



## Romania Civil Society Strengthening Program

### PROJECT GOAL

World Learning's Romania Civil Society Strengthening Program (RCSS) aims to strengthen the capacities of Romanian NGOs to monitor and influence the development and implementation of public governmental policies. Romanian NGOs will, as a result of this assistance, better perform the important function of scrutinizing government actions, helping citizens engage in public policy formulation, and provide an effective voice for civil society.

### PROJECT ACTIVITIES/APPROACH

Using a combination of grants, training, and technical assistance, RCSS employs an approach that focuses on four major areas of intervention: organizational and financial sustainability, advocacy, disability issues, and partnership development. RCSS provides technical and financial assistance to 60 NGOs that are implementing 12 organizational sustainability, 25 advocacy, 9 disability, and 14 partnership development projects.

**Enhancing sustainability** strengthens the organizational and financial aspects of public policy and "watchdog" organizations. RCSS accomplishes this by improving governance and management, emphasizing the development of strategic and business plans. RCSS also assists NGOs through human resource development; and improving organizational capacity to fundraise and identify constituencies.

The project advances the ability of NGOs to **conduct advocacy** and policy reform and to **promote government accountability**. The project encourages NGO coalitions and the participation of a wide variety of organizations in advocacy campaigns. NGOs are stepping up the impact of their advocacy initiatives by diversifying their strategies to include tools such as media advocacy and litigation. More effective and systematic outreach to small and local organizations located outside of the capital city has also resulted in gaining public support for their advocacy initiatives.

World Learning supports the **establishment, strengthening and consolidation of partnerships** between NGOs involved in public policy formulation

and other sectors including academic or professional institutions, and the private and public sectors. Assistance in this area strives to make partnerships durable beyond the end of USAID funding by encouraging NGOs to expand partnerships to new groups such as the private sector or consider new and different types of partnerships or donors.

RCSS funds NGOs that raise awareness on the needs of **children and youth with disabilities** and advocate for increased government provision of priority services. Programs include life skills trainings and advocacy campaigns.

### PROJECT IMPACT TO DATE

- The project supported grantee NGOs in implementing the legal framework for NGO sustainability, and harmonizing NGO legislation with EU Standards.
- Assisted in developing the organizational and financial capacities of grantee NGOs.
- Engaged grantee NGOs in advocacy work on NGO legislation, and developing a framework for cooperation between the NGO sector and the Romanian Government.
- Supported the "2% campaign" to encourage citizens to contribute 2% of their income tax to NGOs of their choice. The campaign resulted in a 400% increase in the amounts directed to NGOs through the 2% provision.
- Disbursed \$2 million in grants to 60 Romanian NGOs. Grants sizes range from \$3,000 to \$70,000.
- Organized quarterly and annual trainings and conferences on topics including advocacy, building financial sustainability, public policy process and lobbying for NGOs, and accountability and monitoring public institutions.

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