



SUCCESS STORY

Citizens Renovate Community Center

Residents find their potential to create change



Children of Dobrusa Township, Moldova, welcome guests in front of the renovated community center.

“Due to this community project we learned that together we can create real change that benefits everyone,” said Victor Grosu, Mayor of Dobrusa Township.

Telling Our Story
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In 1969, the small village of Dobrusa, Moldova opened its first-ever community center to promote civic activities, foster cultural ties, and provide a meeting space. Thirty years later, weather and time had taken its toll on the building: the roof was leaking, doors and windows were broken or stolen, and the auditorium was in decay. The center closed its doors in 2000. Because there were no alternate facilities, many social and cultural events no longer took place, paralyzing a large part of community life. Public meetings would be held outdoors, creating hardships for residents, especially during the cold winters.

When Dobrusa’s residents began developing a strategic plan for social and economic development of their township with USAID, renovating the community center was their top priority. USAID made a grant of \$24,650 to the project and the community collected \$16,700.

With financial support, Dobrusa began to rebuild its community center. Residents worked together to remove dilapidated doors, windows, and floors. The interior and exterior plaster walls of the building were reconstructed with volunteer help. Women planted a small garden in the front entryway. As work progressed, the community realized the benefits of working together.

On July 21, 2006 the newly renovated Dobrusa community center opened its doors to its 1,670 village residents. The villagers were happy — they now had a place to meet and hold civic, social, cultural, and sports activities.

Their work is not yet done. Empowered to create change in their community, the citizens are broadening their possibilities. A public library, farmer resource and training center, a sports club, and computer center are just some of the elements they plan to add to the center. “USAID’s help in renovating the community center was the first, but certainly not the last, step towards revitalizing the center as a civic institution,” noted Mayor Victor Grosu. Now that residents have a place to meet, the real work of strengthening the community will begin.

Photo: The Urban Institute/Cristian Murariu