

NGOS BETWEEN PRIVATE VOLUNTEERS AND PUBLIC MANAGEMENT. CASE STUDY IN IAȘI*

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Abstract

This article represents an exploratory research about the roles and actions of the active NGOs in the city of Iași, Romania, related with the local administrative structures. Field research was a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods/techniques preceded by a long period of a sociological documentation. We applied more than 40 questionnaires within the NGOs, interviews with the executives of four NGOs, one focus group, eight interviews with the administrative functionaries that habitually work with local NGOs. The outcomes of the research were to identify some directions of action to improve the quality of NGOs activities related with the local administration, regional media and private economic sector.

Keywords: *NGOs, quantitative and qualitative investigations, collaboration, communication.*

1. Argument

In Romania, NGOs are social inventions of the last two decades. Their appearance was the result of several public policies that occurred including the addition of liberty for the non-governmental environment.

In Romania, the projects deployed by the NGOs, seen as “social systems” (Luhmann, 1984) carry a significantly dimension linked to fashion (Miftode, 2004) and became very popular as a result of additional factors (Bângăoanu, 2009:20). The first relates to the considerable amount of funds which the European Union,

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The World Bank and other international bodies gave to Romania to facilitate development in order to bring Romania to the same standards as other EU members. The second factor produced by the appearance of the international NGOs on Romanian market which coincided with “the management of the projects as a development strategy not only of the organizations, but also of society” (Gareis, 2010:8).

The “society based on projects” concept had been explored in the Romanian context too. This research project took place between 2006 and 2007 and it was a part of the international research program called *Project Orientation*, which was initiated by the Department Projektmanagement Group of the University of Vienna (Gareis et al. 2007). The research results concerning Romania led to recommendations concerning the increase of the professionals with which the management of the projects at both the organizational and societal level, the involvement of the association, the promotion of international standards and certification both for projects funded privately and those funded publicly.

In his work *Introduction to comparative social policy. The analysis of the social assistance system* (2010:179-200), F. Lazăr presents additional research (presented as a research project for recent graduates, Grant nr. TD 376/2007) that compares the system of the social assistance in several European countries, emphasizing some of the challenges and successes of Romania. *The successes* consist of the legislative environment, the development of social assistance, the active NGOs in the social assistance field, the expansion of the partnership in some area, the appearance of studies and research in the social assistance field etc. The author also addresses the *challenges* Romania faces: the appropriateness of the services to the local needs, the minimal involvement of the beneficiary, the services failure, insufficient admission to the European funds and so on.

Initially, people were sceptical of NGOs and they were seen as a “subversive enclave”. Thus the NGOs had to overcome significant ideological impediments and protests based on some prejudice. In their effort to assess their status as an alternative resource to the governmental funding, the NGOs were encouraged by the *disorder that was after the communism*. (Berevoescu et al., 1999). The brutal elimination of many organizations and institutions, the inability to maintain social order/discipline and to imitate the occidental organizational systems represented favourable conditions which led to collaboration with the NGOs outside the country and opportunities to appoint their own NGOs. Thus it is clear that the effective organizations did not appear by itself, but “were and still are always conditioned by some characteristics of the society” (North, 1990) and some of important functions are the *expression function*, construction and the development of a local communities function (Gaynor, 2009:27).

The social use of such organizations in a context where there are many types of crises, determined not only the obstacles transgression of the NGOs, but also the layout of the functional capacities of the administrative-territorial unit through the

services that they could receive from the new organizational structures, which represents an important aspect of the performance in every NGO. In a loose way, the quality can be defined through opportunity or a good behaviour (Matei, 2006:399). In this way, opportunity is similar to the efficiency of the projects and programs. Usually the quality of services is related to an aspect which impacts the client more directly. This thing can be better defined through a quality of services than through their results (Cojocaru, 2010). To fulfil their specific objectives, governmental institutions such as The City Council, The Prefecture, The Hall, and The Inspectorate and so on, took into account the collaboration with the non-governmental organizations. Actually, the non-governmental sector disposed of employees, facilities and great organization. The higher our expectations concerning NGOs, the more clearly defined our knowledge of the experiences (positive or negative) should be. Therefore, it is necessary to understand what the NGOs have done until now and what they accomplish at the level of the European, national, regional and local community area levels.

Through everything that had been said, to remark the success of the community projects should be viewed as two-fold: from the *private volunteer* perspective (meaning the kind of volunteer maintained and advocated by NGOs) which is strongly connected with the *public management*, which consists of all local institutions. Without a connection between these two, no projects at a local level can succeed, regardless of the area. This conclusion is based on several proofs:

- a. Public and governmental institutions are not always adequate and efficient
- b. Sometimes the persons or the people who are the beneficiaries are not satisfied by the measures taken by governmental institutions.
- c. The persons and the groups are not satisfied to be simply governmental customers; they intervene in productive ways in a properly functioning society by provoking the downfall of a government, relocating political power through elections, and improving of the typology of institutions and organizations.
- d. As an alternative to the governmental provisions, NGOs are possible only in a democratic environment. This explains why they have been legal accepted only after the bankruptcy of the totalitarian regimen in Romania. After approximately two decades from the fall of communism, the notion still exists that everything that is not controlled by the government it dangerous. In proportion, as the Romanian democracy will consolidate and mature, the NGOs will obtain credibility.
- e. Both the governmental and non-governmental organizations must be in touch with some cultural, economic, moral and social mentality, in other words to have *national social-economic vision*.

Therefore, currently it is required a new perspective of the domains we want to research, a perspective which involves development, identification and the use of

the resources, not one which people use in hard times. This new perspective develops the preventive aspect, guiding “the local and the private actors” to the initiation and the supporting of some actions in point of some optimistic situation” (Garleanu-Soitu, 2006; Soitu, Radoi, 2008b; Soitu, 2008a).

2. The location place

At the moment there are a few databases about NGO in Iași. Unfortunately, these databases aren't available or the information is incomplete and/or wrong. For example, the NGO Register which had been made by the Attorney General is hardly available and the containing information is inconsequential and not updated. The Prefecture institution of Iași boasts a database which had been made on the strength of a *volunteer registration* of the NGOs. Though it is available at request, this database is incomplete and contains lots of mistakes/failures. The database with the NGOs from the Hall of Iași is in the same situation.

The database that we used as a basis was *The NGO Catalogue of Iași* made by ProWomen Foundation (also available on www.ongiasi.ro). According to this document, there are 51 NGOs divided in different domains. Though there are more than 51 NGOs in Iași, they couldn't have been identified in the available documents the moment the research took place.

The research concerning the NGOs from Iași was in progress between June and July 2010. For this research we used the questionnaire, the group focus and the semi-structured interview. Thence we made the quantitative and qualitative review of the soil dates. We state that all the NGOs from Iași were taken into account, but many of them refused to answer.

2.1 The quantitative investigation

The purpose of this research through a questionnaire was to identify some tendencies regarding NGO's part in this city and a brief report of its contribution to the development of Iași. In order to do this, it was more than necessary to involve as many people as possible, people from different domains (social services, community development, young people, environment protection, instruction, education, investigation, culture, art; social integration, durable development, humans rights, health / people with disabilities, faith; guidance, negotiation and mediation).

In other words, we were first interested in applying this questionnaire to all existing NGOs. This method's intention was to avoid some inherent or unanticipated difficulties.

As a first step, the questionnaire was sent per E-mail to more than 60 NGOs after we consulted a few lists that we found at the local administration. We started with those lists because there were several reasons to consider those NGOs as

being active or in a good or bad partnership with the local public administration. Furthermore, we have consulted some other sources of information, for example the web sites, but none of the sources can be considered complex or at least consulted by the research team. This way we tried to find out if those organizations are still funding and if the existing information is still available.

As a matter of fact, the feedback that we received was not a very helpful one; thence we have decided to send people that will find some existing NGOs. Our main purpose was not to make a complex research (impossible as a matter of fact), but to work with small sample of NGOs in order to draw a conclusion. Eventually, we got a small sample of 41 NGOs:

The main objectives of the quantitative study were:

1. A brief evaluation of the importance and role of the local NGOs in the city's development;
2. The identification of the main sources of financing and of the specific difficulties that occur while there is a project in progress;
3. The identification of the characteristics of the successful projects and their classification according to their importance. To create some *satisfactory strategies* (successful strategies) getting out of the respective acknowledgment.
4. The evaluation of the local collaboration between the authorities and the NGOs.
5. The identification of the inter-communication and inter-change strategies between NGOs, local authorities and financial backers at it appears from the previous year experience. The evaluation of the strategies with a positive impact in what concerns the city of Iasi.
6. The evaluation of the public relationships strategies applied by the NGOs.

2.2 The qualitative study (the ONG)

The qualitative study sighted out the evaluation of the perception of NGOs in relation to a few relevant tasks and the impact that this compartment has in the development of Iași. The principal tasks referred to their involvement in the development of Iași. Some subjects, such as: the history of the non-profit department in Iași, the trust and the reputation that NGOs has and the internship between NGOs and authorities, with other NGOs and with private and governmental companies. Another part of our discussion was about the strategies that are used in making and deployment the projects with success in order to obtain funds.

The qualitative study sighted out 4 domains of interest: social services, the environment protection, culture and economics. Initially we wanted to meet in 4 focus groups in which we would have a special session for each domain. Unfortunately, though the invitations had the inscription of “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, there were only a few representatives of the NGO's organizations. This

situation led to another strategy. Hereby, there were 4 interviews, one for each domain and a session for the focus group altogether with the representatives of these 4 domains. Our criteria of selection reported on the one hand the people who took part at the conversations and the NGOs on the other hand. The participants to the discussion were NGO's representatives, who have a management position. Another request was that the NGOs who took part in this sessions to have at least five years of activity.

2.3 The qualitative study (local authorities)

The semi-structured interview has been applied in order to get information which will help to complete the information received through questionnaire and group focus. The people who took part at the interview have a leadership position in the same government institutions and they have lots of opportunities to socialize with other NGOs. Their opinions were mostly based on the experience in a certain domain for more than 3 years. We also interviewed some people with a managerial position in NGOs in order to receive more information about the kind of relationship that exist between the non-governmental institutions and to find out how these people who lead a non-governmental institution see the relationship between NGO and the governmental institution.

2.4 The distribution of the NGO on domains:

According to *The NGOs Catalogue of Iași*, made by the ProWomen Foundation, the NGOs organizations from Iași have the following domains of interest (we mean both the main domain and the secondary domain):

Domain:	%
Social services	32,2
Tuition, Education, Research	13,8
Health / People with disabilities	10,3
Youth	9,2
Culture, Art	8,0
The community development	5,7
Guidance, Negotiation and Mediation	4,6
The environment protection	4,6
Sport	4,6
Faith	2,3
The continuous development	2,3
Human rights	1,1
Social integration	1,1

A great majority of all the NGOs have a secondary domain.

It must be said that the NGOs have different domains of interest, but only two of them have an important role. Furthermore, we believe that the domains of activity should be seen as in a general sense, when there was some inadequacy even in some answers from the questionnaire. We can talk about a superposition of competence (which leads to competition) because one domain is important for a NGO while for another is a secondary domain. There are some NGOs that reel off during a year tasks such as: human rights, the cross-border collaboration, mediation in what concerns the labour market, health and/or discrimination on the labour market. This situation persists even there where a main domain is a connective one with two more secondary domains. There are lots of subjects for the projects and there is a risk that they won't focus on a domain which eventually they will fathom.

3. The research results

3.1 Projects and beneficiary

There is an impressive number of beneficiaries of the last three years (2007-2009): from a few scores of beneficiaries (such as: Terra Nostra, The brothers of charity, etc) to hundreds (such as: Iosif Foundation, LECUPO, Waldorf, etc) and to thousands (Star of Hope, Caritas, Save the Children, Social Alternatives, etc). There are some categories in which these beneficiaries can fit in, even if they have the same background: poor and vulnerable families, sick people that are taken care of at home, people who eat in the social cafeteria, unemployed, people with disabilities, old people, children that are facing a delicate situation because of their social status or migration (see Netedu, 2008), drug or alcohol addicts, people with HIV and so on.

The number of these beneficiaries can fluctuate very much. We want to point out that many NGOs gave us an approximate number of the beneficiaries because, depending on the type of project, the number can change.

Of course, it would have been very useful and interesting a direct contact with the beneficiaries in order to see if they are satisfied with the program they are a part of.

In the same time, as it had been observed by other researches before the dependence on the programs made by NGOs or authorities can lead to the same unequal reports.

The very way in which it concerns the number of the pro beneficiaries is also impressive. In the same time (2007-2009) there were several organizations that had more than 1000 pro employer (such as: The Regional Centre of Facilitation and Negotiation, Save the Children, Social Alternatives and With You) or organizations that have hundreds of employers (different collegiate activities, The Crown Foundation, Star of Hope, Bethany, Holt). This number can be really useful in a

comparative outlook between inter-countries or national. Of course, separate research can be conducted based on the type of the activities in which these employers were involved; in order to see how much money they spent with trainings.

If we talk about the number of the employers as institutions, there is a huge number too, more than 100 (such as: The Mediation Centre and Community Security, Social Alternatives, Bethany) or we can talk about some scores (With You, Waldorf, Holt, The Crown, etc).

Of course there is a positive association between the importance of the projects and the number of employers, but of course there are some exceptions: many employers do not have big expenses (here we talk about the foundation for progeny and students).

In conclusion we say that not the number of the employers impresses us, but the diversity, complexity and ingenuity of the local projects.

Concerning the project's location we can build *a map of the NGO's activities from Iași*. It seems that the local NGOs have projects both in cities and in villages. However, most of the projects are developing in cities, Iași being the city with the many projects in progress at the moment. The distribution of the projects in Iași in the last five years was the following:

Locality	Number of projects
Iași	20
Harlau	9
Tg Frumos, Pascani	8
Voinessti, P. Iloaie, Popricani, Raducaneni	6
Aroneanu	5
Erbiceni, Andrieșeni, Scanteia, Belcești, Ciurea, Strunga, Valea Lupului	4
The rest of the rural locality	3 projects on average

From the table above we can see the preponderance of the urban zones or at least of the villages which are closer to the city. Through NGO they have an authority in the rural area because there are lots of projects in progress (Holt and Social Alternatives).

3.2 Employers, volunteers

The performance of an NGO (Străinescu, Ardelean, 2007) depends at least on 3 factors: the experience and the competence of the leader, the difficulty of the duties and the challenges that the NGO needs to face and the motivation that leads the people. Unlike the public institutions and companies, which are using just

employers in their activities, the NGOs use volunteers. The *volunteer programs* (Garleanu-Soitu, 2006) have two major advantages:

- Assures minim costs for NGO
- Offers social positions to the people getting involved in the projects

The two categories (employers and volunteers) have different expectations from NGO and usually they don't agree on what concerns the levy (mobilization), organization, monitoring, evaluation and compensation (reward). Between employers and volunteers can appear tension or pressure due to the fact that both categories have a major contribution and importance for the society. That is why, one of the main duties that a NGO representative has, is to build and to maintain a team spirit and an organizational climate which encourage cooperation. We need to bear in mind also the fact that the NGO employers and the volunteers represent *a heritage/patrimony* and not a cost, represents a human form of capital (Boxall, Purcell, Wright, 2007: 231).

The numbers about the NGO's employers is relevant only when we compare it to a higher level (a European level for example). We conclude that the NGOs have a quite small number of employers (13 on average) wherefrom only 11 are permanently employers. To this number we can add the number of 53 volunteers. The differences are obvious if we refer to domains: hereby the differences from the social domain are bigger 26.21 und 74 persons.

3.3 The relationship between NGO und authorities

The relationship between NGO and the authorities can not be uniform analyzed: the qualitative study respondents consider that *“a part of NGOs have a good relationship, very good even”*, while *“some NGOs have just a formal relationship or no relationship even”*, as well as some authorities have *“o good relationship with the NGOs, a very good even, while other authorities have a less good relationship.”*

The most important mechanism which is the basis of the relationships between NGOs and the authorities represents the establishment of the interpersonal relationships. On the one hand is the NGO representatives' ability to assess interpersonal relationships and on the other hand is about the same ability of the authority representatives to establish interpersonal relationships, doubled by the necessity of the existence of a large, open vision. *“If in that institution, the person that is designated to work with the NGO sees in NGO the opportunity to make some things happen, then the relationship will be a successful one”*.

Practically, the relationship between NGO and the authorities is first at a *“personal level”* established, being a subjective and informal one, then *“the relationship to be formalized and institutionalized”*.

The relationship between NGO and authorities depends much on characteristics of the social changes, flexibility and mobility, receptivity of the existing structures and the opening. The respondents have already identified a need

in the relationship between the NGO and authorities: the changing of the public authorities' management on political criteria. *"It is very hard to establish lasting relationships between institutions, when their bosses change after every election"*.

Another factor that contributes to a successful relationship between NGOs and local authorities has to do with the quantity and quality of the projects made by these two together. *"There are NGOs that have a good collaboration with the respective institution, collaboration built in years"*. Anyway, the initial collaboration is facilitated by *"a good image that the NGO has in the institution's eye"*. The symbolic capital, made by view and trust, and which the NGO has, together with the relational human capital, represents the key of the successful collaboration with the authorities.

In the respondents' opinion, the institutions are *"very good partners in receiving international funds and making projects"*. The partnership had first been imposed by the outside investors. Therefore, *"in the cadre of the financing lines for the public institutions had been required a partnership with the NGOs"* and all the way round *"when there were selections for receiving funds for NGO, they had been asked to be in partnership with the public institutions"*, as a main condition for getting the funds.

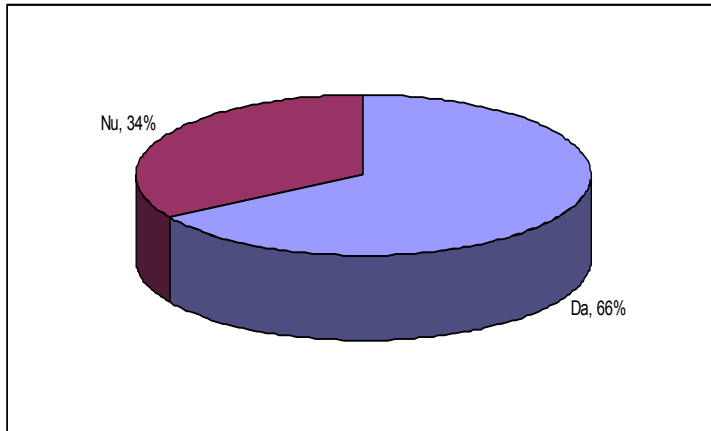
For the most part, this collaboration between NGO and authorities is *"initiated by NGO; the authorities get involved, put in readiness all their resources, but it can be seen the default of a clear strategy at the public institutions level"*. However, the initiation of this relationship depends a lot on the authority that we are talking about. Every public institution has its own organizational culture (behaviour organizational rules, faiths, values and so on) and in order to develop common activities with an NGO there must be found common elements to get them closer, but also the divergent ones (*"to reduce from the beginning the eventual conflicts that may occur during a project"*).

After many discussions 2 types of partnerships with the public institution were identified:

1. The *"real partnership"* is based on a relationship of equality, in which there is interest and engagement in the whole project from both sides. However, the respondents emphasized the fact that, in some circumstances, the public institutions, which belong to the body politic, try to maintain a supra-ordering relationship with an NGO. The *"real partnership"* has to aspects:
 - The formalized *"real partnership"* which is based on a signed contract between two institutions (NGO and the authority, respectively), made for a longer or shorter period.
 - The informal *"real partnership"* made by *"punctually, precise collaborations, less regulation in the official environment"*.

From a quantitative point of view, the NGOs have been interrogated concerning their collaboration with the local authorities in the last 5 years, and when they answered affirmatively, they were asked to specify how the collaboration ensued.

A. *Did you sign a local partnership with the Hall from Iași in the last five years?*

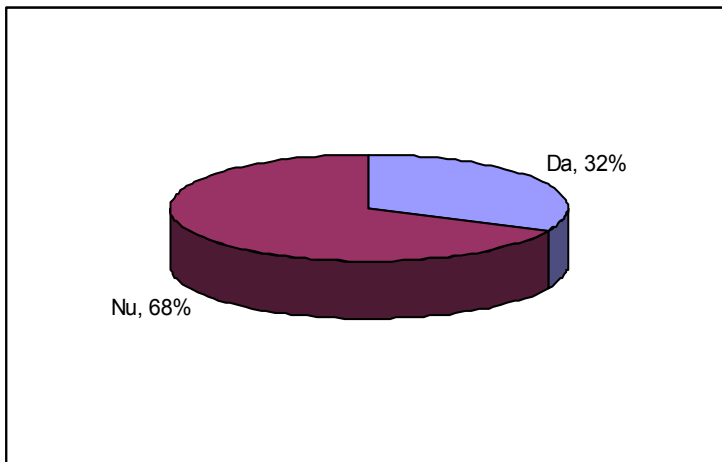


If yes, how would you describe your collaboration with the Hall from Iasi?

- 92% good or very good
- 18% bad enough

In this period of 5 years, we came to the results that are above listed. Anyway, we can observe that there had been a good collaboration with the Hall.

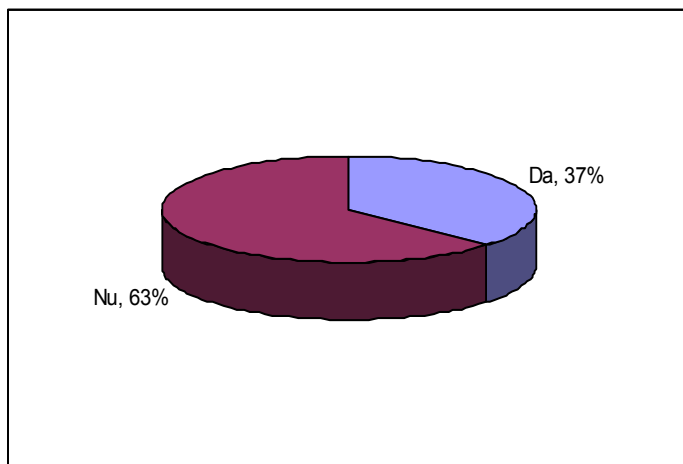
B. *Did you sign a local partnership with the Prefecture from Iași in the last five years?*



If YES, how would you describe your collaboration with the Prefecture?

- 70% good enough
- 30% very good

C. *Did you sign a local partnership with the Country Board from Iași in the last five years?*



If YES, how would you describe your collaboration with the Country Board?

- 60% good enough
- 33% very good
- 7% pretty bad

We can notice that there is a bigger opening regards the Hall and not that big regards the Prefecture and the Country Board. Other institutions that are not as important as these three important ones, we have included in a separate table where we introduced the rate of the partnership in the last 5 years.

D. *Did you sign a contract with....in the last 5 years?*

	Yes (%)	Good and very good collaboration	Bad and very bad collaboration
The General Welfare and Child Protection from Iași	49%	90%	10%
Community Assistant Director from Iași	39%	100%	-
Directorate for Culture from Iain	12%	100%	-
Environmental Protection Agency from Iași	12%	80%	20%
The Hall from another city from our country	31%	100%	-
The Prefecture in another county in the country	15%	100%	-
County Board from are in the country	12%	100%	-
County School Inspectorate from Iași	54%	100%	-
Al. I. Cuza University from Iași	46%	100%	-
County Police Inspectorate from Iași	34%	93%	7%

The NGOs from the sample had interfered with several institutions, but the contact with those is poor. We numerate here the entities that are more common:

Culture Students House, Mathematical Society from Romanian, LCMHF Bukarest/Cluj, Drug Prevention Center, Department for Agriculture and Rural Development Iași, Public Health, County Agency for Employment, County Department for Tourist Iași, Public Health Iași, Environmental Clearance, School Inspectorate of Iași and from other counties, Inspectorate for Emergency Situations, Prison from Iași, Mayors and schools from rural places around Iași, Mayors from Moldova, Socola Hospital, Technical University “Gheorghe Asachi”, Agricultural Board Iași, Gendarmerie Inspectorate Iași, Children’s Hospital “So. Maria”, “Petre Andrei” University, The Court of Iași and so on.

We can notice a big diversity which can be a sign of a great opening to collaborations. Otherwise, most of them are in a partnership as listed below:

	The number of NGOs at the first option	The number of NGOs at the second option
Environmental Protection Agency	1	-
County Board	2	2
Department for Agriculture and Rural Development Iași	2	-
General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Iași	2	3
Public Health Iași	2	-
Police Inspectorate Iași	2	-
County School Inspectorate Iași	3	1
The NGOs from Iași	1	-
The Hall/Local Council from Iași	5	-
Different schools	2	-
Al. I. Cuza Iași University	5	1
Technical University Gh. Asachi	1	-
County Agency for Employment Iași	-	2
British Council	-	1
Department of Community Assistance	-	3
Environmental Clearance Iași	-	1
The Prefecture from Iași	-	1
Others	-	5
No answer	13	20
Total	41	41

From this table too we can see a big diversity of public institutions that are in partnership with the NGOs.

If we assess the relationships between NGOs and the authorities on a scale from 1 (very bad relationships) to 8 (very good relationships), there is a 5.1 in total, which means positive relationships in general.

3.4 The relationship between NGOs and the companies

Though it breaks the border of this article, we believe that the relationship between NGOs and companies, private or governmental ones, still can be relevant in a local context. This relationship can take different forms, and can progress and transform in the same time, to move from one form to another. Depending on the initiator of the relationship we can distinguish the following situations:

1. *The NGO addresses directly to the company* – in this relationship, the company has the role of the benefactor, subsidizing the program, the project or the initial activity of organization. Moreover, the company can get involved in NGO's projects with human resources or the activities that the company is developing in order to begin new projects. In this context, the respondents identified two types of relationships:
 - The NGOs that address the companies directly, in order to receive funds for some projects. The general idea was that organizations of this type “*don't have the requested experience to get some other type of funds, structural funds for example*”.
 - The NGOs that address the companies directly in order to receive some funds that later they will distribute to other NGOs. These NGOs are playing an important role in supporting the other non-governmental organizations, but “*their number is quite small*”. (We are talking here about some NGOs that are just a branch of the international NGOs.)
2. *The companies address to the NGO* – in this relationship the company plays the role of the buyer of some “*service projects*” which an NGO can offer to the employers of the company.

In time, the respondents say, the companies understood that the NGOs can help them to build relationships with the members of the communities, bringing in the partnership their public image, to have access to a lot of benefits, including more information, relationships with people and innovative project.

Like in the first situation when NGO was the initiator, when the company is the initiator, we can distinguish two kinds of relationships.

- Companies that address some NGOs directly in order to start some programs of a social nature for the employers or community. Likewise, the main purpose of initiating a relationship like this can be the creation of a positive image in order to get some competitive advantages. The report between those two purposes is a complex one and relatively difficult to discriminate: “*it is hard to say if the company is more interested in more programs or advertise.*”

- A particular situation represents the companies that have their own NGOs. Similar to the previous case, it is hard to decide if the purpose behind this initiative is a social or a commercial one. Moreover, in many situations these NGOs play the NGO support role, which means they try to get funds from other companies in order to give to other non-governmental institutions. The purpose of these organizations is in a very close relationship with the companies aim.

In the table below is synthesized the relationship between NGOs and companies, starting from the organization that initiates this relationship. The result of this kind of relationships, express under a benefit form, it is different presented for NGOs and for companies too. The two main benefits, social profit and economic profit, are not excluded but rather accentuate the relationship's orientation to a purpose.

It must be mentioned the thing that, through *economic profit* we understand the actions that are made in order to raise funds. For example, the economic profit recorded by a NGO which addresses directly to the company can later get a sponsorship.

The initiator of the relationship	The description of the relationship	Benefits	
		NGO	Companies
NGO	Addresses the company directly	Attract resources	Economic profit
	Support NGO	Attract resources	Economic profit
COMPANIES	Addresses the NGOs	Attract resources	Social profit / Economic profit
	Develop their own NGOs	<i>No benefit</i>	Social profit / Economic profit

The respondents said that the benefits of the relationship between NGOs and the companies reflect on “their beneficiary and sometimes on the community” as well as on the actors directly involved. For some companies, the social corporate responsibility (CSR) became more like a profit equation in accordance with law and philanthropy “*the need of understanding the communities where they activate their projects tends to become a must have for the companies*”. In a global environmental which is in a continuous movement, the social aspects of business get different proportions, such as: “*community investments*”, “*responsibility for the society*”, “*standards of good practice in the social and working domain*” (Oprea, 2007; Kapoor, Sandhu, 2010).

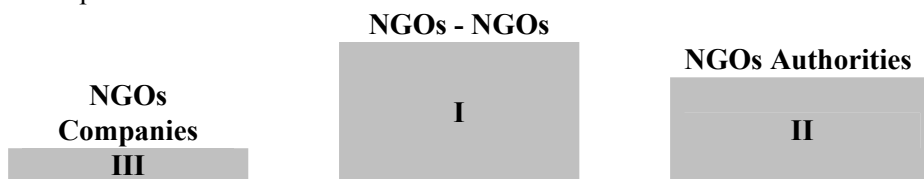
Anyway, the respondents said that, CSR can create a “*corporate jargon*” or “*a matter of policy checked on paper, than a commitment to concrete activities*”. In this circumstance, the NGO benefits can be in the best case superficial, situation in which the visibility and the credibility of the organization can suffer if they associate with a bad partner.

The companies get involved in initiatives made by RSC due to different motives, such as “*the desire to do a good thing*” or “*to consolidate the role of the company in the community*” or “*the need to find the answer to some problems they are facing*”.

The participators to the interview mentioned that, although the benefits are obvious, they have a price too: “*partnership involves significant investment in time and compromise*”.

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At the end of the discussions during the group focus and the interviews to this theme, the respondents were asked to realize a hierarchy of the most effective relationships that the NGOs from Iași have. In all the interviews the result of the hierarchy was similar: the best collaboration is between NGOs, the second is between NGOs and authorities and the last one is the collaboration between NGOs and companies.



3.5 The communication between ONG and the Local Government

As regards the information about the activities of the Local Government, we focused on the Hall / Local Council, County Board and the Prefecture of Iași.

<i>A. Concerning the Halls and the Local Councils activities, to what extend your organization...?</i>	Often and very often	Occasionally or very occasionally	Not at all
...informs about the projects and the decisions that the Hall and the Local Council take	61%	39%	-
...participate to the public meetings that the Hall and the Local Council have	12%	34%	54%
... recommend the Hall and the Local Council	15%	39%	46%
...propose the Hall and the Local Council projects for non-governmental activities	32%	44%	24%
...take part to volunteers activities	49%	32%	19%

<i>B. Concerning the County Board activities, to what extend your organization...?</i>	Often and very often	Occasionally or very occasionally	Not at all
...informs about the projects and the decisions that the County Board take	34%	42%	24%
...participate to the public meetings that the County Board have	10%	24%	66%
...recommend the County Board	15%	29%	66%
...propose the County Board projects for non-governmental activities	22%	22%	66%

<i>C. Concerning the Prefecture activities, to what extend your organization...?</i>	Often and very often	Occasionally or very occasionally	Not at all
...informs about the projects and the decisions that the Prefecture take	34%	34%	31%
...participate to the public meetings that the Prefecture have	10%	27%	63%
...recommend the Prefecture	12%	20%	68%
...propose the Prefecture projects for non-governmental activities	15%	12%	73%

From the tables above we can see that there is an increased interest for the Halls and Local Government activities (61%), but the interest for the County Board and Prefecture actions is not that big. However, the NGO's more active intervention in the local activities is still waited: few associations participate to the public meetings, or make a recommendation to the local authorities or even to propose some activities. Except for the Hall / Local Government, the other connections seem just random.

Related to the collaboration with the local authorities, you have noticed the next type of public involvement of a local NGO:

	The Hall/ The Local Council	The Prefecture	County Board
...said something at a meeting of...	15%	12%	10%
...asked for information	41%	7%	22%
...required a project...	20%	2%	10%
...made a recommendation...	15%	2%	10%
...made a suggestion for a non-governmental activity...	44%	5%	12%
...received funds from...	39%	2%	7%

As shown above, there is a strong connection between NGO and the Hall or the Local Government. This way we expect a more pronounced request from the Hall concerning the specific expertise of these NGOs. Moreover, 61% of the NGOs confirmed that they were asked to make the expertise with the specific problems either through the Hall or through some organizations that belong to the local authorities in general. Here a few institutions' names that requested the expertise and how many times:

	Frequencies
School Inspectorate	7
Development Co-operate Directorate	6
The Hall from Iași	6
The General Social Assistance and Child Protection Iași	5
County Police Inspectorate	3
County Agency for Employment	3
The rural authorities	4
County Board	2
Territorial Authority of Public Order, Jail, The Prefecture, "G.Asachi" Technical University, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Environmental Clearance and others	1

4. Conclusions

The active participation of the non- governmental organizations to the implementation of some projects of a major social impact, and why not, to the solving of some crisis situations, seems to be the new strategy of the present. The main conclusions of the study are presented below:

1. The NGOs representative and the representatives of the other governmental institutions which are in a good relationship with these organizations understand that NGO is "the alternative offer to what the state requires", but consider that the Romanian NGOs won't develop very soon: the state is crimping the "daring" ones, fosters the others and casts in the social centre a wrong image about this organizations for not allowing them to have a social positions.
2. The role of the NGOs in our community must be thought from multiple perspectives: from the beneficiaries, the authorities and the financial backers' perspectives. If these three entities are not mutually visible through a specific and effective communication, it can lead to overlapping competencies and excessive bureaucracy.
3. The visibility of the NGO analyzed among different publics (local authorities, NGOs, companies, people) is limited by the direct linking or by the knowledge of a relationship between NGOs and the members of the public above remembered. From the NGO's perspective, the highest

recorded level notoriety is in relation with the local authorities and the NGO sector, while companies and people have only a vague knowledge of these organizations.

4. The relationship between the NGOs and the authorities cannot be uniformly analyzed, but it depends very much on the applied institutions. This relationship is primarily determined by “the peoples’ level”, being of subjective nature and often informal, but then this “relationship to be formalized and institutionalized”.
5. The relationship between NGOs and the local /central authorities is a positive one overall, but with different degrees of intensity. Relevant depth is achieved when there is partnership between NGOs and the authorities. To emphasize this partnership, relationship must be thought beyond demand-donation to exchange of expertise (with benefits from both sides).
6. The relationship between NGOs and companies is pretty poor and is structured according to the initiator of the relationship. However, we can identify 4 kinds of relationships: the NGO that addresses directly to the company, support NGO, companies that address directly to NGOs and companies that develop their own NGOs.
7. The way of receiving funds through relationship with the governmental institutions is considered to be by some as altered by “advocacy and political interference”. This would explain the easy way new and without any experience NGOs receive important funds.
8. The problem of funding the NGOs are still of a big importance, and the causes and effects of these problems can hardly be quantified because of the diversity of situations (from the lack of funds to payment delays). Important economic and administrative entities are reserved in supporting the non-governmental sector and there will not be any real possibilities in changing this situation.
9. To achieve the development objectives of Iași, it is necessary to improve the relationships between public institutions and the NGOs that are operating in economy, the environmental protection, culture and art, social services for those in need and the implementation of them. To make possible the cooperation between these two institutions, it is necessary to develop a legal framework to regulate this mechanism of involvement of the NGOs in design, implementation and evaluation of development programs for each area. For example, the NGOs can support the social development (Petrescu, 2007:412-429) through:
 - Campaigns of information for the people;
 - To create and to provide social services to people, groups or communities in need;
 - Economic and financial advice provided to small entrepreneurs;
 - Advice offered to local authorities;

- Citizen involvement in decision-making process and participation in implementation of programs, project;
- Provided support for specific causes (advocacy and lobbying);

5. Proposals

Finally, we want to add two proposals that can be drawn from our research:

1. Is recommended the support by certain measures of central administration of NGO activity, in order to avoid their disappearance from economic reasons:
 - to subcontract services from NGOs, to grant tax incentives (see the comparison with the firms status),
 - a requirement to budget public institutions to introduce new chapters to provide and to fund new projects (at the moment, in most of the cases, the NGOs pay for themselves, although their beneficiary and partner are the public institutions) and so on.
2. The need of collaboration of the state of institutions with local and regional NGO, because they know better the nature of the expectations of beneficiaries.

Contributions of Authors

This study is the result of an exemplary team work. Each author had a more substantial contribution in a particular aspect of the study. A. Neteđu has design and coordinated the quantitative study, while R. Asiminei and C. Morariu conducted the qualitative study. Chapters on the conclusions and recommendations ere developed by D. Stan. From the Association of Social Alternative, C. Luca and A. Gulei came up with the initiative of underway the study, contributing, at the same time, with input regarding methodological issues, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

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