ABOUT NATIONAL NETWORK
FOR CHILDREN

The National Network for Children (NNC) was established in 2003 as a free alliance of non-governmental organisations working for children in Bulgaria. In 2006 it was registered as a non-governmental organisation in public benefit.

Today we are an alliance of 146 civic organisations and supporters working with and for children and families across the country. What brings us together are children’s rights and the belief that all policies and practices relating to children should be designed, implemented and monitored in accordance with the principle of the best interest of the child and with active participation of children and young people.

OUR VISION

The National Network for Children works for a society in which every child can have a family and enjoy the best life and development opportunities, and where sectoral policies on 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 broad and socially significant network of organisations and supporters.

OUR GOALS

We at the National Network for Children and our member organisations work for:

- A public perception of the child as a right holder;
- State policies ensuring children’s rights and family support;
- Development, cooperation and support within the Network.

We believe that these goals cannot be achieved without the participation of children. Therefore, we strive to engage them in our work, helping them to develop skills that will enable in adults the capacity to recognise child participation and consider children’s opinions.
Dear Friends and Supporters,

Let me start by saying that 2019 was a difficult year for Bulgarian children and families. This was not only on account of the major challenges many continued to face, but most of all because of the overabundance of fake news, propaganda and disinformation, as well as government institutions that occasionally hold back changes that have been long overdue.

For us too 2019 was very important as a year of planning and looking ahead. Together, we formulated the change we want to see taking place, namely a better childhood for all children in Bulgaria and less distressed and better supported families caring for their children.

We at the National Network for Children – a total of 146 organisations working with and for children across the country – continue to offer daily support to children and their parents living in poverty, children having trouble in school, and children without access to healthcare. We manage some of the most extreme cases of child victims of violence, which no one else is prepared to take, but at the same time we work very hard to prevent them happening again. We care for and support children devoid of paternal care. We further assist tens of thousands of parents turning to us for help. Talking to both parents and children, together we look for ways to bring about the change we would like to see happen.

We will continue to help, as our help is needed now more than ever. The reason we are here is our dream that all children can have a family and the best life and development opportunities, so they can enjoy a happy childhood and grow up to be the best adults they possibly can.

We believe that we can do this together with the many people, volunteers, organisations, parents and supporters who do not give up their daily fight against fake news and continue to offer support to individual children and their families. We will also not stop pressing the government to fulfil its commitment to ensuring a better life for children in Bulgaria.

George Apostolov, Chairman of the Management Board

George Bogdanov, Executive Director
WHAT DO WE DO?

Annually, through a pool of over 5,000 professionals, the National Network for Children offers support to more than 110,000 children and 26,000 families.

We join forces for children
For almost 14 years the NNC has brought together organisations and supporters united around the cause of children’s rights. We are the largest alliance of civic organisations working hand-in-hand for better laws, policies and fieldwork for children and families. During this time the NNC has contributed to bringing about changes for improving children’s lives. These include the government’s undertaking to close down large children’s homes, inclusive education and development of social services in the country. Over the years the Network has become a significant and trusted source of information for children and families, with a website and social media channels enjoying tens of thousands of followers.

We reward people and organisations taking care of children
Each year the NNC presents the Golden Apple Awards to individuals, organisations and institutions in recognition of their contribution to the welfare of children in Bulgaria. The award categories include Municipality, School, Benefactor etc., and the selection is made by a professional panel. In addition, through an online poll the audience can nominate and choose its own Hero of Children.

We monitor the performance of government institutions in childcare
In 2019, for the eighth time in a row, we published Report Card: What is the Average Government Score for Childcare. This one-of-a-kind analysis for Bulgaria reviews and scales institutions’ commitments in the field of children’s rights. It is prepared by experts whose daily activities involve direct work with children and families throughout the country. The report further reflects the views of children, young people, parents and professionals, and provides recommendations for improving current policies and practices.

Together with children
For the fifth consecutive year on 20 November 2019, World Children’s Day, together with the Megaphone Youth Network and in partnership with UNICEF Bulgaria we held the Voice It Youth Forum. This event gives children the opportunity to express their opinions on issues that are important to them and to take active part in their solutions.
WHAT DID WE DO IN 2019?

An appeal to the Prime Minister for urgent action against disinformation

After parents were caught in the midst of a mass panic attack leading to dozens of children being pulled out of school in three Bulgarian cities as a result of rumours of taking the children away, the National Network for Children sent a letter to Prime Minister Boyko Borisov addressing the need for urgent anti-propaganda and anti-disinformation action regarding state policies on children and families in Bulgaria and their clarification to the public.

We worked hard to ensure protection for children and families

In 2019 the public was faced with a critical situation calling into question the children’s rights, social services and the work of civic organisations in general. In an open letter we urged Bulgarian parents and families to stay informed, think more critically and demand real action, rather than let themselves be misled by propaganda and fake news causing social tension and inciting hatred among people. We further called on institutions to come out and speak openly about the National Strategy for the Child 2019-2030, the first ever document to propose overarching family support measures. After a prolonged silence on the part of politicians and government institutions, we addressed some of the key issues associated with the Strategy and public concerns.

We continued to advocate the construction of a true state-of-the-art National Paediatric Hospital

In 2019 serious doubts were raised concerning the construction of a modern children’s hospital in the capital city. In the past two years, as active participants in the Initiative Committee, we have sent numerous letters to all government institutions urging for prioritization of this issue. We requested a new and independent evaluation of the existing structure, which would provide a valid opinion as to its suitability for a children’s hospital. In late 2019 we were involved in initiating an open letter regarding the construction of a modern and functional children’s hospital. Our appeal was supported by over 9,000 organisations, medical doctors and professionals, architects, engineers, parents and citizens.

The year in numbers:

- 29 opinions, positions and letters sent to institutions;
- 1 self-commissioned monitoring paper prepared — Report Card: What is the Average Government Score for Childcare;
- 5 contributions made to international organisations such as Eurochild, ChildPact and the European Commission, helping inform international policies on the child;
- 26 working groups and advisory boards;
- 2 operational programmes monitoring committees;
- 4 thematic working groups with 210 participants;
- 12 public events with institutional, media and civil society representatives.
“Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them.”

Article 18
A simplified version of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, unicef.bg

“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
A simplified version of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, unicef.bg

We requested more flexible working arrangements for parents
Together with parents we worked hard to resolve the issue of combining work and childcare. We sent a letter to the responsible ministries, large employers’ organisations and trade unions, and the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria, insisting on prioritising the issue of ensuring more flexible working arrangements for parents of children up to 10 years old and a better work-life balance for parents and carers. We further brought up the disruption of kindergartens’ working hours and the prejudiced treatment towards children and parents in cases of late collection.

Social Services Act
In the course of the year we continued to work hard to ensure comprehensive and integrated social, educational and healthcare systems support for Bulgarian children and families. This was done through the drafting of the Social Services Act. The latter was unanimously adopted by the National Assembly in March 2019, and was due to come into force in early 2020. After it became the focal point of attacks on child policies, however, the procedure was postponed for another six months. Together with 56 other civic organisations, we petitioned for immediate enactment and preparation of relevant by-laws.

Crisis management measures are no remedy for systematic problems
Following the resignation of Social Minister Biser Petkov at the request of Prime Minister Boyko Borisov, we once again stressed the inability of crisis measures to solve systematic problems. In our letter to the Prime Minister, sent some 18 months prior, at the time of the first request for the Social Minister’s resignation, we had already stated that resignation procedures cannot fix the problems experienced by the social system, which we had been flagging up for years. No minister can ever hope to change the existing family support policies in the country without clear vision, leadership and political support.
We brought attention to the need for better working conditions for social workers

In response to the draft operations ‘Work’ and ‘Social Inclusion and Early Development Services’ under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme, we proposed increasing the remuneration of social workers through the available programme funding. Once again, we urged for a dedicated programme at national level to address the dire situation in the social system, concerning both social services staff and the staff of the Child Protection Departments.

We called for leadership and intense debate on child and family policies

In the course of the heated discussions arising around the National Strategy for the Child a lot was said on how families with children in Bulgaria live and what their needs and fears are. Together with our network members, we held a press conference in Sofia and 11 more cities, at which we proposed the appointment of a Minister of the Child and the Family to lead public debates and bring together, coordinate and propose policies addressing the various needs experienced by the individual children and their families. We further insisted on the appointment of a Children’s Ombudsman, whose role would be to advocate children’s rights and resolve problems faced by parents, including in cases of potential violations by government institutions. Bulgaria is one of the few countries in Europe not to have an Ombudsman responsible for children.

The Voice of Children

What do you think life is like for children in Bulgaria?

The survey was conducted by the National Eurochild Forum rapporteurs among 87 children from the country aged between 11 and 18.

How do you imagine the perfect relationship between children and parents?

The majority of children associate the perfect relationship with mutual understanding between parents and themselves, which is based on confidence and trust building. Special emphasis is put on dialogue, care, support and love.

“Good relationships between children and parents are built on ongoing communication and finding the best solution to any problem.”

“Love, support and patience — that’s what builds the relationship!”

“They should be communicating with each other. Don’t just ask “How was it in school today?” or “Mum, what did you cook for lunch today?”; talk about how you feel, what your dream of and fear, and support each other.”

“Families demonstrate their affection everyday with hugs, kisses and some of the most kind and beautiful words: “Love you”, “How nice that you are here!”
"All children and young people have the right to a primary education, which should be free. Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education of which they are capable."

"Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full."

**Article 28**
A simplified version of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, unicef.bg

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We believe that school upbringing work should be based on practice not on more paper

We work hard to ensure that the Strategy on Upbringing Work in Schools initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science will assist teachers in their mission to bring up confident, successful, perceptive and determined individuals with the help of modern methods and tools. This is reflected in our proposed Personal Development Strategy, which rather than stockpiling meaningless texts specifically focuses on developing children's potential.

We requested preventive rather than punitive measures to reduce school absenteeism

We insisted on dismissing the proposed extension of the timeframes of sanctions for unjustified school absence by suspending child allowances for a period of one year. Such measures are very restrictive and would lead to large-scale sanctioning of children who are not systematically absent. The provision of family support should not be based solely on a means test of parents, but also on other factors determining parents' ability to care for their children.

We demanded accessible transportation services for children with special needs

We looked into the issue of the inadequacy of the transportation services for children with special educational needs in centres for special educational support. Moreover, we proposed a solution to improve the situation, taking into account the current capacity of the Ministry of Education and Science. This initiative was the result of our dialogue with parents of children with special needs.
There is a need for an overarching system for prevention of dropping out of school

We raised concerns regarding the effectiveness of the current effort to prevent dropping out of school and encourage enrolment for children. We consider mobile teams’ visits to children’s residences to be insufficient. What should be done is to invest in additional training and support for teachers and directors. We further proposed creating dedicated positions in schools whose responsibilities should focus on encouraging school attendance for children.

We supported teachers’ requests for removal of the obligatory annual thematic distribution of the learning content

We supported the removal of the current format of the obligatory thematic distribution, which teachers are required to prepare and present every year. This will enable them to design and update their work schedules in accordance with the curriculum, but also to take into account the needs and progress achieved in the school, and will thus reduce their administrative burden.

The Voice of Children

Inclusive Education or Education for Every Child: What Do Children Think?

The survey was conducted by the National Eurochild Forum rapporteurs among 51 children from the country aged between 13 and 18.

How can parents be involved in creating more opportunities for children in school?

The relationship between children and parents — their presence and supportive role — is singled as the key factor here. The majority of the respondents emphasise the importance of the parent-child contact.

“Parents need to give the child a feeling of support. They should assist the child in all situations and help solve any problem.”

“Parents need to take responsibility and set aside some time for their children.”

Do you think that the school treats each child according to their needs?

Here the comments focus on the nature of the student-friendly environment, as well as whether teachers are doing enough to ‘include’ students in the learning process, and whether professionals have the necessary competencies to do their jobs. Another question raised is if children in fact benefit from them, and if not — why? The issue of discrimination is also brought up, as well as whether the school provides children with genuine ‘access’ to education.

“Every child has special needs. No children are fully identical in learning and behaviour, activities and preferences, skills and motivation. All students would benefit from programmes addressing their individual needs.”

“What does a student actually need? The student wants to have an environment in which to learn, as well as classmates who are not mean but friendly, so they can work in a team; the student never wants to be put under stress.”

“In some schools there is discrimination; there children are discriminated by their peers and teachers because of their ethnicity or beliefs.”
We continued to work for early childhood intervention

We appealed to institutions, reasserting our demand for continuation of the work in order to ensure the presence of an early childhood intervention service in every major Bulgarian city. With the help of the NNC experts we produced leaflets and videos explaining the benefits of early childhood intervention as a set of services aimed at parents who have concerns about the proper development of their children aged 0 to 3.

We supported the proposal to extend the ban on the supply and sale of tobacco to children

We supported the proposal to extend the ban on the supply and sale of tobacco, incl. hookah, to children, insisting that different options should be explored to limit the use of heated tobacco products by children. We further emphasised the need for large-scale information campaigns aimed at children and adults to clarify the risk of using tobacco products, alcohol and tobacco-free waterpipe products. 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.

We won a lawsuit against the Ministry of Health on grounds of blocked access to public information relating to the Fund for Treatment of Children

In spring 2019 the Fund for Treatment of Children a was closed in line with a decision to transfer its functions to the National Health Insurance Fund. We expressed concerns about the future and the operations of the Fund, including as regards its public oversight. We further posed 10 questions to the Ministry of Health, but no response followed. Resulting from this, we filed and subsequently won a case against the Ministry. According to the court’s decision: “Financing children’s treatment is an important, publicly significant and social issue. Any matter relating to it is of overriding public interest, and no information relating to it should be restricted in any way whatsoever.”

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

Article 24
A simplified version of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, unicef.bg
We petitioned for a national plan to be put in place to retain healthcare professionals and ensure decent working conditions

We supported healthcare professionals’ struggle for decent pay and working conditions, driven by the conviction that the ongoing situation is one of the main reasons for their ever shrinking numbers. We thus showed that high-quality medical care provision is impossible without investing in people.

We demanded prevention, support and treatment measures for children and young people using drugs

In connection with the discussions on the National Anti-Drug Strategy and its action plan, we urged for establishment of specialised health and social services and programmes for early intervention and treatment of children and young people experimenting with and/or using drugs. We also put forward the issue of the functioning of the National Drugs, Alcohol and Gambling Helpline and possible measures to expand its activity.
We help support children of separated parents

In early 2019 the National Network for Children took part in the project “Children in focus in the reform of the judiciary”, implemented in partnership with the Professional Association of Mediators in Bulgaria (PAMB), Social Activities and Practices Institute (SAPI), the Mediation and Dispute Management Institute (MDMI), For Our Children Foundation and Parents Association. The goal was to put in place a unified mechanism for resolving family custody disputes. The project further aimed to design a new casework model for the judicial system in this area, as well as to develop a new methodology to assist judges, mediators, lawyers and parents in out-of-court dispute settlement.

Despite the lack of progress, we continue to petition for a child justice reform

In 2019 the National Network for Children took part in a working group under the Ministry of Justice, whose task was to draft a Bill on Diversion from Criminal Proceeding and Imposing of Educational Measures to Minors – a milestone in the child justice reform. The working group was set up following our response to a statement made by the Deputy Minister of Justice, and was yet another attempt to fulfil the government’s commitment to reform the child justice system. Unfortunately, after many hours of work put in, no relevant results or work plan have been put in place.

“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**

A simplified version of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, unicef.bg
CORPORAL PUNISHMENT: WHAT DO CHILDREN THINK?

The survey was conducted by the National Eurochild Forum rapporteurs among 63 children from the country aged between 14 and 18.

Do you think corporal punishment (hitting, shaking, pinching, maintaining uncomfortable or tiring positions etc.) affects a child on whom it is practised?

The vast majority indicate that corporal punishment has a negative effect, and that its variations can have different consequences — mental damage, injury to dignity and respect, irreversible trauma for future life, and reproduction of the model.

"Everything that a parent does to their child at an early age affects the child's future development (mental, professional etc.), so I'm against punishment, especially physical punishment, because it creates insecurities and feelings of inferiority, which in turn makes the child's future uncertain."

"I think corporal punishment has a very negative effect on a child on whom it is practised, because, apart from the physical pain, the child can't understand why something should not be done, but will try to blame him/herself more and more. Also, I think that children who've been beaten are more likely to self-hurt, because subconsciously they see it as normal. When they become adults, they are more likely to hit their own children."
Childhood without Violence

Since its creation the Childhood without Violence Alliance has been working hard for Bulgaria to commit to and become a pioneer state in the UN-led Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. The goal is for the alliance to grow into a wide-ranging public platform, bringing together civic organisations, institutions, business, media, academic circles and public figures, who will collaborate to achieving zero tolerance to violence against children in our society.

On 20 June 2019 the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the State Agency for Child Protection, UNICEF, the World Health Organization, Child Protection Hub, supported by Terre des Hommes, and the Childhood without Violence Alliance – Bulgaria organised a high-level regional conference on ‘Smart investments in strategies and partnerships for preventing and eliminating violence against children’. More than 140 experts and representatives of state institutions from 10 countries in the region, as well as distinguished academic lecturers from the USA, UK and Bulgaria took part in the event. The main goal was to exchange knowledge and experience. The discussions held during the programme focused on global anti-violence measures, as well as the action taken by Eastern and South-eastern European countries to address the problem.

A team of FICE-Bulgaria, GERT Foundation and Therapeutic Communities-Bulgaria designed targeted programmes for prevention of violence in schools and kindergartens. In 2019 a number of regional and local training events were held for trainers from MOGA Academy, which provided a methodology for working with children, parents and teachers on topics related to social competence and prevention of violence. The subsequent workshops, which were attended by dozens of professionals, were designed for members of the NNC, the Childhood without Violence Alliance, as well as schools, kindergartens and cooperatives with which these organisations work.

“Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them.”

Article 19
A simplified version of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, unicef.bg
PHYSICAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN PUBLIC SPACES

The survey was conducted by the National Eurochild Forum rapporteurs among 66 children from the country aged between 12 and 18.

What does physical violence in public spaces mean to you?

Nearly 40% associate this with fight, hitting or striking, anything posing a threat to the personal boundaries of another individual, i.e. their inviolable private space. The children find this to be a type of bullying and physical domination over another person. Some also wonder if this can be seen as a response to stress.

“An emotional outburst. It doesn’t matter if they’re nervous, sad or made fun of, for people who commit violence hitting is a way to let out their emotions, simply by aiming for whoever is the closest.”

What can be done to prevent violence in public spaces?

Nearly one-third of the respondents find that working with the perpetrators of violence is of paramount importance. This raises the question of the availability of programmes backed by trained professionals, as well as whether an overarching policy is in place for working with aggressors and categorised offenders when it comes to law enforcement.

“Aggressors should see psychologists and visit different centres to understand that what they are doing is wrong. Most importantly, they need to realise their mistakes and become aware of what they are causing to others.”

Others focus on the severity of the punishment, saying that it is not sufficient.

“The measures against violence against children can be stronger, so when someone knows how strong the punishment is going to be, they won’t commit any violence.”

“There should be appropriate punishment and consequences for what aggressors have done.”

The children further comment on the role of the public authorities and the extent to which law and order is enforced.

“Authorities and adults should have more control over aggressors.”

A final question is the extent to which the community itself is witness to ongoing violence.

“To stop this, we, the community, must help. When one of us becomes eye-witness to violence, he or she should help or inform someone, instead of just look and do nothing.”
For the eighth time in a row in 2019 Report Card 2019: What is the Average Government Score for Childcare announced the results of the monitoring of key child welfare policies in Bulgaria. Produced by the National Network for Children, the report presented the opinions of more than 460 children, young people, parents and professionals. For the first time in 2019 the report followed a new layout and model of presenting the progress achieved in the field of child policies. The purpose of the selected subject areas and sub-areas included in the report is to provide a full picture of the issue of children’s rights and to evaluate all aspects of child welfare. Ensuring children’s rights is spread across eight key areas: Child Welfare; Protection of Children from All Forms of Violence; Early Childhood Development; Child Health; Education; Family Environment and Alternative Care; Justice for Children; and Child Participation.

Report Card 2019: Grades

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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Welfare</td>
<td>3.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protection of Children from All Forms of Violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
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<td>Child Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Environment and Alternative Care</td>
<td>3.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justice for Children</td>
<td>2.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Participation</td>
<td>3.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average grade for 2019</td>
<td>3.31</td>
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Child Welfare: Grade — Average 3.00
High poverty and inequality rates continue to pose serious challenges, and their impact on children remains a major concern.

Protection of Children from All Forms of Violence: Grade — Average 3.00
Despite the progress made in this area and the adopted amendments to the Criminal Code, there is still no unified, multidisciplinary and coordinated policy to combat violence against children. Furthermore, no single statistical database exists in support of policies and measures that need to be implemented.

Early Childhood Development:
Grade — Good 3.50
Compared to the previous two issues of the report, this is the highest grade in the area of early childhood development, which is due to the recognition and prioritisation of the issue by Bulgarian government institutions. Some key challenges that remain are the lack of cooperation and coordination between different systems, the lack of a family-oriented approach and parent support, the lack of a leisure time and cultural activities policy for children, and the lack of adequate policies and measures for children with disabilities and developmental delays.

Child Health: Grade — Good 3.50
For the most part the grade can be attributed to the achieved reduction in the infant mortality rate and the attainment of the planned goals. Despite the adoption of certain measures, there is still a clear need for joint effort and focused attention to pressing issues, as well as for implementation of an overarching approach to children’s health needs, including building a modern children’s hospital, initiation of concrete care provisions for the mental health of children and young people, streamlined attention to the retention of healthcare professionals working with children, and targeted effort to promote healthy nutrition and behaviour for children.

Education: Grade — Good 4.00
This higher grade can be explained by the determined prioritisation of education by the government in recent years and the wide public discussion on the topic. However, social work with families and support for returning students or first-time attendees is still deficient. Inclusive education continues to suffer from a lack of recognition for the inclusion model, as well as the need of such, on behalf of all teachers, directors and parents. Many children with disabilities remain out of school due to the lack of adequate physical access facilities.

Family Environment and Alternative Care: Grade — Good 3.50
The closure of specialised institutions for children continued, and in 2018 the placement of under-three-year-olds without disabilities in homes for medical and social care for children was officially suspended. Still, the number of children living in separation from their birth families has remained relatively unchanged over the years.

Justice for Children: Grade — Average 2.50
This is the lowest grade ever given in this subject area since the first issue of the report. In 2019 no progress was made in the implementation of the child justice reform, despite numerous declarations of political will on the part of the Ministry of Justice.

Child Participation: Grade — Good 3.50
For yet another year we saw evidence of a collectivist and rather institutionalised approach to child participation. A major and lasting obstacle is the lack of child-friendly information concerning decisions having a direct effect on children that have either been or are due to be taken at national, regional and municipal level.
WHAT DID WE DO FOR CHILD PARTICIPATION IN 2019?

“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.”

**Article 12**
A simplified version of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, unicef.bg

**Megaphone Youth Network**

*Megaphone* is a two-year child participation programme created by the NNC. Based on the concept of non-formal education, it enables children to learn about their rights and practise their right to opinion. This is our way of supporting professionals to encourage child participation within their organisations. In September, during the annual Autumn School on Children’s Rights, which attracted 16 new participants from 7 of our member organisations, we set up the new *Megaphone* group of young people. The children joined the camp by preparing an exhibition dedicated to their rights. During the training sessions community maps were designed, in which the participants – adults and children – identified the key areas and hot spots in their towns or cities.

**Report Card: What is the Average Annual Government Score for Childcare**

Our young *Megaphone* participants recorded their recommendations to individual ministries in real personalised report cards, which were then sent directly to their respective bearers. In those the children drew attention to the need for new technologies and free textbooks in school, a children’s hospital and more health education. As regards justice, they would like to see more care and support for child offenders and lighter sentences for minors. Their other recommendations included more job opportunities for parents, streamlined work to prevent poverty, and communication between the general public and ministries with a view to creating a community.

**Rapporteurs**

*Rapporteurs* is a joint initiative of the National Network for Children and Eurochild whose task is to survey young people’s opinions. Throughout 2019 teams set up in different parts of the country collected children’s views. Acting as journalists and researchers, the children explored their peers’ ideas on key topics that affect them. The goal was to have children sound children out on topics that they had chosen, developed and examined themselves. In 2019 the Network gathered young people’s ideas on: How to deal with online bullying; Corporal Punishment: What do children think; EU elections: What do children want to say to the new MEPs; Inclusive education or education for each child: What do children think; Physical violence against children in public spaces; and What is the role of health education in school.

**Eurochild**

The National Network for Children and the Rapporteurs group have their own representative in the Eurochild Children’s Council. The council acts as advisory body for the operations of the European children’s network, bringing together children from 12 countries across Europe. This is Bulgaria’s second representation, through which key issues of national significance can be voiced and the views of Bulgarian children can be heard. On occasion of the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child our representative took part in the celebrations in Brussels.
For the fifth time in 2019 the Voice it Youth Forum was held. This is a traditional event organised every year by the Megaphone Youth Network in partnership with UNICEF Bulgaria. In addition to children’s rights, in particular the right to opinion and participation, which the forum generally promotes, each edition has a special theme chosen by the children. What was special about 2019 edition was that it marked the 30th anniversary of the signing of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

More than 250 children and young people from all over the country took part in Voice it: My life in school. The selected head theme was education, in relation to which the following questions were also discussed:

- Cost of education: access to education, access to textbooks and learning aids (textbook costs); private lessons; are all children able to go to school;
- Learning as process and result: is schooling interesting; interactive education; does the school provide us with the knowledge we need; how does the school contribute to our preparation for our future lives;
- School as community: our relationships at school; violence and discrimination and what can we do to live together in school.

The issues were discussed by the child participants in the youth network at a specially organised panel session with adult guests.

Part of the programme was dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the signing of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. To mark it the young participants had prepared two mini-events – a photo exhibition under the heading of children’s rights and a workshop for making T-shirts with stickers of children’s rights.

One of the highlights of the event was the presence of organisations working in the area of children’s rights, which shared some of their best practices. They were joined by the young beneficiaries of their work, setting a hands-on example of true child participation.

The goals of the forum were: raising the awareness of the participants and the general public of children as individuals who have their own rights, including the right to opinion, and their current status in Bulgaria, 30 years after the signing of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; promoting the right to opinion and ways of exercising this right to institutions, media and organisations working with and for children; providing children with space and an opportunity to discuss their chosen topic (on this occasion – school life), describe the reality in which they live in terms of respect for children’s rights at school, and make recommendations to improve ensuring those rights.

The participants were children and young people who are members of the Megaphone Youth Network, students from schools in Sofia as well as other parts of the country, numerous teachers, parents and representatives of NGOs working in the social field and education.
WHOSE ACHIEVEMENTS
FOR CHILDREN
WE REWARDED IN 2019

Every year we present the Golden Apple awards to individuals and organisations contributing to children’s welfare.

For the ninth consecutive time in 2019 we held the Golden Apple Awards ceremony. We continue to be greatly motivated and inspired by the people, organisations and institutions working with unending energy and enthusiasm in every corner of the country to make social change happen and improve children’s lives. These awards are a recognition for their efforts!

In 2019 a total of 28 nominations were made for the Golden Apple Awards.

Who is Hero of Children

In 2019, 12 people, together with their causes, were nominated for Hero of Children. The winner in this prestigious category was determined in an online vote by nearly 2,500 participants.

The award for Hero of Children went to Antonina Kenova for her achievements in developing a fair, innovative and high-quality education system for the youngest learners. Ms Kenova collects and processes proposals for improving the kindergarten admission system, assists in reporting irregularities and seeks dialogue with institutions.

The award in the School category was presented to the Specialised High School of Fine Arts ‘Prof. Nikolay Raynov’ in Sofia.

What makes this school special is that it has embraced creativity and its students prefer to have classes rather than holidays. Here students are treated as individuals, and the teachers take active interest in their pastimes and opinions, helping them to grow further. As regards children with special needs, they are greeted by a friendly and welcoming environment. The institution has also won funding for an innovative school project based on the concept to offer online schooling to students who are absent and can study at home.

In the Hospital category a Golden Apple was awarded to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Second Specialised Obstetrics and Gynaecology Hospital ‘Sheynovo’ in Sofia. The hospital implements kangaroo mother care and promotes a family-oriented approach. Its Neonatal Unit collaborates with non-medical professionals to support families with premature infants.
The winner of the Outstanding Contribution to NNC award, chosen by the Management Board of the National Network for Children, was Dr. Radosveta Stamenkova, Executive Director of the Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association, who is a true mentor for people belonging to some of the most vulnerable groups in our society.

The Special Recognition award went to all architects and architectural studios who took part in the open call for architectural design projects for construction of a House of Children: Studio De-ARCH OOD, Urbanviva OOD, Another studio, Studio POV, ProArch Studio, and Noviza EOOD.

The Municipality award went to Radnevo Municipality, which has exempted its resident parents from crèche or kindergarten attendance fees for their children, as well as from fees for using the milk kitchen. The municipal administration has also developed a support strategy for children and families, which is based on an integrated approach and a functioning administrative structure.

The award in the Journalist category was presented to Lilyana Boyanova from bTV in recognition of her longstanding work in the field of social issues and children’s and family rights. Focusing on various topics of public interest, Ms Boyanova has contributed to raising the public awareness of children’s rights, which is one of the facilitating factors for sectoral policy reform in the country. Her features seek to include all points of view, avoiding any hint of sensationalism.

The Benefactor award went to Fusion Academy and its founders Lachezara and Ivo Paskalevi for their financial and voluntary support for the cause for every child to grow in a safe, happy and loving family environment. Fusion Academy’s work is guided by the belief that all children have talent and should be given opportunities to develop and its young participants are taught in the spirit of civic activity, changing the public’s perceptions of charity.

The awards ceremony was held on the eve of Children’s Day in Bulgaria Chamber Hall and was attended by representatives of the member organisations of our Network, friends and official guests, among whom Minister of Education and Science Krasimir Valchev, Minister of Labour and Social Policy Biser Petkov, and the Chairperson of the State Agency for Child Protection Dr. Eleonora Lilova. The event was hosted by Iva Doychinova and Yordan Rumenov, a member of the Megaphone Youth Network, and featured performances by students from the National School of Music ‘Lyubomir Pipkov’, Colombina Ballet with principal Albena Arnaudova, and Mini Art Foundation’s Social Circus project.

Students from 105th School ‘Atanas Dalchev’, with whom we shot a short video, also took part in the preparation of the event.

The statuettes were made by the women collective behind the We Knit for Bulgarian Children initiative, winner of the 2017 Hero of Children award, who create beautiful hand-knitted toys for numerous charity initiatives.
"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**
A simplified version of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, unicef.bg

**Countering propaganda and disinformation**
In 2019 we witnessed a campaign against children’s rights and policies, which, backed by fake news and manipulation of parents’ fears, caused mass alarm and led children being stopped from going to school. In the information vacuum caused by the government’s inaction the National Network for Children made considerable effort to let the truth be heard and help pacify parents’ fears.

**Bulgaria Donate**
The National Network for Children became one of 12 founders of the Bulgaria Donate campaign, a joint effort to promote donation in the country. A total of 122 well-established civic organisations from across the country took part in the first Bulgaria Donate event. Their chosen causes came from all fields of public life: human rights, education and talent, nature and environment, social support and healthcare, culture and arts, sport, care and support for the elderly or children and young people at risk. At the event we managed to raise over BGN 50,000 from nearly 2,700 private donors.
14 metres’ worth of parents’ proposals

on how the government should support parents were collected by the National Network for Children at Family and Sports Day Familthon. Hundreds of mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers and children shared their views by noting down their biggest concerns. The most commonly mentioned among those was the insufficient admission in kindergartens and crèches. Some of the pressing educational issues mentioned were: the excessive number of children in class; the need to level standards across different schools; the small number of teachers trained to work with children with special needs; learning by playing, without heavy schoolbags; and promotion of alternative learning models. What children themselves want to see in school is less bullying and more cleaner spaces. The scrolls of parents’ proposals added up to 14 metres long.

National Network for Children in the media

In 2019 the National Network for Children organised 12 public events and issued 9 press releases. The media coverage of our work totalled over 570 publications and 56 TV interviews. Some of the topics we raised to the general public in the course of the year included:

- Violence against children as a problem of public significance in need of urgent action on behalf of the government;
- National Strategy for the Child and the need for such strategy;
- Preparation of a new Children Act;
- Social Services Act;
- Child Justice Act and the leading role of the government in the general communication process around child and family issues;
- Need for a state-of-the-art children’s hospital for Bulgarian children;
- Leadership and in-depth analysis of child and family policies and need for a Minister of the Child and the Family and a Children’s Ombudsman;
- Early childhood intervention as an effective method to overcome developmental problems.

Where to find more information

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- Leadership and in-depth analysis of child and family policies and need for a Minister of the Child and the Family and a Children’s Ombudsman;
- Early childhood intervention as an effective method to overcome developmental problems.

For more information, please follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nmdbg or subscribe to our weekly newsletter at www.nmd.bg.
Four years ago, the National Network for Children began to make consistent effort in pursuit of one of our dreams — building a HOUSE OF CHILDREN.

The construction site lies at the intersection of Hristo Botev Blvd. and Sofroniy Vrachanski Str., on the back of 46th General School ‘Konstantin Fotinov’.

The House will be a shared space where children, young people, parents and professionals can work together for happier, more confident, active and prosperous children in Bulgaria. It will further serve as a training and advocacy hub for children’s rights.

The space will provide a friendly and stimulating environment to all Bulgarian children, regardless of age, family and social status. It will host training sessions on children’s rights, role of institutions, financial culture and entrepreneurship, health culture, ecology and sustainable development, leadership skills, and, more generally, ways to become active and responsible citizens. Here children and young people will be given practical opportunities to exercise their rights to opinion and child and youth participation. The House will also host the shared activities and events of the nearly 150 member organisations of the Network.
What the House of Children will be like?

2019 set another milestone in the creation of the House of Children, as the National Network for Children launched a competitive procedure for architectural design projects for its construction. The jury consisted of architects, engineers, representatives of housing organisations, members of the Management Board of the NNC, as well as one child from the Megaphone network. The chosen design was proposed by Ar. Andrey Andreev and Ar. Petya Nikolova of Another studio, followed very closely by the other two finalists Studio POV and Studio Urbanviva.

The call was open to all architects and architectural studios in the country and was done in two legs, with three finalists selected at the end of leg one and a final contractor at the end of leg two. The main requirement for the participants was to propose a combination between modern vision and uncompromising functionality and high energy efficiency.

Another studio’s project won the jury with the serenity of its contemporary vision, harmoniously blending in with the surroundings, without interfering with or domineering the nearby school, which is a cultural monument of local significance.

Some of the other advantages of the project include a functional layout and possibilities for flexible and diverse use of the rooms and the hostel; minimal, bright and spacious interiors; as well as a winter garden and a roof top playground.

Most of the exterior will be made of brick, whose varying arrangement on different facade areas will outline separate functional blocks on a Lego principle. The interior arrangement of the building materials will allow for dispersal of natural light and modelling according to function.

The design envisages using natural materials with minimal harmful emissions and a low energy footprint: 38 cm. thick exterior brick walls with integrated thermal insulation, mineral- and lime-based plastering, and a wooden interior. The building will have high energy efficiency and will be furnished with a VRF direct evaporative cooler and an integrated air/waterheat pump, used for heating, cooling and hot water supply, as well as photovoltaic panels. The functional layout of the floors will enable natural ventilation and reduce air-conditioning use.

The solutions proposed by the other two finalists – Studio POV and Studio Urbanviva – were also very modern and creative, which is a good example of forward thinking and evidence of the huge potential of the young generation in Bulgarian architecture.

You too can support the construction of the House of Children by making a donation via our website www.nmd.bg or the GlobalGiving platform.
Donations provided to the National Network for Children help children and families living in difficult situations and reach them via the Network member organisations who provide direct support to them.

**Sopharma AD company has provided for the first year**
a donation of 3,200 units of the food supplement *Immunomix Plus*, syrups strengthening the body’s natural defences and making it resistant to bacterial and viral infections.

Products donated by the company amounted to almost BGN 70 thousand. More than 20 NGOs working with children have accepted and distributed the donation to families and children at risk across the whole country.

**Lidl Bulgaria**
donated again more than 11,150 pieces of different collectible Stikeez: smurfs, football players, fruits etc. suitable to be collected and played with by 3+ children.
We made many children happy with that donation which was sent to more than 20 non-governmental organisations and schools, working with children, that are part of the NNC.

**Kaufland supermarkets chain,**
donated again over 100 different types of toys to the NNC. We made a lot of children happy with the donation, distributed to more than 10 NGOs, working in Sofia.

**Ficosota Syntez**
for yet another year donated more than 3,000 litres of liquid household cleaning 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 12,000. Ficosota has been making this in-kind donation for a seventh year in a row. Over 40 NGOs working with children from 22 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. This donation was provided to families with children at risk and gets lasting results.

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**We are very grateful to our donors!**
DONORS AND FRIENDS

We express our gratitude to:

**Ficosota Syntez**, who for yet another year donated several tons of cleaning products and personal care products to the National Network for Children. The donation has reached thousands of families and children in need across the whole country.

**Lidl Bulgaria**, who donated non-food products, that were distributed to children by dozens of social services for children, schools and kindergartens throughout the whole country with the help of the National Network for Children and its member organisations.

**Kaufland Bulgaria** who donated more than 100 different types of toys to the National Network for Children, that were distributed among NNC member organisations in order to reach children who have more difficult access to toys.

**Sopharma AD** who donated 3,200 units of the food supplement Immunomix Plus and syrups for children strengthening the body’s natural defences that were distributed to member organisations in order to reach the children the organisations work with and their families.

**Chamber Hall Bulgaria**, that hosted Golden Apple awards ceremony in 2019.

**National Palace of Culture**, that hosted Voice It 2019 which gathered over 200 children and young people and adults supporting them from across the country to make their voice heard.

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

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

**The thousands of activists and supporters** who did not abandon their efforts to counteract the social media misinformation and continued to fight for the rights and good lives of children and support for their families.

**To all (62) individual donors** who supported the fundraising campaign for building the House of Children at the international platform Global Giving.

WHO WERE OUR DONORS IN 2019?
Seven organisations joined the Network in 2019. These organisations are from Sofia, Stara Zagora and Varna and they work for better education, mental health support, children who don’t live with families, support of Roma children, support of children with kidney problems, against gender-based discrimination and for helping resolve parental conflicts.

The Network will work together with the parents for making change and looking for a better childhood for all children.

2019 was an important year for the Network. The member organisations set the new goals for the alliance after the old strategic plan expired at the end of the year. The process of setting the goals took almost a year and one of its most important steps was the Strategic Meeting that brought together the member organisations on 21 and 22 February in Stara Zagora where together with the children from Megaphone they set the goals for the NNC.

The change NNC will be looking for together with the parents is:
- For Bulgaria to become a better place for children to live and develop;
- For families in our country to feel more secure and supported in caring for their children;
- For parents to perform their role as advocates for the rights of children.

In order to make this change a reality, we in the Network will work for better understanding of the child as a person with their own rights, for government policies that guarantee the rights of children and support families, for the development, collaboration and mutual assistance within the Network.

And certainly, in everything we do we will continue to strive for child participation – as an opportunity for children to take part in the decisions that affect them and for the willingness of adults to listen to them and take their opinions into account.

Organisational Development and Leadership Programme

The programme aims to provide systematic and sustainable support to the member organisations willing to take part in it. It helps them in setting and achieving their own goals for organisational and leadership development by means of building the necessary expertise within the Network. This year it focused on strategic planning of the organisations that took part in it.
Better child policies in Europe through Eurochild

The NNC is taking active part in the joint work and management of the European Network for Children Eurochild for better child and family policies in Europe. In 2019 we continued our work as a national coordinator for the Eurochild’s ‘Opening Doors for Europe’s Children’ campaign that supports the ending of institutional care for children in Europe. We contributed in the discussions for the feasibility study of a European child guarantee which was developed upon request of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament.

President of ChildPact

By participating in ChildPact the Network is working for introducing better ways to tackle violence against children. The NNC is one of the founding members of the Regional Coalition for Child Protection ChildPact and in 2018 the NNC Executive Director was elected as the coalition president.

Fighting child sexual abuse with ECPAT-International

For a second year now, the NNC has been a part of ECPAT-International — the international organisation that combats sexual exploitation and trafficking of children around the world. Within the network we share materials, resources and different options for dealing with child sexual abuse.

Support for the Slovenian network for children

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Slovenian non-governmental network SAFY (Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth) organised an international conference on child participation ‘Citizens of the Future’ in Ljubljana.

The conference goal was to raise the public awareness of the right of children to express their opinions and to share good practices. At that event the Megaphone programme was introduced and the presentation was made by one of its members.

Support for the networks for children in Georgia and Armenia

We provide training to other European networks for children in strategic planning and advocacy.

In 2019 NNC representatives delivered a training for the representatives of the Coalition for Children and Youth — Georgia and the Child Protection Network – Armenia in strategic planning and how to produce a Report Card for the Government, to give grades for the implementation of child policies. As a result, the Georgian coalition came up with their own strategic priorities. In 2020 both the Georgian, and the Armenian networks are expected to present the first issues of theirs Report Cards. All this was made possible thanks to ‘Raise up children’s voice’ project, financed by the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the aim to transfer the good practice ‘A Report Card on the status of the rights of children’ to help the networks for children in Georgia and Armenia. We also provided support for developing of a successful partnership between the Georgian network and UNICEF.

THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR CHILDREN OUTSIDE BULGARIA
FINANCIAL REPORT

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 our commitments was possible thanks to the trust of our partners and funding organisations.

### STATEMENT OF PROFIT AND LOSS (one-sided)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Note</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Revenues</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>919</td>
<td>1 303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Expenses</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(898)</td>
<td>(1 284)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross result</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Finance income</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Finance costs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profit/(loss) from business activity</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net result</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CONDENSED BALANCE SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTIONS, GROUPS, ITEMS</strong></td>
<td><strong>Note</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. NON-CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Tangible fixed assets</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SECTION B:</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Receivables</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Cash and cash equivalent</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SECTION B:</strong></td>
<td>523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D. DEFERRED EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>1 051</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The projects implemented by the National Network for Children in 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

• INSPIRE: Seven strategies to end violence against children – funding was provided thanks to Inspiring the End to Violence Against Girls and Boys, a project of New Venture Fund, project duration 13 months, end of the project September 2019

• Rescue: Reading the early signs of dropping out of school”, donor Erasmus+, project duration 36 months, end of the project September 2019

• ‘Child Rights Hubs for Children in Conflict and in Contact with the Law in Bulgaria’, donor Velux Foundation, project duration 42 months, end of the project 30 September, 2019

• ‘Children in focus in the reform of the judiciary’, donor Operational Programme ‘Good Governance’, end of the project November 2019

• ‘Together against Violence’, donor Operational Programme ‘Human Resources Development’ 2014-2020, end of the project December 2019

• ‘Focus on children’s rights’, donor UNICEF Bulgaria, end of the project April 2020

• Institutional support to implement the NNC Strategy 2015-2020, donor OAK Foundation, duration 48 months, end of the project June 2020

• ‘Putting the Puzzle Together: Sustainability of Family-Oriented Approach and Early Intervention in Bulgaria’, donor Open Society Institute, project duration 36 months, end of the project January 2021

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

All amounts in BGN thousand unless otherwise indicated

3. Revenues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income from donations under conditions</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>1290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership fees</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>919</td>
<td>1 303</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The income from conditional donations, represent recognised 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 the core activity only.

Analysed by nature of expenses as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of materials</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hired services</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages and salaries</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social security contributions</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation costs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other costs</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>898</td>
<td>1 284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHO ARE WE?

The National Network for Children is an alliance of 146 civic organisations and supporters working with and for children and families across the country.

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.

Georgi Apostolov
Chairman of the Management Board
‘Applied Research and Communications’ Foundation

Vesela Banova
‘Child and Space’ Association

Mariana Pisarska
Alliance ‘Children and Youth’

Svetla Peneva
Association ‘Social Dialog 2001’

Luben Georgiev
‘Re-Act’ Association

Ivan Ivanov
‘Agapedia’ Foundation

Maria Gineva
‘Future for Children’ Association
We believe that all policies and practices directly and indirectly affecting children should be designed, implemented and monitored in accordance with the principle of the best interest of the child and with active participation of children and young people.

**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. It also monitors compliance with the rules and procedures of the organisation.

**Secretariat**

The team of the Secretariat is in charge of the coordination of the Network’s initiatives, campaigns and activities. It provides support for the NNC member organisations and their relationships with institutions and other organisation, active in the field of children’s rights. The Secretariat also takes part in the planning of the advocacy work of the Network in the fields of education, health, family and justice.

The Secretariat experts coordinate the work of the Megaphone Youth Network and secure the child participation in the NNC activities. The experts draft and coordinate the drafting of content for children and families. They are also responsible for the financial and administrative processes of the organisation.

**146 organisations from the whole country**

The 146 organisations, members of the National Network for Children, pool together some of the best Bulgarian experts working in the field of education, health, social services, justice, development of youth activities, support for families, parents and children in disadvantaged situation.

Every day we face different challenges, fight for our causes, stand by our positions. In numbers it looks like this: every year, we — around 5,000 professionals — support over 110,000 children and 26,000 families.
WHY DO WE DO IT?

“Being part of the Network for us is like being at home — among likeminded people, people who look up to us, to our work and most importantly with eyes accepting the children and families we are working with every day. Being part of the Network is a privilege, a responsibility and reciprocal support. The NNC has backed us on many occasions and precisely this sharing of common values and support in difficult moments makes the Network alive and active.”

Maya Doneva
‘Karin Dom’ Foundation

“The ‘Initiative for Development – Kardzhali Decides’ has been a member of the NNC since 2009. Our membership in the Network is giving us a lot: sharing experience, an opportunity to take part in trainings and raising the capacity of our organisation, making contacts... The most important for us however, are the support and motivation: support, when it is hard and seems like it is not possible to carry on; motivation to continue to work and believe that what we do is important and that when we are together we could be successful in our mission — to make the lives of Bulgarian children better! Because the NNC is one big family, giving strength, love and support to every organisation.”

Rosi Sredkova
Association ‘Initiative for Development – Kardzhali Decides’

“Because I like volunteering, and also because I am interested in the rights of children and people.”

Dancho, participant in the Megaphone programme

“Networking is power, support for growth and connectedness. Worldwide Orphans Foundation Bulgaria is part of the National Network for Children because this is the way to provide and receive knowledge and experience. “No man is an island, entire of itself”, as John Donne wrote; the same applies to organisations. When we are successful, as well as when we face difficulties, it is important for us to be together, to be connected and to move towards achieving the cause we are working for!”

Rositsa Bogalinska Petrova
Worldwide Orphans Foundation

“For all of us it is an honour to be part of the largest Alliance for Children, not only because of the shared values of understanding, respect and unity, but also because of the common cause — children’s rights and tolerance to children. We believe in the Network for Children, as all its actions are guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We believe that all policies and practices that have so far been changed in Bulgaria and affect children directly or indirectly are largely a result of the actions of the National Network for Children. We are together — we are strong ... and we are as big as the cause we are fighting for and as young as our dreams are daring!”

Mihaela Dzhalalieva
Association of Bulgarian Coeliacs – ‘Gluten-Free Life’
NETWORK MEMBERS 2019

Burgas Region


Varna Region


Veliko Tarnovo Region

‘International Social Service’ Foundation – Veliko Tarnovo ‘Youth Tolerance’ Association – Gorna Orahovitsa Centre for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance AMALIPE – Veliko Tarnovo

Vidin Region

Association ‘Organization Drom’

Vratsa Region

‘First of June’ Association – Byala Slatina ‘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

Kardjali Region

Association ‘Initiative for Development – Kardzhali Decides’ – Kardzhali

Kyustendil Region

Parental Boards of Trustees of Kindergarten ‘Kalina’ – Doupnitsa Association Largo – Kyustendil Association ‘Knowledge, Success, Change’ – Doupnitsa

Lovech Region

‘Ecommission 21st Century’ Association – Lovech ‘Knowledge’ Association – Lovech

Pazardzhik Region


Pernik Region

‘PULSE’ Foundation – Pernik

Pleven Region

Pleven Public Fund ‘Chitalishta’ – Pleven

Plovdiv Region

Foundations: Plovdiv National Alliance for Volunteer Action – Plovdiv One Heart Foundation – Plovdiv

Razgrad Region

Janeta ‘Association – Razgrad Phoenix’ Association – Razgrad

Ruse Region


Silistra Region

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

Smolyan Region

‘Future Now 2006’ Community Cultural Centre (Chitalishte) Sliven Region

Ogoreni Centre


Sofia City Region

‘Parents’ Association Bulgarian Association of Adopted Children and Adoptive Parents Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association Bulgarian Training Centre ‘Child and Space’ Association


Sofia Region

‘Towards a Better Life’ Association – Chelopech

Stara Zagora Region


Targovishte Region

‘Academica 245’ Association – Antonovo ‘Naya’ Association – Targovishte Club of NGOs – Targovishte

Haskovo Region

‘Give a Smile’ Foundation – Dimitrovgrad ‘Opportunity 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 – Boliarov mA Chitalishte ‘Umenie 2003’ – Yambol