A CHANGE IN A CHILD IS A CHANGE FOR BULGARIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2018
ABOUT NATIONAL NETWORK FOR CHILDREN

The National Network for Children (NNC) was established in 2003 as a free alliance of non-governmental organisations. In 2006 it acquired a non-governmental organization in public benefit status.

In 2018, the network already comprises 152 civil organisations and supporters working with and for children and families from the whole country. The members of the Network are among the best experts in the fields of education, health, social services, justice; the development of youth activities, youth activities development, family support, parents and disadvantaged children.

We all work with the desire to create better conditions for the development and a happier future for all Bulgarian children by complementing the efforts of the state and the institutions where necessary and cooperating with them in the best interests of the child.

The rights of the child – their promotion, observance and protection are a key part of the principles that unite us. We believe that all policies and practices which directly or indirectly affect children should be planned, implemented and monitored with a clear assessment of the impact on children and young people and with their active participation.

OUR VISION

The National Network for Children works towards a society where each child can have a family and enjoys the best life and development opportunities, where sectoral policies for children and families are aligned and children’s rights and welfare are guaranteed.

OUR MISSION

The National Network for Children is an advocate for children’s rights and welfare, bringing together and developing a wide, socially-significant network of organisations and supporters.

OUR GOALS

• Campaign for better policies and practices for children and families.
• Change public attitudes to children’s rights.
• Develop participation models for children and young people.
• Unite and develop the Network and its member organisations.
Dear Friends and Supporters,

In 2018, we in the National Network for Children, as an alliance of 152 organisations working with and for children across the country, continued to make every effort to achieve the change we are striving for – that each child would have a family and the best opportunities for life and development, so that they could have a happy childhood and become the best adult they could be.

The organisations continued to support tens of thousands of children and families, to help thousands of professionals (teachers, social and health workers, psychologists, policemen) develop their skills to work for better education, health, social support, justice for Bulgarian children. We continued to advocate and insist that the policies for children in our country should be planned with a view to the specific effect on the life of every child in Bulgaria, with the understanding that governmental institutions, local authorities and professionals working with children should talk to each other and in their decision-making should be guided by what is best for the child. Together with other organisations, an alliance Childhood Without Violence was established, working to build zero tolerance to violence against children in Bulgaria; we were part of the Initiative Committee for the building of a Children’s Hospital; we have constantly emphasised the need for an urgent reform towards a more humane child justice that does not punish children for offences for which even adults are not punished. We have made a lot of efforts to look for the opinion of the children we work for, with over 1,200 children taking part in various consultations over the year.

We have developed and continue to develop the platform helping parents and professionals endviolence.bg, which brings together the experience and support of many organisations and professionals working with and for children.

Nevertheless, 2018 was a different year. Along with the reforms we have been fighting for and demanding for years now, and along with some of the victories and challenges described in this report, disinformation and fear are becoming increasingly visible in the public domain. Numerous false news, misleading petitions and untrue statements exploited the fears of parents and became a threat to providing the best opportunities for life and development of every child in our country. This is a challenge not only for us as a Network but also for the governmental institutions, the media, and especially for the parents.

We in the National Network for Children will continue to advocate for the right of every child to grow in the best possible environment and conditions, to be protected from violence and to live with their family where the parents have the necessary support. Because we believe that every parent wants the best for their child and sometimes they need sometimes they need very little to achieve it.

George Apostolov, Chairman of the Management Board
George Bogdanov, Executive Director
WHO ARE WE?

The National Network for Children pools together 152 organisations from across the country, employing some of the best experts in the fields of education, health, social services, justice; development of youth activities, support for disadvantaged families, parents and children.

Management Board

The NNC has a 7-member Management Board, consisting of representatives of NNC member organisations elected by the General Assembly. The Management Board supports, consults and monitors the work of the Secretariat and makes decisions on key for the Network issues outside the mandate of the General Assembly.

Supervisory Board

The Supervisory Board makes a review of the financial situation of the Network at the end of the fiscal year, and provides monitoring throughout the whole year. Also the Supervisory Board monitors compliance with the rules and procedures of the organisation.
Secretariat

The Secretariat of the National Network for Children consists of 16 people and our operations are divided into 5 departments:

- **Programming** department planning the advocacy work of the Network in the fields of education, health, family and justice;
- **Child and Youth Participation** department with the main role to coordinate the Megaphone Youth Network and ensure the child participation in the activities of the National Network for Children;
- **Network Development** department, dealing with membership issues, networking, strategic planning, regional coordination;
- **Communications** department;
- **Financial and administrative** department.

The activity is organised with the help of and under the leadership of the Network Development Director and the Executive Director.

152 organisations from the whole country

The 152 organisations, members of the National Network for Children, are split into 8 regions in the country. A regional coordinator is responsible for each region. They are responsible for coordinating the local Network activities, initiatives and campaigns; the coordination of region-specific activities; supporting and mobilising the Network members in the region, and supporting relationships between the Network members and other organisations and institutions that have a role to play in guaranteeing children’s rights.

- **North-Eastern Region** (Varna and Dobrich)
  Gavroche Association, Varna
  Gergana Encheva, gergana.encheva@nmd.bg

- **North-Eastern Central Region**
  (Targovishte, Razgrad, Shumen, Silistra)
  Club of NSO – Targovishte
  Nevena Madjarova, nevena.madjarova@nmd.bg

- **North Central Region**
  (Veliko Tarnovo, Lovech, Pleven, Gabrovo, Rousse)
  Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance Amalipe – Veliko Tarnovo
  Ivan Todorov, amalipe@nmd.bg

- **North-Western Region** (Vratsa, Vidin, Montana)
  Association First of June – Byala Slatina
  Aylin Barsanova, aylin.barsanova@nmd.bg

- **South-West Region**
  (Pernik, Blagoevgrad, Kyustendil, Sofia – district)
  PULS Foundation, Pernik
  Julia Andonova, julia.andonova@nmd.bg

- **South-Western Central Region**
  (Plovdiv, Pazardzhik, Smolyan)
  Social Practices Foundation in the Community, Pazardzhik
  Lyudmil Spasov, lyudmil.spasov@nmd.bg

- **Central-Eastern Region**
  (Stara Zagora, Haskovo, Kardjali)
  World Without Borders Association – Stara Zagora
  Gancho Iliev, gancho.ilio@nmd.bg

- **South-Eastern Region** (Bourgas, Sliven, Yambol)
  Association „The True Guardian“ – Burgas
  Jelio Jelev, jelio.jelev@nmd.bg
Every year the National Network for Children helps over 74,000 children, 13,000 families and 4,500 professionals working for children.

A strategic priority in our work is the child participation and their right to state their opinion in making the decisions that affect them. For that reason, we have created and we implement a number of child participation programmes, and also develop the Megaphone Youth Network.

We publish annually the paper “Report Card: What is the Average Government Score for Childcare?”, which makes a review and evaluates the commitments made by institutions concerning children’s rights. The report also includes recommendations that would improve existing policies and practices.

Every year we organise the Golden Apple Awards, which recognise the contribution for the wellbeing of Bulgarian children of individuals, organisations and institutions. The awards are presented in several categories, such as Municipality, School, Benefactor and others, by a prominent jury. The general public chooses the winner of the Hero of Children category by nominations and subsequent online voting.

We advocate for children’s rights

We conduct communication campaigns

We are developing an operational civil network for children and families

We are developing and consulting policies for children and families

The Network maintains 4 communication channels – two websites, a Facebook page, and a weekly bulletin.

www.nmd.bg
www.endviolence.bg
www.facebook.com/nmdbg/
WHAT DID WE DO IN 2018?

We have continued our efforts for a National Paediatric Hospital
together with the Committee for the construction of a modern multi-profile
university children’s hospital. We managed to engage the public opinion and in the last
month of the year we saw various proposals and solutions. We are encouraged by the
desire and the strong recognition of the need for a National Paediatric Hospital –
Children’s Health Park, in our capital. It is of utmost importance for us to continue the debate, to make public decisions, and with the participation of all stakeholders: representatives of civic organisations, parents, psychologists, social workers, children.

We have developed an assessment of the country’s financial investment in children
This is the first for Bulgaria tool to monitor the state’s financial investment in children. It will be further developed as a follow-up in 2019 and will add to the Network’s Advocacy Toolbox a new, modern tool recommended by all international organisations – the Council of Europe, the European Commission, UNICEF, OECD and other.

We have surveyed the attitudes to the corporal punishment
in Bulgaria. A national representative survey conducted in 2018 by the Noema
Agency commissioned by the National Network for Children showed that nearly
90% of parents are aware that spanking is not an effective disciplinary method
but 2/3 have used it at times/at some point. The data also show that the use of corporal punishment has been decreasing over the past 5 years. However, the anxiety among young people and parents is growing, with parents indicating aggression among children as one of the first-ranking threats to their children, whereas 5 years ago they didn’t identify such risk at all.

The New National Strategy for the Child
with a horizon for actions until 2030, was developed with our active participation.
When it was drafted, we helped to focus it on supporting parents and professionals.
We have convinced the other participants in its development to identify and establish key for the Network principles among which are the coordination between the main social systems operating around children and families and the capacity building of professionals working with children, in addition to putting an emphasis on the support for the parents.

We supported the protest of the mothers of children with disabilities
The National Network for Children supported the protest of the mothers of children with disabilities who insisted for reforming the system of social support for people with disabilities in the country. We also joined their appeal for the resignation of Deputy Prime Minister Valeri Simeonov after the unacceptable for his post statement, degrading the children with disabilities and their parents.

What influence did we have in 2018?

50 opinions, positions and letters sent to institutions.
15 consulted legislative and strategic documents
5 amendments to legislation, strategies and plans adopted as a result of the opinions of the Network.
1 self-authored monitoring report – Report Card: What is the Average Government Score for Childcare?
7 collaborative efforts with international organisations as ECPAT, Eurochild and the European Commission contributing to the development of international policies for children
3 National Councils where the NNC takes part
20 working groups and advisory councils
2 monitoring committees under the operational programmes
4 thematic working groups with over 200 participants
8 public events with institutions, media and citizens
WHAT DID WE DO FOR FAMILIES IN 2018?

‘Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good. For example, if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child.’

Article 9

We asked for better care for children in Small group homes (SGH)
We managed to draw the attention of the MLSP and put on the agenda the systemic problems of the Small group homes and the need for lasting and adequate solutions to ensure the quality of care for children in these services. As a result of our actions with our partners, the work of the Standing Expert Group on Deinstitutionalisation has been restored, where a detailed analysis of the situation, problems and recommendations for ensuring the quality of care in these services has been performed.

The New Social Services Act
which at the end of the year was submitted to the National Assembly was developed with our active participation. In a number of opinions, we have expressed our approval for the principles that it introduces, including: – universal access to services, a clear focus on the quality of social services and introducing an integrated approach to service delivery – a conceptually new aspect in the field of social services.

We helped in the crisis after the case of violence in Hrisantema FTPC in Gabrovo
We supported the efforts of the municipality and the team of Hrisantema Family-Type Placement Centre in Gabrovo in their efforts to overcome the crisis after the infamous video of violence against children with disabilities. We have helped the process of finding the proper response for the necessary changes in the municipality to improve the care of children placed in residential services, and proposed a specific action plan to the responsible institutions. Some of the Network member organisations have provided supervision in the municipality to the extent to which the political and administrative will allowed us in.

We have supported the access to education for vulnerable groups of children in Sofia
We drew the attention of Sofia Municipality to the need for keeping the social criteria “child with a deceased parent”, “child of a 3+ children family” and “child placed in foster care or adopted” in the system for admissions of first graders in the municipal schools in Sofia.
What are the topics or situations in which it is important for you to be able to talk to your parents and rely on their support?

In response to this question, most children said that it was important for them to be able to talk to their parents about everything. Children say also that they would need to talk to their parents when they need support on issues about their future development and when they need advice. It is good to be able to talk on topics related to sex and problems at school. Quite a few children say they do not like to communicate with their parents: “They have no sympathy for my interests, ideas”; “I would like them to listen to me and to understand me instead of just patronizing me,” are part of the young people’s opinions.

What are the most important things that a child living without their parents need, in your view?

The majority of young people believe that children living without parents need most of all love, support and care. Very important is also the support of their peers and friends. The family environment, whether of a foster family or close relatives, is a significant factor. Only then children talk about meeting basic needs, such as food and shelter, and about the quality of the living environment.

For which of the decisions taken by your parents, would you like to be asked what your opinion is?

Most children want to participate and/or participate in making decisions that affect them personally or their family, and second comes the view that children are asked or want to be asked about everything. Some of the young people say their parents ask for their opinions only on issues related to their future professional development, travel decisions and decisions about the house they live in, as well as the home menu. There are also some of the children who say their parents do not take into consideration their opinion: “They generally want my opinion, but they do not always take it into account”,”I do not express much opinion because very often it is not respected”, children say.
We encouraged Ministry of Education to support schools and families in the development of more good practices in education and upbringing of children

In 2018, the Ministry of Education set up a working group to develop new Strategy on Education and Upbringing in the Educational Institutions, due to the identified need that the role of the school in the upbringing of children should be more explicitly defined. In the process of development of the Strategy the National Network for Children opposed twice the highly controversial draft text which instead of elaborating modern concepts such as personal development of the child, went back to obsolete forms and methods of upbringing of the past century and was even close to discrimination against children from different ethnic groups. Despite of the amendments of the draft text done by the Ministry, the Network continues to insist that the Strategy should be dropped altogether, and the understanding of upbringing of the educational institutions and the teachers should be modernised as a shared responsibility of the school and the parents together. Currently, the dialogue with MES on that topic continues.

The debate on compulsory education for 4-year-olds continues

The topic of compulsory pre-school education for 4-year-olds was again part of the agenda during the year. In line with the Plan for Implementing the Strategy for Reducing the Early School Leavers (2013-2020), including the 4-year-olds in the compulsory pre-school education should happen by 2020 and should cover 90% of the children of this age. The National Network for Children expressed support for the widest possible inclusion of children from vulnerable groups in early forms of education and care but again insisted for provision of more alternative opportunities for support for families with young children, such as legalisation of parent cooperatives and other forms of childcare; support for children not admitted in state kindergartens; development of specific incentives such as reducing and eliminating the kindergarten fees. The National Network for Children is part of the working groups for reforms in the regulations for admissions in kindergartens in Sofia Municipality, where the criteria for admission and the conditions of childcare services are constantly discussed, as well as the access to childcare facilities, as the shortage of places in Sofia and other big cities is severe.
We awarded 4 school projects with a prize of BGN 600

Four school proposals were awarded in the National Network for Children Competition Change – That’s Us!, under the “The School as a Community Centre” project. The participants in the competition have identified problems in their surrounding school environment and have prepared projects for their resolving.

The successful projects have propose the creation of:
- drums band for the inclusion of all students of Primary School P. R. Slaveykov, Burgas;
- an interactive traffic safety grounds where older students could teach their younger kids school – Hristo Botev, Kubrat;
- refreshing the school corridors by creating spaces for informal communication and painting the walls at Vassil Levski Secondary School, Valchi Dol;
- transforming the school library into a “secret garden” where, in addition to books, students have access to many other games, knowledge and entertainment facilities – at the Third Primary School “Bratyia Miladinovi”, Gote Delchev.

The implementation of each project was financially supported by the National Network for Children with BGN 600.

Community Schools Project

In June 2018 the Community Schools project was finalised. The representatives of the schools participating in the project gathered at the Annual Meeting of the Network in the town of Tryavna and presented their work during the year according the identified priority development areas. Everyone shared their positive experience of their joint work and exchange visits. Although the project will not continue formally, the 33 schools will remain connected to each other in the community schools network and will be a valuable partner to the NNC with various initiatives, focus groups, trainings and events.

The Voice of Children

What helps you most with learning at school? What is your biggest obstacle?

Teachers are the most important factor – if they are patient and explain more, if they are motivated and love their work, if they teach in a clear and easy to understand way, using interesting methods and practical exercises. It is also important whether your parents have taught you to be curious.

The noise in class, distracting classmates and the smartphones are the biggest challenge to learning. Another problem is school workload – a lot of requirements and little motivation.

Is there anything that can be changed in the communication between students and teachers to make you feel better at school and learn more?

Opportunities to talk, in a more open tone, would help children express their thoughts with higher confidence. Teachers should make more jokes and treat students as their equals. There are teachers who shout and use offensive language. It will be nice if the teachers pay more attention to how young people think and what ideas they have, and not to how much they have memorised the facts. Children also claim that they are under great stress and are often anxious or depressed, but no one is paying attention to this.

If you can choose how your school would look like, what would you change or add to make it nicer and the environment to help you learn more?

Nicer environment, cleaner and more colorful, warm in the winter, and with air conditioners in the summer. More sports facilities and green areas are also among the students’ wishes. To play music in the breaks, access to the Internet and TV sets which should show what projects the students are working on. Children need rooms where they can eat and and take some rest, and more tasty at the school canteens. Children recommend that teachers should use more modern technologies – laptops, tablets, multimedia. They want to have only one shift at school, the lessons to start later, backpacks to be not so heavy, and to have smaller number of children in one class; more outdoor lessons and opportunities for an artistic program.

The survey was conducted by the National Eurochild Forum rapporteurs among 76 children from the country aged between 10 and 18. (see page 14-15)
We worked on the development of early childhood intervention
We continue to bring to the forefront the early childhood intervention and family-oriented approach as leading principles for the support for parents of children with disabilities, development delays, behavioural problems or the need for supporting their mental health. We are guided by the recommendations made to our country for building a national early childhood intervention system given by Dr. Emily Vargas Baron, an international consultant and recognised expert supporting the governments in this field.

Health-related legislation and standards
In 2018, we supported the proposed broad changes to the Health Act. We are going to monitor closely the state institutions in order to ensure that they will take real steps towards conducting a survey of the needs for services, programmes and specialists in the sphere of child mental health. We also expressed our concerns that the proposed changes to the “Obstetrics and Gynaecology” Medical Standard are restrictive and do not allow all premature infants to benefit from top-level medical care. We have insisted for the development of a single registry of all premature infants, for upgrading the skills and delivery of specialised trainings to prepare for a conversation with parents in the event of disability, death or unfavourable prognosis for the child; for addressing the main challenges and problems faced by the obstetric care model; for the development of a special programme/plan for retention of healthcare professionals in Bulgaria.

The Fund for Treatment of Children
For yet another year the National Network for Children expressed its concerns about the operation of the Fund for Treatment of Children and about the proposed integration of this Fund within the structure of the National Health Insurance Fund. We issued a statement against the structural changes being done through an amendment in the 2019 State Budget Act, without a consultative process and public consultations. We did not receive a reply to the questions we asked aimed at putting the focus on ensuring that we will not allow for another child’s life to be lost because of administrative obstacles or difficulties, and that our state would guarantee as much as possible the right of every child to life, survival and development. Hence, we filed a complaint with the Ministry of Health, with regards to their refusal to provide us information in accordance with the Access to Public Information Act about the decisions concerning the Fund.

‘Children have the right to a good quality healthcare, to safe drinking water, and nutritious food to help them stay healthy.’

Article 24

‘Children have the right to a good quality healthcare, to safe drinking water, and nutritious food to help them stay healthy.’

Article 24
Early childhood development

We have continued to focus on early childhood development and the need for a unified and integrated policy that would guarantee child welfare from an early age and will be a tool for supporting children and families. In order to unify efforts, knowledge and resources, in 2018 a non-formal association of 50 organisations and professionals, the Alliance for Early Childhood Development, was set up by organisations-members of the NNC, as well as independent ones, and international partners in order to promote early childhood development as a political and public priority and for development of policies and practices.

We opposed the lifting of the smoking ban

We firmly opposed the proposal for amendments to the Health Act to allow smoking in public places. For us, it is entirely at odds with the National policy on improving the health of the nation and the prevention of chronic non-communicable diseases and contradicts a number of international standards to which Bulgaria is a party. We have once again reminded that the guiding principle in the Constitution of the World Health Organisation, is that using the highest achievable standard is one of the fundamental rights of every human being. We have moved forward the recommendation to focus on prevention of smoking among children and young people, as a priority anti-smoking measure, as well as improving control and compliance with the existing rules, including on the restriction of the sale of tobacco products to children.

How do you think a hospital in which children can receive good health care and be treated in an appropriate setting should look like?

Children are most likely to comment on the environment in the hospital, saying they prefer it to be very colourful, with pictures, with grounds, toys, to be welcoming and not so scary. Another important aspect according to the young people is the good attitude of doctors, their care and attention. Many children report that the professionalism of doctors in the future children's hospital is of great importance. The hospital should also have good equipment and an adequate number of staff. Some children also focus on the better hygiene in the hospital.

What do you think doctors and nurses in a hospital could do to help children worry less when they are ill?

To be kinder, friendlier, more smiling and caring; they must be able to make children feel more relaxed and open, and soothe them. “To talk to them and tell them not to worry and that they are in good hands”, “To distract them from the everyday difficulties in the hospital life.” Young people also believe that if the hospital treatment is done through play and some entertainment activities are available, it will be less scary and worrying. They also recommend to the doctors what they should not do in order to make children feel calm and relaxed — not to stress them, not to talk about them with other adults in their presence, while ignoring them. It is also important how the medical professionals are dressed — children prefer them to wear colourful uniform, while white coats scare them.

The voice of children

What in your view is the life of children in Bulgaria?

The survey was conducted by the National Eurochild Forum rapporteurs among 109 children from the country aged between 12 and 18.
What did we do about justice for children in 2018?

"Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in a prison with adults and should be able to keep in contact with their family."

**Article 37**


The 4 Child Rights Hubs continued to help

Children with problematic behavior, child victims of crime and children in conflict with the law in the cities of Vratsa, Pazardzhik, Ruse and Sofia. During the year they became recognisable by local authorities and communities. The Child Rights Hub in Sofia was nominated for the Innovative Social Service of the Year Award. The activities of the centres focus on advocating for the rights of such children in court, at school and before the police. Psychologists and social workers from the centres engage extensively with their families and parents, aiming to intervene at the earliest stage to prevent more serious risk. The Hubs are run by: The Social Activities and Practices Institute in Sofia; Crime Prevention Fund – IGA in Pazardzhik; FICE-Bulgaria, in Vratsa; Association Equilibrium, Ruse. They were built under the NNC project “Development of Child Rights Hubs for Children in Conflict and Contact with the Law in Bulgaria”, supported by the Velux Foundation.

We continued to demand a new Justice for Children Act

and to advocate for the urgent need to proceed with the reform of the child justice system and to repeal the 60-year-old Juvenile Delinquency Act, which does not ensure sufficient support for offenders. We continued to participate and represent the children in various working groups and councils so that a new law could be moved forward. During the reporting period, we wrote two new statements calling for reform.

"Children who have been neglected, abused or exploited should receive special help to physically and psychologically recover."

**Article 39**

We opposed the “secret arrests” of children

In 2018, the Government attempted to make an amendment in the Penal Procedure Code, according to which the notification of the parents of a child detained with a remand detention measure could be postponed for 24 hours (it became known in the public domain as “secret arrests”).

With our two positions, we strongly opposed this amendment, as we believe that it contradicts the understanding of the rights of the child and the need for policies aimed at guaranteeing them. The National Network for Children strongly condemned the scandalous statement of the Deputy Minister of Justice, Mr. Evgeni Stoyanov, that the detained children are not “obedient and good” and one of their basic procedural rights should be withdrawn, namely the right of a third party to be immediately informed of their detention. As a result of our position, the Ministry of Justice restarted the process of reforming the justice for children system and this work continue in 2019.

At what age do you think a child can commit a serious crime?

Most children believe that a child can commit a serious crime at 16 and 17. Fewer are those who consider that this age is 14 or 15. There are also children who claim that a serious crime can only be committed by an adult, and some children believe that it is possible also for a younger child, aged 10 or even 4.

What would be the reasons for committing a serious crime?

According to most of the children’s opinions, the causes for committing a serious crime are psychological problems of varying depth: “mental illness”, “depression” and the like. Others link the serious crime to the environment in which the child grows or the upbringing he/she receives: “poor education”, “neglect by parents”, “psychological harassment”. A child can commit a serious crime also as a result of provocation, being urged by someone, or out of “love” or “jealousy.” It is also possible that this is a “child that is being abused and insulted all the time”. Alcohol, drugs or revenge/envy are also among the likely causes of a serious crime, according to children.

In your opinion, is there a correlation between the severity of the punishment for a crime, incl. a serious crime, and the age of the child? Please explain what is the correlation.

Most of the children believe that the severity of the punishment, even in the case of a serious crime, depends on the age of the child. “Yes, it depends, because younger children do not realise what they have done and in most cases are not ready to take responsibility for their actions”, “The purpose of the punishment is actually to show the child that he/she has done something inhuman. Not to crash him/her.” A smaller group of children says that the punishment does not depend on the age of the child but on the gravity of the crime. “It depends on the crime, a more severe crime leads to a more severe punishment.”
WHAT DID WE DO FOR CHILD PARTICIPATION IN 2018?

‘Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account.’

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**Article 12**


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“Little Report Card” reflected the grade the children give to the government

The annual paper “Report Card: What is the Average Government Score for Childcare?” again included an additional document reflecting the opinion and experience of those directly affected by government policies for children and families – parents, professionals and children themselves. In this survey, we collected the opinions on how institutions deal with their promises to them, of more than 600 children, parents and professionals working with children across the country.

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40 young people took part in five consultation focus groups as part of the second thematic monitoring round on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

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We included the children’s opinion in the “Vision for Sofia”

We joined the “Vision for Sofia” team in the opinion poll in connection with the elaboration of the Strategy Paper of Sofia Municipality of the same name. We conducted 12 focus groups with children of all ages and school professionals on how do children in Sofia live, in order for their views to be taken into account in the future urban development of the Capital City.

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National Eurochild Forum

In 2018, we developed and continue to run successfully the National Eurochild Forum. The participants in it (the so-called “rapporteurs”) on a monthly basis receive or choose a topic for which to consult their peers throughout the country. Thus, we have managed to get the opinions of the children on eight different topics related to school, violence, child justice, the environment and others. Each month, we send the aggregated results to the adults working with children, and try to involve the relevant institutions by expecting them to take into account the children’s views in their actions.
We have supported 39 organisations and over 1,200 children in their efforts to promote and exercise children’s views.

We have worked directly with 200 young people and in 2018 we developed and made the Youth Network Megaphone even more sustainable. We welcomed a new group of children, adults supporting them and organisations, bringing their total number to 36. We continued to work on “Seekers of In/Equities” with 50 adolescents from across the country. Under this initiative, children themselves explore how discrimination emerges and how it affects their communities. Information about the initiative is available on our website. We had the pleasure of having two young NNC representatives take an active part in the Eurochild Children’s Council, the members of which contribute to the development of policies for children at the European Union level.

The Fourth Annual “Voice It” Youth Forum has gathered more than 150 participants from all over the country in the Largo of Sofia. The event is held annually on 20 November on the occasion of the World Children’s Day – the anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The topic of this year’s round of “Voice It”, selected by the children from the Megaphone Youth Network, was health and sexual education. Participants discussed how education on these topics is currently being conducted at school, how the topic is communicated at home, what can be improved and what children need in order to feel better informed and confident about this topic, which is so important for them.

The voice of children

What do children think about health and sexual education in Bulgaria?

The topic was selected by the Megaphone Youth Network and discussed at the “Voice It” 2018 Youth Forum, which included over 150 children and adults.

What questions do you have on sexual and health issues?
Whom can we trust for sexual issues? How to speak about and fight sexually transmitted infections?
What are the symptoms of AIDS? What is the reliable contraception for men? How do we know which condoms are of good quality? Should I share with my partner if I have a sexually transmitted infection or disease? What are the possible complications and how are they treated? What do we do if our naked pictures are posted on the internet? What are you going to tell people who believe that it is harmful for children to discuss these issues and topics at school?

What do you think about health and sexual education in Bulgaria?
During the “Voice It” 2018 forum, the children shared that they were particularly interested in how to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies and from sexually transmitted infections. Young people admitted that they are often embarrassed to talk to adults — parents and teachers, about their sex related fears and questions, and the risks they face because the topic is still taboo in many families and schools. The young people also said it was easier to discuss health and sex related issues with their peers. At the same time, however, they are aware that this poses some risks, because sometimes there is no information or it is not reliable, and so they have suggested young people trained in the topic, supported by the institutions to be provided, who should educate their peers and whom they can consult where necessary.
In 2018, the paper “Report Card: What is the Average Government Score for Childcare?” for the seventh consecutive year monitored the commitments made by the government institutions concerning the rights of children. The report was developed by experts in the relevant areas, and was based on evidence provided by these very institutions. It examined 25 government commitments made in five areas: “General Principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child”, “Family Environment and Alternative Care”, “Healthcare”, “Education”, “Justice”.

According to experts, the most alarming tendencies in recent years were: lack of progress in the efforts to reduce child poverty, systematic problems in the social field and child protection system, lack of a targeted policy supporting families and parents, insufficient coordination between institutions, delayed reform of the child justice system and minimum investments and support for professionals working with children – social and healthcare workers, teachers, judges, etc.

2.88 – the lowest grade, since the launch of the “Report Card”
What is the government score for childcare according to parents, children and professionals?

The prevailing opinions are that there is a huge gap between people and government and there is a need for more people-friendly attitude on the part of the institutions and less bureaucracy, a better connection between people and institutions that work in the interests of child, and bigger involvement of practitioners in making the systematic changes and discussing policies relevant to their work.

43 focus groups with 189 children and 156 adults, as well as an online survey of 252 people, were conducted to produce the grades.

Of the five areas, experts awarded the lowest grade 2.53 to “Family Environment and Alternative Care”. Experts conclude that the existing protection system continues to focus on children at risk, while the concept of welfare of all children and parents is absent. Active actions are needed to ensure the right of the child to a family, by creating community-based prevention services as well as by providing the vital links to healthcare and education systems.

With an average grade of 2.60 next is the area “General Principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child”. Experts believe that, despite several amendments to the legislation affecting children and families in 2017, these changes are more of a “piecemeal” than a conscious integrated approach to children’s rights and support for parents. In this area, efforts to reduce child poverty got the lowest grade. 385,000 Bulgarian children (or 32%) live in poverty, and those at risk of poverty and social exclusion are 45.6%.

The average grade for “Justice” is 2.79, i.e. the lowest grade for this area from the first edition of the report to date. No progress has been made in the year in implementing the reform of the child justice system, which has been delayed for almost 10 years now. Also, the issue of children’s safety in the internet and the development of their digital media literacy still does not fall within the priorities of the responsible institutions.

Experts evaluate the success of the government in the “Education” area as 3.02, thus marking a significant drop compared to the previous three years. Despite the numerous regulatory reforms in the recent years, there is still no comprehensive development strategy for the sector, and this hampers the building of sustainable and successful practices in the educational establishments. There is a very little progress in early childhood development area, but the services provided are narrow in scope and limited territorially, with no complete and full access to them for all children and families.

“Healthcare” gets 3.19 and this is the highest scoring area in Report Card 2018. The main progress is in reducing infant mortality, which reached 6.5 promille in 2016 - the lowest level in the entire history of demographic statistics in Bulgaria. At the same time, however, this level is almost twice higher than the EU average.
WHO WAS AWARDED FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN IN 2018?

On the eve of the Children’s Day, the National Network for Children presented for the eighth consecutive year the Golden Apple awards, which are a recognition and a tribute for the contribution of individuals, organisations and institutions to improving the welfare of children in Bulgaria.

The prizes were awarded in eight categories – Hero of Children, School, Hospital, Municipality, Journalist, Benefactor, Special Contribution to NNC and a Special Prize.

Dr. Tanya Andreeva and Dariya Mukova, creators of the HealthyKid platform, were selected for the Hero of Children award in the eighth edition of the Golden Apple Awards. In their personal time and with their efforts, the two ladies developed a software application that, if necessary, refers parents to appropriate doctors and medical establishments. “The application is somewhat of a virtual hospital,” said Dr. Andreeva, “but I hope that next year the award will go to the real founder of the National Children’s Hospital.” The award was presented by its last year’s winners - the ladies from the Knit for Bulgarian Kids initiative.

The School award went to Nikola Ikonomov Primary School, Razgrad, because they have developed a comprehensive strategy that guarantees the rights of the children and quality and modern education according to the new standards. The school is attended by 635 students from different ethnic backgrounds, and the teaching staff was able to provide a relaxed creative atmosphere for learning and upbringing of the adolescents. The award was presented by the Deputy Minister of Education and Science, Ms. Tanya Mihaylova.

The award in the Hospital category was presented to Dr. Nikola Vassilev Multi-profile Hospital for Active Treatment, Kyustendil. The hospital works together with NGOs and institutions on cases of children at risk, on different cases and on individual cases; it is actively working to keep teenage (under 18) mothers of children with risks to their health in the medical facility, it traces and advises uninsured pregnant women. Prof. Dr. Hristo Hinkov, Director of the National Centre for Public Health and Analyses, presented the prestigious award.
The award for **Municipality** went to Vratsa Municipality for their efforts in search of opportunities for improving the welfare of children and families, as well as their many implemented projects aimed at children and families at risk. The municipality is making efforts to develop services in the social field, and to achieve good cooperation with NGOs. The Mayor of Vratsa, Kalin Kamenev, received the award from Ms. Teodora Dacheva – Deputy Executive Director of the National Association of the Municipalities in Republic of Bulgaria.

The award in the category **Journalist** was presented to Bela Cholakova from 168 hours newspaper. She has been covering the topic of adoption for many years in its various aspects. Her materials positively and correctly examine the issue of adoption in the media and are a step towards changing the value system of the society and creating a more favorable and welcoming environment for adopted children. The award was presented by Maria Cheresheva, Founder and Deputy Chair of the Association of European Journalists.

The **Benefactor** award went to the United Milk Company for the "Milk for Everyone" project implemented over the past 3 years. More than 20 tonnes of dairy products have been donated under this programme, and were distributed among homes, shelters, centres and poor families. The award was presented by Krasimira Velichkova, Director of the Bulgarian Donors’ Forum.

The award for a **Special Contribution to NNC**, was presented to Ms. Tsveta Brestnichka, Chair of the Board of Parents Association and one of the founding members of the National Network for Children. Tsveta Brestnichka received her award from Mr. George Apostolov, Chairperson of the Management Board of the National Network for Children. “The power of the Network is that together smaller and larger organisations can make a difference, and the award is for all these people,” said Tsveta Brestnichka while receiving the award.

The **Special Award for Contributing** to the Welfare of Children in Bulgaria was presented to the Ombudsperson of the Republic of Bulgaria - Ms. Maya Manolova - who has been working very actively in the last three years with a special focus on the protection of the rights and welfare of children.
‘Children have the right to reliable information from the media. Mass media such as television, radio and newspapers should provide information that children can understand and should not promote materials that could harm children.’

**Article 17**

“We talk about children”

The 2018 campaign called for reform in child justice and for closure of the boarding schools, for ensuring a due process, accessible and high-quality legal aid for children, because very often child offenders are children at risk and their behavior is a cry for help. In the framework of this campaign, a video was disseminated, which was viewed by 95,000 people and shared more than 1,200 times in the social media. It won the bronze prize at the biggest and most prestigious FARA Advertising Festival. Within the campaign, special events were held in Sofia and another 6 cities in the country. It was also supported by outdoor advertising – billboards, public transportation stops, non-traditional posters. Over 3,600 new signatures were collected in the Change.org platform for the Child Justice Reform Petition.

“For more human child justice”

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“Spanking leaves no traces on the face but in the heart”

The campaign in late 2018, was meant to oppose the use of spanking as a disciplinary tool. A video was produced in partnership with The Flying Agency and ЯЖ – The Creative Producers, which was distributed free of charge by four national TV stations on several of their channels – BNT 1 and BNT2, Nova TV, Diema, Diema Family, Kino Nova and Nova Sport, Evrocom TV and its children’s channel E-Kids. The video was also published in the social media where it gained great popularity — **nearly 35,000 views and over 280 shares**. The video was also shared by a number of bloggers and influential media such as Mama Ninja, Maiko Milla, Parvite 7, Novite Roditeli, Momichetata ot grada, Detski Dnevnik and many others.

The topic of spanking became a lead topic for the media and the society after announcing the survey data in October. This topic was covered in nearly 80 publications, interviews and participations in TV, radio and other national and regional media broadcasts where the National Network for Children and experts from the member organisations working on this topic were the main participants.
National Network for Children in the Media

With 8 public events and 12 press releases, the National Network for Children contributed in 2018 also for the better public awareness on the topics of children and families in Bulgaria. The media covered us in over 570 publications and 56 TV interviews. Among the topics we raised in the public domain over the year were:

- Children and gambling, as well as suspending the broadcasting of the infamous TV commercial of the National Lottery “Chocolate – we just smell it”;
- Demanding the resignation of Valeri Simeonov in connection with his infamous statements concerning the mothers of children with disabilities;
- Open letter on the amendments in the Penal Code and the introduction of the option for secret arrests of children without informing their relatives within 24 hours;
- Promotion of the Initiative Citizens Committee for building a Multi-Profile Specialised Children’s Hospital and active communication with the Ministry of Health on that subject;
- Participation of children with their opinions on the Vision of Sofia, supported by the Network.

Media partnerships

This year again we had a successful partnership with some of the most influential media in Bulgaria. For the first time four television stations broadcasted for free the video clip “Spanking leaves no traces on the face but in the heart”. It was supported by pro-bono broadcasts by the Bulgarian National Television, the New Broadcasting Group, Evrocom TV and its E-Kids Channel.

Other media partners of the National Network for Children are: Bulgaria On Air TV, Dnevnik and Capital newspapers, Zenata Dnes, Mama Ninja, Maiko Mila, Momichetata ot Grada, Parvite 7, Novite Roditeli, Dir.bg, today.bg, as-deteto.bg and as-jenata.bg and others.

The outdoor billboard advertising companies Idea Comm, JCDecaux and Metropolis Group were also our media partners, and they distributed free of charge a series of advertising visions, part of the NNC’s campaign on the need for reforming the child justice system.

We express our gratitude to all the media, companies and supporters of the cause of children’s rights and happier childhood!

We continue to develop our own NNC information channels

In 2018, the NNC website www.nmd.bg continued to be the main source of information for children and families, with over 1,300 publications in Bulgarian and nearly 100 in English. Its unique users are nearly 140,000 a year, and the page views are nearly 300,000.

The new website www.endviolence.bg, which we created in 2018, has become a resource centre for support, for access to help and advice, for contact details of professionals (psychologists, Community Support Centres, Crisis Centres, etc.) and for useful information on the topics of prevention of violence against children.

The Facebook page of the National Network for Children with its almost 66,700 followers is one of the most recognizable pages in the social media on child and parenting issues. On a daily basis on this page are published both news and information materials, as well as analyses, blog posts and inspiring themes about childhood and policies for children from Bulgaria and the world.

The weekly bulletin of the National Network for Children has 6,000 subscribers with a diverse profile - representatives of institutions, media, civic organisations, parents, etc. We also have a bulletin in English that we distribute to 900 subscribers from Bulgaria and abroad on a quarterly basis.

Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nmdbg and keep informed on various topics related to children from our website www.nmd.bg and our weekly bulletin!
At the beginning of 2018, 19 civil society organisations and representatives of academia established the informal Alliance Childhood Without Violence. The National Network for Children is the first Coordinator of the Alliance for a three-year term.

The Alliance is making efforts so that Bulgaria would make a commitment to become a path-finding country in the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children. The path-finidng states adopt and implement the strategic document “INSPIRE: Seven strategies for Ending Violence against Children”, based on a group of evidence-based strategies that have shown success in reducing violence against children.

How can we raise our children without shouting and spanking?

In September 2018, we publicly announced the establishment of the Alliance Childhood without Violence with a press conference and street event, where nearly 200 people expressed their empathy with the topic, filmed their messages against child violence, and provided their replies to the question “How can we raise our children without shouting or spanking?”. The video can be viewed on the “Childhood Without Violence” Facebook page.

Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children

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Endviolence.bg Resource Centre

collects useful materials on prevention and coping with the effects of violence – guidelines, programmes, research, popular articles – to support children, parents and professionals. On the website there is information about available social services in the country, both for prevention and in case of actual instances of violence, as well as advice for the victims or witnesses of violence against a child to whom they may turn to.

Celebrities and the media have supported „Childhood without Violence“

The pop singer Polly Genova, the writer Georgi Gospodinov, the actors Yoanna Bukovska-Davidova and Ivaylo Zahariev, the Mayor of Sofia Yordanka Fandakova and the Ombudswoman Maya Manolova have recorded emotional videos in which they share messages on the topic of violence against children. The New Broadcasting Group, the Bulgarian National Radio, the “Zhenata Dnes” magazine, and the “Mama Ninja” blog are among the first media partners of the Alliance.
Bulgaria ranks first in Europe in terms of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs). They are about 170,000 – more than the population of Ruse. In order to change this alarming statistic, it is necessary to motivate and involve children from an early age so that they would become active participants in society. To believe, to participate and to make their dreams come true. It is for this reason that the National Network for Children has provided for in its strategy a big and ambitious project – to build a HOUSE OF CHILDREN.

The House will be a Centre for Learning and Protection of Children’s Rights, where they will play, share and learn to master the leadership skills of tomorrow. In an interactive way knowledge will be acquired on topics that are very poorly covered in school – civic education and democracy, the role of institutions, sexual and health education, finance and entrepreneurship, media and digital literacy, ecology and sustainable development, and many others. We have planned that the HOUSE OF CHILDREN will host a school for parents.

This place will also be the home and venue for exchanges and meetings of all 152 member organisations of the National Network for Children. THE HOUSE OF CHILDREN will be run as a social enterprise and will hire for work young people leaving institutions or foster care.

One brick at a time
In 2017 we bought a plot of land located in the broad centre of Sofia, on the streets “Hristo Botev” and “Sofronii Vrachanski”. This was done with the support of the OAK and Velux Foundations. Studies and coordination procedures for preparing the construction of the House are currently underway. An open competitive procedure is about to be launched to select the concept building design, in which all architects and architecture studios will be invited to take part.

Become an architect of the future, support the HOUSE OF CHILDREN!
We have received support from several corporate donors, including Borika Bankservice AD and private donors such as Zhelyaz Andreev – the Bulgarian citizen, who was threatened with extradition to the USA, and when it was cancelled, he decided to donate the funds raised to our project.

In the international crowdfunding platform Global Giving we have already raised over $ 9,000.

You can join as well by donating online to the National Network for Children website www.nmd.bg (payment options include credit or debit card, ePay, Pay Pal, or bank transfer to our donations account). You can also support our donation campaign through the Global Giving international fundraising platform, where we now have over 200 donors or directly by bank transfer to: www.nmd.bg/dari
WHAT DONATIONS DID WE PROVIDE FOR CHILDREN IN 2018?

**Lidl Bulgaria again donated**
more than 100 different items, or over 280 pieces of clothing, toys, household and office supplies to the National Network for Children. Essential items were distributed to nearly 20 non-governmental organisations throughout the country that work directly with children and are part of the National Network for Children. The donations have reached pupils, children and their parents attending different social services and other charity initiatives.

**Ficosota for yet another year donated**
more than 3,000 litres of liquid household cleaning and laundry products and several tons of washing powder, cosmetics and personal care products, which the National Network for Children and its members helped distribute among vulnerable children and families. The products donated by the company were worth nearly BGN 15,000. Ficosota has been making this in kind donation for a fourth year. With this donation, we have helped more than 80 children infected with hepatitis A in the Roma neighbourhood Fakulteta in Sofia. Over 40 NGOs working with children from 27 different locations across the country accepted the donation at the Ficosota warehouse in Shumen, and distributed it among families most in need all across Bulgaria.

**For the first time, the Kaufland supermarket chain,**
donated more than 80 boxes of “Topchovtsi” containing more than 30,000 small collection balls suitable for collecting and playing by children older than 3 years. We made many children happy as the donation was distributed to over 30 schools and over 20 NGOs working with children and members of the National Network for Children.

We are very grateful to our donors!
WHO WERE OUR DONORS IN 2018?

DONORS AND FRIENDS

We express our gratitude to:

Ficosota Syntez, who for yet another year donated several tons cleaning products and personal care products to the National Network for Children. Ficosota made an earmarked donation for children suffering of or at risk of being infected by Hepatitis A in Sofia Roma neighbourhood Fakulteta.

Lidl Bulgaria, who donated non-food products – toys, furniture, clothes and others. Kaufland Bulgaria who donated more than 80 boxes of promotional toys Topchovtsi, part of a company campaign.

Coca-Cola Hellenic Bulgaria, who supported the ceremony of presenting the annual Golden Apple awards for contribution to the children’s welfare by donating soft drinks for the children and the other guests at the ceremony.

Zhelyaz Andreiev, the Bulgarian who was threatened with extradition to the United States. After the charges against him were dropped and the court proceedings abroad were cancelled, Zhelyaz and his family donated to the National Network for Children the amount of BGN 4485 which was collected in the donations account for his eventual lawyer in the United States. The funds were donated to NNC for building the House of Children.

The National Theatre and Film Academy Krasito Sarafov for providing for free the premises of its Students’ Theatre for the Golden Apple Awards ceremony.

Sofia Municipality for providing free of charge the Ancient Complex Serdika – Largoto for conducting the youth forum Voice It.

New Broadcasting Group, Bulgarian National Television, Evrocom TV and E-Kids TV Channel for the free broadcasting of the video clip “Spanking leaves no traces on the face but in the heart”. To the outdoor advertising companies Idea Comm, JCDecaux, Metropolis Group, which distributed for free a series of billboard ads for the campaign of the National Network for Children “For More Humane Juvenile Justice”.

The Flying Agency and РІК – The Creative Producers, who made the video clip “Spanking leaves no traces on the face but in the heart” and its logo.

Reforma Agency, which stood behind the campaign “For More Humane Juvenile Justice”, and implemented it together with the National Network for Children.

Anna Rizova-Noykova (Design for Friends), who supports the organisation’s visual identity.

Marieta Vassileva (Taralezh ‘Hedgehog’), who is doing the design and the prepress of the main printed materials of the organisation.

To all 214 individual donors who supported the fundraising campaign for building the House of Children at the international platform Global Giving.

WHO WERE OUR DONORS?
NEW IN THE NETWORK IN 2018

We have joined as a member ECPAT-International

In June 2018 in Bogota, Colombia, the National Network for Children became a member of ECPAT-International, an international organisation that combats sexual exploitation and trafficking of children around the world. In November in Sofia we were the host of the regional meeting of the Balkan states for prevention and ending of violence and sexual exploitation of children together with ECPAT-International. More than 60 people from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Turkey, Romania and Serbia took part in the meeting.

We continued our active participation in Eurochild

and in November, together with children and young people from the National Eurochild Forum, we attended in Opatija, Croatia the Conference on “Building a better Europe with children!” During the Bulgarian Presidency, we raised the issue of creating an Agency for the Child with the European Commission, which must be the topic for the next presidency of Austria, Romania, Finland.

George Bogdanov, as President of ChildPact –

the regional child protection network, participated in a number of workshops and discussions on securing future funding for the Network. Within ChildPact, we helped the networks and coalitions for children in Serbia, Albania, Macedonia, Georgia, Armenia and Moldova to develop their own projects that were submitted for funding to the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Bulgarian Development and Cooperation Program in the field of child participation and advocacy for the children’s rights in the region.
are the new organisations that joined the Network in 2018. They are based in Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna and Smolian and work for better education, mental health support, support for children with disabilities, children in institutional care, in the Roma communities, promotion of healthy living, support for reducing the premature births and help for the premature babies and their parents, support for combating gender-based discrimination and support to the deaf people.

are the thematic working groups of the National Network for Children – Family, Health, Education and Justice, that bring together member organisations based on their field of work, and they provide expertise and opinions. The working group on Child and Youth Participation operates alongside the thematic working groups and supports the development of child participation in the NNC.

Support for members
We have provided specific support to our member organisations in a difficult for them situation such as “Children and Youth” Association – Sofia, “Ekaterina Karavelova” Women Association – Silistra, Roma Foundation “Iskra” – Shumen, “Karin Dom” Foundation – Varna, Worldwide Orphans Foundation, and others. Our efforts have been successful and we are still helping some others.

Organisational Development and Leadership Programme to support our members
The program aims to support member organisations in setting and achieving their own goals for organisational and leadership development. It has two main steps in supporting organisations to plan: their own assessment and setting development goals; management of change and work on the priorities they have identified from the point of view of their organisational development. Throughout the process, the organisations are supported by a mentor who is an experienced leader with proven success in building and developing organisations.

consultations and cases of support – provided by the Network to its members and other organisations throughout the year.
In the past year the National Network for Children implemented activities related to training, exchange of experience and good practices in Bulgaria and abroad, successfully implemented series of campaigns, child participation, strategic planning, etc.

The implementation of the majority of the NNC’s commitments was possible thanks to the trust of our partners and funding organizations.

### CONDENSED BALANCE SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>NOTE</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>NOTE</th>
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The projects implemented by the National Network for Children in 2018

- ‘Development of Community Schools in Bulgaria – Phase 2’, donor Charles Stewart Mott Foundation – project duration 24 months, end of the project June 2018
- ‘Reducing discrimination and promotion of social inclusion of Roma children and young people and children with disabilities’, donor UNICEF, project duration 9 months, end of project June 2018
- ‘Child Rights Hubs for Children in Conflict and Contact with the Law in Bulgaria’, donor Velux Foundation, project duration 42 months, end of the project September 30, 2019
- Institutional support to implement the NNC Strategy 2015-2020, donor OAK Foundation, duration 48 months, end of the project June 2020
- ‘Rescue: Reading the early signs of dropping out of school’, donor Erasmus+, project duration 36 months, end of the project September 2019
- ‘CHAPTER – Children Help movement Against Physical Threatening and Emotional Repression’, donor EU Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme, project duration 26 months, end of the project January 2019
- ‘Putting the Puzzle Together: Sustainability of Family-Oriented Approach and Early Intervention in Bulgaria’, donor Open Society Institute, project duration 24 months, end of the project September 2019
- End Violence Partnership in Bulgaria, donor the OAK Foundation, duration – 36 months, until January 2021
- INSPIRE: Seven strategies to end violence against children – funding was made possible by Ignite Philanthropy: Inspiring the End to Violence Against Girls and Boys, a project of New Venture Fund

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

All amounts in BGN thousand unless otherwise indicated

3. Revenues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income from donations under conditions</td>
<td>1 290</td>
<td>1 050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership fees</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income from unconditional donations</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 303</td>
<td>1 064</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Association does not account for revenues from business activities.

The income from donations, represent income from projects under which the Association is a Beneficiary and which have been recognised in the year when the associated expenses have been incurred.

4. Expenses

The Association’s expenses are related to its core activity only. Following are the analysed by nature of expenses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of materials</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hired services</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages and salaries</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory social securities</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other costs</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 284</td>
<td>1 049</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT IS NEXT IN 2019?

National Children’s Hospital
This year we will continue to insist on the development of the National Children’s Hospital, and will monitor and support any adequate actions of the state for its construction.

Tool for assessment of investments in children
In 2019, we will promote the tool for monitoring the government’s financial investment in children. Our advocacy plans include recognizing the tool at the top level of government; tracking public investments in childhood; introducing mechanisms in the government for making a link between the political goals and the money spent. At the same time, the Network will use the tool to motivate the line ministries for relevant expenditures in the new policy objectives for children and families.
A new model for resolving custody disputes

In partnership with the Professional Association of Mediators in Bulgaria (PAMB), the Parents Association, the Institute for Social Activities and Practices and For Our Children Foundation, we will work for establishing a new model for resolving custody disputes with a focus on achieving the best interests of the child with a minimum intervention by the judicial authorities.

Bulgaria to become part of the UN Global Partnership to End Violence against Children

In 2019, we will advocate for Bulgaria to take firm steps in its fight against violence on children by joining the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children. We will insist that the tool “INSPIRE: Seven strategies for Ending Violence Against Children” be used as a basis for the government policies to combat violence against children.

Child participation

In 2019, there will be significant changes in our work on child participation. For example, the National Eurochild Forum will cease to exist and the activity of its rapporteurs will become a part of the Megaphone Programme. Also, with the new edition of the forum “Voice it: We Decide with the Children”, we will celebrate the 30th anniversary since the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and more than ever will provoke the institutions to talk to children about how they protect their rights. Last but not least, in the preparation of our new strategy for 2020-2022, we will actively involve the children we work with, so that we could take into account their views on what a Network like ours should do in asserting their rights in the future.
WHY DO WE DO IT?

"I believe that children’s rights have a place in our society. I believe that we in the Network have our contribution for that. We do not always manage to be the best, but we insist on making meaningful policies for children every day. It is a pleasure to work with so motivated and positive colleagues and friends!"

Madlen Tanyelian, Programme Coordinator “Family”, National Network for Children

"Participation in Megaphone gave me a lot of useful information about my rights, how to defend them, if anyone violates them, how to respond. I would encourage others also to join, this is quite useful!"

Diana, Youth Network Megaphone

"We believe that it extremely important for the efforts in the civil society sector to ensure and maintain the child welfare to be synchronized and unified, and that is one of the reasons why we are a part of the National Network for Children."

Margarita Gabrovska, Family Centre “Little Miracles”

"There are and must be people who advocate for children not as a vulnerable group, not as angels or demons, but as human beings with dignity, unique experience and need for support. In our increasingly violent society, such people will be needed more and more. The confidence that we exist with precisely this role has always been the most important reason for me to be part of the NNC team for almost seven years."

Stanislav Dodov, Programme Coordinator “Child and Youth Participation”, National Network for Children

"The Network allows representation of member organisations and meeting common strategic goals. It can exert serious pressure on the status quo when the latter has no will for development and for adequate solutions to the problems. What unites the organisations in the Network is the initiative and the belief that a happy future for all children is mission possible!"

Mariana Pisarska, “Children and Youth” Association, member of the Board of the NNC
**NETWORK MEMBERS 2018**

**Blaueoغرad Region**
- Association ‘Community Council on Education’ – Gotse Delchev

**Burgas Region**
- ‘The Faithful Steward’ Association – Burgas
- ‘Demetra’ Association – Burgas
- Together for a Better Future – Sredetz
- Regional Roma Alliance’ Association – Burgas
- ‘Roosters’ Association
- ‘Smile’ Association – Burgas

**Varna Region**
- ‘Gawroche’ Association – Varna
- ‘Eurointegration’ Association – Varna
- Life with Down Syndrome – Varna
- ‘Karim Dom’ Foundation – Varna
- ‘Vassilista’ Association
- Agency for Social Development
- ‘Vision’ – Varna
- ‘Joy for Our Children’ Foundation – Varna
- Family Zone Foundation – Varna
- Social Association ‘St. Andrei’ – Varna
- Family Centre Maria – Varna
- Nyama Nevazmozhni Neshta
- Association – Varna
- Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association – Varna
- ‘Sauchastie’ Association – Varna
- ‘Colourful Future’ Association – Varna

**Veliko Tarnovo Region**
- ‘International Social Service’ Foundation – Veliko Tarnovo
- ‘Youth Tolerance’ Association – Gorna Ohirovska
- Centre for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance AMALIPE – Veliko Tarnovo

**Vidin Region**
- Association ‘Organization Drom’ – Vidin

**Vratza Region**
- ‘First of June’ Association – Byala Slatina
- Association Vratsa Software Society
- ‘Science and Technology Centre’ Association – Vratsa
- ‘New Way’ Association – Hayredin
- School Board of Trustees of ‘Hristo Botev’ School – Tarnava

**Gabrovo Region**
- CYMCA Gabrovo Association
- ‘Social Dialogue 2001’ Association – Gabrovo

**Dobrich Region**
- ‘Helping Hand’ Foundation – Dobrich

**Kardzali Region**
- Association ‘Initiative for Development’ – Kardzhali Decides’ – Kardzhali

**Kyustendil Region**
- Association ‘Knowledge, Success, Change’- Dupnitsa
- Association Largo – Kyustendil
- Parental Boards of Trustees of Kindergarten ‘Kalina’ – Dupnitsa

**Lovech Region**
- ‘Emission 21st Century’ Association – Lovech
- ‘Knowledge’ Association – Lovech

**Pazardzhik Region**
- ‘Future’ Foundation – Rakitovo
- Julevija Dom’ Foundation
- KUZMANOV Foundation – Zvanitchev
- Crime Prevention Fund IGA – Pazardzhik
- ‘Social Practices in the Community’ Foundation – Pazardzhik

**Pernik Region**
- ‘PULSE’ Foundation – Pernik

**Pleven Region**
- Pleven Public Fund ‘Chitalishta’ – Pleven

**Plovdiv Region**
- One Heart Foundation – Plovdiv
- ‘Gender Alternatives’ Foundation – Plovdiv
- National Alliance for Volunteer Action – Plovdiv

**Razgrad Region**
- ‘Janeta’ Association – Razgrad
- ‘Phoenix’ Association – Razgrad

**Ruse Region**
- CBRTMI Association – Ruse
- ‘Equilibrium’ Association – Ruse
- European Centre for Mediation and Arbitrage (ECMA)
- ‘Caritas-Ruse’ Foundation – Ruse
- Open Society Club – Ruse
- Centre Dynamic Association – Ruse

**Silistra Region**
- ‘Ekaterina Karavelova’ Women’s Association – Silistra
- ‘Hope for a Good Future’ Association – Silistra

**Smolyan Region**
- Future Now Cultural Centre – Gudevitsa

**Sliven Region**
- Society for the support of children and adults with mental, physical and sensory disabilities ‘St. Stilyan Child Protector’ – Sliven
- ‘The Health of Romany People’ Foundation – Sliven
- IRA Foundation – Sliven
- ‘Doctors of the World’ Foundation – Bulgarian Branch – Sliven

**Roma Academy for Culture and Education’ Association – Sliven

**Sofia City Region**
- Agapeida – Bulgaria’ Foundation
- Alliance of Bulgarian Midwives
- Association ‘Bulgarian Psychoanalytic Space’
- Association for Bulgarian family values, traditions and culture
- ‘Bulgarche’
- ‘Alpha Club – to Survive’ Association
- Assist Assistive Technologies Foundation
- Association for Early Childhood Development
- ‘Parents’ Association
- Charity Foundation
- Bulgarian Association of Adopted Children and Adoptive Parents
- Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association
- Bulgarian Paediatric Association
- Bulgarian Helsinki Committee
- ‘Bulgarian Child’ Foundation
- BNC ‘Together for the Children’
- Bulgarian Training Centre
- ‘Child and Space’ Association
- ‘Children’s Books’ Association
- ‘Children and Adolescents’ Association
- Association ‘Children of Bulgaria’
- ‘Dechitsa’ Foundation
- Mam and Dad’s Diary
- Eviros’ Foundation
- ECP Foundation
- ‘Teach for Bulgaria’ Foundation
- ‘Maternal and Child Health’ Foundation
- ‘For our Children’ Foundation
- ‘Health and Social Development’ Foundation
- Ethnic Minorities Health Problems Foundation
- Listen Up Foundation
- Our Premature Children Foundation
- Reach for Change Foundation
- Law and Internet Foundation
- Tempo Foundation
- Institute for Promotion of Vocational Education and Training
- Institute for Progressive Education
- Social Activities and Practices Institute
- ‘Concordia Bulgaria’ Foundation
- ‘The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award – Bulgaria’ Foundation
- ‘Arete’ Youth Foundation
- M&M Physio Foundation
- National Foster Care Association
- National Association of Resource Teachers.
- National Network of Health Mediators
- National Movement ‘FUUTURA’
- ‘Hope for the Little Ones’
- National School Eco-Parliament
- National Centre for Social and Emotional Development
- ‘Partners – Bulgaria’ Foundation
- ‘Human Rights’ Project
- Applied Research and Communications’ Foundation
- ‘Friends 2006’ Foundation
- Association Re-Act
- Reachout.BG Association
- Association for Progressive and Open Communication – Sofia
- ‘Cedar’ Foundation
- ‘Single Step’ Foundation
- ‘Step for Bulgaria’ Foundation
- ‘Step by Step’ Foundation – Sofia
- Social Theatre Foundation ‘Flower’
- School Board of Trustees ‘Nadezhdia’ at ‘Benito Juarez’ School
- Association for Pedagogical and social help for children – FICE
- Bulgarian Worldwide Foundation for Vulnerable Children
- Foundation for Access to Rights (FAR)
- ‘Zographique’ Centre
- ‘Tvsten Tsanov’ Foundation
- ‘Centre Nadya’ Foundation
- ‘Centre for Inclusive Education’ Association
- Centre for Psychosocial Support
- Habitat for Humanity
- SOS Children’s Villages – Bulgaria

**Sofia Region**
- ‘Towards a Better Life’ Association – Chelopech

**Stara Zagora Region**
- ‘Future for Children’ Association – Kazanlak
- Chitalishte ‘Vazrodena Iskra’ – Kazanlak
- Samaritans’ Association – Stara Zagora
- ‘World without Boundaries’ Association – Stara Zagora

**Targovishte Region**
- ‘Academia 245’ Association – Antonovo
- ‘Naya’ Association – Targovishte
- Club of NGOs – Targovishte

**Haskovo Region**
- ‘Children and Families’ Association – Haskovo
- ‘Give a Smile’ Foundation – Dimitrovgrad
- ‘Hope for Protection’ Association – Haskovo

**Shumen Region**
- ‘SOS Women and Children survived violence’ Association – Novi Pazar
- Association of Roma Women
- ‘Hayatchi’ – Novi Pazar
- Roma Spark Foundation

**Yambol Region**
- Municipal School Board of Trustees – Boliyovo
- Chitalishte ‘Umenie 2003’ – Yambol