



UPDATE

THE BULGARIAN ABANDONED CHILDRENS TRUST

TBACT'S REGULAR NEWSLETTER UPDATES SUPPORTERS ON OUR PROJECTS FOR ABANDONED AND DISABLED CHILDREN IN BULGARIA

IT'S BEEN A TOUGH YEAR

OUR TARGET

£120k

OUR EXISTING INCOME

£80k

Despite predictions that the larger charities would be the hardest hit in the widening recession, smaller charities, like TBACT have also suffered significant drops in donations and sponsorship during 2011. With income so far this year at £80k, we are falling a long way short of our target of £120,000.

We are launching a £10 Christmas Appeal to raise funds for our Baba Programme in Pleven. We have 46 children in our Baba Programme and after 3 years we're seeing remarkable results in the children (please see below for information about the impact of the Baba Programme for children

like Magda and Miko). For some children, having a Baba has changed their lives, some, we believe, it has saved but for all the children, it has brought them love, fun and trust. We don't want to reduce our Baba Programme by one single Baba but to keep it going we need to raise funds – please support our Christmas Appeal for Baba's this December and give whatever you can.

DONATE £10

2011: CELEBRATING THE FIRST BABY INSTITUTION CLOSURE WITH A NEW CENTRE IN ITS PLACE

This year was a landmark year in Bulgarian childcare reform. Not only was the first closure of one of the country's 32 baby institution completed but a centre for local social services was established and opened in its place.

The centre is the first of its kind in Bulgaria. Among other services, it will provide day-care for children; emergency placement for children at risk; support for children with behavioural issues; foster care development; and a mobile unit to reach vulnerable families in the community. The project was funded by TBACT and run and managed by our Bulgarian partner Hope and Homes with assistance from both the State Agency for Child Protection and the Ministry of Health.



Dignitaries attended a ceremony to officially open the Teteven Centre for Social Support.

The baby institution had been 'home' to 32 children under the age of three. A key goal of the project was to ensure all children in the institution were placed in families to ensure they were being removed from institutional care and that the closure was a genuine deinstitutionalisation project. As a result ten babies were reunited with their birth families, while two were placed in long term foster care and 20 were adopted.

The project has been recognised as a model of best practice that can be rolled out across the country and Hope and Homes has since been asked to assist the Bulgarian Government's aims to close another eight baby institutions by 2014. This will see 400 children under the age of three moved into loving families, and signalling the beginning of the end for a further 24 baby institutions.



All children from the institution were settled into families.

2011: PREPARING CHILDREN FROM GORNA KOSNITSA FOR BETTER FUTURES

At the end of last year, after more than two years of hard work, our Bulgarian partner, the Cedar Foundation began the process of resettling children and residents from the institution for mentally disabled children at Gorna Kosnitsa into small group homes in the nearby towns of Kyustendil and Bobov Dol.

The closure of the institution is seen as a huge achievement for the Cedar Foundation who had to overcome a number of hurdles over the years. The new homes have been built in partnership with the Bulgarian state government



Children from Gorna Kosnitsa face better futures now that the institution has closed.

as well as the municipalities of Kyustendil and Bobov Dol.

TBACT supported the project by providing funding for a qualified social worker to work for Cedar Foundation,

assessing and preparing the residents for the move into their new homes as well as organising for some of the children to attend school for the first time and occupational therapy for other residents. The transitional period finished in the early part of 2011 and all the residents are now fully settled into their new homes in the heart of the local community.

We are delighted to have funded this valuable work which supported cedar foundation's overall achievement in transforming the lives of children and youngsters from the now closed institution in gorna kosnitsa.

2011: SUPPORTING THE CHILDREN FROM MOGILINO

We have continued to fund one of the small group homes in Ruse that 6 of the children from Mogilino were resettled to. The home is run by the Bulgarian NGO Child and Space. At present we have funded a full time physiotherapist to work with the children.

The budgets associated with the Deinstitutionalisation of Mogilino children and young people are limited to just 7,000 Lev (about £3,500) per child per year. The budget has to cover all needs, include housing, heating, clothing and if necessary, any therapeutic needs. Although the home is intended to be just a home for the children where they live and sleep, and from where they would go out to access local services in the community, the reality couldn't be more different. The local services are all too often unavailable. In order for the children to have some of the essential support they need like physiotherapy, the manager of the home has to bring in the services, essentially employing a specialist, paying a salary when the services would be free if it were available from the local social services group.



During 2011 Child and Space took over the running of another small group home – in Sofia – again where more Mogilino children have been resettled. Whilst social services are being established in Sofia, the situation is similar to Ruse, in that most services cannot be accessed outside of the home yet and the manager will face the same budget constraints as her ruse colleague. We hope to be able to work close with the Child and Space organisation in 2012 and support the Mogilino in both the Ruse and Sofia small group homes directly.



As well as funding a therapist TBACT helped the children from the small group home in Ruse enjoy a summer holiday.

2011: CHILDREN CONTINUE TO BLOSSOM WITH A GRANNY'S LOVE



2008 This boy was unable to move and lay on his back all day. He was extremely small for his age and underweight.



2011 The same boy with his baba, three years of love and attention have changed him beyond all recognition and he is much more mobile and happy.



2008 This little girl was unable to walk or talk despite being 5 years of age.



2011 Today she can walk and talk, count to ten on her fingers and boss her baba into doing what she wants!

We have been running the Baba Programme in Bulgaria for three years and we have always hoped that the children's development and

therefore their long term chances in life would be improved as a result of this intervention. Many of the children have grown deeply attached to their

Baba's over this time. We thought what better way than to show you.

A BIG THANK YOU!

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS AND VOLUNTEERS FOR THEIR HELP THIS YEAR. MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!

The team will be away from 23rd December 2011 until 4th January 2012.