

## Women4Advancement

The project “Equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making for women advancement”

Membership Support Regranting Scheme 2024 / RE-GRANTING AGREEMENT No. MASF2024-006

### 50/50 Campaign - Women in Solidarity

<b>1. Main theme</b>	Gender balance in politics and decision making
<b>Related themes</b>	Solidarity building among women
<b>2. Implementing country</b>	Romania
<b>3. Implementation level</b>	National
<b>4. Main goal and objectives of the good practice</b>	To promote women's equality in political decision-making in Romania in relation with the upcoming four Romanian and European election types in 2024  Objectives <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draft framework of the future Iceland-Romania bilateral strategy for the participation of women in the 2024</li> <li>2. Competence development</li> <li>3. Increase confidence and participation of women from different political parties at the elections in 2024</li> </ol>
<b>5. Target group/groups</b>	- women from local communities interested in local policies - women and young women members in different political parties in Romania
<b>6. Name of lead organisation/body implementing the practice</b>	Romanian Women's Lobby Association NGO, national
<b>7. Partners</b>	Kvenréttindafélag Íslands/ the Icelandic Women's Rights Association NGO, national
<b>8. Period of implementation</b>	11.05.2023 - 11.11.2023
<b>9. Funding/Financial resources and other resources</b>	Active citizens Fund for Romania, the program financed by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Grants 2014 – 2021
<b>10. Description of good practice and it's activities</b>	
After elections in 2020, there are 18.5% women in the current Romanian parliament (i.e., 18.5% women in the Chamber of Deputies and 18.4% in the Senate), occupying the 4th position of lowest representation of women in lower houses of parliament in the EU.	

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The context of the upcoming legislative elections in December 2024 is not favourable to women’s advancement: no Strategy on Gender Balance in Decision Making, a legislative framework that lacks provisions on gender-quotas and a system of sanctions for non-compliance, and hostility towards the adoption of more gender/feminist approaches to policymaking.

The 50/50 Campaign - Women in Solidarity - is innovative approach of RoWL’s Program Women in Political Decision Making. (The Program’s overall objective is to promote Parity democracy by empowering women and create a friendly environment for women’s leadership.)

The solutions identified by participants, in the last training programs and conferences, start with building solidarity between women at all levels. In consequence, the proposed activities were:

### Competence development

A Training of Trainers (ToT) on How to increase the number of women candidates in eligible positions on the electoral lists in the 2024 elections in Romania was prepared by the Romanian-Icelandic team. It consisted in a joint capacity building program for grassroots leaders of RoWL member organizations and women and youth leaders from partner political parties to support and prepare joint campaigns at local and county level during the 2024 elections.

The ToT has been conducted in Iași and involved three experts from Iceland. The topics included: the successful model “A Women’s list,” creating and delivering your message, working with the media, keys to a good policy, finding your allies, surviving politics: Hate Speech on Social Media and Suppression Techniques.

### Follow up activities

Between October and December 5, five physical workshops were organized in five different cities, all supported by participants trained during the ToT, six from the RoWL and five county political party leaders.

### Awareness-raising

Our awareness raising initiative consisted in:

- Press Conference, with the three trainers and four members of the RoWL’s team delivered strong messages about the role of women in politics, the need to change the way politics is done in Romania and the electoral law, and the need for solidarity and the promotion of solidarity among strong women in Romania for a good life for all;
- Press Release sent to media and on the RoWL webpage and the RoWL Facebook Page;
- a dedicated section on the RoWL webpage;
- Social Media Promotion on the RoWL Facebook Page.

### **11. Impact/results of monitoring and evaluation of good practice**

The clear aim of this project was well focused and planned, by the Romanian-Icelandic team, to introduce solidarity between women in their skills development program and thus contributed to a stronger commitment than ever for their active involvement in the elections in 2024.

### Competence development

- 27 women from the member organizations of the Romanian Women's Lobby, women leaders from the five main political parties who would nominate

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	<p>women and young women for the upcoming elections in 2024 and the resident representative of NDI in Romania attended the ToT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- a brainstorming for a mentoring program to support women's NGOs in Romania and women leaders of different political parties to promote women's equality in political decision-making was organized, to further discuss in the workshops</li></ul> <p><u>Follow up activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- six trainees from RoWL member organizations and five trainees from three political parties were speakers and co-organizers of the five workshops developed all over Romania (two in Transylvania, two in the South and one in Moldova)</li><li>- a total number of 164 elected women and potential women candidates for the 2024 elections participated in the workshops, developed for three (out of five) different important political parties</li><li>- five potential mentoring programs were discussed in the workshops</li></ul> <p><u>Awareness-raising</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 288 Reach of the Press Release posted on the RoWL Facebook Page during the project implementation period</li><li>- over 36,500 hits of the dedicated section on the RoWL webpage, during the project implementation period, according to traffic data provided, indicating significant interest in the project and its activities</li><li>- almost 10,000 impacts of the Promotion on the RoWL Facebook Page</li><li>- a television show produced by Iași TV Life on 24 November 2023, about:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the Icelandic model and good practices related to feminism and politics</li><li>• the Equality Party in Iceland and the change in basic assumptions at the national level</li><li>• the role of models and state policy in promoting a feminist culture of equality</li></ul></li></ul> <p><u>Other results</u></p> <p>We may consider as an unexpected positive impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- women participating in these actions gained confidence and, immediately after the ToT, asked the leadership of their political parties to move toward parity on the electoral lists and voluntarily introduce zips or quotas systems;</li></ul>
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	<p>- the excellent reception of our project development information by the general public and targeted smaller groups.</p> <p>Related to the results of the 2024 local elections, three out of the 14 women and young women involved in political parties, trainees in the ToT, have been elected as Local Councilors, and more than 20 % of women participants in our five workshops have been elected as Mayors, Local and/or county Councilors.</p>
<p><b>12. Lessons learned</b></p>	<p>This was a very strategic project, to foster partnership and solidarity between women in politics and women in NGOs, giving innovative approaches and ideas for support to get more women on the electoral lists, and help them to better present themselves in campaigns, during the four types of elections in Romania, in 2024. Thus, we had no obstacles in implementation.</p> <p>However, two (out of five) political parties, who sent participants to the ToT, did not allow them to organize a workshop for the benefit of their political party. This happened because internal issues, and power games inside the respective political parties.</p>
<p><b>13. Success factors of the practice</b></p>	<p><u>Competence development</u></p> <p>This component created a friendly socialization process for the new, young politicians, who were empowered just by being there.</p> <p>There were developed and applied different educational tools to enhance political skills, initiative-taking attitudes, communication skills and gender competences, here to mention the inspirational history of the Iceland movement “<i>From grassroots organizing to political action.</i>”</p> <p>The professional design of the training, particularly of the Practical Exercises, and their public evaluations, also contributed to the success of the ToT. For example, the exercise 'Practice media responses to a talk show'. Women from different political parties, seated at the same table (in a "talk show") with their "enemies" and "just" NGO representatives, answered the provocative questions of the person "moderating the show" carefully, without attacking the answers of their political opponents (even when the answers were totally opposite) and with respect for all the women there (youth and NGO women in their diversity). There were things on which they did not agree, because of official party policy; but there were also problems on which they reached a consensus, accepting that it is a problem that, as women, they understand in all its seriousness, and that it is time to join the efforts to solve it. The main conclusion of the exercise was that we can build solidarity between women from different political parties and women from local communities, to solve women's problems through policy development and implementation.</p>

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	<p><u>Follow up activities</u></p> <p>Invited to organize and speak in the workshops, the trainees had to put in practice the new skills and approaches, select most practical and appropriate exercises and role-play and identify solidarity issues for the participants, specific both to their work environment and political activity. At the same time, within the political party, their positions were strengthened and increased the confidence in their capacity for a political career.</p> <p><u>Awareness-raising</u></p> <p>A success factor was the excellent communication of strong and well-designed messages for the general public, in a cascade of issues related to women in decision making and complementary linked, of the three trainers and four members of the RoWL.</p>
<p><b>14. Ways in which the practice could be improved</b></p>	<p>It can be rather developed but depends on the budget. The ToT, it is deeply connected to Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming objectives, has a list of comprehensive methods and tools, and provides deep reflections after each exercise and roll-play. Budget constraints have reduced the training duration, and thus has reduces the number of exercises and possibilities for more practical work.</p> <p>We may also pay attention to the communication with political parties, particularly during their crisis, rebuilding the partnerships by approaching the new leadership of both the party and the women’s organization.</p>
<p><b>15. Advice and recommendations for those, who wish to implement this good practice</b></p>	<p>Don’t forget the importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- strengthening international partnerships and the exchange of experience between countries to promote gender equality in the political field, with impact on both partners and participants;</li> <li>- press Conference and Press Release, with clever, simple messages of different strong women, each completing what the previous said by raising another important aspect related to the need for more women and young women in politics;</li> <li>- “Solidarity,” that is a magic word;</li> <li>- finally, any training – activity with a high degree of transferability – depends on a certain budget.</li> </ul>
<p><b>16. Source of good practice, contacts, references</b></p>	<p>Romanian Women’s Lobby Association <a href="http://www.rowl.ro">www.rowl.ro</a></p>