

MEMORANDUM

Human Rights Awards 2015

The 2015 Human Rights Awards Board comprises Evghenii Goloșceapov (UNDP), Lucreția Ciurea (UN Women), Antonina Volkova (NGO “Vesta”, Comrat), Dmitrii Kuzuk (NGO „World of Equal Opportunities”, Bender), Månstråle Dahlström (Embassy of Sweden) and Anja Jahn Gunther (Embassy of Sweden). It convened in person on two occasions during November 2015 and carried out additional consultations via email.

In arriving at decisions on awards, the Board heard detailed nominations from, and consulted closely with a Technical Committee of experts comprised of Artiom Zavadoschi, Ecaterina Balan, Igor Meriacre, Petru Macovei and Aliona Marchkova. In proposing nominations to the Board, the Technical Committee had convened their own expertise, as well as relying on a number of nominations received from the public-at-large, following open invitation to nominate meritorious persons, groups or institutions.

The Board worked on the basis of a Regulation and criteria set therein, as well as through developing approaches based on the reasoning and work of previous Human Rights Award Boards.

The Board took the decisions included in this Memorandum by consensus, as follows:

I. On the basis of the information brought before it by the Technical Committee, as well as on the basis of its own deliberations and the information independently available to it, the Board took decisions in favor of awards to the persons, institutions and groups as listed below:¹

1) **Alianța INFONET**, also known as the Alliance of Community Centers for Access to Information and Training (ACCAIT), **for promoting an innovative and inclusive approach to ensuring the right of persons with disabilities to participate in elections.**

2) **„Floare de Cireș”,** a social enterprise, **for promoting the right of persons with disabilities to work and independent living.**

3) **“Inițiativa Pozitivă”,** a network of organizations for people living with HIV, **for raising public awareness and increasing visibility of people living with HIV.**

4) **Oleg Brega**, a civic activist and an independent 2014 parliamentary candidate, **for actively promoting transparency and advocating for the right to be elected independently, including for underrepresented groups.**

5) **Council on Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality**, an autonomous state institution, **for its proactive stance in and commitment to fighting discrimination and raising public awareness about equality.**

¹ *The following Human Rights Awards are made non-hierarchically and without reference to category.*

6) **Asociația Comunitară Locală “Sîngerei Noi”**, a community-based NGO from Sîngerei Noi, **for making active efforts in implementing a human-rights-based approach to community development.**

II. The justifications and detailed information for each individual award are included in the Annex below, and are to be made public as such.

III. To recognize through an Honorable Mention and associated Certificate of Recognition the work of **Nata Scobioală**, a civic activist and human rights defender, **for outstanding commitment to seeking justice for those in need, giving voice to the voiceless and humanitarian activity.**

Detailed information on Human Rights Award nominees:

1) **Alianța INFONET** (<http://www.infonet.md/>), also known as the Alliance of Community Centers for Access to Information and Training (ACCAIT), is a non-governmental organization founded in 2007 through the free consent of 47 community centers for access to information and training, who, through the lens of access to information, have highlighted the human potential of rural communities as an active promoter of community development.

In 2014–2015 **Alianța INFONET** focused on highlighting problems/impediments that did not allow people with disabilities to exercise their right to vote in the national parliamentary elections 2014 and local elections 2015 and elaborated strategies/solutions to ensure that this right was respected through implementation of two² projects aimed at promoting access of persons with disabilities to individual, independent, direct and secret vote. **Alianța INFONET** ensured that people with locomotor, visual and hearing disabilities were able to participate in the 2014 parliamentary and 2015 local elections by actively contributing to making polling stations across Moldova accessible to them. This activity included: 1) training courses and awareness raising activities on participation in voting processes for persons with disabilities³, 2) provision of a taxi lift service for persons with disabilities in Chisinau on the voting day, 3) inclusion of persons with disabilities in the list of election observers⁴ (17 persons with locomotor disabilities, 2 persons with hearing disabilities and 1 Roma person with disabilities) accredited by the Central Electoral Commission, 4) evaluation of 265 polling stations with regard to their accessibility for persons with various disabilities and inclusion of those accessible in the Accessibility Map⁵ and elaboration of the polling station map in Moldova and abroad⁶, 5) elaboration and production of 75 'inclusive ballot' (a plastic envelope with specially cut holes against each candidate's name so visually impaired people could cast their vote independently) which were disseminated among 57 polling stations selected together with the Blind Society, 6) printing of 50 copies of the Voter's Guidelines in Braille Alphabet (which were later distributed among branch offices of the Blind Society), 7) awareness raising activities among general public and politicians⁷, 8) inclusion of 2 persons with hearing disabilities in the list of election observers in the polling stations where most persons with hearing disabilities usually vote, and 9) provision of two sign language interpreters for the Central Election Commission who interpreted announcements of voting results⁸.

For the local elections that took place across Moldova in June 2015 **Alianța INFONET**, in addition to the above, also: 1) organized the Deaf Info Center for persons with hearing disabilities, 2) edited the 2015 Voter's Guidelines in Braille Alphabet, 3) carried out a training course on how to organize live broadcasts in sign language for TV cameramen, and 3) elaborated the information package "Accessibility Standards" which was disseminated among 932 territorial-administrative units (localities) of Moldova.

² <http://www.infonet.md/?p=937> and <http://www.infonet.md/?p=1004>

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTQmqJVGiPE&feature=youtu.be>

⁴ <http://www.cec.md/files/files/Alegeri%20Parlamentare%2030%20noiembrie%202014/Observatori/nationali/MOTIVATIE.pdf>

⁵ <http://motivatie.md/harta-accesibilitate/>

⁶ <http://www.cicde.md/index.php?pag=news&id=1063&rid=807&l=ro>

⁷ <http://www.press-release.md/?go=pr&n=61>

⁸ <http://trm.md/ro/electorala-2014/premiera-la-alegeri-cec-asigura-traducerea-in-limbaj-mimico-gestual/>

By carrying out the above activities, **Alianța INFONET** allowed people with visual disabilities to vote for the first time in Moldovan history with an 'inclusive ballot'. This initiative was piloted during 2014 parliamentary elections. It was so successful that for the 2015 local elections, the Central Election Commission produced 'inclusive ballots' on its own, which allowed persons with visual disabilities to exercise their right to vote again.

Another remarkable success of **Alianța INFONET** can be considered inclusion of 17 election observers with disabilities in the list of election observers accredited by the Central Election Commission. The observers monitored election process and appeals made by voters with disabilities in various Moldovan localities, as well as they analyzed their own needs during the election process. During the voting process, more than 250 polling stations in different parts of Moldova were evaluated with regard to their accessibility and the received data were introduced into the Accessibility Map.

2) **Social enterprise „Floare de Cireș”** (<http://www.floaredecires.org/>), a limited liability company with a status of social enterprise specialized in providing catering services, was founded in 2012 by the non-governmental organization “Eco-Răzeni” (<https://ecorazeni.wordpress.com/>) from village Răzeni, Ialoveni district.

“Floare de Cireș” is the first environmentally friendly social enterprise offering catering services in Moldova. It provides employment and steady income to 7 men and women with various disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, in a safe working and social environment, thus enabling them to grow professionally, as well as build self-confidence and acquire leadership skills. **Floare de Cireș's** values are community development, contribution to an inclusive society through social integration of marginalized people, employment and use of ecological products, as well as community education. When founded, as the first activity **“Floare de Cireș”** opened a social canteen which has been providing food to 24 socially vulnerable persons, including elderly people, in village Răzeni. In September 2013 it launched its catering service.

The social enterprise **“Floare de Cireș”** maintains an extensive professional training program, which mobilizes persons with disabilities and builds their skills in the field of public catering. As employees, they learn to cook and serve food to clients thus developing self-confidence and abilities to become leaders in their families and communities. This program aims at enhancing social inclusion of youth with disabilities by facilitating their access to innovative social services, providing opportunity to exercise their life and working skills, combating exclusion, involving parents, and ensuring sustainability of the social inclusion interventions.

In 2015 **“Floare de Cireș”** has started sharing and multiplying its good practices, which it has developed during past three years, through a program of training in the workplace and supported employment for persons with disabilities. The program is designed for persons with disabilities aged 18-35 from various Moldovan localities, who are motivated to acquire knowledge, skills and work experience as chef assistants, dishwashers, waiters/waitresses, and greenhouse workers⁹. The trainees benefit from scholarship, course materials, free accommodation and coverage of transport costs. The program also includes sessions on independent life skills development, career guidance, assistance in finding a job and support during the first 12 months of employment.

“Floare de Cireș” offers youth with disabilities support in employment, which leads to the shift in the mentality of employers and of youth with disabilities, who otherwise lack working experience and

⁹ <https://ecorazeni.wordpress.com/2015/05/25/programul-de-instruire-la-locul-de-munca-si-angajarea-asistata-a-persoanelor-cu-dizabilitati/>

may have never thought of getting a job, as well as change in the mindset of the community in general.¹⁰

3) “Inițiativa Pozitivă”, <http://positivepeople.md/>, is an association registered in the Republic of Moldova in October 2011, representing a network of organizations with a rich experience in the field of work on HIV/AIDS and drug use¹¹ in Moldova, focusing on key populations at higher risk. The network was founded by three community organizations: “New Life” (Viata Noua), “Regional Center for Community Policies” (Centrul Regional pentru Politici Comunitare) and “Mothers for Life” (Mamele pentru Viata), who are part of network’s steering committee. The network is led by people living with HIV (PLWH), former drug users and women living with HIV and directly affected by HIV. At the country level, regional representation of the network is ensured by its partner NGOs: “TDV Balti” (Youth for the Right to Life), “Credinta Nord” (Balti), Community Center for Drug Users “Pas cu Pas” (Cahul), “Speranta Vietii” (Cahul), Center “Zdorovoe Budusheye” (Tiraspol), and “Miloserdie” (Bender).

Since its foundation, the organization has fought relentlessly and with great determination for the rights of people living with or affected by HIV and key populations. The organization has first and foremost shown that it was dedicated to achieving the best possible environment for affected communities and the organizations that provide services to them. Thanks to an innovative approach, professionalism, bravery and high visibility, they have managed to achieve significant results.

The methods the association employs in its work include advocacy campaigns aimed to promote and to protect PLWH’s and affected communities’ interests and rights at the political level, to ensure political commitment and involvement, to ensure universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support, and to improve the quality of life both from a medical and social perspective.

Throughout its activities the association has been calling state representatives for clear answers regarding the state taking over part of the responsibility for financing treatment and support for people living with HIV as well as prevention services. In addition, it is a forceful community voice in different decision making and advisory institutions, such as the Country Coordination Mechanism and the Communities Delegation to the Global Fund Board. “**Inițiativa Pozitivă**” has also demonstrated that it does not back down in the face of difficulties and the organizations employees and volunteers speak out for people living with HIV and key populations vulnerable to HIV, often with the risk of facing stigma themselves. In addition, they do not turn away from politically sensitive topics such as tolerance towards people suffering from drug abuse or misuse of public funds in meetings and forums as well as through mass media.

Since the organization’s foundation, it has reached a number of important results which have a significant impact on the lives of people living with HIV and key populations at higher risk: it has lobbied for sustainable financing of HIV treatment and related support services. The point of departure has been that in the future the state will have to take on responsibility for these life-saving services, including extending their coverage. The association was directly engaged and contributed to HIV rapid testing and counseling being implemented by NGOs in Moldova. This makes testing more accessible for most vulnerable populations, and as a result those who live with HIV but do not know their status can be identified in order for them to receive life-saving treatment. “**Inițiativa Pozitivă**” has implemented a number of activities aimed at increasing capacity of organizations delivering services to people living with HIV and key populations at higher risk, reaching hundreds of people directly. For example, the organization introduced case management as a method for working with clients of the opiate substitution therapy program, trained NGO representatives on advocacy and

¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZs746xcVOU>

¹¹ <http://www.europalibera.org/media/video/27093150.html>

lobbying and increased NGO capacity in terms of planning and management as well as conducted training on communication and advocacy. All these activities have served to improve the services offered to people living with HIV and key populations at higher risk. The association was one of the driving forces behind an action plan to improve opiate substitution therapy services initiation and elaboration. It also actively participates in the consultations process on elaboration of the National HIV/AIDS Program.

In 2014-2015, “**Inițiativa Pozitivă**” has implemented a number of large-scale, innovative campaigns, reaching thousands of people with a message about tolerance, antidiscrimination and community engagement. Especially, noteworthy is the impact the organization has had through traditional and new media, with the campaigns generating a large media coverage and interaction on social networks such as Facebook.

1. Thus, in August 2014, “**Inițiativa Pozitivă**” launched an ongoing charitable campaign, “Good Deeds Have a Color” (Faptele Bune Au Culoare), aimed at raising funds for HIV/AIDS prevention through donations allocated by 15 various enterprises (restraints, cafes, shops, beauty salons and other services) who transfer 8% from the price of certain goods and services procured by ordinary people to charity¹².

2. On the occasion of the World AIDS Day, “**Inițiativa Pozitivă**” carried out a billboard campaign “A Generation without AIDS Begins from Me” featuring public persons and businesspeople, organized a rock concert with the same title by CUIBUL, Zdob si Zdub and DARA, the Red Ribbon Ambassador in Moldova¹³, as well as carried out “A Generation without AIDS” campaign featuring red umbrellas being showcased in shop windows in the Shopping Mall Dova (Chisinau)¹⁴.

3. On the occasion of the Zero Discrimination Day, celebrated on March 1st, “**Inițiativa Pozitivă**” carried out an online campaign on Facebook aimed raising public awareness about discrimination against people living with HIV¹⁵.

4. In April – May 2015, for the first time in the history of Moldova, “**Inițiativa Pozitivă**” carried out a national social campaign “My Status Is NOT a Secret”¹⁶ dedicated to the World Remembrance Day of AIDS Victims, which included a number of activities carried out the network and its partners in Chisinau, Balti, Tiraspol, Cahul, Bender, Ribnita, Comrat, Floresti, Soroca and Ungheni. One of the campaign’s boldest activities was the national billboard campaign “My Status is NOT a Secret” featuring 9 nine people (4 women and 5 men) living with HIV (5 people from Moldova and 4 people from Ukraine) who publicly disclosed their HIV+ status¹⁷. The urban billboard campaign was carried out in Chisinau, Balti, Tiraspol, Cahul, Comrat, Bender and Ribnita and received extensive media coverage¹⁸ (approximately 70 media reports).

5. In June 2015, “**Inițiativa Pozitivă**” held a public discussion and other community activities on the occasion of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking¹⁹ which took place in Vhisinau, Balti, Cahul, Floresti and other localities of Moldova.

6. The director of “New Life” organization, Ruslan Poverga, and director of “Mothers for Life”, Irina Poverga (both organizations are founding members of “**Inițiativa Pozitivă**”), who happened to be a couple living with HIV were featured in Radio Europa Libera’s short documentary²⁰. They both had

¹² <http://positivepeople.md/iarkii-tvet-dobrogo-dela-polgoda-spustia/>

¹³ <http://positivepeople.md/pokolenie-bez-spida-nacinaetsia-s-menia/>

¹⁴ <http://positivepeople.md/magazini-odejdi-za-pokolenie-bez-spida/>

¹⁵ <http://positivepeople.md/zero-discrimination/>

¹⁶ <http://positivepeople.md/koncepcia/>

¹⁷ <http://positivepeople.md/moi-status-ne-secert/>

¹⁸ <http://positivepeople.md/ro/moi-status-ne-secert/>

¹⁹ <http://positivepeople.md/httpwp-mep4fsdp-2ao/>

²⁰ <http://www.europalibera.org/media/video/27013301.html>

previously come out as people living with HIV through “**Inițiativa Pozitivă**” billboard campaign thus having given a face to people living HIV in Moldova, which has added value to the ongoing fight with stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV.

4) **Oleg Brega** is a civic activist, independent journalist and filmmaker with a 15-year experience of street and legal activism in the field of justice, freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, transparency and fundamental human rights for various vulnerable groups of people. He is a co-founder of the alternative online media outlet www.curaj.tv.

In 2014 **Oleg Brega** decided to challenge the existing parliamentary paradigm and current election legislation by participating in the 30 November 2014 national parliamentary elections as an independent candidate, not affiliated with any organization or power group. The current Elections Code of Moldova is restrictive and excessive with regard to independent non-affiliated candidates by setting a 2% votes-threshold. In the history of Moldova not a single independent candidate has managed to secure enough votes to pass over the 2% threshold. In addition, the Moldovan political and electoral system consistently produced severe under-representation in elected positions of many Moldova’s vulnerable and/or minority groups.

In September-October 2014, by standing in front of the Chișinău Central Post Office from 9 am till 7 pm almost every day, **Oleg Brega** managed to collect 2200 signatures in support of his candidacy. While collecting signatures in support of his candidacy in the center of Chișinău in September-October 2014, Oleg was carrying out an outreach and awareness-raising campaign among general public encouraging others to exercise their right to be elected independently and drawing public attention to the flaws in the current elections legislation and practices of Moldova, which limit one’s right to be elected independently. Having collected sufficient number of signatures in support of his own candidacy, **Oleg Brega** helped other citizens, who wished to be registered as independent candidates, to collect signatures in the center of Chișinău.

In addition to that **Oleg Brega** was the only parliamentary elections candidate whose election program²¹ and campaign promoted a human-rights-based approach to the urgent social, political and economic issues and proposed amendments to existing legislation and restrictive practices in the fields of freedom of press and mass media transparency, freedom of assembly, military service, healthcare insurance, election legislation, and gender representation in decision making processes from the human rights perspective.

During the 2015 general local elections Oleg Brega actively promoted, including via social media, candidacies of independent candidates – including from vulnerable groups – to the Chisinau municipal council.

In the course of 2014 Parliamentary elections **Oleg Brega** received more votes than an average single member of parliament who was elected to the Parliament on the lists of political parties. Having received 0.88% (14,085 votes) of all votes cast, **Oleg Brega** did not win a seat in Moldovan Parliament having failed to pass the 2% threshold set for independent candidates.

5) **Council on the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality** (shortly the Equality Council), www.egalitate.md, is an autonomous state institution established in 2013 under the 2012 Law on Ensuring Equality for prevention and elimination of discrimination, ensuring equality and raising public awareness about discrimination. Being a new and groundbreaking national human rights institution, the Equality Council started its activity literally from the scratch. Despite this

²¹ <http://www.e-democracy.md/files/elections/parliamentary2014/electoral-program-oleg-brega-2014-ro.pdf>

context, during 2014-2015 the Equality Council has positioned itself as the leading and most visible state human rights institution.

The Equality Council examines claims of alleged discrimination based on grounds of race, skin color, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion or belief, sex, age, disability, opinion, political affiliation, sexual orientation, social origin, property, health condition, HIV/AIDS status and other submitted by residents or legal entities of Moldova. Having been deprived of the right to impose direct penalties on perpetrators of discrimination, as initially stated in the draft law on the Council's activity, the Equality Council strives to provide justice for victims of discrimination extrajudicially (by issuing recommendations to perpetrators) and by representing them in the court. Despite challenges and impediments, the Equality Council has managed to achieve considerable results.

During the reporting period, the Equality Council has examined and delivered important and strategic decisions on individual and collective claims of discrimination and incitement to discrimination concerning a wide variety of perpetrators ranging from leading commercial companies, mass media outlets, state officials, state and private institutions, clergymen, courts, Mayor of Chişinău, and high-level governmental institutions such as the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Interior Affairs. In 2014 the Equality Council issued 65 decisions on 89 claims. Analysis of the majority of the issued decisions shows that the majority of admitted complaints concerned discrimination in accessing to goods and services (40%). The rest of decisions concerned discrimination in the fields of employment, access to justice, and education. During the first eight months of 2015 the Council examined 94 discrimination claims.

In 2014 the Equality Council examined 10 laws and by-laws containing discriminatory provisions in the fields of social protection, health, education, and access to goods and services of people with disabilities. It also elaborated and submitted to public authorities 11 opinions concerning content of draft laws and regulations with necessary recommendations to bring them in line with non-discrimination standards. In 2014 the Equality Council issued a number of recommendations on prevention of discrimination to representatives of public authorities and private sector, as well as elaborated 33 reports on the monitoring results over the degree of their implementation. In the first half of 2015, the Equality Council examined 8 draft laws and regulations from the viewpoint of non-discrimination in the fields of social protection, education, right to vote for people with mental disabilities, freedom of conscience, religion and opinion.

In order to prevent discrimination, the Equality Council carried out a number of information and awareness-raising activities for the general public about discrimination. And visited almost all district centers in the northern part of Moldova. This approach is again a very positive practice in the Moldovan governmental institutional context.

It also conducted 27 training activities on prevention and elimination of discrimination in 2014, and 31 trainings for judges, prosecutors, staff of local public authorities, civil society and mass media representatives - in the first half of 2015. A particular attention was given to the training of representatives of public authorities, law enforcement bodies, private sector and civil society.

During 2014-2015 the Equality Council dealt with a number of complaints on nationally "difficult" grounds of discrimination, such as mental disability, race, ethnicity, religion, language, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, etc. With regard to these grounds, the Equality Council, in fact, established a new framework of guidance and reference for the country. It has taken a very proactive stance on cases of discrimination often initiating self-referrals in critical situations (12 times in 2014), which is a very positive practice in the Moldovan governmental institutional context.

6) Asociația Comunitară Locală "Sîngerei Noi" is a local community NGO based in Sîngerei Noi (Sîngerei district) and established on 18 May 2014. Its main goal is community development through

community mobilization around various social issues, empowerment and human rights based approach. The NGO was established as the result of a staged empowerment process by the local people most vulnerable to human rights violations and discrimination, i.e. by the rights-holders themselves exercising their primary agency on the choices and decisions concerning their lives. Despite being a newly established organization, **“Asociația Comunitară Locală “Sîngereii Noi”** has already achieved considerable results in this regard.

The NGO was actively involved into local strategy development and planning processes advancing human rights and equality priorities. It took initiative in development and implementation of community development projects, formulating them in a rights-based and pro-equality manner and seeking to address the primary human rights associated needs of the most vulnerable members of the community. Thus at the moment it has elaborated and is in the process of implementing several such community oriented projects with engagement of local population including women, elderly people and people with disabilities. For instance, **“Asociația Comunitară Locală “Sîngereii Noi”** launched a series of social inclusion models for the older persons, one of them being a community laundry and socialization service for the older, most of whom live alone.

Sîngereii Noi (including nearby village Mărinești) is a home for approximately 844 seniors, 700 of whom are women and 144 are men. From the total number of seniors, 94 have disabilities. According to the available data, approximately 150 of the seniors live in poverty. Around 20% of them don't have families and thus live alone, hence don't benefit from any care services. Most of seniors and people with disabilities lack access to water and have no possibility to care for themselves and wash their clothes and linen, which constitutes essential aspects of dignified living and socialization. The participation of seniors in local decision making processes was extremely low, which made their representation in the local council insignificant.

On 3 April 2015 **Asociația Comunitară Locală “Sîngereii Noi”** opened the community laundry “La Varvara”, which serves seniors from the village Sîngereii Noi, village Mărinești and other nearby smaller communes. It is situated in the basement of the local Culture House, traditional local get-together building for villagers. Three rooms in the basement were offered by Sîngereii Noi local administration. In addition to providing laundry service, **Asociația Comunitară Locală “Sîngereii Noi”** provides space and community activities aimed at consolidating seniors, which allows them not only to wash their clothes ensuring them elementary-level comfort and more dignified living, but it provides an opportunity to socialize and spend their leisure time.

Asociația Comunitară Locală “Sîngereii Noi” has also engaged local communities of youth and volunteers who help local elders. Thus, seniors from village Mărinești benefit from the local laundry service through local social workers and local 10 middle and high school students who have agreed to weekly deliver seniors' clothes to and back from the laundry. Currently, 130 seniors from village Sîngereii Noi (110 women and 20 men) and 17 seniors from village Mărinești (14 women and 3 men) are benefitting from the service. To ensure access to the laundry service for people with reduced mobility, including seniors from village Mărinești and other surrounding communes, **Asociația Comunitară Locală “Sîngereii Noi”** has engaged local social workers, who use free transportation service offered by the local public administration, and local youth.

In addition to the laundry service **“Asociația Comunitară Locală “Sîngereii Noi”** has established 1) a board game club where seniors can play chess, checkers and dominoes, 2) a cinema club, 3) a discussion club “Sfatul Bătrînilor” (Elders Council) where seniors debrief discussions that take place in the village council and discuss various social issues, 4) a book reading club and an ambulant library, 5) a space for traditional community gatherings, 6) and a craftsmen club where seniors, youth and volunteers are involved in handicraft production activities.

The Elders Council actively participates in the process of monitoring **Asociația Comunitară Locală “Sîngereii Noi”**’s projects, develops a report to the village council, regularly requests public hearings at the local municipal council on various issues faced by the seniors where they identify additional measures that need to be taken in order to promote a greater social inclusion of the local elders.

The NGO also contributed to establishment of new mechanisms and platforms for interacting with the local public authorities on community planning and decision-making (with the Elders Council being one of them), advancing the HRBA principles of transparency, participation, accountability and non-discrimination.

Asociația Comunitară Locală “Sîngereii Noi” has established collaboration with the daycare center “Răsărit” from Strășeni with which they hold videoconferences on experience sharing in community development for the elders. **Asociația Comunitară Locală “Sîngereii Noi”** also actively collaborates with the local public administration, social workers, private sector representatives and other community members.

In June 2015 **Asociația Comunitară Locală “Sîngereii Noi”** launched project “Pentru EA” (For HER) aimed at encouraging active participation of women from the village Sîngereii Noi (including nearby village Mărinești) in 2015 local elections, their training, empowerment and community mobilization. To sum up, implementation of the Human Rights Based Approach at the community level by this NGO/CBO manifested through the following:

- a) The NGO/CBO itself has been established as the result of a staged empowerment process by the local people most vulnerable to human rights violations and discrimination, i.e. by the rights-holders themselves exercising their primary agency on the choices and decisions concerning their lives.
- b) The NGO/CBO was actively involved into local strategy development and planning processes advancing human rights and equality priorities;
- c) The NGO/CBO contributed to establishment of new mechanisms and platforms for interacting with the local public authorities on community planning and decision-making, advancing the HRBA principles of transparency, participation, accountability and non-discrimination;
- d) The NGO/CBO took initiative in development and implementation of community development projects, formulating them in a rights-based and pro-equality manner and seeking to address the primary human rights associated needs of the most vulnerable members of the community.

In addition, the following person is proposed for an **Honorable Mention**:

Nata Scobioală is an independent civic activist and human rights defender living in Chișinău, a member of Hyde Park association. For at least five years **Nata Scobială** has been contributing to the www.curaj.tv, an alternative independent online media outlet specialized in publicizing video footage of human, civil, political, economic and cultural rights violations, police abuse, violation of norms and standards by various officials, as well as giving voice to marginalized and vulnerable groups of people.

Nata Scobială joined Hyde Park and engaged in street activism. She quickly evolved as a leading activist and found courage not only to document various human rights violations on video camera, but also report them to relevant authorities and mainstream media and help victims of those abuses seek justice.

Nata Scobioală was one of the first people who, upon having heard of abuse and ill-treatment of children with disabilities in the Orhei residential institution (internat) for boys with disabilities, went to Orhei to document the case as back as 2011. She then followed up on the development of situation this institution by providing necessary evidence of human rights violations that had been taking place there²². In 2015 the entire country learned about what had been going on in Orhei

²² <http://curaj.tv/reportaj/social/internatul-terorii-de-la-orhei/> and <http://curaj.tv/no-comment/internatul-terorii-din-orhei-marturii-socante-partea-2/>

residential institution for boys with disabilities thanks to the extensive coverage of mainstream media triggered by Nata.

Nata Scobioală get involved with a variety of causes by video documenting and trying to find solutions: from people's with disabilities limited access to infrastructure²³, Roma people²⁴, LGBT people to abandoned elders²⁵ and orphans surviving in remote villages of Moldova. A lot of her video footage can be found on her YouTube page²⁶. **Nata Scobioală** is committed to finding justice for herself and people around her, especially for those who have already given up on seeking it. Very often activists like **Nata Scobioală** are their only hope, if not for change, at least for the possibility to be heard, seen and listened to.

Out of her own will and with very scarce resources **Nata Scobioală** is also involved in humanitarian activity. From various sources of information, including personal contacts and via Curaj.TV Facebook page (where many address with complaints), she identifies cases requiring urgent intervention. For instance, she has recently helped a single old man, who lives in poverty in a remote Moldovan village, with money for subsequent procurement of wood to heat his house during winter period. On another occasion she helped a family of orphans who also live in a Moldovan village. She identifies a case that needs urgent intervention (whether with money, clothes, goods, medicine or other things) and makes an open call for contributions on her personal Facebook account. She then collects donations and deliver them the people in need. To make her intervention durable she appeals to local authorities and tries to help those people find justice on their own.

²³ <http://curaj.tv/local/chisinau/intrarea-persoanelor-cu-carucior-interzisa-intr-un-magazin-ordin-de-la-sef-explica-paza-partea1/> and <http://curaj.tv/local/chisinau/intrarea-persoanelor-cu-carucior-interzisa-in-alina-cosmetics-partea2/>

²⁴ <http://curaj.tv/local/chisinau/despre-implicare-stereotipuri-si-discriminarea-persoanelor-de-etnie-roma-cu-valeriu-caldararu/>

²⁵ <http://www.zdg.md/editia-print/social/cine-bate-la-poarta-batranilor-abandonati>

²⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/user/1983giza/videos>