

TRUST FOR SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENT



REDUCING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS FOR BULGARIA'S DISADVANTAGED

2017 — 2020



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Letter from the CEO



The Trust for Social Achievement (TSA) was founded on the belief that society can only fully succeed when we ensure that all members have the opportunity to make the most of their individual talents.

And while 2020 ushered in unprecedented challenges emerging from the global COVID-19 pandemic, we were encouraged by the generous response and desire to help shown by teachers, doctors, nurses, civil society activists, interested individuals and families, and many others throughout the country.

Challenging times remind us of how critical it is to continue to direct our talents and energies toward finding solutions that reduce inequity and removing the barriers that hinder the progress of our children, youth, and families.

This is especially true for disadvantaged communities, and for the past three years TSA has continued our work to reduce achievement gaps in education and employment, with a focus on the Roma community.

We believe that a holistic approach is needed, and that it is necessary to tackle obstacles to development at each stage of an individual's growth – starting with safe and secure housing, then moving through a child's earliest years, quality early learning and care, excellent education, and ultimately a successful transition to the labor market.

Our programs are helping parents, children, youth and families to overcome obstacles and achieve their dreams.

The projects and stories highlighted in this book provide just a few examples and show what can be accomplished when we work together to create positive solutions.

We hope these stories will inspire you, as they have inspired us.

Sarah Perrine
Chief Executive Officer



Our history



The Trust for Social Achievement (TSA) was established in July 2012 with the strong support of the America for Bulgaria Foundation. TSA set out to make a difference in the lives of Bulgaria's disadvantaged by designing, administering, and monitoring activities in a holistic, sometimes operational way. Since the start, we have seen program evaluation as a critical part of our mission. We intend to demonstrate that change is possible and to carefully observe and assess which solutions are most effective in the fight to reduce inequity, so that we may successfully help to boost educational and employment outcomes in disadvantaged communities, with a focus on the Roma.

Since our first grant from the America for Bulgaria Foundation in October 2012, we have diversified our partnerships and gained support from generous donors across the globe.

These include (in alphabetical order):

- Active Citizens Fund
- America for Bulgaria Foundation
- EEA Norway
- European Commission
- Global Giving (individual contributions)
- International Step by Step Association
- Next Generation Bulgaria Fund (individual contributions)
- Open Society Foundations
- Porticus Foundation
- UBS-Optimus Fund
- U.S. Embassy in Bulgaria



Our strategy


2017—2019

When this current program period began in 2017, Bulgaria was demonstrating its second fastest expansion in economic growth since 2008. This growth was buttressed by inflows of EU investment, higher wages, and decreased unemployment in urban centers. However, the heady environment in Sofia and other large, urban areas masked entrenched disparities throughout the rest of the country. Bulgaria continued to rank last in the EU in per capita GDP and unemployment in rural areas was twice that of unemployment in urban areas in 2017. These gaps were most sharply felt among those with lower educational outcomes.

The Roma community in particular continued to experience low employment rates. This is of concern not only for the community itself, but for all of society, which will come to increasingly depend

on the Roma's active inclusion, given that Roma youth currently make up 23% of all new entrants into Bulgaria's labor force.

To help our beneficiaries make the most of their individual talents, we believe that we must take a holistic approach. By removing significant obstacles along the path of human development, we help to level the playing field. We then rigorously evaluate and demonstrate 'what works' and deliver lessons learned to key stakeholders to improve public policy and to achieve greater scale. TSA also works to build the capacity of community-based organizations and builds networks and alliances around issues of key importance to achieve greater sustainability.



We are focusing our efforts on key moments in an individual's development

**Family Economic
Success**

**Educational
Achievement**

**Early Learning
& Care**

**First
Foundations**





Our progress





4

Areas of support



427

Projects



93

Grantees



640+

Locations



161 K

Project participants
& beneficiaries



20 M

BGN total
project funding

The America for Bulgaria Foundation is proud to support the innovative work of the Trust for Social Achievement. Apart from professionalism, it takes a lot of courage and a lot of heart to tackle some of the hardest and longstanding problems in society. TSA's commitment to enhancing the quality of life for Bulgaria's disadvantaged population has resulted in measurable positive impact."

Nancy Schiller
President and CEO
America for Bulgaria Foundation



The Public Health Program (PHP) and Early Childhood Program (ECP) of the Open Society Foundations has been supporting the Trust for Social Achievement (TSA) on ensuring just and equitable access to health services for the most excluded Roma families with young children in Bulgaria since 2018. In this collaboration, TSA has clearly demonstrated its great potential to mobilize and coordinate organizations in a mutually agreed-to direction of actions. Capacity building was at the core of this collaboration, which is in our view a key component to creating self-sustained local advocacy capacities.”

Maja Saitovic

Health Program Senior Program Officer
Open Society Foundations



Since 2017, the ISSA Secretariat had the privilege to collaborate with the TSA team on building a body of trainers in Bulgaria for the two essential ISSA Programs, Embracing Diversity and Quality. It was a challenging task initially, but what was achieved in the meantime is demonstrating that nothing is impossible when the work is done by dedicated, creative, committed, reliable, and educated people who are also brave to challenge existing practices and competent enough to offer solutions for the existing problems. This is how we perceive the TSA team. We want to acknowledge and celebrate them. And to wish them all the best on their journey towards a high quality and inclusive preschool educational system in Bulgaria.”

Zorica Trikić

Senior Program Manager
Step by Step Association

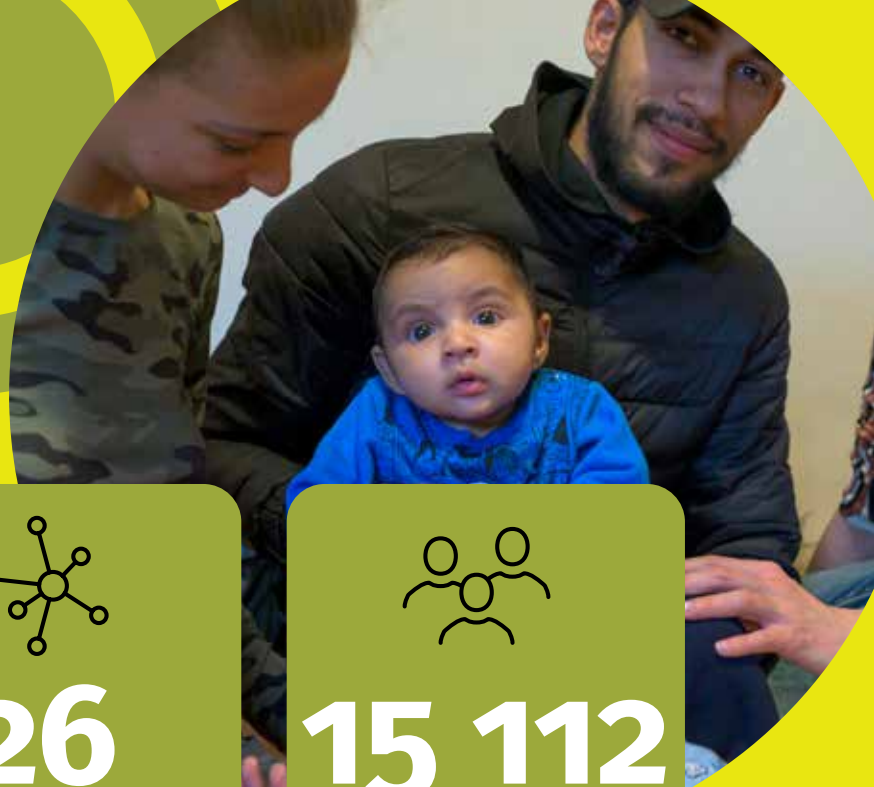




First Foundations

The first thousand days of a child's life give us a unique opportunity to create a strong start for their future success. We now know that 80% of a child's brain is fully developed by the time they turn three years old. Unfortunately, there are many ways that a child's development can be derailed – such as adversity, family hardship, poor nutrition, and limited access to prenatal care. To better prepare for school and for life, we must start at the beginning. Improved access to quality programs and services in the early years is critical for our mission to improve educational and economic outcomes in disadvantaged communities.





30

Projects



26

Partners



15 112

Participants &
beneficiaries

- We explored whether the Nurse Family Partnership Program (NFP) can be faithfully implemented in Bulgaria. An external feasibility study showed that the program is able to be implemented with fidelity to the model in Bulgaria.
- The NFP supported 640 beneficiaries (parents and infants) in two locations (Sofia and Plovdiv).
- NFP nurses and midwives completed 1019 training hours to provide highly specialized support for families and conducted 6927 home visits with program participants.
- We tested programs to improve child nutrition in three project sites, assisting 834 beneficiaries
- We established the first medical center to provide prenatal care for uninsured mothers in Fakulteta, using donations raised through the Global Giving platform.
- We started work on a national advocacy program called “We Care” to help develop coalitions around four main advocacy areas, including improved maternal access to prenatal care and improved nutrition.
- We engaged with international partners on an EC project called “Romomatter” to develop an empowering process that helps young teenage girls to identify and create a vision for their future and to make healthy choices about when to pursue motherhood.





First Foundations

A strong start for a better future

Because the period from pregnancy to age three is so critical for a child's development, the Trust for Social Achievement is spearheading a national project called "We Care" with the support of the Open Society Foundations. This project aims to improve access to early childhood development services for mothers and infants in Roma communities. To achieve this, the project provides advocacy training for 12 civil society organizations as well as a platform for participating organizations to co-create joint advocacy initiatives in support of vulnerable families with children aged 0-3.

During the first year of the project, participating organizations attended capacity building trainings and established a network that will advocate for better planning and implementation of public policies for families with young children.

In the second year of the project, the network of partners collaborated to produce projects that will support four national advocacy initiatives designed to bring about systemic changes in the following policy areas:





- “Access to healthcare for children aged 0 to 3, pregnant women and mothers”. This initiative will focus on access to prenatal care for uninsured pregnant women living in poverty.
- “Access to services that provide opportunities for early learning and responsive caregiving”, which will focus on improved quality, scope, and accessibility of services in support of parenting in poor environments (e.g. nurse home visiting care).
- “Access to services in support of secure and safe environments for children’s development.” This initiative will focus on advocating for improved access to identification documents and address registration of undocumented women and children.
- “ECD services in support of adequate nutrition of pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and young children who live below the poverty line”, which will focus on creation of a national, targeted nutritional program for parents and young children from low-income communities.

Today we can proudly say that there are coalitions of local organizations working directly with impacted Roma communities and heading national-level advocacy initiatives on objectives they themselves defined.”

Maja Saitovic
Open Society Foundations





First Foundations

Steps in the NFP program

2



III TRIMESTER
1 visit every week

First 4 weeks of enrollment

The mother is learning about the changes in her body, the need for good nutrition, regular check ups, and screening of the pregnancy.

The baby's brain is growing fast. All organs are formed and functioning. The lungs start functioning last.

3



III TRIMESTER
1 visit every 2 weeks

Care until birth

The mother is preparing for her baby's birth, learning about breastfeeding and how to take care of a newborn.

1



I & III TRIMESTER
Conception to 28 weeks of pregnancy

Enrollment of mothers

- under 22 years old
- no previous live births
- no later than the 28th week of pregnancy

The baby's brain is forming and growing.



4



BIRTH - FIRST 6 WEEKS

1 visit every week

UNTIL THE CHILD IS 12 MONTHS

1 visit every 2 weeks

Until the child is 1 year old

The mother is building her parental capacity to provide nurturing and stimulating care for the growing child.

The baby's brain is "under construction". Neural connections are created between different parts of the brain. The baby learns something new every month.

5



12 - 21 MONTHS

1 visit every week

21 - 24 MONTHS

1 visit every month

Until the child is 2 years old

The mother is encouraged to think about her life goals, to find suitable care for the child, and to go back to school or work.

Toddlers can walk and talk, become aware of themselves, be more independent, and show great interest in exploring objects and people.

6

Graduation

Toddler is two years old





Early learning and care

Early learning provides an essential springboard for educational achievement. Children who are able to master a range of cognitive, social, and emotional competencies at an early age find learning much more efficient and easier at a later stage and are more likely to continue their education. When we began our work, we identified kindergarten participation as a critical issue, with only 42% of Roma children enrolled in kindergarten.

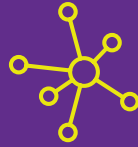
This is why we partnered with the World Bank and J-Pal Poverty Action Lab to explore how best to increase Roma participation in kindergarten for children 3-6. This evaluation demonstrated that removal of kindergarten fees and hidden costs would significantly increase Roma participation, halving the share of unenrolled children. With this in mind, we have been advocating for removal of kindergarten fees in Bulgaria.





70

Projects



27

Partners



3817

Participants &
beneficiaries

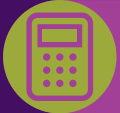
- We commissioned a school readiness assessment with participants from the 2014-2015 World Bank evaluation. While this first evaluation suggested that one year of kindergarten was not enough to improve Roma learning outcomes, a follow-on study in 2019 demonstrated that three years of kindergarten successfully closed the school readiness gap for the most at-risk Roma children.
- We were thrilled when Bulgaria's National Assembly passed a State Budget Act in December 2019 that included an allocation to support the payment of kindergarten fees, due by parents. The policy, currently implemented at the local level by the municipal authorities across Bulgaria, intends to impact about 40% of all children in Bulgaria, or close to 90,000 annually.
- We established the Roma Early Years Network (REYN) in Bulgaria to increase knowledge-sharing among ECD professionals.
- We launched the Young Roma Teachers program to encourage young Roma to become kindergarten teachers by providing competitive university scholarships and creating partnerships with local kindergartens for volunteer and employment opportunities.
- We supported projects in 23 classrooms, 16 educational institutions, three libraries and one community center to improve the socio-emotional skills of 626 children.
- We introduced the International Step by Step Association's "Embracing Diversity" program and added it to the Ministry's Register of Accredited Programs, licensing 48 trainers and training 642 teachers, parents, municipal workers, and business representatives, impacting an estimated 5290 children.





Early learning and care

Springboard for school readiness



2014 - 2015

The World Bank conducts the first-of-its-kind, nationally representative randomized control trial in Bulgaria of TSA's "Springboard for School Readiness" project, which was implemented in 236 settlements throughout the country. This project and evaluation aimed to establish how best to increase Roma enrollment and attendance in kindergarten by testing four interventions.



2017

The results of the World Bank evaluation are published, demonstrating that the most cost efficient and effective way to increase enrollment and attendance is to remove kindergarten fees and costs charged to parents. This intervention cut the number of non-enrolled children in half. Based on the evaluation's results, the World Bank calculated that the removal of kindergarten fees in Bulgaria would increase Roma enrollment to 84%.



2017 - 2019

TSA and partnering organizations in the "Springboard for School Readiness" network embark on information activities and advocacy for the removal of kindergarten fees, working directly in 12 municipalities throughout the country.





2019

A follow-on study is conducted in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science to examine the impact of multiple years of kindergarten on the original project participants of the “Springboard for School Readiness” project. This study demonstrates that while one year of kindergarten was not enough to improve Roma assessment outcomes, three years of kindergarten were sufficient to close the school readiness gap between the most at-risk Roma children and their peers.

More than 45 municipalities waive or significantly reduce (less than BGN 10 per month) their kindergarten fees.

Kindergarten fees become an eligible activity and expense under the “Active inclusion in the preschool educational system” project funded by the Operational Programme “Science and education for smart growth”.



2020

Amendments are made to the Preschool and School Education Act in September 2020, allowing resources from the central state budget to be directed toward municipalities to support the removal of kindergarten fees and costs for parents of children aged 4-6.



2021

TSA launches an initiative in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science and the National Association of Municipalities to monitor how the new policy of kindergarten fee removal is being implemented at the local level. By collecting and analyzing information regarding the application of the new policy, TSA aims to help local authorities effectively introduce the new measure and to provide feedback on challenges and risks emerging in its implementation.

In 2020 Parliament passed a law giving municipalities the resources to make preprimary education affordable for all children. Thank you to TSA for eight years of collaboration with so many of us in science, civil society, and policy that informed, influenced, and inspired Parliament to make this bold and important decision.”

Prof. Joost de Laat

Chair, Global Economic Challenges and Director
Utrecht University Centre for Global Challenges

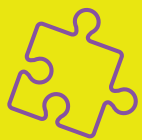




Educational achievement

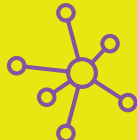
Low-skilled and unskilled employment is often linked to lower educational outcomes, with secondary and higher education being an important precursor to skilled work. In fact, research shows that Roma high school graduates tend to earn 83% more than their non-graduating peers. Unfortunately, graduation levels remain low, with less than half of Bulgaria's Roma completing the 8th grade and only 13.5% completing high school. Many factors contribute to low educational outcomes in the Roma community, including low literacy levels, cost barriers, teacher attitudes, social norms, and a lack of professional role models.





50

Projects



18

Partners



57 930

Participants & beneficiaries

- We supported drop-out prevention programs in 297 schools, positively impacting 49,133 pupils
- We supported training and peer learning opportunities for 3886 teachers and principals
- We removed cost barriers to secondary school participation in high school by providing 1500 stipends for books and transportation, supporting more than 615 pupils nationwide
- We supported youth leadership opportunities and trainings for 473 youth participants
- We supported activities to prepare young people for university through tutorials or counseling on enrollment and/or scholarship opportunities for 1062 youth participants
- We helped 138 youth get access to a mentor
- We provided 175 scholarships for study at a university in a variety of disciplines, including medicine, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry, etc.





Educational achievement

Equal Chance



16

Partners



1500

Stipends



615

Participants
& beneficiaries



High school graduation rates remain low in disadvantaged communities, with financial barriers often deterring continuation, especially for children living in remote and rural areas.





Status among graduates*



89%

Graduation rate of seniors



53%

In university



38%

Employment rate

* per 2018 external evaluation



TSA has been working with partners throughout the country since 2013 to provide needed support to help economically disadvantaged youth attend high school. Local partners identify and support youth and facilitate the provision of textbooks, transportation, and other identified needs.



Equal Chance not only provides direct support for students, but also advocates for removal of financial barriers to high school participation. During this program period, the Pre-school and School Education Act was amended, requiring municipalities to provide transportation for youth studying specific vocational trades. TSA and our partners monitored the application of this law at the local level, speaking with municipalities when necessary to encourage its implementation. We are continuing to advocate that transportation be provided to all traveling high school students, regardless of their field of study.





Employment and entrepreneurship

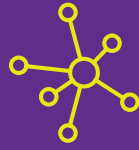
Disadvantaged communities and individuals are not fully engaged in Bulgaria's labor market. This is often linked to low qualifications and educational outcomes, which helps to explain why 53% of Roma are engaged in unskilled, low-paid work. Discrimination in the workplace also continues to play a role. Moreover, European-wide challenges with regards to youth employment disproportionately impact Roma youth, who find it very difficult to make the transition from school to employment. For those who choose an entrepreneurial path, lack of access to credit and practical knowledge often prove a stumbling block. To address these needs, we are aiming to create better pathways for Roma youth to employers, to promote diversity in the workplace, and to help aspiring entrepreneurs access knowledge and capital.





22

Projects



13

Partners



1374

Participants & beneficiaries

- We supported the launch or expansion of 63 small farms and businesses
- We provided BGN 248 278 total capital to support the launch or expansion of small farms and businesses
- We engaged 30 participants in 36 total hours of entrepreneurship training
- We helped 508 youth participants gain access to employability skills, including English, resume-writing, interview skills, basic computing, etc.
- We provided vouchers to businesses to promote employment and promotion of 35 disadvantaged workers





Employment and entrepreneurship

Earning by learning

An EEA - Norway funded project to improve youth employment



Students

15—19 years

GOAL

Stay in school and graduate from high school



Mentorship



Personal Development



Youth

20—29 years

GOAL

Find a job or an internship



Job & Internship Matching



Girls that have dropped out

15—29 years

GOAL

Go back to school and graduate from high school



Preparation of application documents



Multiple Locations



Sofia
Plovdiv
Pazardzhik

Stara Zagora
Sliven
Burgas



Computer
Literacy
Courses



Soft Skills
Training



English
Lessons



Training
Network
Events

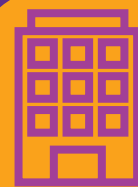


Embracing
Diversity

Schools



Businesses





Family economic success

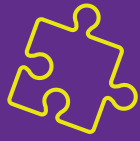
Safe and secure communities are essential for the economic success of a family. Home ownership is a long-term goal, in that it provides access to capital, which is an important first step into the real economy.

Equally important, a stable home environment is one of the three main pillars of a child's early development.

Moreover, access to public services is essential for the health and well-being of a child.

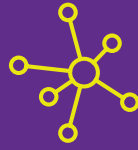
Unfortunately, at present nearly half of Bulgaria's Roma live in unregulated neighborhoods, which means that they are not eligible for public services. This has resulted in nearly 80% of residents of informal communities lacking access to sewage and hot water. Because these neighborhoods are not zoned and urbanized, families are also not able to purchase their homes nor to integrate fully into the life of the municipality.





5

Projects



4

Partners



6105

Participants & beneficiaries

- We developed a zoning plan for 282 dka in the Iztok neighborhood in Kyustendil.
- The final zoning plan was approved by the Municipal Council on October 26, 2017 positively impacting 1000 homes and approximately 5000 individuals.
- We developed a zoning plan for 110 dka in the Kavaklia neighborhood in Dupnitsa.
- The final zoning plan was approved by the Municipal Council on October 26, positively impacting 156 homes and approximately 780 individuals.
- We purchased 31 dka of land adjacent to the Lukovitsa neighborhood via a public tender and then developed a zoning plan for 21 dka of the purchased land.
- The final zoning plan was approved by the Municipal Council on June 9, 2020, thus positively impacting 65 homes and approximately 325 individuals.
- We received funding from the EC to disseminate the model to 30 municipalities and to engage municipal authorities in capacity building and awareness raising activities.





Family economic success

Zoning & legalization of long-standing Roma settlements



Iztok, Kyustendil

- 282 dka
- 1000 houses
- 6000 residents served



MOU
Municipal Council
 Approved a MOU with TSA to conduct the project.



Zoning Plan
Civil engineers and architects
 Surveyed the neighborhood and created a zoning plan.



Urban plan
Relevant stakeholders
 Approved the general zoning plan and integrated it into the general urban plan.



Fundraising
External donors
 TSA is working closely with the municipality to secure support for sewage and water.



Kavaklia, Dupnitsa

- 110 dka
- 65 houses
- 385 residents served



MOU
Municipal Council
 Approved a MOU with TSA to conduct the project.



Team of legal experts
Civil engineers and architects
 Examined property and discovered that 1/3 has no proof of ownership.



Compromise
Mayor, municipal architect
 Agreed with TSA to zone only 2/3 of the plot for now.



Zoning plan
Municipal council
 TSA has completed the zoning plan and is waiting for municipal approval





Lukovitsa, Peshtera

- 31 dka
- 70 land plots
- 420 residents served



MOU
Municipal Council
 Approved a MOU with TSA to conduct the project.



Zoning Plan
TSA
 Purchased a plot of empty land near the Roma neighborhood.



Community fund
Residents and experts
 Established (with TSA support) a local organization to oversee the sale of the land plots.



Zoning plan
Municipal council
 TSA has completed the zoning plan and is amending it upon recommendation of the municipality.



Oreshaka, Peshtera

- 19.2 dka
- 41 houses
- 246 residents served



MOU
Municipal Council
 Approved a MOU with TSA to conduct the project.



Agreement
Biovet
 TSA helped Community Investment Fund sign preliminary agreement.



Relocation fund
Municipality, Biovet, and TSA
 Equally contribute to a fund to help 16 families on the plot to relocate.



Urban Plan
Mayor
 After delays, TSA agrees with municipality to begin by zoning 13.4 dka of the plot, which are discovered to fall within an update to the city boundaries made in 1986.





Capacity building

Data collected in 2016 suggest that less than 5000 of 42,000 registered NGOs in Bulgaria are considered active. According to the Bulgarian Center for Not-for-Profit Law, the sustainability of civil society organizations remained nearly unchanged over the past decade, with financial strength and organizational capacity identified as the most significant challenges.* (NGO Sustainability Index 2015 – BCNL, June 2016)

Strong leadership and enhanced capacity are needed to shift nonprofit organizations from a project-based survival mode to a position of greater institutional stability. Efficient use of resources and use of research and evidence to defend and support activities are instrumental to securing public trust and broadening access to funding. TSA aims to foster a transparent, responsive, accountable, efficient, and sustainable NGO community by investing time, energy, and resources into activities that help build capacity to sustain operations and build confidence in results. Scale and sustainability can only be achieved when institutions, individuals, and organizations work together to deepen our knowledge and expertise and build on best practices to achieve real change in the lives of the communities we serve.





30

Projects



26

Partners



15 112

Participants & beneficiaries

- TSA is part of a consortia managing the Active Citizens Fund Bulgaria (ACF) under the EEA and Norway Grants Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021. TSA is actively involved in the preparation and design of the capacity building activities of the ACF. As part of the capacity building measures, TSA organized seven face-to-face trainings and five webinars that covered financial literacy, theory of change, monitoring and evaluation and project design for potential ACF applicants, as well as a storytelling webinar to improve communications skills.
- TSA supported one of its long-term grantees, Arete Youth Foundation to integrate new technology to enhance their evaluation and reporting functions.
- TSA funded learning and networking opportunities for community leaders and NGO partners to improve their leadership skills in the program offered by the Bulgarian School of Politics “Dimitry Panitza.”
- Through the Grantee Audit Fund, TSA supported audits and the preparation of quality financial statements with consultant support accessible to our partners.





Our stories



2020 – a year of unexpected challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic had a sobering effect on the world, with a disproportionate impact on poor communities. Nearly half of Bulgaria's Roma live in compact settlements with limited access to hot water and sewage, making it particularly hard for residents to protect their families from the virus. COVID-19 also had economic ramifications, with many workers losing their jobs or finding it increasingly difficult to generate income.

In response to these new challenges, TSA immediately responded when the pandemic began by donating 10,000 leva of our privately raised funds to support the National Network of Health Mediators. This network includes 230 municipally

employed Roma health mediators who are working in high-risk communities throughout the country and who benefited from this extra support for masks, hygienic supplies, and protective equipment.

The Trust was also proud to partner with the United Against COVID-19 campaign by donating an additional 10,000 leva of our privately raised funds to the cause.

We supported a training program in Stolipinovo to help inactive women gain labor skills, partnering with the Goethe Institute who agreed in advance to purchase the masks they sewed, providing participants with income as well.

We have also applied to a number of COVID-related funding opportunities and were successful in our application to the Sofia Municipality, which awarded 15,000 leva toward the purchase of 60 tablets and 1 year of internet to help ensure that the Nurse Family Partnership (NFP)'s poorest clients would stay connected through telehealth.





WE RAISED

\$2000 through Global Giving to support nutritious food for vulnerable children. We combined this with project savings to help provide food packages for 110 families (481 total individuals) in Sofia and Sredets.

ADVOCACY

We were involved in advocacy efforts before the Ministry of Education to urge them to provide food to needy families in lieu of the daily meal they would have gotten at school.

OUR DONORS

We focused on working with donors to reallocate funds to meet pressing

needs, and we won approval from Porticus Foundation to reallocate savings so they could be used to support COVID-19 emergency response small grants for project partners.

MORE DONATIONS

We also worked with Equal Chance partners to reallocate project funds to purchase 114 tablets to help students who had the greatest needs and/or the highest risk of dropping out.

OUR GRANTEES

Center Amalipe organized a campaign to collect used laptops, tablets, and phones and managed to gather more than 700 devices and distributed them among partnering schools.

The new normal

And we moved most of our content online. Nurses in the NFP program came to rely on telehealth as a means to stay well-connected with clients during the pandemic. We adapted and moved our trainings online, such as our Embracing

Diversity training. Many conferences and events were moved to the webinar format. And our partners also shifted much of their work online – from consultations with students... to tutorials... and even summer youth leadership camps.



Home visiting services help young mothers succeed

Esmeralda was only 18 years old and already three months pregnant when she met her home visiting nurse for the first time. At that time, she was afraid that she wouldn't be able to raise her child.



To make matters worse, she herself often fell ill. Esmeralda learned about the “Nurse Family Partnership” (NFP) program from a family member. “It’s good that I met Plamena, my home visiting nurse, because I couldn’t have managed without her,” she shares. “I was often ill, I went to the hospital several times, and Plamena taught me how to take care of myself, what to eat, and what nutritional supplements to take.”

In the eighth month of her pregnancy, she prematurely gave birth to a baby girl. Little Silvana was jaundiced, often unwell, and had repeated episodes of bronchitis. “Without my home visiting nurse, I couldn’t have coped. My mother was far away, and I was so scared. I remember that when I was in the maternity ward no one told me what had happened to

my daughter and whether it was normal for a baby to have jaundice. I didn’t know when I would see her. If it weren’t for Plamena, I wouldn’t have known how to breastfeed or what I should eat to have breast milk,” Esmeralda explains.

Her little girl is now two and a half years old, and the young mother is going to school and is determined to finish higher education. Esmeralda jokes that she will soon get to go to prom. She is also attending an English language course under TSA’s project “Find Your Way to the World of Work”. After graduation from high school, she hopes to get accepted into the Young Roma Teachers project and to prepare to study and become a pre-primary or primary school teacher.



TSA opens the first clinic for mothers and children in the Fakulteta neighborhood

The first gynecological and pediatric clinic in Sofia's Fakulteta neighborhood opened its doors at the end of 2019. This clinic was equipped with individual donations made through the Global Giving platform under a fundraising campaign organized by TSA. More than 20,000 USD were donated, allowing TSA to purchase an ultrasound scanner, a colposcope, a fetal monitor, and consumables needed to perform gynecological and pediatric exams.

The clinic was launched in partnership with the Health and Social Development Foundation (HESED). The clinic is intended to improve health standards for people living in the neighborhood. Its easy access within the community allows more women and children to visit a doctor. Many people living in the neighborhood often miss regular check-ups, because of social isolation, lack of insurance, etc. With the opening of this new clinic, TSA and HESED aim to reverse this trend.

Starting in 2020, two gynecologists and a pediatrician worked in the clinic, performing a total of 97 gynecological exams, 29 pediatric exams, and 44 exams to monitor pregnancy.

Dani is one of the women who started visiting the clinic when she was five months pregnant. This was her first time to see a gynecologist. She not only realized the

importance of regular medical checkups, but also discovered a problem that needed urgent attention. Her doctor identified certain risks for the fetus that required immediate hospitalization of the mother. The problem was quickly solved and very soon after the young woman gave birth to a healthy boy.

Months later, and Dani continues to monitor her and her infant's health, regularly taking her son to the pediatrician.

Infant and maternal health are a focus for TSA, given that a child's first 1000 days are of critical importance. Investments in the early years of human development have been shown to have the highest returns toward a child's later health and economic development. The health clinic in Fakulteta is an important step toward achieving this goal.



Malnutrition - a leading cause of infant mortality in Bulgaria



In Sredets, a small town in southeastern Bulgaria, nearly 23% of the population is Roma and living with limited access to resources and services, high unemployment levels, a high percent of early school leavers, and a high share of health problems.

With TSA's support, the association "Together for a Better Future" identified malnutrition as a critical challenge for the community. Parents lack financial resources and awareness, which prevents them from providing their children with nutritious food. Very often, malnutrition starts during pregnancy and remains unchecked, because many Roma women do not have health insurance and are not able to see an obstetrician on a regular basis.

Unfortunately, malnutrition can lead to infant mortality, and Bulgaria continues to

have one of the highest shares of infant mortality in Europe.

The project "Improved health care for pregnant women and children aged 0-2" included 40 children living in Sredets aged between 10 months and two years. For six months, they received nutritious food. The project also included 55 pregnant women, who were provided with individual and group consultations aimed at improving their awareness and attitude toward health and nutrition.

"It is common for the first visit of a pregnant woman to the obstetrician to coincide with the delivery of her baby."



Empowering young girls and communities

RoMoMatter aims to engage Roma girls in an empowering process that shows them alternatives to teenage motherhood and helps them stay motivated to finish their education.

TSA joined an international consortia of partners to implement the EC-funded RoMoMatter project, which aimed to engage Roma girls in an empowering process, examining alternatives to teenage motherhood and encouraging girls to stay in school.

TSA took the lead on developing and implementing a participatory evaluation methodology for the project. This included development of a Field Work Group Manual on empowerment evaluation in close collaboration with the University of Seville, as well as creation of a webinar for all research partners.

TSA also acted as a research partner for Bulgaria, collaborating with the National Network of Health Mediators, who served as the community partner for the project. Project activities were carried out in

Straldzha, together with a local team.

Over a period of 24 months, the team implemented activities with girls, explored women's narratives on a woman's role in society, and mapped resources and community assets according to local stakeholders.

Despite unexpected challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, our facilitators in Straldzha carried out 12 sessions with girls, including a meeting with an inspiring role model, Voice of Bulgaria finalist Yoanna Sachova, and a training on photovoice and distribution of cameras in preparation for a photo exhibition.

TSA also contributed to a number of academic and media pieces, providing insight into the RoMoMatter model and communities in Bulgaria, Romania, and Spain.



An equal chance for everyone

Many parents in Bulgaria face a common dilemma – will they be able to enroll their children in high school or will they decide not to send them, because they cannot afford to purchase textbooks and learning materials each year? Providing support to these parents at such a critical moment plays a key role in the future development and success of their children.



Madeleine, a ninth-grader, was facing a similar fate. Her childhood was full of difficulties. When she was still a baby, she lost her mother, who suffered from a serious illness, and was raised by her grandmother. They continued to live together in a rented apartment, and despite her advanced age Madeleine's grandmother still went to work. Her income, however, was very low and she struggled to find a way to spend the more than 150 leva needed to purchase textbooks each year.

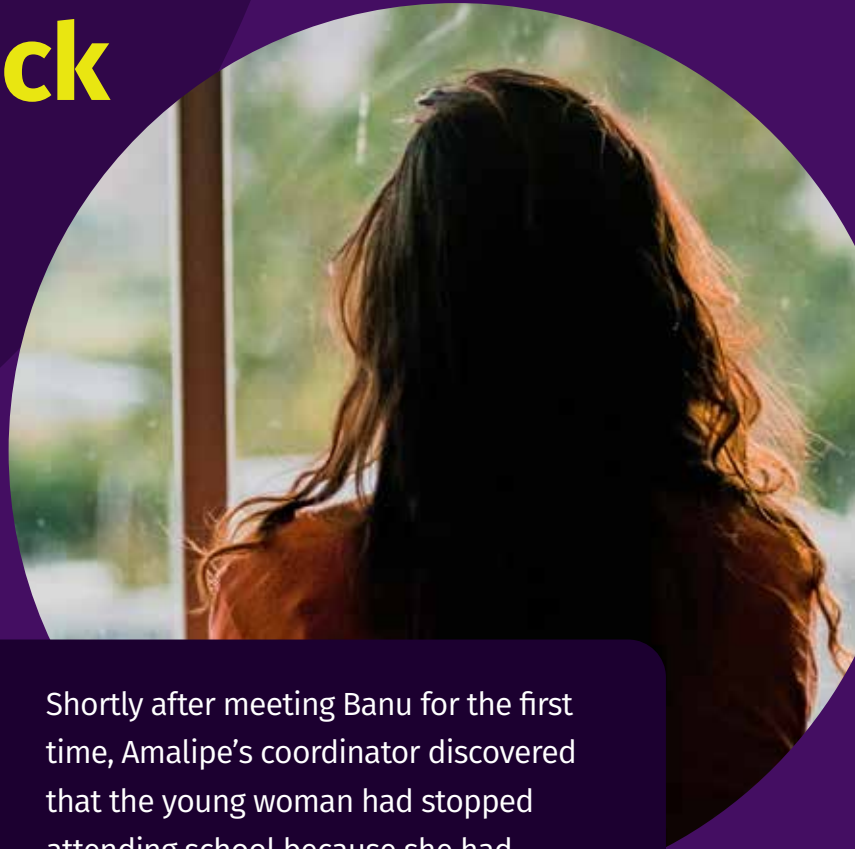
In 2017, Madeleine's grandmother learned about an opportunity provided by the "Equal Chance" project,

managed by the Trust for Social Achievement. She enrolled Madeleine, and thanks to her good results in school, she won a stipend that covers the cost of her textbooks.

"Madeleine is highly motivated to graduate, and she deserves support," her teacher shares. According to Madeleine's other teachers, the young woman is proactive in addition to being an excellent student, and she writes articles for the school newspaper, "School Break." What is more, she is always full of creative ideas, has excellent communication skills, and works well in a team.

The story of Banu who came back to class

Silvia Stancheva, a regional educational expert within the project “Every student can be a winner” for the Shoumen, Razgrad, and Targovishte districts, tells us the story of Banu.



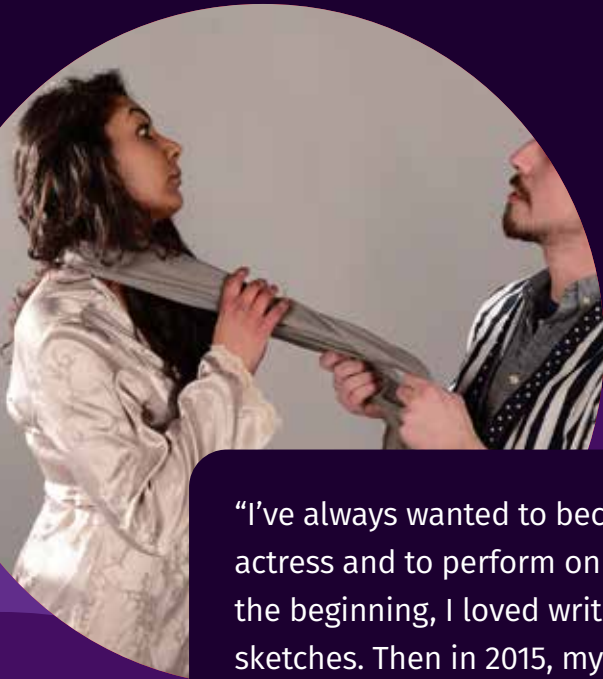
Banu is one of many girls growing up in a closed Roma community where a number of older traditions are still strictly observed. From an early age, Banu showed perseverance, did not give up studying, and as a result of her motivation and hard work she was admitted to the vocational school in Omurtag. The representatives of TSA’s partner organization, the Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance Amalipe, met Banu during a meeting it organized with an aim to prevent early marriages. The meeting was conducted in cooperation with the School Parliament of a vocational school in Omurtag that is a partner under the project “Every student will be a winner.” All project activities are aimed at reducing the number of school drop-outs.

Shortly after meeting Banu for the first time, Amalipe’s coordinator discovered that the young woman had stopped attending school because she had gotten married. When the young 17-year-old couple separated soon after their marriage, Sylvia reconnected with Banu and started to convince her to return to school. With the help of Amalipe and the deputy principal of the vocational school in Omurtag, Banu decided to continue her studies. She didn’t give up, even when she was told that her last year in school would not be recognized and that she would have to finish the 11th grade again.

Determined to succeed, Banu kept pursuing her goal. She continues to receive strong support from Amalipe with respect to obtaining a high school diploma and hopes to even apply to the university with their help.



A young woman's quest to conquer the stage



Donka took a short break in her rehearsal to speak with us. She was getting ready for another performance in Plovdiv. Until recently, she studied Acting at the “Paisii Hilendarski” University of Plovdiv. Having graduated, she was now rehearsing for an upcoming tour with a group of actors.

“I’ve always wanted to become an actress and to perform on stage. In the beginning, I loved writing comic sketches. Then in 2015, my best friend Andrey and I won first place at the competition ‘Svilengrad’s Got Talent.’ Several months later we went to the casting of ‘Bulgaria’s Got Talent’ where we reached the semi-finals. We went through a lot of difficulties along the way, and I’ve had to face different kinds of discrimination. It’s been difficult to achieve even the simplest things,” Donka tells us.

Being of Roma origin has created challenges for Donka, and she has struggled to overcome a variety of prejudices.

In 2016, Donka attended a national girls’ camp organized by the Arete Youth Foundation, a partner of TSA. This camp, she shares, marked the beginning of a

long journey for her.

“While taking part in the camp, I had the chance to meet Roma girls from all over Bulgaria who were ambitious and determined to follow their dreams. We discovered that we all shared common goals. We met with Roma graduate students and heard stories about successful women from our community.”

In the summer of the same year, Donka participated in Arete’s national summer camp, “Forward Together.”

“The camps helped me with respect to my personal growth and self-awareness. Arete’s team motivated me to continue my education. My meetings with other Roma girls and boys who were pursuing university degrees helped me to realize that I could be like them. Now, I am a role model for a lot of young people, and I feel much more confident.”

Dreams of the Roma Pavarotti, Thomas

“Great talent, but what a tough life! This was the first thing that crossed my mind when I met Thomas,” says Lyudmila Zhivkova, director of the NGO “Student Society for the Development of Interethnic Dialogue” (SSDID). She first heard the talented Thomas Tomov sing in 2014 when he won the reality TV show, “Bulgaria’s Got Talent”. Lyudmila shares that Thomas is one of the Roma community’s best talents.



“You can now find my name in Google, but my story started much longer ago when I only wished to sing,” Thomas tells us. “Nothing was more important to me than singing. And not long after... my fairy tale began. The moment I won “Bulgaria’s Got Talent” I knew that this would be my steppingstone to the future!”

Unexpectedly, not long after Thomas’ journey took a turn for the worse. “Over the next three years, Thomas was rejected and cheated by many of the producers who promised to help, and while pursuing these offers, he missed his chance to get into the National Academy of Music,” Lyudmila explained.

Thomas comes from a family of musicians in a Roma neighborhood in Dupnitsa. Scarcity and financial struggle forced the young man to neglect his great talent in childhood. When he and

his family once again found themselves in financial trouble, Thomas decided to abandon his dream to study and to travel instead to Spain to work as a busker.

In 2018, SSDID reached out to Thomas again, trying to convince him not to waste his talent. “I started dreaming again of the Music Academy; it was the only place where I could develop my gift for opera singing and I might learn to be a real professional, showing everyone that a ‘Gypsy’ boy from Dupnitsa could rise to true operatic heights,” Thomas explained.

The foundation made sure that Thomas had the support he needed to prepare for his entrance exams, and after a lot of hard work and preparation, Thomas’ dream came true. In the fall of 2018, he entered the National Academy of Music in Sofia.



The dream to help others



Sabka, a 17-year-old 10th grader at the Professional High School of Transportation in Razlog, stands out because she believes that nothing is impossible. This belief did not spring from a deep sense of self-confidence, but was born from her struggle to overcome challenges she faced as a young Roma woman. While she does not consider herself a victim of discrimination, she admits that many people around her have experienced it. “Mostly at school, I’ve seen friends get insulted or be avoided because of the color of their skin,” she shares.

Sabka is one of dozens of young people participating in “Code Success”, an English-language project conducted by TSA. This project aims not only to help youth from throughout Bulgaria to hone their linguistic abilities, but also to improve their communication skills and cultural awareness. Sabka joined in 2017 and attended online classes for two years.

“Not only did these lessons help me to improve my knowledge of English language, but they gave me confidence to speak more freely and to express myself,” she says.

In 2019, Sabka discovered the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study program on the internet. Every year, hundreds of students apply for this opportunity, seeking support to study

in the United States. Sabka decided to give it a try and managed to surpass 400 other applicants from a variety of different countries.

“There was a test and an interview in English. I didn’t believe I would manage, there was so much competition! But here we are, and one of my treasured dreams has become true. Ever since I was a child, I have always wanted to see America.”

After journeying to live with her host family in Fairfax, Missouri, Sabka started to think about working in the nongovernmental sector. “I want to help other children like me, so that they can have more faith in their own abilities. I want to tell them that everything can be achieved with a lot of passion and, of course, hard work,” she adds.

“A medical career chose me”

This 24-year-old Roma student counts herself lucky, because she is currently making her greatest dream come true. Born in Parvomai, she was able to move to Plovdiv to study medicine after receiving a scholarship from TSA.



“It may sound cliché, but a career in medicine really does choose you. When you help people, you become a part of their lives. In this sense, medical professionals have become modern-day heroes.” This is how Krassimira, a fourth-year student at the Medical University of Plovdiv, explains her decision to study medicine.

“My parents have always encouraged me with my studies. My mother, who is a high school graduate, always insisted that we keep up a respectable image,” Krassi explains, but “there is a part of the Roma community that has never thought it normal for a woman to pursue a career and that her place is in the kitchen.”

“My mother disagreed with this view, and that led to me living my dream now,” Krassi shares.

Krassimira has already decided that she will specialize in obstetrics and gynecology. She associates this field

less with illness and death and more with the giving of new life.

Krassi knows that the family environment plays a key role in ensuring that a young person will complete higher education and find a job. She shares about a classmate, an extremely intelligent young person who could have finished her education but whose parents hurried to find her a husband. She did not even manage to finish high school.

Now that Krassi has made it into the Medical University, she finally feels equal to her peers. “More and more parents have started to talk with their children about education and to push them, even when they don’t want to study. I even have acquaintances who call me because they need me to explain something to them. These changes have started to take place in my community, which is a good sign,” Krassi believes.



A new career in early education



One of my fondest childhood memories is of my first teacher in kindergarten, holding me in her lap and singing to me until my grandmother came to pick me up. I was five years old at the time. A quarter of a century later, and I have returned to the same kindergarten in the village of Buthan. This time, I am here to start working as a teaching assistant. My name is Mariela.

I'm 38 years old and I am about to begin studying at a university in Vratsa to earn a degree in Preschool Teaching and Foreign Language. The chance to pursue a higher degree was only possible due to TSA's Young Roma Teachers project and the support of the local implementing partner, New Road Association.

When I look back, I can see how each step, no matter how difficult, has been guiding me toward this vocation. My parents separated when I was very young and we were raised by our paternal grandparents, but even so we always missed our mother's care. Perhaps this is one reason why I got married early at the age of 18. I finished high school with very good grades and I started working in our village at a home for elderly people with mental health issues. In 2000, I gave birth to my daughter Katrin and nine years later I had my son Ilyan. Not long after his birth, I learned about an opportunity that I had dreamed about for a

very long time when the local kindergarten director told me about the Young Roma Teachers project.

On the day of my exam, I understood what a first grader must feel like when they step into school for the first time. I hadn't slept all night from the excitement. The other girls in the room looked much younger and fresh out of high school. Despite the lessons I'd taken, I suddenly felt afraid of failure. Then I saw the director of New Road, the project's local implementing partner, at the door with a big smile on her face, and my fears dissipated. The exam hours passed by like I was in a dream. Then came the impatient checking of results and the inexpressible joy I felt when I realized I had succeeded.

For me, there is nothing more important in life than educating small children to be compassionate, respectful, and loving. And I cannot wait to begin this new chapter as a teacher!

A young activist finds ways to serve families during the COVID-19 crisis

Tanya Hristova is just 23 years old and already working as a school psychologist at the high school that she graduated from in Kotel. She is Roma and knows many girls who, like her, have managed to overcome stereotypes associated with the community. She has won recognition as an active young professional. Tanya is convinced that education is the key to successful inclusion. That is why she keeps motivating young Roma girls to learn and to develop their talents.



Tanya has been involved in volunteer work for 13 years. She not only actively participates in the volunteer network of the Arete Youth Foundation, a grantee of TSA, but she has also participated in initiatives organized by the Bulgarian Red Cross. According to Tanya, these two organizations made an enormous contribution to her personal growth.

Tanya is also a coordinator for the project “Find your way to the world of work”, implemented by TSA in partnership with the Arete Youth Foundation and she helps to connect businesses and disadvantaged young people who are eager to receive employment.

In mid-March 2020, at the start of the COVID pandemic, Tanya realized that families in her community were faced with a very difficult situation and starting to lose their income.

“People in Kotel make a living mostly out of music, logging, picking herbs, construction and seasonal work. During the lockdown these people were left with nothing to live on. I thought about who would be in the greatest need and knew that it would be mothers of young children and babies. I wondered how they would survive. Then I decided to take action and sent emails to several companies in the country that produce baby food and products to ask for support. Three days later, I received a positive response from Ficosota, which made a large donation of hygiene and home cleaning products”, Tanya shares. She also created a network of volunteers who made it possible for the donations to reach people in need in the community, ensuring that 164 families in Kotel received this support.



Building a bridge between youth and business



“When your English teacher inspires you to learn so much that the thought of quitting doesn’t even occur to you, then you really start to understand how much knowledge you can gain,” shares 21-year-old Daniela. She is a part of a group of young people that the Trust for Social Achievement is supporting through the “Find your way to the world of work” project.

This project helps youth aged 15-29 to gain knowledge and experience that will later benefit their personal and professional development. Participants receive career counseling and take part in soft skills, English, and computer literacy courses. The team guides and supports young people throughout the entire process of searching for employment and filling in job applications.

Daniela joined the project in 2020 and has actively participated in its activities. After successfully completing her Level 1 English and making new friends in the classes, she decided to enroll in Level 2 English.

She was born in Burgas but went to school in Plovdiv, where she graduated from the Humanitarian High School. Most of her schoolmates enrolled in university after completing their secondary education. “When your

parents can afford to pay for your education and to help cover your expenses so you don’t have to work, then it’s an entirely different situation,” Daniela muses.

Daniela’s dream was to become a doctor. However, her top priority for now is to have a child, because she already lost a baby in a previous pregnancy. Still, she hasn’t given up on her dream to go to college. She is currently working in a bicycle manufacturing factory in Plovdiv, while taking part in a variety of courses to help build different skills. “I decided to invest in myself now, while I don’t have a child, so that I can prepare for the future,” she says.

The project, “Find your way to the world of work” is realized with the financial support of the EEA Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021.

Helping aspiring entrepreneurs to succeed

Milan Petrov, aged 29, lives in the Fakulteta neighborhood in Sofia with his wife, who inspired him to start his own business. Milan's wife came up with the idea while organizing their child's birthday party. While looking at birthday party photos sent by relatives in Russia, she saw some 3D decorations that she liked very much. She tried to find similar decorations in Bulgaria but did not have any luck. Then she spoke with Milan about creating similar decorations themselves.



This is how they decided to start a business to create 3D decorations for events and parties. Milan had an education in Financial Management, obtained from Svishtov University. But he had never had the opportunity to work in this field. When he decided to explore his wife's idea, he started to self-educate himself on the internet.

In the fall of 2019, Milan accidentally saw posters advertising the Business Achievement for Social Entrepreneurship (BASE) program and decided to apply. Over a period of four months, he diligently attended lectures on entrepreneurship. By attending this program, he not only gained new knowledge and experience, but he also established valuable contacts with the business representatives who delivered

lectures and provided mentoring to participants.

As the BASE program drew to an end in February 2020, Mila prepared his business idea for the final competition, successfully defending his plan before a jury and winning a cash award of BGN 4000 to help finance his business.

The young family is continuing to work on creating their own portfolio of 3D figures and is planning to invest their prize in creating a space to store the figures. While the COVID-19 crisis postponed the family's business plans, Milan and his wife have never stopped working and dreaming. Their next steps are to register the company, create a customer base, and to develop their own website.



A successful business model

Herbalists are few and far between in Bulgaria. Lyuben is one of them.

“My wife’s grandparents come from a long line of herbalists, and because of our family’s history, we became interested in herbalism too,” Lyuben shares. He is determined to not only preserve the family tradition, but to also turn it into a successful business model.



In the beginning, it was only him and his wife. They learned how to recognize different herbs, how to pick them early in the morning, and how to dry them.

“In 2014 my wife and I decided to apply for a permit from the municipality in Sliven for a portable facility in the central market, so that we could sell our produce. We had no idea whether we’d have success or whether we’d have customers, but we took a risk.”

In 2016, he learned about TSA’s Business Achievement program, which provided a 6-month training for young entrepreneurs with viable business ideas. The trainings were designed to provide practical skills to help them establish or further develop their own businesses. This included financial management and accounting, market planning and research, as well as other marketing skills.

Lyuben shared that one of the most useful things he learned was to not waste time and to always do research before taking any action. He also took part in a business plan

competition at the end of the training and managed to place in the top three, winning a cash award of BGN 5000. He used the money to buy a plot of land near Sliven, which he plans to use to further develop his business.

“That will be our third step. I’ve planned a much bigger production base with a production line, but we need a much larger investment. So, we are taking smaller steps for now, and one day we will reach our goal,” Lyuben shares.

Meanwhile, from 2018-2020 they set up a micro-workshop in their home, using their yard to build a workshop with machines for automatic cutting, measuring, and drying of the herbs.

“Our production volume is constantly growing. With our small workshop, it’s grown at least ten times. I hired two more employees and we’ve opened a bigger herb shop,” Lyuben said.

Now Lyuben is happy that he can see the path ahead.

The first legal incubator in Bulgaria

The legal incubator model was first introduced in 2007 in New York by Fred Rooney, called the “Father of Legal Incubators” by the American Bar Association. It has since gained popularity in 33 states and 4 countries. It was launched in Bulgaria in December 2019 when 13 aspiring lawyers applied to take part.



The legal incubator supports students and recent university graduates – future lawyers who are committed to social justice and who want to improve their skills. Over the course of 18 months, mentors and legal professionals worked with these aspiring participants on real cases involving low-income clients in need of legal support but without the financial means to access it.

Dian Danov, a 31-year old from Razgrad, is one of 13 young lawyers being trained at the incubator. Dian, like 11 of the other trainees, is Roma.

“It’s not easy to finish a degree in law, and it’s even harder to grow professionally in this field. But the hardest thing is to change people’s attitudes. When people see that we’re Roma, the first thing that comes to their mind is that we aren’t law-abiding, that we steal, and that we break the rules.

So, we have to overcome this challenge by changing people’s opinions and making it clear that we are there to protect their interests,” Dian explains.

Young lawyers participating in the incubator have had the chance to work on property-related problems, unresolved parental rights issues, and more. Recently, they assisted a woman to help her child to access a survivor’s pension after the death of her husband.

“Legal support is like healthcare – you either have the money to pay and you’re fine, or you don’t have money and you suffer,” Dian says, explaining what motivates him to provide support for people, free-of-charge. “People from small towns and settlements lack information and don’t trust institutions. This, as well as a lack of money, puts them in a number of difficult situations.”



Cinematography helps improve students' grades

“Cinematography is fantastic!” Georgi exclaims. The 9-year old continues, “we all get to work together as a team.” His classmate Melinda enthusiastically agrees.



They are both attending cinematography workshops conducted by “Arte Urbana Collectif” in collaboration with the “Neofit Rilski” school in the village of Dermantsi in the Lukovit municipality. With TSA’s support, these workshops were offered to primary school pupils during the 2019-2020 school year.

TSA is investing in activities that boost the early learning of Bulgarian language as well as the socio-emotional skills of young children, because these skills are closely linked to the later successful development. When children learn to improve emotional competencies such as perseverance in reaching goals, ability to understand and manage one’s own feelings, and capacity to understand other peoples’ feelings, they are better able to cope in school and in life. This type of early support is especially critical for Roma children, who often attend kindergarten only for the obligatory years or half-day groups.

Most of the children in Georgi’s school are

growing up in disadvantaged families, with 60% of the school’s parents not having a high school degree and a third of pupils living in homes where both parents are unemployed. And the cinematography workshops created an atmosphere where well-performing and struggling children could both freely interact and share.

Daniel Simeonov, a teacher at the school who led the cinematography workshops for 1st-4th graders, recalled a quiet third grader, who lagged behind his schoolmates academically. He found his niche with the cinematography workshops, where he revealed a hidden talent for inventing stories and an ability to perform in front of the camera.

In total, 107 children from the 1st to 4th grade took part in the workshops and together they created 6 feature films and 28 animations.

Starting in the 2020-2021 school year, pupils in this school will have the opportunity to study “Cinema” as a regular school subject.

Building a better future

Many Roma in Bulgaria and throughout Europe are living in appalling conditions. Residents in compact, marginalized settlements often lack access to basic public services and are threatened by forced eviction. This is true for the Lukovitsa neighborhood in Peshtera, where nearly 3500 Roma live.



Lubomira, aged 59, was born in Peshtera. She migrated to Greece in search of employment, but after working there for more than five years, a severe illness compelled her to return. With her saved money, she started to build a one-story house on a privately owned plot. However, she had no permission or construction papers to formalize the home.

TSA's team of experts, in partnership with the Community Investment Fund – Peshtera, are working in the Lukovitsa neighborhood to zone and facilitate the sale of land plots to local residents. The team helped Lubomira to understand the consequences of living in an illegal home, namely the constant threat of forced eviction. They also provided her with holistic support, helping her to register with the local welfare service and facilitating her access to health care.

After speaking with the team's experts, Lubomira decided to voluntarily tear down the construction she had illegally built. She will now have the opportunity to purchase a zoned plot and to receive legal and

technical support to make sure that the home she builds is in compliance with all legal requirements. Legal home ownership will remove the threat of demolition and forced eviction and will allow her to leverage her home as an economic asset.

TSA has been implementing the project "Building a Better Future" for more than five years in cooperation with three municipalities – Peshtera, Dupnitsa, and Kyustendil. The project team works closely with local authorities and starts by zoning a settlement. Without a zoning plan, it is not possible for local or national authorities to invest in infrastructure and community improvements. Once the plots are zoned, TSA provides high quality legal and technical support to residents to help them formalize their houses and to become owners of the land plots. Finally, TSA also helps local authorities to identify and apply for external funds to support the construction of sewage, water supply and infrastructure, to ensure that local residents' get access to basic public services.



Financial Statements

Basis for preparation

The financial statements of the Trust for Social Achievement Foundation have been prepared in accordance with the (new) Accountancy Act effective as of 1 January 2016 (SG 95/08.12.2015) and National Accounting Standards (NAS), approved by the Council of Ministers by CMD No 46/2005 (SG 30/07.04.2005) and amended and supplemented by CMD No 251/2007 (SG 86/26.10.2007) and by CMD 394/2015 (SG 3/12.01.2016, in force as of 1 January 2016), by observing the specific requirements of NAS 9 “Presentation of Financial Statements of Non-profit Entities”.

The Foundation keeps its accounting books in Bulgarian Levs (BGN) and prepares its official financial statements in accordance with Bulgarian accounting legislation.

The financial statements for 2017, 2018 and 2019 have been prepared by AFA Consultants OOD and audited by PricewaterhouseCoopers Audit OOD.



Find the complete audited annual financial statements since its founding in 2012 on TSA's website

<https://socialachievement.org/en/about-us.html>

Revenue

From non-profit activities

The revenue of the Trust for Social Achievement Foundation is from received financing – either contingent or unconditional.

The revenue from contingent financing requires the execution of certain obligations. It is recognized on a systematic basis in the periods in which the Foundation recognizes as expense the respective costs that the gratuitous funds are intended to compensate so that the preliminary set condition is satisfied.

Income from financing, contingent on conditions for acquisition of non-current assets, is recognized up to the amount of depreciation expenses charged on the assets acquired through gratuitous funds in the period.

The gratuitous funds, related with the non-depreciable asset of the Foundation “Land in a built-up yard”, are recognized over the useful life of the acquired building.

Income from unconditional financing is recognized when they originate. Finance income consists of interest income on bank deposits and positive exchange rate differences related to cash, trade payables denominated in a foreign currency and is included in the profit and loss statement when incurred.

From business activities

Upon rendering of services, revenue is recognized by reference to the stage of completion of the transaction at the balance sheet date, if this stage as well as the transaction and completion costs, can be measured reliably.

Revenue is measured on the basis of the fair value of the services sold, net of indirect taxes and any discounts granted.

Income from unconditional financing is recognized when they originate. Finance income consists of interest income on bank deposits and positive exchange rate differences related to cash, trade payables denominated in a foreign currency and is included in the profit and loss statement when incurred.

Expenses

Expenses of the Foundation are recognized as they are incurred, following the accrual and matching concepts.

The Foundation spends its financial resources in line with a budget, approved by the Board of Directors, which covers all operating expenses and the overall plan for financing of the authorized number and amount of grants in each of the project areas related with the fulfilment of its mission as a non-profit organization for performing activities in public benefit.

Deferred expenses are put off and recognized as current expenses in the period where to they refer.

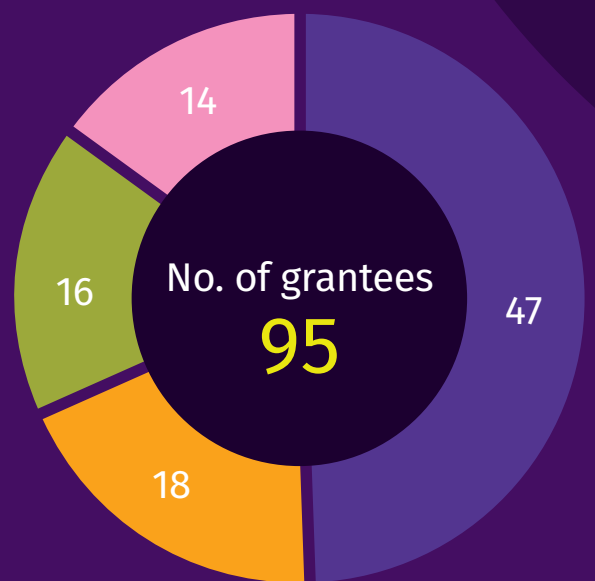
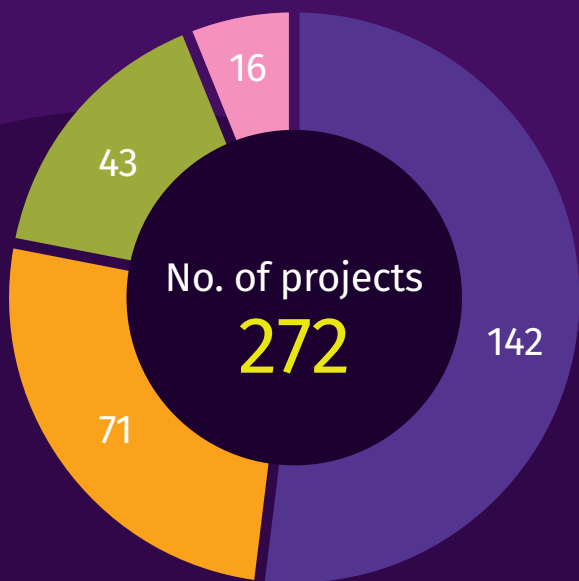
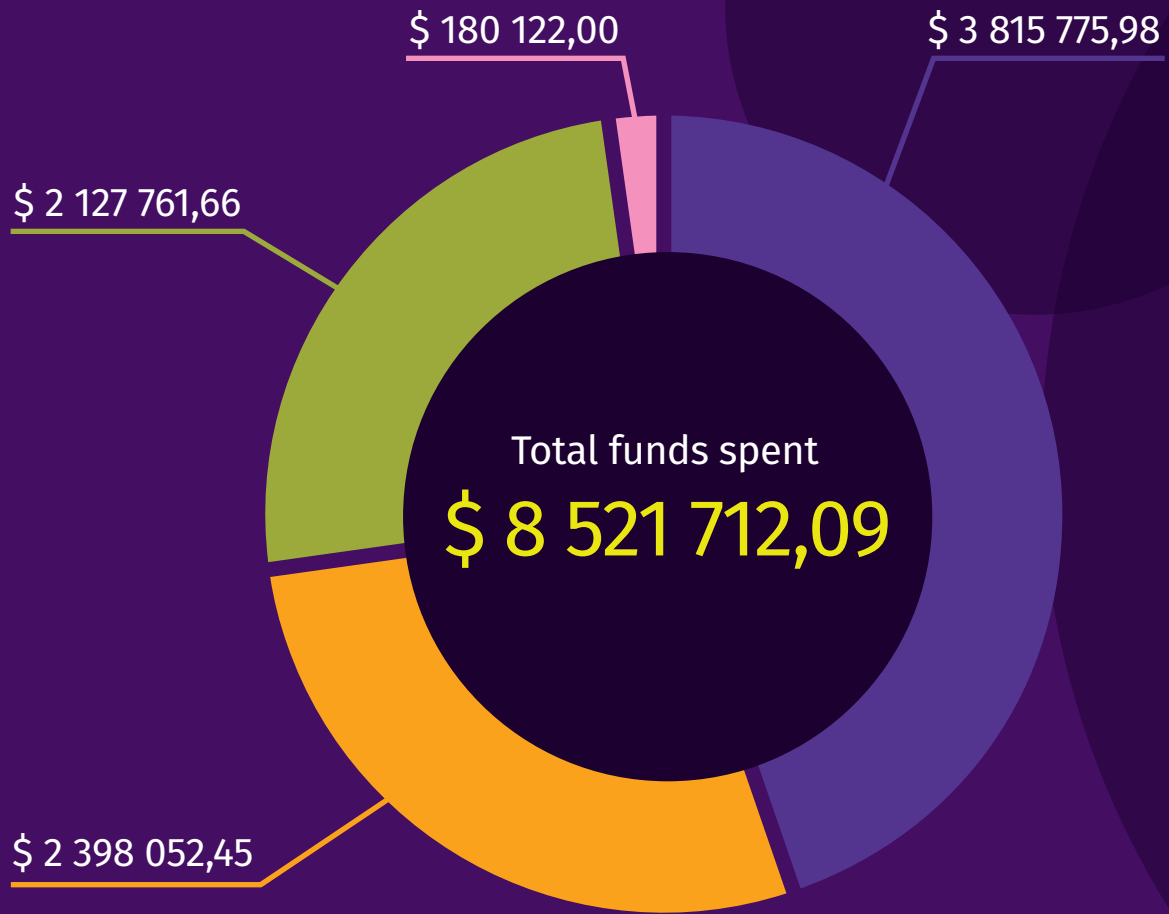
Financial costs consist of negative exchange rate differences related to cash, trade payables denominated in a foreign currency and are included in the profit and loss statement when incurred.

Financing expenses

For the purpose of attaining its objectives, the Trust for Social Achievement Foundation is entitled to co-finance and support with resources activities, initiatives and projects by awarding financing (grants). Only individuals or legal representatives of legal entities, which are non-profit associations, public institutions registered as juridical persons or trade entities performing non-profit activities, have the right to apply for and obtain project funding from the Foundation.



Overview



● ECD
 ● EDU
 ● FES
 ● CB & Other

Profit and loss statement from non-profit activities for the period 2017–2019, in BGN '000

	2019	2018	2017		2019	2018	2017
I. Operating expenses				I. Revenues			
A. Expenses for regulated activities				A. Revenues for regulated activity			
1. Financing expenses	1,968	1,733	1,780	1. Net revenue from conditional financing			
2. Programs and projects expenses	1,438	692	640		4,482	3,522	3,472
Total A	3,406	2,425	2,420	2. Other revenue	5	2	
B. Administrative expenses	1,076	1,097	1,052	Total I	4,487	3,524	3,472
Total I	4,482	3,522	3,47				
II. Finance costs				II. Finance income			
3. Foreign currency exchange losses	18	5	21	2. Interest income	1	-	-
Total II	18	5	21	3. Foreign currency exchange gains	9	6	1
III. Total expenses	4,500	3,527	3,493	Total II	10	6	1
IV. Profit from non-profit activities for the year (total revenues - total expenses)	-	3	0	III. Total revenue	4,497	3,530	3,473
Total (III + IV)	4,500	3,530	3,493	IV. Loss from non-profit activities for the year (total revenues - total expenses)	3	-	20
				Total (III + IV)	4,500	3,530	3,493

Profit and loss statement from business activities for the period 2018–2019, in BGN '000

	2019	2018		2019	2018
A. Expenses			B. Revenues		
1. Expenses for materials and hired services, including:			1. Net sales revenue, including:	47	66
a) hired services	-	5	a) services	47	66
2. Other expenses	4	5	Total operating revenues	47	46
Total expenses for operating activity (1 + 2)	4	8	Total revenues	47	66
Total expenses (1 + 2)	4	8	2. Accounting loss for the year (total revenues – total expenses)	-	-
3. Accounting profit for the year (total revenues – total expenses)	43	58	3. Net loss for the year (2 + row 4 from section A)	-	-
4. Tax expense on profit	4	6	Total (Total revenues + 3)	47	66
5. Net profit for the year (3 - 4)	39	52			
Total (Total expenses + 4 + 5)	47	66			



Balance sheet for the period 2017-2019, , in BGN '000

	2019	2018	2017		2019	2018	2017
ASSETS				LIABILITIES			
ASSETS				NET ASSETS AND LIABILITIES			
A. Non-current (long-term) assets				A. Net assets			
I. Intangible assets				I. Reserves			
1. Concessions, patents, licences, trademarks, software and other similar rights and assets	5	27	54	1. Other reserves, including:	445	448	445
Group I total:	5	27	54	- from prior years	448	445	465
II. Tangible fixed assets				- for the current year	-3	3	-20
1. Land and buildings, including:	414	437	460	Group I total:	445	448	445
- land	7	7	7	II. Accumulated profit (losses) from business activities in prior years, including:			
- buildings	407	430	453	- retained earnings	52	-	-
2. Equipment and other	80	88	120	Group II total:	52	-	-
Group II total:	494	525	580	III. Current profit/(loss) from business activities	39	52	-
Section A total:	499	552	634	Section A total	536	500	445
B. Current (short-term) assets				LIABILITIES			
I. Debtors				B. Creditors			
1. Trade debtors	136	86	67	1. Trade creditors, including:	8	16	82
2. Other receivables	7	6	5	up to 1 year	8	16	82
Group I total:	143	92	72	2. Other liabilities, including:	26	21	14
II. Other current assets	50	52	52	- payables to personnel, including:	13	13	12
III. Cash and cash equivalents, including:	1,500	1,214	540	up to 1 year	13	13	12
- cash in current bank accounts (deposits)	1,500	1,214	540	- payables for social security, including:	3	2	2
Group III total:	1,500	1,214	540	up to 1 year	3	2	2
Section B total:	1,693	1,358	664	- tax payables, including:	4	6	-
C. Deferred expenses	28	16	17	up to 1 year	4	6	-
TOTAL ASSETS (A + B + C)	2,220	1,926	1,315	Section B total, including:	34	37	96
				up to 1 year	34	37	96
				C. Grants and deferred income, including:	1,650	1,389	774
				- grants	1,650	1,389	774
				TOTAL NET ASSETS AND LIABILITIES (A + B + C)	2,220	1,926	1,315

Cash flow statement for the period 2017-2019, , in BGN '000

	2019	2018	2017
I. Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January	1,214	540	482
II. Cash flows from non-profit activities			
A. Cash proceeds from non-profit activities	4,742	4,137	3,655
1. Proceeds from conditional financing	10	5	-
2. Proceeds from bank and currency transactions	16	2	16
3. Other receivables	4,768	4,144	3,671
B. Cash paid for non-profit activities			
1. Financing granted	1,968	1,733	1,780
2. Cash paid for programs and projects	1,393	744	591
3. Cash paid to employees and for social security	603	644	685
4. Cash paid to suppliers	389	313	467
5. Other taxes paid	134	98	67
6. Payments for bank and currency transactions	23	9	23
7. Other payments	3	-	-
Total cash paid for non-profit activities	4,513	3,541	3,613
C. Net cash flows from non-profit activities	255	603	58
III. Cash flows from business activities			
A. Cash proceeds from business activities			
1. Proceeds from clients	56	79	-
Total cash proceeds from business activities	56	79	-
B. Cash paid for business activities			
1. Cash paid to suppliers	19	4	-
2. Tax payments	6	-	-
3. Other payments	-	4	-
Total cash paid for business activities	25	8	-
C. Net cash flows from business activities	31	71	-
	1,500	1,214	540
IV. Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December			
V. Change in the cash flows for the year	286	674	58



Our partners

	●	“Amala-Friends” Association
	●	● “Areté Youth Foundation - Bulgaria”
	●	“Arte Urbana Collectif” Association
	● ●	“Asthma from Trouble” Foundation
	●	BCause Foundation
	●	Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange
	●	“Bulgarian-Romanian Trans-border Mediation Institute” Association
	●	● Bulgarian School of Politics “Dimitry Panitza”
	● ● ●	“Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance - ‘Amalipe’” Association
●	●	● “Club of Non-governmental Organizations” Association
	●	● “Community Investment Fund - Peshtera” Foundation
●	●	● “Concordia Bulgaria” Foundation
	●	“Corps for Education and Development - CORPLuS” Foundation
●	● ●	“Crime Prevention Fund - IGA” Foundation
	●	“Diverse and Equal” Association
	●	“Elizabeth Kostova” Foundation
●	●	“Equal Opportunities Initiative” Association
	●	“Ethnic Minorities Health Problems” Foundation
	●	“Ethnotolerance” Association
●		“European center for mediation and arbitration” Foundation
	●	“Faithful Guardian” Association
●		“For Our Children” Foundation
	●	“Future for All” Association
●		“Future for the Children” Association
●	● ● ● ●	● “Future” Foundation - Rakitovo
●		“Hayachi” Women’s Roma Association
●		● “Health and Social Development - HESED” Foundation
	●	● “Helping Hand” Foundation
●	●	● “Indi-Roma 97” Social Foundation
	●	● Institute for Progressive Education Association
	●	“Integration” Association
	● ●	“Integro” Association

●	●	●	●	●	●	
First Foundations	Early Learning & Care	Educational Achievement	Employment & Entrepreneurship	Housing & Zoning	Capacity Building	
●	●	●				"Knowledge - Lovech" Association
		●	●			"Land Source of Income" Foundation
	●					"LEADER" Association
●		●	●			"Liberal Alternative for Roma Civic Unification - LARGO" Association
	●					Local Action Group-Tundzha" Association
	●					"Meeting Points" Foundation
●						"Mother Center Alternative" Association
●			●			"National Alliance for Volunteer Action - NAVA" Foundation
	●					National Association for Social Activities, Training and Education
●						"National Network of Health Mediators" Association
●	●	●	●		●	"New Way" Association
●						"Open Society Club - Stara Zagora" Association
●						"Open Society Institute - Sofia " Foundation
	●	●				"Opportunity and Protection" Association
●						"Opportunity and Support" Association
					●	"Parents" Association
		●				"Pleven Community Fund 'Chitalishte'" Association
	●	●				"Roma Academy for Culture and Education" Association
	●					"Romano Drom - 2002" Community Center
	●					"Sauchastie" Association
●						"Sheynovo" Hospital
●	●					"Social Dialogue 2001" Association
			●			"Society for Hiring Unemployed Persons - DEMO" Alliance
	●					"Steps Academy" Foundation
		●			●	"Student Society for the Development of Interethnic Dialogue" Foundation
●						"Sveti Georgi" Hospital - Plovdiv
		●				"Teach for Bulgaria" Foundation
●						"Thirst for Life" Association
●		●				"Together for Better Future-Sredets" Association
		●				"UK" Foundation
●	●	●	●			"World without Borders" Association
	●					"Worldwide Orphans" Foundation



Our team



Executive team

Sarah Perrine
Valentin Tapchev
Doriana
Basamakova

Compliance & Evaluation

Kristina Boeva
Petya Zeynelova

Finance

Daniela Raycheva
Gergana Boncheva
Takuhi Elmokian

Administration

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Petar Pavlov



First Foundations

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Dena Popova
Ivanka Puleva
Maria Evgenieva
Natalie Angelova
Paola Lalova
Rositsa Milkova



Early Learning & Care

Eugenia Volen
Ivan Ivanov
Linka Toneva-Methodieva
Lora Lalova
Sofiya Spasova





Educational Achievement

Ognyan Isaev
Aylin Dzhafer



Employment & Entrepreneurship

Petia Goolamallee
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Zoning Program

Maria Metodieva
Dimitar Lazarov



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and to all those who individually contributed to our work.

Institutional Partners



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You too can help give marginalized children, youth, and adults the chance they need to succeed. The Trust for Social Achievement relies on the strong support of its donors, as well as on the generosity of interested individuals. To support our work, donations may be made directly to the Trust for Social Achievement in Bulgaria or to our partner 501c3, the Next Generation Bulgaria Fund.

If you would like to contribute, please contact us at the following email address:

donate@tsa-bulgaria.org

There are many ways to share our talents with communities in need. We are grateful for the support of many volunteers throughout the years.

If you have time and a talent to share, please contact us so that we can discuss options and opportunities to volunteer. You can reach us at the following address:

info@tsa-bulgaria.org



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