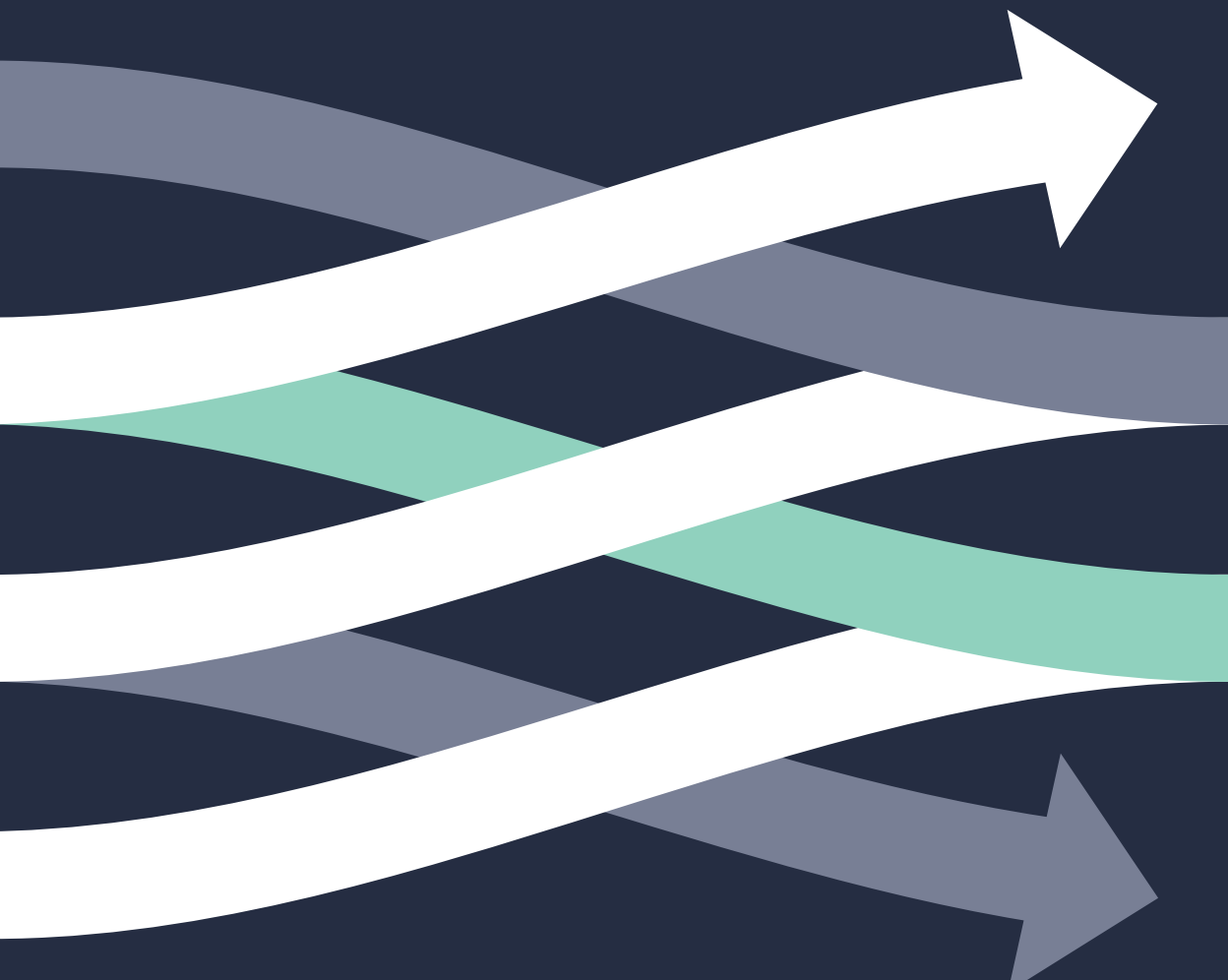


ROMANIA

2024



Civil
Society
Development
Foundation



THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR
PROFILE, TRENDS, CHALLENGES

ROMANIA 2024

THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR
PROFILE, TRENDS, CHALLENGES

Coordinator: Bogdan Voicu

BUCHAREST
APRIL 2024

AUTHORS

(in the order of their first appearance in this work)

BOGDAN VOICU (COORD.)
SIMONA CONSTANTINESCU
ȘTEFANIA ANDERSEN
DANA ȚĂLNAR-NAGHI
IRINA NIȚĂ
MARTON BALOGH

MIRCEA KIVU
MIRCEA COMȘA
OVIDIU VOICU
BOGDAN MIHAI RADU
DANIELA ANGI
VLAD DUMITRESCU

The preparation of this report would not have been possible without the help of our collaborators, volunteers, supporters and peers. Our thanks and appreciation are especially directed towards: the Prime Minister's Chancellery, the National Institute of Statistics, students that have provided us with support in various stages of the research, Ionuț Sibian, Monica Jitariuc, Iulia Vizi, Laura Cireașă, Ioana Ilie, Bianca Oprea, Andreea Drăgan, our colleagues and friends that have contributed to the dissemination of the surveys, the respondents to the three surveys and all those that have encouraged us and have provided assistance in this endeavour.

All the rights over this work belong to Fundația pentru Dezvoltarea Societății Civile – the Civil Society Development Foundation (FDSC). Any reproduction in full or in part, irrespective of the technical means used, without the written consent of FDSC, shall be forbidden. Parts of this publication can be reproduced for non-commercial purposes, provided that the source is indicated.

Fundația pentru Dezvoltarea Societății Civile/ Civil Society Development Foundation
21, Nerva Traian Blvd., sector 3, Bucharest
E-mail: office@fdsc.ro website: www.fdesc.ro

This material has been prepared under the project „Building capacity for collective impact and knowledge on CSOs ecosystem” with the financial support of Active Citizens Fund Romania, a programme financed by Island, Liechtenstein and Norway through 2014-2021 SEE Grants.

The content of this material does not necessarily reflect the position of 2014-2021 SEE and Norwegian Grants; for more information, please access www.eeagrants.org.

Information on Active Citizens Fund Romania is available at www.activecitizensfund.ro

Project developed by:



Graphic design and DTP: Eventwall S.R.L

About the authors,

in the order of their first appearance in the report:

Bogdan Voicu is a researcher at the Research Institute for Quality of Life (the Romanian Academy), a professor of sociology at Lucian Blaga University in Sibiu, of research methods at the Politehnica Bucharest National University of Science and Technology, and of quantitative methods at the Doctoral School for Journalism and Communication of the University of Bucharest. With 26 years of experience in the study of civil society and internationally published and cited articles/chapters/papers, Bogdan has a constant research interest in the life of associations. For more information: www.BogdanVoicu.ro.

Simona Constantinescu is a legal expert specialized in the legislation on non-profit organisations, a member of the Expert Council on NGO Law (the Council of Europe) and she is involved in the executive programme Recharging Advocacy for Rights in Europe of Hertie School. With an experience of more than 25 years in the non-profit sector, Simona coordinates the development and advocacy department of the Civil Society Development Foundation. Being a co-author of the chapter on Romania in the landmark study Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project in the 1990's, she has continued to examine the legal dimension of the non-profit sector throughout this period, and has participated in national and European discussions on the development of legislation in the field.

Ștefania Andersen is the operational manager of the Civil Society Development Foundation. Since 2003, she has been directly involved in the planning and coordination of multi-annual financing programmes (with a focus on governance and democratic engagement, institutional development, human rights and social inclusion), as well as organisational capacity building programmes developed by FDSC for non-governmental organisations in Romania. She has contributed to regular evaluations of the civic sector and the social economy in Romania, integrated in the FDSC outputs: *the Atlas of Social Economy, Romania 2010 and Romania 2017. The Non-governmental Sector: profile, trends, challenges, Index of Civil Society Organizations' Sustainability – Romania*.

Dana Țălnar-Naghi is a sociologist, a PH student in sociology (the Doctoral School of the Romanian Academy) and a scientific researcher at the Research Institute for Quality of Life. She has 9 years of experience in research. Together with Bogdan Voicu and Ștefania Andersen, she has provided input to the FDSC report on the *Romanian non-profit sector: existing data, infrastructure for collection, use of data and possible streamlining solutions*.

Irina Niță (Opincaru) is a sociologist, a PhD in sociology since 2023, with a thesis paper that examines the institutions governing Romanian common goods as social economy organisations in general and social enterprises in particular. From 2013 to 2019 Irina was part of the Social Economy Institute team at the Civil Society Development Foundation, during which time she actively contributed to various reports, such as the Social Economy Atlas and the 2017 edition of this report - *Romania 2017. Non-governmental sector – profile, trends, challenges*. Irina is currently an independent consultant and works mainly with non-governmental and social economy organisations.

Balogh Márton is the manager of Fundatia Civitas pentru Societatea Civila in Cluj and a PhD lecturer at the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences (FSPAC), Babeș-Bolyai University (UBB), in Cluj-Napoca. In his more than 24 years of experience in civil society, Márton has been involved in more than 100 implemented projects and is the author of several papers, teaching materials published nationally and internationally. His research interests cover management of non-governmental organisations, project management in public and non-profit organisations and participatory public policy development.

Mircea Kivu is a sociologist, with over 40 years of experience in various research institutes. His main areas of expertise are public opinion research, demography and the study of interethnic relations. He has published specialized studies, as well as several hundred editorials on social and political issues in the

mainstream press. He has served as a national representative of ESOMAR (1999-2009), has been active in several civic organisations, including as a member of the board of directors of Civil Society Development Foundation (2005-2015).

Mircea Comşa is a professor at the Department of Sociology, Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca. He has more than 20 years of experience in social research, in national and international teams, in both the academic and private sectors. His research and teaching interests are: sociological survey methodology, social research design, electoral studies, statistical analysis and data mining. He has been a member of the research teams for: the Barometer of Public Opinion - BOP (Fundatia pentru o Societate Deschisa, 1998-2008), Romanian Electoral Studies (since 2009), World / European Values Survey - WVS / EVS (Romanian team, since 1999) and Comparative Study of Electoral Systems - CSES (waves 3, 4, and 5).

Ovidiu Voicu is a civic activist, researcher and consultant, with 20 years of experience in Central and Eastern Europe. Ovidiu has worked for over 15 years with the Open Society Foundation Romania, coordinating research and advocacy efforts to promote open society values. Since 2016, Ovidiu leads Centrul pentru Inovare Publica, a civic organisation working in the fields of democracy, human rights and civic education. Ovidiu also provides consultancy in the areas of democracy and political risk analysis, as well as project appraisal and monitoring.

Bogdan Mihai Radu is a PhD lecturer in Political Sciences at the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences (FSPAC), Babeş-Bolyai University (UBB), in Cluj-Napoca. His research interests focus on the study of political culture in recent democracies, especially from the point of view of drivers of democratic values. His publications have addressed different topics, including also various studies on the evolution of civil society in post-communist societies, or the participation of young people in religious organisations.

Daniela Angi is a sociologist and works as a scientific researcher at the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, Babeş-Bolyai University, in Cluj-Napoca. Her research work and publications deal with issues related to the link between civil society and democracy, civic engagement - especially that of young people - as well as topics related to education (educational inequalities and civic education).

Vlad Dumitrescu is the Programme Director of Civil Society Development Foundation, coordinating several capacity development initiatives for non-governmental organisations in Romania and abroad. With over 24 years of experience in the civil society sector, Vlad works directly and in a dedicated manner with a large number of organisations at national and international level, through training and facilitation, mentoring and coaching, in various specific capacity building programmes. Their expertise is diverse, ranging from management issues such as organisational analysis, strategic planning, human resources development, to thematic issues such as human rights, civic participation, intersectionality to cross-cutting issues, such as organisational well-being. Vlad also prepared the youth chapter of the FDSC report *Romania 2017. Non-governmental sector – profile, trends, challenges*.

Table of contents

INTRODUCTION	7
Why (another) report on the NGO sector (<i>Bogdan Voicu</i>)	8
Typology and taxonomy of the sector: legal definitions (<i>Simona Constantinescu</i>)	12
Key sources of data. Methodological elements (<i>Bogdan Voicu, Ștefania Andersen, Dana Țălnar-Naghi, Irina Niță</i>)	16
NUMERICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE SECTOR	19
Size, dynamics (<i>Bogdan Voicu</i>)	20
Activity rate (<i>Bogdan Voicu</i>)	28
ECONOMIC INSIGHT	31
Economy of the NGO sector (<i>Irina Niță</i>)	32
Financing the Non-Governmental sector (<i>Ștefania Andersen</i>)	45
OPERATION OF THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR (<i>Márton Balogh</i>)	61
MISSION AND PUBLIC PRESENCE	71
Civic actions. Representations regarding the sector mission (<i>Mircea Kivu</i>)	72
Representations regarding the influence of and interests pursued by NGOs (<i>Mircea Comșa</i>)	78
Involvement of the NGO sector in public policy-making (<i>Ovidiu Voicu</i>)	90
Practices and evaluations regarding the monitoring and evaluation of projects (<i>Mircea Comșa & Irina Niță</i>)	107
CONTEMPORARY TRENDS	118
NGOs and organizational context (<i>Bogdan Radu, Daniela Angi</i>)	119
Period of pandemic and humanitarian crisis in ukraine: mobilization and difficulties (<i>Daniela Angi, Bogdan Radu</i>)	129
CSR challenges (<i>Bogdan Radu, Daniela Angi</i>)	133
SECTORAL INSIGHTS	136
Classification of the NGO sector by field of activity (<i>Bogdan Voicu, Ștefania Andersen, Irina Niță</i>)	137
A dashboard of the NGO sector by fields of activity (<i>Bogdan Voicu</i>)	141
Social and charitable organisations (<i>Mircea Comșa</i>)	156
Education (<i>Daniela Angi, Bogdan Radu</i>)	166
NGOs in religion & sports (<i>Bogdan Voicu</i>)	180
Civic, advocacy and human rights organisations (<i>Mircea Comșa</i>)	181
Organizations of / for youth (<i>Vlad Dumitrescu</i>)	190
REFERENCES	198

List of Acronyms

APADOR-CH – Association for Human Rights’ Defence in Romania – Helsinki Committee
ARACIP – Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education
ARC – Association for Community Relations
ARPCPS – Romanian Association for Promoting Quality and Successful Practices
BLO – Barometer of NGOs’ Leaders
BMO - Barometer of Members, Employees and Volunteers in the NGO sector
BOP - Barometer of Public Opinion
BOSC - Barometer of Opinions of the Civil Society
CAR - Credit unions
CARP - Credit unions of Retired Persons
CARS - Credit unions of the Employees
CATTIA - Community Centre for Ukrainian Refugees
CDMiR – Coalition for the Rights of Migrants and Refugees
CEAE – Centre for Educational Evaluation and Analyses
CENTRAS – Assistance Centre for Non-governmental organisations
CeRe – Resource Centre for Public Participation
CRPE – European Centre for European Policies
CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility
CURS – Centre of Urban and Regional Sociology
DLC – Decisions of the Local Council
DPSS – Directorate for Policies Social Services (Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity)
ESC – Economic and Social Council
ESS - European Social Survey
EU – European Union
EVS/WVS=European Values Study/World Values Survey
FDSC – Fundația pentru Dezvoltarea Societății Civile (Civil Society Development Foundation)
FEDCAR – Federation of Credit unions
FONSS – Federation of Non-governmental organisations for Social Services
GDP - Gross Domestic Product
G3P - Gala of Public Participation Awards
INCPO/TSO - International Classification of Non-profit Organizations / Third Sector Organizations
INS - The National Institute of Statistics
IRES – Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy
ISSP - International Social Survey Program
KSH – the Hungarian Central Institute for Statistics (in Hungarian: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal)
MEBO - English acronym for Management Employee Buyouts
MF – Ministry of Finance
NAFA – National Agency of Fiscal Administration
NACE - Statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community (CAEN)
NBR - National Bank of Romania
NGO - Non-governmental Organisations
OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
RES/CSES - Romanian Elections Study/Comparative Study of Election Systems
RNFFPA – National Registries of Authorized Vocational Training Providers
RN-ONG - National Registry for NGOs
RUTI – Single Registry for Transparency of Interests
SGG – General Secretariat of the Government
UEFISCDI – Executive Unit for Financing the Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation
UNCARSR – National Union of Credit unions of Employees in Romania
UNO – the United Nations Organization
WOCCU – World Council of Credit Unions

ROMANIA 2024

THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR
PROFILE, TRENDS, CHALLENGES

INTRODUCTION

1.

Why (another) report on the NGO sector

► Bogdan Voicu

This report provides the wide public, decision-makers and the NGO sector with an overview on the current status of the non-governmental sector, its recent dynamics, as well as details on the capacity to contribute to the social development, its role as an employee, and the status of members, employees and volunteers in this sector.

„The NGO sector” is a comprehensive label, covering those means of *formal organisation* in which those who associate generate *public goods* the scope of which is usually beyond the limit of personal interest. It is useful to explain, one at a time, the elements of this ad-hoc definition, to be clearer in terms of intentions.

‘Formal organisation’ refers to the fact that we talk about entities with a legal personality. Without denying the importance of formal groups, let us note that they are rather considered as a part of the NGO sector, especially in less developed societies (Desai, 1996; Levi-Sanchez, 2018; Vakil, 1997). In such areas, the harsh political regime, or basic levels of bridging social capital (weak links among different groups in society), or the combination of the two lead to an inability to cooperate to generate the public good.

‘Public good’ is that service, object or institution that people can create and that benefits the whole community. We can include here all kinds of things, from streets and schools to laws and regulations, from helping people at risk to organising an event of interest to a small group of people without any vulnerability. The simple idea is to do things that are aimed either at wider communities or at individuals or groups at risk. The interest in such tangible or intangible goods (among the latter there may be, for example, initiatives of local council orders) is public, in that they exceed the interest of an ordinary person.

Organisations in the NGO sector can be legally labelled as associations, foundations, but also as federations or unions of them. Such labels can provide additional information on how this class of organisations operates. The term “NGO sector” covers them globally, just as in the international academic literature the term “associations” is often used to designate the entire sector. Labels such as non-profit or civil society sector, voluntary organisations, civil society organisations can equally well be mentioned here. It is also illustrative to state the definition used by the United Nations, which explicitly chooses not to differentiate among NGO, CSO, non-profit and so on and so forth: *„A civil society organisation (CSO) or non-governmental organisation (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens’ group which is organized on a local, national or international level.”* (United Nations, 2024). Even if such terms do not overlap perfectly, they include the same type of organisations concerned. We have brought them into the discussion in order to be clearer about the coverage of this report: we refer to all those organisations that are not profit-oriented, that are organised as associations, foundations, federations, unions, and that have as their stated interest the generation of public good.

Having clarified the subject matter of the report, we can ask whether there is still a need for such a report. The question, stated from the very title, is obviously rhetorical. A report on a given sector is intended to provide knowledge about the subject in question, which knowledge becomes a source for organisational programmes and for public policies in the field. The practice of social reporting has gradually been widely appreciated in the Western world, becoming visible in the 1970’s and now widespread throughout the world. (Farneti & Siboni, 2011; Voicu, 2002; Zapf, 2000). It is therefore not at all unexpected to address a sector that counts as an employer of some 127,000 Romanian residents, as the present report itself shows it, and in which 30% of the adult population are involved as members (Voicu, 2020).

The history of reporting on the Romanian NGO sector is a quite sophisticated one and has experienced various expressions over the last three decades. In the second half of the 1990's and in the early 2000's, Centrul de Asistență for Organizații Neguvernamentale – Assistance Center for Non-governmental Organizations (CENTRAS) publishes on an annual basis a White Charter of the NGO sector (Necșulescu, 2013). During the same period, there comes the idea of drafting an Annual Governmental Report on the NGO sector (1997), which, however, never materializes (Lisețchi and Micescu, 2013). A chapter on Romania, prepared by a team of FDSC, is included in the global report from 1999 of the project coordinated by Salamon and Anheier, at the Center for the Civil Society of Johns Hopkins University (Șăulean et al, 1999). Rather isolated reports focus mainly on the institutional-legal dimension of the sector (Dakova et al, 2000). Systematic reporting on the sector was adopted by the FDSC in 2010, when a first report on the sector was presented (Lambriu & Vameșu, coord., 2010), followed by a second one published in 2017 (Kivu, coord., 2017).

Other initiatives from the grey literature¹ have sought to describe the sector from narrower perspectives. Ailincăi (2023) makes a description of NGO activities in Iasi county. Cibian et al. (2023) do the same for a more limited area: Țara Făgărașului (Fagaras County). Voicu, Bădescu, Tuftș, Voicu (2022) propose a perspective over the population representations on the NGOs in the civil action field. Rusu, Petrescu, Vilcu (2007) examine the social field, and Culturadata Interactiv (2021) the cultural one. Voicu, Andersen, Țălnar-Naghi (2022) tackles the status of data on NGOs. A governmental report addresses the sector financing (MCPDC, 2016). More reports consider the involvement of the NGO sector in the crisis of Ukrainian war refugees (Călin, ed., 2020; Flanigan, 2022; Nowicka et al., 2024; Petrescu, ed., 2023; SGG, 2020).

The academic literature on the civic participation in Romania is richer in terms of number and topics (Bădescu, 2003; Bădescu & Sum, 2005; Bădescu, Sum, Uslaner, 2004; Bibu, Lisețchi, Brancu, 2013; Bogdan, 2023; Dragoman, 2006; Ilie, Colibasau, 2007; Lambriu, Dobre, 2020; Luca, Gheorghita, 2011; Nistor, 2009; Popa, Vlase, Morândău, 2016; Voicu, 2010, 2020; Vlăsceanu, 1996), including also the teaching materials (Hințea, Balogh, 2003) and an exhaustive overview of the NGO sector. As a related area, the literature on social economy includes elements about civil society, with an academic approach as well (Barna, 2014; Lambriu, Petrescu, 2017; Neguț, 2014; Petrescu, 2014; Petrescu, Neguț, 2018; Stănescu, Cace, Alexandrescu, 2011; Vlăsceanu, 2010) or in the area of grey literature (Constantinescu, 2012; Dima, coord., 2011; MMFPS, 2011; Vameșu, 2021, 2022, 2021-coord.).

This report continues the efforts started by FDSC back in 2010 and 2017, it uses the methodology of previous reports (Lambriu, Vameșu, eds., 2010; Kivu, ed., 2017), by revising and enriching it, providing for the first time also a reflexive perspective of the members, employees and volunteers in the sector. FDSC reports describe the overall status of the sector, searching also for the identification of peculiarities of such specific fields. We continue along this path, by proposing a further refinement of the classifications made in previous exercises, reflecting a natural growth from one edition of the report to the next, given the technological developments and the accumulation of contemporary knowledge.

We thus bring along important extra-knowledge, derived also from the fact that we use multiple sources to inform the research endeavour, including administrative data, a survey of the general population, a survey of NGOs, a survey of the members, employees and volunteers in the NGO sector.

The report has also a significant historical particularity. **The NGO sector is an extremely sensitive sector in Eastern Europe, given its role in democratisation, but also the barriers raised by the era of populist and illiberal tendencies.**

¹ Name given to studies that are not available commercially or in the academic publication circuit, usually including government reports, NGO reports, business reports, some working papers etc.

It is therefore necessary first of all to explain the historical context in which we place ourselves and the importance of the report from this perspective. Hence this brief introduction precisely addressing the sensitivity of the field, justified by the recent history of the sector in Romania. The debate, presented in the wider context of post-communist societies, serves as a warm-up to explain what the reader can expect from this extensive report and to present the general structure of the report.

The significance of the NGO sector in Eastern Europe in general and in Romania in particular is determined by the post-communist history of the region and the outright ban on the NGO sector during communist times. (Baća, 2022; Dobbins & Riedel, 2021; Ekiert & Kubik, 2014; Fagan, 2005; Howard, 2002; Kutter & Trappmann, 2010; Mungiu-Pippidi, 2015; Navrátil & Kluknavská, 2020; Pietrzyk-Reeves & McMahon, 2022; Pietrzyk-Reeves & Samonek, 2023; Sandu, 2009; Voicu, 2005). The transition from communism to an alternative organisation was overlapping with a major paradigm shift in terms of development policies. After centuries of focusing on the material and financial side, supplemented only by contributions from human capital, in the 1980's, under the impetus of the World Bank, an interest in social capital emerged. (Bebbington, 2007; Capital, 2000; Fukuyama, 2002; Voicu, 2010; Woolcock, 1998). In other words, it was accepted that money, material and technological resources, manpower and the knowledge accumulated were not enough for society to work. Added to these were the need for rules of cooperation among individuals, trust in people and institutions, and civic participation. That is to say that, there was a need for social capital, as outlined by the founding fathers of the concept (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam et al, 1993)². Social capital refers, among other things, to (civic) participation in small groups, defined by specific statuses or interests, but designed to generate public goods, such as associations (Paxton, 1999; Putnam, 2000).

Such groups, as Tocqueville (1835) had pointed out long before, were essential for a functional democracy. Democracy was precisely what the USSR had prevented from existing in Eastern Europe. And social capital had become a real "missing-link" in former communist European countries since the 1990's (Bernhard, 1993; Dvořáková, 2008; Voicu & Voicu, 2003; Wallace et al, 2012). The simple consequence has been a concerted effort for the revival of civil society. Against this background, there have emerged, for example, the Soros Foundation for an Open Society (Fundatja Soros pentru o Societate Deschisă), with its branches in all communist countries, as well as other non-governmental organisations of the early 1990's, some of which are still operating today. (Necşulescu, 2011).

Conservative public discourse in the early 1990's explicitly decried non-governmental organisations, by accusing them of being subservient to foreign interests or abusively using the public money. Reports from consultations across the sector record the need to communicate outside the sector and generate reports about the sector (Liseţchi and Olteanu, 1998; Necşulescu, 2011). In Romania, in 1997, the first official government-civil society representatives meeting took place (Liseţchi și Micescu, 2013). The next step is to gradually integrate civil society into the public debate on how we organise society. The extent to which this is done adequately or effectively will be detailed in one of the chapters of this report.

In the meantime, let us note that since the late 1990s, despite the still weak involvement of Eastern Europeans in associations, NGOs are beginning to play their natural role in society, going beyond the area of human and civil rights, and participating in the creation of distinct areas, from the social to the cultural and from the sports to the representation of the interests of narrow status groups, be they professional, geographical, ethnic, hobby, etc., through contributing to the development of the cooperative and social economy sector. (Domaradzka, 2018; Istenic & Kozina, 2020; Jacobsson & Saxonberg, eds., 2016; Jehlička & Jacobsson, 2021; Jezierska & Polanska, 2018; Mikołajczak, 2020; Pospieszna & Galus, 2020; Rau, 2019; Rikmann & Keedus, 2013; Todorova, 2002; Toepfer, 2000; Voicu, 2020).

This trend continued and intensified in the 2000's. The 2010 FDSC report begins its introductory section by noting that "over the past twenty years, in Romania, the NGOs have made their comeback into the lives of citizens in various forms." (Lambrou și Vameşu, coord., 2010:7), mainly arguing with examples of services provided by NGOs.

² Social capital refers to the ability to cooperate, being a concept developed in social sciences and economics some time before the same name was given to the subscribed capital of companies in Romania. (see in this respect also Voicu, 2010:11).

Throughout the 2010's and 2020's, across Eastern Europe, non-governmental organisations are strengthening their organisational structures (Rozbicka et al, 2021), but at the same time they are facing the rise of populism and illiberalism (for the sake of simplicity I will use the terms interchangeably). Across formerly-communist Europe, illiberalism tends to hinder the sector development (Bochsler & Juon, 2020; Centrul pentru Inovare Publică et al, 2024; Enyedi, 2020; Marzec & Neubacher, 2020; Mikołajczak, 2023; Piotrowski, 2009). The FDSC Report in 2017 mentioned: "Ten years after Romania's accession to the European Union, there are enough signs that indicate both a maturing of the non-governmental sector in Romania and the emergence of new resources and energies with a huge potential for the development of civil society. At the same time, however, the domestic political context and international developments are far from favourable for the non-governmental sector, for pluralism and for an open society." (Kivu, coord., 2017:3).

The structure of chapters below is directly derived from the presentation of purposes and historical context. This whole story of how things have evolved for the NGO sector in Eastern Europe overlaps with long-standing trends that define how NGOs generally operate in the contemporary world. As we explain in the online appendix, such trends and challenges include the tailoring of NGO intervention and their role in the postmodern mix of welfare provision; the challenges of de-institutionalisation and of informal groups; digitalisation and remote working; the rise of illiberalism and the emergence of an area of civil society often defined as 'uncivic'; staff retention capacity.

Given the diversity of contemporary NGO activity, it is necessary to look at the institutional framework of the sector's activity, described in the following chapter by Simona Constantinescu, which focuses on different taxonomies and legal provisions.

In addition to the *introductory section*, a chapter dedicated to the methodology briefly addresses the used sources of data.

The second major section of the report is dedicated to the numerical importance of the sector, defined by Bogdan Voicu through the dynamics of the number of NGOs and, as an absolute novelty, through an estimation of the activity rate of entities registered as NGOs.

In the third section, Ștefania Andersen and Irina Niță bring forward the *financial dimension of the sector*, seen in terms of monetary flows, of financing patterns and the number of members.

In the fourth section, Marton Balogh describes *the operation of the sector*, looking at internal organisation, the use of volunteers, coalitions' building, with a one-off input from Bogdan Voicu (in the material which accompanies this report in the online version) on the status of individuals from NGOs.

The fifth section addresses the *relation between the sector and society*. The topics gathered in this section give Mircea Kivu the opportunity to tackle the sector civism and Mircea Comșa to address the representations of influences and interests in the sector. Ovidiu Voicu talks about involvement in public policy-making, and Mircea Comșa and Irina Niță about the sector concerns with its own impact. Many of the topics mentioned so far present elements also addressed by FDSC previous reports (Lambru & Vameșu, eds., 2010; Kivu, ed., 2017).

The sixth section refers to a set of new perspectives, promoting at their core the people who set the sector in motion. Bogdan Radu and Daniela Angi address contemporary challenges related to staff recruitment, work security, burnout, work relocation, the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The antepenultimate section includes *specific presentations of some action areas*: the social-charitable (Mircea Comșa), the educational (Bogdan Radu & Daniela Angi), the one of religious and sports organisations (Bogdan Voicu), the one of organisations on democracy, human rights and governance (Mircea Comșa), the one of organisations of and for the youth (Vlad Dumitrescu).

The printed part of the report is accompanied by a methodological report, a series of annexes and additional chapters as well as related databases, which are available at <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/LKJJQO>. Obviously, as in any serious collective work, these perspectives sometimes overlap to provide full details of the context in which each chapter places its argument. With so many challenges to answer, it is time for this introduction to give way to the essential 'narrative' of the report, thus revealing parts of the current state of the NGO sector in Romania today.

Typology and taxonomy of the sector: legal definitions

▶ Simona Constantinescu

The purpose of this chapter is to present the content of the NGO sector, starting from existing legal definitions.

One of the most extensive research projects on the evolution, size and characteristics of the civil society sector it has managed to capture in 36 countries, Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, was started by Johns Hopkins University back in the '90s (Salomon et al, 1999). The common characteristics identified at that time have subsequently been widely taken up, have become the benchmark for the organised structures of what we now commonly call the non-governmental or non-profit sector, and are the first filter of criteria we consider for the whole range of subjects of this report.

Thus, a typical entity from the non-profit sector shall:

- ① **be organized**, in the sense that its functioning is not based on a spontaneous, uncoordinated manifestation and is materialized in a formal structure, i.e. it is a legal entity³;
- ② **be private**, in the sense that it is separate from the State, is not part of the system of public authorities and institutions, is a legal entity governed by private law⁴;
- ③ **be able to make decisions autonomously (self-governing)**, in the sense that it has its own governing and management bodies and is not dependent on the interests of another legal entity;
- ④ **not distribute the eventual profit** resulting from its activity to its members, whether associates or founders; this constraint does not remove the possibility for a non-governmental organisation to carry out economic activities, but it binds the latter to use any surplus obtained to achieve the aim and objectives for which it was set up;
- ⑤ **have a voluntary nature**, namely it should be the result of an initiative of association arising from the will of the founding members, and that the capacity of associate should not be based on a legal obligation but on the member's own will.⁵ To the same extent, this feature is complete when the organisation succeeds in attracting voluntary contributions in cash or in kind.

These features are also found in the System of National Accounts edition 2008⁶ (SCN 2008), adopted by the UN Statistical Commission, announced to be updated in 2025.

The approach is complemented by the legal forms provided for by the Romanian regulatory framework which fully comply with or meet to a certain extent these criteria.

In Romania, citizens can freely associate in political parties, trade unions, employers' associations and other forms of association (art. 40, the Romanian Constitution). This is the basis for the preparation of any subsidiary rule of law regulating the various forms of association currently coexisting in society, some of which are subject to the analysis in this report and which we classify as non-governmental organisations.

³ The Council of Europe CM Recommendation /Rec(2007)14 on the legal status of non-governmental organization in Europe expressly mentions the existence of a legal personality separate from the founding members.

⁴ This characteristic continues to give rise to numerous discussions on the definition of independence from the State in the case of those associations which include representatives of public authorities and institutions in the list of associate members or in the management, administration and control structures; for the time being, the assessment of this characteristic is based on an actual analysis of each individual case.

⁵ Membership of a professional organisation, which is required as a mandatory condition for practising a trade or profession, often arises by virtue of an obligation laid down by a normative act, and not on a contractual basis. These organisations are often considered to be on the borderline of the non-governmental sector and, depending on the intensity of the public law elements present in their setup and operation, may even be labelled as quasi-governmental organisations or quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations.

⁶ Systems of National Accounts 2008, Chapter 23 – Non-profit Institutions, p. 455 and the following

On the Romanian territory, a non-governmental organisation or non-profit organisation, a civil society organisation, an organization without a patrimonial purpose or a not-for-profit organisation are terms that, most of the time, designate the same range of legal entities, but whose precise circumstances vary depending on the peculiarities of the context in which they are used.

Thus, from the perspective of the Tax Code, a non-profit organisation is "any association, foundation, credit union (CAR) or federation established in Romania"⁷, whereas the general regulation on non-reimbursable funding from public funds allocated to non-profit activities of general interest⁸ is only applicable to associations or foundations established as per the law.

Regulated by Law no. 248/2013, the Economic and Social Council (ESC) aims to achieve tripartite dialogue at national level among employers' organisations, trade union organisations and representatives of non-governmental associations and foundations of the civil society. The ESC operates as a consultative body with the Parliament and the Government, just as at European level there is an ESC alongside the European Parliament and the European Commission. Civil society is represented, according to the same law⁹, by 15 representatives from cooperatives, the liberal professions, consumer protection organisations, the scientific and academic community, farmers' organisations, retired persons' organisations, local community organisations, associations representing families and people with disabilities and other non-governmental organisations.

Text box 1. Legal definitions as per GO no. 26/2000

(art 4) **The Association** shall be the subject matter of private law established by three or more persons who, under an agreement, share without right of refund the material contribution, their knowledge or work input to work for the performance of activities for the general interest, of communities or, as the case may be, for their personal non-patrimonial interest.

(art 4) A separate case of association is that **organisation of citizens belonging to national minorities** whose purpose is:

- a. the defence, preservation, development and promotion of the identity of a national minority;
- b. public representation of citizens belonging to a national minority with the role of fulfilling a constitutional public mission.

(art 15) **The Foundation** shall be the subject matter of law established by one or more persons who, under a legal act between living persons or for the cause of death, constitute a heritage permanently and irrevocably allocated to the achievement of an aim of general interest or, as the case may be, of communities.

(art 35) Two or more associations or foundations can become a **federation**.

The national registry for legal entities without a patrimonial purpose¹⁰ (frequently referred to as the National Registry for NGOs in order to be easily understood in language terms, but also to differentiate it from the special registry of associations and foundations to be found within the law court) includes four categories of legal entities: associations, foundations, federations and organisations of citizens belonging to national minorities¹¹. They meet the above-mentioned international criteria and are the widely accepted reference to what we call non-governmental organisations¹², and the normative act regulating them is GO no. 26/2000.

⁷ Article 7, item 24 of the Tax Code : non-profit organization - any association, foundation, mutual aid fund or federation established in Romania, in accordance with the legislation in force, provided that the income and assets of the association, mutual aid fund, foundation or federation is used for an activity of the general interest, community or non-proprietary purpose;

⁸ Article 3, par.(1) of Law no. 350/2005 on the regime of non-reimbursable financing from public funds allocated to non-profit activities of general interest

⁹ Law no. 248/2013 regarding the organization and operation of the Economic and Social Council

¹⁰ As per Law no. 71/2011 for the enforcement of the new Civil Code (Law no. 287/2009), the words legal entities without a patrimonial purpose shall be replaced by the wording 'not-for-profit legal entities'. For terminological correlation, any subsequent legislative act should use these terms.

¹¹ Art. 73 of Government Ordinance no. 26/ 2000 regarding associations and foundations, approved by Law no. 246/ 2005, with subsequent amendments

¹² Non-governmental organisations are part of what specialised literature calls "third sector". One of the recent significant research projects (Third Sector Impact – TSI) has incorporated into the third sector (the non-profit sector of the John Hopkins research period) new varieties of entities, such as those referred to by the term social economy or social enterprises. Thus, the third sector bears new meanings and cannot disregard those structures that use market-specific economic activities to achieve a social goal.

Please note that, at the time of drafting this report, a draft law initiated by the Government and under parliamentary debate includes an amendment introduced in the form adopted by the Senate, whereby organisations of citizens belonging to national minorities are exempted from the obligations of transparency and access to information according to which the name, surname, date and place of birth, nationality and the country of residence are information that can be made available to the public in the case of natural entities who have the capacity of associate, founder, member of the Management Board or person with an executive position, auditor or liquidator.

Associations and foundations are complemented by retired persons' associations¹³ which benefits from a special law, but comply almost entirely with the legal regime set forth by GO no. 26/2000.

Currently, several types of legal entities which resemble in different ways the associations and foundations set forth under GO no. 26/2000 are governed by special laws which either refer to or are supplemented by the provisions of GO no. 26/2000, or we find them directly registered in the National Registry of legal entities without a patrimonial purpose established by virtue of GO no.26/2000. In particular, we are referring to:

- ① **credit unions for the employees**¹⁴ are associations without a patrimonial purpose, organised on the basis of the free will of the employees, with a view to supporting and financially assisting their members. They are included in the category of non-banking financial institutions, are under the supervisory regime of the National Bank, have a purpose predefined by law and operate under competitive market conditions, having exclusively financial products and services for members.
- ① **credit unions for retired persons**¹⁵ are defined by law as civic organisations, private legal entities of non-patrimonial character, non-governmental, apolitical, with the purpose of charity, mutual help and social assistance. It is noted that their purpose is broader than for employees' CAR, being closer to the basic characteristics of a non-governmental organisation.
- ① **Private forestry divisions** regulated by the Forestry Code (Law no. 46/2008) – can also operate under the legal form of a trading company, and as an association, the legal personality being acquired from the moment they are registered in the National Registry of Forest Managers and forestry divisions. Beyond the obvious unclear moment when they acquire legal personality, and if this happens by undergoing the procedure stipulated in GO no. 36/2000, these entities are not non-profit.
- ① **Private education establishments** (Law no. 198/ 2023 and Law no. 199/2023) – private and confessional education is organised according to the non-profit principle, which leads to the forms established by GO no. 26/2000. In the case of pre-university education, the law mentions that legal personality is obtained by order of minister of provisional authorisation. It is possible for the parallelism between GO no. 26/2000 and the two laws on the procedure for acquiring the legal personality to generate double registrations in the National Registry of not-for-profit legal entities for the same structure (the founder of the private educational structure is an association, it becomes a legal entity at the time of registration in the special registry of associations and foundations, and the private education structure becomes a legal entity later on, under an administrative act). At the same time, these entities are supported by taxes (in principle, they are related to an economic activity), and in the event of dissolution, winding-up or liquidation, the patrimony shall revert to the founders (which is not possible for the structures set up under GO no. 26/2000).
- ① **Owners' Associations**¹⁶ regulated by Law no. 196/2018 are associative structures set up for the administration and management of common property, which are overwhelmingly present in buildings consisting of several individual properties. Although their special law provides for a clear procedure for setting up, without reference to GO no. 26/2000, the National Registry of legal entities without a patrimonial purpose includes owners' associations in it. Most likely, this is the result of a misapplication of the law.
- ① **Organizations and federations of organisations in the land improvement field**, regulated by Law no. 138/2004 - **legal entities of public utility without a patrimonial purpose**, are established and operate in accordance with the special law. They acquire legal personality based on their registration in the National Registry of Land Improvements Organisations, but they are also partially found in the National Registry of legal entities without a patrimonial purpose.

¹³ Law no. 502 from 17 November 2004 regarding retired persons' associations

¹⁴ Law no. 122 from 16 October 1996 regarding the legal regime of credit unions for employees and their general unions

¹⁵ Law no. 540 from 27 September 2002 regarding credit unions for retired persons

¹⁶ Law no. 230 from 6 July 2007 regarding the setup, organization and operation of the owners' associations

- **The forest and pasture commons and composesorates** composesorates regulated by Law no. 1/2000 – archaic associative forms of ownership of lands with forest vegetation, pastures and meadows, administered in a joint or shared property regime, which the law allowed to operate according to the statutes admitted in the Romanian state legislation during the period 1921-1946 until re-registration in a special registry kept by the competent law court. It cannot be identified if the entries in the national registry of legal entities without a patrimonial purpose include them all or only partially, but it should be noted that they seek to make profit and distribute dividends.
- **Associations in agriculture**¹⁷- for which the law expressly states that they are 'not commercial in character', are governed by the 'one associate, one vote' principle, but distribute profits.
- **Employees Associations**¹⁸ set up based on the programme of employee shareholders, which was established in the process of selling state-owned enterprises to employees organised in associations, in the context of the privatisation of the type MEBO (Management Employees Buyout – sale to employees and management) during the period 1993 – 2000.

It is necessary to clarify the relation between the registries provided by special laws in the case of associative structures borrowing from the method of constitution, organisation and functioning provided for by GO no. 26/2000 and the National Registry of legal entities without a patrimonial purpose. At the same time, it is necessary to clear this Registry from those legal entities that are for profit-making (or to redefine this Registry so that it no longer refers only to non-profit-making ones).

Some of the above types of legal entities have all the characteristics of not-for-profit legal entities, there are also special registries for them (at different stages of development and public accessibility), but they are only partially or not at all to be found in the National Registry. Others resemble what we call non-governmental organisations, but the market-only tools they use in the way they carry out their activities, the income structure and the distribution of the profit/financial surplus, as well as the destination of the assets in the event of dissolution and liquidation, bring them closer to what we might call a social enterprise¹⁹, a hybrid entrepreneurial form between the traditional business sector and the non-governmental organisation sector.

Finally, some considerations about trade unions and employers' associations, which we consider that, in the context of this report, are not part of what is commonly called non-governmental organisations. Although they are forms of association that meet the above criteria and are part of the civil society, they are subject to special laws based not only on art. 40, but also on art. 9 of the Constitution, they are entered in registries different from the registries of associations and foundations, and the dialogue with the state institutions places them separately from NGOs (while the first are the social partners, the others are partners in civic dialogue; see also the structure of the Economic and Social Council).²⁰

¹⁷ Law no. 36 from 30 April 1991 regarding agricultural companies and other forms of association in agriculture

¹⁸ Law no. 77 from 1 August 1994 on the associations of employees and members of the management of companies to be privatised

¹⁹ Since 2015, Romania has a social economy law (Law no. 219/2015) which aims to outline more precisely the conceptual framework applicable to that segment of entities that has asserted itself in recent decades either by joining the third sector (such as cooperatives and social enterprises, credit unions for employees or retired persons), or by reaffirming its role as a significant contributor to solving social problems (associations and foundations with an economic activity). The latter were also recognised as an enterprise in 2014, when the Romanian law-maker introduced them into the scope of the law on stimulating the establishment and development of small and medium-sized enterprises (Law 346/2004, with subsequent amendments).

²⁰ Currently, the national registry of legal entities without patrimonial purpose from the Ministry of Justice still includes employers' association structures. The request of the employers' unions' representatives of the Economic and Social Council is that the draft amendment of GO no. 26/2000 (which was in March 2024 under debate at the Chamber of Deputies under no. PL-x 763/2003) should include measures to ensure the transfer of employers' association structures from the National Registry of legal persons without patrimonial purpose to the special registry of employers' organisations (see the opinion of the ESC of 6 September 2023) <https://www.ces.ro/newlib/PDF/avize/2023/Avize-Plen-CES-06-09-2023.pdf>.

Key sources of data.

Methodological elements

► Bogdan Voicu, Ștefania Andersen,
Dana Țălnar-Naghi, Irina Niță

This report uses various data sources. We will briefly describe them below, but we also propose an extensive description of the methodology regarding data collection and preparation for analysis, available as a dataverse at <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/LKJJQO>.

Data collected or prepared under the project for drafting this report is of two main types: administrative data, collected by public authorities and to which there is open access or for which we have requested access to, respectively survey data, collected under the supervision of the project team. Both types and each item in the respective category are described below.

The report does not though use *only* such data, but the author/s of each chapter has/have had the freedom to bring into focus other information sources as well, briefly described when used.

Sources of administrative data

● The National Registry for NGOs

Any NGO that is set up does so at the county/sector law court clerk's offices. From the law court clerk's office, it becomes an entry in the National Registry for NGOs (formerly known as the National Registry of Associations and Foundations), maintained by the Ministry of Justice. The registry currently includes records classified into associations, foundations, federations, unions, foreign legal entities. It is provided in a tabular format (Excel), but with errors, duplicates, different formatted fields (numerical/alphanumeric) for the same variable (column). Following the cleaning process of RN-ONG published on 21 January 2024 on the government data portal data.gov.ro, it resulted in a database with 127,804 single entries, about which RN-ONG does not include information that they are deregistered or dissolved.

The database allows an analysis in terms of geography (only by counties, as localities are more difficult to extract due to the way they are registered with the law court registries), dynamics over time, current distributions.

● Financial reporting to NAFA

The second important source of data is the annual reporting of balance sheets to NAFA. The Ministry of Finance publishes the results of the previous financial year annually on data.gov.ro. We used these results and a database of records from 2013-2024 resulted. The database includes 81,938 single entities, in other words, these are the organisations that during the period 2013-2022 submitted a balance sheet as an NGO at least during one year.

The data allow the assessment of financial flows as well as staff number dynamics.

Financial reports are indexed by tax identifier (CUI/CIF) and RN-ONG by a code assigned upon registration with the Ministry of Justice. Unfortunately, we could not identify any link between the two code rows. By using the list of taxpayers published by the Ministry of Finances, we were able to associate the CUI of most of the registrations in the NAFA database with the actual name of the organisation.

In addition, we used data provided by NAFA upon the request of FDSC in March 2024. This additional information aggregates on several types of organisations. The information comes from balance sheet statements

and includes details, for example, on types of expenses or source of income, not included in the public databases on data.gov.ro. The data is in turn affected by filling-in errors and, being aggregated as amounts, it is sensitive to variations induced by atypical cases (e.g. organisations with very high income), either caused by the actual situation or by data entry errors in the balance sheet forms. The number of entities from the data thus received differs in some years from the one from data published by NAFA on data.gov.ro, usually due to reporting delays.

● NGOs classification by fields of activity

In both the NAFA database and RN-ONG we have classified NGOs by fields of activity, as explained at the beginning of the chapter dedicated to specific fields. In short, the classification was made on the basis of name and stated purpose, as they are in the RN-ONG database, respectively name only (financial reporting) and a range of information received from the National Institute of Statistics following a request from FDSC. The procedure, described in detail in the online methodology, involved searching the organisation's name and purpose respectively for strings of characters that allowed the classification of the organisations concerned into fields such as „health”, „education”, „environment/ecology” etc

● Survey data collected upon the FDSC request

The team for this report designed three separate surveys, described below, which were based on similar surveys used in the 2010 and 2017 FDSC reports on the sector. For reasons related to the need to describe sectoral changes, we sought to make as few modifications as possible to the items in the surveys from 2016.

● BOSC 2023: Barometer of Opinions on the Civil Society

BOSC is a survey conducted on a large sample (1200 respondents) that allows to assess the attitudes of the Romanian population towards the NGO sector. BOSC is a telephone interview-based survey (CATI), the data collection being carried out by Mercury Research in November 2023, upon the request of FDSC. The survey included 144 variables, with a median filling-in time of approximately 21 minutes (1239 seconds) for those who completed the filling-in of the survey. The sample includes 1001 respondents who completed the filling-in and 199 who dropped out at various stages of filling-in.

Given the drop-outs from filling in the questionnaire, the decision is to make maximum use of the available information. There is therefore a system of four weighting variables, differentiated according to the place in the questionnaire the variables come from, considered for analysis. Each of the four weighting systems rectifies the sample geographically, and also in terms of education, age, gender of respondents and the crossovers between them.

FDSC has conducted similar research also in 2010 and 2016 (BOSC 2010, BOSC 2016).

● BLO 2023: Barometer of NGOs' Leaders

Barometer of NGOs' Leaders partially replicates the similar survey conducted by FDSC back in 2016 and is a survey for non-governmental organisations, which mainly collects data about the organisation and less about the people who run it.

BLO is a large sample survey (803 respondents), as an online applied questionnaire-based survey (CAWI) on a convenience sample. Its filling-in took place between November 2023 and January 2024. The survey included 360 variables, with a median filling-in time of approximately 36 minutes (2184 seconds) for those who completed the filling-in of the survey.

To boost response rates, shopping vouchers were awarded randomly to three of those who filled in the survey. The resulting sample includes 543 respondents who completed the filling-in and 260 who dropped out at various stages of filling-in.

Given the drop-outs from filling in the questionnaire, the decision is to make maximum use of the available information. Therefore there is a system of four weighting variables, depending on the location of the items analysed in the questionnaire, and based on the field of activity of the NGO and on its geographical location.

The results of BLO 2016 and BLO 2023 are for information purposes only, as the two samples are not probabilistic ("representative"). It is likely that, despite the weighting, the two samples be still biased, depending on the type of population to which the communication channels used led.

BMO 2023: Barometer of Members, Employees and Volunteers in the NGO sector

The BMO is a new tool in the context of the FDSC reports on the NGO sector, which however uses some of the items included in BLO 2016. 2028 of useful responses were collected through a web survey (CAWI) between December 2023 and January 2024. The convenience sample is weighted according to the positioning of the items in the questionnaire so as to reflect the expected age distribution, the only one we had information on. Alongside the topics addressed in this report, the questionnaire also included sets of questions for another FDSC project tackling intersectionality, managed by Claudia Petrescu and Ema Ignăţoiu-Sora.

The questionnaire included a main module, which took a median duration for filling in of 1080 seconds (approximately 18 minutes). At the end of the questionnaire, we asked respondents to fill in an additional module, if they were still available. For those who ended up filling in everything, the median filling-in time is 1790 seconds (about 30 minutes).

The resulting database includes 310 variables collected from respondents.

As in the case of BLO, representativeness is problematic and the results should be considered with this caution. It is also useful to avoid summing the results of the samples of members, employees and respectively volunteers.

ROMANIA 2024

THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR
PROFILE, TRENDS, CHALLENGES

NUMERICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE SECTOR

2.

Size, dynamics

▶ Bogdan Voicu

Introduction

In 2024 we are already 34 years away from the moment when associations and foundations have enjoyed the right once again to become operational in Romania. We know that throughout Eastern Europe the sector has grown exponentially since the 1990's (Toepler & Salomon, 2003), experiencing an actual boom over the last centuries (Meyer et al, 2020; Ekiert & Kubik 2014; Vador et al. 2017). Still, it is hard to assess how many NGOs are in the neighbouring countries or in the European Union in general. Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Commission, does not provide systematic data in this respect, but it has an estimate of around 3.8 million associations in the European Union, which would represent 90% of the total non-profit sector. The result is 4.22 million associations and foundations (Eurostat, 2023).

Based on national reporting, we can estimate how many organisations are in each country, with the observation that the calculation methodology may be different and the figures are not always comparable. A report from 2021 indicates the presence of about 138,000 of associations and foundations in Poland (Charycka et al, 2021). In Hungary, the figure is comparable although the country is much smaller: KSH (the National Statistics Office) provides monthly data on the dynamics of the number of non-profit organisations, and the figure for December 2023 is 132,761 separate entities²¹. Slovakia has a similar option to provide data, but the frequency is on a quarterly basis. The current reporting is from December 2023 and shows 38,883 NGOs registered²².

The Western Europe has not a unitary pattern. 15 years ago, Von Hippel (2010) estimated 650,000 NGOs in Germany. NGEurope (2017) accounted for more than 70,000 NGOs in Portugal and 4,000 in Greece. Around 31,300 NGOs are in Ireland, with approximately 165,000 employees (Benefacts, 2021).

The overall picture is one of a wide variety of situations. In this diverse context, this chapter seeks to provide information on the dynamics and size of the system in Romania. I use two types of measurements in this respect: firstly, we have the structural dimension - how many organisations exist. These organisations provide frameworks that enable people to participate in the organisational life, to generate actions through which organisations achieve their goals. This is the second type of measurement: how many people are employed (paid) or participate (as members or volunteers) in the actions of the NGO sector.

Number of organisations

● Registrations with the National Registry for NGOs

The National Registry for NGO is the main source of information. After removing duplicate and erroneous records, the updated version in January 2024 included 127,053 probably active NGOs and 8003 known to be deregistered, dissolved or in liquidation. Of those with no indication of having ceased activity, 106,433 are associations, 19,046 - foundations, 1,529 - federations, 759 – trade unions, 37 - branches of organisations outside Romania. Besides, 738 are trade unions - a type of organisation which, for historical reasons (in the early 1990's and all throughout the 2000, the participation in trade unions was not entirely on a volunteer basis), we do not include in the analysis.

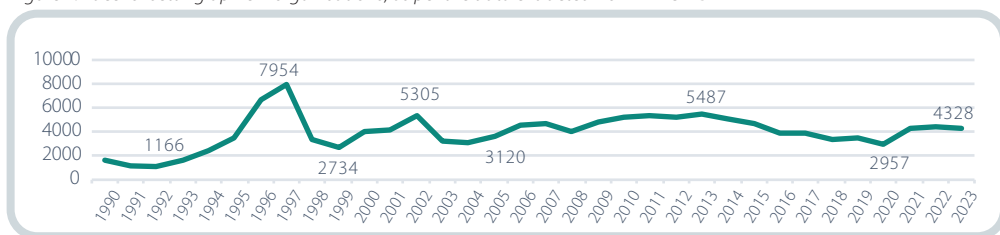
²¹ https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/gsz/en/gsz0050.html

²² https://datacube.statistics.sk/#/view/en/VBD_SLOVSTAT/og2019qs/v_og2019qs_00_00_00_en

The geographical distribution of such organisations, seen by reference to the size of the population from the county of registration, shows a very high variation, with lower values recorded in Moldova and Southern Walachia, respectively higher in Bucharest and North-West. The lowest values are recorded in Vaslui (2.1 NGOs per thousand inhabitants), Ialomita (2.4), Calarasi and Olt (2.6 both). By contrast, there are 10.6 organisations per thousand inhabitants in Harghita, followed by Cluj (10.4), Bucharest (10.0), Sibiu (9.6), Maramures (7.6), Bihor (7.2), Arad (6.9).

The dynamics in terms of number of annual registrations does not bring along any surprise whatsoever (Figure 1). Leaving aside the 11 organisations set up before 1990, a boom is noticed during the second half of the 1990's, also an effect of a relaxing legislation and of a society starting to reject the totalitarian organisation of the 1980's. After 2000, the increase of the sector is actually linear, with slight variations of moment. For instance, in recent years, the major event has been the COVID-19 pandemic, which naturally slows the pace of new registrations of associations with the clerk's offices (most likely to avoid *face to face* contacts). Over the last three years, it has returned to a pace of approximately 4200-4300 of registrations per year.

Figure 1. Pace for setting up new organisations, as per the data extracted from RN-ONG



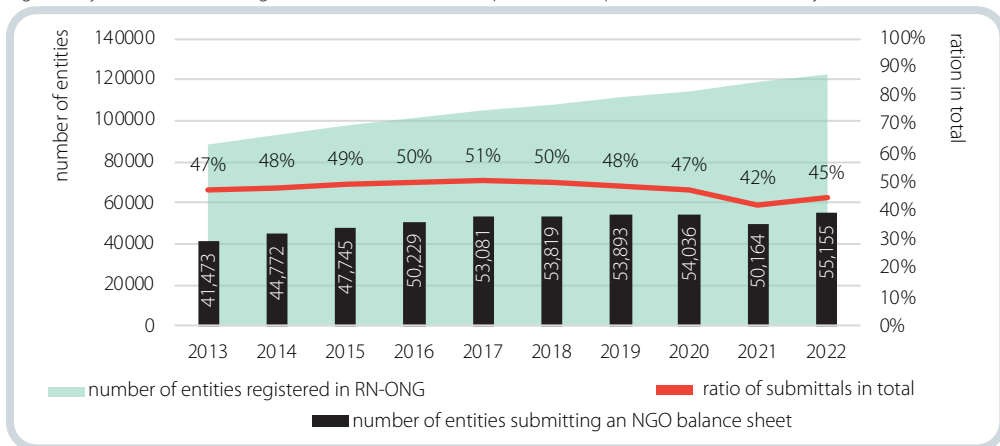
The above estimates are limited to the number of NGOs declaring themselves as NGOs by legal incorporation as per Law no. 276/27.11.2020, which in fact approves, amends and supplements Government Ordinance no. 26/2000, which has regulated the sector for two decades after replacing Law no. 21/1924. This does not include some entities that are established by special law and are not bound to register in the National Registry for NGOs.

● Reporting to NAFA

The NAFA database includes entities that submit on an annual basis their balance sheets to the Ministry of Finances, as required by law. There are in total 81,938 single entities that have submitted at least during a year the balance sheet during the period 2013-2022. Among them, 30% have submitted the balance sheet every year, 5% have submitted it only in 2022, 4% have made it every year since 2016, 2% every year until 2017, 0.4% have submitted it each year between 2015 and 2020, then they have starting doing so etc. In the database there are also NGOs with „gaps”, namely years during which they have failed to submit the balance sheet. For example, there are 294 that have submitted a balance sheet for 2013, have not submitted it for 2014, and then submitted it every year. There are 238 the registrations of which cover the period 2015-2020, take a break in 2021, and re-submit for 2022. There can also be more significant interruptions. For instance, there are 2,013 entities that submit the balance sheet every year between 2013 and 2019, do not submit it for the fiscal year 2020, neither for 2021, but for 2022.

Hence the observation that the absence of a balance sheet submittal does not necessarily mean disappearance, but may be a break. In addition, it is not excluded that some entities may file balance sheets for a company, not for an NGO, by mistake. Over the 10 years for which we have data, NGO-type balance sheet submittal increase from around 41000 in 2013 to 55000 in 2022. Each year, the number of submittals is higher or about the same as in the previous year, with one gap, in 2021. The share of those that submit the balance sheet is almost 50% at the beginning of the period, with a slightly decreasing trend during the second half.

Figure 2. Dynamics for submitting the annual balance sheet as per the data reported to NAFA (the Ministry of Finances): 2013-2022



Caution should be taken that some organisations sometimes delay submitting their balance sheets. The Ministry of Finances usually publishes the databases on data.gov.ro during the summer time (June-September). For older years updates are made later. As already mentioned, the Ministry of Finances provided us in March 2024 with aggregated data from balance sheet statements. They are discussed on in the chapter on the financial size of the sector. Comparison of the figures provided by the Ministry of Finances with those taken from the databases published on data.gov.ro reveals differences in terms of the number of entities reporting balance sheets, with the public data systematically including slightly fewer organisations than those in the current databases of the Ministry of Finance. Hence a recommendation to the latter to also update data from previous years when publishing data for the previous fiscal year.

Another caution is related to the possibility that the RN-ONG database may contain some organisations that have in fact been dissolved or deregistered, and that such changes have not already been recorded in the registry. As the phenomenon, if it exists, will rather be affected all the more during recent years, taking into account all the registration errors we have been mentioning, we can talk about a certain stability over the last 5-6 years of the share of NGOs submitting balance sheets, even if the trend is slightly decreasing.

International benchmarking

The international comparison allows us to identify where Romania stands in relation to other European countries. The almost 130,000 NGOs in the RN-ONG list represent about 6.7 entities per thousand inhabitants. This figure is below the EU average of 9.41, with Romania being below Hungary (13.8), Slovakia (7.2), or Germany (7.6) in terms of density of organisations, at the same level as Portugal (6.7) and above Poland (3.8), Greece (0.4) or Ireland (5.2) to use just a few examples. The growth rate of the sector is above that of Poland, Hungary or Slovakia, which are rather stagnating. However, there are also countries with a sustained growth rate of the sector. In France, the number of NGOs set up each year is around 70,000²³, namely 17-18 times more than in Romania, for a population 3 times larger.

NGO sector as an employer

Data of NGOs reporting an NGO balance

The databases published by the Ministry of Finances on data.gov.ro include a field that should specify the number of employees "without a patrimonial purpose" and one for the number of staff engaged in economic (income-generating) activities.

For reasons not explained, for some of the existing records, the field for the number of employees without a patrimonial purpose includes unrealistic figures. Some (23 records) are millions, and some of these numbers

²³ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1041398/new-associations-created-annually-in-france/>

seem to be actually phone numbers and others are incomprehensible. For example, Asociația de Sprijin a Copiilor cu Handicap Neuromotor Emanuel reports for 2019 14,132,099 employees, which is obviously an error. Similarly, Casa de Ajutor Reciproc a Pensionarilor Nehoiu reports in two years in a row 10,487,737 employees each, Asociația Clubul Sportiv Tase Racing Team would have had 7,850,893 employees in 2017, and Composesoratul Pădureni 7,523,086 in 2022. Other 13 entries have between 10,000 and 383,270 employees. Their individual check reveals that there are also unrealistic. There comes 15 entries showing in terms of number of employees 9499 and 9999 (NACE code for the activity as a NGO), but also a few dozen others which could also be NACE codes, or number of members (for example, for Asociația Rainbow Dance every year there are 971 employees, for Asociația de Părinți de la Școala 2 Ovidiu annually there are 842 employees, for Asociația Sportivă Dinamo Iași 800 employees are specified every year between 2013 and 2022; probably in all these cases the figures actually indicate the number of members).

Records may undoubtedly be subject to manual cleaning procedures. After all, we are talking about only about 400 records out of a total of over 85,000 entries in the database. The problem is that their presence lowers the level of confidence in the other figures reported by NGOs. We cannot know with any accuracy whether, for example, an organisation that has the number 57 entered at employees actually has 57 members or it wanted to enter the street number of its headquarters. Equally, 3 can mean either three employees or the three founding members required by law as mandatory.

In order to be able to use the data, the solution we have opted for is to leave aside the summing up of the number of employees and to re-assess the total number of employees without a patrimonial purpose in the sector starting from the noticed distributions. Table 1 meets this task. We observed for 2022 that we have 14,681 entities that have at least one such employee. Sorting them in ascending order by the number of employees, the first 25% have only one employee, the first 50% have a maximum of 3 employees, 75% have a maximum of 8 employees (25% have 8 or more employees), 10% have 19 or more employees and 3% have more than 94 employees.

Table 1. Statistics concerning the number of staff from the reporting to NAFA and estimation of the number of employees across the sector in the „realistic scenario”

Year	Staff numbers regarding activities without a patrimonial purpose									Total estimated no.	Staff number for economic activities year	TOTAL estimated number of employees across the sector Number of entities by number of employees
	Number of entities by number of employees				Statistics for NGOs with at least one employee							
	total	very high values (>9400)	Without employees	With employees	first quartile	median	third quartile	percentile 90	percentile 97			
2013	41473	8	29084	12381	1	3	7	21	94	110,560	23,619	136,311
2014	44772	16	31528	13228	1	3	7	20	90	114,126	22,481	138,436
2015	47745	16	33195	14534	1	3	7	20	82	120,796	21,555	143,387
2016	50229	10	35412	14807	1	3	6	17	76	114,433	23,479	137,188
2017	53081	10	37504	15567	1	3	6	16	68	114,087	21,086	132,780
2018	53819	6	38526	15287	1	3	6	18	68	112,038	21,246	134,602
2019	53893	6	38847	15040	1	3	7	18	70	113,251	21,186	134,526
2020	54036	10	39994	14032	1	3	7	18	69	107,512	19,334	124,514
2021	50164	8	36951	13205	1	3	7	19	65	99,824	17,108	115,423
2022	55155	4	41376	13775	1	3	8	19	65	105,547	17,905	120,661

*Reading indications: in 2013, 41473 NGOs did not report the balance sheet. Among them, 8 reported unrealistic numbers of employees without a patrimonial purpose, 29084 did not have at all any such employees, and 12381 have reported at least 1 employee, but figures are unrealistically high. Among the latter, 25% have one employee at the most (actually they have only 1 employee), 50% have more than 3 employees, 75% have 7 employees at the most, 10% have over 21 employees, and 3% have over 94 employees. By applying the procedures described in the text, we reach the total amounts estimated by the last three columns.

We decided to estimate the probable number of employees in the sector in two scenarios. We only kept NGOs who have employees. We ordered them ascending by the number of employees. In the moderate scenario, built to reach an estimate similar to that in the 2017 report, for the first 33% of the database entries, the total number of employees is equal to the number of NGOs, because they have exactly one employee, i.e. the value of the first quartile. For the next 34% we used the assumption that we can consider that each one has 3 employees (the median value), and the errors are compensated in sum. For the next 18% we thought they had around the number of employees given by the third quartile, for 10% of NGOs we decided they had around percentile 90²⁴, and for the remaining 5% we gave the 97

²⁴ Obviously, the first quartile is percentile 25, the median is the second quartile, respectively percentile 50, and quartile 3 is percentile 75.

percentile value. We are most likely underestimating the number of employees a little bit, but we avoid the error of giving importance to large numbers that are unrelated to reality. The moderate scenario also provides a higher share of very small organisations.

For employees with an economic activity, visual check of data shows that values above 1200 are most likely input errors, so we made the simple sum of reporting in this category of less than 1200, without further adjustments, also taking into account that the resulting amounts are around 13-14% of the total employees.

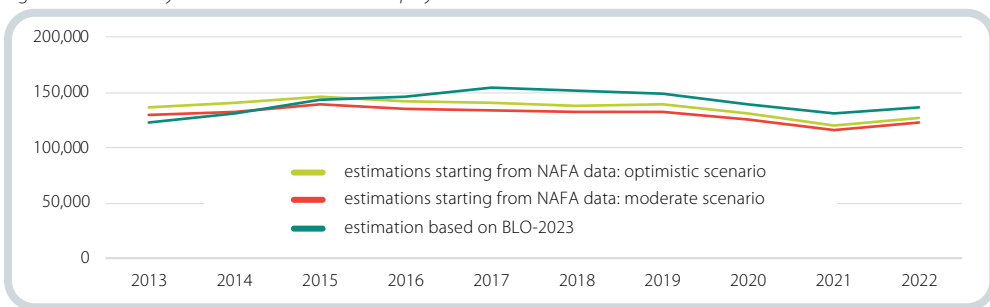
The result shows the sector's stability of around 135-140 thousand employees in the first part of the period under review, followed by a steady year-on-year decrease of the number of employees. Let us note that these employees are not unique, nor they have full-time agreements. Some of the employees counted in the database can only work a few hours, others may have indefinite time agreement of 18 hours a month each, some may work in several NGOs. However, since the numbers reported in the database are exclusively integers, it is difficult to say how the registration of employees with part-time work was carried out. Including the gathering of employees with or without a patrimonial purpose becomes risky, because an employee can have multiple roles, carrying out activities with or without an economic purpose.

The estimate made is of the same order of magnitude as that made in the 2017 FDSC report (Kivu, coord., 2017), as compared to which it is however somewhat higher. It is in line with estimates based on BLO2023 results, as explained in the next section.

In addition, we have also proposed an „optimistic“ estimation of the number of employees, developed in the same way as for the above, but considering the ratios of 30% for those around the first quartile 1, 40% around the median, 16% around the third quartile, 3.8% around percentile 90, respectively 6% around percentile 97. Thus we get a higher estimation of the number of employees, which places more importance yet on larger organisations.

The two scenarios are different only in terms of the ratio associated to the organisations that are around the median, quartiles 1 and 3, respectively percentiles 90 and 97. This means that, if we disregard the total number of employees, the dynamics remain unchanged, revealing a relative stability yet characterized by a quite significant reduction during and also after the pandemic (Figure 3).

Figure3. Estimated dynamics of the number of employees in the NGO sector



Estimates based on BLO 2023

4% of the respondents to the item on the use of employees have preferred not to explain whether they are using employees or volunteers. From the respondents, 47% have indicated the use of both categories of workers, 43% are using only volunteers, and 6% only hired staff.

The BLO sample seems to include more balanced organisations than the NAFA reporting in that the distance from the first quartile to the 97th percentile is smaller. The BLO also includes a higher share of those reporting employees: 51%. The average is 11.9, but it can be affected by extreme values, as a result we have calculated a „trimmed mean“, namely a mean without the highest and lowest 5% values, which is the value 8.43. By multiplying this average by the number of organisations in the sector reporting employees in the last publicly available balance sheet (2022) it results an estimation of $13,775 \times 8.43 = 116,178$ employees. The figure is close to that estimated in the previous section in the moderate scenario (120,661).

According to BLO 2023, a quarter of organisations which have employees below 3 (quartile 1), the median has the value of 5, quartile 3 is 12, percentile 90 is 27, and percentile 97 is 47. If we rebuild the analysis taking into account the structure of the sector and calculate the annual grand totals from the evolution of the number of NGOs that have employees, weighted by the values estimated in BLO for quartiles and percentiles, we arrive at an estimate of approximately 135,304 employees in 2022, close in size to the 127,018 resulting from the estimation in the optimistic scenario in the previous section.

These estimates are also affected by the inaccuracy of the estimated number of employees. Some respondents indicated exactly how many employees there were, regardless of the workload, others indicated fractional numbers, in other words calculating the number of equivalent workloads.

We are talking about such inaccurate figures, but they have the great advantage of giving us a size of the sector in order of magnitude. In conclusion, the number of employees in the sector in 2022 was between 121,000 (conservative estimate based on data from the Ministry of Finances, made to have an estimate close to that in the 2017 FDSC report) and 135,000 (estimate based on BLO 2023). If I were to choose a single figure, not a range, I would round it off to tens of thousands and opt for the approximately 127,000 resulting from the second scenario in the previous subchapter.

● Participation in associations

Existing NGOs, whether or not they have temporary or permanent employees, represent a structure for participation in associations. Ordinary people can find here the environments in which to manifest their elements of participatory culture, to meet like-minded people, to cooperate for the generation of public goods.

Participation in associations throughout the post-communist area was low at the time of the exit from communism. Romania was no exception, with the lowest participation in the region (Voicu, 2020) and it has remained low throughout the short time so far of the Third Millennium.

Registering participation in associations is a complex endeavour. One such measurement is carried out using opinion polls, in which respondents are given a list of types of associations and indicate which they are members of. The number of types of associations included in the list and the size of the list can lead to changes in the responses received. For example, very long lists may inhibit response and lead to an underestimation of participation in associations, with respondents (and interviewers, if it is a human-assisted questionnaire) preferring to say overall that they do not participate, rather than going through each item on the list. Short lists increase the response rate to each item individually, but decrease the respondent's ability to recall each type of organisation individually.

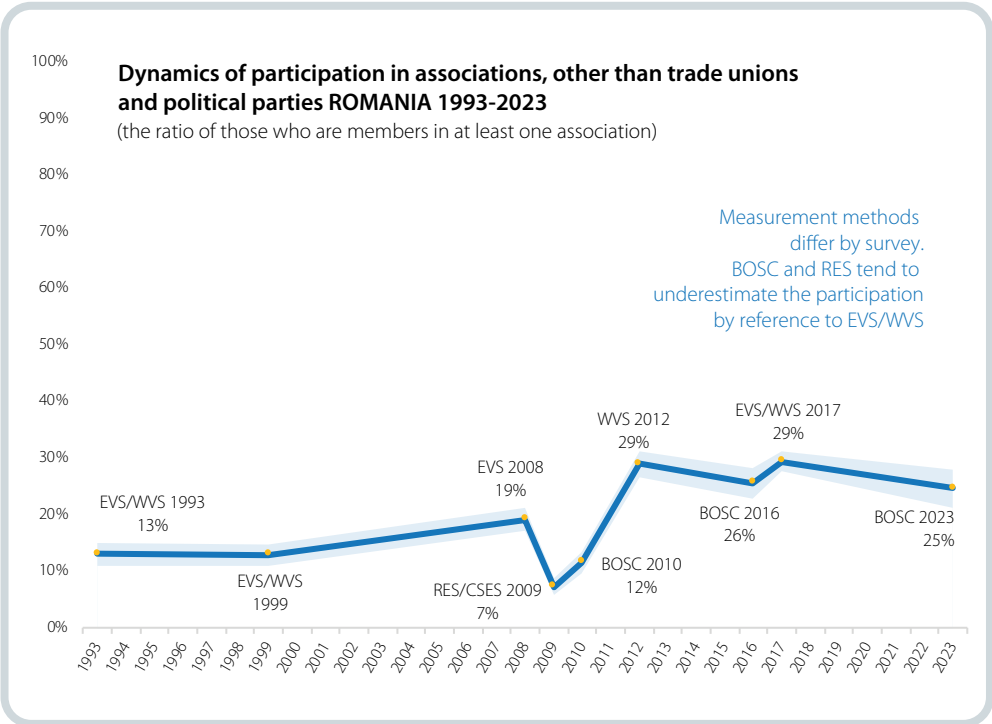
BOSC operates with a long list of association types, for which it asks whether participation is current, whether it has been only in the past, and whether membership fees are paid. In addition, as compared to other similar measures, several types of associations of concern to the FDSC are detailed: resource centres, youth centres, etc. Thus, we have three factors that lead to potential understatements of the size of participation in associations: the length of the list, the breakdown by narrow types, the more complicated response scale used ever since 2010.

In contrast, the second important source of information for participation in associations in Romania, the values surveys (EVS/WVS), propose shorter lists (10-12 types of organisations) and fewer response options: the waves of the 1990's asked whether the respondent was an active or inactive member, followed by the question whether he/she volunteers in such organisations. The recent versions ask the respondent only whether he/she is a member, without distinguishing between the degree of activity and volunteering. Note that the European Values Study is an international survey started in 1981 and joined by Romania in 1993. The EVS collects data every 9 years, covering 48 European countries. The World Values Survey is a worldwide extension, collecting data approximately 5 years apart. Romania has collected data in EVS/WVS in 1993, 1995, 1999, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2017-2018. The next wave is scheduled for 2024 (WVS) and respectively 2026 (EVS), with the collection depending on available resources.

A similar version of the scale of participation in associations has also been applied over time in the 2009

wave of the Romanian Elections Study (RES) and in the 2003 wave of the Soros Foundation Public Opinion Barometer (BOP). The BOP has a much shorter scale than the others and generates figures that are not comparable in terms of estimating the number of those participating in at least one organisation, but it can be used to observe the dynamics of participation in some types of organizations (for instance social associations). RES has also a shorter list, in other words, underestimating the participation in associations.

Figure 4. Participation in association in Romania: 1993-2023



Data comes from various surveys: EVS/WVS=European Values Study/World Values Survey, RES/CSES=Romanian Elections Study/Comparative Study of Election Systems; BOSC= the Barometer of Opinions on Civil Society). The lighter coloured strip is the trust range 95%.

Using data from all these sources, Figure 4 shows an upward trend in the years 1990-2000, with a drop in participation during the economic crisis of the late 2000's, followed by a recovery to around 30% participation rate. To maintain historical comparability, the numbers in the figure do not take into account participation in trade unions and political parties. In the former, in the early 1990's, participation was compulsory if you worked in various industrial sectors and even in the tertiary economic sector, only recently witnessing a resizing of the sector on a voluntary basis. Participation in political parties is borderline and given the sensitivity of the Romanian political environment has been kept distinct. It should also be noted that the estimated participation in political parties is within the 1-2% range, hardly affecting the dynamics in Figure 4. Also excluded from the analysis was membership in tenants'/owners' associations, which is beyond voluntary and in the conditions of Romanian real estate immobility is often inherited, not a reflection of a voluntary gesture. The figures also do not take into account agricultural associations, whose economic purpose is explicit and, even, when registered in the National Registry for NGOs, act more like trading companies.

Returning to the figures in the chart, let us note that participation in associations in Romania has increased about 2.5 times over the last 30 years. Estimated value for the 1990's is 13%, and today around 30% of the population participates in associations. Across Europe, according to EVS/WVS 2017-2018 data, there are a few countries with lower participation, all of which are located in the South of the continent or towards the border with Russia: Albania (9%), Armenia (20%), Azerbaijan (3%), Bulgaria (19%), Belarus (19%), Estonia (22%), Georgia (13%), Greece (23%), Italy (20%), Portugal (9%), Poland (21%), Turkey (21%).

Some countries have figures comparable with Romania's: Bosnia-Herzegovina (36%), France (34%), Hungary (33%), Lithuania (27%), Latvia (29%), Montenegro (29%), Spain (24%), Ukraine (28%).

Then a group of countries, most of which are Balkanic, with figures exceeding Romania's: Andorra (41%), Austria (58%), Croatia (49%), Cyprus (49%), the Czech Republic (44%), Serbia (43%), Slovakia (38%), Macedonia (39%).

Finally, there are countries with an actually generalized participation in associations, especially the Northern and rich ones, which propose a model quite different from the one Romania has opted for today: Denmark (84%), Finland (64%), Germany (70%), Island (83%), the Netherlands (70%), Norway (67%), Slovenia (66%), Sweden (74%), Switzerland (78%), UK (62%), the Northern Ireland (81%).

From the above list, several countries are missing (Malta, Belgium, Moldova, Ireland, Luxembourg) for which EVS/WVS 2017-2018 data either does not exist or did not include items on participation in associations. As a point of comparison, it is useful to note the estimated scores for Canada (62%) and the USA (79%), countries with low taxation models closer to Romania than European countries.

Beyond the figures shown in the table, let us note that, in 2018, an adult from the Romanian population was participating on an average in 0.69 associations, according to the EVS/WVS data (Voicu, 2020).

Activity rate

► Bogdan Voicu

Active, dormant, intermittent: a theoretical typology

The method of setting up, registering and inclusion into the NGO records is one that makes it difficult to track them (Voicu, Andersen, Țălnar-Naghi, 2021). Very briefly, the relevant steps are just a few:

1. The NGO submits the incorporation documents to the County/Sector law court, where it is assigned a number defining its presence in RN-ONG.
2. The NGO submits another set of papers to NAFA, where it is assigned a tax identification number.
3. There is no database, at least not a public one, where we can find the correspondence between the two numbers.
4. In case of deregistration, this occurs in the RN-ONG by adding another record to the already existing ones.
5. Annually, NGOs are bound to submit their balance sheet to NAFA, regardless of whether they had any activity during the fiscal year to which this balance sheet relates. Many NGOs choose not to do it.

The above steps define difficulties in measuring the size of the field. On the one hand, we have to deal with two distinct registries, unrelated, and we have shown in the previous chapter how there are almost 130,000 NGOs in the RN-ONG, but less than 55,000 submit their annual balance sheet, and for the total of ten years there are about 82,000 entities that have submitted the balance sheet as an NGO in at least one year. We have also shown that most of them submit it year after year, or do it at least a few years in a row, but there are plenty that also have “gaps”, i.e. years in which they simply do not submit a balance sheet. In the absence of other information, we can make assumptions for such behaviours: they went into a state of suspension for a while, they simply had no activity and no resources to pay an accountant to submit the balance sheet, they have disregarded the legal requirement, etc.

It is certain that NGOs that submit a balance sheet are active, and the rest may be active, dormant, with intermittent activity, or even dissolved.

Estimating the activity rate thus becomes a need for those who want to assess the size of the sector.

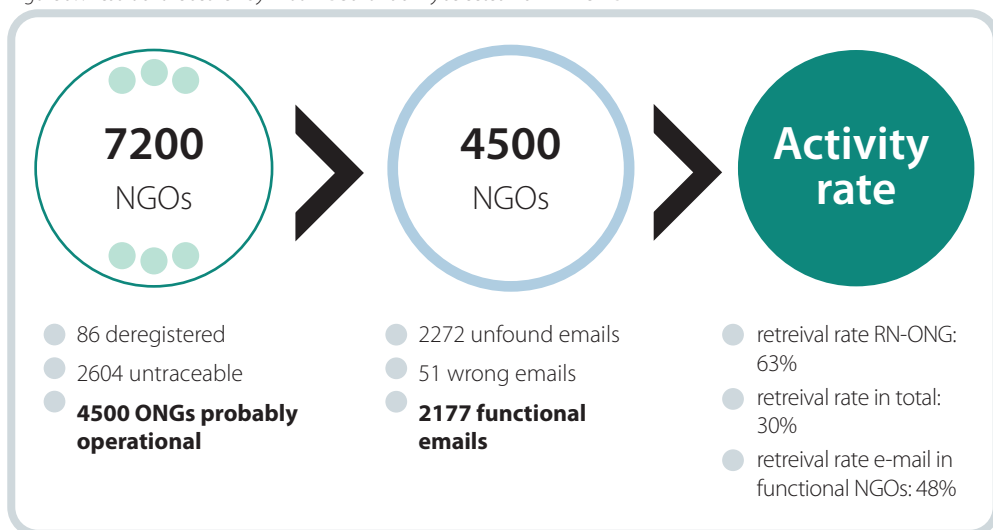
Estimation of „dormant” NGO rate

An exercise designed to increase the number of contacts that we invite to fill in BLO, allows us to estimate the current size of the part of the RN-ONG which can be dormant, becoming active once again when it has funds, or simply carrying out untaxed activities, whether they involve financial turnover or not.

We randomly extracted from RN-ONG a number of 7200 entries, which were not already deregistered or under dissolution. The 7200 NGOs were randomly divided into 900 sets. Each of the eight sets was allocated to a student in social sciences of the University of Bucharest (sociology, public administration), with the request to identify data about the organisation in question, with an emphasis on the email address. We asked the students, who carried out this activity as part of their apprenticeship program, to specify the reasons why they did not find the NGO in question.

Students were able to identify email addresses for 2228 out of the 7200 organisations. From the emails identified, 51 were found to be no longer functional.

Figure 5. . Result of the search by 7200 NGOs randomly selected from RN-ONG



The results of this search exercise are summarised in Figure 5. We are talking about a retrieval rate of NGOs listed in RN-ONG of 63%. No doubt, the figure is to be looked at with caution. The students may not have put too much zeal into the search or have not been able to retrieve all the entities that could be found. I personally repeated the search on samples extracted from the student sample, and I generally achieved results 1-3 percent better, which says it cannot actually be a big loss due to the way the students conducted the search.

All in all, we have to deal with $2604+86=2700$ organisations for which we have strong suspicions that they would no longer work. We remain with this activity rate of 63%, perhaps a few percentage points higher. It is interesting to note that the ratio between the entities that submitted the NGO balance sheet between 2013 and 2022 (81,938) and the inputs in RN-ONG (127,804 NGOs) is in the same order of magnitude: 64%.

The correct email addresses were found in 2177 out of the 4500 NGOs about which we discovered information online. In other words, we have 48% NGOs for which an online address can be identified, and if we refer to the 7200 excerpts from RN-ONG, the email retrieval rate is 30%.

NGOs without an online presence are most likely dormant or have intermittent activity. It is obvious that a part is simply disconnected from contemporary means of communication and to carry out activities without being present in the online environment. They may also not use email, but other means of communication, from WhatsApp to Discord, and from contact forms embedded in the website, to Facebook Messenger. As the primary purpose of the exercise we use was to consolidate the list of emails, we asked students to include only email addresses. The comments provided by the eight students, however, allow us to estimate that out of 4,500 NGOs that seem to be functional, almost half (48%) have identifiable email addresses, 20% have some online activities, and the rest are not found online with dedicated pages, be they websites or their own social media pages.

We remain with an activation rate of about 70% of the 4500 NGOs, with 30% likely "dormant".

Again, the comparison with the balance sheet submittal data confirms these estimates: in 2022, 57902 organisations submitted a balance sheet, i.e. 71% of those reporting at least once over the period 2013-2022.

Instead of a conclusion: what is the size of the sector?

The simple figures say that there are about 125,000 single registrations in the National Registry for NGOs, almost 82,000 submitted at least one balance sheet date from 2013 to 2022, and almost 58,000 registered the NGO in 2022, the last fiscal year for which we have available information.

The estimates made using the sample of 7200 NGOs, with all the errors involved, lead to activity rates similar to those based on the analysis of NAFA and RN-ONG figures: 63-66% is the activity rate of NGOs in the registry, and of them probably 30% are dormant.

In other words, of those in RN-ONG, 33% are likely without any activity and will not resume activity, 18% are asleep, and half are currently active.

Obviously, working with data affected by so many measurement errors, all the above estimates are also affected by errors. The precise meaning of these errors is difficult to estimate, but in my assessment they are reduced in size. The issue of the occurrence of measurement errors is not an isolated one, it does not arise out of the blue in this analysis, but it is specific to any study in which we work with error-affected data. Even if errors are often compensated, we still cannot be extremely precise; therefore, as it is easy to observe, orders of magnitude are indicated above, thus providing an overview of the phenomena examined. Undoubtedly, metaphorically speaking, such a perspective can leave out of analysis a few trees, but it has the advantage of allowing the study of the whole forest. As the aim of this report is to study the entire NGO sector, the overall evaluation proposed is the one that allows us to understand both the current state and the dynamics of the sector.

ROMANIA 2024

THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR
PROFILE, TRENDS, CHALLENGES

ECONOMIC
INSIGHT

3.

Economy of the NGO sector

► Irina Niță

Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the main financial indicators of non-governmental organisations in Romania, focusing on three main points: the assets of the organisations, the structure of income and expenses. In addition, a section is dedicated to non-governmental organisations that are also found among social economy entities (Lambriu, 2013; Lambriu & Petrescu, 2016), focusing on the economic situation of the Credit Unions (CAR) of employees and of retired persons.

Non-governmental organisations carry out a wide range of activities and have various objectives such as: representing and promoting the interests of their members (e.g. civic and professional associations), redistribution of financial flows (e.g. financing foundations, humanitarian or philanthropic organisations) or, more recently, the provision of services and goods on the market through economic activities (Bidet, 2010; Monzon & Chaves, 2012).

In this context, NGOs rely on a mix of income from public and private funding, donations or sponsorships, and less on income from trading goods and services. The analysis of the economic situation of the NGO sector is a particularly important aspect for understanding its evolution and development (Constantinescu, 2012a, 2012b; Barna, 2014; Kivu et al., 2017; Lambriu & Vameșu, 2010).

The information presented in this chapter consists mostly data made public by the Ministry of Finances/NAFA on the government data portal (data.gov.ro) and processed by the authors of this report. For 2015 we took over the financial data published in the previous report (Kivu et al., 2017). In addition, we used the results of the BLO 2016, BLO 2023 and BMO 2023 surveys. Detailed information on the methodology for collecting, processing and analysing data in this report is available in the dedicated chapter. For the period 2016-2020, between the publicly available data (data.gov.ro) and the data provided directly by the Ministry of Finances, minor annual differences (between 0.5% – 3%) in the number of entities were identified, with no significant influence on the analysis of economic indicators at sector level. These variations are mainly due to the fact that publication on the official portal is made shortly after the legal deadline for submitting the financial statements, while the basis of the MF also includes subsequent submittals. In this chapter we have included only the analysis of the public data and the information provided by the MF was used exclusively for the analysis of the distribution by type of sources of income (public funding, contributions, donations and sponsorships, aids, etc.) included in the chapter on sources of income.

The section on the main economic indicators of the NGO sector includes financial data on the following types of entities: associations (including credit unions), foundations, unions (including credit unions' representation organizations and cooperative organisations), federations and educational structures that submit an NGO balance sheet. The credit unions of employees and of retired persons are analysed also separately in the section dedicated to them.

Key economic indicators

● Patrimony

At the end of 2022, the total patrimony of NGOs in Romania that submitted balance sheet statements to NAFA amounted to over 58 billion RON, of which over 34 billion fixed assets and over 23 billion current assets (Table 2). The average of fixed assets was over 1 billion RON, almost 3 times higher than the average

of current assets – 466 thousand RON. Half of the active NGOs had current assets lower than 21 thousand RON, and 75% of them fixed assets of less than 191 thousand RON and current assets of less than 108 thousand RON. At the level of the same year, short-term liabilities (liabilities to be paid during a period of up to 1 year) exceeded 5 billion RON, and long- liabilities (liabilities to be paid over a period of more than 1 year) to over 6 billion RON.

Table 2. NGO patrimony in 2022, in million current RON

Assets / Liabilities	% NGO with a 0 patrimony	Total in million current RON	Average* in mil. current RON	Median* in mil. current RON	Quartile 3 (75%)* in mil. current RON
Fixed assets	63%	34.740	1.740	22	191
Current liabilities	7%	23.374	466	21	108
Liabilities - up to one year	35%	5.308	151	9	42
Liabilities – more than one year	92%	6.439	1.452	28	116

Source: Calculations based on data from MF/NAFA (data.gov.ro). 0 values have been excluded from the average calculation, median and quartile 3.

Fixed assets are the assets and resources that an organisation owns on the long term and uses in its business. Fixed assets can be of three types: tangible assets (land, buildings, equipment), intangible assets (copyrights, trademarks) and financial fixed assets (shares or bonds). In this chapter we will present the total value of fixed assets, without including an analysis by type. It is also important to note that, on an annual basis, the value of fixed assets decreases (they are impaired), which is reflected in the accounts by depreciation. The annual balance sheet records reflect the real, depreciated value of fixed assets. The figures presented below should be treated with caution, bearing in mind that not all NGOs may reflect impairment of assets in their balance sheet.

Table 3. Evolution of NGO distribution by intervals of fixed assets 2015-2022

Fixed assets (RON, current prices)	2015 estimated*	2015 reviewed	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
RON 0	63%	64%	65%	64%	64%	64%	64%	62%	63%
RON 1-10,000	17%	16%	16%	15%	15%	14%	15%	15%	14%
RON 10,001 – 40,000	7%	7%	6%	6%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%
RON 40,001 – 200,000	7%	7%	6%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%
Over RON 200,001	7%	7%	7%	8%	9%	8%	9%	9%	9%

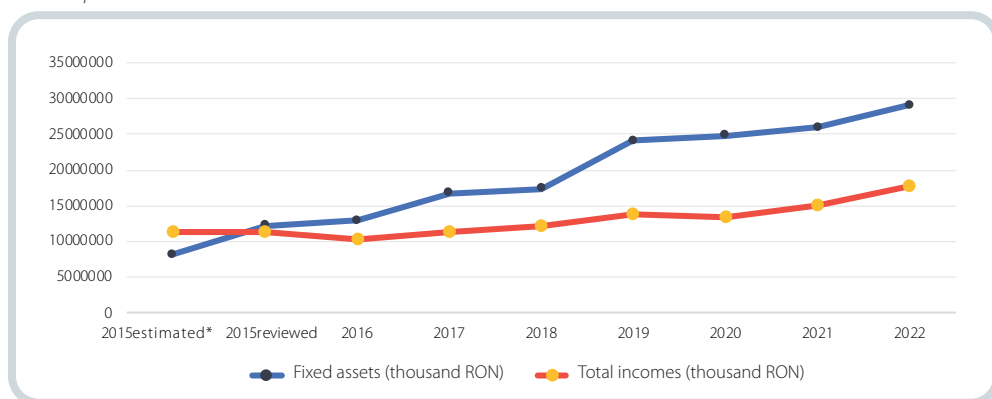
Source: *Kivu et. al. (2017: 33), Remaining years: Calculations based on data from MF/NAFA (data.gov.ro).

Similarly to the distribution from previous years (2000-2015, see Kivu et. al., 2017: 33), there is a strong concentration of fixed assets of non-governmental organisations also during the period 2015-2022 (Table 3). The estimates made for 2015 in the previous report (Kivu et al., 2017) and those remade with the updated data found on the data.gov.ro portal are very similar (the first two columns of Table 3). Between 63 % and 65 % (depending on the year) of NGOs do not have fixed assets, and 14-17 % have fixed assets amounting to less than RON 10,000. Only 19-23 % of NGOs record fixed assets over RON 10,000 or more. Throughout the analysed period, the distribution of NGOs by fixed assets intervals remains relatively constant, with minor variations during the period 2015-2019.

Income and expenses

The evolution of fixed assets and total income of NGOs that submitted a balance sheet during the period 2015-2022 shows a relatively similar trend, with significant variations over approximately the same periods (Figure 6). There is a sharp increase in both total income and fixed assets during the period 2018-2019, followed by a decline in income during the period 2019-2020, with a partial recovery after 2020. Fixed assets continued to grow, albeit slower during the period 2016-2019, and faster during the period 2020-2022.

Figure 6. Evolution of fixed assets and of income of NGOs that submitted a balance sheet during the period 2015-2022, in constant prices 2015



Source: *Kivu et. al. (2017: 34), Remaining years: Calculations based on data from MF/NAFA (data.gov.ro)

The total income obtained by NGOs at the end of 2022 was over 21 billion RON, increasing as compared to the years 2020-2021, but decreasing as compared to 2019, when the total income recorded an increase of about 25%. As compared to 2015, the total income of non-governmental organisations was almost 2 times higher (Table 4). The total expenses of NGOs remained relatively constant during the reference period, with a more significant increase in 2022.

Between 2015 and 2020, the median for the total income of NGOs, denominated in constant prices as compared to 2015, increased slightly and sharply between 2020 - 2022. In 2022, the median for the total income was about 55 thousand current RON and only 25% of the organisations earned an income above 228 thousand current RON.

The estimates made for 2015 in the previous report (Kivu et al., 2017) and those remade with the updated data found on the data.gov.ro portal (the first two columns of Table 4) show major differences, explainable in the case of the average, median and quartile 3 by changing the calculation method. Thus, in this report 0 values have been excluded from the calculation of the average, median and quartile 3.

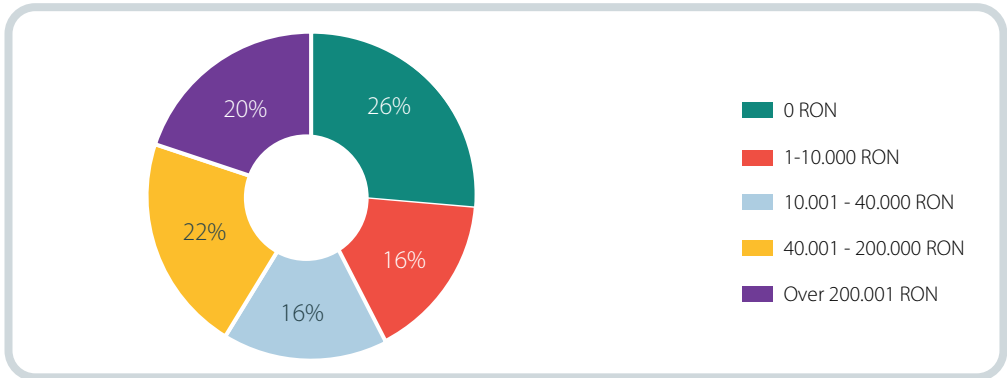
Table 4. Evolution of total income and average income of NGO that submitted a balance sheet during the period 2015-2022, in thousand current Ron and constant prices by reference to 2015

	2015 estimated*	2015 reviewed	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Average total income** in thousand current RON	264	324	279	295	331	388	385	452	533
Average total income in thousand RON constant prices 2015	-	324	285	296	312	357	362	420	446
Median (50%) Total income** in thousand current RON	13	31	32	34	38	40	36	48	55
Median (50%) Total income in thousand RON constant prices 2015	-	31	33	34	36	37	34	45	46
Quartile 3 (75%) Total income** in thousand current RON	84	133	129	143	159	175	171	203	228
Quartile 3 (75%) Total income in thousand RON constant prices 2015	-	133	131	144	150	161	161	188	191
% NGOs with total income 0	-	25%	26%	27%	26%	26%	30%	27%	26%
Total income in million current RON	11.291	11.372	10.173	11.208	12.880	15.100	14.218	16.160	21.170
Total income in million RON constant prices 2015	-	11.372	10.395	11.234	12.147	13.899	13.343	14.989	17.709
Total expenses in million current RON	10.713	10.655	9.423	10.558	11.812	13.787	12.704	14.083	18.925
Total expenses in million RON constant prices 2015	-	10.655	9.628	10.583	11.140	12.691	11.921	13.062	15.830

Source: *Kivu et. al. (2017: 35), Remaining years: Calculations based on data from MF/NAFA (data.gov.ro). ** 0 values were excluded from the calculation of the average, median and quartile 3

Just like for the distribution of fixed assets, also in the case of the total income of non-governmental organisations we see a relatively high concentration of income, with very small variations from year to year. In 2022, 26% of NGOs had no income at all (Figure 7). The vast majority of organisations (54%) recorded incomes lower than RON 40,000, or modest incomes of less than 200,000. Only 20% of organisations that submitted a balance sheet in 2022 have earned an income of over RON 200,000.

Figure 7. Ratio of NGOs by classes of income size in 2022, in current RON



Source: Calculations based on data from MF/NAFA (data.gov.ro)

The distribution of NGOs by total income intervals in 2015-2022 is similar to that of previous years (Table 5, see Kivu et al., 2017, p. 36 for the distribution during the period 2000-2015). The trend of income concentration is maintained, with the distribution by income intervals calculated in current RON, being relatively constant. About a quarter of NGOs did not have income during the period 2015-2022.

Table 5. Distribution of NGOs by intervals of total income 2015-2022, in current RON

	2015 estimated*	2015 reviewed	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
RON 0	24%	25%	26%	27%	26%	26%	30%	27%	26%
RON 1-10.000	23%	23%	22%	21%	20%	20%	21%	18%	16%
RON 10.001 - 40.000	18%	18%	18%	17%	17%	17%	15%	16%	16%
RON 40.001-200.000	20%	19%	20%	20%	20%	20%	18%	21%	21%
Over RON 200.001 lei	15%	15%	14%	15%	16%	17%	16%	18%	20%

Source: *Kivu et al. (2017: 36), Remaining years: Calculations based on data from MF/NAFA (data.gov.ro). Distribution from 2021 may be influenced by the fact that a high number of balance sheets were submitted after taking over the information on the platform data.gov.ro, but it appears in the data received in an aggregated format from the Ministry of Finances.

The responses received within 2023 BLO put into the spotlight representations of NGO leaders on under-funding. 28% of organisations said that in 2022 the organisation's resources covered less than half of the needs for the performance of planned activities. Also, 31% of respondents report a similar situation for 2023. The percentage of organisations who consider they do not have sufficient resources has decreased since 2015 (cf. BLO2016), when 55% of respondents considered insufficient the financial resources of their organisations. Also, according to BLO 2024, 54% of organisations that answered the question believe they will be able to cover up to 50% of their envisaged activities, as compared to only 23% in 2017, according to BLO 2016.

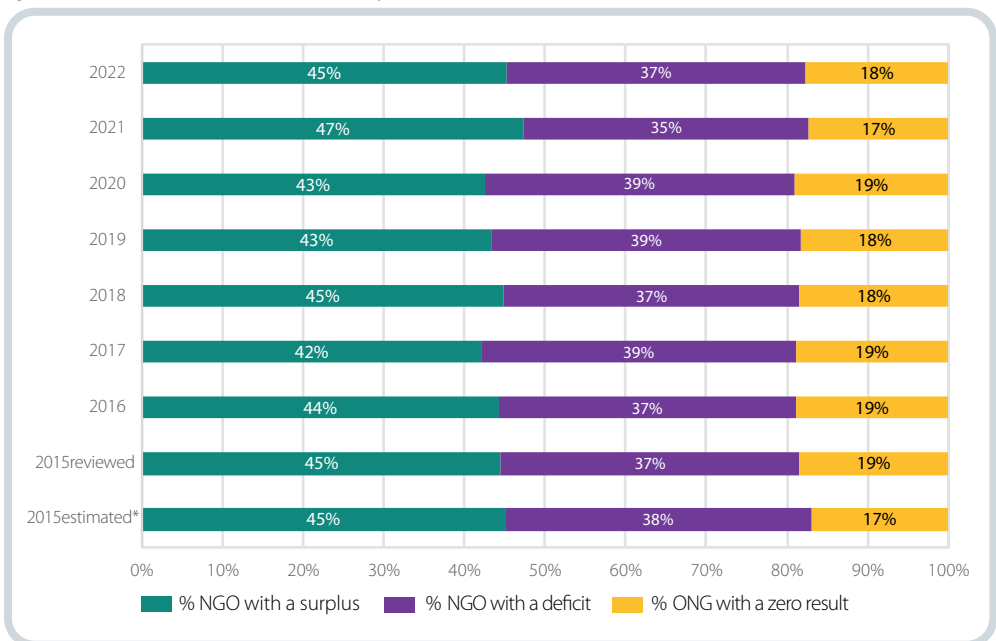
The situation of insufficient resources is also confirmed by BMO 2023 results, where 69% of participants say that their organisation is currently facing insufficient budgets for project implementation. In addition, 78% of respondents said they had had to select the beneficiaries of their interventions in the last 3 years due to lack of necessary resources.

Result of the financial year

The results of the NGO financial year during the period 2015-2022 reflect a good management of available financial resources for most of the active non-governmental organisations (Table 6, Figure 8). In 2022, 45% of NGOs recorded a surplus as a net result of the financial year, while 37% of organisations had a deficit and 18% had a zero financial result. The variation in the distribution of the results of the financial year is maintained with small differences over the whole period 2015-2022, with the percentage of organisations with a deficit slightly decreasing since 2020.

The difference between reporting in NGOs' balance sheets and representations in BLO 2023 and BMO 2023 surveys can be attributed to several factors, including the respondents' biased interpretation of financial information. Firstly, the reporting in the balance sheet provides an objective picture of the financial status of an organisation at a given point in time, reflecting income, expenses and financial results. However, these data may not fully reflect the pressures and challenges that NGOs face in fulfilling their mission.

Figure 8. Evolution of net results of the financial year 2015-2022



Source: *Kivu et. al. (2017: 39), Remaining years: Calculations based on data from MF/NAFA (data.gov.ro)

Table 6. Results of the financial year NGOs 2015-2022, for the NGOs that have submitted a balance sheet during the respective years, in thousand current RON and constant prices by reference to 2015

	2015 estimated*	2015 reviewed	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
% NGO with a surplus in current RON	45%	45%	44%	42%	45%	43%	43%	47%	45%
Total surplus in million current RON	1,202	1,393	1,463	1,619	1,938	2,201	2,260	2,717	3,263
Total surplus in million RON constant prices by reference to 2015	-	1,393	1,495	1,622	1,828	2,026	2,120	2,520	2,729
Average surplus* in thousand current RON	63	67	67	74	82	96	101	117	134
Average surplus* in thousand RON constant prices by reference to 2015	-	67	69	74	77	89	94	108	112
% NGO with a deficit in current RON	38%	37%	37%	39%	37%	39%	39%	35%	37%
Total deficit in million current RON	625	677	713	970	871	889	745	639	1,018
Total deficit in million RON constant prices by reference to 2015	-	-	729	972	821	818	699	593	851
Average deficit* in thousand current RON	39	39	39	48	45	44	37	37	51
Average deficit* in thousand RON constant prices by reference to 2015	-	-	40	48	42	40	34	34	43
% NGO with a zero result in current RON	17%	19%	19%	19%	18%	18%	19%	17%	18%

Source: *Kivu et. al. (2017: 38), Remaining years: Calculations based on data from MF/NAFA (data.gov.ro). *0 values have been excluded from the average calculation.

Discrepancies between balance sheet reporting and survey representations can have multiple explanations. For example, even if an organisation has a financial surplus in its balance sheet, this does not necessarily mean that all of its financing needs are met or that it does not face certain financial challenges. In addition, BLO and BMO surveys can highlight issues that are not directly reflected in the balance sheet, such as funding needs for specific projects that NGOs are forced to drop or difficulties in obtaining the resources needed to implement them.

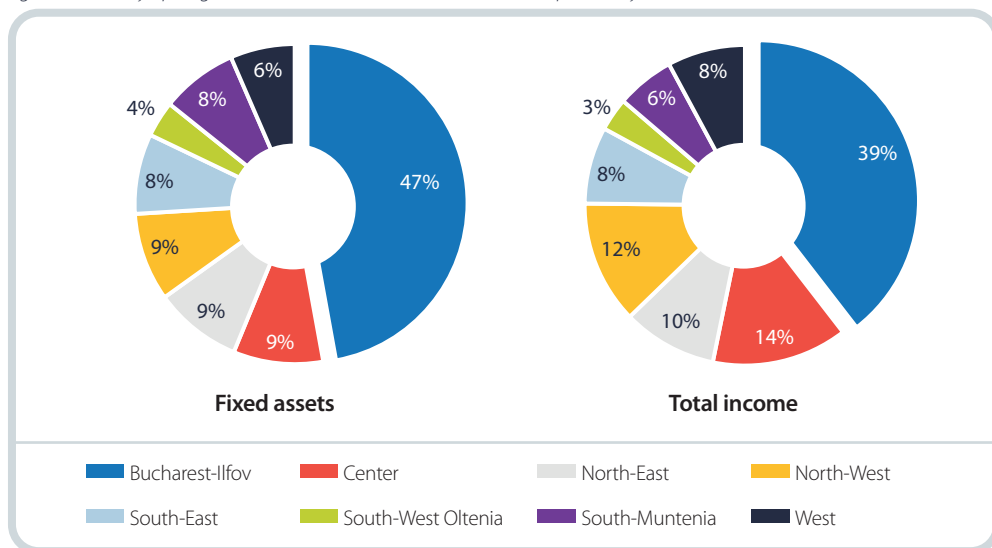
Regional perspective

The analysis of the main economic indicators of NGOs in Romania (total income and fixed assets) at the level of the 8 development regions is relevant for assessing its contribution to the economy, identifying regional disparities and planning policies and strategies at regional level. NGOs play an important role in the development of local communities, and income and asset data can provide key information for the development and implementation of economic and social policy at regional level, including facilitating access to finance and promoting partnerships between NGOs and the public or private sector.

Non-governmental organisations in the Bucharest-Ilfov region comprise both most of the fixed assets of the NGO sector in 2022 –47% of total fixed assets, and most of the total income of the NGO sector – 39% (Figure 9).

The Centre, North-East and North-West regions rank second as a share of NGOs' fixed assets (9% each), but at a distance of 38 percentage points from Bucharest-Ilfov. Third place are the Centre and South-Muntenia regions, where NGOs concentrate 8% of the total fixed assets. In terms of total income, the centre region ranks second, with 14% of the total income, followed by the North-West region, with 12%. South-West Oltenia received the lowest income share of 3% of the total income for the sector.

Figura 9 Distribuția pe regiuni de dezvoltare ale ONG-urilor care au depus bilanș contabil în 2022



Source: Calculations based on data from MF/NAFA (data.gov.ro)

The distribution of fixed assets and total income cumulated by NGOs in the different regions of Romania should be seen in the broader national context and by reference to the size of the sector (number of non-governmental organisations submitting a balance sheet), the size of the region (number of residents) and the gross domestic product achieved at regional level. Table 7 presents these issues.

Thus, we note that the Bucharest-Ilfov region has most of the fixed assets and the highest income, while having the highest number of NGOs submitting tax returns annually, the largest number of residents and a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) twice as high as the other regions. However, the Centre and North-West regions, which are second in terms of total income and fixed assets (well behind Bucharest-Ilfov), have a comparable number of active NGOs, an approximately similar population, but a GDP more than 50% lower.

At macroeconomic level, in 2022, the analysis shows a 1.51% share of total income of the NGO sector in Romania's GDP, slightly decreasing as compared to 2015 (1.59%).

Table 7. Distribution of fixed assets and total income in mil. current RON of NGOs that submitted a balance sheet in 2022, by development regions, in comparison with the sector size, region size and regional GDP in mil. current RON

Development region / Indicator	Fixed assets*	Total income*	No. of NGOs that submitted a balance sheet*	Population** (no. of residents)	Regional GDP ***
Bucharest-Ilfov	13,348	7,947	9939	2,268,268	396,443
Centre	2,570	2,752	9359	2,273,344	158,095
North-East	2,517	1,918	5891	3,221,819	145,494
North-West	2,525	2,495	9388	2,523,549	172,358
South-East	2,292	1,562	4589	2,361,624	138,714
South-West Oltenia	1,027	670	2423	1,869,563	104,046
South-Muntenia	2,192	1,180	4174	2,854,809	157,990
West	1,845	1,580	4890	1,669,479	127,451

* Calculations based on data from MF/NAFA (data.gov.ro), ** According to the TEMPO database of INS, section POP105A – Resident population on 1 January, *** According to Eurostat, the indicator Regional gross domestic product by NUTS 2 regions - million EUR (online data code: tgs00003), calculated in RON at the historical average exchange rate notified by NBR for the year 2022 of RON 4.93127 for Euro 1

Social economy – recognition and legal forms

Social economy organisations in Europe have defined and developed in close connection with non-governmental or non-profits organisations, such as associations and foundations, according to the needs of their communities and members generated by the social and economic context (Alcock, 2010; Chaves & Monzon, 2007; Evers & Lavielle, 2004; Sepulveda, 2014; Lambriu & Petrescu, 2019). Almost 3 million social economy organisations operate at European level, representing 10% of the business environment and hiring over 13 million people, more than 6% of all EU employees. In addition, social economy organisations mobilise an impressive number of volunteers, equivalent to more than 5 million full-time workers (European Commission, 2024).

Over the last 15 years, the social economy sector has engaged considerable interest in Romania, both from practitioners and academia, and from public authorities (Chaves & Monzon, 2007; Lambriu & Petrescu, 2012, 2019; Monzon & Chaves, 2012). Organisations in this sector provide a diversity of products and services, with the main objective of meeting the needs of their members or the community, without seeking profit for investors or shareholders (Defourny, 2001; Monzon & Chaves, 2012; Bouchard & Rousseliere, 2015). The social economy sector includes organisations registered with various legal forms, such as associations, foundations, cooperatives or mutualities (in Romania Credit Unions) and, more recently, social enterprises established as limited liability companies (SRLs).

The concepts of social economy and social enterprise were introduced in the academic and public debate in Romania in the years preceding the country's accession to the European Union in 2007 (Lambriu & Petrescu, 2012, 2019). The EU accession created the basis for social entrepreneurship initiatives and the development of social enterprises in response to new public policies to foster social inclusion and the integration of disadvantaged groups into the labour market (Lambriu & Petrescu, 2012, 2019). Decision-makers have become increasingly interested in understanding and regulating this type of organisation, while existing practitioners, especially associations, have become important actors in putting the topic on the agenda of the Government, promoting the social economy sector and social enterprises, and advocating for their institutionalisation.

This increase in interest in both the sector and the concept of social economy culminated in the adoption in 2015 of Law no. 219 on Social Economy (Lambriu & Petrescu, 2019). According to this, in Romania the following categories of entities are recognised as part of the social economy (they can obtain the certificate of social enterprise): cooperatives, associations and foundations, credit unions of employees or of retired persons, agricultural companies and other organisations which comply with the principles of organisation and functioning laid down by law. Currently, the Social Economy Law does not provide for specific, fiscal or other benefits for social economy entities.

Non-governmental organisations – associations, foundations, federations and unions – are part of the social economy sector, meeting a number of principles of organisation and functioning. Numerous works have documented in recent years various types of non-governmental organisations that fall within the typology of social economy organisations, such as: associations for the management of common assets – forest and pasture commons and compossessorates (Cotoi & Mateescu, 2013; Opincaru, 2020, 2023; Petrescu, 2013b; Vameşu et al., 2018), credit unions (Lambriu, 2013), religious organisations (Conovici, 2013), social service providers (Dima, 2013), vocational training and employment services providers (Constantinescu, 2013a, 2013b) and local development organisations (Petrescu, 2013a).

In the following, we will focus exclusively on the Credit Unions, given the specificities and peculiarities of these organisations within the sector and in the general context of NGOs' activities.

Legal framework and typology

In Europe, mutual aid companies (or mutualities) initially developed as ‘safety nets’ for members of certain professions or communities and have become part of national social security and welfare systems and have intensified their relations with the state (Evers & Laville, 2004). In Romania, mutual aid associations operate under the name of Credit Unions (CAR). The first CARs appeared in the mid-1800s, developed until the communist dictatorship, when they were subordinated to trade unions, from which they separated once again after 1990 (Lambriu, 2013; Lambriu & Petrescu, 2016). The CARs are included by law in the category of non-banking financial institutions and are registered in the Registry of Non-Banking Financial Institutions of the National Bank of Romania.

These organisations have two main roles: first, to facilitate the accumulation of savings for their members, in the ‘social fund’, and the second, to provide them with loans on favourable terms, typically addressing non-bankable persons. The Credit Unions contribute to the fight against financial exclusion by providing low-cost financial services that are particularly necessary for vulnerable groups and people who are unable to access the services offered by commercial banks. In addition to their financial inclusion services, CARs support members in special situations by providing financial aid for further education of children or in the event of death or illness.

The Credit Unions (CARs) fall into two main categories, depending on the status of their members on the labour market: Credit Unions of Employees (CARs), established and managed in accordance with Law no. 122/1996 and Credit Unions for the Retired Persons (CARPs), established and managed in accordance with Law no. 540/2002. The specific legal framework is supplemented by the provisions of Government Ordinance no. 26/2000 on associations and foundations, approved with amendments and supplementations by Law no. 246/2005.

The Credit Unions of the Employees are defined according to Law no. 122/1996 as associations without a patrimonial purpose, established on the basis of the free consent of the employees, in order to support and help their members. At national level, most of the CARs are affiliated to the National Union of Credit Unions of Employees in Romania (UNCARSR), which, according to Law no. 122/1996, aims to “ensure the financial stability of the credit unions of employees” and to provide “services adapted to the specific nature of their activity”. UNCARSR consists of 37 county or territorial unions, to which 1000 credit unions were affiliated in 2024. Another 26 CARs are members of the Federation of Credit Unions (FEDCAR), the only organisation in Romania affiliated to the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU). The category of non-affiliated credit unions includes the CARs of military personnel (militaries, policemen, gendarmes, etc.) and other CARs that choose to operate independently.

The Credit Unions of Retired Persons (CARPs) are one of the most successful cases of reorganisation after the fall of the communist regime, developing into performing social enterprises capable of satisfying a wide range of needs (financial, social, medical, etc.) of their elderly members (Lambriu & Petrescu, 2016, 2019). CARPs are not only limited to the provision of savings services and loans to their members, but also offer a very diverse range of social assistance services, such as non-refundable financial aids, food and medicine, as well as shops for various daily needs of retired persons (shoemaking, barbershop, hairdresser, cosmetics, manicure and pedicure, clock repairs, medical offices, etc.), all at significantly reduced rates as compared to market prices, with CARPs hiring older people qualified in these areas. “Omenia” National Federation of Romanian C.A.R.P. brings together 120 affiliated CARP and 4 partners, with 31.5% of its members in rural areas.

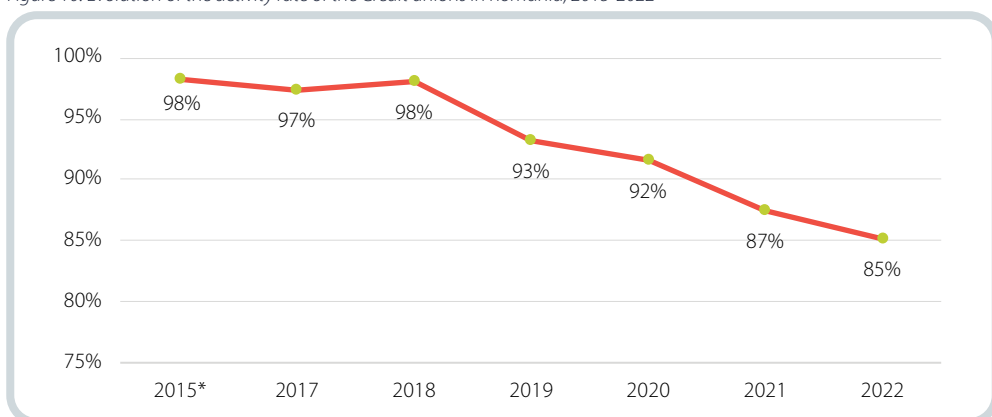
Size and evolution

In the past, information about CARs affiliated to UNCARSR was provided by the National Union, as they did not submit individual balance sheets, but the Union had a consolidated balance sheet. Starting with 2017, all CARs submit individual balance sheets, and this information is now available in the public databases of the Ministry of Finances.

The activity rate of the Credit Unions in Romania has decreased slightly over the past 8 years, according to the data provided by the Ministry of Finances, from 98% at the end of 2015 (Kivu et al., 2017, p. 44), to an activity rate of at least 85% in 2022, the decrease being steeper since 2020 (Figure 10). In March 2024, the Registry of Non-Banking Financial Institutions managed by the National Bank of Romania (Section A. Credit unions) included 2,465 CAR and CARP organisations, with variations from 2,400 CARs registered in 2017 to 2,453 organisations registered in 2022.

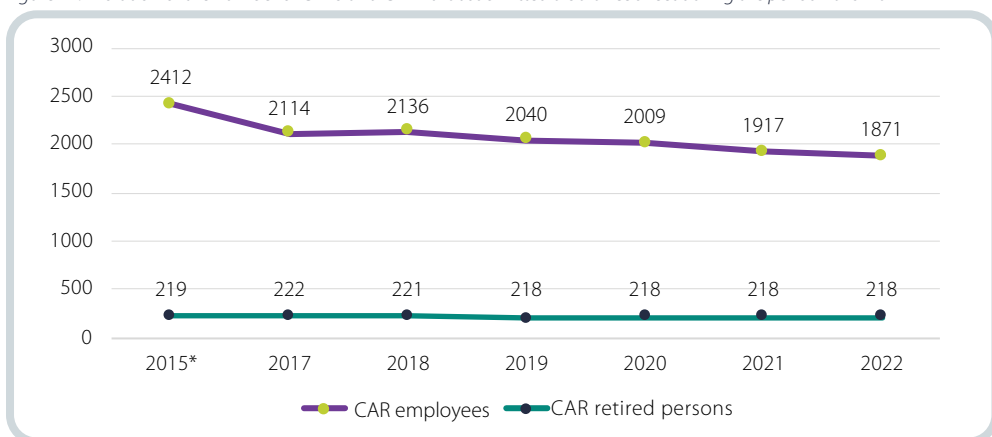
As regards active CAR organisations, the number of credit unions of employees continues to decrease, more significantly since 2018, motivated as in previous years by the National Union's strategy to strengthen member unions by encouraging their merger (Kivu et al., 2017). The number of credit unions of retired persons also varied, but with only a few entities each year during the period 2015-2022 (Figure 11).

Figure 10. Evolution of the activity rate of the Credit unions in Romania, 2015-2022



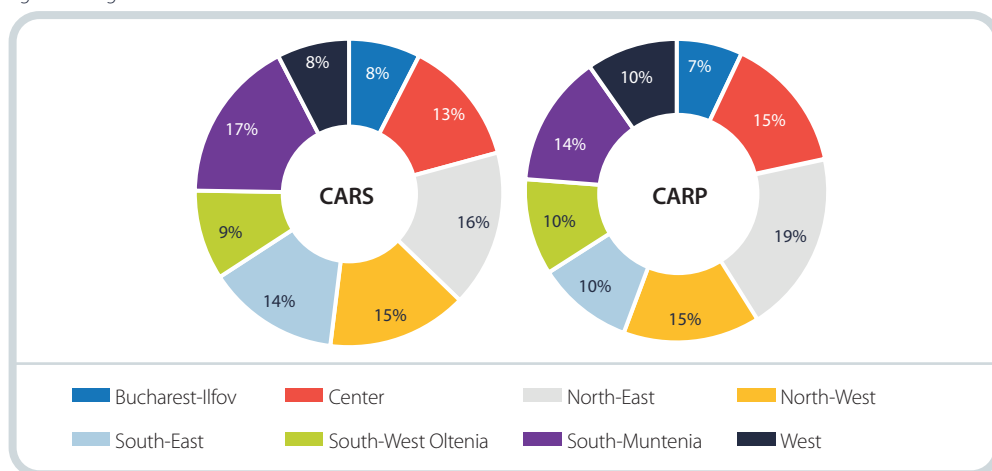
Source: *Kivu et. al. (2017: 44), Remaining years: Calculations based on data provided by the Ministry of Finances and Registry of Non-Banking Financial Institutions managed by the National Bank of Romania (NBR) – Section A. Credit unions

Figure 11. Evolution of the number of CARs and CARP that submitted a balance sheet during the period 2015-2022



Source: *Kivu et. al. (2017: 45), Remaining years: Calculations based on the data provided by the Ministry of Finances

Figure 12. Regional distribution of CARS and CARP that submitted a balance sheet in 2022



Source: Calculations based on data from MF/NAFA (data.gov.ro).

The distribution of CARs at regional level (Figure 12) highlights the usefulness of this type of organisation. It is noted that the highest number of credit unions, either for employees or for retired persons, is found more in the less developed regions of Romania, such as South-Muntenia (17% CARS, 14% CARPs), North-East (16% CARS, 19% CARP) and South-East (14% CARS, 10% CARP). In other words, CARs come and cover a market niche in areas less developed and likely to have less access to banking services.

The distribution of the Credit Unions of employees and retired persons operating in the different regions of Romania can also be analysed in the context of the number of employees and retired persons registered at regional level.

Table 8 presents these issues. Thus, Bucharest-Ilfov region – the region with the highest GDP (twice the GDP of the other regions) has the lowest number of CARS, respectively CARP. In addition, the South-West Oltenia region, with the lowest GDP in 2022, but also a low number of employees and retired persons, has among the lowest number of CARS and CARPs. In the North-East and South-Muntenia regions, with a GDP that is twice as low as that of the Bucharest-Ilfov region, which is in the middle of the GDP ranking, the most numerous CARS and CARP are operating.

Table 8. Distribution of the number of CARS and CARP that submitted a balance sheet in 2022, in comparison with the number of employees, respectively of retired persons in each region and regional GDP in million current RON registered in 2022

Development region/ Indicator	No. of CARS that submitted a balance sheet*	No. of employees**	No. of CARP that submitted a balance sheet *	No. of retired persons***	Regional GDP****
Bucharest-Ilfov	110	1.255.595	13	554.386	396.443
Centre	194	713.309	27	590.269	158.095
North-East	241	641.907	36	745.021	145.494
North-West	215	778.502	27	627.303	172.358
South-East	203	591.752	19	605.823	138.714
South-West Oltenia	138	433.699	19	500.366	104.046
South-Muntenia	251	628.972	26	729.212	157.990
West	111	563.409	18	448.841	127.451

Source:* Calculations based on data from MF/NAFA (data.gov.ro),** According to TEMPO database of INS, section FOM105A – The staff number at the end of the year ,*** According to TEMPO database of INS, section PNS101D – Quarterly / annual average number of retired persons,****According to Eurostat, indicator Regional gross domestic product by NUTS 2 regions - million EUR (online data code: tgs00003), calculated in RON at the historical average exchange rate notified by NBR for the year 2022 of RON 4.93127 for EUR 1

The credit unions in Romania also stand out during the period 2017-2022 as a particularly productive sector from an economic and financial point of view. At the level of 2022, the sector regarding CAR of employees and retired persons cumulated fixed assets of over 8 billion RON, with an increase of almost 60% as compared to 2015 and representing about 35% of the total amount of the assets of the other non-governmental organisations. In the same year, their income reached almost 1.2 billion RON, again having an increase of almost 100% as compared to 2015 (Table 9). The ROA index, or the Return on Assets (ROA) – a measure of the efficiency with which CAR uses its assets to generate income, reflects particular performance of this type of organisation, with values of over 8%-9% each year.

The credit unions of retired persons, although fewer in number (8-12% of the total CAR in Romania) generally cumulate more income and fixed assets as compared to those of employees. Thus, in 2022 alone, CARP accounted for 26% of the total income of credit unions, 16% of fixed assets and 46% of total current assets.

Table 9. Evolution of main economic indicators of CARS and CARP that submitted a balance sheet during the period 2015-2022

		Fixed assets** in million current RON	Fixed assets in million RON constant prices 2015	Total income in million current RON	Total income** in million RON constant prices 2015	Current assets** in million current RON	Return on assets ROA index***
2015*	CARS	3.931	-	401	-	-	n.d.
	CARP	1.032	-	219	-	-	n.d.
	Total CAR	4.963	-	620	-	-	n.d.
2017	CARS	4.938	4.949	608	609	971	10.28%
	CARP	1.129	1.132	235	235	1.307	9.62%
	Total CAR	6.067	6.081	842	844	2.279	10.09%
2018	CARS	5.875	5.541	706	666	1.117	10.10%
	CARP	1.220	1.151	257	242	1.494	9.47%
	Total CAR	7.096	6.692	963	908	2.610	9.92%
2019	CARS	6.007	5.529	763	702	1.951	9.59%
	CARP	1.3230	1.224	291	268	1.660	9.73%
	Total CAR	7.337	6.753	1.054	970	3.611	9.63%
2020	CARS	5.925	5.560	770	722	2.544	9.09%
	CARP	1.247	1.170	268	251	1.946	8.39%
	Total CAR	7.172	6.731	1.038	974	4.490	8.90%
2021	CARS	6.546	6.072	801	743	2.592	8.76%
	CARP	1.281	1.188	283	262	2.024	8.56%
	Total CAR	7.827	7.260	1.084	1.005	4.616	8.71%
2022	CARS	7.009	5.863	871	729	2.512	9.15%
	CARP	1.358	1.136	305	256	2.137	8.74%
	Total CAR	8.367	6.999	1.176	984	4.649	9.04%

Source: *Kivu et. al. (2017: 47), Remaining rows: Calculations based on data from MF/NAFA (data.gov.ro), *** ROA index or Return on Assets is a measure of efficiency with which CAR is using its assets to generate income. It is calculated as a ratio between total income and the total value of assets.

According to BOSC 2023, 12% of people over the age of 18 are currently CAR members, down from 15% in 2016. In addition, 26% of research participants say they had been members of a CAR in the past. The highest percentages of respondents who say they are currently members are in age categories 15-64 years (28%) and 65 years or above (33%).

The evolution of the CAR members' social fund and the aid fund in case of death of CAR members, denominated in constant prices as compared to 2015, reflects an increasing trend during the period 2016-2022, according to data provided by the Ministry of Finances. The social fund of CAR members increased from over 3 billion RON in 2016 to over 8 billion RON in 2022, indicating a significant rise – almost three times as compared to 2016, calculated in constant prices as compared to 2015.

At the same time, the fund for aid in case of death of CAR members increased from almost RON 98 million in 2016 to 133 million RON in 2022, calculated in constant prices as compared to 2015. This steady increase in social funds and aid in the event of death could reflect an improvement in the financial status of CAR members or an increase in the number of members, which may be a positive sign of financial stability and solidarity among members of CARS and of CARP.

Table 10. Evolution of the social fund of CAR members and of the aid fund in case of death of CAR members

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Social fund of CAR members in million current RON	3.422	6.690	7.707	8.637	9.254	9.942	10.273
Social fund of CAR members CAR in million RON constant prices by reference to 2015	3.496	6.706	7.268	7.950	8.684	9.222	8.594
Aid fund in case of death of CAR members in million current RON	96	122	144	145	191	181	160
Aid fund in case of death of CAR members in million RON constant prices by reference to 2015	98	122	1356	134	179	168	134

Source: Calculations made based on the data provided by the Ministry of Finances. The information available in the database of MF/NAFA (data.gov.ro) does not include these indicators.

Conclusion

The analysis of the main economic indicators of non-governmental organisations in Romania reflects some conclusions and trends regarding the state and evolution of this sector during the period 2015-2022. The total patrimony of NGOs increased significantly during this period, reaching over 58 billion RON at the end of 2022. This increase is supported by a strong concentration of fixed assets, which account for most of the patrimony, reflecting the long-term investments of organisations. There is also a relative stability in the distribution of fixed assets and total income within NGOs, with minor variations from year to year.

An important aspect is the evolution of the total income of NGOs that experienced a considerable increase during the period analysed, reaching over 21 billion RON in 2022. This growth shows increasing involvement and support from the civil society. However, it is important to note that there is still a significant share of organisations that are unable to meet their financial needs, according to the representations in the BLO 2023 and BMO 2023 surveys highlighting the persistence of funding challenges.

Another important conclusion is related to the results of the NGO financial year. In general, most of the organisations managed the available financial resources efficiently, recording surpluses in their balance sheets. However, it is essential to mention that these surpluses do not always reflect the reality of the financial difficulties faced by some organisations, as suggested by the representations in BLO 2023 and BMO 2023.

Moreover, discrepancies between reporting in NGOs' balance sheets and survey representations underline the importance of a more complex approach and of a deeper understanding of the financial and operational context of this sector. Continuous monitoring and careful assessment of the trends and challenges faced by NGOs are needed to develop policies and practices that support them in achieving their objectives and in providing essential services to the communities they are serving.

At regional level, it is noted that the Bucharest-Ilfov region remains a main core of NGOs' activity in Romania, concentrating most of the fixed assets and total income of the sector. However, it is important for regional disparities to be carefully examined and for public policies and development strategies to support NGOs in less developed regions in accordance with their needs and specificities.

The Credit unions (CAR) sector in Romania has seen a number of important developments in the period 2015-2022. Firstly, the activity rate of these organisations has steadily decreased from 98% in 2015 to 85% in 2022. This trend can be attributed to a membership consolidation strategy through mergers implemented by the National Union of Employee Credit unions during the period. At the same time, the regional distribution of the CARs reveals that they are more present in less economically developed regions, suggesting an increased usefulness in these areas.

Financing the non-governmental sector

▶ Ștefania Andersen

● Introduction

Access to resources (human, material and financial), the ability to identify, attract and use them remain constant challenges among non-governmental organisations. The freedom to seek, receive and use the resources necessary to carry out the assumed mission is recognised as an integral part of the right of association. (FRA, 2023; OECD, 2023; OSCE, 2015; Council of the European Union, 2023).

At European level, 58% of the organisations involved in the civic are consultation of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA, 2023) mentioned difficulties in securing funding, whether we are talking about the availability of funding sources, associated administrative processes, the fields of activity covered, the type of funding (i.e. per project vs. institutional funding or supporting organisational development) etc.

This chapter proposes the analysis of the main sources of income for non-governmental organisations, with references to elements specific to the regulatory framework that influence their activity or socio-economic drivers that can put in context the evolution at the level of dynamics, volume, distribution/diversification of financing sources, with special reference to the period after 2015.

The financial data used comes from the annual financial statements of the NGOs, recorded with NAFA. The entities considered in the analysis include: associations (including credit unions), foundations, unions (including credit union representation and cooperative organisations), federations and educational structures that submit an NGO balance sheet. The annual data series for the period 2013-2020 are available on the data.gov.ro portal. Given the limited number of indicators available in this source, full financial data for social economy entities, classified by category (see details in the methodological section) was requested from the Ministry of Finance (MF). The MF provided only aggregated data, specifying the number of entities and the cumulative value of the required financial indicators for each individual category.

For the period 2016-2020, between publicly available data (data.gov.ro) and data provided directly by MF there are annual differences (between 0.5% – 3%) in the number of entities, without major influence on the analysis of economic indicators at sectoral level. These variations are mainly due to the fact that publication on the official portal takes place shortly after the legal deadline for submitting the financial statements, without including in all years the update with subsequent reporting.

For a number of indicators in 2021 and 2022, discrepancies between aggregated MF values and those resulting from the analysis of public unit data are inexplicable (by reference to previous annual series) and therefore the information provided by the MF was used exclusively for the analysis of the distribution by type of income sources (public funding, contributions, donations and sponsorships, aids, etc.) included in this chapter.

Overall background: triggers that influence financing

Taxation regime and tax facilities

From a tax point of view, non-governmental organisations are legal entities liable to pay a **corporate tax** (16% of taxable profit), with specific rules. Thus, according to the 2017 Tax Code (Title II, art. 15, par. 2), the following types of income are **non-taxable income**:

- membership fees and subscriptions;
- contributions in cash or in kind from members and supporters;
- registration fees established in accordance with the legislation in force;
- income from visas, fees and sports penalties or from participation in sports contests and demonstrations;
- donations and money or goods received through sponsorship/mecenat;
- income from dividends, interests and exchange rate differences on cash and non-taxable income;
- income from interest rates earned by the Credit Unions from granting loans in accordance with the organization and operation law;
- income on which entertainment tax is due;
- resources obtained from public funds or non-reimbursable financing;
- income from occasional activities such as: fund-raising events with a participation fee, parties, festivals, raffles, conferences, used for social or professional purposes, in accordance with their memorandum of association;
- income from the disposal of tangible assets owned by non-profit organisations, other than those which are or have been used in an economic activity;
- income from advertising and publicity, income from the rental of advertising space on: buildings, lands, T-shirts, books, magazines, newspapers, by non-profit organisations of public utility, according to the organisation and functioning laws, in the field of culture, scientific research, education, sports, health, as well as by chambers of commerce and industry, trade unions and employers' organisations; this category does not include income from the provision of intermediation services in advertising and publicity;
- amounts received as a result of non-compliance with the conditions under which the donation/sponsorship was made, in accordance with the law, subject to the condition that these amounts be used by the non-profit organisations, in the current year or in subsequent years, for the achievement of their goal and objectives, in accordance with their articles of incorporation or memorandum of association, as appropriate;
- income from compensations from insurance companies for damage caused to their own tangible assets other than those used in the economic activity;
- amounts received from income tax due by natural persons, as provided for by the requirements in Title IV;
- amounts charged by collective organisations authorised by law to carry out waste management financing responsibilities.

The **profit tax exemption** facility also extends to other income earned, up to the RON equivalent of 15,000 euros in a tax year, but not more than 10% of the total non-taxable income listed above.

From a **VAT regime** point of view, non-governmental organisations are non-taxable legal entities for the activity consisting of providing goods and/or services free of charge, respectively taxable for the other

activities carried out. In addition, they may carry out certain operations, other than non-taxable ones, which are exempted from VAT without the right of deduction, such as: the provision of services and/or goods closely related to social assistance and/or welfare, child and youth protection, offered to members for their collective interest, the supply of cultural services or services related to practicing sports/physical education.

Even if the general framework of the tax regime for NGOs has not changed significantly as compared to 2015, successive tax changes have had a direct impact in particular on two of the main sources of funding for the sector: the mechanism for directing 3.5% of income tax and sponsorship.

Under the 3.5% mechanism, an individual has the possibility to direct a portion of the income tax due on certain types of income earned in the previous tax year to a non-profit organisation by filling in and submitting a statement to NAFA by 25 May of the following year. Prior to 2018, this rate was 2% of the tax due, subsequently the rate was increased to 3.5%, as detailed below.

The sponsorship tax facility means the right of a sponsor to deduct amounts spent on sponsorship from the corporate tax due at the lower of the amount calculated by applying 0.75% to the turnover or 20% of the corporate tax due. The facility was extended for a period also for companies included in the micro-enterprise category (up to a limit of 20% of the micro-enterprise income tax due). Sponsorship contracts shall be concluded and payment made within the reference tax period and the tax credit shall only be granted if the beneficiary of the sponsorship is registered at the time of the concluding the contract in the Registry of entities/places of worship (details below).

The processes that have influenced changes in NGO funding mechanisms by reference to the 2017 FDSC report (Kivu, ed., 2017) are listed below:

- change in 2018 of the *general income tax rate* from 16% to 10%;
- before 2018, any natural entity could direct up to 2% of the income tax due to support a non-profit organisation by filling in and submitting a statement to NAFA. This mechanism dedicated to the support of non-governmental organisations has undergone changes in size. In 2018, a different rate of 3.5% of income tax was introduced, which could be redirected through the mechanism mentioned above, but exclusively for non-profit entities/places of worship that are accredited social service providers with at least one licensed social service. For all other organisations, the redirection ratio was kept at 2% until March 2019 (inclusively), when the increase to 3.5% was extended to all NGOs, subject to registration in the Registry of Entities/Places of worship mentioned below. From 2024, the redirection is limited to wage and wage related income. (GO no. 115/2023);
- in parallel, the tax regulations on the *taxation of non-wage income* have been amended, thus broadening the basis for the categories of income to which the income tax redirection mechanism applies beyond those from wages and pensions (income from self-employment, from agricultural activities, from self-employment under sports contracts, intellectual property rights, from the transfer of the use of goods, gains from the transfer of securities, from any other transactions with financial derivatives, and from the transfer of financial gold);
- the introduction of the obligation for NGOs to be registered in the *Registry of entities/places of worship for which tax deductions are granted*, applicable for income since 2018. Initially, the registration was mandatory in order to benefit from sponsorship, from April 2019 it has been extended to amounts directed through the 3.5% mechanism. The conditions for registration require that the organisation is active in the field for which it was established, has submitted the annual financial statements, has no outstanding tax liabilities older than 90 days, has fulfilled all its declaratory tax obligations and has not been declared as inactive;
- the change from July 2019 of the *applicable limits for the tax relief on the deduction of sponsorship expenses* to the minimum between: the amount calculated by applying 0.75% to the turnover (as compared to 0.5% applicable between 2016-2019), respectively the amount representing 20% of the corporate tax due;

- the extension from April 2018 of the tax relief on the *deduction of sponsorship expenses from the income tax due also for micro-enterprises*, initially only for the support of non-profit entities and places of worship, which are accredited social service providers with at least one licensed social service. Since April 2019, the facility has been extended to all NGOs;
- the introduction from the tax year 2022 of *the mechanism of annual redirection of corporate tax due for making sponsorships and/or acts of mecenat* if the minimum amount allowed by the sponsorship tax facility (mentioned above) reduced by the sponsorship/mecenat expenses incurred during the current year and the amounts carried forward, has not been fully used;
- Successive changes to *the threshold for classifying an entity as a micro-enterprise*: increased to EUR 500000 in 2017, then to EUR 1 million in 2018 and back to EUR 500000 from 2023. Until the extension of the sponsorship tax facility to micro-enterprises (April 2018), the increase in the threshold practically limited the categories of taxpayers (companies) that could have been encouraged to support the non-governmental sector through sponsorship;
- the tax rate for micro-enterprises has been successively modified: from 3% before 2016, a differentiated rate in 2016 of 1%-2%-3% (depending on the number of employees), a differentiated rate of 1%-2% (depending on the number of employees) from 2017 and a tax rate of 1% from 2023. These rate changes have an actual impact on the maximum amount that a micro-enterprise can spend on sponsorship if it makes use of the tax relief.

All these fiscal developments have had direct effects both at the level of non-governmental sector – public decision-making relationship (in terms of confidence, need for predictability and coherence/consistency of public policies) and at the level of evolution of the income attracted by non-governmental sector during the period 2016-2022, especially from individual donors or the private sector.

The effects will also be felt during the following period, as part of the measures with a positive contribution to the sustainability of non-governmental organisations have been restricted since January 2024: the mechanism of redirecting 3.5% of the income tax shall be applicable exclusively to income from wages and wages related one (income from abroad also eliminated), and the tax facility on sponsorship is eliminated for micro-enterprises.

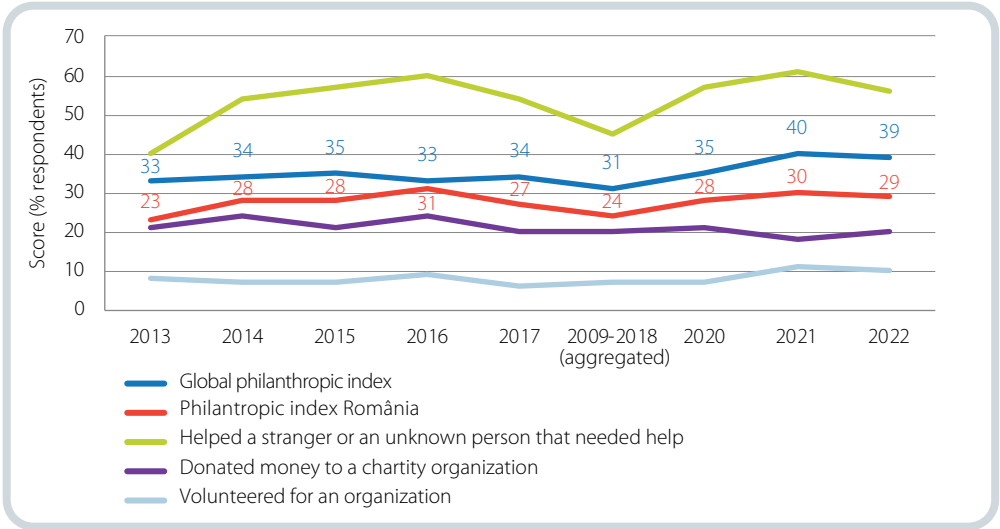
● Socio-cultural background: the relation NGO- citizen/decision-maker/business environment

The fiscal framework and economic developments over the last years have invariably influenced the capacity of non-governmental organisations to find the balance between the need to respond to growing needs, to follow their mission and generate the expected impact at community level, and respectively the ongoing efforts to identify and attract the necessary resources (human, material, financial). The relationship of NGOs with people, the community, the business environment, politicians or public decision-makers in general is marked by the degree of mutual understanding, trust and ability to build partner relationships based on common values.

The philanthropic environment in Romania, reported in international analyses, is assessed as favourable and under consolidation. *Global Philanthropy Environment Index* (GPEI, 2022) is a tool that assesses the philanthropic environment across 91 states and economies by examining six key factors on a scale from 1 (the least favourable) to 5 (the most favourable): ease of operation for a philanthropic organisation; tax incentives for philanthropy; cross-border philanthropic flows; the political environment; the economic environment; and the socio-cultural environment for philanthropy. With an overall score of 4.03, Romania's position in GPEI2022 is higher to the countries examined in the Central European region (covering Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine), largely due to ease of operation (the framework for functioning and running activities for organisations) and the political environment (which measures the relationship between the Government and philanthropic organisations, as well as public policies and practices on philanthropy). Higher scores are reported for Italy (4.38) and the Northern countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland; an average score by region of 4.72).

The 2022 Philanthropic Index (Charity Aid Foundation, Figure 13), places Romania in the second part of the world ranking (a score of 29% in 2022 versus 28% in 2015), with an evolution in line with the global trend. The index analyses the philanthropic behaviour in a country based on a national population survey covering 3 key questions (if he/she volunteered for an organisation, if he/she donated money to a charity organisation, if she/he helped a stranger or an unknown person who needed help).

Figure 13. Evolution of the Philanthropic Index (CAF, World Giving Index, 2015-2022)



Source: CAF World Giving Index, 2016-2023, <https://www.cafonline.org/about-us/research/caf-world-giving-index>

Table 11. The citizen – NGO relationship (BOSC)

		2010	2016	2023
Have you benefited from the NGO services?	Yes	2%	3%	6%
	No			93%
	I do not know			1%
	I do not answer			0%
Have you made donations to NGOs?	Yes	21%	21%	24%
	No			75%
	I do not know			1%
	I do not answer			0%
Have you been asked to make donations to non-governmental organisations?	Yes	15%	14%	18%
	No			81%
	I do not know			1%
	I do not answer			0%
Have you seen information materials on non-governmental organisations?	Yes	10%	30%	48%
	No			51%
	I do not know			2%
	I do not answer			0%

Source: BOSC 2023, BOSC 2016, BOSC 2010. In previous editions of BOSC, options on how to interact with an NGO were integrated into a single, multiple-choice question („Have you or your family ever come into contact with a non-governmental organisation?“).

BOSC 2023 reconfirms **the increased of interaction between non-governmental organisations and the population** (Table 11). 24% of the population made at least one donation to NGOs (as compared to 21% in 2016), with the most active profile ranging between 18-49 years old and higher education. In the regional profile, Wallachia and Moldova are the areas from which the least was donated,

although the percentage of those who benefited from NGO services in these areas was above the national average. As forms of expression for the philanthropic spirit, beyond direct support for non-governmental organisations, the population donated in direct response to humanitarian calls for people in need (42% of respondents) or for other causes (17%), while 45% of the population donated at least once to the church. Although at a very low level, it is also worth noting that 2% of the population donated over the last year to support a publication (a newspaper, magazine, online publication).

The attraction and involvement of volunteers, beyond the value it brings personally and professionally for each individual and the contribution to the common good, substantially influence the capacity of non-governmental organisations to follow their mission (cf. BLO 2023, 35% of organisations carry out their activities exclusively through volunteering). Volunteering engagement continues to grow in Romania (8% in 2023, Table 12), even if the distance from the Nordic European model is large.

Table 12. Volunteering work in NGOs and community (BOSC)

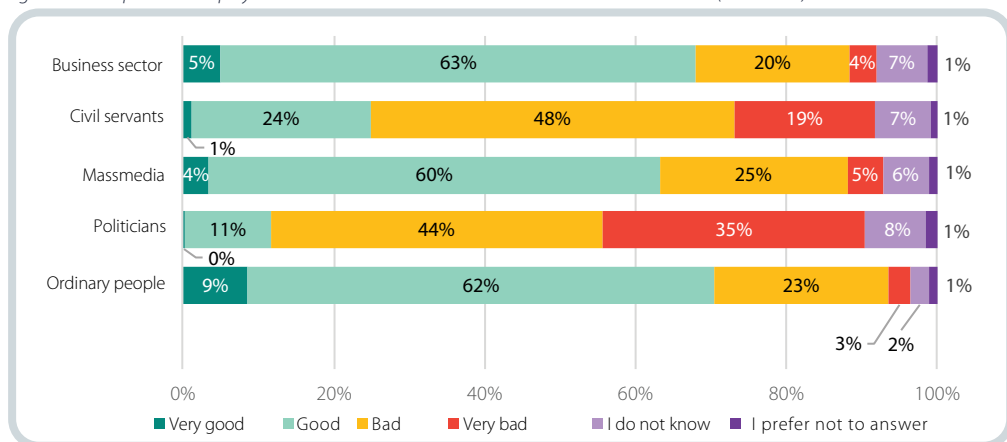
	2010	2016	2023	
Did you provide volunteer work for a non-governmental organisation over the last year?	Yes, only once	1%	2%	2%
	Yes, several times	3%	5%	6%
	No	94%	93%	92%
	I do not know			0%
	I do not answer	2%	0%	0%
Did you provide volunteer work for the community over the last year? (*)	Yes, only once	4%	6%	4%
	Yes, several times	15%	22%	13%
	No	80%	71%	83%
	I do not know			0%
	I do not answer	2%	0%	0%

Source: BOSC 2023, BOSC 2016, BOSC 2010. (*) In 2010 and 2016, the questions included the direct reference to church („Have you ever provided volunteering work for the church and community?”), with an influence on the analysis of the evolution in time of this

The NGO employees have a favourable opinion (good and very good) **on the attitude of ordinary people towards the sector** (71% of the respondents) and the business environment (68%) (Figure 14). Optimistic perception is maintained for 2024, with less than 11% of employees anticipating a negative change over the course of the year in terms of ordinary people’s attitudes, respectively 6% worsening the relationship with the business environment. Volunteers are more confident that ordinary people’s attitude towards NGOs will improve in 2024 (67% as compared to 55% for employees), but a bit more pessimistic about the attitude of the business environment (10% said it would get worse, as compared to 6% for employees). It is not surprising, however, the totally opposite perception among employees, members and volunteers when it comes to the attitude of politicians and civil servants towards the NGO, a confirmation on the one hand of direct networking experiences in the implementation of projects, in public consultations, the proper functioning of the organisation, but also of the overall low level of confidence of the population towards politicians and administration (BMO 2023).

The consolidation and professionalization of the relations between NGOs and the business environment, in various contexts and through specific financing mechanisms, have been confirmed by the extraordinary mobilisation and responsiveness in times of crisis (pandemic, support for people affected by the war in Ukraine), but also by the constant growth of companies’ support for NGOs and the community. The evolution of the practices and motivations for the involvement of large companies in corporate social responsibility projects is assessed annually also through the study “Dynamics and the perspective of the CSR field”, carried out by CSRMedia.ro & Valoria. According to the latest analysis, 96% of respondents referred to the collaboration with NGOs for the implementation of CSR projects in 2022 (as compared to 92% during the previous year), with an increase in the budgets allocated by companies (63%) including for donations (in cash and in kind) and volunteering for the benefit of the community (CSRMedia.ro & Valoria Business Solutions, 2023).

Figure 14. Perceptions of employees on the attitude of various stakeholders towards the NGOs (BMO 2023)



Source: BMO 2023, „How would you rate the attitude towards the NGO sector...“

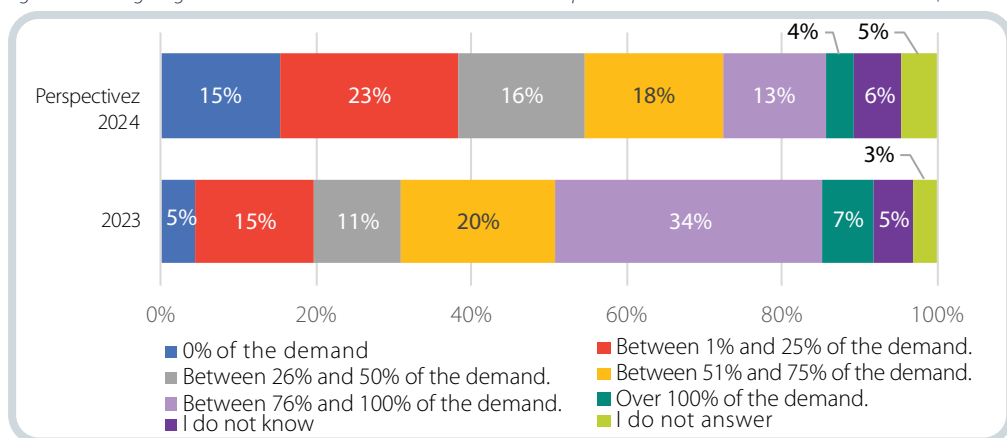
Sources of income for non-governmental organisations

Accessibility and diversity of funding sources

BLO 2023 confirms the diversity of the income sources accessed by non-governmental organisations. In 2023, out of the total number of organisations that registered incomes, 79% identified at least 3 distinct sources of income, 11% reported income from 2 sources, and 10% only one source of funding. Most of the organisations that declared a single source of funding are active in civic/advocacy (29%), human rights (36%) and professional associations (30%). For the same category of organisations (with a single source of funding), the most common sources are individual sources (membership fees, individual donations), respectively income from economic activities.

However, by volume, 31% of organisations declared coverage of less than 50% of the financial resources needed to carry out the activities planned for 2023, with a pessimistic perspective for 2024 as well (only one third of the organisations covered at least 50% of the planned budget) (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Coverage degree for the financial resources demand related to the performance of scheduled activities – 2023/2024 (BLO 2023)



Source: BLO 2023

The incomes from redirecting 3.5% from the income tax, those from sponsorships and individual donations are kept in top 3 most frequent income sources in 2023 (Figure 16). The evolution confirms the influence of the changes promoted over the period 2016-2023 for the two fiscal mechanisms supporting non-governmental organisations. The frequency of organisations benefiting from sponsorship has increased, becoming the main source of income for 20% of the responding organisations (from 7% in 2015).

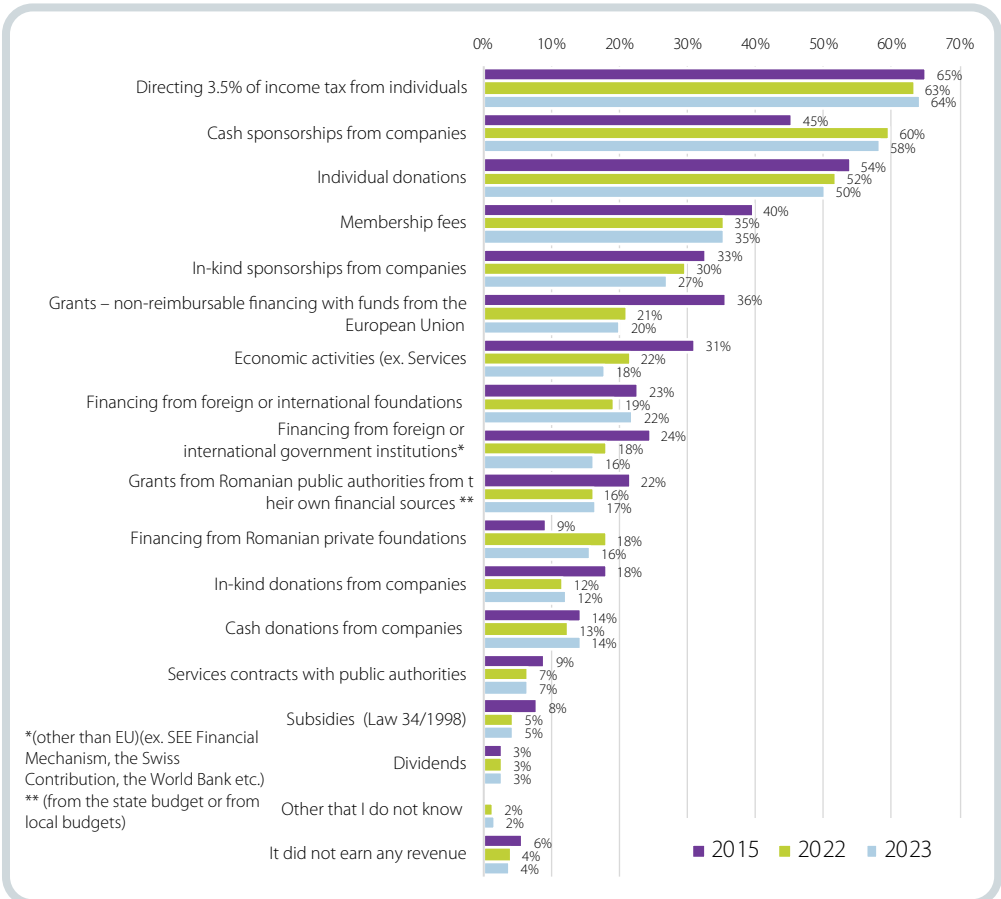
The frequency of financing from local or central budgets (whether grants, subsidies or services contracts) does not show significant variations as compared to 2015 and, unfortunately, fail to represent the main source of income for a large number of organisations (only 8% in 2023).

Financing from external public sources (EU or other foreign or international governmental institutions) was the most important source of funding for 19% of organisations, with a decrease in frequency as compared to 2015 which can be explained by the cyclical nature of funding programmes and peak periods when resources were used by NGOs.

Private financing by means of foundations (international and Romanian) remains an important source of income, both in terms of frequency and the fact that they are the most important source of income for 8% of organisations (international) and 3% (Romanian).

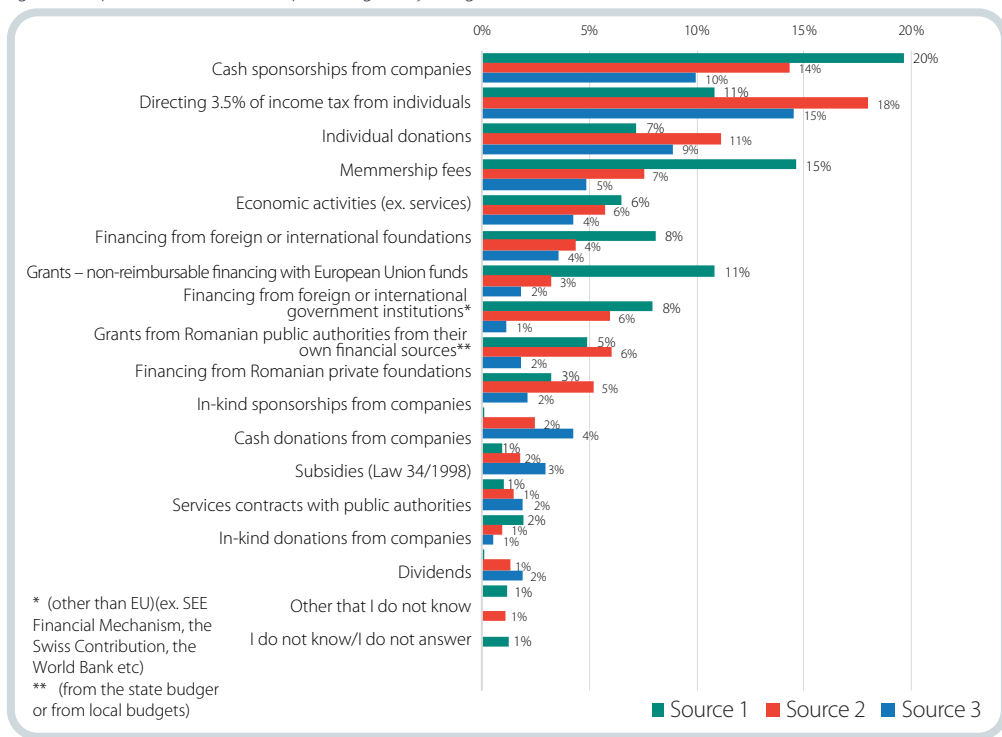
Membership fees are the main source of funding for 15% of organisations, with a slight decrease in frequency as compared to 2015.

Figure 16. Frequency of the income sources for non-governmental organisations



Source: BLO 2023, BLO 2016 („During the year ...your organisation earned income from:”, a multiple choice question).

Figura 17. Top 3 surse de venit în 2023 pentru organizațiile neguvernamentale (BLO 2023)



Source: BLO 2023 („From the income sources mentioned for 2023, which were the main ones?”)

The ranking of the 3.5% mechanism and sponsorship income as the most important sources of income for non-governmental organisations and the importance of the existence of the tax facility for each of the mechanisms is also confirmed by the total **volume of the amounts directed during the period analysed** (Figure 18).

For the year 2022, according to the NAFA official data (March 2024), 2.4 million people requested to direct 375 million RON through the 3.5% mechanism for the support of nonprofit organisations/religious denominations (Figure 18). The number of beneficiary entities was 30,200, noting that this includes places of worship. The volume of redirected amounts has increased significantly since 2019, most likely as a direct effect of the extension of the tax facility (i.e. the categories of income for which one can direct the respective amount). At the same time, we can also take into account the fact that the mobilization of non-governmental organisations in the first months after the outbreak of the Covid pandemic (March 2020) overlapped with the period in which it was possible to express options for directing that amount from the tax related to the income earned in 2019 (submission of returns to NAFA). Thus, the increased visibility of the efforts of non-governmental organisations to address the immediate needs of the population, as well as more intense communication on the needs of resources and the results of the work of NGOs may be factors that have influenced the significant increase in the total amounts redirected in 2019 (348 million RON).

The real potential of the 3.5% mechanism is still undervalued (34% of those eligible to direct have used the mechanism for the 2022 income), despite the constant efforts of organisations to promote the existence of the facility. According to BOSK 2023, only 55% of the population said they were aware of the possibility to redirect the respective amount from the tax, as compared to 71% in 2016. Of those who were aware of the existence of the mechanism, 68% had also used the facility (as compared to 52% in 2016), a progress that supports the need for continued awareness raising among the general population.

As regards sponsorship, the total declared amount of expenses had a continuous annual increase up to 2,468

million RON in the fiscal year 2022 (Figure 18). According to NAFA, the number of companies using the facility increased considerably during the last two years of the reference period, up to 88,544 entities in 2022 (as compared to 34,811 in 2015). The growth trend of amounts directed to support non-profit structures is also maintained if assessed in constant prices 2015, with a cumulative increase of 33% in 2022 as compared to 2015 for amounts directed through the 3.5% mechanism, respectively 166% for amounts representing sponsorship or mecenat, private scholarships.

Figure 18. Amounts redirected through the 3.5% mechanism and amounts accounting for sponsorship 2015-2022 (mil. Current RON)



Source: NAFA data, provided upon the request of the FDSC (March 2024). The reference year shall be considered to be the year of earning the incomes. The beneficiary entities of the reported amounts include all structures that can benefit from amounts directed through the 3.5% mechanism, i.e. sponsorship as per the national legislation (including religious denominations).

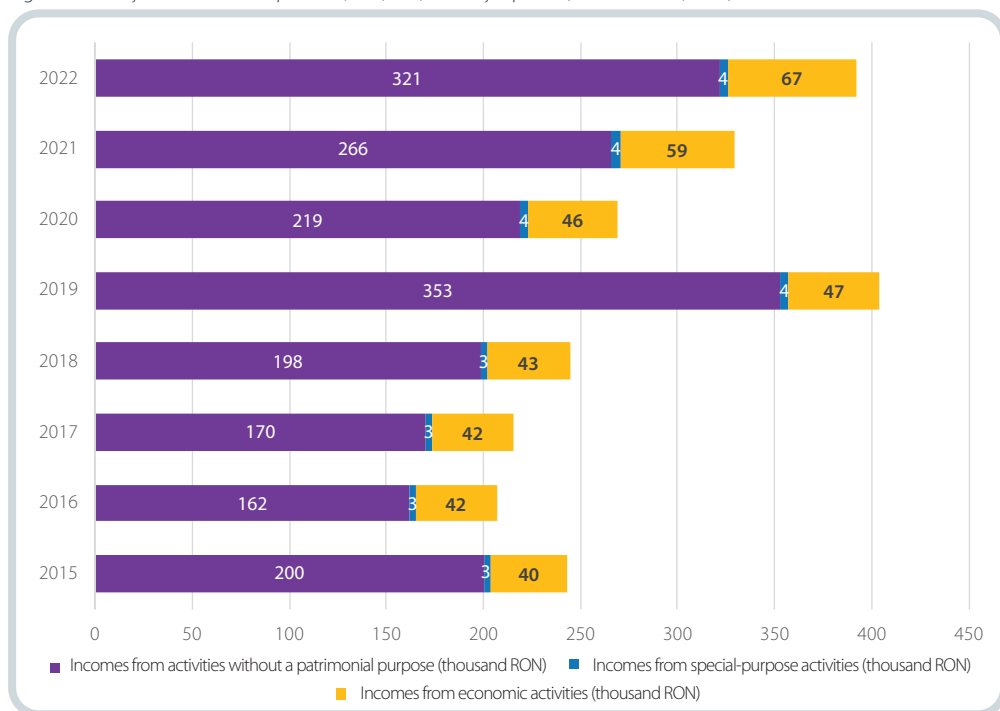
Overall structure of the income sources (financial data)

The general structure of incomes is determined by the legal requirements specific to non-profit structures, according to which income related accounting is kept separately by types of activities (activities without a patrimonial purpose, activities with special purpose according to the law and economic activities), and within them by types of income (detailed above in the section on the tax regime).

In 2022, income from activities without a patrimonial purpose (AFSP) accounted for 82% of the sector total income and the one from economic activities 17%, a relatively constant distribution over the years.

The only significant variation was in 2019 when AFSP income reached 87%, mainly due to the substantial increase in income from donations, sponsorships and aids (Table 13). In current prices, the average of AFSP income was almost double in 2022 as compared to 2016 (Figure 19), but 75% of the organisations recorded less than 194 thousand RON.

Figura 19. Evoluția veniturilor ONG pe surse (AFSP, AEC, destinație specială) - valori medii (mii lei)



Source: Processing of NAFA data (available on data.gov.ro)

● Incomes from activities without a patrimonial purpose – details (financial data)

Financial and accounting regulations on the legal entities without a patrimonial purpose provide a series of peculiarities regarding the obligations for reporting financial data. Thus:

- legal entities without a patrimonial purpose that have simple bookkeeping (*places of worship and owners' associations*) are not required to prepare annual financial statements;
- employers' and trade union organisations, as well as other organisations without a patrimonial purpose, *which do not carry out economic activities* (except those of public utility) prepare simplified annual financial statements (abridged balance sheet).

Unlike the unabridged balance sheet format, the simplified financial statements do not include a full detailed description of the sources of income or expenses recorded. Motivated by the intention to make the sources of income of the non-governmental sector more transparent and especially by the intensive discussions on tax facilities for NGOs as beneficiaries, NAFA has in time introduced a number of additional indicators into the simplified balance sheet structure (abridged balance sheet). Thus, from 2018, separate reporting became mandatory for the *"Income from donations, sponsorship and aids"* and *"Subsidies (it includes operating grants, grants for investment, compensations)"*, and from 2020 the indicator *"Non-reimbursable funding from public funds"* became mandatory for both forms of balance sheet.

These changes allow to highlight two important sources of income for the sector and trends in the evolution of the distribution of these sources.

At sector level, the three main sources of funding, without being able to rank them, are represented by the **income from donations, sponsorship and aids, income from subsidies and income from membership fees and contributions from members and supporters** (Table 13).

The Income from membership fees and contributions indicator is reported separately only by organisations that submit the unabridged balance sheet (Table 14), representing a source of income with a slow-growing pace over the period 2016-2022. According to BLO 2023, the frequency of organisations that had income from membership fees decreased slightly to 35% in 2023, as compared to 40% in 2015, but the positive dynamics at total value level of the indicator in the accounting reports can also be explained by the fact that the latter covers membership fees/ cash contributions of members and supporters (a distinction not specifically made in BLO 2023). Non-reimbursable funding from public funds, although following an increasing annual trend, remains at a low level (up to 10% of total AFSP income in 2022), as compared, on the one hand, to the funding demand expressed by organisations to meet the needs of the beneficiaries they serve, but also as compared to the level of public funding for the non-governmental sector in other countries. For example, in 2022, 44.7% of the total income of non-governmental organisations in Slovenia came from public funding (CNVOS, 2023)²⁵. In the UK, public funding accounted for 30% of the total income of civil society organisations for 2020/2021 (NCVO, UK Civil Society Almanac 2023 - Data. Trends. Insights.)²⁶

Table 13. Distribution of income from activities without a patrimonial purpose (I) – indicators available at NGO sector level

Indicator financiar	2018	2019	2020	2021*	2022*
Venituri din donații, sume sau bunuri primite prin sponsorizare și ajutoare	27%	51%	32%	19%	21%
Venituri din subvenții de exploatare, din care finanțări nerambursabile din fonduri publice		11%	17%	18%	21%
		n.a.	5%	7%	10%
Venituri din subvenții pentru investiții		2%	3%	2%	1%
Alte venituri din activități fără scop patrimonial (AFSP)	73%	36%	48%	61%	57%

Source: Annual series provided by the Ministry of Finances (2024), FDSC processing. The values represent the share of each type of income in total non-for-profit activities (AFSP) at sectoral level. (*) Data for 2021/2022 should be considered with certain reservations given the identified discrepancies between the aggregated data series provided by the Ministry of Finances and the publicly available data in terms of income reported at sectoral level.

Among the potential drivers for high ratios of *income from donations, sponsorship, aids* (51% AFSP income in 2019, respectively 32% in 2020) and of *income from subsidies* for the period 2018-2020 the following can be mentioned: *fiscal changes* regarding the mechanism of 3.5% and sponsorship promoted during this period (extension of the income categories for which the tax redirection mechanism applies, increase of the percentage from 2% to 3.5% for all categories of organisations, the inclusion of micro-enterprises in the category of those who can apply the sponsorship tax facility), *funding from European funds* (the programmatic period 2014-2020) being the peak years in the implementation of NGO projects funded from these sources, *capacity building of fundraising organisations* among individual and community donors, as well as *the significant mobilisation of efforts and resources since the pandemic period*.

Distribution of income sources for organisations submitting full financial statements (unabridged balance sheet) (Table 14) rather reflects the profile of organisations that also have income from economic activities and organisations with substantial or diversified tax income.

In 2022, the number of organisations submitting an unabridged balance sheet dropped by 19% as compared to 2016 (up to 12% of total active organisations), but the share of total income from activities without a patrimonial purpose (AFSP) increased to 45% of total AFSP income at sectoral level. In comparison with the distribution at sectoral level, *the income from subsidies* (including public funding) is the main source of income for these organisations (31% of AFSP income in 2022), followed by *the income from membership fees and contributions, and sponsorship* income.

²⁵ Data published annually by CNVOS (Center za informiranje, sodelovanje in razvoj nevladnih organizacij) - <https://www.cnvos.si/en/ngo-sector-slovenia/>. Information on public funding is based on Treasury data on cash flows between the State (ministries, government departments, agencies, municipalities, public institutes, etc.) and non-governmental organisations.

²⁶ UK CIVIL SOCIETY ALMANAC 2023 DATA. TRENDS. INSIGHTS., NCVO, October 2023, <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/uk-civil-society-almanac-2023/>. Income from public funding includes income from: central government structures, local authorities, regional government structures, EU and other foreign government funding, local councils, NHS trusts, other public structures

Table 14. Distribution of income from patrimonial activities (II) - organisations recorded with an unbridged balance sheet

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
No. of organisations with an unbridged balance sheet (UBS) - % of the total active organisations	17%	16%	16%	16%	15%	13%	12%
AFSP income of organisations with UBS - % of total AFSP income at sectoral level	40%	37%	40%	27%	39%	48%	45%
TOTAL AFSP income – organisations with an unbridged balance sheet (UBS), of which:	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Income from membership fees and cash or in-kind contributions of members and supporters	21.9%	21.7%	22.6%	23.5%	25.5%	29.1%	27.2%
Income from registration fees set as per the applicable legislation	3.6%	3.6%	3.5%	3.3%	3.6%	1.7%	1.7%
Income from donations	11.6%	9.0%	9.4%	7.2%	7.4%	4.6%	5.0%
Income from amounts or goods received through sponsorship	9.7%	10.8%	10.3%	10.0%	11.2%	6.3%	7.5%
Income from aids	14.4%	13.6%	4.6%	3.5%	3.7%	6.4%	6.6%
Income from interest rates earned on the investment of liquid assets arising from activities without a patrimonial purpose	2.6%	2.6%	2.8%	2.9%	3.1%	4.1%	3.3%
Income from dividends on the investment of available funds resulting from activities without a patrimonial purpose	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.1%	0.3%
Income from exchange rate differences resulting from activities without a patrimonial purpose	0%	0%	0.5%	0.9%	1.0%	0.3%	0.4%
Financial income from adjustments for value loss	0%	0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other financial income	2.0%	1.7%	1.0%	0.4%	0.7%	0.1%	0.2%
Income for which entertainment tax is due	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Income from operating subsidies, of which non-reimbursable financing from public funds	11.8%	13.4%	17.2%	22.6%	20.9%	26.5%	30.9%
	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	7.4%	9.2%	15.9%
Income from occasional actions, used for social or professional purposes, according to the organisation's articles of association	1.7%	0.8%	0.9%	0.7%	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%
Income from compensations	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
Income from subsidies for investments	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	3.4%	2.9%	2.4%	1.3%
Income from the sale of corporal/non-corporal assets	2.1%	1.7%	0.9%	1.1%	0.4%	1.1%	0.3%
Income from provisions and impairment adjustments for the operating activity	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.2%	0.9%	0.0%	0.7%
Income from the revaluation of tangible fixed assets	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Income from visas, fees and sports penalties or from participation in contests and demonstrations	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.9%	0.1%
Income from advertising and publicity, according to the legislation in force	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%
Other income from activities without a patrimonial purpose	17.2%	20.0%	20.8%	18.2%	16.6%	15.5%	13.8%

Source: Annual series provided by the Ministry of Finance (2024), FDSC processing. The values represent the share of each type of income in the total income from not-for-profit activities (AFSP) recorded by entities that have submitted an unbridged balance sheet. In 2022, they accounted for 12% of total active organisations and reported 45% of total AFSP income at the sector level. This distribution by source type cannot be translated at the sectoral level, but reconfirms the main sources of funding while highlighting evolving trends. The data for 2021/2022 should be considered with some reservations given the discrepancies identified between the aggregated data series provided by the Ministry of Finance and the publicly available data in terms of income reported at sectoral level.

Economic income

The number of organisations reporting income from economic activities has seen a cumulative increase of 15% as compared to 2016, following an upward annual trend, with the exception of the period 2020-2021 when the sectoral activity was invariably influenced by the COVID pandemic. Given the evolution of the registration and reporting compliance rate, their share in the total active organisations (with annual registered financial statements) remains constant, however, with fluctuations within the range of 10-11% (Figure 20).

Figure 20. Dynamics of organisations with income from economic activities (2015-2022)



Source: NAFA data processing (available on data.gov.ro). Data for 2021/2022 should be considered with certain reservations given the identified discrepancies between the aggregated data series provided by the Ministry of Finances and publicly available data in terms of income reported at sectoral level.

The income from economic activities of non-governmental organisations in current prices increase slightly from year to year during the reference period to around RON 3.6 billion in 2022 (Table 15). Their share in total income at sectoral level become stable at around 17-18%, with the exception of 2019 when it fell to 12%, driven by the significant increase in income from activities without a patrimonial purpose declared during that year. Percentile values (median and percentile 75) increase slightly year-on-year, with the exception of 2020 when NGO activity was most likely influenced by changes caused by the pandemic. In 2022, half of organisations with economic activity reported AE income of less than 71 thousand RON, which in constant prices 2015 is still below the level recorded at the beginning of the reference period.

With slight variations from year to year during the reference period, about 60% of organisations make profit from economic activities. Of these, three quarters of organisations have profit values of up to 55 thousand RON in 2022, after a slight increase in current year-on-year prices over the reference period.

Table 15. NGO with an economic activity - financial data (2015-2022)

		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
No. of NGOs with an economic activity (AE)		4,777	5,150	5,328	5,658	5,736	5,419	5,372	5,920
Total income of NGOs with an economic activity (thousand RON)	Current prices	4,845,932	4,669,319	4,872,039	5,574,610	6,690,600	5,995,507	7,011,130	9,280,301
	Constant prices 2015	4,845,932	4,742,833	4,883,308	5,340,251	6,172,902	5,389,840	5,999,871	6,978,687
AE income of NGOs with an economic activity (thousand RON)	Current prices	1,850,053	2,059,208	2,175,099	2,248,223	2,491,542	2,418,360	2,888,423	3,598,721
	Constant prices 2015	1,850,053	2,091,628	2,180,130	2,153,707	2,298,754	2,174,057	2,471,808	2,706,200
Median of AE income	Current prices	54,813	54,188	55,222	57,122	59,778	52,615	63,074	71,676
	Constant prices 2015	54,813	55,041	55,350	54,721	55,153	47,300	53,976	53,900
Percentile 75 of AE income	Current prices	211,080	200,355	206,762	214,195	226,677	211,281	247,848	275,227
	Constant prices 2015	211,080	203,509	207,240	205,190	209,137	189,937	212,099	206,968
No. of NGOs with an economic activity that have earned profit		2,868	2,944	3,008	3,338	3,375	3,119	3,301	3,637
NGO rate with a profitable economic activity		60%	57%	56%	59%	59%	58%	61%	61%
Profit from AE (thousand RON)	Current prices	227,008	201,664	241,312	273,189	258,209	275,914	372,796	434,124
	Constant prices 2015	227,008	204,839	241,870	261,704	238,230	248,041	319,026	326,456
Median Profit from AE (RON)	Current prices	11,225	9,648	10,618	11,354	11,899	11,596	13,577	15,282
	Constant prices 2015	11,225	9,800	10,643	10,877	10,978	10,425	11,619	11,492
Percentile 75 Profit from AE (RON)	Current RON	42,117	36,452	38,719	41,407	41,771	43,842	51,065	55,375
	Constant prices 2015	42,117	37,026	38,809	39,666	38,539	39,413	43,700	41,641

Source: NAFA data processing (available on data.gov.ro). Data for 2021/2022 should be considered with certain reservations given the identified discrepancies between the aggregated data series provided by the Ministry of Finances and the publicly available data in terms of income reported at sectoral level.

Conclusions

The income from activities without a patrimonial purpose (non-taxable) covers 82% of the total sector-wide income in 2022, with the three main sources being: *income from donations, sponsorship and aids, income from subsidies and income from membership fees and contributions of members and supporters*. The number of NGOs carrying out economic activity increased slightly during the period analysed, to 11% of the total NGOs active in 2022. From the NGOs with economic activity, about 60% manage to achieve minimal gross profit.

The increase in financial flows at sectoral level is partly explained by broadening the basis of active organisations (new organisations registered or submitting annual financial statements), but certainly also reflects the positive evolution in terms of philanthropic culture and volunteering in Romania. Variations in the structure of income sources from year to year are directly influenced by: tax changes, in particular on corporate/income tax redirection mechanisms, respectively sponsorship; cyclicity specific to EU/governmental international support programmes (EEA, Swiss Contribution, etc.); developing the sectoral partner practices with the business environment and donors, substantially intensified in times of crisis response (pandemic, war in Ukraine); development of mechanisms and infrastructure at sectoral

level to support philanthropy and attract resources (no. of organisations that carry out re-granting activities with resources attracted from the community, from companies or international donors, online/sms donation mechanisms, specific programmes for mobilising resources from diaspora or community, offline and through extensive use of information technology, etc.).

The distinct determination of the level of public funding from the national budget/local budgets, i.e. from EU funds/international governments at sectoral level, cannot be done exclusively by analysing available public financial indicators. But the central government can consider two international practices as potential solutions in the declared process of digitalisation and interconnection at the level of public administration: the EU Financial Transparency System²⁷, a platform of the European Commission that integrates information on the use of funds from the EU budget, i.e. ensuring access to information about public funding for non-governmental sector through the involvement of the national treasury (operational practice in Slovenia). In addition, it is essential to put in place common rules for collecting and publishing data on grants/execution with distinct identification of non-governmental organisations (with the mandatory integration of the tax identification code as an element allowing the integration of information from all public data sources).

Although not the subject of the analysis included in this chapter, the adaptation of public financing mechanisms remains a current need for the sector both in terms of administrative aspects related to access, predictability, eligibility, areas and types of activities financed, financing cycles, but also in terms of the size of support from public funds available.

²⁷ EU Financial Transparency System 2014-2022: <https://ec.europa.eu/budget/financial-transparency-system/analysis.html>

ROMANIA 2024

THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR
PROFILE, TRENDS, CHALLENGES

OPERATION OF THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR

4.

Operation of the non-governmental sector

► Márton Balogh

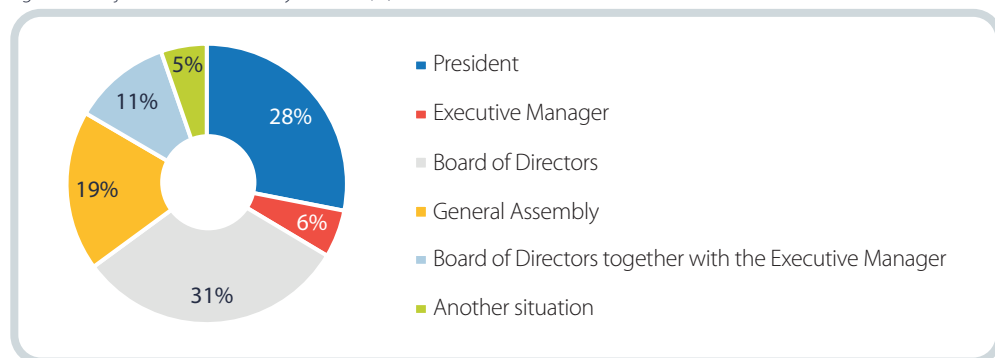
The way non-governmental organisations operate has a decisive influence on their ability to achieve their mission and objectives, as well as on the way they meet the needs of the beneficiaries and target groups they serve. Internal organisation, human resources management issues and intra-sectoral organisation are all factors that influence the ability of organisations and the sector in general to bring about change in society.

In this chapter we will focus on some dimensions on the basis of which we try to shape a more accurate picture of the specificities present in the functioning of non-governmental organisations in Romania. Thus, in the first section of this sub-chapter we will focus our attention on the internal organisation and here we are interested in the way in which decisions are made and the existing relations between the different governing bodies of non-governmental organisations. The way of recruiting and retaining employees, volunteers or even members of non-governmental organisations will be the subject matter of the second section of this material, and in the next two sections of this sub-chapter we will focus on the presentation of the situation of informal groups within the sector, but also the situation of representation (through federations, coalitions) of the interests of the sector in society.

Internal organisation

Within NGOs, the decision-making bodies are: the General Assembly, the Founder(s), the Board of Directors, the President/Executive President, the Executive Director. Given the specific nature of the sector, which is made up of many small organisations without a well-developed internal structure, in practice there is often a lack of some of these bodies or their poor functioning. It is therefore interesting to see who decides and, above all, which of these organisational structures have the most important decision-making powers in a non-governmental organisation.

Figure 21. Major decision-maker in your NGO (%)



Source: BLO 2023

According to BLO 2023, the most important decisions in a non-governmental organisation are made by the Board of Directors and the President of the organisation, while the other governing bodies make strategic decisions to a much lesser extent (Figure 21).

The response rate to this question was 89%. Of those who did not respond, approx. 8% stopped filling in the questionnaire at this point, and the remaining 3% did not answer this question for various reasons (they did not want to answer or simply did not have the information needed to answer).

Correlating this information with the size of the organisation (in terms of number of employees) we can see a different situation only for small organisations with no employees. In these, the most important decision-making role is played by the General Assembly. We explain this situation by the fact that in these organisations the formal/bureaucratic structure is not so clearly achieved and often the same people fulfil several roles cumulatively. We also believe that in these structures, consensus is sought among members in the decision-making process and collective approaches are predominant. However, as the number of employees in organisations increases, the most important decision-makers become the President and the Board of Directors.

If we look at the size of the organisation, according to the number of projects under implementation, and check who makes the important decisions we see the following: in organisations with no projects under implementation - the most important decisions are made by the President, but the role of the President in making decisions decreases as the number of projects increases. This is somewhat explainable, because as the number of projects increases, so does the complexity of the decision-making process and this leads to the bureaucratisation of organisations and the emergence of more actors with decision-making powers. In the case of the General Assembly, we also observe a similar trend to that of the President: the importance of this forum in the decision-making process decreases as the number of projects increases. In exchange, the role of the Management Board in the decision-making increases with the number of projects. In the case of organisations with no projects, in about 17% of cases important decisions are made by the Management Board. For organisations with more than eight projects, 36% of important decisions are made by the Management Board.

We note that the situation remained relatively similar to that observed in the previous report prepared in 2017 (FDSC, 2017), where respondents to the questionnaire indicated that the Board of Directors (30%) and the President (27%) were the two most important decision makers within non-governmental organisations.

These results may also indicate a move towards greater legitimacy and some streamlining of decision-making. Legitimacy because both the Board of Directors and the President are elected/appointed by the General Assembly or founder(s). We believe that this decision-making formula is much more efficient, as it involves linking fewer people.

Table 16. How many years have they been in the organisation

	President	Executive Manager	The oldest member of the Management Board
Minimum	0	0	0
Median	6,0	5,0	9,0
Average	7,9	7,6	9,5
Maximum	32	30	33
Average of those who	Did not respond	19%	8%
	Do not know	3%	2%

Source: BLO 2023

Table 16 suggests that there is relative stability in the governing bodies - the average length of service in the organisation for the President, the Executive Director and the longest-serving member of the Governing Board is between 9 and 5 years. It is worth noting that in the case of the Executive Director the share of those avoiding answering is high (19%), which most likely indicates the non-existence of this position in the structure of the organisations. In the case of the Executive Director, those who did not know the information (For how many years has the Executive Director been in the organisation?) and for this reason did not answer, represent 3%.

The time span mentioned (9-5 years) is suitable for leveraging the experience of people in these positions for the benefit of the organisations represented and, at the same time, provides stability within the organisations' management structures.

In conjunction with this, we note an increase in the attractiveness of non-governmental organisations from a membership perspective, meaning associate members or board members (in the case of foundations) and excluding from this category employees, volunteers or beneficiaries of services provided. Even if the number of members in 2023 remains the same as in 2022 for about 2/3 of the organisations, 27% of the organisations have seen an increase in membership, while only 6% of the respondents declare that the number of members has decreased.

It is a certain correlation between the number of projects developed by a non-governmental organisation and the increase in the number of members. The higher the number of projects carried out by an NGO, the higher the number of members of that organisation.

Table 17. Evolution of the number of NGO members by reference to the number of projects

	Increased	Decreased	Remained the same	Organization set up in 2023	Total
No project	14%	3%	71%	11%	100%
1-3 projects	25%	10%	61%	4%	100%
4-7 projects	26%	9%	66%	0%	100%
8+ projects	32%	3%	61%	3%	100%
Total	27%	6%	63%	3%	100%

Source: BLO 2023

Table 18. Tools used across organisations depending on the number of projects developed

Tool - Yes (%)	Total (%) 2023	Total (%) 2017	No project	1-3 projects	4-7 projects	8+ projects
Strategic plan	69	54	75	65	59	77
Fundraising strategy	52	25	49	42	48	60
Marketing strategy	43	19	28	36	35	50
Communication strategy	72	45	50	71	68	78
Volunteers' management strategy	46	36	34	31	55	51
Human resources strategy	37	20	13	37	31	46
Internal procedure manual (including GDPR, conflict of interests)	58	37	63	61	49	62

Source: BLO 2023

As regards management tools, the use of a wider range of such tools indicates a higher degree of maturity for the organisations concerned, and, at the level of management processes, it generates predictability and transparency (Anheier, 2005). Knowledge and application of a set of management tools shows a concern at the level of organisations for increasing organizational performance and for a better collaboration with different categories of stakeholders. A question was introduced in BLO 2023 on the tools that the surveyed organisations use. From the answers (Table 18) we notice that, most often, organisations use the communication strategy and strategic plan in their work. The manual of internal procedures and the fundraising strategy were indicated only in the following positions by the respondents as being documents existing in the organisations represented by them, while the volunteer management strategy, marketing strategy and human resources strategy are known to organisations, but used to a smaller extent.

If we correlate the types of management tools used by NGOs with the number of projects they are developing, the order of use of these tools remains unchanged, however, we can see that the more projects the organisation runs, the more all the tools are used than the average of the sample concerned. By comparing these data with those obtained in 2016, we can see that for each tool mentioned, the number of organisations using them has increased. However, a stronger increase is observed in two of

them, namely: the communication strategy and the fundraising strategy. This can be explained by the fact that the sector has become more mature, but probably also by the existence of financing programmes that condition non-governmental organisations to develop such documents in order to increase organizational capacity. Another interesting aspect that we can see is the fact that those who say that they do not know what these documents refer to represent a fairly small share of 2-5% of respondents. We can conclude that there is a fairly broad familiarity with these documents and their usefulness in the sector, and therefore, if they are not used by the organisation, the reason is not their unawareness, but rather the lack of resources of different types.

Human resources: recruitment and retention

From the resources needed for the proper functioning of non-governmental organisations, human resource is the most important, because through it organisations have access to the other types of resources necessary for their operation (Anheier, 2005). In addition to these aspects, identifying employees, volunteers and members with the mission pursued by the organisation is a decisive aspect when someone joins an organisation or the cause followed by it. As we could see in the sub-chapter „Internal Organization”, one of the most important problems encountered in the implementation of the projects concerns insufficient human resources.

As for the age structure of non-governmental organisations, according to BLO 2023 (Table 18), the best represented are age groups up to 34 and between 35-44 years in approximately equal weights, while the age group of employees over 55 years is the least represented.

Table 19. Ratio of employees' age groups

Among your organisation's employees, in rough terms, which is the ratio of those who are...	Minimum	Average	Median	Maximum	Do not know	Did not respond
• 34 years or less	0	35	30	100		
• between 35 and 44 years	0	39	35	100	5%	27%
• between 45 and 54 years	0	20	10	100		
• over 55 years	0	6	0	100		

Source: BLO 2023

According to BLO 2023, in terms of the number of employees, small organisations with a low number of employees are predominant: 55% of organisations have up to 5 employees, 16% between 6 and 10 employees, and only 2% of organisations have an average number of more than 50 employees in 2023. If we look at the other data collection tool used in this study, BMO 2023, the data related to the number of employees is similar to those presented above. Based on this data, we can say, without mistake, that from this point of view we have a very fragmented sector, with many organisations that have few employees and management systems adapted to the specific nature of these types of entities.

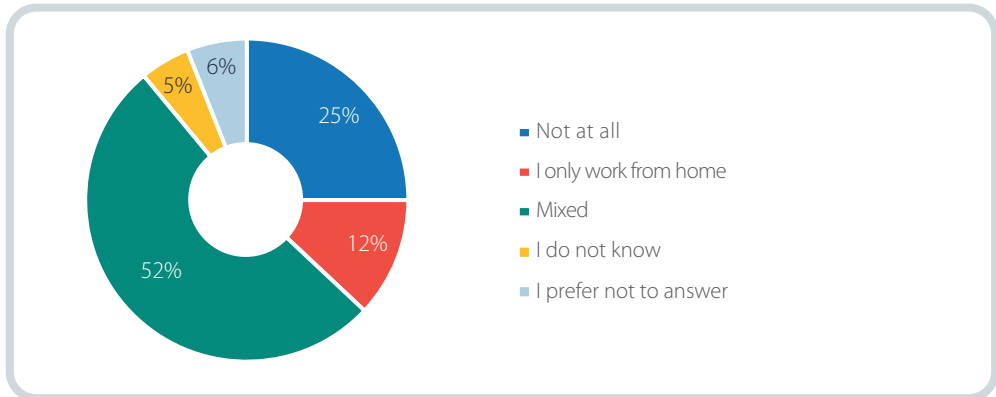
Regarding the form of employment used by the organisations participating in the study, for both tools used (BLO 2023: 41%, BMO 2023: 59%), organisations work with both employees and volunteers alike. Second place as a form of employment of human resources referred to in both tools (BLO 2023: 37%, BMO 2023: 29%) is volunteering. As a profile of employees in NGOs, we note that the overwhelming majority of them have university studies (short or long term) of master's degree or PhD.

According to BMO 2023, in terms of personal state of the employees in the sector, we can notice that they are satisfied and very satisfied with their lives in an overwhelming share (over 80%) while the level of satisfaction is over 60% in terms of income earned. Related to the time that employees spend weekly in the workplace, 27% of respondents to BMO 2023 selected 40 hours/week, and about 54% have part-time joss – i.e. less than 40 hours/week. The fact that more than 50% of employees in the sector have two or

more jobs is not surprising. This is explainable given the specificities of the activities carried out and the fact that the vast majority of organisations work on a project basis, where employment agreements are in line with their responsibilities. In addition to the core organisation where they operate, many employees work in other non-governmental organisations, but not all.

On labour practices – the ratio between office work and remote work, most organisations have adapted to the existing labour market requirements since the Covid-19 pandemic and offer a hybrid work regime – both office and remote work (Figure 22). It is interesting to note that there is a percentage of organisations that work exclusively remotely, but also organisations that have only office work. This latter category is probably represented by organisations providing services that depend on the existence of equipment that is found only at their offices.

Figure 22. From the total working time, how much time do you work remote, in percentages? (%)



Source: BMO 2023

Related to the intensity of the work done, one of the effects felt at the level of individuals is professional burnout. It is one of the diseases of the century, where work-related stress and symptoms of professional exhaustion are much more prevalent than they were in the past. In the case of this occupational syndrome, we note that about 20% of those who responded to BMO 2023 considered that it affects at a very low and low level the employees in their current organisations. 41% of survey participants believe that the risk of burnout is very high and high. We interpret this as a fact that needs to be carefully monitored across NGOs. The existence, within the framework of non-governmental organisations, of a work-life balance of employees, volunteers and members is an aspect that needs to be carefully monitored.

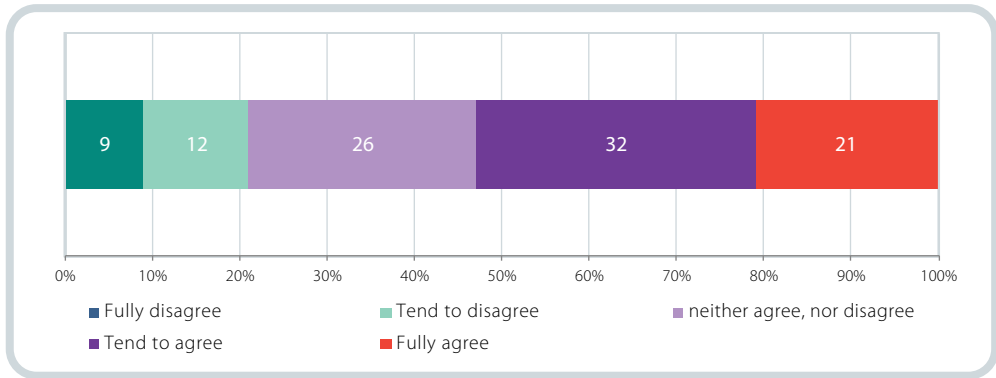
If we look at the retention of employees from non-governmental organisations, we note that for 2022 in about 60% of cases there were no employees leaving the organisations. By corroborating this data with that concerning the situation of members where we concluded that there is a relatively stable situation, we can consider that, in recent years, we have not witnessed a migration of the workforce from non-governmental organisations. It is interesting to see what the reasons for this stability are. We have seen above that about 80% of employees are satisfied and very satisfied with their lives, and 60% of them with their income, leading us to the conclusion that these elements work together towards a high degree of retention of human resources in organisations.

The degree of satisfaction with the organisation in which they operate is also apparent from the fact that more than 70% of those who participated in BMO 2023 feel that they would be happy to spend the rest of their career in their current organisation.

21% say that work gives them good professional prospects, and 32% agree with the statement, but not as much as the former (Figura 23). Apparently, we have a support for the idea that staff retention cannot face challenges. The comparison with the rest of Romania, however, reveals the opposite: according to *the*

European Working Conditions Telephone Survey 2021²⁸, 40% of Romanian employees reported having good prospects at work (double the corresponding figure in BMO 2023) and 26% supported the statement but not as much as the former.

Figure 23. My work offers good career prospects (%)



Source: BMO 2023

In conclusion, from the point of view of human resource retention, we believe that NGO employees and members are satisfied with the perspective offered by the organisation, both in the career path and at the level of the personal values shared by them. However, as the analyses in the next chapter reveal, it is possible for this relative stability to be just an illusion.

Informal groups

The Romanian legal framework (Government Ordinance 26/2000) defines associations, foundations, unions and federations as non-governmental organisations. In reality, however, the sector of non-governmental organisations is much more diverse and complex from the perspective of the forms of organisation, than the legal context leaves us to understand. We note the existence in the Romanian society of various forms of public participation in solving community problems that are not necessarily limited to the legal structures listed in the legal framework. Among these actors in society, informal groups without legal personality are a separate category, which can appear under different names – initiative group, civic groups and which can engage in a very broad range of activities at the level of society.

The legitimate question we can ask is: are these initiatives part of the non-governmental sector or not? If we look at the definitions of the non-governmental sector we can note the five characteristics formulated by Salamon and Anheier (1995) on the basis of which we can define these structures: institutionalisation, private character, non-distribution of profit, volunteering and self-government. Informal groups, therefore without legal personality, meet all these characteristics, even that of institutionalisation, because it does not necessarily refer to the existence of the legal personality but rather to institutionalised organisational structures (they own internal decision-making mechanisms, have a joint purpose for all members, etc.). As a result, informal structures can be considered part of the sector of non-governmental organisations, even if they are not quantified in official statistics.

Even though there are very few specialised materials that address these structures (their number, their modus operandi), we can still establish some specific characteristics for them. Their setup is usually carried out from the grassroots level, as a result of initiatives from ordinary citizens, who are concerned about solving actual problems that have arisen at community level and which impact their daily lives. The degree of legitimacy enjoyed by these structures is very high, because those who are affected by a situation organise themselves and try to find a solution to their actual problem.

²⁸ <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/data-catalogue/european-working-conditions-telephone-survey-2021-0>

These initiatives often try to bridge the gap of a public service or put pressure on a public institution. However, the way these groups act and intervene depends on many factors, such as access to time resources, money, information, the ability of members to organise and, last but not least, the interest of society in the idea promoted by them. Over the years, there have been many examples when citizens in a community have organised themselves and through an informal group have tried to solve various problems: help to families/persons facing health problems, trying to solve basic infrastructure problems, etc.

There are also situations where the setup of these initiative groups is generated by an external facilitator or through a funding programme. It is that process initiation that comes from top to bottom, from the perspective of a public policy actor inside or outside the political and administrative system (Balogh, Radu, 2013). In these cases, the legitimacy of these interventions is reduced at the beginning and the facilitator must build community confidence around the intervention. An important role in these situations lies with the facilitator and the way in which the funding programme is designed. Over time, many programmes of this kind have been implemented, which initially worked with initiative groups – we mention here the community development programmes of Fondul Român de Dezvoltare Socială - the Romanian Social Development Fund (<https://frds.ro/>), the Leader Programme(<https://www.madr.ro/axa-leader.html>) or the Community-led Local Development mechanism https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/guidance/guidance_community_local_development.pdf).

The life cycle of these informal groups is strongly linked to the cause they support, they either manage to solve the problem for which they have been created and lose their scope, or they do not solve the problem, and that is precisely why they become useless. It is also likely that due to the success achieved or precisely to create the necessary context for solving problems, they will undergo legal registration. In this case, such structures begin a laborious process of bureaucracy like any organisation that registers and with the inherent challenges in this process. It is very difficult for an initiative group that has been successful in one case to be able to replicate success in other causes. In general, if you want to continue the activity, then it will lead to legal registration.

In establishing these informal groups, an important role is also played by social media platforms, where it is extremely easy and efficient in terms of costs for anyone to join a cause. Most of the time, this affiliation via the aforementioned platforms does not come along with major obligations or responsibilities, but disaffiliation can also occur as quickly and easily. In the last ten years, many impactful events have taken place in the Romanian society (the protests of February 2017 against Ordinance 13, mobilisation regarding assistance to refugees from Ukraine, etc.) which, in part, were the result of the work of informal groups, some even organised via social media platforms. We will see and analyse in the future whether or not the ability of these informal groups to generate support around causes or ideas is more attractive to millennials (which are beginning to have a representative share among employees and NGO members) than that of classical organisations.

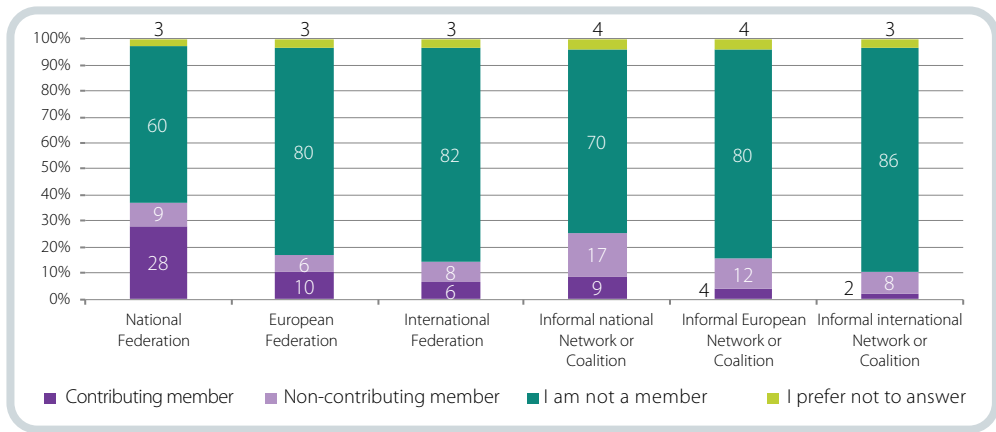
Organization within the sector: coalitions, federations and alliances

The capacity of the sector to influence the public agenda and meet the needs of different groups in society depends to a large extent on the internal organisation of the non-governmental sector. The manifestation of the level of organisation is achieved through formal or informal structures and the way in which the interests of NGOs are represented in relation to different actors in society.

What we know from the data provided from the National Registry for NGOs (2024) is that in Romania there are 1529 federations and 759 unions, in other words, much less than the associations or foundations.

Through BLO 2023 we were interested if the organisations that responded to the study are part of the different networks/coalitions/federations type structures and Figure 24 indicates the responses received. Another dimension that we were interested in was whether or not organisations pay a fee within these structures. Assuming the payment of a contribution can mean a more serious commitment to the cause of that structure in which we associate. Although the collaboration between non-governmental organisations can take a wide variety of forms, we have considered those mentioned to be the most representative of our study.

Figure 24. Is your organisation part of a network/coalition/federation and does it pay a contribution



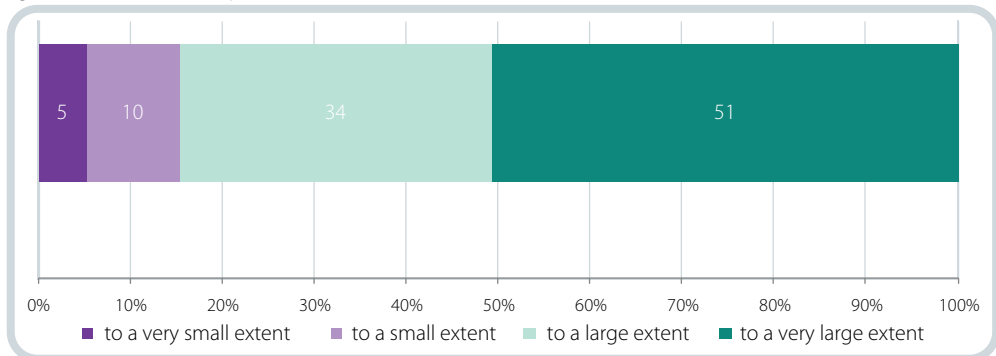
Source: BLO 2023

We have tried to determine to what extent the organisations developing more projects are more present in such national/international structures. The analysis of the data showed that there is a relatively balanced dispersion among different types of organisations, and we cannot say that organisations with more projects are more present in these structures than those that implement a smaller number of projects.

What it can be noted here is that the majority of organisations are not part of any national or European structure, whether formal or informal. A different situation is in the case of formal association with a national federation, where we have a higher share of those who replied that they were members of such a structure. What is even more surprising is that within these federations the situations in which a fee is paid are more common. However, with regard to the data in its entirety, we consider that a reduced capacity to influence public policy agendas and decisions and to generate consistent support in society for various causes is partly explained by those data. The lack or early form of these intra-sectoral collaborations leaves some degree of vulnerability to the sector.

It seems that members of non-governmental organisations are aware of these issues and consider almost unanimously (99%) that the level of cooperation within the sector needs to be improved and intensified (BMO 2023, FDSC). This desire is also somewhat proven by the fact that in the legally registered federations there is a significant increase as compared to 2010 (758 federations), but also to 2015 (1195 federations). Significant changes also show BLO data where in 2016 leaders declared 28% to be part of at least one federation (FDSC, 2017). In 2023, if we cumulate the two options – a contributing member and a mere member – we have a share of 37% (BLO 2023, FDSC).

Figure 25. There must be a representative structure at national level for the NGO sector (%)



Source: BMO 2023

It seems that within the non-governmental sector there is a majority option also in terms of the need for a representative structure at national level for the associative structures. As also shown by Figure 25, more than 80% of those who responded to BMO 2023 (FDSC) support this idea.

It is known that non-governmental organisations have representatives in the following structures: the Superior Council of Magistracy, the Economic and Social Council, the National Integrity Council and the European Economic and Social Council. During the period under review, positive developments took place at the level of the representation of the non-governmental sector in these relevant bodies at national or even European level. In this regard, we can recall the elections that were held for the Economic and Social Council. The elections took place via the Vot ONG platform (administered by Code for Romania), with any NGO having the opportunity to apply as well as vote via the platform. In addition to the democratic exercise, this process was organised by representatives of NGOs and 788 non-governmental organisations participated in the vote. It is the first full mandate in which NGOs have representatives in the plenary of the Economic and Social Council. And within the European Economic and Social Council, the activity of NGO representatives in Romania is much more consistent and visible. Gaining experience in these structures by representatives of the Romanian associative environment will have beneficial effects on the maturity and representativeness of the sector on the medium and long term.

ROMANIA 2024

THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR
PROFILE, TRENDS, CHALLENGES

MISSION AND PUBLIC PRESENCE

5.

Civic actions. Representations regarding the sector mission

► Mircea Kivu

Trust in the sector

The confidence of the general population in the non-governmental sector, as recorded in the three omnibus studies commissioned by the FDSC (2010, 2016, 2023) is moderate but superior to that in other secular forms of association (trade unions, parties). Overall, the level of trust in non-governmental organisations is kept, over time, at a constant level around 50%. (The value of 32% recorded in 2010 is not so different from the rest of the series, considering the high share of non-responses recorded in that survey.)

Table 20. Trust in non-governmental organisations and other types of organisations

How much do you trust...?		I do not trust at all	I do not trust	To a certain extent	To a very much extent	I do not know	certain extent+ to a very much extent
2010		24%	26%	26%	6%	18%	32%
2016	NGOs	14%	33%	43%	8%	2%	51%
		21%	24%	40%	10%	5%	50%
2023	Trade unions	25%	30%	31%	9%	5%	40%
	Parties	48%	28%	17%	5%	1%	22%
	Church	7%	10%	32%	50%	0%	82%

Source: BOSC 2010, 2017, 2023

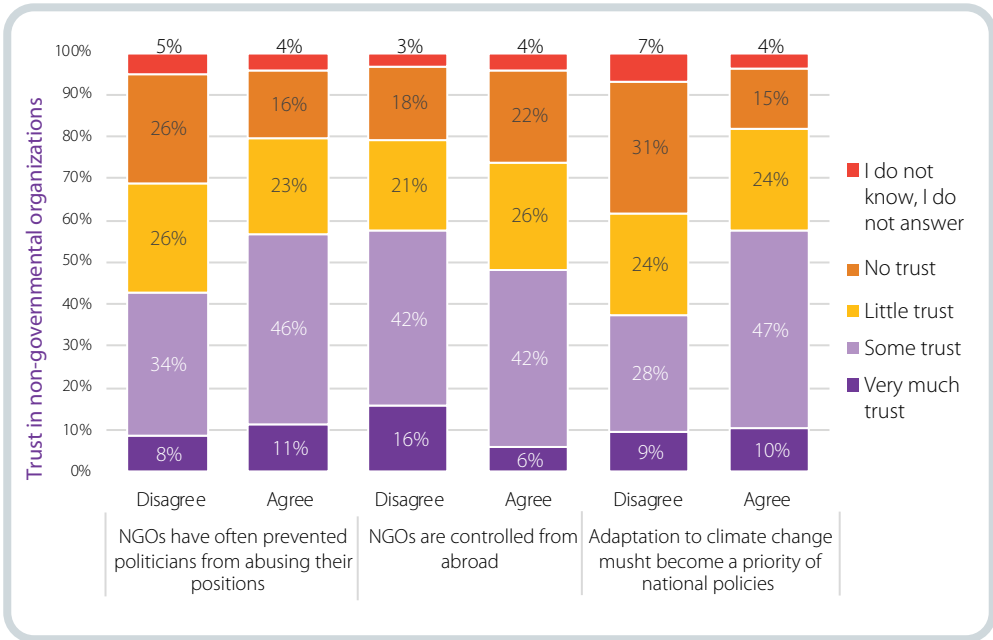
There are significant differences in the level of trust in NGOs related to some demographic characteristics. Thus, *young people have more confidence than the elderly* (in the age group 18-29 years, the confidence level is 73%, while in over 60 it is only 36%). Also, *the higher the level of formal education, the higher the degree of trust* (among higher education graduates, the confidence degree is 66%, falling when it comes to primary and secondary school graduates to only 43%). We also note a statistically significant association between the employment status and the trust in NGOs: only 42% of those who do not work trust the sector, while *in the employed group the ratio rises to 58%*. We found no significant variations induced by other socio-demographic variables.

The regression analysis shows that, apart from demographic characteristics, a decisive role in shaping a favourable or unfavourable attitude towards the non-governmental sector is played by the acceptance or rejection of certain topics or stereotypes related to these organisations. Several statements were tested, but only for three of them, presented below, we have recorded significant coefficients (probability that the link would be randomly less than 1%) for the relationship with the dependent variable “trust in NGOs” (Figure 26).

So, first of all, the extent to which NGOs succeed in convincing that they have contributed to limiting some abuses by politicians leads to increased trust. This is relevant when tackling public representation of the mission of the non-governmental sector.

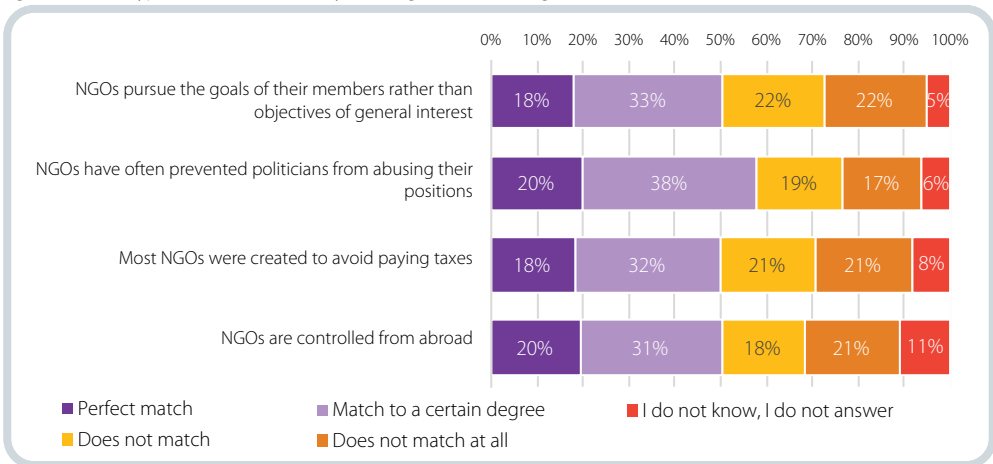
Secondly, the association between the agreement with the sentence ‘NGOs are controlled from abroad’ and trust in them is negative. Therefore, the accusation frequently used in the early post-communist years that non-governmental organisations are agents of obscure external interests works as a trigger of suspicion of them. It seems that the stereotype still works (for 51% of respondents), although in recent decades it has appeared less often in the public space.

Figure 26. Attitudinal drivers of trust in non-governmental organizations



Source: BOSCS 2023

Figure 27. Stereotypes related to the activity of non-governmental organisations



Source: BOSCS 2023

Thirdly, the need for an active attitude towards climate change is one of the topics that most NGOs explicitly or implicitly adhere to. The fact that those who share the “ecologist” opinion are favourable to these organisations indicates that the topic is strongly associated in public representations with the non-governmental sector.

In this context, it should be noted that two other stereotypes frequently circulated in relation to the non-governmental sector continue to work, with around half of the population agreeing with them, but they do not significantly influence the level of trust in the sector (regression coefficients are insignificant). These are “NGOs pursuing the purposes of their own members rather than objectives of general interest” and “Most NGOs have been created to avoid paying fees”.

Representations regarding the sector mission

In order to analyse how the mission of the non-governmental sector is understood, several options were proposed: the mission of government monitoring (*whatchdog*), that of catalyst for civic actions, that of participation in the preparation of normative acts, the charitable one. The same question was inserted both into the omnibus (target group: the adult population of Romania) as well as in the Barometer of NGOs' Members (target group: members, employees and volunteers of associations and foundations – we will further refer to them as *activists*). The distribution of answers is given in Table 21.

Table 21. Representation of the mission of the non-governmental sector among the general population (BOSC), respectively NGO members (BMO)

To what extent do you think Romanian non-governmental should... ?		To a very large extent	To a high extent	To a small extent	To a very small extent	I do not know/ I do not answer
Check on what the governors are doing	BOSC 2023	58%	27%	9%	4%	2%
	BMO 2023	57%	28%	8%	3%	4%
Organize people to do things together	BOSC 2023	34%	49%	11%	3%	3%
	BMO 2023	66%	31%	2%	0%	1%
Contribute to the preparation of laws and of other normative acts	BOSC 2023	41%	40%	10%	5%	4%
	BMO 2023	63%	28%	4%	1%	3%
Help the ones in need	BOSC 2023	37%	41%	14%	4%	4%
	BMO 2023	45%	47%	6%	1%	2%

Source: BOSC, BMO 2023

All four types of mission are widely accepted (over 80%) by the analysed populations in both surveys. In general, activists are more convinced than the general public of the need for their sector to undertake each of the four missions analysed; this is especially obvious if we look at the proportions of the “to a very large extent” answers.

The biggest differences between the representations of the general population and those of the activists appear in the mission of catalysing civic action (the share of “to a very large extent” responses is almost double in the activist sample). Why does the “ordinary man” believe to a smaller extent than the activist in the capacity of non-governmental organisations to mobilise citizens?

Probably, when they hear about “doing things together,” most people think of visible actions in the street. This difference may reflect the diminishing visibility of civic actions in which the non-governmental sector has been involved.

Civic actions

● Public demonstrations, street actions

The decade 2010-2019 was marked by the scale of protests initiated by NGOs and informal groups (Rosia Montana – 2013, Colectiv – 2015, anti-corruption – 2017-2018). Many of the public rallies or demonstrations organised during that decade included tens of thousands of people. These actions had concrete effects, decisively influencing politicians’ decisions: the Rosia Montana Gold Corporation project was stopped, the PSD government led by Victor Ponta resigned, GEO 13 on pardoning punishments was withdrawn. (Some would say that another would be the real *kinoun* of those events, but for now we have

these facts.) After the violent suppression of the demonstration from August 10, 2018, we found a drastic decrease in popular participation in such civic actions.

Apparently, after 2020, the traditional spaces of protest actions (University Square, Victoriei Square) were abandoned to the groups that revolve around the new populist parties. The topics that dominated these protests were the exclusive use of Romanian in public institutions, the removal of restrictions related to the fight against the pandemic, the freedom not to get vaccinated.

During this period, there were also some public demonstrations that continued the topics promoted in the 2nd decade (the abolition of special pensions – Declic, conservation of green spaces in cities – Ecocivica), but these had little impact, barely managing to gather several hundred participants. The comparison of the responses obtained within the *Barometers of NGO Leaders* – 2016 and 2023 editions shows that the involvement of non-governmental organisations in protest actions has decreased significantly: if in 2016 the representatives of 27% of organisations declared that they were involved in initiating such actions, in 2023 the percentage decreased to 18%. The question remains open: it is the diminishing participation in street actions a sign that other forms of civic action have been adopted, or the reasons for protesting have just become less flagrant?

Table 22. Ratio of individuals stating that they have participated in public demonstrations - omnibus 2016 and 2023

Which of the following were you involved in last year? Participation in a public demonstration		2016	2023
Age group	18-29 years	8%	6%
	30-44 years	7%	3%
	45-59 years	6%	3%
	60 years and over	6%	2%
Gender	Male	7%	4%
	Female	6%	2%
Education	Primary-gymnasium	4%	3%
	Secondary-high school	6%	2%
	Tertiary-higher	11%	5%
Residential area	Rural	5%	3%
	Urban	8%	3%
Total		7%	3%

Source: BOSC 2016 and 2023

The decline in participation in public demonstrations is also visible in surveys that investigated the entire population: if in the 2016 FDSC omnibus we recorded 7% of respondents who said they had participated in a public demonstration in the past year, in 2023 their ratio decreased to 3%. Table 22 shows that the most 'drastic' decreases were recorded in cities, in age groups over 30 years and in women.

It is interesting to mention that the street actions from 2023 that had the widest participation were Bucharest Pride on July 29 (25,000 participants, according to Wikipedia²⁹) and the rally of education strikers on June 9 (15,000 participants, according to the Portal Invatamant³⁰). The first is not a protest itself, but an affirmative action of the LGBTQ+ community, and the second is an action to support a trade union strike (supported also by non-governmental organisations).

²⁹ https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bucharest_Pride

³⁰ <https://www.portalinvatamant.ro/articole/stiri-profesori-106/mars-de-protest-cu-15000-de-participanti-in-bucuresti-revendicarile-sindicalistilor-din-educatie-12068.html>

Legal proceedings

One of the ways of acting to which – it seems quite often – non-governmental organisations resort to when they disagree with the authorities is the arbitration of justice.

According to the Barometer of NGO Leaders, 11% of organisations had taken legal action during the previous year against a local or central authority. The ratio is slightly lower than in 2016 (13%).

Table 23. Legal proceedings started by non-governmental organisations, according to BLO 2016 and BLO 2023

Please state whether your organisation has ever started legal proceedings against public authorities		Of which:					I do not know, I do not answer
		Successful in the matter	Unsuccessful	Pending trial (*)	No	Yes	
Local authorities	2016	8%	5%	3%	-	84%	8%
	2023	10%	6%	2%	4%	83%	5%
Central authorities	2016	7%	4%	3%	-	85%	8%
	2023	6%	3%	1%	2%	87%	5%

(*) The response option was not included in the questionnaire from 2016.
Source: BLO 2016 and 2013

We note that, both in 2016 and 2023, more than half of the organisations that took legal action against public authorities (either local or central) were successful.

Over the last year, there has been an action model of entities whose financial interests are threatened by the actions of some NGOs in court – most of the time, challenging administrative acts that allow real estate investments affecting local communities. The model consists of hiring extremely expensive law firms; in the event of the loss of the trial, the NGO that initiated the action has to pay huge amounts as court expenses. In some cases, such actions resulted in the administrative dissolution of the organisations that had initiated the action. It is possible that, in the future, with the proliferation of this model, to witness a restraint on the part of associations seeking to defend the interests of communities to take legal action.

Recently, APADOR-CH, supported by several civil society organisations and more than 20,000 citizens, proposed a solution³¹ which could counter this danger. This would consist of introducing a provision whereby, in the case of proceedings concerning the free access to information of public interest or urban or environmental matters, the court expenses be not borne by the party losing the case, as it is the rule, but each party bear its own court expenses. We will see whether the decision-makers will want to solve the problem (in a first instance, the Ministry of Justice considered that organisations and citizens who are starting legal proceedings against the State or powerful companies to defend the public interest, do not need additional protection in court).

Petitions

BLO data indicates that in both 2016 and 2023, 36% of the organisations that answered to the questionnaire had been involved in the signature of petitions in the last year. The shares of those who had mobilised more than 1,000 citizens in those actions were also equivalent: 4% in 2016 and 5% in 2023.

According to data from omnibus studies, the share of people who signed various petitions decreased between 2016 and 2023, but less than the one of participants in public demonstrations.

³¹ <https://apador.org/in-romania-inca-se-aplica-pedeapsa-cu-moartea/>

Table 24. Ratio of individuals stating that they have signed petitions

Did you sign a petition during the last year?		2016	2023
Gender	Male	16%	11%
	Female	18%	14%
Age group	18-29 years	19%	26%
	30-44 years	19%	17%
	45-59 years	20%	11%
	60 years and over	8%	5%
Cohorts	1999-2005	-	30%
	1987-1998	19%	19%
	1972-1986	19%	12%
	1957-1971	20%	10%
	before 1956	8%	4%
Education	Primary-gymnasium	8%	4%
	Upper Secondary	18%	11%
	Tertiary	24%	31%
Residential area	Rural	15%	9%
	Urban	18%	16%
Total		17%	13%

Source: BOSC 2016 and 2023

Although the overall share has decreased, we see an increase in the share of signatories of petitions among young people. More specifically, if we refer to the analysed cohorts, we note that young people aged between 18 and 24 years (who were under 18 years in 2016, so they were not analysed) signed 30% petitions; for those between 25 and 36 years (i.e. 18-29 years in 2016), the ratio is 19%, or equal to that recorded seven years ago. We also see an increase in the ratio of this modus operandi among people with higher education (from 24% to 31%). This could be an indication that this type of civic action tends to become one of the younger and educated generations.

A successful example is the series of petitions directed against the draft emergency ordinance on some budgetary fiscal measures in the field of public expenses, the decentralisation of public services, economic and financial discipline, as well as for amending and supplementing some normative acts issued in the form of a draft on the 2nd of august 2023. Against the provisions of this project a first petition³² has been published, signed by 1374 organisations and by 209 natural entities asking for the elimination of provisions that risked cancelling the current sponsorship mechanisms, leaving the non-governmental sector without funding. On the other hand, another petition³³ has been launched, initiated by 50 managers from cultural institutions and then signed by over 46,000 persons, calling for removal of certain provisions from the same project, which would have led to the disappearance of numerous public cultural institutions and to the elimination of some positions from their organisation charts.

Numerous public interventions followed, which led to the amendment of the text and the transformation of the GEO into a draft law. From the final text, which became Law no. 296/2023, published in Official Gazette no. 977/27.10.2023, the majority of the provisions challenged in the two petitions were removed.

Unfortunately, few similar situations can be cited where a public petition has had concrete results. It seems that politicians are not too receptive to the messages they receive in this manner.

³² <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LjDhJxjBWaIXkFnB7k4bI3dbWODHWY/edit>

³³ https://www.petitiononline.com/opriti_distrugerea_culturii

We note that from the three types of civic actions undertaken by non-governmental organisations, the most effective, in terms of impact, were protests through public demonstrations. Legal proceedings have also had tangible but rather punctual results in many cases; there are reasons to expect a reduction in the use of this type of action. Petitions require less logistical effort, but the effects achieved are also reduced.

Paradoxically, the most effective civic actions are also those whose frequency is decreasing. One possible explanation would be that the non-governmental sector has been “institutionalised”, either individually, by hiring leaders in existing administrative bodies or parties, or by creating new parties (USR was the most visible, but also some with local impact, such as Partidul Oamenilor Liberi - the Party of Free People). An alternative explanation would be that for the “well-established” ways of civic action one found remedies such as the one described above, in the case of legal proceedings.

Representations regarding the influence of and interests pursued by NGOs

▶ Mircea Comșa

Population trust in the NGO sector as a whole is rather medium to low. Several national surveys of the non-institutionalised adult population show a confidence share (large and very high) of only 19-27% (CURS, January and September 2023, January 2022, January 2021; IRES, January 2021). Of course, the situation is not necessarily specific to Romania, as similar confidence shares are found in many other countries in Eastern Europe³⁴.

In view of this context rather characterised by distrust in NGOs, in this chapter we will describe actors' representations regarding two major topics: the influence of NGOs and the interests pursued by NGOs. As we mentioned explicitly in the title of the chapter, the intention is not to illustrate an objective reality but to outline the subjective representations of the actors (what they think about the phenomena in question) regarding the influence of and interests pursued by NGOs. Therefore, in this text we do not describe reality but some representations of this reality. It is an imagined, diffuse, fragmented reality, a reality created in the minds of actors by combining partial information, experiences and biased reactions felt by them as a result of discussions, media consumption, personal experiences, contact with rumours and stories circulating in the public and private environment.

In order to provide a comparative perspective, we have considered and measured the representations of three categories of actors: (1) general adult population, (2) NGO leaders and (3) members/employees/volunteers from NGOs. Of course, we expect that the representations of the actors directly involved in the activity of the NGO sector be relatively better shaped, perhaps even closer to reality, as compared to those of the general population. The subjective nature of this reality does not diminish its value at all, and it can generate direct consequences simply by whether or not people act in relation to what they believe to be true and not necessarily what is actually real.

³⁴ Mohamed Younis și Andrew Rzepa (2019) One in Three Worldwide Lack Confidence in NGOs, Gallup Blog, June 20, 2019, accesat 22.02.2024 la <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/258230/one-three-worldwide-lack-confidence-ngos.aspx>

Influence of NGOs

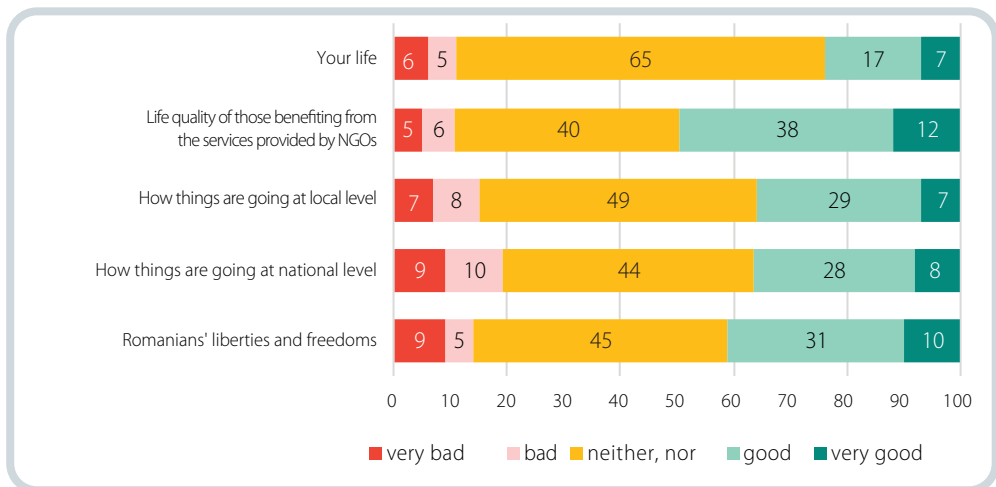
To measure the image of NGOs' influence, we used the following questionnaire question: What influence do you think Romanian NGOs generally have on...? We have, in turn, asked for an opinion on the following instances: the respondent's life, the quality of life of NGO beneficiaries, the way things work at local and national level, and the freedoms and rights of Romanians. These instances are the main areas where the activity of an NGO can manifest itself, where it can make a difference in the way society works, depending on the objectives pursued.

Most likely, the common social representation is dominated by the image of NGOs offering goods and services to different disadvantaged social categories. Beyond this component, there are NGOs interested in the good functioning of things locally and nationally, in the normal and efficient functioning of public institutions, of society at large. Of course, the phrase "the smooth running of things" can be refer to various things, such as: the standard of living of the population, the level of economic development, the functioning of administrative institutions, infrastructure and transportation, jobs, inflation, etc. Even if such a situation is, methodologically, to be avoided, we have preferred it for reasons that related to keeping the duration of the questionnaire within reasonable limits. Another component, less visible at the level of public opinion, concerns the fight of NGOs to defend citizens' freedoms and rights. The scale used in this question was an ordinal five-tier and middle variant. Thus, respondents could choose from the following options (NGOs in Romania have an influence): very bad, bad, no good, no bad, good, very good.

Perspective of the population

The population's answers to the question about the influence of NGOs are indicated in Figure 28. A very small share of the population (10-20%) consider that NGOs have a negative (bad or very bad) influence, with small variations depending on the subject matter of the assessment. Naturally, when it comes to NGO beneficiaries and respondents, negative evaluations are the least present (11%). On the other hand, as far as the progress of things at national level is concerned, the share of negative assessments almost doubles (19%). About half of the population believes that NGOs do not make a difference (for better or for worse), regardless of the field, but especially in what concerns the personal life of each of us. A third or more of the general population believes that the influence of NGOs is positive.

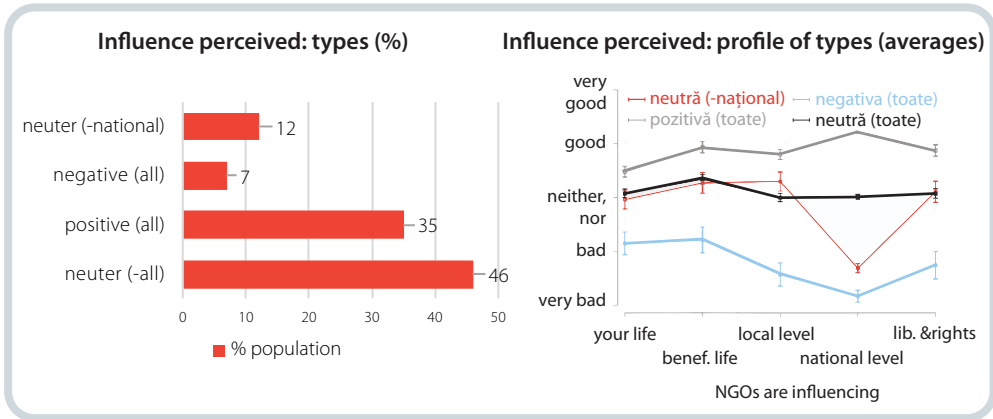
Figure 28. What influence do you think Romanian NGOs, in general, have over...?



Source: Analyses based on the data from the BOSC 2023 survey. Values represent percentages.

Based on the answers to the question about interest (all related items), we can build a typology of the population, estimate the weight of each type in total, respectively describe the resulting types according to different socio-demographic characteristics. To get this typology we used the Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014; Ferguson et al., 2019; Nylund-Gibson & Choi, 2018; Spurk et al., 2020; Weller et al., 2020), addressing in this case, for simplicity, the ordinal scale as a metric scale (the distribution of each variable is relatively normal, and the distances between classes are, in subjective terms, approximately equal). We tested several solutions (2-6 profiles), and finally, based on specific criteria (share in total population, interpretability, statistical measures, number of cases in total sample), we kept the solution with four profiles/classes/types. Of course, a larger sample would have allowed a better estimate of the weight of these types, namely the definition of more refined and homogeneous types. The results obtained are presented in Figure 29.

Figure 29. A typology of population depending on the representation on the NGOs' influence (population data)



Source: Analyses based on data from the BOSC 2023 survey. Reading mode: The LPA leads to four types, of which "neutral (all)" (those who consider NGOs to have a neutral influence regardless of the size considered) includes 46% of NGOs (the chart on the left). In the right chart, the black line and the black circles indicate the averages, for each dimension, associated with organisations in the "neutral (all)" category, on a scale from 1 (very bad influence) to 5 (very good influence).

In the first image of Figure 29 there are the four resulting population types and their share in the total population. We labelled each type taking into account the observed averages of variables used to build the typology.

- The dominant type, called "neutral influence (all)", includes almost half of the population and is characterised by a generally neutral representation in terms of influence of NGOs. We note in the second chart that the average of the evaluations of all component items is in the area defined by an influence "neither bad, nor good" (black profile).
- The following type of weight, called 'positive influence (all)', includes about one third of the population and is characterised by a generally positive representation regarding the influence of NGOs. We note in the second chart that the average evaluations of all component items is in the area defined by a good influence (grey profile).
- The third type, "neutral (national) influence" (12%), is similar to the first type, being different from it only because the influence of NGOs at national level is considered negative, not neutral. We note in the second chart that the average of the assessments of the component items is in the area defined by a neutral influence, except for the national level where the influence is bad (red profile).
- The last type, "negative influence (all)", includes the 7% who believe that the influence of NGOs is rather negative regardless of the aspect assessed. We notice on the right that the average of evaluations regarding all the items is in the area defined by a bad or very bad influence (light blue profile).

We are interested to see whether the types defined according to the influence of NGOs differ from a number of socio-demographic characteristics. For this we used a multi-varied analysis model (multi-nominal logistical regression) and have statistically predicted the composition of the types. Therefore, the values shown in the charts are values predicted on the basis of the model, not values observed in the dataset. The strategy of statistical control and prediction based on a multi-varied model has the advantage that it only identifies real differences, those associated with each variable, unaffected by the rest of the respondents' characteristics.

Somewhat surprisingly, the four types have a rather similar average composition (in terms of the few available socio-demographic characteristics). These analyses are presented in the annexes, and here we mention only the differences where we also have statistical significance (i.e. there is a reasonable chance – 95% – that these differences will occur again if we resume the survey). We have not noticed statistically significant differences induced by education, status (employee, employer, pensioner, stay-at-home person), macro-region, membership in an NGO currently. Beware, the comments that follow relate to relative differences, not absolute differences. In short, we have found the following differences:

- Gender: men appear relatively more often in the 'negative influence' type and women in the 'neutral influence' type;
- Age: young people (18-29) are more present in the "positive influence" type;
- Stay-at-home persons appear less often in the case of the 'neutral influence' type;
- Residential area: rural residents appear more frequently in the case of the 'negative influence' type;
- Those who have benefited from the services of an NGO appear less often in the case of the 'neutral influence' type;
- Those who have been members of at least three NGOs are less often found in the "negative influence" type and more often in the case of "neutral influence" type.

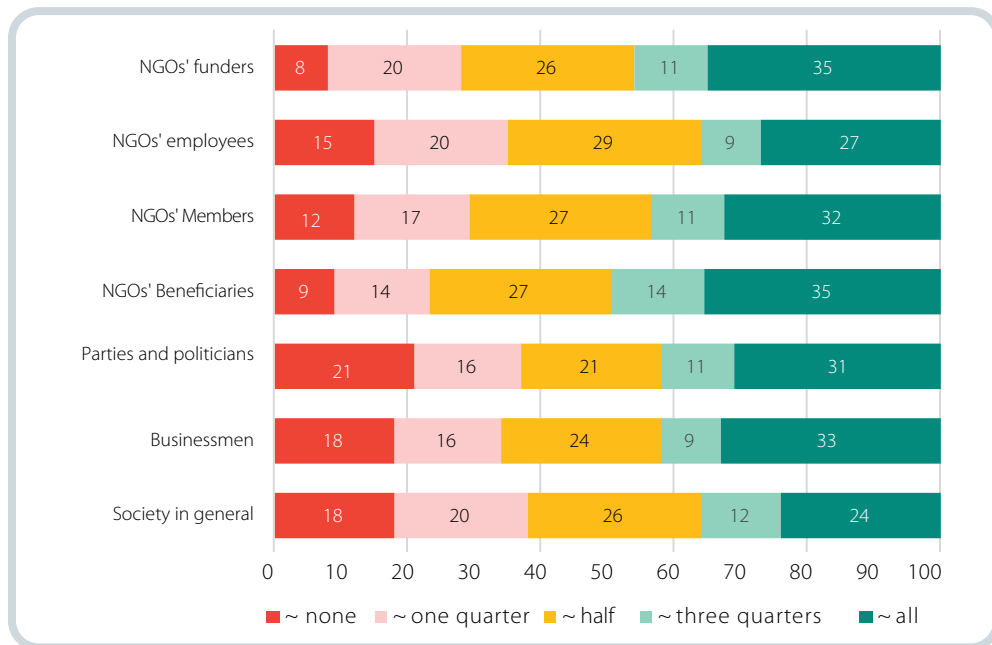
Interests pursued by NGOs

In order to measure the representation regarding the interests pursued by NGOs, we have used the following questionnaire question: How many of the NGOs in Romania do you think primarily pursue their interests...? We have, in turn, asked for an opinion on the following two categories of instances: (1) actors working in relation to NGOs, namely funders, employees, members and, of course, beneficiaries; (2) actors outside NGOs: parties and politicians, businessmen, and society in general. In theory, NGOs could pursue the interests of all these categories of actors. Naturally, we would expect the population to appreciate that most NGOs mainly pursue the interests of the beneficiaries, of society in general, and perhaps, secondarily, the needs of those who finance and operate in the NGO sector. Certainly, we do not want a public image of NGOs characterised by a priority concern for the interests of political and economic actors. Of course, what we measure is not reality but an approximate representation that the population has on the interests supported by the NGO sector. The scale used in this question was an ordinal five-tier and middle variant. Thus, respondents could choose from among the following categories of answers (NGOs mainly pursue the interests of...): almost no NGOs, about a quarter, about a half, about three quarters, almost all NGOs.

Population's perspective

The answers of the population to the question about the interests pursued by NGOs are specified in Figure 30. In this case, the distribution of answers is much more balanced, emphasizing the lack of consensus, of a dominant perspective. Overall, there appears to be an important segment of the population (almost half of it) who considers that the majority of NGOs operate for the interest of the beneficiaries, i.e. the NGO sector (the aim being the reproduction and functioning of the system). About one third of the general population associates the priority interests of NGOs with the interests of parties and politicians and respectively of businessmen.

Figure 30. How many of the Romanian NGOs do you think are mainly pursuing the interests of...?



Source: Analyses based on the data of the BOSCS 2023 survey. Values represent percentages.

The presentation of the answers in this form conceals how the responses are grouped, whether or not alternative representations exist at the population level. Based on the answers to all items we can build a typology of the population, estimate the weight of each type in total, and describe the resulting typology according to different socio-demographic characteristics. We have used the Latent Profile Analysis (LPA), addressing for simplicity the ordinal scale as a metric scale (the distribution of each variable is relatively normal). We have tested several solutions (2-7 profiles), and finally, based on specific criteria (weighting, interpretability, statistical measures, number of cases in total sample), we have kept the solution with four profiles/classes/types.

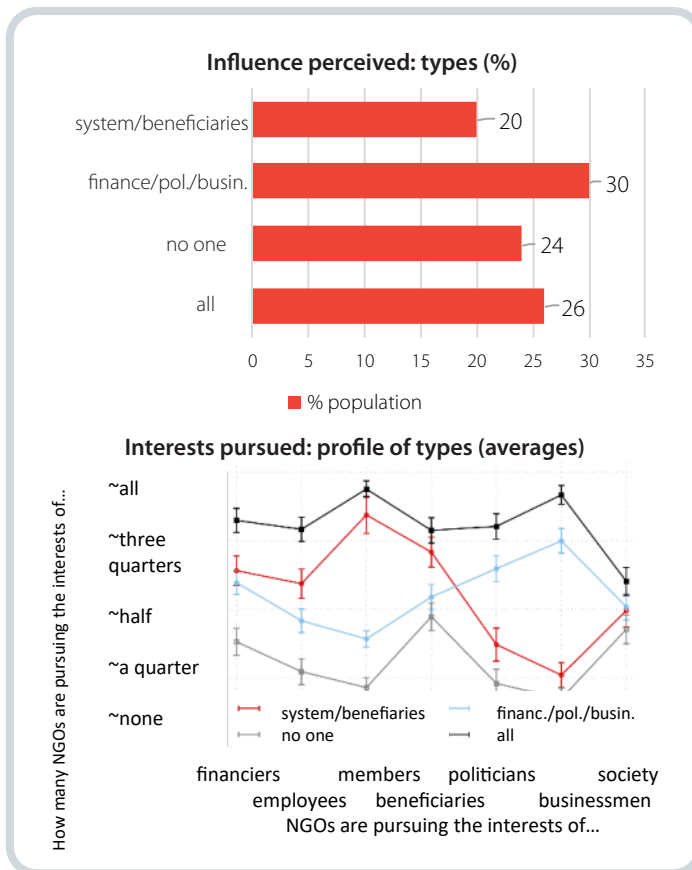
In the first image of Figure 31 there are the four resulting types and their share in the total population. We have labelled each type by taking into account the observed averages of variables used to build the typology. This time there is no dominant type, but four types with a relatively close weight:

- ⦿ The first type, called "interests of the system/beneficiaries", has a share of 20% of the population and is made up of those who consider that most NGOs pursue the interests of beneficiaries alongside with the interests of the NGO sector (funders, employees, members). In the chart on the right we note that the average of the evaluations of the items associated with these actors is close to the response category "about three quarters" of NGOs (red profile).

- The following type, “interests of funders/businessmen/political people”, has a share of 30% of the population and it includes those who consider that NGOs rather pursue the interests of these categories of actors. In the chart on the right we notice that the average of the evaluations of the items associated with these actors is in the area defined by the answer options “about half”/“about three quarters” (light blue profile).
- The third type, “no one’s interests” (24%), includes those who believe that NGOs do not really pursue someone’s interests, somewhat except for beneficiaries and society. In the chart on the right we see that the average evaluations of the associated items is in the “about a quarter” area and increases to “about half” in the case of beneficiaries and society (grey profile).
- The latter type, “everyone’s interests”, includes the 26% of the total population who consider, somewhat non-discriminatory, that the majority of NGOs rather pursue the interests of all categories of actors. We note in the chart on the right that the average of evaluations for all component items is in the area defined by the category “about three quarters” (black profile).

The item about the interests of society is the least discriminatory among types (average values vary very little between profiles). The next power of discrimination is that of pursuing the interests of beneficiaries, while the representation that the majority of NGOs pursue the interests of beneficiaries is quite widespread, regardless of the type.

Figure 31. A typology of the population depending on the representation in terms of interests pursued by NGOs (population data)



Source: Analyses based on data from the BOSC 2023 survey. Reading mode: The LPA leads to four types, of which “all” (those who appreciate that NGOs pursue the interests of all actors) includes 26% of NGOs (the chart on the left). In the right chart, the black line and black circles indicate the averages, for each actor, associated with “all” organisations, on a scale from 1 (none of NGOs) to 5 (all NGOs).

We are interested to see whether the types defined according to the interests pursued by NGOs differ according to a number of socio-demographic characteristics. For this we have used a multi-varied analysis model (multi-nominal logistical regression) and statistically have predicted the composition of the types. Therefore, the values shown in the charts are values predicted on the basis of the model, not values observed in the dataset. The strategy of statistical control and prediction based on a multi-varied model has the advantage that it only identifies real differences, those associated with each variable, unaffected by the rest of the respondents' characteristics.

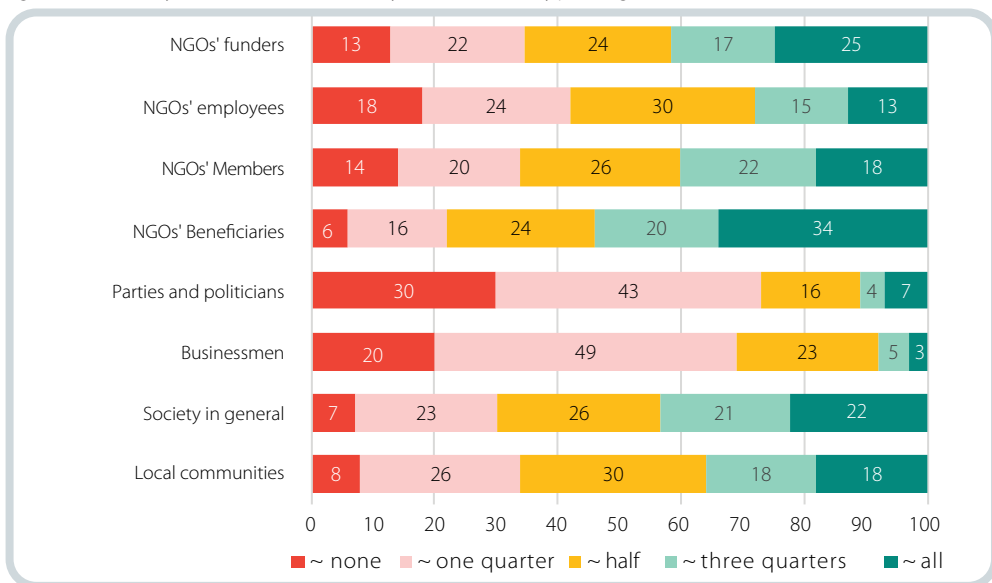
Again, the composition of the four types is rather similar (in terms of the few available socio-demographic features). These analyses are presented in the annexes, and here we mention only the differences where we also have a statistical significance (i.e. there is a good chance – 95% – that these differences will occur again if we resume the survey). We have not noticed statistically significant differences induced by gender, status (salary, pensioner, stay-at-home person), beneficiary status or membership in an NGO in the past or present. Beware, the comments that follow relate to relative differences, not absolute differences. In short, we have found the following differences:

- Age: the incidence of 'beneficiary/system interests' increases as age increases; the incidence of "funders/political people/business people's interests" type decreases as age increases; the incidence of "no-one's interests" is relatively higher in extreme ages.
- Those with low education (maximum secondary school) can be found more often in the case of the "funders/political people/business people's interests".
- Those who are employers or self-employed are less often found in the "all's interests" type.
- Those living in macro-region South are less often found in the "no-one's interests" type and more often in the "funders/political people/business people's interests" type.

Perspective of NGOs' leaders

Answers of NGO leaders to the question on the interests pursued by NGOs are to be found in Figure 32. Naturally, the leaders' perspective of the interests pursued by the sector is somewhat more favourable: a very small part of the leaders believe that most NGOs pursue the interests of business people or politicians, i.e. that they do not primarily pursue the interests of the beneficiaries.

Figure 32. How many of the Romanian NGOs do you think are mainly pursuing the interests of...? (leaders' data)

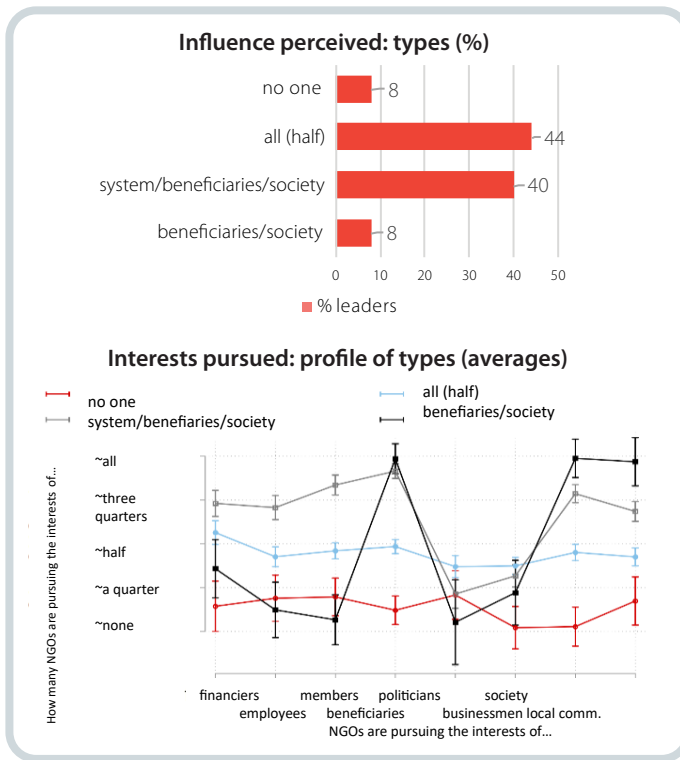


Source: Analyses based on the data from the BLO 2023 survey. Values represent percentages.

In the first image of Figure 33 there are four types resulting from the combination of responses to the previous items, i.e. the share of these types in the total population. We have labelled each type by taking into account the observed averages of variables used to build the typology. We have identified four relatively clearly defined types:

- ① The first type, called “no one’s interests”, has a small ratio (approximately 8%) and is made up of leaders who have a negative perspective on the sector, believing that no more than a quarter of NGOs pursue someone’s interests (no matter who they are). We note in the chart on the right that the average evaluations of these items are close to the answer categories “about none”/“about a quarter” of NGOs (red profile).
- ② The following type, “interests of all (half)”, has a ratio of 44% and includes leaders who consider that about a half of NGOs (of course not the same half) rather pursue the interests of actors indiscriminately. We note in the right chart that the average of the evaluations for these categories is in the area defined by the answer variant “about half” (light blue profile).
- ③ The third type, “interests of the system/beneficiaries/society/local” (40%), includes leaders who consider that the majority of NGOs pursue the interests of actors in the system, beneficiaries and society/local. We note in the chart to the right that the average evaluations of component items (all except businessmen and politicians) is in the area of “about three quarters” (grey profile).
- ④ The last type, “interest of beneficiary/society/locality” (“idealists”), includes the 8% leaders who believe that most NGOs mainly pursue the interests of beneficiaries and society/locality. We note in the chart on the right that the average of the evaluations on the component items is in the area defined by the category “about all” (black profile).

Figure 33. A typology of leaders by their representation in terms of the interests pursued by NGOs (leaders’ data)



Source: Analyses based on data from the BLO 2023 survey. Reading mode: The LPA leads to four types, of which “no one” (those who believe that NGOs do not pursue the interests of any of the actors tested) includes 8% of the leaders (the chart on the left). In the chart on the right, the red line and red circles indicate the averages, for each actor, associated with “no one” leaders, on a scale from 1 (none of the NGOs) to 5 (all NGOs).

We are interested to see whether the types defined according to the interests pursued by NGOs differ with regard to a number of characteristics associated with their leaders and NGOs. For this we have used a multi-varied analysis model (multi-nominal logistical regression) and have statistically predicted the composition of the types. Therefore, the values shown in the charts are values predicted on the basis of the model, not values observed in the dataset. The strategy of statistical control and prediction based on a multi-varied model has the advantage that it only identifies real differences, those associated with each variable, unaffected by the rest of the respondents' characteristics. Unfortunately, the number of leaders who answered questions about interests is quite small (a little over half of the total sample of about 800), so most differences do not cross the threshold of statistical significance.

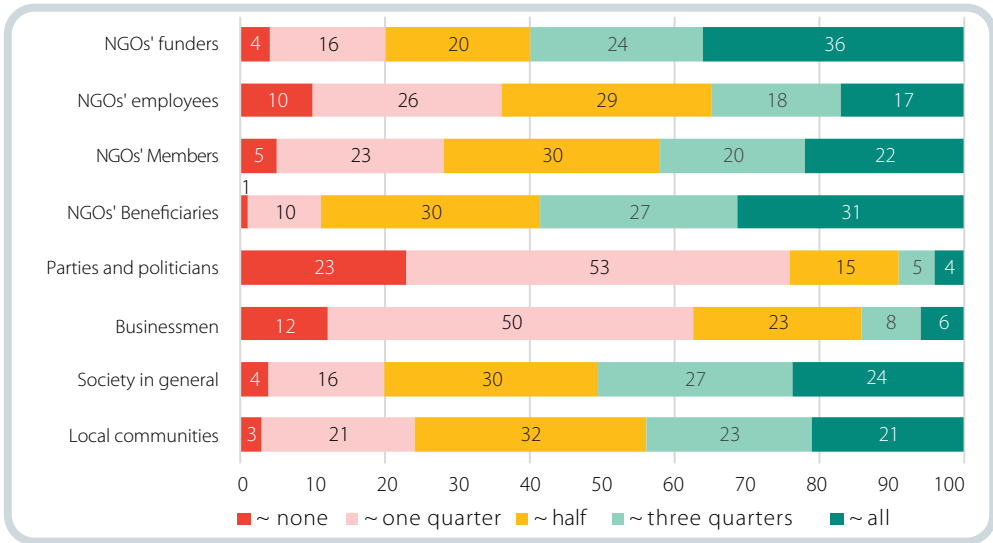
The composition of the four types varies rather slightly depending on different characteristics. These analyses are presented in the annexes, and here we mention only statistically significant differences (i.e. there are high chances – 95% – that these differences will occur again if we resume the survey). We did not notice statistically significant differences caused by age, education, seniority, status (employee, member, volunteer), number of employees, budget size, other fields of activity of NGOs. The following comments refer to relative, not absolute differences. In short, we have found the following differences:

- Gender: women leaders appear relatively more often in the case of the “interests of the system/beneficiaries/society/local” and the male leaders in the “interests of all (half)” type.
- Those who are not employed in the NGO appear more often in the case of “all’s interests (half)”.
- Those who are not members of the NGO appear more often in the case of the type “interests of beneficiary /society/municipality”.
- Those who are part of the Board of Directors of the NGO appear more often in the case of the type “interests of beneficiary /society/municipality”.
- Those who are both entrepreneurs and employers appear more often in the case of the ‘interests of all (half)’ and less often in the case of ‘interests of system /beneficiaries/company/local’.
- Those who are employed only in the NGO and who are part of the NGO with fewer members appear more often in the case of the type “interests of beneficiary /company/locality”.
- Those associated with NGO in the field of human rights appear more often in the case of “interest of beneficiary/society/locality” and relatively less often in the case of “all interests (half)”.
- Those associated with NGO working in the field of resources for other NGOs appear more often in the case of “no one’s interests”.

Perspective of members, employees and volunteers of NGOs

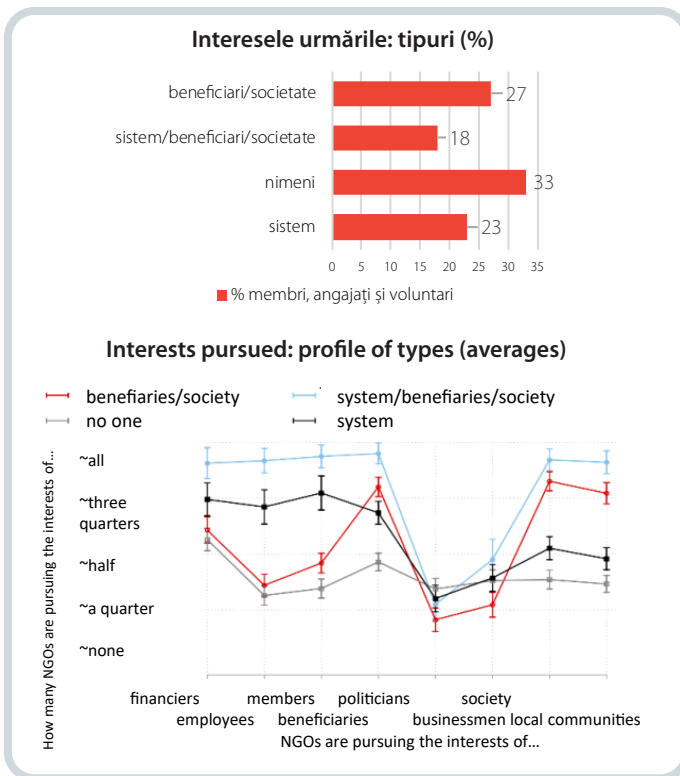
Answers of members and volunteers of NGOs to the question on interests pursued by NGOs are to be found in Figure 34. Naturally, their perspective of the interests pursued by the sector is generally positive: most members and volunteers believe that most NGOs pursue the interests of all actors except businessmen and politicians. Less to be expected is the representation that NGOs pursue almost equally the interests of beneficiaries and NGO funders. Quite likely, this is because members and volunteers believe that the interests of the two parties are actually the same: the funders have as their main interest the interests of the beneficiaries.

Figure 34. How many of the Romanian NGOs do you think are mainly pursuing the interests of...? (members' and volunteers' data)



Source: Analyses based on data from the BMO 2023 survey. Values represent percentages

Figure 35. A typology of leaders by their representation in terms of the interests pursued by NGOs (members, employers and volunteers' data)



Source: Analyses based on data from the BMO 2023 survey. Reading mode: The LPA leads to four types, of which "beneficiaries/society" (those who state that NGOs pursue the interests of beneficiaries, society and local communities) includes 27% of respondents (left chart). In the chart on the right, the red line and red circles indicate the averages, for each actor, associated with respondents in the 'beneficiaries/society' category, on a scale from 1 (none of NGOs) to 5 (all NGOs).

In the first picture in Figure 35 there are four types resulting from the combination of responses to the previous items, i.e. the share of these types in the total population. We have labelled each type by taking into account the observed averages of variables used to build the typology. We have identified four relatively clearly defined types:

- The first type, called “interests of beneficiary/society” (“idealists”), has a share of about 27% and is made up of members and volunteers who look positively at the sector, considering that most NGOs mainly pursue the interests of beneficiaries and society/locality. We note in the chart on the right that the average of the evaluations on the component items is in the area defined by the category “about three quarters” (red profile). The share of this type is significantly higher for members and volunteers as compared to NGO leaders.
- The following type, “interests of the system(s)/beneficiaries/society/local” (18%), includes members and volunteers who consider that the majority of NGOs pursue the interests of the actors in the system, beneficiaries and society/local. We note in the chart on the right that the average evaluations of component items (all except businessmen and politicians) are in the “about three-quarters”/“all” area (light blue profile). The share of this type is significantly lower for members and volunteers as compared to NGO leaders.
- The third type, “no one” (33%), includes members and volunteers who have a negative perspective on the sector, believing that no more than a quarter of NGOs pursue someone’s interests (no matter who they are). We note in the chart on the right that the average of the evaluations on these items is close to the “about half”/“about a quarter” response categories of NGOs (grey profile). The share of this type is significantly higher for members and volunteers as compared to NGO leaders.
- The latter type, the “interests of the system” (23%), includes members and volunteers who believe that most NGOs mainly pursue the interests of actors in the NGO sector. We note in the chart on the right that the average of the evaluations on the component items is in the area defined by the category “about three quarters” (black profile).

Similar to the analyses of the leaders’ responses, we were interested to see if the types defined according to the interests pursued by NGOs differ in terms of a number of characteristics associated with members, employees and volunteers, respectively the NGOs to which they belong. We used exactly the same strategy described above. Unfortunately, the number of members and volunteers who answered questions about interest is relatively small (approximately 400). Very likely, variations in types depending on the characteristics considered are rather modest. As a result, none of the differences tested exceeded the threshold of statistical significance (all charts are presented in the Annex).

Conclusions

At the population level, the majority representation is that NGOs have a positive influence in the case of beneficiaries and neutral in the rest, those who assess that the influence is negative being marginal. The positive impact of NGOs on Romanian freedoms and rights is recognised and appreciated by 41% of citizens. In terms of perceived influence, there are two large segments of citizens: those who consider that, regardless of the aspect considered, NGOs have a neutral influence (46%) and those who consider the influence to be positive (35%). The first segment could be of interest in the case of a long-term public campaign to improve the image of NGOs. The sector could engage in more projects in areas other than those strictly linked to supporting different disadvantaged social groups and/or promote such projects more. In particular, campaigns to raise awareness of the importance and impact of projects on major areas such as: quality of governance, functioning of institutions and quality of the political class, reduction of corruption, modernisation of local and central public administration institutions, efficient and professional functioning of education and health systems, ensuring respect for citizens’ freedoms and rights.

In general, half of the population appreciates that NGOs pursue the interests of beneficiaries and slightly fewer interests of those working in the sector. However, there is an important segment of citizens (30%) who see in the NGO sector a way in which different external social actors (NGO funders, businessmen, parties and politicians) promote and support their personal political and economic interests. The promotion of interests pertaining to the general good, to the proper functioning of society as a whole, is far less visible. A series of public information and awareness campaigns aimed at illustrating how NGOs contribute through their activities to the smooth running of society could help increase the visibility of this action path.

Gladly, the perspective of NGO leaders with regard to the interests pursued by them is relatively more positive as compared to the image of the population. Very few (8%) leaders have a negative image (most NGOs do not follow the interests of any actor), but very few (8%) are "idealists" (most NGOs strictly follow the interests of beneficiaries/society/local). Nearly half of the leaders believe that NGOs pursue the interests of everyone except businessmen and politicians. And about 40% of leaders believe that NGOs pursue the interests of the system/beneficiaries/society/local.

NGO members, employees and volunteers also have a positive perception of the interests pursued by them, even if the share of those who have a divided perspective in terms of NGO interests is quite high (33%). The share of "idealists" (most NGOs strictly pursue the interests of beneficiaries/society/local) is higher as compared to leaders (27% vs. 8%). However, at the same time, the share of those who appreciate a dispersed interest (no one type) is clearly higher for members and volunteers as compared to leaders (33% vs. 8%). Simply put, representations of members, employees and volunteers are more extreme as compared to representations of leaders. In the case of members, employees and volunteers, two other important types are those who believe that NGOs pursue the interests of all except politicians and businesses (18%, significantly less as compared to the leaders – 40%), respectively the interests of the system (funders, employees, members, beneficiaries) (23%).

Involvement of the NGO sector in public policy-making

▶ Ovidiu Voicu

Introduction

In this chapter, we aim to describe the capacity of the NGO sector to participate in decision-making and to engage in the public policy-making, from the perspective of using the legal and institutional tools that associations and foundations have at their disposal.

Conceptual, policy and legislative framework

This chapter assumes that the involvement and participation of citizens in the decision-making justifies the institutional, financial and human resources costs involved. There is a philosophical and pragmatic debate behind this hypothesis, but this discussion goes beyond the purpose of research. Irvin and Stansbury (2004) carry out a detailed analysis of the list of pros and cons of citizens' participation in the decision-making for both parties involved. From the authorities' perspective, the benefits include learning (from informed citizens), legitimacy and conviction of citizens, increasing trust and limiting discontent, overcoming obstacles, avoiding additional costs (e.g. litigations) and, in some cases, better policy decisions. But there are also cons: the process is costly and time-consuming, it can generate frustrations that lead to dissatisfaction and distrust, a loss of decision control occurs, and in some situations worse but popular decisions cannot be avoided. In some cases, decision-makers consider that cons outweigh the pros, and prefer to avoid consultations.

The conceptual framework used is developed by international organisations to which Romania is a party to and which have a particular concern for the development of civil society and for the protection of civic space, respectively the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. This approach has the advantage of incorporating theoretical elements from academic research, NGO contributions and state commitments. In this way, standards are developed that entail the responsibility of governments.

The Conference of International NGOs of the Council of Europe is a body associated with the Council, which implements the recommendations of the Council of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly on the framework for the functioning of non-governmental organisations in the Member States. In June 2007, the Conference of International NGOs was given the responsibility to develop a code or guide of best practices covering mechanisms for the participation of NGOs in decision-making processes and civil society engagement in the preparation of public policies. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe recognised in the CM/Recommendation (2007)14 of October 2007 "the essential contribution made by NGOs to the development and realisation of democracy and human rights, in particular by promoting public awareness, participation in public life and ensuring transparency and accountability of public authorities".

The best practice code for civic participation in the decision-making was adopted by the Conference in 2009 and agreed by the Council of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. The Code makes recommendations for improving the participation of NGOs in all stages of the public policy-making process, on four levels:

- Information (lowest level) – ensuring access to information, including in open formats;

- Consultation – request for the opinions of civil society on a targeted basis and facilitate participation in the decision-making;
- Dialogue – a permanent two-way communication, built on common interests, aimed at ensuring a regular exchange of opinions;
- Partnership (highest level of engagement) – sharing of responsibilities at each stage of the political decision-making process since the establishment of the working agenda, drafting, decision-making and implementation of political initiatives.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has a particular interest in promoting and developing the civic space. This “club” of the most developed economies, which Romania strives to join, included in the standards proposed to its members a living civic space, which allows citizens to obtain as many benefits as possible from economic development.

The OECD defines civic space as a set of legal, political, institutional and practical conditions necessary for non-governmental actors to access information, express themselves, associate, organise and participate in public life. Promoting and protecting civic space represent a prerequisite for good governance and inclusive growth, as well as for effective open governance policies and stakeholder participation initiatives. In the OECD's view, civic space is based on four pillars: civil liberties, involvement of citizens and organisations in the decision-making, the media and digital space freedom, as well as a civil society-favourable environment.

In 2022, as part of the OECD accession process, Romania requested the Organisation to carry out two thematic analyses: *Civic Space Review of Romania and Open Government Review of Romania*. The two reports were published in July 2023 and can be read on the OECD page (ironically, although they were paid by Romania, downloading reports can only be done with payment), at the addresses indicated in the References section.

The OECD recommendations from the two studies will underpin the upcoming *National Open Governance Strategy*. This strategy is the first national public policy document in the last 25 years aimed at increasing citizens' participation in the decision-making. The strategy is a target in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, with a deadline for implementation June 2024, and benefits from consistent funding. The implementation of the project is delayed and public consultations on the Strategy only started in January 2024. The new deadline is October 2024. Once adopted, the Strategy will become the first national policy framework in this area.

Even in the absence of a policy framework, Romania has a legislative framework favourable to citizens' participation in the decision-making, which has remained almost unchanged over the last 20 years. Civil liberties are enshrined in the Constitution and operationalised by several laws. In particular, the following regulations are of interest to the subject matter of this chapter:

- Freedom of assembly (art. 39 of the Constitution) is subject to *Law no. 60/1991 on the organisation and conduct of public assemblies*. Non-governmental organisations are recognised as potential organisers of public meetings.
- The right of association (Art. 40) is regulated specifically for NGOs by *Government Ordinance no. 26/2000 on associations and foundations*. Together with rules on the organisation and functioning of NGOs, they are also recognised as having a special status in the relation with public institutions. Other forms of association, which are not the subject of this research, are regulated by specific normative acts.
- The right to information (art. 31) is directly subject to *Law No. 544/2001 on the free access to information of public interest* and, more recently, to *Law No. 179/2022 on open data and the re-use of public sector information* (the latter, adopted to transpose the similar European Union Directive). NGOs benefit from specific provisions.
- The right of petitions (art. 51) is legislated by *Government Ordinance No. 27/2002 on the regulation of the activity regarding the settlement of petitions*. Legally established associations and foundations are explicitly granted the right to petition.

- The participation of citizens in the decision-making is at the intersection of civil liberties and is regulated by several acts. *Law no. 52/2003 on transparency of the decision-making* sets the general framework for consultation on normative acts and gives an important role to NGOs.
- Several normative acts establish the representation of the NGOs in various public institutions or advisory committees, the most important of which is the Economic and Social Committee (*regulated by Law no. 248/2013 on the organisation and functioning of the Economic and Social Council*), a constitutional body.
- The *2019 Administrative Code* introduced new methods for citizens' participation in the decision-making at local level, namely the zonal representative, citizens' assemblies and citizens' initiative.

As it can be seen, most of these laws were adopted at least two decades ago, when Romania was negotiating its accession to the European Union, and have remained relatively stable throughout this period.

Approach and data sources

The subject of this chapter is the legal and institutional tool deriving from the national legislative and policy framework. We are interested in the actual way in which NGOs use these tools to describe the sectorial ability to influence the public policy-making. There are also other important elements of participation, such as the ability to mobilise citizens or mechanisms for coalition and representation of the sector. They are covered by other chapters of the report.

The proposed model has three dimensions: citizens' expectations, which define the ethical legitimacy of the NGOs' involvement in the public policy-making; the effective use of the tools available; and self-assessment of organisations, through the voice of their leaders. We will mainly use four data sources, each of which provides an insight into the topic examined.

The Barometer of Opinions of the Civil Society, 2023 edition is a data source that allows us to capture citizens' expectations about the role played by NGOs and their mission in society. Because this perspective is discussed extensively in other chapters of this paper, we will briefly review the main indicators.

The annual reports published by ministries and county capital municipalities on transparency of decision-making for 2022 (the most recent year available) are an objective source for the way in which civil society organisations use the legal tools for involvement in the decision-making and in the public policy-making. We downloaded some of the reports from the respective institutions' webpages, and some of them were obtained through the courtesy of the General Secretariat of the Government, following a request for access to information of public interest for research purposes.

The projects proposed for award at the 2023 Public Participation Gala, a traditional event of civil society in Romania, represent empirical evidence for models of effective involvement of NGOs in decision-making processes. I consulted these projects directly on the website of the event (www.galacere.ro).

The Barometer of NGOs' Leaders, the 2023 edition, allows us to describe the sectoral self-assessment in relation to the capacity and methods of involvement in the public policy-making. In some cases, we used the 2016 edition of the NGO Leaders Barometer to illustrate the situation from the respective year. Some methodological precautions are specified in that section. Based on BLO data, we will also propose a profile of resource organisations for public policy.

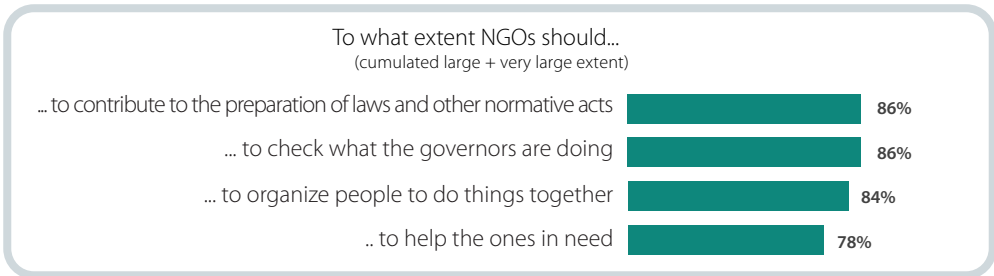
The conclusions of the chapter will relate to the intersection of the three dimensions and the lessons learned from it.

Citizens' expectations

In the Barometer of Opinions of the Civil Society (BOSC) research, we checked citizens' expectations about the role of NGOs in society on four dimensions: solidarity by helping those in need, civic organisation, the participation in the decision-making and monitoring of government activities (the watch-dog role).

For each of these dimensions, the vast majority of respondents consider to a large extent or to a very much extent that NGOs should play a certain role (Figure 36). In particular, the participation in the decision-making ("contributing to the preparation of laws and other normative acts") and the power monitoring ("check what the governors are doing"), the share of those who consider, to a large or very large extent, that non-governmental organisations should play a certain role is 86% of the entire sample. The share is not significantly influenced by the age, gender or level of education of the respondents.

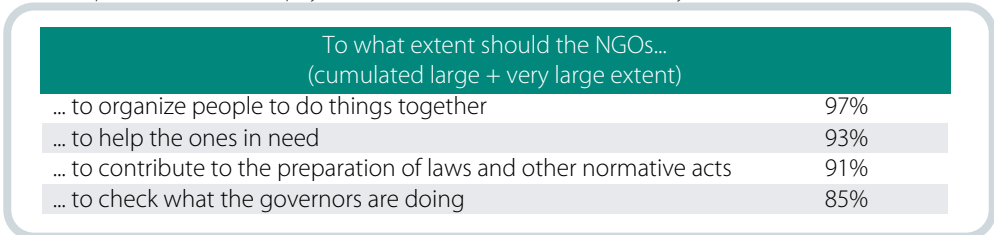
Figure 36 – Citizens' perceptions of the NGOs' roles.



Source: BOSC, 2023. National representative sample, 860 persons. Percentages are calculated from the whole sample, with the possible options being "very large", "largely", "to a small extent", "to a very small extent" and "I do not know".

NGO members, employees and volunteers are still more enthusiastic about involving organisations in all these roles. However, in their case, the hierarchy of roles is reversed. According to BMO 2023 data, citizens' organisation is the first in the view of members, employees and volunteers, a role that 97% of citizens agree with. The role of helping those in need is accepted by 93% of respondents. Policy influencing and watchdog roles are accepted by 91% and respectively by 85% of those who participated in the BMO 2023 research.

Table 25– Opinions of members, employees and volunteers on the NGOs' role in society.

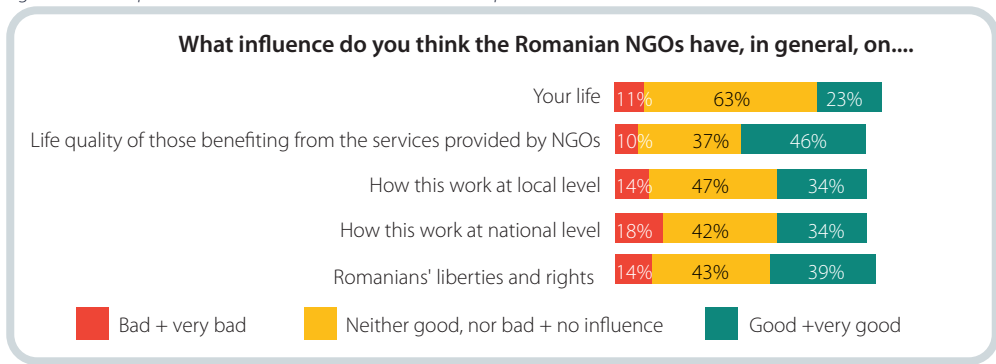


Percentages are calculated from the total sample, with possible options being "very large", "largely", "to a small extent", "to a very small extent", "I don't know" and "I prefer not to answer".

Source: BMO 2023

Perceptions are different when we refer to the real influence of non-governmental organisations. We have measured several indicators (Figure 37) and in general, only about a third of respondents believe that NGOs have a positive influence on some areas of society that reflect involvement in the public policy-making: the way things work at the local or national level, or the freedoms and rights of Romanians. It should be noted that most responses are neutral – "neither good nor bad influence" or "have no influence" – and under one fifth of respondents believe that NGOs have a negative influence.

Figure 37 – Perception of citizens on the NGOs' influence on aspects of life.



Source: BOSCS, 2023. National representative sample, 860 individuals. Differences up to 100% are: I do not know/ I do not answer

In this case, we have also not identified statistically significant differences by gender or education. In exchange, among young people up to 30 years old, the share of those who believe that NGOs influence positively (good or very well) the way things go locally and centrally increases significantly to 50%.

Predictably, the share of those who believe that organisations positively influence the way things work in Romania statistically increases significantly in the case of people who have had direct interactions with the work of an NGO. About 60% of beneficiaries, 50% of donors and 40% of volunteers believe that NGOs positively influence the course of things locally. The figures are similar, within the error margin, for those who think the influence is positive at national level.

Use of legal instruments for participation in the decision-making

Government Ordinance no. 26/2000 on associations and foundations regulates a mechanism whereby public institutions record, upon request, non-governmental organisations in order to involve them in the decision-making process. *Law no. 52/2003 on transparency of the decision-making* binds public institutions to draft and post on their website an annual report assessing citizens' participation in the decision-making. At the same time, the institutions are also bound to forward the report to the General Secretariat of the Government (SGG).

The evaluation reports have a standardised form provided for by the law enforcement rules. The included indicators refer both to the relation with the associative environment, including the number of organisations recorded, as well as to the public debate of draft normative acts. We have extracted information from these reports, which we present below. For the central administration, we have examined the reports published by the ministries, and for the local administration, those of the town halls in the county capital municipalities. The information in the following tables will be understood as follows:

- ① Draft normative acts:
 - under debate – number of drafts publicly debated by the respective institution in 2022. It may be different from the number of drafts adopted.
 - with recommendations received: number of drafts for which the institution has received recommendations from citizens and organisations. The data does not allow the distinction between recommendations submitted by associations and foundations and recommendations submitted by citizens not affiliated to an organisation.

- with accepted recommendations: number of drafts for which the institution included in the final legislative act at least one recommendation received during the public debate.

⊕ Associations and foundations:

- Registered – the total number of associations and foundations recorded by the institution concerned, on the basis of the provisions of GO no. 26/2000.
- Debates requested – number of public debate meetings requested from the respective institution by associations and foundations during 2023.

The publication of the report is mandatory, but there are no sanctions. As it can be seen, some public institutions ignore the provisions of the law: either they do not publish the report at all or do not include all the information. Empty cells in the table are the missing information in the report.

Participation in the local decision-making

Data in Table 26 supports a reasonable suspicion that the municipalities do not have a uniform interpretation of the obligation to submit draft normative acts to public debate. Law No. 52/2003 provides that the transparency rules apply to normative acts of general application. Without going into the details, there is a discussion about which specific Local Council Decisions (HCL) qualify to be of general application.

Another discussion is about the individual or normative nature of an administrative act. For example, many municipalities consider that the DLC for the Detailed Urban Plans (PUD) or even Zonal Urban Plans (PUZ) are administrative acts of individual character and not of a normative character, so they are not subject to public debate. This results in very large differences among the number of drafts subject to public debate by different town halls. Even if these draft normative acts are of interest to a small number of people and organisations, they must be subject to public debate. However, different reporting may lead to misinterpretations. Therefore, we have excluded the municipalities that had reported a very large number of normative acts subject to public debate, namely over 300 when we have calculated the aggregated indicators from Table 27. We also excluded municipalities that did not report complete data (no information on the number of recommendations received).

Table 26 – Information extracted from the evaluation reports for enforcement of Law no. 52/2003 on transparency of the decision-making, in 2022, published by the county capital municipalities

Municipality	Draft normative acts			Associations and foundations	
	Under debate	With recommendations received	With recommendations accepted	Registered	Number of required debates
Alba-Iulia	108	5	3	0	0
Arad	64	10	4	12	0
Pitești	26	3	2	0	0
Bacău	24	2	2	0	0
Oradea	1422	1	1	0	0
Bistrița	23	1	0	5	0
Botoșani	<i>(it has not published the report for the year 2022)</i>				
Brașov	17	6	3	0	2
Brăila	11	0	0	55	0
Buzău	45	7	4	0	0
Reșița	12	0	0	0	0
Călărași	93	0	0	0	0
Cluj-Napoca	969			0	0
Constanța	227			0	0
Sf. Gheorghe	58	10	7	1	0
Târgoviște	49	0	0	0	0
Craiova	21	21	21	0	0
Galați	11	3	2	96	2
Giurgiu	27	0	0	0	0
Tg. Jiu	36	2	2	0	1
Miercurea-Ciuc	<i>(it has not published the report for the year 2022)</i>				
Deva	40	1	1	0	0
Slobozia	21	1	0	4	0
Iași	<i>(it has not published the report for the year 2022)</i>				
Baia-Mare	27	1	1	120	0
Drobeta Tr.-Severin	<i>(it has not published the report for the year 2022)</i>				
Tg. Mureș	98	4	4	0	1
Piatra Neamț	58	11	2	89	1
Slatina	10	0	0	0	0
Ploiești	34	0	0	40	0
Satu-Mare	61	1	0	0	0
Zalău	32	1	1	5	0
Sibiu	19	19	3	143	0
Suceava	11	0	0	0	0
Alexandria	12	0	0	0	0
Timișoara	370	10	10	14	3
Tulcea	21	2	1	117	0
Vaslui	<i>(it has not published the report for the year 2022)</i>				
Rm. Vâlcea	382	0	0	0	0
Focșani	29	2	2	0	0
Bucharest	42	31	10	711	4
Sector 1	<i>(it has not published the report for the year 2022)</i>				
Sector 2	8			0	1
Sector 3	26			0	0
Sector 4	363			0	0
Sector 5	258	0	0	0	0
Sector 6	329	0	0	0	0

Table 27 – Aggregated indicators for participation of associations and foundations in the local decision-making, in 2022. Calculations based on reports published by county capital municipalities.

Indicator	Value	Observations
Share of draft legislative acts for which recommendations have been submitted	10%	Number of town halls included in the calculation: 32
Share of draft legislative acts that included recommendations received during the consultation	5%	Number of town halls included in the calculation: 32
Share of draft normative acts for which public debate meetings were organised upon the request of civil society	1%	Number of town halls included in the calculation: 32
Total number of associations and foundations recorded	1.412	Number of town halls included in the calculation: 41 711 are recorded with Bucharest Town Hall

Participation in the central decision-making

Table 28 – Information extracted from evaluation reports for enforcement of Law no. 52/2003 on the transparency of the decision-making, in 2022, published by ministries

Ministry	Draft normative acts			Associations and foundations	
	Under debate	With recommendations received	With recommendations accepted	Registered	Required debates
Agriculture	146	37	33	0	27
Defence	33	6	3	55	0
Research	70	30	21	0	1
Culture	46	6	4	0	1
Development	208			1	6
Economy	13	0	0	0	0
Education	97			0	2
Energy	64			0	0
External	30	2	1	0	0
Family	23	24	11	6	0
Finance	142	0	0	0	1
Funds	47	13	12	0	0
Internal	99	69	14	5	4
Justice	59	11	6	1	4
Environment	241	29	25	12	5
Labour	90			0	9
Health	193			0	6
SGG	30	14	5	1	4
Transports	281	16	16	0	5

Table 28 repeats the analysis, focusing this time on the central level. Even though all ministries in the current Government published the evaluation reports, five of them did not include all the data provided by the legal framework. We excluded them from the calculation of the aggregated indicators presented in Table 29.

Table 29 - Aggregated indicators for participation of associations and foundations in the local decision-making, in 2022. Calculations based on reports published by ministries.

Indicator	Value	Observations
Share of draft legislative acts for which recommendations have been submitted	20%	Number of ministries included in the calculation: 14
Share of draft legislative acts that included recommendations received during the consultation	12%	Number of ministries included in the calculation: 14
Share of draft normative acts for which public debate meetings were organised upon the request of civil society	4%	Number of ministries included in the calculation: 14
Total number of associations and foundations recorded	81	Number of ministries included in the calculation: 19

Non-governmental organisations currently use at least two other legal instruments to participate in the decision-making: hearings and petitions. However, the authorities' reports do not provide sufficient information on the use of these tools to be able to analyse the data.

Through hearings, NGO representatives meet directly with decision-makers to present their proposals and points of view. The audience is defined strictly within a legal framework and refers to the activities of the heads of institutions or elected dignitaries. In a broader sense, we can also talk about other types of direct meetings, which are not necessarily hearings in the legal sense. We include, for example, invitations to consultations or meetings within public events. There is a legal instrument that should record such meetings. The Single *Registry of Transparency of Interests (RUTI)* was introduced for testing in 2015-2016, and regulated by the *National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2016-2020*. Decision-makers should specify in RUTI all the meetings they have, with various interest groups. However, RUTI remained an optional activity, only for the central authorities. The use rate has decreased from year to year and is not a relevant source.

The petition has been regulated since 2002 by *Government Ordinance No. 27/2002 on the regulation of petition settlement activity*. The law also recognises the right of non-governmental organisations to initiate petitions on behalf of the communities they represent. The normative act lays down the obligations of the authorities for the settlement of petitions. However, there is no obligation to report on a regular basis on the petitions-related work. Some authorities make public the reports voluntarily, but rarely differentiate between petitions initiated by citizens and those initiated by associations and foundations. Therefore, there is insufficient information to objectively assess the degree of use of the petition by NGOs.

Empirical evidence: what does success mean?

The reports of public institutions provide objective indicators on the involvement of NGOs in the public policy process using legal instruments. There are other sector-specific mechanisms, mainly based on the organisation of citizens, through which the same goal can be achieved. However, there is no systematic statistical measurement of these mechanisms. Instead, we can analyse empirical evidence from the self-organisation of the sector.

The Public Participation Awards Gala (G3P) is a traditional event organised by CeRe: Centrul de Resurse pentru Participare Publică - Resource Centre for Public Participation. In 2023, the G3P reached the 13th edition. In itself, the longevity of the event advocates its role as a barometer of public participation. Other arguments are the relatively high interest of NGOs – annually between 30 and 60 projects are enrolled – and the fact that the award-winning organisations proudly refer to the prizes received in presentation materials and annual reports.

Between 2009 and 2023 13, annual editions were organised (except for 2020, in which the Gala was

cancelled due to the pandemic). In total, 168 public participation projects were awarded, as shown by the official page of the event, www.galacere.ro.

For 2023, the reference year of this research, 30 projects were submitted in the competition. We have classified the projects submitted by proposing a typology that combines the purpose and type of action (Table 30). Most of them (12) aimed at convincing the authorities to invest in certain public space facilities, including buildings. Four projects enrolled aimed at organising citizens in order to do certain actions together, and to influence public policies at local and central level. Two investigation journalism projects have been submitted and even awarded, one of which is from the Republic of Moldova. One project aimed to bind the authorities to do their duty, and consisted primarily of a court action.

Table 30 – Types of projects enrolled with the Gala of Public Engagement Awards 2023.

Gala of Public Engagement Awards 2023		
Type of project	Projects enrolled	Projects awarded
Convincing the authorities to invest in certain public space facilities (including infrastructure and buildings)	12	3
Organisation of citizens for joint actions (carried out by citizens)	4	2
Influencing public policies at central level	4	3
Influencing public policies at local level	4	3
Convincing authorities to engage in partnerships (with NGOs) to provide services	3	1
Investigative journalism	2	2
Litigation – legal actions to compel authorities to do their duty	1	0
TOTAL	30	14

Typology based on data from the event official page, www.galacere.ro

Looking at the projects enrolled in the G3P 2023 competition, we can see the natural inclination of NGOs to mobilise citizens. Petitions, letters, public meetings and other similar are methods we encounter in almost all projects (the only exception is the project that concerned a court action, but this is a very specific case).

The projects aimed at arranging public spaces were implicitly or explicitly based on a type of needs analysis, with varying degrees of complexity, depending on the specificity of the project. The simplest analyses merely showed the immediate need, especially when it comes to infrastructure, and/or the direct benefits of a target group. In a few cases, more complex analyses addressed the issue of costs and eventual priorities of investment.

A similar structure, from the perspective of methods, was that of the projects that aimed at convincing the authorities to engage in partnerships (with NGOs) to provide services. In all cases, these organisations already had, at least theoretically, the capacity to provide the services, but they needed the cooperation of the authorities, whether administrative or fiscal.

Projects aimed at drafting local or national public policies included in all cases policy documents in various forms. They also called on legal instruments from the civic spectrum: access to information, transparency in the decision making and, in at least two cases, court proceedings.

Investigation journalism projects have their specificity and differ from all others. First of all, they were run by editorial offices, not by NGOs. Then, they did not intend to directly alter the behaviour of the authorities, or to determine them to make a specific decision, but instead they sought to show the facts and their impact on society. Exposing illegal practices prompted authorities to take legal action.

Self-assessment of NGOs' leaders

The information in this section mainly uses research data from Barometer of NGOs' Leaders (BLO), the 2016 and 2023 editions. We remind that both surveys are based on convenience samples. The main hypothesis is that rather the organisations more active, including in the civic space, have responded to the questionnaire so they are overrepresented.

For the 2023 edition, the correlation with other datasets allowed for a better weighting. We believe that the data is closer to the profile of Romanian associations and foundations. The same cannot be said for the 2016 edition. That is why 2016 data is included for an illustrative purpose and we will not resort to comparisons over time.

Some questions were formulated slightly differently in the 2023 edition to allow for more precise answers. Therefore, some aggregated responses are not available for the 2016 edition. In these cases, the cells in the tables remained empty. More information on the datasets can be found in the methodological section of the report.

● Activity at local or national level

When discussing participation in the public policy-making process, the level at which organisations have an interest in working is relevant. For example, we do not expect a local organisation to try to interact frequently with national authorities.

From the organisations that participated in the research, 67% said they work (also) at local or county level, involving the interaction with the respective authorities. We will continue to refer to them as predominantly local organisations.

47% of respondents are active at national, European or international level, and in their case we expect activities including central authorities. We will refer to this group of predominantly national organisations.

There is, of course, an overlapping of the two groups: 24% of the entire sample are organisations operating at both levels.

● Collaboration with public institutions

Half of the leaders of the organisations that responded to the BLO 2013 said they worked directly on projects with public institutions, and they were either partners (21%) or beneficiaries (6%), or both – both partners and beneficiaries (23%). With these responses, the surveyed leaders show to a strong tendency of partnership with public institutions.

Far fewer organisations (18%) report having used the two key legal tools for civic engagement: requests for information (Law no. 544/2001) and requests for meetings for public debates on normative acts (Law no. 52/2003). There is a clear preference for L544, which 16% of respondents used, in comparison with only 9% for L52 (some organisations used both).

Table 31 – Interactions between NGOs and public institutions: collaborations for projects and formal requests.

Interactions reported with public institutions					
Collaboration in projects			Formal requests		
	2023	2016		2023	2016
Only partners	21%	48%	At least one request for access to information (L544)	8%	9%
Only beneficiaries	6%	16%	At least one request for a public debate (L52)	1%	2%
Partners and beneficiaries	23%		Both	8%	10%
No collaboration	50%	36%	No request	82%	79%

Sources: BLO 2023, 2016.

The existence of a form of collaboration with a public institution correlates with an increase in the capacity of the organisation to use legal instruments. The share of organisations that have used at least one of the two mentioned laws decreases to 71% among those that have a partnership with an

● Initiated proposals and contributions required for the public policy-making

About a quarter of organisations say they have initiated public policy proposals. As expected, slightly more organisations have initiated proposals at local level. Less than 10% of all organisations have had such initiatives not only local and county level, but also at central level.

Table 32 – Ratio of organisations that have initiated public policy proposals.

Organizations that have initiated public policy proposals					
(from the total sample per each category)			(single)		
	2023	2016		2023	2016
Local	17%	13%	Only local and county	12%	11%
County	15%	4%	Only national	7%	14%
National - Parliament	13%		Both	9%	4%
National - executive authorities	14%	18%	None	72%	71%

Sources: BLO 2023, 2016.

Among organisations working at national level, the share of those who initiated proposals (at all levels) increases significantly, to 36%, as compared to 28% for the whole sample.

Although the share of organisations initiating public policy proposals is relatively small, most of them were at least partially successful. For proposals initiated to local authorities, central executive authorities or Parliament, the success rate, partial or total, is around 70%. The success rate is somewhat lower, at 48%, for county authorities. All these percentages are calculated for organisations that have initiated proposals.

Table 33 – Successful public policy proposals initiated by NGOs.

Have public policy proposals been reflected in the final decision adopted by the authorities?				
	(ratio of organisations that have initiated proposals)			
	Yes, completely	Yes, to a certain extent	Pending decision	No
Local	12%	54%	11%	11%
County	10%	38%	13%	28%
National - Parliament	8%	62%	12%	10%
National - executive authorities	11%	60%	7%	16%

Source: BLO 2023. Differences up to 100% are non-answers.

Looking from the perspective of public institutions, 30% of organisations say they have been contacted by at least one institution for consultation on their proposals. Also 19% of organisations have been contacted by other civil society bodies for consultations. Changes in the figures as compared to 2016 actually do not exist.

Table 34 – Organizations reached out by other stakeholders for consultations on public policy proposals.

Organizations reached out by the authorities for consultations					
(from the total sample by each category)			(single)		
	2023	2016		2023	2016
National public authority	12%	13%	Only local and county authorities	10%	11%
Ministry	13%	16%	Only national and regional counties	8%	15%
Regional bodies	4%	5%	Both types of authorities	11%	10%
County Council	13%	8%	None	70%	65%
Local Council/ Town hall	20%	17%			
Other non-governmental organisations	19%	34%			
Federations, platforms or networks of NGOs	22%	32%			
Other stakeholders	4%	3%			

Sources: BLO 2023, 2016.

Predominantly national organisations (as defined in this section) are more often contacted by authorities for consultations. 38% of them mentioned this, as compared to 26% among predominantly local organisations. It is interesting to note that 23% of predominantly national organisations say they have also been contacted by local or county authorities.

Table 35 – Ratio of organisation reached out by the authorities depending on the level at which they work.

Organizations contacted by the authorities for consultations		
	Mainly local NGOs	Mainly national NGOs
Only local and county authorities	12%	10%
Only national and regional authorities	5%	15%
Both types of authorities	9%	13%
None	74%	62%

Source: BLO 2023

● The call for justice

Only 8% of organisations responding to the BLO 2023 survey say they have started legal proceedings against public authorities. The number of disputes against local authorities is slightly higher, but at the limit of statistical significance as compared to the number of disputes against central authorities. The questionnaire did not include information on the subject matter of these disputes.

Table 36 – Organizations which have started legal proceedings against public authorities.

Organizations that have started legal proceedings against the authorities					
(from total sample per each category)			(single)		
	2023	2016		2023	2016
Local authorities	7%	8%	Only local authorities	4%	5%
National authorities	4%	7%	Only national authorities	1%	3%
			Both	3%	4%
			None	92%	88%

Sources: BLO 2023, 2016.

As expected, predominantly national organisations have a greater capacity to start legal proceedings against the authorities. 12% say they have done so, as compared to only 7% of predominantly local organisations.

● Methods for promoting the position towards public policies

When asked about the methods they frequently use to inform on their messages and position on public policy, NGO leaders indicated primarily public outreach tools: communicating with and mobilising their members (46%), press releases (21%) and publishing research and reports (17%). A much smaller number said they frequently use direct advocacy tools: hearings with decision-makers (10%), or attending meetings of the Local Council (4%), Parliament (2%) or County Council (1%).

Table 37 – Frequently used methods to inform on the messages and position towards public policies.

Methods used for promoting public policy proposals (from the total sample per each category)		
	Frequently	Infrequently
Communication with and mobilization of own members	46%	11%
Press releases	21%	31%
Publication of research / reports/ data	17%	27%
Other methods	11%	9%
Hearings at / hearing with relevant public decision-makers	10%	25%
Attending local council meetings	4%	23%
Organization of demonstrations	2%	13%
Attending Parliamentary sessions	2%	16%
Attending county council meetings	1%	8%

Percentage of total sample. The question used was "How often does your organisation use each of the following methods to inform on its public policy messages and position?" with the response options "never", "rarely", "frequently" and "I do not know". Sources: BLO 2023, 2016

As shown by the data in Table 37, a variable share of organisations responded that they "rarely" use each of the methods listed. We interpreted this response as a lack of a current practice of systematically engaging in a dialogue on public policy issues. We therefore consider relevant to the topic of this chapter the share of NGOs that frequently uses the tools mentioned.

For this indicator, there are no statistically significant differences between predominantly national and predominantly local organisations. Naturally, national organisations attend more often Parliament sessions and local organisations more often Local Council meetings. However, the shares for these types of activities are too low across the sample to allow comparisons.

Resource organisations for public policies

We will define resource organisations for public policies as being those NGOs meeting the criteria described in Table 38. They account for 19% of the organisations that have responded to BLO 2023 questionnaire.

Table 38 – Definition of resource organisation for public policies.

Indicator	Condition
Collaborate with the public institutions	Have had public institutions as partners or beneficiaries
Initiate public policies	Have made public policy proposals or recommendations during public debates, at any level whatsoever
Use legal instruments for being engaged in the decision-making	Have requested information of public interest or called for public debates on legislation or have started legal proceedings against public authorities
Are considered resource organisations by public institutions	Have been asked for their opinion by a public institution at any level on a normative act or public policy

The proposed definition takes into account citizens' expectations of NGO activity, models of success based on empirical evidence, and legal instruments in the sphere of civic space.

Here are some features that differentiate public policy resource organisations (PPROs) from other survey respondents

- The following areas are better represented: civic, advocacy, influencing public policy (11% of PPRO vs. 4% of the total sample); social (20% vs. 12%) and environmental (8% vs. 4%).
- Less represented is the field of education (8% as compared to 15%).
- 60% of the PPROs work predominantly at national level or above, as compared to 47% of the whole sample.
- They have more stable financial resources. 56% of the PPROs say that resources have covered at least 76% of needs in 2022, as compared to 36% of the whole sample. For 2023 (recall that data was collected at the end of the year), 69% of PPROs have attracted at least 51% of planned resources, as compared to only 49% of the whole sample.
- Manage larger budgets. In 2022, 22% of PPROs had budgets above RON 2,500,000 and 12% above RON 450,000 (7% and respectively 10% of the total sample).
- They have more employees: an average of 19 employees for PPROs, as compared to 5 employees for the whole sample.
- In general, they report that they pay higher salaries (with the observation that 45% of the respondents, a similar percentage for PPROs, have preferred not to answer this question).

Interestingly, there are no statistically significant differences in age between the resource organisations for public participation and the whole sample. This can be explained by the fact that, in general, senior organisations have participated in the research rather than new organisations.

Conclusions

● Citizens' expectations: an unfulfilled potential

Romanian citizens show strong support for the four roles of NGOs in Romania: influencing public policy (86% support), watchdog (86%), citizens' organisation (84%) and social solidarity (78%). NGOs therefore enjoy increased legitimacy to act in all these areas.

At the same time, however, citizens are much more reserved when assessing the impact of the work of associations and foundations on the way things work in Romania. Only one in five Romanians believe that NGOs have a positive influence on their lives, although 46% believe that organisations have a positive influence on the lives of those they directly help. About a third of the population believe that NGOs have a positive influence on the way things work at local or national level, or on citizens' rights and freedoms.

The data reveal an important difference between the expectation out of principle that NGOs make a significant contribution and the assessment of direct influence. For those who have interacted directly with NGOs (beneficiaries, volunteers, donors, more knowledgeable people), the share of those who believe that the influence is positive increases, but does not exceed 50%. This proves that a communication and information effort helps, but, at least for the moment, it is insufficient.

A significant problem is the existence of a category of citizens, between 10% and 20% of the population, who believe that NGOs have a negative influence. The topic of the sector overview is addressed in other chapters of the report.

- NGOs should make a greater effort both to fulfil all four roles and to communicate directly with citizens about their work.
- Authorities should invest in public meeting spaces, both physical and online, between citizens and organisations. In this way they will respond to the legitimate demand for NGO sector engagement and benefit from the expertise and energies of this sector.

● Very low participation in the formal decision-making

The implicit assumption of the analysis is that NGOs are a legitimate participant in the public policy-making. This does not mean that they are the most important participant. Both principally and legally, public institutions are the main initiator of policy and legislation, as a direct effect of their mission in society. Public institutions are the originators of not only most, but also the most important decisions.

In 2022, only 20% of legislation subject to public debate by ministries received recommendations from civil society, and only 12% were also improved following the debate. At the local level, only 10% of legislation subject to debate received recommendations, and only 5% included some recommendations in the final form.

It is natural that not all normative acts be of broad interest and many are technical or even well written, requiring no interventions. On the other hand, there is widespread dissatisfaction with the quality of law-making at all levels. The absence from the dialogue meeting represents a major missed opportunity offered by the legislative framework.

The poor participation of NGOs also contributes to a decline in mutual trust and greatly lowers the expectations of public institutions. If in most cases the public debate phase does not bring any actual results, institutions will tend to consider it useless and time-consuming, and will avoid investing resources in this phase. The result is a vicious circle of mutual mistrust.

But there is also an optimistic outlook. The majority of organisations that responded to the BLO 2023 questionnaire and that have had public policy initiatives say that they have been at least partially successful at all levels. We can assume that in principle we are talking about issues that have been brought up or promoted by NGOs on the agenda of decision-makers. The empirical evidence of successful projects entered in the Public Participation Gala supports this assumption. Most of these proposals concern proposals that NGOs have brought to the attention of decision-makers.

- NGOs interested in playing a role in the public policy-making should strategically invest time in monitoring public debates and systematic and consistent participation in them.
- Funders should allocate resources to support monitoring efforts. This should include both staff training and a long-term perspective (at least one election cycle) that is not necessarily conditional on immediate success.
- Public authorities should be the ones to break the vicious circle of mistrust by pro-active measures to motivate civil society participation in the decision-making, beyond the formal and minimal application of legal rules. This is a long-term investment in getting the expertise and energies of society.

● Citizens' organisation: a strength insufficiently converted into strategic tools

NGOs show a clear predilection for the role of mobilising and organising citizens. This is revealed by all the data sources analysed: opinions of members, employees and volunteers; evidence from successful projects; responses from NGO leaders on the methods of action and communication used.

At the same time, in 2022, NGOs requested public debate meetings for only 1% of the normative acts initiated by municipalities in county capital municipalities, and for only 4% of that initiated by ministries. The organisation of meetings is mandatory when requested by a legally established association or foundation, and as many citizens as wish can register. The authorities can ignore letters, collective petitions, or even demonstrations under the institution's window. It is much harder for decision-makers to look a large number of voters right in the eye and say "no" at a public meeting.

In general, NGOs are reluctant to use the legal instruments at their disposal, even though less than 10% of their leaders say they are unaware of the legal provisions. This observation also applies to the access to information and referring matters to the law court.

One possible explanation is the difficulty of administrative and judicial dispute resolution paths. This is also determined by the fact that the laws are old, which can most likely be improved, including the use of new technologies. Without going into details which are not the subject matter of the research, we would point out that there have been calls for such improvements to legislation for some time, and even drafts have been submitted for debate in Parliament.

- NGOs should strive to understand and apply the legislative instruments at their disposal.
- The Parliament should make it a priority to review the laws that operationalise civil liberties, to update them in line with the technological progress and to remove the constraints documented over time.
- NGOs should pay greater attention to mobilising citizens to participate directly in public debate meetings organised by public institutions on normative acts of interest to them.

● The way from collaboration to dialogue and partnership

Half of the NGOs responding to the BLO2023 survey say they have some form of collaboration with public institutions. We do not have detailed information on these collaborations, although empirical evidence indicates that they are more ad hoc, project or area-based, rather than systemic forms of dialogue and partnership in the sense defined by international best practices (see, for example, the Council of Europe's Code of Best Practices). In any case, this collaboration is an important resource that can be developed.

On the other hand, the annual reports of the city halls of the county capital municipalities show that, by the end of 2022, only 1,412 organisations had been registered, upon request, half of them at the Bucharest City Hall. In the same period, only 81 organisations had applied for registration with a ministry. Even if we can suspect that the reporting is not very accurate (especially of ministries), the trend is clear and the number very low.

Registration is a particularly powerful tool, regulated by specific legislation on associations and foundations. It implies clear obligations for authorities to pro-actively consult registered organisations, and it is the first step towards systematic dialogue.

At the same time, the BLO 2023 research reveals the existence of a category of NGOs that are significantly more involved and able to participate in the public policy-making. We have called them resource organisations for public participation and we find them at both national and local level across all regions of the country. Even if they have a higher presence in some fields of activity, they are not missing from any of them.

- ① NGOs should constantly (re)learn and use the fundamental mechanisms of dialogue with public institutions.
- ① Authorities should simplify the use and popularise the existence of the same mechanisms. In addition, local authorities should better inform about the new mechanisms introduced by the Administrative Code.
- ① Funders should identify and actively support resource organisations for public participation, preferably through long-term institutional funding.

Practices and evaluations regarding the monitoring and evaluation of projects

▶ Mircea Comşa & Irina Niţă

In recent decades, the impact assessment of projects has become a natural companion to the postmodern tendency to delegate to NGOs some of the interventions that once belonged to the State. (Baños Smith, 2006; Hailey & James, 2003; Lai & Hamilton, 2020; Yu & McLaughlin, 2013). This chapter is a natural consequence of these concerns and presents a number of attitudes and practices regarding project monitoring and evaluation as they emerge from the statements of NGO representatives (leaders, members, employees, volunteers). The survey data collected is used to build a series of typologies of NGOs according to their practices with regard to monitoring and evaluation of projects carried out.

Representations regarding the usefulness and role of project monitoring and evaluation activities

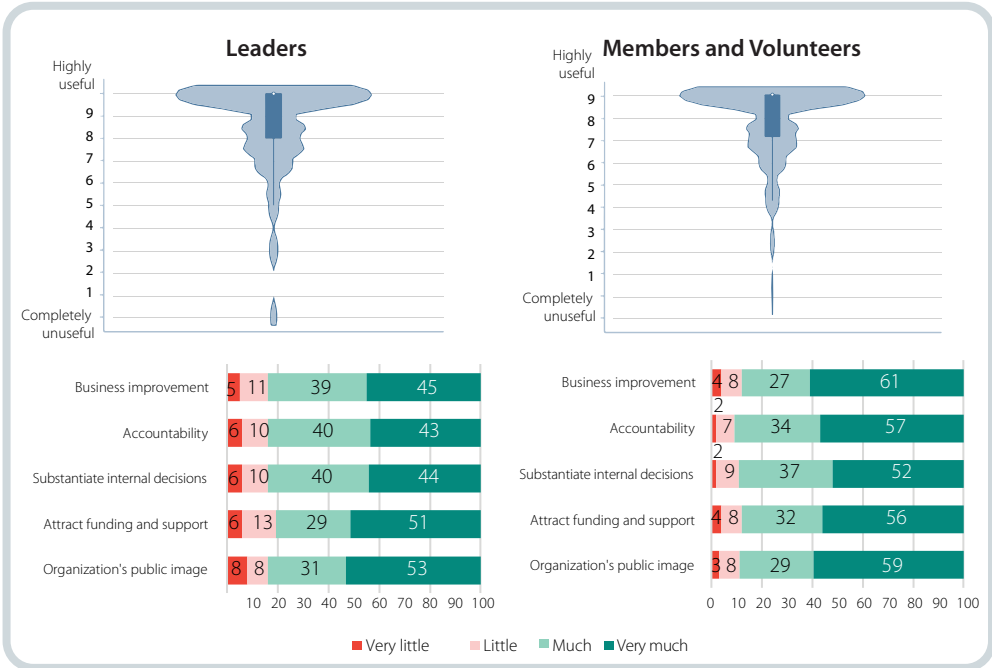
The discussion in this section is based on the survey data collected from two populations of interest: NGO leaders (BLO 2023 survey) and NGO members, employees and volunteers (BMO 2023 survey). Thus, the two types of respondents were asked about the usefulness of the impact assessment of programmes or projects in general and in particular (different specific aspects). The questions used were as follows:

- ① In your opinion, on a scale from 0 to 10, how useless or useful is the impact assessment of projects/programmes?
- ① Thinking about the specific nature of your organisation, do you think that impact assessment of projects contributes to ...?
 - Business improvement
 - Ensure accountability towards stakeholders (accountability)
 - Substantiate internal decisions
 - Attract funding and support
 - Public image of the organisation

As it can be seen (Figure 38), the responses of the two populations concerned are almost identical. Half of the respondents consider the impact assessment of projects to be extremely useful (choosing a score of 10 on a scale from 0 = completely useless to 10 = extremely useful). Moreover, almost 90% give a score of at least 7.

This extremely positive assessment also appears when assessing the contribution of the impact assessment on the dimensions considered (Figure 38). Of those who gave a valid answer (depending on the item, 7-9% of leaders refused to answer or said they could not assess), 80-90% consider that impact assessment activities make a great and very great contribution, regardless of the dimension under consideration: improving the NGO's activities, accountability to stakeholders, substantiating internal decisions, attracting funding and support, or the NGO's public image. In the case of members and volunteers, evaluations tend to be slightly more positive.

Figure 38. Representations regarding the usefulness and the role of project monitoring and appraisal activities



Source: Analyses based on the data from the BLO 2023 and BMO 2023 surveys. Values in the charts located on the second row represent percentages.

Project monitoring and evaluation: discussions, allocated resources, implementation

In order to measure intentions and practices regarding project monitoring and evaluation, the questionnaire to NGO leaders included the following question:

Please think of the last THREE projects carried out by the NGO in which you work. In how many of these projects was the question of...?

- ... internally monitoring the activities carried out in the project
- ... quantifying the number of products, services, etc. actually carried out in the project
- ... evaluating short/medium-term changes in the project beneficiaries
- ... assess long-term changes at the project beneficiaries' level

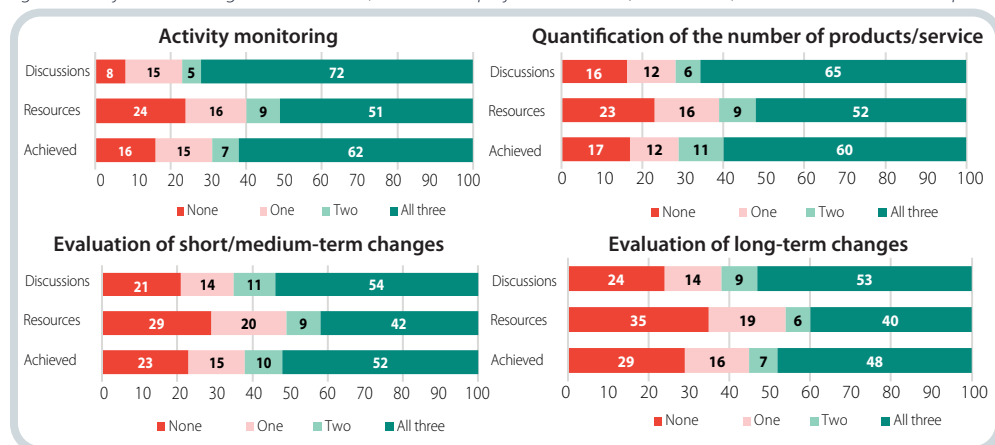
For each of these aspects we were interested to see whether there had been discussions about the component, whether resources had been allocated for its realisation and whether the component had actually been realised. Depending on the item, about 14-20% of leaders refused to answer or said they could not assess.

The leaders' answers to this question appear in Figure 39. According to their statements, most of the projects run by NGOs are monitored and evaluated. Monitoring activities were discussed in almost all cases, even though the resources needed to carry out these activities, i.e. actually doing them, were relatively less frequent (half or more of the NGOs did so in the case of the last three projects). In terms of counting products and services, the situation is relatively similar, even though the percentages are slightly lower as compared to monitoring activities. In the case of short/medium and long-term changes assessment, the percentages decrease slightly as compared to the counting component, but they are still within a high range: 40-50% have discussed, allocated resources and implemented such activities for each of the last three projects.

We note that discussions on the various monitoring and evaluation activities are always more frequent, that these activities are actually implemented relatively less often, and that resources are allocated even less often. Most likely these differences indicate a positive attitude towards monitoring and evaluation, i.e. the performance of the associated activities using already existing internal resources.

About 20% of NGOs did not carry out any monitoring, quantification and evaluation of short/medium-term changes and about 30% did not evaluate the long-term change (referring to the last three projects implemented). Given that our measure is based on statements and these are affected by social desirability, it is very likely that the values recorded are actually somewhat higher.

Figure 39. Project monitoring and evaluation (the last three projects carried out): discussions, allocated resources and implementation



Source: Analyses based on the data from the BLO 2023 survey. Discussions = „we discussed about...“, Resources = „resources were allocated for ...“, Achieved = „the respective activity was achieved“. Values represent percentages.

We use the Latent Class Analysis (LCA), in particular the Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) to build a typology of NGOs, while estimating the weight of each type in total. We have obtained two similar typologies, but with some major differences, which is why we present on both. In the case of LCA we have recoded the answers in two categories only: all three projects vs. the rest. For both models we have tested several solutions (2-6 profiles) and finally, based on specific criteria (weighting, interpretability, statistical measures, number of cases in total sample), we kept the solutions with four profiles/classes/types. Of course, a larger sample would have allowed a better estimate of the weight of these types, respectively the definition of several types, somewhat finer and more homogeneous. The results are presented in Figure 40. Basically, the analysis reveals the existence of four types of NGOs, generically referred to as 'nothing', 'monitoring', 'few resources' and 'all', and in the case of LPA 'nothing', 'no resources', 'no assessment' and 'all'. The two methods used (LCA and LPA) are equally qualitative, with the resulting classifications highly overlapping.

The first two images in Figure 40 show the resulting typologies, each of which consists of four types of NGOs, respectively the share of the types in the total valid responses. We have labelled each type by taking into account the observed averages of variables used to build the typology.

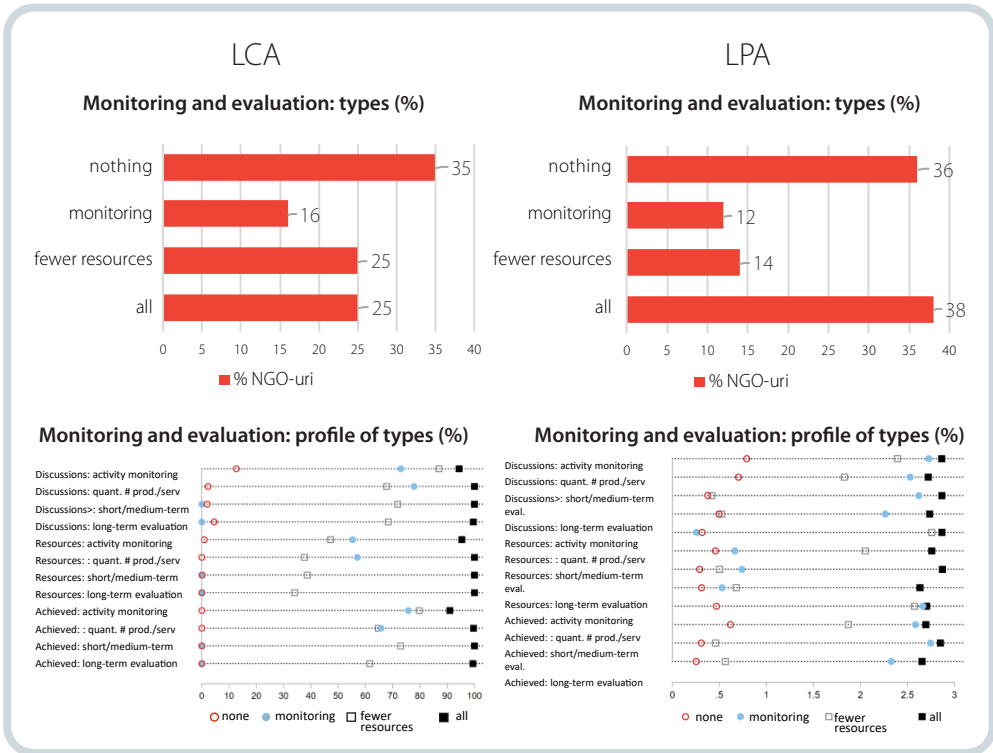
In the case of left-hand typology (LCA) we have the following types:

- The first type (“nothing”), 35% of the total NGOs, includes NGOs that are not concerned with the monitoring and evaluation of the last three projects (all three projects), i.e. neither discuss nor allocate resources nor perform such activities. We note in the profile chart that the weights associated with all items are within the range 0-10% (red profile).
- The type called “monitoring” (16%) includes NGOs only interested in monitoring (they are not interested in evaluation as well). We note in the profile chart that the weights associated with monitoring and quantification items are within the range 60-80%, and those associated with the evaluation are zero (light blue profile).
- The type called “few resources” (25%) includes NGOs relatively interested in monitoring and assessment that allocate relatively fewer resources. We note in the profile chart that the weights associated with the items on discussions and activities are within the range 60-80%, and those associated with the resources are within the range 30-50% (grey profile).
- The type called “all” (25%) includes NGOs interested in monitoring and appraisal from all points of view (discussions, resources, actual implementation). We note in the profile chart that the weights associated with all items are within the range 90-100% (black profile).

In the case of the left typology (LPA) we have still four types:

- The first type (“nothing”), 36% of the total NGOs, includes NGOs that are not very concerned about the monitoring and evaluation of the last three projects (they perform such activities less often, not for all projects), i.e. they do not discuss too much nor allocate resources or carry out such activities. We notice in the first profile chart that the weights associated with all items are within the range 0-1, i.e. an average of 0.5 projects out of three (the profile with empty circles, red).
- The type called “no resources” (12%) includes NGOs relatively interested in monitoring and evaluation that allocate relatively fewer resources. We note in the profile chart that the weights associated with the items about discussions and activities are within the range 2.5 (2.5 projects out of three), and those associated with the resources are within the range 0.5 (0.5 projects out of three) (the profile with full circles, light blue).
- The type called “no assessment” (14%) includes NGOs interested only in monitoring. We note in the profile chart that the weights associated with monitoring and quantification items are within the range 2-2.5 (2-2.5 projects out of three) and those associated with the evaluation are within the range 0.5 (0.5 projects out of three) (empty squares profile, grey).
- The type called “all” (38%) includes NGOs interested in monitoring and evaluation in all respects (discussions, resources, actual implementation). We note in the profile chart that the weights associated with all items are within the range 2.5-3 (2.5-3 projects out of three) (the full squares profile, black).

Figure 40. A typology of NGOs depending on the monitoring and evaluation practices



Source: Analyses based on data from the BLO 2023 survey. The charts on the left are made with the LCA, the ones on the right with the LPA. Except for the chart at the bottom right, values represent percentages. Reading mode: the LCA model distinguished between four types, of which the ‘nothing’ type (those who are not interested in any evaluation/quantification/monitoring) includes 35% of NGOs (top left); the empty, red circles (bottom left) indicate the share of the ‘nothing’ organisations that have performed the respective activities for each of the last three projects carried out. Reading mode: the LPA model distinguished between four types, of which the ‘nothing’ type (those who are not interested in any evaluation/quantification/monitoring) includes 36% of NGOs (top right); empty, red circles (bottom right) indicate that among organisations in the ‘nothing’ category, on a scale of 0 to 3 (the situation was quantified on the last three projects carried out), the indicator value for discussions on monitoring activities is about 0.75, the value of the indicator discussion on quantification has the value of 0.6, etc.

We are interested to see if the previously defined types of NGOs differ according to a number of characteristics. For this we have used a multi-varied analysis model (multi-nominal logistical regression) and have statistically predicted the composition of the types. Therefore, the values shown in the charts are values predicted on the basis of the model, not the values observed in the dataset³⁵. The strategy of statistical control and prediction based on a multi-varied model has the advantage that it only identifies real differences, those associated with each variable, unaffected by the rest of the respondents’ characteristics.

In general, the four types of NGOs have a rather similar average composition (in terms of the characteristics tested). These analyses are presented in the annexes, and here we mention only the differences where we also have statistical significance (i.e. there is a reasonable chance – 95% – that these differences will occur again if we resume the survey). Beware, the comments that follow relate to relative differences, not absolute differences. In short, we have found the following differences:

LCA model:

- Gender: men appear relatively more often in the “all” type, and women in the “nothing” type.
- Member: members appear more often in the “all” type and non-members in the “nothing” type.

³⁵ The independent variables included in the model were: gender, age, education, region, seniority, status (employee, member, volunteer), leader, member of the Board of Directors, other activities (freelancer, full-time employee, entrepreneur, no other occupation), number of employees, number of members, size of budget, main field of activity of the NGO (culture, sport, education, health, social, environment, policies, development, human rights, resources for NGOs, religion, professional, employer, tourism, animal protection).

- Volunteer: volunteers appear less often in the case of the “all” type (which was expected).
- Member of the Board of Directors: they occur less often in the case of the ‘all’ type, and more often in the case of the ‘nothing’ type.
- Budget: NGOs with a large budget appear more often in the case of the “all” type, and the low-budget ones in the “nothing” type.
- Field of Culture & Art: it appears more often in the “all” type.
- Field of Education: it occurs more often in the case of the “nothing” type.
- Area of Health: it occurs more often in the case of the ‘few resources’ type, and less often in the case of the ‘nothing’ type.
- Area of Human Rights: it occurs more often in the “monitoring” type.
- Area Resources for NGOs: it occurs more often in the case of ‘fewer resources’.

● LPA model:

- Gender: men appear more often in the “all” type, and women in the “nothing” type.
- Member: members appear more often for the “all” type and non-members for the “nothing” type.
- Volunteer: volunteers appear less often in the “all” type, and more often in the “nothing” type (which was expected).
- Member of the Board of Directors: they appear less often in the case of the ‘all’ type, and more often in the case of the ‘nothing’ type.
- Budget: NGOs with a large budget appear more often in the case of the “all” type, and the low-budget ones for the “nothing” type.
- Area of Culture & Art: it occurs less often in the case of the ‘no-assessment’ type.
- Area of Health: it occurs more often in the case of “all”.

Who has performed the monitoring and evaluation activities?

We then asked the NGO leaders about the actor who had carried out the monitoring and evaluation activities. These could be done by an in-house expert, an external expert or by experts from another organisation. Of course, we asked about this with regard to each type of activity (monitoring, quantification, evaluation of the change on the short/medium and long term), also with reference to the last three projects. Leaders’ answers to this question, on the four dimensions, appear in Figure 41.

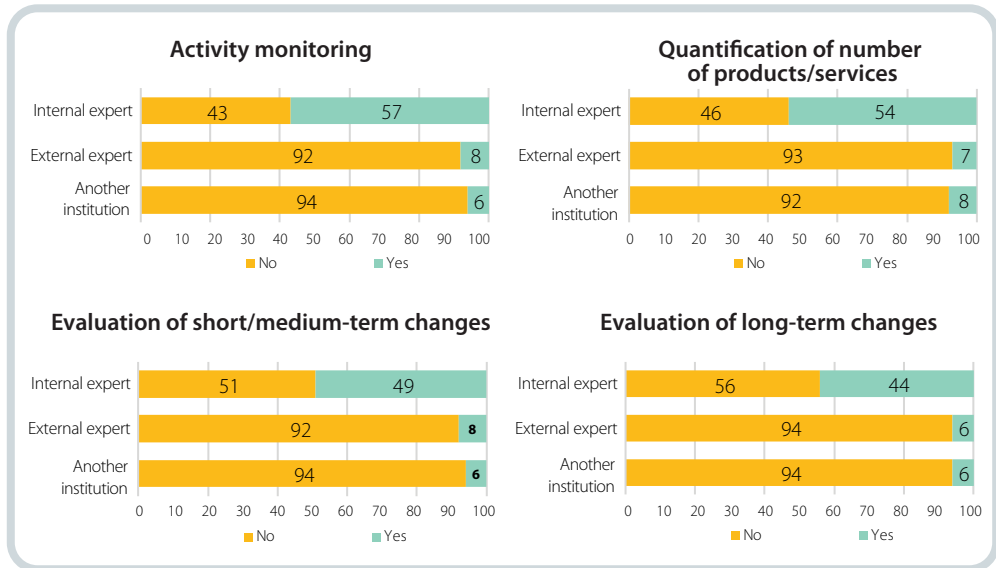
According to the leaders, the trend is clear: most monitoring and evaluation activities are carried out by in-house experts. Be aware, the figures in the charts present the situation with respect to any of the last three projects carried out (reported to valid responses), not only with regard to the projects where monitoring and evaluation activities have been carried out. If we exclude unmonitored and unevaluated projects, the practice of monitoring and evaluation by an in-house expert would be even more evident. In addition, presenting the data this way gives us more accurate information (as compared to the previous question) on the weight of the situations in which monitoring and evaluation activities are actually carried out.

We note that the combined values of Yes situations (even if assuming that the activities were carried out by only one of the three actors, not by a combination) are systematically lower as compared to the evaluations obtained by the previous question. Thus, we can say that the actual implementation of evaluation activities happens in fact less often, with estimates being as follows: 71% monitoring activities, 69% quantification of products and services, 63% evaluation of short-term/medium-term changes and 56% evaluation of long-term changes (all these estimates are about 15 percentage points lower than the estimates obtained by using the previous question).

Even these estimates are likely to be overstated, due to reasons related to at least the following aspects:

(1) The question measures the situation with regard to any of the last three projects, so an activity could only be carried out for one of the projects, not necessarily for all; (2) we do not know what were the actual forms taken by those activities, especially those of evaluating the change (probably in some cases a limited research design has been implemented); (3) The survey was conducted online, so the representatives of more active NGOs replied (on the other hand, the anonymity is higher online, so the effects of social desirability should also be reduced).

Figure 41. Who has performed the impact monitoring and evaluation activities? (the last three projects carried out)



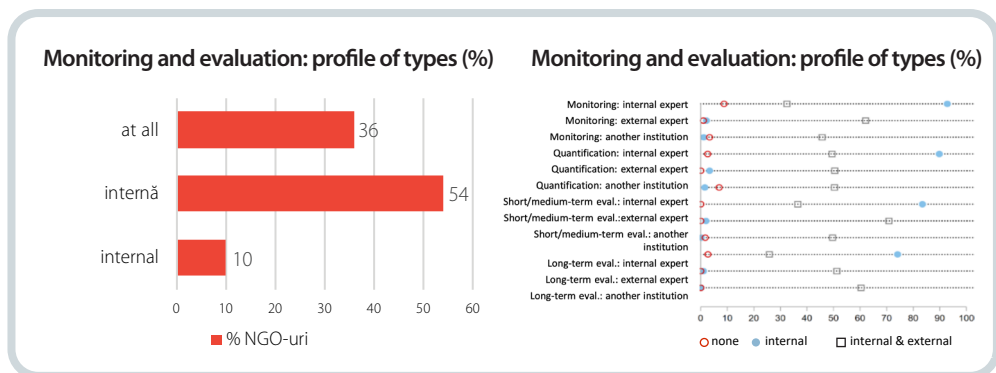
Source: Analyses based on the data from the BLO 2023 survey. Values represent percentages.

Based on the answers given to the question about the actors who carried out the monitoring and evaluation activities (all related items) we can build a typology of NGOs, estimate the weight of each type in total, respectively describe the resulting types according to different characteristics. Similarly to the previous analysis, to obtain this typology we have used Latent Class Analysis (LCA). We tested several solutions (2-6 profiles), and finally, based on specific criteria (weighting, interpretability, statistical measures, number of cases in total sample), we kept the solution with three profiles/classes/types.

The first image in Figure 42 shows the resulting typology, with the three types of NGOs and their share in total. We have labelled each type by taking into account the observed averages of variables used to build the typology. The resulting types are characterised as follows:

- The first type (“not at all”), 36% of the total NGOs, consists of NGOs that do not carry out project monitoring and evaluation activities (in the case of the last three projects). We notice in the profile chart that the weights associated with all items are within the range 0-10% (the empty circle profile, red).
- The type called “internal” (54%) includes NGOs that carry out monitoring and evaluation activities with the help of in-house experts. We note in the profile chart that the weights associated with the items related to in-house experts are within the range 80-90%, and the rest are close to 0% (full circles profile, light blue).
- The type called “internal & external” (10%) includes NGOs that carry out monitoring and evaluation activities with internal and external experts, respectively with the help of other institutions. We note in the profile chart that the weights associated with all items are within the range 30-70% (empty squares profile, grey).

Figure 42. A typology of NGOs depending on the monitoring & evaluation practices



Source: Analyses based on data from the BLO 2023 survey. Values represent percentages. Reading mode: the LCA model leads to three types, of which the 'at all' type (NGOs that does not carry out project monitoring and evaluation activities) includes 36% of NGOs (the chart on the left). Empty, red circles (right chart) indicate that most organisations in the "at all" category do not perform project monitoring and evaluation activities (values are within range 0-10%) etc.

In general, the three types of NGOs have a rather similar average composition (in terms of the characteristics tested). These analyses are presented in the annexes, and here we mention only the differences where we also have statistical significance (i.e. there is a reasonable chance – 95% – that these differences will occur again if we resume the investigation)³⁶. Be aware, the comments that follow refer to relative differences, not absolute differences. In short, we have found the following differences:

- Gender: men appear relatively more often in the "internal & external" type.
- Age: as age increases, the ratio of the "at all" type increases and the ratio of the "internal" type decreases.
- Member: members appear more often in the case of the 'at all' type, and non-members in the case of the 'internal' type.
- Budget: NGOs with a large budget appear more often in the "internal" and "internal & external" types respectively.
- Local development: more often in the case of "internal & external" type, less often in the case of "internal" type.

The project with the most complex component of impact monitoring and evaluation

The way in which the impact monitoring and evaluation activities are carried out, i.e. what forms these activities take, is very difficult to measure effectively in all projects. In order to get a picture of these activities, we considered the situation of the project with the most complex monitoring and evaluation component (in the assessment of the leaders, without the need for them to name the project in question). Therefore, the results presented do not describe the usual monitoring and evaluation practice but a declared practice of an exceptional positive situation. The question used was as follows:

Among the projects carried out at any time by your NGO, please think about one that had the most complex component of impact monitoring and evaluation. Within this component ...?

One has evaluated on a separate basis 18 possible features of a monitoring and evaluation analysis (Figure 43) trying to distinguish between different associated dimensions: monitoring vs. evaluation,

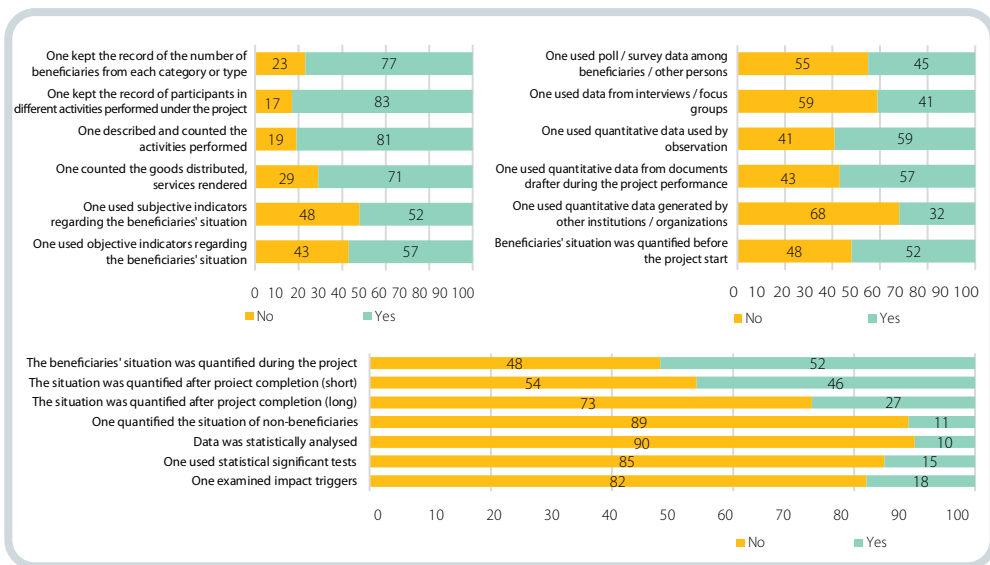
³⁶ The independent variables included in the model were: gender, age, education, region, seniority, status (employee, member, volunteer), leader, member of the Board of Directors, other activities (freelancer, full-time employee, entrepreneur, no other occupation), number of employees, number of members, size of budget, main field of activity of the NGO (culture, sport, education, health, social, environment, policies, development, human rights, resources for NGOs, religion, professional, employer, tourism, animal protection).

objective vs. subjective, qualitative methods and data vs. quantitative, sectional vs. experimental design (presence of a control group), short-term vs. long-term impact, use of a theory and statistical analyses. The data obtained from the statements describe a positive picture of the monitoring component: in about 80% of the top projects such activities have been carried out.

Going towards more concrete, specialised aspects related to evaluation, we notice that only a little over half of the projects used objective or subjective indicators. Methods of collecting qualitative (interview and focus group) and quantitative data (polls/surveys, observation, analysis of project-related documents, secondary data) were used in approximately half of the cases. For these methods, quantitative analysis of documents and observation of the quantitative type are relatively more used. Half of the projects also measured the situation of the beneficiaries before the start of the project, along the way and immediately after completion. The assessment of the status of the beneficiaries after a longer period of time occurs only in the case of a quarter of projects. The rest of the tested characteristics (use of a control group, use of statistical analysis and use of the theory of change) occur much less often, somewhere within the range 10-20%.

Based on the answers given to the question regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the most complex project (all related items) we can build a typology of NGOs, estimate the weight of each type in total, respectively describe the resulting types according to different characteristics. To obtain this typology, we used Latent Class Analysis (LCA). We tested several solutions (2-6 profiles), and finally, using specific criteria (weighting, interpretability, statistical measures, number of cases in total sample), we kept the solution with four profiles/classes/types.

Figure 43. Features of the most complex project developed



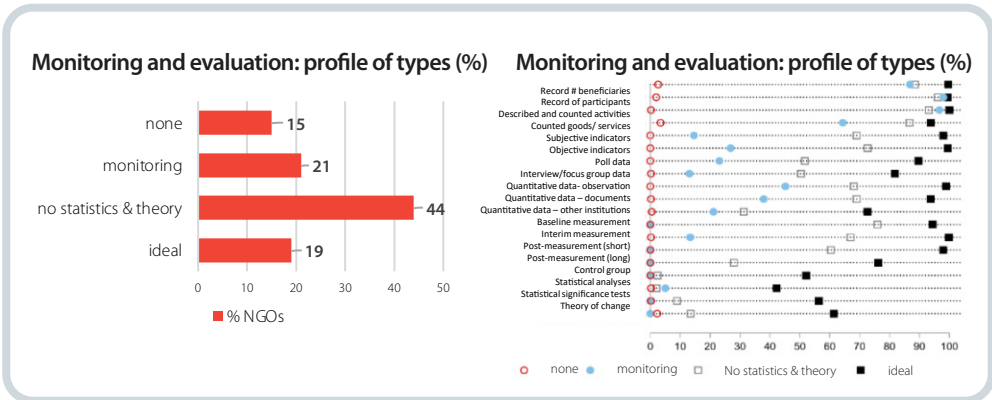
Source: Analysis based on data from the BLO 2023 survey. Values represent percentages.

The first image in Figure 44 shows the resulting typology, with the four types of NGOs and their share in total. We have labelled each type by taking into account the observed averages of variables used to build the typology. The four resulting types have characteristics described below:

- The first type ("none"), 15% of the total NGOs, includes NGOs that did not perform any of the monitoring and evaluation activities specified (unless they did such activities for the most complex project, they did not do it for the other projects either). We notice in the profile chart that the weights associated with all items are within the range 0-5% (the empty circle profile, red).
- The type called "monitoring" (21%) includes NGOs that mainly carried out monitoring activities. We note in the profile chart that the weights associated with monitoring and quantification items are

- within the range of 70-100%, those associated with the data are within the range 20-50%, and those associated with analysis and theorisation are almost 0% (the profile with full circles, light blue).
- ④ The type called “no statistics & theory” (44%) includes NGOs that have performed all monitoring and evaluation activities except those related to the experimental component, statistical analysis and theorisation. We note in the profile chart that the weights associated with most items are within the range 50-90%, except for those related to the control group, statistical analysis and the theoretical approach that are within the range 0-10% (empty squares profile, grey).
- ④ The type called “ideal” (19%) includes NGOs that have, however, carried out all the monitoring and evaluation activities mentioned, to varying degrees. We note in the profile chart that the weights associated with most items are within the range 90-100% (40-60% for statistical analysis, theory and control group) (the full squares profile, black).

Figure 44. A typology of NGOs depending on the monitoring and evaluation practices



Source: Analyses based on data from the BLO 2023 survey. Values represent percentages. Reading mode: the LCA model leads to four types, of which the ‘none’ type (NGOs that did not perform none of the monitoring and evaluation activities specified in the most complex project) includes 15% of NGOs (the chart on the left). Empty, red circles (right chart) indicate that most organisations in the ‘none’ type do not perform project monitoring and evaluation activities (values are within range 0-10%) etc.

In general, the four types of NGOs have a rather similar average composition (in terms of the characteristics tested). These analyses are presented in the annexes, and here we mention only the differences where we also have statistical significance (i.e. there is a reasonable chance – 95% – that these differences will occur again if we resume the poll). Unlike previous typologies, surprisingly, no statistically significant differences arise depending on the NGO’s budget (we would have expected that multi-resourced NGOs would be more present in the case of the “ideal” type). Be aware, the comments that follow refer to relative differences, not absolute differences. In short, we have found the following differences:

- Gender: women appear relatively more often in the “none” and “monitoring” types.
- Age: as age increases, the weight of the “no statistics & theory” type decreases.
- Member: members appear more often in the “none” type.
- Volunteer: volunteers appear more often in the case of the “none” type.
- Member of the Board of Directors: BD members appear less often in the “none” type.
- Number of members: a small number is accompanied by a higher presence of the “no statistics & theory” type.
- Area of Sports: it occurs more often in the “monitoring” type, and less often in the case of “none”.
- Field of Education: it occurs more often in the case of the ‘no statistics & theory’ type, and less often in the case of the ‘monitoring’ type.
- Area of Health: it occurs more often in the case of the ‘ideal’ type, and less often in the case of the ‘monitoring’ type.
- Area of Environmental protection: it occurs more often in the case of the “none” type.
- Field of Human Rights: it occurs less often in the case of the “none” type.

Conclusions

In this chapter we described NGO representations and practices regarding project monitoring and evaluation activities using survey data among leaders and members, employees and volunteers from the organisations that participated in the surveys. All results should be seen as statements and not as an objective description of reality (we have not actually analysed practices based on documents and/or observations). The main conclusions are set out below.

As regards the representation on the usefulness of monitoring and evaluation activities, the data show an extremely positive picture: half of the respondents find them extremely useful (they choose score 10 on a scale from 0 = completely unnecessary to 10 = extremely useful), respectively 90% give a score of at least 7. The same picture results when respondents appreciate the role of impact assessment on a few dimensions. 80-90% of them believe that impact assessment activities make a large or very large contribution, regardless of the size assessed: improving the NGO's activities, accountability towards stakeholders (accountability), substantiation of internal decisions, attracting funding and support, respectively the public image of the NGO.

To measure practices, we considered three categories of questions: What happened to the last three projects in terms of monitoring and evaluation?; Who carried out the monitoring and evaluation activities?; What does the project look like with the most complex monitoring and evaluation component?. Just over a third of NGOs do not carry out any monitoring and evaluation of implemented projects. At the other pole, depending on how we do the measurement, 25-38% of NGOs perform both monitoring and impact assessment activities (regardless of the reference period). Although they discuss such activities and implement them, 12-25% of NGOs have little or no resources for this component. About 14-16% of NGOs only carry out monitoring activities.

Those who effectively carry out monitoring and evaluation activities are most often the in-house experts of NGOs. Just over half of NGOs perform monitoring and evaluation activities using internal human resources. 36% do not do such activities at all, and 10% use both internal and external human resources (independent experts and/or other institutions).

If we relate to a single project, the one with the most complex monitoring and evaluation component, we find that 15% of NGOs did not do any such activity, 21% carried out monitoring activities only, 44% performed monitoring and evaluation activities, but without resorting to more advanced methodological components (control group, statistical analysis, specific theories) and only 19% did it by using the ideal way (they used all the components, including some slightly more advanced ones).

ROMANIA 2024

THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR
PROFILE, TRENDS, CHALLENGES

CONTEMPORARY
TRENDS

6.

NGOs and organizational context

▶ Bogdan Mihai Radu, Daniela Angi

Introduction

The challenges to the non-governmental sector are numerous globally, and can be catalogued from at least three perspectives. Firstly, we can talk about the challenges specific to the tertiary sector, which can be identified in the most diverse contexts, and this would include, for example, financing issues (such as the absence of multi-annual grants) or lack of sustainability (Parks, 2008). Secondly, there are challenges specific to the non-governmental sector in Central and Eastern Europe, where, in addition to the issues listed above, the particularities of the post-communist context such as the lack of trust in civil society, both among the population and the political class, are added, which sometimes challenge the legitimacy of the tertiary sector in order to gain support for illiberal/non-democratic policies (Marczek & Neubacher, 2020). Thirdly, problems arising from international/transnational crises, such as the war in Ukraine or the COVID-19 pandemic (Nemţeanu & Dabija, 2020), can be mentioned.

In 2023, the Romanian Centre for European Policies (CRPE) released a report on the challenges faced by the civil society in Central and Eastern Europe (the wider Black Sea area and several European Union countries) (CRPE, 2023). Gathering data from 40 organisations (beneficiaries of the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation Foundation), the report identifies the following challenges the NGO sector is facing in the area. Firstly, in terms of sustainability, many organisations do not receive basic funding, which makes them financially vulnerable, having to apply constantly for grants – on different topics – to ensure their sustainability. A consequence of this situation is the implementation of projects that sometimes do not naturally fit into the role and mission assumed by the organisation. Secondly, respondents believe that threats outside the sector (e.g. from the state) are on the rise. Although these problems are particularly specific to non-EU Member States, they are also under pressure from their own political regime in the EU. Thirdly, it is the problem of investment in human resource, which often feels exhausted and is increasingly placing itself in a position of vulnerability and precariousness. Then, the issue of a more substantial dialogue between donors and organisations of the civil society is important both from the perspective of drafting the agenda and of a desirable debureaucratisation of the field (especially from the perspective of the reporting style requested by the funders). Civil society organisations should also be more involved in their communication work, which in turn would be easier to achieve if partnerships between organisations became an integral part of their development strategy. This would protect them, for example, also from threats, in addition to a potential positive effect in terms of impact on public policy/advocacy.

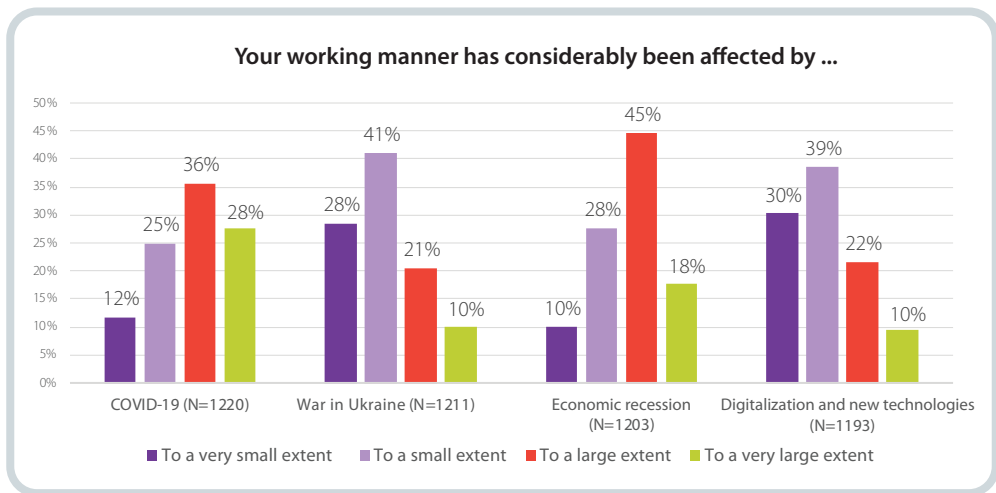
In this chapter we aim to document the various challenges faced by civil society organisations in Romania, by analysing poll data containing perceptions of these challenges, as felt by those directly involved. These perceptions include both information about the functioning of non-governmental organisations and the challenges they face, as well as the problems faced by members, employees and volunteers of non-governmental organisations in their work. Therefore, the poll data provides an overview of both structural and individual challenges. For this analysis we will use two national surveys conducted in 2023 – one with members/employees/volunteers of non-governmental organisations (BMO 2023) and one with leaders of these organisations (BLO 2023).

Analysis of challenges faced by non-governmental organisations as resulting from survey data

● Global challenges, local difficulties

Starting from the need to identify the main challenges for the work and development of civil society organisations, a battery of questions was introduced in BMO 2023 measuring respondents' perception of a set of issues affecting both the work of organisations and the work of their employees (and their members and volunteers).

Figure 45. Global threats for the activity of the associative sector



Source: BMO 2023

Figure 45 provides information on global challenges for the functioning of non-governmental organisations. In other words, the Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the recent economic recession and digitalisation and the emergence of new technologies have had an impact on civil society in many countries of the world. Thus, we note that of the four global challenges, the one that seriously affected most respondents was the Covid-19 pandemic (28%), followed by the economic recession (18%). If we take into account the effects of these challenges by summing up the number of those who have been affected to a very large extent and to a large extent, it is noted that the Covid-19 pandemic and the economic recession are almost equal (64% and respectively 63%). The war in Ukraine and digitalisation affect the work of those in the tertiary sector significantly less, with 31%-32% saying that they have influenced their way of working to a very large or large extent. Considering the variables as continuous (min=1, max=4), we notice that the most pressing problems or sources of concern have been the Covid-19 pandemic and the economic recession, almost at the same level, followed by the war in Ukraine and digitalisation, also at about the same level. The number of respondents who did not know how to answer this question varies between 6% and 8% of the whole sample (excluding those who did not answer all questions in the questionnaire). The reported percentages were calculated after elimination of non-responses.

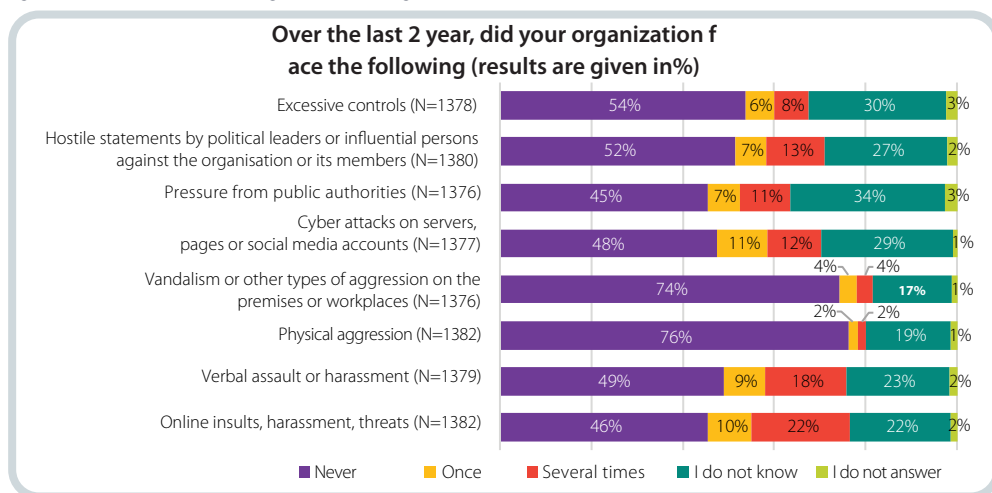
Table 39. Global threats for the activity of the associative sector (averages and standard deviations)

	Average	Standard deviation
COVID-19	2.79	.978
War in Ukraine	2.12	.937
Economic recession	2.70	.876
Digitalization and new technologie	2.10	.943

* Four-point scales ranging from 1 (small threat) to 4 (big threat).
Source: BMO 2023

If we compare the ways in which these problems have affected the work of employees on the one hand and members and volunteers on the other, the differences are not large. In general, employees of non-governmental organisations are more affected by these four problems than members or volunteers, which is understandable, given their role in the functioning of the organisation. From the perspective of socio-economic variables, there are no significant differences in age, but there is a small gender gap, with women considering that these problems have affected them more than men.

Figure 46. Recent threats for non-governmental organisations

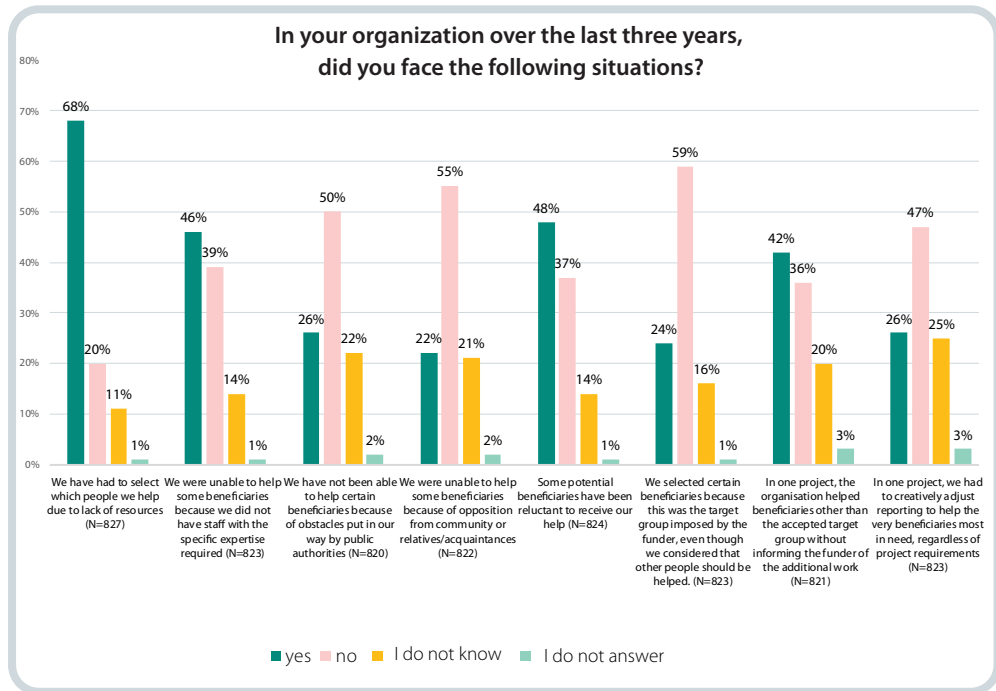


Source: BMO 2023

Figure 46 summarises the perception of NGO members regarding various potential threats they have felt in the context of their work. Thus, it can be seen that over 20% of respondents have mentioned that the organisation has repeatedly faced insults, harassment and threats in the online environment, and almost as many (18%) mentioned the repeated existence of verbal aggression and harassment. At the same time, around three quarters of those surveyed said there had never been any physical aggression or aggression on the headquarters of the organisation/workspace. It should also be noted that almost 20% of respondents noted pressure from public authorities and hostile statements from political leaders or influential individuals against the organisation or its members. It is interesting to note also the rather high rate of those who did not know how to answer this question (oscillating from 17% to 34%). On the one hand, this may mean the absence of these challenges, which on an average would reduce the values reported above; on the other hand, the lack of information does not necessarily mean that these challenges did not exist, but this can be a consequence of the selection of respondents. In a similar 2016 survey (BLO 2016) there was a question about whether public authorities could have pressed an organisation to stop a particular endeavour, to which organisation leaders responded. At that time, 23% of respondents agreed (in whole or in part) to that statement. As compared to that time, in 2023, 18% of

respondents (who, this time, are members of NGOs and not leaders) said there was pressure from the authorities, suggesting a possible progress in terms of influence of the work of non-governmental organisations by state institutions. However, it should be kept in mind that this comparison is inaccurate, as the two questions used in the 2016 and 2023 questionnaires were somewhat different, and so were the categories of respondents.

Figure 47. Problems experienced by the associative sector in project implementation

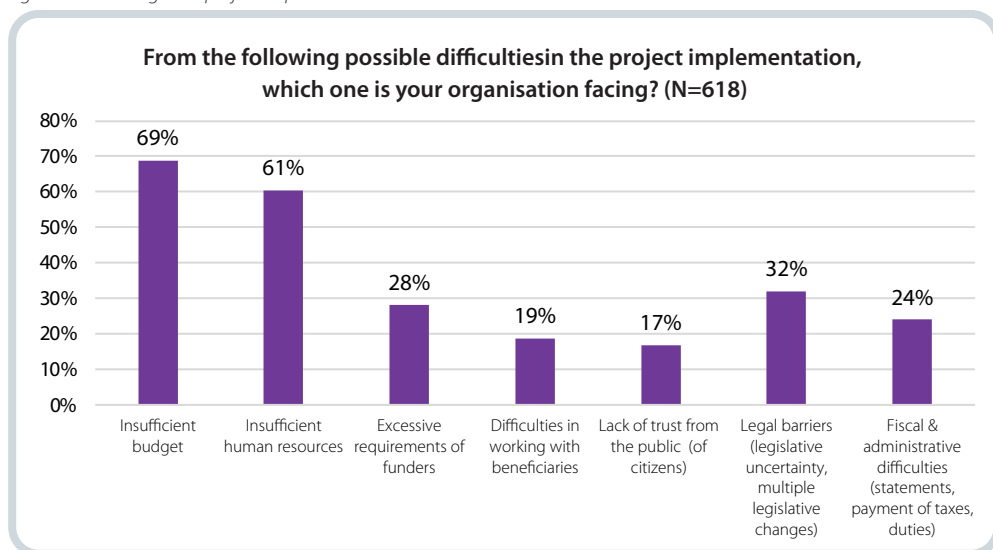


Source: BMO 2023

Of course, the challenges for the functioning of a civil society organisation are not only limited to possible threats, but may also arise from scarcity of resources or the work/inactivity of social actors, the effects of which can be measured in the context of evaluation, impact and monitoring studies. Thus, 68% of respondents consider that they were in a position to select certain beneficiaries, as they did not have sufficient resources to help all. 46% also believe that some beneficiaries could not be helped because there is not enough specialised human resource. From the perspective of possible obstacles or opposition from public authorities or society, things are comparatively better: only 26% of respondents mentioned the existence of obstacles put by public authorities, and 22% mentioned the opposition of the community or people close to the beneficiaries. Although as compared to the other results presented in this chart, the 26% that suffer because of obstacles from public authorities does not appear to be high, however, it is a worrying value: more than a quarter of respondents noticed such obstacles in their work. Thus, the impact of some projects has been reduced, sometimes significantly, by the lack of resources – financial or staff – or due to reticence/oppositions from social/political actors. Also, almost 50% of respondents said that sometimes even some beneficiaries were reluctant to receive help. On the other hand, 42% of respondents mentioned that in some projects, in addition to the initial beneficiaries, the organisation also helped other categories, although this involved additional work. Moreover, sometimes projects provided help to beneficiaries as required by the funder, even if the organisation considered that other categories should have taken priority (24% of respondents mentioned that this had happened). To avoid this unfair situation, 26% of those surveyed said that sometimes the reports were adjusted so that those most in need benefited from it, even if they were not in the target group of the project.

Again, as in the previous chart, the rate of those who did not know how to answer this question varies between 11% and 25%. These non-negligible percentages may also be due to the fact that among the respondents there were employees as well as members and volunteers of non-governmental organisations, and the information requested is known mainly to people working in these organisations and not to all employees.

Figure 48. Challenges for project implementation



Source: BMO 2023

Asked about the difficulties organisations face in implementing projects, 69% of respondents mentioned insufficient budget and 61% insufficient human resources. These are the difficulties most often faced by non-governmental organisations in implementing projects. They follow, in a descending order, existing legal barriers (32%), excessive requirements of funders (28%), fiscal and administrative difficulties (24%), difficulties in working with beneficiaries (19%) and lack of confidence on the part of the population (17%). According to omnibus surveys conducted by the FDSC in 2016 and 2023 respectively, population trust in NGOs remained relatively constant: about 45% of respondents do not trust (choosing the answers at all or I do not trust) and around 50% trust (choosing the answers *somehow* and *a lot of trust*). This result is worrying, especially given the constant evolution of the associative sector, which brings an increasing visibility of the projects implemented.

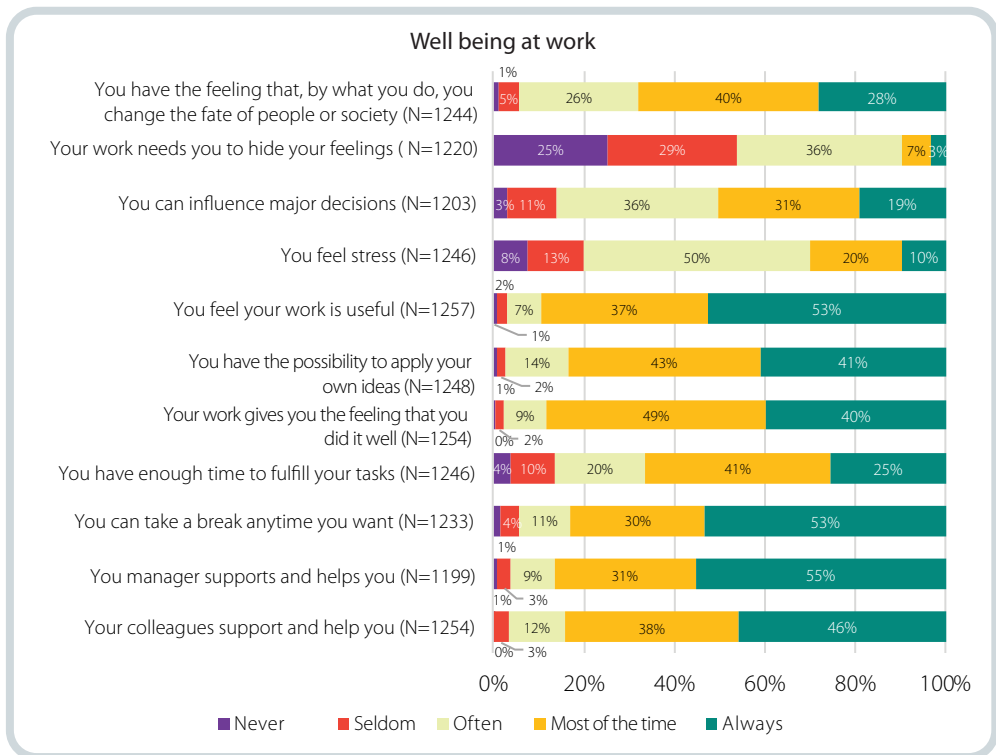
● Well-being, satisfaction and motivation in the associative sector

By shifting from the challenges of organisations to those faced by NGO members in the context of their work, we explore the degree of exhaustion felt by them. BMO 2023 data shows that from the employees who answered this question (N=342), 46% experience a high or very high degree of burnout and 39% experience moderate burnout. Among members and volunteers (N=360) the situation is marginally better, with almost 30% of them experiencing a high or very high degree of burnout. Overall, 85% of employees said they felt exhaustion to some extent (from moderate to very high), a worrying value. The self-assessed high degree of burnout among people working in the non-governmental sector is an acute problem in other countries, with a UK study mentioning the growing precariousness in the sector, amid the economic downturn (Ecclesiastical, 2023).

According to data on well-being at work, around 80% of respondents believe that both colleagues and managers help and support them most of the time or always, and there are no obvious differences between employees and members or volunteers. About 80% also say they can take a break at work

whenever they want, for the vast majority of the time or always. These results suggest that, from the perspective of networking with colleagues or superiors and the flexibility of working hours, more than three quarters of respondents have positive assessments, regardless of whether we are talking about employees or members or volunteers. Also, over 80% of those surveyed people feel that most of the time or always work gives them the feeling that they have done it well, that they can apply their own ideas, and almost 90% think they are doing useful work. In terms of effectiveness, almost 70% of respondents believe that what they do changes the fate of people or society, most of the time or always. Again, there are no differences between employees or members and volunteers in these respects. Corroborating these results with those on how to relate to colleagues, it appears that, in general, there is the satisfaction of working in non-governmental organisations. In terms of work experience challenges, stress is one of the most important. Thus, among employees, more than 30% feel stress always or most of the time, as compared to just over 20% of members and volunteers. Also, only about 50% of employees believe they can influence important decisions at all times or most of the time. In terms of time management, there are significant differences among employees and members and volunteers, in the sense that just over 55% of the former think they have time to perform all their tasks, while among members and volunteers the percentage is 72%. These differences are expected because NGO members and volunteers only participate in their activities within the time allocated by themselves, while employees have precise performance targets and sometimes difficult to achieve.

Figure 49. Well-being felt by members, volunteers and employees of non-governmental organisations



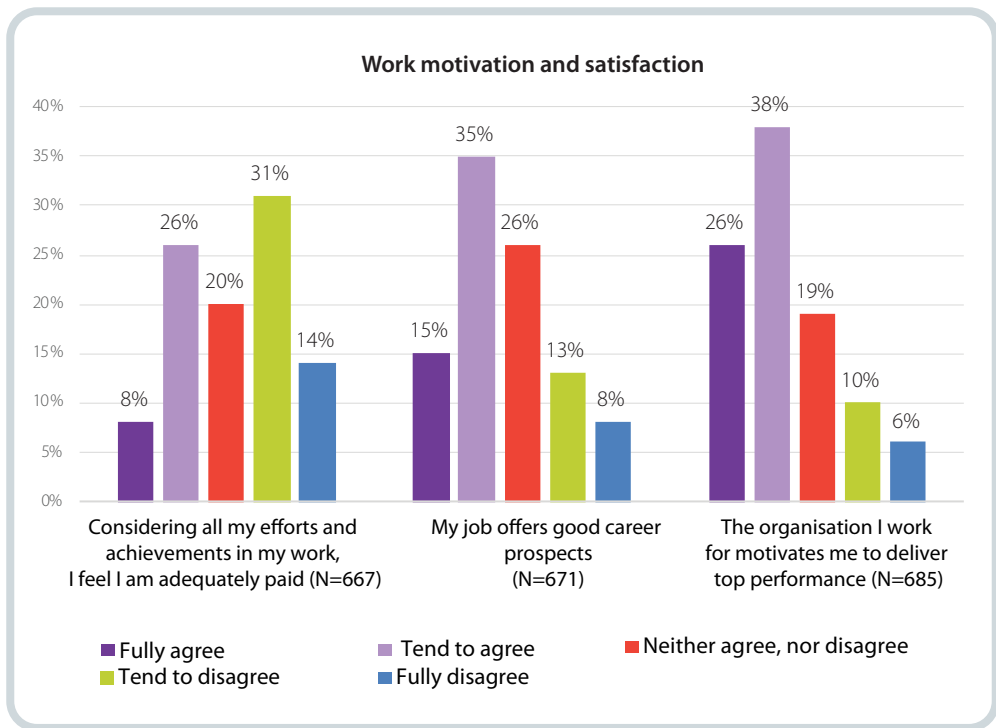
Sursa: BMO 2023

In terms of how well-being at work in the NGO sector compares with national or European environments, we will use the results of a 2021 survey from the European Working Conditions series (Eurofound, 2021). Thus, according to Figure 50 data, 53% of respondents always feel that they are doing useful work, as compared to 61% at European level (not just from the NGO sector) or 76% in Romania. However, if you take into account the percentages of those who said they feel that their work is always and often useful, the percentages are very similar: 90% in this survey, 89% in Romania and 90% at EU level. The difference

is more marked among those who believe that their work is always useful, as those in the NGO environment is less inclined to respond this way, probably due to the fact that sometimes in the tertiary sector the effects of work are difficult to measure, and there is always the feeling that there is still a need to make efforts to solve all the problems. Also, the vast majority of respondents believe that work gives them the feeling that they have done it well, there are no significant differences between respondents who took part in this study, and the average on Romania (about 90% think they have this feeling always or often). The corresponding percentage in the European Union is of 85%.

From the point of view of motivation and financial and professional satisfaction of NGO employees, things are less optimistic, and reflect some of the considerations related to the precariousness of work in this field, mentioned at the beginning of this section. Thus, according to Figure 50, 45% of employees believe that, taking all the efforts and achievements of their work into account, the work is not properly paid. However, almost half of them believe that work gives them good career prospects (50%), and that their organisation motivates them in terms of performance (64%). As noted, the number of respondents is significantly lower for these questions, which is due to the fact that the batteries of questions that capture motivation and job satisfaction were applied only to a sub-sample from the main sample. In terms of socio-economic status, age does not significantly influence answers to questions about motivation and job satisfaction, and from a gender perspective, there is a small difference between women and men, the latter being more satisfied with the prospects offered by the organisation. The comparison with the results of the 2021 European Working Conditions survey mentioned above reveals that people active in NGOs are less optimistic in terms of career prospects than the national average; thus, if in the BMO 2023 survey, 50% believe that their work gives them good prospects for career advancement, the national average is 66% and the EU average is 51%.

Figure 50. Work motivation and satisfaction felt by NGO employees



Source: BMO 2023

Human resources in the associative sector

Recruiting and retaining staff is sometimes a difficult problem among non-governmental organisations. According to Table 40, in 17% of organisations whose representatives answered questions about the form of employment of NGO members, there is not a single person employed full-time, and the corresponding percentage, but only for female employees, is of 30%. This result is indicative for the more general situation in the civil society sector in Romania, where precariousness and forms of employment that do not provide safety and predictability (e.g. project-based hiring) are common.

This precariousness is also evident by monitoring the number of people who have left non-governmental organisations. According to the BMO 2023 survey, between 2022 and 2023, around 20% of respondents said that one or two persons left from their organisation, and nearly 15% said 3, 4 or 5 persons left. However, almost 60% of respondents said that no one left their organisations during the period mentioned. Labour market dynamics in the tertiary sector can be better understood if we look at the likelihood for an employee to remain at the same job, or, at least in the same field, in the future.

Table 40. Distribution and typology of labour agreements across NGOs (in your organisation...)

Type of labour agreement/Number of responses	I do not know	I do not answer	None	1-2 persons	3-5 persons	6-10 persons	They have employees, but the exact number is unknown
How many persons have a full-time agreement? (N=1035)	31%	4%	17%	12%	9%	14%	3%
How many persons have a part-time agreement? (N=1035)	31%	4%	22%	17%	13%	3%	4%
How many women have a full-time agreement? (N=1035)	31%	4%	30%	12%	9%	7%	1%
How many women have a part-time agreement? (N=1035)	31%	4%	32%	18%	3%	2%	2%

Source: BMO 2023

Thus, although there is a generalised perception of the inadequacy of the income of members of the organisation to their performance, most of them do not plan to change their jobs. According to BMO 2023, nearly 70% of employees believe that there is a very high probability that they will work for the same organisation in a year time, and for almost 80% it is almost certain that they will also work in the NGO sector in a year time.

Table 41. Job retention and the associative sector depending on motivation and satisfaction

Dimensions	Evaluations	Self-assessed probability for employees to also be operating in their current organisation				Self-assessed probability for employees to also be operating in the NGO sector			
		0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Payment level	negative	11%	8%	18%	64%	6%	5%	11%	78%
	neuter	12%	5%	19%	64%	6%	3%	16%	75%
	positive	5%	3%	14%	77%	3%	3%	10%	84%
Career prospects	negative	22%	7%	18%	53%	11%	8%	12%	69%
	neuter	7%	4%	22%	67%	6%	4%	15%	75%
	positive	5%	5%	12%	78%	1%	2%	10%	87%
The organization boosts motivation	negative	36%	9%	24%	31%	13%	13%	18%	56%
	neuter	8%	16%	21%	56%	8%	5%	17%	70%
	positive	3%	1%	13%	83%	2%	1%	9%	89%

Note: negative evaluations = responses showing total or partial disagreement with the statements in the figure about motivation and satisfaction; neutral evaluations = neither agreement nor disagreement with the above-mentioned figure statements; positive evaluations = responses showing agreement in whole or in part with the statements in the figure mentioned; totals in rows may differ from 100% as a result of rounding off. The cells in the table in dark tones are those that contribute substantially to the statistically significant association between the self-assessed likelihood of employees' remaining with the organisation and their views on career prospects, namely motivation to reach performance within the organisation. Source: BMO 2023

Table 41 shows the link between how respondents relate to their professional future (the self-assessed probability of working for the same organisation in the coming year, i.e. to remain in the NGO sector) and their assessments of the three dimensions of activity and current professional satisfaction, described in Figure 50.

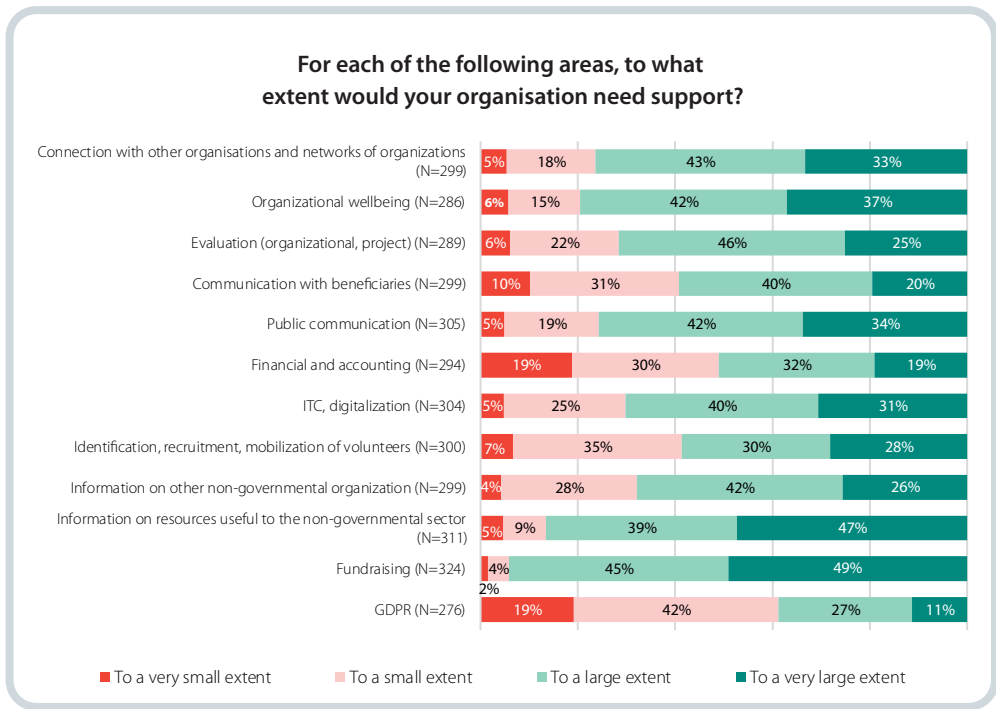
It can be seen that, for both projections related to the professional future, the highest percentages of responses suggesting the expected stability at career level are among those with positive assessments of the aspects of their present work within organisations. The association between employee assessments and the assessment of the likelihood of not leaving the organisation is statistically significant (significant Chi-square test, $p < 0.05$) only in the case of the last two dimensions, the one related to career prospects and the motivation that supports performance.

● Challenges for NGOs according to organisations' leaders

Next, we add information from BMO 2023 and data on how these challenges are perceived by leaders of non-governmental organisations. Figure 51 presents the areas within the scope of a non-governmental organisation in which their leaders believe that more support would be needed.

It is obvious that the area in which the leaders of organisations believe that the most help is needed is the fundraising: 94% of respondents believe that help is needed to a very large extent or to a large extent. This area is closely followed by that of obtaining useful information for the non-governmental sector (86%). This question may, in fact, also be understood as a reference to the availability of funding sources, since that useful information also includes information about sources of funding. The need for help is also intensely felt in connecting with other organisations and ensuring organizational well-being. Another significant challenge is the identification, recruitment and mobilization of volunteers: 28% of respondents think they need help in this direction to a very large extent, and 30% to a large extent. Besides, organisation leaders believe that they also need support from the perspective of public communication (76% to a very large extent), organisational assessment or digitalisation (over 70%). The percentage of those who did not know how to answer these questions is generally low, reaching up to 5% for the organisational well-being item. Percentages reported were calculated after elimination of non-responses.

Figure 51. Need of support for non-governmental organisations



Source: BLO 2023

Conclusions

The data analysed in this chapter outlines a complex picture of the challenges faced by non-governmental organisations in Romania. On the one hand, resources, both financial and human, or related to access to relevant information continue to be scarce. The lack of resources is visible both from the precariousness existing in the sector, e.g. the small number of full-time employees, and from the inability to cover the needs of a large number of beneficiaries.

Beyond the lack of financial or human resources, the tertiary sector sometimes also faces a lack of information on various aspects of the functioning, financing and cooperation among organisations in this area. Employees in the sector work a lot, with a large share of them being affected by burnout, and harassment by some people or groups, or chicanery, deliberate or implicit by public institutions, continues, albeit at a level lower than 7 years ago. However, for most of those working in the non-governmental sector, the workplace or organisation where they work is a pleasant environment, where they feel supported by both leadership and colleagues. Problems related to scarcity or insufficiency of resources have been exacerbated in recent years by global threats, among which the most important are the Covid-19 pandemic and the economic recession.

Period of pandemic and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine: mobilization and difficulties

► Daniela Angi, Bogdan Mihai Radu

Introduction

The last four years have been marked by at least two developments with important challenges for society at large: the exceptional situation created at the beginning of 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic (including the series of measures generated to manage the new epidemiological context), and two years later, the Russian military attack on Ukraine and the effort to accommodate and integrate the population that fled away from the conflict. Both events have generated notable changes in the usual dynamics of the NGO sector in Romania, one of the common aspects being the significant involvement of non-governmental organisations in actions of response to the new situations created.

Regarding the pandemic, we are not only talking about the fact that organisations have contributed – through the services provided and targeted interventions – to the easier going through this the period by various groups of beneficiaries, but also by the fact that the sector itself was marked by the destabilising effects of the pandemic context. In turn, the humanitarian crisis generated by the invasion in the neighbouring country has been not only a moment of mobilisation to support refugees, but also a challenge for their ability to coordinate their activities with other actors involved in the humanitarian effort and reconfiguration, even if temporarily, of the action paths. We discuss some of these elements below, with the important remark that the examples provided represent only a small part of all the NGO sector's interventions in addressing these very exceptional circumstances.

Covid-19 pandemic

In the unprecedented context of the pandemic, citizens' access to up-to-date information on the evolution of the situation and the measures to be followed has become essential. An important support in this regard came from the organisation Code for Romania, which, within the Covid 19 Task Force programme, created a series of digital solutions that meet the needs of the moment (Code for Romania, n.d.).

One of the platforms created under the umbrella of Task Force Covid-19 is RoHelp.ro, which addressed the need to facilitate donations to NGOs involved in activities related to the effects of the pandemic. RoHelp.ro has enabled this, allowing donors to choose which interventions the organisations registered on the platform can support financially (Știri.ONG, 2020).

In fact, the efforts (and successes) of organisations in accelerating fundraising actions were one of the key aspects of the period. They made possible the multitude of NGO interventions, a large part of which concerned the health area, be it the provision of services to beneficiaries or support to healthcare institutions (USAID, 2021). The support provided to the units in the healthcare system was possible thanks to the fast and efficient mobilisation of organisations in collecting donations that would allow the purchase of the necessary medical equipment. For example, organisations such as the Asociația pentru Relații Comunitare (Association for Community Relations) and Salvați Copiii (Save the Children) created emergency funds intended for this type of interventions during the first months of the pandemic. (ARC, 2020; Salvați Copiii, 2020).

Community foundations have been instrumental in coordinating various initiatives at local level and in facilitating collaboration among organisations, local authorities and health institutions (FFCR, 2020).

An important mechanism during this period was the creation of special funding lines for NGOs under existing programmes. One such example is the special call *În stare să ajut (Able to help)* within the programme *În stare de bine (Able to do good)*, run by FDSC and Kaufland Romania, which financed 15 projects aimed at supporting vulnerable groups and medical staff (Știri.ONG, 2021).

A priority area in which NGOs made a significant contribution during the health crisis is education. The suspension of face-to-face courses and their transition into the online system was a major change, for which a large part of the students and teachers were unprepared, lacking acquaintance with online teaching activities and, not infrequently, the technology needed to deliver them. A summary of education interventions in the first months of the pandemic shows that most of the initiatives carried out covered these issues, with NGOs providing educational support to pupils and teachers, as well as various resources to assist remote teaching (Coaliția pentru Educație, 2020). In addition, teacher training activities and the provision of IT equipment to assist distance learning have been key forms of support from organisations (Coaliția pentru Educație, 2020).

Beyond mobilising the NGO sector to counteract the effects of the pandemic, organisations have themselves been vulnerable by the newly created context. Limiting people's mobility and social interactions, which has virtually eliminated the possibility of many types of actions, has helped shape rather pessimistic perspectives about the future of many non-profit entities. For example, in a World Bank study (2020), based on data collected in May-June 2020, a quarter of the organisations participating in the survey indicated a reduction in the number of 'permanent employees or collaborators' (p. 40) as a result of the context created by the pandemic.

In this context, there have been numerous reactions calling for support for NGOs or criticising the measures proposed by the authorities to counter the effects of the pandemic. Here are two illustrations of this kind.

In the second half of March 2020, the Civil Society Development Foundation published a position paper pointing out the acute need for state support so that NGOs can continue their work in difficult times (FDSC, 2020). The call refers to the multitude of problems encountered by the organisations consulted and their concerns about the period ahead. These include difficulties related to the possibility for organisations to continue delivering regular services to beneficiaries, as well as access to funding through which additional support can be provided to them, financial problems (including staff remuneration), affecting the calendar of activities in ongoing projects or activities involving the organisation of events and campaigns. Highlighting the internal diversity of the sector – where organisations have different opportunities to adapt their activities to the new conditions – that document proposes specific support measures, some of them of a fiscal nature, to help the sector through this period.

Another example is the cultural and creative sector, strongly affected by the drastic reduction of social interaction. In November 2020, when the intention to introduce a state aid scheme was announced, Centrul Cultural Clujean (Cluj Cultural Centre), together with several dozen cultural organisations, submitted observations to the Government indicating that, in the proposed form, the scheme is disadvantageous for a large part of the organisations, which would have been excluded – due to limitative definitions – from the category of eligible beneficiaries (Centrul Cultural Clujean, 2020). In addition, the signatories reacted to the excessive concentration of the measures on ticket sales (which would have focused support mainly on event organisers), as well as to the restrictive calendar of the proposed procedure for enrolment as potential beneficiaries of State aid (CCC, 2020).

In the survey conducted for this study, involving NGO members/employees/volunteers (BMO2023), 64% of respondents indicated that the pandemic affected to a large extent the way their organisation works. The survey includes no questions to detail the specific ways in which organisations have been affected by the pandemic experience. Establishing a clear relationship between the field in which organisations operate and the strong impact of the pandemic is hampered by the fact that more than half of them have

declared themselves active in more than one area, making it difficult to isolate the effect of a particular area in which they work (e.g. in the case of organisations active in both education and environmental protection, their work may have been heavily affected by the pandemic in terms of educational activities and less in terms of those related to environmental protection).

We have explored the possibility that the pandemic's strong impact on the way organisations work might look different depending on the type of human resources involved in their work. Indeed, the data shows that the share of responses indicating a strong impact of the pandemic is higher among organisations working exclusively with employed staff (68%, as compared to 65% in organisations where both employees and volunteers work, respectively 60% for entities using exclusively volunteers), but overall, the association between the two aspects is not statistically significant.

Humanitarian crisis generated by the war in Ukraine

Two years after the usual pace of life was disrupted by the outbreak of the pandemic, Russia's military action in Ukraine generated a new situation in which non-governmental organisations demonstrated an extraordinary ability to mobilise and intervene quickly.

A mapping of the actions carried out by NGOs in spring 2022 shows that, together with their engagement in providing immediate assistance, organisations also carried out actions to facilitate, in the medium and long term, the accommodation of people who had to leave the territory of Ukraine (Cibian & Fejes, 2022). NGOs were involved in support actions near the border and at community level, and the forms of aid were multiple, including the provision of products to cover basic needs, shelter, transportation and various types of services needed for adults and children arriving in Romania (Cibian & Fejes, 2022).

In the efforts to help people who left Ukraine were also involved member organisations in the Coalition for the Rights of Migrants and Refugees – CDMiR. Representatives of the CDMiR were present in all six thematic working groups announced by the government to draw up the Action Plans on Refugee Integration (CDMiR, 2023). Among the interventions of the member organisations are the actions of Asociația Română pentru Promovarea Calității și Practicilor de Succes - the Romanian Association for the Promotion of Quality and Success Practices (ARPCPS), which contributed to the organisation, in March 2022, of the Community Center for Ukrainian Refugees (CATTIA), later under the administration of the municipality of Brasov (CDMiR, 2023). Under the aegis of ARPCPS, the Centre for Integration for Migrants in Brasov has been operating since 2012; in the context of the situation in Ukraine, the Centre has become an important support point in the region, by providing information and counselling services, assisting refugees in interacting with various institutions and organising Romanian language courses (CDMiR, 2023).

Also part of the fast response to the situation created in spring 2022 was the creation of Centrul de Asistență Umanitară și Socială pentru Refugiați CTR Nicolina - the Centre for Humanitarian and Social Assistance for Refugees CTR Nicolina, an initiative of the Federation of Non-governmental Organisations for Social Services (FONSS), in which partners from the NGO sector were involved, together with the municipality of Iasi (FONSS, n.d.a). During the first year of the war, the Centre provided beneficiaries with a variety of services and forms of assistance (UNHCR, 2023). The RESTART project continued the Federation's involvement in the efforts to integrate refugees from Ukraine, aiming to increase their information about their rights in Romania, as well as the capacity of organisations and institutions to respond to the specific needs of refugees, part of which are found in particular situations of vulnerability (FONSS n.d.b).

As many of the refugees arriving from Ukraine are children, an important part of the support actions initiated by NGOs targeted their well-being and access to education services. The forms of support from NGOs were multiple, including, among others, organising educational hubs, offering after-school activities and non-formal education programmes, psychological counselling, facilitating access to online

courses organised in Ukraine, Romanian language courses (an extensive discussion on this topic is offered by Niță et al., 2023).

The involvement of organisations in assisting refugees arriving from Ukraine was not without difficulty. These include ensuring the financial resources involved in interventions (including calculating the costs needed to support future actions), lack of previous experience of staff/volunteers in the area of humanitarian emergencies, problems of coordinating activities among organisations and harmonising NGOs' involvement with the actions of the authorities (Cibian & Fejes, 2022).

In addition – as shown by a recent study (Petrescu et al., 2023) focused on NGOs' response to the humanitarian crisis – the engagement of organisations in support programmes for refugees also involved adjustments in their functioning and internal structure, such as the diversification of services provided and the recruitment of additional staff, with skills suitable for specific types of interventions.

Coming back to the survey data collected for this study (BMO2023), they show that the way 31% of organisations work has been affected to a large extent by the war in Ukraine. The representatives of the organisations were also asked whether the activity of the entities in which they are active involves working with refugees from Ukraine. Of all those who answered this question (N=1286), 64% say the organisation does not work with refugees from Ukraine. Among organisations that have indicated various forms in which the organisation is active in working with refugees (N=463), in 71% of cases, refugees are among the beneficiaries of the organisation, 31% of organisations say they have colleagues from Ukraine, other forms by which the organisation works with refugees are reported by 23% of respondents (the question allowed multiple answers).

In the category of organisations that indicated that refugees from Ukraine are among their beneficiaries (N=327), we can mainly identify organisations for which the social-charitable field represents one of the areas of activity (63%), NGOs that have mentioned education between fields of intervention (56%), as well as organisations whose specialisation includes civic advocacy (30%), human rights (28%) and health (26%). The results are consistent with the overview of NGO sector interventions discussed in this section, reflecting the efforts of organisations to respond to the specific needs of refugees arriving in Romania.

Conclusions

In conclusion, both the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have affected non-governmental organisations in Romania in at least two ways, simultaneously. First, the two crisis situations created a decisive and quasi-conventional response of civil society, which mobilised exemplarily and provided help whenever needed, sometimes before state institutions managed to react. At the same time, both the pandemic and the war in Ukraine have tested the limits of non-governmental organisations, exerting pressure on human resources and exacerbating pre-existing problems such as insufficient financial resources

CSR challenges

► Bogdan Mihai Radu, Daniela Angi

Introduction

Projects and actions implemented through corporate social responsibility (CSR) mechanisms of companies can be both an important source of income for non-governmental organisations and a way to build sustainable partnerships with the business environment. Although there are already CSR campaigns in Romania, the collaboration between NGOs and private companies has not yet reached the optimal level, and this situation is due to both structural factors and limited information/education on this subject. However, in recent years, remarkable progress has been made in terms of collaboration between companies and non-governmental organisations, as shown by the latest studies summarised below.

Collaboration between NGOs and companies through the CSR mechanism

The survey of non-governmental organisation leaders presented in this study (BLO 2023) introduced several questions about how NGOs interacted with the business environment through CSR. Thus, 25% of the questioned NGO leaders (and who answered this question) said they had implemented actions and projects with CSR companies in 2022. Survey data conducted by FDSC in 2016 also with leaders of organisations shows that at that time the percentage of NGOs that had carried out projects in partnership with companies through the CSR mechanism in 2015 was of 25%. Returning to the data from BLO 2023, it is also worth noting that 61% of respondents mentioned that their organisation arranged for fundraising campaigns through the 3.5% mechanism, and 66% of them estimated that the funds raised through the campaign exceeded the costs of that campaign. According to the 10th edition of the study Dynamics and the perspective of the CSR field in Romania (2022), conducted by CSRMedia and Valoria Business Solutions, 65% of the companies included in the study state that social responsibility is part of their sustainability strategy, and 71% define CSR as community involvement (CSRMedia, 2022). Also, according to the same study, 96% of the companies included in the research collaborate with NGOs to implement CSR projects and, although the CSR budget is predominantly allocated to PR and marketing departments (55%), the allocation to sustainability departments is increasing (20%) (CSRMedia, 2022). Health and education are among the areas most frequently targeted by CSR projects, and the environment seems to become an increasingly visible area of interest (CSRMedia, 2022).

In 2018, EY Romania in partnership with the Asociația pentru Relații Comunitare (Association for Community Relations) and HOSPICE Casa Speranței conducted a study (Hospice Casa Speranței, EY & Asociația pentru Relații Comunitare) which estimated the use of the tax facility according to which companies can direct up to 20% of the corporate tax to non-governmental organisations, among companies with a turnover of more than EUR 1 million. The study also included the application of a questionnaire on how this tax facility was used, to which 59 people, representatives of the companies, replied. The main result of the study is that only about half of companies have decided to direct part of their corporate tax to non-governmental organisations. If they did so, the most popular areas to which resources have been directed are: education and health first, followed by social services and culture, and significantly less by the environment and sports. Nearly 40% of the companies that used this tax facility collaborated with a maximum of three non-governmental organisations and 34% by more than ten. Three quarters of the companies that have directed resources to non-governmental organisations have

done so out of responsibility for community issues, and over 50% due to the fact that this facility exists. Also, a third claimed that this involvement was a moral duty, and 27% chose to support organisations working in the same field as the company's.

In 2022, a new study, this time conducted by EY together with ARC (Asociația pentru Relații Comunitare - Association for Community Relations), entitled Tax Credit on the sponsorship regime in Romania, outlines the developments in this sector, from the perspective of using the tax incentives offered by law to companies for involvement in CSR processes. The study starts from the legal/fiscal provision that companies can sponsor various types of beneficiaries, including non-governmental organisations, and this expense becomes a tax credit that can reduce the corporation tax due by companies, up to 20% of the corporate tax due, or 0.75% of turnover (to choose the option with the lower ceiling). Moreover, the provision also applies to micro-enterprises, where a 20% limit of income tax applies (EY & ARC, 2022). Based on the responses of 150 business environment respondents, the study shows that in 2020, the total amount granted to sponsorships was almost 336 million EUR, increasing by more than 10% as compared to the previous year, but representing only 41% of the maximum theoretical sponsorship possibility (EY & ARC, 2022). The vast majority of respondents (over 91%) represented companies that are subject to corporate tax. The data collected presents a dynamic situation with a significant development potential; thus, almost 80% of respondents said that they are aware of the legal provisions regarding the tax credit related to sponsorships and that they use it, which is an encouraging result. However, more than half of the companies surveyed do not have a dedicated CSR officer or department. Of the companies surveyed, 95.8% gave sponsorships in 2020, of which slightly more than half directed funds to non-governmental organisations, and about three quarters said the aid was financial (EY & ARC, 2022). The preferred areas of companies are education, social services and health, and more than 70% of respondents said they preferred to develop partnerships with certain organisations that they support on the long term (with or without a formal partnership). The reasons why companies choose to sponsor non-governmental organisations include both community care (36.6% mention responsibility for community issues, 12.2% refer to moral duty, and 12.2% to NGO-supported causes) and instrumental considerations (26.8% use the tax facility because there is one, while 12.2% believe that NGO support positively affects their employees) (EY & ARC, 2022). The comparison between the two studies carried out by EY and other partners shows an evolution in terms of CSR dynamics in Romania over the last 5 years, especially in terms of the increasing involvement of large companies.

Another study from 2023 entitled Philanthropy and Corporal Social Responsibility in Central and Eastern Europe (Social Impact Alliance for Central and Eastern Europe, 2023) conducted by the Social Impact Alliance for Central and Eastern Europe with the support of Google, the Romanian Business Leaders Foundation, Dentons Bucharest and Nexia Romania, analysed the results of in-depth interviews with representatives of umbrella organisations of companies, investors, NGOs, academia, authorities and organisations supporting social involvement, in order to outline an overview of companies' involvement in philanthropy. The problems or obstacles affecting the level of involvement identified in this study include the following: companies' support for projects rather than organisations, which does not ensure the sustainability of the initiative, an approach to CSR from the perspective of companies as *tick boxes (rather than as a strategic investment)*, lack of information on the topic, high level of sophistication of terminology, dense legislation, lack of capacity (Social Impact Alliance for Central and Eastern Europe, 2023). It also mentions the lack of trust in non-governmental organisations, but also the fear of possible tax controls, which could take place following the decision to engage in CSR activities. From a legal and fiscal perspective, there is primarily the issue of insufficient tax incentives for donors, the difficulty of NGOs to also engage in lucrative activities (due to tax/legal barriers/complications), the weak evolution of social entrepreneurship, the lack of support for pro bono activities, the lack of legal and fiscal support for social impact-oriented investors (Social Impact Alliance for Central and Eastern Europe, 2023).

Moreover, one of the problems that influences the formation and cultivation of the link between non-governmental organisations and everything we call CSR stems from multiple and sudden fiscal and legislative changes affecting the economic sector. According to a study by UEFISCDI on entrepreneurship (Curaj et al., 2021), for companies, these changes make it difficult to create long-term planning.

Thus, sometimes, firms are forced to change their CSR strategy on the move, due to the unpredictability induced by ad hoc-tax changes, this undoubtedly affecting the work of non-governmental organisations that rely on these funds.

Conclusions

As the above mentioned studies suggest, as well as the responses of questioned NGO leaders in the BLO 2023 survey, the collaboration between non-governmental organisations and companies through CSR mechanisms exists in Romania and seems to be part of a positive dynamic. The increased involvement of companies, especially large ones, or the creation of long-term partnerships with certain organisations suggests a development of the CSR sector in Romania. Tax incentives related to CSR, even if sometimes difficult to apply (which is also confirmed by the participation in CSR partnerships of smaller companies) are certainly important in any strategy for developing partnerships companies – NGO through CSR mechanisms. Although there is still room for improvement, both in the legislative and fiscal framework and of education and information in the field of CSR, trends confirm that over the last decade, the CSR mechanisms of some companies have become important sources of support for non-governmental organisations, and the visibility of the field has increased significantly.

ROMANIA 2024

THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR
PROFILE, TRENDS, CHALLENGES

SECTORAL
INSIGHTS

7.

Classification of the NGO sector by field of activity

► Bogdan Voicu, Ștefania Andersen, Irina Niță

The chapters grouped in this part of the report, dedicated to “sectoral insights”, address the dynamics of the NGO sector for several large areas of economic activity. Their choice was determined by their economic presence – through the development of private education (education), the reported boom in terms of participation (religion and sports), the importance of the NGO sector in the Eastern European area as a promoter of democratisation and development (civic, advocacy and human rights associations), the specific long-standing interest of the FDSC in the youth organisations’ sector.

Before describing these areas, however, it is useful to specify how we identify the areas themselves. This is the purpose of this chapter, which briefly outlines the classification of the domains based on the criterion of the type of economic activity, and familiarises the reader with the procedure for classifying by field the organisations from the National Registry for NGOs and which have submitted a balance sheet to NAFA. Finally, we are discussing the validity of this classification.

Typologies of NGOs

There is an old, long-lasting debate that will probably never end up in a total consensus on the classification of NGOs (Vakil, 1997; Voicu & Serban, 2012). Existing taxonomies take into account the type of orientation of the organisation’s purposes, for example by discussing expressive or instrumental organisations (Gordon & Babchuk 1959), to which religious ones may be added as a distinct category (Voicu & Serban, 2012), or may oppose socio-tropic ones – aimed at producing a more general public good as opposed to utilitarian ones – which produce more tangible public goods, closer to individual participants or narrower communities (Beugelsdijk and van Schaik, 2005; Welzel et al. 2005). A large number of other papers propose classifications based on the size of the geographical area covered, specialisation given by the profile of members, involvement in charitable actions, level of transparency, involvement in economic activities etc. (Brown, 1991; Damm & Kane, 2022; Esman and Uphoff, 1984; Fowler, 1985; Korten, 1987, 1990; Vakil, 1997; Werker & Ahmed, 2008; Wolch, 1990)

Such typologies, however, focus on the desire to offer taxonomies with a narrow number of categories, with a precise analytical purpose, related to the intrinsic meanings of NGOs thus organised into classes. However, there may be a more direct instrumental purpose, linked to financing patterns and the need to streamline the types of concrete actions and which materialise in defining the areas of activity of NGOs (Anheier & Salomon, 2006; Salomon and Anheier, 1992a,b, 1996, 2013). This is the path followed by the previous FDSC report on the sector (Kivu, coord., 2017) and reflects the impact of the classification proposed by Salomon and Anheier, which has gradually penetrated the United Nations’ system of statistics and social reports, as well as national accounts systems (Salomon, Haddock, Toepler, 2023). The classification, called *The international classification of nonprofit organisations / third sector organisations* (INCPO/TSO) has been subject to several revisions, but has kept its comparative valence, in other words being applicable as such in any society, including Romania.

The classification is today adopted as such by the United Nations and used as a basis for reporting recommended to Member States (United Nations, 2018).

The classification we opted for Romanian organisations is designed to allow a good comparison with the 2017 FDSC report (Kivu, coord., 2017) and to reflect as much as possible the 12 major categories of the ICNPO/TSO classification. We took into account the specificity of the Eastern European space, where in the first years of transition, participation in trade unions was still mandatory (Voicu & Voicu 2013) and, as

in 2010 or 2017, we excluded trade unions. It is anecdotal to note that, by mistake, one of the large trade union confederations in Romania was invited to reply to the BLO questionnaire, which triggered a rather impetuous official message that put the organisers into their place, marking the fact that that confederation is a trade union, not part of non-governmental organisations.

For the remainder, the classifications made complied with the INCPO classification, with a few mentions. Professional and business-related organisations are united in one category due to the difficulties of being separated into the algorithm we used for classifications. Organisations dedicated to promoting the NGO sector (section H, ICNPO/TSO) have been assimilated to civic/advocacy organisations, due to the small number of those in section H. For reasons related to the history of FDSC reporting and the specific interests of the FDSC related to certain areas, we have distinguished several types of organisations, which have been classified also separately: youth organisations, children's organisations, tourism organisations, elderly organisations, family organisations, ethnic organisations, Roma organisations, women's organisations, house owners and tenants associations, forestry and agricultural commons.

Field identification method

To classify organisations by field, we followed a simple path used in similar studies from other countries such as Austria (Litofchenko, Karner, Maier, 2020) or Scotland (Rutherford & Brook, 2018). We took over the name of the NGO, as it appears in RN-ONG or in the reports to NAFA and we carried out semantic analysis, starting from the keywords that define the area. For example, an NGO that has in its name "FOTBAL" or "BADMINTON" is classified as "Sports and Hobby". An NGO that includes the sequence of words "HUMAN RIGHTS" is classified in the category "civic/advocacy".

Obviously, this approach, without being doubled by verifiers, is simplistic and can lead to serious classification errors. For example, the word "SPORTS" apparently refers to "Sports and hobby", but the respective sequence of letters (S-P-O-R-T) can be found in... "TRANSPORT", as in the case of Asociația Transportatorilor Independenți din Cârța (Association of Independent Transporters of Cârța), a fictitious organisation that we use only as an example. In the same way, "ARTA" can be part of the name of Cârța, it can be part of words or phrases such as "partaj", "Spartan Club", "Marta Bibescu", "Soarta Ciorilor", etc. In other words, although apparently "ARTA" refers to "culture/art", in fact the use of the word as such is difficult.

Before we continue to explain the potential inclusion errors and how we sought to solve them, it is useful to note that some of the RN-ONG records and from NAFA are either with or without diacritics, may or may not include punctuation marks, quotation marks, abbreviations. To eliminate such variations, we removed the diacritics (Ș became S, Ț became T, Î became I, and Â became A), all the words were written in capital letters, we removed punctuation marks except the point, and the spaces were replaced by underscores.

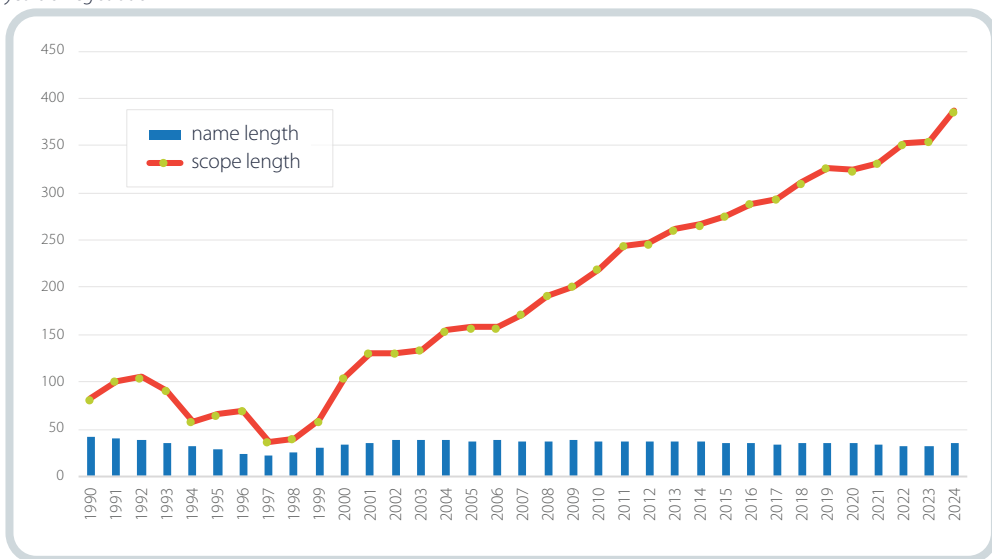
Returning to ARTA, it is now obvious why it is confused with some words or phrases that include it and with which it would not overlap when diacritics are present. But overlapping, as the only few examples selected above reveal, are also present when diacritics are in place. In other words, the keyword selection activity has been permanently doubled by controlling inclusion errors. In the case of ARTA, the successions _ARTA_, _ARTEI_, _ART_, have proven to effectively classify organisations in the field of "Culture & art". In some cases, we had to cross some criteria or manually clean some classification errors.

Keyword generation activity was performed similarly in the 2017 FDSC report. As compared to that report, we developed the keyword scheme and removed a number of classification errors such as those exemplified above. We also used a database provided by the National Institute of Statistics (INS) upon the request of the FDSC, which includes over 241.000 entities that could have been in the non-governmental sector. For example, as compared to those that are NGOs, associations of owners or agricultural associations that are not registered in RN-ONG have been added upon the request of FDSC. The list has also included a classification by type of organisation by INS and the NACE codes reported to NAFA (those in the annual balance sheets). Of the entities on the list about 145.000 included the NACE code 9499

(which says they carry out non-profit activities). We used the respective codes and typologies made by the INS as a guide to detect keywords that were not originally present in the list used for classification, thus increasing the initial accuracy. The full list of keywords and coding operations carried out is described in the extensive methodology of this report, available online at: <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/LKJJQO>.

Using the keyword list, we have repeated the classification in RN-ONG once on the basis of the title and then again based on the declared and registered purpose of the organisation. In both cases, and regardless of the fact that we have made the classification in the RN-ONG or in the annual balance sheet database, an NGO can be classified in no area (it has no keywords allowing classification), in one field, or in several (e.g., education, and religious, and community development).

Figure 52. Median number of characters of the name, respectively of the mission statement declared by NGOs from RN-ONG, per years of registration



Source: RN-ONG

Historical data from RN-ONG enables also observation of variations in the length of the organisation's title and declared purpose (Figure 52). Hence the possibility to classify organisations in RN-ONG by fields using the name and stated purpose. There is only one problem that can be related to technology. Figure 52 shows a strong, unnatural increase in the number of characters used to describe the purpose of the organisation. The suspicion is that, at least in the latter part of the 2000s, it is an effect of penetration of primary computer technology and knowledge. This means that the employees of the Registry and the Ministry of Justice include more words from the description of the organisation's mission statement. Just as well, it may even be an increase in the size of the instruments of incorporation, precisely because of the same causes. In other words, an organisation can be classified into several areas after 2010, because it mentions more things in the articles of incorporation, not because it would do more, but because, before, the lack of computer skills made these acts shorter. The alternative assumption also makes sense: as we approach contemporary times, the world becomes more complex, and the increasing complexity of NGOs' goals reflects this change. Since we cannot currently test these assumptions, we can only draw attention on the potential to more accurately classify registered organisations more recently when using RN-ONG.

As the size of the name of organisations does not vary as much, errors cannot occur when using only the name. However, when we use only the name, the accuracy is lower than when we also use the stated scope of the organisation.

Validation of classifications

BLO includes a question of self-identification of the fields of activity of organisations that responded to the questionnaire. Comparing the answers to that question with the classification based on the organisation's name, as it appears in the databases of the Ministry of Finance/NAFA, we found correct classifications for over 75% of organisations in most areas. However, there are areas where the discrepancy is higher: education (59%, the vast majority being errors of non-inclusion in the field, i.e. the organisation identified itself as having actions in the field of education, but classification based on the name did not categorise them as such), social/charitable (44%, most of all non-inclusion errors), civic (40%, most of all non-inclusion errors). Overall, field-based classification is a bit better in the BLO if we use the revised classification scheme in 2024 than the one generated in 2017. Even though the improvement is small, it increases the accuracy of the classification by about two percentage points.

Table 42. Accuracy indicators for the classification by fields.

Field	Ratios in total NGOs in the field		Ratios in total NGOs		
	Validity	Reliability	Over-inclusion errors	Under-inclusion errors	Total
Culture / art	76%	76%	1%	23%	100%
Sports & Hobby	89%	89%	1%	10%	100%
Education	36%	42%	1%	58%	100%
Health	75%	75%	1%	24%	100%
Social / charitable	54%	56%	3%	41%	100%
Environment / ecology	80%	79%	1%	19%	100%
Animal protection	97%	97%	0%	3%	100%
Civic	59%	59%	2%	38%	100%
Community development	70%	70%	0%	29%	100%
Religious	98%	95%	3%	2%	100%
Tourism	93%	93%	0%	7%	100%

Self-identification is based on data from BLO 2023. The classification within fields is based on the name, as it appears in the reports from the Ministry of Finance.

*Validity: correctly classified among self-identified ones in the field

*Reliability: correctly classified within or outside the field, from total organisations

*Over-inclusion: classified within the field, although not self-identified with it (out of total NGOs)

*Under-inclusion: classified outside the field, though self-identifying with it

Data in Table 42, based on the mixed examination of BLO 2023 and of the classification made by fields, shows that that we are dealing with difficulties to correctly place NGOs in only three categories (social/charitable, civic, education). These are also the areas for which accuracy increases substantially when we can use in the classification also the scope of the organisation, not just the name.

The presence of under-inclusion errors is only reflected in the use of data from administrative sources and only partially. Given the large volumes (the large number of organisations in each field), the assessment of the dynamics of their registration or of their average/median size or financial execution median/average does not entail major precautions. Using relative figures (weights) or medium/median trends solves the problem. However, difficulties arise when summing up the numbers of members and/or budgets. For all of this, we know that these amounts are underestimated and we cannot predict how much. It should be noted that similar errors affect the data submitted in 2017 by the report preceding this one.

A dashboard of the NGO sector by fields of activity

► Bogdan Voicu

Dynamics of NGOs registration set-up

Table 43 describes the establishment of NGOs in the four post-December decades. For some of the registrations in the National Registry for NGOs it is impossible to specify the year of establishment, hence the column in the table called "uncertain".

The message of the table is simple: for most sectors in the NGO sector, the 2020s are more productive in the emergence of new entities than in 2010s, which were in turn a little more active in the emergence of new NGOs than the decade that preceded them, while the 2000s marked the establishment of more NGOs than the 1990s. There are also some areas where the 2010s have seen a setback (ethnic, Roma, women, as well as those of a purely economic nature – and whose membership of the NGO sector is questionable).

Table 43. Distribution of NGOs from various fields

Field	Incorporation date					Total
	The 1990's	The 2000's	the 2010's	the 2020's	uncertain	
Culture/art	13%	28%	43%	16%	0.1%	100%
Sports/hobby	13%	28%	41%	18%	0.1%	100%
Animal protection	6%	27%	53%	14%	0.1%	100%
Education	10%	27%	44%	18%	0.1%	100%
Research	12%	29%	43%	15%	0.1%	100%
Health	16%	24%	39%	21%	0.1%	100%
Social / charitable	27%	25%	33%	16%	0.1%	100%
Disabilities	16%	19%	42%	24%	0.1%	100%
Elder people	22%	27%	34%	17%	0.1%	100%
Rroma	7%	50%	33%	10%	0.1%	100%
Women	13%	39%	36%	12%	0.0%	100%
Family	13%	23%	40%	23%	0.0%	100%
Children	13%	22%	43%	22%	0.1%	100%
Youth	11%	28%	43%	18%	0.1%	100%
Environment	8%	25%	48%	19%	0.1%	100%
Civic	12%	27%	43%	19%	0.1%	100%
Ethnic	23%	36%	32%	9%	0.0%	100%
Religious	20%	28%	37%	15%	0.1%	100%
Business / professional	14%	30%	40%	16%	0.1%	100%
Community development	9%	33%	43%	15%	0.1%	100%
Agriculture	13%	36%	43%	7%	0.1%	100%
Tourism	12%	24%	48%	16%	0.0%	100%
Commons / forestry	11%	54%	30%	4%	0.2%	100%
LAND owners	2%	41%	52%	5%	0.2%	100%
FOREST owners	1%	81%	16%	2%	0.4%	100%
Housing (residents, tenants, owners)	16%	35%	29%	20%	0.2%	100%

Source: RN-ONG.

Current structure of the sector

Registration in the National Registry for NGOs

Table 44 brings to the fore the distribution of the sector by fields of activity. The high number of organisations dedicated to the “social/charitable” domain (approximately one third of the total NGOs in the National Registry) is noted. Their primacy reflects the trends of post-modernisation of social policies anticipated in the first part of this report, and their number is expected to increase, bearing in mind that the whole field has been forbidden to exist during communism and revives after 1990 (Lazăr et al, 2021). In terms of number, there follows NGOs in education (a lot of them are private education organisations), civic, sports, cultural organisations, in the field of “business – professional”.

Table 44. A map of the NGO sector by major fields of activity, according to the registrations in RN-ONG

	NGO type					Total
	association	foundation	federation	union	Foreign subsidiary	
Culture/art	31,628	3,824	285	165	8	35,910
Sports/hobby	30,777	1,401	351	91	5	32,625
Animal protection	8,182	317	34	5	1	8,539
Education	31,071	2,807	142	78	14	34,112
Research	6,154	616	27	8	4	6,809
Health	12,748	2,155	96	20	5	15,024
Social / charitable	31,905	9,684	228	94	14	41,925
Disabilities	5,060	837	26	3	1	5,927
Elder people	3,935	986	23	13	1	4,958
Rroma	5,327	554	170	120	4	6,175
Women	6,478	924	36	16	2	7,456
Family	14,164	2,511	33	11	9	16,728
Children	21,314	1,789	154	79	3	23,339
Youth	16,642	1,265	88	19	1	18,015
Environment	33,887	2,284	556	316	12	37,055
Civic	1,857	223	25	38	5	2,148
Ethnic	937	59	3	14	0	1,013
Religious	11,433	2,495	71	42	6	14,047
Business / professional	31,212	1,511	780	406	9	33,918
Community development	6,676	354	47	12	1	7,090
Agriculture	10,439	307	108	33	0	10,887
Tourism	3,754	216	25	6	0	4,001
Commons / forestry	2,819	66	19	8	0	2,912
LAND owners	1,362	4	4	0	0	1,370
FOREST owners	1,148	2	2	1	0	1,153
Housing (residents, tenants, owners)	550	6	10	7	0	573

Note: Summarising the figures per column is not legitimate: an NGO can be included in several fields/ Source: RN-ONG.

Given the tendency to underestimate the number of NGOs in education, social/charitable and civic fields, it is likely that their dominance in all organisations in the RN-ONG is even stronger.

● NGOs reporting the balance sheet on an annual basis

In the figures reported in Table 45, on each row (i.e. for each field), both the denominator and the numerator vary from one year to the next. However, the estimated weights remain virtually unchanged from year to year. As the underestimation of the number of organisations equally affects the numerator and the denominator, when considering the annual variation, it follows that, indeed, these rates of submitting balance sheets remain practically constant over time. In terms of their size, given that in the classification based on RN-ONG we also take into account the scope of the organisation, not only the name, especially for areas where scope analysis brings much more information than the name (education, business/professional, civic, culture, social/charitable), it is likely that the submittal rates for balance sheet statements are also underestimated.

Table 45. Ratio of NGOs reporting an NGO balance sheet to NAFA in total NGOs recorded until the respective year in RN-ONG

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	total submittals 2022
Culture & art	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	13%	13%	11%	11%	3911
Sports & hobby	33%	34%	35%	35%	35%	34%	34%	33%	29%	32%	9773
Animal protection	19%	21%	21%	21%	20%	19%	18%	17%	14%	16%	1280
Education	18%	19%	19%	20%	20%	20%	19%	18%	16%	17%	5467
Research	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%	381
Health	21%	21%	21%	21%	21%	20%	19%	19%	17%	17%	2393
Social & charitable	12%	13%	13%	13%	15%	15%	14%	14%	12%	13%	5130
Disabilities	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%	12%	12%	11%	11%	621
Elderly	15%	14%	15%	15%	15%	14%	14%	13%	12%	12%	563
Roma	14%	13%	13%	13%	12%	12%	11%	10%	7%	9%	86
Women	38%	37%	37%	37%	36%	34%	34%	32%	29%	29%	1755
Family	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	282
Children	16%	16%	17%	17%	17%	17%	17%	17%	15%	16%	2435
Youth	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	7%	7%	7%	6%	6%	1291
Environment/ecology	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	1214
civic, advocacy etc.	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%	1813
Ethnic	29%	30%	30%	30%	30%	29%	29%	28%	25%	26%	551
Religious	25%	25%	25%	25%	24%	24%	23%	23%	20%	21%	2800
business/professional	37%	37%	36%	35%	33%	31%	30%	28%	24%	25%	8016
Community/local/regional development	29%	28%	28%	28%	27%	26%	25%	24%	21%	21%	1443
Agricultural	37%	38%	38%	37%	35%	34%	32%	31%	26%	27%	2928
Tourism	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%	11%	10%	10%	9%	9%	350
Commons & forestry	63%	64%	64%	64%	64%	63%	62%	60%	54%	57%	1638
Land/pasture owners	29%	29%	29%	28%	27%	26%	25%	24%	21%	22%	293

Source: RN-ONG.

● Participation in NGOs, by fields of economic activity

If the data from NAFA and RN-ONG may include underestimations of the field, for membership in NGOs we have more user-friendly data available, even if affected by differences in measurement. This is data from different surveys, mainly comparative, listed in Table 46, which illustrates the share of those who claim to be members of different types of associations /NGOs.

Table 46. Types of associations/NGOs the Romanians are part of.

Year:	1993	1998	1999	2003	2008	2009	2010	2012	2016	2018	2023	
NGO type	source: EVS/WVS		BOP		EVS		RES/CSES		BOSC		WVS	
Trade unions	20%		9%		6%	7%		8%	8%	8%	8%	
Political parties	3%		2%		4%	2%		7%	10%	5%	6%	
Religious associations	5%	2%	4%		9%	3%	1%*	20%	6%*	17%	8%*	
Culture	2%		3%		4%	1%	0%	7%	3%		2%	
Education							1%		2%	7%	2%	
Human rights	0%		1%		1%		0%*		0%*		1%**	
Peace movements	0%		0%		1%	0%	*		*			
Local action groups	1%		1%		2%							
Humanitarian & charitable organizations		1%					1%	4%	1%*	6%	2%	
Health	0%		1%		2%	0%					2%	
Environment, ecology	1%	1%		1%	3%			4%		5%		
Animal rights	0%					1%						
Professional associations	2%	2%	2%	5%	2%			5%	2%*	5%	5%	
Youth	1%		1%		1%		1%		1%		2%	
Sports/leisure	3%		2%		3%	1%	1%	8%	2%	8%	4%	
Groups of women	0%		0%		1%	0%						
Groups of consumers								3%		3%		
Groups of mutual aid								4%		4%		
Credit unions (CAR)									16%			
Associations for retired persons									2%		2%	
Organizations for helping the elderly	2%		2%		4%	1%						
Parents' committee									7%			

The figures represent the share of those who declare to participate in each type of association. The amount per column can theoretically exceed 100%, given that each respondent can participate in as many types of associations as they wish. Empty cells indicate the absence of data. EVS=European Values Study, WVS=World Values Survey, RES=Romanian Election Study, CSES=Comparative Study of Election Systems, BOP=Barometer of Public Opinion (The Soros Foundation). With the exception of BOSC data, the rest is taken from Voicu (2020). "0%" indicates percentages below 0.5%. Empty cells indicate a lack of information (the category per row was not included in the column survey). Figures cannot be summed up (one respondent may be a member of several types of organisations). *Different measurement modes, explained in the text. **BOSC: "Civic, democracy, human rights and minority organisations".

Before interpreting the table, it is useful to look at the methods of measurement, in order to understand the potential sources of differences that are not due to the observed reality, but to the instrument to record this reality. The term "measurement", in the sense used in all sciences, refers to the quantification of the properties of a phenomenon or process so that its state can be assessed, can be compared to other similar phenomena or processes, or to a previous or future state of it. In our case, the phenomenon is participation in associations, as a member, and our interest is related to the dynamic observation of this phenomenon.

The classic battery of participation in associations is the one proposed by the European Values Study and the World Values Survey in 1990, being applied for the first time in Romania (see Voicu, Rusu, Tufiş, eds., 2020 for an overview of these surveys). The item battery lists 12 domains in which NGOs can activate and asks if respondents of nationally representative samples participate in each of these types of associations as members. Some EVS and WVS waves distinguish between active and passive members. Other waves include additional questions about participating as volunteers in such organisations.

The initial set of items is similar to the areas proposed by Anheier and Salamon in 1992 (Salamon, Anheier, 1992a, 1992b) and underlying the INCPO classification already mentioned in this report. The battery is taken over in some waves of the European Social Survey and the International Social Survey Program, two other sets of important comparative surveys in Europe and worldwide, but which are not present in Romania (ESS collected data three times in Romania, but the resulting samples were rejected by the international team, not integrated into comparative databases, for issues related to validity of collection).

Also, the battery is taken over in the Romanian version of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, more precisely in the Romanian Election Study 2009 wave (Comsa, Gheorghita, Tufiş, eds., 2001). The 12 items vary from one survey and year to year, but the comparability of the main areas remains and allows the assessment of dynamics over the last three decades. They can also be partially found in the 2003 Barometer of Public Opinion of the former Soros Foundation Romania (Voicu & Voicu, 2022) – with a much shorter list of areas, as well as in BOSC 2010, 2016, 2023.

BOSC operates with a slightly different measurement in response options, investigating for each area if participation is current, if previous (“we have been a member in the past”) or has never participated in that type of organisation. In addition, the list of areas is different. Although also inspired by INCPO, BOSC lists also bring to the fore some areas of interest of FDSC (youth, agricultural companies, house owners’ associations) and propose restrictive measurement of several other areas. For example, in the BOSC 2016 there is measured not participation in religious associations but in “parish and ecclesiastical committees”; BOSC 2023 distinguishes between these committees and “other types of religious associations”; BOSC 2010 is also restrictive, measuring participation in “religious organisations with legal personality”. The consequence is an underestimation of participation in religious associations as compared to the measurement used at international level.

In terms of professional organisations, BOSC 2023 distinguishes between mandatory and non-mandatory ones, and BOSC 2016 measures participation in “Employers’ or Professional Organisations (liberal professions – e.g. College of Physicians, College of Pharmacists, Union of Legal Advisors, Union of Notaries)”. The specification in brackets most likely restricts responses to those organisations mentioned as an example. In this case, the desire for precision leads to a decrease in the likelihood that a member of professional associations will tick this and thus the participation is underestimated.

EVS/WVS opted in 1990 for measuring participation in education and culture associations, which does not allow the separation of the two types. BOSC measures them separately, with the observation that participation in the cumulative type is not equal to the sum of participation in educational and cultural organisations (since each respondent could mention participation in several types of organisations).

In 2016 and 2010, BOSC severely penalises the social and health fields, mentioning: “Social and health (organisations of persons with disabilities, patients, etc.)”, which reduces the likelihood of selecting the field if you are not in the examples in brackets.

In turn, EVS 2017 and WVS 2018 did not collect data separately for health associations.

Absolutely all surveys (EVS/WVS, RES, BOP, BOSC) have the disadvantage of incomplete or inadequate measurement of participation in civic associations. EVS/WVS and RES propose some categories from these organisations, but do not cover them completely. BOSC proposes an exhaustive definition (“Civic Organisation, Democracy, Protection of Human Rights and Minorities”), but the length of the definition may lead to the avoidance of response to phone surveys such as BOSC 2016.

The BOSC 2010 and 2016 databases also have the particularity of not including any refusal to answer questions concerning participation in NGOs. This statistically improbable feature (it is impossible for no respondent in more than a thousand to not refuse to answer those questions), artificially decreases estimates of the weights of those participating in associations, being most likely those who did not answer were registered as not participating in associations.

BOSC also measures its presence in owners' associations and agricultural associations. The last ones are in 2016 specified by examples: "The Association of Water Users, the Association of Forest Owners, the Association of Animal Breeders, the Association of Agricultural Producers". BOP also measures its presence in agricultural associations and owners' associations. However, since both types of organisations do not meet the international definition of a non-profit association (most often those of landlords/tenants are not voluntary, and agricultural ones actually pursue profit gaining, being rather trading companies, despite the "association" label), we preferred not to register them in Table 46. Also, all surveys offer the category "other types". As lists are different from one survey to another, participation in "other" is understood differently from survey to survey and figures cannot be compared.

Apparently, having to deal with so many measurement differences, the data seems unusable. However, the figures in Table 46 bring extremely valuable information, useful to understand the real dynamics of the sector. In terms of the share of those who are members of NGOs in different fields, we do not see any significant changes for most of these areas, despite the steady increase in the number of organisations (the increase observed in the previous chapter). However, there is a boom in presence in religious associations, followed by an increase in those participating in sports organisations. The two trends are visible, regardless of the measurement model used, when we compare surveys that come from the same area and can be seen even when all available surveys are combined. We also have a stable increase in participation in professional associations.

Number of employees per economic fields

● Estimations based on reporting to NAFA

As explained above, the annual submittal of the balance sheet also includes a field where the number of employees is reported, with the distinction related to the purpose of employment: activities without a patrimonial purpose or economic activities. The distinction between the two types of activities is most likely superfluous in practice: a simple search reveals dozens of websites that refer to the difference between the two and provide expert solutions (usually provided by accountants) that are not necessarily consistent. This causes a good part of the records in those fields to be affected by errors that we cannot control. Hence, as in the chapter dedicated to the size of the NGO sector, the decision to base our estimates on data series cleared of potential errors, and to take into account the median or various percentiles, as it does Table 47.

Table 47. Number of employees in NGOs that have reported a balance sheet in 2022

Field	Ratio of NGOs without employees for activities ...				Employees for activities without a patrimonial purpose				Employees for economic purpose activities				Total number of employees							
	Without a patrimonial purpose		economic		total		median		percentile		percentile		percentile		percentile		percentile			
	82%	83%	96%	81%	2	5	12	33	2	4	9	15	2	6	13	33	2	5	12	32
Culture & art	83%	82%	98%	82%	2	4	12	31	2	4	12	22	2	5	12	32	2	5	12	32
Sports & hobby	77%	77%	98%	77%	2	5	10	21	3	6	12	288	2	5	12	24	2	5	12	24
Animal protection	71%	69%	96%	69%	6	15	30	83	3	8	20	62	6	15	30	89	6	15	30	89
Education	78%	76%	96%	76%	2	6	12	29	3	4	8	18	3	7	12	29	3	7	12	29
Research	70%	69%	97%	69%	3	5	14	38	4	8	20	30	3	6	16	38	4	8	20	38
Health	65%	64%	97%	64%	3	7	20	51	4	9	22	48	3	8	22	53	4	9	22	53
Social & charitable	69%	68%	96%	68%	3	7	13	28	3	4	8	22	3	7	14	27	3	4	8	27
Disabilities	48%	45%	92%	45%	7	16	32	58	4	12	29	42	9	16	32	60	4	12	29	60
Elderly	80%	79%	99%	79%	4	6	71	190	3	3	3	3	4	6	71	190	3	3	3	4
Roma	61%	60%	95%	60%	3	10	24	111	4	8	18	37	4	11	26	104	4	8	18	104
Women	73%	72%	97%	72%	3	8	19	31	1	6	62	62	3	9	20	41	1	6	62	41
Family	62%	60%	95%	60%	10	18	30	50	6	12	24	55	10	18	31	52	6	12	24	52
Children	80%	79%	97%	79%	3	8	20	68	2	4	7	29	3	8	20	66	2	4	7	66
Youth	76%	75%	96%	75%	3	7	15	33	4	6	13	20	3	7	16	33	4	6	13	33
Environment/ecology	68%	67%	97%	67%	4	6	14	52	2	5	12	39	4	7	15	52	2	5	12	52
Civic, advocacy ...	66%	65%	96%	65%	3	12	31	99	2	6	17	29	3	12	31	99	2	6	17	99
Ethnic	66%	65%	96%	65%	5	13	45	145	4	10	22	106	5	14	46	147	4	10	22	147
Religious	66%	65%	96%	65%	3	9	29	184	3	7	14	40	3	10	32	190	3	7	14	190
Business/professional	66%	64%	95%	64%	4	10	21	97	4	7	12	16	4	10	21	82	4	7	12	82
Community development & co.	67%	65%	94%	65%	2	4	8	20	3	6	12	37	3	5	11	25	3	6	12	25
Agriculture	89%	87%	98%	87%	3	9	18	26	2	2	2	2	2	3	6	26	2	2	2	26
Tourism																				

Reading suggestion: among NGOs classified in the field of culture/art that submitted a balance sheet for the fiscal year 2022, 82% have no employees for activities without a patrimonial purpose, 96% have no employees for economic activities, 81% have no employees at all. Of those who have employees, half have 2 employees at the most for no-patrimonial purposes, 75% have no more than 5, 90% 12 at the most, and 3% have 33 or more.

For almost the majority of areas, NGOs that have employees are a minority. For example, among those in the sports & hobby field, 81% have no employees, among those who have employees, half have two employees or fewer. Only 10% of these organisations have 12 or more employees (percentile 90), and the largest 3% have more than 33 employees each.

The differences are those that have as a direct, explicit purpose the provision of care and counselling services: NGOs for the elderly, children, women. Here we meet 55% of organisations that say they have at least one employee (in the case of education), namely 40% – women, 40% – children, 36% – social/charitable, 36% – development. The same organisations have slightly larger median sizes: 6 employees in education (some are actually schools, kindergartens or private universities), 9 in NGOs for the elderly (many of them are in fact a retirement home, with a prevalent economic purpose), 10 in those for children. In all these areas, the environments are much larger, but they are artificially increased by the presence of entities with an economic purpose, but organised as NGO (a retirement home, a private university, etc.).

Let us also note that these figures give us only an overview of the sector but in fact we do not know exactly what they indicate. Individuals reported as employees may actually be part-time employees with one hour of work per year, but they can as well work 60 hours a week. Some of those working in NGOs can also be active in other organisations as well: 53% of employees who responded to BMO 2023 also report another occupation. More specifically, 2% of employees who replied to BMO 2023 are employers, 20% (i.e. one in five) are self-employed, 10% – full-time employees, 8% – part-time employees, 10% students, 2% retired persons, 8% work also in another NGO.

Data from BLO and BMO

At the end of the previous section, we already anticipated the data in Table 48, more precisely the first column, taken from BMO 2023. The remaining columns give us estimates of the number of employees based on the figures in BLO 2023.

Table 48. Typical number of employees of NGOs, by fields, according to BMO and BLO 2023

source	BMO		BLO	
	Ratio of employees having another occupation as well	Had employees in 2023	Number of employees in 2023, if they had employees	
Field (self-identified)			average	median
Culture and art	72%	47%	5	3
Sports	70%	32%	5	3
Education	57%	51%	12	5
Health	54%	65%	18	9
Social/Charitable	50%	55%	17	9
Environment protection	50%	53%	10	6
Civic, advocacy, policy influence	54%	61%	13	6
Local development	63%	66%	14	5
Human rights	55%	54%	12	8
Religion	79%	43%	9	3
Centre of resources for NGOs	58%	84%	9	5
Professional associations	84%	62%	10	2
Employers' associations	90%	*	*	*
Tourism	63%	57%	10	5
Animal protection	51%	39%	*	*

* too few cases. Sources: BMO 2023, BLO 2023.
Source: BMO 2023, BLO 2023.

As compared to the data from the reporting to NAFA, BMO and BLO have the advantage of an increased accuracy of respondents' statements. In addition, the fields result from the self-identification of NGOs, which gives better accuracy than the automated identification we used in NAFA data. On the other hand, BLO and BMO data also has the disadvantage of a reduced accuracy due to the smaller sub-samples of only a few tens or hundreds of organisations per field. It is added that, as these are not representative samples, BLO is more likely to include rather more active organisations, which overestimates the number of employees.

Beyond these precautions, as an order of magnitude, BLO leads to estimates similar to those from reporting to NAFA regarding the median number of employees in NGOs that have employees, and they are in fields such as education, culture/art, sports/hobby, community/local development. Differences are for health and social/charitable organisations, where the median is 3 in reporting to NAFA from 2022, but it rises to 9 in BLO-based estimates, while for civic (4 vs. 7) and environment/ecology (3 vs. 6), the increase is of 3 employees each. In the field of religious NGOs, the BLO estimates the median number of employees more conservatively: 3 versus 5 in the estimate based on reporting to NAFA.

It is also important to note that, like in reporting to NAFA, the average is also much higher than the median, indicating that the distributions are very asymmetrical (there are atypical cases with a high number of employees that are far from the rest of the organisations in each field and make the average not a representative indicator, i.e. it is not useful to describe the typical number of employees).

● Employees' profile: estimations based on BLO

BLO/BMO provides the opportunity to describe also the socio-demographic structure of employees in the NGO sector.

Table 49. Estimates for the structure of employees in the fields of the NGO sector, by age and gender

Field	BLO 2023: averages by fields** What is the ratio of employees aged... (pre-set categories)					BMO 2023 Declared gender			
	N*	[34 years or less]	[between 35 and 44 years]	[between 45 and 54 years]	[over 55 years]	N*	Female	Male	Another identity
Culture and art	214	32%	40%	19%	5%	83	73%	27%	0%
Sports	113	30%	33%	24%	10%	37	86%	14%	0%
Education	516	34%	36%	19%	5%	350	81%	19%	0%
Health	210	33%	35%	17%	5%	147	76%	22%	2%
Social/Charitable	383	33%	34%	20%	6%	327	82%	18%	0%
Environment / ecology	176	33%	40%	21%	5%	134	74%	26%	0%
Local development	241	31%	41%	21%	6%	153	78%	22%	0%
Religion	17	35%	51%	10%	4%	8	67%	33%	0%
Professional associations	29	36%	48%	10%	6%	17	68%	32%	0%
Tourism	56	26%	40%	19%	10%	22	78%	22%	0%
Animal protection	24	20%	69%	10%	1%	17	76%	24%	0%
Civic	345	35%	34%	20%	6%	294	78%	21%	0%

*N=number of cases before weighing. If the number of cases is low, we recommend caution in drawing conclusions.

** In the case of structure by age, the figures are not summable. They are averages of respondents' percentage estimates for their own organisation.

Sources: BMO 2023 and BLO 2023.

Table 49 presents employees according to age and gender. The differences between areas are small. Age does not make any difference at all, taking into account the fact that we make estimates based on a small number of cases from convenience samples. The high share of women is common to all areas.

The structure by age confirms a pattern of employment in which young and older workers are less present. Estimates of those who responded to BLO 2023 suggest that there are slightly more employees in sports associations over 45 years, while in tourism the share of over 55 years increases.

BLO 2023 also asked respondents about the average salary in the organisation. 7% preferred not to say what the average monthly salary is in the organisation, and 3% did not have such information. The distribution by field of those who provided answers on the income categories we predefined is indicated in Table 50.

Table 50. Distribution of average salaries per fields, according to BLO 2023

Field	Number of cases*	I prefer not to answer	I do not know	Monthly average net salary in 2023 for a full-time job (pre-set categories)						total
				below RON 1,900	1,901-2,500	2,501-3,000	3,001-4,000	4,001-5,000	Over RON 5,000	
Culture and art	214	8%	2%	13%	19%	13%	18%	16%	10%	100%
Sports	113	8%	3%	13%	20%	18%	20%	13%	8%	100%
Education	516	6%	2%	8%	13%	13%	27%	20%	11%	100%
Health	210	9%	2%	4%	8%	14%	30%	20%	12%	100%
Social/Charitable	383	5%	2%	6%	15%	16%	32%	15%	9%	100%
Environment protection	176	7%	4%	14%	7%	9%	24%	21%	13%	100%
Local development	241	5%	2%	8%	9%	11%	28%	23%	14%	100%
Religion**	17**	13%	0%	13%	13%	0%	50%	0%	13%	100%
Professional associations**	29**	20%	7%	7%	13%	0%	0%	7%	47%	100%
Tourism	56	16%	0%	12%	8%	0%	24%	28%	12%	100%
Animal protection**	24**	13%	0%	0%	13%	13%	25%	25%	13%	100%
Civic	345	5%	1%	5%	10%	11%	26%	24%	17%	100%

*not weighted. ** we recommend caution in interpreting statistics based on a small number of cases.

Source: BLO 2023

The benchmark to consider is the national monthly average net salary: RON 4523 in September 2023, 4692 in October and 4765 in November and 5079 in December 2023, according to INS data³⁸. In relation to these benchmarks, for all areas considered, average estimates of respondents to BLO 2023 place employees in the sector at a clearly lower level. According to INS data for 1994-2022, the result is not surprising: if during the period 2006-2012, the salaries in NGOs were above national averages, economic growth led to average wages practically equal to the national average from 2013, slightly lower during 2014-2015, and since 2016 the salaries in NGOs were by $\frac{1}{6}$ - $\frac{1}{5}$ lower than the national average net salary³⁹.

The differences between areas are not very large, but there are three that systematically report lower salaries: Sports, Social/Charitable, Culture/Art.

³⁸ https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/com_presa/com_pdf/cs12r23.pdf.

³⁹ http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table,variabila_FOM106B.

Status of members, employees and volunteer

Work time

It is useful to look at different areas of activity when it comes to employees across NGOs. Table 51 does this by using respondents' assessments to BMO 2023 as raw material. Reading the figures is good to remember that respondents tend to overestimate the time spent working, as shown by those high, practically impossible maximum figures (one week has 168 hours). Even so, it is relevant to note that in all areas analysed, at least two thirds of respondents report also working elsewhere. For all areas, the average hours worked exceeds the median, indicating that most cases are below average, but there are cases reporting exceptionally long working weeks.

Table 51. Work time of employees from NGOs, according to BMO 2023

	N*	Work hours in an ordinary week in NGO				Work also for other NGOs	Has also other jobs	Number of hours worked in total per week			
		min	aver	median	max			min	aver	median	max
Culture and art	57	5	38	40	70	36%	63%	8	54	50	150
Sports	24	8	43	40	70	47%	67%	8	62	50	150
Education	197	5	39	40	150	40%	53%	8	56	48	228
Health	72	2	39	40	90	30%	51%	6	51	45	140
Social/Charitable	174	6	42	40	100	36%	55%	8	61	50	260
Environment/ecology	86	6	37	40	150	43%	52%	5	50	43	200
Local development	86	5	40	40	150	52%	65%	5	63	50	228
Civic	186	6	40	40	90	45%	60%	5	57	50	228

*N=number of respondents. For the fields of religion, animal protection, tourism, professional associations, employers' associations, the number of respondents is too small to present estimators for the indicators in the table. Source: BMO 2023

In terms of time worked for the NGO as the main employer (Table 51 – columns on the left), the differences are not statistically significant, and remain non-existent also if we remove employee characteristics⁴⁰.

Comparing among sectors the total working time (right columns), those in the "Social/Charitable" and "local development" fields systematically report more hours worked per week in all their occupations, and those in health and environment/ecology report fewer⁴¹. Differences in total time worked also remain significant when we eliminate employee characteristics.

About 40% work for other NGOs as well. By eliminating personal characteristics⁴², the differences between areas completely disappear. They reappear but very limited when it comes to working outside the NGO sector: naturally, it occurs much more frequently in professional associations. Otherwise, regardless of the field, around 60% of employees say they work outside the NGO sector as well.

Subjective well-being

BLO respondents' estimates may be affected by subjectivity. Even if it were not so, beyond the salaries themselves, what really matters is how people in NGOs relate to their lives and income levels. Table 52 illustrates the variation across the economic areas where NGOs can be placed, for two subjective well-being indicators collected in BMO 2023: satisfaction with life and satisfaction with income.

⁴⁰ Estimates based on regression models (OLS), eliminating the effect of age, gender, education, seniority in NGOs, role in the organisation, total time worked, working in another NGO, working in another organisation. Standard errors were estimated roughly and the dependent variable and total working time were calculated by using logarithms. The materiality threshold considered is 0.05.

⁴¹ Statistically significant differences at $p < .05$.

⁴² Logical regression models, similar as predictors and estimation strategists of OLS models referred to in the previous paragraph.

The differences between areas practically do not matter⁴³, both in terms of income and life satisfaction. The satisfaction with income is below that of life, as in the case of the population of the whole of Romania.

Table 52. Average levels of subjective well-being indicators (scale from 1 to 10), according to BMO 2023

	How satisfied are you by your life those days?			But what is you think about your income?			Number of respondents		
	Employee	Member	Volunteer	Employee	Member	Volunteer	E	M	V
Culture and art	7.8	7.7	7.5	6.4	5.8	6.0	57	64	54
Sports	7.6	7.9	7.7	6.0	6.2	6.3	24	28	28
Education	7.6	7.5	7.6	6.3	6.0	6.2	197	148	142
Health	7.6	8.1	7.1	6.3	6.0	6.0	72	44	62
Social/Charitable	7.7	7.6	7.7	6.3	5.8	6.4	174	102	133
Environment protection	7.7	7.5	7.4	6.7	6.2	6.3	86	55	52
Local development	7.5	7.7	7.7	6.2	6.3	6.3	86	51	47
Religion*	7.5	8.1	7.5	6.5	6.8	6.7	5	4	6
Professional associations*	7.5	7.1	6.0	5.7	4.5	5.1	10	7	7
Employers' associations*	6.2	7.0	7.0	6.6	6.0	6.0	3	1	1
Tourism*	8.2	7.5	7.3	7.5	6.4	6.3	13	14	10
Animal protection*	6.9	7.4	7.8	5.7	4.8	6.3	8	5	12
Civic	7.5	7.2	7.3	6.4	5.6	5.5	186	84	66

* The satisfaction scales have 10 points (1=very dissatisfied; 10 = very pleased). For areas with very few cases, the results are only indicative. (E=Employee, M=Member, V=Volunteer). Source: BMO 2023

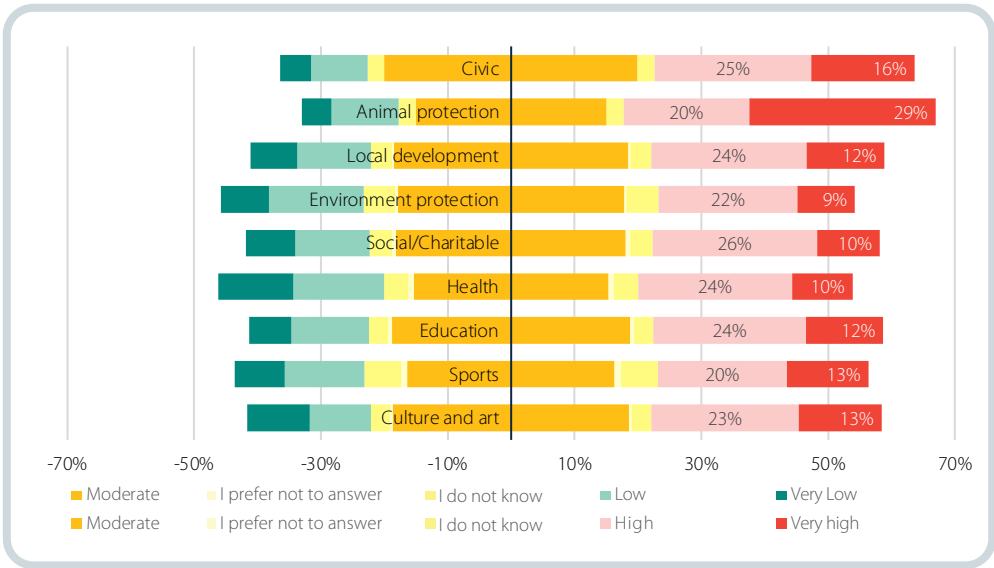
With many hours worked daily/weekly and low salaries, NGO employees are quite likely to be at risk of burnout. A question in the BMO asks respondents to assess the burnout level of their colleagues. Figure 53 illustrates the answers to the question detailing them by areas of action of organisations. There are many differences and they are immediately noticed. Some of them are unexpected and generate a need for better explanation.

The deeper analysis of the data⁴⁴ reveals that if we treat burnout as numerically measured and upwards from 1 to 5, employees in Sports NGOs have an average burnout 0.6 points higher than average, and those in religion have an estimated burnout 1.3 points higher than average. At the opposite end, a lower burnout is for employees in environmental NGOs (by 0.4 lower than average) and tourism (1.3 lower than average).

⁴³ They are not statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

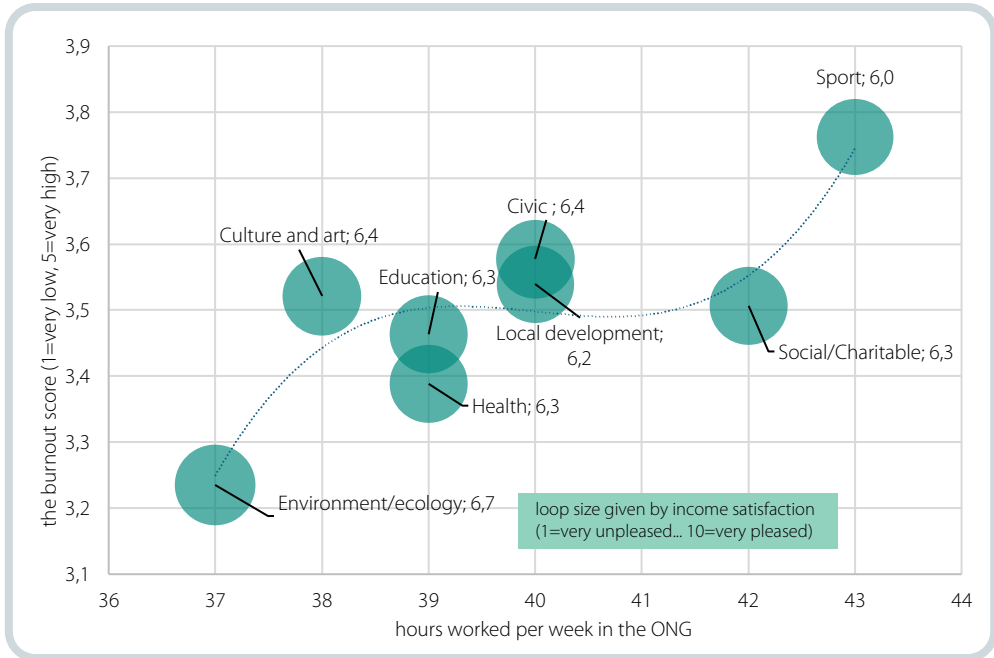
⁴⁴ Regression models (ordinal logit) in which we predicted responses to the question with fields of activity, controlling for gender, age, education, experience (seniority in the organization), status in the organization (member, volunteer, employee), executive role in the organization, size of the organization. "I do not know" and "I prefer not to answer" have been treated as missing values, and standard errors are estimated robustly. Differences reported in the text are significant at $p < 0.05$.

Figure 53. Estimation of the burnout level across NGOs: data from BMO 2023, by economic fields of activity



Source: BMO 2023, question: „How do you estimate burnout level of employees and members of the NGO?”

Figure 54. Relation between the number of hours worked, satisfaction with the income and the burnout level in various fields



Source: BMO 2023

Even though the differences between domains are quite small, the link among load with work hours, burnout estimation and income satisfaction is quite strong if we look at the fields of activity as distinct entities (Figure 54). In areas where more work is done, the burnout score is higher (correlation: 0.81) and lower income satisfaction (-0.82). Income satisfaction also correlates negatively with burnout (-0.85). Average life satisfaction per field decreases when the average hours worked increase (correlation coefficient: -0.31), increases with income satisfaction (0.38) and decreases when burnout increases (-0.30).

Loyalty and Retention

Similar to the calculations made at the level of the entire NGO sector, we calculated average organizational attachment indicators (affective, continuity, normative) to the organisation and calculated average probability of remaining in the sector. Table 53 brings to the fore the average of five resulting indicators, calculated at field of activity level. The differences between areas prove to be very small at best. By eliminating factors related to the characteristics⁴⁵ of respondents, some greater differences arise:

- The “Culture and art” field has a higher affective attachment;
- The “Environmental/ecology” field has higher affective attachment and normative attachment scores and average scores 8 percentages higher to remain in the organisation;
- “Local development” and “animal protection” fields have systematically lower normative attachment scores than the rest;
- The ‘Sports’ field shows average scores 10 percentages lower to remain in the sector;
- There are no differences between fields in terms of organizational continuity attachment and self-estimated probability of being in the organisation within a year.

Table 53. Differences among fields in terms of loyalty and retention indicators according to BMO 2023, employees only

	Type of organizational attachment									Probability to remain in the...					
	affective			continuity			normative			organization		sector			
Culture and art	3.3	3.4	3.5	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.8	3.0	73	79	85	78	82	87
Sports	2.9	3.2	3.6	2.2	2.5	2.7	2.5	2.9	3.3	63	75	87	69	79	88
Education	3.1	3.3	3.4	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.8	73	76	79	76	79	82
Health	3.0	3.3	3.5	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.8	71	77	82	75	81	86
Social/Charitable	3.1	3.3	3.4	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.8	70	74	78	77	80	83
Environment protection	3.2	3.3	3.5	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.9	77	81	85	82	85	87
Local development	3.2	3.4	3.5	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.6	2.8	73	78	83	81	83	86
Civic	3.1	3.2	3.3	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.8	72	75	79	77	80	83

Source: BMO 2023. Each type of organizational attachment ranges from 1=very low to 4=very strong. The probability of retention is self-assessed and refers to a time horizon of one year. Figures written in grey define confidence intervals 95%.

⁴⁵ In regression models (OLS) similar to the previous sections. Differences are significant at $p < .05$

● A brief conclusion

We have reviewed in this chapter potential sources of differentiation of NGOs by sector of activity. Beyond the financial results that differ from one field to another (see chapter “Economic insight”), there are few things to separate the fields. Among what is different, the palpable, objective indicators are noted: the distinct dynamics of NGO setups, a larger number of employees in areas that offer directly advice to the beneficiaries, the different dynamics of participation as a member (having religious and sports associations as performers). For the rest, members’ status, time worked, retention potential brings to the fore resemblances among fields rather than distinct paths.

Social and charitable organisations

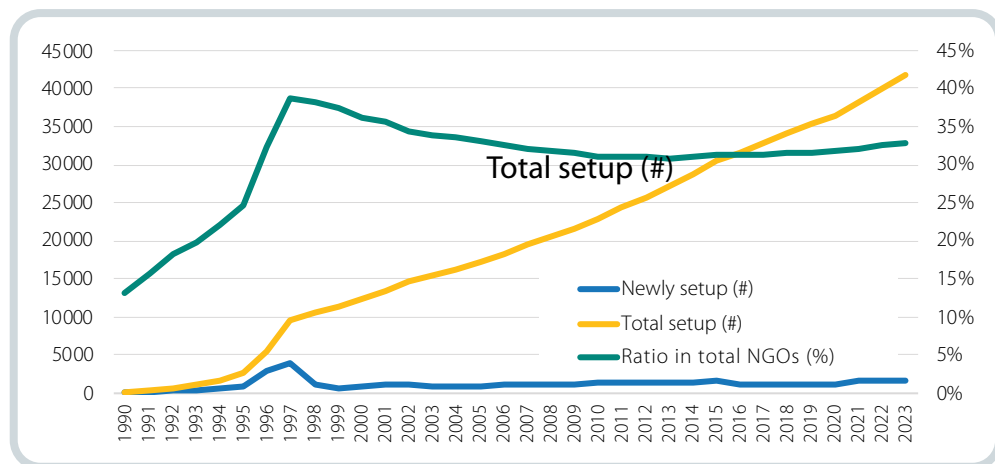
► Mircea Comşa

Often, the NGO sector is viewed through the lens of aid of different types that these organisations offer to different categories of people in need. Such NGOs are often intended for elderly people, children, women, homeless, jobless, poor, etc. The services offered often take the form of day centres, residential centres, care, social canteens, etc. We have gathered all these entities in one place in what we label, for the fluency of the text, as “social-charitable NGOs”, called as such by semantic analysis of the names and scopes of these organisations, as explained in the chapter “Field identification method”.

Dynamics of registration and licensing social and charitable NGOs

The number of NGOs in the social and charitable sector registered in the National Registry for NGOs increased relatively steadily after 1990, except for the period 1995-1997 when the growth rate was higher (Figure 28). With this exception, the number of NGOs in the social-charitable sector increased by about 1200 per year. As regards the share of NGOs in the social-charitable field in total NGOs, things are different. By 1997, this share had increased threefold, from 13% to 39%. Subsequently, the share decreased slightly year-on-year to 31% in 2015, before increasing very little to 33% in 2023. Therefore, currently, out of the total NGOs, those in the social-charitable field represent about one third. Of course, some of these NGOs also carry out other types of activities than those of a social-charitable type (see methodology regarding the identification of the main activity of the NGO sector).

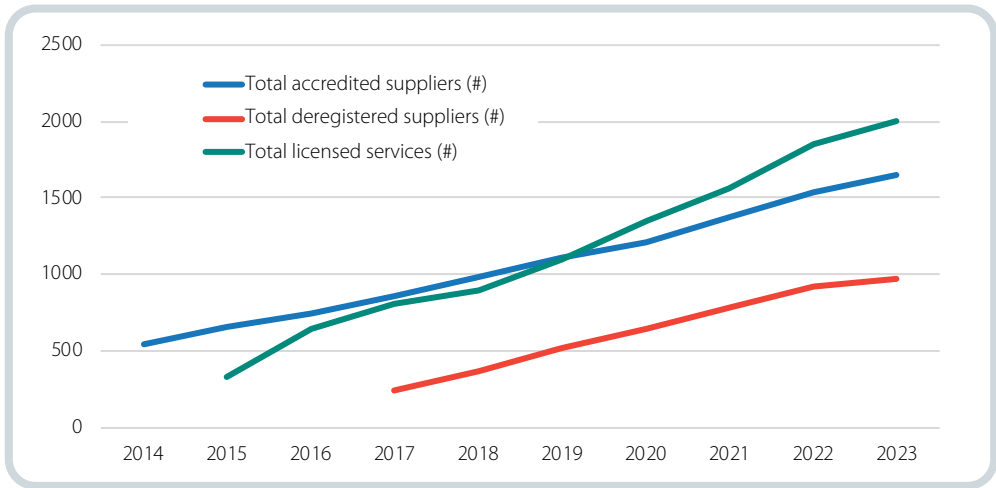
Figure 55. Dynamics of registration with the National Registry for NGOs - Social and charitable NGOs



Source: Calculations based on records from the National Registry for NGOs. The left axis indicates the number of NGOs in the social-charitable domain (established in that year, respectively up to and including that year), and the right axis indicates the share of NGOs in the social-charitable domain in total NGOs. The main field of activity of NGOs has been established using different keywords. About 30% of NGOs were not classified in any of the fields considered. Because of these limits, estimates should be considered with certain reservations.

A small part of the 40 thousand NGOs previously identified as linked to the social-charitable sector are accredited as social service providers and/or provide licensed social services. This is supported by official data provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, Directorate for Social Services Policies (Figure 56). At the end of 2023 there were almost 4000 accredited suppliers in Romania, slightly less than half of them (~1700) being NGOs (associations and foundations). Therefore, only about 4% of NGOs linked to the social-charitable sector, according to our definition, are also accredited as social service providers. Accredited NGOs offer approximately 2000 licensed social services. Both indicators increased relatively steadily during the period 2014 - 2023. Not all NGOs providing previously accredited social services have kept their license from one year to the next. Thus, in the period 2017-2023, approximately 1000 suppliers were deregistered (an average of about 140 per year).

Figure 56. Dynamics of the number of NGOs (accredited and deregistered) providing social services and licensed social services: 2014-2023



Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, Directorate for Social Services Policies⁴⁶

Analyses based on the data from NAFA

In this section we will present the dynamics of several indicators as it results from the data provided by NAFA. We remind that the main field of activity of NGOs has been established using different keywords. About 30% of NGOs were not classified in any of the fields considered. In addition, NAFA data appears to have been taken exactly as it was filled in (declared) by NGO representatives, without further corrections, which is why sometimes, in the case of some indicators and NGOs, values appear either wrongly declared or misinserted. Because of these limits, the estimates submitted should be regarded with certain reservations.

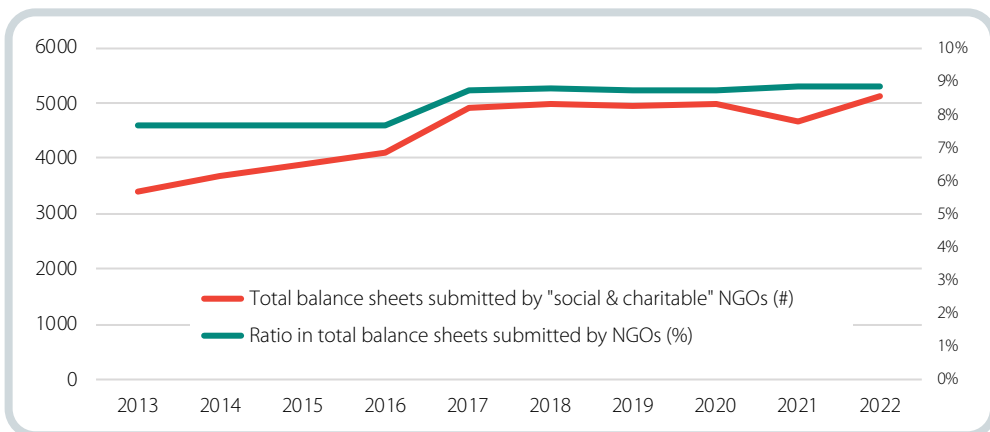
Number of NGOs that have submitted the balance sheet to NAFA

Approximately 8% of the total NGOs that submitted a balance sheet at NAFA during the period 2013-2022 belong to the social-charitable area (Figure 57).⁴⁷ The number of social-charitable NGOs that have submitted a balance sheet increases over time from 3400 to 5130. The estimates presented in the following sections are based strictly on the data of the social-charitable NGOs that submitted the balance sheet and provided the data on the indicators in question (most of those who submitted the balance sheet also provided the requested data).

⁴⁶ https://www.servicii-sociale.gov.ro/source/Registru/Evolutie_fss_si_ss.pdf, accesat la 2024.02.29.

⁴⁷ Dacă determinăm domeniul principal în funcție de codul CAEN declarat, ponderea ONG-urilor social-caritabile este de aproximativ 6%.

Figure 57. Dynamics of balance sheet submitted to NAFA – social and charitable NGOs



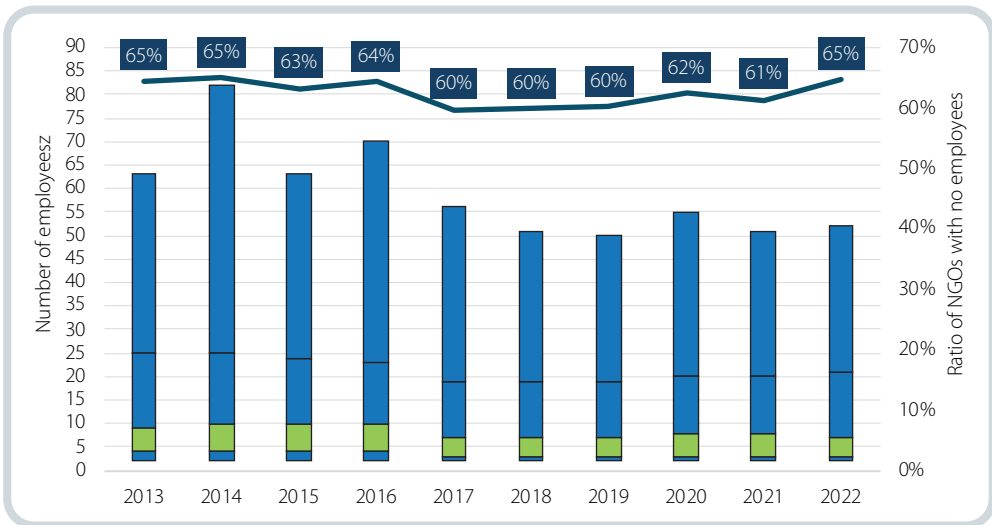
Source: Processing of NAFA data. The left-hand axis indicates the number of NGOs in the social-charitable field that have submitted a balance sheet to NAFA, and the right axis indicates the share of this number in the total NGOs that have submitted a balance sheet. The main field of activity of NGOs has been established using different keywords. About 30% of NGOs were not classified in any of the fields considered. Because of these limits, estimates should be considered with certain reservations.

Dynamics regarding the number of employees

Approximately 60-65% of socially charitable NGOs have no employees (Figure 58, blue line). These NGOs, either have little activity or the activities are carried out strictly by volunteers. The number of employees is stable over time, although it is slightly higher in the first part of the period. If we only refer to social-charitable NGOs that have at least one employee and order them upwards according to the number of employees, we notice that the first 25% of these NGOs have two employees at the most, the first 50% have 3-4 employees at the most, the first 75% have no more than 7-10 employees, the first 90% have no more than 19-25 employees, and the largest, in a ratio of 3%, have at least 50 employees. The differences among NGOs are stable and small over time (the ratio between percentile 75 and percentile 25 is 2-3 over the period).

The total number of employees in social-charitable NGOs slightly increases between 2013 and 2015 from 19 to 22 thousand, and then oscillates within the range of 27-34 thousand. The share of social-charitable NGO employees follows approximately the same pattern: 7-8% during the period 2013-2015, then 11-16%. These estimates should be considered with some caution (the associated chart is included in the online annexes (RO)). The inaccuracy of estimates is a consequence of the lack of information on the main field of activity of NGOs (the definition strictly through NACE codes underestimates the number of NGOs in the social-charitable field) and of possible errors in the balance sheet data submitted by NGOs.

Figure 58. Dynamics regarding the indicator for the number of employees – social and charitable NGOs



Source: Processing of NAFA data. The horizontal black lines represent percentiles 25, 50, 75, 90 and 97. The values are calculated by reference to social-charitable NGOs that have employees. 60-65% of socially charitable NGOs have no employees (blue line). The coloured area is the one between the median (quartile 2/percentile 50) and percentile 75 (quartile 3). Reading example: if we consider social-charitable NGOs that had employees in 2022 and order them up by the number of employees, the first 25% of them had two employees at the most, the first 50% had three employees at the most, the first 75% had 7 employees at the most, the first 90% had 21 employees at the most, and the last 3% had at least 52 employees.

Dynamics of financial indicators

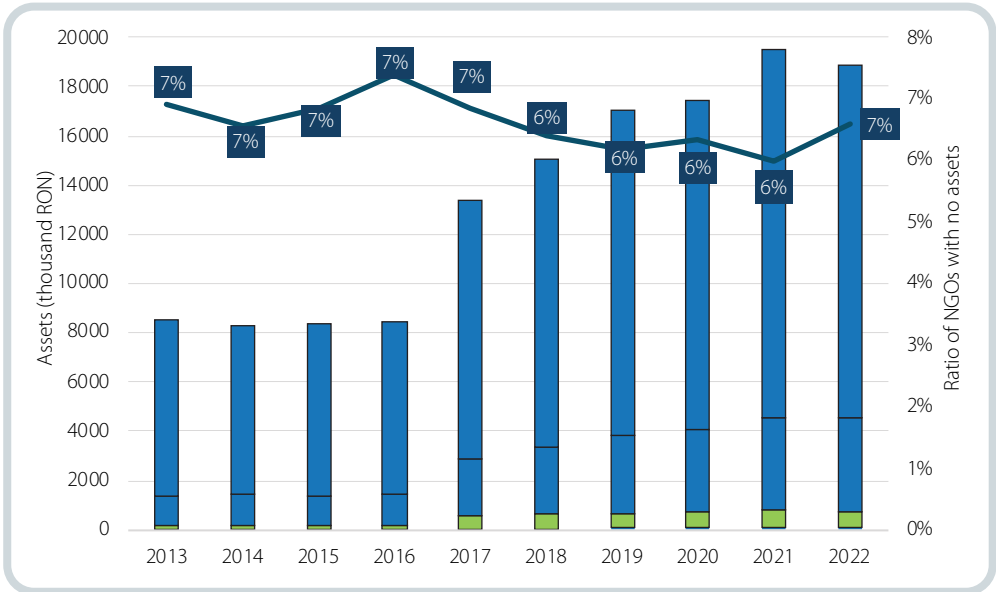
Within this section we present the dynamics (2013-2022) of several financial indicators associated with social-charitable NGOs (assets, net assets, i.e. assets minus liabilities, capital, income, expenses, surplus/deficit). The data presented are processed NAFA data. In the case of assets we have kept the values declared by NGOs in the annual balance sheets. In the case of the other financial indicators we have adjusted the values with inflation so that we can compare the values presented longitudinally. The monetary values shown in the charts are in thousand RON. In addition to monetary values, we have also included in the charts the share of social-charitable NGOs that take the zero value to the respective indicator.

Given that these indicators do not have a normal distribution, we have preferred not to synthesise them in the form of average values (these would be too much influenced by cases with extremely high values), but in the form of several percentiles (25, 50=median, 75, 90 and 97). As we have explained in other chapters, percentiles characterise the way NGOs are distributed. For example, with reference to the active indicator, if percentile 25 takes the value of 10 thousand, this means that a quarter of socially charitable NGOs have assets of up to 10 thousand RON; if percentile 50 takes the value of 75 thousand, then half of them have assets of maximum 75 thousand RON.

Figure 59 presents data on assets reported by social-charitable NGOs. During the first four years of the reference period, the inflation-adjusted percentile values are stable, then slightly increase from one year to the next. Half of social and charitable NGOs (percentile 50) have asset values of no more than 21-24 thousand RON at the beginning of the period, their value then increasing year by year to 75 thousand RON in 2022. During the first four years, the majority (90%) of social-charitable NGOs have asset values of no more than 1.4 million RON, their value then increasing year by year to almost 4.6 million RON in 2022. Differences among NGOs tend to increase over time (the ratio between percentile 75 and percentile 25 increases over the period from about 65 to 100 then decreases to 80). About 6-7% of social and charitable NGOs have no assets, depending on the reference year.

If we sum up the values associated with this indicator for all NGOs, respectively for social-charitable NGOs, we can calculate the share of the social-charitable field in the total. The value of the indicator is, with small fluctuations, within the range of 14-24% (the associated chart is included in the online annexes (RO)). The combined assets of social-charitable NGOs increase relatively steadily throughout the period from about 4 to 12 billion RON. Although the value of the weight indicator is less influenced by the quality of the data, we consider these estimates to be rather indicative (see previous comments on this topic).

Figure 59. Dynamics of the assets indicator– social and charitable NGOs

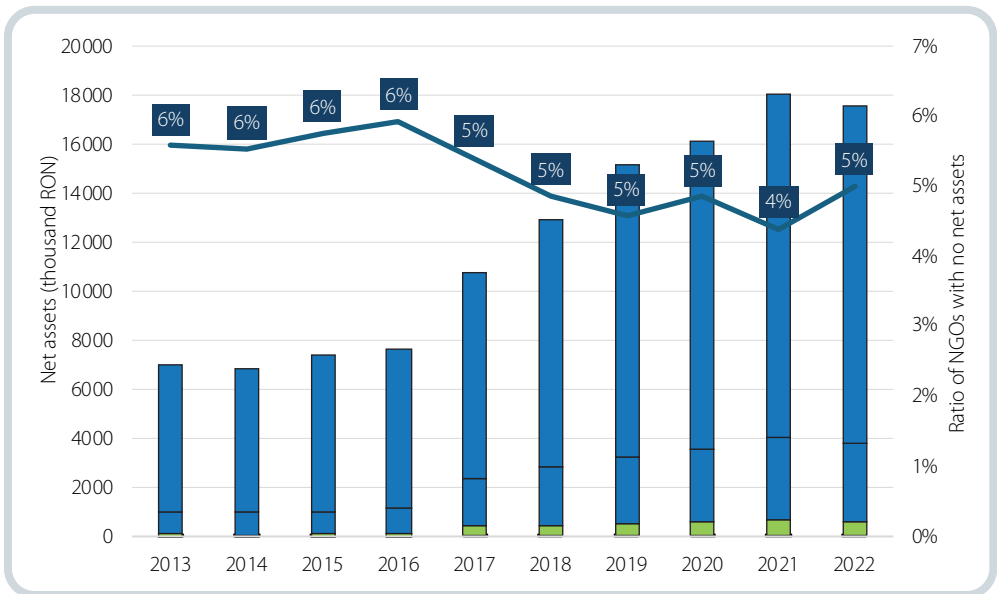


Source: NAFA data processing (declared values). The horizontal black lines represent percentiles 25, 50, 75, 90 and 97. Values are calculated by reference to social-charitable NGOs that have assets. 6-7% of socially charitable NGOs have no assets (blue line). The coloured area is the one between the median (quartile 2/percentile 50) and percentile 75 (quartile 3). Reading example: if we consider social-charitable NGOs that had assets in 2022 and order them up by the value of this indicator, the first 25% of them had assets of nine thousand RON at the most, the first 50% not more than 75 thousand RON, the first 75% 743 thousand RON at the most, the first 90% 4583 thousand RON at the most, and the last 3% at least at least 18903 thousand RON.

Figure 60 presents data on net assets (assets minus liabilities) reported by social-charitable NGOs. During the first four years of the reference period, percentile values are stable, then slightly increase from one year to the next. Half of socially charitable NGOs (percentile 50h) have net assets values of RON 12-16 thousand at the most at the beginning of the period, their value then increasing year by year to RON 53 thousand in 2022. During the first four years, the majority (90%) of social-charitable NGOs have net assets values of no more than 1-1.2 million RON, their value then increasing year by year to 3.8 million RON in 2022. Differences among NGOs tend to increase slightly over time (the ratio between percentile 75 and percentile 25 increases over the period from 160 to 220 then decreases to 170). Approximately 4-6% of social charitable NGOs have no net assets, depending on the reference year.

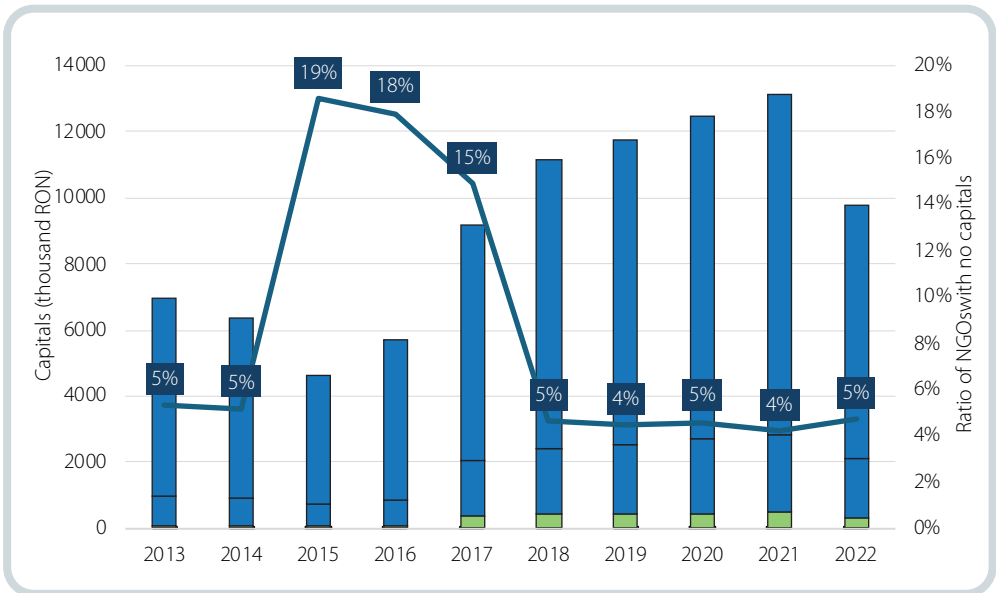
If we sum up the values associated with this indicator for all NGOs, respectively for social-charitable NGOs, we can calculate the share of the social-charitable field in the total. The value of the indicator is, with small fluctuations, within the range of 19-29% (the associated chart is included in the online annexes (RO)). Net assets (assets minus liabilities) summed by social-charitable NGOs increase relatively steadily throughout the period from approximately 3.3 to 11.4 billion RON, with the precautions mentioned above.

Figure 60. Dynamics of the net assets indicator (assets minus liabilities) – social and charitable NGOs



Source: NAFA data processing (declared values). The horizontal black lines represent percentiles 25, 50, 75, 90 and 97. Values are calculated by reference to social-charitable NGOs that have net assets. 4-6% of social charitable NGOs have no net assets (blue line). The coloured area is the one between the median (quartile 2/percentile 50) and percentile 75 (quartile 3). Reading example: if we consider social-charitable NGOs that had net assets in 2022 and order them up by the value of this indicator, the first 25% of them had net assets of up to three thousand RON, the first 50% RON 53 thousand at the most, the first 75% 602 thousand RON at the most, the first 90% 3800 thousand RON at the most, and the last 3% at least 17542 thousand RON.

Figure 61. Dynamics regarding the indicator of capitals – Social and charitable NGOs



Source: Processing of NAFA data (inflation-adjusted declared values). The horizontal black lines represent percentiles 25, 50, 75, 90 and 97. Values are calculated by reference to social and charitable NGOs that have capitals. 4-5% of social and charitable NGOs have no capital (very likely, data for years 2015-2017 was collected differently/wrong) (blue line). The coloured area is the one between the median (quartile 2/percentile 50) and percentile 75 (quartile 3). Reading example: if we consider social and charitable NGOs that had capital in 2022 and order them up by the value of this indicator, the first 25% of them had capital of two thousand RON at the most, the first 50% 31 thousand RON at the most, the first 75% 338 thousand RON at the most, the first 90% 2130 thousand RON at the most, and the last 3% at least 9776 thousand RON.

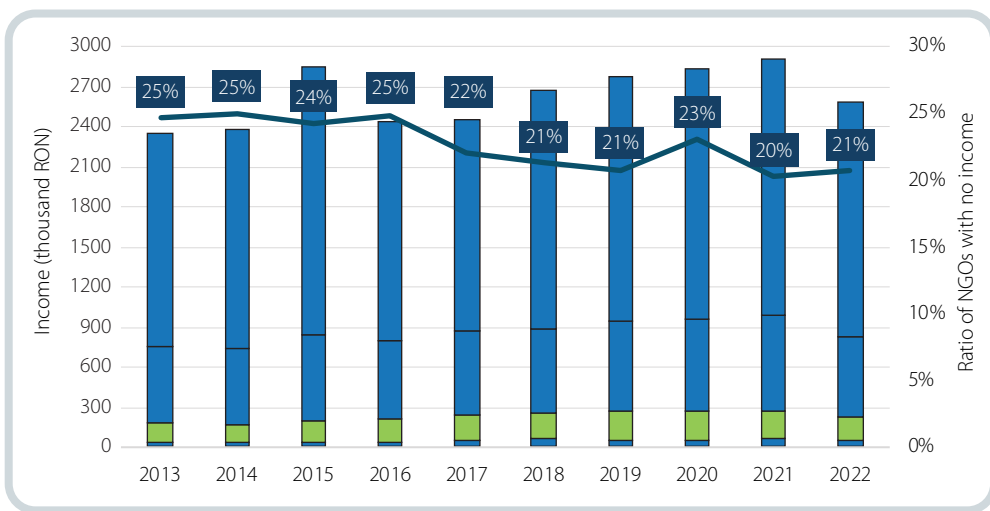
Figure 61 presents the data on capitals reported by social-charitable NGOs. During the first four years of the reference period, the inflation-adjusted percentile values are stable, then slightly increase from one year to the next. Half of social-charitable NGOs (percentile 50) have capital values of up to 10-12 thousand RON at the beginning of the period, their value then increasing year by year to 31 thousand RON in 2022. During the first four years, the majority (90%) of social-charitable NGOs have capital values of no more than 0.7-1 million RON, their value then increasing year by year to RON 2.1 million in 2022. Differences among NGOs are stable over time (the ratio between percentile 75 and percentile 25 varies, over the period, between 157-276). Approximately 4-5% of social-charitable NGOs have no capital, depending on the reference year.

If we sum up the values associated with this indicator for all NGOs, respectively for social-charitable ones, we can calculate the share of the social-charitable field in the total. The value of the indicator is, with small variations, about 30% (the associated chart is included in the online annexes (RO)). The combined capital of social-charitable NGOs is approximately 3 billion RON at the beginning of the period, then rises to 6.5-7.8 billion RON in recent years, with the precautions mentioned above.

Figure 62 present the data on the income reported by social and charitable NGOs. During the first four years of the reference period, inflation-adjusted percentile values are rather stable, then slightly increase from one year to the next. Half of social and charitable NGOs (percentile 50) have income values of no more than 39-44 thousand RON at the beginning of the period, their value then increasing year by year to 54 thousand RON in 2022. During the first four years, the majority (90%) of social and charitable NGOs have income values of no more than 0.7-0.8 million RON, the value of which increases very little thereafter to 0.8-0.9 million RON. Differences among NGOs rather fluctuate over time (the ratio between percentile 75 and percentile 25 varies between 17-22). About 20-25% of social and charitable NGOs have no income, depending on the reference year.

If we sum up the values associated with this indicator for all NGOs, respectively for social and charitable NGOs, we can calculate the share of the social-charitable field in the total. The value of the indicator is, with small fluctuations, within the range 9-13% (the associated chart is included in the online annexes (RO)). The combined income of social and charitable NGOs are lower in the first four years (approximately RON 1 billion) and stabilise at approximately 1.7 billion RON in the coming years, with the precautions mentioned above.

Figure 62. Dynamics of the income indicator – Social and charitable NGOs

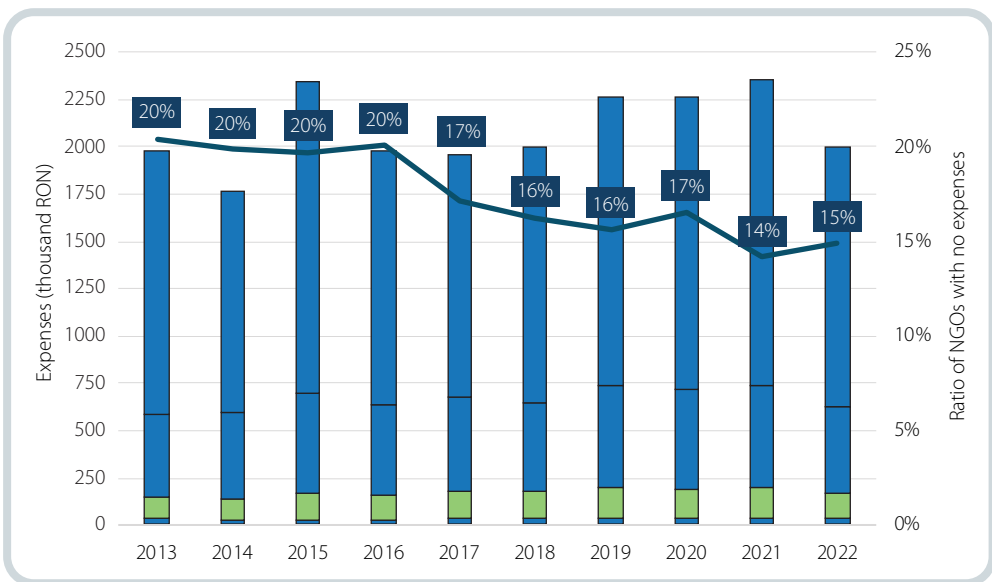


Source: Processing of NAFA data (inflation-adjusted declared values). The horizontal black lines represent percentiles 25, 50, 75, 90 and 97. The values are calculated by reference to social and charitable NGOs that have income. 20-25% of social and charitable NGOs have no blue line. The coloured area is the one between the median (quartile 2/percentile 50) and percentile 75 (quartile 3). Reading example: if we consider social and charitable NGOs that had income in 2022 and we order them up by the value of this indicator, the first 25% of them had income of 13 thousand RON at the most, the first 50% 54 thousand RON at the most, the first 75% 223 thousand RON at the most, the first 90% 834 thousand RON at the most, and the last 3% at least 2586 thousand RON.

Figure 63 present the data on the expenses reported by social and charitable NGOs. During the first four years of the reference period, inflation-adjusted percentile values are stable, then slightly higher. Half of social and charitable NGOs (percentile 50) have expenses values of no more than 29-33 thousand RON at the beginning of the period, their value then rising to 35 thousand RON in 2022. During the first four years, the majority (90%) of social and charitable NGOs have expenses values of 0.6-0.7 million RON at the most, the value of which then increases very little. Differences among NGOs fluctuate over time (the ratio between percentile 75 and percentile 25 oscillates, over the period, between 21-31). About 14-20% of social and charitable NGOs do not have expenses, depending on the reference year.

If we sum up the values associated with this indicator for all NGOs, respectively for social and charitable NGOs, we can calculate the share of the social-charitable field in the total. The value of the indicator is, with small fluctuations, within the range 9-12% (the associated chart is included in the online annexes (RO). The combined spending of social and charitable NGOs is almost constant during the first four years (approximately 1 billion RON), then stabilises at about 1.5 billion, with the precautions mentioned above.

Figure 63. Dynamics of expenses indicator – Social and charitable NGOs

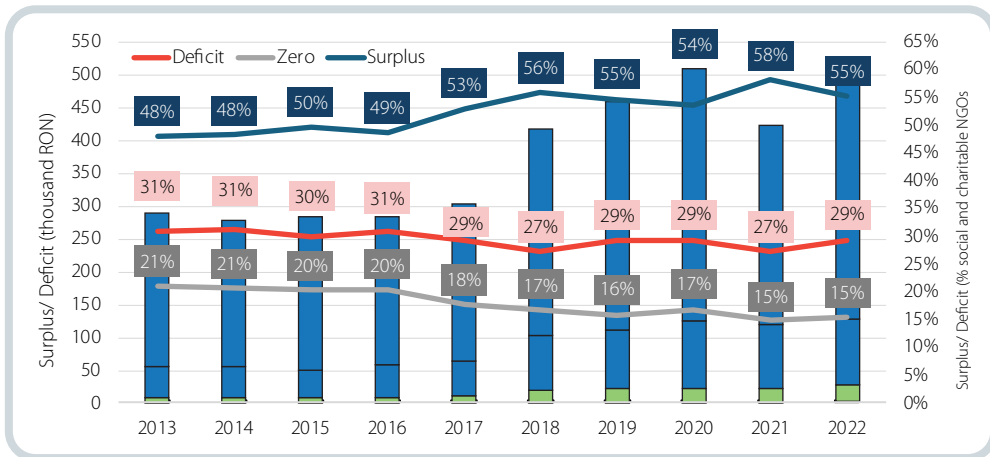


Source: Processing of NAFA data (inflation-adjusted declared values). The horizontal black lines represent percentiles 25, 50, 75, 90 and 97. The values are calculated by reference to social and charitable NGOs that have expenses. 14-20% of social and charitable NGOs have no expenses (blue line). The coloured area is the one between the median (quartile 2/percentile 50) and percentile 75 (quartile 3). Reading example: if we consider social and charitable NGOs that had expenses in 2022 and order them up by the value of this indicator, the first 25% of them had expenses of seven thousand RON at the most, the first 50% 35 thousand RON at the most, the first 75% 168 thousand RON at the most, the first 90% 630 thousand RON at the most, and the last 3% at least 2000 thousand RON.

Figure 64 presents the surplus/deficit data reported by social and charitable NGOs. With very small variations, almost a third of these NGOs record a deficit (most often the values are relatively small), one fifth is "per zero", and about half of them have a surplus (in this case there seems to be an upward trend). During the first four years of the reference period, the inflation-adjusted percentile values are stable, then slightly increase from one year to the next. Almost regardless of the year, half of social and charitable NGOs (percentile 50) have zero surplus values (they are zero or have a small deficit). During the first five years, the majority (90%) of social and charitable NGOs have surplus values of 64 thousand RON at the most, the value of the indicator then increasing year by year to 129 thousand RON in 2022. Differences among NGOs tend to decrease slightly over time (the ratio between percentile 75 and percentile 25 decreases over the period from 35 to 18).

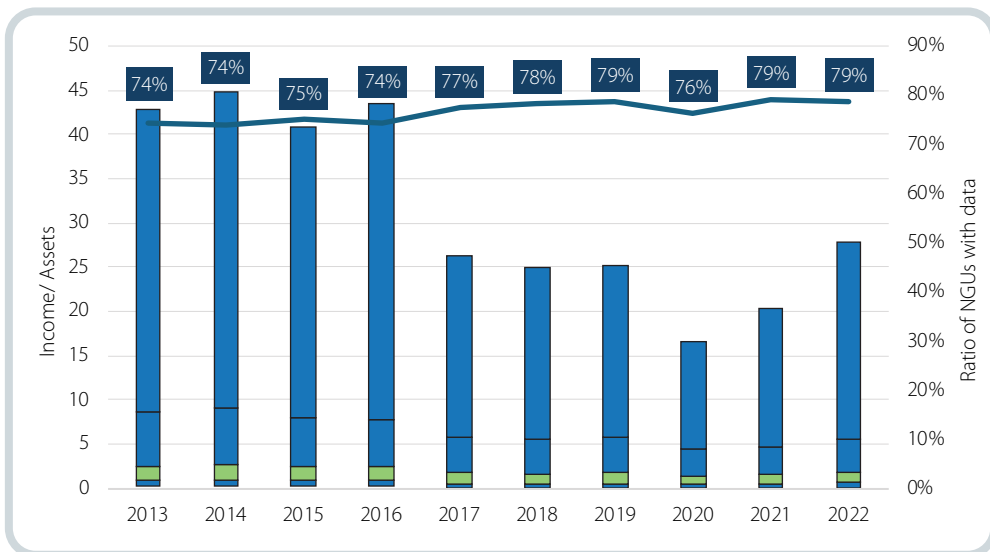
If we sum up the values associated with this indicator for all NGOs, respectively for social and charitable NGOs, we can estimate the share of the social-charitable field in the total. The value of the indicator is, with small fluctuations, around 19% (the associated chart is included in the online annexes (RO)). Similarly, the total surplus of social and charitable NGOs varies over the period around 200 million RON, with the precautions mentioned above.

Figure 64. Dynamics of surplus / deficit indicator – social and charitable NGOs



Source: Processing of NAFA data (inflation-adjusted declared values). The horizontal black lines represent percentiles 25, 50, 75, 90 and 97. The coloured area is the one between the median (quartile 2/percentile 50) and percentile 75 (quartile 3). The coloured continuous lines indicate the share of social and charitable NGOs that have a surplus (blue line), are on zero (grey line) and record a deficit (red line). Reading example: if we consider social and charitable NGOs we order them up by the financial result of 2022, the first 25% had a slight deficit or were on zero, the first 50% had a surplus of two thousand RON at the most, the first 75% had a surplus of 27 thousand RON at the most, the first 90% had a surplus of 129 thousand RON at the most, and the last 3% had a surplus of at least 27 thousand RON, the first 90% had a surplus of 129 thousand RON at the most, and the last 3% had a surplus of at least 488 thousand RON.

Figure 65. Dinamica raportului dintre venituri și active – ONG-uri social-caritabile



Source: Processing of NAFA data. The horizontal black lines represent percentiles 25, 50, 75, 90 and 97. Values are calculated in relation to social and charitable NGOs that have reported income and assets of at least one RON. 74-79% of social and charitable NGOs are in this situation (the blue line). The coloured area is the one between the median (quartile 2/percentile 50) and percentile 75 (quartile 3). Reading example: if we consider social and charitable NGOs that had assets and income in 2022 and order them up by the value of the ratio between the two indicators (income/assets), the first 25% have a value close to zero, the first 50% a value of not more than 1, the first 75% a value of not more than 2, the first 90% a value not exceeding 6, and the last 3% a value of at least 28.

Figure 65 presents data on the ratio between income and assets of social and charitable NGOs. With certain limits, we may consider this indicator to state the efficiency of NGOs' activity. A sub-unit value of this indicator means reduced efficiency, and a positive value means increased efficiency. The efficiency of social and charitable NGOs varies slightly from one year to the next. Thus, the first 25% of social and charitable NGOs have a ratio of close to zero. The first 50% of these NGOs have a value per unit at the most, the first 75% have a value of about 2-3, the first 90% have a value of 4-9, and the last 3% have a value of at least 17-45 (depending on the year). These estimates are based on the declared values of 74-79% of social and charitable NGOs. For the remaining 23%, values of indicators are zero or missing.

Conclusions

There are approximately four thousand accredited social service providers in Romania. However, the number of NGOs linked to the social-charitable field is very likely much higher, about 40 thousand according to data from the National Registry for NGOs. About five thousand of the social and charitable NGOs submitted a balance sheet to NAFA. Social and charitable NGOs account for about a third of all NGOs. The number of registered social and charitable NGOs has increased steadily since 1990 by an average of 1200 per year. The highest growth rate was between 1995 and 1997.

About 60-65% of social and charitable NGOs do not have employees. From those with employees, half have 4 employees at the most and only 3% have more than 50 employees. During the period 2013 - 2022 the total number of employees in social and charitable NGOs increased slightly, but the number of employees in an NGO decreased a little bit (values of percentiles considered).

The financial indicators (assets, income, expenses, surplus) associated with social and charitable NGOs tend to improve over time (2013-2022), with two stable periods: 2013-2016 (relatively lower values) and 2019-2022 (higher values). In general, with regard to each indicator, we see an increase in both summed-up values and median values (i.e. the values of percentiles considered). Regardless of the reference year, about half of social and charitable NGOs have low activity efficiency (the ratio between income and assets is less than one).

Education

▶ Daniela Angi, Bogdan Mihai Radu

Introduction

This chapter explores some of the ways NGOs in Romania are active in the field of education. The chapter begins with a discussion about numerical visibility and NGO activity in education, and some aspects related to the organizational attributes of these entities are also addressed. The second section addresses recent dynamics in the private education sector, an area where most of the existing structures operate under the umbrella of associations or foundations. The following section places emphasis on the provision of accredited training programmes by NGOs, and the last part of the chapter focuses on the contribution of organisations in the field to the advocacy component and the promotion of innovative practices in education.

In dealing with these topics, we have used multiple types and sources of data. Thus, in the first section we use the data from the National Registry for NGOs and the balance sheet related data collected by NAFA, as well as two of the surveys conducted by the FDSC for this study: Barometer of NGOs' Leaders 2023 (BLO 2023) and Barometer of Members/Employees/Volunteers (BMO 2023). The rest of the sections use public data managed by public institutions in the field of education and analysis/reports prepared by them, INS official statistics, relevant legislation in the field, information available on NGO websites, articles from the media and relevant literature.

NGOs in Education in the administrative data and survey data

An important source of administrative data on the basis of which one can assess the extent of the share of organisations active in education (and its ratio in the associative sector as a whole) is the National Registry for NGOs. According to the classification methodology developed by the FDSC, which uses criteria related to the name and scope of organisations, 34,112 (27%) of the entities potentially active registered in the RN-ONG are eligible for education. (Table 54).

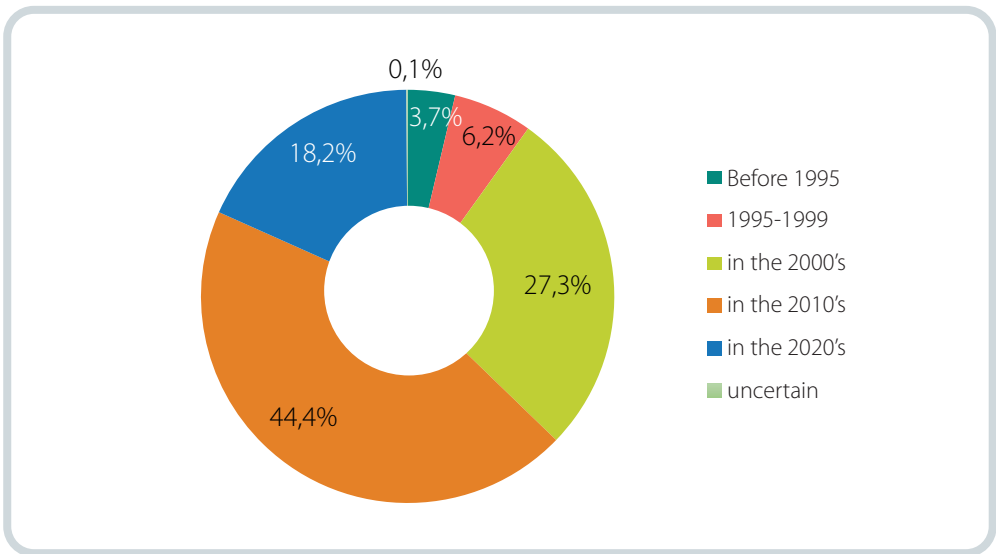
Table 54. Organizations registered in the National Registry for NGOs, assigned to the education field based on the name and

Criterion substantiating the classification	Name NO, purpose YES	Name YES, purpose NO	Name and purpose YES	Total
Number of organisations	27,052	2,465	4,595	34,112

Source of data: the National Registry for NGOs, the Ministry of Justice, 2024.

According to the same source, 44% of the total number of entities classified in education field in RN-ONG were established in 2010 (Figure 66). At the same time, recent years seem to have been characterised by a remarkable evolution of the dynamics of specialized organisations. During the period since the beginning of 2020, 18% of the total NGOs in education were established, representing about two thirds of the number of entities in the field founded throughout the 2000s.

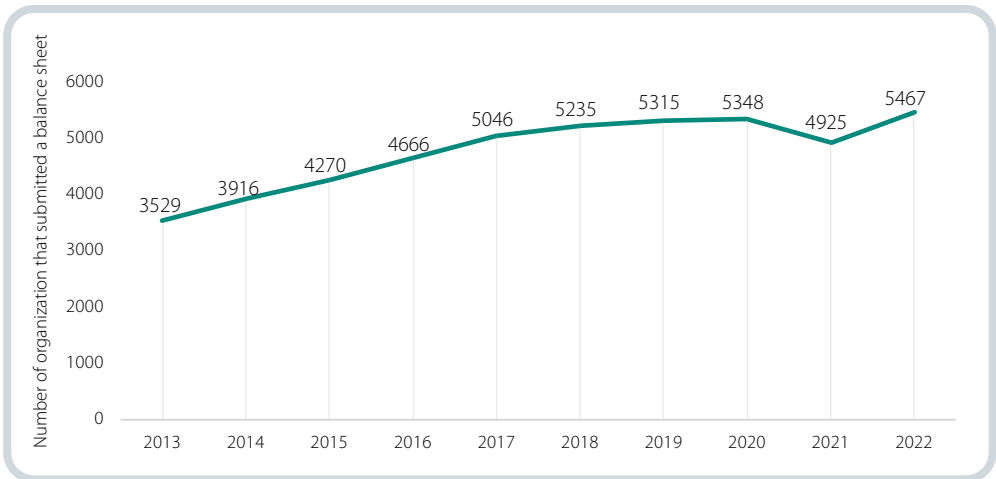
Figure 66. Period of incorporation of NGOs from Education registered in the National Registry for NGOs



Source of data: the National Registry for NGOs, the Ministry of Justice, 2024

Another useful source of administrative data is the information collected following the submittal of annual balance sheets by NGOs to NAFA. As discussed extensively in the section on sector size (Voicu, in this volume), the information collected by NAFA can help shape an image of the segment of organisations that is definitely active.

Figure 67. Dynamics of balance sheet submittals by NGOs from education during the period 2013-2022, according to the data from the Ministry of Finance (NAFA)



It is important to note that the analysis based on NAFA data included organisations classified as belonging to the education field based on their name. During the period 2013 - 2022, the number of NGOs in education thus classified that submitted balance sheets with NAFA increased year by year, with the exception of 2021 (Figure 67). During this period, 7346 single organisations submitted the balance sheet at least during one year, of which 30% submitted the balance sheet in all 10 years envisaged.

Another aspect that can be captured in NAFA data concerns the number of staff employed for activities without a patrimonial purpose. According to the information provided by the organisations, in each of the years between 2013 and 2022, around 70% of NGOs in education did not have such employees. From the organisations that stated that they had employees of this type, half had no more than 4 employees without a patrimonial purpose in 2013-2019, no more than 5 such employees in 2020 and 2021 and no more than 6 employees without a patrimonial purpose in 2022.

In terms of staff employed for economic activities, during the period 2013 - 2022, 95-96% of NGOs in education on which there is information from the balance sheets reported to NAFA did not have such employees. In 2022, half of the organisations with employees had no more than 3 employees in this category.

We now focus on the information included in the surveys of the leaders of organisations (BLO 2023), i.e. members/employees/volunteers from NGOs (BMO 2023).

In the data from the 2023 Barometer of NGOs' Leaders, education is the main field of activity for 68 of the 180 organisations that have mentioned this field among the areas in which they are active. Referring to the type of activities carried out and their importance, most organisations with a dominant educational profile place in the intervention area considered the most important provision of services of public interest (for which accreditation is required or not) – Table 55. About a quarter of organisations mention, as second rank of importance, activities of information, awareness, advocacy and monitoring of public policies (only 2 of them identify these interventions in the priority category of activity).

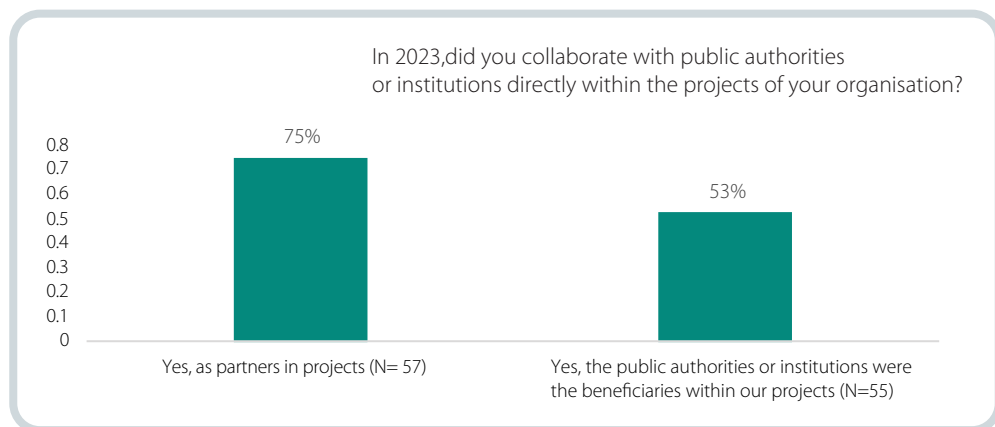
Table 55. Major activities of organisations with education as the main field and their self-declared importance

Category of importance	Type of activity	No. (%) of organizations
<i>The most important</i>	Provision of accredited/authorised services of public interest (e.g. social services, health services, counselling, education, training)	24 (37%)
	Provision of services of public interest not requiring accreditation - youth, cultural etc.	22 (34%)
	Sports and leisure activities	5 (8%)
<i>The second most important</i>	Provision of services of public interest not requiring accreditation - youth, cultural, etc.	14 (26%)
	Information, awareness raising, research, advocacy and monitoring of public policies	12 (23%)
	Sports and leisure activities	7 (13%)
<i>The third most important</i>	Information, awareness, research, advocacy and monitoring of public policies	8 (19%)
	Sport and leisure activities	7 (16%)
	Facilitating citizens' access to services or other benefits, charity, humanitarian aid	7 (16%)
	Community and local development (including inter-community and local authority associations or associations which they are members or founders of)	6 (14%)
	Other activities	6 (14%)

Source of data: 2023 Barometer of NGOs' Leaders, weighted data. Organisations were able to choose from 11 categories of activities. Only those that collected the most responses within each self-declared importance category are given in the table. Percentages of valid responses.

It is also worth noting that some of the organisations participating in BLO 2023 – which have education as their main field of activity– had, during 2023, collaborations with authorities or public institutions (Figure 68), where the latter were partners (in three quarters of the cases) or beneficiaries in the projects carried out (in just over half of the cases).

Figure 68. Collaborations among NGOs with education as the main field of activity and public authorities/institutions



Source of data: BLO 2023; non-answers and "I don't know" and "I prefer not answer" were excluded.

We end this section with a brief discussion about the profile of organisations in education and those working within them, based on BMO 2023 data. In the aforementioned sociological survey, half of the respondents who indicated the fields in which their organisations belong came from NGOs for which education is one of the fields of activity (unlike the BLO 2023 survey, a question about the main field of activity of the organisation was not included in BMO 2023). Their responses show that most organisations work with employed staff and volunteers (59%), about a third with volunteers alone (34%), while working exclusively with employees is much less frequent (7%). From the organisations working with employees (whether or not they involve volunteer work), 60% have a maximum of 10 employees, suggesting that many NGOs active in education are relatively small entities.

Table 56. Human resource and incidence of types of agreements in NGOs with an education related activity

Number of employees	Persons working in the organisation with a		Women working in the organisation with a	
	Part-time agreement	Full-time agreement	Part-time agreement	Full-time agreement
Between 1 and 10	43%	37%	38%	35%
Over 10	2%	13%	1%	6%
They say they have, but do not state the number	6%	3%	4%	1%
They do not have	23%	20%	31%	31%
They do not know	24%	24%	24%	24%
They prefer not to answer	3%	3%	3%	3%

Source of data: BMO 2023; N=468 (only organisations that have employees were taken into account in the above calculations).

Almost a quarter of respondents do not know how many employees of their organisation work with part-time or full time agreements (Table 56), in entities with more than 10 employees the share of those who do not know these issues is about 43%. With the observation that the large number of non-specific responses makes it possible to shape a partial image, full-time contracting seems to be absent in the case of quite many organisations in education, a trend visible especially in what concerns women, which indicates a potential situation of precariousness and inequity.

Another aspect highlighted by the responses of the survey participants is the tendency of NGOs in education to work mainly with young people in the age categories of 34 years or less, respectively 35-44 years.

Excluding situations where respondents did not know how many projects their organisation had during 2023, the data show that 80% of NGOs in education had between 1 and 10 projects (most commonly indicated 2 and 5 projects), 18% were active in over 10 projects, while 2% did not have any projects during the last year. In the implementation of projects, organisations in education face mostly insufficient budget difficulties (73%) and insufficient human resources (61%), the most rarely reported difficulty being the lack of public trust (16%). The provision of direct services to the beneficiaries characterises the overwhelming majority of NGOs with activity in education (87%), according to respondents who wanted and knew how to provide information about this aspect.

In line with the general trend highlighted by BMO 2023 data, a large share of employees working in NGOs in education (48%) have negative assessments of their work remuneration. On the other hand, 53% believe that the organisation they work for gives them good career prospects, while 71% believe that their job provides a performance environment. In this context, just under three quarters (72%) of respondents working in education NGOs indicate a high probability of being in the same organisation within a year as well.

Private education in Romania

The ways in which non-state actors (including NGOs) become relevant in the field of education are multiple: they can become educational service providers, funders of educational institutions or important voices in influencing policies in the field (UNESCO, 2021). Sometimes, their presence in education is accompanied by disagreements, more or less obvious. For example, in the case of provision of education by private organisations, some typical arguments dominate the debate between supporters and opponents: on the one hand, the aspect of innovation is invoked – the idea that private education could counteract inertia in the public system, together with the possibility to respond to needs that the state education system cannot cover; on the other hand, the extent to which the private initiative is a guarantor of innovation is challenged, the issue of equity being also raised – the differential access to private education appearing as problematic in this respect (UNESCO, 2021).

At the same time, the difficulty of public schools to meet the specific preferences parents have in relation to their children's school experience or to align with the particular values they adhere to (Levin, 1999) is not negligible at all. As a result, the choice of what is considered to be the adequate learning/development environment plays a central role in the attractiveness of private education.

Private structures in pre-university education

In Romania, Law No 198/2023 regarding pre-university education provides that 'private and confessional education shall be organised according to the non-profit principle', such structures being described as 'free, open, autonomous units both organisationally and economically and financially, based on private property' (Art. 27, Romanian Parliament, 2023a). As in the case of public education, private educational structures are subject to authorisation procedures, respectively accreditation, in which a central role lies with the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education – ARACIP.

The data available in the National Registry of Accredited Educational Establishments (ARACIP, 2024a) shows that around 60% of pre-school units and just under three quarters of private primary schools are set up by legal entities with the label of association or foundation in their name. For secondary schools, secondary schools and private post-secondary schools, their share is over 80%. Other types of legal entities registered as founders of private educational establishments are trading companies and religious institutions, for some of the private entities the information about the founders is lacking.

Regarding the spread of private educational structures, at the end of January 2024, information about the publicly available school network on the Integrated Information System of Education in Romania (SIIR) page allowed the identification of 1056 educational establishments with private ownership form and legal personality, of which almost 600 serving the pre-school and ante-pre-school level (SIIR, 2024). The data from SIIR outlines the image of an extremely unequal territorial distribution of private educational structures. In 12 of the counties (Brăila, Calarasi, Covasna, Giurgiu, Ialomita, Mehedinți, Olt, Sălaj, Satu Mare, Teleorman, Tulcea and Vaslui), the aforementioned list identifies 5 or fewer such entities. At the opposite pole there are Bucharest (with 272 private units) and counties such as Ilfov (93), Cluj (64), Iasi (56) and Constanta (51), practically regions including some of the major cities of the country.

The numerical evolution of private educational structures in pre-university education can be surprised by analysing data managed by the National Institute of Statistics (INS).

Table 57. The number of private establishments at various education levels during the period 2013-2022

Education level	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Preschool	310	355	355	346	410	414	424	402	452	493
Primary and gymnasium	61	80	80	87	112	106	102	101	117	120
High school	84	82	79	68	63	68	68	69	70	80
Vocational	-	1	2	4	4	4	5	4	4	4
Post-secondary	104	117	121	124	136	143	143	141	139	144

Source of data: NS Tempo online, SCL101A - Educational establishments by category

Over the last 10 years, the most spectacular growth in absolute terms is the one recorded at preschool level, where the number of kindergartens increased by 183 units (Table 57). This trend is very likely the direct result of the existing demand for a service that the State cannot adequately cover. The presence and maintenance of a large number of private structures at post-secondary level is also noted. In fact, if we look exclusively at school levels, the dominance of this level becomes clear. Last but not least, the visibility of primary/gymnasium schools, which almost doubled in 10 years, has also increased significantly.

Another way to examine the dynamics of the private sector in the pre-university sector is to analyse the number of pupils enrolled in private structures. We preferred the presentation of absolute numbers on that of the shares of students included in private structures out of the total number of students, which also allows to note the comparison with the public education sector.

Table 58. Ratio of pupils enrolled in private establishments out of the total number of pupils, by education levels

Education level	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Primary and gymnasium	0,6%	0,7%	0,9%	1,1%	1,2%	1,3%	1,4%	1,6%	1,8%
High school	1,9%	1,6%	1,7%	1,6%	2%	2,2%	2,5%	2,7%	2,9%
Vocational	1,6%	2%	2,5%	2,6%	2,6%	2,5%	2,3%	2,3%	2,1%
Post-secondary and foremen	43,2%	41,3%	41,7%	43,4%	46,1%	46,7%	48,2%	49,5%	48,7%

Source of data: INS - reports "Education system in Romania – synthetic data", published during the period 2016-2023. For the school year 2022-2023, INS Tempo online SCL103H – School population, by levels of education, forms of ownership, macro-regions, development regions and counties.

As compared to the other levels of education, private primary and secondary schools have the lowest share of the total number of pupils, with the public education system clearly dominating in this segment (Table 58). However, the evolution of the absolute number of pupils in private primary and secondary schools shows a significant increase, from 11,000 in the 2014-2015 school year to 29,259 in 2022-2023. (INS, 2016; Ins, 2023b). What draws particular attention in these data is the popularity of private post-secondary schools, which have attracted almost half of the students following this level of education over the last three years.

The relevance of post-secondary education, regardless of the form of ownership that characterises its organisation, is closely linked to the open access of high school graduates without a baccalaureate degree, which gives these schools an important role in the professional mobility of candidates who cannot opt for tertiary education (Mihuț & Bădescu, 2022).

In the case of private post-secondary schools, an interesting aspect concerns the preponderance of their sanitary specialisation. This trend is reflected in the information contained in the national registers of accredited/authorised units (ARACIP, 2024a; 2024b), which shows the dominance of the field "Health and Pedagogical Assistance" in which professional qualifications are offered. For example, based on ARACIP (2024a) data, it can be found that in the category of accredited private post-secondary schools, 98% have a sanitary profile.

It is worth recalling, in this regard, that in 2022 a draft law was proposed to introduce the obligation to have a baccalaureate diploma for candidates wishing to attend post-secondary sanitary schools (regardless of their ownership), as a means of increasing the training of those who become nurses (Neagu, 2022). The introduction of this exception for schools with a sanitary profile is likely to have affected their schooling figure, but that bill was rejected by the Parliament.

One of the topics frequently present in the debate about private schools in Romania is related to the contribution of public funds to their financing, a topic often addressed in relation to the status of schools as accredited units or only authorised to operate on a temporary basis. In this respect, an important milestone was the extension in 2016 of basic funding – which the state provides only to public schools – also to schools in accredited private and confessional education (Hotnews.ro, 2016). It is about the funding granted according to the standard cost per pupil, the level of funding and the procedures to be followed by schools being established, at that time, by Government Decision No. 136/2016 (Ministerul Educatiei - Ministry of Education, 2023b).

The differentiated approach to basic state funding, depending on the status of private schools as approved or accredited establishments, occasionally becomes a sensitive issue. One such moment was in spring of 2020, during the start of the pandemic, when the suspension of courses and the prospect of extending the situation until the end of the school year created a difficult context for private schools (Peticilă, 2020). At that time, representatives of the private education sector requested the support of the authorities, highlighting the vulnerability of approved schools, for which the lack of basic funding is a comparative disadvantage (Ministerul Educatiei - Ministry of Education, 2020). Emergency Ordinance of 14 May 2020 temporarily corrected this situation by introducing a provision according to which authorised private educational establishments also benefit from basic state funding during the state of alert. (Pantazi, 2020).

The issue of financing authorised private schools was recently brought again to attention by representatives of the private education system, in the context of the debate, in Parliament, of the draft new education law (Stănescu, 2023). The new legislative framework adopted at the end of 2023 (Law No. 198/2023) indeed provides for the basic financing from the state and private entities that do not yet benefit from accreditation, but it makes this conditional on the non-perception of "study fees from primary beneficiaries" (Art. 138, al. 9, Parlamentul României - Parliament of Romania, 2023a).

The space does not allow us to develop a discussion about the quality of private education structures and the school results of students who follow the private education path. However, we emphasise the usefulness of carrying out thorough analyses of these aspects, for which the information managed by ARACIP, namely the data from the PISA tests, the results of national evaluations and Baccalaureate examinations, which allow not only the comparison with the public education system, but also a longitudinal perspective on performance.

Private universities

As regards higher education, its early period was marked by the absence of a clear legislative framework, with important milestones shaping the regulation of private structures appearing with the law on accreditation of higher education institutions (Law 88/1993) and the Education Law from 1995 (Reisz, 2007). The current law (Law No 199/2023, which resumes the provisions of the previous legislation in the field of education) states that 'the private higher education institutions and confessional higher education institutions are legal entities governed by private law, founded on the initiative and with the material and financial resources of a foundation or association, religious cult or recognised cult entity or other provider of education' (Art. 97, al. 1, Parlamentul României - Parliament of Romania, 2023b).

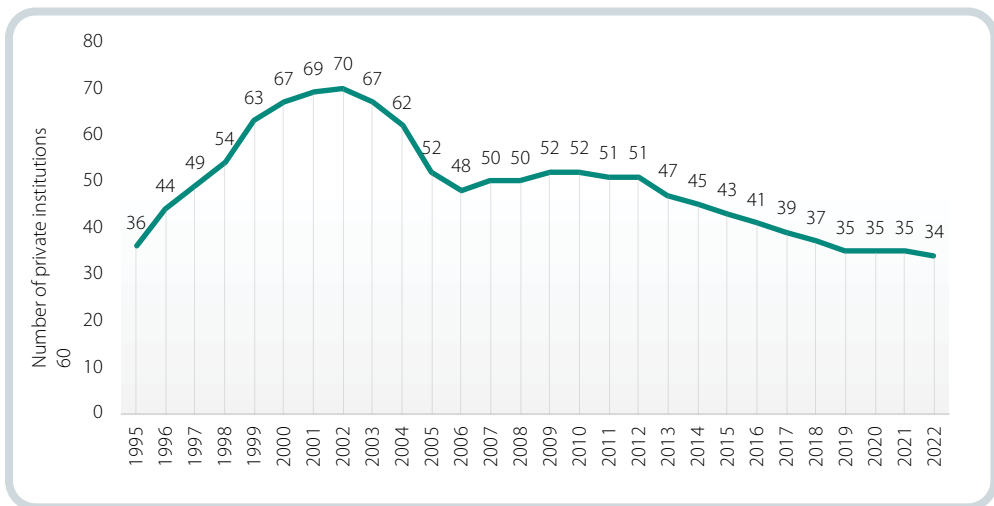
For this level of education, authorization and accreditation are processes in which the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education – ARACIS plays an essential role.

At the time of drafting this text, the list of accredited private higher education establishments available on the website of the Ministry of Education includes 34 structures, located as follows: 14 in Bucharest, 4 in Cluj-Napoca, 3 in Oradea and Iasi, 2 in Constanta, and one institution in Arad, Bacau, Lugoj, Pitesti, Sibiu, Targu Mures, Timisoara and Cernica. Most of them were set up in the early 1990s, shortly after the private initiative was again possible in all sectors of activity.

Figure 69 shows that after a spectacular growth that culminated in 2002, when there were 70 private universities, the number of private structures enrolled on a rather steep downward trend, followed by a modest recovery and again a downward trend.

A downward trend is also visible in terms of the absolute number and share of students enrolled in private higher education, relative to the total number of students (see Table 59). It should also be noted that, regardless of the form of ownership of universities, according to INS data, the total number of students decreased between 2014 and 2022 from 541,653 to 538,720, representing a decrease of 0.54%.

Figure 69. Dynamics of the number of private higher education establishments during the period 1995-2022



Source of data: INS Tempo online, SCL101A - Educational establishments by category, form of ownership, macro-regions, development regions and counties.

Table 59. Number of students in private universities and their ratio in the total number of students during the period 2014-2022

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
No. of students enrolled in private establishments	77,504	70,206	66,944	67,495	65,818	67,476	68,547	67,487	63,174
Ratio from the total no. of students	14.3%	13.1%	12.6%	12.5%	12.3%	12.4%	12.2%	12.2%	11.7%

Source of data: INS Tempo online: SCL103L - Students and learners enrolled in higher education, by group of specialisations

According to the National Council for the Financing of Higher Education, 2007 and 2008 represented the moments when the capacity of the private system to attract students was the closest to that of public universities (CNFIS, 2015).

Over the following period, a multitude of factors, including demographic decline and the effects of the economic crisis, contributed to the reduction of the number of students in general (Deca & Santa, 2022), with private universities being also affected. In addition, there were also distinct dynamics within the private education sector, such as the unprecedented controversy created in 2009 around one of the private universities with the highest enrolment figure at the time, at which time 100,000 graduates found themselves holding diplomas declared illegal by the Ministry (Usher & Williams, 2022).

Rigorous data on the public perception of private universities does not abound, in the Romanian context. However, it would be worth noting the regular steps taken by ARACIS to examine opinions on higher education institutions among students, teachers and employers (see the series of reports and publications based on the Quality Barometers, editions 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2015, some of which are hosted by the ARACIS website). All these analyses contain a comparative component that allows to observe the differences between state and private universities in the opinions of the three categories of actors (ARACIS, n.d.).

The state-private dichotomy is also relevant in terms of how private universities promote their public presence. In this regard, Reisz (2007) notes the importance of building legitimacy as higher education providers by newly established private universities, in which they fluctuate between replicating existing models (imitating public universities) and shaping a specific identity, through which they can be distinguished visibly within the educational offer. Analysing the attributes of private universities present in Romania in the mid-2000s and their legitimising discourse, the author notes that one fifth of the universities examined considered themselves to be similar to public ones (Reisz, 2007). Their common characteristics include long history of operation, location in Bucharest, complexity of educational offer and large number of students (Reisz, 2007).

The aspect of institutional isomorphism is also pointed out by Mihuț (2022), who observes that the development of private higher education in Romania took place in a logic of responding to market demands, with private actors taking over the institutional recipe of public universities, without feeling the need to innovate.

NGOs providing accredited vocational training programmes

A relevant source of information about NGOs' involvement in providing vocational training is the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, through the County Agencies for Payments and Social Inspection. They have the obligation to publish on their websites the National Registries of Authorised Vocational Training Providers (RNFFPA). Due to the fact that each county agency publishes information differently, both in

terms of format and period, a systematic analysis of it is difficult to carry out. However, a brief analysis of these registries in certain counties reveals the following. Firstly, as expected, counties that include the country's big cities offer far more training programmes than smaller counties. Even though we have not carried out an exhaustive analysis, some examples are striking; for example, if for the period 2019-2023, there were 2065 authorised programmes in Bucharest, and for the same period there were 241 in Bihor and in Botosani 77. Calculating how many of these programmes are offered by non-governmental organisations (the rest are offered by companies or public institutions, including educational institutions), it is found that the proportions vary widely. For example, in Bistrita Naşăud, more than half of these programmes are offered by non-governmental organisations, while in Bacău the share is of 18%. In Bucharest, 21% of the programmes are offered by non-governmental organisations, and in Cluj 25%.

Closely related to the vocational training component is the work of NGOs in providing lifelong learning programmes. In a study conducted by Centrul pentru Studiul Democrației - Center for the Study of Democracy in 2023 for Federația Patronală Concordia - Concordia Employers' Federation, the authors show that among the institutions that are involved in offering accredited lifelong learning, non-governmental organisations are among the most popular (Centrul pentru Studiul Democrației, 2023). According to data from a national survey conducted on 1000 respondents, almost 30% said they had participated in vocational training over the last 12 months; the courses/trainings were mainly offered by the employer or an employers' organisation (57%), a non-governmental organisation (33%) or an educational institution (9%). Thus, it is clear that the role of non-governmental organisations in the direction of learning is significant, which confirms the important role they can play in the educational sphere (Centrul pentru Studiul Democrației, 2023).

A specific training area in which NGOs active in the field of education are visible is the provision of ongoing professional development programmes for staff in the pre-university educational system.

Initial teacher training does not always optimally cover the multitude of competences that the teaching activity entails throughout the career path, and the wider context in which teachers work is not static. Various curricular changes, innovation in pedagogical approaches, increasing the role of information technology in teaching activity are just some of the aspects that impact on the ongoing professional development needs of teachers.

For example, the TALIS 2018 report shows that the areas that more than 20% of Romanian teachers have indicated as those where they feel the need for professional development include "teaching for students with special educational needs" (mentioned by 35% of teachers), "communication with people from different cultures and countries", "teaching in a multicultural or multilingual environment", "individualised pedagogical methods" and "ICT competences for teaching" (Centrul Național de Evaluare și Examinare - National Center for Evaluation and Examination, 2020, p. 22). According to the Ministry of Education (2023a), during the 2022-2023 school year, professional development areas that attracted a strong interest of teachers included, among others, digital skills development, inclusive education, media education.

According to the annual reports of the Ministry of Education, a significant part (48%) of the accredited training programmes during the school year 2022-2023 have as providers associations, foundations or training centres, a trend similar to that of the previous school year (Ministerul Educației - Ministry of Education, 2022a; 2023a).

The conditions that non-governmental organisations must meet in order to become providers of accredited training programmes addressed to teachers are specified in Art. 6, al. 1 lit. f) of *Framework methodology on quality assurance of programmes for the ongoing professional development of teachers in pre-university education and the accumulation of transferable professional credits*, prepared by the Ministry (Ministerul Educației - Ministry of Education, 2022b). Having a specific experience of at least 3 years in the field of education is one of the criteria envisaged in this regard.

The national registry of accredited ongoing professional development programmes is regularly updated, the latest available version being from February 2024 (Ministerul Educației - Ministry of Education, 2024).

This list includes 474 programmes (as opposed to 565 in the list published in July 2023, available on the Ministry's page). Of these, almost half (235) are provided by the county branches of Casa Corpului Didactic – the Teachers' Training Centre.

Approximately 35% of accredited programmes have associations, foundations or other NGOs as providers. Some of these organisations have several accredited programmes (sometimes 10) in different thematic areas of relevance to those teaching in pre-university education. In terms of targeted competences, most programmes provided by NGOs fall within the thematic areas ICT/digital skills, Management and Leadership in Education, Learning-Teaching-Evaluation Strategies, Education of Children with SER (special educational requirements), Student Class Management and Counselling and School and Career Guidance. Several organisations run programmes on equal opportunities and gender, a thematic area with a rather modest representation in the entire offer of accredited programmes.

It should be noted that in the case of 18 counties, there is no course provided by NGOs in the list of training programmes. In these cases, the training offer is usually provided by the Teachers' Training Centre, usually also with programmes delivered by various structures in the public system and/or universities. In exchange, one third of the training programmes organised by NGOs are initiated by organisations in Bucharest.

Involvement of NGOs in advocacy and promotion of innovative practices in education – several case studies

In this last section we present some of the projects of non-governmental organisations working in the field of education. All summarised cases underline the importance of these organisations in creating/developing new practices in education, advocacy, or both.

Centrul de Evaluare și Analize Educaționale - The Centre for Educational Evaluation and Analysis (CEAE) aims to reduce functional illiteracy in Romania by reforming the teaching mode, or even the attitude towards teaching/school, among teachers. Basically, the organisation aims to increase the degree of scientific/functional literacy of children in Romania, including reforms of educational policies, aimed at increasing the competitiveness of Romanian graduates. The most important projects were aimed at preparing school teachers in STEM fields for modern teaching approaches. It is worth noting that the CEAE project for physics teachers, Fizica Altfel, carried out over 10 years and comprising over 2800 teachers, included rigorous impact assessment components (with an experimental design and complex statistical analysis), an extremely rare approach in the Romanian context (see for details CEAE, n.d.).

Fundația Noi Orizonturi - New Horizons Foundation (FNO) has been active for more than 20 years in building the network of IMPACT clubs. The IMPACT programme is based on the approach of learning by doing, young people being involved in group activities through which, with the help of leaders and mentors, they learn various things directly (FNO, n.d.). The Foundation also runs the programme Școli cu scLipici, focused on the acquisition of early literature in the case of children/groups of children who did not learn to read when needed due to often socio-economic situations and Tabăra Viața, where young people learn to cope on their own under various conditions, at the same time acquiring fundamental values, such as responsibility and perseverance. (FNO, n.d.).

Teach for Romania focuses on the educational needs of the public educational system in Romania and has targeted actions in place to reduce illiteracy (and functional illiteracy) (Teach for Romania, n.d.). At the same time, the organisation offers a comprehensive training programme for teachers who choose to work in vulnerable communities, understanding that the general problems of education are much more pressing in these communities. The organisation benefits from an extensive network of partners, sponsors and supporters that give it the chance for sustainability.

Federația Coaliția pentru Educație - Coalition for Education Federation, active since 2015, groups non-governmental organisations in the field of education, in order to facilitate the shape of a common position regarding the problems of education in Romania and to identify solutions to them (Coaliția pentru Educație, n.d.). Bringing together nearly 20 organisations under its umbrella, Coaliția pentru Educație includes a significant advocacy component that seeks to influence educational policies to reform the system.

Institutul Intercultural Timișoara - Intercultural Institute of Timișoara (IIT) is one of the organisations actively involved in promoting inter-culturality, tolerance and inclusion. In addition to international projects related to the way diversity is managed, whether from the point of view of ethnic minorities or migrants living and working in Romania, IIT also implements actions that have an impact on education. For example, the project Cetățeanul – which already has a long history – provides support to social education teachers so that they can offer students courses in which democracy is learned by creating a public policy project, with students acquiring notions about democracy through applied activities (IIT). Beside, IIT also implements a project through which democracy is communicated to young people through games, analogue or digital (IIT, n.d.).

Centrul pentru Jurnalism Independent - Independent Journalism Center (CJI) is an organisation working in the field of education and media literacy. The organisation provides useful educational resources for teachers who wish to include media education in classroom (CJI). Moreover, the IJC also contributes to the civic education of children through the broad meaning given to the concept of media education: media literacy issues, such as hater speech or cyber bullying, are understood to threaten the democratic core of society. Thus, media literacy also contributes to the development of a democratic political culture.

Certainly, the above examples can be added to numerous other illustrations of organisations whose involvement in educational activities and programmes has led to transformations with a beneficial impact on students, schools and, in general, on the education system in Romania.

Conclusions

Education is an area with a substantial presence in the entire NGO sector in Romania. Organisations classified in the field of education account for 27% of all potentially active entities registered in the National Registry for NGOs, most of them established in 2010.

The data collected from the leaders, i.e. members/employees/volunteers from NGOs in education, captures some important aspects related to the activity and internal functioning of these entities. For most organisations that have education as their main field of activity, the provision of services of public interest (for which accreditation is required or not) is the most important activity they carry out. In addition, a large part of them have had recent collaborations with public authorities/institutions. Regardless of whether education is the priority area or not, most organisations for which education is one of the fields of activity are facing budget difficulties and insufficient human resources in the implementation of projects. The responses collected also reveal the existence of a share of organisations where full-time contracting is lacking, especially with regard to women. Even though the pay aspect is unsatisfactory for some respondents, overall education organisations seem to provide a sufficiently stimulating and attractive environment to keep their employees close in the near future.

Most private education structures are set up by foundations or associations. Available data shows that, at the pre-university level, there has been an increase in the number of private schools over the last 10 years, a trend particularly visible in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools and post-secondary schools. Since the 2014-2015 school year, the latter comprised more than 40% of the total number of pupils enrolled at this level of education. In terms of higher education, recent developments have seen a different dynamics. As compared to 2012, when 51 private universities operated, their number has now fallen to 34. The number of students enrolled in private universities was also reduced, i.e. their share in the total number of students. Further research, both on the pre-university level and the university level, would be useful to examine in detail the challenges faced by private education structures, in terms of

institutional accreditation process, financial stability and public image, as well as quality and performance aspects.

NGOs are an important category of training providers, their work on a variety of areas of interest to the public in search of accredited programmes. A specific share of beneficiaries are teachers from pre-university education, for whom the offer of training NGOs in the field of education facilitates participation in ongoing professional development programmes.

The poor approach to reporting information about accredited training providers can be a major source of difficulty in building rigorous (comparative and longitudinal) analyses about the dynamics of training programmes delivered by NGOs.

Among NGOs in Romania working in the field of education there are numerous examples of organisations running educational programmes aimed at reducing access/result gaps among students. Often, an important feature of this type of NGO involvement is the attention given to educational projects targeting disadvantaged communities, where situations of socio-economic vulnerability of families increase the need for interventions related to children's education.

NGOs in religion & sports

► Bogdan Voicu

Romania is a society that started the post-communist transition with an extremely low level of participation in associations as compared to the rest of Europe, but started to grow in the 2000s, mainly thanks to the participation in religious and sports associations (Voicu, 2020). Hence the interest in the two types of associations. A detailed analysis is presented in the online annexes (RO), with this page summarising only the main results.

The dynamics over the 30 years for which we have data (Table 60) reveals the mentioned increase. Beyond the differences among surveys (BOSC tends to underestimate participation in associations, especially religious ones), all surveys available over the last 15-20 years point to religious associations as the main contributor to participation, with sports ranking either second or in the second-ranked cluster. It is also worth noting that, although as compared to the rest of the European countries, Romania attracts few members in associations, in terms of religious ones, the participation as a percentage of the total adult population is one of the highest in Europe.

Table 60. Declared participation in sports and religious associations

	Year:	1993	1998	1999	2008	2009	2010	2012	2016	2018	2023
Association type	source:	EVS/WVS	BOP	EVS/WVS	EVS	RES/CSES	BOSC	WVS	BOSC	EVS/WVS	BOSC
Religious organisations		5%	2%	4%	9%	3%	1%	20%	3%	17%	8%
Sports/leisure		3%		2%	3%	1%	1%	8%	2%	8%	4%

The figures represent the share of those who declare that they participate in each type of association. The amount per column can theoretically exceed 100%, given that each respondent can participate in as many types of associations as they wish. Empty cells indicate the absence of data. EVS=European Values Study, WVS=World Values Survey, RES=Romanian Election Study, CSES=Comparative Study of Election Systems, BOP=Barometer of Public Opinion (Soros Foundation). Data is taken over from Voicu (2020).

The dynamics of the share of members in associations are not reflected in the number of existing organisations. The number of organisations set up annually remains relatively constant, leading to a spectacular increase in the total number of NGOs in each of the two areas. Both in terms of sports and religion, the number of organisations in the field doubled in 2022 as compared to 2010. However, although they attract most members, neither sports organisations nor religious organisations are among the most numerous categories of NGOs. This suggests a higher membership density per organisation than in other fields.

Employees in sports NGOs work many hours a week, but if we eliminate their individual characteristics, the sectoral effect disappears, in other words, it is not due to the sector but because of the type of employee. Instead, employees in sports NGOs have a low loyalty level to them, and mention a burnout level higher than any other type of NGO, except for religious ones that have a prevalence of self-assessed burnout in the sector much higher than any other type of NGO.

Civic, advocacy and human rights organisations

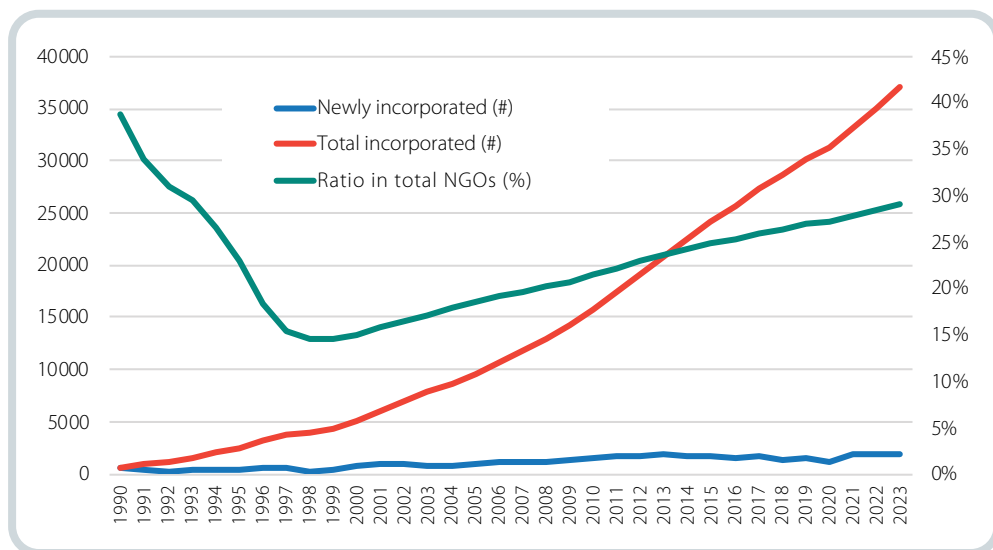
► Mircea Comşa

Often, the NGO sector is equated with its active version of public policy promotion, the role of watchdog, human rights defender. Such NGOs deal with the defence of civil liberties, advocacy, government control, law proposals, etc. We have gathered together all these entities in what we label, for the fluency of the text, as “civic NGOs”, the field being extended also by including NGOs that provide resources to other NGOs.⁴⁸

Dynamics regarding the registration of civic NGOs

The number of civic sector NGOs registered in the National Registry for NGOs has steadily increased since 1990 (Figure 70) by an average of about 1080 per year. Of course, there were periods when average growth was lower (500 in 1990-2001), respectively higher (1600 in 2010-2023). As for the civic NGOs share in total NGOs, things are different. By 1999, the share decreased significantly from 39% to 14%. Subsequently, the share increased year by year to 29% in 2023. Therefore, currently, out of all NGOs, civic NGOs account for almost a third (approximately 37 thousand). Of course, some of these NGOs carry out other types of activities than those of the civic type (see methodology on identifying the main activity sector of NGOs).

Figure 70. Dynamics regarding the registration in the National Registry for NGOs - civic NGOs



Source: Calculations based on records from the National Registry for NGOs. The left axis indicates the number of NGOs in the civic field incorporated during that year, respectively up to and including that year), and the right axis indicates the share of NGOs in the civic field in total NGOs. The main field of activity of NGOs has been established by using different keywords. About 30% of NGOs were not classified in any of the fields considered. Because of these limits, estimates should be considered with certain reservations.

⁴⁸ Bogdan Voicu, Gabriel Bădescu, Claudiu Tufis, Ovidiu Voicu. (2022). *Reprezentări despre ONG-urile active în domeniile politicului, guvernării sau drepturilor omului. Centrul Inovația Publică.* <https://www.inovarepublica.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/perceptii-ONG-PGDO-2021.pdf>

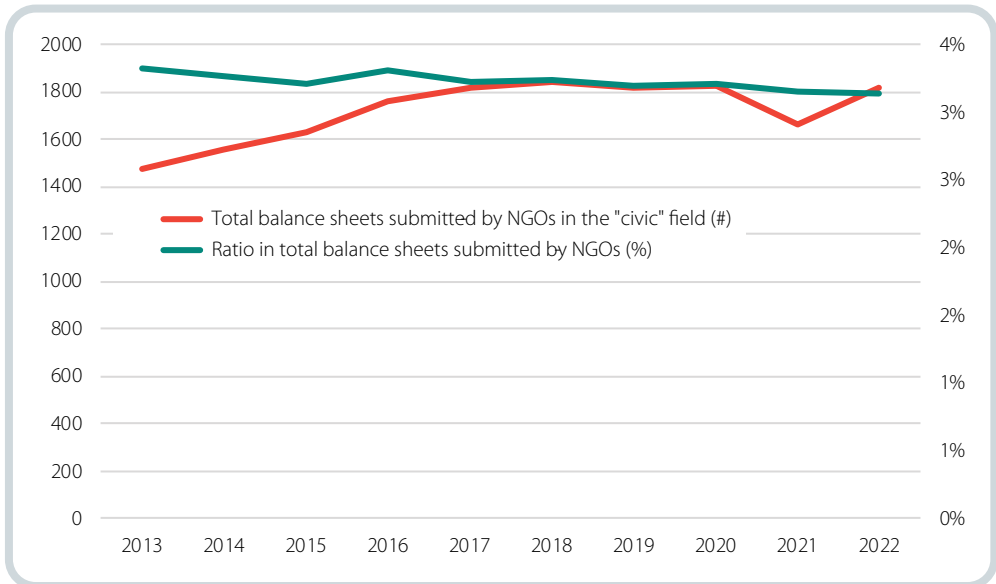
Analyses based on data from NAFA

In this section we will present the dynamics of several indicators as it results from the data provided by NAFA. We remind that the main field of activity of NGOs has been established by using different keywords. About 30% of NGOs were not classified in any of the fields considered. In addition, NAFA data appears to have been taken exactly as it was filled in (declared) by NGO representatives, without further corrections, which is why sometimes, in the case of some indicators and NGOs, values appear either wrongly declared or misinserted. Because of these limits, the estimates submitted should be regarded with certain reservations.

Number of NGOs that have submitted a balance sheet to NAFA

Around 3% of the total NGOs that submitted a balance sheet to NAFA during the period 2013-2022 are in the civic field (Figure 71). The number of civic NGOs that have submitted a balance sheet increases slightly over time from about 1500 to 1800 at mid-term, then stabilises (except for 2021 when the number drops to 1,600). The estimates presented in the following sections are based strictly on data of the civic NGOs that submitted the balance sheet and provided the data on the indicators in question (most of those who submitted the balance sheet also provided the requested data).

Figure 71. Dynamics of balance sheet submitted to NAFA- civic NGOs



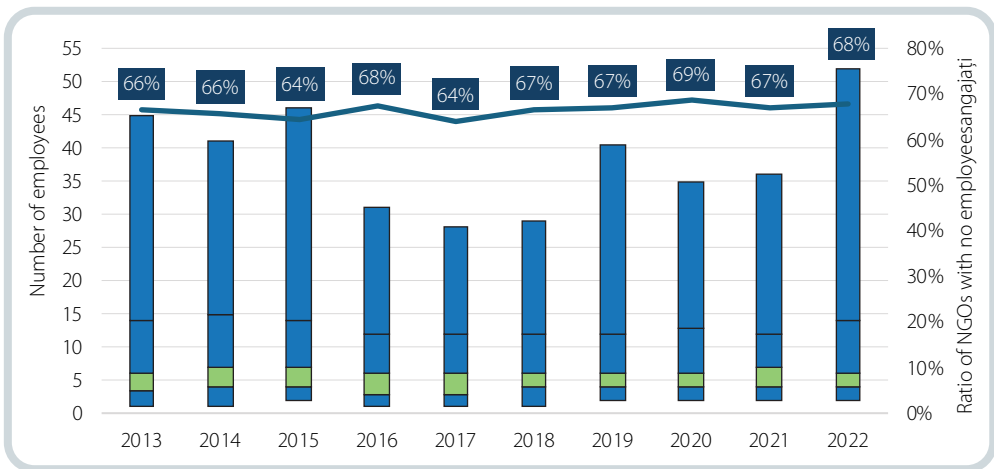
Source: Processing of NAFA data. The left axis indicates the number of civic NGOs that have submitted a balance sheet to NAFA, and the right axis shows the share of this number in the total NGOs that have submitted a balance sheet. The main field of activity of NGOs has been established by using different keywords. About 30% of NGOs were not classified in any of the fields considered. Because of these limits, estimates should be considered with certain reservations.

Dynamics regarding the number of employees

About 64-69% of civic NGOs do not have employees (Figure 72, blue line). These NGOs, either have little activity or the activities are carried out strictly by volunteers. The number of employees is stable over time. If we only refer to civic NGOs that have at least one employee and order them in an ascending order according to the number of employees, we notice that the first 25% of these NGOs have one or two employees at the most, the first 50% have 2-3 employees at the most, the first 75% have 2-3 employees at the most, the first 90% have no more than 5-8 employees, and the largest 3% have at least 16 employees. The differences among NGOs are stable and small over time (the ratio between percentile 75 and percentile 25 is around 2 over the period).

The total number of employees in civic NGOs is with small fluctuations within the range of 4-6 thousand, representing a share of about 2% of the total NGO employees. These estimates should be considered with some caution (the associated chart is included in the online annexes (RO)). The inaccuracy of estimates is a consequence of the lack of information on the main field of activity of NGOs (the definition strictly through NACE codes underestimates the number of NGOs in the civic field) and of possible errors in the balance sheet data submitted by NGOs.

Figure 72. Dynamics regarding the number of employees indicator – civic NGOs



Source: Processing of NAFA data. The horizontal black lines represent percentiles 25, 50, 75, 90 and 97. Values are calculated in relation to civic NGOs that have employees. 64-68% of civic NGOs do not have employees (blue line). The coloured area is the one between the median (quartile 2/percentile 50) and percentile 75 (quartile 3). Reading example: if we consider civic NGOs that had employees in 2022 and we order them up by the number of employees, the first 25% of them had two employees at the most, the first 50% had four employees at the most, the first 75% had six employees at the most, the first 90% had 14 employees at the most, and the last 3% had at least 52 employees.

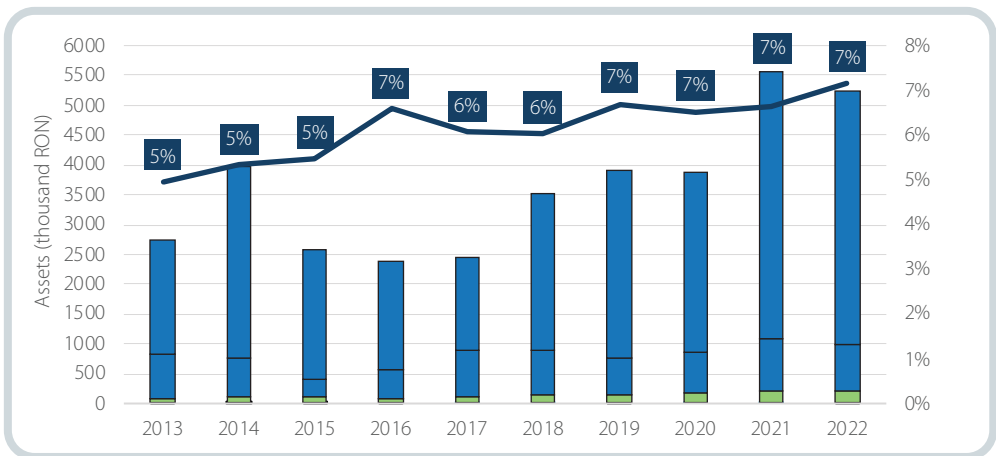
Dynamics of financial indicators

Within this section we present the dynamics (2013-2022) of several financial indicators associated with civic NGOs (assets, net assets, i.e. assets minus liabilities, capital, income, expenses, surplus/deficit). The data presented is processed NAFA data. In the case of assets we have kept the values declared by NGOs in the annual balance sheets. In the case of the other financial indicators, we have adjusted the values with inflation so that we can compare the values presented longitudinally. The monetary values shown in the charts are in thousand RON. In addition to the monetary values, we also included in the charts the civic share of NGOs that take the zero value to the respective indicator.

Given that these indicators do not have a normal distribution, we have preferred not to synthesise them in the form of average values (these would be too much influenced by cases with extremely high values), but in the form of several percentiles (25, 50=median, 75, 90 and 97). As I have explained in other chapters, percentiles characterise the way NGOs are distributed. For example, with reference to the active indicator, if percentile 25 takes the value of 10 thousand, this means that a quarter of civic NGOs have assets of up to 10 thousand RON; if percentile 50 takes the value of 75 thousand, then half of the NGOs have assets of up to 75 thousand RON.

Figure 73 presents data on assets reported by civic NGOs. During the first five years of the reference period, percentile values are stable, then slightly increase from one year to the next. Half of civic NGOs (percentile 50) have asset values of up to 11-14 thousand RON at the beginning of the period, their value then increasing year by year to 24 thousand RON in 2022. The majority (90%) of civic NGOs have asset values of up to 1 million RON, regardless of the reference year. Differences among NGOs are relatively stable over time (the ratio between percentile 75 and percentile 25 varies over the period between 63 and 85). About 5-7% of civic NGOs do not have assets, depending on the reference year.

Figure 73. Dynamics of the assets indicator – civic NGOs



Source: NAFA data processing (declared values). The horizontal black lines represent percentiles 25, 50, 75, 90 and 97. Values are calculated relative to civic NGOs that have assets. 5-7% of civic NGOs have no assets (blue line). The different coloured area is the one between the median (quartile 2/percentile 50) and the percentile 75 (quartile 3). Reading example: if we consider civic NGOs that had assets in 2022 and order them up by the value of this indicator, the first 25% of them had assets of up to three thousand RON, the first 50% not more than 24 thousand RON, the first 75% not more than 217 thousand RON, the first 90% not more than 979 thousand RON, and the last 3% at least 5230 thousand RON.

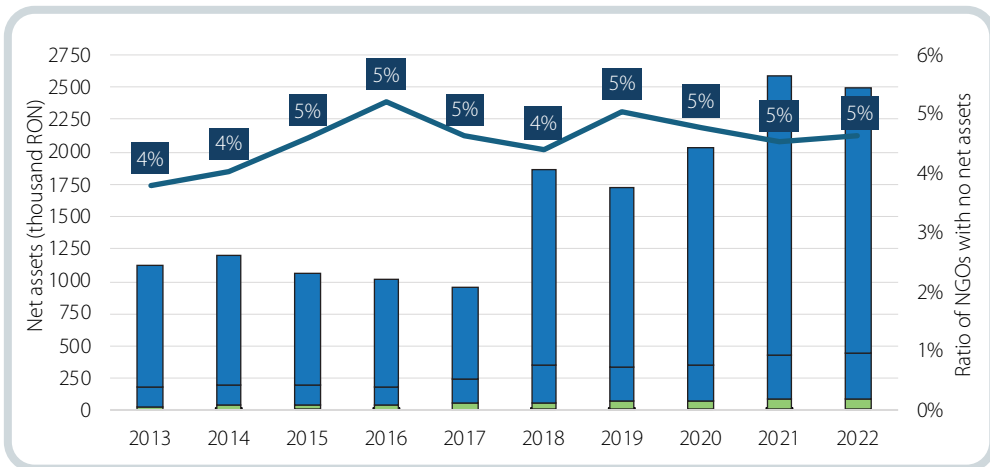
If we sum up the values associated with this indicator for all NGOs, respectively civic NGOs, we can calculate the share of the civic field in the total. The value of the indicator is, with small fluctuations, within the range 2-3% area (the associated chart is included in the online annexes (RO)). The combined assets of civic NGOs increase relatively steadily throughout the period from approximately 0.8 to 1.6 billion RON. We recall that these estimates are rather indicative (see previous comments on this topic).

Figure 74 presents data on net assets (assets minus liabilities) reported by civic NGOs. During the first five years of the reference period, percentile values are relatively stable, then slightly increase from one year to the next. Half of civic NGOs (percentile 50) have net assets values of no more than 4-6 thousand RON at the beginning of the period, their value then increasing year by year to 10 thousand RON in 2022. During the first five years, the majority (90%) of civic NGOs have net assets values of up to 200 thousand RON, their value then increasing year by year to 441 thousand RON in 2022.

Differences among NGOs tend to increase over time (except for 2013, the ratio of percentile 75 and percentile 25 increases over the period from 139 to 354). Approximately 4-5% of civic NGOs do not have net assets, depending on the reference year.

If we sum up the values associated with this indicator for all NGOs, respectively civic NGOs, we can calculate the share of the civic field in the total. The value of the indicator is, with small fluctuations, within the range 1-2% (the associated chart is included in the online annexes (RO)). The combined net assets (assets minus liabilities) of civic NGOs increase almost steadily throughout the period from approximately 250 to 740 million RON, with the precautions mentioned above.

Figure 74. Dynamics of the net assets indicator (assets minus liabilities) – civic NGOs

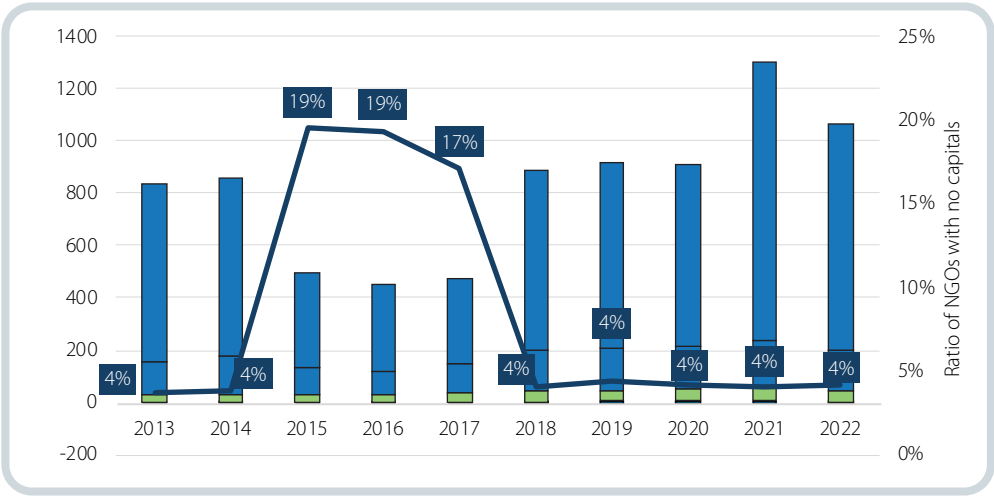


Source: NAFA data processing (declared values). The horizontal black lines represent percentiles 25, 50, 75, 90 and 97. Values are calculated against civic NGOs that have net assets. 4-5% of civic NGOs have no net assets (blue line). The different colored area is the one between the median (quartile 2/percentile 50) and percentile 75 (quartile 3). Reading example: if we consider civic NGOs that had net assets in 2022 and order them up by the value of this indicator, the first 25% of them had net assets of up to one thousand RON, the first 50% not more than 10 thousand RON, the first 75% not more than 97 thousand RON, the first 90% not more than 441 thousand RON, and the last 3% at least 2501 thousand RON.

Figure 75 presents the capital data reported by civic NGOs. During the first five years of the reference period, the inflation-adjusted percentile values are relatively stable, then slightly increase from one year to the next. Half of civic NGOs (percentile 50) have capital values of no more than 3-4 thousand RON at the beginning of the period, their value increasing slightly to 5 thousand RON in 2022. During the first five years the majority (90%) of civic NGOs have capital values of no more than 150 thousand RON, their value increasing in the next years to about 200 thousand RON. Differences among NGOs tend to be stable over time (the ratio between percentile 75 and percentile 50 oscillates over the period around 10). About 4% of civic NGOs do not have capitals, depending on the reference year.

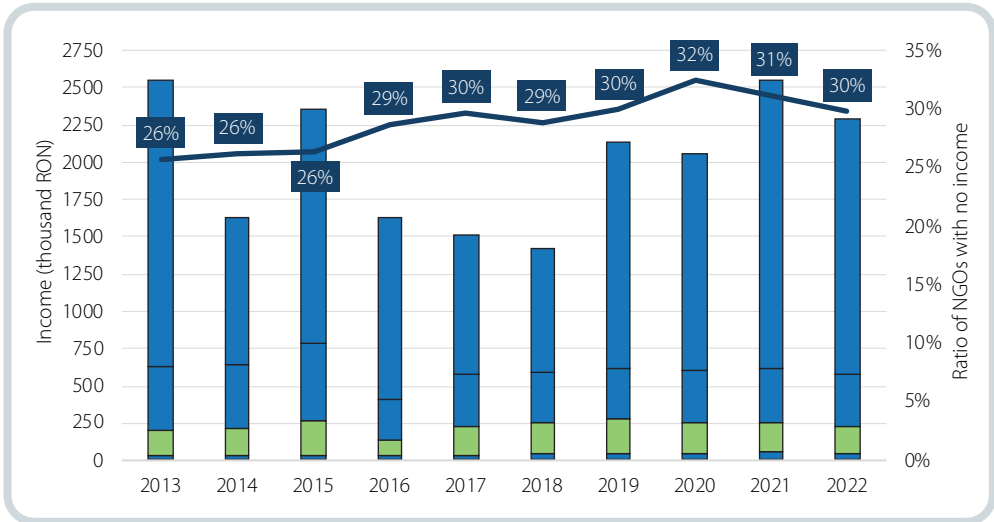
If we sum up the values associated with this indicator for all NGOs, respectively civic NGOs, we can calculate the share of the civic field in the total. The value of the indicator is, with small fluctuations, within the range 1-2% (the associated chart is included in the online annexes (RO)). The capitals of civic NGOs are relatively lower in the first five years of the period (145 million RON), then increase to about 350 million RON, with the precautions mentioned above.

Figure 75. Dynamics of the capitals indicator – civic NGOs



Source: Processing of NAFA data (inflation-adjusted declared values). The horizontal black lines represent percentiles 25, 50, 75, 90 and 97. Values are calculated against civic NGOs that have capitals. 4% of civic NGOs do not have capitals (very likely, data for years 2015-2017 were collected differently/wrong) (blue line). The different coloured area is the one between the median (quartile 2/percentile 50) and percentile 75 (quartile 3). Reading example: if we consider civic NGOs that had capitals in 2022 and order them up by the value of this indicator, the first 25% of them had capitals of up to one thousand RON, the first 50% not more than five thousand RON, the first 75% not more than 47 thousand RON, the first 90% not more than 201 thousand RON, and the last 3% at least 1062 thousand RON.

Figure 76. Dynamics of the income indicator – civic NGOs

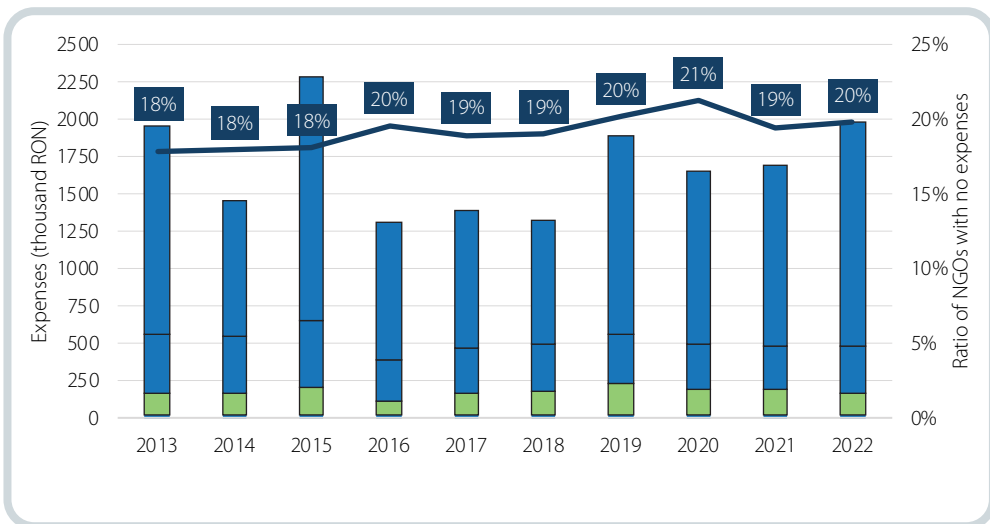


Source: Processing of NAFA data (inflation-adjusted declared values). The horizontal black lines represent percentiles 25, 50, 75, 90 and 97. Values are calculated in relation to civic NGOs that have income. 26-32% of civic NGOs do not have income (blue line). The different coloured area is the one between the median (quartile 2/percentile 50) and percentile 75 (quartile 3). Reading example: if we consider civic NGOs that had income in 2022 and we order them up by the value of this indicator, the first 25% of them had income of up to seven thousand RON, the first 50% not more than 42 thousand RON, the first 75% not more than 227 thousand RON, the first 90% not more than 583 thousand RON, and the last 3% at least 2294 thousand RON.

Figure 76 presents the income data reported by civic NGOs. During the first five years of the reference period, inflation-adjusted percentile values are rather stable, then slightly increase from one year to the next. Half of the civic NGOs (percentile 50) have income values of no more than 5-6 thousand RON at the beginning of the period, their value slightly increasing to RON 7 thousand in 2022. The majority (90%) of civic NGOs have income values of approximately 600 million RON, the value being relatively stable over time. Differences among NGOs rather fluctuate over time, with a slight downward trend in recent years (the ratio of percentile 75 and percentile 25 varies between 28-52). About 20-25% of civic NGOs do not have income, depending on the reference year.

If we sum up the values associated with this indicator for all NGOs, respectively civic NGOs, we can calculate the share of the civic field in the total. The value of the indicator is, with some fluctuations, around 3-6% (the associated chart is included in the online annexes (RO)). The combined income of civic NGOs increase over the period from about 380 to 560 million RON (870 million in 2020), with the precautions mentioned above.

Figure 77. Dynamics of the expenses indicator – civic NGOs

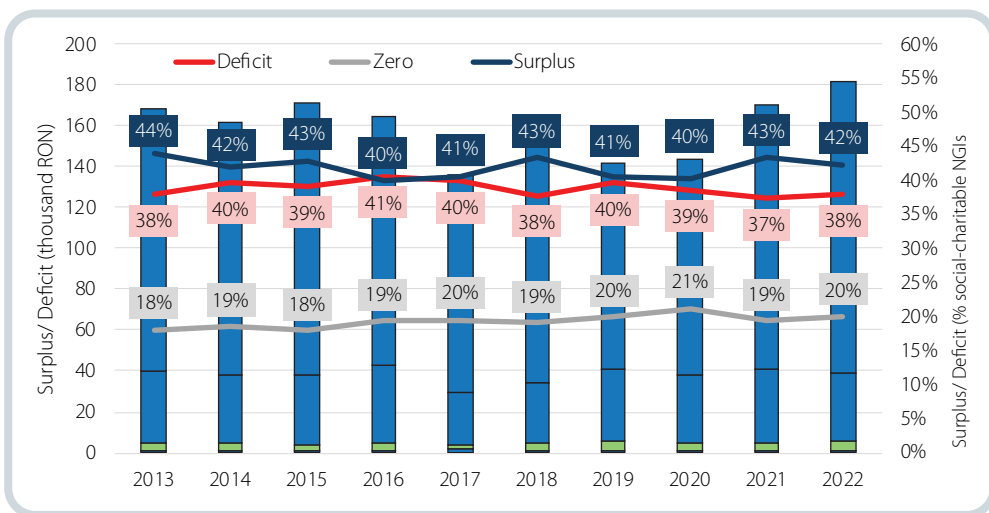


Source: Processing of NAFA data (inflation-adjusted declared values). The horizontal black lines represent percentiles 25, 50, 75, 90 and 97. Values are calculated in relation to civic NGOs that have expenses. 18-21% of civic NGOs have no expenses (blue line). The different coloured area is the one between the median (quartile 2/percentile 50) and percentile 75 (quartile 3). Reading example: if we consider civic NGOs that had expenses in 2022 and we order them up by the value of this indicator, the first 25% of them had expenses of up to three thousand RON, the first 50% not more than 25 thousand RON, the first 75% not more than 172 thousand RON, the first 90% not more than 483 thousand RON, and the last 3% at least 1977 thousand RON.

Figure 77 presents data on expenses reported by civic NGOs. During the first five years of the reference period, inflation-adjusted percentile values are fairly stable, then slightly higher. Half of civic NGOs (percentile 50) have expenses values of no more than 21-23 thousand RON at the beginning of the period, their value then increasing to 25 thousand RON in 2022. The majority (90%) of civic NGOs have expenses values of up to 400-650 thousand RON, regardless of the reference year. Differences among NGOs fluctuate over time (the ratio between percentile 75 and percentile 25 fluctuates over the period within the range 41-95). About 18-21% of civic NGOs do not have expenses, depending on the reference year.

If we sum up the values associated with this indicator for all NGOs, respectively civic NGOs, we can calculate the share of the civil field in the total. The value of the indicator is, with small fluctuations, around 3-7% (the associated chart is included in the online annexes (RO)). The combined expenses of civic NGOs is generally stable over the period (approximately 500 million RON), with small exceptions (850 million in 2020), with the precautions mentioned above.

Figure 78. Dynamics of the surplus/deficit indicator – civic NGOs



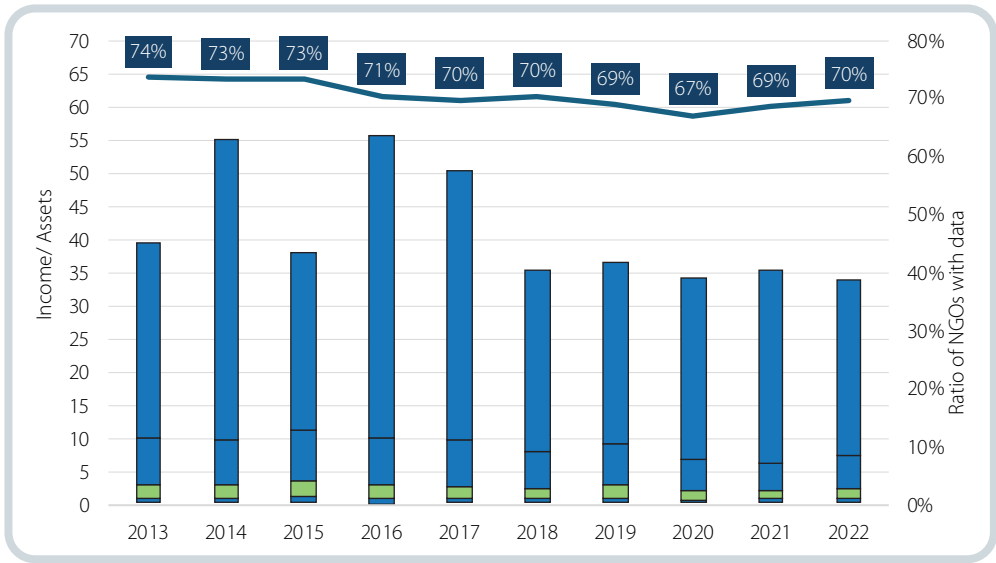
Source: Processing of NAFA data (inflation-adjusted declared values). The horizontal black lines represent percentiles 25, 50, 75, 90 and 97. The different coloured area is the one between the median (quartile 2/percentile 50) and percentile 75 (quartile 3). Continuous coloured lines indicate the civic share of NGOs that have surplus (blue line), are zero (grey line) and deficit (red line). Reading example: if we consider civic NGOs in 2022 and we order them up by the value of this indicator, the first 25% of them had a slight deficit (one thousand RON), the first 50% were on zero, the first 75% had a surplus of no more than five thousand RON, the first 90% had a surplus of no more than 37 thousand RON, and the last 3% had a surplus of at least 181 thousand RON.

Figure 78 shows the surplus/deficit data reported by civic NGOs. With very small variations, almost 40% of these NGOs are on deficit (most often the values are relatively small), one fifth is “per zero”, and about 40% have a surplus. Throughout the reference period, the inflation-adjusted percentile values are fairly stable. Regardless of the year, half of civic NGOs (50 percentile) have zero surplus values (they are “zero” or have a rather small deficit). Almost regardless of the year, the majority (90%) of civic NGOs have surplus values of no more than about 37 thousand RON. Differences among NGOs are also almost stable over time (the ratio between percentile 75 and percentile 25 varies between 32-58).

If we sum up the values associated with this indicator for all NGOs, respectively civic NGOs, we can calculate the share of the civil field in the total. The value of the indicator is, with some exceptions, around 3% (the associated chart is included in the online annexes (RO)). Similarly, the total surplus of civic NGOs varies over the period around 33 million RON, with the precautions mentioned above.

Figure 79 presents data on the income and assets ratio of civic NGOs. With certain limits, we may consider this indicator to show the efficiency of NGOs’ activity. A below one value of this indicator means reduced efficiency, and a positive value means increased efficiency. The efficiency of civic NGOs varies slightly from one year to the next. Thus, the first 25% of civic NGOs have a ratio close to zero. The first 50% of these NGOs have a value per unit at the most, the first 75% have a value of about 2-4, the first 90% have a value of 6-11, and the last 3% have a value of at least 34-56 (depending on the year). These estimates are based on declared values of 67-74% of civic NGOs. For the remaining 30%, indicator values are zero or missing.

Figure 79. Dynamics of the ratio between income and assets – civic NGOs



Source: Processing of NAFA data. The horizontal black lines represent percentiles 25, 50, 75, 90 and 97. The values are calculated against civic NGOs who reported income and assets of at least one RON. 67-74% of civic NGOs are in this situation (blue line). The different coloured area is the one between the median (quartile 2/percentile 50) and percentile 75 (quartile 3). Reading example: if we consider civic NGOs who had assets and income in 2022 and order them up by the value of the ratio between the two indicators (income/assets), the first 25% have a value close to zero, the first 50% a value of no more than 1, the first 75% a value of no more than 3, the first 90% a value of no more than 8, and the last 3% a value of at least 34.

Conclusions

The number of NGOs related to the civic field is about 37 thousand according to the analysis on data from the National Registry for NGOs. About 1800 of civic NGOs have submitted a balance sheet to NAFA. Civic NGOs accounts for almost a third of all NGOs. The peak of the share (39%) was at the beginning of the period analysed (1990-2023), then decreased to 14%, after which it increased to 29%. The number of registered civic NGOs increased relatively steadily after 1990 by an average of 1080 per year (500 in 1990-2001 and 1600 in 2010-2023).

About 64-69% of civic NGOs do not have employees. From those with employees, half have 2-3 employees at the most and only 3% have more than 16 employees. During the period 2013-2022 the total number of employees in civic NGOs (4-6 thousand), respectively the number of employees in an average NGO rather fluctuated.

The financial indicators (assets, income, expenses, surplus) associated with civic NGOs tend to improve over time (2013-2022), with two stable periods: 2013-2017 (lower values) and 2018-2022 (higher values). In general, for each indicator, we see an increase in both the summed-up values and the median values (i.e. the values of the percentiles considered). Regardless of the reference year, about half of civic NGOs have low activity efficiency (the ratio between income and assets is below one).

Organizations of / for youth

▶ Vlad Dumitrescu

Introduction

In this chapter, we aim to explore the topic of organisations of/for youth, to identify criteria for their definition and to understand the distinctions or similarities between the two titles. We also aim to identify the dimension of the non-governmental sector for youth and to highlight specific features of this sector. In addition, we aim to identify some particularities of the profile of young people working in non-governmental sector in Romania

Methodology

In order to identify organisations of/for youth included in the research horizon, the present analysis considered the search by keywords for the purpose/objectives of the organisations registered in the National Registry for NGOs (tinere, tineret, tanar, tinarul, tineri, student, youth, young, jeunesse, jeune, Jugend, fiatal, ifjusag, etc.).

In this analysis, the central and local public administration structures with responsibilities in the field of youth (structures of the Ministry of Youth and Sports) and structures such as Fundațiile Județene pentru tineret și a Municipiului București - the County Youth Foundations and Bucharest Municipality were not included. However, for the County Youth Foundations we have accessed the official website of Fundația Națională pentru Tineret - National Youth Foundation for relevant information in this regard.

Sector of/ for the youth

● Sector definition

The UN Youth Strategy “Youth 2030” pursues the vision for “a world in which every young person’s human rights are realized, where young people are empowered to achieve their full potential”. Even if it does not propose a definition, the strategy uses the terminology of ‘youth-led organisations’, i.e. organisations run by young people/youth organisations, without putting particular emphasis on their strategic importance.

The Council of Europe’s 2030 Youth Strategy is an important initiative dedicated to “promoting the fundamental values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law for young people in Europe”. Unlike the UN, this strategy uses the more general terminology of ‘youth organisations’ and mentions them above all in relation to their important contribution to human rights education and support for young people’s access to fundamental rights.

At the same time, the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 aims to encourage “the participation of young people in democratic life, facilitating access to the resources needed for their social and civic engagement”. Here we have a clearer nuance of the definition of “organisations”, in the sense of using the terminology of “youth organisations”, translated into Romanian as organizații de tineret and “organisations working with young people”, translated into Romanian as organizații care lucrează cu tineri”.

Thus, even though non-governmental organisations dedicated to youth are indispensable for the

provision of services in this area, we see from various international/European policies a lack of a common definition for these types of organisations and clear measures specifically directed towards them.

At national level, when we talk about young people, according to the Youth Law (L350/2006), we refer to citizens aged between 14 and 35 years, even if at international/European level this range is different. The Youth Law also clearly defines civil society in the field of youth (Chapter III, Non-Governmental and Youth Structures) as follows:

- a. Non-governmental organisations OF and FOR youth
- b. County foundations for youth and Bucharest Foundation and the National Youth Foundation
- c. National Youth Council (it is not an existing/ functional structure).

Non-governmental organisations OF youth are legal entities governed by private law and without a patrimonial purpose (including federations), operating under the conditions of GO no. 26/2000 and meeting the following cumulative criteria: a) the purpose stipulated in the statute directly concerns the youth field, and to achieve it most of the objectives assumed are addressed to young people; b) at least two thirds of the total number of members are young people.

Non-governmental organisations FOR youth are legal entities governed by private law and without a patrimonial purpose (including federations), operating under the conditions of Government Ordinance no.26/2000 and whose purpose laid down in the statute directly concerns the youth field, and in order to achieve it most of the objectives assumed are addressed to young people.

A peculiarity of the Romanian organisations of/for youth ecosystem are the County Youth Foundations and the Bucharest Municipality Foundation and the National Youth Foundation. The foundations are established on the basis of the provisions of Decree-Law no. 150/1990, as legal entities governed by private law and of public utility, autonomous, non-governmental, non-political and not-for-profit, unique at the level of each county and Bucharest municipality, whose general assemblies are made up of representatives of non-governmental youth organisations that have their headquarters in the respective administrative and territorial unit and express their adherence to their purpose.

The issue of integrated or separate definition of youth organisations, apart from the phrases mentioned in the law, is particularly relevant in the case of non-governmental organisations working for young people. Most of them, which are not exclusively or predominantly dedicated to youth, can carry out activities for the interest of young people, but also in other fields such as education, social, health, environment, etc., and an accurate classification either in the category of or for youth can be achieved only by means of their own declaration of organisations or by checking the articles of association of these organisations individually and following up their work.

● Sector size

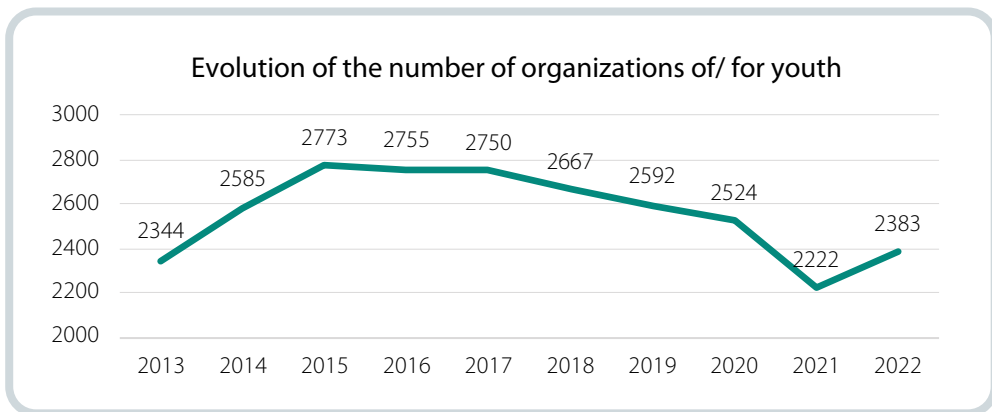
From the data collected and used for the Study *Romania 2017. Non-governmental sector – profile, trends, challenges*, out of the total number of 42707 non-governmental organisations active at that time according to the National Institute of Statistics, according to the aforementioned methodology, one identified a number of **2434** organisations of/ for young people. Thus, almost 6% of non-governmental organisations active in Romania could be classified in this category.

For this exercise, we are expanding the sizing area and looking at the numerical evolution of organisations of/for youth over the period 2013-2022 (Figure 80).

There can be noted a steady decline in the number of these organisational typologies, which could have several factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic in the years 2020-2021. However, in the 2023 NGO Leaders Barometer, 39% of the total respondents defined themselves as an organisation of/for youth, of which 23% an organisation **of** youth and 77% an organisation **for** youth. This may indicate, on the one hand, an extensive activity of organisations of/for youth, although numerically few, and on the other h

and it correlates with the poor way of correctly identifying these typologies of organisations, given that the classification is carried out on the basis of self-identification and can only be controlled by a thorough investigation of the documents and activities of those organisations.

Figure 80. Evolution related to the registration of organisation of/ for youth



Source: RN-ONG, processing by FDSC

● Characteristics of the youth sector

If we compare the data from the 2023 NGO Leaders Barometer between youth organisations and the rest of the respondents, we first notice that there are no major differences between categories. This can clearly mean that organisations of/for youth are a clear integral part of the Romanian non-governmental ecosystem, with more or less the same characteristics as those set out in the previous chapters. However, it is possible to identify from the analysis some particularities of organisations of/for youth, which emerged from the application of the 2023 NGO Leaders Barometer.

Organisations of/for youth mostly have education as their main field of activity and almost 48% of the organisations participating in the study were (self) assigned under this category. This classification is disproportionate to other fields of activity, the next being social/charitable, only 12%.

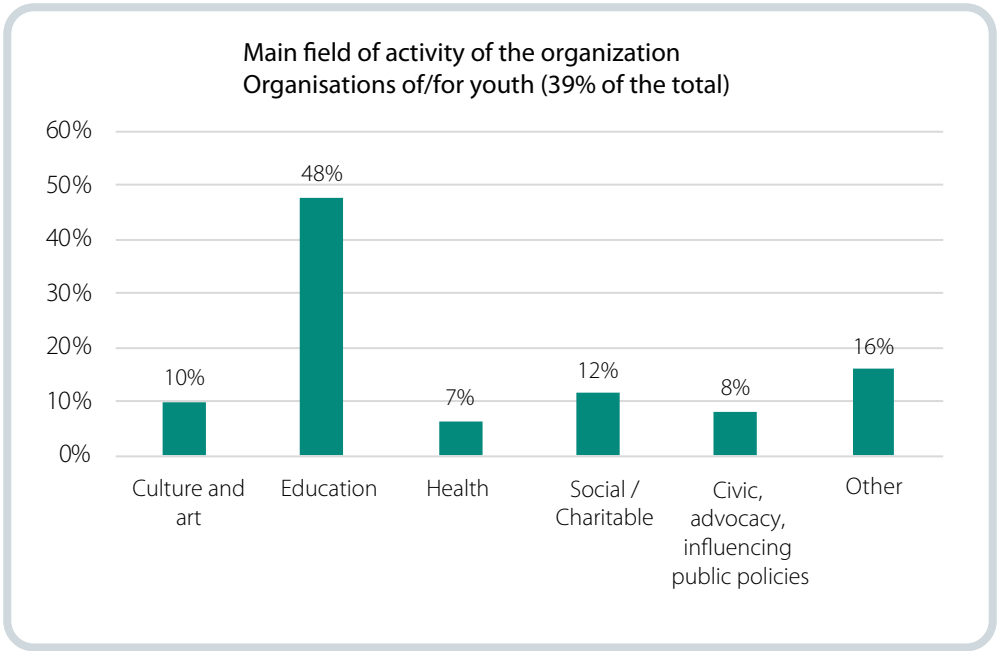
Thus, given the large difference in percentage, there could be a disproportionality in addressing the needs of as many young people in Romania as possible by youth organisations.

Almost half of organisations of/for youth included in the analysis work locally in urban areas and 21% at national level. Fewer youth organisations work locally in rural areas (15%) and at European/international level (15%), which also shows a lack of representativeness at geographical level.

At management level, we note that organisations of/for youth use to a lesser extent tools such as strategic plan, fundraising strategy, manual of internal procedures as compared to other types of organisations included in the analysis. However, more often use tools such as: marketing strategy, communication strategy and volunteers' management strategy.

Another peculiarity of organisations of/for youth is that they work more with volunteers as compared to the rest of the organisations included in the analysis. Thus, only 2% say they work exclusively with employees (as compared to 10.3% for other types of organisations) and 42% say they work exclusively with volunteers (as compared to 29% for the other types of organisations). The average number of employees for organisations of/for youth in 2023 has a median value of 4, almost half of the other types of organisations, and the average monthly net wage for a full-time employee is at least 5 percent lower than the other organisation typologies.

Figure 81. Main field of activity for organisations of/for youth



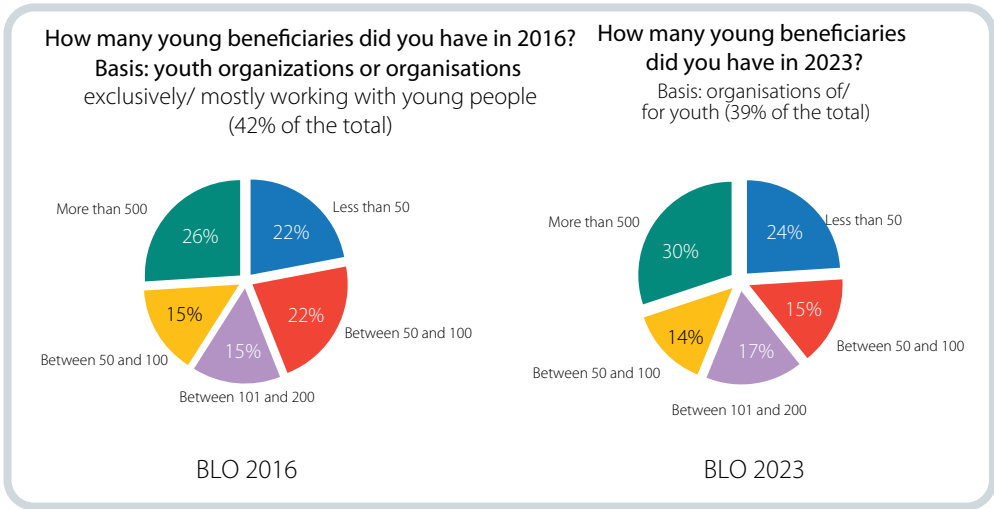
Source: BLO 2023

The percentage of people who are members of organisations of/for youth (24%) is lower than the other typologies of organisation (53%) and than the average per overall respondents (40%).

As compared to the 2016 exercise on the number of young people served, we see an increase in the percentage of organisations in the sample working with over 500 beneficiaries, but the median is of 170 young beneficiaries in 2023.

One particularity of organisations of/for youth is the possibility of involving staff specialised in activities carried out – youth workers. According to the occupational standard, a youth worker mobilises young people in order to develop life skills and pro-active behaviours, stimulating associative life and cooperation among young people, facilitating their participation in community life (Autoritatea Națională pentru Calificări - National Authority for Qualifications, standard ocupațional Lucrător de Tineret - Occupational Standard Youth Worker, 2012).

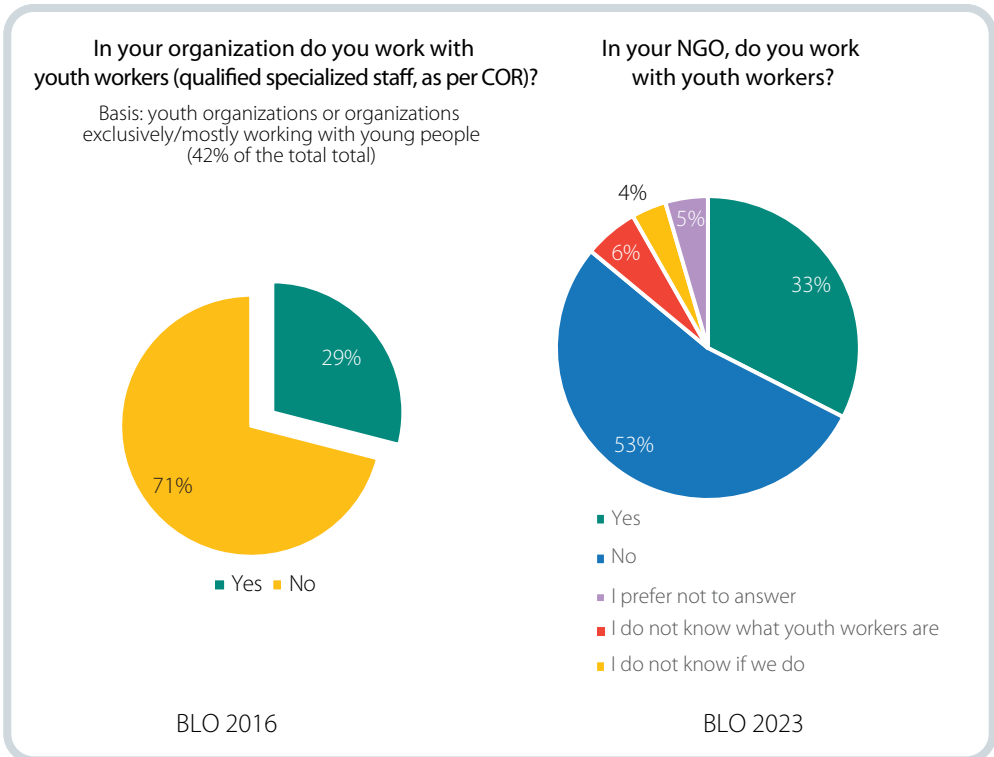
Figure 82. Number of young beneficiaries served in 2022 and 2023 by an organisation of/for youth



Source: BLO 2016, BLO 2023

Despite this, from the data of BLO 2016, 71% of organisations identified as belonging to/ for the youth did not work with youth workers, and if so, almost half of them involved no more than 2 young workers.

Figure 83. Use of youth workers



Source: BLO 2016, BLO 2023

In 2023 we see an increase in the number of organisations working with youth workers by up to 33%, but the involvement of a maximum of 2 workers per organisation remains constant. However, we make this statement with the caution that part of this increase may come from differences in structure between the two compared samples.

Specific to the non-governmental/youth sector is also the effervescence of organising projects/events. Thus, according to the NGO 2016 Leaders Barometer, 41% of the total respondents organised more than 8 events/projects in 2015. In 2023, 49% of respondents organised more than 8 events/projects.

The total income budget for 2022 for organisations of/for youth is mostly below 45,000 RON (22%) or between 45,000 and 225,000 RON (23%) and the most important sources from which organisations received income in 2023 are fairly balanced between individual donors (30%), corporate donors (22%) and institutional donors (40%). Even if small, there are also 5% of income earned from economic activities.

● Profile of young persons working in NGOs

From the analysis of data from the NGO Leaders Barometer and the Barometer of Members, Employees and Volunteers, conducted by the FDSC in 2023, we extracted a generalist profile of young people who are involved in the non-governmental sector.

Thus, a large share of young people are either involved voluntarily (43%) or employed (39%) on the basis of specific expertise, project manager or communication person, rather than organizational leaders, thus having few decision-making powers. It is interesting to note that more than 70% are from a large urban environment, 75% are women, 73% have higher education. Young people are also more connected to different social platforms, 92% of them using Facebook, 90% Instagram, 83% YouTube and 40% Tiktok.

Seniority in the organisation for young people is less than 5 years (83%) and the organisation in which it operates tends to be in the field of education or social/charitable and slightly heterogeneous, in the sense that there are no high percentages of different categories of employed persons.

Text box 2. FDSC and young people in the non-governmental sector.

Given that in Romania there is no exclusive learning context dedicated to young people who want to prepare to work in the NGO, the Civil Society Development Foundation established in 2019 Programul3, 'a movement, a school, a space for learning, motivation, connection, practice for the continuous development of Romanian civil society and beyond'. Programul3 brings together young people interested in working and developing the third sector, especially through new approaches, while learning from professionals in the field. Programul3 proposes a six-month to one-year learning process, structured in two semesters with a predefined curriculum, plus a customised learning process, according to the needs and interests of each person. The first semester is dedicated to technical content related to work within NGO, with introduction to NGO management and development of essential working skills in the sector. The second semester is dedicated to thematic content of work in the sector such as human rights, civic participation, environmental protection, etc. In the 5 years of the programme, a specific and adapted curriculum was tested for each generation, including a series of actions (events, community meetings, masterclasses) that led to the development of management and thematic skills on different areas of interest of the sector for over 170 young people who have participated in the programme, people who are still actively involved in civil society.

In terms of their work, young people have a lower percentage than adults for feeling that they are doing useful work (86% in young people versus 91% in adults) and do not always feel that they can influence major decisions (only 44% of young people say so). Young people have fewer hours of work in a typical NGO week (a median of 25 hours compared to 35 hours in adults) and 75% of them work remotely, as compared to 60% of adults. 37% of young people think they need additional training to cope well with their tasks (as compared to only 29% of adults). Besides, 37% believe that efforts and achievements in their work are properly paid for. 64% of young people would be happy to a large and very large extent to spend the rest of their careers in the organisation they work in, as compared to 82% of adults. In a year's time, 63% of young people (against 80% of adults) believe they will be in the same organisation and 76% still in the non-governmental sector.

With reference to addressing the vulnerability of different categories of population, young people have higher percentages on average by more than 20% of the total as compared to adults when asked whether different vulnerable people need help. The same value is recorded for the question of what is considered vulnerable, with young people having a broader understanding of the term of vulnerability, with more positive perceptions than those of adults (i.e. 48% of young people consider vulnerable people to be victims of society, as compared to only 33% of adults).

Concluding, if we were to make a general profile for the young person working in an NGO, this would be a female, highly educated, living in a large city, active on social media, especially Facebook and Instagram. Works either on a voluntary basis or employed for up to 5 years in an organisation with slightly heterogeneous staff working in the field of education. Has few decision-making powers and thus does not always have the feeling that she can influence major decisions, even if the person thinks is doing useful work. Works less hours than adults, especially remotely, and believes that work efforts and achievements could be better paid for. Is less likely to remain in the same organisation for a long time, but is willing to work in the sector. This person is open to integrating the wider context of vulnerable people in society with a greater and more positive understanding of the phenomenon.

Conclusions and recommendations

With reference to the fact that there is a multitude of research and analysis carried out in relation to young people, but fewer with direct reference to the structure and functioning of organisations of/for youth, it is recommended to include in various such approaches a component that specifically captures the support given to young people by organisations of/for youth, such as the inclusion of a dedicated chapter in the Diagnosis that should be carried out for the Youth Situation and its expectations by the Ministry of Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities.

Although the Youth Law clearly defines civil society in the youth field, an accurate classification either in the category "of youth" or "for youth" can be achieved through its own declaration of organisations or by checking the official documents of these organisations individually and following up their work. Thus, it would be useful to have a national register of youth organisations identifying these organisations more clearly.

Given the focus of many youth organisations on the field of education, with activity at local level, especially in urban areas, it can be estimated that many of the real needs of young people at national level are not addressed through lack of representativeness. Even if these needs could be covered by other types of organisations, it is not possible to determine the ratio. Thus, it is desirable to diversify the typologies of interventions of organisations of/for youth beyond the educational area as well as cooperation with other types of organisations, which could come with complementary interventions.

Even if organisations of/for youth are a clear integral part of the non-governmental ecosystem in Romania, having more or less the same general characteristics, it can be appreciated that there is a greater need to develop their organizational capacity, especially in the area of strategic management, consolidation of income sources, growth in the number of employees and members.

Thus, the development of specific programmes in this respect is desirable, be it public authorities or other private actors. Also, given the limited total income budget of these organisations, it would be appropriate to encourage youth funding, especially from the private sector, for example the establishment of a Youth Fund, managed from within the civil society.

With reference to the profile of the young person working in the NGO environment, we can distinguish certain peculiarities of the new generation that cannot be ignored and which, if not addressed, there may be a risk, over time, that fewer and fewer young people will come to the sector and remain in it. Thus, besides involving young people in initiatives such as Programul3, it is vital to adapt non-governmental organisations to these new realities and new profiles, through their awareness and, above all, by creating inclusive organizational processes that take into account these peculiarities.

ROMANIA 2024

THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR
PROFILE, TRENDS, CHALLENGES

REFERENCES

- Aghajanyan, T., & Dvarionas, D. (2020). The perspectives of sustainable social services provision through local NGOs in Lithuania. *Socialinis darbas. Patirtis ir metodai*, 47-65.
- Ahrendt, Daphne; Mascherini, M., Sándor, E., Ganko, I., Jansova, E., Kärkkäinen, O, Mereuta, C., Monteleone, C., Prina, C., di Vozzo, D. (2022), *Living, working and COVID-19 in the European Union and 10 EU neighbouring countries*, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Ailincăi, A.A. (2023) *Raport de analiză privind activitatea ONG-urilor și a nevoilor strategice din Municipiul și Județul Iași: 2022-2023*, proiect ONGteca, Iași: Fundația Serviciilor Sociale Bethany, Fundația Comunitară Iași, Asociația Civica.
- Alcock, P. (2010). A Strategic Unity: Defining the Third Sector in the UK. *Voluntary Sector Review*, 1(1), 5–24. <https://doi.org/10.1332/204080510X496984>
- Amnesty International (2019). *Laws designed to silence: The global crackdown on civil society organizations*, London: Amnesty International.
- Anheier, H. (2005) *Nonprofit Organisations – Theory, management and policy*, New York: Routledge.
- Anheier, H. K., & Salamon, L. M. (2006). The nonprofit sector in comparative perspective. Pp. 89-116 in Steinberg, W.W. & Powell. R. (eds.). *The nonprofit sector: A research handbook*. Yale University Press.
- ARACIP. (2024a). Registrul național al unităților de învățământ acreditate. 12.02.2024. Disponibil la <https://aracip.eu/categorii-documente/info-unitati-Invatamant-registre>
- ARACIP. (2024b). Registrul național al unităților de învățământ autorizate să funcționeze provizoriu. 12.02.2024. Disponibil la <https://aracip.eu/categorii-documente/info-unitati-Invatamant-registre>
- ARACIS. (n.d.). Broșuri și cărți. Disponibil la <https://www.aracis.ro/brosuri-si-carti/>
- Asociația pentru Relații Comunitare (ARC). (2020). Raport anual ARC/ 2020.
- Asparouhov, T., & Muthén, B. (2014). Auxiliary Variables in Mixture Modeling: Three-Step Approaches Using Mplus. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 21(3), 329-341. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705511.2014.915181>
- Bacă, B. (2022). Practice theory and postsocialist civil society: Toward a new analytical framework. *International Political Sociology*, 16(1), olab021.
- Bădescu, G. (2003). Social trust and democratization in the post-communist societies. Pp. 120-39 in Bădescu, G., & Uslaner, E. M. (Eds.). *Social capital and the transition to democracy*. London: Routledge.
- Bădescu, G., & Sum, P. (2005). Historical legacies, social capital and civil society: Comparing Romania on a regional level. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 57(1), 117-133.
- Bădescu, G., Sum, P., & Uslaner, E. M. (2004). Civil society development and democratic values in Romania and Moldova. *East European Politics and Societies*, 18(2), 316-341.
- Balogh, M., Radu, B. (2013) *Public policy analysis*, București: Tritonic.
- Baluch, A. M. (2017). Employee perceptions of HRM and well-being in nonprofit organizations: Unpacking the unintended. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 28(14), 1912-1937.
- Baños Smith, H. (2006). International NGOs and impact assessment. Can we know we are making a difference? *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 11(2), 157-174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569780600671021>
- Barna, C. (2014). *Atlasul economiei sociale. România 2014*. București: Institutul de Economie Socială.
- Bebbington, A. (2007). Social capital and development studies II: can Bourdieu travel to policy?. *Progress in development studies*, 7(2), 155-162.
- Benefacts (2021). *Nonprofit Sector Analysis. 2021*, accesat la 13.01.2024 la <https://benefactslegacy.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/benefacts-nonprofit-sector-analysis-2021.pdf>

- Bernhard, M. (1993). Civil society and democratic transition in East Central Europe. *Political science quarterly*, 108(2), 307-326.
- Beugelsdijk, S. and van Schaik, A.B.T.M. (2005) Social capital and growth in European regions: an empirical test, *European Journal of Political Economy*, 21(2): 301-324.
- Bibu, N., Lisetchi, M., & Brancu, L. (2013). Particularities of Non-governmental Organizations' Financing. The Bunea, A. (2007). *Civil society as "mushrooming" NGOs? Western assistance and the Re-building of Civic Sphere in Post-communist Romania and Poland*. MA Thesis, CEU Budapest.
- Bidet, E. (2010). Social Economy. In S. Toepler & H. Anheier (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society* (pp. 1405–1410). Springer.
- Bochsler, D., & Juon, A. (2020). Authoritarian footprints in central and eastern Europe. *East European Politics*, 36(2), 167-187.
- Bogdan, C. (2023) Engaging with refugees in times of conflict and social acceleration: Romanian civil society and the war in Ukraine. *Civil Szemle*, 2, 119.
- Borgers, J., Pilgaard, M., Vanreusel, B., & Scheerder, J. (2018). Can we consider changes in sports participation as institutional change? A conceptual framework. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 53(1), 84-100. doi:10.1177/1012690216639598
- Bouchard, M. J., & Rousseliere, D. (2015). Introduction. The weight, size and scope of the social economy. In M. J. Bouchard & D. Rousseliere (Eds.), *The Weight of the Social Economy. An International Perspective* (pp. 141–158). P. I. E. Peter Lang.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital, pp. 241-58 in Richardson, J., *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, Westport, CT: Greenwood
- Brown, L. D. (1991) Bridging organizations and sustainable development. *Human Relations* 44(8), 807–831.
- Brzustewicz, P., Escher, I., Hatami, A., Hermes, J., Keränen, A., & Ulkuniemi, P. (2022). Emergence of social impact in company–NGO relationships in corporate volunteering. *Journal of Business Research*, 140, 62-75.
- Calderón-Orellana, M., Aparicio, A., & López–Huenante, N. (2023). COVID-19's impact on worker stress in human service organizations: The mediating role of inclusion. *Plos one*, 18(12), e0295743.
- Caligiuri, P., Mencin, A., & Jiang, K. (2013). Win–win–win: The influence of company-sponsored volunteerism programs on employees, NGOs, and business units. *Personnel Psychology*, 66(4), 825-860.
- Călin. A. (coord.) (2020) *Rapid Assessment of Romanian CSO in the Context of COVID-19*. Washington, D.C. : World Bank Group.
- Capital, W. I. S. (2000). Social capital: implications for development theory, research, and policy. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 15(2), 225-49.
- Cavicchi, C., & Vagnoni, E. (2023). Digital information systems in support of accountability: The case of a welfare provision non-governmental organisation. *The British Accounting Review*, 55(5), 101112.
- Centrul Cultural Clujean (CCC). (2020). Poziție privind schema de ajutor de stat pentru sectorul cultural propusă de către Guvernul României, publicat 20 noiembrie 2020. Disponibil la <https://cccluj.ro/pozitie-privind-schema-de-ajutor-de-stat/>
- Centrul de Evaluare și Analize Educaționale (CEAE). (n.d.). *Studiu de impact. Programul "Fizica Altfel"*. Disponibil la <https://ceae.ro/studiu-de-impact/>
- Centrul Național de Evaluare și Examinare. (2020). *TALIS 2018. Raport național. Analiza mediului educațional din România*. CNEE, București. Disponibil la https://rocnee.eu/images/rocnee/fisiere/talis/Raport_national_TALIS_2018.pdf
- Centrul pentru Inovare Publică, CeRe: Centrul de Resurse pentru participare publică, ActiveWatch, Asociația pentru Tehnologie și Internet – ApTI (2024). *Starea democrației în 2023*. București: Grupul „ONG-uri pentru Cetățean”

- Centrul pentru Jurnalism Independent (CJI). (n.d.). *Educație media*. Disponibil la <https://cji.ro/subject/educatie-media/>
- Centrul pentru Studiul Democrației. (2023). *Raport de cercetare. Participarea în programe de învățare continuă în România. Studiu elaborat pentru Confederația Patronală Concordia*. Disponibil la <https://d-ng6bz1fnhn09.cloudfront.net/media/2023/11/raport-de-cercetare-final.pdf>
- Centrul Român de Politici Europene (CRPE). (2023). *Eforturi pentru a rezista în vremuri turbulente. Evaluarea sustenabilității OSC-urilor și a impactului în creșterea al amenințărilor externe*. Disponibil la https://www.crpe.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/raport_crpe_CSOSustenabilitate_ro-1.pdf
- Charity Aid Foundation (2016-2023), *CAF World Giving Index*, <https://www.cafonline.org/about-us/research/caf-world-giving-index>
- Charycka, B., Gumkowska, M., Bednarek, J. (2021) 2021. *The Capacity of NGOs in Poland. Key Facts*, Varșovia: The Klon/Jawor Association.
- Chaves, R., & Monzon, J. L. (2007). *The Social Economy in the European Union. European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)*. <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/qe-31-12-784-en-c.pdf>
- Cibian, Ș., Drăgan, M., Fierăscu, S., Beserman, E.D., Fejes, Z.L., Rușitoru, I., Cârnu, A. (2023) *Studiu privind Dezvoltarea Societății Civile din Țara Făgărașului*, Făgăraș: Editura Institutului de Cercetare Făgăraș.
- Cibian, Ș., Fejes, Z. L. (2022). *Intervenția societății civile din România în adresarea crizei umanitare din Ucraina 2022: contribuții și provocări*, Făgăraș: Editura Institutului de Cercetare Făgăraș.
- Coaliția pentru Drepturile Migranților și Refugiaților (CDMiR). (2023). *Contribuția Coaliției pentru Drepturile Migranților și Refugiaților în contextul războiului din Ucraina*. Disponibil la <https://cdmir.ro/wp/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/EV02-contributia-CDMiR.pdf>
- Coaliția pentru Educație. (2020). *Impactul ONG-urilor în domeniul educației în timpul pandemiei COVID-19*. Disponibil la https://coalitiaedu.ro/studii-cercetari/raportul-ong_pandemie/
- Coaliția pentru Educație. (n.d.). *Despre noi*. Disponibil la <http://coalitiaedu.ro/despre-noi-2/>
- Code for Romania (n.d.). *Povestea noastră*. Disponibil la <https://www.code4.ro/ro/povestea-noastra>
- Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American journal of sociology*, 94, S95-S120.
- Comșa, M., Gheorghiuță, A., & Tufiș, C. D. (2009). *Alegerile pentru Parlamentul european. România. 2009*, Cluj: Presa Universitară Clujeană.
- Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe (2009), *Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg. Disponibil la: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/ingo/-civil-participation>
- Conovici, I. (2013). *Organizațiile cu profil religios angajate în economia socială în România*. FDSC (IES).
- Consiliul Național pentru Finanțarea Învățământului Superior (CNFIS). (2015). Raport public anual 2014. Starea finanțării învățământului superior și măsurile de optimizare ce se impun. Disponibil la https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/studii%20si%20analize/2016/CNFIS/CNFIS-Raport-public2014_final.pdf
- Constantinescu, S. (2012a). *Atlasul economiei sociale România, 2011*. FDSC (IES).
- Constantinescu, S. (2012b). *Atlasul economiei sociale România, 2012*. FDSC (IES).
- Constantinescu, S. (2013a). *Economia socială și ocuparea forței de muncă. Furnizorii de formare profesională și servicii de stimulare a ocupării*. FDSC (IES).
- Constantinescu, S. (2013b). *Economia socială și ocuparea forței de muncă. Integrarea grupurilor vulnerabile pe piața muncii*. FDSC (IES).

Cotoi, C., & Mateescu, O. (2013). *Economie sociala, bunuri si proprietati comune in Romania*. Polirom.

Council of the European Union (2023), *Council Conclusions on the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights; The role of the civic space in protecting and promoting fundamental rights in the EU*, Brussels, 24 februarie 2023

Craiovan, P. M. (2015). Burnout, depression and quality of life among the Romanian employees working in non-governmental organizations. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 187, 234-238.

CSR Media. (2022). Dinamica și Perspectiva Domeniului CSR în România. Disponibil la <https://www.csrmedia.ro/studiu-csr-media-71-dintre-companii-definesc-responsabilitatea-sociala-ca-strategie-sustenabila-de-business/>

CSRMEDIA.ro & Valoria Business Solutions (2023), *Studiu: Dinamica și perspectiva domeniului CSR – ediția 2022*, București.

Culturadata Interactiv (2021) *Inventarierea organizațiilor neguvernamentale culturale din România*, Institutul Național pentru Cercetare și Formare Culturală. Accesat 21 ianuarie 2024 la <https://culturadata.ro/interactiv/arhiva/organizatii-neguvernamentale-culturale/>

Curaj, A., Mitroi, M., Paul, C., Simion, E., Ionescu, O., Coșcodaru, R., & Dinu, A.M. (2021). Sustenabilitate și dezvoltare în sistemul antreprenorial din România. Studiu exploratoriu. UEFISCDI. Disponibil la <https://accelerate.gov.ro/storage/sustenabilitate-si-inovare-in-ecosistemul-antreprenorial-din-romania-rezumato.pdf>

Da Silva, J., Riana, I. G., & Soares, A. D. C. (2020). The effect of human resources management practices on innovation and employee performance (study conducted at NGOs members of FONGTIL) Dili. *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding*, 7(9), 322-330.

Dakova, V., Dreosi, B., Hyatt, J., Socolovschi, A. (2000) *Review of the Romanian NGO Sector: Strengthening Donor Strategies*, Charity Know How & Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

Damm, C., & Kane, D. (2022). Classifying UK charities' activities by charitable cause: a new classification system. *Voluntary Sector Review*, 1(aop), 1-27.

Deca, L., & Santa, R. (2022). Educated Romania—Focusing on Inclusive Policymaking After 30 Years of Shifting Reforms in the Romanian Education System. In A. Curaj, J. Salmi, C. M. Hâj (Eds.), *Higher Education in Romania: Overcoming Challenges and Embracing Opportunities* (pp. 1-9). Springer International Publishing.

Defourny, J. (2001). From Third Sector to Social Enterprise. In C. Borzaga & J. Defourny (Eds.), *The Emergence of Social Enterprise* (pp. 1–18). Routledge.

Desai, M. (1996). Informal organizations as agents of change: notes from the contemporary women's movement in India. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 1(2), 159-173.

Dima, G. (2013). *Serviciile sociale in Romania. Rolul actorilor economiei sociale*. FDSC (IES).

Dima, G. (coord.) (2011) *Serviciile sociale in Romania. Rolul actorilor economiei sociale*, București: Institutul de Economice Socială.

Dobbins, M., & Riedel, R. (2021). The "Missing Link": Exploring organized interests in post-communist policy-making. In *Exploring Organized Interests in Post-Communist Policy-Making* (pp. 3-21). Routledge.

Domaradzka, A. (2018). Urban social movements and the right to the city: An introduction to the special issue on urban mobilization. *VOLUNTAS International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 29(4), 607–620.

Dragoman, D. (2006). Civic engagement and democracy in Romania and Bulgaria. *Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review*, 6(3), 599-615.

Dvořáková, V. (2008). Civil Society in Latin America and Eastern Europe: Reinvention or Imposition?. *International Political Science Review*, 29(5), 579-594.

- Ecclesiastical. (2023). Charity Risk Barometer. Disponibil la <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/insights/charity-sector-risks/2023/>
- Ehrhardt, J. J., Saris, W. E., & Veenhoven, R. (2000). Stability of life-satisfaction over time. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 1(2), 177-205.
- Ehrlén, V. (2022a). Mediatization and Self-Organized Leisure Sports: A Finnish Perspective. *Communication & Sport*, 10(5), 913-930. doi:10.1177/21674795221095042
- Ekiert, G., & Kubik, J. (2014). Myths and realities of civil society. *Journal of Democracy*, 25(1), 46–58.
- Enyedi, Z. (2020). Right-wing authoritarian innovations in Central and Eastern Europe. *East European Politics*, 36(3), 363-377.
- Esman, M. J. and Uphoff, N. T. (1984) *Local Organizations: Intermediaries in Rural Development*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca.
- Eurofound. (2021). European Working Conditions Telephone Survey. Disponibil la <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/data-catalogue/european-working-conditions-telephone-survey-2021-0>
- European Commission. (2024). *Social economy in the EU*. https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/proximity-and-social-economy/social-economy-eu_en
- Eurostat (2023). Associations, accesat pe 23.01.2024 la https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/proximity-and-social-economy/social-economy-eu/associations_en
- Evers, A., & Laville, J.-L. (2004). Defining the third sector in Europe. In A. Evers & J.-L. Laville (Eds.), *The Third Sector in Europe* (pp. 11–42). Edward Elgar.
- EY & ARC. (2022). *Creditul fiscal privind regimul fiscal al sponsorizărilor în România*. Disponibil la <https://arcromania.ro/arc/documente/creditfiscal.pdf>
- Fagan, A. (2005). Taking stock of civil-society development in post-communist Europe: Evidence from the Czech Republic. *Democratization*, 12(4), 528-547.
- Farneti, F., & Siboni, B. (2011). An analysis of the Italian governmental guidelines and of the local governments' practices for social reports. *Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal*, 2(1), 101-125.
- Federația Fundațiile Comunitare din România (FFCR). (2020). Raport de activitate 2020. Disponibil la <https://ffcr.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Raport-de-activitate-FFCR-2020.pdf>
- Federația Organizațiilor Neguvernamentale pentru Servicii Sociale (FONSS). (n.d.a). Am deschis Centrul de asistență umanitară și socială pentru refugiați CTR Nicolina. Disponibil la
- Federația Organizațiilor Neguvernamentale pentru Servicii Sociale (FONSS). (n.d.b). Proiectul Restart Disponibil la <https://fonss.ro/en/proiectul-restart/>
- Ferge, Z. (1997). The changed welfare paradigm: the individualization of the social. *Social policy & administration*, 31(1), 20-44.
- Ferguson, S. L., G. Moore, E. W., & Hull, D. M. (2019). Finding latent groups in observed data: A primer on latent profile analysis in Mplus for applied researchers. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 44(5), 458-468. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025419881721>
- Flanigan, S. (2022). The roles of NGOs in migration policy & services in Romania with a focus on Ukrainian migrants. *Report on US State Department funded American Councils Title VIII Research Scholar Program Fellowship*.
- Fowler, A. (1985) *NGOs in Africa: naming them by what they are*. In *Non-Government Organizations' Contribution to Development*, Occasional Paper, No. 50, Institute of Development Studies, University of Nairobi, Nairobi.
- FRA (2023), *Protecting civil society – Update 2023*, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

Fukuyama, F. (2002). Social capital and development. *SAIS Review (1989-2003)*, 22(1), 23-37.

Fundația Noi Orizonturi (FNO). (n.d.). Activitatea noastră. Disponibil la <https://www.noi-orizonturi.ro/activitatea-noastra/>

Fundația pentru Dezvoltarea Societății Civile (FDSC). (2020). Document de poziție. Organizațiile neguvernamentale necesită măsuri de suport pentru a se adapta și contribui activ la rezolvarea problemelor sociale generate de pandemia COVID-19, 24 Martie 2020. Disponibil la https://www.stiri.org/assets/files/document_de_pozitie_ong-urile-au-nevoie-de-masuri-de-suport-in-contextul-covid-19_fdsc.pdf.

Gordon, W. and Babchuk, N. (1959) A typology of voluntary associations, *American Sociological Review*, 24(1): 22-29.

GPEI (2022), The Global Philanthropy Environment Index 2022, IU Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, 2022, <https://hdl.handle.net/1805/28098>

Hailey, J., & James, R. (2003). *NGO Capacity Building: The Challenge of Impact Assessment* New Directions in Impact Assessment for Development Methods and Practice Conference, Oxford.

Hințea, C., Balogh, M. (2003). *Introducere în managementul organizațiilor neguvernamentale. Suport de curs pentru învățământ la distanță*, Cluj-Napoca: Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai, Facultatea de Științe Politice și Administrative

Hospice Casa Speranței , EY, & Asociația pentru Relații Comunitare. (2018). Cum ar arăta lumea dacă toate lucrurile ar fi făcute pe jumătate?

Hotnews.ro. (2016). „Guvern: Școlile particulare vor primi finanțare de bază alocată de la bugetul de stat”. Hotnews.ro, 02.03.2016, disponibil la <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-20839190-guvern-scolile-particulare-vor-primi-finantare-baza-alocata-bugetul-stat.htm>

Howard, M. M. (2002). Postcommunist civil society in comparative perspective. *Demokratizatsiya*, 10(3), 285-305.

Ilie, A. G., & Colibasanu, O. A. (2007). Romania Europeana si 'industria'sectorului non-profit. *Romanian Economic Journal*, 10(26), 221-238.

Inglehart, R. (2018). *Cultural Evolution: People's Motivations are Changing, and Reshaping the World*. Cambridge University Press.

Institutul Intercultural Timișoara (IIT). (n.d.). În desfășurare. Disponibil la <https://www.intercultural.ro/tag/in-desfasurare/>

Institutul Național de Statistică (INS). (2016). Sistemul educațional în România – date sintetice. Anul școlar/universitar 2014-2015.

Institutul Național de Statistică (INS). (2017). Sistemul educațional în România – date sintetice. Anul școlar/universitar 2015-2016.

Institutul Național de Statistică (INS). (2018). Sistemul educațional în România – date sintetice. Anul școlar/universitar 2016-2017.

Institutul Național de Statistică (INS). (2019). Sistemul educațional în România – date sintetice. Anul școlar/universitar 2017-2018.

Institutul Național de Statistică (INS). (2020). Sistemul educațional în România – date sintetice. Anul școlar/universitar 2018-2019.

Institutul Național de Statistică (INS). (2021). Sistemul educațional în România – date sintetice. Anul școlar/universitar 2019-2020.

Institutul Național de Statistică (INS). (2022). Sistemul educațional în România – date sintetice. Anul școlar/universitar 2020-2021.

Institutul Național de Statistică (INS). (2023a). Sistemul educațional în România – date sintetice. Anul școlar/universitar 2021-2022.

Institutul Național de Statistică (INS). (2023b). SCL103H - Populația școlară, pe niveluri de educație, forme de proprietate, macroregiuni, regiuni de dezvoltare și județe. Disponibil la <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

Irvin, R.A. and Stansbury, J. (2004), 'Citizen Participation in Decision-Making: Is It Worth the effort?', 2004, *Public Administration Review*, vol. 64, no. 1, pp. 55-65.

Istenic, S. P., & Kozina, J. (2020). Participatory planning in a post-socialist urban context: experience from five cities in Central and Eastern Europe. *Participatory research and planning in practice*, 31.

Jacobsson, K., & Korolczuk, E. (2020). Mobilizing grassroots in the city: Lessons for civil society research in Central and Eastern Europe. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 33, 125-142.

Jacobsson, K., & Saxonberg, S. (Eds.). (2016). *Beyond NGO-ization: The development of social movements in Central and Eastern Europe*. Routledge.

Jehlička, P., & Jacobsson, K. (2021). The importance of recognizing difference: Rethinking Central and East European environmentalism. *Political Geography*, 87, 102379.

Jeziarska, K., & Polanska, D. V. (2018). Social movements seen as radical political actors: The case of the Polish Tenants' movement. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 29(4), 683-696.

Kivu, M. (ed.) (2017) *România 2017. Sectorul neguvernamental – profil, tendințe, provocări*, București: FDSC.

Kołomycew, A. (2023). Whose Interest Really Matters? The Role of NGOs' Representatives within Local Advisory Councils in Poland. *East European Politics and Societies*, 37(03), 903-926.

Korten, D. (1987) Third generation NGO strategies: A key to people-centred development. *World Development*, Supplement 15, 145-159.

Korten, D. (1990) *Getting to the 21st Century*. Kumarian Press, West Hartford, CT.

Kuruppu, S. C., & Lodhia, S. (2020). Shaping accountability at an NGO: a Bourdieusian perspective. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 33(1), 178-203.

Kutter, A., & Trappmann, V. (2010). Civil society in Central and Eastern Europe: The ambivalent legacy of accession. *Acta politica*, 45, 41-69.

Lai, J. Y., & Hamilton, A. (2020). For whom do NGOs speak? Accountability and legitimacy in pursuit of just environmental impact assessment. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 82, 106374. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eiar.2020.106374>

Lambriu, M. (2013). *Organizațiile de ajutor reciproc*. Polirom.

Lambriu, M., & Dobre, A. (2020). Romania: re-shaping the CSO sector in difficult conditions. *Problemy Polityki Społecznej. Studia i Dyskusje*, 50, 61-75.

Lambriu, M., Petrescu, C. (2012). Trends and Challenges for Social Enterprises in Romania. *International Review of Social Research*, 2(2), 163-182. <https://doi.org/10.1515/irs-2012-0023>

Lambriu, M., Petrescu, C. (2016). Bottom-up social enterprises in Romania. Case study – Retirees' Mutual Aid Association. *International Review of Sociology*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03906701.2016.1181388>

Lambriu, M., Petrescu, C. (2017), "Romania: Fostering Social Enterprise in a Post-Transitional Context: Caught between Social Enterprise Country Models", Kerlin, J.A. (Ed.) *Shaping Social Enterprise*, Emerald Publishing Limited, Bingley, pp. 109-138.

Lambriu, M., Petrescu, C. (2019). *Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe. Updated country report: Romania*. Publications Office of the European Union. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?advSearchKey=socenterfiches&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=22>

- Lambriu, M., Petrescu, C. (2019). *Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe. Country report Romania*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of European Union.
- Lambriu, M., Vameșu, A. (eds.) (2010) *România 2010. Sectorul neguvernamental – profil, tendințe, provocări*, București: FDSC & Editura Litera.
- Lazăr, F., Lightfoot, E., Iovu, M. B., & Dégi, L. C. (2021). Back from the ashes of communism: The rebirth of the social work profession in Romania. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 51(1), 340-356.
- Levin, H. M. (1999). The public-private nexus in education. *American behavioral scientist*, 43(1), 124-137. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027649921955191>
- Levi-Sanchez, S. (2018). Civil society in an uncivil state: Informal organizations in Tajik/afghan Badakhshan. *Journal of International Affairs*, 71(2), 50-72.
- Lisețchi, M, Micescu, V. (2013) *Politica statului privind ONG in Romania*, București: Agenția pentru Informarea și Dezvoltarea Organizațiilor Neguvernamentale, <http://www.aid-ong.ro/en/politica-statului-privind-ong/model-participativ-de-elaborare-a-politicii-publice-nationale-privind-ong-in-romania/documente-de-realizat/politica-statului-privind-ong-in-romania/>
- Lisețchi, M., Olteanu, I. (1998) *Carte alba la Forumul Național ONG, 1998: "Organizațiile neguvernamentale și conceptul de parteneriat"*, Centrul pentru Asistență pentru Organizații Neguvernamentale
- Litofcenko, J., Karner, D., & Maier, F. (2020). Methods for classifying nonprofit organizations according to their field of activity: A report on semi-automated methods based on text. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 31, 227-237.
- Luca, S. A., & Gheorghita, B. (2011). Young people in Romania: Values and behavior in civic and political field. *International Journal of Arts & Sciences*, 4(8), 445.
- Luo, J., Zhuo, W., & Xu, B. (2023). The bigger, the better? Optimal NGO size of human resources and governance quality of entrepreneurship in circular economy. *Management Decision*, (ahead-of-print).
- Marzec, W., & Neubacher, D. (2020). Civil society under pressure: historical legacies and current responses in Central Eastern Europe. *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, 28(1), 1-6.
- Mateiu-Vescan, R., Ionescu, T., & Opre, A. (2021). Reconsidering volunteering: Individual change as a result of doing good for others. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 32, 1213-1227.
- Mateiu-Vescan, R., Ionescu, T., & Opre, A. (2022). Volunteering in Romania: A case study that can inform global volunteerism. *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai Psychologia-Paedagogia*, 41-66.
- Meyer, M., Moder, C., Neumayr, M., & Vandor, P. (2020). Civil society and its institutional context in CEE. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 31, 811-827.
- Mihuț, G. (2022). Romania: public-private divide in a dual-track system. *International Higher Education*, 109, pp. 34-35. Disponibil la <https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/ihe/article/view/14503>
- Mihuț, G., Bădescu, G. (2022). Învățământul post-secundar în România. Disponibil la https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361174350_Invatamantul_Post-secundar_in_Romania
- Mikołajczak, P. (2020). Social enterprises' hybridity in the concept of institutional logics: Evidence from Polish NGOs. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 31(3), 472-483.
- Mikołajczak, P. (2023). Values Do Matter: Lessons for Non-Governmental Organizations During the Crises of Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. *Democracy and Security*, 1-21.
- Ministerul Educației. (2020). „Grup de lucru la nivelul Ministerului Educației și Cercetării pentru sprijinirea învățământului particular din România”, 30 aprilie 2020. Disponibil la <https://www.edu.ro/grup-de-lucru-la-nivelul-ministerului-educa%C8%9Biei-%C8%99i-cercet%C4%83rii-pentru-sprrijinirea-%C3%AEEnv%C4%83%C8%9B%C4%83m%C3%A2ntului>

Ministerul Educației. (2022a). Raport privind starea învățământului preuniversitar din România 2021-2022, Decembrie 2022. Disponibil la https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2022/Transparenta/Starea_invatamantului/Raport-Starea-invatamantului-preuniversitar-2021-2022.pdf

Ministerul Educației. (2022b). ANEXA la OME Nr. 4224/06.07.2022. Metodologia-cadru privind asigurarea calității programelor pentru dezvoltarea profesională continuă a cadrelor didactice din învățământul preuniversitar și de acumulare a creditelor profesionale transferabile. Disponibil la https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Legislatie/2022/Anexa_OME_nr_4224_6.07.2022_Metodologie_programe_formare_in%20cariera_didactica.pdf

Ministerul Educației. (2023a). Raport privind starea învățământului preuniversitar din România 2022-2023, Decembrie 2023. Disponibil la https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2023/Transparenta/Rapoarte_sistem/Raport-Starea-invatamantului-preuniversitar-2022-2023.pdf

Ministerul Educației. (2023b). „Notă de fundamentare - Proiect Hotărâre de Guvern privind aprobarea normelor metodologice pentru determinarea costului standard per antepreșcolar/preșcolar/elev pentru finanțarea de bază a unităților de învățământ preuniversitar particular și confesional acreditate”. Publicat 29 decembrie 2023. Disponibil la

Ministerul Educației. (2024). Registrul național al programelor de formare profesională continuă acreditate. Februarie 2024. Disponibil la

Ministerul Muncii, Familiei și Protecției Sociale și Persoanelor Vârstnice. (MMFPS) (2011) *Raport de cercetare privind economia socială în România din perspective europeană comparată*, București: MMFPS.

Ministerul pentru Consultare Publică și Dialog Civic (MCPDC) (2016) *Finanțarea Organizațiilor nonguvernamentale de către statul român*.

Monzon, J. L., & Chaves, R. (2012). The Social Economy in the European Union. European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/qe-31-12-784-en-c.pdf>

Mufti, M., Xiaobao, P., Shah, S. J., Sarwar, A., & Zhenqing, Y. (2020). Influence of leadership style on job satisfaction of NGO employee: The mediating role of psychological empowerment. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 20(1), e1983.

Mungiu-Pippidi, A. (2015). The splintering of postcommunist Europe. *J. Democracy*, 26, 88.

Narayana, E. A. (1992). Bureaucratization of non-governmental organizations: An analysis of employees' perceptions and attitudes. *Public Administration and Development*, 12(2), 123-137.

Navrátil, J., & Kluknavská, A. (2020). Civil Society Trajectories in CEE: Post-Communist 'Weakness' or Differences in Difficult Times?. *Politologicky Casopis*, 27(2).

Neagu, A. (2022). „Avem sau nu asistente medicale fără bacalaureat în spitalele românești? Proiectul de lege al unui deputat-medic deschide cutia Pandorei”, Hotnews.ro, 14.03.2022. Disponibil la <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-sanatate-25433805-avem-sau-nu-asistente-medicale-fara-bacalaureat-spit-alele-romanesti-proiectul-lege-unui-deputat-medic-deschide-cutia-pandorei.htm>

Necșulescu, A.-H. (2011). Geneza apariției ONG-urilor din România. *Studia Politica: Romanian Political Science Review*, 11(3), 525-556. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-448658>

Neguț, Adriana. (2014). Introductory aspects on the sustainability of social enterprises, *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, 4, pp. 21-33.

Nemțeanu, M.S. & Dabija, D.C. (2020). Best Practices of Nongovernmental Organisations in Combatting COVID-19. In: R. Pamfilie, V. Dinu, L. Tăchiciu, D. Pleșea, C. Vasiliu eds. 6th BASIQ International Conference on New Trends in Sustainable Business and Consumption. Messina, Italy, 4-6 June 2020. Bucharest: ASE, pp. 626-633.

NGEurope.net (2017) *NGOs across Europe: A research report to diagnose opportunities and needs*, accesat 12.01.2024 la https://www.ngeurope.net/sites/default/files/output/files/i01_research_report_0.pdf

Nistor, L. (2009). Câteva aspecte privind participarea în organizații de protecție a mediului în România și Europa. *Sociologie Românească*, 7(01), 60-88.

Niță, I. S., Petrescu, C., David-Crisbășanu, S., Vișoianu, D. (2023). Raport final. Accesul și integrarea copiilor refugiaților ucraineni în sistemul de educație românesc. București: Federația Organizațiilor Nonguvernamentale pentru Copil (FONPC). Disponibil la <https://helptohelpukraine.ro/2023/10/18/raport-final-accesul-si-integrarea-copiilor-refugiatilor-ucraineni-i-in-sistemul-de-educatie-romanesc/>

Nordesjö, K., Ulmestig, R., & Denvall, V. (2022). Coping with tensions between standardization and individualization in social assistance. *Nordic Social Work Research*, 12(4), 435-449.

Nowicka, M., Deliu, A, Szarota, M., Voicu, B. (2024) *NGO responses to refugees flows in Warsaw and Bucharest: te case of Ukrainian War Refugees with Disabilities*. UNRF, Warsaw: Colegium Civitas.

Nylund-Gibson, K., & Choi, A. Y. (2018). Ten frequently asked questions about latent class analysis. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*, 4(4), 440-461. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tps0000176>

O'Connor, J. P., & Brown, T. D. (2007). Real cyclists don't race: Informal affiliations of the weekend warrior. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 42(1), 83-97.

OECD (2022), *The Protection and Promotion of Civic Space: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/d234e975-en>

OECD (2022), *The Protection and Promotion of Civic Space: Strengthening Alignment with International Standards and Guidance*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/d234e975-en>. Disponibil la: <https://www.oecd.org/gov/the-protection-and-promotion-of-civic-space-d234e975-en.htm>

OECD (2023a), *Civic Space Review of Romania*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/f11191be-en>. Disponibil la: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/civic-space-review-of-romania_f11191be-en

OECD (2023b), *Open Government Review of Romania*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/ff20b2d4-en>. Disponibil la: <https://www.oecd.org/governance/open-government/open-government-review-of-romania-ff20b2d4-en.htm>

Oh, D., Elayan, S., Sykora, M., & Downey, J. (2021). Unpacking uncivil society: Incivility and intolerance in the 2018 Irish abortion referendum discussions on Twitter. *Nordicom Review*, 42(s1), 103-118.

Opincaru, I. S. (2020). Elements of the institutionalization process of the forest and pasture commons in Romania as particular forms of social economy. *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics (APCE)*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apce.12294>

Opincaru, I. S. (2023). *Romanian Commons' Governing Institutions as Particular Forms of Social Economy* [PHD thesis]. University of Bucharest, Doctoral School of Sociology.

OSCE (2015), *Joint Guidelines on Freedom of Association*, Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR.

Păceșilă, M. (2014a). Analysis Of Key-Motivators In The Romanian-Ngo Environment. *Quality Innovation Prosperity*, 18(2), 38-55.

Păceșilă, M. (2014b). The relationship between motivational theories and the current practices of motivating NGO's human resources in Romania. *Management Research and Practice*, 6(1), 5-20.

Pantazi, R. (2020). "Învățământul privat autorizat va primi finanțare per elev, cât timp suntem în stare de alertă – a anunțat Turcan, după ședința de guvern", Edupedu.ro, 14.05.2020. Disponibil la <https://www.edupedu.ro/breaking-invatamantul-privat-autorizat-va-primi-finantare-per-elev-cat-timp-s-untem-in-stare-de-alerta-a-anuntat-turcan-dupa-sedința-de-guvern/>

Parks, T. (2008). The Rise and Fall of Donor Funding for Advocacy NGOs: Understanding the Impact. *Development in Practice*, 18(2), 213–222. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27751904>

- Parlamentul României. (2023a). Legea Învățământului Preuniversitar, nr. 198/4 iulie 2023, publicată în Monitorul Oficial al României Partea I, Nr. 613 / 5.07.2023. Disponibil la <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/271896>
- Parlamentul României. (2023b). Legea Învățământului Superior, nr. 199/4 iulie 2023, publicată în Monitorul Oficial al României Partea I, Nr. 614 / 5.07.2023. Disponibil la <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/271898>
- Paxton, P. (1999). Is social capital declining in the United States? A multiple indicator assessment. *American Journal of Sociology*, 105(1), 88-127.
- Peters, M., & Marshall, J. (2002). *Individualism and community: Education and social policy in the postmodern condition* (Vol. 4). Routledge.
- Peticilă, M. (2020). "Asociația Școlilor Particulare solicită Guvernului acordarea costului standard per elev și unităților autorizate, precum și scutirea de la plata contribuțiilor pentru angajați pe o perioadă de 3 luni", [Edupedu.ro](https://www.edupedu.ro), 15.03.2020. Disponibil la <https://www.edupedu.ro/asociatia-scolilor-particulare-solicita-guvernului-acordarea-costului-standard-per-elev-si-unitatilor-autorizate-precum-si-scutirea-de-la-plata-contributiilor-pentru-angajati-pe-o-perioada-de-3-luni/>
- Petrescu, C. (2013a). *Economia sociala in contextul dezvoltarii locale*. Polirom.
- Petrescu, C. (2023) *How has the crisis in Ukraine influenced NGOs in Romania?* FONPC (Federația Organizațiilor Neguvernamentale pentru Copii)
- Petrescu, C. (Ed.). (2013b). *Organizatiile colective ale proprietarilor de terenuri agricole si forestiere—Profil, evolutie, tendințe*. Polirom.
- Petrescu, C., 2014, Comparative analysis regarding the level of development and spatial distribution of collective organizations in Romania. *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, XIV(3), 39-51
- Petrescu, C., Neguț, A. (2018). Social economy in Romania – from concept to practice. *Calitatea vieții*, 4: 317-338.
- Petrescu, C., Neguț, A., Niță, I.S., Manea, M. (2023). Cum a influențat criza din Ucraina ONG-urile din România? București: Federația Organizațiilor Nonguvernamentale pentru Copii (FONPC). Disponibil la <https://helptohelpukraine.ro/2023/11/08/raport-cum-a-influentat-criza-din-ucraina-ong-urile-din-romania/>
- Pietrzyk-Reeves, D., McMahon, P. C. (2022). Introduction: Civic Activism in Central and Eastern Europe Thirty Years After Communism's Demise. *East European Politics and Societies*, 36(4), 1315-1334.
- Pietrzyk-Reeves, D., Samonek, A. (2023). Measuring Civil Society: Lessons from Central and Eastern Europe. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 56(1), 152-165.
- Piotrowski, G. (2009). Civil society, un-civil society and the social movements. *Interface: a journal for and about social movements*, 1(2), 166-189.
- Popa, A. E., Vlase, I., & Morandau, F. (2016). Nongovernment sector fighting cancer in Romania. *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, (2), 39-55.
- Pospieszna, P., & Galus, A. (2020). Promoting active youth: evidence from Polish NGO's civic education programme in Eastern Europe. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 23, 210-236.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. Simon and schuster.
- Putnam, R. D., Nanetti, R. Y., Leonardi, R. (1993). *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ, USA: Princeton university press.
- Rau, Z. (2019). *The reemergence of civil society in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*. Routledge.

- Reisz, R. D. (2007). Legitimacy discourse and mission statements of private higher education institutions in Romania. In S. Slantcheva, & D. C. Levy (Eds.), *Private Higher Education in post-Communist Europe: in search of legitimacy* (pp. 135-155). Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Rikmann, E., & Keedus, L. (2013). Civic sectors in transformation and beyond: Preliminaries for a comparison of six Central and Eastern European Societies. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 24, 149-166.
- Rozbicka, P., Kamiński, P., Novak, M., & Jankauskaitė, V. (2021). The Organizational Development of Nongovernmental Organizations in Central and Eastern Europe. pp. 115-136 in Rozbicka, P., Kamiński, P., Novak, M., & Jankauskaitė, V. *Achieving democracy through interest representation: Interest groups in Central and Eastern Europe*. Springer International Publishing.
- Rusu, O., Petrescu, C., & Vilcu, I. (2007). *Locul și rolul organizațiilor neguvernamentale pe piața de servicii sociale din România*. București, Fundația pentru Dezvoltarea Societății Civile.
- Rutherford, A., Brook, O. (2018). Civil society organisations in Scotland, 2017. [Data Collection]. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive. 10.5255/UKDA-SN-852915
- Ruzza, C. (2009). Populism and euroscepticism: Towards uncivil society?. *Policy and Society*, 28(1), 87-98.
- Ruzza, C. (2021). The institutionalisation of populist political discourse and conservative uncivil society in the European Union: From the margins to the mainstream?. *Nordicom Review*, 42(s1), 119-133.
- Salamon, L. M., & Anheier, H. (2013). The third world's third sector in comparative perspective. pp. 60-93 in Lewis, David, ed. *International perspectives on voluntary action: reshaping the third sector*. Routledge.
- Salamon, L. M., & Anheier, H. K. (1992). In search of the non-profit sector. I: The question of definitions. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 3, 125-151.
- Salamon, L. M., & Anheier, H. K. (1996). *The international classification of nonprofit organizations: ICNPO-Revision 1, 1996*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Institute for Policy Studies.
- Salamon, L. M., Haddock, M. A., & Toepler, S. (2023). Conceptualizing, measuring, and theorizing the third sector: Embedding statistical and methodological developments awaiting broader scholarly take-up. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 34(1), 115-125.
- Salvați Copiii. (2020). Raport anual 2020. Disponibil la https://www.salvaticopiii.ro/sites/ro/files/migrated_files/documents/f4a4c546-799e-4e9d-bea1-32d3694b5d21.pdf
- Sandu, D. (1999). *Spațiul social al tranziției*. Iași: Polirom.
- Șăulean, D., Stancu, D., Epure, C., Constantinescu, Ș., Luca, S., Baboi Stroe, A., Țigănescu, O., Berianu, B., Toepler, S., Salamon, L.M. (1999) Romania, pp. 337-354 in Salamon, L. M., Anheier, H.K., List, R., Toepler, S., Sokolowski, S. W. eds. (1999). *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*. The Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies.
- Schmidt, J. (2016). Nature of NGO volunteers' and employees' motivation. Implications and recommendations for managerial staff. *Problemy Zarządzania*, 14(3 (61)), 45-69.
- Secretariatul General al Guvernului (SGG). 2020. *Tablou național al implicării organizațiilor neguvernamentale și grupurilor de voluntari în combaterea efectelor COVID-19, în anul 2020*
- Segatto, C. I., Alves, M. A., & Pineda, A. (2023). Uncivil society and social policies in Brazil: The backlash in the gender, sexual, and reproductive rights and ethnic and racial relations fields. *Public Administration and Development*, 43(1), 60-69.
- Sepulveda, L. (2014). Social Enterprise – A New Phenomenon in the Field of Economic and Social Welfare? *Social Policy & Administration*, 49(7), 842–861.
- Sistemul Integrat al Învățământului din România (SIIIR). (2004). <https://siiiir.edu.ro/cart0/#/retea> (accesat 27. 01.2024).

- Social Impact Alliance for Central and Eastern Europe. (2023). Filantropia și responsabilitatea socială corporativă în Europa Centrală și de Est. Disponibil la <https://ceeimpact.org/romania-filantropia-si-rscs-in-ece/>
- Solomonidou, A., & Katsounari, I. (2022). Experiences of social workers in nongovernmental services in Cyprus leading to occupational stress and burnout. *International Social Work, 65*(1), 83-97.
- Spina, N., & Raymond, C. (2014). Civil society aid to post-communist countries. *Political Studies, 62*(4), 878-894.
- Spurk, D., Hirschi, A., Wang, M., Valero, D., & Kauffeld, S. (2020). Latent profile analysis: A review and "how to" guide of its application within vocational behavior research. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 120*, 103445. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103445>
- Stănescu, A. (2023). "Școlile private autorizate să primească și ele costul standard per elev, nu doar cele acreditate, solicitare din partea Asociației Școlilor Particulare / Proiectul de lege al educației din Parlament prevede acest lucru, cu condiția să nu încaseze taxe de la părinți", *Edupedu*, 18.04.2023. Disponibil la
- Stănescu, Simona Maria; Cace, Sorin; Alexandrescu, Filip . (2011) *Între oportunități și riscuri: Oferta de Economie Socială în regiunile de dezvoltare București-Ilfov și Sud – Est*. București: Editura Expert.
- Știri ONG. (2020). Deja 28 de ONG-uri adună donații pentru combaterea efectelor COVID19 prin platforma RoHelp.ro, dezvoltată gratuit de voluntarii Code for Romania Task Force, Știri ONG, 14.04.2020. Disponibil la <https://www.stiri.org/ong/civic-si-campanii/deja-28-de-ong-uri-aduna-donatii-pentru-combaterea-efectelor-covid19-prin-platforma-rohelp-pro-dezvoltata-gratuit-de-voluntarii-code-for-romania-task-force>
- Știri ONG. (2021). În stare să #ajut: cum au susținut ONG-urile #ÎnStareDeBine comunitățile și grupurile vulnerabile în criza coronavirus în 2020, 25 ianuarie 2021. Disponibil la <https://www.stiri.org/finantari-si-csr/articol/in-stare-sa-ajut-cum-au-sustinut-ong-urile-instaredebine-comunitatile-si-grupurile-vulnerabile-in-crisa-coronavirus-in-2020>
- Stolfova, A., & Fajfrlikova, P. (2019). Development of employees' evaluation and motivation systems in Czech NGO. *International Journal of Public Sector Performance Management, 5*(1), 26-45.
- Taylor-Gooby, P. (2006). Social and public policy: reflexive individualization and regulatory governance. *Risk in social science, 271-287*.
- Teach for Romania. (n.d.). Ce facem? Disponibil la <https://teachforromania.org/ce-facem/>
- Tocqueville, A. de. (1835). *De la démocratie en Amérique*, Paris: C.Goselin.
- Todorova, E. (2002). Transforming Post-Communist Countries' Welfare System: The Role of the State and the Civil Society. *Социологически проблеми, 34*(Special), 185-195.
- Toepler, S. (2000). From Communism to civil society? The arts and the nonprofit sector in Central and Eastern Europe. *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society, 30*(1), 7-18.
- Toepler, S., & Salamon, L. M. (2003). NGO development in Central and Eastern Europe: An empirical overview. *East European Quarterly, 37*(3), 365.
- Trott, V. (2022). The virtual clubhouse: Australian women's cycling and digital counterpublics. *Feminist Media Studies, 1-17*. doi:10.1080/14680777.2022.2149602
- UNESCO. (2021). Global Education Monitoring Report 2021/2: Non-state actors in education: Who chooses? Who loses? Paris, UNESCO. Disponibil la <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379875>
- UNHCR. (2023). Regional Refugee Response Plan. Romania Chapter. January-December 2023. Disponibil la <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/99187>
- United Nations (UN) (2024). Civil Society, accesat pe 2.02.2024 la <https://www.un.org/en/civil-society/page/about-us>.

United Nations. (2018). *Satellite Account on Non-profit and Related Institutions and Volunteer Work*, Studies in Methods Series F, No. 91, Rev. 1 (ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/91/Rev.1), https://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/docs/UN_TSE_HB_FNL_web.pdf, New York: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division.

USAID. (2021). *Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index. Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia. 24th Edition.*

Usher, A., & Williams, J. (2022). Losing Ground: Romanian Higher Education Since 2006 in Comparative Perspective. In A. Curaj, J. Salmi, C. M. Hâj (Eds.), *Higher Education in Romania: Overcoming Challenges and Embracing Opportunities* (pp. 211-230). Springer International Publishing.

Vakil, A. C. (1997). Confronting the classification problem: Toward a taxonomy of NGOs. *World development*, 25(12), 2057-2070.

Vameșu, A. (2021). *Barometrul economiei sociale din România 2021*, București: Fundația Alături de Voi România.

Vameșu, A. (2022). *Barometrul economiei sociale din România 2022*, București: Fundația Alături de Voi România.

Vameșu, A. (coord.) (2021). *Barometrul Accesului la Finanțare al Întreprinderilor Sociale din România*, București: Fundația Alături de Voi România.

Vameșu, A., Barna, C., & Opincaru, I. (2018). From public ownership back to commons. Lessons learnt from the Romanian experience in the forest sector. In P. Bance (Ed.), *Providing public goods and commons. Towards coproduction and new forms of governance for a revival of public action* (Vol. 1, pp. 55–74). CIRIEC - Université de Liège.

van Ingen, E., & Wilson, J. (2017). I volunteer, therefore I am? Factors affecting volunteer role identity. *Nonprofit and voluntary sector quarterly*, 46(1), 29-46.

Vandor, P., Traxler, N., Millner, R., & Meyer, M., eds. (2017). *Civil society in Central and Eastern Europe: Challenges and opportunities*. Vienna: Erste Stiftung.

Vlăsceanu, M. (1996) Sectorul non-profit. Contexte, organizare, conducere. Editura Paideia, București, 1996.

Vlăsceanu, M., (2010) *Economie socială și antreprenariat: o analiză a sectorului nonprofit*, Iași: Polirom.

Voicu, B. (2002). Rapoarte ale dezvoltării, pp. 700 în Luana Miruna Pop, ed., *Dicționar de politici sociale*, Editura Expert, București.

Voicu, B. (2005). *Penuria pseudo-modernă a postcomunismului românesc*. Iași: Editura Expert Projects.

Voicu, B. (2008). Social values, working time and the future of society, p. 141-158 în Otto Neumaier, Gottfried Schweiger, Clemens Sedmak, eds., *Perspectives on Work : Problems, Insights, Challenges*, Munster, Hamburg, London: LIT Publisher Group.

Voicu, B. (2010). Capital social în România începutului de mileniu. *Iași: Lumen*.

Voicu, B. (2010). *Capital social în România începutului de Mileniu: Drumeț în țara celor fără de prieteni?*, Iași: Lumen.

Voicu, B. (2019). Politici sociale postmoderne în România: Între nevoie și schimbările așteptate ale sistemului de furnizare a bunăstării. *Sociologie Românească*, 17(2), 9-36. <https://doi.org/10.33788/sr.17.2.1>

Voicu, B. (2020) Capacitatea de a coopera. Asociaționismul în România, azi și acum 30 de ani, pp. 54-60 în Voicu, B., Rusu, H., Tufiș, C. (editori). *Atlasul valorilor sociale: România la 100 de ani*. Cluj: Presa Universitară Clujeană.

- Voicu, B. (2022). Changes in work values under the influence of international migration pp. 322-335 in Ruud Luickx, Inge Sieben, Tim Reeskens, eds., *Reflections on European Values*, Brill.
- Voicu, B. (2023). Dincolo de prejudecata tradiționalistă: satisfacția cu viața și convergența țărilor Uniunii Europene, pp. 213-235 în Zamfir, Cătălin, Cace, Sorin, Precupețu, Iuliana, Stănescu, Simona. (Eds.). *Studii de calitate vieții și politici sociale. În onoarea profesorului Ioan MĂRGINEAN*. București: Pro Universitaria.
- Voicu, B., & Șerban, M. (2012). Immigrant involvement in voluntary associations in Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(10), 1569-1587.
- Voicu, B., & Voicu, M. (2009). Volunteers and volunteering in Central and Eastern Europe. *Sociologia*, 41(6), 539-563.
- Voicu, B., Andersen, Ș, Țălнар-Naghi, D. (2021). *Sectorul non-profit românesc: date existente, infrastructura de colectare, utilizarea datelor și posibile soluții de eficientizare*, București: RQSA & FDSC.
- Voicu, B., Bădescu, G., Tufiș, C., Voicu, O. (2021) *Cercetare privind percepțiile populației din România cu privire la ONG-urile de advocacy, guvernantă și drepturile omului*, implementată de Centrul pentru Inovare Publică cu sprijinul financiar al Open Society Foundation.
<https://www.inovarepublica.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/perceptii-ONG-PGDO-2021.pdf>
- Voicu, B., Deliu, A., Glăvan, E., Neguț, A., Țălнар-Naghi, D., Vasile, M. (2024). *Societatea azi: ce ne-a relevat pandemia Covid-19. Munca de acasă, imigranții, participarea în asociații sportive. Raport de cercetare*. București: ICCV. ISBN: 978-973-0-39834-2. <http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.12529.70244>
- Voicu, B., Rusu, H., Tufiș, C. (eds). (2020). *Atlasul valorilor sociale: România la 100 de ani*. Cluj: Presa Universitară Clujeană.
- Voicu, B., Voicu, O. (2022), *Public Opinion Barometer, 1995-2004 pooled dataset*, <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/N1LLNU>, Harvard Dataverse, V1
- Voicu, M., & Voicu, B. (2003). Volunteering in Romania: a rare avis, pp. 143-159 în Paul Dekker și Loek Halman (coordonatori) –*The values of volunteering: Cross-cultural perspectives*. Boston, MA: Springer US.
- Vollebergh, A., de Koning, A., & Marchesi, M. (2021). Intimate states: Techniques and entanglements of governing through community in Europe. *Current Anthropology*, 62(6), 741-770.
- von Hippel T. (2010) Nonprofit organizations in Germany. Pp. 197-227 in Hopt KJ, Von Hippel T, eds. *Comparative Corporate Governance of Non-Profit Organizations*. International Corporate Law and Financial Market Regulation. Cambridge University Press.
- Wallace, C., Pichler, F., & Haerpfer, C. (2012). Changing Patterns of Civil Society in Europe and America 1995-2005: Is Eastern Europe Different? *East European Politics and Societies*, 26(1), 3-19.
- Weller, B. E., Bowen, N. K., & Faubert, S. J. (2020). Latent Class Analysis: A Guide to Best Practice. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 46(4), 287-311. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798420930932>
- Welzel, C., Inglehart, R. and Deutsch, F. (2005) Social capital, voluntary associations and collective action: which aspects of social capital have the greatest "civic" payoff?, *Journal of Civil Society*, 1(2): 121-146.
- Werker, E., & Ahmed, F. Z. (2008). What do nongovernmental organizations do?. *Journal of economic perspectives*, 22(2), 73-92.
- Wilson, J. (2000). Volunteering. *Annual review of sociology*, 26(1), 215-240.
- Wilson, J. (2012). Volunteerism research: A review essay. *Nonprofit and voluntary sector quarterly*, 41(2), 176-212.
- Wilson, J., & Musick, M. (1999). The effects of volunteering on the volunteer. *Law and Contemp. Probs.*, 62, 141.
- Wolch, J.(1990) *Building the Shadow State*. Foundation Center, New York.

Woolcock, M. (1998). Social capital and economic development: Toward a theoretical synthesis and policy framework. *Theory and society*, 27(2), 151-208.

World Bank. (2020). Rapid Assessment of Romanian CSO in the Context of COVID-19. Disponibil la <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/374111602685815317/pdf/Rapid-Assessment-of-Romanian-CSO-in-the-Context-of-COVID-19.pdf>

Xu, A. J., Loi, R., & Ngo, H. Y. (2016). Ethical leadership behavior and employee justice perceptions: The mediating role of trust in organization. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 134, 493-504.

Yu, S., & McLaughlin, D. A. (2013). Program evaluation and impact assessment in international non-governmental organizations (INGOs): Exploring roles, benefits, and challenges. *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research*, 4(2), 14.

Zapf, W. (2000). Social reporting in the 1970s and in the 1990s. *Social Indicators Research*, 51, 1-15.

ROMANIA

2024

THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR
PROFILE, TRENDS, CHALLENGES



Civil
Society
Development
Foundation