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**Civic Education Outreach
Project for Romania**

**International Foundation for
Electoral Systems**

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A. Introduction

Civic education is a continuous process of understanding a country's political, social, and economic environment and how this environment affects each member of society. In Romania, it is necessary to educate citizens regarding the problems they face, possible solutions, and the consequences of democratic action. It is only through this process of learning, analysis, and concentrated action that one can achieve a democratic society.

Forty-five years of Romanian communism exacerbated by relative national isolation have contributed to a severe deterioration in people's perceptions of their nation's political, economic, and civic realities and government indoctrination. Government control over virtually all forms of information dissemination, has denied Romanians opposing viewpoints on vital issues, which is a necessary condition for learning how to decide what may be beneficial or harmful, right or wrong, for oneself, one's family or one's community. This condition of limited access to information most seriously affects those in the Romanian countryside where the majority of the population lives. The IFES civic education program will provide objective information regarding the political, social and economic dimensions of democracy throughout Romania. Access to such information is required for the citizens of Romania to become full participants in the democratic process.

B. Project Goals

The following goals of the Civic Education Outreach for Romania Project have been developed by IFES:

1. To inform Romanian citizens about the fundamental concepts of democracy.
2. To educate citizens about the rights and responsibilities of individuals in a democracy.
3. To inform Romanians about constitutional and election issues and means of participating in the democratic system.
4. To establish an in-country sustainable civic education program to serve as a resource to encourage and strengthen the democratic movement in Romania.

C. Program Element: Civic Education Resource Center

1. Background and Description

Given the civic education needs and the scarcity of resources

in Romania, financial and technical assistance from IFES is necessary to establish a Civic Education Resource Center. This center will serve as a permanent resource for the development and implementation of a comprehensive civic education program.

2. Program Objectives

The Civic Education Resource Center will pursue the following program objectives:

- a. To establish the human and technical resources to develop, adapt, and produce civic education materials;
- b. To develop and implement a comprehensive and focused civic education program to instruct a primary group of 30 individuals to teach a core curriculum on the principles and values of democracy.
- c. To serve as a clearinghouse for civic education programs in Romania;
- d. To organize civic education workshops for individuals involved with the institutions vital to democracy.
- e. To provide voter education on specific issues related to elections and voting.
- f. To provide assistance for the organization of civic activities that promote a practical understanding of democratic principles.
- g. To serve as a sustainable resource for the coordination and implementation of future civic education program activities.

E. Implementation of Program Objectives

Program Objective 1: To establish the human and technical resources to develop, adapt and produce civic education materials

a. Background

A civic education program in Romania must address the needs of a broad spectrum of individuals that includes both the illiterate and university students, the ethnic majority and minorities, young people and adults, and men and women. An effective civic education program must explore the current political, social, and economic environment of Romania in order to reach an understanding among the citizenry as to the nature and origin of democracy and its consequences in the Romanian context.

b. Program Description

The Civic Education Resource Center will develop original materials and adapt existing materials that address the fundamental principles of democracy and explain the technical issues surrounding the Romanian election process. The Civic Education Resource Center will coordinate and fund the development, adaptation, and distribution of the civic education materials needed to implement this program.

The development and production of civic education messages is critical to the program since the overall effectiveness will depend on the content and delivery of these messages. The Center will develop original materials and adapt and translate into Romanian existing appropriate civic education materials as well as texts developed in other countries for this purpose.

Program Objective 2: To develop and implement a comprehensive and focused civic education training program to instruct a core group of 30 individuals to become civic education instructors.

a. Background

The key to successful implementation of any viable and sustainable civic education program is the concentrated effort of individuals who can teach and train other individuals. This program objective provides for a network that can spread a message quickly, but more importantly establishes a local talent pool for civic education instruction. A core group of motivated individuals trained to teach a basic curriculum on democracy will become a valuable resource to civic organizations, and individuals for learning about democracy and the democratic process.

b. Program Description

Through the daily activities of the Civic Education Resource Center, Romanian citizens, with the assistance of IFES, will select two groups of fifteen Romanians to become Civic Educators. One group will be selected and trained in the first half of the project year and the second group will be selected and trained in the latter half of the project year.

The Civic Educators will participate in an intensive two-week training program that teaches a standard civic education curriculum. The two-week training program will present a core civic education curriculum developed by a working group and also will instruct the Civic Educators on the methods of presentation of the materials to others. The initial training will be followed up with one day seminars at least once a month for additional training on specific topics related to election issues and current issues facing the Romanian people.

c. Core Curriculum

The core curriculum for training the Civic Educators will be developed by a curriculum working group of civic education experts and Romanian citizens. This group will determine the exact needs and presentation form of the core curriculum. The following is an sample framework that the working group will consider for curriculum topics:

1. Current, political, economic, and cultural considerations
2. The values and institutions of democratic society
 - Reaching goals through democratic institutions
 - Individual responsibilities inherent in a democratic system
3. Essential elements of democratic governments
 - Free, fair and competitive elections
 - Role of the separation of powers among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches
 - Respect for rule of law
4. Salutory role of political parties in the democratic process
5. Vital role of an independent press in the democratic process
6. The economic consequences of democratic transition
 - Transitional trauma
 - Free market versus centralized economy
 - Privatization

d. Training Methodology

The Civic Educators and Civic Education Assistants program is based on the "training of trainers" methodology. The first program year of the Resource Center provides for two cycles of training, each resulting in a core group of fifteen trained individuals with the expressed responsibility to subsequently train an additional ten individuals each in the methods of civic education instruction.

A core group of fifteen students to participate in initial training is based on a level one trainer/trainee ratio of one instructor per fifteen students. The class size is kept to a level that allows maximum learning by the trainees and individual attention by the trainers.

The core curriculum developed by civic education experts, the curriculum working group and IFES will be taught over a two-week period. Training will also include time for instruction on the methods of presenting the subject matter which include:

- Oral Presentations
- Exercises and group simulations
- Case studies
- Group discussions
- Video and audio presentations

After completion of training, the Civic Educators and Civic Education Assistants will work with civic organizations and groups of individuals to organize and conduct civic education seminars and workshops based on the core curriculum. Noting time constraints and voluntary participation, these seminars and workshops will be conducted as half-day and full-day sessions covering one to two topics of the curriculum. The goal is to conduct the seminars and workshops on a regular basis to cover the entire curriculum.

This multiplier methodology will provide at least 300 civic education instructors by the end of the first year (30 Civic Educators each with ten Civic Education Assistants). These 300 Civic Education Assistants will also bear the responsibility of training 10 people each. The end result will produce a group of 30 Civic Education Instructors, 300 Civic Education Assistants and 3,000 Civic Education Trainees).

This multiplier methodology will establish an essential network of civic educators throughout the country that any number of other organizations can use in their civic education efforts. This network will develop the potential of becoming a professional association of civic educators that will continue to expand and

spread civic education instruction. By the second program year of the Resource Center the goal is to double the number of Civic Educators to train a core group every three months.

e. Profile of Civic Educators and Civic Education Assistants

It is important to carefully select the individuals to receive the intensive civic education instruction since these individuals must be relied upon to instruct others. The objective of this program is the development of a group of motivated individuals well-versed in civic education for democracy to be lasting resources for civic education instruction. The foundation of the civic education instruction program will be a core group of individuals known as Civic Educators. The Civic Educators will be selected on a competitive basis from throughout the country. This core group should consist of individuals who are university educated, are respected by their community, demonstrate leadership skills, and preferably have experience in teaching.

In return for a scholarship to participate in the civic education training institute and follow-up activities, the Civic Educators will be required to develop a lesson plan to teach the core curriculum to at least ten students who will become Civic Education Assistants. The Resource Center will be directly involved with the training at the first two levels by supplying teaching materials and organizational support.

Civic Education Assistants should be individuals with characteristics reflecting those of the Civic Educators. These individuals may be younger, but should also be educated and adept at conveying a message. The Assistants will work with the Civic Educators in teaching seminars and workshops covering the core curriculum.

Program Objective 3: To serve as a clearinghouse for civic education programs in Romania

a. Background

Currently, there is a large number of small civic groups that have their own independent programs for citizens' education. Lack of coordination has led in several instances to duplication of effort, waste of time and resources, and ultimately to frustration. One example in point is the praiseworthy effort by two such small groups, Romanian Independent Society for Human Rights in Bucharest, and Timisoara Society in Timisoara, to translate and publish all charters and documents passed by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights since 1948. Unfortunately, these groups did not know about each other's activities and therefore duplicated rather than shared in the effort.

b. Program Description

By promoting the Civic Education Resource Center as a clearinghouse which will be open to civic groups that are willing to cooperate in a joint effort to promote the understanding of democratic principles, a better coordination of programs and schedules will be possible by knowing which groups are sponsoring what activities. This will enable these organizations to maximize efforts while avoiding duplication. The Center will also offer limited office support to non-partisan organizations working to promote democratic principles.

Program Objective 4: To organize civic education workshops for individuals involved with the institutions crucial to the development of democracy.

a. Program Description

The Resource Center will organize civic education workshops targeted at individuals in professions vital to strengthening the democratic process.

Program Objective 5: To provide voter education on specific issues related to elections and voting.

a. Program Description

Voter education and training for special election activities will be a top priority of the Civic Education Resource Center. The Civic Educators will receive training specifically involving the election process during follow-up seminars. This training will allow the Civic Educators to incorporate general voter education into the curricula.

b. Topics

- 1) Registering to vote
- 2) Voting procedures
- 3) Poll watching
- 4) Importance of peaceful dialogue during the campaign period
- 5) Vital role of political parties in the democratic process

Program Objective 6: To provide assistance for the organization of civic activities that promote a better understanding of democratic principles.

a. Program Description

Civic education is an on-going process that addresses the political, social, and economic concerns of individuals. It is necessary to use a wide variety of mechanisms to convey the many aspects of democracy. The Civic Education Resource Center will assist cooperating organizations with the implementation of

activities that translate the democratic ideas that are analyzed in the core curriculum of the Resource Center into concrete action.

b. Activities

1. Public Fora. This activity permits public officials and candidates for public office to discuss before an audience issues and problems of concern to the electorate. The Resource Center will assist in organizing two fora focusing on electoral issues and a third forum which will enable public officials in the Ministry of Education and other public entities to meet with representatives of civic organizations and the public to discuss issues of mutual concern.

2. Structured Cultural Events. The Resource Center will provide technical and material assistance with the organization of cultural events that promote democratic exchanges. These events are designed to allow civic education volunteers to invite members of the public to attend activities consistent with the general theme of civic education. They may be structured around a concert for young people, for example, or around a play or a video, in which case the show is followed by a discussion. Artistic, cultural and scientific personalities would serve as moderators. One example is a video presentation of political and parliamentary life in a democratic country, followed by questions from the audience moderated by a Romanian or foreign scholar.

3. Exhibitions. The Resource Center will also provide assistance in the planning and organization of fixed or mobile exhibitions of visual materials that demonstrate or explain an important idea or activity of a democratic society. One exhibit will consist of the entire voting process illustrated with pictures and a brief message. The Resource Center's working group on civic education curriculum will develop two other exhibition that will help the Romanian people better understand the individual's role in a democracy. These exhibition will be organized in conjunction with a structured cultural event in order to maximize its effectiveness in reaching a large audience.

Program Objective 7. To serve as a sustainable resource for the coordination and implementation of future civic education programs.

a. Program Description

The Civic Education Resource Center will offer support to foster research and development of new civic education programs to meet the changing educational needs of a civic society in the early stages of evolution. Projects to be developed beyond this current project year will include, but not be limited to, comprehensive training of additional Civic Educators and Civic Education

Assistants, development of civic education manuals and publications for the adult population, development of a course in civics for introduction into elementary and secondary schools.

It is likely that once the potential and benefit of the Civic Education Resource Center is realized it will become an invaluable vehicle for a variety of worthy civic education efforts. This will also serve to better facilitate cooperation among the various organizations with a common goal of a democratic society.