



Community Centers Bring Community Services

In Fintinele, Romania, the situation was discouraging for children and teenagers, with no community centers or youth activities for diversion and very few job opportunities. Residents were also concerned about several other issues in their community, including safety, alcoholism, violence, anti-social behavior and theft. Working with local partners, USAID implemented a project to renovate and endow community centers and activity clubs, train citizens to become facilitators in community service, and establish a three-year community safety strategy. Many teens now volunteer at the centers, which offer services including job training, business assistance, help accessing social services, domestic violence support groups, and counseling in domestic violence, family planning and alcoholism. “We see these centers as rocket launchers for future projects implemented in our community,” said Vice Mayor Dumitru Sturza.



Photo: Paula Talaba

Before

The community center in the village of Fintinele was an unused, cluttered space before residents worked with USAID to renovate the building and establish a vibrant meeting place for the community.

After

Opened in June 2004, the Fintinele Community Center has trained teachers, doctors and counselors to identify victims of abuse and help them cope with their problems. Children visit the center to participate in the arts and crafts class—one of 17 activities now offered.



Photo: Paula Talaba

Before and After