



Civil Society Development Foundation Annual Report 2014



Message from the executive director



As the main vehicle of the European Union - European Economic Area - Swiss Government and private donors' funding programs for civil society, CSDF acted as one of the major engines of development of the Romanian civil society. Since it has been founded – 20 years ago, our foundation contributed to the development of civil society organisations, acted as a strong driver in encouraging the collective action by civil society at large, to improve the quality of life and to strengthen democracy in Romania. We have bridged gaps, crossed borders and became a dynamic actor in civil society. Nevertheless, we learned that freedom is an everyday struggle for individuals and it requires constant active engagement in bolstering pluralism, initiative and community involvement.

CSDF is the living example that non-profit organisations in Romania are well equipped in both knowledge and expertise, which proved essential in coagulating the energies required to push for the reforms needed for the EU accession, achieving individual rights, modernisation of the society and bringing innovation in the public sphere.

Since its establishment CSDF remained loyal to its mission and by developing intelligent grants making, provided support for civil society organisations programs to over 2500 projects, with a value of over 150 million Euro, delivered training and coaching to over 10 000 individuals working in the NGO sector or education. Our researches and public policy reports, such as the Social Economy Atlas and Carta Alba, continue to provide an accurate diagnose of the third sector. Every year NGO Fest brings over 20 000 citizens in contact and dialogue with NGOs and since 2014 we succeed to make NGO Fest an European event bringing participants from other 15 countries. The Institute for Social Economy and the Civic Innovation Fund, programs developed by CSDF in the last years have already become brands.

In the following years we have many challenges ahead and issues to be addressed: consolidation of the Romanian not for profit sector, developing NGOs organizational capacity, supporting advocacy initiatives, and improving the sectors' public image. Questions to be answered include: how to channel the concerns of NGOs and the coalitions for national policy debates on issues of common interest to the NGO sector in a structured platform; how to increase the level of civic engagement and public support of NGOs, how to further build the capacity of the NGO sector, and how to consolidate CSDF and strengthened its performance as a resource organization for the NGO sector.

Ionut Sibian

About us

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CSDF is an “organisation for organisations”, sharing the belief that the very development of non-governmental organisations is an indicator of the progress of communities and citizens.

CSDF's growth has been certainly connected to the changing needs of the Romanian non-governmental organisations (NGOs): in the first half of the 1990s, we catered to the immediate need for funding of the emerging national NGO sector, through grant programs, while later on we gradually added new programs and services designed to meet specific needs identified in every development stage of the non-governmental sector.

Reaching out to other categories of stakeholders and target groups, which had become more and more relevant for the overall development of the civil society, CSDF is currently pursuing its mission by providing services not only to NGOs, but also to public administration, the business sector, journalists, academia. Our grant programs, information services, consultancy and training, as well as advocacy, coalition and platform building program are interconnected and with a mutual added value. That is what makes us different and comprehensive in its approach on the development of the civil society.

About us

Grants management and technical assistance

CSDF provides technical assistance for the planning and implementation of financing programs, whether from public or private funds. We assist donors throughout the entire program cycle.

Training and consultancy

To respond to the development needs of local NGOs, CSDF created several training and consultancy services in the areas of organizational management, project management, structural funds.

Information services

CSDF acts as a resource center for NGOs providing real-time information updates on projects, activities and opportunities for organizations, through the news portal www.stiriONG.ro.

Advocacy and public policy

As a proponent of positive changes made as a result of a constant dialogue between the third sector and the public administration, CSDF has the ability to mobilize a significant number of non-governmental organizations and the expertise to manage the entire process of advocacy.

Research

CSDF is a research center dedicated to the civil society, this role being assumed since the beginning.

**Increasing
the capacity
of CSOs in
Romania**

Grants management and technical assistance

NGO Fund

2014 was the year of signing contracts for projects selected under Round 1 as well as the year of launching the Calls for proposals and evaluation of project proposals received under Round 2. Calls for Round 2 were launched in August and projects were evaluated starting from October until December 2014. Under Round 1, a number of **214 contracts** with a total value of **19,444,407.26 euro** requested as grant were signed during 2014, first ones beginning 1st of March. Receiving a reallocation of **6,330,000 euro** from one of the cancelled Romanian Programs enabled us to finance part of the projects on the reserve list. They cover all relevant activities that are eligible under the NGO Fund, and, most importantly, some of them have as a unique opportunity of funding the NGO Fund, such as democracy, human rights, anticorruption, advocacy, think-tanks, networks and coalitions. Within the NGO Fund in Romania, capacity building is tackled through several actions and on different layers (raising capacity of writing project applications, direct training of project promoters, organizational capacity evaluation, support during implementation, organizational development through specific aims and activities within the funded projects etc.).

For ensuring a proper implementation of the projects, 8 training sessions (covering project management and financial management) were organised for all promoters of projects contracted, on July 2014 (16 groups of training in total). The training courses' location was in 4 cities around the country (Bucuresti, Iasi, Cluj-Napoca and Brasov) in view of ensuring the accessibility of promoters – 361 participants attended these courses.

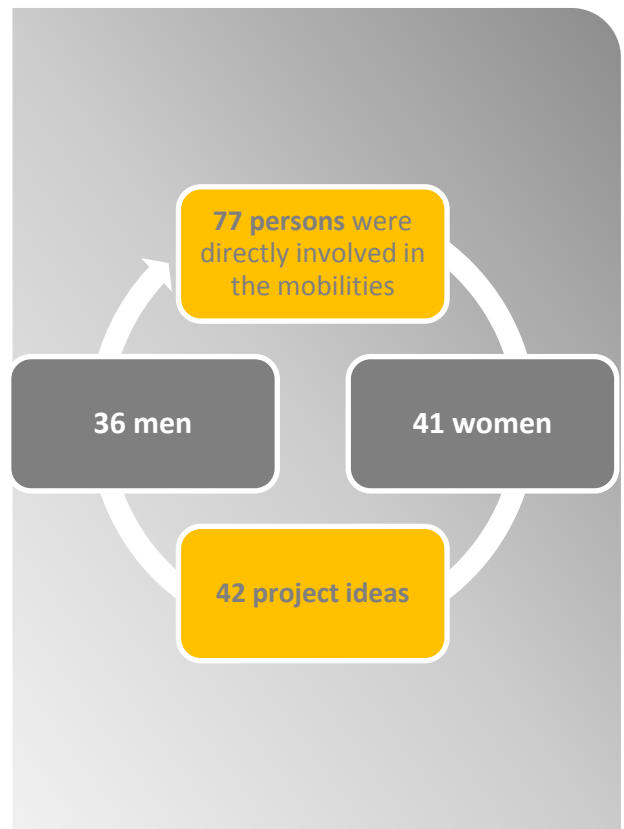
For strengthening **bilateral relations** with entities from donor states, the **2nd Call for proposals for seed money facility** was officially launched in December 2013, with a deadline for submission of proposals on February 20, 2014.

44 registered proposals

33 recommended for being financed

31 contracts have been signed and implemented

Mobilities unfolded in April-June 2014, before the official opening of the Calls for proposals under the 2nd Round of the NGO Fund, 7 of them being hosted in Romania (with Norwegian or Icelandic organizations visiting Romanian organizations).



NGO Fund

In 2014 contained some added-value activities on hate speech topic, and contributed to ensuring the exchange of experience and good practices from both the transnational perspective (at the level of Fund Operators and promoters), and the national one (activities meant to bring know-how and useful, relevant knowledge for the national programme stakeholders, with focus on promoters and potential promoters). One of the major events organised in 2014 was the first edition of **Civil Society Forum from Central and Eastern Europe**. Special focus on (no) hate speech theme continued to be present in the activities in 2014.

Complementary actions

The **Facebook account** was weekly updated with details about the Calls for proposals, organized events or other useful information. News about financed projects' activities are also increasing, as the projects start having visible results. At the end of 2014, the page had almost 5,000 likes. The total number of fans' impressions is over 3.6 million and our messages reached more than 1.2 million users.



In 2014, the activities and events organized within NGO Fund by CSDF were mentioned in over 110 media apparitions (online and printed articles, radio and TV news). **Strategic media partnership of the programme** in 2014 was with Dilema Veche magazine.

Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme



PROGRAMUL DE COOPERARE ELVEȚIANO-ROMÂN SWISS-ROMANIAN COOPERATION PROGRAMME

The two Thematic Funds from the Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme are managed by a consortium formed by KEK-CDC Consultants (Zurich, Switzerland) CSDF and the Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation (Miercurea-Ciuc, Romania).

Thematic Fund "Partnership and Expert Fund"

In the year 2014 the 2nd round of the Partnership Block Grant was organized with a total financial allocation amounting to **CHF 5,189,216.74**, which allowed the financing of 26 projects (out of 79 submitted). The funded projects aimed at promoting and strengthening institutional partnerships between Romanian and Swiss partners and covered topics as diverse as community development, environment, education, social economics, public policy.

Meanwhile, in the course of 2014, 11 projects from the 1st round of the Partnership Block Grant continued their implementation, CSDF providing the necessary assistance and monitoring of the Executive Agencies for the successful implementation of the funded projects. The total amount of the grant for partnership projects, monitored by CSDF, totaled **CHF 2,287,627.76**.

Thematic Fund for Civil Society Participation

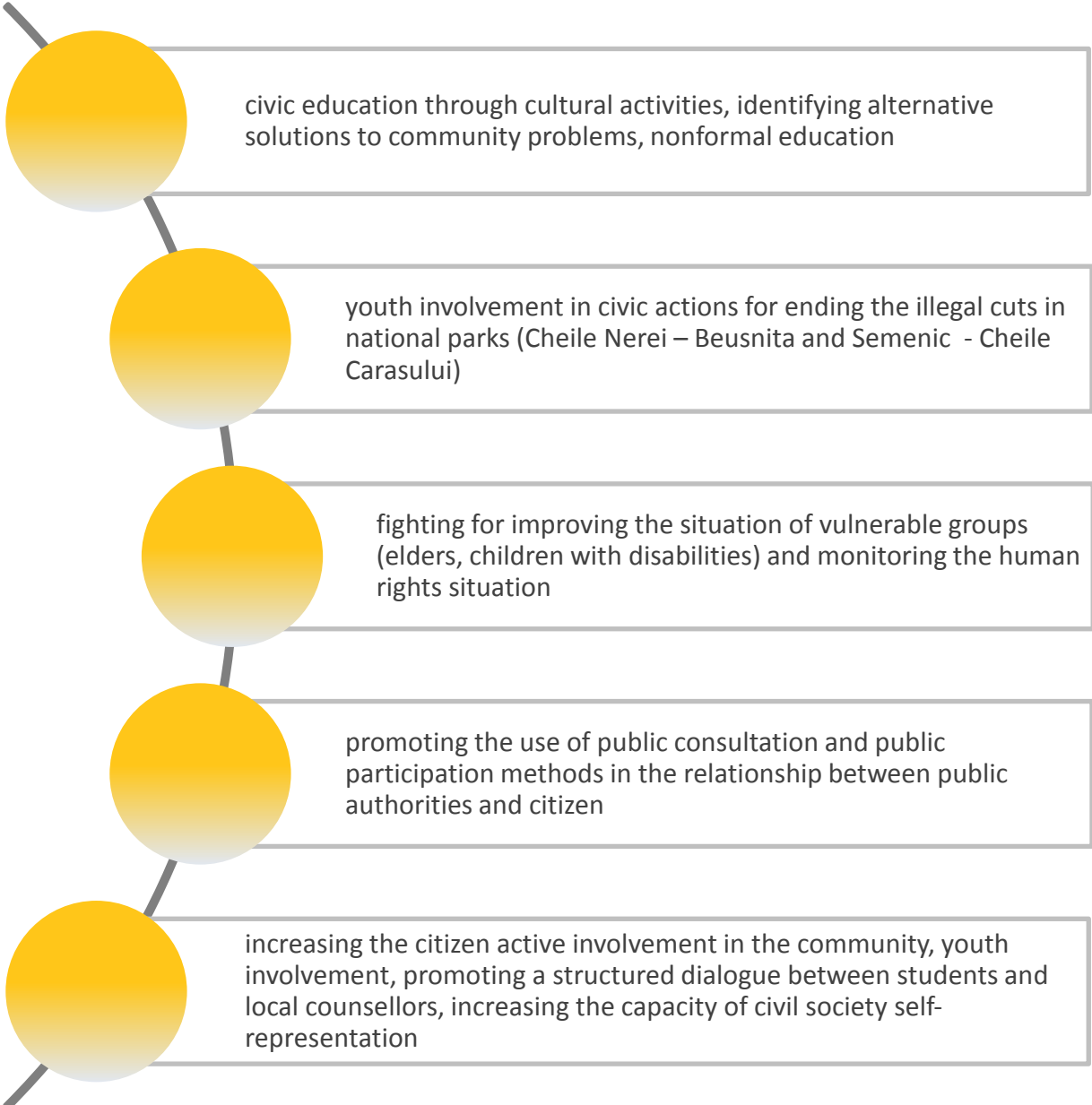
Within the NGO Block Grant, during the year 2014 all 30 projects on the Social Component contracted during the year 2013, in the 1st Round of Block Grant for NGOs, have continued their implementation, CSDF offering, as in the case of the partnership projects, the necessary advice and monitoring of the Executive Agencies for the successful implementation of the funded projects. The total amount of the grant for the Social Component projects totaled **CHF 3,893,575.89**. The 2nd Round of Block Grant for NGOs is planned to be launched in the first quarter of 2015.

The Civic Innovation Fund

In March 2014, the Civic Innovation Fund launched a new Call for proposals dedicated to Romanian NGOs. The competition was very tight as 500 applications were received and only 20 were financed. Another 2 projects were financed under the Rapid Action Fund. The total value of the grants was 1.042.184 lei (approx. 300.000 USD). The main supporters of this Call for proposals were CEE Trust and Raiffeisen Bank.

The projects cover entire country, being implemented in Bucharest, Brasov, Cluj-Napoca, Bistrita, Nasaud, Turda, Iasi, Chisinau, Oravita, Pitesti. Their duration is between 6 and 11 months.

Among the financed projects are a large variety of activities such as:



civic education through cultural activities, identifying alternative solutions to community problems, nonformal education

youth involvement in civic actions for ending the illegal cuts in national parks (Cheile Nerei – Beusnita and Semenic - Cheile Carasului)

fighting for improving the situation of vulnerable groups (elders, children with disabilities) and monitoring the human rights situation

promoting the use of public consultation and public participation methods in the relationship between public authorities and citizen

increasing the citizen active involvement in the community, youth involvement, promoting a structured dialogue between students and local counsellors, increasing the capacity of civil society self-representation

Training and consultancy

Social innovation and entrepreneurship for performing schools

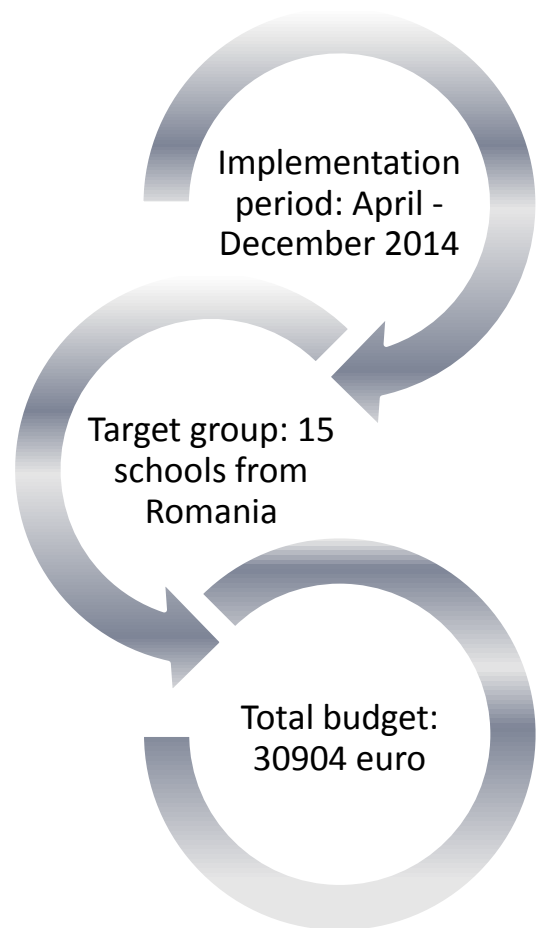
In April 2014, CSDF started the implementation of project „Social innovation and entrepreneurship for performant schools” financed by OMV Petrom

The project is trying to change the paradigm of financing public schools in Romania, through the development of small businesses, as future sources for self-financing. Within the small businesses, children have an active role in carrying out marketing activities, participating in the production process, the identification of business distributors and suppliers, etc. Community involvement in business development was vital because, through the specifics of the project, this was a condition for that the small business can have sustainable results.

The project **main activities** were focused on training and consultancy, the majority of the participants did not have any experience in developing a business.

Main project results in 2014

The businesses have had varied impact in the community by creating jobs, supporting disadvantaged children; stimulate self-employment activities or creating spaces of adequate education in school through equipping schools



6 days training course

24 persons certified as Social Entrepreneurs

11 business plans financed in recycling paper and plastic PET, mill, hives, handicraft hats, cultivation of medicinal plants, salina

15 business plans developed

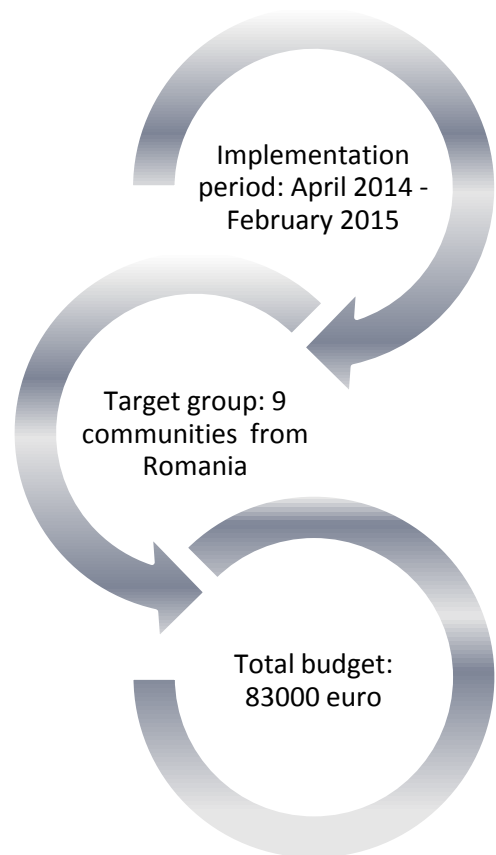
560 consulting hours for implementing the business plans

Civic innovation Fund: Petrom communities

The Civic Innovation Fund is being developed in response to the situation and needs of civil society in Romania today, including local communities, emphasizing civic initiatives. Civic Innovation Fund is a financing tool of the Civil Society Development Foundation, designed to support innovative civic initiatives of NGOs. Within this component, 13 letters of intent were received and 9 contracts were signed for a total amount of RON 249041.8, individual grants ranging between RON 15,660 – RON 51,139.74.

The program had a strong character of capacity building given the limited operational, financial and management capacity of many organizations.

A training course in project management and governance of CBOs was delivered, as well as coaching in project management.



Main project results in 2014

139 people stimulated for raising agriculture we practice from subsistence farming at agriculture based on knowledge

Approximately 135 participants from various non-education activities (creative workshops, schools, clubs, etc.)

3 structures of stimulating employment (sera, carpentry workshop, an Association of production of berries)

9 implementation areas: Baicoi, Prahova County; Bustuchin, Gorj County; Poboru, OLT County; Moinesti, Bacau County; Schela, Galati County, Suplacu de Barcau, Bihor County and Zemes. Bacau County.

157 participants in training courses, of which 27 national Authority for accredited qualifications in qualification and training courses

9 applicant organizations and 8 partners, of which 2 local authorities

564 people informed about projects

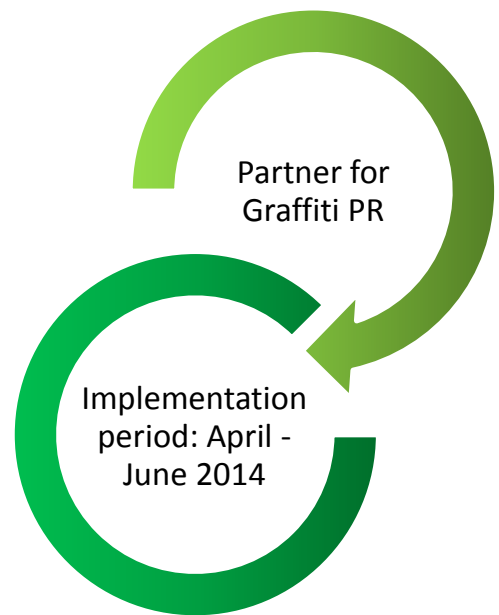
Total allocation for grants: 53,905.15 euro

9 projects funded

3 local initiative groups and 3 Community Based Organizations created

METRO Cash & Carry Romania

We partnered with Graffiti PR in the provision of consultancy and support for the implementation of the "METRO-Stars Community 2015" competition, initiated by METRO Cash & Carry Romania.



Consultancy on the elaboration of the competition regulation



Development of the evaluation process tutorial



Field visits to the 20 finalists of the "METRO-Stars 2014 Community" competition and fact findings to accompany the candidatures included in the selection process



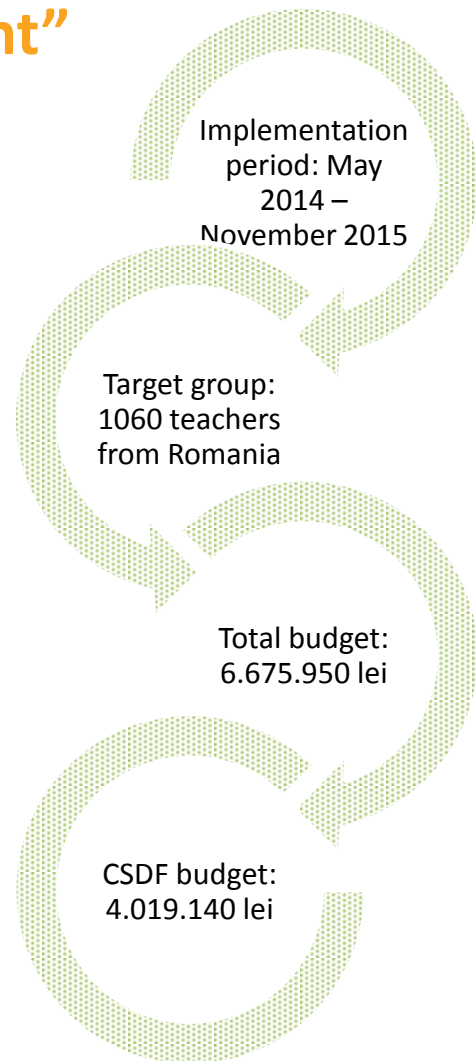
Facilitation of the selection process

“Developing youth Lifeskills in the context of sustainable development”

In May 2014, CSDF started the implementation of the Structural Fund project „**Developing youth Lifeskills in the context of sustainable development**” (POSDRU/1.3/S/141511).

Implemented in partnership with Bihor County Resource and Educational Assistance Centre (as main applicant) and **REPER21 Association**, the project continues CSDF’s previous efforts and approaches in the field of national education.

Therefore, the project contributes to the development of a **new educational perspective** – a perspective more focused on developing competencies than on delivering information. Without a wide range of competencies developed, young people will fail in transferring the knowledge they acquire in school into the real life. In this context, **developing life skills** represents the essential ingredient that allows them to transform the knowledge into behaviors and attitudes.



The project **main objectives** are:



Improving professional skills of 1060 teachers through a 10 days training course (focused on complex, transdisciplinary approach based on education for sustainable development and innovative methods of non-formal education) for the development of life skills of youth;



Developing the methodology for implementing the already approved (by ministerial order) optional curricula: „Life-skills development” (for gymnasium) and developing a new optional curricula “Competencies for sustainable development” (for high-school);



Facilitate the exchange of good practices and experiential learning by developing an online community of practice (www.prof21.ro) for more than 500 teachers involved in the project and NGOs acting in the field of education.

“Developing youth Lifeskills in the context of sustainable development”: main results

1

- national research on analysing training needs in life skills area conducted
- launching conference organized
- study visit organized in Cyprus with 12 teachers from Oradea, teachers that will apply at their schools life skills development activities
- online training platform launched: prof21.ro. The platform continues to be developed as an online community of practice.

2

- thematic seminars organized with teachers and other different stakeholders (NGOs, educational public institutions etc.)

10

- days training course developed and accredited on the thematic of life-skills development in the context of sustainable development

80

- training hours (56 face to face training hours & 24 hours of online training)

European Coop Campus

European Coop Campus was implemented by the Civil Society Development Foundation in partnership with Federazione Trentina della Cooperazione – FTC (as the main applicant) and six other partners: Co-operative College (UK), Academy of German Cooperatives (ADG) – Germany, Coexhpal – Spain, European Research Institute on cooperative and social enterprises (EURICSE) – Italy, University of the Aegean (UoA) – Greece and Actif Europe – France. The partnership was a combination of expertise provided by coop systems, research centres in the field of social enterprises, cooperative training providers and networking organisations. The partner countries offered a wide umbrella vision and perspective that enhanced the chosen target of sustainable project results to be used at a European level, to provide useful research and practical guidance.

The main purpose of the project was to provide the board/elected members (cooperative top management positions) with a fresh awareness towards their role and the role of cooperatives in the European economy. In this respect, the partnership designed and tested innovative methodologies and best practices and agreed a mutual recognition in order to enhance the importance of learning by doing and learning from others' experiences, especially in this working sector where traditional competences have to be strengthened with soft skills, an ethical outlook and a keen spirit of innovation.

Main results

Coop board/elected member job profile described in terms of a relevant set of knowledge, skills and competences, related learning outcomes (LO) and learning units (LU), and EQF levels

Mobility learning units (MLU) codified to enable the creation of a common reference within the cooperative context identified

ECVET Guidelines for coop training organizations as a methodological approach for determining and attributing ECVET credits to the LO and MLU codified

A set of ECVET tools (Assessment, Memorandum of understanding, Learning agreement) and methods (guidelines for implementing ECVET process)

Mobility pilot actions for testing and customizing the tools defined

A permanent network at national and European level to foster a durable impact of the project to ensure mobility exchanges

The European Coop Campus project was funded by the European Commission through the LLP – Leonardo Da Vinci, Lifelong Learning Programme, had a total budget of 470.537 Euro and was implemented during November 2012 and December 2014.

All the project's results are available for download in all partners' languages at this link: coopcampus.eu/results.

Information services

StiriONG.ro

217.499 Sessions

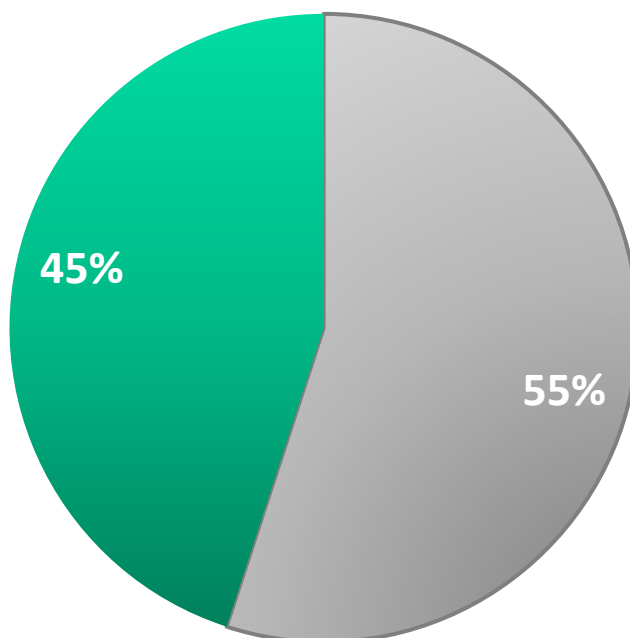
123.295 Users

446.391 Page views

"StiriONG.ro" is a product of the CSDF developed within the "Catalogue of the civil society 2008" financed by CEE Trust - Trust for Civil Society in Central & Eastern Europe.

"StiriONG.ro" is a constant resource for current information and news that facilitate the development of partnerships between civil society, businesses, public institutions and citizens by providing useful and updated information in the field of CSR, news about projects, events and training courses run by NGOs, public financing, private financing etc.

■ New visitor ■ Returning visitor



After consultations with representatives of NGOs, of resource centers, public authorities, donors and companies with CSR activities, the portal was divided into six general dimensions, each dimension and interest providing structured information for each category of beneficiaries.

NGOFest 2014: the romanian national fair of non-governmental organisations

ONGFest is the biggest civil society public event in Romania

Its goal is to encourage the number of people actively engaged in the community, to promote the associative spirit and enhance the involvement of Romanian associations and foundations in the society; to get closer to the people and organizations devoting their time and resources for the communities and vulnerable groups cause; to support volunteering and community involvement; to interact directly with participating organizations and to develop partnerships for the future change.



NGOFest 2014: the romanian national fair of non-governmental organisations



Theme - Celebrating diversity, tolerance and solidarity for combating discrimination and hate speech.

159 NGO participants

4 seminars on funding opportunities hosted by: Raiffeisen Bank, Petrom, Google Romania and ANPCDEF

4 satellite events: CIVIC engagement and citizen mobilization; GOOD practices and challenges in Roma integration; DIVERSITY education in NGO projects; ENVIRONMENTAL challenges in urban development and heritage preservation

143 participant NGOs, from over 25 urban and rural areas in Romania, and from 9 countries: Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia

20 debates and workshops on various NGO-related topics and 100 non formal, leisure time activities for visitors

35 stage performances, plus 2 well-known bands in concert: Les Elephants Bizarres and Bere Gratis; AND... over 20000 visitors

TEDxCaleaVictorieiED

The second edition of **TEDxCaleaVictorieiED**, dedicated to education, was held on October 7th at Club Control. This year's theme was human rights education. 8 speakers shared their experience in the field, among them: Alexandra Lancranjan, prosecutor of the Bucharest Tribunal, Csaba Asztalos, president of the National Council for Combating Discrimination, Eliza Rogalski, founder of Rogalski Damaschin Public Relation, Valeriu Nicolae, founder of Policy Center for Roma and Minorities, Elena Stancu, journalist and Teodora Agarici volunteer at Save the Children Romania.

"The event was organized with support from: EEA Grants 2009 - 2014, the NGO Fund, Control Club, Creative Impact, Bursa Binelui, AVON."

The NGO Fund was one of the supporters of this edition. Defending human rights is one of the strategic priorities of the program, combating hate speech another one. Based on public policy, through best practices and personal experiences, each of speeches inspired the 100 participants to initiate or to continue the fight against hate speech and to defend the human rights.



The first edition of the Civic Arena, a new publication that focuses on the NGO sector in Europe, with particular attention on Central and Eastern Europe, was launched. The publication aims to provide information and experience among European civil society and nongovernmental organizations to increase the capacity to act together. In the context of increasing extremism, populism, racism and xenophobia at an European level, this issue is dedicated to hate speech. The magazine includes interviews with major players in the fight against hate speech, overviews of the situation in different European countries, best practices and other initiatives to describe this phenomenon.

Dilema Veche

Since February, the website Dilema Veche is hosting the section called "Civil Society's Corner" - a space where we talk about the NGOs in Romania, their projects and the things we do for the groups or causes they address. During 2014 about 40 articles about projects and initiatives that make a real difference were published here. Among the topics addressed: social services, educational activities, education, events, legislative proposals, volunteering, human rights, protection of green areas or endangered species and other models of involvement in the Romanian society.

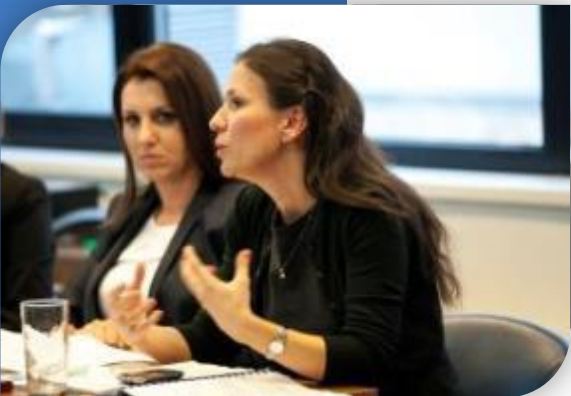
Advocacy and public policy

Pro Bono 2014



CSDF continued to support the development of the pro bono practice in Romania, as a main measure to increase access to justice for vulnerable groups, beneficiaries of services provided by NGOs.

"The meeting was very pleasant and helpful! Congratulations on your initiative! The friendly, open questions and discussion among the participants brought added value to the information presented". NGO Representative



Through the program "pro bono legal services for the NGOs in Romania", 11 law firms in Romania devoted time to serve their society. The year 2014 marked the joining of two law firms to the network: Razvan Dinca and Associates and Jinga and Associates, through their office in Brasov. In this way, the network has expanded its area of expertise, reaching the opportunity to support the NGOs that are facing legal situations in different areas of practice: project financing, intellectual property and copyright, taxation and financial law, labor law, commercial law. In addition, through Jinga and Associates law firm the territorial coverage of the network has expanded, taking over the cases of the NGOs from the central region of Romania, with a high number of active NGOs.

In collaboration with law firms, we continued to develop and deliver legal seminars in order to support the non-governmental organizations in clarifying the most important legal aspects of their activity. In September 2014, we organized, with the support of Jinga and Associates, the first ONGLex legal seminar dedicated to the NGOs in Brasov. The seminar was attended by 20 representatives of NGOs from Brasov County, with a focus of the discussions on labor relations.

At the end of October 2014 we brought the same issue to the attention of over 30 NGO representatives in Bucharest with the support of the law firm DLA Piper, one of the first firms that joined the pro bono network. Besides the aspects of the individual labor contract, DLA Piper lawyers analyzed the Tax Code provisions on labor relations and the copyright law.

After analyzing the feedback forms completed by the participants, one of the main features appreciated by the participants was of the open character of the discussions. The information was assessed as presented in an interactive manner, and over 70% of respondents appreciated the information received as useful.

No Hate Speech @ NGOFest 2014

In May 2014, the annual **Romanian NGO fair** had as main theme **celebrating diversity, tolerance and solidarity for combating discrimination and hate speech**. Indoor activities in the first day, when the office of the President of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies hosted the opening event at the House of Parliament, offered the space for 200 participants (NGOs from Romania and 9 other countries, including Norway, Romanian officials as well as the Embassy of Norway and the EC Representation) to celebrate the contribution of the NGO sector to the development of the society, and highlight the need to become aware about the growing phenomenon of hate speech. The outdoor setup for the next 2 days allowed a direct interaction of the NGOs to approximately 20,000 visitors, while a variety of debates and workshops, nonformal activities and stage performances (more than 150 happenings in total) completed the event. Exchanges of good practices between the participants from 10 countries were encouraged throughout the entire duration of the event (Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Romania), either through the formal thematic events organised (6 thematic events in English on: civic engagement and citizens mobilisation, good practices and challenges in Roma integration, diversity education in NGOs projects, environmental challenges in urban development and heritage preservation, acting against Hate Speech across Europe, and democracy and the future of Europe with civic activists from Spain, Bosnia Herzegovina, Ukraine and Russia), or by directly interacting to the participating NGOs and visitors. The English programme with highlights on (no) hate speech debates was made available to all participants (the debates that were lively broadcasted).



As a satellite event to the NGO fair, a **contest for bloggers** was organized. The winning article, titled **“Romanian intolerance – or how hard it is for us to accept the differences”**, speaks about the online comments directed at Conchita Wurst, competitor at the 2014 Eurovision edition. In total, over 30 articles have competed to win the prize put on stake (a Romanian manufactured bike). Each of these articles can be found [here](#).

No Hate Speech @ Civic Arena

Continuing the series of events on (no)hate speech, the first issue of **Civic Arena** (the magazine focusing on the non-profit sector in Europe, with a particular attention to Central and Eastern European countries), was released in Romania and Poland (the issue was introduced during the Polish Operator (NO) Hate Speech Conference in June 2014, in Warsaw). Dedicated to (NO) Hate Speech in the context of rising extremism, populism, racism and xenophobia across Europe, this first issue includes interviews with key actors in combating hate speech, overviews of in-country situations, good practices and other initiatives to counter the phenomenon.

It reveals once again that Hate Speech is a highly dangerous phenomenon which does not spare any country in Europe. The target groups for hate speech are rather similar in most of the countries, yet each particular context and each future crisis can shift the weight to new and different groups. It is thus important to act now, to educate the public and the decision makers that “words matter” and that the road from speech to violence is short. The first issue of Civic Arena can be accessed here:

<http://bit.ly/1T5MV2K>



NO HATE SPEECH MOVEMENT

@ TEDxCaleaVictorieiED

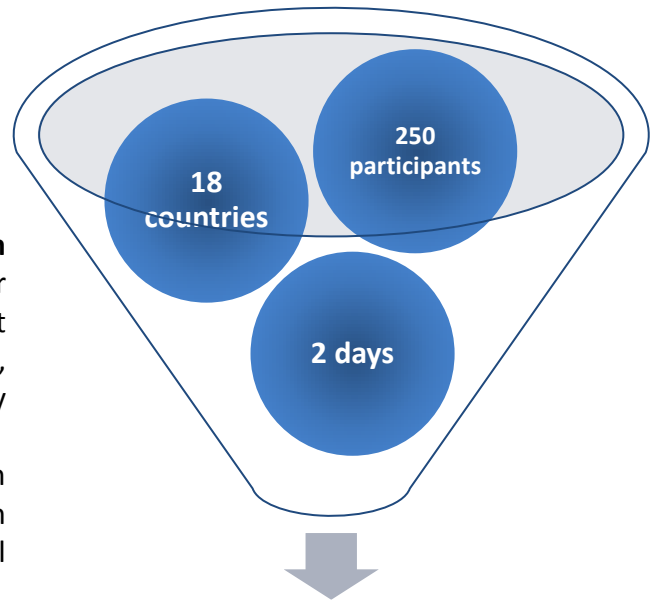
The **TEDxCaleaVictorieiED** focused on defending human rights in its October, 2014 edition. The NGO Fund was one of the supporters of this edition as well as in 2013. Defending the human rights is one of the program's strategic priorities, along with combating hate speech. Beginning with public policies, moving along through best practices and personal experiences, each of the speeches inspired the 100 participants to initiate or continue the fight against hate speech and the fight for the protection of human rights .

Civil Society Forum from Central and Eastern Europe

First edition of **Civil Society Forum from Central and Eastern Europe** gathered over 250 participants from 18 countries that attended during the 2 days of the event, including a high number of Civil Society Organisations' (CSOs) leaders.

Representatives of the main European institutions were also present: European Commission, European Parliament, Council of Europe, Agency for Fundamental Rights.

The Forum has successfully contributed to achieve the following objectives:



Highlights of the Forum, along with its main conclusions and recommendations were gathered in the Forum Report to be distributed to all participants.

1

To renew the sense and tradition of solidarity and cooperation among CSOs in CEE. Agreement was reached to continue concrete cooperation beyond the forum. Two working group were proposed to carry on further work on priorities identified during the forum. The Forum's result will connect with and mutually reinforce other regional initiatives (for example with the NGO Forum in Riga, March 2015).

To identify the main priorities for the European civil society in the fields of democracy, rule of law, good governance and human rights. Two main priorities area have been agreed upon:

2

Support for democracy and rule of law in Europe, with a concrete working topic on engagement of CEE civil society with the rule of law mechanism developed by the EC.

Strengthening Civil Society, with a concrete further work topic on strengthening EU's programme to support civil society initiatives in the fields of democracy, citizen participation and the rule of law in European member states.

Support for under threat fellow Hungarian NGOs

Both foundations are in charge of distributing the funds from the EEA financial mechanism, which, among other things, supports strengthening civil rights and transparency. Administration of the fund which lies outside the direct control of the Hungarian government and support of organizations that are openly critical towards the government is at the core of the case, which in recent days has grown into an unprecedented demonstration of force.

The appeal initiative in support of Hungarian NGOs emerged from foundations that administer the EEA

NGOs from across Europe called today upon the highest institutions of the European Union to stop ignoring the recent anti-democratic developments in Hungary. Since spring 2014 the civil society in Hungary faces increasing pressure from the government of Viktor Orbán. As part of the escalating campaign the police have raided the offices of Ökotárs and DemNet foundations as well as the houses of their employees to carry out unannounced inspections, where they confiscated computers and documents on Monday, September 8.

NGO Funds in 16 European countries. XXX NGOs from YY countries have signed a joint letter to the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council of Europe's Commissariat for Human Rights and the European Council. They jointly call upon the highest European institutions to stop ignoring the situation in Hungary and to not tolerate such approaches toward civil society characteristic in present day Russia, Belarus and Azerbaijan.

The letter states that "since the current situation in Hungary constitutes another serious breach of the fundamental values on which the European Community is founded, we call upon the European Union to apply the measures provided by the Treaty of Lisbon in article 7 to tackle threats to the rule of law in any of the EU Member States. We call upon the European Commission and the European Parliament to use the new framework for addressing systemic threats to the rule of law adopted in March 2014 and enter a dialogue with the Hungarian government to prevent the further escalation of civic rights violation".

Signatories of the letter, which include, for example Transparency International, Greenpeace, are convinced that the Hungarian organizations facing the attacks from the Orbán government should not remain alone struggle in their struggle for legitimacy and independence and that this case deserves the urgent attention of the European institutions.



Research

USAID CSO Sustainability Index

CSDF continued its tradition of making the annual index of the Romanian civil society sustainability, in the framework of the USAID CSO Sustainability Index.

Thus, in September 2013 we launched the Bucharest edition of the Index USAID, in the presence of the US Embassy in Bucharest, the Romanian representatives of nongovernmental organizations and the press.

By using standard indicators and annual collection of data, the index helps to track and to identify the associative sector's developments and trends, also allowing comparisons between countries and between regions.

The exploratory study of the state-of-the art facts in Romania

The exploratory study of the state-of-the art facts in Romania was officially launched in March 2013; new and preeminent supporters were activated (the Head of the European Commission Representation in Romania, and the President of the National Council for Combating Discrimination), while the event was very well reflected in the media (e.g. National Television broadcasted about it in prime time, a special issue on (no)hate speech was released at the same week in a quality magazine), generating debates and thus awareness amongst the journalists, and further on for their readers or viewers.



“Making Social Economy Visible in Romania” (MSEVR)

The project “Making Social Economy Visible in Romania” (MSEVR) was implemented by the Civil Society Development Foundation (FDSC) together with the National Centre for Training in Statistics (CNPS) and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly (MoLFSPE).

The project was financed by the European Commission, DG Enterprise and Industry (Economic impact of social enterprises) and had a total budget of 63.130 Euro.

MSEVR had as main objective to draw the satellite accounts of the social economy using as methodological framework the European System of National and Regional Accounts (“ESA 1995”) and the *CIRIEC Manual for drafting satellite accounts for the enterprises in social economy*.

Another important part of the project was the publishing of the third edition of the Atlas of Social Economy (Romania 2014), containing the main data on the social economy sector in Romania. The Atlas of Social Economy provided a comprehensive statistical picture of the dimensions of the social economy sector in Romania and of its main actors (associations; foundations; cooperatives - consumers’ coops, handicraft coops, credit coops, agricultural coops; credit unions of pensioners and employees; commercial companies controlled by social economy organizations) and an analysis of main trends registered by the sector.

The 2014 edition of the Atlas of Social Economy presented detailed indicators for the fiscal years 2011 and 2012 and an analysis of the dynamic of the sector over the period 2000-2012. This edition also brought elements of novelty: the first-time inclusion and detailed analysis of organizations regulated by special laws: agricultural societies, worker owned enterprises – association of workers / shareholders, agricultural cooperatives and commercial companies controlled by social economy organizations.

The main results and products of the project were presented in a series of regional seminars organised by MoLFSPE in collaboration with CSDF (in Sibiu, Constanta and Targoviste) and during the National Conference on Social Economy. More than 200 participants at the events had the opportunity to discuss and analyse the important role which the social enterprises can play in generating growth and jobs, to discuss the statistical data that demonstrate the importance of social economy enterprises at national level and the special position they are able to play as public policy partners.

A policy brief with major proposals for statistical changes proposed by the project was prepared and presented during the Conference and the 3 local seminars.

The project’s results and products, in both Romanian and English are available for download on the Institute of Social Economy’s web page, at this link: <http://www.ies.org.ro/mserv>.

CSDF: networking, figures and people

European Network of National Civil Society Associations

CSDF continued its active involvement and representation as Board member of **ENNA - European Network of National Civil Society Associations**.

19

umbrella
bodies

national
platforms

resource
centers

from EU member states, Norway and
Turkey

In 2014, by valuing the national members' expertise and experience, ENNA continued its involvement in the „*Balkan Civil Society Acquis – Strengthening the Advocacy and Monitoring Potential and Capacities of CSOs*” project and got to be partner in two other initiatives „*Civil Society Dialogue between EU and Turkey - Active Civil Society Participation in EU Accession Talks*” and respectively „*SecurePART - Increasing the engagement of civil society in security research*”.

At policy level, ENNA got to be part of the task force group of the *Civil Society Europe - the European Coordination of Civil Society Organisations* that aims to create an enabling environment for horizontal exchanges between civil society organisations and movements across Europe and be influential in shaping the agenda on transversal issues of common interest for organised civil society in Europe.

ENNA – European Network of National Civil Society Associations

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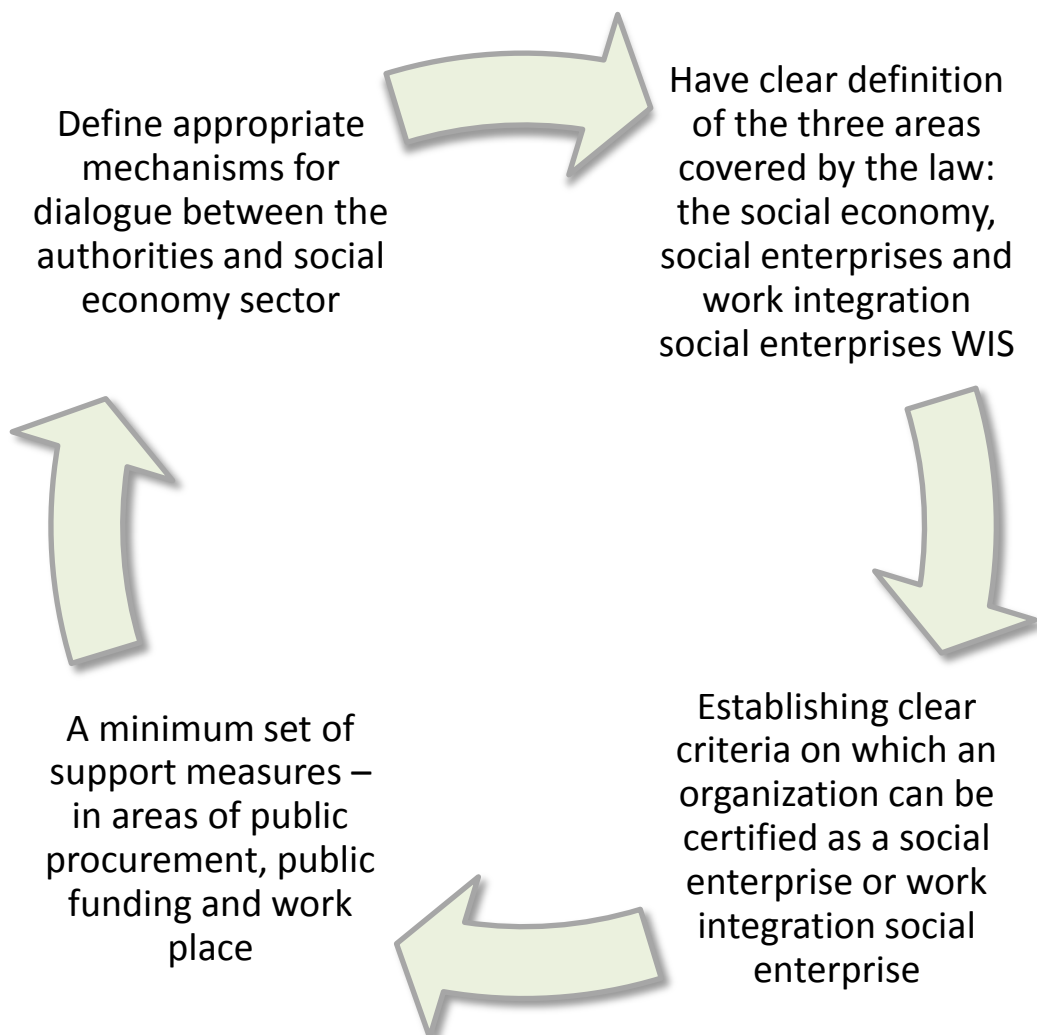
Fax: +32 (0) 2-537-51-08 |

Find out more at: www.ennaeurope.org

Social Economy Coalition

Social Economy Coalition was **established in 2010** during the campaign against the Law on Social Entrepreneurship – a Parliamentary initiative that miss defined social economy and social enterprises classifying as social enterprises the state and multinational companies. Since than the Coalition has advocated for the social economy as a sector that can contribute decisively to solving Romania’s employment problems and widespread poverty.

Following the launch of the public debate on social economy bill by the Ministry of Labor (in December 2011), the Institute for Social Economy has initiated a consultation process among organizations in the social economy in order to gather amendments to the Draft. The Coalition formed of work integration social enterprises Network in Romania RISE, associations and foundations active in social economy and their federations, umbrella organizations of credit unions of employees and retired through their unions and federations, consumer cooperatives through Centrocoop, and agricultural cooperatives through Pro Agro has again mobilized and initiated an advocacy campaign promoting amendments in order to:



Social Economy Coalition

December 2013

The Romanian Government approved **draft law on social economy** and submit it to the Romanian Parliament. Following this, the law was than made public and it was than clear that the draft had incorporated a small part of the Coalition amendments.

February 2014

IES and RISE initiated an open letter around which the Coalition for Social Economy was mobilized. Amendments were sent to the Senate aimed at clearly defining the three areas covered by law : social economy, social enterprises and work integration social enterprises and the support measures.

The Labor and Social Protection Committee of the Romanian Senate decides to consider the amendments & establishes a joint working group with the other two committees to discuss the amendments. IES and other Coalition meetings attended the working group meetings.

The Ministry of Labor was asked to review the draft law in the light of the sector proposed amendments.

The General Directorate of Social Assistance of the Ministry of Labor initiated consultations with representatives of the Coalition & it was agreed that the provisions relating to social clauses in public procurement to be updated in the light of the new European Directive on public procurement.

June 2014

Though the Senate adopted the Law without including amendments proposed by the Coalition for Social Economy and sends it to the Chamber of Deputies.

**Autumn
parliamentary
session**

The Coalition for Social Economy submitted a **simplified form of amendments made earlier** by the Committees of the Chamber of Deputies. By the end of the year two of the three committees of the Chamber have adopted most of the Coalition amendments.

Financial report

Income

13.581.961 lei
3.055.834 euro*

Expenditure

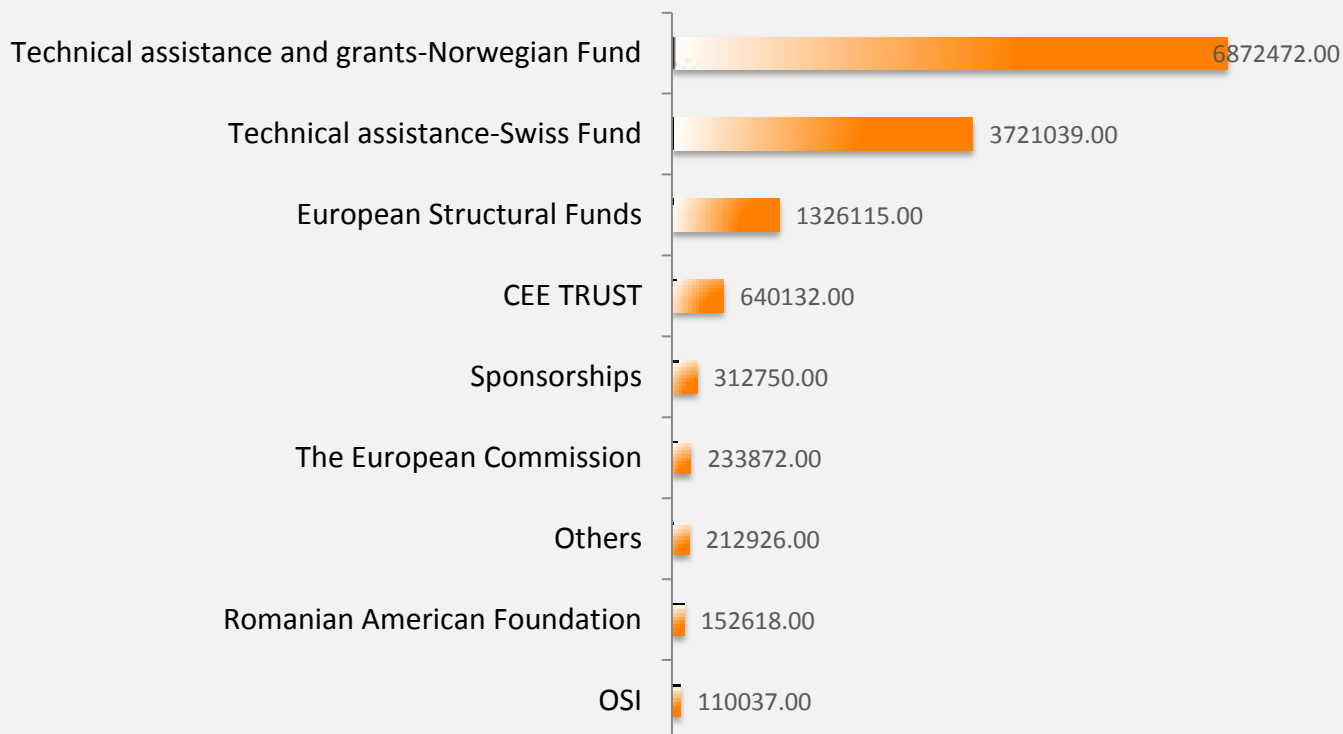
11570377 lei
2.603.244 euro*

Net result

2.011.584 lei
452.590 euro*

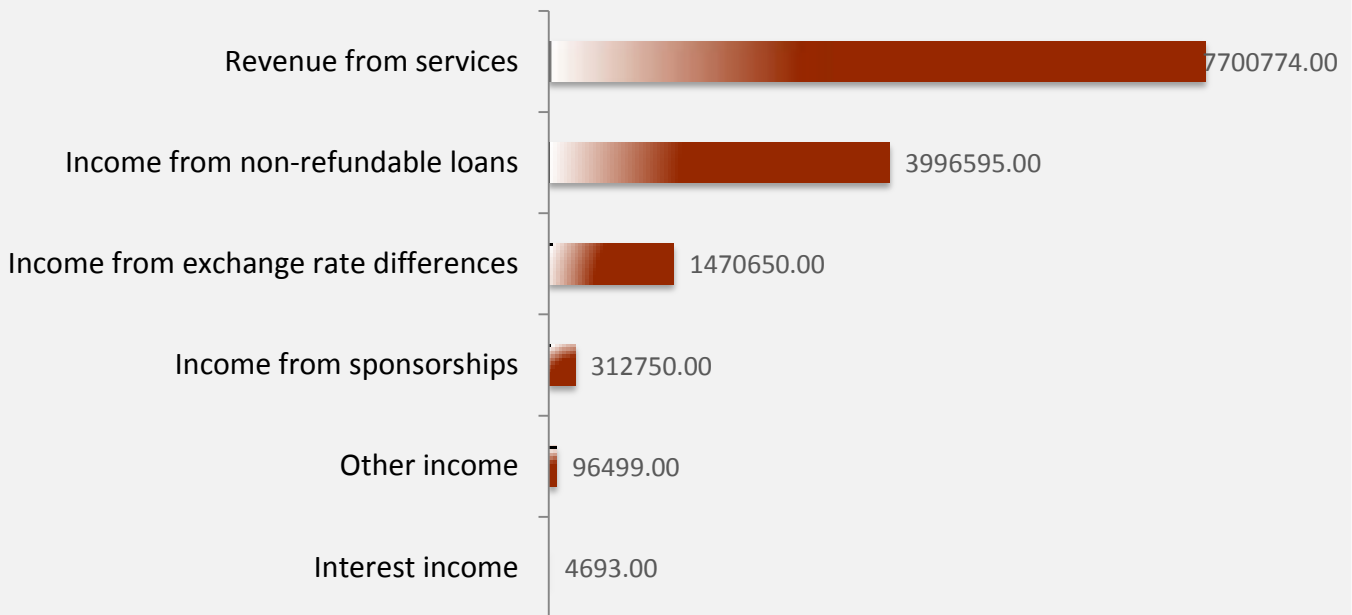
*The central bank average exchange rate for 2014 (4,4446 lei) was used to calculate the equivalent in euro

Funders of 2014 (lei)

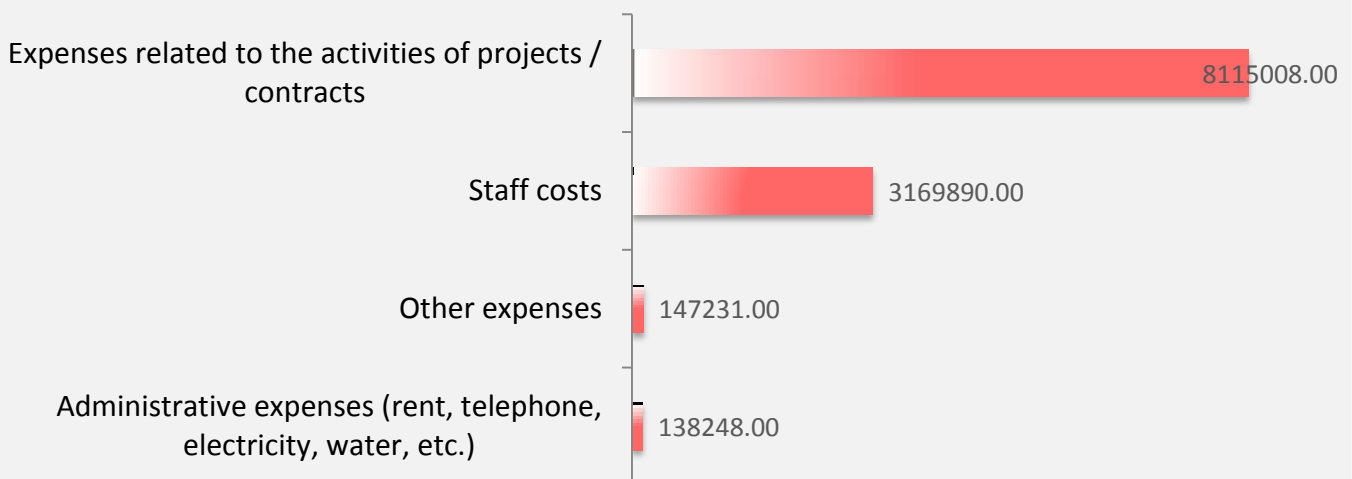


Financial report

Sources of Income (lei)



Expenditure (lei)



CSDF Team



“In 20 fulfilling years of public service, the foundation has contributed to the development of civil society organisations. We encouraged the collective action by civil society to improve the quality of life and to strengthen democracy in Romania. We have bridged gaps, crossed borders and become an active actor in civil society. We learned that freedom is an everyday struggle for individuals and requires constant effort in terms of pluralism, initiative and community involvement”