



ROMANIAN DEVELOPMENT CAMP

MDGs UNDER FOCUS: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE RE-EMERGING DONORS

CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The third edition of the Romanian Development Camp brought together more than 100 individuals from various countries and walks of life: development practitioners, scholars, members of two national parliaments, private companies, local authorities from Romania and Republic of Moldova, development educators, volunteers. The debates over the three days of this Development Camp resulted in a list of strategic contributions and recommendations.

I. The Romanian policy for international development

1. The Romanian strategy for international development has been created in 2006 and it has been a helpful guide for Romania's first steps as a re/emerging donor. Considerable progress has been made in the last years in the field of development education and development co-operation. The great majority of the RDC participants showed that the strategy needs to be revisited so that actions feed into policy objectives, rather than ad-hoc goals.
2. Such strategy should be based on inputs coming from all possible stakeholders: the civil society, the Government, the national Parliament, the private sector, the local authorities, academia, representatives of mass-media, etc. Ideally, public funding should be allocated for this wide-ranging effort.
3. The revisited strategy should include a results-oriented approach, with embedded mechanisms for evaluation mechanisms, answering a world wide concern of donors on aid effectiveness. The strategy should reflect the changes in the Lisbon Treaty, which place the eradication of poverty as a core issue of the European foreign policy.

II. Operationalizing and capitalizing on Romania's 'capital of sympathy' in the developing countries

4. At the time being, Romania's priority countries for development aid are located in its close neighborhood. The RDC participants acknowledged that MFA had a good starting strategy in limiting their approach to countries where Romania has an understanding and cultural sensitiveness towards beneficiaries, thus allowing the MFA to develop its capacity to deliver aid efficiently. The RDC participants wish for these relations to be strengthened.
5. At the same, Romania should start building its capacities for extending the list of partner countries, having in mind that from 2011 Romania will start contributing to the European Development Fund whose main beneficiaries are the ACP countries.



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6. In relation to this, one important starting point can be the ‘capital of sympathy’ that Romania has in the developing countries via the former students who studied in Romania. It has been noticed that in various countries, Romania’s former students are now in key positions and keen to reconnect with Romania and to do cross-sectoral business.
7. Taking into consideration all these complex aspects, RDC participants consider that would be a strategic mistake not to start already connecting and bridging with beneficiaries from ACP countries.
8. A study of the actual extent of Romania’s ‘capital of sympathy’ and a broad debate, in Romania and internationally, with representatives of Romanian embassies and honorary consuls in developing countries, former students in Romania and their associations on how such ‘capital’ can be transformed into mutually beneficial development relations should be performed and acted upon.

III. The role of the national Parliament

9. The RDC participants urged the national parliaments to be more involved in the formulation and scrutiny of development policies. In what Romania is concerned the RDC participants commended the Senate’s Health Committee for having created a sub-committee on Population and Development and urge the creation of a Development Co-operation sub-committee in the Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee.
10. Such sub-committee would analyze Romania’s multi-lateral and bi-lateral ODA contributions and contribute to the profiling of Romania’s development policy, by bringing the global concerns closer to the various constituencies of its Members.
11. The Parliament should be supported in strengthening its capacity in what the analysis of the complex development issues are concerned, by creating a strategic alliance with the national co-coordinator of the development policy and the civil society.

IV. A public pedagogy for international development

12. The RDC participants showed that the ‘returns on investment’ for the development policies are much higher in those donor countries where the general public is aware and ready for the challenges and opportunities that come with a globalized world. They urge all stakeholders to contribute to this public pedagogy:
 - a. The academia and the civil society should work together to shape the scope and ethical boundaries of development frameworks;
 - b. The members of the Parliament are encouraged to include the global issues on their political agendas;
 - c. The Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is encouraged to build upon its coordination role on development policies and to find innovative ways to bridge the civil society, the academia, the business and the decision makers to shape and support a Romanian aid oriented to results.



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13. The RDC participants noted FOND's increasing efforts in this field. From 2008 to the time being FOND members have invested at least 800.000 EUR in development education activities. Only a small fraction of these resources are of Romanian origin, while the bulk of them are originated with the European Commission. Having in mind the unsolved co-financing issue, the great majority of these NGOs intend to or have already discontinued their efforts to secure such funding from the European Commission, with grave consequences for the future.
14. The RDC participants notice that the 'political obligation' (the mandatory policy imposed by the EU) reason for development assistance is over-emphasized in Romania's discourse of international development. While the role of the European Union needs to be acknowledged the RDC participants also encourage Romania's public servants and civil society to also emphasize the values that are associated to development cooperation, as well as the mutual benefits that Romania's action in this field can bring to its citizens.

V. Urgent pending issues on Romanian ODA agenda

15. In view of Romanian participation to the MDG Summit, RDC participants strongly encourage the MFA to open a dialogue and to prepare Romanian position through cross-sectoral consultations. FOND, as the strategic partner of MFA, is expressing its availability and interest to contribute to the debate.
16. RDC participants sent a strong message to MFA concerning the Romanian delegation to the MDG Summit and urge the MFA to consider civil society representatives as members of the official delegation.
17. RDC participants encouraged MFA to open consultations with civil society representatives to prepare Romania's position on the establishment of European Volunteer Corp.

VI. Professionals for international development

18. The efforts of professionalizing Romania's development workers, by introducing MA-level development studies are commendable and raise new expectations. All institutions involved in formulating and implementing development projects, and in particular the national co-ordinator of the development policy, are called to consider and build on this new step ahead.
19. The RDC brought successfully together the public sector, NGOs, academia, business and media. This is a momentum on which RDC participants strongly encourage MFA to build upon and to create a Task Force formed of cross-sectoral development experts, which would act as a strategic consultation structure for specific ODA policies oriented to results.