

MANAGEMENT OF NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: *Management of non-profit organizations (NGO'S) contributes to the creation of strong social ties. Through them, they meet people who can use their skills and resources together to solve problems that affect society. But there are also individual benefits.*

Young people who volunteer can more easily develop their social skills by collaborating with colleagues and project beneficiaries.

Older people who engage in volunteer activities feel less alone and have a good opportunity to socialize. On the other hand, encourage the initiative of citizens and motivate them to act instead of waiting for a solution from outside, from state institutions or business.

Individuals are becoming stronger and more proactive under the influence of this NGO-promoted perspective. In addition, people who get involved in projects, volunteer or work for an NGO can learn useful and professional and personal skills, from empathy to better communication and planning skills. They can help raise awareness and better informs society, such as the consequences of global warming and pollution.

Keywords: *Management of non-profit organizations (NGO'S), solve problems, beneficiaries, empathy, better informs society, help raise awareness;*

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Introduction

Non-governmental organizations have a distinct role in democratic societies. They contribute to solving complex social problems and, depending on their type, can be involved in cultural, ecological, educational or health activities. The term NGO was first used officially in 1945, in the UN Charter, Article 71. In general, NGO means an entity that does not seek to make a profit and is independent of governmental influences. On the other hand, their role is to promote social values, mutual respect, tolerance, and protect the rights and interests of those disadvantaged categories, in order to prevent social exclusion and to harmonize a set of principles and values. „Nonprofit organizations are generally described as mission driven, mission focused, and values based. A mission – driven or mission – focused organization is motivated in its programs, activities, and decision making by remembering why it exists: to meet the needs of the community.”¹It is essential to create a committee to strengthen the ties between the state and non-governmental organizations that have a very important role in society. Creating a national strategy for the non-profit sector, having a definite role in to streamline the activity and to create cooperation networks between citizens, non-governmental organizations and the state to ensure a new direction of development and the identification of financing mechanisms by supporting partnerships between private and public sector organizations. NGOs have, among other things, the role of facilitating communication between citizens and rulers, to present the way of thinking, the opinion of citizens and their interests regarding certain initiatives by creating a communication network in both directions, and in certain situations.

Acts as a support tool for the government acting for the implementation of projects with increased speed and efficiency due to the expertise in the field and the team of specialists.

The importance of the role played by non-profit organizations is also underlined by the United Nations, which in 2017 met and established the

¹ David O. Renz, Beth K. Smith, 2010: The Handbook of Nonprofit Governance p. 20.

2030 agenda for sustainable development, which includes a set of 17 sustainable development objectives to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change raise awareness and mobilize, provide technical expertise and support and hold governments accountable to their commitments to improve the quality of life of citizens.¹

1. Functions of non-profit sector in the society

Starting from the 10 functions of non-governmental organizations listed by David Horton Smith in 1988², their applicability and role can be highlighted through a series of mechanisms, considering their mission and target group as follows:

- **Offers to society social innovations.** They have a role to play in this direction, as they contribute to the realization of systemic changes related to the evolution of society through innovative ideas through the involvement of civil society, working tools that can be used: virtual volunteering, distance learning, as alternative ways of working with classical methods for social purposes.
- **Offers a forum for debates, in order to positively influence the solving of different problems.** In some situations, it is an effective way to promote debate and facilitate communication between government and citizens and come to the aid of the community. This working method often needs an expertise in the field created by specialists to ensure an efficient communication that will materialize in an action plan with precise deadlines.
- **It is a source of „negative feedback” for society.** It is a useful tool of communication by offering the possibility to transmit certain grievances from society to the rulers. But in order to have a more accurate representation of reality, it is good to have documentation to ensure that we have the correct and up-to-date information.

¹ United Nations, 2015, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG'S):<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

² D.H. Smith, 1988: “The *Nonprofit Sector*”: A Research Manual, New Haven: Yale University Press, U.S.

- **Ensures the recreational/relaxing element of people and society.** Represents a good method of developing skills by engaging in educational activities, and in other situations only to facilitate recreational programs. Having an impact in increasing the quality of life and social cohesion between different categories of citizens with a system of similar principles and values through commitment and civic involvement.
- **Has a major impact on social integration.** This function has a very important role in creating bridges between the disadvantaged categories in society and the rest of society, by carrying out adaptation programs and specialized support. Social integration is also important for the harmonious development of society, in which all social categories feel represented and have support and information mechanisms when they want to exercise their rights and obligations. One solution, among others, is the creation and implementation of social rights protection programs for disadvantaged groups to prevent social inequity.
- **Promotes change.** The changes that an NGO's can make in society are to be appreciated with great importance, given that they pursue good intentions, and the public interest in increasing the quality of life for citizens. But unfortunately non-governmental organizations often face bureaucratic barriers and low support from the rulers, who often do not have the capacity to truly understand their role and mission as a tool of support for citizens and rulers.
- In this sense, the working tool that can be used, in the master plan the national sustainable development plan must be reviewed and introduced the coordinate for defining the non-profit organizations as a support tool to promote the change in the society, in addition to the governmental programs.
- **Frees the individual and supports the expression of abilities and potential in an often restrictive environment.** This coordinate aims to encourage disadvantaged people to express themselves and get involved through ingenious solutions by engaging in activities in

society, through programs that allow prevention of social exclusion and to combat poverty, ensuring proper access to information and resources.

- **Embodies and represents in society different values.** In this case, the role of reactivating certain values, currents or ideas in order to reiterate the importance of some principles in a certain context at a given time. These activities can be carried out with the help of media campaigns and in public debates, which should also have a resolution with an action plan and precise implementation deadlines.
- **Offers support to society's economic system.** For the most part, we can highlight certain economic challenges that social institutions may have at some point in the administration of goods and services by identifying the improvement of situations in the community for the benefit of citizens. These challenges can be remedied in certain situations with the help of legislative and institutional reforms, by reviewing public policies and implementation plans.
- **Constitutes an important resource for achieving society's interests.** The public interest is essential, when we talk about an equitable allocation of resources and the creation of laws and governance programs within society. The role of non-profit organizations being to raise awareness, mediate and identify specific solutions to a possible situation at a given time.
- The best way to address this situation is to facilitate communication between citizens and governors, and to propose certain legislative initiatives, which can take the form of draft laws, to be later promulgated and adopted by politicians in the case of a national consensus.

2. Applicability of the non-profit sector functions in Romania

- Based on everyday realities and on the correlation with the vision of the author David Horton Smith highlighted in "A Research Manual,

New Haven: Yale University Press, United States”, the main functions of the non-profit sector, that can be applied and improved in Romania with priority are:

- **Offers to society social innovations.** In Romanian society, identifying the most innovative ideas can be an asset, NGOs are the main agents of innovation in the process of local development. A good example of creating a useful initiative is promoting democratic values, civic actions carried out both at local and national level, formulating public policy proposals, monitoring public authorities and institutions are some of the possible directions of action for organizations carrying out projects funded by the Civic Innovation Fund. The Fund for Civic Innovation in 2012, aims to be a catalyst for the potential of citizens to transform and develop their communities. In the last 8 years, 148 projects developed by large and small NGOs from all over the country have been funded, with low access to funding, which have supported innovative civic initiatives and actions and inspired, supported and empowered citizens to actively contribute to the development of their communities.¹
- **Offers a forum for debates, in order to positively influence the solving of different problems.** This function in Romania is distinguished by an active involvement in the debates of the participants, at the international level.
- A good example is „The Black Sea NGO Forum” organized by the Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations for Development in Romania².
- It’s an open space for debate, mutual knowledge and understanding, communication and cooperation between representatives of civil society, governments and non-governmental organizations active in the wider Black Sea region.

¹ Civic Innovation Fund: <https://www.inovarecivica.fdsc.ro/>

² Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations for Development in Romania: www.fondromania.org

Since its first edition in 2008, the Forum has brought together over 800 participants from various fields of activity in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Russia, the Republic of Moldova, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Turkey, Ukraine, Romania, as well as other member states of the European Union. Since 2013, the Forum has managed to attract the support of two important partners – direct support from the European Commission and the International Coalition CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness.

- **It is a source of „negative feedback” for society.** Non-profit organizations in Romania offers a possibility to improve those things that do not go in the right correction to be corrected by providing a negative feedback from citizens to politicians, through nonprofit organizations. Among the nonprofit organizations that provide feedback and support through the expertise offered constantly, as a useful tool for evaluating government representatives in Romania, we can mention, Local Employees Association Of Small And Medium Enterprises which since 2004 deals with representing, supporting and defending the interests of the private business community, promoting business opportunities in the area, attracting funding. Involvement in economic and social development, development of strategies, implementation of projects, participation in public-private partnerships, with the ultimate goal of increasing the standard of living of the inhabitants of the area. As well as the Assistance Center for Non-Governmental Organizations (CENTRAS), Foundation for the Development of Civil Society (FDSC) and the Trust for a Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE Trust) since 2006, which operates under the close coordination of the European Commission.¹
- **Ensures the recreational/relaxing element of people and society.** In this respect, non-governmental organizations in Romania are best because they enjoy a civic-made involvement and the support of the rulers at a higher level. Most activities having a degree of cohesion and success at a high level, mainly by organizing sports

¹ List of NGOs in Bucharest: <https://listainstitutii.ro/ong-uri-din-bucuresti>

competitions, concerts, cultural festivals and educational activities. Here we can give as an example a series of non-profit organizations in Romania such as¹: Dacoroman Academy Association which since 1991, promotes art, especially literature, music, painting, but also philosophy and, of course, first-hand talented artists on the national culture scene, through book launches, literary circles, openings, promoting the culture and civilization, the history of Roman Dacia, focusing on the free Dacian and the Daco-Roman intersection in culture, art, linguistics, law, ethnology and ethnic interbreeding, which led to the formation of the Daco-Roman origins of our people. Moreover, another example is BHealthy Association, which deals since 2018 with promotion of table, performance and team sports among all people of any sex and age, especially among young people. The association also aims to organize, sports activities, promote cultural, sports and tourism activities of young people, actions to respect human rights, and so on.

- **Has a major impact on social integration.** In this regard, non-governmental organizations have a lot of work to do in preparing strategies to ensure operational support from the government, because we have many disadvantaged categories, due to socio-economic factors.
- A good example is the Association of Workshops without Borders² which since 2008 offers in Romania, social, professional and civic integration of vulnerable, excluded and marginalized people. It was created a social insertion enterprises through economic activity – the reconnect workshop, the remesh workshop and the bio & co farm, where it offers personalized social support services, insertion counseling, psychotherapy and pedagogical support for skills training for people who have multiple difficulties at employment (long-term unemployment, addictions, disabilities, school dropout, domestic violence, human trafficking, etc.).

¹ List of NGOs registered with the Chamber of Deputies: http://www.cdep.ro/informatii_publice/ong_pe_dom

² National Register of NGOs in Romania: <http://www.just.ro/registrul-national-ong/>

- **Promotes change.** The changes are happening through flexibility of continuous communication, taking into account the socio-demographic characteristics with different levels of economic development between urban and rural areas, categories of citizens and levels of education, doctrines and value systems.

Within this function can be mentioned the Association Of Investments And Development Of Romania¹, as a good example that since 2020 carrying out activities in the fields of: tourism, environmental protection, protection of water resources, energy, energy resources, research, human resources, education, culture, civic values, democracy, the rule of law, social assistance and human rights, public health, conducting market research / surveys, Romanian and community public institutions and collaborating nationalities of the European Union, in general.

- **Frees the individual and supports the expression of abilities and potential in an often restrictive environment.** This function of non-profit organizations is found in Romanian society in the form of educational programs, which have as a source of funding European funds.
- The main role is to increase the degree of cohesion between different social categories of citizens especially in rural areas, with villages, communes and even less developed cities where socio-economic differences of the population.
- The Humanitarian Association Together for Them², has been dealing since 2010 mainly with the operationalization of this function aiming. Improving the quality of life for people and groups in situations of social risk as well as organizing and developing viable social economic units to meet the needs of all categories in situations of social exclusion.
- **Embodies and represents in society different values.** In Romanian society is manifested in the form of the presentation of sets of values,

¹ List of NGOs in Bucharest: <https://listainstitutii.ro/ong-uri-din-bucuresti>

² Humanitarian Association Together For Them: <http://impreunapentruai.ro/>

beliefs and cultural traditions, which usually have a national identity. Where they can be found, mainly in the case of minority populations such as: Hungarians, Roma, Turks, Tatars, Russians of Lipova, Macedonians, and especially the migratory populations from the geographical regions of Dobrogea and Muntenia.

Here can be mentioned The New Pagan Dawn Association¹, which since 2020 has been considering, among other things, the defense of the interests of minorities. As a cultural, philosophical and educational association, it aims to promote the social inclusion of minorities and risk groups, raising the spiritual level of people by popularizing information about pagan / neo-pagan cults and esoteric sciences.

- **Offers support to society's economic system;** This function play an important role, however we have many things to improve, given the reluctance of politicians to accept non-profit organizations as partners and representatives of citizens.
- We can mention here the Association Local Employees of Small and Medium Enterprises² with the role of representation, support and defense of the interests of the private business community, promoting business opportunities in the area, attracting funding.
- Involvement in economic and social development, development of strategies, implementation of projects, participation in public-private partnerships, with the ultimate goal of increasing the standard of living of the inhabitants of the area
- **Constitutes an important resource for achieving society's interests.**

Within this position we can mention here the important contribution of the Romanian Investment and Development Association³ which is a non-governmental organization founded in 2020 out of the desire to contribute to the development of Romania by carrying out individual projects, but also in collaboration with public authorities in its fields of:

¹ New Dawn Pagan Association: <https://thenewpagandawn.eu/>

² List of NGOs registered with the Chamber of Deputies: http://www.cdep.ro/informatii_publice/ong_pe_dom

³ Romanian Investment and Development Association: <https://redirectioneaza.ro/aidr>

- assessing and supporting the environmental protection sector, supporting the implementation of measures on climate neutrality by increasing the production of energy from renewable resources;
- promoting policies regarding the rehabilitation and exploitation for tourist purposes of tourist locations on the territory of the country;
- supporting the public authorities for accessing the non-reimbursable funds necessary for the realization of the development projects at national and / or local level, following the public interest.

Conclusions

The activity of non-profit organizations in Romania, being in a continuous transformation in which the cohesion force, specialization, and quality of the activities carried out must be stimulated by introducing a coherent national strategy in the form of regulatory institutions to ensure a healthy and harmonious development framework. Considering the principles of the rule of law and the public interest to increase the quality of life of citizens through knowledge, skills and abilities transferable to the labor market, in the potential of volunteering as a lifelong learning opportunity, in cultivating social skills such as trust, tolerance, esteem self-respect for diversity.

The importance of the role played by non-profit organizations is also underlined by the United Nations, which in 2017 met and established the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, which includes a set of 17 sustainable development objectives to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change raise awareness and mobilize, provide technical expertise and support and hold governments accountable to their commitments to improve the quality of life of citizens.¹

According to law 26/2000² and the law no. 276 of November 27, 2020 in Romania which complements the operating regulations, the legal

¹ United Nations, 2015, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG'S):<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

² Official Monitor of Romania: Law 26/2000, on associations and foundations.

forms under which non-governmental organizations can be established are associations, foundations or federations to serve the public interest in areas such as: art and culture, sports and recreation, education and research, environmental protection, health, social assistance, religion, civic activism, human rights, humanitarian and / or philanthropic aid, community development, social development. At the same time, NGOs can contribute to improving or even solving problems, where the state does not act enough.

There are NGOs that work in many fields: education, health, environment, society, politics and more. Even if the problems attacked by NGOs can be global, their action is local, and the changes are seen for the first time at the community level.

In Romania, the functions of non-profit organizations as they were defined in 1988, by David Horton Smith, find their place especially by representing the interests of citizens on all levels, due to the fact that there is a continuous will to develop of the society needs. The solutions for the big problems of the society in relation to non-profit organizations, to increase the degree of cohesion and cooperation, to respond as well as possible to the current needs of the society. With the main role of increasing administrative efficiency and to have a sustainable development in the society, including in the relationship with NGOs.

The Romanian Government aims to become a leading actor in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The government is now in the process of operationalising the National Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Romania 2030 (SNDD) by drafting an action plan and developing a governance framework for its effective implementation expected, presents concerns to be more efficient and effective, to respond more effectively to the needs of citizens, with the help of innovation, information technology, as well as to improve the relationship between the business environment and citizens.¹ The non-governmental sector proved to be resilient,

¹ OECD Reviews of Public Governance in Romania 2023: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/civic-space-review-of-romania_f11191be-en

sufficiently solid and continued to play an important role in Romanian society, both through innovations in the public sphere and through the defense of values, rights and institutions built in the process of European integration. In the last decade, but especially in recent years, the non-governmental sector has been on constant alert to react to the number of attempts to remove institutions, reform or legislation that were difficult to obtain during the accession of the European Union.

All in all the success of the development strategy of the Romanian public administration, consists in the ability to adapt public policies to the current needs of society through consultation with non-profit organizations, for creating efficient public policies for a good administration of the Romanian society. Having implemented a self-regulation and transformation mechanism, to function as an integrated system at the level of the administrative structure. Implementing digital reforms and public administration through strategic management, in a form of an action plan in laws, that determine the political class, regardless of political color to collaborate when it comes to the national strategic interest. Aiming at long-term sustainable development of society and to increase the quality of life among citizens, for current and future generations.

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