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Teach For Bulgaria

Teach For Bulgaria is a non-governmental organization, initiated and generously supported by the America for Bulgaria Foundation. Teach For Bulgaria has been operating since 2010 with the mission to provide equal access to high-quality education to every child in Bulgaria, regardless of where they live, which school they go to, their ethnic background, and their family’s socioeconomic status. Teach For Bulgaria recruits and carefully selects motivated, high-achieving professionals who come from different backgrounds. Within the two-year professional development and leadership program all participants go through intensive training and are directly supported in the classroom and in all aspects of their work with students from vulnerable communities in regions all over Bulgaria. The organization has built a strong community of current teachers and alumni, as well as key partners from all sectors in order to ensure long-term, sustainable access to high-quality education to every child in Bulgaria.

Teach For Bulgaria is part of the international network Teach For All whose approach is successfully adopted in over 40 countries on six continents.
TEACH FOR BULGARIA’S MISSION IS TO PROVIDE EQUAL ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION TO EVERY CHILD
AN ADDRESS BY EVGENIA PEEVA-KIROVA

United by the success of every child

Evgenia Peeva-Kirova, CEO of Teach For Bulgaria, during the Big Adventure It’s Up to Me 2017
**In 2017 Teach For Bulgaria turned seven. It has been seven crucial years of working towards providing equal access to high-quality education to every child in Bulgaria.** In the past twelve months our community has grown significantly with each of our new motivated participants in the program as well as with multiple successful partnerships, and key projects for systemic change. Some of the most important ones are presented in this annual report.

The program’s alumni, who in their own way stay engaged with the mission towards the success of every child, start more and more successful initiatives. New organisations such as Education Bulgaria 2030, Steps Academy (Akademia NIKE), Vratsa Software, Mestentseto (The Little Place), Start Academy Sofia, the Uf Foundation in Lovech, and the Academy of Knowledge in Varna are all initiated by people who have participated in our program. They address the key needs of children from different communities and school staff from schools around the country. Our alumni have joined already established organisations which at a regional or a national level work towards education policy and practice change. Such organisations are the National Network for Children, the Trust for Social Achievement, the Institute for Progressive Education, the Arete Youth Foundation, the Bulgarian Safer Internet Center, and the project behind the 2017-2022 Education Development Strategy of the municipality of Plovdiv.

Two of our alumni, Daniela Ivanova (class of 2012-2014) and Daniela Todorova (class of 2011-2013), are already school principals and others are engaged in school leadership as assistant principals or in other roles. The wonderful initiative called School Miracles has been uniting Teach For Bulgaria participants and alumni in the Lovech region since 2013 and is still going strong. The Summer Leadership Academy and the Big Adventure It’s Up to Me are also a result of the joint effort by Teach For Bulgaria participants of different classes. For the first time in 2017 the intensive training of the new participants in the Summer Institute was entirely planned and executed by Teach For Bulgaria alumni from all classes.

We have seen the start of many summer schools, school events, and community initiatives in the past year which would not have been possible without the effective collaboration with the teaching staff at our partner schools, our great supporters from various institutions, the America for Bulgaria Foundation, corporate and NGO partners.

In 2017 our community hosted and partnered with important education forums - the first Teach For All Global Conference in Europe, the latest Education Conference, and many other regional and national events. The Erasmus + project “Tutoring and Mentoring New Teachers” and the White Paper on the recruitment and retention of effective teachers have been meaningful opportunities to share good practices that were made possible with the active involvement and collaboration between members of our community. In the beginning of 2017 the Ministry of Education and Science recognized the handbook “How to Teach 21st Century Skills?” as a valuable resource for Bulgarian teachers and organized its distribution in schools all over the country. Great accomplishments, however, are a good reason to set even higher expectations for the future.

With the Annual Teach For Bulgaria Impact Report we try to look back on and present our achievements, opportunities, and successful partnerships. We have collected part of the stories which inspire us to work with greater determination, ideas, and focus towards the success of every child and their equal access to high-quality education.

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**Evgenia Peeva-Kirova,**
CEO of Teach For Bulgaria
The organisation recruits and carefully selects motivated, high-achieving professionals who come from different backgrounds. Within the two-year professional development and leadership program all participants go through intensive training and are directly supported in the classroom and in all aspects of their work with students from vulnerable communities in regions all over Bulgaria. The participants who do not have teaching certification prior to applying for the program, are enrolled in teacher training programs at partner universities of Teach For Bulgaria. The organization has built a strong community of current teachers and alumni, as well as key partners from all sectors in order to ensure a long-term, sustainable access to high-quality education to every child in Bulgaria.
HOW DO WE KNOW WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED OUR MISSION?
Based on previous experience the organisation outlines four key characteristics of quality education and an effective system of education:

1. **Trains students how to be successful after graduation**
   Formal primary and secondary education develops skills, knowledge, and mindsets relevant to the needs and realities of a democratic society and the labor market of the 21st century.

2. **Works towards developing the potential of every child**
   All stakeholders (parents, teachers, institutions, etc.) believe that every child can achieve good academic results at school. They work together in alignment towards every child’s future success.

3. **Adapts and updates according to the needs and outcomes**
   The school system changes independently, based on the regular and effective tracking of all outcomes and KPIs. Resources are invested purposefully with transparency and accountability.

4. **Supports and values those who work in education**
   Teaching receives the public recognition and prestige it deserves.

With the help of many partners from the public sector, non-governmental organisations, business partners, principals, school staff, the media, and other supporters Teach For Bulgaria’s work is dedicated to making these characteristics real for education in Bulgaria. When that happens we will know we have accomplished our mission.

KEY ASPECTS OF **TEACH FOR BULGARIA’S WORK**

- **WE OVERCOME** teacher shortage-related challenges by recruiting new talent.
- **WE WORK** to support all participants in the program in their role of change agents and in their development as leaders in the system of education.
- **WE DEVELOP** and share best practices that serve as an inspiration not only to the education sector, but to society in general.
- **WE BUILD** a coalition of stakeholders united by a common vision for equal access to quality education for every child in Bulgaria.
What We Believe

IN ALL EVERYDAY CHOICES AND ACTIONS TEACH FOR BULGARIA’S COMMUNITY IS GUIDED BY SIX MAIN VALUES.

ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT
We face challenges with enthusiasm and energy. We find revolutionary and innovative solutions to all problems we encounter without sacrificing our professionalism and focus on long-term results. We are open to new ideas and experiences, we work outside of our comfort zone, and we try out new solutions to accomplish our mission.

PROFESSIONALISM
We always act as ambassadors of our organization and mission. We show perseverance - even in the most difficult and stressful moments, we remain calm and act in a professional way. We keep deadlines and work effectively. We always use appropriate language and tone of communication.

CONTINUOUS LEARNING
We strive to constantly develop and improve ourselves and our community by taking advantage of every learning opportunity and by helping our teammates, supporters and partners.
EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION
We strive to create sustainable and meaningful partnerships with all stakeholders in the education system. We help each other to achieve our common goals. We are friendly, honest, open to feedback, and supportive in our teamwork. We show the necessary patience to understand different points of view and to adapt our style of communication and actions, so we can have effective collaboration and accomplish our common goals.

RESPECT AND HUMILITY
We show respect to all people regardless of their background, age, beliefs, and experience. We do not make assumptions, but believe that every person can be successful. We are open-minded and curious about different points of view.

FOCUS ON RESULTS AND LONG-TERM IMPACT
We are led by the belief that every child has the right and ability to succeed. We work to achieve long-term sustainable results and make decisions aimed at the greatest possible impact. We try to find the right balance between effectively achieving short-term results and having a long-term impact. When possible, we use data to measure our effectiveness and to direct our actions. We handle difficulties and adapt our approach when we fail to achieve our goals on time.
The achievement gap

... OR WHY TEACH FOR BULGARIA EXISTS

Shizen Izet, Teach For Bulgaria participant, class of 2016-2018; geography teacher at Secondary School “Dr. Petar Beron” in Kostinbrod.
Education in Bulgaria has been facing a multitude of challenges for years now - teacher shortages, an outdated and inflexible curriculum, gaps in the funding system, neglect for the individual needs of every student, teacher, parent or principal. As a result, the academic achievements of a great part of Bulgarian students are not simply plummeting, but are significantly lagging behind those of their peers both within the country and internationally.

The analysis of Bulgarian students’ results at international assessments, which measure basic cognitive skills, shows two historically stable and increasing variations in knowledge and skills. We call them achievement gaps. The first one is the gap between the average level of Bulgarian students’ cognitive skills compared to those of students from the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) member countries - the so-called international gap. The second gap is between the average cognitive skills of different groups of students within Bulgaria - the so-called internal gap.

**THE INTERNATIONAL GAP IN STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS**

- **Bulgaria ranks last** in reading, last but one in mathematics, and last but two in science compared to other EU member states and according to data from the latest PISA 2015 results (presented in December of 2016). The number of points scored by Bulgarian students has increased slightly, but Bulgaria remains at the bottom of the rankings.
- **Students’ results** in Bulgaria are also below average compared to those of the OECD member countries. Bulgaria’s test results place the country in the same group as the United Arab Emirates, Romania, Turkey, Montenegro, Greece, Cyprus, Chile, and Uruguay. Bulgarian students lag about three school years behind their peers in the highest ranking country - Singapore; they also lag about two school years behind students in most countries in Western Europe as well as in Slovenia, Estonia, and Poland.
- **PISA shows** that nearly every third ninth-grader in Bulgaria does not reach even the minimal level 2 in all three tested areas which means they are functionally illiterate. The average percentage of functionally illiterate students in the OECD member countries is 13. If we take into consideration the dropout rate as well, the PISA results become even more worrisome. Functional illiteracy is a key indicator because it relates to students’ analytical skills. Over 40% of ninth-graders in Bulgaria do not understand what they read and cannot apply simple mathematics in everyday situations. Close to 40% do not have the adequate scientific knowledge to explain or make an argument about naturally occurring phenomena.

**THE INTERNAL GAP IN STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS**

- **The gap in the test results of the best and the worst performing students in Bulgaria** is considerably bigger compared to the OECD member countries. 16% of the achievement gap between ninth-graders in Bulgaria is due to family environment factors. The average for OECD member countries is 13%, 14% in Romania, 8% in Estonia, and only 7% in Russia.
- **If a student is raised by a poor family** or lives in a village, does not speak Bulgarian at home, lives with only one parent, has parents with lower levels of education or parents who are unskilled workers, at 15 years of age this student is likely to have considerably lagged behind in his/her cognitive skills.

41.5% of 15-year-old students in Bulgaria are functionally illiterate, i.e. they cannot grasp the meaning behind the text they read. Even higher (42%) is the number of students who lack the skills to solve basic mathematical problems. The percentage of students who lack the adequate knowledge to explain scientific phenomena is 38.
development compared to his/her peers who are not in a similarly disadvantaged situation.

- **Only 13.6% is the percentage** of Bulgarian students with high academic achievements despite their low socio-economic status. The average for the OECD member countries is 30%.

- **The best performing students in Bulgaria** are concentrated in a handful of schools which show high results in all subject areas. These schools, however, serve a small number of students whose families have the means to educate them there.

**CAUSES OF THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP**

Bulgaria’s low ranking in the PISA survey reflects the current state of Bulgarian schools and the quality of teaching. First and foremost, teacher training programs cannot attract top graduates. According to the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), passive teaching methods are common. Besides, national curricula do not focus on the development of crucial cognitive and noncognitive skills and the national external assessments do not measure if and to what extent the students are prepared to face the challenges of the 21st century. The students are required to memorize and replicate a lot of facts instead of learning how to independently draw conclusions based on those facts. Performance evaluation, remuneration, professional development, and training policies are not stimulating enough for teachers and principals, and so they do not put the necessary effort into increasing their students’ motivation or raising their literacy level, especially their disadvantaged students with low results.

According to data analysis from the international surveys, the internal achievement gap is caused mainly by the incapability of the education system to reduce the adverse effects that poverty and social exclusion have on students. Besides failing to teach students how to be successful after graduation, the school system in Bulgaria does not manage to meet their individual needs or to compensate for any language, social, and behavioural deficiencies which obstruct efficient learning. Teachers who work in underprivileged communities do not receive professional support and do not have the freedom to seek and develop individual approaches when working with their students.

**CONSEQUENCES OF THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP**

The cognitive skills achievement gap has a strong and tangible effect on the entrepreneurial spirit, innovations, labor market dynamics, the quality of state government, and public finances. Bulgaria’s incapability to provide access to high-quality education to all students prevents its citizens from contributing to the economy and from being actively engaged in a democratic society; it prevents them from being able to set and achieve goals independently, from defending their rights, and from taking advantage of their fundamental freedoms.

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), Bulgaria is among the countries with the lowest entrepreneurial activity in 2016. The share of young Bulgarians who are neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET) is worrisome - every fifth person aged 20 to 24, according to Eurostat data. The NEET percentage in the EU is higher only in Greece and Italy.

Employers constantly report skilled labor shortages. Political analysts warn against the adverse effects illiteracy, poverty, and social exclusion have on the political processes, the stability of democratic institutions, public finances, and national security.

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFITS OF CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP**

The World Bank Annual Report of 2010 and an analysis carried out by the Open Society Founda-
tion in 2007 show that a wider access to education is going to have a net positive impact on the state budget even if the quality of education remains the same. Simulation modeling carried out by Teach For Bulgaria shows that narrowing the achievement gap (raising the quality of education) in Bulgaria - in comparison with the OECD member countries - is going to add 1.1 percentage points to the GDP base growth in the upcoming decades.

Violeta Taseva, Teach For Bulgaria alumna (class of 2013-2015) and one of the creators of the project
The year of Teach For Bulgaria

Diagram 1:
A calendar of all regular activities and events

**OCTOBER - MAY**
RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF NEW PARTICIPANTS

**JULY - AUGUST**
SUMMER INSTITUTE
Intensive training of all new participants in the program

**AUGUST**
SUMMER ACADEMY FOR STUDENTS

**SEPTEMBER - JUNE SCHOOL YEAR**
The seventh class of Teach For Bulgaria participants entered their classrooms in September, 2017

*The starting date varies for different groups of new participants and depends on when they have applied for and joined the program

**EVENTS**

- **JANUARY//APRIL**
  **INNOVATIONS DAY**
  Events dedicated to sharing best practices and inspiration in Teach For Bulgaria’s

- **JULY**
  **THE BIG ADVENTURE IT’S UP TO ME**
  An annual student conference organized by Teach For Bulgaria alumni

- **NOVEMBER**
  **EDUCATION CONFERENCE**
  One of the largest education policy forums in Bulgaria

- **NOVEMBER**
  **INSPIRATION LEADERS CHARITY AUCTION**
  An event which gathers business leaders and public figures in support of Teach For Bulgaria
Impact of Teach For Bulgaria
TEACHERS, STUDENTS, AND PARTNER SCHOOLS IN 2017/2018 SCHOOL YEAR

NEW REGIONS
Veliko Tarnovo and Pleven are the two brand new regions where Teach For Bulgaria starts operating in 2017

12 ARE THE REGIONS
in the country where Teach For Bulgaria operates in 2017

164 TEACHERS
who are participants in Teach For Bulgaria’s program start the new school year on Sept 15th, 2017

18

NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO HAD A TEACH FOR BULGARIA TEACHER IN 2015/2016 6828
NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO HAD A TEACH FOR BULGARIA TEACHER IN 2016/2017 9035
While the recruitment campaign in 2017 was running, Teach For Bulgaria organized an informational campaign targeting potential partner schools where the new participants could start teaching. Our partner schools serve disadvantaged students who come from families with low socioeconomic status and often have a lower academic performance. Despite all hardship, our partners are open to change and look for new development opportunities for their students.

Teach For Bulgaria strives to select teaching positions that would enable the participants in the program to have a bigger impact on their students’ results. School placement takes place after detailed interviews with every participant and principal of a partner school.


Bilyana Asenovska, Teach For Bulgaria alumna, initiator of “Gramotko” - a program in support of students who need extra academic help
How to become a Teach For Bulgaria participant

RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, AND QUALIFICATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The 2016/2017 recruitment campaign slogan was “Kids are looking for a role model.”

Table 1:
Number of received applications for Teach For Bulgaria’s program and accepted candidates in the past two years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>APPLICATIONS</th>
<th>ACCEPTED CANDIDATES</th>
<th>ACCEPTED OFFERS</th>
<th>SELECTION RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2465</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2250</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teach For Bulgaria’s selection process is rigorous in order to select candidates who have the appropriate skills, knowledge, and mindsets which are going to help them become successful in a challenging work environment at school. All future participants go through three selection stages - online application, phone screen, and assessment center.
ASSESSMENT CENTER

The assessment center takes place at Teach For Bulgaria’s office and lasts about half a work day. The goal is to give candidates a chance to learn more about the organisation, to show their skills and competencies in person, and to meet other successful candidates.

The candidates take part in group and individual activities during the assessment center such as demo lessons, presentations, role plays, interviews, etc.
### QUALIFICATION AND TRAINING OF TEACH FOR BULGARIA PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Institute</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Certification Program</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Institute</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Academy</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from a Coordinator</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Ongoing Trainings</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The goal of the Preliminary Institute is to deepen the new participants’ understanding of the achievement gap and of what working towards equal access to high-quality education means. During the Preliminary Institute the participants learn more about what challenges to expect, the difficulties their students may experience, and best practices that will ensure equal access in their classroom. They visit schools and observe classes, work on various case studies, and do additional reading of recommended resources.

2. The participants who do not have a teaching certification are enrolled in teacher training university programs and are certified after a successful completion of the program. The training is aligned with their teaching responsibilities at school.

3. The Summer Institute consists of theoretical modules and practical assignments; the topics which they cover include lesson planning, goal setting, classroom management, teaching methods, assessment, revision, and working with national education standards and school documentation. The new teachers are also learning how to create a vision for the success of their students, to identify the goals on the way to fulfilling the vision, and the various ways to accomplish these goals. The training of all participants in the program also includes the internationally recognized Teaching as Leadership model. It is developed to be effective when working with students with low academic achievements who come from families with low socioeconomic status. Teaching as Leadership has six main principles and when teachers working in low income communities apply these principles in practice they manage to see a considerable student motivation boost and an improvement in academic results.

4. The new participants have the opportunity to apply what they have learned in practice during the three-week Summer Academy for students from 1st to 12th grade. The summer school is organized by Teach For Bulgaria every year and recreates the experience of teaching in an actual partner school. The participants in the program teach classes and a team of coordinators observe, give feedback and guidance so they can improve their work in the classroom. The teachers teach every day, meet with their coordinators, plan their next lessons, grade student work, and analyze the data from their classes.

5. Every Teach For Bulgaria participant works with a coordinator who has prior teaching experience and provides professional support during the two-year program. The coordinator visits and observes classes, leads monthly meetings, gives feedback and guidance so that the teacher can constantly improve their work in the classroom. The coordinator helps the teacher identify positive trends and areas of improvement in their work. They also help the teachers plan their lessons and teaching objectives.

6. During the school year teachers receive ongoing training based on the needs and areas of improvement identified by them and their coordinators. The participants in the program have access to teaching resources, studies, and courses that can help them improve their teaching or other skills.
2017 SUMMER INSTITUTE

The seventh Summer Institute took place from July 10 to August 25, 2017. The new class of participants went through an intensive training to master key pedagogical competences, effective teaching practices, and methods. For the first time all Summer Institute trainers were Teach For Bulgaria alumni from different classes of the program and with various teaching background. The institute was divided in two parts - an intensive theoretical training and field studies during the first three weeks in the town of Lukovit and a Summer Academy with students which was the practical part of the training during the following three weeks in Sofia. The final week of the institute focused on the key role of the teacher in long-term sustainable change and on working with different stakeholders.

2017 SUMMER ACADEMY

For the seventh year in a row Teach For Bulgaria organized a free Summer Academy for students from 1st to 12th grade from July 31 to August 18, 2017. Some of the goals of the academy were to raise the students’ motivation for learning, to improve their subject matter knowledge, and to engage them in useful and entertaining activities during the long summer vacation.

The academy took place in two schools in Sofia - 90 Secondary School “General Jos de San Martin” in Liulin neighborhood and 144 Secondary School “Narodni Buditeli” in Mladost neighborhood; the students who signed up for the academy reached the record number of 1311.

The academy was also the final part of the intensive summer training of the new participants in Teach For Bulgaria’s program who started teaching at partner schools in 12 regions of the country in September, 2017.

PARTNER UNIVERSITIES OF TEACH FOR BULGARIA

Within the two-year leadership and professional development program, Teach For Bulgaria collaborates with universities that can certify teachers in accordance with the state regulation for the acquisition of a teaching professional qualification.

Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” has been a partner of the organisation for many years. Thanks to this collaboration the participants in the program are enrolled in two types of qualification programs - a master’s degree and a further professional training program in two fields - Primary School Pedagogy and subject-specific teaching qualification.

In 2017 Teach For Bulgaria started a partnership with Veliko Tarnovo University “St. Cyril and St. Methodius” where part of the new participants (class of 2017-2019) were enrolled to receive a teaching certification upon successful completion of the program.
A new way for new talents in teaching

TEACH FOR BULGARIA IS DEVELOPING AN INNOVATIVE MASTER’S DEGREE FOR TEACHERS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE AND PLOVDIV UNIVERSITY

Teach For Bulgaria is a leading partner, authorized by the Ministry of Education and Science, in the NEWTT (A New Way for New Talents in Teaching) project. The non-governmental organisation is also the project coordinator for the Bulgarian consortium. NEWTT is an Erasmus+ project (Key Action 3, Contract Number 2015-3741/001-001) launched in 2016 in Bulgaria, Latvia, Austria, Romania, and Spain and planned to finish in 2019. The third Bulgarian partner in the consortium is Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”.

NEWTT’s goal is to test innovative policies in the recruitment, training, and retention of new teachers in the profession. The participants in the project have various professional experience, but are united by their strong motivation and potential to be successful teachers. They either do not have a teaching certification, or have limited teaching experience. The project aims to prepare them for their new career and to help them integrate faster and more effectively in the education system.

Zdravko Kerelsky, English teacher at the Professional High School for Veterinary Medicine and Agriculture “St. George” in Kostinbrod
Through NEWTT the European Commission is attempting to solve the following EU-wide challenges:

- teacher shortages, especially of young specialists;
- the unattractiveness of the teaching profession;
- the necessity to improve teacher’s pedagogical and leadership competencies, so that they can adequately meet the needs of the 21st century;
- the need for more practical training of new teachers.

The participants in the project are trained in an innovative master’s degree and will become certified teachers upon the successful completion of the program. Key features of the innovative master’s degree are:

- a rigorous selection process;
- training which complies to all teaching certification state requirements and is upgraded with courses that focus on the basic key competencies the new generation of students needs - reading and numerical literacy and 21st century skills (teamwork, creativity, critical and analytical thinking, presentation skills, etc.);
- more practice during the teacher training and supervised teaching;
- mentorship and support by experienced teachers and principals.

According to the parameters of the project, 140 people are going to be trained in two years in Bulgaria. The participants are part of a large study conducted by the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany whose purpose is to test and establish good practices and successful methods for the recruitment, training, and support of new teachers. The experience from the pilot programs will serve as a basis for recommendations for new national and EU policies for the recruitment, training, professional development and retention of new specialists in the system of education.

The recruitment and selection of the participants in the innovative master’s degrees, who started their training and work at school, took place in 2016. In Bulgaria 63 people who started teaching at 42 schools participated in the project during the first year. Their skills, mindsets, and knowledge were measured at the beginning of the program as part of the study conducted by the University of Duisburg-Essen in order to establish any development in the course of the training. Initial data indicates that the participants in the innovative program achieve high results as early as during the first few months of their work at school.
In the Classroom

TEACH FOR BULGARIA TEACHERS’ IMPACT AT SCHOOL

TEACH FOR BULGARIA TEACHERS’ FOCUS IN THEIR WORK WITH STUDENTS

Teach For Bulgaria teachers focus on a few areas of importance which are key for the success of their students. These areas are:

1. **Academic achievements.**
   - Graduate high school with a GPA of at least 4.5 (out of 6);
   - Graduate high school prepared and capable to continue their education at a university in alignment with their long-term goals, or to receive vocational training which is valuable on the labor market;
   - Are able to articulate with confidence and defend with arguments their long-term personal and professional development vision.

2. **Access to information, role models, and opportunities for development.**
   - Finish middle school with a GPA of at least 4.5 (out of 6);
   - Finish middle school prepared and capable to continue their education either at a high school or a vocational school in alignment with their long-term goals;
   - Are able to articulate with confidence and defend with arguments their vision, can set goals for themselves with action plans where they track the progress to every goal.

3. **Aspirations and mindsets that motivate students to achieve better results.**
   - Finish their primary education with a GPA of at least 4.5 (out of 6);
   - Finish their primary education prepared and capable to continue their education in middle school;
   - Have aspirations to learn and grow;
   - Are able to articulate with confidence and defend with arguments their vision, can set goals for themselves with action plans where they track the progress to every goal.

4. **Agency that empowers students to take control of their own progress and to contribute to the development of their community.**

TEACH FOR BULGARIA’S DEFINITION OF SUCCESS

Regardless of their mother tongue, family and education background or socioeconomic status, all students who have a Teach For Bulgaria teacher will:
WHAT WE WANT FOR ALL STUDENTS WHO WORK WITH TEACH FOR BULGARIA TEACHERS

**HIGH ACHIEVEMENTS**
- achieve excellent results both in class and in their extracurricular activities;
- gain valuable experience, knowledge, diplomas, certificates, etc.;
- develop learning and time management skills;
- apply their knowledge in new and practical situations.

**ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES**
- find, mobilize, and use valuable resources at school and in their everyday life in order to accomplish their goals;
- develop life skills and professional skills;
- have access to information;
- have access to successful role models.

**HIGH ASPIRATIONS**
- set high goals and strive to accomplish them;
- have the inner motivation to learn and grow;
- have a growth mindset;
- believe in their own potential.

**AGENCY**
- take responsibility and consciously guide their own progress;
- are actively engaged and contribute to the development of their community (their school, neighbourhood, town, country, world).
STUDENT PROGRESS TRACKING INSTRUMENTS

In order to track the progress of students who are taught by Teach For Bulgaria teachers, the organisation uses different sources, data, and information. The teachers who teach 4th, 7th, and 12th grade are responsible for their students’ performance at the national external assessments and maturity exams. These evaluations, however, do not measure well enough key skills like functional literacy for example. That is why Teach For Bulgaria applies new instruments to evaluate reading and numerical literacy, the level of student engagement, and students’ skills to set personal development goals. We have collected information from the teachers about students’ results, extracurricular activities, and the way students transition into the next stage of their education.

Teach For Bulgaria conducts an internal reading literacy assessment with the help of a test developed in collaboration with the Center for Control and Assessment of the Quality in Education and in compliance with the PISA format. During the 2016/2017 school year the students taught by Teach For Bulgaria teachers achieved a 13% progress compared to their diagnostic assessment in the beginning of the year (graph 1).

Graph 1:
Reading literacy assessment results of students taught by Teach For Bulgaria teachers, 2016/2017

*515 students from 5th to 9th grade participated in the assessment.

TEACH FOR BULGARIA
CONDUCTS
AN INTERNAL
READING LITERACY
ASSESSMENT WITH
THE HELP OF A
TEST DEVELOPED IN
COLLABORATION
WITH THE CENTER
FOR CONTROL AND
ASSESSMENT OF
THE QUALITY IN
EDUCATION AND IN
COMPLIANCE WITH
THE PISA FORMAT.
Teach For Bulgaria introduced their own framework for classroom observations and teacher accountability known as “Rigor, Reach, Results” or the 3 Rs. That way Teach For Bulgaria teacher performance can be evaluated not just by tracking the progress of their students. The extent to which the teachers manage to engage all students in the lesson, the level of rigor of all assessments, tests, group and individual work are also taken into account.

The participants in the program actively seek and create opportunities for extracurricular activities for their students. They focus on building key skills and mindsets during the extracurriculars. Hundreds of student clubs, sports initiatives, activities and events focused on developing literacy, civic education, and entrepreneurship, language learning clubs, arts and culture clubs, and student volunteering missions have been organized in the past few years. They are inspired by the various interests that both students and teachers have and their main goals are to develop soft skills (e.g. time management, teamwork, communication skills) and to provide students with helpful resources and access to role models.

Teach For Bulgaria teachers put a lot of effort into raising students’ awareness about all development opportunities they have and about the consequences of their lifestyle choices. Teachers strive to change students’ and parents’ mindsets about how crucial it is for all children to go to school where the quality of education is better and expectations are higher. Teachers set up individual and group consultations to prepare their students for the application process for such schools.
STUDENTS ATTENDING UNITED WORLD COLLEGES
For two years in a row students of Teach For Bulgaria teachers got full scholarships to prestigious schools, part of United World Colleges. In 2015 Atanas Pavlov, a student of Secondary School “Lyuben Karavelov” in Koprivshtitsa, was accepted in the Armand Hammer United World College of the American West. In 2016, after Atanas Pavlov’s success, Ganka Radoeva, from the same school in Koprivshtitsa, was accepted in the United World College of the Adriatic in Trieste, Italy and Lyudmila Stefanova from Pirdop joined Atanas in Armand Hammer.
WHERE TO AFTER SCHOOL
Some of the universities in which students of Teach For Bulgaria teachers have been accepted are University of Bristol, Technische Universität – Wien, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Technical University – Sofia, University of National and World Economy in Sofia, Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”, and South-West University “Neofit Rilski” in Blagoevgrad.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT
Some of the schools in which students of Teach For Bulgaria teachers have been accepted are the American College of Sofia, Sofia High School of Mathematics, High School of Mathematics "Acad. Kiril Popov" in Plovdiv, Second English Language High School "Thomas Jefferson" in Sofia, French Language High School "Antoine de Saint-Exup ry" in Plovdiv, Technical School for Electronics in Sofia, Professional High School for Electronics and Electrical Engineering in Plovdiv, National High School for Trade And Commerce in Plovdiv, Secondary School With Humanitarian Profile “St. Cyril and St. Methodius” in Plovdiv, School for Foreign Languages “Bertolt Brecht” in Pazardzhik, Sofia Professional High School of Electronics "John Atanasoff", and the National School for Ancient Languages and Cultures.
COLLABORATION WITH PRINCIPALS AND TEACHING STAFF

Building partnerships and collaborating with supporters both at school and within the community are at the basis of achieving long-term change. Only with the help of effective collaboration and by focusing the effort of the entire teaching staff, can disadvantaged students fill in the gaps in their education and have wider access to opportunities for development. That is why Teach For Bulgaria teachers are encouraged to learn from their experienced colleagues and to share their best practices with them.

“Teach For Bulgaria teachers see their work at school as a mission. They are entirely dedicated to their students. They are different - look different, act different, they are innovative, very positive and take initiative. These are important qualities necessary to overcome students’ lack of interest.”

Petya Georgieva, Principal of Primary School “Neofit Rilski” in the village of Dermantsi, one of Teach For Bulgaria’s longest partnerships
FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS AND PARENTS

A useful KPI for measuring teachers’ competencies and effectiveness in the classroom is the feedback and performance evaluation from their students.

WHAT IS MY TEACHER LIKE?

Teach For Bulgaria teachers’ skills which received the highest grades in a survey conducted among students in 2015/2016 school year.

- CARES
  develops supportive, personalized relationships with students;
  
- CONFERS
  values students’ ideas and views
  
- CHALLENGES
  holds students to high academic standards, encourages persistence, and monitors student effort
  
- CONSOLIDATES
  summarizes and makes connections in ways that help students see relationships within and across lessons, remember ideas, and build understanding over time;
  
- CLARIFIES
  checks for understanding, addresses misconceptions, and resolves confusion
  
- CAPTIVATES
  makes learning interesting

WHAT IS THE TEACHER OF MY CHILDREN LIKE?

Teach For Bulgaria teachers’ skills which received the highest grades in a survey conducted among 124 parents in June, 2016.

- CARES
  develops supportive, personalized relationships with students;
  
- CONFERS
  values students’ ideas and views
  
- CHALLENGES
  holds students to high academic standards, encourages persistence, and monitors student effort
  
- CONSOLIDATES
  summarizes and makes connections in ways that help students see relationships within and across lessons, remember ideas, and build understanding over time;
  
- CLARIFIES
  checks for understanding, addresses misconceptions, and resolves confusion
  
- CAPTIVATES
  makes learning interesting

AS A RESULT OF HIS/HER WORK

- my child’s motivation to learn has increased

- SETS CLEAR GOALS
  for my child;

- WORKS TOWARDS GETTING TO KNOW
  our community better and comes to community events

- SEeks my advice AND OPINION
  on how to serve my child better

- HAS A POSITIVE IMPACT
  on my child’s time management skills

Another valuable source of information about teachers’ impact is the feedback from their students’ parents. At the end of the 2015/2016 school year, 92% of over 100 respondents agreed that their children’s motivation to learn had increased as a result of their Teach For Bulgaria teachers’ work.
STORIES FROM THE CLASSROOM

THE MEANING BEYOND STATISTICS

THE BRAVE DREAMS OF STUDENT LEADERS

THE ACTORS OF DERMANTS

WHAT IS THE JOB OF A TEACHER

DICTATION IN P.E. CLASS
“Go, Mitko!” an entire row of first-graders cheers. “Ste-fan, Ste-fan,” the other row of children chants as Mitko and Stefan run back and forth in a hurry to pass the baton to the next runners in the relay race. What seems to be a standard relay race typical for any P.E. class is actually much more than that. To complete the race each student has to write down a random word and the winning team has to be not only faster, but with fewer spelling mistakes. That way students can both be physically active and sharpen their reading literacy skills.

Their P.E. teacher, Iva Spasova, came up with this original idea. She has been teaching physical education at 136 Primary School “Lyuben Karavelov” in Sofia for two years now and is a participant in Teach For Bulgaria’s professional development and leadership program. “Incorporating reading literacy in my classes has been a priority for me since Iva realizes that many of her students in the summer academy have trouble with spelling and reading comprehension, so she decides to find ways to incorporate these skills in her classes.”
my training in the Summer Academy organized by Teach For Bulgaria,” Iva says. In the process of getting to know her students, Iva finds out that a lot of them have trouble with spelling and reading comprehension, so she decides to find ways to incorporate these skills in her classes. Iva has other strategies besides the relays. For example, she had to teach with a sore throat once, so she told her students they’d be having a “silent class” by writing down everything they’d like to say out loud. She often gives them written instructions which the students need to read, understand, and explain to each other. If someone is late for class, they need to give her a written explanation why they couldn’t make it on time. There is a “kindness box” in the gym where each class submits a description of all acts of kindness they’ve done during the week no matter how insignificant they may seem—like letting a classmate borrow a pen from you, for example.

IVA’S JOURNEY TO THE SCHOOL GYM

Iva Spasova has a physical education teaching certificate from the National Sports Academy, and a master’s degree in Sports Management from the same university. She has been doing sports acrobatics from an early age and has won multiple competitions. Her dream, however, has been to become a P.E. teacher because she believes that sports help children develop many skills which can be transferable to other aspects of life. Teach For Bulgaria’s mission for equal access to high-quality education rings true to her and she becomes part of the program in 2016. Today Iva teaches all students at 136 Primary School “Lyuben Karavelov” and is determined to keep teaching after the end of the program.

“At the beginning the fifth-graders would come into the gym and start running all over the place”, remembers Iva. With persistence and lots of conversations she manages to build a relationship of trust with the students who are now “calm as they enter the gym and take their shoes off.” Iva focuses on empowering her students and giving them responsibilities - there are classes when her students are teachers or judges/referees, some games are entirely organised by them. Iva also deliberately makes mistakes in her instructions every once in a while to give her students the opportunity to correct her. For the past 2016/2017 school year, Iva’s students have participated in about 20 competitions, some of which - national.

“I tell them I don’t care about victory, I care about their performance,” Iva explains.
Her students have been victorious, however. They qualified for the 2017 Coca-Cola Cup Football Championship finals—a historical achievement for the school.

**BEYOND SPORTS**

Iva Spasova teaches mainly children from families with low socioeconomic status and faces more challenges than are typical for the teaching profession. For example, assisting her seventh-graders with filling out all documents they need to apply to high school because their parents have difficulties with the paperwork. She often has conversations with the parents about how important it is for their children to graduate high school and university, and serves as a role model to children at risk of dropping out due to pregnancy or early marriage by explaining that even though she is a young mother herself, that hasn’t stopped her from completing her education and having a career.

“Students need support, dedication, and understanding, if you want them to become better people,” Iva concludes.

In her classes and extracurricular activities she focuses on emotional intelligence as well. She talks to them a lot about how important it is to be able to control your emotions when your team loses a game, for example, and about how crucial team spirit is.

An important part of her class is the time for reflection when the students share important experience they’ve had or talk about future plans. This happens every week, and at the end of the school year her students look back on the past months and share their favorite moments, their sad moments, and what they’d like to do during summer break that is going to make them feel successful. When a student shares, their classmates discuss and give advice. This approach of active listening and sharing can help prevent aggressive behavior which is often triggered by the inability of schools to address all student needs.

After a conversation about what it means to “behave” in class, why “teachers yell at me”, how to help people in need, reminiscence about football victories, and a few ideas how to impress the X-Factor judges at the castings this summer, Iva says goodbye to her fifth-graders, but doesn’t forget to give them a homework assignment. They should think about what games to organise next year. “I’ll be expecting you in September with ideas,” she says, “written on a piece of paper.”
The Actors of Dermantsi

DANIEL SIMEONOV, THE ENGLISH TEACHER FOR WHOM UNEQUAL ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION IS MUCH MORE THAN STATISTICS

A few years ago when Daniel Simeonov, with a bachelor’s degree in Film Production, decided to move to Aglen - a village in Lovech region - he realized what the numbers in the studies of access to education which rank Bulgaria nearly last in Europe and worldwide mean in practice. 40% functional illiteracy among 15-year-old students translates as the wasted potential of thousands of young people who cannot understand what they read. High dropout rates lead to a serious economic inequality in the country. The huge inequality in the access to education deprives students coming from families with low socioeconomic status of their chance to be successful.

“I had been thinking of becoming a teacher before I moved to Aglen, but when I came here I decided that I had the time and I felt the need to take action,” Daniel shares. In 2016 Daniel applied to become a participant in Teach For Bulgaria’s program and started teaching English at Primary School “Neofit Rilski” in the village of Dermantsi. Today he is certain that his place is at school and that he is going to devote many years to teaching because “children take a lot, but they also give a lot.”

After a few years of working in the corporate sector Daniel Simeonov became a teacher with a clear vision of what education should be - modern, adequate, positive, effective, and inclusive for every student in the classroom.

LIBRARY, THEATER, AND GUIDED TOURS
Even during his first year as a teacher Daniel found multiple ways to work towards his vision. He focused on extracurricular activities and on providing more learning opportunities to his students. His first project at the primary school in Dermantsi was the renovation of the recently remodeled school library. Daniel organized the books thematically and fundraised...
for the library. He also set up a learning nook equipped with computers and Internet access which turned into a real information center.

Daniel also led the theatre club at the school. At the end of the school year the young actors performed an entertaining and innovative version of Romeo and Juliet entitled Ivancho and Mariyka. Daniel believes that theatre helps students develop their emotional intelligence. “Stage work, table-reads, role plays, and all discussions along the process help students get to know themselves and their emotions,” the teacher explains. He adds that he sees the biggest progress in terms of skills and mindsets in the young actors who know what the big goal is and are motivated to accomplish it - a process which is sometimes challenging to replicate in the classroom. As Daniel says, “grades are not the same as the applause and energy you get from the audience.”

Meanwhile, Daniel’s fifth-grade students dedicated their work during the 2016/2017 school year to the organization of a Dermantsi guided tour in English. The students planned to take international English speaking guests on a guided tour around Dermantsti during their summer break. The idea came up during a conversation between Daniel and his students about presenting their home village. The children got even more excited to share stories about the sights in Dermantsi when they were visited by guests from the international network Teach for All - part of which is Teach For Bulgaria.

Daniel raised his eighth-graders’ motivation to learn English by giving them the responsibility to teach fourth-graders. After that experience he had them reflect on the extent to which they could apply their knowledge of English while teaching.

The students in Dermantsi are not going to have a boring summer vacation. Primary School “Neofit Rilski” and a few other schools in the region are organizing a summer school for children who need to improve their reading, writing, and mathematical skills. Daniel is going to take part in the European Cinema Education for Youth project - CinEd - in collaboration with the French Institute in Bulgaria. The project involves European film viewings followed by discussions about the meaning, messaging, and nonverbal communication that the students have observed and discovered. “This develops students’ functional literacy because they analyze and extract meaning,” Daniel explains.

**BREAKING THE VICIOUS CYCLE**

The biggest challenges that Daniel faces in his job as a teacher are mindset-related; developing children’s growth mindset, teaching them how to learn independently, getting them to believe that they can be successful, that the sky’s the limit, and that they can go as far as their heart desires can be challenging. “They sometimes believe that the world ends at the village limit sign,” Daniel says and admits that this “infuriates” him. According to Daniel, the mindset problem should be openly talked about and even though it is not purely a responsibility of the school system, schools cannot abdicate. “Whether children come to class regularly depends mainly on the motivation and expectations of their teachers - expectations both for the students and for themselves,” Daniel believes.

Another crucial aspect when changing mindsets is working with parents who, according to Daniel, are the most influential role models for their children and if they have low expectations, this is passed on to the students. “There is a need for national policies about engaging parents in order to break the vicious cycle of poverty which traps children,” Daniel states.
What is the Job of a Teacher

RALITSA MATEEVA, BULGARIAN LANGUAGE TEACHER IN THE VILLAGE OF TARNAVA AND PARTICIPANT IN TEACH FOR BULGARIA’S PROGRAM, SPEAKS ABOUT THE PROFESSION-RELATED RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH GO FAR BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

The teams are at the starting line, the jury — at their places, the competition instructions are now being given. For the fifth-graders from the villages of Byala Slatina, Galiche, Harlets and Tarnava the end of the school year is not simply about collecting their individual grade books. It is marked by a special event — a “Language Competition” the purpose of which is to assess the students’ skills in Bulgarian language as well as their teamwork skills. The goal is not simply to crown the winner, but rather to motivate the children, help them believe in themselves and give them the opportunity to share the results of the year-long work with many people. The organizer of the competition is Ralitsa Mateeva, a first-year Teach for Bulgaria teacher, who teaches Bulgarian language and literature at Primary School “Hristo Botev” in the village of Tarnava in the Vratsa Region.

She was inspired to organize the event based on the example set by another participant in the program two years ago and involved colleagues and principals, including ones from neighbouring villages, as well as the local community in the organization process. The jury even had the Mayor of Tarnava, Mrs. Gabriela Ralovska, as a member as well as the Regional Education Management Expert for Vratsa, Sonya Damyanova, the principals of the schools in Tarnava — Irena Yakimova and Galiche — Veneta Pacheva, and the secretary of the community center in Tarnava — Tatyana Marinovska. There are a number of benefits to this community inclusion — benefits for the teachers who feel the support of the larger community, for the students who step beyond the borders of the classroom, and for the whole school which attracts supporters for the cause of quality education.

The students go through a year-long preparation for the competition, while the students from the higher grades have taken on the very responsible role of making sure the criteria are observed during the competition. There are four rounds to the competition which cover the topics of definite/indefinite articles, spelling, parts of speech, and parts of the sentence. It is carefully monitored whether the students work together, whether they show respect and listen to one another and whether everyone participates in the tasks completion. At the end, everyone receives a prize because as Ralitsa says, “the aim is not to assess the knowledge of the students, but for all of us to leave the competition with a sense of satisfaction.”
A TEACHER EVEN BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

For Ralitsa Mateeva the profession of the teacher is more than simply teaching a certain subject in class. She has a degree in Bulgarian Language and History from the University of Rousse, followed by a master’s degree at the University of Veliko Tarnovo. She realized she felt good in the classroom during her university practice and started seeking opportunities for career development in teaching. While she was a substitute teacher in a village in the Ruse region, she was confronted with the fact that the work of a teacher does not finish when the bell rings.

“There was a fifth-grader in my class who had the face of a child and the hands of a lumberjack because he used to cut trees to make money,” Ralitsa remembers. She met poor children at school, some with underdeveloped communication skills, having found themselves in hard family situations, including domestic violence. She also saw institutions turning a blind eye. And she realized that inaction could sometimes cost the life of a child.

“If a child doesn’t come to school because they have worked for two leva per day to help their family, what am I supposed to tell them, should I reprimand them?” Ralitsa asks rhetorically. And this question reveals the gravest inequality in Bulgarian society — the inequality in education with all consequences for their health and future perspectives. It is then that Ralitsa realized that being a teacher does not simply mean planning your lesson, but also spending quality time with the children, even taking in the environment they live in and wondering whether they have shoes and clothes to come to school with. After the experience she gained as a substitute teacher, Ralitsa decided to apply for Teach for Bulgaria’s program, which she saw as an opportunity to find support for her work, learn best practices, and actively develop her skills. She relocated from Ruse to the Vratsa region and starting next year, besides in the village of Tarnava, she will also be teaching in the school in Galiche.

WHAT STUDENTS NEED

Ralitsa receives a warm welcome in Tarnava by the principal and her colleagues. In her interaction with students she shows them the opportunities for development they could have, motivates and encourages them to think about which school they would like to continue studying, which subjects they would need to take exams in on the way to the desired profession paying special attention to their Bulgarian language and math tests on which their admission to high school would depend. At the beginning, children found it difficult to concentrate in class, but Ralitsa was patient to tried out various techniques — delegated responsibilities, set teamwork tasks, reacted with a smile and jokes, because “students are like a radar — they quickly detect your emotions”. She has noticed that after one year her students have developed a more positive attitude to change and have become more organised and responsible in the learning process.

“Trying to yell louder than them in class does not work,” the teacher has now realised and knows that the solution is to relax, make sure students are not overloaded with tasks and have the time to go through the class activities at their pace. Ralitsa is also trying to reflect on her own actions when a class goes well or not.

“Students need a clear sense of purpose and achievement — what they do should give a visible result for their life outside the classroom, rather than a simply a grade,” Ralitsa explains. And goes on — when she teaches the definite/indefinite articles rules, she first asks the students to think about why it would be important for them to know the rule, and lets them independently figure out when they will need it in real-life situations.
In the hot summer days of August, 2016, the atmosphere in the living museum in Koprivshtitsa is much livelier than a person would expect for this time of the year. The impressive museum building which used to host Bulgaria’s first grade school (where students were divided into grades as opposed to the older practice of having all children in the same room where the teacher taught the older students and they taught their younger classmates) comes to life again with the closing event of the first of its kind Summer Leadership Academy “It’s Up to Us”.

Surrounded by the portraits of the greatest poets, writers, and teachers of the Bulgarian National Revival, seventeen students of different ages and from different places (the villages of Dermantsi and Oreshene and the city of Sofia) are presenting their inspiring school and community impact projects for next year. They have been working on the organization of this event for the past ten days and have been given the responsible roles of student leaders at the academy.

Their Teach For Bulgaria teachers Iglika Atanasova, Denitsa Moskova, Izabela Vladimirova, Radostina Boycheva, Bogdana Dencheva, Bilyana Asenovska, Tsvetelina Mitsova, and Sava Dimitrov join forces to organize the leadership summer school. The academy is meant to be a well-deserved reward for all the hard work that the students have done and the extraordinary progress they have shown during the school year.

During the 10-day summer academy students have the opportunity to improve their skills and knowledge and to get a much needed confidence and motivation boost that will help them become active leaders in the development of their schools and communities. Most of the participants of the academy come
from families with low socioeconomic status and have limited access to opportunities for development. That is why the time spent with inspiring mentors, successful peers, and Teach For Bulgaria teachers is a truly unforgettable experience which can have a positive impact on their future.

The children have trainings which help them in their work on four school and community impact projects. Their goal is to execute the projects during the 2016/2017 school year and that way they will get a chance to apply what they have learned in practice and to find partners and supporters along the way.

“The students identified and researched the problems in their communities and found possible solutions,” Denitsa Moskova, one of the organizers and mentors in the academy and a teacher in Dermantsi, shares.

The young leaders’ projects focus on environmental protection, extracurricular activities, student self-government, and overcoming adult illiteracy.

During the training the students are supported not only by their teachers, but also by their peers who study at the hosting school “Luyben Karavelov”, by local citizens, and by individual and corporate donors who have donated money or provided school supplies.

**VISITING AN INTERNATIONAL FORUM IN BLAGOEVGRAD**

The leadership academy, however, does not end with the presentations at the living museum. It continues at school where the students carry out the projects they have planned in Koprivshtitsa.

A few month after the eventful leadership academy, Vasko, Gabby, Dako, Gloria, Natalia, Sofka, Mariana, Lalka, and the rest of the participants will continue their leadership journey at the annual Teach For All Global Conference in Blagoevgrad.

Starting on Oct 25, 2016, the 3-day Global Conference took place in Bulgaria for the first time and was attended by over 400 education experts from over 60 countries. The leadership academy students and their mentors were special guests and had the chance to participate in all sessions and workshops. The students had never been part of such a big forum before. For the first time in their lives they communicated in English with so many people, shared their stories of success, challenges, and lessons learned, and found out more about life and education in other countries from their peers. The young leaders made new friends, built new skills, and dared to dream bigger because they recognized their role of “creators” of the future. Vasko, one of the leadership academy students and a participant in the Global Conference, had this to say:

“For years my teachers have been telling me that it’s all up to me. I have never heard my parents say that and I haven’t really completely understood what it means. All of a sudden, I realized that I am your future. It really is all up to me. I can determine what that future will be and I will work hard to make it happen.”

**AND A CONFERENCE IN SOFIA**

Only a day after the Global Conference, the students from the Summer Leadership Academy made their voices heard at the National Education Conference 2016 co-organized by Teach For Bulgaria and Education Bulgaria 2030. The students led and moderated a workshop called “The Equal Voice of Students” - a topic related to one of their impact projects. They were very professional, motivated, and responsible and proved that “it’s up to them” to accomplish their goals. Their teachers were the people who helped them believe that every dream could come true by being there for them and supporting them.

“*FOR YEARS MY TEACHERS HAVE BEEN TELLING ME THAT IT’S ALL UP TO ME. I HAVE NEVER HEARD MY PARENTS SAY THAT AND I HAVEN’T REALLY COMPLETELY UNDERSTOOD WHAT IT MEANS. ALL OF A SUDDEN, I REALIZED THAT I AM YOUR FUTURE. IT REALLY IS ALL UP TO ME. I CAN DETERMINE WHAT THAT FUTURE WILL BE AND I WILL WORK HARD TO MAKE IT HAPPEN,”* VASKO, ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE ACADEMY, SHARES.
Teach For Bulgaria Alumni

Most of the participants who finish the program stay in the education sector.

Teach For Bulgaria Alumni Career Paths

Educational inequality is a serious challenge that cannot be tackled by an individual person or a single organization. That is why it is crucial for Teach For Bulgaria to support the participants in the program in their search for possible inequality solutions and opportunities for development that would help them to continue their work for the success of every child even after their two-year commitment. With the help of the growing community of teachers, alumni, team members, supporters, and partners, Teach For Bulgaria encourages those who complete the program to choose a career path that would allow them to stay engaged with the mission for equal access to high-quality education.

The two years in the classroom are the beginning of a mission which can only end when every child in Bulgaria can attain an excellent education.

As of September, 2017, 368 people are part of Teach For Bulgaria’s community and 163 people have completed the program.

Graph 2: Alumni career paths:

- Social entrepreneurship
- University
- Undecided
- Business
- Education sector
- NGO sector

Graph 3: Alumni in the education sector career paths:

- Teaching at public schools
- School leadership
- Teach For Bulgaria team
- Social entrepreneurship focused on education

163 Participants have completed the program as of July 2017.

*The information in the graph is from October, 2016, and does not include Teach For Bulgaria’s class of 2015-2017 who completed the program in July, 2017.
Emiliyan Kadiyski (class of 2011-2013) is one of the three teachers nominated by the Ministry of Education and Science for the Global Teacher Prize. Emiliyan Kadiyski and his Business partners from Vratsa Software made it into Forbes “30 Under 30” list for Europe in the social entrepreneurship category. Vratsa Software won first prize in education at the BAIT awards 2016 and additional funding from Google RISE Awards.

Daniela Ivanova (class of 2012-2014) and Ivan Gospodinov (class of 2014-2016) are included in Forbes Bulgaria “30 Under 30” list for young talents. Ivan Gospodinov and Teodora Zareva (class of 2011-2013) are nominated for the Innovators in Education awards.


Yoana Slavova (class of 2013-2015) was invited by the municipality in Lukovit to draft a proposal for a strategy for the successful integration of minority children. The invitation is a recognition for Yoana’s devoted work and community initiatives in the region.

Teach For Bulgaria participants from different classes (Iglica Atanasova, Denitsa Moskova, Izabela Vladimirova, Radostina Boycheva, Bogdana Dencheva, Bilyana Asenovska, Tsvetelina Mitoova, and Sava Dimitrov) organized the first of its kind Summer Leadership Academy in August, 2016, in Koprivshtitsa. The academy was meant to support and build upon all the hard work of students who had shown remarkable progress during the school year. The mentors at the academy focused their work with the students on developing 21st century skills and the students created 4 school and community impact projects.

During the 2016/2017 school year Teach For Bulgaria alumni and current teachers in the Lovech region continued the “School Miracles” initiative. Their main focus was dropout prevention. In 2017 “School Miracles” won a grant from One World Foundation.

Petya Daneva (class of 2014-2016) started an after school program called “Academy of Knowledge” in Asparuhovo neighbourhood in Varna. The academy helps students improve their skills and motivation to learn.
Two of the alumni of the program have already become school principals. In 2016 Daniela Ivanova (class of 2012-2014) led one of Teach For Bulgaria’s first partner schools - 202 Primary School “Hristo Botev” in Dolni Pasarel. Due to its geographic location and the lack of other schools in the area, the school has a status that protects it from closure. Daniela Todorova (class of 2011-2013) became the principal of the Private School of Arts and Languages Lyceum Artis. Ivelina Pashova (class of 2011-2013) was the assistant principal at Secondary School “Lyuben Karavelov” in Koprivshtitsa from 2014 to 2017. Radka Ibisheva (class of 2014-2016) became a technology director at Primary School “St. Cyril and St. Methodius” in the village of Vetren. Starting September, 2017, Borislava Todorova (class of 2014-2016) will be the vice principal of 90 Secondary School “General Jos de San Mart n” in Sofia.

Daniela Ivanova led one of Teach For Bulgaria’s first partner schools - 202 Primary School “Hristo Botev” in Dolni Pasarel.

Inspiration and Sharing of Best Practices at Innovations Day

Teach For Bulgaria’s community and teaching experience grows every year. Inspiring ideas and stories of community members grow in number as well and reach new supporters. In order to support communication and collaboration between participants from different classes of the program, Teach For Bulgaria organizes thematic Innovations Days every year. Their main goal is to encourage the sharing of best practices, new approaches, and creative solutions both within the community and by borrowing from inspiring practices outside of it. Innovations Day normally happens twice a year. Some of the guest speakers in 2017 were the principal of Bialik Rogozin School in Tel Aviv, Ellie Nehama, Katilyan Kostadinov, principal of Secondary School “Tsanko Tserkovski” in the village of Nikola Kozlevo in Shumen, and Malina Edreva, chairperson of the Culture and Education Committee at Sofia Municipal Council. Alumni and Teach For Bulgaria participants had the chance to share their ideas about education and social projects, as well as effective good practices tested in their classrooms to help their colleagues.
Interactive methods, practical solutions, individual support, learning by doing, inspiration, and tons of enthusiasm - these are just a few of the mandatory elements you can find in the trainings of Steps Academy. The organisation provides trainings to teachers and principals and is driven by the belief that children’s personal and professional development today means a brighter future tomorrow.

Steps Academy is run by three Teach For Bulgaria alumni - Ekaterina Gramenova, Ivanka Yordanova, and Kristina Rangelova. The school staff trainings are planned by the team of the organisation comprised of ten Teach For Bulgaria current teachers and alumni. They share first-hand experience in overcoming the challenges of the teaching profession.

In 2017, all 35 training programs presented by the academy to the Ministry of Education and Science were included in the official registry of training and qualification programs for pedagogical specialists. This grants Steps Academy the right to give qualification credits to everyone who successfully completes a training.

The trainings are designed to address school staff needs in three areas - effective school leadership, Teaching as Leadership, teaching 21st century skills. After the implementation of teacher performance evaluations in public schools, the academy is planning to develop trainings addressing individual professional development goals.

In 2017, 35 training programs developed by Steps Academy were approved and included in the Ministry of Education and Science official registry of training and qualification programs for pedagogical specialists.
“Be driven, believe in yourselves, do not give up if you come across an obstacle or even if you fail.” This was part of Vlado Asenov’s powerful message during the student conference called “The Big Adventure ‘It’s Up to Me’”. Vlado himself is an eleventh-grader at the Professional High School for Veterinary Medicine and Agriculture in the town of Kostinbrod. The student conference took place in the Faculty of Biology at Sofia University on June 10, 2017, and was
attended by over 200 students from 1st to 11th grade who traveled from all over Bulgaria. The main organizer of the event was “It’s Up to Me” - a non-governmental organization founded and run by Teach For Bulgaria alumni.

“The Big Adventure” gave students the opportunity to share their accomplishments and talk about their journey to success. Vlado also shared his journey and explained how his passion for football made him neglect his studies. His father, however, reminded him that his future and his career depended on his education. Vlado started working harder on his studies and on the application process for his dream university - the Academy of the Ministry of Interior. For Georgi, Hristov, a ninth-grader at Vladi’s school in Kostinbrod, the turning point was when his Teach For Bulgaria teachers Desislava Todorova and Teodora Vavova started teaching him how to face challenges, present before an audience, and believe that his goals were attainable.

“Confidence, courage, and dignity” - three qualities that every successful student should have according to Georgi.

The students also presented the projects they had been working on during the school year such as the Anglo-American Culture Festival and Career Orientation Fair (Secondary School “Otets Paisii”, Samokov), the tenth-graders’ video and volunteer club “Lend a Helping Hand” (Secondary School “Hristo Smirnenski”, Stara Zagora), and the second-graders from Bistritsa-Nikol, Bozhidar, and Nikolay’s play in English. The students hosted and moderated workshops and roundtable discussions as well. Some of the topics were teamwork, reading and numerical literacy, presentation and communication skills, measures against poverty. Guests from different backgrounds visited the conference - representatives of schools, public institutions, non-governmental organizations, corporate partners, and supporters.

The Big Adventure gave students a chance to share their accomplishments of the past school year.

“Success depends solely on the efforts you put in,” Iliyan Ramov, a seventh-grader at 159 Primary School “Vasil Levski” in Chelopechene, pointed out. He shared that he started focusing not only on the amount of school work he did, but also on his learning process, and the results he got out of it. For the seventh-graders at Primary School “Vasil Aprilov” in the village of Harlets, the big goal for the end of the school year was clear - their performance at the national external evaluation tests and completing their primary education. The results come after a lot of hard work, participation in competitions, after-school practice, and a national external assessment marathon with 8 trial tests. Their Teach For Bulgaria teacher Nevyan Teodosieva supported them on their journey and one of the inspectors at the Regional Inspectorate of Education in Vratsa gave them useful tips for the national tests. “We now know that it’s all up to us,” Teddy and Pepi summed up.

The students of 31 Teach For Bulgaria teachers from 24 schools in Batanovtsi, Bistritsa, Bozhurishte, Brestnitsa, Butan, Vratsa, Kostinbrod, Lom, Orleshene, Orlandovtsi, Pasarel, Samokov, Sofia, Stara Zagora, Tarnava, Harlets, Chelopechene, and Cherni Osam participated in the conference.

The conference was supported by Teach For Bulgaria, the America for Bulgaria Foundation, Lidl Bulgaria, Bankya Mineral Waters, ETEM Bulgaria, Printing House Multiprint Bulgaria, the Faculty of Biology and the Student Council at Sofia University, Darik Radio, and the portal for non-governmental organizations - ngobg.info.
The children of Fakulteta neighbourhood in Sofia can go to school every Saturday at 75 Primary School “Todor Kableskov” which hosts the initiative. The training is provided by a group of *Teach For Bulgaria* current teachers and alumni and their goal is to help the children, some of whom have already dropped out of school, to catch up with their school work in Mathematics and Bulgarian language, and to develop crucial soft skills such as teamwork, communication, emotional intelligence, and so on. The Saturday school initiative gives the children the chance to find new friends and meet successful role models—their teachers.

The Saturday school initiative is one of the projects of Start Academy Sofia- a non-governmental organization founded by Milena Dimitrova, Elitsa Geneva, and Desislava Stoyanova who are *Teach For Bulgaria* alumni. The main goal of the organization is to provide opportunities for additional training to children who have dropped out of school or are at risk of dropping out.

In 2017 Start Academy Sofia received funding by Program “Europe” of Sofia Municipality and organized a Summer Start Academy. It served 60 children from Fakulteta neighbourhood in Sofia who got additional training and improved key skills.

An innovative model of teaching that allowed every student to practice and learn at their individual Math and Bulgarian language level was implemented during the Summer Start Academy. The children were divided into small groups determined by their age and every student had a personal development plan with regular progress checks. The main goal of the academy was to raise the students’ motivation to stay in school by developing relationships of trust both with the children and with different stakeholders in the neighbourhood.

The Pro European Network, *Teach For Bulgaria*, the Health and Social Development Foundation, and Sofia Municipality “Krasna Polyana” district supported the Summer Start Academy. All best practices which led to a significant progress in students’ results are to be published as a pamphlet which would be available as a free resource to other schools in Sofia Municipality.
The history and geography teacher Silvia Bogdanova logs into Facebook every evening. She does not do it to look at her friends’ pictures, however, but to chat with her students about everything that is important or interesting to them. Their Facebook group is called “Let’s Talk in Bulgarian” and is one of the ways in which her students can develop their writing skills.

Silvia is a Teach For Bulgaria teacher at Primary School “Hristo Botev” in the village of Dalgo Pole near Plovdiv. After she completed the two-year program in 2016, Silvia stayed teaching at the same school and continued getting mentoring and coaching from Teach For Bulgaria thanks to the Trust for Social Achievement. She is one of the two alumni who continued teaching in the same school with the financial support of the trust, as part of its “Lend a Helping Hand” project. The project addresses the low attendance and academic achievements of Roma students, as well as the shortage of high-quality teaching.

Silvia’s main goal as part of the project is to develop her middle school students’ reading, writing, and digital literacy among a variety of other skills they will need both at school and after graduation. Part of the students in Dalgo Pole live in extremely harsh conditions and the main priority for their families is to find food and shelter.

Silvia’s students made a video report about their school activities which gave them the opportunity to develop their presentation skills, teamwork, creativity, and sense of belonging to their school.

Silvia has different goals for different grades. She wants to motivate the eighth-graders to continue their education and she works for early marriage prevention with them. The focus for the seventh-graders is to help them gain confidence especially by acing the end of the school year exams. The fifth and sixth-graders are working to build their vocabularies and catch up on all school work with Silvia’s help.

Silvia’s hard work at Primary School “Hristo Botev” is already paying off. Her students have developed learning strategies and gained confidence in their abilities. Some of them have even participated in regional geography and history competitions. Their perception of other people, their environment and of themselves has become more positive and thanks to the “Lend a Helping Hand” project, 60% of the students at the school have been included in additional meaningful and free school activities.
THE EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF PLOVDIV MUNICIPALITY

In July, 2017, the City Council of Plovdiv unanimously adopted the 2017-2022 Education Development Strategy of the municipality. The document was drafted in collaboration with Teach For Bulgaria with the purpose to create a contemporary vision for education in Plovdiv. The strategy has specific objectives, areas of influence, actions of priority, and KPIs which meet the needs and capability of local authorities, population, and business.

The ultimate goal of the strategy is for every young citizen of Plovdiv to have attained a basic level of competence of key 21st century skills. The long term vision for education in Plovdiv is to provide supportive environment and opportunities for all children and young people to be able to unlock their full potential. Supportive environment and development opportunities will attract, develop, and retain effective specialists for industries and economies with high added value as well as unique talents to contribute to a richer cultural and intellectual life.

Stefan Stoyanov, Deputy Mayor of Plovdiv, experts from the local administration, principals, teachers, university professors, local business representatives, and representavtives from the NGO sector all participated in the strategy coordination workgroup. Teach For Bulgaria was represented by the organization’s CEO, Evgenia Peeva-Kirova and Teach For Bulgaria alumni Georgi Dyankov and Kristina Rangelova. Program Director, Trayan Trayanov, and Chief Officer of Public Partnerships, Neli Koleva, participated as consultants.

In 2015, Teach for Bulgaria and Plovdiv Municipality signed a memorandum of cooperation and partnership. Its main priorities are attracting highly qualified and motivated young people to the teaching profession and establishing good practices in the selection and career development of teachers.
A HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS CALLED “HOW TEACH 21ST CENTURY SKILLS?”
The first handbook by teachers for teachers “How to Teach 21st Century Skills?” was published in 2016. It contains useful resources and best practices for developing functional literacy at school. The handbook was designed and created by Teach For Bulgaria teachers and alumni as part of a project called “Functional Literacy for the 21st Century”. The project is funded by the program for NGO support in Bulgaria under the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area 2009-2014. Thirteen key 21st century skills are presented in the handbook along with ideas on how to develop them in class regardless of the subject. At the beginning of 2017 the handbook was recognized by the Ministry of Education and Science as a useful resource for teachers in Bulgaria and was distributed to every school in the country.

TEACH FOR SKILLS
During the 2015/2016 school year, Teach For Bulgaria represented the country in an international Erasmus+ project called “21st Century Skills”. All participants in the project were teachers and their students from partner schools of non-governmental organizations part of the Teach for All Network in Europe. The other European countries which took part in the project were Latvia (the hosting partner), Estonia, and Spain. The main goal of the project was to develop a set of 21st century skills, knowledge, and mindsets in the process of international collaboration and sharing of best practices. The project focused on project-based learning which fostered teamwork, critical thinking, taking initiative, confidence, etc.

TUTORING AND MENTORING NEW TEACHERS
In 2016 Teach For Bulgaria participated in the Trainee to Trained Teacher (T2TT) project on “Tutoring and Mentoring New Teachers” funded by Erasmus+. The main goal of the project is to improve the quality and increase the efficacy of education and training by identifying strategies, tools, and resources necessary for the development of training packages which would make the transition from a beginner teacher to an expert teacher easier. The result of the project is a model applicable in across the EU.
The events of 2016/2017
WHAT HAPPENED IN THE PAST YEAR

EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2016

Education Conference is one of the largest forums for education policies and best practices in education both from Bulgaria and internationally. The conference is initiated and organized by Teach For Bulgaria and partners such as the European Commission, the World Bank in Bulgaria, the America for Bulgaria Foundation, and Forbes. It gathers representatives of government and local institutions, civic organizations, representatives from the business sector, school and education experts and strives to seek the right path towards equal access to high-quality education to every child. On October 28 and 29, 2016, Education Conference 2016 raised important and topical questions about the current condition of the education system in Bulgaria.
TEACH FOR ALL GLOBAL CONFERENCE IN BLAGOEVGRAD, BULGARIA

For a few days every year the Global Conference organized by the international network with the mission to expand educational opportunities, Teach for All, gathers distinguished international leaders, experts, representatives of national partner organizations, teachers, alumni, and global community partners. The forum provides guests the opportunity to share their experience, to learn from each other, and to get to know the context and background of the hosting organization. Teach For Bulgaria hosted the Global Conference for the first time in 2016. The conference took part in Blagoevgrad between October 25 and 27 and sparked a conversation about the future of education. This was the first Teach for All Global Conference not only in Bulgaria, but in Europe as well.
REWARDS AND RECOGNITION

In 2016/2017 Teach For Bulgaria and members of the community received recognition for their work in education, social entrepreneurship, and leadership development. Here are some highlights:

**Evgenia Peeva-Kirova**, CEO of Teach For Bulgaria, won first prize at the annual “Innovators in Education” awards. Teach For Bulgaria’s community was also represented by Program Director, Trayan Trayanov (6th place) and by Teach For Bulgaria alumni Ivan Gospodinov and Teodora Zareva;

Teach For Bulgaria alumni **Emiliyan Kadiyski** and Stanimira Hristova are in Darik Radio’s “40 Under 40” list for 2017;

Teach For Bulgaria alumni **Daniela Ivanova** and Ivan Gospodinov are in Forbes Bulgaria “30 Under 30” young leaders list for 2016;

Teach For Bulgaria was awarded a prize by Sofia City Library for preserving and promoting Enlightenment in Bulgaria. The ceremony took place on November 1, National Enlighteners Day;

**Emiliyan Kadiyski** was one of the few Bulgarians to be included in Forbes “30 Under 30” list for Europe;

Bankya’s campaign “Teach for Better Quality Education” in support of Teach for Bulgaria’s mission and participants won first prize in the “Investor in Knowledge” Category at the annual Responsible Business Awards organized by the Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum (BBLF) for 2016.
INSCRIPTION LEADERS CHARITY AUCTION

For the fifth year in a row representatives from the business sector and Bulgarian public figures were united by the mission to provide equal access to high-quality education to every child at the Inspiration Leaders Charity Auction on Nov 17, 2016, at the Hilton Hotel. The charity auction is an annual event co-organized by Teach For Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum. Nineteen famous public figures and representatives of 40 companies from different sectors participated in the auction in 2016 and fundraised over 100,000 BGN for the training and professional support of Teach For Bulgaria teachers.

The guests from the business sector had the opportunity to bid in order to buy two hours of the time of popular actors, musicians, athletes, authors, entrepreneurs, and other public figures. The public figures are Teach For Bulgaria supporters and donated their time to host corporate events, team buildings, etc.

The famous public figures who donated their time at the 2016 auction were the actresses Silvia Lulcheva and Militsa Gladnishka, the Olympic champion Maria Grozdeva, the young comedians from HaHaHa Impro Theater, the musicians Hilda Kazasyan, Orlin Pavlov, Hari Eshkenazi, the front man of Jeremy? Ersin Mustafov, the singers Magi Dzhanavarova and Nora Karaivanova, dancers from Derida Dance Center, the charismatic founder of “A Mailbox for Stories” Geri Turiyska, the entrepreneurs Leona Aslanova, Tsvetan Lazhanski, and Kiril Petkov, the writer Katerina Hapsali, the polar explorer prof. Hristo Pimpirev, and H.E. Irit Lillian, Ambassador of the State of Israel.

The 2016 Inspiration Leaders Charity Auction was made possible with the generous support of the Hilton Hotel in Sofia, Kinstellar, Vinex Preslav, JTI, Astra Zeneca, and SEG.
Education - a Cause which Unites Everyone

“Education is an essential value and a shared responsibility of all of us - society, the business sector, the government. The America for Bulgaria Foundation supports Bulgaria in the effort to build a modern and prosperous nation. We work towards improving the quality of education and the professional image of teachers. To us this means mainly to support teachers in their effort to teach children the skills necessary for their successful future. Since the establishment of our organization in 2009, the America for Bulgaria Foundation has invested over 110 million dollars to support Bulgarian education. We are happy that Teach For Bulgaria became a symbol of the mission to ensure that one day every child in Bulgaria will have access to high-quality education regardless of where they live, which school they go to, and what the financial means of their family are.”

Nancy Schiller, President & CEO of the America for Bulgaria Foundation

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. Founded in 2009, the organization is the successor of the Bulgarian-American Enterprise Fund created by the U.S. Government through the U.S. Agency for International Development. The generous donations and financial support provided by the America for Bulgaria Foundation foster the friendly relations between the Bulgarian and the American nation.
DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

“There are two factors which have helped me the most in my life and career: the unconditional support of my parents and the chance to have had an excellent education - from my Primary School “Vasil Levski” in Stara Zagora to my high school (the National School for Ancient Languages and Cultures) in Sofia. Teach For Bulgaria works tirelessly to provide every child in Bulgaria with equal educational opportunities.”

BOGOMIL BALKANSKY, VICE PRESIDENT OF GOOGLE, TEACH FOR BULGARIA SUPPORTER

“We support Teach For Bulgaria because it is an organization of successful young people who want to have a positive impact on education. The goal to provide high-quality education to every child which Teach For Bulgaria has set for themselves, is crucial to our future as a nation and the energy invested by the team in their work is boundless. Schools need young and successful people who can motivate children with their drive and by setting an example to follow.

We are impressed by Teach For Bulgaria’s team and the way they find new and innovative approaches to students, teachers, and communities. The concept to build a network of supporters, alumni, and partners is good and would facilitate an even stronger positive organizational impact.”

DR. ENG. ILIA GARKOV, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF DUNDEE PRECIOUS METALS CHELOPECH EAD

“I support Teach For Bulgaria because the team is entirely focused on the biggest and fundamental problems of Bulgarian society, namely education and social inequality. I am convinced that in order to build an economically strong and truly democratic Bulgaria, it is crucial for us to be united and unanimous in the way we treat underprivileged people. I strongly believe in Teach For Bulgaria’s strategy to help children from underprivileged communities realize their full potential in society by uniting them in the name of education. Our motherland needs responsible citizens with critical thinking skills to be agents of positive social change.”

PAVLINA YANAKIEVA, DEVELOPING STRATEGIES CONSULTANT IN SAN FRANCISCO, USA
MEMBER OF TEACH FOR BULGARIA’S EXPERT COUNCIL AND AN AMBASSADOR OF THE ORGANIZATION IN SAN FRANCISCO
YAVOR, HIS BIKE, AND THE SUCCESS OF EVERY CHILD

“People have the interesting quality to unite and work together, even if they live in different parts of the world and have never seen each other. Sometimes they just need someone to give them the necessary grounding. In this case, I — a boy on a bike — I had the honor of being this someone, but that could be any one of us. Each of us should identify a problem they would be willing to devote to and find the grounding for its solution.”

This is what our loyal supporter, Yavor Atanasov, told us a few days after completing his charity bicycle trip from Paris to Barcelona, with the purpose to raise money for the monthly financial support of Teach for Bulgaria teachers.

Yavor, who works as a software engineer for the BBC and has lived in London for years, has
been provoked to start his longest solo cycling trip after a joke he shared with his brother more than a year ago. His trainings in preparation for the journey were no joke, however, and he managed to complete a 1,347 km bicycle trip from Paris to Barcelona from June 3 to June 13, 2017. In order for his bike trip to be not only a personal physical and life challenge, but also a much more inspiring idea, Yavor decided to turn it into a fundraising trip with all donations going towards the monthly financial support of Teach For Bulgaria teachers.

“I had a teacher who completely changed my life. Many children do not have such teachers, and this is a problem whose solution is worth investing in. I strongly believe in the goals that Teach for Bulgaria has set and I would like to use my trip as a channel to provide support for the organization’s work,” Yavor said.

Over the course of 10 days in June 2017, Yavor traveled precisely 1,347 km and “climbed” 7,214 m. He rode between 5 and 6 hours a day, covering a distance of 125-140 km, and on the last day he traveled the record 187 km in 9 hours. By himself, on a bike. This, however, is not his greatest achievement. Within a month of starting his campaign and making the trip itself, he brought together over 420 people (in the dedicated Facebook group From Paris to Barcelona on a bike!). They all empathized with his daily adventures and helped him exceed his fundraising campaign goal by more than £1,000. Thus, at the end of June, we are pleased to announce that thanks to Yavor, the sum £4,160.26 was raised in support of Teach for Bulgaria. Thanks to another of our supporters, Bogomil Balkansky, and his current fund matching campaign, the raised donations will cover the financial stimulus of three teachers for one year.

“It was not the dozens of croissants I ate that gave me the strength to go this distance, but my faith in what you are about to accomplish. Have faith yourselves! I am sure that your journey will be difficult, but the easy ones do not lead anywhere. I wish you good luck and I thank you!” he later shared as a message to the participants in the program.

In June of 2017, Yavor managed to make another great gesture towards Teach for Bulgaria’s community, by joining as a virtual guest and role model in the classroom of Svetla Yordanova, English teacher and Teach For Bulgaria participant at Professional High School “S ndor Pet fi”. Yavor managed to tell students not only about his bike trip, but also about his career path and the key role that education played in it.

If you found Yavor’s story inspiring and you would also like to support the equal access to quality education in Bulgaria or if you have other ideas about future collaboration or want to organize another event in support of Teach for Bulgaria, do not hesitate to reach us at development@zaednovchas.bg.

Yavor is not our first supporter to decide to support Teach for Bulgaria through a personal challenge. In the end of 2016, Georgi Baldzhiev joined the Impetus PEF Challenge Triathlon in London, where he managed to raise nearly £ 2,000 for Teach for Bulgaria. Elisa Emilova, who learned about Teach for Bulgaria at our London event in January 2017, joined the big London Marathon in April 2017, also raising funds for the participants in the program.
CORPORATE PARTNERS

The work of all participants in the program and Teach For Bulgaria’s team members is possible with the generous help of our corporate partners who believe that high-quality education is a long-term investment in the economy and the development of the country. Teach For Bulgaria’s corporate partners actively involve their employees and management by engaging them in various initiatives in support of Teach For Bulgaria’s mission: visiting classrooms as guest role models, teacher mentorship, trainings, sharing of best practices, etc.

Every donor is our supporter who believes that every child in Bulgaria has the potential to grow and be successful!
Between 15 and 30% of Teach For Bulgaria's annual expenses are covered by funding which is not part of the grant by the America for Bulgaria Foundation.
How Can You Support Teach For Bulgaria?

BECOME OUR SUPPORTERS FOR THE SUCCESS OF EVERY CHILD

Teach For Bulgaria’s vision is that every child should have access to high-quality education regardless of where they live, their ethnic background, and the financial means of their parents.

In order to fulfill this vision, the organization recruits and supports motivated professionals to become teachers and have a direct positive impact on their schools and the education system. The work of the organization is supported by the America for Bulgaria Foundation, corporate partners, and individual donors. Teach For Bulgaria is part of the global network for equal access to education, Teach for All, with partner organizations in over 40 countries on 6 continents.

If you believe that every child has the potential to be successful, there are many ways to help all children on their way to success.

Here are some of the ways in which you can support us:

You can apply to become a participant in the program

As a teacher you can directly influence your students’ motivation and accomplishments and have an impact on your school and local community. The experience you gain in the classroom will help you develop personal and professional skills necessary to accomplish an even greater impact on the education system in the long term.

Find out more about the program at www.zaednovchas.bg or email us at apply@zaednovchas.bg and apply now.
You can become a monthly donor
Every donation is appreciated and valuable for the success of our students. It will be invested in ongoing trainings and financial support of the participants in the program.

SUPPORT US THROUGH PAYPAL
If you live and work in Bulgaria, you can make monthly donations from your salary, as well as online through PayPal at paypal@zaednovchas.bg.

SUPPORT US THROUGH GLOBALGIVING
You can support our Global Giving campaigns from anywhere.

SUPPORT US THROUGH BENEVITY AND AMMADO
If you are an employee of Google, Microsoft, VMware, and other IT companies, you can support Teach For Bulgaria/Zaedno v chas through ammado and benevity.

For more information and donation options, please email development@zaednovchas.bg.

You can become an ambassador of Teach For Bulgaria
As an ambassador you will have the opportunity to provide information about Teach For Bulgaria’s mission to new supporters and key stakeholders: potential candidates, donors or partners.

With your help we will be able to reach more socially engaged people in Bulgaria or abroad!

If you love organizing events for a cause, communicating with lots and different people, and if you share our values, do not hesitate to reach out to us. We can talk about your potential role as an ambassador, if you email us at development@zaednovchas.bg.

You can share about us
Our community grows with every new supporter and has the potential to reach more and more potential candidates, partners, and donors.

Like our pages on Facebook and LinkedIn and share our posts with your contacts.

That way more people will be able to learn more about Teach For Bulgaria’s mission and work towards providing equal access to high-quality education to every child in Bulgaria.
Contact Information

Teach For Bulgaria’s address is:
Collider Activity Center
111V Tsarigradsko shose blvd.
Sofia 1784
Bulgaria

Our new office is a general donation by WALLTOPIA, one of our long-term and loyal partners and the owner of Collider Activity Center.

For more information, you can call + 359 2 988 06 88 or email info@zaednovchas.bg.
Teach For Bulgaria is a non-governmental organization, initiated and generously supported by the America for Bulgaria Foundation. Teach For Bulgaria has been operating since 2010 with the mission to provide equal access to high-quality education to every child in Bulgaria, regardless of where they live, which school they go to, their ethnic background, and their family’s socioeconomic status.

Teach For Bulgaria recruits and carefully selects motivated, high-achieving professionals who come from different backgrounds. Within the two-year professional development and leadership program all participants go through intensive training and are directly supported in the classroom and in all aspects of their work with students from vulnerable communities in regions all over Bulgaria. The organization has built a strong community of current teachers and alumni, as well as key partners from all sectors in order to ensure long-term, sustainable access to high-quality education to every child in Bulgaria.

Teach For Bulgaria is part of the international network Teach For All whose approach is successfully adopted in over 40 countries on six continents.