



Over 80 new houses for Romanians living in the county of Neamt

Helping Housing Efforts In Romania

Challenge

Over the past 15 years, housing has become a critical issue in Romania. Statistics show that the size of apartments and houses in Romania are quite small compared to other European countries, and that many families are forced to live together for extended periods of time. It is not uncommon for children well into their 20's and 30's to remain in their parents' home due to the difficulty in finding affordable housing.



Photo: GRASP/Paula Talaba

The new Housing Guide and plans for Neamt county.

The program makes people realize that besides local governments there are other places where they can look for advice. Above all, information given out through a center such as ours is specialized, cheaper and more flexible.

- Maria Talpă, Femina 2000 Association President

Results

This partnership to provide housing for citizens, between local government and civil society organizations, will ensure that at least 10-12 clients per day will be provided with critical information about housing - 40% of them meeting extensively with a consultant. Already 160 people have begun to prepare the paperwork with the intention to build or to buy a house, with 80 of them expected to live in their dream house by the fall of 2004.

Initiative

USAID addressed this problem by providing a grant to the Femina 2000 Association in order to establish a consulting center called "My House - From Dream to Reality." The center provides information for prospective homeowners on all aspects of building private homes including financing, legislation, house models, contractors, and materials suppliers.

The Femina 2000 Association used the grant to organize and equip the center, as well as to join forces with five banks, 65 construction companies, eight real estate companies, and the Chamber of Commerce and housing industry of Neamt County, in offering counseling services on housing issues. This makes implementation of the program easier at all stages, from designing and funding the project, to obtaining permits and putting up the building.

The grant was also used to produce and distribute the Housing Guide, a comprehensive publication for citizens interested in building a house. This resource is key to inform members of the Neamt community that building a house is possible, and encourages them to use consultancy services which offer alternatives for different price ranges, as well as a network of banks, contractors, and real estate agencies to "customize" housing to meet financial needs.

Case Study



United States Agency for International Development
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