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Annual Report 2001-2002

Bardar, 2002

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Introduction

The Non Governmental Organization Rural and Social Initiative (NGO RSI) was registered by Ministry of Justice of Republic of Moldova on 19 December 2000 with No. 1606. NGO activate according his Statute as not for profit, independent organisation. The Ministry of Justice of Republic of Moldova issued the “Certificate of Public Benefit” No.241 to NGO RSI on 15 March 2002, after rigorous examination of previous two years activities. Fiscal code 32341242.

NGO RSI was founded by physical persons from 3 main districts (judets) of Republic of Moldova: Chisinau, Lapusna, and Bender and may activate on the all territory of Republic of Moldova and internationally. The NGO Executive Director is Mrs. Maria Brodesco, M.D.

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Activity profile

NGO support the establishment of civil society in Moldova through implementing of social projects in urban and rural area of Republic of Moldova.

The NGO RSI is working out a flexible Strategy of responding to the most pressing demands in the field of citizens' dialogue with their elected representatives, including meetings, seminars and mass media campaigns, publishing of books and educational leaflets. The goal is to teach Moldovan citizen how to contact or to operate with the public authorities, how to obtain and use the official information provided, how to ensure their granted rights by the Constitution of the country.

Main types of activities are:

- Implementation of social projects, mainly in rural, the most undeveloped area.
- Consulting services in the legal field, financial management, help establish small income generation projects.
- Knowledge transfer and education of the people through learning activities: workshops, seminars, specialized courses for distinct target audience.
- Publication and distribution of books, leaflets, other publications, electronic bulletins .
- Ecological education and training, support of the environmental projects and initiatives.
- Involvement business circles in solving environmental problems;
- Fundraising activities.
- Web presence maintaining and distance education.
- Monitoring human rights and poverty situation, evaluation of activities in related fields.
- Public awareness campaign in mass media.

Objectives

The goal of projects, implemented during 2001-2002 is to facilitate access to social services for poor inhabitants and, the same time, train local CBOs/NGOs.

The main objectives are:

- To consolidate and develop the capacities, creativity and potential of the rural communities;
- Promotion of sustainable oriented social development, improvement of public services, and the provision of support for disadvantaged groups to the alleviation of poverty.
- To disseminate the principles and practices of civic self-government as a basic form of democracy on all levels.
- Support and develop managerial abilities of Community based Organizations (CBOs), and the construction of childhood throughout the country on a free of charge base;
- Education in the field of Human Rights as first step to raise civic participation.
- Promotion of partnerships between Moldovan and foreign NGOs.

The possibility of horisontal cooperation, common activities to ensure sustainability of further works is established by training activities.

Resources

The main resource remains Human Resources. We benefit from very qualified personnel – two PhD, other members possess university degree in pedagogical, law and medical fields. The staff consists of eighth NGO members directly involved in project implementation and part time personnel. Around forty volunteers participates in project implementation are from villages Bardar and Pojoreni. Five local consultants were hired on contract basis to provide consulting services. The experience on project implementation is obtained in NGO RSI and other Moldovan NGOs as well. Three consultants have practical experience in the field of human rights gained in the Ombudsman office.

The NGO members participated in Project implementations are:

1. Maria Brodesco, Executive Director NGO RSI.
2. Victor Tarcenco, Chief accountant.
3. Scutaru Olesea, Project assistant.
4. Banarescu Maia – expert in social protection of disadvantaged people – Centre for Human Rights from Moldova (CHRM).
5. Capatsina Grigore - Mayor of village Bardar.
6. Tonu Galina – Kindergarden director, consultant on work with children and their parents.
7. Tonu Tamara, School director, counselor on social protection in Mayorat.
8. Vera Lipcan – Ombudsman counselor.

Table 1. List of the NGO management board / committee.

Name	Profession	Gender	Function	Years on the board
Brodesco Maria	Medical Doctor	F	Executive Director	2
Scutaru Olesea	Teacher	F	Board member	2
Rusu Tamara	Nurse	F	Board member	2
Victor Tarcenco	Economist	M	Chief accountant	2

All personnel have higher education: University diploma in Law, or Medicine, Technique, Social services, knows 2-3 languages.

Office utilities: we use telephone, E-mail, E-fax (via Internet).

One computer is used to edit project materials and for accounting purposes. We collaborate with IATP/IREX office to have Internet access, but it include additional expenses for travel to Chisinau. The local Internet access is quite limited and we are able to use e-mail only. On-line access is quite expensive as the only national provider “Moldtelecom” is accessible in rural area - (~3USD/hour under “Internet Total” programme).

Activities

Context

The projects, implemented during 2001-2002 appear as result of preliminary study, conducted by NGO Rural and Social initiative in rural area of Republic of Moldova. The study visits to a number of communities in the South and central part of Republic of Moldova; meetings with local authorities and department of social protection in Lapusna judets were conducted.

The economic and social crisis have a direct and hard impact on rural communities. The State social services try to solve the problems but their situation is difficult as well. The financial limits and lack of managerial capabilities do not allow State structures to solve problems of the poorest at least.

Other way is the civic engagement, community activities having the aim to solve local problems. The understanding that community members should cooperate with public authorities via local CBOs, implement own projects is the key element to escape from emerged problems.

This way may succeed if CBOs have qualified personnel and volunteers, which knows participatory methods to work effectively. The fact, that from the total of 2500 existent NGOs only 150-200 activate fruitfully, show us the lack of managerial capabilities in the not for profit field in our Republic .

Social Projects

- Seminar for future Volunteers (about 50 persons), in collaboration with Peace Corp. January, 2001.
- Small grant to plant about 1500 saplings in the “green week” on April 2001, REC.
- 1584,0 Euro project to solve community 'Hot problems' in kindergarten of village Bardar, as a way to establish collaboration and participation between local authorities and community. NGO Centre Contact co-finance activities with 700,0 Euro, Mayorat – 500 Euro and NGO RSI ~300 Euro. Period of implementation - December, 2001 – April 2002

Community development

At present two projects are under implementation:

- 1,870.00 USD Grant for a series of seminars with parents and local authorities “The Right of Children with disabilities”, financier: USA Embassy in Moldova, Implementation period is March – July 2002. village Bardar, Pojoreni, Ialoveni sector.
- 7,800.00 USD Project “The participatory activities and civic engagement in rural region”, co-financed by WB resident mission in Moldova (4300\$), Soros foundation 1000\$, NGO and communities contribution 2500\$

Implementation period is June – December 2002.

In four rural communities are selected groups of person to organize social services on volunteer principles. The necessary knowledge on participation methodology and planning are transferred during training.

The project may be qualified as pilot as it is targeted to a small number of communities (four) in central and south region of Moldova and is oriented on social services to the poorest. In each of communities we established an initiative group in the form of Community Based Organization (CBO), formalized by law. A special training is provided to the leaders of CBOs. To obtain a multiplication effect we made a practice: a series of seminars, implicating community members and local authorities and prepared by local CBO and NGO RSI.

The specific methodologies like participatory methods, planning methods, fundraising skills, collaboration with local authorities permit to our trained participants to activate in field of social services, where the state structures are unable to have a good results because of budget restrictions and because of ineffective methods of work as well.

Implementing partners are the Moldovan Center of Human rights, NGO Femeia Azi.

This Project may present interest as an example of horizontal cooperation between CBOs and as an example of transferring knowledge to the communities, specific methodologies used to engage community members and reach the poorest.

Internet presence

Beside the online access is quite limited in Moldova, the e-mail is widely used during project implementation. Practically each Primaria (Mayorat) has the possibility to connect via dialup connection with State provider Moldtelecom to send & receive e-mail.

We start develop a web site oriented on community development and human rights. The testing version is on <http://irural.hypermart.net>;

The main benefits for user on territories include receiving information on following:

- Information about current & planned events
- Publishing & discussion of Moldavian & International Law, Projects other documents connected to HR issues
- Exchange of experience in the field of methodology of teaching HR to different target groups
- Bibliography, new resources, editorial & on line news on HR
- Case Study, Success story that can be used in educational programs
- Fundraising recommendations, connecting partners abroad, grant information.

The information on site will be in 2 languages: English & Romanian. The site on HR themes, community oriented, in the Romanian language is quite unique. In Moldova there are no resources that provide such information in local language.

The target audience consists of students, teachers, lawyers, social services specialists, NGO's representatives, public authorities' representatives and physical persons.

Partners

NGO RSI has agreements with local public authorities and other NGOs regarding collaboration during projects' implementation. The partners are: Ialoveni Department of social assistance, the Department of social assistance county (Judets) of Lapusna, Centre for Human Rights from Moldova (CHRM - Parliament Ombudsman), Department for employment of jobless people Ialoveni, and Mayorat of village Bardar.

These organisations provide us with consultants and offer logistic support. Additionally CHRM is core organisation for „Consulting and audience day on human rights” in communities. Local organisations that are usually included in project activities are: schools, kinder-gardens, Mayorates, local small businnes enterprises. Some activities in communities are facilitated by local NGOs. During 2002 year we collaborated with bcal NGOs established before, in communities Bardar, Buteni, Satu Nou.

Beneficiaries

Four communities with the direct number of beneficiaries – 1000 persons and indirect or prospective number amounting (20 000 – 25 000) people.

The group of 20 trainers, local specialists in rural area were educated in the field of Human Rights who will constitute – monitoring & consulting groups in the community and on sector/regional level, have participated in first training. The gained knowledge allows us to be sure that multiplication effects have to manifest.

The social groups directly implicated in activities are local authorities, mayors and counselors, local rural communities’ poor people, women from disadvantaged families and their children, directly involved in activities of our trainee, who will benefit from educational programs, consulting, publishing materials, be involved in evaluation activities.

The other beneficiaries are Moldovan people, cohabitants of rural judets in South and Center of Republic of Moldova, which will benefit from the advertising campaign in mass media, will sense the better level of social services, and will benefit from knowledge in the field of Civic engagement.

Achievements

The innovative approach is the possibility to establish a rural network of ‘grass root’ local organizations active in the Civic engagement field and particularly rural communities’ development. Will not be an ‘umbrella’ organization which has such disadvantage as own sustainability concern rather than CBOs. The present Project empowers horizontal cooperation between rural organizations and cooperation with local authorities. So the innovative approach in case of Moldova, at least, is the decentralization approach. The solution of problems has to be found on local level and less in the vertical structures or top level authorities.

The training of trainee is the main strategy used in this case. Our trainee activate in rural communities’ environment with target groups: poor inhabitants, women and children from disadvantaged families, children under risks. The trainees are able to cooperate with authorities or help people from target group to claim own rights.

Women are involved in Project implementation as coordinators and consultant with 80% rate.

The beneficiaries in each community are mainly women from disadvantaged families, children from group of risk. We counted that 70% from trainee are women.

The rights of children are enlightened together with the civic engagement theme. The trainees are able to activate with group of children with different ages (kinder-garden – school – faculty) and their parents as well.

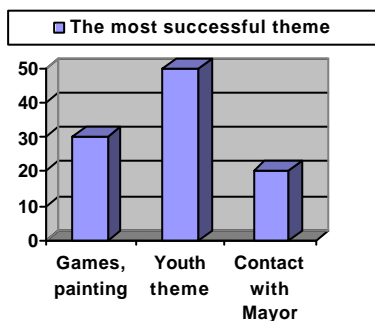
The fruitful interaction with public authorities (Mayorat) is established during a series of seminars with school children, their parents and local authorities “The Right of Children with disabilities”, under the USA Embassy Grant in Moldova.

The possibility to be involved in discussion with counselors and take care on decisions which affect them was intriguing for parents and absolutely new for children.

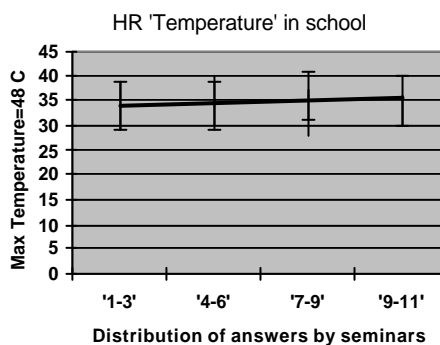
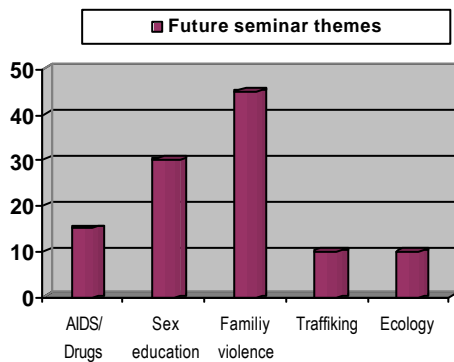
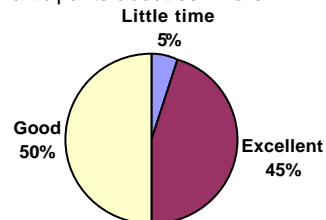


Fig. 1. Drafting proposals for Mayorat.

Participants made evaluation at the end of each seminar according elaborated questionnaires. Around 160 answers were processed. We mention that some answers were similar for all respondents. Around 100% express the willingness to participate in future actions and the fact that this kind of projects is a must for community. Some evaluation results are presented below:



Participants about seminars:



The social awareness on the situation of the poorest lead to better understanding of rural communities needs by local authorities, other local people, and neighbor inhabitants. The project opens new horizons for rural communities, open the world via international institutions, information network, establishes cooperation between organizations in rural area, through the planned events

Short term results:

- A group of 25 persons is trained in the field of participatory methods and NGO management,
- Training of personnel in charge with education of children in communities: mainly from schools, 500 children and their parents - 120 single women and other 200 parents gained knowledge on child rights and notion on family violence.

Long term results:

- A partnership on community level is established.
- The sustainability of activities is ensured by the local CBOs.
- Public opinion awareness campaign started with a series of press releases spread to mass media. As result we are invited to participate in radio program „NGO development and community life” at radio „Antena C” (Capitala) that covers around 90% of Moldovan territory.

The creation of specialised NGOs or local Community Based Organisations (CBOs) may represent the good result if they are quite sustainable. The sustainable group should have at least following:

1. existence of peoples who want to be active member;
2. existence of minimal financial support based on volunteer principle or gained from own fundraising activities or umbrella organisations;
3. existence of people having necessary skills and knowledge;
4. The law environment facilitating this type of activities.

The 4th condition is fulfilled by law of Republic of Moldova.

Ensuring the 1st, 3rd and partially 2nd conditions is the result of current project.

We try to avoid the risk of bureaucracy in organising such groups. Those one are based on volunteers principles, have a plan of works and a plan of action in case of HR violation and procedures describing how to monitor the HR situation, how to provide information to the right persons and organisations.

The project built local skills and expertise, in the rural area, where is the lack of knowledge and most pressing demands of managerial capabilities and knowledge in the field of Civic engagement.

Sustainability issues

The horizontal cooperation and creation of network of rural NGOs, in perspective, will contribute to common activities and facilitate fundraising.

The overall sustainability is ensured by:

Target groups – via establishing of links with local authorities, new assimilated knowledge, a perspective to solve own problems in collaboration with other NGOs.

Local CBOs – having qualified personnel in participatory methods, a community actions plan developed in collaboration with local public authorities, links with social departments in sector and judets.

Local public Authorities – collaboration with local NGOs to better targeting and efficient use of resources.

Transparency of activities: The projects results are spread by our trainee, local groups, volunteers, beneficiaries, published materials. The evaluation of first results is compiled using statistical methods.

It is planned to continue efforts and implement similar projects in all judets of Republic of Moldova.

Organization continues fundraising activity, establish web presence and continue personnel training in computer sciences, methods of community development, accounting principles. The ONG representative has participated in the Europe and Central Asia region NGO forum in Belgrade on 13-17 June, 2002 under the World Bank auspicious. WB ECA NGO Forum opens the possibilities of transfrontalier collaboration with other organizations.

Accountability

The applicant NGO is the lead organization that acts individually and is legally responsible for all aspects of the implementation of the project. Implementation is carried out on the base of plan of action and budget for the distinct period of implementation.

The written financial and descriptive reports are provided on the end of each project stage. The accounting and other confirmative documents like pictures, published materials, and text of consultants' lessons are attached. At the start of project a beneficiary assessment on community development have conducted.

Accounting department keep accurate and regular records as well as separate and transparent accounts of the implementation of the Operation. Subcontracting are provided for the specific tasks recommended by sponsors: publishing/press services, evaluation, supply of equipment).

The local open tender simplified procedure of procurement, with consultation of at least 3 service providers for office equipment supply is usually used.

For services, supplies and works under $X < ^ 5000$ a single quote is used.

The used procedures permit a brief analysis of situation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The internal evaluation is on weekly basis. The weekly meetings have the aim to evaluate how project staff, NGO members and invited consultants fulfils the obligations imposed. The quarterly and annually Technical and Financial Reports are drafted and discussed. If the sponsor or its authorized agents perform an intermediate evaluation, the project management unit provides any document or information likely to help that evaluation is successfully concluded.