



changing lives!

Cedar

Foundation

Annual

Report



2015



Message from the Executive Director



Dear friends,

In 2015 The Cedar Foundation turned 10! According to child development experts, children at this age start to go through changes in every aspect of their life, mature, and develop a sense of who they are in the world. I am happy to say that the year of Cedar's 10th birthday included all of this: we changed the lives of another 75 children and young adults, expanded our team, confirmed our position as a leading organization in the policy-making social sphere in Bulgaria, and developed our strategy for the next 5 years.

At every stage of 2015, we had something to be proud of. Every day our children and young adults in Kyustendil and Kazanlak showed progress, acquired new skills and talents, and got to know themselves and the world around them. They started to attend mainstream kindergartens and schools, to work, pursue their hobbies, participate in events, and make new friends. The autumn of 2015 brought good news for people with disabilities in Kyustendil and their families: we opened the Social Rehabilitation and Integration Centre. We ended the year with a successful Charity Ball, the honour of being chosen by the non-profit sector as a co-chair of the Permanent Expert Working Group on Deinstitutionalization, and the accession of three new members to the Board of Directors, all of who have solid experience in the business sphere.

In 2015, we grew up, achieved new positive changes for disadvantaged people in Bulgaria and paved the way for the years ahead. This was possible thanks to the tireless and dedicated team of over 90 people, the Board of Directors, our donors, partners and volunteers. Let's enter this new stage of development with a brave step forward, and together, let's open up new horizons for disadvantaged people in Bulgaria.

Warmest regards,

Alexandrina Dimitrova
Executive Director

Board of
Directors

Alexandrina Dimitrova, Executive Director
Bernard Coffey, Non-profit Adviser
Bianca Summerfield, Fundraising Consultant
Bryan Turner, Vice President, Resolute Asset Management LLP
Dimitar Rusev, Chief Financial Officer, Infinity Group
Julia Eskdale, Lawyer
Lindsay Saltsgiver, Former Executive Director,
Cedar Foundation
Mark O'Sullivan, Executive Director, Cedar Tanzania
Natalia Kirilova-Todorova, Executive Director,
Digital Marketing Group
Stuart Byfield, Educator at International school of Zug and Lucern
Filip Genov, First Vice President, Special Projects,
UniCredit Bulbank

10 YEARS OF CEDAR - DOZENS OF CHANGED LIVES

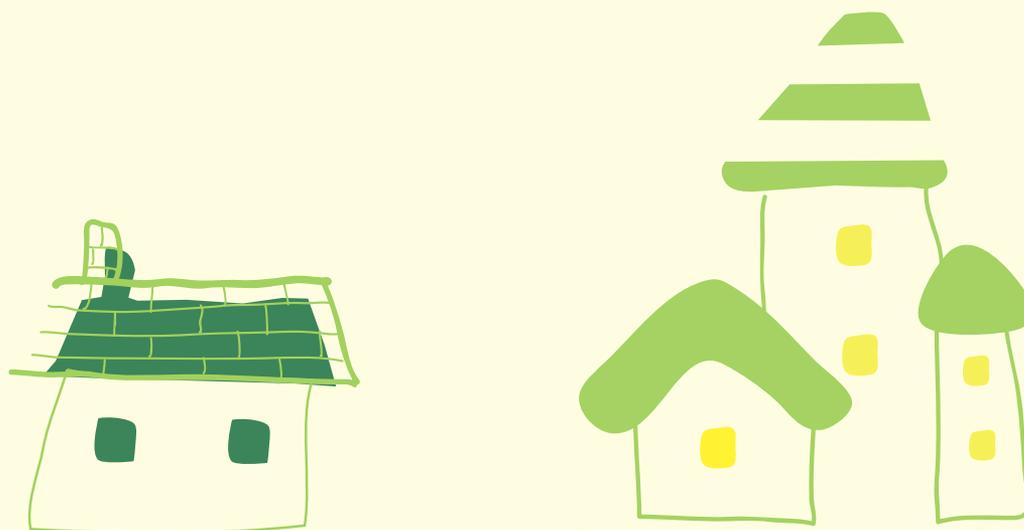


changing lives!

The Cedar Foundation is now 10 years old. In 2005, we started out as a few volunteers. Now we have become a large community united by one common mission. During this period of time, we have helped hundreds of abandoned children and young adults. We have shut one orphanage down completely and contributed to the closing of another 10 orphanages throughout the country.

We have trained more than 430 specialists to provide a higher quality of care to disadvantaged people in Bulgaria. We have provoked a change in old policies and attitudes in the social sphere.

In the last 10 years, we have touched hundreds of lives in Bulgaria and have changed them for the better. And we shall continue to do so.



THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

9 social services
managed by
The Cedar
Foundation

24-hour individual
care for 66 children
and young adults
in family-type
environment

31 young adults with
disabilities and 8 families
supported in the community
in Kyustendil

4 people in our
central office in
Sofia

7 Cedar-led fundraising events
and 11 events organized by
our partners, dedicated to
our cause

87 employees working
directly with the children
and supporting the
young adults

Contribution to the closing of
10 institutions for children and
young adults with disabilities

2085 hours of
volunteering

82 volunteers in
support of our
cause



OUR IMPACT

In 2015, we took over the management of three family-type homes and one protected home in the town of Kazanlak. 44 children and young adults with and without disabilities now live in the homes after spending their childhood in isolated orphanages. By opening these new social services, we have helped to close 10 orphanages through out the country, marking the beginning of a change in attitudes towards disadvantaged people. Our end goal is for these young people to be accepted as a valuable part of the community in Kazanlak.

In our family-type houses the children and young adults are respected, supported, and given individual care according to their needs and potential. The foundation's team helps the children and young adults to build up every day routines and acquire decision-making skills. We work with every child individually, according to his/her needs and preferences. The family-type atmosphere strengthens their feeling of security. The Foundation also provides a variety of opportunities for the children to integrate into the community, enabling them to feel like an integral part of society.

Thanks to the individual care and the person-centred planning approach, in less than a year, there has been a visible progress in the development of each child and young adult. A few of the children who were considered to never be able to walk by themselves have already accomplished it. Most of the children can now eat on their own, and many of those who were previously only capable of saying a word or two can now have conversations. The children and young adults took part in many public events, trips, concerts, etc. They go to school or kindergarten, and attend additional activities according to their hobbies, including football, zumba, folklore dancing, origami courses, etc.





The team that works with the children and young adults every day have polished their skills by participating in training programmes in important areas of their work, led by Bulgarian and international experts. Regular supervision is provided which aims to support the team psychologically and professionally.

Silvia and Ivan are brother and sister. She is 7 years old, he is 10. They came to us from an orphanage. They have told us that they like to be supported and cared for. Silvia is in first grade and is learning to count. She mostly enjoys counting with sticks. Ivan describes himself as a “bunny” because he is very shy and insecure when he is outside. He longs to be loved in a family setting. He enjoys saying and hearing “I love you” and gets sad when he has to part with an adult who is important to him. When the “bunny” puts on sunglasses, he turns into a big boy and says “I think I look like a man with these sunglasses on!”. In the short time that they have been with us, Sylvia and Ivan have experienced the most exciting moment in their lives: meeting their future adoptive parents. This has had a very positive effect on both children. They are delighted that soon they will have a real and big family, and cannot wait to become part of it.



Siyanie family-type homes



The “Siyanie” family-type homes in Kyustendil continue to provide and develop individual support for 22 children and young adults with intellectual disabilities. They live in 2 houses and 2 apartments in the city.

Achievements

- ☀ The children attend mainstream schools.
- ☀ 5 of the young adults have jobs.
- ☀ All of the children and young adults attend other social services that support their development.
- ☀ The children and young adults take part in different social activities, organized by Kyustendil municipality and other organizations.
- ☀ The children and young adults are better accepted and recognized by the community.
- ☀ “Siyanie” has proven itself as a leader in the delivery of quality social services and individual person-centered support.
- ☀ The team continues to develop professionally and improve the quality of care. This can be clearly seen in the progress of the children and young adults. In 2015, the team completed over 10 training programmes in support of their work.
- ☀ As with every big family, our home regularly needs to be given a fresh look. The children and young adults chose new colours for their rooms and, together with a team of volunteers, they gave their homes a makeover.





* Ina from "Siyanie"

"The most exciting thing for Ina in the past year was finding a job, as well as all the experiences and emotions that came with it. Ina had to prepare her CV, apply and go to an interview on an equal basis with the other applicants for the position. For her, this was an entirely new experience, but she approached it with a great sense of responsibility and understanding. Our team was constantly by her side, encouraging and supporting her when needed, so that she could do her best. Of course, it was the job interview and the fact that she was competing with other applicants that really made her feel significant and valued. The fact that she got the job was the most satisfying thing of all for her and she now fulfils her duties with great responsibility and willingness."

Svetla Vaseva, Manager of "Siyanie"



The Power of Faith

In 2010, after conducting an in-depth analysis, we found out that nearly 100 people with disabilities in Kyustendil lived behind the walls of their homes. They were completely dependent on their relatives, socially isolated and had no opportunity to work. Our findings motivated us to create a place where people with disabilities felt significant, where they could receive therapy and acquire skills to become more confident and independent. We encouraged Kyustendil Municipality to become our partner in this endeavour and received funding from the US Embassy in Bulgaria to build a **Social Rehabilitation and Integration Centre**. After 5 years of hard work, after overcoming challenges in the building process, organizing donation campaigns for the equipment of the Centre, and dealing with the difficulties involved in acquiring state funds to ensure the functioning of the Centre, in 2015, the Centre became a reality. And with it, our dream came true: to enable people with disabilities in Kyustendil to live a fulfilled life.

Social rehabilitation,
cognitive, psychological,
and medical physiotherapy.



Social and family consulting
and psychological support
according to the individual
needs of the person and
their relatives.

Speech therapy, art therapy,
labour therapy, sensory
therapy; holistic impact
on the person's
well-being.



In the Centre's short history, there has been a huge interest in its activities. Today it supports 31 young adults. By working with various specialists according to their individual needs, the Centre's clients have adapted quickly, and they continue to attend the Centre with great willingness and interest.

Among the important features of the Centre is the family-oriented approach which actively includes the family in the overall support of the young adult.

"The most important thing that we have achieved in this short period of time is that our clients have adapted very quickly to us. They recognize the specialists as their friends, and have built a relationship of trust and confidence with them. This is one of the main conditions for achieving the goals we had set. By coming to us, the young people feel more significant, their self-esteem and their confidence grow, and they are happy that they are no longer isolated and lonely, but valued and respected. Their achievements are visible to their parents and relatives, who start to understand the need to participate fully in the process."

Maya Angelova, Manager of the Centre



OUR HAPPY STORIES



"In 2015, we organized a large variety of fun activities for our children and young adults. Among them, were outings, trips, participation in community initiatives, walks, etc. But my most vivid memory of all was when two sisters who live in our houses received a visit from their father. The girls were very excited and happy to meet their father, who visited them along with their uncle and another relative. Their family had brought them gifts, and the sisters, their eyes sparkling, kept asking questions and hugging them. When they said goodbye, they promised to see each other again soon and to strengthen their relationship. Although the time they spent together flew by, this meeting left a positive impression on the girls, and the memory of it still warms their hearts," says Daniela Nikolova, a social worker at "Siyanie".

"The young adults from "Siyanie", together with part of the team, were given the chance to have a holiday in the "Trite Buki" area near Kyustendil. We all enjoyed the trip. Moreover, the attitude of the people there towards us was very respectful and attentive, showing that they had faith in our work. They even had a few surprises in store for us, which was great recognition for our daily efforts. Combined with the warm weather, the nature, the fresh air, and the positive attitude towards all of us – the young adults with disabilities and the social therapists – the holiday was a real joy," said Irina Zareva and Malinka Davidkova, social therapists in "Siyanie".





"I am a mother of a 19-year-old disabled boy. He is visually impaired, with a mild form of cerebral palsy and a mild to moderate intellectual disability, but with a preserved intellect. I have been using the services of the Social Rehabilitation and Integration Centre, managed by The Cedar Foundation, for several months now. All of the professionals in the Centre work with my child and I can honestly say that I am very pleased with their services. The good results can be clearly seen in my son's behaviour. He attends the Centre four times a week with great joy and pleasure. The people who work there love their profession and look after our disabled children with care and love. I hope there will be more of these centres in future, so that our children can socialise with others and avoid becoming prisoners of their own homes. I wish the team in the Centre many more professional successes to come. We need more people like them, people who use their skills, knowledge, professionalism and great patience to raise and teach our children to socialise. Thank you!"

Veneta Zareva, parent





“I want them to live their lives the way I live my life,” says our labour therapist Todor Vankov discussing the 6 young adults he supports in our protected home in Kazanlak.

With this idea in mind, he organized dozens of initiatives in 2015, enabling the young men to discover a different world from the one they had known behind the walls of the institutions they used to live in.

“I noticed that they felt happy whenever we went out into the city or into the nature. I wanted to provide them with new experiences that were interesting and useful to them. So we organized our first picnic and had a wonderful time. I was very surprised that it was the first time that the boys had learned how to light a fire and how to make a barbecue. This gave me even greater motivation to continue organising such activities for them.

We took them to a mineral pool with warm water in the village of Yagoda on two occasions. It was there that I saw for the first time the kind of integration I want to see everywhere. The people who were at the pool that day welcomed the boys. They played together with them in the water and taught them to swim. Our boys found new friends with whom they still keep in touch.

After that, I initiated camping. The boys from the protected home were all so excited by this that they could not stop talking about it and started to prepare early for the upcoming trip. Long after that trip, they remembered what we had experienced. The 6 boys, a colleague of mine, 2 social assistants, and I went camping for one night in the area near Muglitzh. Together we pitched the tents and the boys participated actively with great interest and enthusiasm. We went on a few walks in the area and around the river. For them, it was something completely new and unknown. For the first time in their lives, they saw a river and they were fascinated by the way the water flowed into it.

In the evening, we lit a fire together and the boys enthusiastically gathered twigs and kept the fire going. One of them even spent the night under the stars by the fire, enjoying this new magical moment in his life. In the morning, we prepared breakfast and spent the day in the nature. The boys gathered berries and herbs and collected many new memories, making up for each day spent locked away in the institutions.”



TOGETHER FOR CHANGE



Besides offering quality services to disadvantaged people in Bulgaria, The Cedar Foundation actively works to change national policies and practices and to implement the National Strategy “Vision for Deinstitutionalization of Children in Bulgaria”. We believe that in order to ensure the well-being of more people in the country, we need to work towards changing the entire social system in the long-term by collaborating with local and state authorities as well as other representatives of the civil sector.



The project is aimed at children and young people who use social services in the community. Our goal is to create a system to assess the impact of social services on their quality of life. At the moment, quality is determined only by formal administrative criteria, thereby disregarding human development and whether or not a particular service is right for a specific individual. This poses a risk to the social services and the rights of people who use them. The project aims to change the existing outdated model and focus on the individual as well as what he/she needs in order to develop fully.

We are implementing the project in partnership with local and national authorities. Based on the lessons learned from the applied model and on practices implemented in Iceland, our experts have made recommendations for legislative amendments and have created a new approach for measuring quality, which could be applied to social services across the country.





We are an
active member of
Coalition Childhood
2025

We participated in a series of meetings with ministers and deputy ministers responsible for the deinstitutionalization process. They have resulted in:

 The creation of a working group which aims to develop a new action plan for the implementation of the National Strategy “Vision for Deinstitutionalization of Children in Bulgaria” (2016-2020). The working group includes representatives of NGOs, among them, The Cedar Foundation. The Coalition insists that the goals of the new plan include: preventing the separation of child and family, closure of the remaining institutions for children and increasing the capacity of the child protection system.

 The decision that the Permanent Working Group on Deinstitutionalization shall be co-chaired by a representative of an NGO.

 The Cedar Foundation’s Executive Director Alexandrina Dimitrova was named its first co-chair.



Participation of
one of Radiance's
girls
in an international
conference

One of the girls from the “Siyanie” family-type homes participated by means of a video message in an international conference organized by the European Commission in Brussels on the Day of Persons with Disabilities. The invitation was issued following her participation in the meeting for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Geneva, where she gave a presentation on “Participation of children with intellectual disabilities”.





**We improve
quality of life**



We held a round table discussion on the topic “How can we improve quality of life in social services”. The experts of the organization presented the results of an in-depth examination and comparative analysis of the best practices for measuring the quality of social services in Bulgaria and Iceland. The aim of the discussion was to focus on the importance of changing the model for measuring the quality of social services in Bulgaria. It also sought to encourage collaboration between experts from non-governmental organizations and state institutions in implementing policies and making decisions at a local, regional and national level. The round table discussion provided interested experts from the social sector with the opportunity to contribute to the development of models which measure the quality of life in social services in Bulgaria.

As a member of the National Network for Children, we were part of the Opening Doors for Europe’s Children Campaign. The Cedar Foundation represented Bulgaria at an official meeting in Brussels to discuss the report on the use of EU funds for deinstitutionalization, which was drawn up after consultation with civil society organizations from 8 EU Member States. The campaign aims to improve the quality of life of children and young people at risk of entering or leaving institutional care throughout Europe by promoting the transition from institutional care to family-based care.



**Opening Doors
for Europe’s
Children**



FUNDRAISING

In 2015, we expanded and diversified our funding sources. We continued to focus on fundraising events as the most enjoyable way for our donors to support us. We organized the most successful Annual Charity Ball of the last three years, and participation in our Pub Quiz continued to be high. 11 partner-led events were held in support of our cause. Furthermore, we continued to develop our Sponsor a Carer and Sponsor a Child programmes. And we achieved something brand new: we gained a permanent spot on the Global Giving platform and within 7 months we managed to raise 60 % of the necessary annual funding for one of our houses in Kazanlak. Here is what our partners share about our mutual work:

“Since 2010, Cordeel Bulgaria has been a general sponsor of the Annual Charity Ball of the Cedar Foundation. It is with great pleasure that we attend the ball every year. We are honoured to be a partner of the foundation, as it provides outstanding care for children who need exactly this kind of support.”
Ivo Tringov, Executive Director, Cordeel Bulgaria



* second from left to right



“I heard about the pub quiz from a colleague a few years ago. Initially, I didn’t want to go because I thought I didn’t have enough knowledge, but I couldn’t refuse the invitation and in the end, I went. Ever since that first time, I have rarely missed the event. Admittedly, I still don’t know all the answers, but that doesn’t bother me anymore. I go because I have fun with friends and colleagues – we get to know each other, we meet new people, we compete, we learn. Still, the main reason for me to participate is the fact that we help the Cedar Foundation in their work to support children and young adults with disabilities. I believe in their cause and I am sure that every contribution is important to them. In this way, they also help us to become better people.”
Tanya Levenska, regular participant in the Pub Quiz





"The Cedar Foundation is Hilton Sofia's long-term community partner since the Foundation establishment ten years ago. We (the Hilton Sofia team) are working very smoothly with the Foundation team and highly value their professionalism and the dedication to their mission - to give disadvantaged people in Bulgaria a better quality of care, a better quality of life. Our cooperation has seen many shapes and successful initiatives. For three years in a row we have organized the Around the World in a Day event at Hilton Sofia in order to raise funds for the family type homes for children with disabilities in Kazanlak and Kyustendil. It is our highlight community event and we are very proud to hold it for the benefit of an active and trustworthy community partner like The Cedar Foundation.

We are also running yearly in kind donation campaigns (clothes, toys, household utensils) to support the Foundation projects. The Hilton Sofia team traditionally organizes a Christmas visit to the family-type homes "Siyanie" in Kyustendil, together with Santa Claus, the dwarves and presents for all the kids and young adults there. This is one of the most inspirational events, in which our team members are very keen to participate!

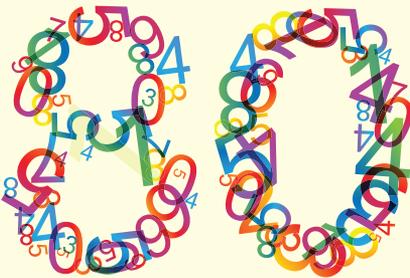
It is an honour for the Hilton Sofia team to support The Cedar Foundation and their work on the forefront of social service by developing alternatives to institutional care for neglected children and young adults, with and without disabilities." Stephan Reiter, General Manager, Hilton Sofia.

"They say that three things must be done in life: build a home, raise a child and plant a tree! The International Women's Club Sofia has achieved these three things thanks to our partnership with the Cedar Foundation - a wonderful home, where disadvantaged children and young adults are given the opportunity to have a better life, lots of love and a true, big family! On behalf of the Charity Foundation of IWC Sofia I would like to express our best wishes for the future development of the Cedar Foundation," Maria Ilieva, member of the Board of the International Women's Club in Sofia, partner of the Foundation in the "Sponsor a carer" program



OUR VOLUNTEERS

Over



volunteers

In 2015 we focused our efforts on recruiting long-term volunteers.

worked more than



hours in support of our cause



Part of our volunteers in 2015:



 A group of 15 students from Warwick University, UK spent a week with the children and young adults in Kyustendil, organizing various interesting activities with them. Inspired by their experience, the students created the short video “A Trip to Enlighten Our Souls”.

 A group of 15 students from the International School of Zug and Lucern in Switzerland – within 3 days, they had finished the project to install a gas supply in one of the apartments in Kyustendil which is home to 4 young people with intellectual disabilities. The project was fully funded by the fundraising carried out by the volunteer group. The students also helped with renovations in the small group homes and the Social Rehabilitation and Integration Centre. They went on a picnic with the children and young adults with disabilities, where they made a fire, baked bread, climbed and rode horses.

 Helen Winnicott, a professional physiotherapist from the UK, supported us by creating an individual physio rehabilitation programme for children and young adults with physical disabilities in Kazanlak. Helen provided important advice and guidance to the team and she also handcrafted additional posture aids for some of the children.

 Konstantin Kuchev – a young musician who carried out music therapy seminars with the children and young adults in Kyustendil and Kazanlak. For most of them, this was their first encounter with musical instruments and the experience was unforgettable for everyone.

 Volunteers from the initiative “Teddy Bear” provided Christmas presents for all children and young adults in Kazanlak, as well as materials for the art therapy programme in Kyustendil.

 Over 20 volunteers supported us in our central office, where they helped with various activities, such as organizing fundraising events, video shooting, introducing new technology to improve the functioning of the organization, graphic design, translations, communication, etc.





“Working for a cause motivated me to become a volunteer – I don’t think I can do anything else. During my time at the Cedar Foundation, I have learned how to do my job with an uncompromised quality. I think I’ve managed to transfer this to my new workplace. One of the things that impressed me most while I was volunteering for the organization were the stories of how quickly children progress in a family-type environment, where they receive high-quality care and all the attention they need. I chose to support this particular cause because at the moment there is a silent social revolution taking place in the way society treats people with intellectual disabilities, and I would like to be a part of it.”

Dimitar Ivanchev, long-term volunteer in the administration of the organization

“We have three volunteers who come regularly. They visit us 2-3 times a week and mostly they spend time with the children: they organize group games and individual activities, such as painting, completing puzzles, etc. One of the volunteers is teaching Braille to a blind child. With some of the children, they do physical exercises, and when the weather is good, they go out. Our volunteers always attend the organization’s celebrations, as well as personal celebrations of the children. The children know them well and are very happy when they come to visit. The team also appreciates the volunteers’ support and accepts them as a part of the team.”
Vera Stoyanova, team leader, Family-type home in Kazanlak





"I am a volunteer and consultant with the Cedar Foundation having worked for 20 years in UK with children with disabilities. I was introduced to Cedar Foundation in 2007 and have supported their work since then, helping with training and advice as required. I am excited that Cedar Foundation is at the forefront in helping the authorities in Bulgaria to improve the quality of life for disadvantaged children. This is a big motivation for me in doing what I can to support their work. I visit one of the small group homes in Kazanlak twice a week and have seen many improvements in the children. Several of the children were in pampers day and night and now after one year, many of them are using the toilet appropriately. Some of the children are now attending school or day care services, giving them different opportunities and experiences. It is also good to see the children helping with laundry, hanging clothes on the drier and folding items up when they are dry. As I was leaving the group home one day, a child who doesn't normally speak, said Ciao and blew me a kiss. I was very touched by this small gesture. When I see how the children are flourishing in the smaller, more family type environments it fills me with hope that these children will have a much better quality of life. I want to continue to support this important work in the hope that my small contribution will help to make a difference."

Anne Luck, long-time volunteer and pro-bono consultant of the Cedar Foundation. In 2015, Anne was actively involved in the process of launching the new services in Kazanlak. She held training sessions for the staff on how to work with people with disabilities and she worked individually both with the children and the staff.



FINANCIAL OPERATING YEAR 2015

Operating and financial revenue	BGN	%
State funding	313 918,00	41%
Events and campaigns	215 382,73	29%
Donations from Cedar Switzerland	70 371,96	9%
Corporate donations	63 571,56	8%
Grants	53 756,56	7%
Incomes from volunteer initiatives	41 363,78	5%
Individual donations	8 227,97	1%
Interest and exchange rate gains	480,32	<1 %
Total Revenue	767 072,88	

Expenses	BGN	%
Project expenses	711 590,74	86%
Development expenses	72 512,62	9%
Administration expenses	37 722,13	5%
Currency exchange loss and bank fees	3 277,17	<1%
Total Operating Expenses	825 102,66	

The difference between revenue and expenditure is covered by reserves from previous years.

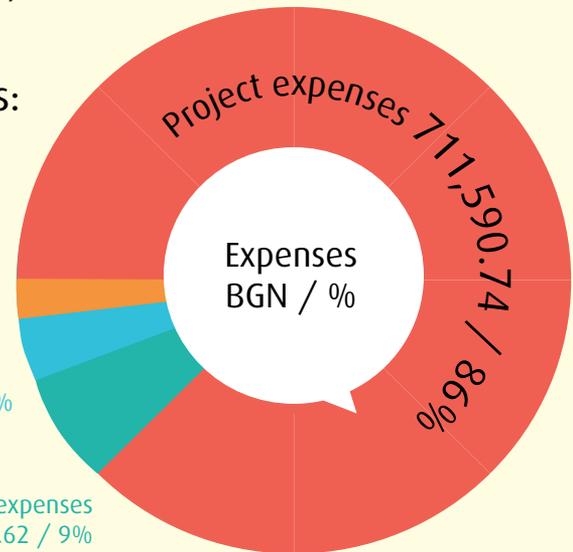
Total Operating Expenses:
825,102.66

Financial Information

Currency exchange loss and
bank fees 3,277.17 / <1%

Administration expenses 37,722.13 / 5%

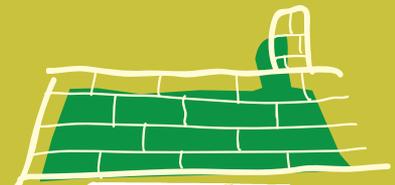
Development expenses
72,512.62 / 9%



www.cedarfoundation.org

Maria Ilieva reminded us that three things must be done in life: build a home, raise a child and plant a tree!

That was 2015 for The Cedar Foundation. We opened 4 new family-type houses for children and a rehabilitation center, we planted a tree, and started to take care of another 44 children, providing them with the support they need.



changing lives!