



ОТ БИТНО МАШИНИ

1. КЕЛЕНКА И ПОНТАР ПАВЧЕВ

КОМАТ НА ЗЕМЯ

Преображенията на битнето

Келенка е доволна и успева да се справи со промените во животот си. На тоа време, во млада есеистика, с когото тој сега работи во Битола, сега и живее и работи во Скопје.

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НА ТУРИ И КАНОНИЧЕР

КОМАТ

ИОН

Наташа

BAU



ARETÉ YOUTH FOUNDATION

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

ОВОИ
о е

Без да се каже и нешто.

Areté

(from Greek)

Being the best you can be; reaching
your highest human potential!

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Areté Youth Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization supporting high-potential youth who are limited by social and economic barriers in Bulgaria and the Balkans. We envision a Roma community of engaged citizens and positive role models who support one another to achieve educational, financial, and personal success.

Our mission is to build sustainable social networks that encourage educational pursuits, instill a culture of giving back, and promote mentorship.

As members of the Areté Youth Foundation team, we believe in investing in initiatives directed toward young people and supporting efforts that provide opportunities that help shape the leaders of tomorrow.

Three of our programs—the Forward Together (Zaedno Napred) for Roma youth, the Education and Information Hub for university applicants and students, and the Roma Professional Network (RPN) for aspiring and successful Roma professionals aiming to increase the number of Roma who pursue a university education, create employment opportunities for Roma, and improve the Roma image among Roma and non-Roma.

Additionally, our Areté Youth Volunteer Network empowers young Roma to serve and engage in community life, thus improving their citizenship skills.



Words from the Executive

It is a great pleasure for me to be an essential part of Areté Youth Foundation (AYF). Since 2013, I have witnessed amazing improvements, heard incredible individual stories, saw miracles happen, and met extraordinary Roma youth ready to change the world!

It has been fourteen years since the start of our Forward Together camps and nine years since the organization started in Bulgaria. During these nine years the foundation has had the opportunity to partner with remarkable people and organizations which helped us shape our mission.. Our earliest partners are still foundational to our future success - including America for Bulgaria Foundation; Trust for Social Achievement Foundation; Bulgarian- American Society; Volunteers of Madison, Roma leaders and community members, returned Peace Corps Volunteers and staff, educational institutions and socially responsible businesses. I want to express my deepest gratitude to each and every one who has helped us through the years.

2019 was a very eventful year for AYF. Our Forward Together program supported more than 600 youth ages 16-21 through its national leadership camps, the Areté Youth Volunteer Network and the subsequent peer mentoring initiative. The 2019 Forward Together Leadership Camps, a program we have been running since 2003, welcomed an additional cohort of 60 Roma youngsters from across Bulgaria. The programming provided a variety of experiences to help develop positive behavior, a sense of knowledge and competence in life skills, a feeling of connectedness to others and society, and strength to believe in their abilities and potential.

With these newly developed skills and confidence, camp alumni become ambassadors of Areté and become role models for their communities. Moreover, we see many of our alumni continue on to graduate from universities and chase their dreams working towards a better society!

Since its launch in 2010, the Education and Information Hub has developed sustainable relationships with other organizations and educational institutions to connect

Roma youth interested in pursuing an academic degree with scholarships, educational grants and opportunities. In 2019, more than 250 youth benefited from the program's information campaigns for high school seniors, college visits, RMUSP training for scholarship application and academic mentorship program that connects Roma students to university professors. In 2019, fifty university students were assigned academic mentors who played an important role in nurturing students' college aspirations, helped them feel more connected and engaged with the university and increased their social and academic confidence.

This year, we also relaunched the Roma Professional Network (RPN) program. Through regular meetings and career counseling, soft skills training, paid internships in leading companies and career mentorship, the Roma Professional Network will connect more than 300 young professionals and students with established businesses in order to strengthen the labor market and help participants achieve their career goals.

We learn, grow and achieve alongside the youth we serve. Every day our hope is renewed as we work with hundreds of young people who are encouraged, trained,, and challenged through our programs. They will become the leaders of tomorrow--role models and professionals who will effortlessly serve their communities.

Working with those youngsters is a true inspiration and helps to keep us motivated. Our long-term objective is to uplift the next generation of the Roma community so that they can reach their fullest potential.

Radostina Chaprazova
Areté Youth Foundation Director for Bulgaria



Challenges Roma youth are facing

Roma youth are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion, discrimination, and poverty. They are often identified as NEETs - not employed, not in education, and not in training.

Lack of opportunity to quality education leads to higher rates of early school dropouts and illiteracy, which contributes to a low percentage of Roma university students and reduces access to work and continued education.

Roma youth are less competitive than their Bulgarian peers in terms of qualification, education, social image, and social capital.

As an underserved community, they are underrepresented in the civil, public and private sectors.

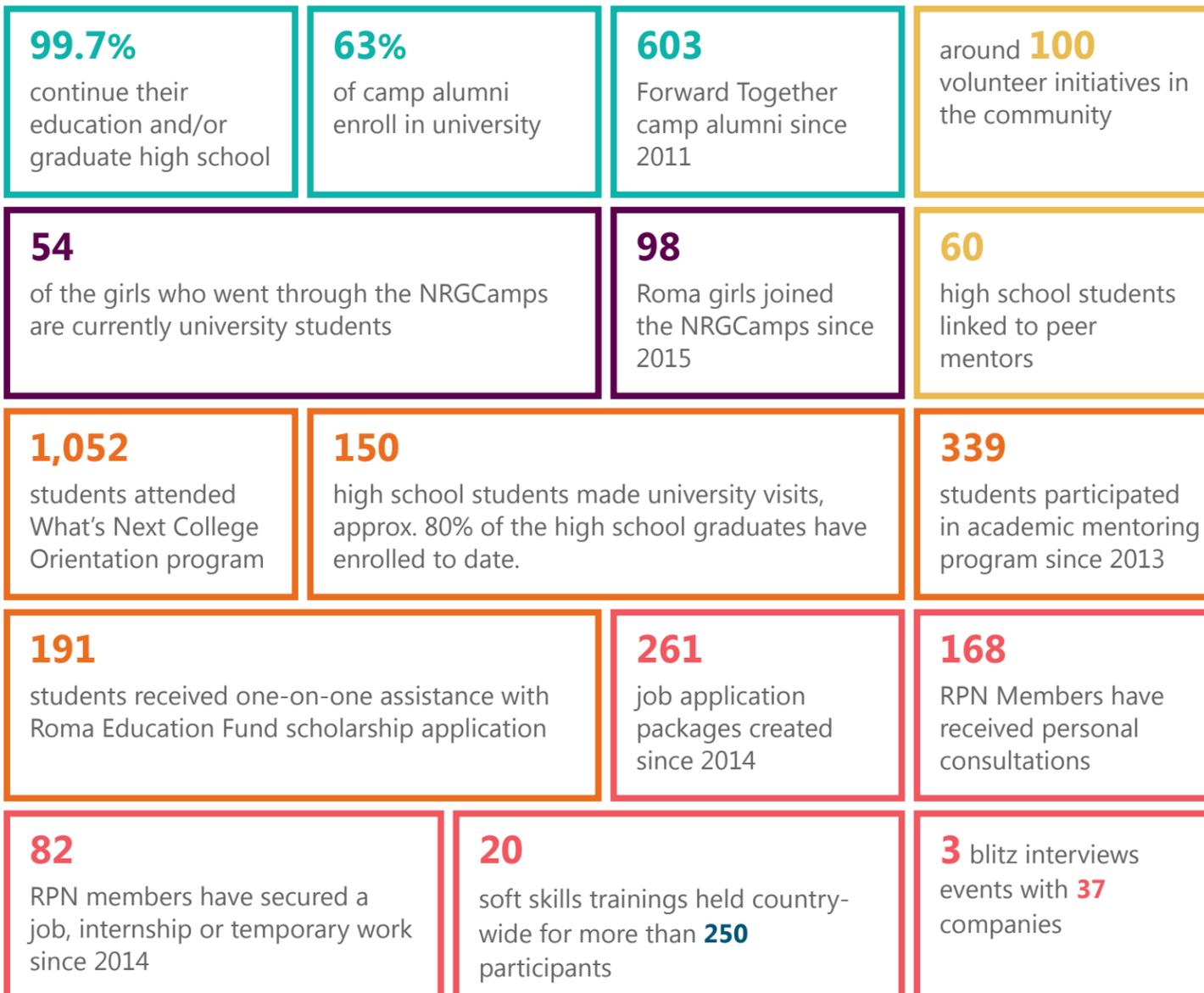
Many Roma youth lack positive self-esteem and lack the opportunities to improve their social status.

Accomplishments for the past 10 years

Areté Youth excel in High School Graduation, University Enrollment, and Employment!

Our beneficiaries aspire to become lawyers, doctors, and business people as well as non-profit leaders. They have come to represent the counter perspective and the shining example that the Roma can be.

To date more than 3500 youth have benefited AYF's programs and initiatives. We believe that focusing on high school youth and providing them with support through their educational and professional development is the key to creating role models in all sectors of society.





Forward Together *Zaedno Napred*

204

beneficiaries of
the program

22

participants in the
peer-to-peer program

84

beneficiaries'
localities

431

volunteers
in AYVN

18

volunteer
activities

7

realized
events

This program aims to increase the number of Roma who graduate from High School.

Through the Zaedno Napred program, each year AYF supports two national leadership camps for Roma youth between the ages of 16-21, a training for camps leaders, a peer to peer mentoring initiative, the Areté Youth Volunteer Network, and a National Roma Girls Camp.

The purpose of the interrelated group of activities is to help motivate, inform and improve the lives of participants by encouraging them to complete their education, take a more active role in their communities and create an active and supportive network of young Roma from throughout Bulgaria.

A major priority for the program is organizing National Forward Together Leadership camps for Roma youth. Founded in 2002, Camps were started to motivate Roma youth from Bulgaria to build leadership skills and self-esteem as well as to find ways to overcome the extreme cases of discrimination that they face in their communities.

AYF's camps significantly increase the number of high potential Roma youth who continue their education and/or graduate from high school. Our most recent data shows that 99.7% of camp participants graduate high school against a national average of 9%¹. Through surveys and interviews, many camp participants felt that their participation was an important factor in completing their education.

Camps are the first time for Roma youth to meet and network with like-minded peers. It is an important platform that increases self-esteem, reinforces their motivation for education and introduces participants to role models and guest experts.. In 2019, 60 Roma youth from 34 locations across Bulgaria took part in motivational sessions during the 2019 leadership camps. Camp programming focused on Roma identity, communication skills, volunteering, and leadership with an explicit focus on encouraging the individual pursuits in education and future life careers.

¹ National Roma Integration 2012-2020 (NRIS) adopted by the Bulgarian Council of Ministers in December 2011, in response to the requirements of the European Framework for National Roma Inclusion Strategies; Source: NSI, 2004, 2011



Dalila Zhivkova's path in Forward Together

Senior at the Vocational High School of Light Industry "Vladimir Dimitrov- the Master", specializes in Manufacture of Textile

Dalila's engagement with Areté starts back in 2018 when she is a participant at the Forward Together leadership camps. She shares that: "the camp for me was a pivotal step for my personal development and my future." Her favorite sessions were those about the Roma culture, the ways of effective communication, and the possibilities for continuing her education. Being inspired and ready to spread the knowledge and skills she gained during the leadership camps, Dalila joined the AretéYouth Volunteer Network in October 2018.

For the two years in which Dalila has been part of the Areté family, she has been involved in several training programs, seminars, and volunteer activities. She also proved to be a skillful leader of a small group during the Forward Together camps in 2019. "The camp helped me to start expressing my thoughts and ideas freely, to believe in myself and to reach the goals I set, to start having a lifestyle which will help me get my dream job, an elementary school teacher."- says Dalila.

What Dalila envisions for the following five years is completing her Bachelor's degree as she has started her dream job as a teacher in her neighborhood in Kyustendil!

The camp helped me to start expressing my thoughts and ideas freely... to start having a lifestyle which will help me get my dream job, an elementary school teacher.

“DALILA





Areté Youth Volunteer Network

30

new
members

37

volunteers went
through training

3

small
projects

24

youngsters got involved
in the small projects

We give. Alumni give. And communities flourish.

The Areté Youth Volunteer Network (AYVN) is the largest group of young Roma in Bulgaria who engage with community service/volunteering.

Its members have been involved in a diverse spectrum of activities related to education, cultural inheritance, health education, environment initiatives, and charity events.. The network with its current 431 members works hard to fulfill the meaning of the mission of the AYVN to empower Roma youth to become active, conscientious and engaged citizens providing access to volunteering activities.

Inspired by the summer leadership camps, young people from throughout the country continue to join our volunteer network. Twenty nine new members have become part of the AYVN in 2019, bringing their own creative ideas to present and realize in their communities. The biggest volunteer chapters are in the cities of Sofia, Kyustendil, Razlog, and Galiche.

In 2019, AYVN members have implemented 21 volunteer initiatives, including three small community projects through grants provided by Areté. The Small Community Grant program is an initiative that was piloted six years ago and has proven to be an effective approach to empower Roma high school youth in their communities. AYVN volunteers, many of whom have completed a specialized project cycle and project management training, take ownership of management and reporting of their projects.. Most projects are now more comprehensive, innovative and most importantly, help address needs and build capacity at the local level.

One such project is a charity concert organized by the volunteers from Sofia and assisted by volunteers from all around the country.Y. With the raised funds from the concert the volunteers granted three scholarships to high school seniors for the upcoming 2019-2020 school year who have high academic achievements and are determined to continue their education in higher educational institutions.



Asen Yankov's volunteer experience in AYVN

Senior at Razlog High School, specializes in Catering

Asen is an 18 year old Roma who appreciates the little things in life, such as honesty and giving back. It was the positive influence of his peer mentor Aleksandra Kirilova, a Forward Together alumna, who led him to join the Forward Together leadership camps back in 2017. There he found like-minded people, with whom he has created strong bonds and are still working together organizing various initiatives.

Asen joined the Areté Youth Volunteer Network immediately upon completing the camps. For him, volunteering has improved his outlook on life and helped value the idea of giving without expecting something in return. This is why Asen has taken part in organizing the worldwide cafeteria for volunteering in Razlog, his hometown. He has organized an after school tutoring program for Roma students in grades 1-4 helping them to catch up with their studies. In addition, he conducts English and guitar lessons once a week and has helped in the massive clean up of an entire neighborhood in Razlog. On top of all that, Asen and his teammates celebrated the women in their lives and towns on International Womens Day, the 8th of March, which is a big celebration in Bulgaria.

He continues to actively recruit Roma youngsters for the Forward Together leadership camps. It is not surprising that Asen was chosen as the most active volunteer of the Foundation in 2019.!

Asen's goals are to graduate from a prestigious university and to start working in the NGO sphere where he continues to give back to his community.





National Roma Girls' Camp

Empowering the female leaders of tomorrow.

The National Roma Girls Camp is an initiative of ours which we decided to re-launch in 2020.

At Areté Youth Foundation, we believe that empowering young and courageous Bulgarian Roma girls from all over the country is of pivotal importance.

The camp is a three-day intensive and interactive event for Roma girls between 16 and 25. The program consists of lectures and workshops to develop skills and confidence for social and educational achievement among young Roma women. The girls have the opportunity to interact with female role models in the community, learn social and leadership skills, and attend lectures on women's issues.

The topics discussed during the camp are the challenges faced by the Roma women, violence, human trafficking, the prevention of early marriages, and discrimination. In addition, participants are introduced to new educational opportunities provided assistance in setting goals and given guidance on dealing with society expectations and peer pressure..

By implementing the fifth NRG, Areté Youth Foundation will enlarge its community of dedicated ambassadors to Areté's mission and Roma empowerment. The participants will be part of our future mentors, volunteers, community leaders and role models.

If you want to become a supporter to our initiative, you can do it by donating through our causevox profile: <https://national-roma-girls-camps-2019-and-2020.causevox.com>

[Donate to National Roma Girls' Camp](#)



Evelina Dimitrova's accomplishments

Senior at High School "Hristo Botev", Galiche

Evelina is an 18-year-old Roma girl from the village of Galiche. She first became involved with Areté Youth Foundation in 2017 during the National leadership camps, Forward Together. Later the same year Evi, as her friends call her, joins the Roma Girls camp. For her, the girls camp served as an eye-opener and gave her the push she needed to start her development journey.

Since her participation in the girls' camp, Evi has proven to be a very determined and goal-oriented person. She has become one of the creators of the Roden dvor Association in her village, which creates activities aimed to amuse and educate the younger population like screening movies or organizing dances "under the stars"! Moreover, Evi got elected as an ambassador to the Swiss Confederation in Bulgaria, and she is still organizing educational workshops for her peers in her high school. Her ambition to become a role model for the youngsters in her community has turned Evi into a lifetime ambassador of success.

Evi has already decided that she wants to major in International Relations and is tirelessly preparing for her upcoming graduation exams.

Evi believes that we should do what we love and love what we do!





Education & Information HUB for Roma

184
beneficiaries of
the program

50
students got
an academic mentor

27
university
visits

431
joined the
"What's next?" campaign

22
completed a REF training

The program aims to increase the number of Roma who apply and enroll in University.

The Education and Information Hub for Roma (Edu Hub) aims to provide assistance to current and prospective university students. The program has a diverse portfolio of activities which benefits its participants

Academic mentorship is a key component within the Edu Hub program that has been proven to be greatly needed and successful through the years. Through mentorship support from professors, Roma university students become more socially integrated into a new academic environment and thereby increased their chances for academic success. Mentees establish strong connections with their mentors who not only provide guidance and motivation, but also share with them available extracurricular activities, educational opportunities, and internships. This additional support is critical to their success and we believe this has a substantial impact on the number of Roma graduating from universities. During the academic 2019/2020, 25 professors joined the program and became mentors to 50 Roma university students from 16 colleges and universities across Bulgaria.

Through the "What's next?" campaign we identified Roma high school students early and get a sense of their aspirations towards education. In 2019, 85 Roma youth have been educated about the Bulgarian university system, the application process, and fields of study available. We have learned that a lack of information on these topics has often prevented young people from obtaining a degree or continuing their education. Therefore we also see the "What's Next?" campaign as an initial breakthrough towards a positive attitudinal change. Prospective students are given the opportunity to have campus tours around universities in Bulgaria. During the tours, the students are not only getting a glimpse of the campus infrastructure, but also they are being informed about the different majors the particular university offers as well as being familiarized with the application process. In 2019, 27 high school students joined the university visits and became more informed about the admission process in these specific universities.



Rashka Gaitanova's academic success

Physician associate from the Medical University of Sofia

Rashka is an ambitious girl who has recently graduated from the Medical University of Sofia. Medicine became her passion as during her teenage years she was afflicted with several diseases. Her frequent visits to the hospital prompted her interest in the field, and provided her with the encouragement to pursue her interest in medicine.

Rashka is a mentee in our Academic mentorship program. She credits her mentor, Anushka Dimitrova, with making her academic life smoother. She shares the following: "My mentor helped a lot with giving me valuable pieces of advice, she was guiding and motivating me in how to give my best in my education. We were meeting often, whenever I had a question, I could easily call her or text and she was always there for me." Because of her ethnicity, Rashka has faced discrimination throughout her life. She believes that people should judge your qualities and your kindness rather than the color of your skin.

Rashka's future plans are to start working as a physician associate to serve as many people as possible and to help start making a change in our society.





Roma Professional Network

154

beneficiaries of the program

8

information campaigns

40

people will receive career orientation meetings

8

soft skills training

Support social inclusion and create opportunities for sustainable employment for young Roma.

Historically, no networking groups or support systems have existed for professional Roma in Bulgaria.

Therefore, the opportunity to collaborate and to build trust between the Roma and the larger community was lacking. Exclusion and discrimination in employment prevents them from fully developing their capacities to build independent and productive lives. The absence of professional “brand” and visibility of Roma in the public and private sector prevented college graduates from entering the labor market. The private sector in Bulgaria lacks knowledge and experience with Roma communities. As more in the sector come to understand the employment aspirations of many Roma youth, it will pave the path to diversifying their teams and creating stronger companies as a result.

The main objective of ACF / 219 Roma Professional Network is to support social inclusion and create opportunities for sustainable employment for young Roma in the public and private sectors in Bulgaria. The project is providing career guidance and motivation; developing and improving personal, social and organizational skills; facilitating access to quality job positions and improving skills and job-seeking / traineeship opportunities for Roma youth. The main target groups are Roma youth, 18-29 years of age, currently studying or already graduated either high school or university. Additional target groups are local Roma communities, businesses, and socially engaged partners.

Eight workshops on resume/CV writing and job interview skills will be held country-wide for more than 120 Roma youth and more than 260 received one-on-one career consultations, and support for their job application packages since

During the project, the activities focus on soft skills training programs for young people in higher education seeking career development, career guidance and career counseling sessions, career mentoring meetings, and obligatory training for career mentors to work with young people. Another planned activity is having a Business Career Internship Program, which aims to improve the access of Roma university graduates or students in their final year of study to the labor market, giving them the opportunity to participate in quarterly paid internships in the public and private sectors.

The project contributes to the development of a Roma professional network helping to create a new generation of educated and socially engaged professionals and leaders of Roma origin--role models that support one another.



Ralitsa Petrova's motivation to join the RPN



What Ralitsa believes in the most is that if people want to fulfill their dreams then they should always try to develop and enrich themselves.

Project Coordinator of Roma Professional Network

Ralitsa is a junior, studying Social Studies at Sofia University. Her ambition to succeed and reach her highest potential led her to get involved in various activities within the Foundation. She was a leader of a small group during the Forward Together leadership camps for three consecutive years as well as was one of the main organizers of the two charity concerts which Areté organized in Blagoevgrad and Sofia. In addition, she was the coordinator of the AYVN volunteer group in Sofia back in 2017-2018.

Ralitsa believes that there is a definite need for a project like the Roma Professional Network. She is confident the combination of regular meetings, along with career counseling/mentorship and the opportunity to have paid internships in a leading company will be the formula to success. The opportunity that the Roma Professional Network has to connect young Roma professionals and students with relevant and interested businesses will help strengthen the labor market and help participants achieve their career goals. Ralitsa says: "I am excited about this project not only because I will have the opportunity to meet and work with so many people, but also because I personally will gain a lot of experience and develop so many new skills."



AYF's Board of Directors



Brian Murray

Brian Murray, who was a Peace Corps volunteer in Bulgaria from June 2002 to August 2005, founded Arete Youth Foundation to provide a platform of support for high school Roma students seeking to maximize their educational potential. Since its humble beginnings, the Roma leadership camps have grown into a series of programs that support mentorship and the creation of role models for future generations.



Jodi Stewart-Miteva

Jodi Stewart-Miteva served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Bulgaria from 1999-2003. In four years, she taught over 1,000 individuals in the areas of English and computer technologies. Outside of the classroom, she launched various community initiatives that helped raise awareness of AIDS, human trafficking, women's issues, and orphanage conditions throughout the country.



Dave Elmstrom

A former reporter and editor, Dave Elmstrom joined the Peace Corps with his wife Mary Blake and served from 2002-2004 in Nova Zagora, Bulgaria. There, Dave served as a Community Economic Development Specialist, helping work on community development projects in the municipal government, libraries, orphanages and schools, including the town's school for Roma kids.



George Eli

George Eli started his career in documentary film after graduating from the New York film Academy. He produced his own film which documented his personal journey to discover the origins and traditions of his culture, that of the Romani people. He founded The Romani Media Initiative in 2012, a nonprofit with the expressed goal of creating and building positive media role models for the Romani community in order to build a more prosperous future for the Romani community.



Nikolay Dinev

Nikolay Dinev has a doctorate in Finance at the Vienna Graduate School of Finance. He received his MBA from the Yale School of Management and his BA in Mathematics and Economics from Macalester College. He is also a CFA Charterholder. Nikolay brings rich international academic and practical experience, predominantly in finance and strategy. He was employed as a Consultant at the Boston Consulting Group and as an Investment Banking Analyst at Bank of America.

Arete Youth Foundation's Team



(from left to right)

Raycho Vasilev (Education and Information HUB Program Manager), Galina Isaeva (Zaedno Napred Program Manager), Hristo Hristov (Technical Assistant), Ralitsa Petrova (Roma Professional Network Project Coordinator), Mustafa Mustafa (Communication Expert), Daniela Adamova (Financial Director), Radostina Chaprazova (Country Director)



Financial report for 2019

Over the years, Areté has relied on a broad coalition of private supporters, helpers, and the like-minded organizations and foundations. Our anchor supporters over the years have been the America for Bulgaria Foundation, the Trust for Social Achievement, and the Active Citizens Fund.

Each donated dollar contributes directly to empower someone's life. We as a team strive to maximize each dollar's impact. Our organization relies heavily on relationships and people. Towards that end, we strive to direct dollars to direct program-related expenses for our beneficiaries. Consequently, we encourage our staff to grow both personally and professionally by creating a professional environment of growth and opportunity. Work at Areté is often a stepping stone for others to further their careers.

Expenses	Amount	Amount
	(BGN thousands)	(BGN thousands²)
	Current Year	Last Year
a	1	2
I. Activity costs		
A. Expenditure of regulated activity		
2. Other expenses	348	176
Summarized A	348	176
B. Administrative costs		106
Summarized for group I	348	282
II. Financial expenses		
3. Interest expenses	0	
6. Other financial transactions costs	1	1
Summarized for group II	1	1
IV. Loss of economic activity	0	0
V. Total costs	349	283
VI. Results		
Summarized (V+VI)	349	283

Income	Amount	Amount
	(BGN thousands)	(BGN thousands²)
	Current Year	Last Year
a	1	2
I. Activity income		
A. Income of regulated activity		
1. Income from donations under conditions	349	283
2. Income from donations with no conditions		
3. Membership fee		
Summarized for group I	349	283
II. Financial income		
4. Interest income	0	
5. Foreign exchange gains		
Summarized for group II	0	0
IV. Income from economic activity	349	283
V. Total income		
VI. Results		
Summarized (V+VI)	349	283

Thank you for your support throughout the years

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