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International Development Programs

Romania Civil Society Strengthening Program

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Romania Civil Society Strengthening (RCSS) program was implemented in Romania between September 2005 and December 2007 by World Learning for International Development (WLID) and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Initially USAID allocated \$6.3m to be matched by a cost share of \$1.6m from WLID to fund activities over a three year period. Due to Romania becoming a member of the European Union on January 1st, 2007 the lifespan of the project was reduced and consequently funding also decreased proportionately to \$4.8m with \$2.4m allocated for grant support to Romanian NGOs which partnered WLID in efforts to strengthen civil society.

In Romania, the transition to a democracy has been an uneven and often difficult process, and the NGO community was challenged by an imperfect regulatory environment, inability to secure stable financial support, inadequate constituency building skills, lack of good organizational governance, and difficulty in forming mutually supportive, durable citizen advocacy and policy reform networks. As existing funding sources began phasing out, starting in 2007, the international donor landscape in Romania changed dramatically with clear consequences for the ways in which civil society organizations would function and how sustainable their representational activities would be. New donors meant new donor preferences, philosophies and agendas. Securing funding for watchdog and public policy NGOs expected to be uncertain and especially difficult if the experience in other countries which had in past few years become EU members was noted. By strengthening internal governance and external outreach of the NGO sector, RCSS worked successfully, through grants support and the provision of technical assistance and training, with members of NGO community to address these issues and put NGOs in a stronger position to continue representing the interests of civil society.

In the RCSS program, World Learning implemented a series of inter-related activities which culminated in watchdog and public policy NGOs enhancing perspectives and skills required to function and thrive in the EU environment and to be effective and sustainable representatives of their supporters and constituents. RCSS comprised three complementary components each consisting of a mix of general and customized training, technical assistance, mentoring, sub-grants, and appropriate civil society strengthening interventions all designed to achieve project goals.

One component enhanced the organizational and financial sustainability of public policy and watchdog organizations. Target NGOs, twelve (12) in number selected from a group of 27 nominated by USAID, were sector leaders which had clear and pronounced public policy, advocacy, and monitoring functions and goals. These organizations benefited from specific opportunities provided by RCSS through which to develop approaches and attributes that made them more attractive to the new universe of donors and to their own membership thus allowing them to develop dependable and durable funding bases. NGOs also developed new and innovative ways to support themselves as they grappled with obtaining a better understanding of the new rules and regulations affecting civil society being brought into force ahead of accession to the EU.

More specifically, RCSS and its twelve sustainability core grantees while utilizing a total of \$1.1m in grants and cost-share in the implementation of 12 grants, concentrated on the following issues which successfully promoted organizational and financial sustainability. Organizational and financial sustainability grants provided watchdog and public policy NGOs with specific opportunities to develop products and systems that made them potentially more attractive to donors and to their members, supporters and constituents while providing opportunities to develop local funding bases.

NGO partners focused in organization sustainability by continued development of professional boards for watchdog and public policy NGOs; they developed organizational strategic plans based on the changing

operating environment in which they found themselves as preparations for accession proceeded apace and then following entry into the EU; NGOs established and put into operation realistic business plans as elements of their strategic plans and introduced new mechanisms for revenue generation; staff training and appropriate systems of remuneration were introduced so as to retain staff and enhance their operational sustainability prospects and finally, they tapped increasing volunteerism and expanded their volunteer base to enjoy the benefits of this human resource.

Financial sustainability was enhanced by the NGOs better documentation of the impact that their advocacy activities had for marketing purposes and for increasing the credibility of the watchdog and public policy NGO sub-sector; citizen and organizational membership schemes were developed to assist in creating identifiable constituencies as well as to enhance local fundraising strategies; fundraising techniques and strategies targeted to unique opportunities and challenges of individual organizations were also developed while cost-effective expansion and adaptation of Intermediary Support Organization (ISO) services was pursued through which NGOs could generate income and reduce reliance on hitherto all important grants as previously provided by major donors.

NGO grantees who perceived their future in terms of income generation through ISO activities focused on the development of new programs to support creating reliable and continuous income streams and on the changing laws leading to EU accession, the implications of accession on how NGOs will operate and source funds, keeping costs down and finding specialized sources of funds to subsidize their ISO work. RCSS provided grants and technical assistance to help NGOs develop new training packages, particularly on new laws and policies that affected local NGOs, on operating in the EU, and on tapping new types of funding; some grantees developed internet-based training modules to sell to their clients while as a general ambition organizations worked on building up their resource center infrastructure and expertise, so that they created broader set of services to offer to the local NGO community.

A second, equally vital, component, improved advocacy and public policy knowledge and skills for selected NGOs - ten (10) working with fifteen (15) partners funded through RCSS Small Advocacy Grants - and also provided support for advocacy coalitions and networks through grants, technical assistance and training. A total of \$1m was utilized by the grantees in furthering their missions and goals with at least 25% of this amount being generated by the NGO cost share applied to their implementation of projects.

This assistance stressed the importance of NGOs following through with advocacy efforts to monitor the impact on citizens of newly introduced or revised legislation. This component also assisted a number of NGOs (15 entities using \$109K in grant and cost share funds - located outside of Bucharest which engaged in national level advocacy which was an innovative action since until that time support was provided to advocacy NGOs mainly working out of bases in the capital city. Assistance to improve advocacy and expand outreach focussed on outstanding and in-flux policy issues specifically, giving attention to successful campaigns that needed follow-up through in terms of monitoring of impacts, as well as failed campaigns that needed to be re-activated because an issue remained vital to an active civil society. The formation and meaningful functioning of sustainable coalitions were facilitated and the importance of NGO engagement in the entire advocacy cycle, from the formulation of strategies through appropriate implementation of laws and policies, was promoted and strongly supported by RCSS assistance. Training provided NGOs with skills which to use to engage in effective advocacy and in monitoring compliance and impact; these were perspectives and skills largely considered either unimportant by NGOs or beyond their reach because of insufficient resources.

More concretely and specifically, RCSS helped NGOs focus, in the first instance, on the formation and activities of coalitions engaging in advocacy, stressing the need to follow through with advocacy efforts all the way to monitoring the impact of changes in laws and procedures on citizens. Secondly, the RCSS program worked assiduously with major, sophisticated and well experienced Bucharest based NGOs on

bringing into coalitions and advocacy networks local – county based – NGOs into national level advocacy and public policy activities. In the legal environment aspect of advocacy and public policy the World Learning partner, the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law, based in Bucharest and its local Bucharest implementing partner CSDF contributed significantly to helping NGOs achieve a heightened awareness of the changing pre-entry and immediate post-accession legal environment which was increasingly determining the kinds of opportunities and challenges which civil society representatives were facing.

RCSS facilitated the formation and functioning effective and sustainable partnerships between Romanian policy, advocacy, monitoring and watchdog NGOs, and local, regional, European and American partners that allowed Romanian organizations to continue their missions beyond Romania's accession to the EU and USAID's withdrawal from the Eastern Europe. Partnerships with the business sector, academia and the public sector were supported to the extent these addressed issues and challenges which were considered by NGOs to be germane to the goal of strengthening Romanian civil society. In total fourteen (14) NGOs and their seventy (70) partners were supported by RCSS channelled funds and with technical assistance and training interventions. Partnerships, networks and coalitions were encouraged to make joint proposals thus re-enforcing the concept of organizations bringing different skills and expertise to an initiative, without requiring legal mechanisms for channelling funds or selecting one organization to manage a grant on behalf of other members of a coalition. Projects arising from this effort utilized some \$920K in grant funds and cost share provided by RCSS partners

The RCSS approach in respect of actions towards working with and fostering the broader and more focused engagement in partnerships helped NGOs and their partner entities with watchdog and public policy actions, in their advocacy work and for some, in their roles as service providers and ISOs. Also, a significant change in attitudes occurred among NGOs core grantees and their partners, regarding the desirability of making their partnerships more permanent, even after USAID funding ended, through continued contact between partnership members be that informally or in subsequent forms of collaboration as suited the mission being implemented. A noticeable, but not universal, looking to Europe and the Balkans region for new partnerships was evidenced in the final end of project reports submitted by Partnership grantees as was reportage of expanded partnerships to include new groups, such as the private sector and public authorities; this last most evidenced in more realistic perceptions of the benefits to be gained by all involved in service contracting at the county and local levels. Lastly, there was some, albeit, minimal evidence that NGOs had begun considering new and different types of partnerships these going beyond the acquisition short-term funding as a prime goal.

Efforts were also expended by RCSS to assist relatively small and unsophisticated provincial NGOs – nine (9) in number - whose missions focussed on addressing issues and challenges associated with disability. Perceiving this component as supporting both advocacy and partnership efforts would be appropriate. Many of the issues tackled by the nine NGOs supported by a total of \$218K in grants and cost share from the NGOs themselves revolved around issues of the legal rights of Romanian citizens with disabilities and how these were being addressed by the national government and local authorities in terms of budgetary allocations and the implementation of laws and procedures. More specifically NGOs worked in partnership and employed tools required for advocacy and lobbying to ensure opportunity and equality of access to services and support for Romanians with disabilities.

Training and technical assistance in the legal sphere was provided by the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law and its Bucharest based implementing partner CSDF while advocacy and public policy, along with partnership training and sustainability interventions were crafted and presented according to RCSS requirements by Management System International specialist trainers and consultants. In total eight (8) training interventions were conducted targeting specific needs expressed by the grantees and their partners. Additionally, meetings, workshops and conferences were conducted by ECNL and CSDF involving NGOs and local and national government to increase awareness among NGOs of such innovative aspects of civil

society as social entrepreneurship, the 2% Law on tax deductible donations in support of NGOs, public budgets and the new role which the national government is obliged to play under EU regulations in the support of international development.

The above assistance actions improved democratic governance at the local level, as well as strengthened links between citizens, public institutions and the business sector. This conclusion is supported by comprehensive reporting by grantees of the changes they have effected as measured by reviews of their quarterly reports and their Performance Monitoring Plans (PMPs) which effectively defined project goals and established the indicators by which successful achievement of goals was measured. For the Sustainability component of the RCSS program an overall achievement level of objectives as listed in the PMPs was 93%, Advocacy PMP analysis reported overall 86% level of achievement, with Partnership grantees completely satisfying their missions at 100% while disability issue focused grantees reporting a 71% level of satisfaction of their objectives.

It is worth noting that the definition of the PMP measures of success proved to be protracted process for many of the NGO grantees since RCSS insisted on these measures reflecting outputs – results and impacts – rather than the more traditionally accepted success measures based on quantity of input. Also the use of the WLID developed analysis tool – the Participatory Institutional Analysis Instrument (PIAI) and custom designed tools to measure changes in the Advocacy (PAA) and Partnership (PAT) activities of the program created accurate reflections of the changes which NGOs effected through their project implementation.

As the USAID legacy program in the field of democracy and social reform, RCSS developed a series of publications based on the training, workshops and conferences which comprised an integral aspect of efforts to strengthen civil society in Romania. These cutting edge publications were created by a combination of writers from Romanian ISO staff, which had co-implemented trainings with ECNL and MSI, and by RCSS technical specialists. All publications were in Romanian and distributed through hard copies and available through free download from the internet at the Partners for Democracy and Development (PDD) website. As a legacy achievement the creation of a successor organization, which will continue the work started by the USAID/WLID RCSS program, is noteworthy. Partners for Democracy and Development (PDD) is this entity and has been officially registered, strongly supported by USAID and WLID and commenced operating from its newly rented office in Bucharest as of January 2008.

Overall, the Romania Civil Society Strengthening Program has successfully provided assistance to Romanian NGOs in their efforts to establish for themselves, and consequently for their supporters and constituents as members of a society in transition from a communist dictatorship to full EU membership as a sovereign democratic state, a meaningful and long-term role. A comprehensive report supporting the veracity of this statement is found in the report following this introduction.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

A. Organizational and Financial Sustainability

1. The initial situation.

When initially designed, the sustainability component of the Romania Civil Society Strengthening Program (RCSS) aimed to help a relatively small group of in the main, Bucharest based, watch-dog and intermediary support organizations to anticipate and successfully overcome the organizational challenges brought about by Romanian accession to the European Union (EU). Following the various start-up assessments performed by World Learning (WL) in close cooperation with its partner NGOs - based on individual interviews, cooperative exploration of the kinds of changes faced by civil society organizations in countries which had joined the EU earlier and an analysis of organizational structures and processes typifying Romanian non-governmental organizations performed cooperatively with a target group of 27 entities - several issues were discerned and highlighted becoming through mutual agreement the cornerstones of the approach developed and employed in program implementation by WL-RCSS and its partner grantee NGOs. These fundamentals were:

- Accession to EU was expected to place watch dog and public policy organizations in a vulnerable position as EU funding programs do not favor watch-dogging and policy monitoring activities nor support for NGO involvement in policy development. Specifically, the EU sees NGOs only playing a role as part of policy efforts formulated and already initiated by public organizations.

Project start-up assessment activities performed by WL-RCSS in partnership with project assisted NGOs:

- individual and group interviews with NGO stakeholders performed during the development of WL-RCSS approach
- attendance at focus groups working on USAID Civil Society Index
- individual organizational diagnosis process conducted with 27 civil society organizations
- collective workshop exploring sustainability challenges and needs as perceived by the 27 RCSS partner NGOs.

- Increased financial insecurity for organizations performing watch-dog activities was expected to follow from entry in the EU. After the departure of traditional US donors, principally

USAID which had historically recognized the importance of watch-dog organization and their role in the formation and functioning of a robust democracy, this type of NGOs was considered to be imminently vulnerable to significant challenges to the performance of their activities.

- Insufficient organizational capacities among watchdog and public policy NGOs for building a meaningful relation with the wider communities was also considered an element requiring considerable and urgent attention. To a certain extent, due to the fact that the targeted NGOs did not have a clearly identifiable constituency base and, because virtually all Romanian citizens are beneficiary of their activities, most NGOs faced difficulties defining in the first instance and subsequently building a solid and supportive relation with their constituency. In practice such NGOs developed a donor focus rather than a community focus, putting the donors' perspectives, strategies and goals first and consequently garnering, at best, only limited support for their goals and actions from the wider community.
- Insufficient public support for NGO activities and lack of public trust in NGOs weakened the possibilities for purposeful, sustained and meaningful action from NGOs. Partially as a result of the organizational incapacity to reach out to a constituency base, but also, due to a low culture of civil participation in Romania, the NGOs received only limited public support from citizens and

from the for-profit private companies. The low level of public trust was demonstrated by polls showing a maximum of 25% of Romanian citizens declaring that they trusted NGOs.

- Insufficient capacity to manage human resources was limiting to the efficient and effective role of NGOs. To a certain extent, Romanian NGOs lacked organizational procedures and policies in human resource management and were hampered in the activities by relatively high staff and volunteer turnover rates.

As indicated by the results of the 27 organizational analyses created jointly by RCSS and its potential partner NGOs through the application of the Participatory Institutional Assessment Instrument (PIAI)¹ at the beginning of the RCSS program the following were discovered to represent both the strong and the weak attributes and competencies displayed by the population of targeted NGOs. This population had been pre-defined, by USAID/Bucharest, and financial and technical assistance and training were to be delivered to a selected number of them on the basis of the results of a competitive allocation of project grants. The PIAI analyses indicated mutually defined target areas for this compendium of assistance.

PIAI- 2006: Strong and weak functional attributes

Strong functional attribute		Weak functional attribute	
Governance	3.1	Human resources	2.3
External Relations and Advocacy	2.9	Operations & Management Systems	2.7
Financial Management	2.8	Service delivery	2.7

An additional analysis of organizational competencies indicated that the weakest were firstly, financial security; this being defined as a lack of capacity to raise project funds other than through submitting proposals for grants. Secondly, human resource management indicating a lack of capacity to monitor staff performance and provide rewards and financial remuneration in accordance with individual contributions to organizational efficiency, effectiveness and impact.

PIAI – 2006: Strong and weak organizational competencies.

Strong organizational competencies		Weak organizational competencies	
Legal status	3.6	Salary administration	2
NGO collaboration	3.4	Performance management	2.1
Communication	3.3	Administration	2.2
Accounting	3.3	Mobilization of resources	2.2
Government collaboration	3.3	Resource base	2.3

When reviewing well developed attributes and competencies, it appears that the most developed were legal status and accounting, and readiness of the targeted NGOs to collaborate with potential partners. While

¹ PIAI - is an organizational analysis framework developed over many years by World Learning for International Development (WLID). It includes 96 evaluatory items clustered within 28 competencies and 6 functional areas. Each item is ranked on a scale from “0” indicating an absent competency to “4” signifying a well developed competency.

four of the five least developed competencies related to “productive²” capabilities in the form of financial and human resources critical for overcoming anticipated challenges, only two of the five most developed competencies referred to “productive” skills. The above reported definitional distinction is important as, in a period of radical and extensive environmental changes, productive competencies are critical when organizations mobilize resources needed for survival and future institutional development.

As major changes within the Romanian funding environment are considered the following positive and negative trends are worthy to note because they impacted on the nature, timing, and subsequently, on the impact of RCSS interventions and the success of the program in strengthening civil society through helping organizations improve their levels of financial and operational sustainability:

Threats - Negative trends	Opportunities - Positive trends
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ US funding sources were scheduled to close: USAID, Open Society Foundation, Mott Foundation and other US funders were slated to reducing financial support and have prepared or were already implementing their exist strategy. ▪ PHARE programs will end. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased chances to approach centralized European Funds which are funding programs administrated from Brussels. ▪ Structural funds will be available and will hopefully represent a significant source of funding for NGOS ▪ Development of governmental funding for NGOs which might include i) subcontracting services to NGOs, ii) establishing governmental funding institutions such as The National Environmental Fund or The National Cultural Fund and iii) development of local or county grant making programs targeting NGOs ▪ Increased openness from business sector for support to NGOs and social initiatives stemming from an increasing sense of corporate social responsibility. This may be achieved in several ways: i) direct support to NGOs, ii) through intermediary mechanism such as community foundations or other entities such as United Way of Romania and iii) corporate foundations. ▪ Increasing individual support to NGOs mainly through the 2% Law on tax free deductible giving by individuals and other forms of donation.

A cursory review of the changes in funding sources might create an optimistic view as these appear to diversify and increase the amounts available for financial support. Despite this potentially optimistic

² Within the RCSS PIAI analysis the 28 PIAI competencies were divided in two key categories: productive competencies representing tangible and intangible assets constituting inputs such us human resources, funds, image and the like, and, administrative competencies representing an entity’s capability and capacity to effectively apply inputs and resources such as accountancy, administration and the like to the pursuit of its mission.

future, many NGOs feel insecure because they feel uncertain or simply lacking the skills and capacity to successfully approach these new sources. The apprehension and uncertainty stemmed in significant part because these new funding mechanisms were, so to speak, “under construction” and there was only limited knowledge and experience of how to approach them to ensure a reasonable measure of success in securing support. A significant element in the RCSS approach to assisting NGOs to enhance their sustainability prospects was focus on working with NGO partners in developing a better understanding of the new donor funding philosophies, policies and preferred procedures for access assistance.

Apprehension, uncertainty and confusion regarding the optimum financial strategic choices each organization could make is understandable since most NGOs, during the course of the RCSS program, lost familiar funding sources and operational environments in which they had been successful in maintaining financial sustainability and were obliged to face totally new and unfamiliar opportunities and challenges.

Additionally, there was a low level of trust in the fact that donors, coming to the fore after the withdrawal of the likes of USAID, would operate in a friendly and supportive manner towards civil society organizations. Due to the bureaucratic approach of the EU and also of the nationally operated programs a break in funding was expected to appear during 2007 when most US and private European founders were expected to reduce their financial support while the new funding mechanism would not have yet become operational.³ Part of the responsibility which RCSS was charged with was preparing the NGOs to come through this hiatus period with their operational capabilities and capacities intact and continuing to be relevant as the new donors began infusing monies into the civil society and activist environment.

NGOs almost universally expected that the new funding environment would not provide equal chances to all of them. Some NGO missions would not be accommodated by the new donors’ preferred perspectives while others would; the former would obviously find their financial stability and security jeopardized.

In summary, conventional wisdom among NGOs had it that the organizations which were most likely to be favored by the new social, economic and political environment, and therefore with the greatest prospects for continued operational and financial sustainability would be:

- Area-focused or community based NGOs. NGOs with a clear connection to a specific community would have better chances of attracting financial support from local citizens and local businesses. Solid relations with parish and county institutions would also indicate a better chance of attracting public funding.
- NGOs with a good reputation and high visibility. This was considered to definitely be an organizational asset which would make an NGO attractive to partners, businesses and public institutions, increasing chances for success in mobilizing individual support be this financial, in-kind support or providing through volunteering. These NGOs are also attractive partners for public institutions in their attempt to approach successfully the European funding programs (developing projects for structural funds).
- Service providing NGOs. Considering the humanitarian missions of these NGOs and their constituencies it was considered that mobilizing greater financial support from individual in companies would be easier than for the majority of NGOs. Additionally a significant source of funding for social service NGOs was considered to be the state provided through service contracting mechanisms. In the medium and long term such sources of funding were considered to potentially provide a significant share of income for well established and professionalized NGOs operating in this sphere.

³ This assumption proved to be a correct one as the EU structural funds - the most important funding source of the new funding environment - was finalized and launched in late 2007. It is anticipated that NGOs will be able to use this funds in the second part of 2008.

- NGOs with strong connections to county and regional authorities. These NGOs were considered to have higher chances of accessing the Structural Funds being assembled during the final year of the RCSS project.
- NGOs with solid demonstrable experience of working with EU institutions and according to European procedures and practices.
- NGOs with strong partnership links to other EU organizations and institutions. This was considered to be a key factor predicting the highest likelihood of an organization successfully approaching centralized European funding sources. As a corollary, NGOs which had focused on working closely, and in some cases exclusively, with non-EU donors would be the least well positioned for maintaining access to newly emerging sources of support.

Organizations which conventional wisdom considered would experience the most obvious and significant difficulties in maintaining financial sustainability were expected to be:

- Watchdog and public policy organizations are not usually supported through public funding be that EU or national in origin. Watchdog and public policy missions are less widely recognized, relatively poorly understood and lacking public appeal for reasons both integral to their nature and due to the poor publicizing efforts expended by their practitioners. Consequently it was considered that it would be harder for these NGOs to obtain significant financial support from individuals and businesses. More than this, some funding from corporate entities cannot be accepted by these NGOs since it may create possible conflicts of interest and call into question organizational integrity and reputation.
- USAID focused NGOs which relied heavily on US funding and had low or limited experience with European funding sources. These would simply lack the experience of working effectively with EU funding policies and procedures.
- Single donor NGOs which had relied on sole sources be these and international or a local donor which during the course of the RCSS assistance effort were preparing or actualizing their exit strategies from Romania.
- NGOs with low visibility, unknown to the wider public because of an inferior capability and low capacity for documenting and promoting the results of their work.
- Isolated or closed NGOs with limited or no clear constituency.
- NGOs with limited experience in attracting and managing community and constituency support such as working with volunteers.

The RCSS program was obliged to implement its assistance programs in a dynamic and inexorably changing environment since this was precisely the experience through which its partner NGOs were also navigating towards a hoped for predictable and enhanced level of sustainability. There were several areas of organizational development that the RCSS program needed to help partner NGOs consider and invest time and effort in addressing in order that they minimize threats while maximizing the opportunities for a sustainable future in the EU. These were:

- Development of partnerships with EU organizations and institutions. This was considered a critical action required to ensure the highest possible likelihood for successfully accessing centralized EU funds.
- Developing partnerships at county and regional level with local Romanian. This was considered a prerequisite for increasing chances of successfully accessing regional structural funds.
- Improving organizational visibility and reputation. This required documenting and publicizing organizational achievements thereby enhancing public image and drawing increased public attention to the organization's professional reputation. Investing in organizational visibility and

reputation was considered to be of key importance in order to increase organizational chances for sustainability and for leveraging resources.

- Expanding constituency and volunteer base. Constituency building was designed to mobilize support and increase the number of people and or organizations supporting an NGO as an entity or being behind an initiative pursued by an NGO. In this respect, “organization’s constituent base” was to constitute citizens; in the form of members of organizations, volunteers, beneficiaries and other individual supporters, business, policymakers, research and academic institutions, other NGOs amongst other entities that trust, support and are represented by the NGO. A broader constituency was considered to be highly likely to increase an organization’s chances to attract and capture both financial and in-kind support, including volunteers, and increase the organizational power to promote social change.
- Attract financial support from individuals and businesses.
- Developing high quality services which could be commercialized and providing institutional income through collection of fees for services rendered by the NGO.
- Developing income generating activities and adopting commercial practices.
- Attracting, effectively managing and retaining competent human resources.

2. The purpose of the RCSS Sustainability component.

World Learning developed a series of inter-related objectives and activities to provide watchdog and public policy NGOs with sets of skills and tools they needed to be effective and sustainable in the EU environment. The RCSS sustainability component focused on three areas:

Strengthening Organizational Sustainability:

- continued development of professional boards for watchdog and public policy NGOs;
- development of strategic plans clearly related to the organizational operating environment;
- development of realistic business plans as part of the strategic plan and these to include new mechanisms for revenue generation;
- staff training;
- development of mechanisms and procedures for increasing the role of volunteers in organizational functioning.

Strengthening Financial Sustainability:

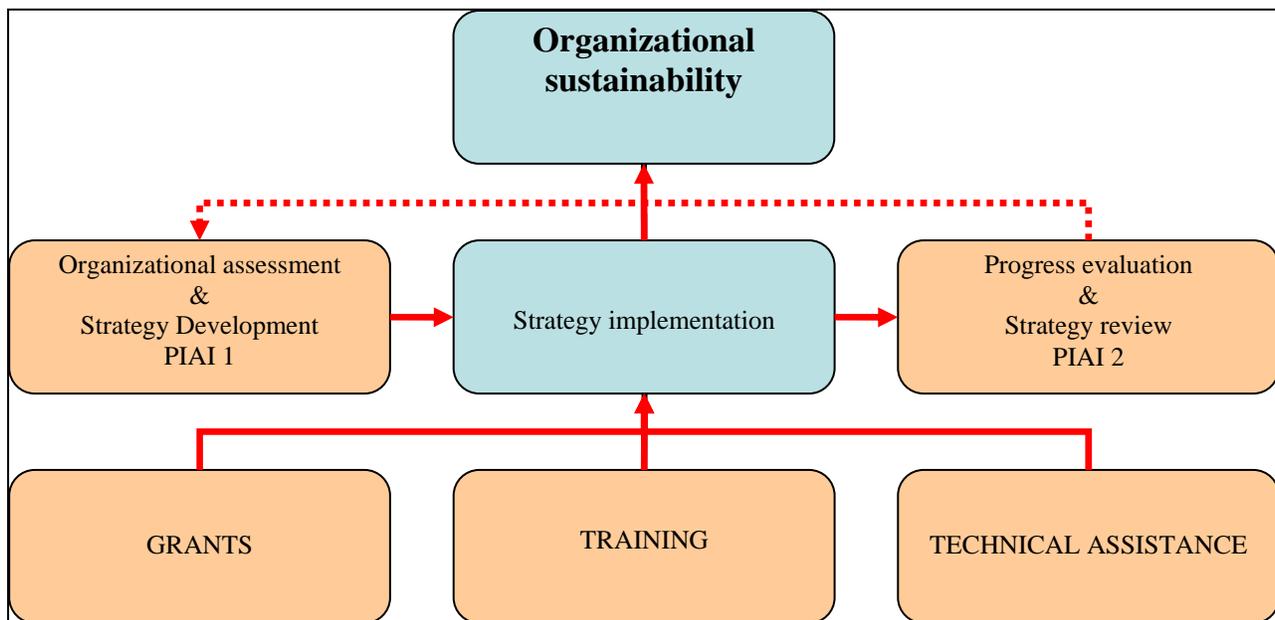
- documentation of the impact that each NGO’s advocacy activities had, to use these for marketing and promotional purposes and for increasing the credibility of the watchdog and public policy NGOs;
- development of membership schemes to assist NGOs in creating identifiable constituencies as well as to enhance the results of local fundraising strategies;
- development of fundraising techniques and strategies targeting the unique opportunities and challenges experienced by individual organizations;
- cost-effective expansion and adaptation of Intermediary Support Organization (ISO) services as a means of generating financial income and enhanced self-sufficiency.

Strengthening Intermediary Support Organizations:

- developing new training packages, particularly on new laws and policies that affect local NGOs, training on how to operate successfully in the EU and on accessing new types of funding;
- development of internet-based training modules;
- developing capacity to issue and monitor sub-grant projects to other NGOs;
- building up ISOs resource center infrastructure and expertise so that NGOs, functioning as ISOs, have a wider set of services to offer to the local NGO community.

3. The RCSS assistance program to enhance the sustainability of NGOs specializing in watchdog activities and public policy issues

In order to achieve program goals and objectives, WL implemented a series of inter-related activities and support schemes to engage targeted NGOs in a meaningful and effective process of reflecting upon and subsequently acting to enhance the actual and potential organizational sustainability.



The RCSS intervention addressed the full cycle of organizational activities as follows:

1. Start-up organizational analysis – the PIAI - was conducted during January-February 2006 in order to help the 27 targeted NGOs define their organizational structures and management processes and establish priorities for the kind of changes they wanted to introduce so as to improve their chances of continued work in their chosen activity areas. The 2006 PIAI was contracted out and performed by Opportunity Associates Romania with oversight provided by WL-RCSS staff.
2. Creation of organizational development strategies and action plans. The Invitation for Applications (IFA) was the mechanism employed to obtain project proposals from the targeted NGOs. This process was launched by WL-RCSS and encouraged NGOs to develop strategies and plans which would lead them to a consolidation of organizational sustainability through pursuing the development goals each NGO had established for itself in the PIAI process. The IFA format required that all aspects of a strategic plan were addressed in the proposal and subsequent implementation plan. OAR expertise was provided to each of the 27 targeted NGOs in analyzing

their PIAI results and defining their organizational development priorities including how these might be attained through implementing a grant funded project.

3. Implementation of organizational sustainability strategies. WL-RCSS provided technical and financial assistance to the 27 targeted organizations for the proper implementation of the developmental strategies. This was through grants to 12 NGOs and technical assistance primarily through customized training to all 27 organizations.
4. Progress review. The changes registered by partner organizations were measured through a repetition of the PIAI which took place between August and October 2007 and facilitated by Partners for Democracy and Development (PDD). The final, post-project, PIAI focused on the following two aims:
 - To assess organizational progress since the first application of the PIAI. In early 2006, 27 Romanian NGOs received technical assistance in performing an organizational analysis to help them explore and identify strategic priorities for institutional development. The final PIAI helped partner NGOs analyze organizational progress and identified organizational areas where significant changes - both positive and negative- happened during the program.
 - To assist target NGOs in reviewing and establishing priorities for institutional development. As an institutional analysis tool, PIAI will allowed NGOs to identify organizational strengths and weaknesses and, consequently, to establish further institutional development priorities stemming from their altered state reached through participation in the RCSS program.

The second application of the PIAI was:

- A purposefully structured opportunity reflection and learning about organizational sustainability and developmental challenges provided to the NGOs. The process of applying PIAI thus assisted targeted NGOs to deepen their appreciation and understanding of self-sustainability and stimulated organizational learning practices taking into account the events and changes which these brought about during the implementation of the grant funded sustainability enhancement projects.
- A process of consensus building since the PIAI process encouraged collective reflection about organizational challenges and created a shared understanding of the current organizational status and the desired future for the organization.
- A self-assessment process through involvement in the PIAI application which led partner organizations to understand their own level of development and establish priorities for a desired organizational future. PIAI was a process of organizational sense-making in which the key actors and stakeholders were NGO members and activists. The participatory approach was thus essential and the commitment and involvement of key organizational stakeholders such as board and staff members, beneficiaries and volunteers were critical to a meaningful outcome of the PIAI analysis and consequent actions.

The RCSS approach included three different forms of intervention and assistance:

a. Technical assistance.

The technical assistance provided by WL included:

- start-up organizational analysis through the application of the PIAI which was conducted by Opportunity Associates Romania engaging a group of 27 NGOs selected by USAID/Romania.
- support for the identification of organizational development priorities as part of the PIAI process in which a decision making workshop was facilitated by the RCSS contractor involving each target organization. Through this NGO stakeholders gained a clear understanding of the developmental stage at which their organization was an appreciation of challenges involved in achieving defined developmental priorities.
- on-going technical assistance during the project implementation which was provided by specialist WL-RCSS staff under the coordination of the Civil Society Development Specialist. Technical assistance included support both on programmatic - strategic and technical - matters and administrative issues.
- a final PIAI analysis to which promoted a clear understanding among NGO staff, board and volunteers as to what changes had been effected by the grant funded project which each organization had completed. While the PIAI was offered to all 27 organizations involved in the process only 14 were able to mobilize themselves to repeat the analysis in the timeframe available. It worth mentioning that the smaller number of organizations engaged in the second PIAI did not reflect a lack of interest in the process organizational evaluation per se but rather a desire to avoid duplicating an analysis which they had already conducted internally and unilaterally because they perceived its innate importance and value.

b. Grants

In February 2006, WL-RCSS launched a Request for Application (RFA) process inviting the short list of 27 NGOs, nominated by USAID as potential sustainability partners, to develop and submit proposals for projects which would strengthen their organizational and financial sustainability. The targeted organizations were acting as watch-dog, public policy shapers and intermediary support organizations. The RFA was designed to be flexible and open allowing NGOs to receive financial support for a wide range of activities and organizational issues in line with the needs they had identified through the PIAI. However, following the incorporation of the findings of preliminary assessments performed by WL in cooperation with the partner NGOs additional emphasis was placed on:

Organizational Sustainability

- continued development of professional boards;
- development of organizational strategic plans closely linked to the operating environment;
- development of realistic business plans as integral aspects of each strategic plan and to include new mechanisms for revenue generation;
- staff training;
- development of resources for increasing volunteerism and broadening the volunteer base.

Financial Sustainability

- documentation of the impact that NGO advocacy activities for promotional purposes and for increasing organizational credibility;
- development membership schemes, the creation of identifiable constituencies;

- development of fundraising techniques and strategies targeting opportunities and challenges faced by individual organizations;
- cost-effective expansion and implementation of services offered to other NGOs on a for-fee basis; NGOs acting thereby as Intermediary Support Organizations (ISOs).

Following the assessment of the received applications 12 grants were awarded as follows:

Organization	Project name	Project aim and expected results
Pro Democracy Association (APD)	Strengthening APD's institutional capacity to promote good governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased membership - participation in the association activities. - Set-up and running fund raising strategies - develop operational plans and business plans - staff development - Board development
Centre for Legal Resources (CLR)	Centre for Legal Resources - Future plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop and implement a strategic plan for 2006-2009 - develop and implement a business plan coordinated with the organizational strategic plan - Board development - set up a Training and TA team to deliver specialized services to other NGOs
CENTRAS	DISCIPPO-Develop Intermediary Support Center for the Improvement of Public Policy Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased capacity to generate and promote public policy initiatives serving the non-profit sector. - develop and implement the 2007-2009 strategic development plan and business plan - develop organizational capacity in setting up and managing funding programs - increase organizational capacity to design and deliver training and TA programs on a) business planning for NGOs, b) access to structural funds, c) volunteer management, d) alternative fundraising techniques, e) monitoring public participation in decision making processes.
Media Monitoring Agency (MMA)	Standard NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MMA develops and implements a strategic plan for 2006-2007 - Board development - staff training and development - improve constituency base - diversify funding sources
FDSC	FDSC contribution to further strengthening the Romanian NGO community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve CSDF capacity to advocate for a more enabling environment for Romanian NGOs - CSDF will develop an advocacy portal - CSDF will develop and adapt its training and consultancy services (at least three new training programs will be developed) - training department will be assessed and a

		<p>development plan will be established including training needs, mentoring and evaluation procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board development - staff development activities (primarily training on training of trainers, project management, structural funds)
Romanian Academic Society (SAR)	Ten Years of SAR and More - Consolidation and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop strategic planning document and business plan - staff development - increase membership base and voluntary base - improved organizational skills to mobilize local financial resources
Association for Community Relations (ARC)	Organizational sustainability for sector sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - set up an e-learning platform within the framework of a postgraduate program on resource mobilization - set up a direct mail service as an income generating activity - develop and start implementing an organizational outreach plan - ARC will open a Bucharest office with one new employee - increased board and staff involvement and capacity in designing the financial and organizational sustainability strategy - develop and employ a 3 year-fundraising and business plan for financial sustainability
Pro Vobis Volunteer Center	Professionalization and Performance of the Volunteer Movement in Romania: Strengthening of Pro Vobis - the National Volunteer Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop organizational strategic plans - board development - develop and update organizational policies and procedures - develop and implement staff development plans - develop and disseminate a toolkit for volunteers center - develop and implement PR plan
Center for Independent Journalism (CIJ)	Strengthening the Organizational and Financial Capacities of CJI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CIJ improved public image and increased public support. - develop a Media (Virtual) Resource Center for journalists - develop a two year written financial sustainability plan which includes a fundraising and marketing plan.
Institute for Public Policy (IPP)	Strengthening IPP Institutional capabilities to Develop High Quality Services for Local Government through Internalizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop and start implementing a long term strategic/development plan - develop a business plan to include market research on the formation of a survey division - set up a new division on public survey - develops and implements a marketing strategy for promoting main services to be delivered to

	Public Survey Know-how	local communities
ACCEPT	Looking toward the Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve public image and public support through: the development of a PR strategy, increase number of volunteers and financial support from individuals - improve organizational management capacity through: the development of strategies and action plans, update organizational charts and human resource management policies.
Communes Association – Romania (ACoR)	Organizational Development of the Association of Romania Communes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop functional policy commission within ACoR and train their members in order to develop and promote at least two law proposals - develop strategies, plans and organizational procedures - set up a professional body of Commune Secretaries - develop new ACoR branches in increase the ACoR membership

c. Training. Three specifically targeted trainings were planned, designed and conducted addressing the needs of the NGOs assisted by the RCSS sustainability component; details of these follow:

Building financial sustainability

May, 2006.

Lead Technical Specialist and Trainer: Robert Herman, Management Systems International (MSI)

Co-trainer: Roxana Braga, Romanian ISO

Workshop provided information, guidance and instruction on:

- Building better understandings of financial sustainability.
- Developing a clear understanding of likely changes to funding levels.
- Current and future funding sources.
- Gaining a better understanding of strategic choices in the financial arena.

The training was based on the certain knowledge that business planning is a new topic for Romania and especially new for NGOs. This training brought to the participating NGOs a sense of confidence based on concrete knowledge that allowed them to concentrate on fundraising grounded in an understanding of wider NGO sector trends and challenges. The workshop helped participating NGOs formulate financial sustainability strategies and focus their efforts on activities and directions that were likely to ensure future financial stability and security.

Business planning for NGOs: setting-up and running income generating activities (Part 1)

September 2006

Leading Technical Specialist and Trainer: Richard Brewster, Management Systems International (MSI)

Co-trainer: Dana Nicolescu, Opportunity Associates, Romania

This training provided a number of the better established civil society NGOs in Romania with support to help improve their organizational sustainability. RCSS had previously facilitated training that covered a range of sustainability issues, but in a review earlier in the year of NGO needs, organizations identified business planning and earning income as top priorities for additional training.

The training helped participants gain a basic understanding of:

- What earned income is.
- What makes earned income initiatives most likely to succeed.
- How to assess whether a nonprofit is ready to proceed with an earned income initiative.
- How to generate ideas for earning income.
- How to select the most promising ideas for earning income.
- How to conduct a feasibility study.
- How to construct a business plan.
- How to identify and manage the risks of engaging in earning income.

Business planning for NGOs: setting-up and running income generating activities (Part 2)

May 2007

Technical Specialist and Trainer: Richard Brewster, Management Systems International (MSI)

This training was a follow-up to that conducted in the late summer of 2006 and provided a number of the more established Romanian civil society NGOs with further support to help them increase organizational sustainability. Given the wide range of types of earned income initiatives and NGO needs identified, and in light of the fact that some attendees were not the same as had attended the first training, this event started with a refresher session on the main conditions necessary for ensuring the success of earned income initiatives. Participants then assessed the extent to which their NGO met these conditions. A detailed analyses of several of the participating NGOs as practical examples for the other NGOs to learn from followed. Short verbal coverage of a number of topics identified in pre-training surveys was also provided. The topics of greatest interest were sales and promotion and developing an entrepreneurial culture. By the end of the workshop, the major lessons learned as reported by participants were:

- The importance of being “in the market,” in other words, a willingness to provide the services that customers want and have identified as important and therefore worth paying for, even if these are not consistent with the NGO’s own ideas.
- The usefulness of the “Mission/Money Matrix” as a means of exploring the overall balance between money-making and non-money making activities. This matrix helped NGOs in making decisions about their objectives and consequent actions in an earned income initiative.

- How to work through and resolve the tension between money and mission by being clear about the goals of the initiative, involving the right people and using the Mission/Money Matrix to put the earned income activity in context.
- The importance of creating and selling products that are consistent with the NGO's desired image.
- The need to "refresh" products and services, rather than assuming that because people are willing to buy them now they will continue to want them in the future.
- That there will often be a dilemma for organizations about whether to provide services to all free of charge, or to selectively impose a fee on those who can afford the services. There is no general solution – the answer will vary in each case according to the values of the NGO, its ability to cope with different prices, and with the logistics of pricing including invoices and such, on what other organizations are doing and what key stakeholders expect.
-

Leadership and Change Management for NGOs

February 2007

Lead Technical Specialist and Trainer: Ken Phillips; NGO Development Services Inc.

Co-trainer: Irina Stanescu - Civil Society Development Foundation

This training helped targeted NGOs acquire a keener understanding of organizational change processes and thereby develop skills and capacities to employ in implementing and conducting change processes within their organizations. This intervention helped NGOs better adapt and introduce organizational strategies and actions in response to the changing NGO environment as a result of EU accession. The training focused specifically on two major areas:

- i) understanding organizational change and
- ii) developing personal knowledge and skills for introducing and managing organizational change.

The following topics were explored during the three day training:

- understanding of the change pressures
- the importance of change in becoming an "adaptive" and innovative organization
- internal and external determinants of change
- how change occur in organizations (models of innovation and change diffusion)
- change catalysts and change resistance
- understanding change resistance and strategies of overcome it
- Strategies for introducing change processes at organizational level.

4. Key achievements

4.1. Assessment of PMP - Project Monitoring Plan - and project completion

The final evaluation meetings conducted between RCSS and the partner grantee NGOs, all quarterly reports and the final project reports indicate satisfactory implementation of all sustainability grants.

No project implemented by a NGO grantee under the Sustainability component of the RCSS program reported major discrepancies between the proposed goals and objectives and the realized outcomes and achievements. A closer analysis of the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) developed for each of the 12 grants allows for highlighting several findings which lead to an unambiguous appreciation that the Sustainability program was satisfactorily implemented and concluded:

- of the 233 individual performance indicators defined by NGO grantee partners implementing projects under the Sustainability component, 174 indicators (76.4%) were accomplished fully or to a greater degree than originally planned while only 35 indicators (15%) were under-achieved.
- the overall program goal achievement rate for all 12 sustainability projects was 93.2%.

Please see the table below for a more detailed report on levels of achievement of proposed goals and objectives for the 12 NGOs partnering RCSS in the sustainability component of the World Learning Romania Civil Society Strengthening Program.

PMP INDICATORS ACHIEVEMENT RATE:	Number of indicators	Percent
indicators 100% achieved	129	55.4
indicators achieved <u>more</u> than 100%	49	21
indicators achieved <u>less</u> than 100%	35	15
indicators that could not be reported (n/a)	20	8.6
Total	233	100
Overall achievements rate*:		93.2

*The overall achievement rate does not take into account over-achievements. All indicators where organizations obtained results beyond their initial targets or expectations were considered as 100% achieved. The “overall achievement rate” does not include outcomes beyond the contractual ones. The decision to minimize the impact of over-achieved indicators was determined by the fact that some indicators were reported as achieved significantly in excess of levels originally expected and set as targets thereby indicating that there was a major, although unintentional setting the bar at an unrealistically low level.

The following table provides a sample of overachieved indicators which were eliminated from the calculation of overall-project success:

NGO	PMP indicator	Base line	Target	Achieved	Achieved %
CRJ	No. of contracts through the income generating services	N/A	1	2	200
FDSC	No of staff trained in monitoring and evaluation	NA	13	30	231

FDSC	No of new training courses developed on various topics of interest for NGOs	NA	3	5	167
SAR	No of recipients of newsletter	N/A	100	480	480
SAR	No of visitor – web section on newsletter	N/A	300	558	186
CRJ	Local Romanian support increased from 2006 baseline by the end of the program	\$3,000	20%	\$10,215	283
ACCEPT	Increased number of volunteers involved in activities other than outreach	6	20	50	250
APD	Percent increase in volunteer support (number)	1,200 volunteers	10%	2343	177
APD	Increase (double) the amount of money raised from other sources than grants	\$32,834	100%	\$117,061	194
APD	Increase the funds attracted (in USD)	\$319,447	45%	\$205,8374	444

RCSS - Sustainability grantees: Key achievements

NGO	Level of project achievement	Key achievements
ACCEPT	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 15 staff members improved organizational management knowledge and skills - Internal procedures reviewed and developed - Organizational monitoring and evaluation plan developed - Job descriptions up-dated - Volunteers management policy and procedures developed - Volunteers involved in activities other than outreach increased from 6 to 50 - PR policy and strategy developed - Number of visitors of web portal increased from 18,000 to 60,000
Romanian Communes Association	98.4%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three functional policy commissions established involving 32 active members - 8 policy commission meetings organized 2 law amendments elaborated - Strategic plan developed - Database of the ACoR members developed - Internal documents and procedures for the Professional Body of Secretaries developed

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 regional meeting organized - Collection of membership fees increased from 42% to 70%
Civil Society Development Foundation	96.7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 partnership developed with EU based NGOs - 80 NGOs supported various CSDF advocacy initiatives - 200 NGOs interviewed for the development of a needs assessment process - 13 staff members developed or enhanced their training skills - 5 new training programs developed - A board assessment and development plan established - Redesigned image materials including web page
Center for Legal Resources	96.2%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic and business plans developed - 11 staff members formulated individual development plans and 8 staff members developed training skills. - Two new training programs developed - Two training contracts signed - Internal regulations and procedures developed and approved by board
Institute for Public Policy	95.2%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A long term development strategy in place incorporating the input from 15 stakeholders - The survey division was developed - 59 field operators recruited and trained - A business plan developed for new services - Two national surveys implemented
Romanian Academic Society	94%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job descriptions designed for all staff members - Membership base increased from 41 to 57 - 6 issues of an electronic newsletter produced and distributed to more than 400 people - Business plan developed for the PolSci Journal - 35% of the costs for the production of PolSci covered from domestic sources
Media Monitoring Agency	94%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MMA registered as an independent organization - A new board developed - Strategic plan developed - Annual budget increased more than 200% - No of volunteers increased from 5 to 41 - Seven partners attracted in MMA projects
CENTRAS	93.8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic and business plans developed - 47 volunteers attracted and trained - New training packages developed - Two consultancy and training kits produced - 15 smaller NGOs trained in business planning, volunteer management and fundraising
Pro Democracy Association	93%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase number of volunteers from 1200 to 2343 - Membership increased from 727 to 903 - Recipients of e-journal increase from 150 to 757 - Funds attracted through 2% allocations increase from \$4,379 to \$12,149 - Business and operational plans developed

		- Annual budget increased more than 400%
Association for Community Relations	91.9%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 57 technical assistance days on resource mobilization provided to other NGOs - The IDD e learning course developed and launched and ready for post graduate academic accreditation - Created a 3-year development plan for each of 3 new services - Outreach plan developed and being implemented - The Bucharest office with one new employee established - 3 board members developed knowledge and skills in business planning for NGOs - 3 year-fundraising and business plan for financial sustainability developed
Center for Independent Journalism	84.5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mission revised based on input from stakeholders and beneficiaries - Media (Virtual) Resource Center established and operational - Web page redesigned - Library materials catalogued and linked to web portal - Increased public visibility in national mass media through 35 appearances - Local Romanian support increased from \$3,000 to \$10,000
Pro-Vobis*	81.3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board procedures manual developed - Organizational statute updated and agreed by board - a two year programs development and implementation plan created - Monitoring and evaluation procedures and performance standards for Pro Vobis programs developed in written form - Job descriptions and organizational chart revised - Toolkit for volunteer developed and distributed to 20 centers - PR plan was developed - Study on the current status of volunteerism in Romania performed
Average score	93.2 %	

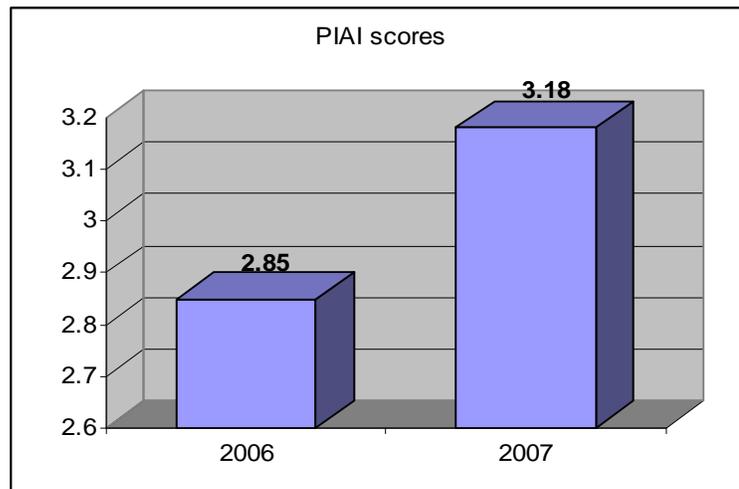
* The comparatively low score registered by Pro-Vobis can be explained by three different factors:

- The complexity and magnitude of the proposed intervention was significant. Out of the 12 sustainability grantees ProVobis had the highest number of performance indicators: 28 indicators in 7 areas.
- Staff turn-over during the middle of project implementation following which Pro-Vobis faced difficulties when the former parent organization (LPA) claimed back the office space. In addition three experienced staff members left the organization to be replaced by unseasoned replacements.

4.2. Comparative analysis of PIAI 2006 and PIAI 2007 and overall change during this period

The aggregated PIAI scores 2007 indicate that the NGOs working on projects funded through RCSS grants succeeded in reaching a higher level of institutional development entering a “mature” developmental stage as indicated by the PIAI matrix competency indicators.

Considering the comprehensibility of PIAI - the 28 functional areas and 96 competency indicators - the reported increase in the overall PIAI score of 0.33 indicates a notable development among the assisted NGOs. It worth mentioning, that of the 28 functional areas which could have been selected by partner NGOs to focus their attention on, most sustainability projects supported by WL-RCSS focused on working on improvements in 10 to 15 organizational functions. Most NGOs concentrated on improving strategy, internal procedures and human resources as key elements of their work towards enhancing their sustainability.



A closer look at the 6 organizational areas investigated by the PIAI permits a better appreciation of the structural and procedural changes achieved by partner NGOs through implementing RCSS funded sustainability enhancement projects.

PIAI scores 2006 and 2007

PIAI scores	2006	2007	PIAI score change
Governance	3.1	3.40	0.3
Operations and management systems	2.7	3.16	0.46
Human resources	2.5	2.93	0.43
Financial resources	3.0	3.24	0.24
Service delivery	2.8	3.12	0.32
External relations and advocacy	3.0	3.23	0.23

As highlighted in the table above, “Operations and management systems” and “human resources” registered a quite obvious positive development while “financial resources” and “external relations and advocacy” also registered positive but more modest improvement. The PIAI score changes reported above also indicate the strategic priorities decided upon by RCSS partner NGOs and the relative levels of effort placed in achieving their goals.

The table below illustrates the distribution of performance indicators established within the sustainability projects. A useful, and revealing way to consider the information reported in the above and the below tables is that the initial performance indicators can be seen as an expression of the deliberate and indented strategy while the changes in PIAI scores represents and illustrates the consequence of the applied strategy.

Performance indicators of Sustainability component projects

Areas of intervention (PMP indicators)	Level of effort	
	No of indicators	Percentage
Human resources (staff, board, volunteers)	86	33
Service development	41	16
External relations - PR	36	14
Financial resources	33	13
Strategy development	31	12
External relations - constituency building	28	11
Other	5	2
TOTAL	260	100

A closer look at the project performance indicators highlights the fact that 33% - the main focus by far - of the organizations energy and resources were directed toward effecting change in development, organization, better coordination and motivation of human resources while other organizational areas received less and relatively equal levels of attention. This fact is one of the main reasons why PIAI scores on human resources and operations and management systems registered the greatest change as indicated in the first table.

Despite the intensive NGO investment in bringing about change and positive evolution in the human resource area and the consequences of this in a substantial increase on PIAI score scale, it continues to remain the weakest organizational function; in fact it is the only characteristic which defines NGOs as being in the “consolidation” stage. However, it is worth mentioning that all NGOs implementing RCSS funded sustainability projects faced significant and challenging changes in their human resources dimension during the implementation of their projects. Five (5) organizations had a change of Executive Director, 11 experienced changes of board structure and composition, and all organizations were challenged by staffing changes and volatility. In some NGOs, the staff changes were very significant as in Pro Vobis and SAR, while in other cases such as CSDF, the staff changes although disruptive were less so since they involved lower hierarchical positions and operative staff rather than managerial and directorial persons. However, the period was, and still remains, a very problematic one for NGOs as the Romanian labor market is currently demonstrating substantial changes in terms of an increased general demand for highly skilled personnel. Most NGOs faced staffing difficulties since they cannot compete with the for-profit sector in offering competitive salaries thus leading to a movement of people away from the NGO sector.

NGO weaknesses

An assessment of the lowest scores registered in the 28 functional areas of PIAI highlight some ongoing and only partially addressed organization institutional weaknesses which could not be fundamentally affected by the relatively short project life spans permitted by the RCSS program although as the scores indicate positive progress was recorded.

PIAI lowest scores 2007

PIAI competency	PIAI functional area	PIAI 2006	PIAI 2007
Salary administration	Human resources	2.2	2.5
Mobilization of resources	External relations and advocacy	2.4	2.7
Community ownership	Service delivery	2.5	2.8
Resource base	Financial resources	2.5	2.8
Performance management	Human resources	2.3	2.8

Two of the lowest indicators refer to human resources. Salary administration, which refers to the NGO's capacity to monitor individual staff level of effort and provide remuneration in accordance with performance, is the organizational function with the lowest score. The low score does not however reflect a meager technical capability but rather a minimal willingness to apply the relevant procedures. Maintaining a flexible and non-demanding system for salary administration and not linking salary to achievement of individual performance indicators is one of the compromises consciously adopted by NGOs as a way to motivate highly skilled staff and compensate for a lower level of salary as compared with that which could be commanded by the same individuals in a for-profit organization. Obviously freedom from close supervision and flexible working conditions continue to be valued by the majority of NGO staff.

Two indicators refer to the capacity of the organization to identify and mobilize needed resources. Financial security and financial stability is considered one of the most important challenges faced by NGOs. Although the two indicators are part of two different organizational areas they refer to the same reality and the same inability of organizations to secure the needed funding. This inability is, to a certain extent as explained above., responsible for the lower scores registered within the human resource area

One low indicator refers to the capacity of an organization to involve its constituency in the design and evaluation of offered services. This low score is not an expression of missing competencies but rather signifies a lack of resources and of the generalized services provided by NGOs. This is to say that most organizations engaged in watch dog and public policy initiatives as a central organizational position lack a clearly identified target group or community which they serve.

Organizational strengths

When analyzing the organizational competencies registering the highest PIAI scores several conclusions are worth mentioning:

PIAI highest scores in 2007

PIAI competency	PIAI functional area	PIAI 2006	PIAI 2007
Legal status	Governance	3.8	3.9
Accounting	Financial resources	3.5	3.7
Sectoral expertise	Service delivery	3.3	3.6
Mission	Governance	3.1	3.5

NGO collaboration	External relations & advocacy	3.4	3.5
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The two most developed organizational competencies were “legal status” and “accounting” which however refer to nothing more than simple formal compliance with legal requirements of NGO registration and accounting procedures. However, considering the level of development of the wider Romanian NGO sector the two competencies have a low capacity to differentiate NGOs from their peers and therefore to generate sustainable competitive advantage for organizations which possess them.

Four of the five most developed organizational competencies in 2007 registered relatively modest changes during the RCSS grant funded sustainability project implementation period. The variation in the four competencies is below the overall average variation for the twenty eight competencies while only one - “mission” - registered significant changes and a variation above the average. This is to say that, the most developed competencies in 2007, following the implementation of the sustainability enhancing projects, were also the most developed in 2006 and, with the exception of one, these received little attention from NGOs during the project implementation period.

Out of the five most developed competencies in 2007, “mission” - referring to the existence of a mission statement, which is well articulated, motivational, known and internalized by stakeholders and used as a decision making tool - received special attention from NGO partners. Most organizations partnering RCSS used the grants they received to review and redesign their broader strategic choices and, in this context, also review their mission statement. To a certain extent, the “mission” dimension recorded better PIAI scores, not because it was changed or reviewed but because this was a period when organizations going through the PIAI exercise, “recalled” their mission and used this stimulus as a focus for their strategic planning activities.

Key organizational transformations

Another way to report transformations effected by targeted NGOs is to analyze the organizational competencies which demonstrated the most radical changes in their PIAI scores. The table below highlights the 28 organizational competencies listed according to the level of change in PIAI scores.

PIAI scores for organizational competencies	2006	2007	Change
Administration	2.3	2.9	0.59
Planning	2.8	3.4	0.55
Team development & conflict resolution	2.5	3.0	0.50
Staff roles	2.7	3.2	0.48
Task management	2.8	3.2	0.45
Performance management	2.3	2.8	0.44
Management of information	2.4	2.9	0.42
Impact assessment	2.5	2.9	0.41
Leadership	2.9	3.3	0.40
Program development and implementation	2.9	3.3	0.40
Board or other governing body	2.6	2.9	0.37
Mission	3.1	3.5	0.36

Budgeting	3.0	3.3	0.36
Mobilization of resources	2.4	2.7	0.36
Resource base	2.5	2.8	0.34
Community ownership	2.5	2.8	0.34
Salary administration	2.2	2.5	0.33
Public relations	3.0	3.3	0.31
Sectoral expertise	3.3	3.6	0.26
Communication	3.2	3.4	0.21
Constituency	3.1	3.3	0.20
Financial controls	2.9	3.1	0.20
Advocacy	3.0	3.2	0.19
Accounting	3.5	3.7	0.18
Audit / external financial review	3.1	3.2	0.16
Government collaborations	3.2	3.4	0.14
Legal status	3.8	3.9	0.11
NGO collaboration	3.4	3.5	0.09

Several statements are worthy of specific mention:

- The first seven competencies reporting the highest positive score changes reflect aspects related to only two organizational areas: “Operation and Management Systems” and “Human Resources”. These seven competencies also reflect the “real” strategies employed by targeted organizations to deal with extensive socio-political change and possibly higher levels of organizational insecurity occasioned by Romania’s entry into the EU.
- Four competencies which registered significant improvements are related to human resources. These are: recruitment, organization, coordination and creation of a collaborative and supportive working environment. These improvements are not surprising if we consider that 33% of the effort invested by NGOs through the RCSS supported sustainability projects supported focused on human relations aspects. The high PIAI scores reported above also reflect the relative effectiveness of strategic change activities implemented by NGOs during the sustainability projects.
- If the focus on planning - as mentioned previously since all NGOs implementing RCSS sustainability projects engaged in strategy development processes - and the focus on organization and coordination of human resources are natural and obvious priorities for organizations dealing with higher levels of organizational change, the focus on administration capacity⁴ is less so. This dimension reflects the tendency of organizations to intensify the adoption and subsequent application of their internal controls as a way to attempt to keep control of their external environment. To a certain extent the focus on intensifying the adoption and application of organizational procedures appears as a negative strategy in dealing with extensive social change as

⁴ This competency refers to the existence of extensive organizational procedures which regulates most organizational functions. More than this, the procedures are systematically followed and reviewed based on feedback from internal and external stakeholders.

this option is affecting the organizational flexibility and adaptability. However this focus served an important function in creating a sense of stability for the organizational staff and supporters.

- Of the five less improved organizational competencies, three refer to the organizational area External Relations and Advocacy. The modest progress registered within this area indicates a limited understanding of the importance of external connectivity in times of extensive and intensive change in the organizational environments in which NGOs function. The high level of effort invested in developing organizational rules and procedures - internal controls - and lesser effort invested in cultivating external relations - expanding control and influence over the external environment - in reality reflects a strategic decision which might, in the medium to long term, undermine the long term sustainability of targeted organizations. These choices might intensify structural inertia and might weaken organizational adaptability.

5. The 2% Campaign: Linking NGOs with citizens; when small contributions lead to great support

Accession of Romania to European Union (EU) raised many hopes and positive expectations but also numerous fears regarding the continued effectiveness and sustainability of civil society organizations. EU accession was expected to create a major shift in the funding environment for NGOs. Anticipating significant and extensive EU funding opportunities, most US funding organizations reduced their financial contribution or decided to close completely their operations in Romania. Similar strategies were followed also by other EU based private funding organizations leaving the Romanian non-profit sector in almost total dependence on public funding - be it European or national.

Understanding the risks of such a situation, especially for organizations involved in watch-dog and public policy initiatives, RCSS intensified assistance efforts through which to help NGOs create more supportive socio-political and economic environments in which to continue the activities they had been carrying out to date. Consequently in 2006 World Learning decided to support a major national campaign aiming to mobilize citizens to support the non-profit organizations. The initiative focused on making use the opportunities, stipulated in the Fiscal Code, which allowed citizens to redirect 2% of their tax liability to central government as a donation to CSOs of their choice. Implementing organization: The Association for Community Relations (ARC) was selected as the NGO entity to conduct this awareness and informational campaign. The grant total for this project amounted to 150,000USD - 100,000 USD in 2006 and 50,000 in 2007, provided through RCSS.

In 2005, at the beginning of the RCSS program, the 1%⁵ mechanism, as any new fiscal tool, was underused by citizens who were not familiar with it while NGOs did not had the necessary capacities to either promote it as a means for Romanians to support their favourite NGO nor access the funds through the channels available for this purpose. The results for that year, reported by the Ministry of Finance, indicated that only €1,130,000 were redirected to NGOs by 138,000 individual taxpayers which number constituted approximately only 2% of all individual tax payers. The campaign supported by RCSS was directly implemented by the Association for Community Relations (ARC) which also coordinated the implementation efforts of a larger group of secondarily functioning partner organizations. The campaign focussed on three target groups comprising citizens – so as to increase citizens’ knowledge about the 2% provision; NGOs - to develop their capacities to set-up and run 2% campaigns, and large for-profit companies so as to predispose and ideally transform the for-profit business sector into a strategic partner acting to disseminate the 2% campaign message to their employees.

The fact that RCSS was the only donor supporting a national 2% campaign the impact in terms of increased understanding of the 2% Law and the volume of contributions went beyond all expectations. In 2005, the number of citizens using the 2% provision increased from 145,084 to 568,735, while the overall amount directed to NGOs increased from €1,224,000 in 2005 to €5,294,603 in 2006. A follow-up

⁵ Due to changes within fiscal policy, in 2006 the 1% provision was transformed into the 2% provision.

campaign reporting results for 2007 saw both the number of participating taxpayers and the value of their tax contributions more than doubling in comparison with the 2006 tax year.

	2005	2006		2007 ⁶	
			% increase compared with 2005		% increase compared with 2005
Number of citizens using the 2% tax provision	145,084	568,735	392	1,137,470	784
Amount directed to NGOs (€)	122,4000	5,294,603	433	10,589,206	865

It is also worth mentioning that the non-financial benefits were equally, or even more, important than the financial ones. As a result of the campaigns the public image and visibility of the NGO sector was enhanced, public trust in non-profit organizations improved, working relations between for-profit and non-profit organizations expanded and, finally, an increased sense of legitimacy and public recognition of the positive impact brought about by the non profit sector was established.

RCSS program achievements; Satisfaction of RCSS PMP Objectives

Sub-Intermediate Result 2.3.2.1

Improved organizational and financial sustainability of public policy, watchdog NGOs and ISOs

Sub-IR 2.3.2.1

Score from the NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia, USAID’s annual monitoring of changes in CSOs.

Baseline: 3.6

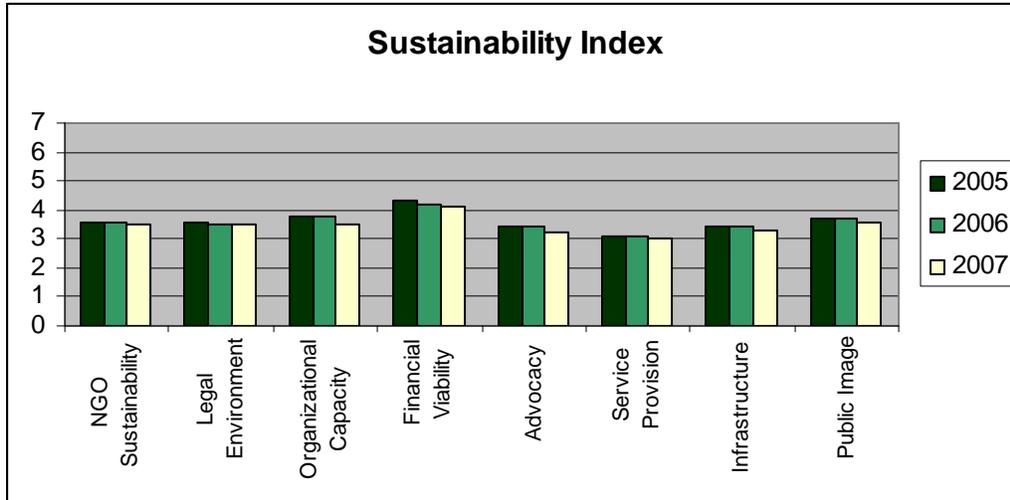
LOP target: 3.5

Achieved: 3.5

Romania’s Score on Sustainability Index

NB: The Sustainability Index scoring scale is counter-intuitive in that it considers “7” as a low score to “1” as high; the lower the figure, therefore, the “better” the situation or attribute.

⁶ Estimates based on a national survey coordinated by ARC.

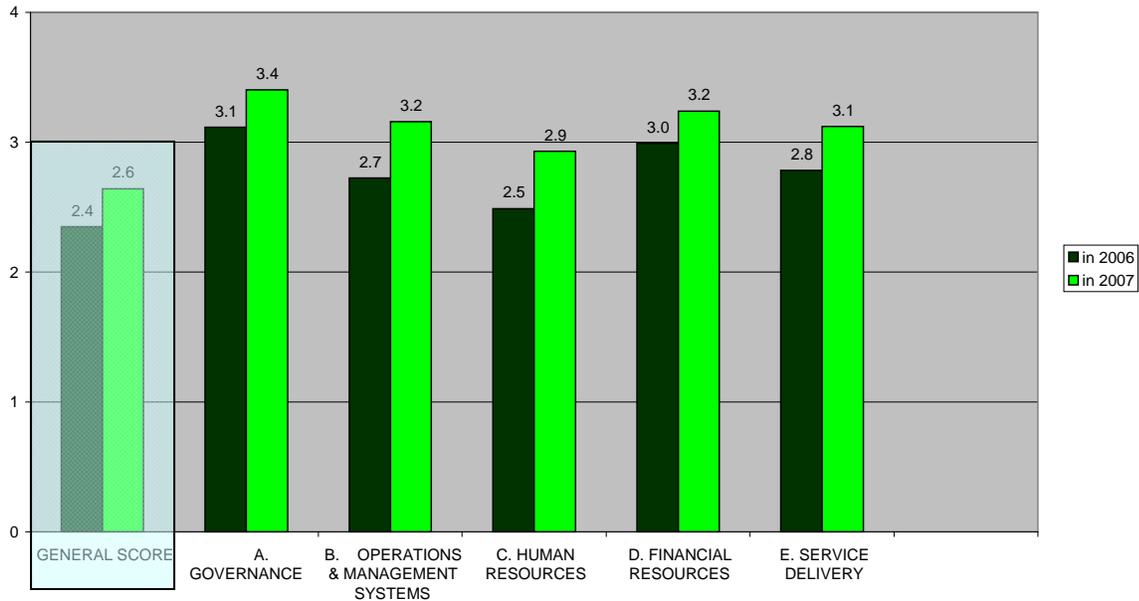


Dimension	SUSTAINABILITY INDEX SCORE		
	2005	2006	2007
NGO Sustainability	3.6	3.6	3.5
Legal Environment	3.6	3.5	3.5
Organizational Capacity	3.8	3.8	3.5
Financial Viability	4.3	4.2	4.1
Advocacy	3.4	3.4	3.2
Service Provision	3.1	3.1	3.0
Infrastructure	3.4	3.4	3.3
Public Image	3.7	3.7	3.6

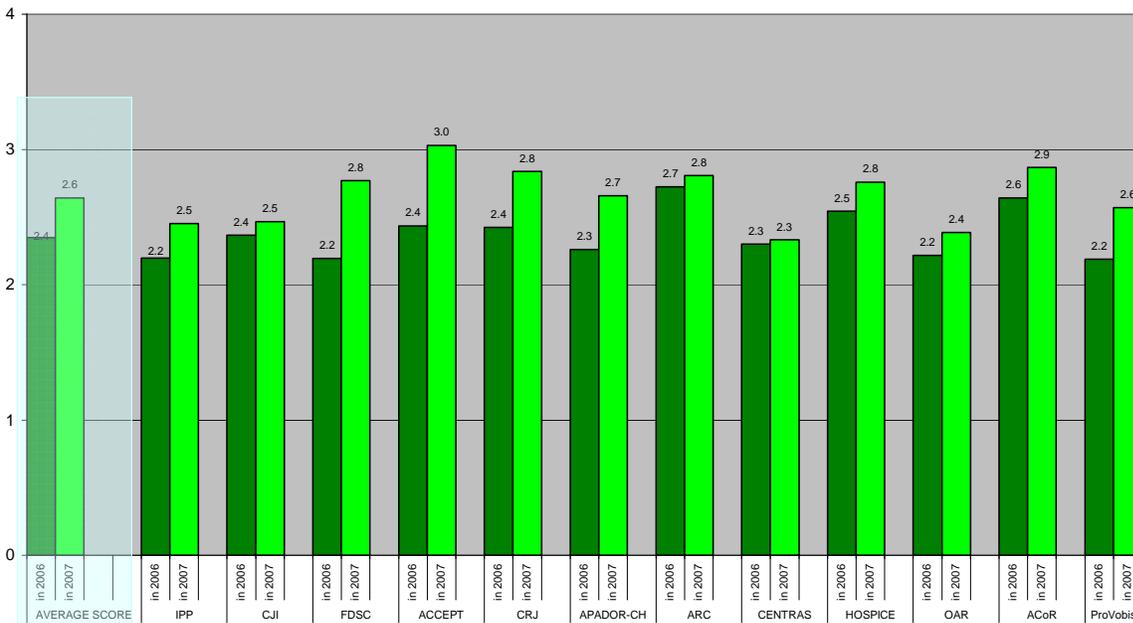
Sub-IR 2.3.2.1 - Improvements in ratings on PIAI (for 5 dimensions)

Baseline: 2.4
 LoP target: increase 0.2
 Achieved: 2.6

PIAI AVERAGE SCORES - ON DIMENSIONS



PIAI General Scores (comparative 2006 vs. 2007)



The analysis is based on 9 organizations that were assessed in 2006 through PIAI, implemented a sustainability enhancement grant funded project, were assessed again in 2007 through PIAI. The NGOs were the Institute for Public Policies, Center for Independent Journalism, Civil Society development Foundation, ACCEPT, Center for Legal Resources, Association for Community Relations, CENTRAS, Romanian Communes Association, Pro-Vobis.

Sub-IR 2.3.2.1 - Number of strategic plans developed or reviewed by target NGO

Baseline: 0
LOP target: 33
Achieved: 33

RCSS supported 26 NGOs nominated by USAID in each conducting an organizational review and evaluation using the PIAI which led to developing a process for strategic planning. The sustainability RFA was another important approach through which to support the 26 short listed organizations in articulating their strategic plans. The application template for the sustainability RFA was designed in the form of a strategic plan highlighting the importance of an assessment of each NGO's current situation, an assessment of organizational challenges and opportunities, a definition of organizational strategic objectives and a definition of operational plans and organizational performance indicators. The 26 proposals submitted for the sustainability RFA were thus written expressions of organizational strategies. During the second year of the RCSS program implementation, 7 organizations funded under the sustainability component (ARC, MMA, CJI, FDSC, APD, IPP, CENTRAS) implemented activities which further reviewed their organizational strategic plans with the results of these reviews acting as templates for a subsequent determination of further action.

Sub-IR 2.3.2.1 - Number of business plans developed or revised by target NGO

Baseline: 0
LOP target: 20
Achieved: 10

Building financial stability and security was one of the main topics addressed through the feedback workshop which followed the first PIAI and RFA process. As a result of these interventions 15 organizations which submitted proposals highlighting financial sustainability goals in which they defined organizational objectives and explored strategies and for financial security. It is important to note that not all financial strategies proposed were coherent and clear even though the organizations submitting them were considered to be advanced and experienced in implementing USAID funded projects. Through the sustainability grants, associated training and technical assistance provided by RCSS, 10 organizations - CSDF, ARC, SAR, CENTRAS, CRJ, APD, IPP, MMA, ACCEPT, Hospice of Hope - revised their business plans.

Sub-IR 2.3.2.1 - Number of target NGOs launching local constituency building activities

Baseline: 0
LOP target: 15
Achieved: 9

RCSS supported partner NGOs in their attempts at starting to build constituency support for their missions and action agendas through:

- o PIAI process: the strategic planning process, resulting from each partner NGO's participation in the institutional analysis of current status through the first PIAI event, had as an objective the provision of assistance to 26 targeted NGOs to help them build a shared understanding of organizational priorities among their stakeholders these being primarily staff, members, board members and volunteers.
- o Grants: constituency building activities were supported by sustainability, advocacy and partnership grants. Since most of the funded organizations started their project implementation in July 2006 or later, it was too early, by the end of the RCSS project, to state that the constituency building activities were finalized by all organizations. In most cases activities were launched in September 2006 and will continue beyond December 2007. Sustainability grantees undertook the following constituency building activities:

- **APD** - improved membership of the 31 APD Clubs, better-informed members and dynamic APD Clubs;
- **MMA** - increased volunteer contributions to the functioning of the organization; number of new partners attracted in MMA projects;
- **SAR** - strengthened links with members of SAR through enlarging its membership base, creating a better dissemination of achievements and generating a higher involvement of the membership in SAR activities;
- **ARC** - improved the long term organizational outreach capacity in relation to key stakeholders by developing a permanent presence in the capital, elaborating a coherent outreach plan and developing a consultative and support structure “Friends of ARC”;
- **ProVobis** - improved functioning and performance of the Board of Directors and revised Statutes related to changes of structure, strategy, approach and environment of Pro Vobis;
- **ACCEPT** - increased number of volunteers involved in activities other than outreach;
- **ACoR** – created twenty new branches; developed a Professional Body of Secretaries; developed three functional Policy Commissions;
- **Alternative Sociale** - ASA and the regional Coalition increased organizational capacity through building strategic partnerships among Coalition members, the public and private institutions;
- **Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Bistrita Nasaud County** - CCIA developed a strategic partnership to effectively promote and implement corporate social responsibility in the addressing of local issues and needs.

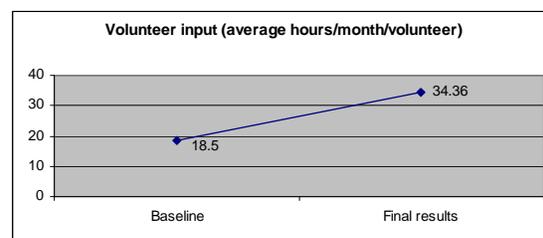
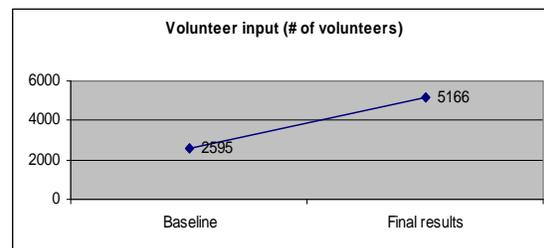
Sub-IR 2.3.2.1 - Percent increase in volunteer support of partner grantee NGOs

Baseline: 0%

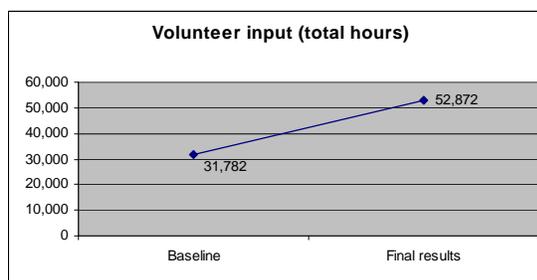
LOP target: 10%

Achieved: 83%

RCSS grantees as with most of the Romanian NGOs, do not establish nor clear ways and means through which to monitor and collect information on volunteers’ work time and contributions to the implementation of programs. It is typical that the agreement between an NGO and a volunteer is informal so that the expected number of working hours per day, week, or month to be performed by the volunteer for the benefit of the organization is not stated. To overcome the effect this feature has the accuracy and reality of measuring and reporting percentage changes in volunteer activity the report uses rough approximations of volunteers’ input. These approximations were arrived at through the application of a questionnaire distributed in February 2006. This provided RCSS with baseline information for this indicator.



Additionally, data for this indicator was collected from quarterly reports submitted by grantees and also through monitoring visits performed by RCSS staff following the receipt of grantee quarterly progress reports.



The tabulation below summarizes the data on volunteer inputs as these changed during the course of the RCSS assistance effort to Sustainability partner NGOs between the March 2006 and the end of November 2007.

Volunteer Input	Baseline	Final Level	Increase (%)
Number of volunteers (average)	2,595	5,166	99%
Hours/month/volunteer	18.5	34.36	86%
Total hours	31,782	52,872	66%
Average increase			83%

Sample: The 12 NGOs that benefit by sustainability RCCS grants
 Baseline: Data from 2005 as collected through Sustainability Questionnaire during March 2006
 Final results: Data collected from grantee quarterly reports and aggregated through end of November 2007

Sub-IR 2.3.2.1 - Number of NGOs launching new fund raising activities

Baseline: 0
 LOP target: 10
 Achieved: 10

Innovative and hitherto unused fundraising activities were included by NGOs in the newly created and revised business plans proposed by RCSS grantees. Strategies were varied and included:

- development of mission related commercial services. This was the case of IPP (social survey division), Social Alternatives (psychological testing services), MMA (media monitoring services), CENTRAS (sale advertising space within the Atitudini Magazine);
- introduction of cost recovery policies. This was the case of SAR (subscription for the political science journal), Pro Vobis, CSDF, ARC and CENTRAS (introduction of fees for training programs delivered gratis to date);
- Development of organizational capacities to increase the prospects for successfully applying for tenders and grants to new funding sources especially funds provided through the International Development Program of Romania and EU Structural Funds. This was the case of CENTRAS, CSDF, PDA, ARC;
- Launching of constituency building and involvement in the 2% tax donation campaigns.

The information presented above summarizes the achievements of both the RCSS Sustainability Grantees, those NGOs which were involved in the program through participation in the trainings and technical assistance provision and also the data presented indicates how RCSS met its obligations to USAID in terms of satisfying the requirements of the program Performance Monitoring Plan.

B. Advocacy

1. State of the sector – advocacy and the legal framework

1.1. USAID background

The legal framework for CSO creation, registration, and operations was generally in place at the start of the RCSS program, although there were aspects that needed attention. On the positive side, the new Fiscal Code, which came into effect in January, 2005, included several provisions aimed at strengthening CSO financial sustainability. The most important positive provision was that individual tax payers could request that up to 2% of their tax bill be allocated by the government to CSOs. Proper implementation of this provision could possibly lead to enhanced civic responsibility and philanthropic behavior among Romanian citizens, and could reduce the CSOs overwhelming dependence on foreign funding which was largely coming from the USA. Other provisions within the new Fiscal Code referred to tax deductions in the sponsorships made by the business sector to CSOs. Companies were permitted to deduct up to 0.3% of their total income, but no more than 20% of their taxes due. The “1% Law” was a key new Fiscal Code provision allowing individual tax payers to request that up to 1% of their paid taxes be allocated by the Government to CSOs. In December, 2004, this provision was amended and the limit raised to 2%.

Although not always successful, the increased number of advocacy initiatives demonstrated CSOs’ growing willingness to mobilize and unify on issues of key interest. These efforts increased during 2004 as CSOs took advantage of the opportunities provided by elections and negotiations for EU accession. Advocacy themes were diverse and included campaigns targeting anti-corruption and transparency, moves to create an ethically behaving parliament, changes to the electoral law, equal opportunity, environmental issues, the “1% Law”, and child protection and social services.

Law 52/2003 regarding transparency in the decision-making process gave CSOs the opportunity to influence governmental decisions. CSOs began to use the provisions of the Transparency Law to demand public debates on draft bills published on Ministries’ websites. However, CSOs often complained that these public debates continued to be nothing more than formal gatherings where stakeholder suggestions were listened to but rarely taken seriously. CSOs initiated several lawsuits against Local Authorities in order to enforce the Transparency Law and the Law on Free Access to Public Information (FOIA).

However, to be effective and successful in their advocacy and watchdog activities CSOs needed to enhance their capacity to plan and organize advocacy campaigns, to garner support from fellow organizations and from citizens for the issues in contention, and to identify and cultivate allies within the public institutions. Moreover, the capacity of the sector to engage in long-term advocacy work with regards to the general CSO legislative framework was, and remains, rather low. Organizations must enhance their ability to document how legislation affecting their work is implemented and proactively propose policy action based on practice in order to play the role they have ascribed themselves in the socially and politically changing national arena ahead of, and immediately post EU accession.

Communication, co-operation, and networking capacity were, and continue to remain, areas of concern for CSOs. Although information exchange between CSOs has increased during the currency of the RCSS program as a result of Internet expansion and heightened media coverage of civil society actions, the number of formal CSO coalitions remains very small. Most members of formal coalitions, such as the Alliance for European Justice in Romania and the Coalition for a Clean Parliament, are well-established organizations functioning almost exclusively in big cities, especially in Bucharest. The lack of resources and information prevent small or medium-sized organizations from forming or joining networks or coalitions at the national level. Most meetings take place in major cities, and smaller, more remote organizations cannot afford the travel costs which would allow them to participate.

1.2. Romania Civil Society Strengthening Program support and activities and background issues in the watchdog and public policy sector

- National representation

There were between 10 and 22 NGOs in Bucharest working in the policy advocacy sub-sector. Success in the public policy arena would be better achieved if the public policy NGOs, and especially coalitions had national not merely capital city area representation.

- Coalitions and networks

Public policy NGOs have a history of forming coalitions for temporary collective action on a single issue and they have a reasonably good success rate for achieving short-term goals they set. They suffer because of several constraints in developing coalitions and networks, namely a lack of time to devote to the maintenance of these coalitions once formed, mistrust between each other as to motives and covert agendas, competition and a seeming lack of understanding about the collective power that networks can wield.

The terms coalition and network can be confusing in the Romanian context. In general a coalition is considered a temporary body whose constituent members work together on an issue and have a mutual objective of making a particular change in a law or policy. These coalitions tend to be informal and therefore highly unlikely to be registered bodies. Coalitions, while networks can be either registered or unregistered. While not always the case, coalitions are usually convened for advocacy, while networks tend to bring together NGOs with common interests for mutual support, information sharing and activities less likely to be formed and to function with a specific change goal as the core of their immediate mission. A network is thus a more formal arrangement and may not address a specific issue within a defined timeframe.

- Follow through several advocacy cycle stages

Within the watchdog and public policy NGOs many coalitions have sprung up on particular issues, the most visible having been the Coalition for a Clean Parliament that exposed corruption and conflict of interest among candidates in the last election. Another noteworthy example is the Coalition for Transparency that promotes the Free Access to Public Information Law (FOIA) through the courts. A third example is of the initiatives on the “1% Law” that allows employees to currently direct 2% of their tax liability to an NGO. And, finally, the pressuring of the Parliament to secure release of the former regime’s secret police intelligence files on citizens.

While public policy NGOs have been successful in forming short-term coalitions, as indicated in the examples noted above, they have not generally formed networks. Many of the service delivery NGOs, have however, been able to form rather stable networks. However within most networks advocacy has afforded a lower priority than the coordination of operations and the implementation of ongoing programs. While the public policy NGOs have been able to become active on particular issues, a major problem was and continues to be the lack of follow through on these issues. Watchdog and public policy NGOs tend to declare success, or failure, at reaching the first milestone in their campaign, that is, the upon witnessing a change in the law or policy they have defined as the core of their campaign. What, if anything happens next, comes to be of little concern NGOs.

- Promoting implementation of new legislation – monitoring
Advocacy must be seen as a continuum from the identification of the need for change, through the advocacy and change process to monitoring compliance and finally, and even more importantly, monitoring the actual impact of the change. In Romania, as in other transition countries, the law comprises two parts. The first is the law itself and then, once legislated, a set of procedures designed to implement that law. In Romania these procedures are referred to as “methodology norms” or “administrative procedures”. This means that a law can be passed relatively expeditiously, satisfying the goals of any coalition engaged in effecting such a change and leading to the conclusion that an advocacy campaign has been successful, but the establishment of “norms” can take a long time and may never actually happen if public funds are not earmarked for this purpose or the political will is absent. Often the watchdog and public policy NGOs declare success when a law is changed but then do not follow up through monitoring and advocacy for the “norms” to be put in place.

During the course of the RCSS program several NGO directors, staff and board members were asked about this weakness. In one case it was claimed that the less visible monitoring tasks were expensive. Another claimed that establishment of “norms” and monitoring compliance was the role of government, not advocacy NGOs. However, one pointed to the NGO community itself stating that: ‘monitoring works better when NGOs work as a team and we need to learn how to do that better.’ The addressing of this “weakness” among NGOs was a major feature of RCSS assistance to watchdog and public policy NGOs.

Watchdog and public policy NGOs were encouraged to make the commitment to working together for longer periods on the issues they selected and to ensure that following changes in laws and policies there was a speedy establishment of effective procedures (“norms”). Partner NGOs were encouraged to engage in monitoring compliance of the government to properly carry out procedures established to implement laws, to commit to monitoring the impact of the law on citizens and systems, and finally to comment and recommend next step changes either to the law which had been the focus of their advocacy campaign or closely related legislation.

2. The purpose of the RCSS advocacy NGO assistance project

The purpose of the RCSS program was to provide assistance to NGOs which would promote the development of active, public-policy oriented civil society and watchdog NGOs which would monitor governmental integrity, bring corruption issues into the public agenda and actively promote transparency and accountability in governance.

By encouraging citizens to demand greater transparency and accountability from Romanian state institutions and by promoting citizens’ rights and interests within the framework of the rule of law, Romanian civil society and the citizens it represents can demand and receive more representative, responsive and democratic governance. However, political patronage and a strong reliance on personal relationships to get things done has always meant that there is little propensity for collective action by civil society entities for the common good. In order for CSOs, including social service delivery organizations, to insert themselves into, and act effectively, in policy formulation and reform processes, they must strengthen their advocacy skills, build constituent acknowledgement and support and more actively promote citizens’ stated interests.

In terms of the essential elements of the RCSS program and as criteria by which to estimate its success at achieving objectives and impact, by the end of the program the following results were anticipated:

- effective representation of citizens' interests by civil society organizations in monitoring the Government of Romania and ensuring more transparency in government decision-making
- active promotion of citizens' interests by civil society and effective advocacy of their causes
- positive, tangible reform of public policy in Romania toward EU standards led by civil society
- reform of the legal framework to support on-going development of the CSO sector.

In summary, the objective of the RCSS advocacy component was to assist a wide range of CSOs to strengthen their capacities to more actively promote citizens' interests and effectively advocate their causes. The RCSS program divided its assistance activities into three separate components. The advocacy component dealt with improving advocacy and outreach for civic groups and social service providers.

The NGOs receiving RCSS assistance under the program's advocacy component included civic watchdogs, social service organizations and business associations. Strategically awarded grants supported both civic watchdogs and social service providers in carrying out advocacy and policy reform projects, promoting accountability of government, increasing cooperation between CSOs working in the sector and addressing broader civil society sector development issues. In addition to promoting the specific interests of CSOs and their constituents, provided assistance also supported appropriate modernization and reform of the legal and regulatory framework to ensure the creation and ongoing presence of a supportive environment and sustainable services for the continued development of the sector following the cessation of assistance from USAID.

Rather than try to engineer appropriate conditions for the development of stable networks among the NGOs, RCSS facilitated NGOs in organically forming stable associations from existing coalitions. RCSS promoted the concepts of the complete advocacy cycle and of follow through by providing training to NGOs to give them the skills necessary to engage in the establishment of administrative procedures required to implement laws and to monitor compliance and assess and measure the impact of changes in the law which had been effected by NGO advocacy campaigns. Grants, distributed by RCSS through a competitive process and encouraged to be joint proposals by groups of NGOs and coalitions, were designed to help NGO coalitions follow through on current different issues, be they former and existing issues or new ones.

Networks, as opposed to coalitions – see above p.32 for a country contextualized explanation of the differences between network and coalition - working in community development, on women's issues and minority concerns also identified issues where they sought to bring about change. However, as service delivery organizations or sectoral networks they did not have experience in advocacy. Unlike public policy organizations, they did not have staff lawyers or access to the press and other forms of media in the same way and to the degree which the more practiced policy change and watchdog entities based in Bucharest did.

These sectoral, or thematic, networks also qualified for RCSS advocacy grants on a limited basis. They also attended joint training activities. Through RCSS technical assistance and training events increased contact between watchdog and public policy organizations gave each access to direct interactive exposure to common issues of accountability, transparency, rights and public policy. These exchanges fostered linkages between "watchdog" organizations mainly based in Bucharest and provincial NGOs. The mixing of experienced advocacy and watchdog entities and more service oriented organizations in coalitions, where each had something to offer, be it a constituency or a particular technical perspective from various sectoral networks, for example, child protection, community development, environment and such like strengthened each collective entity be it a coalition or network. This cross-fertilization of ideas and experiences not only brought new skills and perspectives into advocacy, but also provided organizations

with learning opportunities the lessons of which they could apply to advocacy campaigns and subsequent follow-up on monitoring and impact evaluation of the changes they effected.

Grants were not given simply to support the traditional needs of short-term coalition advocacy activities, such as production of materials and media products, holding public debates, conducting polls, and such like. Proposals had to include plans for follow through including such activities as advocating and monitoring the establishment of “norms” and the ways and means of analyzing their effectiveness, monitoring compliance of government agencies with the law or policy and for measuring impact of both the changed law and the consequent needs for additional or related advocacy which the implementation of the changed law occasioned.

RCSS determined that the use of a redesigned Advocacy Index, based loosely on the PIAI which World Learning created and pioneered the use of in a number of countries to measure change facilitated by its assistance efforts, was an appropriate in the case of the program’s work with advocacy and public policy NGOs. The application of the Advocacy Index was fully inclusive participatory exercise undertaken with the NGOs which allowed them fully be involved in providing input into the rating of their efforts regarding the change they were bringing about. The application of the Advocacy Index exercise was repeated at the end of the project to determine whether partner NGOs perceived any improvement. RCSS also provided training, technical assistance and mentoring in advocacy campaigns and follow-through techniques. In addition, the RCSS project facilitated the creation of an environment allowing the experiences of local NGOs to be shared among their sister organizations.

The following five critical issues defining the development needs of advocacy organizations were identified both by USAID and World Learning’s initial analysis were taken into account in the formulation of the preliminary RCSS program design :

- to improve the national representation of advocacy coalitions
- to consolidate existing coalitions and networks
- Issue diversification – CSOs and networks in other sub-sector such social services should conduct policy change and advocacy work
- Follow-through to practice a complete advocacy cycle ending in a monitoring of the impacts of the change effected by advocacy campaigning
- Promoting implementation of new legislation based on monitoring the impacts of changes brought about by legislative and policy change.

Mechanisms for and results of expanding the advocacy cycle

Advocacy Cycle Step	Mechanisms used by WL RCSS	Expected Results
Identification of needs	Grants for researching current and new issues.	NGOs will identify issues on which work need to be completed (expand the cycle)
Measure impact of policies and policy changes on citizens and determine next step changes	Training, technical assistance and mentoring.	Advocacy, irrespective of the issue, will be related directly to citizens concerns. NGOs should measure the results of positive change on society and citizens

Develop strategy and form coalitions	Territorially focused grant approach ensures inclusion of new NGOs into the advocacy process – outside of Bucharest	Wider coalitions ensuring national representation
Design and execute advocacy campaigns	Training and technical assistance to help NGOs research, analyze and design the complete advocacy cycle;	Advocacy looks beyond short-term success to ensure laws are implemented
Promote implementation through the development of implementing “norms”	Grants to support NGOs through the process of working together longer and on the “hard part” of advocacy	Successes in changing laws and policies are reflected in the implementation of those laws or programs
Monitor implementation by government as indicated by compliance to laws, policies, programs and “norms”	Grants to support NGOs for monitoring activities	Published monitoring results and improved implementation of new legislation

RCSS support strategy to advocacy NGOs

Considering the shortened time frame of the RCSS project, which was caused by Romania’s entry into the European Union, and the time constraints faced by partner grantee NGOs, who had other activities to accomplish under this project, as well as commitments to other donors, World Learning envisaged in its proposal that between two and three coalitions would be funded. These would follow through on former and existing advocacy initiatives being supported in the course of doing so by five or six individual NGO grants. Also supported would be NGOs, either in the configuration of new coalitions entirely or restructured and expanded existing coalitions, working on two or three completely new advocacy issues. And, finally two or three advocacy initiatives would be tackled by sectoral networks with grants being issued either using a geographical focus approach or being afforded to legally established networks, depending on the capacity of these networks to manage grants. Of these, at least 75% were expected to be able to conduct advocacy projects from defining an advocacy issue through to monitoring impact and being able to report to the public the tangible impact of their actions on citizens.

Interventions

To support the above strategy beyond simply issuing competitive grants, RCSS designed a combination of targeted in-country and regional training, networking conferences and workshops and long-term technical assistance. RCSS, in order to actualize the strategy, worked in partnership with domestic organizations to co-manage the technical assistance and grants.

3. The interventions – Grants, training & technical assistance

3.1. RFA Advocacy

Thirty four (34) proposals were received from NGOs in response to the Advocacy RFA these being reviewed and adjudicated by a Proposal Review Committee consisting of USAID and RCSS staff and members of the NGO community. Sixteen proposals, submitted by fourteen NGOs were selected. Of these:

- 8 proposals were ready to be funded following the receipt by the Committee of some clarifying answers to technical questions

- 8 proposals while addressing real and critical issues, and the applicant organisations having the capacity to implement such projects, required major design refinements in order to be effective and thus ready to be funded.

To assist NGOs in responding adequately and concretely to the Committee's questions, a proposal development session was conducted by RCSS staff. Subsequently, resubmissions were received and reviewed from all sixteen proposals with ten grants being awarded as a result of the Committee's deliberations. These are listed in the following table.

Applicant	Funding requested from RCSS (USD)	Cumulative funding request (USD)
Pro Democratia	99,420	99,420
Center for Independent Journalism	92,150	191,570
FDSC - Government funding for NGOs	44,108	235,678
Institute for Public Policy	54,371	290,049
Ruhama Foundation - Oradea	57,375	347,424
Towns Association	58,500	405,924
APADOR-CH	56,595	462,519
Hospice "Casa Sperantei" - Brasov	74,154	536,673
FDSC - Contracting of social services	89,945	626,618
Center for Legal Resources	86,914	713,532

3.2. Advocacy Capacity Assessment of local NGOs

Participatory Advocacy Self-Assessment (PAA)

This was an assessment tool developed by RCSS which used to reveal, in a systematic and objective manner, the level of development and the capacity of an NGO to relate to, and function in, its external environment, specifically, to effectively advocate for causes and promote policy changes that are part of its stated institutional mission. The instrument was applied by the NGOs themselves following instructions in a User Guide developed by RCSS and available in Romanian. The methodology adopted was user friendly and clear using EXCEL forms and self-generating score sheets with all questions and instructions in Romanian. The RCSS Advocacy Advisor or the Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator introduced the PAA instrument during meetings with the advocacy coalition and networks implementing each of the RCSS grant funded projects.

The grantee partner entities involved in the Advocacy component of the RCSS program consisted of principal NGOs and a significant number of local partners which cooperated in the implementation of the projects. The Association of Cities of Romania, for example, involved three partner NGOs – which were umbrella organizations of local governments. Two projects involved loose coalitions with open memberships, an example being the Civil Society Development Foundation working with government funding and coordinating with an estimated 100 NGOs and focusing on social contracting issues. The Centre for Independent Journalism (CIJ) worked with the Convention of Media Organizations consisting of 35 NGO members, whose involvement in the project was not significant enough to allow CIJ to request them to conduct any PAA analyses. All told, 76 organizational members in 6 out of 9 coalitions and monitoring networks formed and functioning during the implementation of the RCSS advocacy grants were introduced to, and employed the RCSS PAA the assessment methodology to their advantage.

In the table on the following page details of the composition of the networks and coalitions with which RCSS worked during the implementation of the advocacy grant funded projects between 2006 and the end of 2007.

Coalition or monitoring network	Number of local* NGO members in coalition	Number of local NGOs as first time coalition members	Percentage of NGOs as first time coalition members
Pro Democracy Association	7	3	43
Institute of Public Policy	12	3	25
APADOR Helsinki Committee	30	3	10
Center for Legal Resources	3	1	33
Hospice Casa Sperantei	10	6	60
Ruhama Foundation	14	7	50
Total / average	76	23	30

* “Local” in this context means NGOs functioning outside of Bucharest and having their main constituency and main mission focus on a relatively small provincial rather than national or regional arena.

In summary the following data is presented indicating size of the coalition partner population, and hence the importance of this to the implementation of advocacy projects outside of Bucharest where the absolute majority of important and influential advocacy and watchdog NGOs are based. The details are as follows:
 Number of NGOs that received the coalition history questionnaire: 76
 Number of NGOs that responded to the coalition history questionnaire : 64 (84%)
 Number of NGOs participating in a coalition for the first time, this figure being based on the total number of NGOs that responded to coalition history questionnaire: 23 (38%)

Twenty four (24) local NGOs conducted participatory self-assessment exercises whose conclusion and analysis informed them of their advocacy and public policy capacity. RCSS introduced 45 local NGOs implementing 9 out of the 10 RCSS grant funded projects to the PAA assessment methodology which employs the same four developmental stages as the PIAI and covers four organizational capability categories which makes comparison with the broader PIAI canvas quite logical and appropriate while increasing the sensitivity of that tool to the specific evaluatory needs of the advocacy component. The four main organizational capabilities and capacities which are investigated through the PAA are as below:

- General competencies for advocacy and public policy,
- Public relations, media and external communication,
- External relations and coalition building,
- Advocacy and public policy change.

The PAA instrument was applied by the NGOs themselves through multi-stakeholder planning teams from each NGO, following methodological guidelines provided by RCSS. Through this application the instrument has been adopted as a legitimate and appropriate means of NGOs self-determining their status,

both structural and procedural, and potential capacities for conducting effective and impactful advocacy work.

PAA results do indicate that local NGOs have in the main a lower advocacy capacity than the Bucharest based NGOs which comprised the main target group for RCSS assistance. Comparison between common factor scores from the PIAI for core group of advanced advocacy NGOs receiving grants from RCSS and the PAA scores for local NGO partners working in coalition with the core grantee NGOs – which also financially supported this coalition work using RCSS grant funds- are listed below.

PIAI scores of 26 NGOs in the core group and PAA scores of 24 local NGO members in RCSS advocacy coalitions	PIAI	PAA	+/- PIAI
		3.16	2.30
Sectoral and public policy expertise & track record	3.3	2.2	-1.10
Strategy to attract support	2.6	2.2	-0.40
Media relations	2.9	2.8	-0.10
Nature of governmental relations (national & local)	3.5	2.2	-1.30
Networking and coalition-building	3.4	2.7	-0.70
Agenda setting strategy	3.1	2.1	-1.00
Influencing public policy change / enactment	3.3	1.9	-1.40
Monitoring implementation / enforcement of government-set policy	3.2	2.4	-0.80
Monitoring and evaluation of policy impact	3.1	2.2	-0.90

From this comparison it is clear that Core Group organizations are more mature, as indicated by their average score of 3.16, while local NGOs members in RCSS advocacy coalition scored less on all factors creating an average score of 2.30. The greatest differences are on the factor “Influencing public policy change/enactment” (-1.40), followed by “Nature of governmental relations – national and local” (-1.30), and “Sectoral and public policy expertise and track record” (-1.10). The least difference was on the factor “Media relations” (-0.10). See attached as Annex 2 the aggregated results by coalition of the PAA analysis of local NGOs’ advocacy capacity.

3.3 Advocacy Small Grants

Following the application of the Participatory Advocacy Assessment (PAA) to the 76 NGOs working in various coalitions formed during the implementation of projects financially supported by RCSS grants, the need to strengthen the advocacy capabilities of these organizations became clear. Therefore an Invitation for Application (IFA) for Small Advocacy Grants was issued to NGOs that self-evaluated their advocacy capacities using the PAA and submitted their results to RCSS. The IFA was instituted in order to give these NGOs the possibility to put into practice actions for improving their advocacy and public policy influencing capabilities as these were identified in the PAA self-evaluation. As there were 41 respondents to the PAA, there were potentially 41 respondents to the Invitation for Application. The maximum grant sum was set at \$5,000 with an expected cost-share, either in cash or kind or both, of at least 10% with the project implementation period set at of a maximum of 6 months.

The call for proposals was launched in January with a deadline for receipt of these in early March 2007. Since only 5 proposals were submitted during this time it was decided to extend the deadline to late March 2007 by which time an additional 9 more proposals were received. Please see table below for details.

Small Advocacy Grants Scheme – cycles and timetable

Call for proposal	Date of call	Deadline	Proposals	Grants awarded
Small grants advocacy (1) – RFA for coalition members	January 24, 2007	March 5, 2007	5	4
Small grants advocacy (2) – RFA for coalition members	March 5, 2007	March 30, 2007	9	3
Small grants advocacy(3) - open call	March 12, 2007	April 16, 2007	41	9

Grants for core Advocacy NGO coalition members: RFA 1 and 2

RCSS awarded 7 grants on the basis of a competition targeting NGO members in coalitions with the results of this illustrated in the table below:

Organization	Project Title	Project Aim	RCSS Grant USD
Federation of Tenant Associations - Timisoara	VOICE – Town’s Future Requires Ethics and Action	Civil society and citizens’ involvement in local government decision making process according to citizens’ needs.	5,000
TONAL Association	M.A.P. - Sibiu Mechanism of Participative Action	Creating a mechanism for participatory action for people with psychical disabilities and their families from Sibiu.	5,896
Voluntary Centre - Cluj-Napoca	‘Voluntary Voice at Cluj-Napoca’	Increasing the Capacity of Voluntary Centre Cluj-Napoca to actively promote the adoption and implementation by local authorities of strategies and decisions in favor of voluntarism in Cluj county.	5,000
Association of Social Workers Crisana	Consolidating the role of Association of Social Workers “Crisana” in the domain of local and county public policy	Increase the capacity of Association of Social Workers Crisana members and consolidating the association’s role in monitoring and influencing public policy in the social assistance sector in Bihor County.	5,000
PEOPLE TO PEOPLE Foundation - Oradea	Strengthening organizational capacity for representing its	Strengthen organizational capacity to represent different categories of beneficiaries before political decision makers, funders and the local community	5,000

	beneficiaries		
Association for Community Development PANAGHIA - Dolj	Transparency and democracy in rural areas	Consolidating the dialog between local public administration and citizens from villages belonging to Calopar commune, by creating 3 civic consultative committees	5,328
Pro Democratia Association - Focsani	Strengthening APD Focsani organizationally for effective action in rural areas	Development of operational capacity of ProDemocracy Association – Focsani to work in rural areas in Vrancea county by promoting citizens participation to the process of decision making.	4,430
			35,654

Of the seven projects summarized above, four were financed under the first IFA being of good quality and demonstrating that local – not based in the capital city area but rather in the provincial and rural County areas - advocacy and watchdog actions are possible. Three projects funded under the extended deadline required improvements.

The small number of applications received can be explained by the following:

- Most of the provincial NGOs were not, at that time, able to engage in advocacy and watchdog activities without the support of a stronger organization this being one usually based in Bucharest and having an established profile and track record of implementing successful projects in this sphere.
- The self-assessment exercise, while considered by a majority of NGOs as interesting and useful with 54% of the NGOs in networks and coalitions submitting final results, was, without additional training and consultations unable to generate project proposals rather it fostered and facilitated an intention and ideas for such future action since only 34% of NGOs self-administering the PAA actually submitted proposals in response to the IFA.
- The capacity building activities of small and local NGOs could have been better incorporated and integrated into projects led by major organizations funded by RCSS and engaged in advocacy watchdog work at the national level. The reality was that monitoring activities were designed by the national organizations giving the local NGO a role mostly in applying and implementing locally the methodology already designed at the national level and simply handed down for action at the local level. This cannot be considered altogether unique nor patronizing since in fact it is a traditional approach and, factually borne out to be a pragmatic approach since the PAA demonstrated a real lack of capabilities and capacities for advocacy work by local NGOs.

RFA small grants – open call

The following organizations were awarded grants under an open RFA designed to attract attention and provide support to local NGOs participating in project implementation headed by core advocacy grantees in provincial and rural areas. The tables below indicate, in the first instance, the coalition members and their core grantee partners with which they were involved during the RCSS program, and secondly, the project goals and the value of the award made by RCSS in each case.

Organization	Member of coalition or partnering with
Pro Democratia Association (PDA) – Braila Club	PDA – network of 7 PDA clubs working on local government integrity in 7 cities
Association of Environment Experts	
Public Policy Institute (IPP)	
National Association for Autistic Children and Adults - Craiova	
Humanitarian Association „Impreuna 2002” Chiajna, Ilfov	Local NGO partner of Motivation Foundation – partnership project – advocacy for organizations of the disabled
Pro Democracy Association - Craiova branch	PDA – network of 7 PDA clubs working on local government integrity in 7 cities
Parents Association of Children Deaf and Blind – UNICUL SENS	Save the Children partner in the disability project on monitoring access to education of children with special needs
C.R.O.N.O. - Craiova	APADOR CH – Coalition on Decision Making

Organization	Project Aim	RCSS Grant USD
Pro Democratia Association – Braila	Lobbying the Local Council to adopt a transparent mechanism for NGO funding	3,957
Association of Environment Experts	Keeping the local authorities in Mehedinti, Hunedoara and Caras-Severin Counties accountable for ensuring nature protection – the last virgin forest in Central and Eastern Europe	7,000
Public Policy Institute (IPP)	Ensuring citizens access to public interest information – promoting a better regulation to distinguish between private data and public interest information	4,500
National Association for Autistic Children and Adults - Craiova	Keeping county government accountable for ensuring access to services by autistic children in Dolj county	4,318

Humanitarian Association „Impreuna 2002” Chiajna, Ilfov	Increase capacity of self-representation of physically disabled in 5 communes in Ilfov county.	5,000
Pro Democracy Association - Craiova branch	Monitor transparency of decision-making in 50 communes – rural communities in Dolj county.	5,000
Parents Association of Children Deaf and Blind – UNICUL SENS	Increased awareness among local governments of the needs and rights of deaf and blind children.	4,960
C.R.O.N.O. - Craiova	Building partnerships between civil society and local governments in Dolj county	5,925
Total funds disbursed in support of projects		40,660

3.4. Training workshops

RCSS organized, facilitated and funded trainings and workshops on informational topics and skills which grant funded NGOs and their coalition and network partners determined to be important to the successful implementation of their RCSS funded projects in particular, or in a more general manner, helpful to enhancing their capabilities and capacities for functioning successfully in the EU environment.

The following summaries relate to the compendium of trainings and workshops which were conducted during the term of the RCSS project. Some of these events and interventions were led by US based subject experts selected and provided by an implementing partner Management Systems International (MSI) following extensive consultations with RCSS regarding the topics considered relevant to the Romanian NGOs and the optimum manner of presentation. All of the interventions were conducted by MSI staff or contractors working in close partnership with Romanian experts both structuring and implementing each event following close consultation with RCSS technical managers to ensure that to the greatest possible degree NGO needs and expectations were satisfied and the lessons learned and information acquired were translated into better implemented and more impactful projects.

To a similar degree the role of the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law and its local implementing partner FDSC, in providing valuable inputs specifically detailing the legal environment and the changes through which this was progressing, was important. The interventions helped NGOs become more effective as constituency representatives and implementors of impactful projects as their understanding of existing laws was broadened and deepened while their appreciation of the processes through which legislative change takes place in Romania was heightened enabling more incisive and effective lobbying and advocacy campaigns to be defined and actualized.

3.4.1. Problem Solving Workshop, Bucharest, April, 2006

The Workshop achieved the following:

- To increase participants’ knowledge and skills in designing and implementing problem solving process steps to improve the quality of their proposals:

- problem analysis and definition – describing the existing situation
- elaboration of goals and objectives – describing the desired situation
- developing solutions to solve problems and achieve objectives through force field analysis and stakeholders analysis
- To facilitate the exchange of ideas in order that participants could support each other to improve their RCSS Advocacy Program project implementation.

Romanian trainers from the Foundation Partners for Local Development (FDLP) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) developed and utilized handouts covering the main concepts presented during the workshop. As an in-kind contribution the FPDL Consultant provided each participant with a handbook titled “What is Participatory Planning” which described the main concepts covered in the workshop in a simple and attractive way. The workshop design was based on a practical, interactive approach to learning and required the participants to apply the problem-solving concepts learned to their specific project proposals. Participants went through the problem solving main steps starting with problem analysis and identification through to strategy elaboration based on stakeholder and force field analysis results. In this way participants improved the logic of their project proposals and, at the same time, learned about each other’s projects and offered support to each other for the improvement of their projects.

3.4.2. Advocacy Workshop: Concepts And Practices Training Sinaia, May, 2006

Workshop objectives attained were to:

- Connect participant experiences to a conceptual advocacy framework that fits their own work situations in Romania.
- Develop advocacy strategy plans utilizing advocacy strategic analysis tools
- Apply commonly used advocacy strategies and skills including constituency building, coalition building, and media advocacy to actual advocacy campaigns
- Strengthen each NGOs community of advocacy practitioners by building personal relationships between the workshop participants and helping each learn from each other’s experience.

An advocacy consultant with Management Systems International (MSI), and a local consultant from FPDL the workshop during which a training manual titled “Advocacy Concepts and Practices Handbook- A practical Guide to advocacy Groups” was presented which had been developed based on the experience of the “People Advocacy” organization. The Romanian facilitator prepared additional handouts and visual aids before and during the workshop through which to present key concepts and to facilitate the learning transfer. The workshop design, based on participants’ needs assessment included four components:

- Advocacy Conceptual Framework – through which were introduced key advocacy concepts with these being discussed to determine how they relate to the Romanian context.
- Advocacy Strategy Planning - to teach advocacy strategic analysis tools including ACT-ON, to work with criteria for selecting advocacy issues, triangular analysis, stakeholders analysis, setting advocacy objectives, selecting appropriate advocacy strategy and assessment of advocacy leadership team.
- Exploring common used strategies - review of core strategies on constituency and coalition building, as well as media advocacy and lobbying
- Application of learning to actual advocacy campaigns – working in teams on how best to apply the learnings gleaned from the training advocacy campaigns the practitioners were planning.

3.4.3. Accountability and Monitoring Public Institutions, Bucharest, June 2006

Objectives achieved were to:

- Provide practical skills and capacity for conducting monitoring and oversight of public institutions with the objective of keeping government accountable to citizens
- Share models from other countries on how citizen watchdog organizations operate and achieve their objectives
- Support development of detailed strategies and work plans for each participant organization

A trainer from Management Systems International (MSI), and a local expert from the Romanian Training Institute conducted the workshop. The MSI consultant presented key concepts and handouts based on MSI's experience while the Romanian facilitator prepared visual aids germane to Romanian legislation for watchdog activities and present key local concepts to enhance the learning experience.

3.4.4. NGOs Participation in the Public Budget Process - Concepts and Tools

NGOs can be more effective if they understand the formulation of national and local budgets specifically how these are formulated, adopted and implemented. Combining an in-depth knowledge of a policy issue with a solid knowledge of budgets has proven to be an outstanding method of influencing policy decisions.

The workshop satisfied its aims which were:

- to improve NGOs' understanding of ways in which costs and revenues have an impact on the adoption and implementation of public policies.
- to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to start engaging effectively in budget debates through assembling the available information, analyzing it and then integrating the analysis into policy and advocacy work.
- To provide participants with approaches and tools to deal successfully with issues related to public funding and public spending.

Participants were introduced to budget basics - such as budget processes and systems, elements of a sound budget, stages of the budget cycle, transparency of public budgets and public participation in budget debates, opportunities for NGO engagement in applied budget work. The training was led by a MSI consultant and a Romanian trainer from the Advocacy Academy in Timisoara which is an organization specializing in advocacy training with experience in advocating for improved effectiveness of the local government budget in Timisoara. The State Secretary in the General Secretariat of the Government, in charge with the implementation of policy-making, coordination and planning system at the level of central administration in Romania; a staffer from the US Treasury Office for Technical Assistance, Intermittent Missions Coordinator and a member of the Group of Applied Economics (GEA), Romania and the Welsh Institute for Research in Economics and Development (WIRED) also presented sessions during this training.

The management of public spending and the budgetary process in the context of the new policy-making framework promoted by the government, budget revenues and budget transparency guidelines of the IMF Code of Good Practices in Fiscal Transparency and of the International Budget Project of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in the US and presented results of an international assessment for Romania and, finally macro-economic aspects related to public finances were topics presented by the speakers.

3.4.5. Advocacy & Partnership Training for the NGOs of the disabled

Sinaia May, 2006.

The workshop improved participating organizations' capacity for effective involvement in public policy processes, advocacy campaigns and partnerships leading to a more supportive social, economic and legal environment for people with disabilities.

The training was led by two trainers from the Partner Foundation for Local Development (FPDL), an organization specializing in local development and capacity building programs which address Romanian civil society, public authorities and local communities' needs. FPDL was selected to run the workshop since it had previously co-presented with MSI delivering training for RCSS on the same topics. This was the first solo action of Romanian ISO based trainers on these topics while building on the experience gained from working with an internationally renowned consulting company. This was an important step taken by RCSS in developing the capabilities of indigenous ISOs to practice according to international standards and linking North American practice with the needs to be satisfied within the EU.

The twenty-one (21) participants for this workshop were selected from among the RCSS disability grantees and also from NGOs, and their partners, working in the disability arena which had applied for Small Advocacy Grants.

The workshop design was based on a practical, interactive approach to learning, by making participants apply sectoral concepts to their specific organizational and project contexts and needs. Short presentations of the main concepts and tools alternated with group work on the specific projects. The workshop was considered to be very successful by the participants according to their post-training questionnaire responses.

4. Promoting legal reform and social enterprise development

NGOs and the EU Structural Funds

The civil society sector in Romania faced a major shift in the policy and legal environment with accession to the EU. While most changes could be foreseen and addressed pro-actively, CSOs seemed not to be making a concerted and protracted effort to fully understand the changes and their implications. Among the lessons learned from the experience of CEE countries which had recently entered the EU, the first vital concern was that CSOs need to be prepared for the changes before their effects can be felt, and even more importantly, that they need to be able to influence these transition changes and not simply allow governmental authorities to make decisions without considering civil society considerations. During the RCSS program the changes which were already happening and which were expected to commence having an impact during the program's implementation were:

- Changes in public policy priorities affecting CSOs having an almost exclusive focus on areas related to the Structural and Cohesion Funds as reflected in the proposed Operational Programs;
- Change in the main CSO financing mechanisms from Pre-Accession Funds to Structural Funds under which CSOs are not considered separately from other beneficiaries;
- Accelerated withdrawal of US, bilateral and other international donor funding;
- Changes in VAT legislation that abolished then available tax exemptions for CSOs.

The above were expected to have some negative effects on the development of the sector since, as for example, lack of funds for human rights advocacy, or post-financing of projects. However, the changes also represented unprecedented opportunities, which if perceived and addressed appropriately, may lead to a major qualitative change in the professional standing, strength and influence of CSOs in Romania.

Events and Actions

World Learning, European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL) and its partner CSDF engaged in various activities related to NGOs and the EU Structural Funds. These can be summarized as:

- preparation of recommendations to two Sectoral Operational Programs (SOP) to enhance cooperation with NGOs;
- a series of meetings with government officials related to the Structural Funds (SF) process;
- a workshop on the involvement of NGOs in the SF process with special emphasis on monitoring;
- a one-day conference to address the role of NGOs in the social economy;
- a draft report on the legal-fiscal issues related to NGOs and social economy. A background document on this subject was prepared by the RCSS partner ECNL and its Romanian counterpart, CSDF, being based on notes and guidance provided by RCSS staff.

Public debate: “Civil society and EU Structural Funds in Romania”

March 2006

This public debate was initiated by a group of seven (7) Romanian organizations⁷ and was supported technically and financially by RCSS, its partner; the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI). The debate initiated a discussion on the European Union programs to be funded, starting in 2007, from the EU Structural Funds and the mechanisms that would enable active involvement of NGOs in the planning, implementing and monitoring of the use of these Structural Funds destined for disbursement in Romania.

The event attracted over 34 participants these being representatives of Romanian NGOs, various Ministries involved in planning and managing programs financed from the European funds and representatives from NGOs in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic with expertise in managing the process of planning for the use of Structural Funds.

Proposals to the Operational Programs to be funded from the Structural Funds

April 2006

The NGO group on Structural Funds with support from RCSS and CSDF proposed a set of recommendations to the Sectoral Operational Programs on Human Resources Development (HRD) and on Increasing Administrative Capacity (IAC) to enhance the quality and potential of the entities for cooperation with NGOs. The group made recommendations related to the various sub-topics of each Sectoral Operations Program (SOP), proposed new subtopics, pointed out inconsistencies and proposed new objectives to specifically strengthen civil society and the role of NGOs in the SOP. As for the SOP on increasing administrative capacity, the group acknowledged that the document enlists important principles, such as good governance and the dialogue with social partners, which underscore the significance of cooperation with civil society for a well functioning public administration. At the same time the group pointed out that these principles did not translate into concrete objectives and activities in the document. To remedy this and other inconsistencies and contribute to a more effective strategy, the group proposed several recommendations to be included in the SOP.

Report on the legal framework for Social Economy in Romania

CSDF experts prepared the initial draft of a paper to report for the first time in a comprehensive way on the legal framework for social economy organizations in Romania. While it was not in the scope of the RCSS project to undertake legal reform initiatives broader than those affecting NGOs, it was considered indispensable to tackle the changes which were beginning to have effect in Romania during the currency of the RCSS program to help NGOs familiarize themselves with issues that may affect several actors,

⁷ The NGOs involved were: Gentia de Monitorizare a Presei "Academia Catavencu", Asociatia Pro Democratia, Centrul de Asistenta pentru Organizatii Neguvernamentale - CENTRAS, Centrul pentru Jurnalism Independent, Centrul de Resurse pentru Participare Publica, Fundatia pentru Dezvoltarea Societatii Civile, Organizatia Salvati Copiii

including but also in addition to the NGOs, and thus, need to be considered by the government in the legal reform affecting NGOs as well. The report satisfied three main objectives:

- to familiarize Romanian NGOs and other stakeholders with the concept of social economy
- to identify key legal issues involved - including financing - that need resolution in order for the more effective functioning of social economy
- to call the attention of the government to outstanding legal and fiscal issues and encourage prompt reform.

Meetings related to the Structural Funds process

RCSS and CSDF representatives helped convene, physically attended and actively participated in monthly meetings among the members of the NGO group on structural funds. A number of meetings were also held with Management Authorities. Three meetings were organized between the NGO group on structural funds and the Ministry of Interior and Administration (MIA) regarding the above described NGO proposals to the Operational Program on Increasing Administrative Capacity, which were submitted to the MIA. As follow up to the round table organized by NGOs in March, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) invited NGOs and all the Management Authorities of the structural funds to discuss and find solutions for increasing NGO involvement in the programming phase of the structural funds, including conditions regarding co-financing and advance payment.

The NGO group on structural funds worked closely with the Ministry of Labor, Social Services and Family (MLSSF) in the elaboration of the Human Resources Development SOP. The Ministry organized three rounds of discussions to which the NGO group submitted over 20 proposals with most being included in the final version of the operational program. For each meeting with the MLSSF an additional meeting was organized with NGOs from the social field. Throughout the process, CSDF disseminated information on Structural Funds to the NGOs from which it received and collected proposals and concrete amendments. The NGO group on structural funds was invited to participate in the Prime Minister's working group on the absorption capacity of Structural Funds following which it prepared a set of proposals to be included in the action plan developed by the working group.

As a result of earlier activities, March and June conferences funded by RCSS and implemented by ECNL and CSDF, the Managing Authority for Special Operational Program Human Resources Development (POS HRD) from the Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity made social inclusion a priority in its action agenda. This will provide direct funding - an overall budget of €400 million over the period 2007-2013 - to NGO projects on the issue of social inclusion with. The POS HRD acknowledged the characteristics of NGOs in Romania that "require specific means and tools to further support the development of this sector. The financial potential of the social partners, NGOs and social economy structures is particularly weak in Romania and, therefore, measures aiming at encouraging these entities to engage in ESF funded activities are crucial."

Two of the six areas of intervention - developing social economy and also an integrated social services network - were of interest to the NGO sector. Subsequent actions taken were:

- the development of the necessary tools and mechanisms to fully implement the concept of social economy;
- promoting employability and adaptability of low skilled people, disabled people and people at risk of social exclusion in the social economy entities;
- integrating vulnerable groups at risk of marginalization in the community through the forms of social economy;
- Raising awareness and exchange of experience in the field of social economy.

The Managing Authority for Human Resources Development Special Operational Program from the Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity became particularly interested in defining legal concepts such as social economy and social enterprise as a result of the NGO Group awareness raising and lobbying activities supported by RCSS and its international and domestic partners.

Training workshop on involvement of NGOs in the Structural Funds process
May 2006.

This was conducted by ECNL and met two main objectives:

- to share experiences of new EU member states regarding the process of Structural Funds and participation of NGOs in the process of determining priority areas and allocation of funds, with a special focus on their participation in monitoring committees
- to help formulate priorities and goals for NGO advocacy efforts since the participants represented NGOs that were already involved in advocacy initiatives, supported by RCSS, and related to this process.

A list of further important objectives and possible activities was developed, including some mechanisms of communication and networking and lobbying and advocacy.

National seminar on the role of NGOs in the Social Economy
June 2006

This National Seminar was organized by CSDF in cooperation with ECNL and with RCSS technical support. The event grew out of the need identified at the first seminar organized by CSDF and ECNL, which had been conducted in March 2006, where an appreciation was realized that strengthening the social economy in Romania, employing funding from the Sectoral Operation Programs provided to targeted NGOs, could be a main area of common interest for government and NGOs during the accession process. The social economy concept relates also to NGO service delivery functions as well as their income generation activities through economic activities.

The National Seminar met the following main objectives:

- To provide information to participants on current issues regarding social economy in Europe in general as well as the latest developments in Romania;
- To identify key issues in the legislative and policy framework in Romania, including both obstacles and opportunities for NGOs to engage in the various aspects of social economy including, for example, social services, social enterprises and economic activities;
- To share the experience of other member states and raise awareness among Romanian participants of the opportunities to improve the legislative and policy framework;
- To promote the role of NGOs in the various aspects of social economy and help build their capacity in that role;
- To identify opportunities and next steps for key actors to advance these issues.
- The conference provided the opportunity for the first time in Romania for NGOs to familiarize themselves with the concept of social economy in more depth and also to reflect on how NGOs could and should contribute to its development.

During the seminar, a CSDF expert presented the key conceptual elements of social economy and three NGOs presented their work as case studies of social economy activities realized in Romania. The ECNL representative presented the experience of NGOs in previously acceded new member states during the transition to a more or less functioning social economy and the dilemmas faced by NGOs during that transition. As a theoretical and practical summary, a German academic Seminar participant presented five theses related to the legislation on social economy and answered participant's questions.

Three workshops held were held during the seminar; one was on the legal-fiscal issues related to social economy, one on social services provision by NGOs and one on social enterprises, cooperatives and other forms of social economy actors in Romania beside the NGOs. Following the workshops and the workshop reports, a detailed summary was presented regarding the current state of the HRD SOP, priorities and measures related to social economy financed after 2007 from European Social Fund.

The event was very well attended with over 70 participants taking an active part in the seminar.

“LEADERS” Forum on Social Entrepreneurship⁸

November 2006.

The concept of social entrepreneurship is almost unknown in Romania which makes it therefore challenging for NGO leaders and entrepreneurs to imagine and understand that solving social problems can be a source of financial sustainability. Among Romanian NGOs, very few are currently financially sustainable in the long-term. The USAID NGO sustainability Index 2004 indicates that the non-profit organizations in Romania depend heavily on funding from private and donor sources, making them vulnerable to the changes in the funders’ policies and priorities. There is a clear and urgent need to develop the capacity of NGOs to generate independent streams of revenue through delivery of services. The small and medium enterprise (SME) sector is underdeveloped and barely involved in solving social issues. In 2002, less than 2% of Romanians were running their own businesses compared to 5.4% in the EU and 14.2% in the USA, according to the Romanian Agency for SMEs. The percentage is considerably lower still if we take into account businesses which were set up for a social cause.

The LEADERS Forum 2006 increased awareness among NGOs of the opportunities a social entrepreneurial activity can bring to them and to the society as a whole. The objectives satisfied during the Forum were:

- The publicization of the concept of “social entrepreneurship” to the civil society, business, government and media in Romania ;
- Presentation of concrete models of social entrepreneurial initiatives based on international and local level experiences
- The provision of an analysis of the legal and financial opportunities that currently exist in Romania for social entrepreneurs
- An analysis of the specific ways in which young persons can start a social enterprise in the fields of education, environment, social security and health.

World Learning assisted LEADERS with technical advice and sponsored the participation of 35 NGOs in the Forum. RCSS also sponsored the participation of international experts from European Center of Not-for-Profit Law and NESsT. The training evaluation report is attached Appendix 10. The final agenda and speaker's presentations have been posted on RCSS website.

Assessment on the state of NGO self-financing in Romania (NESsT and RCSS)

In partnership, during the final year of the RCSS program, the Nonprofit Enterprise and Self-sustainability Team (NESsT) and RCSS conducted an assessment of the state of NGO self-financing in Romania through examining existing practices, results achieved and the needs for development. The following actions were undertaken and completed:

- A review existing information, previous research and analysis published;
- Interviews and site visits with 10 organizations conducting self-financing activities.

⁸ “LEADERS” Romania www.leaders.ro is a non-profit organization of young students and graduates supporting the professional and personal development of young leaders.

- Questionnaires applied to, and interviews conducted with, 4-6 donors
- Questionnaires with interviews with 3-5 intermediary service organizations
- Development of 4 case studies;
- Summary report of research findings that includes recommendations for assisting the development of social enterprise by NGOs in Romania.
- Printing and distribution of the research report and case studies in both English and Romanian.

State of NGO Self-financing in Romania: Preliminary findings .

Funding strategies

According to 2002 data provided by the Ministry of Finance, the NGO sector generated total revenues of more than €400 million, representing 1.2% of the Romania economy.⁹

NESsT conducted an analysis of the funders supporting 121 NGOs that provided financial information on the "All for one and one percent for all" (unulasuta.ro) website. Of these 121 NGOs, 98 reported their funding percentage mix for the year 2006 according to the following category breakdown: grants, sponsorships (corporate), membership dues, individual donations, self-financing, and other. The result for these 98 NGOs was the following:

- Grants: 33.9%
- Corporate sponsorships: 24.6%
- Individual donations: 22.3%
- Membership dues: 5.1%
- Self-financing: 7.8%
- Other: 6.3%

Economic activities

Some studies estimate income from NGO economic activities to be 18-30%¹⁰ of total NGO income. It appears that a majority of revenue generated from economic activities comes from institutions such as Chambers of Commerce and private universities, which are registered as NGOs. As the NESsT analysis of 98 NGOs shows, it is possible that self-financing represents a much lower percentage of overall NGO income. Examples of economic activities include consultancy services, training, and the sale of products made by NGO beneficiaries. Charging fees for services is also a sensitive issue. Historically, NGOs have provided services gratis and many groups are reluctant to change this. Further, it is clear many citizens would be hesitant to pay a fee for a service hitherto receiving for free. Finally, existing fees charged for services are usually not at market value and only partially cover costs of service providing. A very limited number of NGOs participate in business activities that are truly run in a businesslike manner. In many cases, the commercial activities are closely related to the mission of the NGO and are operated entirely through the non-profit.

The assessment was published in English and Romanian and distributed to interested NGOs – it is also available in English and Romanian at www.nesst.org

Social Enterprise Competition

RCSS also supported NESsT in the implementation of a program providing organizations developing social enterprises with capacity building and financial support . The following actions were completed:

⁹ GDP data taken from <http://econstats.com/weo/C131V019.htm>.

¹⁰ See studies from WDI, Johns Hopkins, and Mott.

- Announcement, in the national media, of a Social Enterprise Competition promoting the concept of social enterprise.
- Two Social Enterprise workshops provided introductory level training on social enterprise readiness to a selected group of 50 NGOs. Each workshop:
 - introduced CSOs to the field of social enterprise, through definitions, concepts, and examples;
 - assisted CSOs assess their readiness for social enterprise in the areas of mission/values, stakeholder support, capacity, and funding;
 - identified the goals for social enterprise and potential business ideas; and introduce a methodology and series of tools for CSOs to develop pre-feasibility studies.
- Two 2-day workshops on feasibility study for eight (8) NGOs; 16 workshop participants were present at the interventions. The workshops accomplished the following:
 - equipped selected NGOs with knowledge and skills needed to conduct feasibility studies
 - ii) clarify working relations between NESsT and selected organizations for the appropriate implementation of planned activities.
- Provided one-on-one guidance and support to at least eight (8) NGOs so that they completed a pre-feasibility or full feasibility study for the formation of a social enterprise. NESsT provided 12 days of technical assistance to each selected CSO.

RCSS and NESsT promoted the competition to their networks of watchdog and public policy organizations and to intermediary support organizations and organizations working with disabled people. This competition was organized by NESsT in partnership with RCSS, LEADERS Romania (as implementing partner), and the ABN-AMRO Bank Foundation.

Fifty three (53) applications were received from potential participants of which 31 CSOs were beginners in social enterprise development, 10 already had a business plan, and 9 indicated they were currently running a social enterprise and that they needed help expanding it. The geographical distribution showed that Twenty-seven (27) organizations were from Bucharest, 16 from Ardeal and 10 from Moldova.

Two Social Enterprise workshops, focused on organizational readiness for self-financing and pre-feasibility study, were held during July 2007 to provide introductory level training on social enterprise readiness. Thirty-six (36) organizations were selected to participate in the introductory-level workshops on social enterprise, and 29 attended the workshops held in Bucharest and Brasov. The workshops included organizations dealing with:

- Providing social services to people in need (children, youths and their families);
- Providing access to culture, education and employment for people with disabilities and to support their social inclusion;
- Offering help and support for disenfranchised people through social and educational programs;
- Supporting marginalized youth to achieve their objectives and lead a life of dignity;
- Supporting marginalized Roma youth to find employment;
- Supporting the social integration of marginalized groups.

Thirty-one (31) organizations submitted social enterprise organizational readiness exercises through which they:

- Evaluated their readiness for social enterprise by assessing the implications of social enterprise on their mission and core values; by identifying the support for social enterprise from key stakeholders; by evaluating their capacity to do social enterprise; and by evaluating their financial readiness;
- Developed financial and social goals for their social enterprise;

- Brainstormed and identified potential social enterprise ideas.

Twenty-three (23) organizations submitted pre-feasibility studies for social enterprises. The main fields in which organizations are trying to establish social enterprises are: hostelling; after school services; event organizing; trainings and consultancy offered for project management for local councils and public administration; consultancy for NGOs; courses on strategic planning, management, community development; home care services; wood/wax/glass manufacturing workshops; cleaning services for institutions and private households.

A large number of organisations participated in the competition, due to the significant outreach efforts of the social enterprise competition partners (NESsT, LEADERS, ABN-AMRO, and RCSS). While the large response from organizations has been positive from the standpoint of the competition, more time was necessary to review the organizational readiness exercises and pre-feasibility studies submitted by the participants.

Following the end of the agreement period NESsT provided:

- five (5) "venture planning grants." These are grants were awarded to organizations submitting feasibility studies so they could conduct extensive business planning activities.
- one-on-one support to five (5) CSOs to equip selected NGOs with needed knowledge and skills to develop full business plans.
- financial support in the form of "venture grants" to four (4) social enterprise competition winning NGOs and one (1) runner-up NGO for start-up or expansion financing as well as on-going capacity-building through business plan implementation.

Social enterprise case studies

NESsT created four detailed case studies of civil society organizations (CSOs) with social enterprises in Romania these being modeled on business school cases. Cases were selected to represent a variety of cultural, economic and historical contexts and organizational characteristics and types of social enterprise approaches. Detailed social enterprise case analyses were prepared through self-administered questionnaires and telephone interviews. The case studies are available in English and Romanian at www.nesst.org

The cases examined social enterprises in five key areas: motivation and start-up; types and prevalence of enterprise approaches; internal and external challenges of enterprise management; effects of various legal, tax, and physical regulations and donor policies; the impact of social enterprise on financial performance, mission and organizational sustainability. The four Romania case studies were:

- 1) Motivation Romania Foundation: working to provide social support and integration services to people with disabilities. The organization manages a successful wheelchair production workshop that produces appropriate and personalized wheelchairs.
- 2) Ruhama Foundation: manages a variety of programs in the fields of community development, social services, and professional trainings. Ruhama's self-financing activities include social services (home care services to marginalized groups) and professional training in social care.
- 3) PATRIR: an institute promoting peace building and constructive conflict transformation to prevent violence in Romania and internationally. PATRIR rents out meeting space and equipment for conferences and trainings to private sector firms and civil society organizations; and collects service fees for trainings, on-line courses, and consultancies.
- 4) Bioterra Foundation: a membership organization whose mission is to promote organic agricultural and livestock production among Romanian farmers and encourage consumers to choose organic products. Bioterra sells consulting services to farmers who are using organic methods as well as those who would like to begin to farm organically; and it also sells publications, including a magazine, books and brochures about organic farming and livestock-raising.

Joint Conference on Social Enterprises in Romania
OECD LEED Program and the Ministry of Labor
June 2007

A draft concept of the event was developed by RCSS after sending its Advocacy Advisor to a USAID Conference on social enterprise co-organized with the OECD-LEED program in Zagreb, Croatia. This has been supported by the Ministry of Labour and Family. As a follow-up event an International Conference was organised by the OECD LEED Programme, the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family and the National Agency for SMEs and Co-operatives (NASMEC) in partnership with WLID/RCSS, the Civil Society Development Foundation and ECNL supported USAID. This conference was held in Bucharest during June 2007 under the title “Social enterprises in an evolving economy: From Non Profit Organizations To Social Enterprises”.

Background of the event The concept of social entrepreneurship is yet insufficiently known in Romania. In recent years, services for education, health, employment, social inclusion and long-term care have developed in Romania in response to increasing and diversified needs. Systems of accreditation do function for most of the social, health, training and education, sheltered workshops having been established to provide standards for various types of services. The non-profit sector has been, and continues to, initiate and deliver such services. Seventy-two percent (72%) of accredited providers of social and socio-medical services are private, non-profit organizations. Challenges faced by local governments, mainly responsible for funding and delivering these services and national authorities, and non-profit organizations involved in service delivery result in unmet needs of local citizens, financial challenges that require cooperation among various levels of government and with the private sector, developing an effective mix of public and private funding and delivery functions involving civil society that will ensure also quality of services and users involvement in decision-making. Increasingly, non-profit organizations in Romania including those involved in the design and delivery of social and community services have been looking at ways of ensuring their financial sustainability and providing quality employment to their users; disadvantaged groups.

Social enterprise, as defined today, includes both these new typologies of organizations which are the traditional third sector organizations re-fashioned by a new entrepreneurial dynamic and new forms of enterprises with social aims.

The objective of this seminar was to disseminate information about and discuss policies that promote new forms of social entrepreneurship in OECD member and non-member countries of Central and Eastern Europe and assess their relevance and potential for application in Romania.

One hundred and seventy five (175) participants attended of which seventy (70) were NGOs activists; all had the opportunity to:

- Consider models of social entrepreneurship across OECD countries to assess how nonprofits can pursue public benefit objectives through entrepreneurial activities.
- Review policies in various OECD countries on distribution of roles and responsibilities for social services at different levels of government and the role of the private, non-profit sector in the social services market mix
- Consider models of social entrepreneurship in work integration services of disadvantaged, disabled workers in OECD countries

- Models of social entrepreneurship action under the European Social Fund and the role of the non-profit sector in promoting Lisbon Agenda objectives

Representatives of the following groups participated in the seminar:

- national policymakers and experts working on the role of non-profits in labor and social policy in OECD countries and Romania,
- regional and local public authorities responsible social inclusion and employment service design and delivery and for the management of European Social Fund interventions from Romania,
- NGO leaders and experts and researchers in the non-profit field in OECD countries and Romania, leading non-profit practitioners working to advance social entrepreneurship at national level in OECD countries and Romania and regional levels in Romania.

Key points from the Conference presentations and debates were as reported below:

- Social enterprise (SE) is not for every NGO. Each NGO should make a strategic decision about whether to engage in SE, depending on their core activity, potential market, organizational culture and capacity. However, NGOs should be encouraged to engage in economic activities as a way to support their sustainability even if they do not choose to develop into a social enterprise.
- Internationally, there is a wide range of financing mechanisms for SE from traditional (grants and loans) to innovative ones (like “community equity”). It is important to highlight that there are different approaches as to the role of the state in financing SE. For example, in the US this is not seen as needed or desirable given that the SEs have to be self-sustaining financially; while in Europe governments often find it important to financially support their development. In Romania, as in the other new member states, market based financial mechanisms are not likely to be widely available until the SE sector strengthens and takes hold – therefore, government support should certainly be part of the financial streams (most of all, through the Structural Funds). However, it is important to avoid from the beginning some mistakes seen in the other transition countries. These may include “over-funding”, market distortion, creating unsustainable services, changing policy priorities without regard to needs etc.
- Based on the experience of other member states, SEs can be important players in the delivery of social services despite the fact that these are usually not considered as market-based services. Most of all, they are popular in the area of employment (job creation, disability employment, workforce integration); but good examples can be found in almost all fields of social service provision.

Presenters included experts from Concordia University, Montreal, Canada; the Open University, United Kingdom; Department of Work and Social Economy, Flanders Region, Belgium; an independent consultancy specializing in social enterprise, United Kingdom, DIESIS; World Bank and Gruppo Cooperativo, CGM, Italy.

RCSS covered transport and accommodation costs for 20 NGOs outside Bucharest. ECNL covered costs of the meeting rooms. The Civil Society Development Foundation (CSDF) as ECNL sub-contractor was responsible for inviting, registering NGOs, international participants and in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor with printing and PR arrangements for the conference. All presentations made at this Conference were posted at http://www.oecd.org/document/37/0,3343,en_2649_34459_38870949_1_1_1_1,00.html

Legal Guide to non-profits conducting economic activities

ECNL contracted NESsT to produce a legal guide to conducting economic activities for Romanian NGOs. NESsT provided a researcher in Bucharest to gather all the necessary information and draft the guide, while ECNL provided financial and expert support to NESsT including baseline data, comparative

materials, contacts and a review of the final guide. The completed guide describes and interprets the current situation relating to the permissibility and taxation of economic activities by NGO and gives very concrete, practical assistance to NGOs who are, or aim to be, engaging in economic activities. In addition, it also makes recommendations based on international best practices as to how the legislation could further encourage economic activities of NGOs in order to enhance their potential of fulfilling public benefit goals. Available in English and Romanian at www.nesst.org

Key recommendation

Raise or eliminate the financial threshold of conducting tax exempt mission-related economic activities which is currently set at €15,000 or 10 % of the total income of the NGO.

The analysis concludes that while this measure would not result in unfair market competition or a significant loss of tax revenue, it would provide a serious incentive for NGOs to diversify their income base by generating their own income. Since the exemption would be aimed at mission-related activities only, this would in fact increase the ability of the NGOs to fulfill their social purposes and therefore contribute to the public good. Given the ongoing review of the public benefit status, this recommendation may be reserved for the group of newly defined Public Benefit Organizations (PBOs) only.

Public Benefit Status: Promoting reform of legislation

ECNL and CSDF drafted a policy paper on the Public Benefit Status of NGOs. CSDF started consultations with NGOs regarding the Public Benefit Status with a workshop was organized during the NGO Forum in Cluj Napoca, in Central Romania, where CSDF and ECNL staff facilitated group discussion of the topic.

CSDF organized a consultation process among NGOs in Iasi, Cluj Napoca, and Bucharest to discuss the main recommendations of the policy paper. Based on the outcomes of the debates CSDF developed an initial draft of a proposed law on public benefit organizations. This draft has, to date, been only shared with a smaller circle of NGOs and experts. CSDF called upon 10 – 15 key NGO leaders, a so-called “consultative group” with whom it discussed the initial draft of the policy paper as well as the proposed initial draft of the law. During June 2007, when it proved difficult to find a good time to convene the whole group, CSDF experts met with these leaders on a one-on-one basis as well in order to ensure their input and gain their valuable insights to the issues that were raised during the process.

As a result of the consultation process, changes were made in a few key aspects of the policy paper and the proposed law. Most importantly, based on the advice of stakeholders the proposed Public Benefit Organization (PBO) Authority will not be the taxation authority but a specialized body established for this purpose (“PBO commission”). Contrary to the suggestion of the policy paper this body will be centralized but nevertheless it seems that under the current political and institutional setup in Romania this would still be the best solution. Although this is a common solution in Western Europe, there were serious concerns about the ability of the tax authorities to handle the additional task of administering the PBO status for which they do not have the capacity or expertise. The Commission – according to the current proposal – would consist of 5 government and 4 NGO representatives.

Further discussion points were raised, among others, around the following issues:

- The list of public benefit activities – should it be open or closed?
- Should international development be a public benefit activity?
- To what extent should PBOs be allowed to engage in economic activities?
- Should members of the board of a PBO be allowed to be officials of a political party?

- Should the proportion of public benefit activities/other activities/administrative expenditures be determined by law?
- Should benefits for PBOs entail tax deductions for donations by private citizens? (in theory this could be a good incentive but it may not be feasible under the flat tax regime currently in force in Romania)

VAT reform

During February 2007 the Romanian Government published, for public debate, various drafts of normative acts to regulate the possibility of refund of VAT for goods and services financed through PHARE programs. In late February 2007 CSDF submitted on behalf of Romanian NGOs a letter in order to introduce NGOs as beneficiaries in this ordinance and organize a public debate on these issues. CSDF was working as the in-country implementing partner of ECNL which was a Cooperative sub-Agreement holder for the RCSS program; hence all the activities mentioned in this section were funded and coordinated by RCSS staff as an integral part of the Romania Civil Society Strengthening Program.

A roundtable was assembled in early March 2007 with the participation of the Head of Pre-Accession National Fund of the Ministry of Public Finance and over 30 NGO representatives. For this occasion, CSDF drafted a position paper that highlighted the three situations when it would be necessary to reimburse VAT for goods and services procured by NGOs, these being:

- PHARE, ISPA and SAPARD programs including the future Structural Funds,
- Community Funds
- private funds such as international organizations, embassies, sponsorships.

In the final version of the normative act, which was adopted through GO no.11/2007, NGOs are eligible for VAT reimbursement only for goods and services financed from PHARE, ISPA and SAPARD programs. CSDF continued to maintain its relationship with the Ministry of Public Finance to give specific information to draft Methodological Norms (MPF Decision 450/2007).

VAT issues were also discussed in March during the meeting of the College of Associations and Foundations during which time the CSDF position paper was presented. The discussions were focused mainly on the situation of VAT refund for goods and services procured by NGOs from Community Funds and private funds. Following this meeting, in mid-March, CSDF submitted a letter to the Ministry of Public Finance in order to analyze and initiate a special regulation which would give the possibility for Romanian NGOs to have VAT refunded to them.

PACT Foundation Project –Developing seven Community Enterprises

The Partnership for Community Action and Transformation (PACT) Foundation is a Romanian non-profit organization active in the field of community development and social economy. RCSS provided support to the PACT Foundation to initiate development of community enterprises in disadvantaged areas of southern Romania through capacity building of six (6) community organizations.

The PACT project contributed to the creation of a pro-business environment and fostered measures promoting innovation, research and community development. The project facilitated the creation of community enterprises under the auspices of six community based organization (CBOs) which will help increase the level of activity of civil society through encouraging local participation. These community level enterprises met local needs currently not satisfied completely by the market or by the existing public provisions. They also increased the employability of, and provided employment for, groups which are disadvantaged in the local labor market.

The project built on previous work carried out by PACT in rural and urban communities located in Arges, Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinti, Olt, Teleorman and Valcea counties¹¹. The project was conducted between April and October 2007 with \$20,000 of RCSS out of a total budget of \$31,980.

Please see www.fundatiapact.ro/english/news for details

Results achieved by the PACT project

These were noteworthy given the proscribed implementation time available to the grantee and are as follows:

- Seven (7) community organizations gained knowledge and skills in analyzing business ideas, running a market analysis and drafting a business plan
- Seven (7) community based organizations consolidated their knowledge and skills in working in a participatory manner with community members in designing and carrying out community development strategies
- Fourteen (14) community representatives acquired knowledge and skills in community business development
- Seven (7) business plans for community businesses were fully completed in draft
- The PACT Foundation project team gained knowledge and expertise in community enterprise development and social economy.

5. Results of RCSS interventions with Advocacy Grantees as these were determined through PMP results.

RCSS used the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) as a tool for planning, managing the implementation of programs it funded and for documenting progress made towards the satisfaction of the intended project outcomes through data collection. The PMP comprised 22 indicators these being categorized as output and impact indicators and grouped into three Sub-Intermediate Results Categories (Sub-IR).

The PMP addressed USAID/Romania's Strategic Objective (SO)2.3: Improved Democratic Governance at the Local Level, specifically Intermediate Result (IR) 2.3.2: Improved Interaction between Citizens and Local Public Institutions – please see the chart below.

The PMP also contributed to the effectiveness and accuracy of the RCSS performance monitoring system by assuring that comparable data were collected on a regular and timely basis. For each indicator, achieved performance data was compared with past performance or other relevant benchmarks and with targeted performance. Each of the Sub-IR categories addressed specific assistance areas targeted by RCSS implementation components: sustainability, advocacy and partnership. Although RCSS was obliged to shorten its lifespan and to consequently redefine its annual workplans because of the withdrawal of USAID

¹¹ The following entities were involved in the PACT project as part funded by RCSS:

Association Rudezis started a traditional "oltenesc" carpet weaving workshop

Association Humanity Rom, a Roma association which was already running a community enterprise in the form of a cleaning services company and went on to develop this company further.

Muscel Association for Education and Culture: the association headed by two women with interest in arts and theater developed an after school program.

Association "I Care About You", developed plastic waste disposal business.

Association PROEUROYOUNG developed a plastic waste disposal business.

Foundation "Soul to Soul", an association of wheel chair users has been producing small manufactured objects such as Christmas cards and small gifts develop this into an income generation activity.

Association Panaghia invested in the creation of a small rural bed and breakfast

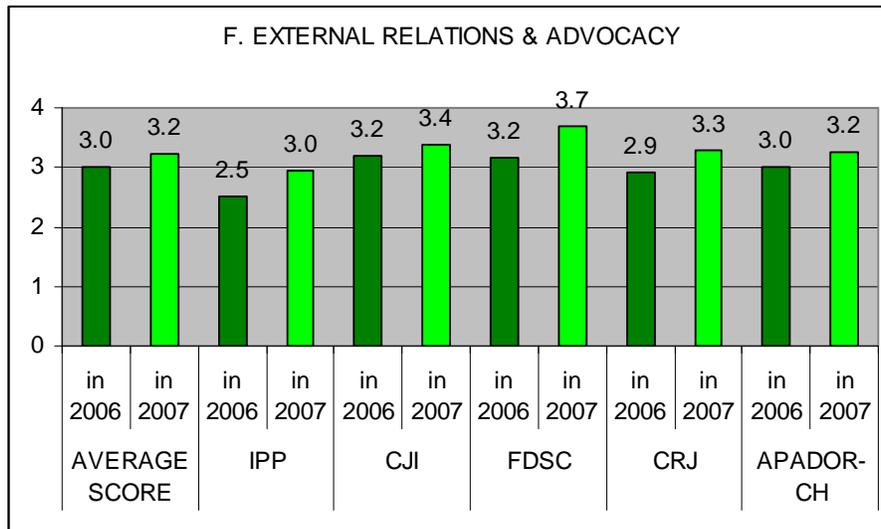
from Romania occasioned by this country’s accession to the EU, most of the PMP indicators were kept unaltered at the same target level as initially planned.

Achievements recorded by the RCSS PMP

Sub-IR 2.3.2.2 - Improved advocacy and outreach of NGOs and coalitions

Sub-IR 2.3.2.2 - Improvements of ratings on Participatory Institutional Analysis Instrument (PIAI), for “External Relations & Advocacy” dimension

Baseline: 3.0
 LoP target: increase 0.2
 Achieved: 3.2



The analysis involved 5 organizations that were analyzed in 2006 through PIAI, implemented an advocacy grant and were analyzed again in 2007 through PIAI. The five organizations were: Institute for Public Policies, Center for Independent Journalism, Civil Society development Foundation, Center for Legal Resources, APADOR-CH.

Sub-IR 2.3.2.2 - Number of policy initiatives pursued by the grantee partner NGOs

Year 1 target: 10
 LoP target¹²: 12
 LoP achieved: 27

NB: Of the 27 initiatives, 10 were conducted through RCSS Advocacy Grants, 4 through RCSS Disability Grants and 13 employing Small Advocacy Grants). In addition a number of the Partnership Component grant funded projects also had policy dimensions although these are not included in the above summary.

Civil society groups through collective civic action, reflecting the composition and interests of the community, helped to ensure that citizens’ perspectives and priorities were taken into proper consideration by public policy making and resource allocating institutions. NGOs and CSOs in Romania were increasingly able to monitor government performance, demand accountability both at national and local

¹² The target for the life of the project (LoP) for this indicator was set at 12. Each of the 10 advocacy projects funded pursued a policy issue, 8 were focused on national level issues while 2 were focused on local level policies related to planning /funding of social services by county and other local governments based on needs and integrity standards in local governments.

level, and pursue new policy initiatives to ensure that government operates in a more responsive, participatory, accountable, and increasingly effective and more democratic fashion. The Romanian government provides public and civil society organizations with legal access to mechanisms and procedures of governance that allows for public action, comment on and oversight of policy making and implementation through sunshine legislation and free access to public interest information. These mechanisms created the legal framework for most of the projects which involved monitoring, watchdog type of activities – all grantees used formal requests to public information, some of the NGOs, mainly from the social sector or disabled groups did this for the first time during the RCSS program which supported their activities. The tabulation below summarizes the policy initiatives undertaken by the RCSS Advocacy Grantees using funding support from the program:

Organization	Policy Initiative
Pro Democracy Association	Integrity standards and practice and anti-corruption capacity of local governments
Center for Independent Journalism	Editorial independence and media accountability - concentration of ownership, hidden ownership, un-fair competition, unclear sources of revenues of media
Civil Society Development Foundation	NGO sustainability - public funding of NGOs
Institute for Public Policy	MPs accountability - presence and expenditure
Ruhama Foundation – Oradea	NGO sustainability - externalization of community/social services towards private providers through open tenders (or other forms of public acquisition)
Towns Association – Romania	Local governments' capacity to make sustainable investments and co-finance (infrastructure) projects to be funded from EU structural funds
APADOR-CH	Transparency of public decision-making
Hospice of Hope – Brasov	Access to health care services of the incurable patients
Civil Society Development Foundation	Externalization of community/social services towards private providers through open tenders (or other forms of public acquisition)
Centre for Legal Resources	Human rights abuses in mental disabilities institutions

RCSS grant recipients, individual NGOs and CSOs their partners and NGO coalitions promoted policy changes and governmental accountability for issues of public interest, specific interests of CSOs/NGOs and their constituents, and helped formulate and sustain a legal framework that better protected and promoted civil society and NGO sustainability.

NGO		Policy Initiative
Disability Component		
1	Save the Children Romania	Promoting access to education of disabled children – children with special education needs – monitor and develop strategies at local (10 counties) and national levels to improve current situation
2	Society of Disabled People Zalau	Employing youth with disabilities – county Zalau
3	Soul to Soul Foundation	Accessibility of physical environment for people with disabilities – city Ramnicu Valcea – monitoring and promoting implementation of legislation
4	Romanian League for Mental Health League	Work integration - access to employment and employment services of the disabled in Romania - evaluation of the situation of the disabled on the labor market and their access to public employment services
Small Advocacy Grants		
5	Federation of Tenants Associations - Timisoara	Consumers’ rights – public utilities and local public services, consumer prices, levels of public spending /budgets (cost-effectiveness and efficiency of services)- influencing public decisions of the City Council of Timisoara
6	TONAL Association	Mental health - Monitoring implementation of mental health strategy in Sibiu county
7	Voluntary Centre - Cluj-Napoca	Volunteering in Cluj county – promoting local public strategies in favor of volunteer action
8	Association of Environment Experts	Blocking a public decision - Stopping a road building project in a protected area – the last Intact Forest Landscape (IFL) area (1,005sq.km) of Central and Eastern Europe – which was built without legal permits and without respect for environment protection and building regulations
9	UNICUL SENS	Assessment of access to education of deaf and blind children in 4 counties and advocate for their improved access to necessary services
10	ANCAAR	Lobbying for public funding for NGO’s day care service for autistic children from the public county budget
11	Institute for Public Policy	Access to public information vs. protection of personal data in the case of public officials - policy implementation
12	Association Pro Democracy BRAILA	Promoting public funding of NGOs from the city budget
13	Association Pro Democracy CRAIOVA	Transparency of decision making legislation in rural communities in Dolj County

The following organizations - CRONO; Association Pro Democracy, Focsani and Association for Community Development “PANAGHIA” received small advocacy grants to support these NGO in promoting public participation in the decision making process.

The following organizations received grants for specific actions to improve their advocacy capacity: Foundation PEOPLE TO PEOPLE to improve the organization’s advocacy capacity, the staff’s knowledge and lobbying on behalf of constituents’ needs; IMPREUNA 2002 to assess the needs of the disabled in 5 communities and advocate for their improved access to services – education; and, Association of Social Workers Crisana for monitoring and influencing social policies in Bihor county.

Sub-IR 2.3.2.2 - c. Number of policy initiatives successful in introducing, changing, or removing a law or policy

Year 1 target: 0

LoP target: 3

LoP achieved: 6 (2 new polices, 2 policy changes, 2 public decisions were blocked)

Introduction of new policies

- a. Braila Local Council and the Pro Democracy Association Braila
Promoting integrity of local governments – adoption of a local council decision on management of information systems that solved all issues related to implementation of public access to information and “sunshine” legislation raised by the Local Integrity Group. This is an example of a policy change that improved enforcement of existing legislation.
- b. National Health Insurance House and the Hospice Casa Sperantei
Following lobbying by Hospice Casa Sperantei, provisions in the framework contract for 2007 allowed for the funding of palliative care as part of the hospice services provided to terminally ill patients. Distinct provisions in the framework contract referring to palliative care that allow adequate admission periods in specialized hospice units for patients in critical or terminal stages, were established. A special provision was introduced in the 2007 framework contract draft mentioning the possibility of funding palliative care inpatient units according to a formula proposed by Hospice Casa Sperantei. Until this framework contract draft, palliative care was not mentioned at all, the funding being provided for oncology in-patient units only. Palliative care on the other hand, addresses many other types of diseases not only oncological cases.

Creating policy changes

- a. Bihor County Council and the “STRONG” Coalition of Social Service NGOs
Following the campaign by the “Strong” coalition which was established by the Ruhama Foundation, the Bihor County Council decided to establish a special funding line for NGOs delivering social services based on Law 350 (Grants for NGOs). Previously this law did not cover the social sector at all. Four (4) NGOs received funding in October 2007 under this budget line.

The Coalition registered its first success – an increase in the County Council budget allocation for NGOs social services

“In order to urgently increase the County Council’s fund allocation for NGOs the coalition decided to advocate for the inclusion of the social field among the areas eligible for financial support through Law 350 regarding grants for NGOs. The coalition presented the proposal to a County Committee ATOP, which included six County Councilors and Vice-Prefect, in two meetings with the idea and the proposal being embraced by the President’s team. As a result of these advocacy activities, the coalition worked with the County Council team of legal advisers, finance experts and specialists to include the Social Sector among the sectors to receive support along with a series of objectives in the social field proposed by the coalition members. From our last information, the social services were included. Following this result, the next step will be to analyze together with the County Council team the opportunities available for strengthening cooperation with NGOs and to support private social services through DGASPC by allocating funds and social contracting.”

b. Timisoara City Council and the Federation of Tenants Associations Timisoara “FALT” – a public service consumer group

Five (5) different City Council decisions were amended following lobbying efforts by “FALT”. These amendments ensured public access to financial information about public service providers and amending budgets of public service companies to include performance objectives and reducing costs.

Removing public policies

a. Hunedoara County Public Roads Authority and the Association of Environment Experts with partners Greenpeace Romania and Eco Sud Vest Romania

Blocking a public decision which resulted in stopping a road building project in a protected area consisting of the last Intact Forest Landscape (IFL) area in Central and Eastern Europe covering some 1,005 sq. km. The road was being built without legal permits and without respect for environment protection and building regulations.

b. Timisoara City Council and the Federation of Tenants Associations Timisoara “FALT” – public service consumer group

Blocked a decision by the Timisoara City public services company to increase prices of central heating.

Drafting and promoting new policies

a. Baia Mare Local Council and the Association Pro Democracy Baia Mare

Draft policy on whistle blowers, presented, lobbied and waiting for adoption.

b. Hospice Casa Sperantei and Parliament

A position paper on the Law on Palliative Care was presented at the Chamber of Deputies to the Health Commission and discussed with members of the Commission to define the elements of a future law regarding palliative care.

c. Hospice Casa Sperantei and the Ministry of Health

The national cancer program will be improved and will also include palliative care as a separate chapter. The program currently focused only on prevention, treatment and recovery issues. In the budget for 2008 a pilot project on a palliative care network in three counties was introduced and

narrative and financial support data regarding different types of services such as homecare, inpatient care and hospital support will be henceforth collected routinely .

d. Hospice Casa Sperantei and the Health Insurance House

Amendments to the 2008 Frame Contract were advocated and approved as a result of the action taken by the NGO.

e. Hospice Casa Sperantei and County Councils

This action was at the local level in Bacau County. The Development Strategy of the County was under preparation and, in this context, Fundatia de Sprijin Comunitar (FSC) - which was a member in the Coalition for Palliative Care and Coordinator of the Working Group focused on social services - included palliative care services for terminally ill patients with oncological and non-oncological diseases among the services to be part of the County Development Strategy. In this process, FSC addressed the stages necessary for a County Action Plan these being networking with local providers, local needs assessment and defining and applying methodology and tools.

Sub-IR 2.3.2.2 - d. Number of successful advocacy initiatives that continue through the advocacy cycle.

Year 1 target: 0

LoP target: 3

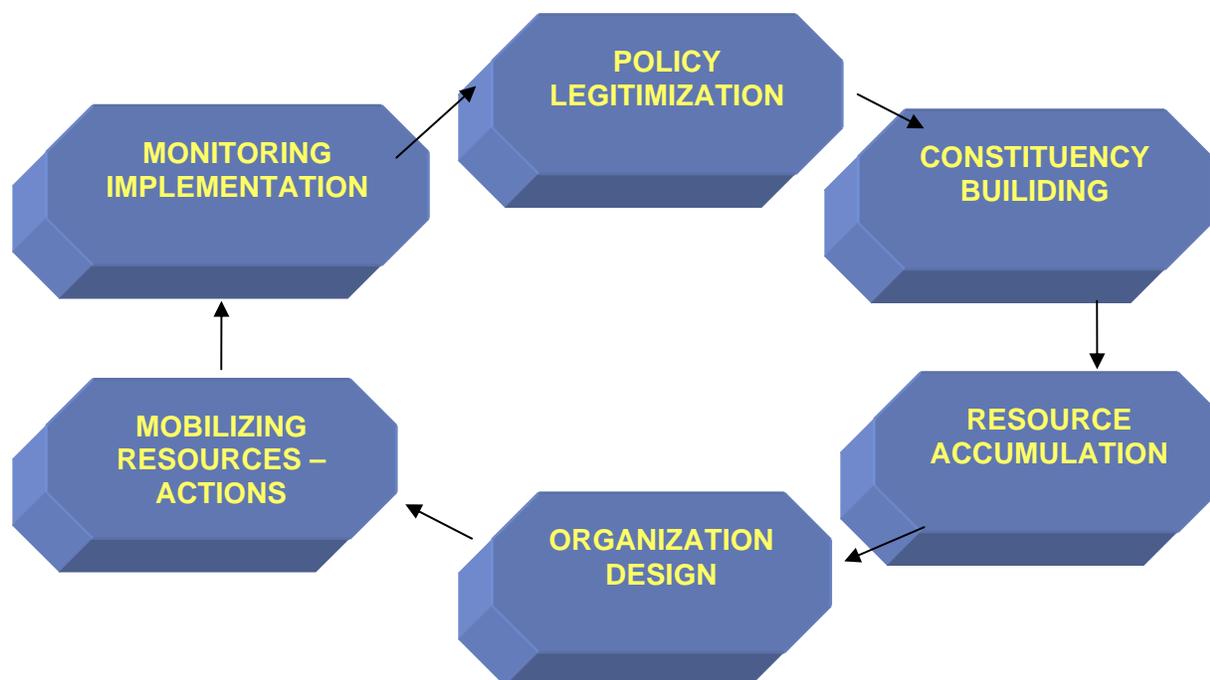
LoP achieved: 8 initiatives out of which 5 monitored the implementation of legislation previously promoted by NGOs

The Advocacy Projects monitored the implementation of legislation previously promoted by NGOs; 2 Disability Projects monitored the implementation of legislation in favor of the disabled while 3 Small Advocacy Projects monitored the implementation of two pieces of legislation previously promoted by NGOs which concentrated on the transparency of decision-making and mental health. Please see the table, on the following page, setting out the policy changes and stages effected during the RCSS project.

One of the weaknesses of NGO advocacy and public policy change work that has been noticed in the past is the issue of the lack of “closure of the advocacy cycle”. While NGOs aggressively and enthusiastically promote policy changes they, however, do not continue their work to ensure that these changes are actually implemented. RCSS therefore employed the policy implementation task model developed by MSI trainer Ben Crosby¹³ to attempt to get NGOs to remedy this deficiency. The key tasks for an implementable and subsequently actually implemented policy were stressed, these being: policy legitimization, constituency building, resource accumulation, organizational design and modification, mobilization of resources and monitoring performance and impact.

The Advocacy Cycle referred to above is diagrammed on the following page. The NGOs lack of awareness of the complete cycle cannot be ascribed to willful neglect of their responsibilities to their constituencies but rather to relative unfamiliarity with the advocacy process in its complete form and to insufficient resources to employ in its execution. The RCSS interventions regarding this certainly enhanced knowledge and, in the case of Advocacy Grantees, provided the financial resources to help a small number NGOs put into practice the essential monitoring of legislative implementation.

¹³ *Managing Policy Reform* – Ben Crosby and co-author Kumarian Press, 2002



All Advocacy Projects supported by RCSS included more than one phase of the advocacy cycle, mostly comprising the following:

- monitoring implementation of legislation and defining proposals for policy changes to ensure better implementation
- policy legitimization and constituency building based on assessments of the current situation in order to formulate policy proposals and the drafting and promoting of policy changes.

Some Advocacy Projects were mainly focused on lobbying to promote particular policy issues and changes.

Policy cycle stages of the Advocacy Projects, four Disability Advocacy projects and all Small Advocacy Grant projects.

Organization		Policy Initiative	Project Objective – policy cycle stage
Advocacy Projects			
1	Pro Democracy Association	Integrity standards and practice and anti-corruption capacity of local governments	Assessment including monitoring of transparency and anti-corruption legislation and policy changes at local level
2	Center for Independent Journalism	Editorial independence and media accountability, concentration of ownership, hidden ownership, unfair competition, unclear sources of revenues of media	Assessment and policy change

3	Civil Society Development Foundation	NGO sustainability - public funding of NGOs	Assessment and policy change
4	Institute for Public Policy	MP accountability - presence and expenditure	Assessment and policy change
5	Ruhama Foundation – Oradea	NGO sustainability - externalization of community/social services towards private providers through open tenders or other forms of public acquisition.	Assessment and local policy change
6	Towns Association – Romania	Local governmental capacity to make sustainable investments and co-finance infrastructure projects to be funded from EU Structural Funds	Assessment and national policy change
7	APADOR-CH	Transparency of public decision-making	Monitoring implementation of legislation and policy change
8	Hospice of Hope – Brasov	Access to health care services by incurable patients	Policy change
9	Civil Society Development Foundation	Externalization of community and social services towards private providers through open tenders or other forms of public acquisition.	Policy change and implementation
10	Centre for Legal Resources	Human rights abuses in mental disability institutions	Monitoring and policy implementation and change
Disability Projects			
1	Save the Children Romania	Promoting access to education of disabled children – children with special education needs –	Monitoring and developing strategies at local (10 counties) and national levels to improve current situation
2	Society of Disabled People Zalau	Employing youth with disabilities – county Zalau	Promoting implementation of legislation
3	Soul to Soul Foundation	Accessibility of physical environment for people with disabilities – city Ramnicu Valcea	Monitoring and promoting implementation of legislation
4	Romanian League for Mental Health League	Work integration - access to employment and employment services of the disabled in Romania	Evaluation of the situation of the disabled on the labor market and their access to public employment services
Small Advocacy Projects			

5	Federation of Tenants Associations - Timisoara	Consumers' rights – public utilities and local public services, consumer prices, levels of public spending /budgets (cost-effectiveness and efficiency of services)	Influencing public decisions of the City Council of Timisoara
6	TONAL Association	Mental health	Monitoring implementation of mental health strategy in Sibiu county
7	Voluntary Centre - Cluj-Napoca	Volunteering in Cluj county –	Promoting local public strategies in favor of volunteer action
8	Association of Environment Experts	Blocking a public decision - Stopping a road building project in a protected area – the last Intact Forest Landscape (IFL) area (1,005 sq.km.) in Central and Eastern Europe – which was built without legal permits and without respect for environment protection and building regulations	Monitor and promote implementation of legislation for environment protection
9	UNICUL SENS	Assessment of access to education of deaf and blind children in 4 counties and advocate for their improved access to necessary services	Promote implementation of access to education legislation
10	ANCAAR	Public funding for NGO's day care service for autistic children from the public county budget	Lobbying for public funding for NGO's services for autistic children from the public county budget
11	Institute for Public Policy	Access to public information vs. protection of personal data in the case of public officials - Policy implementation	Lobbying for implementation in favor of access to information
12	Association Pro Democracy BRAILA	Promoting public funding of NGOs from the city budget	Lobbying
13	Association Pro Democracy CRAIOVA	Transparency of decision making & access to information legislation in rural communities Dolj County	Monitoring implementation of legislation

Closing the advocacy cycle

Monitoring implementation of transparency of decision making legislation was undertaken by APADORCH and its network of 15 NGOs for a continuous period of 16 weeks. The activities thus closed the advocacy cycles on transparency of decision making legislation. Ninety three (93) central government and local government offices in 16 counties were monitored as to their implementation of legislation on transparency of decision-making.

Seven (7) local governments in Alexandria, Baia Mare, Braila, Craiova, Focsani, Lupeni, Oradea, where monitored on implementation of transparency, access to information, anti-corruption legislation by Pro Democracy Association clubs. Publications of the monitoring reports raised a lot of interest in local media.

Twenty five 25 local governments in rural communities in Dolj Counties were monitored regarding their respect for existing legislation on transparency of decision making and access to information. Results

showed that only about a third (30%) of local governments respect and act in accordance with the provisions of the laws.

The Center for Legal Reform (CLR) monitored five mental health institutions from all over Romania to gauge their respect for patients' rights. Publications of these monitoring reports also raised a lot of interest in local media in the cities where the monitored mental health institutions were located. As a consequence the Director of one of the institutions was asked to resign since the CLR monitoring reported that there was frequent violence against children in the institution.

The findings are presented in the table below:

<p><u>Monitoring of Implementation - Findings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Internet webpages: of the 93 public authorities monitored, 20 have no webpage while for 16 their webpages were not functioning or inaccessible.○ Dedicated boards for posting official news; 9 institutions have none, 36 have a board which is badly organised and the information is not citizen accessible.○ Official journals (regulated by special law) - In 4 of the 16 counties there is no officially published gazette while 4 counties publish gazettes only irregularly.

Launching new advocacy cycles

Based on monitoring results APADOR CH issued recommendations for the improvement for legislation launching a new advocacy circle.

<p><u>Suggested amendments to Law 52/2003: “Transparency of decision-making in the public administration” - the so-called “Sunshine law”.</u></p>

<p>The Law, which has been in force for over 4 years, had never been amended even though significant and obvious problems related to its enforcement existed and derived from the lack of effective and specific sanctions in cases of non-compliance. APADOR suggests the following main changes:</p>
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The announcement of draft legislation or a decision should include the date when it is made public; this is necessary in order to be able to enforce the legal terms of 30 and 10 days.○ Extending the period in which amendments can be suggested from 10 to 20 days.○ Rephrasing the article which foresees exceptions in order to not allow abuse of these provisions – situations under which exceptions are acceptable should be explicitly stated.○ Clarifying and introducing accessible means of official publications for administrative decisions in particular lower level public decisions by central government and legislation of the lower tiers of the administration such as local and county governments.○ During this monitoring exercise APADOR CH has discovered that although specific legislation exists for local and county governments instituting the local and county official gazettes (Government Ordinance 75/2003 regarding the establishment and operation of official gazettes of the administrative units of Romania modified and approved through Law. 534/2003) is almost completely un-enforced in all of the counties surveyed. This is a topic on which APADOR CH will focus its efforts in the future.○ Organizing public debates; ensuring enough places in the room to guarantee access to all concerned parties this being at least 10 legally registered entities and 20 concerned citizens under the sanction of suspending the public debate. Organizers should ensure that all participants can exert their right to express an opinion by giving them the floor. |
|--|

- Change provisions related to publishing annual reports in order to make sure that these reports are published in all situations – including after they have been publicly presented – in public meetings and introducing deadlines for publishing such reports.
- Sanctions – all legislation adopted without respect for the provisions the law should be null and void.
- The courts should be given the right to take any measure to ensure the law is respected and the assumption of moral prejudice in cases when the law is violated. The court will declare a decision taken without respect to the provisions of the Sunshine Act as void. The court will be able to decide on the level of reparations to which it can subject those who break this law.
- Legal entities which break the law should be subject to sanctions these being complementary to the sanctions on the particular public servant responsible with its enforcement.

Sub-IR 2.3.2.2 - e. Number of new NGOs participating in policy coalitions

Year 1 target: 3

LoP target: 10

LoP achieved: 23

Twenty three (23) local organizations were working with Advocacy grants and 2 local organizations specialized on disability issues.

Five (5) of the Advocacy Grantee projects established networks of local NGOs which were involved in local monitoring and advocating for policy changes. A total of fifty five (55) NGOs were involved in these networks and coalitions with 23 of these participating in advocacy policy coalitions for the first time. NGOs in these coalitions received training and were directly involved in monitoring the following : 7 local governments for integrity standards, 160 public institutions for enforcement of sunshine legislation, 140 MPs to check on their reported constituency involvement, 15 mental health institutions, the needs of users of social services. The NGOs also conducted local advocacy activities to enforce transparency, sunshine and anti-corruption legislation, access to public funding, social budget, and public health insurance budgets for private NGO providers.

Four (4) of the Disability Grantee projects had an advocacy component which involved the monitoring of employment of the disabled and the levels of access of disabled to employment services. Also the “Soul to Soul Foundation” which had never been previously involved in advocacy did monitor legislation related to physical accessibility for disabled in one city of 100,000 inhabitants.

In addition 260 NGOs joined two coalitions launched by CSDF. One coalition - joined by 80 NGOs - promoted new social service legislation that was designed to ensure equal access for NGOs to funding from local, county and national budgets for payment for the services they rendered. The other coalition – joined by 180 NGOs and local and county social services - promoted changes to procedures for government funding for NGOs. For these there was no analysis whether they were previously involved in a policy coalition or not.

Overall results for Advocacy partner grantee NGOs assessed with the Project Monitoring Plan (PMP)

The final evaluation meetings, quarterly reports and the final project reports indicated satisfactory implementation of all Advocacy Grants. No project showed major discrepancies between the proposed and realized outcome and achievements. A closer analysis of the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) developed for each grant allowed for the highlighting of several findings which permitted arriving at the conclusion that the program was satisfactorily conducted and implemented. Of the 174 individual performance indicators, 131 indicators (75.2%) were accomplished completely or to a greater degree than planned while 43 indicators (24.7%) were under-achieved. The overall program goal achievement rate for all 10 advocacy projects is calculated at 86%.

A tabulated summary is presented below:

Level of program achievement as reported by PMP indicators.	Achievement Level (%)	Number of indicators
		174
Number of indicators 100% achieved	58.0	101
Number of indicators achieved <u>more</u> than 100%	17.2	30
Number of indicators achieved <u>less</u> than 100%	24.7	43
Number of indicators that could not be reported	n/a	
Overall level of goal and objective achievement	86	

NB: The overall achievement rate does not take into account over-achievements. All indicators where organizations obtained results beyond their initial targets or expectations were considered as 100% achieved.

6. RCSS – Advocacy Grantee key achievements

The tabulation presented below summarizes the achievements of all NGOs implementing RCSS grant funded projects falling into the Advocacy category of assistance provided to entities specializing in advocacy or watchdog missions or attempting to satisfy the demands of both areas. Additionally, the report shows the level of achievement of each implementing partner in respect of the objectives each had proposed to attain at the completion of their projects.

With the exception of the Towns Association all of the implementing partners managed to achieve a significant level of satisfaction of their proposed objectives. Where there was a lower achievement level than could have been expected an inability to affect factors influencing implementation were usually the cause. In no case could ineffective strategies or willful negligence be attributed as a reason for 43 – out of a total of 173 - of the NGOs defined success indicators not being attained completely as planned.

Organization	Overall achievement level (%)	Key achievements
Pro Democracy Association	93	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 35 local NGOs in 7 cities increased their monitoring and advocacy skills - 7 Local Integrity Groups (LIG), each including NGOs, unions and/or professional organizations were established - Participatory assessments and diagnosis reports for each of

		<p>the 7 target cities on corruption, transparency and integrity publicly debated and publicized in the media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 7 Local Integrity Strategies one in each of the seven target cities developed with the involvement of civil society - Some measures from 5 Local Integrity Strategies adopted by the local administrations in the respective cities - Integrity website - anti-corruption capacity tool - standards of integrity and internal procedures for the local bureaucracy, 'whistle blowers', methodology for assessing, monitoring and evaluating local government integrity - Report "Improving local public administration's integrity" based on results in the 7 cities and monitoring methodology published
Center for Independent Journalism	73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updated Media Index D-base of media ownership following accurately the moves on the market - 28,383 visitors accessed monthly CJI's Media Index D-base website www.mediaindex.ro - 4 quarterly media monitoring reports assessing the current status of media ownership, key players and market shares, editorial content, legal framework (based on main national press and at least 4 national TV stations) constituting a baseline for advocacy - 32 academics and 323 students from 5 cities aware of the issues that endanger the transparency and the accountability of the media - 220 media owners and managers, journalists, politicians aware of the issues that endanger the transparency and the accountability of the media - one proposal for legislative change that would have secured transparency of funding/ownership and limit oligopolies in the field of media and press - A policy paper on transparency of media funding published on 5 sites - The 35 local and national media associations support CJI's proposed advocacy initiative, 3 of the local media organizations co-organized awareness events in their region - The Convention of Media Organizations dedicated a session to the topic of transparency of media funding attended by the 35 representatives of COM members - 3 public meetings in cities around the country with 70 media consumers dedicated to media issues
Civil Society Development Foundation - government funding	90	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An assessment of government funding for 6 targeted Ministries for 2006 fiscal year - Questionnaires on funding received from governmental bodies – level, form, type of project supported received from 800 NGOs - A review of policies public funding mechanisms in different countries (EU models)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A set of proposals for improving the funding mechanism of the targeted Ministries developed in consultation with 220 NGO representatives and public authorities - A coalition of 80 NGOs established to influence government policies in the area of funding for NGOs - Proposals for an improved funding mechanism for NGOs are presented and discussed with the Ministries and decision-makers during 4 round tables - At least 1,000 NGOs informed about the status of public funding for NGOs - central government decision-makers are made aware of the deficiencies in the current funding mechanism and proposals for improvements - 7 public officials have been trained on transparency and accountability
<p>Institute for Public Policy</p>	<p>97</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A manual on monitoring the activities of the MPs including a media monitoring methodology - 12 local NGOs member of the National Association of Citizens Advise Bureaux trained on monitoring methodology and are now able to conduct effective monitoring activities of MPs at their county level - Data about attendance to voting process in the plenum of the two Chambers and activity (number of legislative initiatives, number of speeches etc) of 468 MPs (137 members of the Senate and 331 Deputies) in the parliamentary session of September – December, 2006 registered from the Chambers websites and up-loaded in the IPP website database on a daily basis - Data about presence and activity (number of working hours in constituency offices, number of meetings with citizens per working day) in the local constituency of 141 MPs (101 deputies and 40 senators in the above mentioned sites) for 3 months was registered and up-loaded in the IPP website database - 300 on-site monitoring visits done by NGOs to MPs constituency offices (Oradea, Arad, Timișoara, Cluj, Brasov, Alba Iulia, Ploiești, Brăila, Târgoviște, Sfântu Gheorghe, Iași, Satu Mare) - 12 local monitoring reports on the activity of up to 141 MPs were issued by each NGO NACAB member published and launched in press conferences by local NGOs - One National monitoring Report issued by IPP in a press conference - 3,000 visitors of IPP updated database with information about MPs activities in Bucharest and at the local level - 2,350 beneficiaries are reached through disseminating the reports (both at local and central level) - 100 articles were published 3 times what was originally planned - 73 citizens contact IPP and NACABs expressing

		<p>opinions about the use of the monitoring methodology or reporting information about MPs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3,500 visitors registered on the IPP's website to view the public expenditure of MPs - A policy paper and proposed amendments to the Standing Orders' provisions regulating absenteeism and expenditure
Ruhama Foundation – Oradea	83	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An assessment report of needs for social services is generated (for Bihor County) - An assessment report with existing and missing social services is created - An assessment of the current level of public funding of social services delivered by NGOs is made - A position paper of the coalition of NGOs providing social services is developed and made public - Public policies were developed at county level allowing for support from the county budget to NGOs providing social services adopted by the city and County Councils as council decisions. - Representatives of 8 NGOs demonstrate improved skills of conducting public policy analysis - 500 citizens/ social service beneficiaries were involved in focus-groups, public consultations and participatory needs analyses - 23 NGOs in the coalition are actively involved in campaign activities (attending at least 50% of the coalition activities) - An NGO coalition of NGO social service providers and joined by 40 NGOs providing social services in Bihor county join the coalition - The NGO Coalition has a strategic plan and a communication plan elaborated in a participatory manner - Bihor County Council approves an increase of at least 10% of the financial support for social services delivered by NGOs for the fiscal year 2007
Towns Association – Romania	57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An assessment of existing legal & fiscal framework/ arrangements for for investment /infrastructure projects is conducted and a report drafted - A policy paper with recommendations for a co-funding mechanisms between central and local governments - Representatives of 232 cities / local governments support the policy proposal - 3 regional meetings of local governments' are held to collect and formally register their comments on the policy proposal - 3 meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Finance and the Cabinet to discuss the policy proposals
APADOR-CH	90	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A supporting document (comparative assessment) of practice and legal framework in Romanian and three

		<p>other countries is developed and used to promote improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendations for improvement of the methodology of the Agency for Governmental Strategies on monitoring the implementation of the law are made - A network/ coalition of 15 NGOs is established to conduct monitoring activities of local and central administration in Romania - 1342 weekly monitoring of the web-sites and 1342 weekly visits to the head-quarters of the 93 selected institutions to check announcements for draft laws, regulations and decisions, public debates, public meetings, minutes of public meetings and annual reports - 1526 public authorities and institutions informed on needed policy changes as regards implementation of the Law on decisional transparency in the administration - 4 local and central administration bodies adopted internal policy changes in the filed of decisional transparency - Changes to the law are defined, documented and promoted - 476 policy makers aware of the proposed changes - 7 key policy makers support the proposed changes (Agency for Governmental Startegies and Secretariate General of the Government) - 15 local NGOs joined the coalition established and actively participate in the advocacy campaign to generate better implementation of the Law on decisional transparency - 14 local NGO demonstrate improved knowledge and skills on using the Law on decisional transparency in the administration as an advocacy tool/ monitor implementation/ public policy analysis and monitoring its implementation - 14 recommendations for better implementation of the law be made by the trained NGOs - 15903 individuals received fliers for awareness of the Law on decisional transparency in the administration and the role of the NGOs provided for by the Law. - 689 citizens participated in local actions of local NGOs on decisional transparency by the end of the project
<p>Hospice of Hope – Brasov</p>	<p>100</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A database of all palliative care services from Romania has been created - All actors involved palliative care (13 NGOs) joined the palliative care coalition “Partnership for palliative care” and actively involved in coalition activities. - palliative care providers and other key stakeholders (medical services, health insurance houses, public health directorates, ministry) receive a quarterly bulletin - 13 NGO representatives are able to conduct effective advocacy activities on behalf of service providers and/or

		<p>beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 32 representatives of new palliative care service providers and policy makers demonstrate improved palliative care skills and use of best practices following 3 study visits for at least 10 participants per location - A model of care and cost-benefit analysis of palliative care services is developed and promoted - Proposals for the Framework Contract of Health Services for 2007 (approval system for home care services, inclusion of palliative care in the package of home care services currently covering only basic care for recovery after hospital discharge) and allowing adequate periods for hospital treatment in specialized hospice units for patients in critical or terminal stages are drafted and promoted (currently: 7 days, suggested: 14 days) have been accepted by the National Health Insurance House - Background report for a National Program for Palliative Care and a new Law of palliative care services under discussion in the Health Committee of the Lower Chamber of the Parliament - Regulation ensuring equal opportunities for providers (both NGOs and public health institutions) for a better implementation of a national palliative care program is included in the framework contract for health services - A policy paper to support increased funding allotted annually by the National House of Health Insurances for home care services (more cost-efficient than hospital care) and end-of-life care is drafted and promoted - 23 regular articles are published in newspapers and journals - A joint awareness campaign in preparation was run on the International Hospice Day, October 2007 – an estimate number of <u>270,000</u> citizens have been exposed to it
<p>Civil Society Development Foundation - social services</p>	<p>86</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new law - amending GO 68/2003 on social services and GO 48/2003 on public finance was drafted that creates a coherent legal framework and guarantee equal treatment for social NGOs with public providers, free competition on allocation of public money, and qualitative social services - An assessment report on current legislation and state of affairs regarding social policies that affects NGOs access to local public resources - One pilot model for a system of allocation of local budget designed for social services that increases the accountability and transparency on spending public money and adopted in 4 cities/counties - 10 local advocacy activities organized in 10 different counties in support of the proposed changes - 709 local (from at least 10 counties) and national decision makers in the field of social policy are informed

		<p>of the proposed changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 179 individuals participate in the regional sessions in which assessment results and proposals were debated - 2.3 The Advocacy Coalition established includes 10 of most significant networks already in existence (geographically representative representative on social issues and sectors) - 40 NGOs participated in the action rresearch dediicated to identifying the deficiencies in the current system and alternative solutions for its remedy - 190 NGOs registered as coalition supporters
Center for Legal Resources	88	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 240 staff members in 15 close institutions demonstrate knowledge of the content of the major human rights standards applicable to people with mental disabilities - 13 social workers from the 15 targeted institutions visited are using proficiently the mechanism of complaints and internal advocacy system for their beneficiaries/clients - 6 institutions show a good implementation of the mechanism of complaints and internal advocacy system for their beneficiaries /clients - 1,577 persons with mental disabilities from closed institutions and their families have learned about their right to complaint about the involuntary admission and treatment, the seclusion and restraint procedures, the lack of available medication and the right to community based needs services (98 persons have been directly interviewed by the monitoring teams) - 600 persons from institutions and family members have actively participated in activities of project partners and social workers in institutions, and of mental disability CSOs in communities - 22 CSOs which offer community based services for persons with mental disabilities, professional associations, the National College of Social Workers, volunteer organizations and one CSO of users and former users of mental disability services will actively support the project with outreach, education, monitoring and advocacy activities - 30 monitoring visits (two for each chosen institution) are performed - One overall monitoring report has been made public - 15 Directions of the Social Assistance and Child Protection are taking steps towards proper implementation of the system in the institutions under their authority - Commitment of the Parliament to identify adequate mechanisms for safeguarding the rights of persons in closed institutions is developed and implemented - draft law in the senate - 11 working meetings with representatives of central government agencies with responsibilities in the area

		<p>(Ministry of Health, the National Authority for Child Protection, the National Authority for Persons with Handicap, the National Council on Combating Discrimination and the Ministry of Justice) to promote the complaints and monitoring mechanism are held</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12 local meetings are organized with local authorities, CSOs, managers of institutions to promote the complaint/monitoring mechanism - 19 complaints about bad treatment are sent by patients, family members or CSOs representatives - Director of one institution has resigned following CLR monitoring report – in this institution there CLR registered frequent violence against children
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C. Partnership

1. Purpose of the Partnership Component

In Romania, the transition to a democracy has been an uneven and often difficult process, and the NGO community has been hampered by a number of factors, including an imperfect regulatory environment, inability to secure stable financial support, and difficulty in forming mutually supportive, durable citizen advocacy and policy reform networks.

The objective of the Partnership component of the RCSS program was to support effective and sustainable partnerships between Romanian NGOs specializing in policy, advocacy, monitoring, watchdog missions, and local, regional, European or American partners that would allow Romanian organizations to continue their missions beyond Romania's accession to the EU and the withdrawal of USAID from Eastern Europe.

The partnership component encouraged, educated and assisted Romanian NGOs focus on and better actualize the following:

- Making partnerships more permanent through helping NGOs establish and remain in contact with entities involved in cooperative action;
- Look to Europe and the Balkans region when considering new partnerships;
- Expanding the composition of partnerships to include possible cooperation and work with the private sector;
- Looking at partnership arrangements in addition to those, traditional formulations, which have been successfully employed to help secure short-term and usually grant based funding.

In implementing this component, World Learning built upon the successes and lessons learned under its Romanian-American Sustainable Partnerships project (RASP) which was also USAID funded and implemented between May 2000 and February 2004.

2. The Partnership Program – approach to assistance provision

The Partnership component of RCSS was implemented through providing grants, training, and technical assistance to a group of NGOs selected through a competitive process. RCSS helped potential partners think through the dynamics of partnership and work towards models and inter-entity arrangements which

would lead to sustainable, effective and programmatically impactful partnerships. The underlying philosophy introduced and reinforced the centrality of the concept of strength and effectiveness through diversity. That is, organizations bringing different skills and expertise to an initiative, without requiring a change in their individual status, recourse to hitherto unused legal mechanisms for employing existing funds or being obliged to select one partnership organization as a lead organization to manage a grant on behalf of other members of a network.

The three aspects of assistance provided to partnership grantee NGOs are reported on below. Although treated separately in the report there was a consistent managerial integration of each of the elements in order ensure the maximum impact of the assistance provided to the grantee NGOs and their partners.

2a. Grants

RCSS developed and issued a Request for Applications (RFA) for Partnership proposals, these being sought from Romanian non-governmental and civil society organizations, intermediary support organizations and federations which wished to attempt to become sustainable via effective partnerships. The partnership RFA was launched during March 2006 with a deadline for receipt of proposals in mid-April 2006. It was widely publicised in Voluntar, NGO list, eu-list and on the World Learning website. A Technical Proposal Review Committee with representatives from USAID, RCSS and the Romanian NGO community was established and drew up procedures and criteria for the grant review. All grants had to include partnerships between the applying Romanian NGOs and the public and/or private sector, academic and/or professional institutions, and think-tank organizations, whether these partners were based in Romania, elsewhere in the European Union or in the United States of America.

Forty three (43) proposals were received in response to the Partnership RFA. Although the Partnership RFA was open to all Romanian NGOs, the number applying was not as high as expected even though a quite liberal definition of what could constitute a “partnership” project was presented in the RFA. Fifteen (15) NGOs, which been nominated by USAID as strong contenders for the RCSS Sustainability grants, also submitted proposals for this RFA while twenty eight (28) applicants originated from the general pool of NGOs forming Romanian civil society. This implied that either the NGOs involved in activities addressing the public policy development and watchdog activities are, in reality, small in number or, they identify themselves and function more as service providers than advocacy and watchdog entities.

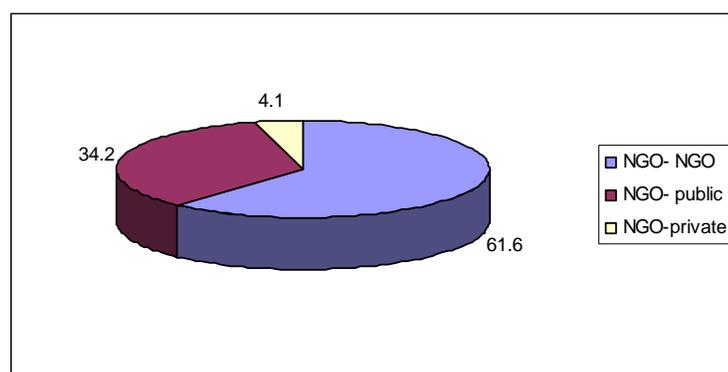
The fourteen (14) proposals accepted by the Review Committee covered a projects ranging from human rights to good governance and from attaining organizational sustainability to creating a funding mechanism for civil society. This was acceptable since the purpose of the grants was to help NGOs form and subsequently function in partnership for a meaningful period of time with, possibly, these assemblies lasting and working beyond the currency of the RCSS grant funding.

The RCSS Partnership grantees and details of each project are listed in the below tabulation:

Organization	Project Title	Area of Interest	Budget USD
Opportunity Associates Romania (OAR)	Strengthening Third Sector Legitimacy	International Cooperation & Good NGOs Governance	34,985
FDSC	Partnership for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid	International Cooperation	28,022
Association for Community Relations (ARC)	Community Foundations - A mechanism for Sustainable Community Resource Mobilization	Local NGOs Sustainability and corporate responsibility	34,955
Hospice "Casa Sperantei" - Brasov (HOSPICE)	Working Together Private -Public Partnerships to Strengthen Palliative Care in Romania	Socio-medical Services	44,655
OVIDIU ROM Association	Every Single Child in School	Social Services	35,000
Pro Democracy Association	Partnership for Good Governance	Democracy and Governance	50,043
Resource Centre for Roma Communities	Empowering Partnerships	Local NGOs Sustainability and minority rights	34,980
Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Bistrita Nasaud County	The Way We Live Around - Corporate Social Responsibility Puzzle	Corporate Social Responsibility	30,179
Motivation Romania Foundation	Partnership for building self-advocacy capacity	Disability/ human rights and organizational sustainability	34,025
Multiple Sclerosis Society	"MS Help Desk" - Achieving European Standards in Multiple Sclerosis Services	Social Services / Disability	41,120
Alternative Sociale Association	Alternative Sociale Association - a stronger NGO - a stronger partner	Human Rights and organizational sustainability	34,697
GRADO	Public Policies and transparent funding for domestic violence	Social Services / Financial Sustainability of NGOs working in domestic violence	38,243

		issue	
ICAR Foundation	Twinning against torture	Human Rights	45,396
Foundation for Community Care Services	Partnership Against Drugs - a partnership for influencing policies for an appropriate provision of services against drug addiction	Social Services / Local NGOs Sustainability	32,472
Total			518,772

As illustrated in the pie chart below most partnerships were formed between NGOs with about a third involving NGOs with the public sector while working with for-profit entities was the least well represented form of partnership.



It is worth noting the opportunities and challenges faced by NGOs working in partnership in Romania:

- The total number of partners who worked with the 14 core RCSS grant funded implementers was 73. Of these, 56% were other Romanian NGOs, 34 % were public institutions, 4% could be categorized as Romanian private entities, and 5.5% as international partners (1 US partner, and 3 EU partners).
- Most applicants (62%) decided to work with non-governmental organizations while only 3% decided to sign partnership agreements with private for profit entities.
- The majority of applicants focused on building partnership relationships with Romanian partners (94.5%) while only 5.5% sought international partners.
- The involvement of volunteers as minimal even though these are an enormous resource considerably enhancing organizational sustainability.

The above configurations and consequently, indirectly the reasoning and rationale which was employed by NGOs in selecting with whom they formed working relations can be explained as follows:

- NGOs have traditionally, even though sporadically, been infrequently involved in partnership activities and consequently have a low capacity and expertise for building such arrangements and supporting these by coherent marketing and development strategies;
- There has been a clearly evident lack of local knowledge, culture and practice regarding the identification and attracting of strategic partners;

- Lack of strategic sustainable partnership frameworks to address local resource mobilization and distribution which attract both public and private institutional representatives into the decision making process required in partnerships.
- Minimal strategic planning and experience to base collaboration on and through which to attract international partners which would increase the level and quality of knowledge, expertise and possibilities of sharing information;
- Lack of international exposure of many Romanian NGOs
- Lack of legitimacy and a self-regulatory mechanism for NGOs in order to increase transparency and make NGOs more appealing as cooperative partners to other sectors and public at large.

In this context, RCSS designed its training and technical assistance to address these issues since this offered the potential for helping NGOs educate themselves on subjects which would make good their deficiencies and consequently stimulate the creation of strong partner relationships between NGOs domestically and between these and international organizations. Through grants, customized training and technical assistance NGOs did improve their organizational and financial sustainability through either consolidating their partnerships or building new ones; details of the extent and nature of the changes achieved through working on RCSS grant funded projects will be presented in the achievements section of this report on Partnerships.

During the provision of assistance, RCSS staff kept a measure of distance as partnerships developed, so as not to interfere with the organic process or shape it in ways not considered useful by the principle actors. At the same time a close monitoring relationship was established by RCSS through which to appreciate the dynamics of partnership formation and implementation. Through this process it was possible to appreciate the quality and functionality of the partnership arrangements forming in terms of the equality of the relationships, the nature and quality of communications between partners, joint problem solving and decision-making processes and procedures, the benefits accruing to partners and also the positive consequences for Romanian civil society and local communities in terms of the efficiency and level of impact of actions taken by partners.

Monitoring of Partnership activities was undertaken by the RCSS Partnership monitoring team consisting of the Grants Manager, Program Specialist and the Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator who, in the first instance, worked cooperatively with the NGOs on refining each of the grantee Performance Monitoring Plans. In this process each organization was involved on an individual basis resulting in performance indicators and their targets being agreed upon.

A Partnership Capacity Assessment Tool (PCAT) was created by RCSS and subsequently refined after being employed, with full involvement of the Partnership NGOs grantees, in determining the nature and degree of change achieved by these NGOs while being assisted by the RCSS program. The tool was used after the Partnership's grantees had been selected, grants awarded and project implementation commenced. The PCAT comprised 47 questions grouped into 4 categories: Resources, Culture, Experience, and External Relations. The application of this instrument and the employment of conclusions stemming from the analysis of data generated by PCAT led to a clearer understanding of the progress of the implementation of RCSS Partnership grants and opened avenues for the cooperative formulation of grantee implementation strategies to ensure the greatest possible impact of their work.

The tool assessed partnerships and identified issues which were addressed by NGOs in the actions to create partnerships and enhance their functioning. Evaluating how well partnerships functioned and what could

be achieved through them was essential to preserve NGO continued commitment and enthusiasm for the partnerships formed during this project once RCSS support ceased. PCAT was sent to 87 entities which were the core partnership grantees (14) and their partner organizations (73). The instrument was self-applied by 54 NGOs and public authorities employing a methodology created and disseminated by RCSS. The results were analyzed, following which, using the results, RCSS staff worked individually with each partnership to assist in fostering a better and more comprehensive understanding of the theoretical, and more importantly, practical dimensions of effective and impactful partnerships and the work they were conducting.

2b. Technical assistance

The success, or otherwise, of project implementation strategies and tactics employed by NGO grantees and the nature and effectiveness of the dynamics between partners varied widely. It appeared to depend upon both the size and duration of the partnerships, in the first instance, and also upon the innovativeness of the issue being addressed by each project and implementation methods used. RCSS staff offered technical assistance to NGOs in need of developing and enhancing skills required to work in partnerships, in implementing specific activities and in monitoring and reporting on their RCSS funded projects. Technical assistance was provided through meetings, by telephone and email as requested by grantees.

The RCSS Technical Specialist, M&E Officer, Program Officer and Financial Officer worked with the NGO staffs to provide technical assistance which included support on programmatic (strategic and technical issues), financial and administrative issues.

Technical assistance provided to grantees by RCSS touched upon topics and issues such as those summarized below:

- difficulties in communicating with partners or having some partners drop out of the relationship;
- NGOs facing difficulties in communicating with and mobilized partners mainly due to organizational issues;
- delays in project implementation arising from the external operating environment such as the impossibility of predicting with any degree of certainty when of legislative change would be enacted;
- organizational challenges created by newly formed partnership structures having to coordinate and organize a large number of partner members simultaneously as they engaged in domestic action or attempting international cooperation;
- level of experience of NGOs representatives or staff available to implement a partnership project;
- Reporting program achievements and general progress according to the performance monitoring plans (PMPs) the grantee partners had developed;

2c. Training

Partnership grantees were invited to participate in all trainings organized by RCSS whether they were specifically targeting partnership issues or not. One specific training session, “Inter-sectoral Partnership”, was precisely devised for the fourteen (14) Partnership grantees and their partners to address issues and topics of particular and specific relevance to this group. This workshop achieved the following since it:

- Deepened the NGOs’ understanding and enhanced their knowledge on the various and varied dimensions and aspects of purposeful and effective partnering to achieve program goals.
- Helped NGOs apply new knowledge in order to analyze their actual partnership arrangements and functioning with a view towards making these more effective in achieving goals;

- Facilitated the elaboration of Action Plans to use in improving existing partnerships and making them more effective through increasing their impact and sustainability.

The training, held during March 2007, was led by a MSI consultant and a trainer from the Partner Foundation for Local Development (FDLP), a Romanian organization specializing in local development and capacity building interventions designed to address the needs of Romanian civil society organizations, public authorities and local communities.

Participants for this “Inter-sectoral Partnership” workshop were selected from among the fourteen (14) Partnership grantees; ten (10) projects funded by RCSS were represented at this workshop by eighteen (18) NGO representatives consisting of the NGO Project Coordinator and a representative from one of the Core Partnership grantees partners.

The evaluations of the training submitted by participants indicated a relatively high overall satisfaction rating and also provided some initial indicators of long-term impact; these being:

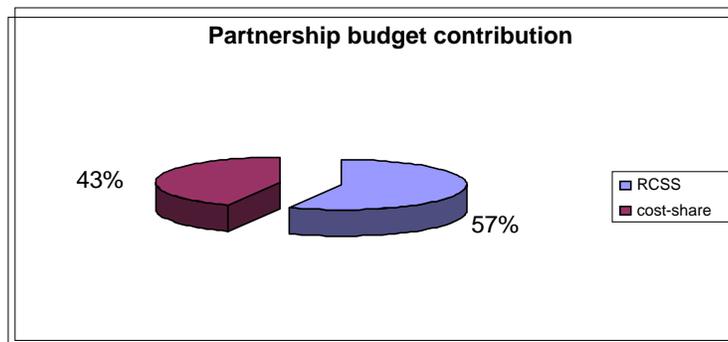
- A relatively high proportion of participants reported an increase in knowledge and skills. The fact that they had initially indicated low levels of prior knowledge suggests that the potential for learning was high and the opportunity for remedying this state was accordingly taken advantage of;
- A reasonably high proportion of participants felt that they would be able to apply their knowledge and newly acquired skills to developing better formed and more effective partnerships.

It is important to note that the final evaluation of Partnership grantee progress in effecting change revealed that some six (6) had employed tools and methods presented in the training.

3. Partnership Grantees - Project results and key achievements

RCSS and its partnership grantees worked to make partnership relationships as sustainable as possible and capable of meeting the challenges presented by the new EU environment.

RCSS funded a total of fourteen (14) partnerships awarding grants valued in total at \$518,772. Each grantee was required to contribute cost-share either in-kind or in cash which all grantees did generating \$389,780 which to apply to the implementation of the RCSS grants contribution. The cost-share, overall, represented 43% of total project funding and thus far exceeded the stated requirements of a 20% level of contribution; no NGO contributed less than the required level.



3a. Analysis of general levels of Partnership Grantee achievement of project objectives

The format of the final evaluations of the Partnership projects was devised by RCSS to analyze to what level objectives set by the grantees were achieved, what were the shortfalls and how the partners saw the continuation of their partnership relationship continuing beyond the end of RCSS funding. The Partnership Specialist together with the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer conducted 14 final evaluation visits, reviewed terminal project reports and on the basis of these assessed each project’s impact.

Final evaluations were meetings with each NGO Project Coordinator, interviews with grantee partners, interviews with community representatives or new partners attracted to the activity during the life of the project. In the case that it was not possible to meet face to face with partners, either because they were international organizations not based in Romania, were located in distant parts of Romania or could not for whatever reason not arrange a meeting, all were “interviewed” via email.

In summary, the following summarizes achievement levels of the fourteen (14) Partnership grantees and their partners:

- Of the 241 individual performance indicators defined by all grantees, 191 indicators (79.25%) where achieved as planned or were exceeded while 50 indicators (20,74%) where under-achieved.
- The overall achievement level for all 14 partnership projects is calculated at 100.2% with lowest level at 88,72 % (Ovidiu Rom) while the highest level was reported at 109% (Opportunity Associates Romania).

Over the page please find a detailed summary tabulation of the level of Partnership grantee level of achievement of their program objectives and goals.

Level of program achievement as reported by PMP indicators.	Number of indicators	Achievement Level (%)
Number of indicators 100% achieved	113	47
Number of indicators achieved <u>more</u> than 100%	78	32
Number of indicators achieved <u>less</u> than 100%	50	21
Total	241	100
Overall level of goal and objective achievement	100	

NB: The overall achievement rate does not take into account over-achievements. All indicators where organizations obtained results beyond their initial targets or expectations where considered as 100% achieved.

The tabulation – see following pages - indicates the overall level of the NGO key achievements expressed as a percentage of proposed results of the Partnerships Grantees and the ongoing status of these.

Partnership Organizations	Level of results achievement	Key achievements	Ongoing Status
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	(%)		
<p>Grantee: Alternative Sociale Association</p> <p>Partners: Crucea Rosie Vrancea, Salvati Copiii Galati, Salvati Copiii Vaslui, Salvati Copiii Suceava;</p>	107	<p>- The Anti-Trafficking Coalition was enlarged by accepting two (2) new Human rights NGOs as members.</p> <p>- A regional strategy for 2007-2009 and an action plan on anti-trafficking of human beings was developed and signed by all Coalition members. The Coalition created its own logo and visual identity.</p> <p>- the Regional Network on Prevention and Combating of Human Trafficking was enlarged by 60 new members consisting of representatives from NGOs and public authorities.</p> <p>-11 public institutions from eight counties agreed to become members of the Regional Anti-trafficking Coalition</p> <p>- ASA and the Coalition benefited formed a good relationship with the National Institute for Crime Research and Prevention and the National Agency against Trafficking formalized through a signed partnership agreement, joint meetings and sharing information and resources.</p> <p>- 3 NGO and local business partnership were created to support the Coalition against Anti-Trafficking</p>	<p>The Coalition became more sustainable and stronger due to a larger number of members taking an active role in the Coalition; the Coalition and Regional Network was enlarged to include public representatives and new NGOs; the coalition's members attracted private partners to support the Coalition. The Coalition also strengthened its relationship and with the national (central) authorities in order to design join programs and act as an advisor.</p> <p>The Coalition attracted two international partners (Association of the Women in Legal Careers, Republic Moldova and Institute for Penal reforms, Moldova). Partnerships were signed and two projects on combating trans-border trafficking were submitted. One year grant of €54,132 was received.</p> <p>The coalition also won a grant from Trust for Civil Society in the total amount \$74,710 which will end on March 2008;</p> <p>The Coalition signed a partnership with the national TV station to promote its projects and messages.</p>
		-A methodology and a tool kit	The consortium formed by

<p>Grantee: Pro Democracy Association.</p> <p>Partners: Media Monitoring Agency, Resource Centre for Public Participation</p>	<p>101</p>	<p>to assess good governance at the local level was developed by the 3 partner NGOs working together in this project. The instruments combine legislative requirements with indicators to assess the processes and mechanisms needed to have good governance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Two public authorities (Cristesti/ Iasi county and Jimbolia/ Timis county) signed partnership agreements for testing the good government methodology. -Two local initiative groups (LIG) were establishing in Cristesti (19 persons) and Jimbolia (17 persons). The LIGs formed by local administration representatives, NGO representatives, teachers, local businessmen and citizens; - Website www.bunaguvernare.eu hosting information on good governance was created and includes a map of Romanian communities complying with good governance practices. -5 new public-private partnerships were signed to further implement good governance methodologies -9 communities were identified to apply the methodology and 4 signed implementing. 	<p>PDA, Media Monitoring Agency and the Centre for Citizen's Participation CeRe) submitted a joint proposal for continuing the implementation of the good governance methodology and assessing local authorities using EU funds from the Phare Civil Society Program. This activity will begin on December 2007. The Consortium will continue working together since good governance has become the basis for a joint program of great importance for the future.</p>
<p>Grantee: Civil Society Development Foundation</p> <p>Partners: TRIALOG, Eurostep</p>	<p>108</p>	<p>-31 Romanian NGO representatives increased their knowledge on capacity building for non-governmental development organizations (NGDOs) by participating in several training sessions organized under this project.</p> <p>-CSDF officially became a member of Eurostep in December 2006. This led to increased representation of and</p>	<p>The total impact of this project will be seen in the years to come since, only starting with 2007 Romania become EU's member and only since this time therefore have international development programs become a mandatory part of the country's contribution as an EU member to international development</p>

		<p>contribution from the Romanian NGOs in European networks in the field of development cooperation which attracted more support for other Romanian NGOs willing to become involved in this field.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FOND, the Romanian non-governmental development organization (NGDO) platform, was legally formed on 2007, a Board was elected and strategic plan approved; -building a good relationship with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) ended with the inclusion of FOND in the decision making process and it becoming the recipient of support from the public budget with supporting international development for the following 3 years. Due to lobbying, a Government Decision was adopted in July 2007 which defined the International Development process, the entities to be involved and the mechanism to be employed. 	<p>Therefore, it is expected that CSDF, Trialog , Eurostep and Fond will continue working together since they have common goals on this regard.</p>
<p>Grantee: Resource Centre for Community Centre</p> <p>Partners: Asociatia Dezvoltare, Asociatia Interne, Asociatia Dezvoltare Comunitara, Asociatia Viitorul Valea Viilor, Fraternitatea Nemsă, Impreuna, Drumul Voinicilor Stana, Humanity Rom.</p>	102	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -68 NGOs and public authority representatives participated in a series of trainings on different topics such as: Structural Funds, strategic planning; writing proposals, lobbying, project coordination; -7 project proposals written and submitted by the local NGOs or groups of local NGOs associated with this project. €71,510 were awarded. - 10 community development plans completed and submitted to Local Councils for approval. Two currently approved. - Community activities such as: evaluation of the ID's situation in Roma district; preparing an income generation activity (a brick small factory); and 	<p>RCRC will continue to work with the 10 local groups when requested and needed. RCRC through this experience by enhancing and developing the expertise of working with local public administration and local NGOs created a model approach. The implementation team and consultants will continue using it for another 60 rural and urban communities within the Phare Program between September 2007 and March 2008. They also, proposed to disseminate the model approach developed to the National Regional Agencies thus reaching</p>

		<p>finalizing the Milk Collecting Centre were implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 Local Councils established special budget lines as contribution and or cost-share for community project ranging from €500 to €2,500. -one inter-sectoral partnership was created between three (3) communities (Varbilau, Iancu Jianu and Cugir) meaning that 3 local Roma NGOs and three neighboring Public Authorities will work together and develop a common project. 	<p>another 200 local communities.</p>
<p>Grantee: Opportunity Associates</p> <p>Partners: Centras, Civil Society Development Foundation</p>	109	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The 2006 John Hopkins University Annual Conference was held in Bucharest in July 2007 and 87 Romanian NGOs attended. -5 new partnerships were formed between Romanian NGOs and international entities as a result of networking at the Conference -a Code of Conduct completed and adopted by 40 NGOs (website: www.codedeconduita.org) -563 NGOs were made aware of the Code - The “Coalition of Good Practices” was formed by a group of NGOs and it will be responsible of implemented and promoted the code. 	<p>OAR, CSDF and Centras will continue working together and support each other on the Code of Conduct. OAR will take the lead for the coming year since it is committed to running the Secretariat of the coalition. OAR is working on writing a proposal to the CEE Trust for continuing work on the Code of Conduct.</p>
<p>Grantee: Motivation Foundation</p> <p>Partners: American Network of Community Options and Resources, Special Olympics, Centre for Legal Resources, (cont.) Directorate for</p>	96	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -61 NGOs representatives and persons with disabilities increased their knowledge about advocacy as a result of participating in training sessions delivered by the American Network of Community Options and Resources -4 national advocacy initiatives were created by partners and other local NGOs. -5 new public –private partnerships were created in 	<p>The partnership, as it was created for this project will not continue. However, all partners involved will continue working together on a one-to-one basis rather than as coordinated group.</p> <p>Motivation and its partners proposed to the NGOs attending the last Conference organized by the program that they form the Romanian</p>

<p>Child Protection Ilfov County</p>		<p>order to improve the life of persons with disabilities -5 local advocacy plans were created by 10 local NGOs trained by this project to effect the local policy-making processes. -10 local NGOs working for and with persons with disabilities went through an assessment of their organizational capacity, needs and operating environment regarding a disabled person's quality of life. Reports were completed.</p>	<p>Coalition for Community Living (RCCL) an umbrella organization which should be the voice of both persons and NGOs in respect of the rights and legislation impacting people with disabilities.</p>
<p>Grantee: Ovidiu Rom Association</p> <p>Partners: Various private supporters and for-profit sector donors.</p>	<p>89</p>	<p>-A census was carried out in 3 Bucharest locations, Sector 5, Bacau and Buhusi. -27 OvR staff , 35 representatives of local authorities, 6 persons from NGOs and one student attended 6 trainings organized on intercultural competencies, non-violent communication in schools and case management in social work. -A policy paper on the status of Roma children's education was drafted; -A strategy paper on Volunteers recruitment and involvement was drafted - 20 new partners - either public or private or NGOs - were attracted by OvR to support its programs. - increased financial contributions from public and private partners received.</p>	<p>OvR initiative „Every Single Child in School” received increasing support from partners both in terms of the number of partners and in the level of implementation. However, to make it work it will require a better understanding of the roles that each partner has within the project and a creation of a participation and communication mechanism in order to maximize the effect of the effort.</p>
<p>Grantee: Hospice Casa Sperantei</p> <p>Partners: Municipal Hospital Pascani-iasi County, (cont.) Hospital from</p>	<p>102</p>	<p>-21 doctors, 107 nurses and 25 other professionals were trained in palliative care. - Two (2) Palliative care units were created and officially sited in two public hospitals: one in Municipal Hospital Pascani, Iasi County and the other in the Hospital for the Chronically Ill</p>	<p>The partnership will not continue. However, Hospice Casa Sperantei will provide consultancy and support as and where needed.</p>

<p>Stefanesti –Arges County, Coltea Hospital – Bucharest, Directorate for Child Protection Brasov County</p>		<p>in Stefanesti, Arges County. These two units are the first two palliative care units in public hospitals in Romania. - 8 Romanian NGOs (Diakonia Cluj, Carl Wolf Sibiu, Hospice timisoara, Sf.Necatricie, Sf.Irina, Hospice Emanuel, Fundatia ChiRo and Fundatia Casa Soarelui sought expertise on improving or opening palliative care units. - 12 Romanian Public Hospitals contacted Hospice Casa Sperantei and sent their representatives to learn, get advice and support for setting up palliative care services; - 6 international hospices were willing to twin with and support either Hospice Casa Sperantei or other Hospices for future activities. Actions were already taken by two Hospices on getting involved in activities. Hospice St.Columbas and University of Rhode Island, USA, in the form of exchange of expertise particularly in the areas of volunteerism, social work and day care. A third international partner, Boston University Palliative Care Team worked through videoconferences on palliative care and training in Romania.</p>	
<p>Grantee: ICAR Foundation</p> <p>Partners: MRCT Iasi, ICAR Craiova</p>	<p>109</p>	<p>- a media support team consisting of journalists from newspapers and television was established in order to improve awareness regarding torture and the needs of torture survivors. - 15 applications were submitted. to potential new donors as follow up of fundraising training - 6 staff members demonstrated improved financial management skills</p>	<p>The 3 NGOs partner have the same mission and they will continue working together.</p> <p>The partnership received \$31,237 to continue its activities.</p> <p>Due to current opportunities created by the recognition damages caused by the former communist regime, a law initiative was drafted by</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A newsletter was produced and distributed to the general public to increase the visibility of ICAR and the topic ICAR is focused on - a virtual information and documentation center was developed and promoted. - Lobbying and advocacy to of decision makers regarding the Legislation of Lustration regarding benefits to be provided to the victims of torture. - Translated and reproduced the Istanbul Protocol as tool, 25 Romanian professional working with victims of torture trained using this tool. 	<p>the Ministry of Justice. The draft stipulates the annulment of political sentences and opens the way for substantial reparations. However, the law initiative is still missing a rehabilitation dimension for which ICAR and its partner will continue work in direct negotiations with the Ministry of Justice.</p>
<p>Grantee: Association for Community Relations</p> <p>Partner: Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, Satu Mare</p>	89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -2 local mixed groups, were set up to form community foundations in Cluj and Alba. These involved representatives from public authorities (4), NGOs and companies (8). 4 trainings and workshops. The upgraded knowledge and skills of local groups - Quarterly community newsletters were created and distributed; - Eight (8) persons trained and an experience exchange was organized with Slovak Community Foundations to better understand community foundation and the mechanisms which could be used in raising and administering funds. - €7,261 was raised from businesses in Cluj, Alba and Satu Mare to support community projects. - one inter-county inter-institutional partnership created between Cluj and Alba Iulia (local authorities and NGOs) to share experience and organized local training. 	<p>This partnership experienced operational and communications difficulties and it will not continue beyond the end of RCSS program support.</p>
Grantee:	89		

<p>Foundation for Community Care</p> <p>Partners: National Agency of Anti-Drug, “ARAS”, Romanian Association of fighting against HIV/ AIDS</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A National Consultancy Group on Drugs was formed to support the RCSS grantee and its partners to promote and integrate the project's results and recommendations into laws, procedures and programs. - A community guide in the field of drug addiction in Bucharest was completed. - Two (2) Local Working Groups were formed (Cluj and Iasi) from NGOs and public authorities’ representatives in order to replicate it in their areas. -A database of public and private service providers in the drug addiction field was developed for Bucharest. The database posted on the National Antidrug Agency’s website and promoted among public and private institutions. 	<p>FIC and ARAS will work with National Agency of Anti-Drug cause it is a natural relationship.</p>
<p>Grantee: National Society for Multiply Sclerosis</p> <p>Partners: FIC; European Platform</p>	<p>97</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A report including national and international data analysis regarding multiple sclerosis (MS) issues, its consequences and services was produced. -97 patients have been involved in reviewing the Guide for Services. - two guides for specialized services approved by Neurological Professionals Association, multiplied and disseminated. -3 workshops organized where representatives from SSMR’s local branches, patients, various professionals such as social workers, psychologists, doctors; public authorities’ representatives, University, Neurological Professionals 	<p>The partnership as it was created for this project will not continue. One organization (FIC) decided to leave the partnership; the rest will stay in touch more or less.</p> <p>SSMR and European Platform will continue working together under a European project, where SSMR was selected from among other organizations from 5 European countries.</p>

		<p>Association, participated in developing and finalizing the guides.</p> <p>-1,139 persons used the MS Help Line and 634 persons accessed the National Register and SSMR's website.</p> <p>-5 official licenses were received by SSMR and its partner MS Bihor for providing services in accordance with Romanian standards.</p>	
<p>Grantee: GRADO</p> <p>Partners: Asociatia Pas Alternativ – Brasov, APFR - Asociatia pentru Promovarea Femeii din Romania – Timisoara, AFIV - Asociatia Femeilor Impotriva Violentei – Artemis – Cluj-Napoca, CMSC - Fundatia Centrul de Mediere si Securitate Comunitara – Iasi, Fundatia Catharsis – Iasi, SEF - Fundatia Sanse Egale pentru Femei – Iasi, Fundatia Veritas – Sighisoara, Fundatia Conexiuni – Deva, IEESR - Fundatia Institutul Est</p>	102	<p>- 11 persons from 10 NGOs working in the domestic violence field were trained on monitoring public budgets and prepared materials to be used in order to assess public institutions. Data collected referred to number of cases, existing services (accredited) and campaigns, specialized staff and budget.</p> <p>- 128 official requests were sent to 6 public institutions from 20 counties. The local public institutions contacted to be part of the assessment were: County Council, Local Council, City Hall, Direction of Work, Social Solidarity and Family, General Direction for Social Work and Child Protection, The County Police Inspectorate, The court and the Probation Service. The Central Authorities were: Ministry of Labor, Social Solidarity and Family, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Research, and Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs.</p> <p>- Monitoring reports of the status of domestic violence in 20 counties of Romania was completed.</p> <p>- Two Press Conferences were held to present the results of the project.</p>	<p>The Coalition became a legal entity during 2007 and will continue working together in this field.</p> <p>During the last quarter of this project, the Coalition applied for a grant to the Chamber of Deputies of Romanian Parliament in order to improve the legislative framework related to domestic violence.</p>

<p>European de Sanatate a Reproducerii – Targu Mures</p>		<p>- An extensive media coverage reporting data about budgets on domestic violence, both at national and local level, was generated through press conferences.</p> <p>- Public resources were mobilized in 5 counties and created public-private partnerships to develop services for victims of domestic violence.</p>	
<p>Grantee: Chamber Commerce of Industry and Agriculture Bistrita Nasaud</p> <p>Partners: CNS Cartel Alfa, Fundatia Inocentii, Primaria Bistrita, Prefectura Bistrita Nasaud.</p>	<p>105%</p>	<p>-A research for analyzing the status of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in 5 counties of Romania was completed and disseminated to 585 institutions; public institutions, NGOs, and all Romanian Chambers of Commerce</p> <p>-30 companies were involved in CSR activities</p> <p>-A web site dedicated to CSR activities developed (www.rschn.ro)</p> <p>-\$3,000 raised for projects;</p> <p>-52 volunteers involved in supporting the programs initiated by the partnership and local NGOs's activities;</p> <p>-76 persons from NGOs, local companies, mass-media and public authorities attended a 3-days training for implementing good corporate governance, relation between social partners, stakeholders' analysis, and implementing a code of conduct in corporate operations.</p> <p>-2 local companies (Leoni Wiring Systems Ro SRL Bistrita and Teraplst) started a campaign for directing of 2% of employee taxes to local NGOs.</p> <p>-16 local NGOs presented to the local business and public authorities in order to better connect and mobilized local</p>	<p>These partnerships as they appeared will not continue even though the organizations will work together. However, CCIA-BN, through implementing the code, will work closely with business and local NGOs.</p> <p>The code was approved by the Board of Directors of CCIA-BN and by 50 companies. The CCIA-BN started to change its procedures therefore all its members (450 companies) will need to adopt and follow the code since it will be compulsory. As a consequence it is expected that CSR activities amongst CCIA-BN's members will increase.</p>

		resources to develop the CSR concept, -A code of conduct for CSR developed and disseminated amongst companies, -a joint data base with volunteers coming from companies, public institutions, NGOs and public at large created	
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Major achievements of RCSS Partnership Grantees

a. NGOs regulatory mechanism created

The NGO community agreed to establish a regulatory mechanism defined and operated by the NGOs themselves this being in addition to the government required registration procedures. Through a Partnership project implemented by Opportunity Associates and its partners, and funded by RCSS , there was mechanism and procedure created to certify NGOs, to monitor adherence to their stated missions and to ensure that an NGO is not merely a sham organization being used by a business or political party for its own purposes nor being the property of an individual and run for personal reasons and gain. This Code of Good Practices involves member NGOs conducting peer evaluations to ensure adherence to the basic tenets of authenticity and good practice.

The Coalition will secure future funding in order to organize an Annual Conference on Good Practices and provide training and technical assistance when needed for Romanian NGOs in order to adopt and implement the code.

b. Achievements in obtaining financial support from non-traditional donors – the public and private sectors

Romanian NGOs, especially watchdog and public policy organizations, are facing complex problems most often related to the decrease of funding from traditionally present and supportive sources – such as USAID – and having to address the challenges of securing funds from the EU, the private sector, the general public and the national government. Since the availability of stable and sufficient funding plays a critical role in the ability of organizations to continue working together, a number of partnerships engaged in a concerted efforts to ensure funding for further joint collaboration. During lifetime of the RCSS funded Partnership projects, grantees succeeded in attracting \$339,500 in additional funds in the form of grants, donations or increased cost-share from partners.

NGOs worked successfully to develop multiple funding sources to secure long term sustainability while maintaining their independence as Romanian NGOs. Three of the RCSS funded Partnership projects succeeded in creating mechanisms for mobilizing resources either from public or private sectors. These were as follows:

- ARC with creation of Community Foundations mechanism;
- Chamber of Commerce Bistrita with CSR’s code and practice;
- CSDF with International Development Fund from Central Authority’s budget.

During the RCSS funding of NGOs and through the training and technical assistance provided Romanian organizations have started to develop capabilities and capacities for persuading the public and private sectors to financially support NGO activities. This it is especially important in order for NGOs to take advantage of assistance available through the EU.

c. Building a public image as watchdog organizations

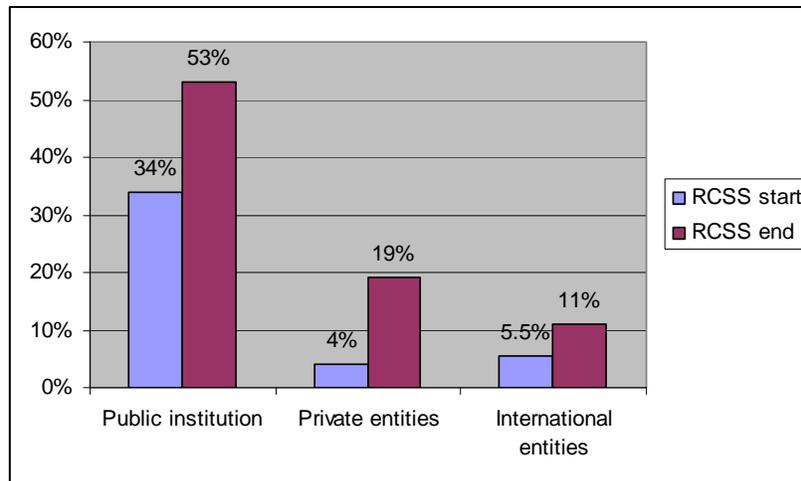
Watchdog, public policy organizations like any other NGOs have to demonstrate their effectiveness and impacts of their actions, and promote and publicize themselves not only as watchdog organizations but also as direct service providers in order to be taken seriously by the government, their clients and also potential donors and supporters. Three Partnerships grantees achieved this through their projects:

- GRADO with monitoring public budget on domestic violence;
- Motivation working with local NGOs and partners to implement local advocacy initiatives;
- Foundation for Community Care with its assessment of public and private community services for drug addicts.

The results obtained by these NGO projects and the activities through which their data was collected clearly demonstrated to Local Authorities and to the community that these NGOs were comprehensively and objectively monitoring the implementation of current legislation to ensure that changes as intended by the Law were being actualized.

d. Strengthen the relationship among NGOs and between NGOs and other sectors both domestically and internationally.

One of the most successful ways to build capacity and maximize the impact of their implementing efforts is for NGOs to work in partnership with other NGOs and also with the public and private sectors to achieve a common goal. In this context, it is important to mention that during the life of the RCSS project, the number of partnerships increased. Twenty nine (29) new domestic partnerships were created, with 54% being between NGOs and Public Authorities and 19% with private sector partners. International partnerships have also increased by a factor of two times more than at the start of the RCSS effort. Please see the tabulation below for details.



e. Increased volunteerism

Volunteers are a valuable resource for NGOs both in terms of the physical and intellectual support they provide and because volunteerism strengthens relations with the community. Three NGO grantees in particular - OvR, Chamber of Commerce and SSMR - reported making great use and receiving significant benefits from working with volunteers; 58 persons were regularly involved in project activities. It is interesting and important to mention that the majority of these volunteers had full-time jobs in the for-profit business sector. Quite possibly, therefore, the argument can seriously be posited that a certain minimum level of financial and job security must be enjoyed by individuals before they feel comfortable with volunteering time and energy for causes they would otherwise only support emotionally.

NGO Partnership in Romania - observations

NGOs working in partnership need to periodically, but routinely, comprehensively and objectively, assess their strengths in order to determine where and what each entity in the partnership can contribute to increase the overall synergy of the relationship and lead to more efficient and effective satisfaction of the mission and goals. This is a valid perspective irrespective of the composition of the partnership be it NGO/NGO or NGO/private/public sector. Partnership for the sake of partnership, or cooperation merely based on a past history of organizational association is dangerous and could harm the organization itself or even the relationships. The RCSS assistance effort demonstrated the value to NGOs and their partners, irrespective of the duration of the relationship, in making an assessment of the reasons for the formation and existence of a partnership as much as for its structure, internal relationships and functioning.

Allocating time, effort and resources to ensure successful partnerships is extremely import. Successful partnerships require qualified people, time, and money to establish, develop and maintain functioning in a meaningful, representative, inclusive and effective manner. When funding new partnership projects, it is important to allow partners to be trained specifically on how to start and run an effective partnership and negotiate the details partnership. Training and technical assistance for partnership capacity development is more effective at the beginning of a project than after partnership grant has been awarded and some form of implementation is already underway. Facilitation or negotiation meetings between all partners involved will save time and energy and will reduce misunderstandings while preparing all involved for project implementation.

All entities involved in a partnership effort should carefully document their work and present it to the partners or even to the general public, if possible, in order to educate civil society and other NGOs about the work which has been done, by who and with what results. This is often very challenging for NGOs used to working independently or taking the lead and dominating role in what have traditionally been considered as partnership but which in fact functioned as project implementing relationships based firmly on subordination. That some NGOs have tended to control or take-over the management of a partnership, ascribe success uniquely to themselves or irresponsibly blame partners for failures has been relatively common in Romanian civil society. This has often been inadvertently facilitated by donors more interested in “results” irrespective of how these were obtained and at what long-term cost to the entities involved in project implementation. Documentation and evaluation of how partnerships have functioned will allow partners to take early actions and learn from their experience. If partners agreed to make their experiences public this will also help other partners to avoid the same mistake and look for better solutions.

Successful partnership requires good communication and flexibility. NGOs have generally and historically tended to be focused on project activities and less on the relationships between partners. The evaluation of how partnership is going, how well partners accomplish what they commit to and how happy they are in such partnership is not a common practice among NGOs. Therefore, NGOs get enmeshed in institutional relationship which is not working well and have difficulties in discussing the effectiveness and efficiency of the structure and functioning of relationships which if they were addressed would reduce implementation delays and frustration among partners. Periodical evaluations are important when done appropriately and involve all actual, prospective and former – partners and the community.

More than ever, professionalism, transparency and leadership are the key elements of long-term sustainability for watchdog public policy organizations. Managing a partnership is a delicate process which can work differently based upon the actors involved, the level of functioning, its purpose and dynamic environment. The dynamic of relationship and roles could change. Therefore, every time, it is important to consider the particularity and individuality of each partnership and not attempt a “one size fits all” philosophy.

The RCSS program as funded by USAID was unique in its goals in the Partnership component and in the manner of its implementation because it worked with NGOs to help them better understand and practice the skills needed to establish and maintain project implementation through partnership functional structures and sustainable practices rather than focusing solely on the results regardless through what means and in which ways these were attained.

4. Partnership RCSS PMP results

SUB-IR 2.3.2.3 Newly created or strengthened NGO partnerships with other sectors

Sub-IR 2.3.2.3 Number of NGOs which make a multiyear commitment to a partnership

Baseline: 0

LoP Target: 7

Achieved: 7

Seven of the RCSS Partnership grantees made multi-year partnership commitments; these NGOs were Alternative Sociale Association, Pro Democracy Association, Civil Society Development Foundation, ICAR, GRADO, Opportunity Associates Foundation, and Society for Multiple Sclerosis Foundation. Five of these, during the course of implementing RCSS funded projects, secured funds for continuing activities in partnership; these NGOs were ASA, ProDemocracy Association, Civil Society for Development Foundation, Society for Multiple Sclerosis Foundation and ICAR). The remaining two submitted proposals to possible donors for such funding.

Sub-IR 2.3.2.3 Number of partners that provide support other than funding to NGO partners

Baseline: 0

LoP Target: 10

Achieved: 11

The following organizations benefited from various kinds of support from their partners: Alternative Sociale, SSMR, CRCR, FIC, CCBN, Motivation, Ovidiu Rom, CSDF, GRADO, APD, and Opportunity Associates. In general the support provided was in the form of knowledge, skills and specialized trainers and material support.

More specifically:

- SSMR received assistance from the European Platform in the field of multiply sclerosis; general support received from the University of Oradea;
- Motivation benefited from ANCOR providing trainers on advocacy and public speaking on disability issues;
- CSDF from Trialog and Eurostep on international development and building European platforms;
- APD from CERe and MMA on transparency and public participation in the form of studies and specialized information and participation in networks or through connections with various institutions such as CSDF, ASA, OvR, OAR.
- ASA from coalition members through a strategic planning exercise, human resources in the form of volunteers;
- OvR from private companies;
- OAR from Centras researchers and studies.

Sub-IR 2.3.2.3 Number of initiatives which aim to generate institutionalized funding mechanisms

Baseline: 0

LoP Target: 2

Achieved: 3

Three of the RCSS Partnership grantees developed initiatives which created workable and sustainable institutionalized funding mechanisms:

- ARC formed their Community Foundations mechanism. In two Romanian cities; Cluj and Alba Iulia a group formed by local NGOs, public authorities and corporate entities established a community organization – similar to a Foundation but not registered as such - in order to address local needs by mobilizing local resources;
- Chamber of Commerce Bistrita, using the code and practice created by CRS(Romania), created a institutionalized funding mechanism focusing on the Chamber’s corporate members to support local NGOs and community needs;
- CSDF helped formulate a government decision through which recipients for the International Development Fund will be channeled to fund Romanian NGOs and also, specifically, FOND which is the Romanian Non-governmentals for Development Organization.

These three initiatives will serve a large number of Romanian NGOs, with the first two mentioned operating mainly at the local level while the last is national and international in scope.

Sub-IR 2.3.2.3 Number of partnerships developed

Baseline: 0

LoP Target: 14

Achieved: 18

The total number of partners working with the 14 RCSS Partnership main grantees was 73. Of these, 41 were Romanian NGOs, 25 were Romanian public institutions, 3 were Romanian private entities, 4 were international partners.

During the implementation of the RCSS project 4 Partnership NGOs developed new partnerships involving 21 entities.

- 3 NGO and business partnerships: ASA (3 partners), ARC (2 partners), Ovidiu Rom (3 partners)
- 3 NGOs partnering other NGOs: ASA (2 partners), Ovidiu Rom (3 partners), ARC (1 partners)
- 2 Romanian NGO working with international organizations: ASA (2 partners), Opportunity Associates (5 partners).

Sub-IR 2.3.2.3 Number of public-NGO partnership at the local level

Baseline: 0

LoP Target: 10

Achieved: 13

Six (6) of the partnerships projects were founded on local level NGO cooperation with public entities involving 23 local Public Authorities and institutions. The Hospice of Hope worked with 4 Public Authorities, SSMR with 2, Motivation with 1, the Resource Centre for Roma Communities with 10, the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Bistrita Nasaud County had 2 partners while the Ovidiu Rom Association cooperated with 4 partners.

Two such partnerships were also created within the Disability Grants component these being ASCHFR-Olt and AHF Satu Mare each working with two Public Authorities.

During the implementation of the grant funded projects, 5 NGOs created totally new partnership arrangements with local public institutions which involved 17 public entities these being APD with 6 public institution partners, ARC with 2, ASA with 1, Motivation co-working with 5 and GRADO with 3.

In summary, 13 NGOs funded by RCSS engaged in partnership arrangements with 42 local public institutions, some of which have stated that they wish to continue the working relationship beyond the lifespan of the RCSS project.

Sub-IR 2.3.2.3 Percentage of cost share covered by partners

Baseline: 0
LoP Target: 5%
Achieved: 15%

The percentage of cost share covered by the 14 Partnership grantees, amounted to \$389,780 which represented 43% of the partnership component total budget of \$908,552. The percentage of cost share covered by the 73 partners of the 14 partnership grantees was \$140,762, which represents 15% of the total Partnership grants budget.

In addition, during the project grantees and their partners brought an additional cost–share in a total amount of \$64,415 over and above the amount stipulated in the Grant Agreements as mandatory.

Six (6) of the partnership projects had an advocacy component which monitored the implementation of legislation affecting educational, employment and accessibility rights for Romanians with disabilities. The Partnership grantees most involved in this work were Motivation, ASCHFR-Olt and AHF Satu Mare – the last two were funded through the disability grant making facility of the RCSS program. Five (5) local NGOs working with Motivation were trained by this NGO and subsequently developed local advocacy initiatives focusing on the implementation of legislation for the disabled. Two entities, GRADO and FIC focused on monitoring public budgets on domestic violence and drug addiction while APD assessed and monitored good governance.

D. Support for Disability Issues

Responding to current challenges facing NGOs dealing with disability issues, RCSS initiated a cycle of grants supported by technical assistance and trainings in order to help such organizations. This program component provided funding for those NGOs, and their partner organizations, whose missions focused on disability issues, which worked with disabled people and were active at either the local or national level. RCSS helped these NGOs to increase organizational capacity to monitor the implementation of existing legislation through strategic partnerships. RCSS helped these entities, both singly and through strategic partnerships to help them acquire and employ the perspectives and skills required to monitor the implementation of existing legislation. The RCSS strategy was to strengthen the operational capabilities and capacities, at the legislative and policy making level, of organizations representing disabled people and to help them raise relevant and urgent issues affecting disabled Romanians.

The approach for providing assistance through the Disability component was similar to what RCSS had implemented in the Sustainability, Advocacy and Partnership components. A package consisting of a combination of grants, technical assistance and training was central. RCSS staff offered technical assistance to NGOs in need of developing and enhancing skills required working in partnerships, implementing specific activities on advocacy and sustainability and in monitoring and reporting on the progress and achievements of the projects. On-going technical assistance was provided through telephone and email as requested by grantees.

A Request for Applications (RFA) for disability grants was announced during August with a deadline for receipt of concept papers set for mid-September. The RFA announcement was widely distributed including “Voluntar”, NGO list and EU-list. Ahead of the receipt of the concept papers a review Concept Paper Review Committee was established which included members of the RCSS staff, and independent sector specialist and USAID staff. In response to a Request for Applications (RFA) from NGOs working on disability issues (70) concept papers were received by the deadline. It is important to note that with USAID concurrence a request was issued for concept papers rather than proposals since earlier surveys had indicated that this group of NGOs was significantly deficient in the skills and experience needed to compose workable proposals even though the ideas on which they were founded were appropriate and relevant. Therefore, this RCSS grant making component included as significant effort to enhance NGO capabilities and capacities which would be employed in the RCSS competition and subsequently to access EU funds designated for disability issues.

Representatives of ten (10) organizations whose concept papers was considered as potentially very appropriate as the foundation for impactful projects attended a RCSS and ISO implemented workshop during which they learned about the skills required to write strong proposals based on their concept papers.

A training event was organized and conducted for the 10 short-listed organizations. Also, representatives from their partner organizations – these being other NGOs or public institutions, project managers or members of the project teams involved in the development of the project proposals – attended the workshop. Following on from the concept paper selection and proposal writing workshop, RCSS concluded Grant Agreements with nine NGOs for the Disability Component. Funds released to the Disability NGO grantees totaled \$165,104 and attracted a cost share of \$47,600. All Disability projects lasted nine months and were completed by the end of September 2007.



Participants at the Proposal Writing and Problem Solving Workshop for Disability grantees
Pre-award discussions of proposed projects were conducted with each NGO and focused on:

- Revising objectives, results and indicators to render these as clear as possible;
- Revising and clarifying project activities and the role played by partners involved in order to maximize the effectiveness and impact of the implementing actions;

- A budget review to ensure that financial projections accurately reflected the costs of the proposed implementation;
- Developing Performance Monitoring Plans (PMP) and matrixes which would be used by Disability project implementers to gauge their progress and evaluate their achievement levels at the conclusion of the project.

Assessment of Project Monitoring Plan (PMP) for Disability Projects

The final evaluation meetings, all quarterly reports and the final project reports indicated satisfactory implementation of the grants funded through the Disability component. A closer analysis of the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) developed for each grant allows highlighting several findings which permit an appreciation that the program was successfully conducted and implemented

In summary, of the 121 individual performance indicators, 86 indicators (71%) were accomplished completely or to a higher level than originally proposed while only 35 indicators (29%) were under-achieved. Please see the tabulation following.

PMP indicators level of achievement	Number of indicators	Percent
Indicators 100% achieved	65	54
Indicators achieved <u>more</u> than 100%	21	17
Indicators achieved <u>less</u> than 100%	35	29
Total	121	100

Grantee	Grant (USD)	Project Goal	Main Achievements
Society of Disabled People Zalau	22,180	To increase the employment opportunities for people with disabilities, especially for those living in Salaj County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The grantee conducted activities and strengthened its vocational training services to provide training courses to disabled persons - Survey of the most important 120 companies in Salaj county; 70 responses received. Work with National Council for Adult Training to create occupational standards for one profession (candlemaker) thus enabling the running vocational training courses in this skill.
Save the Children Romania	17,020	To improve access to education for children with disabilities, a right that is stipulated in the UN Convention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local strategies for improving access to education of children with disabilities were developed in 8 pilot areas.

		for Children's Rights.	- Report launched at a press conference generating a public debate attended by the Ministry of Education – the aim was to develop a national strategy for improved access to education of children with disabilities.
Soul to Soul Foundation	19,000	To improve physical access of people with disabilities to public institutions as stated in the legislation in force in the town of Ramnicu Valcea .	- Finalized a report on the results of the monitoring of enforcement of accessibility rules in the city of Ramnicu Valcea and making these, including the rules for applying sanctions by the responsible institutions, public in a press conference,.
Romanian League for Mental Health Liga	20,545	To promote employment for people with disabilities from Romania (and in particular for 4 targeted counties).	- Finalized and made public the first report on the employment situation of disabled persons in Romania and their access to public employment services and programs - Published and disseminated two guides; one for the disabled and one for employers, about the employment of disabled persons
National Organization of Disabled People from Romania	22,568	To improve the capacity of ONPHR and its member organizations to adapt and develop in the context of socio-economical changes imposed by the legislation and the norms of the European Community.	- Increased organizational capacity of the organization - Strategic planning process developed and strategic plan elaborated
Association of Support for Psychological Disabled Children – Olt	21,000	To strengthen organizational capacity for achieving social integration of children and youth with disabilities who are cared for in families by increasing the participation of	- Three local parents' support groups were formed to promote and monitor the needs and rights of disabled children and youth. - Twelve (12) new members accepted into ASCHFR-Olt

		the organization's members at the local level and attracting local authorities as partners.	- Three (3) reports regarding the situation of children and youth with disabilities in three communities in Olt County were produced by the support groups. 8 children were integrated into mainstream schools.
Association of Support for Psychical Disabled Children – Romania	7,807	To improve organizational capacity for responding to members' needs and assuring a stable and coherent organizational evolution	- Trained and reorganized the Board - Strategic plan elaborated
AUTISM Romania - Parents Association of Autistic Children	13,009	To strengthen organizational capacity to better represent the interests of autistic people before authorities and to offer beneficiaries needed individual or group support and quality services.	- Increased association membership - Increased the number of volunteers involved - A database of parents, services and volunteers completed
Association of Disabled People, Satu Mare	22,970	To develop the capacity of AHS-Satu Mare for facilitating access of disabled people into the job market, development of entrepreneurial capacity and elaboration of an action plan for starting-up a protected workshop business for people with disabilities.	- A data base of 600 persons with disabilities and 200 employers was set up as preparatory stage for research - One research report on employability of persons with disability in Satu Mare completed - A business plan for an income generating activity completed
Total	166,099 USD		

In addition to the NGO specific reporting in the above tabulation some noteworthy general changes and first time achievements should be highlighted since these indicate positive consequences arising from the provision of assistance yet not being specifically planned for nor, in many cases anticipated, meanwhile forming foundations for productive future developments within the sector.

The following are examples:

- A number of nation-wide organizations - ASCHFR, ONHPR, and Autism Romania - formed from a large number of locally rooted and functioning parents associations were strengthened as a result of individual NGOs pursuing their Disability project goals
- Watchdog activities in the area of employment (AHF-Satu Mare, LNSM), education (Save the Children and ASCHFR-Olt) and accessibility (Soul to Soul) for Romanian citizens with disabilities were conducted on for the first time by many of RCSS grantees. The results achieved by the RCSS funded and supported projects increased the visibility and profiles, within their community and nationwide, of NGOs working disability issues better positioning them for continued impactful action as their stature among their actual and potential constituencies was enhanced.
- Working in partnership and networking allowed NGOs to carry out large scale researches over greater geographical areas and become better equipped to advocate more impactfully from the basis of sound and extensive knowledge of issues supported by facts and figures.
- Two grantees completed business plans for setting up income generating activities which will consolidate their financial and organizational sustainability and provide models for others to emulate; this is essential to ensure enhanced levels of sustainability in what is a rather unsophisticated sector despite being so active and of such obvious national importance.
- Two organizations contributed to increasing access for children and youth in schools through monitoring newly signed legislation on disability (Save the Children and ASCHFR-Olt).

Overall the Disability component of the RCSS program, although requested by USAID rather later than other components, proved a very cost-effective and impactful in terms of positive change created by NGOs. Organizational strengthening opportunities were comprehensively embedded in a grants, training and technical assistance matrix which facilitated the implementation of high impact, action projects effecting positive change in both the ways and means which NGOs employed to achieve their goals and in the effects their actions had on the legal and administrative environments determining quality of life and opportunity for Romanian citizens with disabilities.

E. RCSS Grant making and Grant management

Grant making and grants management were the activities which underpinned RCSS assistance and allowed NGOs in four main activity areas to conduct programmatic actions which overall resulted in the strengthening of Romanian civil society, both in structural and procedural terms. The assistance also helped organizations better position themselves for functioning meaningfully and effectively in an operating environment which would, during the implementation of the RCSS program, change fundamentally once Romania entered into the European Union which the country did on January 1st, 2007, this being almost half way through the Romania Civil Society Strengthening Program which was implemented for USAID/Romania by World Learning for International Development.

This section of the report summarizes the activities which resulted in the provision of financial support to NGOs through a total of sixty (60) grants of varying value and disbursed to achieve a number of programmatic goals all however ultimately focused on helping NGOs make themselves more effective and meaningful representatives of Romanian citizenry.

In summary, the following tabulation indicates the scope of support provided through RCSS to Romanian NGOs and the financial value of this in direct grants to NGOs. For a detailed report on all component parts of the grant making and management effort including cost-share contributed by grantees please see tabulations on page 109 and following.

Sector	Number of Grants	Value of Direct Grants (USD)
NGO Sustainability	12	0
Advocacy and Public Policy	10	0
Partnership	14	0
Disability Issues	9	0
Small Advocacy Action Initiatives	15	0
TOTAL	60	2,209,730

Grant making consisted of a series of procedures and steps which when applied to proposals received from NGO applicants resulted in a distribution of funds to those NGOs best able to use the resources in the most effective and impactful way to maximize positive changes made towards the goal of strengthening Romanian civil society.

NGO assessment methodologies employed in grant making

To ensure that NGOs were capable of using funds provided by RCSS effectively to achieve relevant objective in line within a general goal of strengthening civil society RCSS employed a range of survey instruments either readily available in a final form, such as the World Learning Participatory Institutional Analysis Instrument (PIAI), or tools which were developed by RCSS such as those employed with Advocacy grantees and the NGOs in the Partnership component of the program.

Participatory Institutional Analysis Instrument (PIAI)

Organizational analysis of NGOs recommended by USAID for possible receipt of Sustainability grants was conducted using the Participatory Institutional Analysis Instrument (PIAI). The PIAI is an updated and modified version of the Institutional Analysis Instrument (IAI) employed in previous World Learning implemented programs in Romania. RCSS hired a Romanian NGO to work with targeted NGO to apply PIAI in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in the structure and functioning of each organization. To ensure the proper application of the instrument, a refresher course was provided to all PIAI implementers by a WLID trainer. All implementers had prior knowledge of, and experience in, facilitating the PIAI and under previous World Learning projects. In addition to the PIAI analysis, the same implementers helped NGOs draw up or review strategic plans which as implemented would enhance their organizational sustainability. The results of analyses and the completion of a strategic planning exercise were the basis on which sustainability project proposals were developed and submitted for review.

Twenty six (26) organizations, each nominated by USAID, were assisted in analyzing their organizational strengths and weaknesses and in starting their strategic planning process. The PIAI was highly appreciated by most participating NGOs especially since they understood that they would soon have to function in a changed funding environment created as a result of EU accession. This realization obliged them to initiate strategic planning processes and to attempt to better understand their current and future sustainability and action prospects. PIAI provided a methodology through which NGOs explored organizational issues in an inclusive and participatory manner resulting in twelve (12) of the twenty six organizations receiving grants to support their sustainability enhancing projects.

PIAI was considered by the NGOs as a critical tool which they used in developing proposals and applications for grants under the Sustainability IFA. The PIAI was not required by RCSS to be used to help formulate the content of sustainability proposals, neither was participation in it an eligibility condition. However, such a perception was evident in the content of the proposals as references to the PIAI were

frequent. Even though there was no requirement for ideas regarding enhancing sustainability to be based on a particular tool or form of analysis, the fact that the PIAI was used for this purpose indicated convincingly it's perceived utility in defining current organizational states and the ways and means which could be employed to improve these.

Participatory Advocacy Assessment Instrument (PAA)

A modified advocacy index, the PAA designed for maximum applicability under Romanian advocacy conditions, was produced by RCSS and based on the following instruments: Advocacy Index developed for USAID by the Advocacy Institute; Institutional Advocacy Analysis Instrument, used in Armenia by World Learning in its NGO Strengthening Program and the Participatory Institutional Analysis Instrument (PIAI) - World Learning's tool for estimating for levels of organizational development. During the RCSS program the PAA was employed to help NGOs better monitor the impacts of their program implementing actions and to evaluate the level of achievement attained at the conclusion of their project.

The instrument comprises 5 indicators grouped into 4 categories which cover: general information about the organization, public relations, media and external communication, external relations and coalition building, advocacy and public policy change – 10 of these indicators are derived from the PIAI.

The instrument was self-applied by the NGOs through multi-stakeholder planning teams, based on a methodology provided by RCSS. The Advocacy Advisor and, or, the Monitoring & Evaluation Coordinator introduced the instrument in an initial meeting with the coalition or network held by each of the projects. A timeframe for applying the PAA and sending in generated data was agreed with each group of NGOs during these meetings. A user friendly User Guide, in Romanian, was developed and provided to the NGOs along with the PAA instrument in excel form since this allowed for the establishment of self generating score sheets which saved time and effort since subsequent transcribing was unnecessary; this feature also eliminated errors which could have been caused by transcription. Seventy-six (76) organizations, members of 6 coalitions and, or, monitoring networks initiated during, and as a result of the implementation of the RCSS advocacy grants, were introduced to the assessment methodology used in the PAA.

Partnership Assessment Tool (PAT)

The Partnership Assessment Tool (PAT) was designed by RCSS staff and used to gauge partnership formation and activities as these were manifested by our Romanian NGO partners. The PAT survey tool investigates 5 categories that are considered essential for successful partnership: partnership need, vision and scope, commitment and involvement, communication and representation and partnership process. PAT was assessed the form and functioning of partnerships formed under the RCSS grants scheme and to identify issues which were important to their formation, long-term functioning and achievement of project goals established by the partners.

The fourteen (14) grantee NGO partners and their own 90 partners, through the participatory self-evaluation process which is at the core of the PAT approach, assessed how their specific partnership relationships were working during the course of implementing the RCSS funded projects. PAT was applied before the mid-point of each partnership grant funded project thus allowing whatever necessary technical intervention determined as beneficial and enhancing the functioning and impact of the partnership to be applied in good time.

Evaluating how well their partnerships functioned and what they achieved was essential for preserving their commitment and enthusiasm and maintaining the partnerships created as a result of RCSS funding as

effective means through which to achieve civil society goals through the active involvement of NGO members working after the RCSS project has ended.

PAT allowed RCSS core partner NGOs and their partners to better understand the benefits arising from partnerships and the barriers which inhibited their formation and consolidation. Using the survey tool also allowed RCSS and NGOs to develop guidelines to be used as, circumstances dictated, in creating effective partnerships.

2. Finalizing and signing grant agreements

Sub-agreement drafts were finalized and signed with all applicants whose proposals had been selected by the review committee for funding. The finalization of the proposed projects focused on:

- Ensuring that the Proposal Review Committee's recommendations were taken into consideration and used to make final revisions to the sub-grant agreements
- Revising results and indicators: RCSS Technical staff and Monitoring Evaluation Officer assisted grantees in improving their Performance Monitoring Plans (PMPs) through the formulation and measurement of results.
- Clarifying project activities in order to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation effort;
- Reviewing project budgets by the Grants Specialist and Financial Officer to ensure that they accurately represented the costs of the proposed project actions.

3. Monitoring and technical assistance for grantee project implementation.

During the lifespan of each RCSS funded project a number of monitoring and evaluation visits were paid to the grantees to help them get started with the implementation of their projects in line with USAID regulations and RCSS requirements, and to ensure that during the course of their projects their actions were securing the achievements and goals laid out in their proposals and project workplans.

Start up visits

These were conducted in order to check on staff involvement, roles and responsibilities, project progress to date, project partners' involvement, project procedures for monitoring results (PMP), advocacy capacity assessment of local NGOs, coordination with other projects, training and TA needs and other issues.

Start up visits were paid to RCSS grantees in order to clarify

- i) working relations,
- ii) further clarify reporting requirements and
- iii) respond to any concerns and questions raised.

Start up visits allowed RCSS to better understand the challenges faced by RCSS grantees and to therefore provide the appropriate assistance whether this was as training, technical guidance or specialized and customized counseling delivered by RCSS staff to specific NGOs.

Monitoring visits.

Each NGO grantee was obliged to provide quarterly program and financial reports. Following RCSS review and approval of these, monitoring visits were paid to each grantee specifically to:

- determine the existence of documents which confirmed the implementation of reported trainings and other events such as workshop reports, list of participants, existence of terms of references for external consultants, application of purchase procedures and such like.
- clarifying RCSS expectations regarding specific aspects of the reporting requirements this being primarily the use of the PMP matrix as a reporting framework. Through the rigorous and routine

application of the PMP as a check on progress made and targets yet to be reached each grantee was better placed to achieve the goals of their projects and make their contribution to the strengthening of Romanian civil society.

- clarifying additional issues and concerns raised by grantees.

4. Combining grants with training and technical assistance

Ad-hoc technical assistance was provided in the process of project implementation. All projects, with the exception of small grants, were reviewed at the end of each quarter and at a mid-term evaluation which included site visits and in-depth discussions on progress. Performance issues were identified and raised with grantees which were asked to provide correction action plans.

Training courses offered by RCSS were directly related to grantee projects and RFAs. In many cases training activities had a workshop format with grantees working on real issues in their projects.

5. Performance measurement

Development of customized project monitoring plans (PMPs) with each grantee

RCSS staff engaged closely with grantees and provided support on revising proposal objectives, accomplishment indicators and assisted to the degree required with developing project monitoring plans (PMP). RCSS developed a PMP matrix and assisted each NGO in its attempt to complete this monitoring instrument. Developing the PMP documents proved to be a critical but difficult process for the grantees because:

- The grantees had limited experience in developing project monitoring and evaluation plans. Most of the proposals initially received failed to define clear indicators which were closely connected to the stated objectives. Intermediary performance indicators and targets which were monitored on a quarterly basis were also identified at this time.
- Most NGOs were able to develop “process indicators” that showed that certain activities were implemented. However they failed to define “impact indicators” which would highlight the value-added and the consequence of the proposed activities. Also there was an obviously limited experience in developing mechanisms for collecting information – monitoring - project impact.
- Most NGOs were also not able to provide base line data on all the indicators they proposed, thus the degree and the direction of change and progress they could claim to have generated could not objectively be proven.

The process of redesigning the monitoring indicators by the grantees assisted by WL staff led to:

- In some cases the development of completely new indicators which had not been mentioned in grantee initial proposals. The revised indicators did thus allow for better monitoring of progresses towards stated program goals.
- The elimination or replacement of some of the originally proposed indicators – replacing outputs with impact indicators - criteria measuring impact rather than the completion of a process.
- The development of intermediary target indicators which grantees considered important for themselves in order to better monitor progress towards the satisfaction of their needs.

Reporting on performance progress

The overall grant making approach developed by RCSS required grantees to use their quarterly reports to demonstrate the impact their programmatic actions were having in their chosen area of operations. RCSS issued reporting guidelines which clearly stated that there was no interest in a chronicle of activities conducted, but that stress was placed on measuring, monitoring and reporting performance progress.

This preferred reporting perspective created a significant challenge to NGO partners as most grantees faced difficulties in using the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) template as a report formulating instrument which complemented their action plans and schedules. Most reports used the approved activities calendar as the main instrument on which to base their reports of project progress. This alone did not provide information necessary in establishing the real change had been effected as a result of program actions. However due to a persistent educational effort made by the RCSS technical staff the quality of reporting, in terms of impact statements rather than output chronicles, increased noticeably by the conclusion of the RCSS program in December 2007.

6. Relationship with the grantees

RCSS formed relationships with targeted NGOs based on trust and mutual understanding in order to facilitate frank discussions about structure of their programs and their performance in terms of achieving the impact their proposals had indicated. This process was essential for problem identification and action planning to resolve them even though it was time consuming and considered intrusive by some NGOs which considered themselves advanced and too sophisticated to learn much from a PMP driven implementing regime.

Most partner NGOs valued the approach to co-working which RCSS promoted because of its flexibility, the focus on partnership relations and the importance given to achieving real objectives (outcomes) rather than simply satisfying implementation plans for stated activities (inputs).

7. Final Evaluation and Final Reporting

A final project report was required to be submitted by grantees within 30 days of their project close date. A final evaluation meeting (workshop) was conducted by RCSS staff and NGO members within 15 days of project closure. This was in accordance with Sub-grant Agreement provisions, Para 1.6 Reporting Requirements d. evaluations, "the final evaluation will be conducted in form and substance as agreed by World Learning". Participation of partners and relevant stakeholders in the final evaluation was required.

The evaluation assessed, as systematically and objectively as possible, the level of fulfillment of objectives, the nature of the impact and the sustainability of the results of the projects funded through Romania Civil Society Strengthening Program (RCSS). The main criteria used for the evaluation of the projects were the elements of each grantee project Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP). The level of achievement on all objectives, as well as on all specific indicators was assessed. The following evaluation questions were addressed:

1. What was the major success of each project? How did this success improve/ change the situation/ problem that the grantee was focused on. Numerical data, objective facts, anecdotal or observational, supporting the NGOs claims were sought?
2. Did the NGO reach its objectives and indicators as stated in the proposal and agreed in the contract and PMP? If not, why not, and how did the NGO think such a project could be strengthened in the future?
3. Were there any unexpected impacts of the project?
4. How did this project affect the NGO and its organization as a whole?
5. What did the NGO learn as an organization from carrying out this project?
6. Was there any innovation in the NGOs project? Did the NGO introduce innovative ways or means for any phase of the project: conceptualization, implementation, recording results in impactful way?
7. Did the NGO have a plan for continuation, replicating or expending of this project? Were there other donors, public authorities or private institutions interested on further engaging in supporting the organization?
8. What was the value of the partnership to the individual partner organizations? (if applicable)

9. How was the NGO and the project's results perceived by the community/ies? How did the public authorities (local or central) view the program? (if applicable)
10. What RCSS should have been done differently in supporting the grantee during the project implementation?

Final grantee reports included the evaluation findings structured on the above questions; a report on activities carried out in the last quarter of the project and a final financial report.

The payment of 5% of the grant funds was made after the acceptance by RCSS of satisfactory financial and activity final reports, as specified in the contract.

Details of funds disbursed to NGO project implementing partners are provided in following tabulations.

Sustainability Grants

Grantee Organization	Grant amount (USD)	Total Amount Disbursed (USD)	NGO Cost Share (USD)	Unspent Grant (USD)
CRJ	52,445	52,445	23,590	-
MMA	57,250	57,250	39,929	-
FDSC	61,450	61,450	22,219	-
SAR	59,772	59,772	19,777	-
CIJ	76,780	76,780	22,260	-
ACCEPT	54,603	54,603	15,360	-
ACOR	53,000	53,000	44,546	-
IPP	58,269	58,269	28,147	-
CENTRAS	58,844	58,844	71,177	-
APD	96,944	96,944	34,692	-
ARC	55,704	55,704	16,911	-
Pro Vobis	53,700	53,700	16,647	-
TOTAL	738,761	738,761	355,255	0

Advocacy Grants

Grantee Organization	Grant amount (USD)	Total Amount Disbursed (USD)	NGO Cost Share (USD)	Unspent Grant (USD)
AOR	57,200	55,052	16,500	2,148
APD	99,532	99,532	28,630	-
CIJ	91,850	86,171	23,900	5,679
IPP	63,544	63,544	16,409	-
APADOR-CH	62,510	62,510	15,693	-
HOSPICE	60,949	60,949	19,394	-
RUHAMA	72,955	72,955	16,760	-
FDSC - GUV	44,108	40,460	12,200	3,648
FDSC-SOC	86,835	83,225	27,543	3,610
CRJ	68,680	68,680	24,370	-
TOTAL	708,163	693,078	201,399	15,085

Partnership Grants

Grantee Organization	Grant amount (USD)	Total Amount Disbursed (USD)	NGO Cost Share (USD)	Unspent Grant
OAR	34,985	34,985	39,887	-
FDSC	28,022	28,022	9,800	-
ASI	34,696	34,696	14,117	-
HOSPICE	44,655	44,655	24,475	-
RCRC	34,980	34,980	17,900	-
FIC	32,472	32,472	14,993	-
CC BN	30,179	30,179	13,748	-
MOTIVATION	34,025	34,025	68,223	-
ARC	34,955	34,955	27,595	-
SSMR	41,120	41,120	24,895	-
OVIDIU ROM	35,000	33,250	41,300	1,750
GRADO	38,243	38,243	10,430	-
ICAR	45,396	45,396	82,250	-
APD	50,043	50,043	12,840	-
TOTAL	518,771	517,021	402,453	1,750

Disability Issues Grantees

Grantee Organization	Grant amount (USD)	Total Amount Disbursed (USD)	NGO Cost Share (USD)	Unspent Grant
SALVATI COPIII	22,180	22,180	6,851	-
SH ZALAU	17,020	17,020	6,494	-
SOUL TO SOUL	19,000	19,000	4,992	-
AHF SM	20,545	20,545	5,130	-
ONPHR	22,568	22,568	7,078	-
LRSM	21,000	21,000	6,205	-
AUTISM	7,807	7,807	1,958	-
ASCHF OLT	13,009	13,009	4,879	-
ASCHF ROMANIA	22,970	22,970	8,135	-
TOTAL	166,099	166,099	51,722	0

Small Advocacy Grants

Grantee Organization	Grant amount (USD)	Total Amount Disbursed (USD)	NGO Cost Share (USD)	Unspent Grant
AASC	5,000	5,000	2,100	-
TONAL	5,896	5,896	2,211	-
CVCN	5,000	5,000	3,750	-
FALT	5,000	5,000	2,798	-
APD Focsani	4,646	4,646	535	-
PANAGHIA	5,328	5,328	830	-
PEOPLE TO PEOPLE	5,000	5,000	650	-
AEM	7,900	7,900	13,520	-
CRONO	5,960	5,960	960	-
IMPREUNA 2002	5,030	5,030	850	-
UNICUL SENS	5,000	5,000	1,288	-
ANCAAR	4,318	4,318	602	-
APD BRAILA	4,358	4,358	877	-
IPP	4,500	3,329	500	1,171
APD CRAIOVA	5,000	5,000	600	-
TOTAL	77,936	76,765	32,071	1,171

F. RCSS – Legacy activities

1. RCSS Publications

World Learning-RCSS published a series of guides to disseminate information and knowledge generated by the training programs. Additionally, some of the tools developed and used and the experiences gained by RCSS grantees in projects funded by USAID were distributed to the wider NGO community. World Learning-RCSS worked with Romanian ISOs involving these in the training programs and to produce cutting edge knowledge-based guides which will take Romanian NGOs into the next stages of sustainable civil society development.

The principle objective of these guides was to collect, synthesize and distribute useful information and tools to help any Romanian organization increase its knowledge and enhance its practical efficiencies and effectiveness in the areas of organizational sustainability, advocacy and public policy. In total five (5) different titles were created and published:

- 1) Advocacy – a Guide for NGOs on strategies and tools for policy change
- 2) Monitoring public policy implementation – How to watch effectively for public good?
- 3) In search of organizational sustainability - Strategic planning and organizational sustainability
- 4) Leadership
- 5) Building Effective Partnerships

RCSS secured the services of Romanian ISOs which had co-presented workshops - with Management Systems International (MSI) - on these cutting edge topics, to develop the guides. Publications 1 and 5 were created in partnership with FPDL Foundation Partner for Local Development, while the Romanian Training Institute was instrumental in writing publication #3; RCSS staff developed and wrote the guides dealing with the remaining topics.

The publications were scripted to be practical, to give hints necessary to the reader to undertake action and to have a user friendly style being non-academic and responsibly illustrated with visuals and graphics. The guides were written for an audience with a level of experience ranging from medium to advanced and were a step forward from already existing materials on the Romanian market in terms of depth of conceptual presentation and the cutting edge nature of tools and tips included. This advanced and innovative edge was possible since they are based on the training materials used by MSI trainers defining the most advanced thinking on the topics under scrutiny.

All publications in this series have a common identity defined by a similar style, layout and design. RCSS technical staff were involved in varying degrees in the production of these guides. This involvement ranged from making editorial and technical suggestions for improvements during the intermediary stages of the publication to writing partial or complete updated publications. Some of the guides' elements were tested in RCSS training programs offered to NGO members before the end of the RCSS program.

Five hundred (500) copies of each title were printed. They were made available at the RCSS close-out Conference in hard copy, also being distributed to about 77 different NGOs around the country and thereafter being placed on the website of Partners for Democracy and Development (PDD this being the RCSS successor organization).

2. RCSS Conference – “Civil Society in Romania – Future Perspectives”

This closing event marked the ended of the RCSS Program and presented the main achievements of grantees and of RCSS. The conference presented valuable practices and experiences of the Romanian NGOs – principally RCSS grantees) and their partners - and future explore potential of sustainability of NGOs in Romania. The Conference also focused on the role of Romanian Civil Society will have now that Romania is an EU state member. In addition to sharing grantees experience, the conference demonstrated to the participants the diversity of activities funded under RCSS: social enterprise competitions and building community enterprises, supporting 2% campaigns 2006 and 2007, various public events and conferences.

The purpose of the conference was manifold:

- (1) Share valuable practices and experiences of NGOs in dealing with some of the sustainability, advocacy and partnership issues;
- (2) Evaluate the most critical areas of NGOs encountered challenges/ barriers;
- (3) Identify follow up solutions and commitments based on the role played by the public and private sector regarding the sustainability of NGOs sector;
- (4) Launch the RCSS's publications.

The Conference was designed as a combination of presentation, plenary sessions and working group sessions lasting two days and presented a great opportunity to discuss progress made by Romanian NGOs under RCSS project. It was also allowed the NGO community to explore specific issues and discuss the next steps under the rubrics of Civil Society Organizations in the Int'l Arena – prospects for Romanian NGOs, working with private donors and business sector and Romanian NGOs in the context of Romania's

EU membership. RCSS and NGOs presented their publications, brochures and materials produced during the term of the RCSS program.

Representatives of all 49 grantees funded by RCSS, representatives of donors such as CEE Trust, Black Sea Trust, United Way among others and public officials attended the Conference conducted at Bucharest Parc Hotel in 14-15 November, 2007. The US Ambassador, Mr. Nicolas Taubman and Mr. Victor Giosan, Secretary of State for Public Policy were the special guests. The conference was attended by 100 participants.

Participants and donors' representatives stated how impressed they were with the NGOs' achievements and initiatives implemented with assistance from USAID/RCSS.



3. Partners for Democracy and Development (PDD) – the successor organization



USAID and World Learning/RCSS were instrumental in encouraging and facilitating the formation of a successor; Partners for Democracy and Development (PDD). This was officially formed as an organization in June 2007 stemming from the strong desire of its members – all WL-RCSS staff - to continue the civil society development efforts conducted in Romania during the last 15 years by the United States Agency for International Development and World Learning for International Development. All PDD members previously worked in the development and implementation of the USAID/WLID Romanian Civil Society Strengthening Program.

PDD's mission is to strengthen civil society and enhance participatory democracy by developing a robust non-profit sector capable of actively shaping social development processes at local and national level.

According to PDD's mission statement:

- PDD strongly believes in the positive functions of a deliberative democracy. PDD believes that a deliberative society, characterized by a strong, vibrant and civic civil society able to help its citizens to shape their present and future lives and communities, is essential to sustainable and effective social development.
- PDD strongly believes in the positive functions of a robust and civic associative sector. PDD believes that a strong and sustainable non-profit sector, able to give voice to disadvantaged groups and effectively engage in solving social needs, is an essential actor contributing to the social development efforts of any society.
- PDD strongly believes in the positive functions of a strong culture of civic participation and civic activism. PDD believes that concerned and active citizens, animated by a strong desire to use their human potential in a collaborative effort to advance social solutions to social needs, can make a significant contribution to developmental efforts and initiatives.
- PDD strongly believes in the positive power of partnership and collaborative work between the public, the private and the non-profit sector in effectively addressing social needs and developmental challenges. PDD believes that a sustainable development effort needs to bring together all societal actors in a meaningful and accountable collaborative effort based on mutual trust and support, recognition of diversity and shared commitment for building better societies.