



**AMERICA FOR  
BULGARIA  
FOUNDATION**

# **American optimism meets Bulgarian potential**

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**Annual Report 2017**

The America for Bulgaria Foundation (ABF) is an independent, non-partisan and non-political American philanthropic foundation. Founded in 2008, ABF is a successor to the Bulgarian-American Enterprise Fund, an investment fund created under the SEED Act of 1989 through the U.S. Agency for International Development.

ABF assists in strengthening a vibrant market economy and the institutions of democratic society in Bulgaria, helping the country to realize its full potential as a successful, modern European nation. The philanthropic aid provided by ABF builds on the legacy of goodwill and friendship that exists between the American and Bulgarian people. For more information, please visit: [www.us4bg.org](http://www.us4bg.org).



## Annual Letter

### Dear Partners and Friends,

I am an optimist about Bulgaria. While we all recognize the challenges Bulgaria faces, I am optimistic because of our partners and the community we're building. These individuals' dedication to their country is inspiring, and for that, I am deeply impressed and humbled as I know it is not always easy.

There are many barriers, both external and internal, but they persevere. More often than not, together we achieve much of what we set out to do. We recognize change comes slowly, and impact may not be seen for months or even years. But progress has been made, and I would like to share a few highlights of the past year.

### Where We've Been

We started 2017 with optimism, inspired by a new logo, a new motto, and a new visual identity, which state our mission and long-term support for Bulgaria loud and proud.

In 2017, we introduced the ABF Education Leadership Academy bringing world-class principal and teacher training to Bulgaria. Schools of the Future added 23 schools, bringing the number of schools to 68. By funding computer, science, and language labs, we immediately impact the educational environment. Community engagement is key: through fundraising initiatives, each school generates 25-30 percent of the improvement budget, creating a sense of ownership and community pride.

Our beloved Muzeiko, the children's science and technology museum, welcomed its 200,000th visitor. Its Inventions exhibit traveled to Razgrad due to the generosity of local private donors. And Muzeiko earned two more international awards for its content and design.



**Nancy L. Schiller**  
President & CEO

We are extremely proud of additional international recognition received by ABF grantees.

The United Nations awarded the Trust for Social Achievement a prize for its land zoning initiatives in Kyustendil, Peshtera, and Dupnitsa. This project can be a model for other communities in Bulgaria and countries dealing with similar issues.

In Paris, ABF and its partners the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Tourism, Municipality of Plovdiv, and the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to UNESCO introduced the Bishop's Basilica of Philippopolis to UNESCO delegates along with an eight-day exhibition.

Back in Bulgaria, we delighted in President Radev's recognition of the Bulgarian Donors Forum for its "Learn to Donate" program, aimed at familiarizing students with the principles of charity and goodwill.

The Little Heroes initiative transformed the children's wards of Pirogov with corporate support, DMS contributions, and individual gifts, resulting in a 2,200-square-meter, 65-room, three-floor transformation, along with a new playground. We are enormously proud of this transparent model of fundraising. When a community comes together under an umbrella of trust and shared goals, amazing things can happen.

We are grateful to the 26 NGOs who combined efforts to hold government to account regarding proposed amendments to the Judicial System Act. The lack of transparent ownership of media, the threats to independent media, and ongoing corruption issues accentuate the need for continued engagement of all citizens to hold Bulgaria's leaders to the country's democratic values.

## Where We're Going

In the first months of 2018, we will break ground on the Bishop's Basilica of Philippopolis and submit the UNESCO application. In spring 2018, we will cut the ribbon on the new ABF-funded campus at the American College of Sofia.

Several new initiatives include a partnership with Texas A&M University to train Bulgarian agricultural specialists. Start-Up Navigator, a dedicated webpage created by ABLE—the Association of Bulgarian Leaders and Entrepreneurs—serves as a one-stop shop for new businesses.

A partnership with Telerik Academy Foundation will teach digital skills to students in grades 4-12. Over the next three years, we expect to reach 5,600 students in 13 cities.

With the Center for Applied Sciences and Innovations, ABF is funding a new laboratory at Sofia University to encourage research and development in the biotech industry and to help keep scientific innovators in Bulgaria.

Partnering with the Srednogorie Cluster, we are launching BASE—Business Achievements for Social Entrepreneurship—to train budding entrepreneurs on how to run a small business.

The HUB cities project focuses on three communities: Razgrad, Gabrovo, and Vratsa. We will closely work with organizations, businesses, and local government to see how ABF and its partners can assist in building stronger, sustainable communities.

And the Muzeiko Inventions exhibit will travel to Gabrovo and Plovdiv, again due to the generosity of individual donors, corporate and municipal support.

We deeply value our community's engagement and begin 2018 with determination and optimism. But as large as ABF is, we alone cannot provide the long-term support to all the worthy causes in the country. Or to the same initiatives indefinitely. The times present us with different challenges that need to be addressed, which brings me to the topic we will be working on in 2018—sustainability.

### **How We'll Work Together to Get There...**

Over the past 12 months, the Foundation's team expanded our reach and broadened our network of contacts. We are actively exploring domestic and international partnerships—with government, embassies, businesses, and individuals, along with US and international foundations and organizations. We are doing this because we want to help our grantees and partners have even greater impact and better sustain their initiatives over the long term.

Social issues are rarely solved by the efforts of one sector. It takes the policy-making power of government, the innovation engine of business, the energy and commitment of NGOs, the media's commitment to report honestly on successes and failures, and the financial support of individuals and philanthropic organizations. As we all know, the power of a group is much greater than the efforts of an individual.

ABF is here to plant the seeds, to nurture the germ of an idea for the betterment of society. Not all seeds will take root, but some will successfully see the light of day and, possibly, transform society in ways none of us can anticipate. ABF and its partners will actively explore ways to collaborate, ask questions, and share our collective wisdom.

Finally, I'd like to end with a quote by Mr. Rogers, a US television personality who educated generations of American children: "We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say, 'It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those people who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes."

The members of the ABF community are the Big Heroes. They see the need and respond. On behalf of ABF, I extend my gratitude for what they do every day.

Nancy L. Schiller  
President & CEO





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# Our Mission

## Our Mission

### **Development and Support**

The America for Bulgaria Foundation assists in strengthening a vibrant market economy and the institutions of democratic society in Bulgaria, helping the country to realize its full potential as a successful, modern European nation.

### **Friendship**

The America for Bulgaria Foundation seeks to enhance the longstanding legacy of goodwill and friendship between the American and Bulgarian people and through many of its programs, to promote the US - Bulgaria people-to-people contacts and exchange of ideas and resources.

### **Generosity**

The Foundation represents the generous face of the American people and embodies the highest standards of US ethical conduct, transparency, and core values.

# Guiding Principles and Core Values

## Partnership

We are not merely a sponsor or a funding mechanism. Our grant-making process presumes collaborative planning between ABF and its grantees since we understand that common solutions best lead to sustainable change. We also encourage partnership and synergy among our grantees to utilize to the highest degree experiences gained and lessons learned.

## Long-Term Commitment

We are committed to achieving fundamental and lasting difference in our primary areas of interest knowing that achieving meaningful results requires a sustained effort. That is why we foster long-term engagement with the partners and areas in which we work. We give preference to projects where, if successful, national replication is possible.

## Innovation

We look for entrepreneurial organizations, innovative thinkers and proactive leaders with a vision and capacity to promote change. We seek to advance creative ideas and novel solutions and are not afraid to take risks that other stakeholders might not assume, and to challenge convention and confront stereotypes.

## Local Initiative

We seek to remain focused on our overall mission and supporting strategies and, in so doing, we listen carefully to local needs to ensure that the endeavors we support have lasting impact and that local communities and organizations assume ownership upon project completion.

## Proactive Approach

We proactively develop distinct ABF operational competencies and initiatives. We do not just review applications but help build the institutional capacity of our grantees or create new organizations to ensure important needs are met in ABF's priority areas of interest.

## Ethics

We are committed to the highest ethical standards in our own governance and administration of our grant-making, to personal and professional integrity, transparency and accountability, and expect that our partners and grantees adhere to the same standards.

## Evaluation

We are committed to using evaluation as a means to sharpen objectives and improve the effectiveness of our work. We understand that ABF's success will be measured over the long run but we make every effort to ensure that where appropriate our grants have meaningful and measurable outcomes.

## Philanthropy

We are committed to reviving philanthropy in Bulgaria and to encouraging its growth by example and by specific actions.

## US - Bulgaria Cooperation

We seek to enhance the legacy of goodwill and friendship between the American and Bulgarian people and promote the US-Bulgaria people-to-people contacts and exchange of ideas. We encourage specific project recognition such that the American people receive appropriate credit for ABF efforts.



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# Our History



## We started our work in 2009. But our connection with Bulgaria dates back more than 25 years.

### **1989: In Europe, the Berlin Wall Falls. In the United States, the U.S. Congress Passes the SEED Act**

On November 9, the Berlin Wall fell. The Iron Curtain lifted and opened the way to democracy and free markets for the countries from Central and Eastern Europe.

On November 28, 1989, the U.S. Congress passed the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act promoting transition to free markets and democracy in former communist countries. In a way, the program had similarities to the Marshall Plan of 1948, but this time, the economic assistance would not be government to government, but from private U.S. corporations to private companies, through a novel and unique creation – Enterprise Funds.

The Enterprise Funds authorized under the SEED Act were funded with U.S. tax money through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) but managed by independent, volunteer Boards of Directors comprised of U.S. business executives and entrepreneurs, without direct U.S. government involvement. In all, ten funds were created in 17 countries across Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

### **1991: The Bulgarian-American Enterprise Fund is Established**

The Bulgarian-American Enterprise Fund (BAEF) was established, with capital of \$55 million. The Fund began investing in Bulgaria's emerging free-market economy by helping entrepreneurial Bulgarians create small and medium-sized businesses.

### **1992 – 1995: The Bulgarian-American Enterprise Fund Invests in Bulgarian Businesses**

Through BAEF's micro-lending, SME and Hotel Lending programs, in three years, the Fund made over 500 investments in businesses located in 130 cities, towns and villages across Bulgaria.

### **1996: The Bulgarian American Credit Bank is Established**

The successful development of the Fund and its increased investment activities led to the establishment of the Bulgarian-American Credit Bank (BACB). BACB began by creating a Home Mortgage Lending Program and assisting with the passage of Bulgaria's Mortgage Bond Legislation. By 2001 and for several years to come, BACB was recognized as the most profitable and efficient bank in Bulgaria. Over the next ten years, BAEF and BACB invested in more than 5,000 Bulgarian businesses, which employed thousands of Bulgarians.



### **2007: Bulgaria Becomes a Member of the European Union**

On January 1, 2007, Bulgaria entered the European Union. Having largely fulfilled its mission, BAEF began selling its assets.

### **2008: BACB is Sold**

In August 2008, BAEF sold its majority ownership of BACB to Allied Irish Bank, allocating the proceeds of the sale together with other asset sales to form the America for Bulgaria Foundation's \$400 million corpus. The total investment returns positioned BAEF as the most successful of the ten SEED Act Enterprise Funds.

### **2009: The America for Bulgaria Foundation is Established**

The proceeds were earned in Bulgaria thanks to the good management of investments and the work of the Bulgaria team. It was a natural decision for this capital to be put to continued good work in Bulgaria to improve Bulgaria's business environment, the quality of education, the prosperity of society in all its dimensions – culture, knowledge and everyday life. This vision was at the core of the 2009 founding of the America for Bulgaria Foundation.

Each year ABF donates about \$20 million out of its \$400 million endowment. The corpus is invested to allow ABF to continue as a perpetual foundation in its six key areas of interest:

- **Private Sector Development**
- **Education**
- **Civil Society and Democratic Institutions**
- **Economically Disadvantaged**
- **Arts and Culture**
- **Cultural Heritage and Tourism**

## How We Work

When making grants, we look for effective organizations, original thinking and relevance of the proposal to the development of the private sector. Our grant-making process presumes collaborative planning between ABF and its grantees.

We accept unsolicited applications but also proactively approach organizations that are independently identified by our staff; initiate projects ourselves; or create new organizations.

Applications are considered throughout the year. If our review of the initial inquiry is favorable, the relevant program director contacts the applicant to discuss their ideas in greater detail and help shape a full proposal. If a proposal is to be considered for a grant, the approval process - which includes research, meetings, site visits, grant negotiations, legal review and presentation of the grant for approval - is generally completed within one month but can take longer.

America for Bulgarian Foundation works for the benefit of Bulgaria so the projects which we fund are primarily to Bulgarian organizations and take place all over the country. We promote the US - Bulgaria people-to-people contacts and exchange of ideas and resources, so certain project activities take place in the United States and are administered by US organizations.

Making a difference matters to us. Every effort is made to be certain the programs ABF supports have meaningful and measurable outcomes. Evaluation is key to knowing we are doing the right thing in the right way. Evaluation is one of ABF's Guiding Principles, and we are committed to using evaluation to sharpen our objectives and improve our effectiveness.

We define our objectives before the program begins, determining the indicators and outcomes we expect for each grant. ABF closely monitors the project, working with our partners to collect data for analysis. Our largest investments are rigorously evaluated by either ABF's Impact and Evaluation team or by external independent evaluators. Our desire is to ensure the funds entrusted to ABF are put to the best possible use.

After a grant agreement is signed, we announce all the projects that we fund on our website. We provide information on the organization, the project title, grant amount, grant term and brief summary of the project.




# ABF Investments


## Our support in numbers 2009-2017

 **9 years**

 **756 projects**

 **202 million**

-  Approved
-  Disbursed
-  Number of projects

 All data is in US dollars

	Civil Society and Democratic Institutions	Private Sector Development	Arts and Culture	Cultural Heritage and Tourism	Education	Economically Disadvantaged	Total per Year
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,406,810</b>	<b>8,603,902</b>	<b>18,706,425</b>	<b>11,792,571</b>	<b>111,278,645</b>	<b>23,491,776</b>	<b>202,280,129</b>
	24,848,566	6,858,956	18,224,875	7,840,732	93,215,197	15,828,310	166,816,635
	142	61	310	38	133	72	756
<b>2017</b>	<b>1,563,328</b>	<b>1,292,557</b>	<b>1,259,495</b>	-	<b>5,331,880</b>	-	<b>9,447,260</b>
	2,916,267	693,621	1,390,532	441,201	9,564,891	2,063,540	17,052,051
	7	7	40	-	8	-	62
<b>2016</b>	<b>4,134,525</b>	<b>956,544</b>	<b>1,798,187</b>	<b>252,565</b>	<b>7,843,020</b>	<b>5,867,640</b>	<b>20,852,481</b>
	3,783,424	824,305	1,730,463	390,449	8,265,043	1,849,591	16,843,275
	21	10	36	1	9	1	78
<b>2015</b>	<b>2,879,690</b>	<b>824,232</b>	<b>983,163</b>	<b>4,618</b>	<b>3,800,253</b>	<b>665,872</b>	<b>9,157,828</b>
	3,050,176	769,374	1,658,022	342,079	11,864,518	2,184,746	19,868,915
	14	5	30	1	10	2	62
<b>2014</b>	<b>6,159,213</b>	<b>1,308,291</b>	<b>3,004,229</b>	<b>5,847,736</b>	<b>9,744,706</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>26,104,175</b>
	3,992,789	871,245	2,617,888	1,250,475	21,252,593	3,439,230	33,424,220
	22	9	41	7	15	1	95
<b>2013</b>	<b>887,946</b>	<b>364,135</b>	<b>3,556,314</b>	<b>137,645</b>	<b>26,059,755</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>31,005,795</b>
	3,180,903	1,009,579	3,480,917	1,593,067	13,541,794	1,756,261	24,562,521
	11	3	41	1	14	0	70
<b>2012</b>	<b>3,050,318</b>	<b>1,731,070</b>	<b>2,852,255</b>	<b>2,223,023</b>	<b>25,671,941</b>	<b>12,658,084</b>	<b>48,186,691</b>
	3,063,640	1,033,937	2,665,959	1,918,248	12,049,721	1,788,312	22,519,817
	14	9	32	5	23	17	100
<b>2011</b>	<b>4,922,040</b>	<b>934,908</b>	<b>2,898,107</b>	<b>797,213</b>	<b>10,939,389</b>	<b>601,571</b>	<b>21,093,228</b>
	2,828,785	776,049	2,762,240	734,327	9,349,427	1,180,421	17,631,249
	18	6	46	9	22	19	120
<b>2010</b>	<b>3,870,136</b>	<b>785,459</b>	<b>1,591,114</b>	<b>1,963,062</b>	<b>7,064,064</b>	<b>2,303,957</b>	<b>17,577,792</b>
	1,616,806	610,846	1,483,431	803,681	4,957,564	1,422,694	10,895,022
	28	8	26	11	18	23	114
<b>2009</b>	<b>939,614</b>	<b>406,706</b>	<b>763,561</b>	<b>566,709</b>	<b>14,823,637</b>	<b>1,354,652</b>	<b>18,854,879</b>
	415,776	270,000	435,423	367,205	2,387,646	143,515	4,019,565
	7	4	18	3	14	9	55

## How American Optimism Met Bulgarian Potential in 2017





“American Optimism Meets Bulgarian Potential” – we started 2017 with optimism, inspired by a new logo, a new motto, and a new visual identity, which state our mission and long-term support for Bulgaria loud and proud.

For the first time in 2017 we gathered all our partners and friends from across the country, with whom we have completed over 700 projects worth more than USD 200 million in the last nine years. This year alone we launched 60 new projects, worked on over 150 initiatives, and made investments in the amount of USD 16 million. We continue to look for and create new opportunities for strengthening and expanding ABF’s community to celebrate Bulgaria’s potential.

Our mutual efforts brought Pirogov’s Little Heroes to life, helped achieve a UN award and launched Bulgaria’s candidacy to put the Bishop’s Basilica and the Roman Mosaic Heritage of Philippopolis on UNESCO’s World Heritage List.

ABF’s Little Heroes of Pirogov transformed the children’s clinics in Pirogov Emergency Hospital into a magical, welcoming place for children and their loved ones. The Little Heroes spread over the three floors of the children’s clinics in Pirogov, and a new playground was built in the yard of the hospital. The silver pine tree planted by the Foundation in the playground will dazzle and gleam in the hospital yard with its Christmas decorations, a bright reminder of the “Little Heroes” initiative of ABF and its partners.



Bulgaria was the center of attention of the United Nations twice this year. In October, Bulgaria’s Trust for Social Achievement, founded by ABF, was awarded in the “Exclusive Contribution” category of the UN Prize for Sustainable Cities and Settlements for its successful program “Urban Planning - Everybody Wins.” This program was implemented in three Bulgarian municipalities - Kyustendil, Peshtera and Dupnitsa.



An exhibition dedicated to the Bishop's Basilica and the Roman Mosaic Heritage of Philippopolis, organized by America for Bulgaria Foundation with the support of the Permanent Delegation of Bulgaria to UNESCO, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Municipality of Plovdiv was held on November 20 at UNESCO's Headquarters in Paris. This exhibition launched the initiative to include the Bishop's Basilica and the Late Antique Mosaics of Philippopolis, Roman province of Thrace on the UNESCO's Indicative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Work on the candidacy continues with ABF's financial and organizational support.

The Bulgarian Donors Forum was awarded by Bulgarian President Rumen Radev for its "Learn to Donate" program. It is aimed at familiarizing students in grades 1 to 12 with the principles of charity and goodwill and is being implemented in 24 schools nationwide with the support of America for Bulgaria Foundation.





The newly-created Anti-Corruption Fund analyzes deals and transactions with high corruption risk with a special focus on public procurement. The tender tracking algorithm identifies signs and signals of possible violations. Teams of legal experts and auditors assess the data collected and gather additional information needed to report specific cases to the law enforcement authorities.

In three cities - Gabrovo, Razgrad and Vratsa, we saw the opportunity to prove how powerful community can be by uniting the efforts of the local administration, citizens and businesses. It was an honor and a pleasure for our Board of Directors to visit these three cities in April, and in June we continued with meetings of non-governmental organizations, active citizens, business representatives and local institutions. We built a solid foundation for cooperation and will continue this active partnership in 2018.

This year, ABF launched the Academy for School Leadership, aimed at enhancing the prestige of teaching and the quality of education in Bulgaria. The Academy offers qualification programs tailored to the needs of Bulgarian principals and teachers, developed by experts from the Teachers' College of Columbia University and Bank Street College in New York in partnership with the Qualification Department of Plovdiv University.

The Schools of the Future program, which supports innovative school communities nationwide, reached another 23 schools this year. BGN 2.6 million was invested in modernization of the learning environment and new teaching and learning methods.



This year Bulgaria's Olympic teams in natural sciences, supported by America for Bulgaria Foundation, won 16 gold, 19 silver and 29 bronze medals in the international Olympiads in Informatics, Biology, Physics, Astronomy, Chemistry and Mathematical Linguistics. Bulgaria hosted the first European Junior Olympiad in Informatics - EJOI 2017. America for Bulgaria was its gold sponsor.



Telerik Academy, which helps students between grades 4 and 12 across the country learn more about programming and new technologies, will reach 5,600 students from 13 cities nationwide over the next three years thanks to America for Bulgaria's financial support.





Muzeiko – America for Bulgaria’s Children’s Museum ventured outside of Sofia in the second year since its launch. In Razgrad, more than 6,000 visitors saw the traveling exhibition “Inventions” dedicated to the most important inventions of the 19th and the 20th centuries. The center ‘crossed’ the ocean, grabbing the award for the best mission performance at the annual conference of the Children’s Museum Association of the United States.



Bulgarians enjoyed a number of performances by world-famous stars. Gil Shaham, one of the most prominent violinists of our time, came to Bulgaria to play on the Sofia stage in the “Music of America” series, which we started with Cantus Firmus and the Classic FM Orchestra in 2010.

Bulgaria welcomed Frank Uwe Laysiepen (Ulay), a talent who has left a mark on 20th century art, with his first photo exhibit in the country. One of the greatest innovators of jazz music of our time and the most sought-after artist for festivals, Robert Glasper (5 Grammy Awards), and 21st century American Jazz symbol Christian McBride (4 Grammy Awards) were among the headliners of the A to Jazz festival, which the Foundation supported for the seventh year.

The Young Virtuosos Contest, funded by America for Bulgaria Foundation, attracted a record number of 135 participants in Sofia. Some of the most influential musicians and lecturers in the world arrived in Bulgaria to judge the contest.



## American Optimism Meets Bulgarian Potential: **America for Bulgaria Foundation Unveiled New Identity**

In 2017, the America for Bulgaria Foundation, the largest philanthropic organization in Bulgaria, introduced a new brand identity. The branding package includes a new logo and related visuals, a new tagline, and a new domain name.

Nancy Schiller, president and CEO of the America for Bulgaria Foundation, introduced the new branding at a conference in Sofia for more than 600 of the Foundation's partners from 75 locations across Bulgaria.

"Our new brand identity captures the unique partnership between our two countries, best exemplified by our new tagline 'American Optimism Meets Bulgarian Potential,' Mrs. Schiller said. "It also reflects our long-term commitment to Bulgaria as we plan to continue investing about \$20 million per year in donations that benefit the Bulgarian people."

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## Yordan Zhechev, Tribal Worldwide: **We Bulgarians Have Potential but Need Optimism**

Yordan Zhechev is the CEO of Tribal Worldwide Sofia advertising agency and one of the most respected advertising professionals in Bulgaria. Yordan and his team are the creative minds behind the new visual identity of America for Bulgaria Foundation. A key element of the new identity is the tagline, which embodies in six words who ABF is: American optimism meets Bulgarian potential.

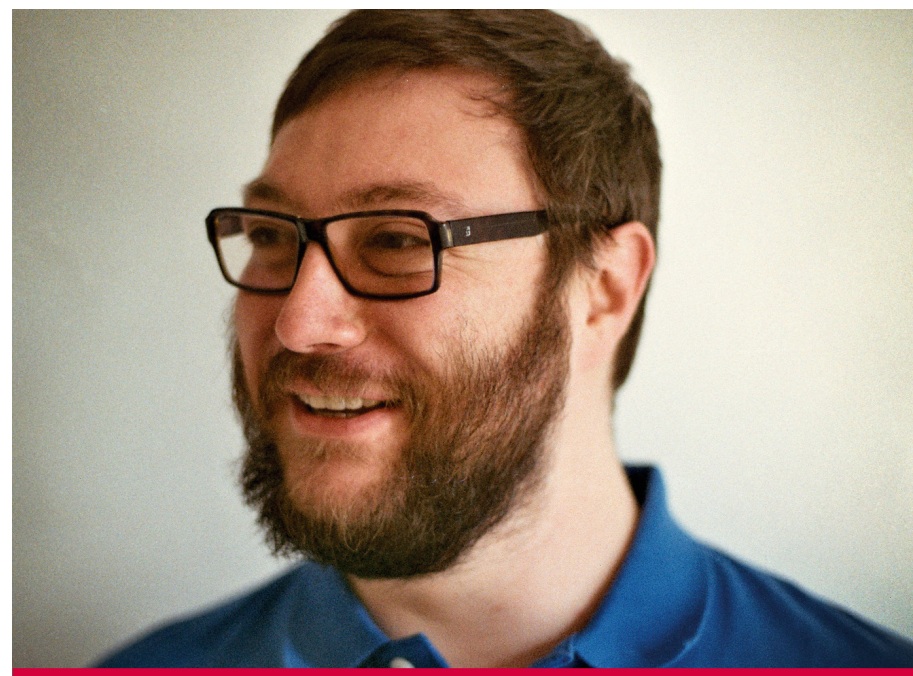
**You are the main person behind the creation of the new visual identity of America for Bulgaria Foundation. What does the tagline ‘American optimism meets Bulgarian potential’ stand for?**

- I am just one of the people involved in the project. Behind it is also the whole team of Tribal Worldwide Sofia that spent the past five months sampling, editing, erasing and starting from the beginning over and over again. Once more, we discovered that if you want to have a simple and straightforward message, you have a long way to go.

The tagline ‘American optimism meets Bulgarian potential’ means what it says – there is no subtext, no hidden meaning and no casual puns. I think that we Bulgarians have potential, but we often don’t believe in ourselves. This is why the American belief that if you put in the effort you will succeed, can be of great help to us. In other words – the two parts come together to make a strong whole.

**At Tribal, you say that you wouldn’t work for someone you don’t believe in. How did America for Bulgaria Foundation win you as a client?**

- With the fact that they have a clear and firm position and are ready to stand behind it. Moreover, the evidence for the Foundation’s outstanding work over the years is all around us and has inspired our team repeatedly - from One Design Week and A to Jazz, and Muzeiko, to the Basilica in Plovdiv – there is no team member of the agency that is not impressed by the work of ABF.





**What purpose does the new logo, tagline, graphic and web design serve a non-governmental organization?**

- None, if not followed consistently and purposefully. The clean and well-designed identity is only the start. What builds the brand is the daily upholding of your principles and having a consistent, unambiguous message across all channels – from a brochure to a Facebook post to an advertisement. And yes, even the smallest non-governmental organization has to think of itself as a brand. In the long run, this would pay off greatly.

**What challenges did you encounter during the development of the new identity of America for Bulgaria Foundation and how did you overcome them?**

- The challenges came mainly from that fact that if you want to say something eloquently enough, clearly and precisely, you have to deprive yourself from saying many other things and concentrate on one single thing. In this case, after some research, we decided that we are seeking a strong and stylish symbol, which speaks loud and proud to the involvement of the United States.

**What was your inspiration for the new logo?**

- In English there is the wonderful word – ‘unapologetic’ which, I’m afraid, doesn’t have an exact translation in Bulgarian. Well, we wanted the Foundation’s identity to be unapologetic, and I think we achieved it.

**The new logo, like the old one, is a flag – what is the idea behind keeping this detail? Don’t most organizations completely change their logo when rebranding?**

- You don’t always have to wipe out everything and start from scratch. A big part of our job is to analyze the context of the task before we decide on our client’s communication issue and if we find something worth keeping, we always prefer to keep it.

If you look closely, in addition to the flag, we have also kept the square shape, as well as the stripes. The more significant part of our decision was to reduce the amount of information and the level of unnecessary details – as you can see, we have removed references to the Foundation in two languages, we now work with one font, not two, and we don’t use any thin lines that are difficult to see, but instead rely on bright, dense features framing the square.

**With your TEDxBG presentation in 2012, you looked for the rational reasons to stay in Bulgaria. What advice would you give today to Bulgarians with potential that have stayed?**

- To be more optimistic. There are many reasons for that.

## The Community of America for Bulgaria Foundation: **Joint Efforts in Support of Bulgarian Potential**



More than 400 organizations from 75 Bulgarian cities, towns and villages, united by their vision of Bulgaria's prosperity – this is the community of America for Bulgaria Foundation – our community. Made up of people from NGOs, teachers and principals, entrepreneurs, musicians, artists, judges, prosecutors, journalists and many others. Our community is a colorful and inspiring picture of the Bulgaria where we all want to live – modern, prosperous and transparent.

For the first time ever on January 17, 2017 ABF brought this community together in order to celebrate the success of the people who work hard every day for the development of Bulgaria's potential. And with our support, they achieve remarkable results and we will actively share the stories of their success.

Stories of the 160 teachers and principals from all over Bulgaria who daily strive to ensure our children have access to contemporary and competitive education. Or the stories of more than 200 entrepreneurs trained in our programs who have founded more than 40 companies in the last five years. Or the stories of dozens of experts who modernize Bulgarian agriculture; or the stories of the young people from the eight national high-school Olympic teams in science who in 2016 won 65 medals for our country; or the stories of the countless volunteers who support hundreds of causes and projects that make Bulgaria a better place to live.

We'll continue to tell these stories and many more like them. We will also continue to celebrate the successes of our ever-growing community of non-governmental organizations, national and regional institutions, public and private media, social and private companies, schools and universities, libraries, community centers, theaters, operas and ballets, symphony orchestras, museums and galleries.

Together we can make our biggest dream come true – to reach the full potential of our country as a successful and modern European nation.







AMERICA FOR  
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# Our Stories





A glowing Edison-style light bulb with a black base is positioned on a wooden workbench. The bulb's filament is illuminated, casting a warm glow. In the background, several colorful wires (green, blue, red) are coiled on the workbench. The scene is set in a workshop or maker space, with blurred figures of people in the distance. The overall atmosphere is one of innovation and hands-on work.

AMERICA FOR  
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FOUNDATION

# Private Sector Development



## Private Sector Development

### Competitiveness. Professionalism. Entrepreneurship.

For too long, Bulgaria's economic growth has been hampered by various factors. To succeed in the 21st century, Bulgaria needs institutions and attitudes that support the many benefits of entrepreneurship and a market-based economy.

In 2017, we evolved our Agriculture AOI and streamlined support for initiatives that strengthen Bulgaria's private sector in an area titled Private Sector Development. ABF's mission in the area of Private Sector Development is to promote entrepreneurship and development of vibrant new and existing privately owned, competitive Bulgarian businesses by supporting initiatives that:

- **Bolster for-profit and nonprofit entrepreneurship and private initiatives.** ABF fosters a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem to help develop the full potential of Bulgaria's small and medium enterprises. We work to transform business people's mindset and seed a can-do attitude in Bulgarian entrepreneurs. However, we do not support individual business plans and initiatives.
- **Increase the efficiency and international competitiveness of Bulgarian businesses.** We promote models and practices that have proven successful in America and elsewhere. We work to advance the transfer of new knowledge and technologies that can help Bulgarian businesses get ready for tomorrow's challenges. We provide access to U.S. expertise and help establish contacts with leading American counterparts.

- **Improve the business environment and foster the adoption of market-oriented policies.** We create local capacity to analyze current economic policies and create an enabling business environment. We invest in leaders who drive positive change in business development and who work to change the mindset of business people, government leaders, and consumers.
- **Support the development of robust professional organizations.** We inspire professional organizations to become drivers of change in the industries they represent. We help them build capacity and realize the fullness of their potential.

### What Do We Strive to Accomplish?

- Bolster entrepreneurial culture and private initiative;
- Make Bulgaria an attractive and preferred start-up destination for Central and Eastern Europe;
- Build a solid, vibrant SME sector to become the true backbone of Bulgarian economy;
- Increase the competitiveness of Bulgarian businesses on the local and international markets;
- Establish effective links between business and academia;
- Foster the adoption of market-oriented policies and enabling business environment;
- Build visionary, professional business organizations with adequate capacity to bring Bulgarian private industries on an internationally competitive level.

### **This Could Be Why Bulgaria Is the Best Place to Start a Business**

Acting on the conviction that anyone can be an entrepreneur with the right motivation and support, the America for Bulgaria Foundation created the Summer Entrepreneurship Program (SEP) in 2010 to promote an entrepreneurial culture in Bulgaria and to allow enterprising young Bulgarians to implement their ideas.

Over the past seven years, more than 200 SEP participants have had the opportunity to receive entrepreneurship training at one of the top business schools in the world, Babson College, in the US state of Massachusetts. The program imparted both theoretical business knowledge and practical skills to help individuals start and manage their own companies successfully.

Today, a third of the program's alumni have their own companies, 12% are self-employed as consultants, and half work in the private sector. One-fifth of program participants founded 50 companies after returning from the United States, and 39 of these are still in business, providing 160 jobs. Companies created by SEP alumni represent a variety of industries: just over a third are in the IT sector, 10% are in the food industry, and 8% of companies offer marketing and advertising services.

According to a survey of the entrepreneurship program's impact, 87% of program participants receive a monthly income from the businesses they founded after the training. For half of these participants, this revenue represents over two-thirds of their personal monthly income—an indicator of brisk business activity.

Half of the newly established businesses operate in Bulgaria as well as internationally, and the total amount that the startups attracted from investors and startup accelerators is \$1.6 million.

The study also shows the effect of the program on its alumni's personal and professional development. The program has helped participants cultivate important business skills and key personal characteristics, and one of its most valuable outcomes is the creation of an active organization of program alumni—the Association of Bulgarian Leaders and Entrepreneurs (ABLE)—which aims to encourage entrepreneurship in Bulgaria.

### **How Can A Six-Year-Old Have So Much Impact On 12,000 Bulgarians? Just Ask ABLE.**

Only six years of age and already having profound impact on Bulgaria's entrepreneurial sector. How is this possible? Ask ABLE - the Association of Bulgarian Leaders and Entrepreneurs. In 2009, ABF founded the "Young Leaders of Bulgaria" a five-week summer program for entrepreneurial training in the US for enterprising Bulgarians. After returning from the U.S., the alumni created the Association of Bulgarian Leaders and Entrepreneurs (ABLE).

That's how an ongoing success story began. Today, the Association has 230 members, more than 50 business projects, and various initiatives to include lectures on motivation, and training and mentoring programs, which have had more than 12,000 participants.



When you go on a journey, you do not worry that you will get lost because the smart device in your pocket always helps you find your way. What is more, thanks to the modern digital maps built into your device, you can conquer new horizons every day.

Just like a map, StartUp Navigator aims to chart Bulgaria's startup world and guide all its "inhabitants"—from people with ideas to those who back them. But the ambitions of the Navigator don't stop there: it seeks to promote a startup culture in Bulgaria, to anticipate and respond to the needs of entrepreneurship, and to be the ultimate place for answers to questions such as: How do I make an informed decision about what project to start? What project is innovative? Who is working on what? Who are the right partners for my project?

Here's how you can use StartUp Navigator:

In early 2017, again with the support of America for Bulgaria Foundation, ABLE transformed into a professional structure with the aim of expanding its mentoring program - ABLE Mentor and the development of the online platform, StartUp Navigator.

### **Startups, Funding, Partners... Are They Hiding Here?**

StartUp Navigator is an initiative of the Association of Bulgarian Leaders and Entrepreneurs (ABLE) and is funded by the America for Bulgaria Foundation. One of the initiative's goals is to spotlight people and organizations that create meaningful things. The Navigator also seeks to identify good role models and to encourage potential entrepreneurs to launch their first business—once they have found an example to inspire them, a mentor to guide them, and a partner with whom to pursue their dreams.





- The first step is to create a profile—either as an individual (freelancer, mentor, investor, talent) or an organization (startup company, small business, NGO, corporation, etc.).
- The second step is to browse the directory, which is updated every week, using the provided search filters (stakeholder type, industry, development stage, city, and country).
- The third step is to select potential partners.
- Fourth, follow the events calendar.

They say the first step is the most difficult one, but in this case it is not.

### How Can Texas Farmers Help Revolutionize Bulgarian Agriculture

Good practices and successful management approaches in meat production were among the topics covered by the Leaders in Agriculture program this summer. The program's 2017 edition allowed 12 agriculture professionals from Bulgaria to participate in a two-week intensive practical training at the Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture at Texas A&M University, a leading US institution for agricultural research.

The Leaders in Agriculture program was created by the America for Bulgaria Foundation to aid in the development of a modern and competitive agricultural sector in Bulgaria. The program offers educational opportunities and practical support to professionals and researchers in the field who are eager to explore innovative, sustainable production methods and apply them in their work.

Theoretical training in nutrition, health management, and genetics was supplemented by trips to fattening farms, processing plants, and breeding associations. A highlight of the program was the visit to the Texas Beef Council, a marketing organization dedicated to promoting the benefits of beef consumption. There, the participants had the opportunity to prepare beef steaks under the supervision of a professional chef. The group also met with two extension



specialists—professionals who work locally and use scientific research to help farmers come up with solutions to real problems in agriculture, such as tackling new diseases and optimizing production costs.

During the training, the program participants also learned about the meat production model in Texas, a state with perfect conditions for cattle rearing and traditions in the field that go back generations. Cattle breeding is a traditional family business in Texas, and the Santa Rosa and 44 Farms ranches are two examples of prospering family-run operations.

The training concluded with a visit to the Fort Worth Stockyards, a historic landmark of the livestock trade, and a traditional rodeo show in Decatur, Texas. The participants returned home loaded with new ideas and a great deal of American optimism.

### Could Raycho Raychev Be Bulgaria's First Outer Space Entrepreneur?

The cosmos fascinates him, and he has dedicated years to studying it. But he is not one of those people who limit themselves to dreaming and watching space-themed movies. At 33, Raycho Raychev is a successful space entrepreneur and scientist with an impressive resume featuring work in national space programs and international organizations. His company, EnduroSat, builds satellites, and a significant part of his time and efforts is dedicated to furthering space education in Bulgaria and abroad.



Raycho is the first Bulgarian to have completed the Singularity University technology program hosted by NASA's Ames Research Center. He previously worked in the Brazilian Space Program and the Space Research and Technology Institute in Bulgaria. From 2011 to 2015, he was Bulgaria's national representative at the United Nations Space Generation Advisory Council.

Today, he works on a variety of educational projects. One is the Tsiolkovsky Association, which connects space enthusiasts and of which he is a cofounder, and another is the Space Challenges Academy, which offers free space education to individuals aged 18-28 years from various backgrounds.

In 2017, Raycho launched SPACEPORT, a platform for online space education featuring lectures, articles, and presentations by the world's leading space science and technology experts, and most of these have already been translated into Bulgarian.

## Bulgaria Needs 20,000 More IT Experts Right Now! Here's Step One ...



**Telerik Academy** has made it their mission to reverse the negative trend by improving the digital competence of young Bulgarians. For the purpose, they have developed a series of courses and programs targeting 4th to 12th graders from across the country. The programs will allow students to enhance their logical thinking and programming skills. Thanks to the America for Bulgaria Foundation, participation will be free for all qualifying students, as the Foundation shares Telerik Academy's values and aspirations to see Bulgaria fulfill its digital promise. With ABF support, in the next three years, more than 5,600 students from 13 cities will attend academy programs.

Established in 2009 by Telerik founders Svetozar Georgiev, Boyko Iaramov, Vassil Terziev, and Hristo Kosev, Telerik Academy is one of the most successful educational projects in Bulgaria. Since its inception, more than 11,300 people have received training on-site, and 42,500 users have used the academy's learning resources online.

## Could Vratsa Be the Next Silicon Valley? Maybe...



The depopulation of Bulgarian villages in the 1990s is only equaled by the exodus of people from Bulgarian cities and towns today. The northwestern city of Vratsa has been particularly hard hit by the demographic crisis. But the grim statistics are not what interests us at the America for Bulgaria Foundation; rather, we want to know if we can help bring about a reversal. Whom do we join forces with to achieve that? What like-minded individuals and initiatives are worth supporting?



When we came across Emiliyan Kadiyski and Teodor Kostadinov's Vratsa Software Community, we knew we had to look no further.

Four years ago, Vratsa natives Emiliyan and Teodor, both of whom have successful IT careers in Sofia, decided to do something for their hometown—to help young people stay and earn a living in Vratsa. That's how Vratsa Software Community was born.



Today, Vratsa Software Community offers several programming courses and organizes an array of IT events in the city. Among them is the biggest programming event in Northwestern Bulgaria—CodeWeek Vratsa, a part of EU Code Week. There are no age restrictions for CodeWeek participants: from elementary school students to older individuals, citizens of Vratsa and the region are introduced to programming topics and the wealth of opportunities offered by the IT sector. This year's CodeWeek attracted more than 220 participants from across the region, who enriched their knowledge of robotics, neural networks, digital marketing, and programming and even tried to combine technology with magic.

They started out by offering a free nine-month IT training program, open to unemployed individuals, working professionals, and students. For its efforts, the initiative became one of six European organizations to receive a grant from Google in 2016, and, in October 2017, the America for Bulgaria Foundation donated funds for its development in the following three years.

## Tackling Regional Disparities through the ABF HUBS Project

With eight years of grant activity in Bulgaria as of the end of 2017, 750 grants and over \$186 million committed – ABF has a wealth of experience. ABF grantees work throughout the country, impacting every region, from cities to villages.

Through a new “Hubs” strategy, ABF builds on its existing initiatives to execute a more aligned and targeted approach, seeking deeper impact with a select number of communities in an effort to tackle regional disparities. The “HUB” approach aims to leverage ABF’s efforts in a focused and sustainable manner and tackle regional disparities.

The “HUB” strategy initially focuses on three cities – each with a population between 30,000 and 60,000. In addition to the level of economic development and economic parameters, ABF selected the cities based on the level of cooperation of the mayor and regional municipalities’ leadership. ABF is reaching out to the local business community and NGO’s to secure buy-in from all stakeholders. Much like Schools of the Future, each city will pledge a determined level of matching financial contributions to the overall effort to ensure their commitment to the program and to build community and a sense of ownership.

The “HUB” will help grantees focus on the mission of ABF and to synergize with each other, which will assist in building the ABF community. Grantees will be engaged with ABF staff, local government, schools, businesses and the community.



The three Hub cities were selected based on the above criteria, as well as on their varying degrees of economic development informed by our research and the Institute of Market Economics Regional Profiles analysis.





**Razgrad** A town of about 35,000 people located in Northeast Bulgaria. Like most Bulgarian towns of that size, it is experiencing problems of outmigration of its more able citizens, difficulty in obtaining and retaining skilled workers, and competing with the brighter lights of cities like Varna, Plovdiv, and even Ruse, not to mention Sofia. Completion of the Hemus highway is key to the region's growth, as it will significantly improve accessibility of Razgrad. Agriculture operates at a very high level and the area receives subsidies from the EU for the agricultural business.

**Gabrovo** is located in Central Bulgaria. The town ranks second in the country in both economic and social development after Sofia. It is one of the districts where electronic government and administrative one-stop services are well developed and the municipal administration is transparent. The city's economic indicators are better than the national ones; less than 5% unemployment rate. The quality of education is good, high school graduates pursue university education in Sofia or abroad but do not return after their studies. There is no shortage of viable, real economy businesses of varying sizes – large, medium and small. All are export oriented, exporting over 90% of production, including machine manufacturing components, medical devices, textile and clothing. The biggest challenge is migration – its population has decreased from 90,000 in the 1980s to about 56,000 at present. The construction of the Shipka Tunnel (3.5 km long) is the Mayor's #1 strategic priority (approximately \$260 million in cost and two-years to build; complicated by a 30-km roundabout and ring road and a smaller tunnel (560 meters) leading to it – both are currently under construction).

**Vratsa** is located in the poorest Northwestern part of Bulgaria (often referred to as the poorest region in the EU), with a population of 54,000 and decreasing. Several industries that are on the rise and create jobs: textile and sewing, food and beverages, construction materials (cement), extraction of raw material (limestone, used primarily for tiling), furniture production, machinery (milling and lathes), energy (Kozloduy NPP), foundry and metalworks, electronics, tourism, trade and services. The main advantages of the region are proximity to Sofia and its airport, transport accessibility and investment in infrastructure, availability of terrains for business development, availability of workforce, attractive possibilities for recreation, entertainment and sports, authorities and local organizations supportive of the business.



AMERICA FOR  
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# Education

## Education

### **Quality of education. Prestige of the teaching profession. Bulgaria's human capital.**

The most important thing a society can do is prepare its children for the future. ABF supports Bulgaria in developing its human capital that will guarantee its successful future as a modern and prosperous nation.

We are committed to improving the quality of education in Bulgaria, raising the prestige of the Teaching Profession, and nurturing education as a core value. Further, we seek to develop the capacity of young Bulgarians to successfully prepare them for their future.

We support initiatives that:

- **Encourage good teaching.** ABF provides opportunities for professional development to educators, including teachers and principals, to help develop their full potential as leaders in and out of the classroom. We work with teachers' colleges to provide access to U.S. expertise, and establish networks of educators who drive educational change in Bulgaria.
- **Prepare students for the jobs of the future.** We help students acquire the skills that will help them contribute to the value-added, knowledge-based sectors of the globalized economy. We foster their interest in the jobs of the future — especially science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers — by strengthening their critical and logical thinking skills, digital literacy, English language proficiency, and problem-solving and coding skills.
- **Enhance public policy.** We create local capacity to analyze education policies and help the education sector make data-driven decisions. We support forums, conferences, and publications aimed at cultivating policy expertise and an informed public. We provide access to global thought leaders and cutting-edge practices in education.



# EDUCATION AREA OF INTEREST, AMERICA FOR BULGARIA FOUNDATION

DEVELOPING THE HUMAN CAPITAL THAT WILL SUPPORT  
A THRIVING PRIVATE SECTOR

WE SUPPORT INITIATIVES THAT:



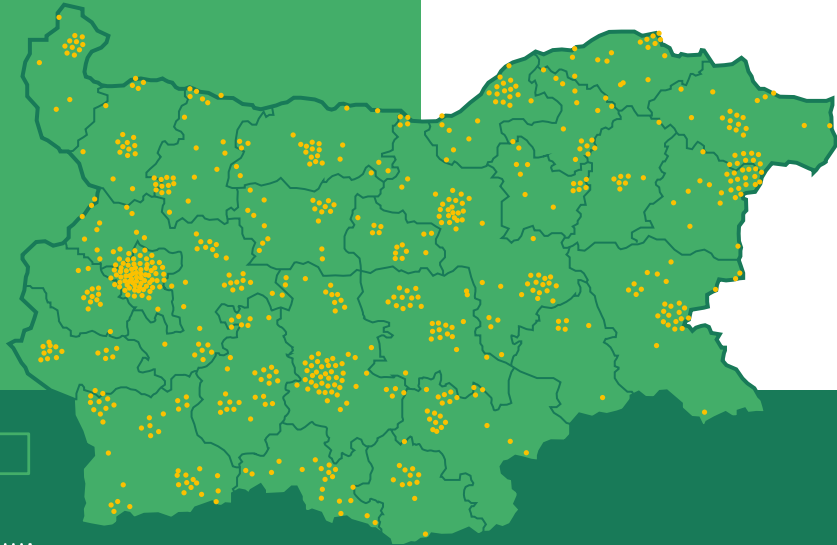
Promote Effective Teaching



Prepare Students for Jobs of the Future



Inform policy, Support Innovation, and Build the Capacity of Educational Organizations



AMERICA FOR  
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FOUNDATION

American optimism meets Bulgarian potential

EDUCATION

123 principals



9 198 teachers



9 years



170 projects



110 million dollars



927 / 39% of all schools



630 600 direct investments in students





## WHAT WE DO



Support innovative education programs



Train teachers to use interactive teaching methods and educational technology



Create interactive educational environments at Bulgarian schools



Showcase the best examples of Bulgarian and American teaching methods



We develop the next generation of leaders in science and technology

## ACHIEVEMENTS

We have trained

**3000** teachers to work with interactive teaching methods and educational technology

We helped create the Bulgarian model of inclusive education

**200 000** visitors of Muzeiko - the first Children's Science Museum in Eastern Europe.



We have supported the Bulgarian Olympic teams in natural science in winning



**468** medals



**43** honorary certificates



**9000** participants from **350** schools

**170** locations

in the National English Spelling Bee tournament



**170** Americans English Teaching Assistants in

**37** high schools

**28** cities



## WE HAVE FOUNDED



## PARTNERS

ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ БЕЗ РАНИЦИ  
www.obeducation.org



## America for Bulgaria Foundation Presents the ABF Education Academy in Partnership with Columbia University and Bank Street College in New York

For nine years, America for Bulgaria Foundation has worked to enhance the prestige of the teaching profession in Bulgaria in order to provide quality education for all children. Principal and teacher training in the United States, Teach for Bulgaria, ABF - Fulbright English teaching assistants in language schools across the country, Spelling Bee competitions, support for the Olympic teams in natural sciences, technological modernization of schools through the Schools of the Future project are only a few of ABF's initiatives in support of Bulgarian education.



In 2017, we created the ABF Education Leadership Academy. The Academy brings home the best of all ABF programs for educators, working in two regional hubs in Bulgaria each year and supporting school teaching teams rather than individual teachers. Thanks to ABF's outreach over the years, the ABF education family now involves 300 educators (teachers, principals and technology specialists) from 145 schools in 68 towns and villages, who teach 90,000 students from the biggest cities to the smallest villages in the countryside.

One of ABF's goals is to raise the prestige of the teacher and the teaching profession. The ABF Education Academy will provide quality training programs and credit-qualifying programs in Bulgaria for school directors and school teams as well as innovative training sessions for teachers well into their careers.

One of the "ABF Education Academy" programs is "Education Technology Specialist". This is a unique educational qualification program created by America for Bulgaria Foundation in collaboration with Columbia University in New York. As is apparent from the name of the program, it puts modern technology and its meaningful use in the modern educational process. Hello, 21st Century.

Over the past year, 17 teachers from various Bulgarian schools were qualified as "technology specialists" by Columbia University lecturers. The final module will bring these skills and technologies directly into the classroom. During the week of June 5, leading specialists from the Faculty of Education at Columbia University in New York came to Bulgaria to conduct the training. Let's meet them:

**Caron Mineo** is Director of Research at the Center for Technology and School Change. She has experience as a teacher in all stages of education, both in public and private schools. Currently, Caron is working on her doctorate at the Teachers College at Columbia University.

**Dr. Rita Sánchez** is the Associate Director for Professional Development at the Center for Technology and School Change. Previously, she was a mathematics and physics teacher for eight years. She holds a Ph.D. in Mathematics Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Dr. Sanchez's specialty and passion are mathematics, technology, natural sciences and engineering.

Caron and Rita train teachers from all over the world to teach mathematics and science to better engage the students. We are delighted Caron and Rita spent time in Bulgaria to help teachers inspire more children in the classroom.

During school year 2017-2018, the Education Leadership Academy will offer six professional development programs:

- “Progressive Educational Practices” (conducted by professionals from Bank Street College of New York).
- “New Teaching Methods “ (conducted by professionals from Columbia University of New York).
- “Training Mentors for New Methods of Teaching” (conducted by professionals from Columbia University of New York).
- “Educational Technology Specialist” (conducted by Columbia University of New York).
- “Training Mentors for Educational Technology Specialists” (conducted by Columbia University of New York).
- “Workshop for Professional Development of Teachers and School Principals” (a three-day seminar for the whole community of teachers and directors who have passed the qualification programs of the Academy).

Every year, the Academy will select two or three geographic hubs where it will train school teams. The training programs will focus on new teaching methods, innovations in the organization of the learning process, and the meaningful use of educational technology. In 2017, the Academy began with Varna and Razgrad (with school teams from Razgrad, Silistra, Targovishte, Dobrich and Shumen). In November, it hosted an annual meeting for its alumni – now numbering more than 200.





## OUR GOAL

We create a **network of school leaders** across Bulgaria through a series of qualification programs for **teachers and principals**. We aim to support positive change in the education system.

## OUR APPROACH



We work regionally to create centers of effective teaching practices



We encourage educational change by supporting innovative practices in the classroom



We train mentors to support program participants

## PROGRAMS



**PROGRESSIVE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES PROGRAM**  
(for school teams)



**NEW TEACHING METHODS PROGRAM**  
(for teachers)



**EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST PROGRAM**



**MENTORSHIP PROGRAM**  
(for mentor teachers and educational technology specialists)







PARTNERS



RESULTS | 2017



60  
teachers



20  
principals



20  
mentors and  
university  
professors



20  
educational  
technology  
specialists

= 120  & 15 000   
educational specialists / year    students / year

2020 | PLAN



6  
centers



360  
educators



60  
schools

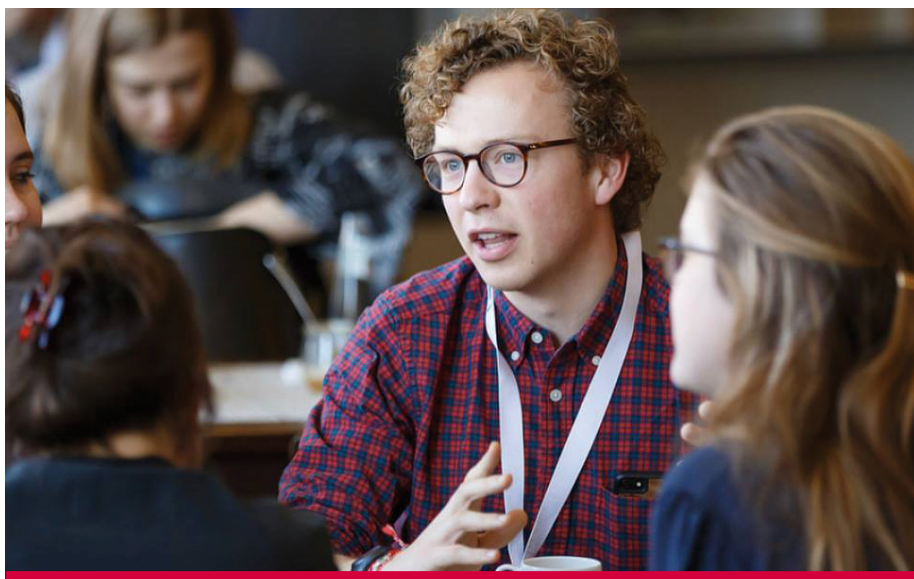


45 000  
students

### What's So Special about These Thirty Bulgarian Schools?

Learning English from a native speaker can make a world of difference for students. Just ask any of the thousands of students at the 30 schools in 25 Bulgarian cities where Americans are working as English-language Teaching Assistants (ETA's).

Education transcends borders and countries and while many people promote the merits of the internet as a teaching tool, a teacher will always be at the heart of education. Contact with someone outside of your daily experience can be life changing. This is now understood by the many students and ETA's who worked together throughout the past school year.

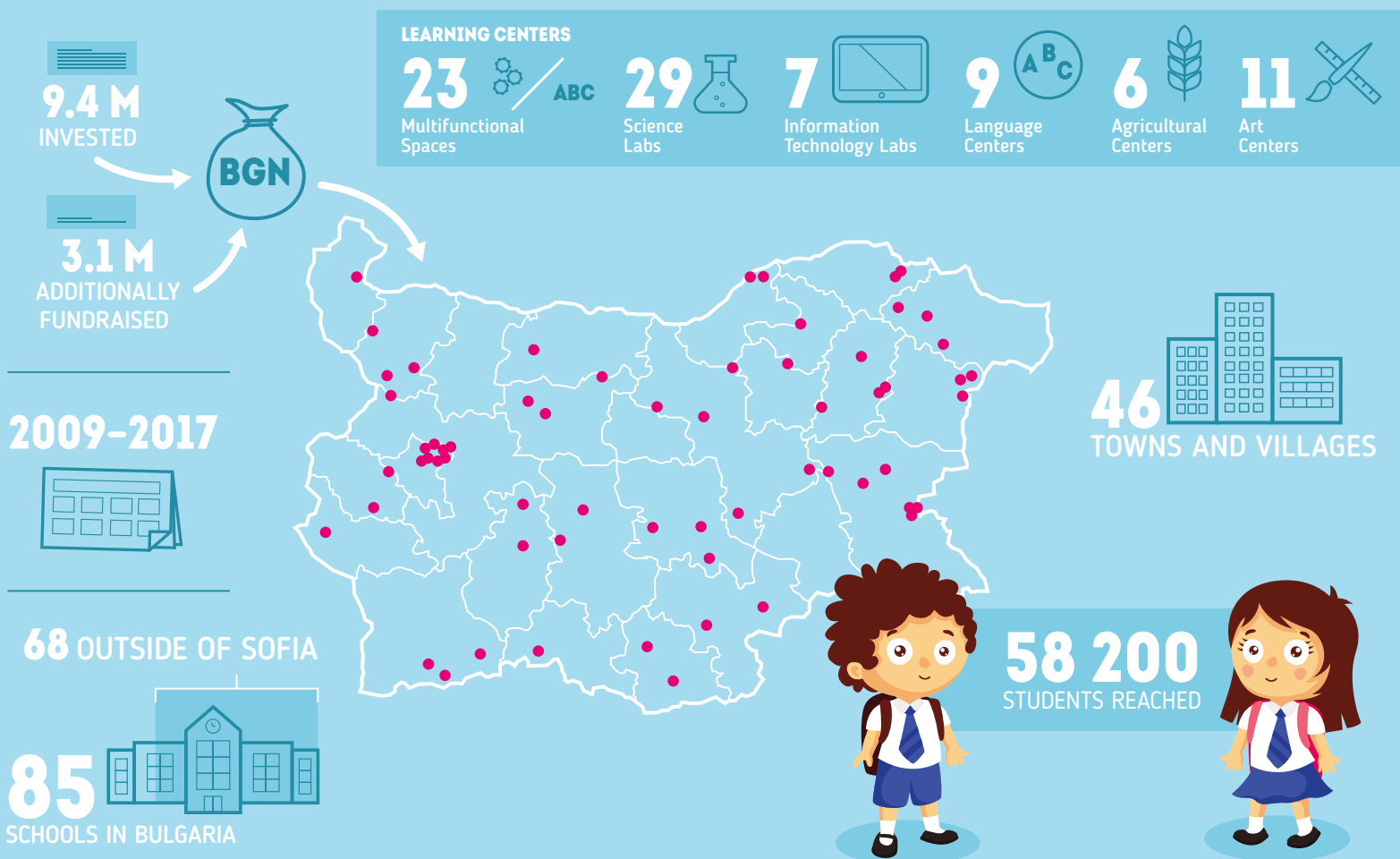


Since 2009, America for Bulgaria Foundation and the Fulbright Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange have enabled students from language-focused high schools across the country to improve their English with American teachers. In addition to English, students and teachers are learning to help their community through various charity initiatives and cultural events. English competitions, debates, literary essays and poetry, charity causes, volunteer initiatives, sports celebrations and concerts ... and the school year is over in a blink of an eye.



Eight years ago, we started with ten US Fulbright teachers. In 2017, 30 American teachers will enter the classrooms of language schools in Blagoevgrad, Bourgas, Varna, Veliko Tarnovo, Vidin, Vratsa, Gabrovo, Gotse Delchev, Dimitrovgrad, Dobrich, Kardzhali, Kyustendil, Lovech, Montana, Razgrad, Rousse, Silistra, Sofia, Stara Zagora, Haskovo and Shumen.

## SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE 2009-2017





# CREATING THE BULGARIAN SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE

SCHOOLS CHANGE REQUIRES A HOLISTIC APPROACH



## PEDAGOGY

Teachers use contemporary teaching practices, which turn education into a motivating, interactive, and practical process, relevant to students' life.

## LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The learning environment encourages students to explore, to work in teams, to develop their critical thinking, to create their own learning content and to create.

## EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Technology is a meaningful part of the learning process and adds value to teaching. Technology allows students to search for information in real time and to create their own digital projects in all subjects. Teachers receive real-time information on students' performance. The classroom is flipped and learning happens beyond the borders of the schools.

## TEACHER QUALIFICATION

The transformed learning environment can be challenging for teachers. They need to learn to not only operate the new devices, but to also plan their lessons and seamlessly integrate educational technology in the learning process.

## SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

In transforming the learning environments, the principal works closely with the teachers to form a shared vision for the school. The School of the Future embodies the leadership's strong desire to improve teaching and learning through a complete overhaul of the learning environment.

## SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE PROGRAM IMPACT

Added value in student performance in

**NATURAL SCIENCE**



Added value in student performance on

**BULGARIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**  
external evaluations



Better performance on national external evaluations in  
**FOREIGN LANGUAGES**



**71%**

of students are **HAPPY** to be studying at their school



**62%**

of students in a random sample of schools

Vs.

**40%**

of teachers report that participating in the program has led to

**POSITIVE CHANGES** at their schools



Improved  
**COGNITIVE SKILLS**



Reading and interpreting data



Basic memorization



Long-term memory

Better  
**NON-COGNITIVE SKILLS**



Conscientiousness



Sociability



Growth Mindset



Goodwill



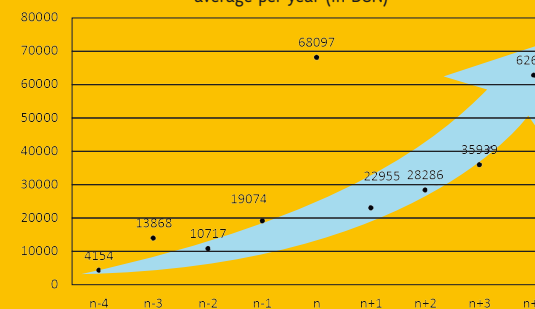
Resilience

**DECREASED VIOLENCE**  
among students



Sustainable increase in **FUNDRAISING**

Funds raised by the ABF supported schools, average per year (in BGN)



Evaluation conducted by the Open Society Institute, commissioned by the America for Bulgaria Foundation in 2015-2016. Research was conducted in four control groups totaling 60,000 students and 5,000 teachers.

## Muzeiko Brings Inventions to the Ludogorie Region



Muzeiko, the America for Bulgaria Children's Museum, is taking its show on the road around Bulgaria. Their new traveling exhibition "The Inventions", focuses on the most interesting discoveries in the 19th and 20th centuries. The team from the largest children's science center in Eastern Europe highlights the process of making discoveries, and aims to inspire and encourage children to fearlessly try new ideas, even if they fail because failure is part of the journey of discovery.

The exhibition's first stop is in Razgrad, the heart of the Ludogorie region, where it was on display from April to October.

"The Inventions" encourages young and old to feel like real inventors. Various discoveries are shown in the exhibition: the moment of the genius idea, the ways to create a science project, coping with the inevitable hurdles, or the success that sensational inventions bring with them.

Admission to the exciting traveling exhibition was fully free-of-charge, thanks to the support of Mr. Nikola Nikolov, ADM, Pilko, Ameta, Technomatics, Pharmateam, Holiday News, Ludogorets PFC, Mr Yordan Tachev, Rotary Club Razgrad, the Ludogorie Association and logistics partner Gopet Trans.

## Where the Future of Bulgarian Science Begins

Each summer, 80 of the world's most accomplished high school students gather at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for the Research Science Institute (RSI). Since 2010, ABF has supported two bright Bulgarian students to participate in it. They are among eighty of the most talented students from all over the world who gather in Boston for a six-week summer school with intensive training in engineering and natural science.

When in 2017 she participated in the Research Science Institute (RSI), the world's most prestigious summer science and engineering program for high school students, Tania Otsetarova, participant in the Bulgarian Harvard Club and a student in "Acad. Kiril Popov" mathematics high school in Plovdiv, worked on a math problem that generations of scientists before her hadn't been able to solve (her hypothesis was difficult to prove but earned her peers' admiration).

The other Bulgarian student in the program, high school junior from the American College in Sofia and longtime competitor in international informatics Olympiads, Ivan Ivanov, created a computer application for automated text analysis.





A few years ago, Lyubomir Yanchev developed a remote-control app for air conditioners. Shortly thereafter, he received funding in the amount of 1 million Bulgarian leva (over 620,000 US dollars) to develop his invention further. In 2016, his company Melissa Climate became Bulgaria's Startup of the Year. Today, it offers high-end smart products to clients across Europe.

Zvezdin Bessarabov also develops innovative IT products. His applications ArduWrite, Obitcoin, and Blockchain Predictor brought him a John Atanasoff award in 2017, conferred by the president of Bulgaria.

Apart from extraordinary talent, what do Tania, Ivan, Lyubomir, and Zvezdin have in common? They all began honing their research skills and abilities in the same place—the Student Institute of Mathematics and Informatics, supported by the America for Bulgaria Foundation

since 2010. The institute gives talented young people from across the country the opportunity to work on innovative practical projects in close collaboration with experienced Bulgarian researchers. Communicating with peers with a shared passion for science is another benefit of the program.



Program participants work on a variety of projects in mathematics and engineering. A robotic arm, a device measuring CPR efficiency, a mechanism that calculates calories, and mathematical models of musical works are just some of the interesting creations that have been presented at the institute's annual conference in recent years. Every summer, the top two participants earn the right to represent Bulgaria at MIT's Research Science Institute.

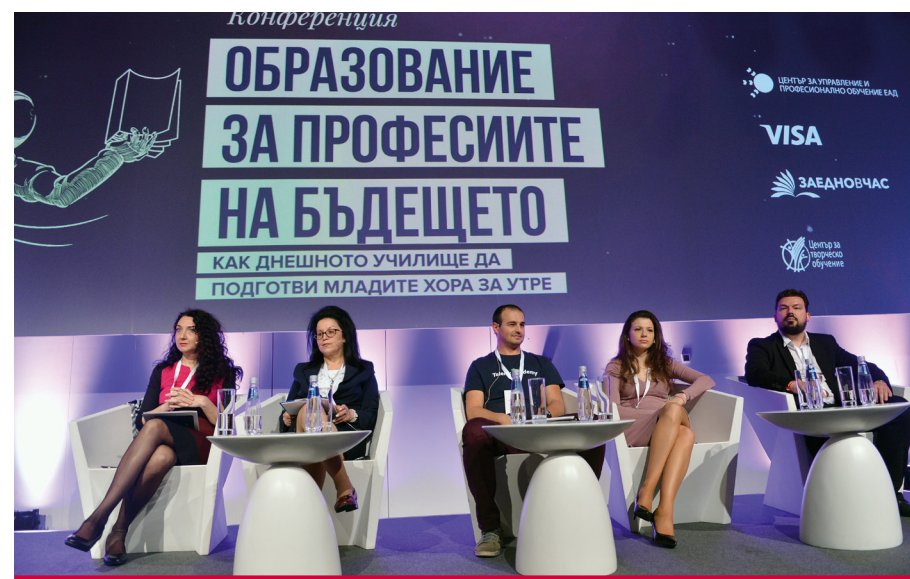
Students from the institute are also active in a number of other competitions, where they always distinguish themselves. One student won a Cyber Games: Warmup prize in 2017, while another received an award at the Annual Science and Innovation Fair that year. Several students received John Atanasoff distinctions in 2017.

Math professor Evgenia Sendova has accompanied Bulgarian high schoolers at RSI for twenty years. Her description of the MIT program could apply to the institute as well: it is “a place where being extraordinary is the most ordinary thing in the world. It creates a wonderful sense of humility, fulfills one’s yearning for recognition, and ushers students into the realm of science. Students learn to appreciate science for what it really is—a challenging journey where being creative and communicating with other passionate researchers are more important than recognition, fame, and rewards. Success comes to those who are too busy to think about it.”

**ABF - Capital Education for the Jobs of the Future Conference:  
65% of today’s first graders will have professions that do not yet exist**

Sixty-five per cent of today’s first-graders across the world will one-day work in professions that do not yet exist. This emerged at a conference entitled “Education for the Professions of the Future”, organized by Capital and the America for Bulgaria Foundation, which brought together leading world experts in education and Bulgarian education professionals.

More than 500 teachers, heads of schools and other professionals in the educational field took part in the conference. They discussed good practices from Bulgaria, Finland and the United States and took part in three practical workshops; teaching financial literacy, shaping pupils’ vital skills for success in the 21st century, and project-based learning.



***“We believe the most sensible investment Bulgarian society should be making is in education,” said Galya Prokopieva, editor-in-chief of Capital, adding, “It is education alone that gives birth to free people, and it is only they that can make informed choices and create value that they can share with others. The absence of investment in this particular sector is the reason that society now is worried and concerned about the future of their children.”***

The conference was one of the largest education forums for the year and both presenters and participants were firm about the major challenges facing Bulgarian education. The PISA study placed Bulgaria 45th out of 70 countries, which in practice means the country is three years behind those with the best results. Bulgaria remains the only country in the survey where the number of poor ratings in all three components of PISA (29.6 per cent) significantly exceeds those of the excellent grades (6.9 per cent). As to the practical skills that pupils acquire in school, the indicators are even lower. For example, in problem-solving skills, Bulgaria is in second-to-last place (41st out of 42 participants).

***“The main value of our education system remains the learning materials and that’s a big problem. No attention is paid to skills, all the tasks given to the children are theoretical, and no effort is made to get the children interested,” Assen Kyuldzhev of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences said. He went on: “We cannot claim to be in the 21st century with education that doesn’t give pupils basic skills such as how to present their ideas, the ability to work in a team, and critical thinking. The Bulgarian educational system needs radical change to meet the challenges of the future.”***

Representatives of the private sector emphasized that the development of specific skills that can help the children of today to become fully-fledged participants in the labor market was the main task facing education. Nikolai Vulchanov, technical director of Programista Ltd, told the conference: “Especially vital are proactivity, problem-solving ability, teamwork, communication and presentation

of ideas - these things determine whether someone will succeed at his work or not.”

Mark Prensky, executive director of the Global Future Education Foundation and Institute presented “The world needs a new curriculum” throwing down the gauntlet to educational institutions in Bulgaria and across the world.

Gary Stager, consultant, teacher, school administrator and advocate for computer programming, outlined the importance of the proper use of technology in education.

One of the best teachers in the world, Maarit Rossi, a Finnish math teacher who was a finalist in the Global Teacher Prize 2016, explained how mathematics can be entertaining. Dr. Ward van de Vijver, a Dutch expert on educational innovations, demonstrated the role of innovation in teaching the skills of the future.

***“The mission of the America for Bulgaria Foundation is to support Bulgaria on its path to being a successful and modern European nation, and this is possible only through investment in education,” Foundation executive director Desislava Taliokova said. “For this reason, in the past nine years we have invested more than \$100 million in educational projects aimed at raising the prestige of the teaching profession, the significance of education as a value, and about the significance of the learning environment and meaningful use of educational technology. And precisely because of forums like this one, bringing together some of the greatest minds and leading educational specialists in the world with their Bulgarian counterparts, we remain optimistic about the potential and the future of Bulgarian education and of Bulgaria”.***





AMERICA FOR  
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# Civil Society and Democratic Institutions

## Civil Society and Democratic Institutions

### **Rule of law. Independent media. Transparent and accountable public institutions.**

These are essential ingredients for a free and fair society and for the development of the private sector as the backbone of a competitive economy that creates value and opens horizons for growth to every Bulgarian citizen.

We embrace the values of democracy and work with a wide range of civil society organizations who share these values. We support state, municipal and judicial institutions that share our vision for Bulgaria, and have the ability to change things for the better. We also support mutually beneficial contacts between professionals from the United States and Bulgaria.

We support initiatives that:

- **Strengthen the judiciary.** For the public to trust the legal system, all the participants, from police to prosecutors to judges must be honest and fair. We support programs that help increase professionalism in the judiciary and legal system and upgrade legal education in Bulgaria.
- **Promote good governance.** We support programs aimed at countering corruption and increasing accountability and transparency in public life.
- **Boost independent journalism.** The programs we fund support investigative reporting, provide short-term training opportunities for journalists, and promote the highest professional and ethical journalistic standards.
- **Encourage civic engagement and philanthropy.** We support initiatives that promote philanthropy and inspire volunteerism, enhance the organizational capacity of nonprofits, unleash the hidden potential of local communities, and foster civic participation in public life.

## Five Ideas Won Awards in the Best NGO Business Plan Competition

The Business Planning for Nonprofits initiative of the Bulgarian Center for Not-for-Profit Law (BCNL) is among the core activities of the organization, aiming to enhance the skills of Bulgarian nonprofits to diversify their funding through mission-related businesses.

In 2017, BCNL held the 6th annual edition of the program in which 59 NGOs from more than 20 cities and villages across the country applied with their business ideas.



The award ceremony for the NGO entrepreneurship program was held on February 2 in Vivacom Art Hall in Sofia. In addition to ABF, UniCredit Foundation also supports the competition for the best business plan of an NGO. Winners in the competition were each awarded a prize of BGN 7,000:

- Maria's World Foundation – the prize will be used to develop the catering services and the “Svetove” (“Worlds”) café to support the employment of young people with disabilities.
- Eyes on Four Paws Foundation - their idea is to create a hotel for dogs, which provides care for pets in the period when their owners travel. The profits will support the Eyes on Four Paws Foundation’s programs for training guide dogs for blind people.
- Animus Association Foundation – the award will be used to open a foodplace “Blaga Baba Blaga”, which will offer home-made snacks made by single elderly women or women victims of violence.
- Friends of the Sea Club - Varna – will develop in a sustainable manner the activities of the social enterprise “Together on board”. It provides vocational training courses in marine specialties “Diver” and “Leader of vessels up to 40 GT at sea”, where 20% of the revenue is invested in similar, but free vocational training courses for young people without parents from poor families and unemployed young people.
- IDEA Association will start catering services to enhance the chances for the social tearoom to employ young people growing up in social and economic exclusion.

## Anti-democratic Propaganda in Bulgaria 2013 - 2016

Anti-democratic propaganda in Bulgaria is aimed at preparing public opinion for the country leaving the EU and NATO, as well as the systematic blocking of judicial reform and all efforts to democratically impose the rule of law.





That conclusion emerged from the monitoring 3,305 media reports from 2013 to 2016 via press clippings and a standardized matrix. The analysis, entitled “Anti-democratic propaganda in Bulgaria”, was prepared by a team from the Human and Social Studies Foundation. The measurement was done using the SENSIKA system, which contains an electronic archive of items in 3,080 Bulgarian-language news sites and blogs from the beginning of 2013 onwards.

The study was divided into four leading topics that anti-democratic propaganda attempts to push among the Bulgarian public: “The decline of the West”, “The rise of Russia” (divided into sub-themes), “The United States/NATO as a global hegemon and puppeteer” and “The elites selling out Bulgaria”.

The study found that from 2013 onwards, the propaganda language on each of these leading topics multiplied by dozens and hundreds of times.

The most intense attack was on the theme of the “elites selling out Bulgaria” which aims at discrediting civil society. The thesis is that all Bulgaria pro-democratic and pro-European civil movements and protests, all advocates of judicial reform, all politicians and parties who hold consistent pro-European and pro-NATO positions, as well as human rights organizations and NGOs and media, are being systematically attacked and discredited by propaganda media in the country. The first peaks in the media attacks were in Fall of 2013 and were directed against anti-government protests. New, even higher peaks were registered against the founding of a pro-reformist coalition in autumn 2014, against an initiative on judicial reform in 2015 and during the 2016 presidential campaign. From 2013 to 2016, articles attacking civil society in Bulgaria increased 23 times, from 494 in 2013 to 11,394 in 2016.

Over four years, Eurosceptic propaganda increased by 16 times and was in line with the Russian political calendar. At the same time, anti-US and anti-NATO propaganda increased by 34 times and also was led by the Russian political calendar.

This period also saw a significant increase in propaganda articles about the “rise of Russia” while the largest increase was on the topic of the “enemies of Russia” - by 144 times, from 2013 to 2016. In 2013, Russia had no “enemies”, even though NATO had long since expanded and reached its current format. But after the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the “hostile discourse” was sparked - the West, and NATO in particular, suddenly turned into enemies of Russia.

The other two major themes that saw steady growth throughout the period were “sanctions against Russia”, while the “power of Russian weaponry” (which peaked during the intervention in Syria in 2015) and “the US/NATO as a global hegemon and puppeteer” decreased in 2016.

Besides quitting the EU and NATO and the undermining of judicial reform, this propaganda aggravates the risks of creating an environment of public cynicism of the “they’re all scoundrels!” type and the growth of a lack of confidence in all common principles, values and institutions and the superseding of the legal order at international and national level, and the replacement of the force of law with the law of force.

The objectives are the de-institutionalization of democratic mechanisms of separation and checks and balances of power, including the possible rejection of parliamentarism, the silencing and discrediting of civil society as an environment for free and specific defining of the common good, and support for creeping authoritarianism of a populist or “referendum” type.

In the denigration of the West and the praising of Russia, the propaganda is mostly through unsigned articles, while signed articles predominate in the defamation of domestic opponents.

The study concludes: “While there is no doubt that a strong Russian ‘influence’ exists in Bulgaria, the function of the existing local Bulgarian propaganda actually serves to distract attention from the Russian economic influence. The reason for this is that Russian economic influence in Bulgaria traverses the entire political spectrum and penetrates deeply in the Bulgarian business community. In this sense, the study shows the picture not of Russian propaganda in Bulgaria, but of Bulgarian media that spread the “pro-Russian” outlook as a form of disinformation, the aim of which is to exert influence on the political process”.

The scope of the study was limited to news sites and print publications in Bulgaria for the period 2013-2016. This segment of the media cannot currently be sustainable on a market basis and is subject to shadowy forms of financing. On the other hand, however, it is a major producer of media content that is distributed through television and radio stations and social networks.

In the period covered by the study, from 2013 to 2016, no counter-propaganda media were identified.

### **The KTB State**

The story of Bulgaria’s Corporate Commercial Bank (KTB) has shown how easily public institutions fall captive to private interests. The KTB State is the first book in a three-part series that aims to study and analyze this phenomenon.

### **KTB - What Happened?**

The bankruptcy of KTB is by far the largest in Bulgarian history. The assets found to have been lost and in need to be written off are valued at about BGN 4.22 bln, which equals approximately 5% of the country’s GDP. Translated to the size of the US economy, this would amount to nearly a trillion dollars.

The sum is larger than the annual government expenditures on defense and national security, on education, on health or on all other annual social payments, besides all pensions. It is approximately equal to the sum needed to pay all pensions in the country for half a year. The payment of the state guarantee to only the guaranteed depositors increased the total public debt of Bulgaria by almost 20%.

It took KTB nearly a decade to turn from a very small and insignificant bank into the fourth largest Bulgarian bank. In this period, its assets registered an average annual growth of almost 50% and its share of the total assets of the Bulgarian banking system increased by 17 times.

Both the spectacular rise and the even more spectacular crash of the bank indicate the co-existence of two types of government institutions in Bulgaria: those which are captured by specific private (or foreign government) interests, and those which fail to check and counter such interests.

### The Concerns

A grave danger exists that the lessons which the failure of KTB can bring to the Bulgarian society and its long-term ability to prevent state capture and to build institutions genuinely serving the public interest may be lost due to the lack of prompt investigation into the intricacies of the case of KTB.

### The Effort

Three Bulgarian NGOs – Centre for Liberal Strategies, Transparency International – Bulgaria and ‘Access to information’ Programme – decided to unite in a common effort. Their strategic goal is to assist in the creation of the actual capacity of Bulgarian public institutions to serve the public interest genuinely and to decrease their susceptibility to capture and corruption. This strategic goal is pursued through the achievement of the following three objectives:

- to discover the mechanisms of state capture;
- to outline effective lines of reform in specific institutions and regulatory frameworks;
- to contribute the debate for proposals to improve the operation of state institutions.

### THE KTB STATE: The Story of the Largest Bank Failure in Bulgaria - or the Workings of a Captured State That Sold out the Public Interest for Private Expediency



#### Editor's Note:

“THE KTB STATE is the result of a two-year investigation by six journalists, some of whom have had an interest in the topic dating back to 2008 and 2009, when they first put ink to paper.

The investigation is structured as a chronological account of the history of the CORPORATE COMMERCIAL BANK (KTB) from its establishment until its collapse. It tells the story of the largest bank failure in Bulgaria.



The preparatory and investigative work carried out under the KTBfiles project involved more than 250 meetings with different sources, approximately 30,000 pages of documents (reports, contracts, correspondence, lists, registers, financial records, etc.) put under close scrutiny, more than 1,000 phone calls, and at least 50 applications for access to information.

In January 2016, the website [www.ktbfiles.com](http://www.ktbfiles.com) was launched with the original intent of presenting the work of the team and the goals of the investigation. It contains several important elements:

- a full chronology of the events from the establishment of KTB in 1984 until the bank's closure in 2016;
- a Radar — a daily media scan software, which uploads all KTB-related materials onto the website;
- a rich selection of KTB-related documents.

Several months later, the website's content was expanded with the "KTB Top 100" sub-project — a comprehensive, document-based analysis of the bank's 100 biggest borrowers with an aggregate share of more than 80% of its loan portfolio, detailing the loans obtained by each company, the way in which the money was spent, the current financial standing of the borrowers and the assets acquired with the money borrowed. The "KTB Top 100" project largely answers the question: Where did the money go?

THE KTB STATE is an example of "spotlight journalism." However, unlike in the Boston investigation, the victim of the assault here is the Bulgarian State."

## Anti-Corruption Fund

The Anti-Corruption Fund (ACF) established with ABF support in late 2016, started work in 2017 whereby teams of legal experts and financial auditors closely examine publicly available information and collect additional data to build a compelling case to be presented to the relevant law enforcement agencies or control institutions who in turn pursue or dismiss the case if there is no sufficient basis for action.

The Anti-Corruption Fund is an independent expert civilian platform which focuses on a practical and effective anti-corruption approach. The Fund provides direct and easy access for any citizen who may have useful information on corrupt practices. Through ACF, anyone can file names or anonymously report evidence of corruption backed up by data, facts, and documents and harness the analytical power of the ACF expert team.

**Mission:** The Anti-Corruption Fund works in the interests of civil society to investigate, prevent and disrupt corruption at all levels in Bulgaria, including specifically at high levels of government. Corruption undermines the state and harms society. Abuse of power and undue political influence raise the threat of kleptocracy, while neglect of the long-term goals of society results in unprosperous economic development and harms the nation. The Anti-Corruption Fund's team monitors all manifestations of corruption, and also closely scrutinizes Bulgaria's regulatory bodies – both for signs of inefficiency, and for deliberate silence and inactivity in carrying out their statutory roles.

**Monitoring:** The Anti-Corruption Fund systematically monitors publicly available information, media outlets, social networks and many other sources of interest. Through this monitoring network, the Fund extracts, validates, and expertly analyzes information sources for signs of corruption of high public interest and directs evidence to the relevant institutions.

## Professional Journalism Is the Best Antidote to Fake News

The Association of European Journalists - Bulgaria (AEJB) is a non-profit organization that brings together individual journalists and stringers to local or international news outlets. AEJB promotes independent journalism, upholds high professional and ethical standards, and defends the freedom of information and freedom of the press. ABF supports AEJB institutionally as well as for the development of the 'Mediator' interactive platform that will stage discussions on the media environment and breaches on journalists' rights, provide training opportunities and propagate analyses and specialized information of interests to journalists.



Quality, professional journalism is the most effective tool for addressing the already well-known phenomenon of fake news. This is the key point shared by the participants in the international

conference “Europe vs Disinformation: Is the Bendy Cucumber a Real Threat to the European Project?”, which the Association of European Journalists – Bulgaria (AEJ-Bulgaria) and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation organized in Sofia on November 9, 2017.

French journalist Jacques Pezet (Libération and Correctiv.org) presented his work on debunking false information circulating in the media. **“My work is called journalism, as every journalist has to check the facts,” he said. In his opinion, fake news is a piece of information one publishes with the awareness that it is false. “Everybody can make a mistake, especially politicians, because the more you talk, the more likely you are to say something wrong, but if you publish something you know is false, this is fake news,”** Pezet said.

Irina Nedeva, a journalist from the Bulgarian National Radio (BNR) and chairwoman of AEJ-Bulgaria, insisted that the media should acknowledge their mistakes when they have got something wrong and notify their audiences about these mistakes.

Daniel Kaddik, director of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Southeast Europe, used an interesting metaphor to illustrate the problem. He said he could not start his car that morning due to a transmission problem. **“We cannot have a proper democracy if the transmission of information is broken and we cannot have a good transmission of information,” he said. “In order for media in Bulgaria not to be broken even further, not slipping down the slope of [freedom of expression rankings such as the one by) Reporters Without Borders, we have to fix the engine.”**

**“We do not do anything different from what journalists usually do, namely checking the facts,” said Velislava Popova, editor in chief of Dnevnik.bg. “We discussed the idea of creating a rubric for debunking fake news, but we gave it up, because the lies are so many that it will be difficult for us to decide which one to refute and which – not to refute,”** Popova explained.

Nova Television, one of the two largest national TV stations in Bulgaria, has its own initiative for refuting false stories, which journalist Marina Tsekova presented during the conference. Nova Television regularly receives signals from viewers and its reporters and editors then check the truthfulness of various claims which appeared in the media. According to Tsekova, the rise of fake news also provides professional media organizations with an opportunity because more and more people will be relying on them in the search of quality information.

Mediapool.bg has also initiated a special campaign aimed at drawing the public attention to the phenomenon of fake news. According to its editor in chief, Stoyana Georgieva, checking individual facts when a big media group produces not just fake news but propaganda. **“We cannot pretend we are not seeing the elephant in the room,”** Georgieva said. We should not allow to end up in situations similar to those in China or Russia, she added.

Nelly Ognyanova, a media law expert and professor at Sofia University, quoted European Commission Vice President Andrus Ansip who has suggested that a ministry of truth would be worse than fake news. While Ognyanova does not see any indications that the European Commission is willing to introduce special regulations on fake news, she noted that the media directive is currently being revised and that the EU may introduce legal responsibility for social media platforms such as Facebook. Ognyanova also raised the question as to whether private companies should be allowed to decide what is truth and what is not. She gave as an example the panel of fact-checking experts Facebook is planning to establish, urging the audience to think about the extent to which we can trust such bodies when they are linked to a private company.

Another speaker at the conference was Ida Eklund Lindwall from the East Stratcom Task Force of the European External Action Service (EEAS). Lindwall talked about the unit’s tasks and activities and highlighted the ridiculousness of some fake news stories, such as the

one about the EU purportedly banning snowmen on the ground they are racist, which appeared in some Bulgarian media in early 2017.

Bulgarian media analysis company Perceptica demonstrated the path of some popular false stories to the media in the country. Georgy Auad, director of the company, showed how a piece of information that originally appeared in 2004 is being republished every few years as if it is new. In most cases, the sources of fake news are from Eastern European countries such as Russia, Ukraine, and Macedonia, Auad said.

According to Jacques Pezet, traceability is very important in the fight against propaganda. **“If you manage to understand the organization of information, you have done half of the work,”** he said. He further elaborated on his experience as a journalist who managed to infiltrate a secret chat group of supporters of Marine Le Pen, the candidate of the French National Front in this year’s presidential elections. These supporters received concrete instructions about what they should publish online to discredit Emanuel Macron, who eventually won the elections.

Pezet stressed that the work of fact-checkers like him is not to tell the people whom they should vote for but to check the facts, share them with voters, and thus help them make an informed choice.

In the two days following the conference, Pezet led two training sessions for Bulgarian journalists in Sofia (10 November) and Plovdiv (11 November). During the sessions, he provided the participants with the latest techniques and instruments for fact-checking and reporting on fake news.

The conference and the training sessions were organized with the support of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation and the America for Bulgaria Foundation. Media partners include the Bulgarian National Radio (BNR), Dnevnik.bg, and Club Z.



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# Economically Disadvantaged



## Economically Disadvantaged

### **Early childhood development. Education and training. Family economic success.**

ABF understands that society as a whole cannot fully prosper until the most disadvantaged citizens are included in the economy. We work to increase self-sufficiency and improve the lives of Bulgaria's poor, with a focus on the Roma community. Roma comprise an estimated 10% of the population and make up a significant portion of the poor. To achieve better outcomes for Bulgaria's most impoverished citizens, ABF created a separate organization, the Trust for Social Achievement.

Through the Trust for Social Achievement, we support initiatives for:

- Early childhood development. Programs have an emphasis on healthy parenting and increasing participation in preschool. Investments in the first six years of a child's development have been shown to make the greatest difference in that child's future educational achievement and economic productivity.
- Educational achievement. Initiatives are aimed at drop-out prevention for at-risk pupils, with a focus on improving school attendance and academic performance and increasing graduation from high school.
- Family economic success. Initiatives help low-income families obtain the skills and job opportunities that lead to economic independence and success. They provide skill training, and link people with job opportunities; support targeted micro-credit and entrepreneurship programs; and promote legalization of long-standing communities and home ownership.

## The Trust for Social Achievement Received the United Nations' Award for Sustainable Urban Planning

Stopping the vicious cycle of poverty and creating a sustainable living environment in economically vulnerable areas are the goals of Building a Better Future for All, a program of the Trust for Social Achievement (TSA) in Bulgaria. The program's accomplishments in three Bulgarian municipalities, Kyustendil, Peshtera, and Dupnitsa, earned TSA a United Nations award for outstanding contribution to sustainable urban planning in 2017.



The Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements Awards are given out annually by the Global Forum on Human Settlements and are supported by the United Nations Environment Program. They recognize organizations all over the world for their contribution to the achievement of the post-2015 UN Sustainable Development

Goals and help promote their work and innovative approaches. This year's award ceremony was held on October 30, 2017, at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

This is an annual global recognition in its eleventh consecutive year by the Global Forum on populated areas and endorsed by the United Nations Environment Program. It distinguishes organizations around the world for contributing to the achievement of United Nations sustainable development goals and promotes their work and innovative approaches.

"Our initiative to improve the housing conditions of economically vulnerable communities will help nearly 1,800 families from the three municipalities to achieve security and stability and economic independence. The high appreciation of the international community encourages us to continue to work with optimism and faith," said Sarah Perrine, CEO of the Trust for Social Achievement.

The awarded project promotes slum regulation, access to land, basic services, and infrastructure, and urban legislation. Moreover, TSA's work to zone and legalize Roma neighborhoods includes community-based action groups, introduction of green and public spaces into urban planning and access to basic services such as safe drinking water, sewage systems, and waste removal. These are important first steps toward the creation of socially inclusive, resilient, and economically prosperous towns and cities.

The first important result is an urban plan regulating the Roma neighborhood of Iztok in Kyustendil, with a population of over 8,000. The Trust for Social Achievement (TSA) was created in 2012 by America for Bulgaria Foundation, which finances its activity. TSA focuses its work on supporting initiatives for early childhood development, education and economic autonomy of economically disadvantaged communities.



## A Step toward Success – English for Disadvantaged Youth

A Step Toward Success provides English language instruction to 200 disadvantaged youth aged 13-20 from across the country. The project includes three learning modules – a traditional module, an online module, and a blended learning module. The traditional module involves 100 youth from the town of Pazardjik, 75 youth from across the country access that platform through a home computer and the internet, while the remaining 25 participate in a blended module in Peshtera.



U.S. Ambassador Eric Rubin and Nancy Schiller, President and CEO of America for Bulgaria Foundation (ABF) officially launched A Step Toward Success – English for Disadvantaged Youth project at an event hosted by the Pazardjik district administration.

A Step Toward Success is a two-year nationwide project implemented by the Trust for Social Achievement in partnership with the Youth Foundation “Arete”, the Fund for Crime Prevention (IGA) and the CorPlus Foundation for Education and Development, with the financial support the U.S. State Department and the America for Bulgaria Foundation.

Two hundred disadvantaged youth aged 13-20 from across the country have access to English lessons. The project includes three learning modules – a traditional module, an online module, and a blended learning module. The traditional module involves 100 youth from the town of Pazardjik, with a focus on the Iztok neighborhood. In order to provide more young people with access to language acquisition and skills development, an online learning platform is provided through virtual classrooms created by Proznanie EAD.

All participants are divided into groups according to their language level and participate in a total 360 hours of English language instruction from February 2017- December 2018. Each group is assigned one teacher and an assistant teacher. In addition to English language instruction, A Step Toward Success provides sessions on personal development and community engagement, including language camps and volunteer initiatives.

## New Entrepreneurs Investing in Bread, Tea and... Electronic Drums

How difficult is it to start your own small business? Many would agree that it is a difficult challenge, even in the best of circumstances. The Trust for Social Achievement founded the “Business Alternatives” program to encourage young entrepreneurs to develop the skills for launching and managing their own successful businesses.

On March 15, 2017, the second set of participants in the program graduated after 19 weeks of intensive training. The best performers

received monetary awards to serve as initial financing. This year, the projects awarded were an electronic drums company, a traditional bakery and an industrial unit for tea production.

Meet Vera and Johnny Lyubenov from Sofia and their project – “MY DRUMS” electronic drums. It won first place and financial support of 15,000 leva from the “Business Alternatives” program.



Iliyan Asenov from Blagoevgrad was awarded second place. He impressed the jury with his bakery “Traditionna”. The bakery offers various breakfast snack products, king among which is, of course, Bulgarian traditional banitzha, prepared by masters with long-standing experience. The bakery is about to open in Blagoevgrad. We shall be following the development of the project.



Lyuben Penkov inherited from his grandparents a Sliven-based business producing herbal teas. His entrepreneurial spirit won him third place among the four start-up or already existing businesses.

Young entrepreneur Stefan Yustiniyanov won fourth place with his business plan for a cosmetics shop in a Roma neighbourhood in Kyustendil.



AMERICA FOR  
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# Arts and Culture





## Arts and Culture

### Music. Dance. Theater. Photography.

In a thriving democracy, arts are essential. They celebrate the human experience. They invite us to challenge our attitudes and beliefs.

America and Bulgaria share a tradition of embracing the arts and promoting freedom through culture. So ABF works to promote a vibrant Bulgarian cultural life through education, cultural exchange, and art management support.

We support initiatives that:

- Promote Bulgarian culture. ABF supports projects that help young and undiscovered, as well as established Bulgarian artists present their work.
- Bring American art to Bulgaria. ABF underwrites events and series that bring a variety of American art forms to Bulgarian audiences. We also host exhibits and events sponsored by leading American arts organizations.
- Enhance arts education. ABF helps professional art schools and universities upgrade their facilities and curricula to meet 21st-century standards. We encourage young people's interest in art through regular school programs, as well as extracurricular and family activities.
- Provide arts management training and US-Bulgaria professional exchange opportunities. For the arts to thrive, Bulgaria needs a cadre of talented managers who can develop programs and artists in the country. We help by inviting young professionals to get short-term, non-degree, practical arts-management training locally and abroad. We also stimulate professionalism and excellence in the arts by arranging interactions between peer organizations in Bulgaria and the U.S.



## What Is Plovdiv Night, and What Record Did It Set?



The Night of Museums and Galleries in Plovdiv was established in 2005, attracting about 3,000 visitors. Since 2009, ABF has been supporting this two-night festival, which quickly gained popularity and reached 45,000 visitors in 2017.

The festival was first held in Plovdiv in 2005 on the initiative of Vesselina and Katrin Sariev, founders of the SARIEV Gallery. Later they created the Open Arts Foundation, the main organizer of the Night.

The Night has become one of the most popular events not only in Plovdiv – it is highly anticipated and visited by people from all over the country. This not only positively impacts the local economy, but also makes Plovdiv a modern city with great cultural potential.

In 2017, the Plovdiv Night actually ran over three nights - on September 15, 16 and 17. The wide variety of activities included a children's program, a number of workshops (for graphic print exercises and icon-painting techniques and making booklets from recycled paper with inspirational quotes), exhibitions, plays, intellectual "games" and lots of fun in general.

But the effect of the Festival is much greater than cultural outreach according to a 2015 study prepared by Bauersachs Foundation, Industry Watch and Plovdiv University's Sociological Department. Each dollar invested in the ABF-supported Night of Museums and Galleries festival in Plovdiv generates \$4 of revenue for the local businesses. Over 20% of the visitors were not from Plovdiv and traveled from Sofia and the region. About 55% of the 31,000 unique visitors in 2015 were 18-35 years of age, with an average audience expenditure of \$19. The income generated by the local economy during the Night/Plovdiv was \$585,000 compared to \$92,000 generated during non-festive weekends.









## A To Jazz 2017 - A Heart-Melting Experience In Sofia...

Summer is the season of holidays, long hot days and inviting nights when jazz fans welcome the heat of the weather and the music and if this is so, A to Jazz Festival was the hottest jazz event in Sofia this summer.

Launched in 2011 by a handful of devoted Bulgarian followers of Louis Armstrong with the generous support of America for Bulgaria Foundation, the festival opened the summer music season in Bulgaria's capital city.

In 2017, the sixth edition of the festival ran from July 7 to July 9 at Sofia's South Park 2 with the participation of a constellation of jazz stars such as Robert Glasper, an American keyboard player and record producer with five Grammys on his wall; virtuoso Christian McBride and his band CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE'S NEW JAWN; the Swedish trio DIRTY LOOPS, whose pop music interpretations just blow your mind (just listen to their version of Lady Gaga's Just Dance and you'll see what we mean).

The program of the festival was well complemented by the Spanish band MASTRETTA, FUNKXPRESS – a young fusion band from Salzburg, the UVIRA/BRUNO/HAFIZI, etc.

The Bulgarian jazz tradition was represented by the Big Band with the Pop and Jazz Department of the National Music Academy, led by conductor Mihail Yosifov, along with young bands like Romaneno and Jazzaniza. The latter offer an interesting combination of traditional Bulgarian folklore music and jazz motifs. Charming jazz starlet Dorothy Takev, sometimes called the Bulgarian Nelly Furtado, was one of the must-see artists on this year's program.

### About the A to Jazz Festival:

The International A to Jazz Festival is one of the symbols of music Sofia, spreading the jazz spirit in the city and transforming it into a capital of improvised music for three days. Established in 2011 by a team, young and inspired by music, and with the exclusive support of America for Bulgaria Foundation, the festival traditionally marks the beginning of summer, presenting the best of worldwide jazz music





in open air. The beautiful South Park 2 has welcomed an audience of more than 100 000 people and great musicians such as Christian McBride, Robert Glasper, Kenny Garrett, Roy Hargrove, Branford Marsalis, Kurt Elling, Richard Bona, Michel Camilo, Dianne Reeves, Jose James, Dirty Loops, Nik West who performed on its stage.

A to Jazz Festival is organized by A to Z Foundation and America for Bulgaria Foundation, with the support of Sofia Municipality and the Ministry of Culture. The event is under the patronage of Mr. Elen Gerdjikov - Chairman of Sofia Municipal Council.









## A Kids' Roundtable Without the Kids



In 2017, for the fifth consecutive year, America for Bulgaria Foundation organized a roundtable for more than 130 experts 100 cultural institutions and organizations -- Bulgarian museums, galleries, studios and workshops that host children's programs to encourage them to get acquainted, share ideas, and seek solutions to the challenges faced in their day-to-day work.

Museum professionals from all over Bulgaria gathered at Etar Open Air Ethnographic Museum for "With the Children," a conference for representatives of museums, galleries, studios and workshops that host children's programs. This is what Maria from the 'Together' Foundation had to say:

*"I want to say a sincere thanks for inviting me to take part in the 'With the Children' round table - the meeting and the training were of great importance to us. A true life-enhancing experience and quality of new knowledge that was precisely timely. Never before, in all these years, have I felt such quality support to be able to continue on to the goals I've set. I wrestle every day with professional challenges, but it is precisely in these intense moments - the meeting of the round table and the training in Gabrovo - is so supportive."*

## #ATTHEMUSEUM 2017 Is Super Cool!

#ATTHEMUSEUM 2017 is the second edition of the #ATTHEMUSEUM Awards presented annually by America for Bulgaria Foundation to the museums and art galleries that really stand out and make a difference. Because, you know, the museum is a cool place to be and not only in summer...

Bulgaria's museums and art galleries have earned the country a special place on Europe's cultural map. However, America for Bulgaria Foundation wants to show that the museum is also a good choice for a family weekend or an art class outside the classroom... No matter how old or how busy you are, be cool and spend some time **#ATTHEMUSEUM!**

The award ceremony took place at the House of Humor and Satire in the Balkan town of Gabrovo in central Bulgaria.



## And the winners are....



The **Dobrich Art Gallery** won the big prize in the Best Partnership category with their project Speech and Sound – the fruit of some hard teamwork of four kindergartens, six schools and four summer schools in the city. The program has so far benefited more than 1,200 kids from all over the country. The prize in this category was presented by Mrs. Tanya Hristova, Mayor of Gabrovo.

The **National Museum of Military History** was declared the Most Family-Friendly Museum in Bulgaria for their project Father’s Day at NMMH. The award in this category was presented by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Svetla Dimitrova, Director of the Etar Ethnographic Open Air Museum.

Nadia Zaharieva, Program Director of the Arts and Culture department of America for Bulgaria Foundation, gave the first prize in the Most Active Children Involvement category to the **Friends of the Sea Club** in the northern coastal city of Varna for their project Sea Camp for Children, aimed at providing better integration opportunities to underprivileged children through free lessons in various seaside activities and sports – free diving, basic scuba diving training, sailing, etc.

Their other program, Sea Academy, is aimed at providing better employment opportunities to underprivileged youth from Varna and the smaller towns at Bulgaria’s northern seaside through the organization of various certified qualification enhancement and vocational training courses.

In recognition that doing a great deal with scarce means and resources means a lot, America for Bulgaria Foundation encouraged the local library, part of Svetlina Cultural Center in the village of Trud with the sum of BGN 1,000 for their determination in keeping the embers of art and culture in the region glowing throughout the past year.

The members of the jury were as follows: Krassimira Velichkova, Director of the Bulgarian Donors Forum, Yana Buhner-Tavanier, co-founder of the TimeHeroes Volunteer Platform, Olga Kovgan, Program Director of the Programata culture guide, Iva Taralezhkova, president of the Citizen Participation Forum, and Vesselka Voutkova, Director of Corporate Communications at Vivacom.





AMERICA FOR  
BULGARIA  
FOUNDATION

# Cultural Heritage and Tourism



## Cultural Heritage and Tourism

**Historic buildings and churches. Archeological sites.  
Cultural traditions.**

Bulgaria's vital cultural heritage is a critical part of its identity as a country. ABF supports the development of cultural tourism with the understanding of the extraordinary value of Bulgaria's thousands of years of history.

We support initiatives that preserve, develop and promote select major archaeological assets, which have the potential to develop the country's attractiveness for visitors. These sites will put Bulgaria on the world map of cultural tourism with enormous benefits for the local economic development.





## The Bishop's Basilica of Philippopolis

“What began as a small project just a few years ago, has turned into a gift beyond our imagination. Approximately 2,000 square meters of Roman mosaic tiles – in two distinct layers from the 4th-5th centuries AD – are now uncovered, revealing more than 100 unique birds, a spectacular peacock centerpiece, a fountain of life, ivy vines and medallions. The tesserae artistry is a feast for the eyes and colorful messengers of stories from the past.”

America for Bulgaria Foundation brings people and communities from various backgrounds together to impact economic development through cultural heritage. The Bishop's Basilica unites the efforts of Plovdiv Municipality and Bulgaria's government, archeologists, restorers, and hundreds of individuals and companies from all over the country who volunteered more than 2,700 hours to unearth the treasures hidden beneath a thick layer of dirt and debris.

The Bishop's Basilica site is quickly turning into a remarkable historic landmark that promises to be a cultural, tourist, and community centerpiece for generations to come. This benefits not only Plovdiv and Bulgaria, but all who appreciate history, beautiful craftsmanship, and the centuries of stories left behind. It is a privilege for America for Bulgaria Foundation to play a supporting role in bringing the Bishop's Basilica of Philippopolis back to life. We look forward to working toward UNESCO designation and greeting you at the Basilica's opening in early 2019. ”

Nancy L. Schiller  
President and CEO  
America for Bulgaria Foundation



## Bulgaria Presents: The Bishop's Basilica and the Roman Mosaic Heritage of Philippopolis

A treasure that lay buried for 14 centuries, a great deal of determination and more than five years of work to restore it, and a benefactor committed to Bulgaria and its cultural heritage—these are just some of the elements of the exciting history of the Bishop's Basilica of Philippopolis in Plovdiv. The largest early Christian temple found in Bulgaria, the basilica, as well as its treasure trove of mosaic decorations, is being restored with the financial support of the America for Bulgaria Foundation and will open to the public in 2019.

On November 20, 2017, at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, representatives of Bulgaria's Permanent Delegation to UNESCO, the Ministries of Culture and Tourism, the Municipality of Plovdiv, and the America for Bulgaria Foundation opened an exhibition dedicated to the Bishop's Basilica and the Roman-era mosaics of ancient Philippopolis.

This exhibit marked the beginning of Bulgaria's application for UNESCO designation for the serial property - "The Bishop's Basilica and Late Antique Mosaics of Philippopolis, Roman Province of Thrace." The team working on Bulgaria's application includes archeologists, restorers, architects and consultants from the Ministry of Culture and the National Institute of Immovable Cultural Heritage with the financial and organizational support of America for Bulgaria Foundation.

After the success of the Small Basilica, which opened its doors in 2013 thanks to the 1.3 million leva investment by ABF, the Foundation is now supporting the excavation, restoration and socialization of the Bishop's Basilica with 8.2 million leva and the country's UNESCO application.

UNESCO HEADQUARTERS, PARIS  
SALLE DES ACTES  
20 – 27 NOVEMBER 2017

**BULGARIA PRESENTS** THE BISHOP'S BASILICA  
AND THE ROMAN MOSAIC  
HERITAGE OF PHILIPPOLIS

**THE BISHOP'S BASILICA**  
OF PHILIPPOLIS

PLOVDIVMOAICS.ORG





The Bishop's Basilica is the largest Early Christian temple found in the lands of the Roman province of Thrace. Little from the remarkable architecture of the three-nave basilica with an apse, a narthex, and a colonnaded atrium has survived through centuries. But the preserved multi-color mosaics found in two layers with a total area of 2,000 sq. m., make the Basilica a first-class cultural heritage monument.

***“This project advances with the serious efforts and the tireless work of many people, organizations and institutions. Thanks to their dedication and good partnership, I believe that an important part of this unique Bulgarian cultural heritage will be displayed to the world in its full splendor,”*** said the Bulgarian Deputy Minister of Culture, Amelia Gesheva, at the exhibition opening.

Desislava Taliokova, executive director of America for Bulgaria Foundation, underscored: ***“It is a privilege for America for Bulgaria Foundation to support bringing the Bishop’s Basilica of Philippopolis back to life. We take inspiration from Bulgaria’s treasured cultural heritage and view it as a source of innovation and advancement, prosperity and optimism for the future. We look forward to working toward UNESCO designation and greeting you at the Basilica’s opening in early 2019 when Plovdiv will be European Capital of Culture.”***

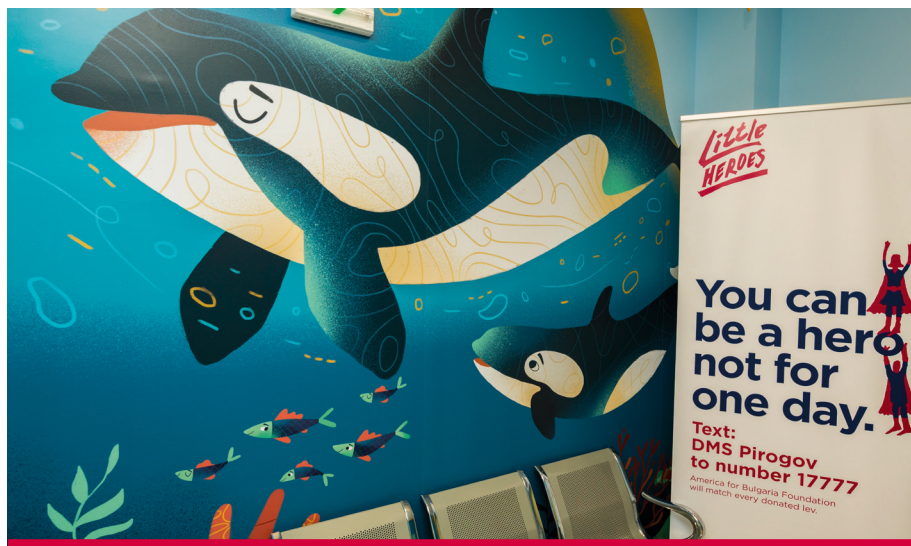




## We are committed to reviving philanthropy in Bulgaria and to encouraging its growth by example and by specific actions.

### See How Little Heroes Transformed the Pirogov Children's Clinics

What would it be like not to fear going to the doctor? And what if, instead of white walls, your doctor's office had colorful murals depicting fairy-tale characters? Can a hospital visit be transformed from a source of anxiety into an opportunity to learn something new and have fun? Starting in October 2017, young patients of Sofia's Pirogov Hospital and their families will receive that exact opportunity, thanks to the America for Bulgaria Foundation's Little Heroes campaign.



In 2017, the Little Heroes initiative raised funds to remodel the interior of Pirogov Hospital Children's Clinic, Bulgaria's premier provider of emergency medical and surgical care to children. The revamped interior features superhero-themed enhancements, including colorful murals, artwork, and furnishings, to reduce stress for patients and caregivers and empower young patients to fight for their lives and defeat disease, superhero-style. The contributions of private citizens, businesses, and public figures ensured that a facility that had not been renovated in more than 30 years was successfully transformed into a welcoming healing environment for patients, families, and medical personnel alike.

A host of private and corporate donors threw their support behind the initiative, including IKEA Bulgaria, Unicredit Bulbank, Happy Bar & Grill, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Walltopia, American Chamber of Commerce in Bulgaria, Henkel Bulgaria, US Embassy in Bulgaria, LHSA + DP, New York, Baustoff + Metall, Sensor-S, Center for Creative Training, Tribal Worldwide Sofia, SteraMed, Rofix, Area, AstraZeneca Bulgaria, City Academy, Muzeiko; BNT, bTV, NOVA TV, Bulgaria ON AIR, Bloomberg TV Bulgaria, BiTelevision. Tennis ace Grigor Dimitrov supported the initiative as its patron. In addition, over 8,000 individuals sent SMS donations.

Little Heroes helped refurbish a total of 65 patient and manipulation rooms and doctor's offices on three floors, covering an area of 2,270 square meters, and build a new playground in the hospital grounds. The project is an important part of the overall reconstruction of the children's surgery and traumatology center, undertaken by the hospital and financed by the Bulgarian state.

There is more to this than a refurbishment project as the initiative aspired to revive the tradition of giving in Bulgaria by mobilizing corporate partners, private citizens and public figures. It is an extraordinary example of successful public-private collaboration in a country marked by distrust in public institutions. Thousands of private citizens and businesses came together to support the initiative, building on the clinic's overall reconstruction financed by the Ministry of Health.

In addition, it is a model for transparent collaboration. ABF adopted a model of radical transparency by allowing donors to follow account movements and monitor spending, thereby promoting a spirit of openness and transparent collaboration in a region where both are lacking.

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***“Thank you from the heart to all those who took part in the initiative and donated funds! Thank you to the America for Bulgaria Foundation and all donors! So far, Pirogov has not been repaired since it was built, and it is important that people who come here feel calmer. I wish you fewer patients and that all of them will leave the hospital alive and healthy,”***

Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov said at the official opening of the transformed clinics on October 23, 2017.

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## ABF Active Grants in 2017\*

Area	Grantee	Project Name	Grant Period (in months)	Total Approved (\$)	Total Disbursed (\$)
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### Arts and Culture

ART	HH-Triola-Quintola Foundation	Fortissimo in class 2016-2018	24	183,129	189,231
	Easyart Foundation	Children's Fair, Art in Schools, Art for Children in Galleries	24	197,205	205,053
	Musicartissimo Foundation	Days of Music at the Balabanov's House	36	114,124	37,777
	Elizabeth Kostova Foundation	The Sozopol Fiction Seminars & Capitaliterature	36	91,693	30,221
	Allegra Foundation	ISA Allegra	12	8,187	8,142
	"Master of Art" Foundation	Master of Art Film Festival	12	8,081	8,127
	Documentary Theater Studio Vox Populi Association	V HOD	12	29,630	29,801
	Dedal Art School for Disadvantaged Children Association	Fine Art for Children 2017	12	8,081	8,096
	Pro Rodopi Foundation	Forbidden for Adults International Theater Festival 2017	12	8,081	8,096
	Varna Jazz Society Association	26th Varna Summer Jazz Festival - 2017	12	8,081	8,096
	Art Office Foundation	Art on the Road and Bulgarian-American Theater Exchange 2017	12	81,535	86,827
	House of Humour and Satire museum	Working with children and youngsters on two program exhibitions	12	8,154	8,169
	Project Da Association	www.interview.to	12	8,380	8,415
Dixie Jazz Fest Foundation	Dixie Jazz Fest Veliko Tarnovo	12	8,351	8,415	

Area	Grantee	Project Name	Grant Period (in months)	Total Approved (\$)	Total Disbursed (\$)
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ART	Good Music Society Foundation	The Bridge Youth Arts Festival	12	8,623	8,603
	Center for Informal Learning and Cultural Activity - Alos Association	Parallel steps, parallel spaces	12	51,736	25,881
	One Arts and Culture Foundation	ONE DANCE WEEK - international festival for contemporary dance and performance	12	114,705	117,414
	Nikiforov Art Association	Maryan Ballet Academy	12	8,569	8,606
	Children Books Foundation	Varna Lit 2017	12	8,569	8,603
	European Development of the Bulgarian Village Association	The Brava Fest	12	8,634	8,606
	Good Music Society Foundation	Chris Zahariev - Against the Current	12	8,569	8,603
	Jazztet Foundation	Jazz Forum Stara Zagora	12	8,569	8,603
	New Bulgarian University - Raina Kabaivanska Fund	Stipends for the Master Class of Raina Kabaivanska in Sofia 2017	12	8,569	8,606
	HH-Triola-Quintola Foundation	Fortissimo Fest 2017	12	85,920	86,886
	Open Arts Foundation	Support Open Arts Foundation and the Night of Museums and Galleries, Plovdiv - 2017	12	26,259	26,066
	Art Link Foundation	Dance PORT Derida - 2017	12	30,927	30,700
	Peter Petrov - Parcheto Foundation	National Jazz Meeting Ruse	12	8,809	8,929
	VIA URBANA Foundation	Online media for events for kids programata.kids	12	8,994	9,048
	Via Fest - International Theatre Festival Varna Summer Foundation	Metropolitan Opera Live in Bulgaria	12	43,531	43,929
Piano Extravaganza Foundation	Piano Extravaganza	12	24,146	24,405	



Area	Grantee	Project Name	Grant Period (in months)	Total Approved (\$)	Total Disbursed (\$)
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ART	Sofia Philharmonic	Concert of Thomas Hampson in Sofia	12	30,182	30,506
	Soul City Foundation	Kapana Fest - Fall of 2017	12	9,139	9,142
	One Arts and Culture Foundation	American Dance Abroad's "Spotlight: USA" a performance showcase of American dance in Bulgaria	13	100,000	54,000
	Fools On The Hill Association	Networking Creative Space	12	9,048	9,052
	Music for Bulgaria Foundation	Covering scholarships for music education and providing professional recording	12	9,048	9,052
	Culture Association	Criticism and Duelism II	12	30,235	15,166
	A to Z Foundation	A to Jazz Festival 2018	12	80,000	40,000
	Cantus Firmus AD	The Music of America 2018	12	60,783	60,573
	Musiz Foundation	Masters of Photography 2018	12	30,235	15,166
			<b>TOTAL ART</b>	<b>1,576,511</b>	<b>1,320,609</b>

### Cultural Heritage and Tourism

CHT	Free Speech International Foundation	High Beam: Spotlight on Bulgaria	36	252,565	169,119
	ABF-operated Project	Big Basilica in Plovdiv (incl. additional funding approved in Dec 2016)	60	5,185,642	953,837
				<b>TOTAL CHT</b>	<b>5,438,207</b>

Area	Grantee	Project Name	Grant Period (in months)	Total Approved (\$)	Total Disbursed (\$)
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### Civil Society and Democratic Institutions

CIV	Transparency International Association	Local Integrity System Index (LISI)	42	499,521	403,880
	Institute for Regional and International Studies Association	Leadership for Regional Development	37	293,616	279,481
	Institute for Market Economics Foundation	Regional Profiles: Indicators for Development, Annual survey and analysis of the regional development in Bulgaria (2015 - 2018)	36	369,805	380,436
	Libertarium Association	History of the corruption in Bulgaria: the years of transition to democracy (1989-2014)	39	167,123	140,929
	Bulgarian Judges Association	Courts in the Community Project	42	243,032	167,934
	Bulgarian Donors Forum Association	Unchartered Territories of Philanthropy Project	36	309,875	316,025
	AGORA Platform – Active Communities for Development Alternatives Association	Active Communities: Building Capacity for Change	43	266,345	194,619
	Bulgarian Center for Not-for-Profit Law Foundation	Support to Civil Society Organizations Continued and Expanded	36	486,275	399,211
	Center for Dispute Resolution Association	Court mediation in support of businesses.Promote fair and expedient dispute resolution through court mediation referral programs	36	268,142	188,589
	World Press Institute	WPI Fellowships for Bulgarian Journalists in 2016-2018 Project	36	97,500	65,000
	Devetaki Plateau Association	Devetaki Plateu shares experience in community development Project	36	198,410	134,029
International Moot Court Competitions Association	Jessup 2016-2018: Strengthening the Application of Principles and Rules of the International Society in Bulgaria	36	111,920	74,613	

Area	Grantee	Project Name	Grant Period (in months)	Total Approved (\$)	Total Disbursed (\$)
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CIV	Foundation for Human and Social Studies-Sofia	Anti-Liberal discourses and propaganda messages in Bulgarian media: dissemination and social perception	29	262,632	169,645
	Bulgarian Institute for Legal Initiatives Foundation	Moving Forwards: American Judges for Bulgaria Network	42	692,923	351,951
	Time Heroes Foundation	Empower Volunteering	36	221,081	158,484
	Gulliver Clearing House Foundation	The Reality Check: a platform for public debate and civic engagement	18	110,086	111,744
	Gramada Association	Building a Consistent Case Law	36	270,145	183,374
	Riskmonitor Foundation	Counter organized crime	36	242,438	165,304
	Otetz Paisiy 36 Foundation	Support for Independent Regional Journalism	36	188,011	63,774
	Association of European Journalists - Bulgaria	Mediator: A Bridge between Ethical Journalism and the Society	24	195,998	105,338
	Reduta.bg Association	Consolidate Analytical Journalism	36	158,077	81,027
	First June Association	I give to make a difference	36	162,457	71,288
	Anti-Corruption Fund Foundation	Anti-Corruption Fund	27	481,014	238,605
	Workshop For Civic Initiatives Foundation	Community Philanthropy Development Program	36	315,585	64,229
	Pro Veritas Association	Platform for independent regional journalism	36	323,947	101,179
	Satirist Foundation	'Starshel' and friends	36	74,801	18,976
	Sofia Platform Foundation	Teaching Citizenship	31	132,023	18,848
	Access to Information Programme Foundation	Transparency advice center	30	480,439	196,942



Area	Grantee	Project Name	Grant Period (in months)	Total Approved (\$)	Total Disbursed (\$)
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CIV	Institute for Public Environment Development Association	Civic Action for Free and Fair Electoral Process	24	210,864	41,967
	Association Academy for Civic Education	Academy for Civic Education	12	25,668	15,253
	<b>TOTAL CIV</b>			<b>7,859,756</b>	<b>4,902,677</b>

### Economically Disadvantaged

DIS	Trust for Social Achievement Foundation	Building Capital-Partnering with a Local Business to Zone and Legalize a Roma Neighborhood (Oreshaka)	48	698,386	58,939
	Trust for Social Achievement Foundation	Institutional Support for the Trust for Social Achievement Foundation - continued	44	6,466,353	727,405
	<b>TOTAL DIS</b>			<b>7,164,739</b>	<b>786,344</b>

EDU	National Academic Library Information System Foundation	National Academic Library Information System	103	7,231,306	6,839,723
	American University in Bulgaria	America for Bulgaria Distinguished Scholarship for AUBG 2013-2015 Entry Classes	72	6,000,000	6,000,000
	Teach for Bulgaria Foundation	"Motivating Teachers for Every Child"	88	15,156,386	5,803,408
	Muzeiko EOOD	Children Center Muzeiko construction, land, operational support	60	19,816,980	19,909,532
	Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange	Helping English Language Training in Bulgarian Language High Schools	42	1,362,000	1,362,000
	American University in Bulgaria	ABF Distinguished Scholarship Program FY 2016 & FY 2017	72	3,600,000	3,600,000

Area	Grantee	Project Name	Grant Period (in months)	Total Approved (\$)	Total Disbursed (\$)
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EDU	Bulgarian Library and Information Association	Bulgarian Libraries in the 21st Century	48	206,885	168,915
	Center for Advanced Study Sofia Foundation	Advanced Academia Project 2016-2019	36	274,082	138,941
	Astronomy Club - Vega Association	Astronomy and Astrophysics Summer School	36	31,176	31,661
	Student Computer Arts Society Association	Educational Workshops at the International Computer Arts Forum	40	28,263	28,232
	Institute of International Education	Bulgarian Young Leaders Program (2015 - 2016)	24	2,136,850	2,136,850
	N. Y. Vaptsarov 1st Primary School	Natural Science Experimentation Center	18	27,118	18,547
	St. St. Cyril and Methodius Primary School	Natural science center	18	22,011	22,130
	Dr. Petar Beron Primary School	Natural Science and Mathematics Center	18	28,324	19,114
	N. Y. Vaptsarov Primary School	Natural Science and Mathematics Center	18	4,062	4,116
	Videlina Primary School	Natural Science Center	18	26,549	19,486
	Sava Mladenov Vocational School in Forestry and Woodworking	Ecology center	18	25,610	18,246
	P. R. Slaveikov K-12 School	Multifunctional Center for Communications and Creativity	18	16,465	11,469
	Stoyu Shishkov Primary School	Center for Project-based Learning	18	27,616	27,492
	P. R. Slaveykov Primary School	Multifunctional Center for Elementary Education "School for Dreamers"	18	81,562	84,346
	1st Specialized Secondary Language School	Foreign Language Center	18	103,542	74,818
	Yane Sandanski Specialized Secondary School in Math and Science	Multi-functional Center in Natural Science and Mathematics	18	47,788	50,777
Saint Kliment Ohridski K-12 School	Natural Science and Mathematics Center	18	79,647	84,094	

Area	Grantee	Project Name	Grant Period (in months)	Total Approved (\$)	Total Disbursed (\$)
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EDU	Prof. Emanuil Ivanov Specialized Secondary School in Math and Science	Center for High Achievements in Natural Science and Ecology	18	85,714	61,501
	Nesho Bonchev K-12 School	Natural Science Center “Spiral of Life”	18	80,537	57,343
	Hristo Smirnenski Specialized Secondary School in Math and Science	Natural Science Center	18	79,647	83,812
	Saint Patrira Evtimii K-12 School	Natural Science Center “From the Atom to the Cosmos”	18	82,486	58,298
	Baba Tonka 5th - 12th Grade Math School	Biochemichal Laboratory Center	18	33,025	33,747
	St. Constantine Cyril Philosopher K-12 School for European Languages	Foreign Language Center	18	80,047	57,343
	Hristo Botev K-12 School	Interactive Center for Technology, Informatics, and Mathematics	18	106,197	111,822
	Vasil Levski Primary School	Multi-functional Center “Adventure Time”	18	106,197	75,992
	William Gladstone 18th K-12 School	Natural Science Center	18	109,763	75,992
	Elisaveta Bagryana 51st K-12 School	Natural Science Center	18	106,197	76,457
	Center for Inclusive Education Association	“One School for All” - a Special Educational Needs (SEN) Program	42	1,556,374	577,060
	Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange	Supporting English Language Training in Bulgarian High Schools	42	1,290,000	184,286
	American College of Sofia	America for Bulgaria Campus Center	21	7,871,568	2,862,203
	ABF-operated Project	ABF Academy for Educational Leadership	36	450,000	101,539



Area	Grantee	Project Name	Grant Period (in months)	Total Approved (\$)	Total Disbursed (\$)
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EDU	Teachers College Columbia University	Training Teachers and Technology Directors within the ABF Education Academy	36	705,729	180,000
	Bank Street College of Education	Training Educators within the ABF Education Academy	36	549,280	128,550
	American University in Bulgaria	ABF Distinguished Scholarship Program Class of 2021	51	2,000,000	374,360
	Center for Creative Training Association	Meaningful Use of Technology: Supporting Schools	14	61,343	43,239
	Education Without Backpacks Association	Educate Bulgarian Children With Khan Academy	12	84,035	42,963
	Sofia Debate Association	Strengthening and Development of the Bulgarian Debate Network	20	82,211	33,596
	Institute for Progressive Education Association	JUMP Math, Phase II (2017-2020)	36	551,903	152,019
	Olympic Teams in Natural Sciences Association	Bulgarian Olympic Teams in Natural Sciences 2017-2020	36	672,247	122,175
	Muzeiko EOOD	Continued operational support 2018-2020	36	1,836,322	0
			<b>TOTAL EDU</b>	<b>74,915,044</b>	<b>51,948,193</b>

### Private Sector Development

PRIV	Bulgarian Food Bank Foundation	Capacity building and expansion of the services of the Bulgarian Food Bank and its network of partnering organizations	68	467,693	443,310
	Trakia University - Stara Zagora	Establishment of a National Center for Professional Training and Competence America for Bulgaria	60	544,348	344,342
	University of Ruse Angel Kanchev	Conserving Bulgaria's Soils	48	422,274	290,838

Area	Grantee	Project Name	Grant Period (in months)	Total Approved (\$)	Total Disbursed (\$)
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PRIV	Inteliagro Foundation	Agricultural Sector Analysis and Policy Monitoring	37	185,573	178,307
	National Union of Bulgarian Horticulturists	Modern Trade	42	58,591	43,547
	Agricultural University - Plovdiv	Advanced Research for Modern Agriculture	41	220,098	169,320
	Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service	Agriculture for the Future (BALP&BASP)	26	300,000	300,000
	Association of Beef Breeders In Bulgaria	Integration and Development of Electronic Herdbook Platform for Beef Breeders in Bulgaria	48	159,353	126,152
	Agrobiointitute	Microalgae for high-value products	24	133,000	83,000
	Institute of Agricultural Economics	“Strengthening the Analytical and Public Outreach Capacity of the Center for Agricultural Policy Analysis (CAPA) at the Institute of Agricultural Economics”	36	132,394	54,323
	Danube Fruit-Growers Union	Successful fruit-growing with the Danube Fruit-Growers Union	36	103,070	27,743
	Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service	Bulgarian Agriculture Leadership Program	12	250,000	250,000
	Association of Bulgarian Leaders and Entrepreneurs	The ImpactABLE Community of Entrepreneurs and Mentors	21	75,452	77,684
	Vratsa Software Community Association	Vratsa Software Academy	36	67,373	15,014
	HRC Culinary Academy Foundation	Cooking competitions and stipends for Razgrad, Gabrovo and Vratsa	12	9,187	9,008
	Single Step Foundation	Embrace Diversity. It’s Good Business	6	8,978	9,093
	Srednogorie Industrial Cluster Association	Business Achievement Program	12	83,358	6,023
			<b>TOTAL PRIV</b>	<b>3,220,743</b>	<b>2,427,706</b>

\* Total Approved and Total Disbursed Grants reflect grants that are active in 2017. Previous years’ grants which were completed are not included in these totals.

<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>100,175,001</b>	<b>62,508,486</b>
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# ABF Standalone Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2017 and 2016

in USD (000)	2017	2016
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	13,738	6,779
Investments, at fair value		
ETF and public mutual funds	242,636	227,060
Private mutual funds	155,351	138,682
Equity investments	3,751	3,632
Bonds	7,239	5,985
Partnership investments	192	545
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>409,169</b>	<b>375,904</b>
Dividends and interest receivable	896	625
Prepaid expenses and other assets	140	128
Fixed assets, net of accumulated depreciation	142	218
Intangible assets	134	122
Investment in subsidiaries	12,129	17,495
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>436,348</b>	<b>401,271</b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Liabilities		
Grants payable	8,681	10,084
Accounts payable and accrued payroll	269	122
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>8,950</b>	<b>10,206</b>
Net Assets - Without donor restrictions	427,398	391,065
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<b>436,348</b>	<b>401,271</b>



# ABF Standalone Statement of Activities

December 31, 2017 and 2016

in USD (000)	Without Donor Restrictions	
	2017	2016
Change in net assets:		
Contributions received	101	25
Reversed Grants Income	548	903
Other Income / (Loss)	(1)	1
Investment income		
Interest income	2,631	1,966
Dividend income	6,680	6,045
Net realized gain / (loss) on investments	7,813	(5,108)
Net unrealized gain / (loss) on investments	43,384	27,044
Realized exchange rate gain / (loss)	(660)	(63)
Unrealized exchange rate gain / (loss)	819	15
<b>Total Investment income / (loss)</b>	<b>60,667</b>	<b>29,899</b>
Less investment management fees	(902)	(769)
Investment income / (loss), net	59,765	29,130
<b>Total Income / (Loss)</b>	<b>60,413</b>	<b>30,059</b>
Grant Expenses	(13,798)	(16,947)
Program related and donation expenses	(732)	(529)
Management and general expenses	(3,763)	(3,739)
Depreciation and amortization	(101)	(108)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>(18,394)</b>	<b>(21,323)</b>
Impairment loss on investment in subsidiary	(5,686)	-
<b>Total Non-operating Expenses</b>	<b>(5,686)</b>	<b>-</b>
Changes in net assets	36,333	8,736
Net assets, beginning of the year	391,065	382,329
<b>Net assets, end of the year</b>	<b>427,398</b>	<b>391,065</b>

## ABF Standalone Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

in USD (000)	2017	2016
<b>Cash Flows from Operating Activities</b>		
Contributions received	96	25
Grant payments	(15,956)	(15,653)
Grant refunds	58	856
Cash paid to suppliers and employees	(4,424)	(4,382)
Net cash used in operating activities	<b>(20,226)</b>	<b>(19,154)</b>
<b>Cash Flows from Investing Activities</b>		
Proceeds from sale of investments	22,425	29,137
Proceeds from dividends	6,412	5,558
Proceeds from interest	2,286	1,632
Proceeds from sale of fixed assets	-	1
Purchase of fixed assets	(17)	(6)
Purchase of intangible assets	(24)	(76)
Purchase of investments	(2,762)	(11,178)
Investments in subsidiaries	(320)	(830)
Investment fees paid	(819)	(855)
Net cash from investing activities	<b>27,181</b>	<b>23,383</b>
<b>Effect of exchange rate changes on cash</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>(6)</b>
Net increase / (decrease) in cash	<b>6,959</b>	<b>4,223</b>
Cash at the beginning of year	<b>6,779</b>	<b>2,556</b>
Cash at end of year	<b>13,738</b>	<b>6,779</b>

## Our Team

### Board of Directors

**Valentin S. Braykov**  
**Gail Buyske**  
**Lynn M. Daft** / Chairman  
**Brian Dailey**  
**Michael M. Dunn**  
**Stephen W. Fillo**  
**Melanie Kirkpatrick**  
**Lyubomir B. Lozanov**  
**Anthony R. Manno, Jr.**  
**Chris J. Matlon**  
**Marshall Lee Miller**  
**Nancy L. Schiller** / President and CEO  
**Kenneth Vander Weele**  
**Dimiter S. Voutchev**  
**Ambassador Eric S. Rubin** / US Government Liaison


### Emeriti Directors

**Frank L. Bauer** / President Emeritus  
**Joseph J. Borgatti**  
**Penko S. Dinev**  
**Leonard M. Harlan**  
**Gary E. MacDougal** / Co-Chairman Emeritus  
**Carl H. Pforzheimer III** / Co-Chairman Emeritus

### Staff

**Asya Asenova** / Compliance Director  
**Bojana Kourteva** / Chief Financial Officer  
**Desislava Taliokova** / Executive Director  
**Diana Trifonova** / Program Assistant, Civil Society and Democratic Institutions and Cultural Heritage and Tourism  
**Elena Hadjisotirova** / Program Coordinator, ABF Education Leadership Academy  
**Irina Ilieva** / Program Assistant, Education  
**Ivanka Tzankova** / Director, Impact Assessment and Evaluation  
**Ivo Bossev** / Officer, Impact Assessment and Evaluation  
**Kalina Konstantinova** / Program Officer, Private Sector Development *(on maternity leave)*  
**Konstantin Rangelov** / Technical Assistant  
**Krasimira Vangelova** / Operating Accountant  
**Krum Karadakov** / Digital Support Specialist  
**Lenko Lenkov** / Program Director, Civil Society and Democratic Institutions and Cultural Heritage and Tourism  
**Nadia Zaharieva** / Program Director, Private Sector Development  
**Nancy L. Schiller** / President and CEO  
**Natalia Miteva** / Program Director, Education  
**Nikolay Traykov** / Manager, Design and Construction  
**Orlin Vutov** / Technical Assistant  
**Rosen Arsov** / Technical Assistant  
**Simona Voynova** / Compliance Assistant  
**Stanislava Staneva** / Program Officer, Education *(on maternity leave)*  
**Svetla Tsenova** / Receptionist *(on maternity leave)*  
**Tsvetana Kasabova** / Communications Assistant  
**Vanya Grigorova** / Senior Accountant  
**Violeta Nedeva** / Program Director, Private Sector Development *(on maternity leave)*  
**Yuliana Decheva** / Program Officer, Arts and Culture  
**Zlatina Baleva** / Program Officer, Private Sector Development





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