

Overview of the Romanian NGO sector

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Before 1989

- Before 1989, during the Communist regime, there was no genuine civil society organization in Romania. Existing associations, clubs and trade unions were under strict control from the Government.
- Volunteering was mandatory (!)
- Culture of social mistrust, dependency on Government in all areas of society

Post-communist context

- Revolution of December 1989: the old authoritarian regime fell, followed by a painful transition and economic and social hardship.
- Public services were strained; (new) public needs were (re)discovered, while available resources were scarcer.

Reinventing civil society

- Foreign donors and humanitarian organizations stepped in providing direct support to Romanian people and starting to develop local branches and new local NGOs;
- Civic organizations, supported by foreign donors, filled the gap of a weak political democratic opposition in an undemocratic political culture.

Formative years

- Throughout the 1990s, local NGOs were supported by foreign donors to build more capacity leading to a better level of professionalization in the 2000s.
- With the integration of Romania in the EU (2007), civic and watchdog organizations largely lost the foreign support and largely disappeared.
- NGOs in the social field also lost a crucial volume of their resources with foreign donors reorienting to other priority areas (e.g. Africa, Central Asia etc.)

Post EU integration context

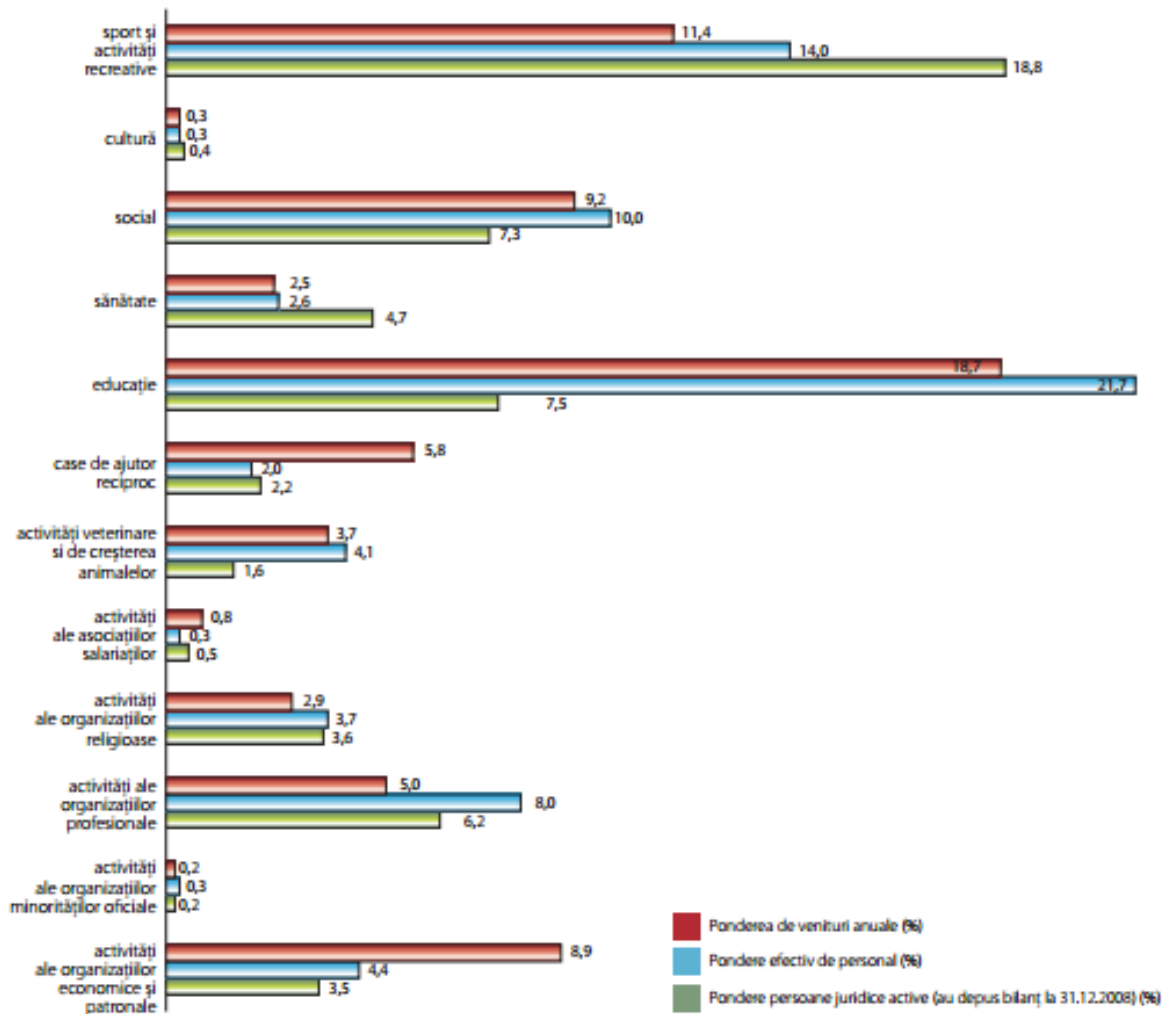
- Huge challenges and unmet needs in the social, environmental and good governance area are not dealt with by the Government.
- Local NGOs lack the resources to meet all the demand.
- Government became less responsive, less transparent and less accountable.

Dimension of the NGO Sector (2012)

- 70,036 registered CSOs in Romania (end of 2012).
- only 26,322 CSOs are active*.
- 70% are associations and 25% are foundations.
- 70% of total NGOs have NO employees.
- 61.000 employees (1.3% of the employed population in the private sector / 0.66% of the total working population).
- ~ 90% concentrated in urban areas



Fields of work



Present: main challenges

- Scarcity of financial resources;
- Adverse political environment;
- Lack of public trust / social capital;
- Large gap between NGOs operating in larger cities and those active in rural and small urban areas, with many regions not covered by NGOs;
- Increasing demand for services in the context of the economic crisis.

Read more:

- ROMANIA - 2012 CSO SUSTAINABILITY INDEX
- http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1863/ROU_0.pdf
- The Atlas of Social Economy (2012)
- http://www.fdsc.ro/library/files/the_atlas_of_social_economy_2012_en.pdf
- Dialogue for Civil Society. CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report (2005)
- <http://www.fdsc.ro/documente/16.pdf>