

Inquiring the promotion of the MDGs in Romania. A discussion with FOND



Since 2007, the Romanian NDGD platform (FOND) is actively involved in increasing the capacity of member civil society organizations in implementing, advocating and monitoring projects and programs in the field of international development and humanitarian aid. As a major actor in the field, a strategic partner of the Romanian Ministry of

Foreign Affairs, FOND has contributed to the promotion of MDGs and enhanced the role of Romania as a new ODA donor country at a local and regional level.

Interviewing **Ms Adela Rusu**, the Coordinator of the **FOND** platform, the Romanian NDGO platform which offers support to NGO's working and/or willing to implement projects in the fields of development and cooperation.

Alexandra: Adela, what was the role of FOND in promoting the MDGs at national level? Could you summarize the main activities in this regard and sum up their impact?

Adela: The Romanian NGDO Platform, which currently has 36 NGOs active in development cooperation, development education and humanitarian aid, has as main role representing its members and very importantly, acts as a support center. It provides the members (for their projects and activities) relevant information and policy briefs on the global agenda, for example on issues such as development effectiveness and the Millennium Development Goals, and more recently on the post-2015 agenda. More specifically, the platform was involved in awareness raising campaign promoting the Global Call for Action against Poverty' campaign "Stand Up and Take Action" (2008-2009), focused on achieving MDG1 on extreme poverty and supported different campaigns on MGDs implemented by members in recent years. Recently, the platform has taken the role of facilitating national debates on the MDGs agenda by organizing since 2010 an annual event for the national development community - The Romanian Development Camp, with support from the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (as national coordinator of development cooperation) and UNDP - Bratislava Regional Center. The last edition of RDC hosted a debate on the new post-2015 agenda and provided input from the participants for the national position on this important issue.



So, FOND has been mostly involved in raising awareness and facilitating debates on the MDGs and post-2015 agenda, which is very much needed in the Romanian context as development cooperation is not very visible in the public space.

Alexandra: One of the main objectives of FOND is the maintenance of an active implication of the Romanian CS organizations in the field of international development and humanitarian aid. How does FOND seek to stimulate the activity of Romanian NGOs in the field, and the coherence and efficiency of their efforts? How does FOND connect its members to European and global debates in this field and support their active engagement in global discussions?

Adela: Besides the activities mentioned previously, FOND provides capacity consolidation tailor-made for the needs of the members by organizing trainings and workshops (project proposal writing, advocacy, campaigning, different policy issues: Policy Coherence for Development, the new multiannual EU budget and its effects for the NGDO sector, European Year for Development,

Sustainable Development Goals ...) and facilitating the Working Groups of the platform (Policy/Advocacy, Development Education, Humanitarian Aid) by fostering sharing lessons learnt and good practices among the members. For instance, in November we organized a workshop on effective campaigning tools relevant for the Romanian context, as to better prepare the members who will be engaged in promoting the European Year for Development (which will be celebrated in 2015).

FOND connects its members with the regional and international context in two ways: It provides a direct connection with potential partners from Romania's ODA priority countries, by organizing NGO events to support networking, study visits and project writing, such as: The Black Sea NGO Forum (organized since 2008), The Romania-R. Moldova NGO Forum (2010, 2011) which later developed in the Mobility Fund for Experts from Romania and R. Moldova (2013, 2014). This year's edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum will take place in early December (8-10) in Kiev.



In addition, FOND is an active member of The European Confederation of NGOs in Development and Relief (CONCORD) and the International Forum of National NGOs Platform, as well as a partner in two European projects with other similar platforms from the European Union. More recently, FOND has been engaged with the Beyond 2015 campaign by taking part in the European Task Force of this initiative. These connections provide the members with updated and digested information on the development debates at the European and global level and networking opportunities (identifying partners, resource persons, relevant good practices...) and also the opportunity to promote the members' interest and priorities at the European level. It brings visibility to FOND and its members. Since this year, FOND even has a representative elected in CONCORD Board.

Alexandra: What could be the contribution of the Romanian NGOs in the overall debate that will lead to the new international development agenda?

Adela: The Romanian NGOs provide relevant input on what the priorities should be for the new agenda, based on their experience of promoting the MGDs and on the needs of the beneficiaries of their projects. Their contribution has been emphasized during the last edition of the Romanian Camp VII (which I have already mentioned above) and also is being used as valuable input for the debates at the regional level through our involvement in CONCORD (Beyond 2015 - European Task Force).

Alexandra: What kind of new synergies, partnerships and policies do you envisage for FOND in the near future in order to address the new SDGs both at national and regional level?

Adela: FOND will continue strengthening its current partnerships at national level (with the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant national stakeholders, such as the Parliament) and at European level (CONCORD and the European institutions, especially the European Parliament). At the international level, we're exploring the opportunity to promote again global campaigns such as Action/2015, initiated by the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP). And of course, we are open to other partnership proposals from other NGOs or different actors interested in this issue.