

Annual report

Reachout.BG

2014



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Review

Driven by the belief that good education opens the door to a better life in the future, in 2014 Reachout.BG continued to expand its extracurricular education support program to children with serious knowledge gaps and at risk of dropping out of school. Our activities were directed not only to children deprived of parental care but also to children living in deprivation and poverty.

We made this step because we believe that the environment in which a child grows up and develops together with the attitude of the adults towards it and the contacts it has with its peers (classmates and friends) has a great influence on the formation of values and attitudes and affects the motivation to learn. That is why for the first time we paid attention to children from poor Roma families that are classmates of the children deprived of parental care we've been working with for several years.

Striving to meet the developmental needs of children we continued to seek the most appropriate approaches and methods in dealing with each of them, while trying to expand our activities and development opportunities we offer them. We worked out individual plans tailored to the interests of the children who advanced quickly, overcame the gaps in their knowledge and made consistent progress.

During the last year we continued to work hard and to broaden our strategic partnerships with both institutions and organizations working in the fields of child policy, protection and education.



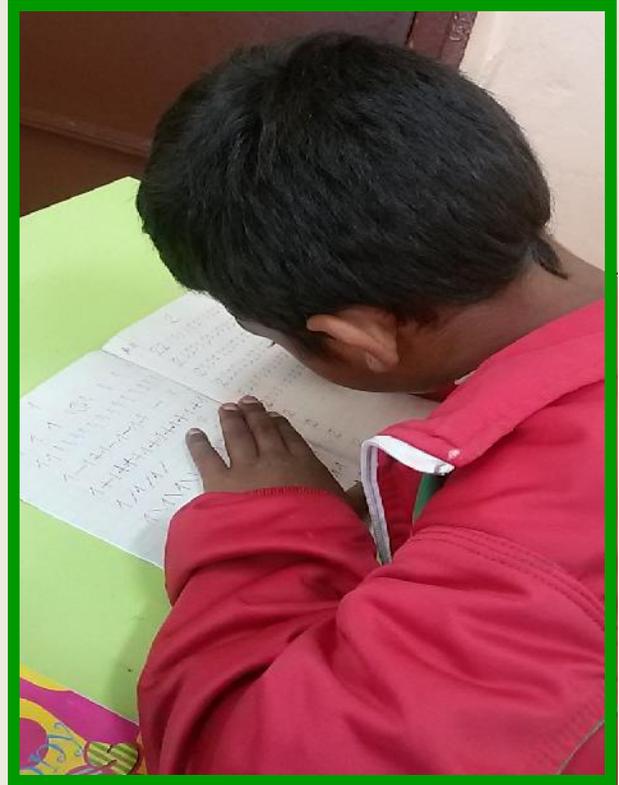
We continued to provide opportunities for skills development of our specialists, to attract new volunteers and resources with which to make more useful and varied things for the children. In the following pages we will tell you more about what happened in Reachout.BG in 2014. We hope it will be interesting for you!

Educational support program

The educational support program was carried out in two stages. The first stage was aimed at children who are still in elementary school, and the second one at students in junior high and high school.

The program aims at early prevention of school dropout, increasing literacy and social competencies of vulnerable groups such as children deprived of parental care and those living in extreme poverty

Our goal is children at risk not only to attend school but to feel accepted, to be motivated to work and unfold their potential. In order for this to happen, however, they often need additional and long-term support as due to their life of privation they don't have the opportunities of their peers to gain knowledge and experience .



After school study for youngest pupils

In 2014 Reachout.BG organized two after school study groups.

In the first group we continued to prepare children who were included in the program in 2013. Thanks to small group work in their first year as pupils they were able to develop systematic study habits, the desire to learn increased and an interest in books and reading appeared. It should be noted that outside the study hall children's access to books and literature is too limited. It could be said that the only books that they have are their textbooks. First graders successfully completed the school year. They continued to work during the summer holidays and were able to consolidate what they have learned in first grade having difficulties only with more complex tasks and exercises.

Already second graders they seamlessly started the new school year.

The second study group was founded after a preliminary study of school life in 113 school and how classmates of children deprived of parental care that are already included in the Reachout program cope with studies. Since most of the children from Slaveykov Orphanage study in this school they spend much of their daily time with other children who have similar difficulties. 113 School is a school in which are trained mainly Roma children living in very poor families. Many of them, like the children deprived of parental care, have knowledge gaps, experience serious difficul-

ties in mastering the material and are often absent from school.

With this in mind Reachout.BG launched a pilot project "There is a place for me in school" which was aimed at children from the community.

With the help of 113 school's management and primary classes form tutors a number of second and third grade students who lag seriously in mastering course material were selected.



As their knowledge and skills were equivalent to those of children entering first grade, Reachout.BG included them in a group modeled on our study of children deprived of parental care. From the outset the 6 children recorded in the group attended eagerly the afternoon studies.

Education support for children from 5th to 12th grade

For a second year in a row Bulgarian language and literature occupied a central place in educational support to older students. In 2014 in Reachout twelve children took 359 lessons in these subjects. Most of them are students with limited language skills, lacking the ability to use grammatical rules and apply the norms, falling behind on school material. They have basic gaps in primary education, lack of established learning habits, problems with motivation and desire to work. The level of many of these children is too low, some of them have serious reading difficulties even in high school.

The teacher from Reachout helps them to catch up with the school material, to develop their language competences, improve their speech, and encourage them to write texts on various topics. The working methods are different, tailored to their knowledge and the pace at which they are progressing.

During Bulgarian language classes children not only educate themselves and receive help but they also learn to communicate, to listen, not to interrupt each other, to show patience when talking to one another and to accept other people's opinions. For the first time most of the children develop interest in reading, learning and gaining knowledge. They make great efforts to educate themselves.

The extracurricular educational support they receive in Reachout affects student performance in class because they already have assessments other than the lowest grades and give answers other than "I don't know" and even have the courage to be examined at their own will.

He lives in an orphanage. He is a student in fifth grade but his knowledge of Bulgarian and school performance equivalent to those of a second grader. He has serious behavior problems. His teacher said she does not know his handwriting because he never writes in class. In Reachout he attended classes in Bulgarian for more than a year. His reading skills improved, he started writing short texts and became much more confident in his knowledge. Gradually he began taking part in school classes.

She grew up in an orphanage. In 2014 she was a student in the seventh grade. She attended classes in Bulgarian in Reachout for one year. With a lot of persistence and perseverance she prepared for the matriculation exam. She managed to take the exam with a score of 5.46 which allowed her to enroll in the desired school.

Education support for children from 5th to 12th grade

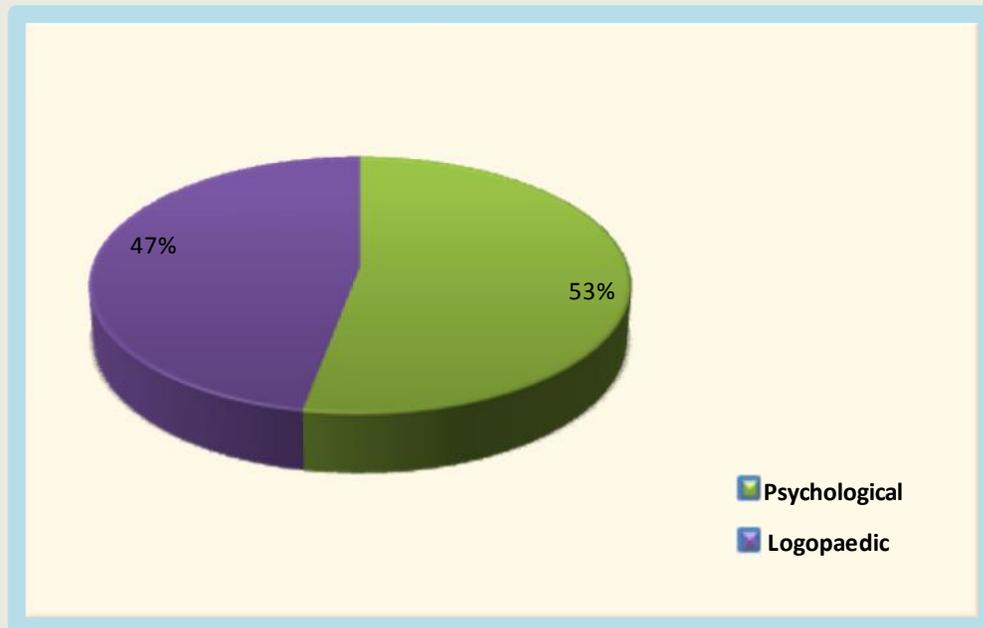
The first successfully implemented plan for child individual support in our program was made possible by the support of the Cervantes Institute in Sofia.

The Cervantes Institute has helped us to realize the dream of a girl from a family type home for children located near Slaveykov orphanage to learn Spanish. In the summer of 2014 she successfully started and finished level A1.1. + A1.2. As a result of her good performance during the course and the high score at the exam to complete the level, the Cervantes Institute decided to extend her scholarship and in the autumn of 2014 she started level A2.1.



Specialized support

During the last year the psychologists and the speech-therapist of Reachout.BG provided a total of **403** consultations (212 psychological and 191 speech therapy ones).



Psychological support

In 2014 Reachout.BG kept the scope of care activities for the emotional development of the children. Five children with behavioral problems and adaptation difficulties received psychological support. The psychologist helped them explore their feelings and emotions and overcome problems and difficulties in communicating with others. They also helped children overcome their problems with concentration and retaining attention in the classroom.

We continued to provide weekly individual psychology counseling to the three girls with Down syndrome. The psychologist work with two of them was mainly focused on preparing them for leaving the institu-

tion and moving them to protected housing for young people.

Along with the consultative work, one of our psychologists determined the level of school preparedness of the new children in the Reachout program using tests.

Speech therapy

In 2014 the Reachout speech therapist worked individually with eight children and adolescents. The children who attended the therapist were lagging behind in language and speech development. They don't have enough concepts in their active vocabulary which reflects upon the functional use of the language.

Therefore children have difficulty naming even common objects related to daily life. This is an obstacle to literacy and leads to a delay in learning the material. Speech therapy courses help children raise their level of linguistic competence and to express themselves properly and clearly.

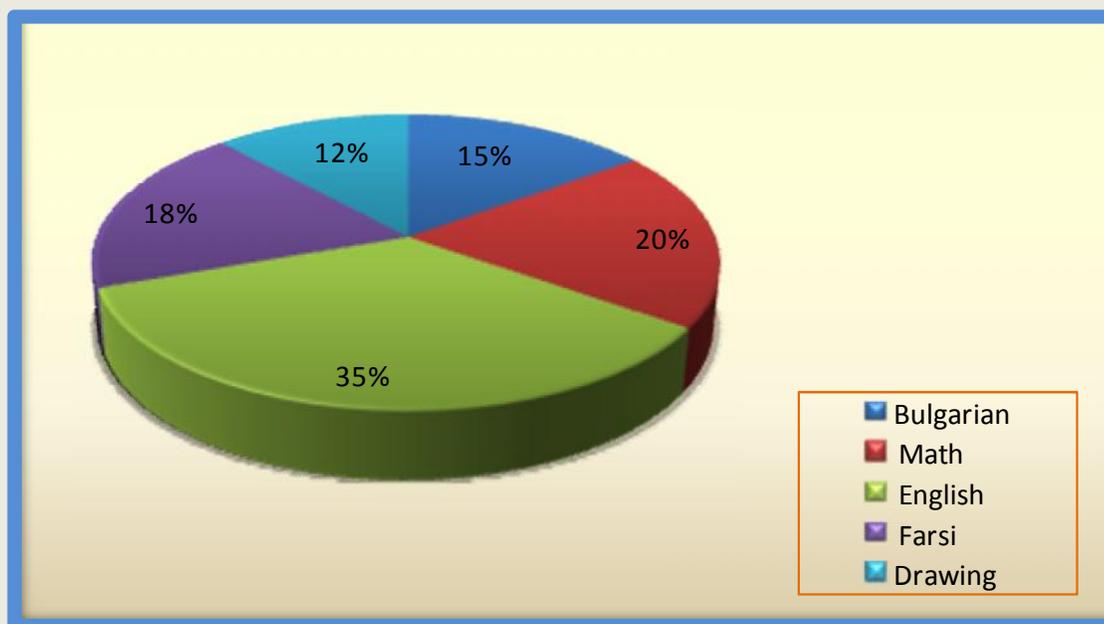


Volunteer support

Our volunteers actively participated in the activities that we implemented in 2014. They helped us in group activities, adventure trips in nature, the Christmas walk and the painting studio. They also joined the activities at the start of our second study in 113 High School.

Like in previous years some of the volunteers continued to support an individual child by helping it to study on a specific subject.

In 2014 our volunteers did **184 hours** voluntary work: **48 hours** to teach Bulgarian language; **32 hours** mathematics, **55 hours** English, **30 hours** Farsi and **19 hours** painting



- ✓ **Bulgarian** – During the informal communication with our volunteers children turn to books easier because they do not see reading as coercion or exam, but as a funny and enjoyable time during which they learn many new things.
- ✓ **Mathematics** – Last year our volunteers continued to help children improve their knowledge of mathematics. They worked mainly with children in high school classes.
- ✓ **English** – Reachout continues to carry out classes in English only thanks to the efforts and dedication of its volunteers. Last year 4 children took classes in English.
- ✓ **Persian language (Farsi)** - For the second year in a row one of our volunteers held classes in Persian language with

two refugee children accommodated in the House. In this way we help children to preserve their native language. We believe that knowing a language which is not so popular in Bulgaria will favor the successful realization of these children in the future.

- ✓ **Painting** - The painting studio is visited mainly by a group of younger children. During these hours our volunteer shows the children different painting techniques. Children are waiting for these activities with a feeling of great anticipation.

Learning through experience

In 2014 Reachout.BG and Reverso continued their joint work together and gave to the children from Slaveykov orphanage new exciting adventures.

In the beginning of September we took 12 children to camp in the mountain. Together we returned to familiar places from last year but also explored new, unfamiliar routes. We even did an evening walk. Overcoming challenges, we made clay figures which we later hid in a cave. Children actively participated in all daily activities cooked, prepared the equipment, gathered sticks for the fire and laughed a lot.

Thanks to the support of Reverso we managed to start a new initiative - we sent one of the bigger boys to camp along with children, strange to him, for the first time. Chil-



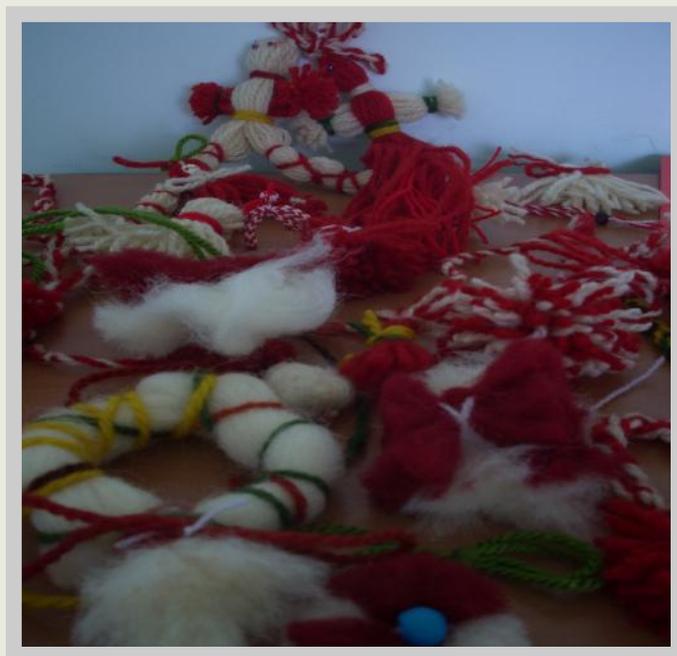
children deprived of parental care are always part of a group and they very rarely have the feeling that something is done only for them.

We believe that for children deprived of parental care to gain personal experience and be able to make friends, to be independent and responsible, they need to experience the same things as their peers who were raised in a family environment. That is why in 2014 we started the individual adventures and according to the boy the Bike club Crookes Spoke expedition was an unforgettable experience.



Art workshops

Both Baba Marta and Christmas days were an occasion to get together with the children, to create and to have fun. The organization of these workshops has become a tradition and every year children come gleaming with enthusiasm to make more beautiful martenitsi and cards. The smallest kids who participate for the first time are the ones most eagerly anticipating the workshops. With the bigger kids we share memories and recall the joyful moments from previous years.



Events

- ✓ **Hackidemia** – In 2014 children participated in Hackidemia again thanks to our new friends from Soho. With each edition of Hackidemia workshops are becoming more and more interesting. They are a great opportunity for children to learn interesting facts from various scientific fields in a fun and interactive way.
- ✓ **Career with a cause** – Reachout took part in the second edition of the forum dedicated to making a career in NGOs. This was a great opportunity to attract new volunteers to our cause .
- ✓ **To continue** – In November we were invited to the Military club in Sofia for a third year in a row. During this charity event children watched children's musical the Nightingale presented by their peers from the city of Dupnitsa .
- ✓ **Christmas walk** – The children's musical based on the Bremen Town Musicians was our Christmas gift for the children from Slaveykov Orphanage. Children enjoyed songs, dances and a lot of fun at the Sofia Opera.



Financial report

Sources of financing and realized costs for the period 1 January - 31 December 2014 in Bulgarian levs.

Financial account for 2014	BGN	GBP*
Revenues	37,156.11	14,862.44
Costs	39,367.22	15,746.89
<i>Psychologist</i>	5,262.57	2,105.03
<i>Speech-therapist</i>	4,053.61	1,621.44
<i>Teachers</i>	13,579.31	5,431.72
<i>Camps and materials for work with children</i>	3,683.31	1,473.32
Total direct costs	26,578.80	10,631.52
<i>Salaries</i>	10,879.98	4,351.99
<i>Accounting</i>	1,200.00	480.00
<i>Other</i>	708.44	283.38
Total administrative costs	12,788.42	5,115.37

*Exchange rate British pound to Bulgarian lev 0.4

In 2014 we extended the scope of our program again. The number of children increased and for the first time we included children from the community who live in extremely poor families. We attracted new volunteers to participate in the implementation of our activities and expanded our team of teachers.

The program costs grew by 25% due to the assistance provided by professional experts (teachers, psychologists and speech therapist). We would like to emphasize that the above table does not account for the unpaid work by our volunteers which amounts to 2208 leva as well as the support by our partners - the Cervantes Institute and Adventure school Reverso for the implementation of individual plans to help specific children amounting to a total of 1115 leva.

We continue to stick to our philosophy to do minimal administrative costs which are limited to salaries for a coordinator and an accountant.

Reachout.BG plans for 2015 r.

- ✓ Establishing a separate support center for children at risk;
- ✓ Redirection of the program from Petko Slaveykov orphanage to the Centers for family-type accommodation which will be opened by Sofia municipality as part of the process of deinstitutionalization;
- ✓ Improving our school support program through the development of individual plans for the children;
- ✓ Developing individual plans for development and support of older children according to their interests and achievements;
- ✓ Expanding the program for cultural education and sports activities during children's leisure time;
- ✓ Expanding our volunteer network by identifying and attracting new corporate partners as well as founding corporate social responsibility programs for the Bulgarian companies;
- ✓ Trainings for volunteers engaged in various Reachout.BG initiatives;
- ✓ Organizing meetings of NGOs whose goal is to build lasting partnerships and sharing of best practices for working with children deprived of parental care;

Thanks to all those who donated money or time to our cause last year. Your support provides children deprived of parental care to grow up smiling and increases their opportunities for development and a better future.

The contribution of anyone, no matter how small it is, makes a difference in the lives of children at risk.

You can support our cause by donating money via bank transfer, via PayPal or through the Virgin money platform.



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Account in UK

HSBC Bank PLC
129 New Bond Street, Mayfair
London, W1S 1EA
Sort code: 40-05-01
Account: 8169 0493

Account in Bulgaria

UniCredit BULBANK
IBAN: BG41UNCR70001521790913
BIC: UNCRBGSF
9, Knyaz Al. Dondukov - Korsakov Blvd, 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria



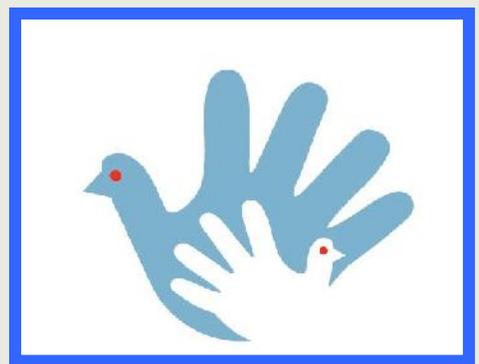
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