Association "Fracarita Bulgaria"
Sofia 1000, 1, Ekzarh Yosif str.,
Tel.:+359 2 971 99 20, +359 884 38 99 30,
+ 359 879 47 42 24
E-mail: info@solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.drugsinfo-bg.org

Summary of "Fracarita Bulgaria" Association Activities Report for 2018

Association "Fracarita Bulgaria"
Sofia 1000, 1, Ekzarh Yosif str.,
Tel.:+359 2 971 99 20, +359 884 38 99 30,
+ 359 879 47 42 24
E-mail: info@solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.drugsinfo-bg.org

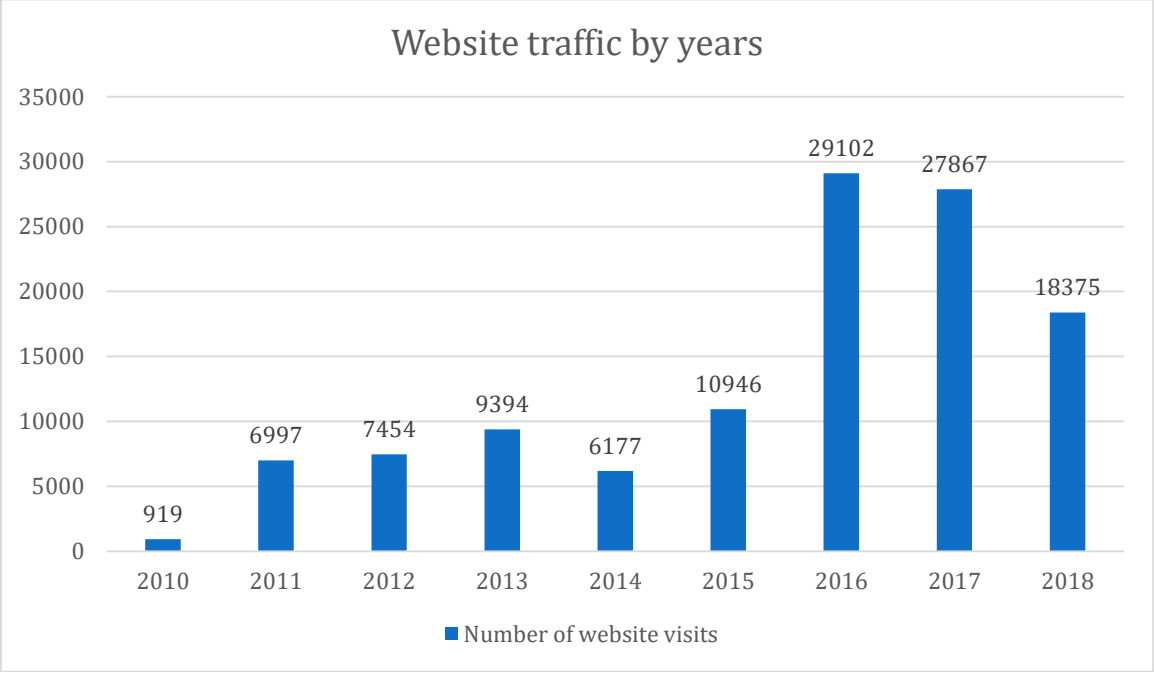
I. Developments at "Fracarita Bulgaria" in 2018.

1. **Changes in the team:**

1.1 In June, the family consultant Ina Apostolova quit her position in the "Solidarnost" therapeutic program. Her place was taken by Marina Popova – a psychologist at the National Drugs, Alcohol and Gambling Helpline (NDAGH). Marina continued working as a consultant for the NDAGH half-time and half-time as a family consultant at the "Solidarnost" therapeutic program.
1.2 In July, a new psychologist was hired for the team of the NDAGH on half-time: Gergana Raynova.
1.3 As of the end of October 2018, Elena Nikolova left her position as an executive director of "Fracarita Bulgaria". She remains a member of the Board of Managers. We have not hired anyone for the position by the end of 2018.

2. **Maintenance of and traffic to the website of "Fracarita Bulgaria" - http://www.solidarnost-bg.org/.**

2.1 Maintenance of the website: the website of the organization is maintained by the team of the NDAGH. In 2018, 10 news articles were published as well as the stories of two clients who completed successfully the "Solidarnost" therapeutic program (in the section "Shared"); 12 events with photographs; and the annual report for 2017. Two new texts were published in the menu of the Therapeutic program and a new menu for the Evening program which will start in January 2019.
2.2 Website traffic: "Fracarita Bulgaria" had been using Google Grants to advertise free-of-charge the "Solidarnost" therapeutic program since November 2015. Unfortunately, in April 2018, the company changed its rules and the advertisements for addiction treatment were prohibited. Our ads were stopped in June 2018 and as a result, there was a significant decrease in the number of visits to the website (with 34%).



Graphic 1

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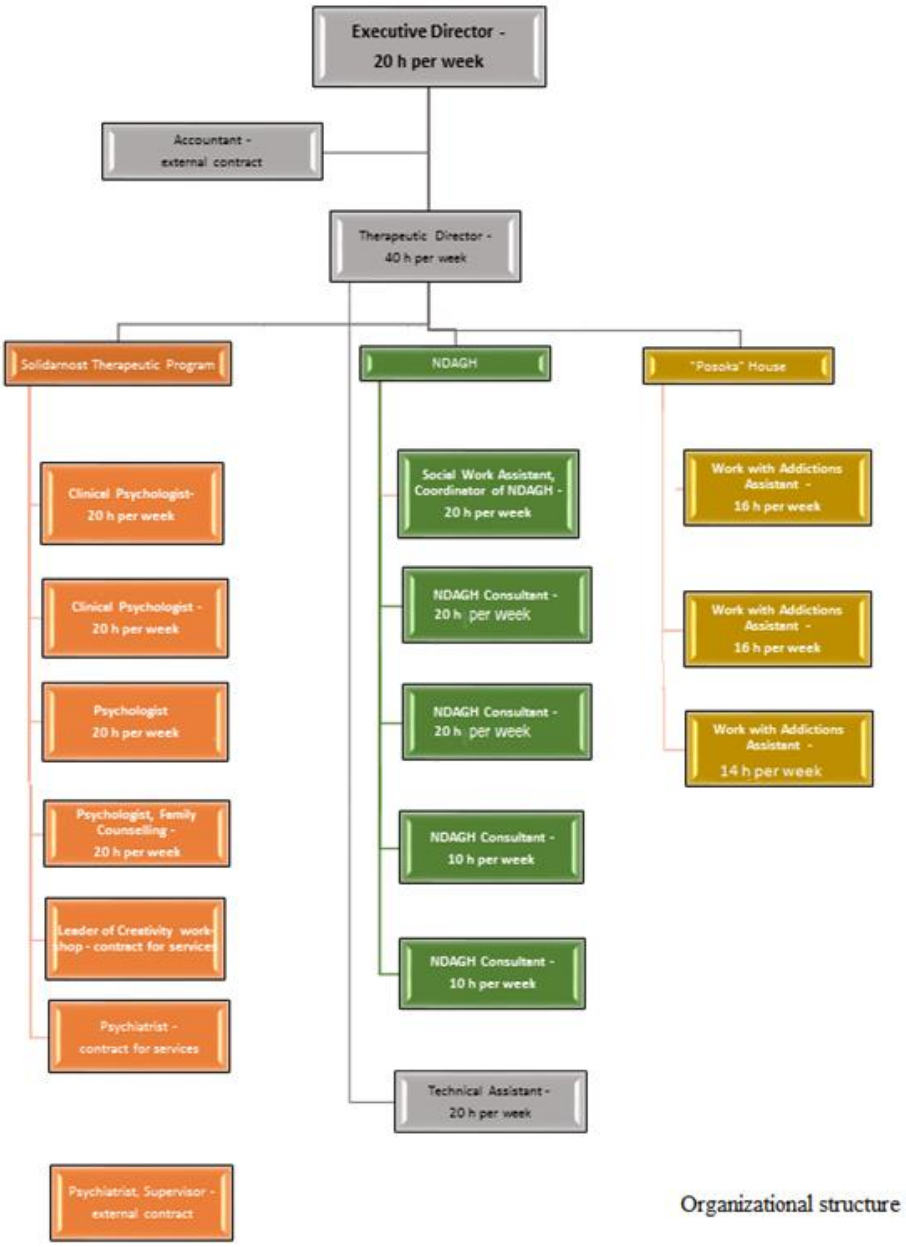
II. Organogram of "Fracarita Bulgaria" Association at 31.10.2018.



Organizational structure

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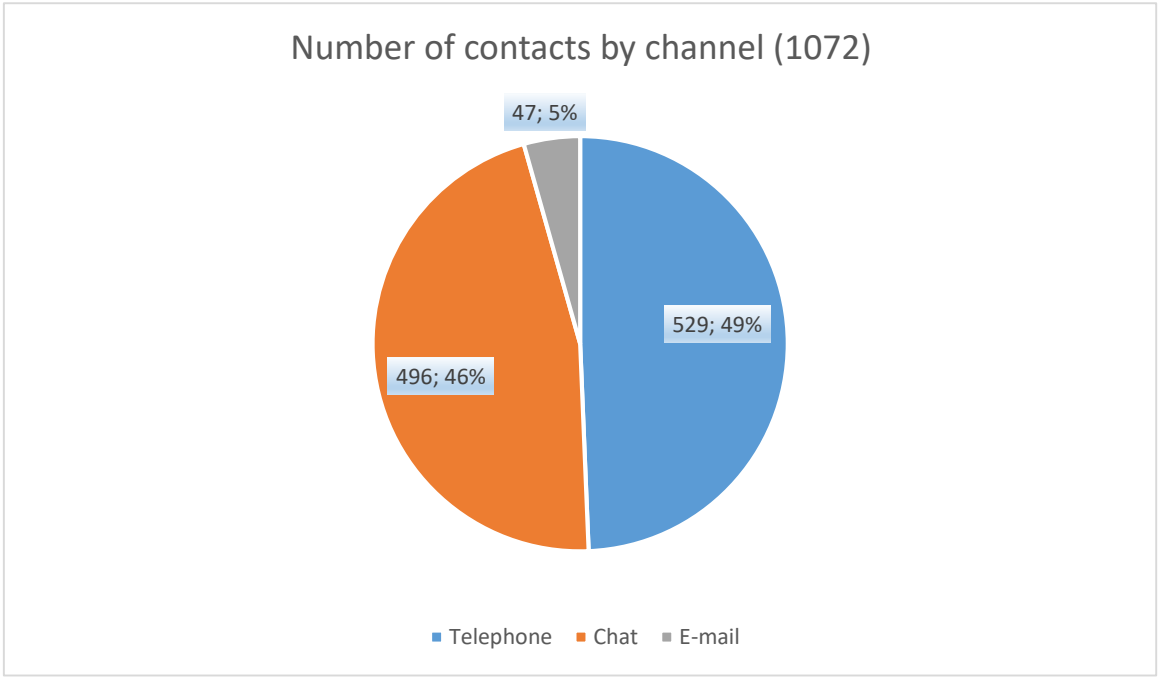
III. National Drugs, Alcohol and Gambling Helpline (NDAGH) Activities Report for 2018.

1. **Statistics.**

1.1 Total number of contacts: The total number of contacts for 2018 was 1072 (there is an increase by 18.32% in comparison to 2017 when there were 906 contacts). We registered 529 telephone calls, 496 chats и 47 emails. As you can see on Graphic 2 the telephone calls are 49% of the total number of contacts, chats – 46%, and emails – 5%.



Graphic 2

Some of our observations regarding the number and type of the contacts:

a) The number of contacts has been rising for three consecutive years and there are several possible reasons:
   - After 10 years of work, the NDAGH is becoming a more recognizable service for the Bulgarian society;
   - The website of the NDAGH is on leading positions on the Internet search engines, and this is the place where people usually seek information;
   - We assume that the number of people with problems with drugs and gambling is rising but we cannot confirm this because there is no representative national statistics.

b) People more frequently prefer using the chat in spite of the fact that this channel is not suitable for more serious consultations. This is probably due to the stronger feeling of anonymity when communicating this way.

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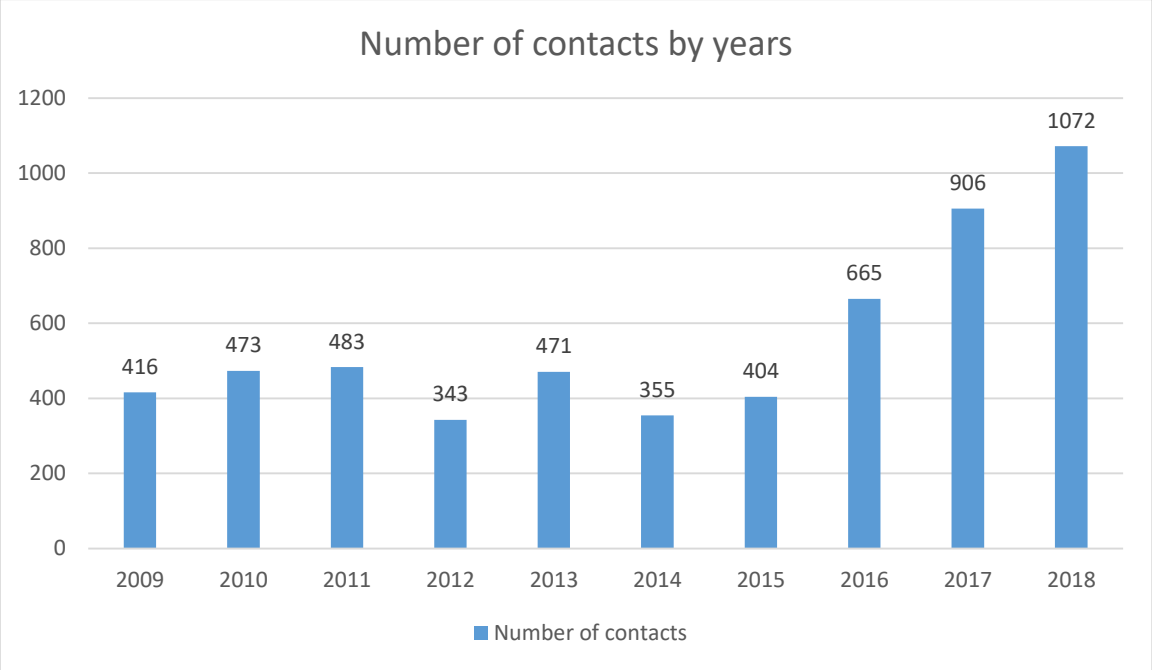
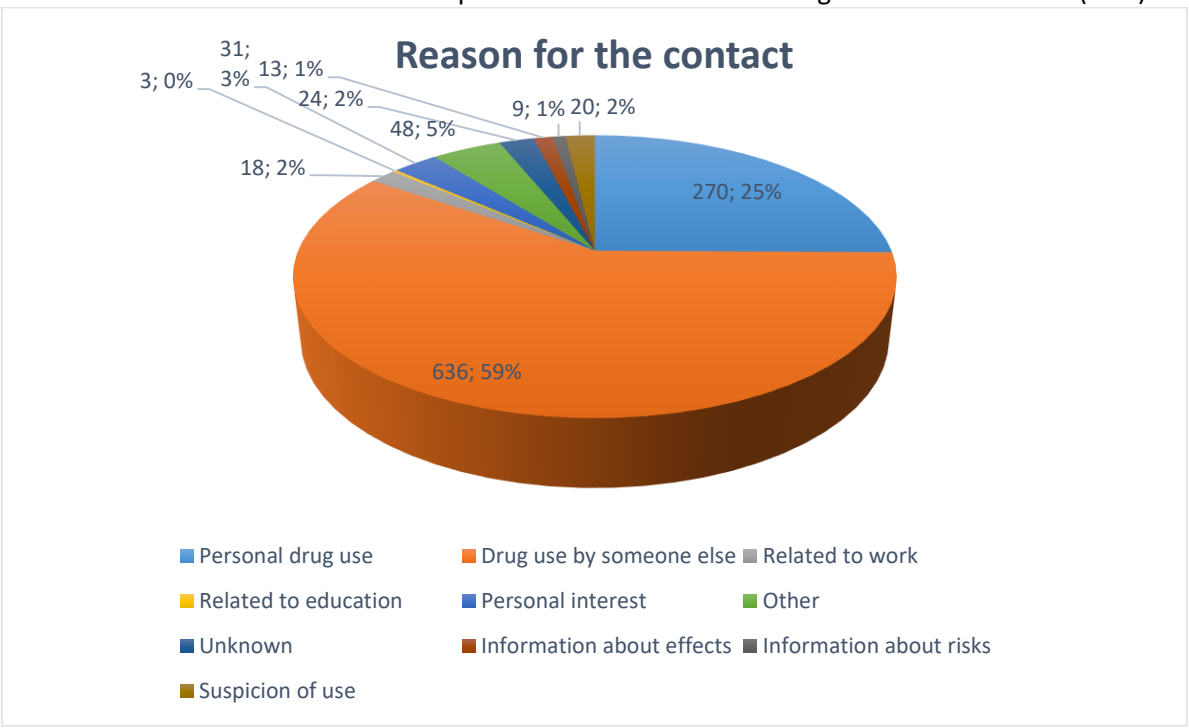
1.2 Comparative statistics for the number of the contacts in the period 2009-2018:



Graphic 3

1.3 Reason for the contacts: The leading cause for 2018 as well as for 2017 was "Drug use by someone else" – 636 contacts (59%) and in 44% of these cases, the contact concerned a child of the caller. The second most frequent cause was "Personal drug use" – 270 contacts (25%).



Graphic 4

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1.4 Referrals: In 2018, the largest part of referrals were to a psychologist or social workers (370). Second were the referrals to places for treatment and rehabilitation of people suffering from addiction (229). 42 people were referred to detoxification, and 26 – to a doctor.

1.5 Gender, age, city: In 2018, the tendency from the previous years continued and our services were sought by mostly women. They were 60%, the men – 29%. In 11% of the cases, the gender of the caller remained unknown and these people contacted us through the chat on our website or email. In these cases, we cannot always determine whether they are male or female.

In 2017, the proportion was almost the same: 58% women, 32% men and 10% unknown gender. In our opinion, more women seek our services because of several reasons:

a) In Bulgaria, the main person, who takes care of the family and its members, is the woman (mother, wife, sister, grandmother);
b) About 80% of the people suffering from addiction to alcohol, drugs and gambling are men. One of the specific characteristics of this disease is that the sufferers rarely seek help on their own (it is hard for them to realize the problem; their motivation for treatment is unstable; they are afraid to state openly the problem because of the existing stigma). This may also be the reason why most of the people who contact us are women who are relatives or partners of men with addiction.
c) Women much more frequently become victims of violence committed by the users/addicts, who are more often men, and the women are forced to seek help. In Bulgaria, around 25 to 30% of women are victims of domestic violence and often this is related to alcohol or drug use by men in their family.
d) Bulgarian men do not tend to seek help out of the family or prefer not to engage very much with the solving of serious family problems.

The average age of the people who contacted us was 38 years. The average age of the women was 41 and that of the men – 33. The oldest person who contacted us was 78 years old, and the youngest – 12 years old. Most of the callers belonged to the age group 40-44, the second group was 30-34 and then the groups 25-29 and 35-39 follow with minimal difference in frequency between them.

In 2017, the average age of the people was almost the same – 39 years.

The largest number of contacts came from Sofia – 408 (38%). Second are the contacts from another city – 291; 27% (this group includes all towns and villages from which we had less than 12 contacts per every town/village for the year. Unfortunately, the Registration system does not allow us to see and specify the number and the name of each of the included in this group towns/villages and the corresponding number of contacts for each of those places). On third place were the contacts coming from unknown cities – 137 (13%).

In 2017, the largest number of contacts came from Sofia as well and the reason is that almost 30% of the Bulgarian population lives in the capital city.

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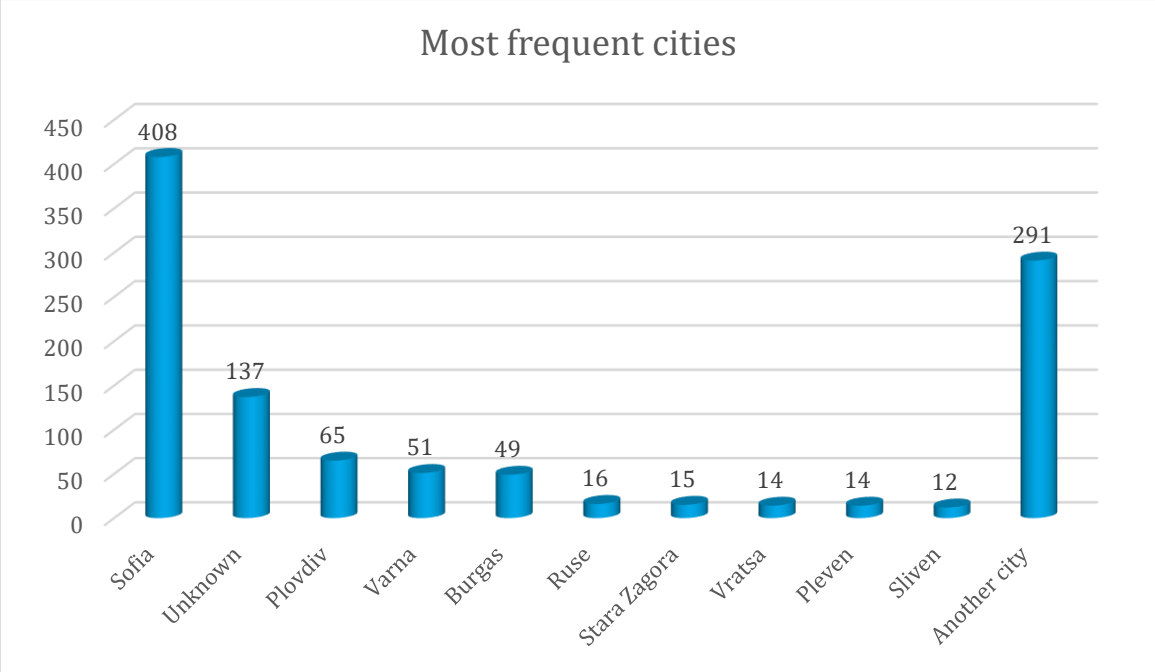

Graphic 5

1.6 Origin of the contact: The largest part of the contacts came from the Internet – 919 (86%). On second place were the contacts coming from a previous call – 92 (8%). The third place was for contacts of unknown origins – 42 (4%).

1.7 Substances: The largest number of contacts in 2018 were related to alcohol – 207 (19%). The second place was for gambling – 173 (16%) and cannabis – 155 (14%) on third place. 116 contacts were for problems with amphetamine. If we add together the contacts for amphetamine and methamphetamine we can see that they are 15% of all contacts.

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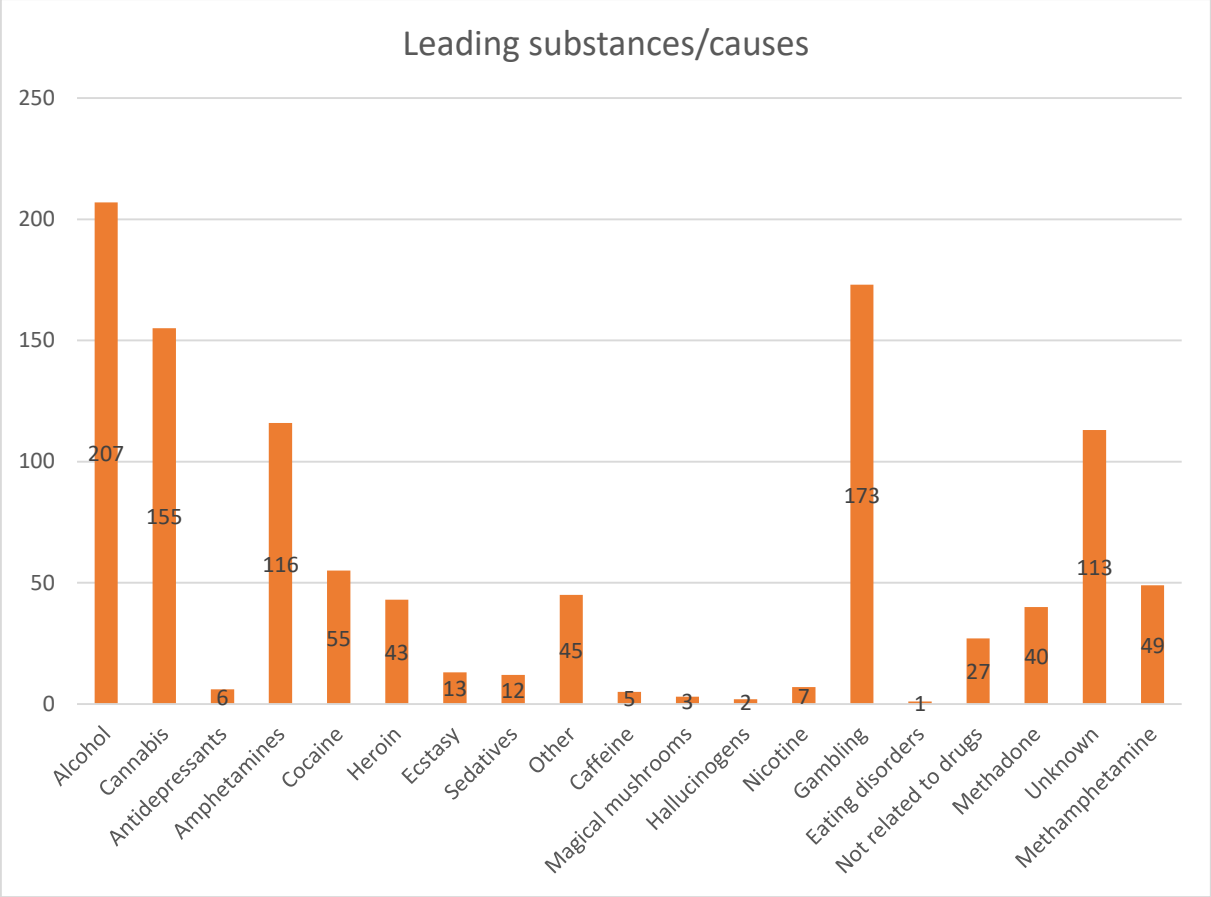

Graphic 6

Tendencies: On graphic 7 you can see the tendencies in contacts concerning the seven most frequent reasons: alcohol, cannabis, gambling, amphetamines, heroin, methamphetamine and cocaine. We can see that there has been a change in the profile of the people who contact us over the years and the emergence of several problems:

a) In 2008, when we created the NDAGH, we expected that most people contacting us would be doing so because of drug related problems. We found out that the most common reason for them to contact us was alcohol addiction. There was only one year in which alcohol was not the leading cause for contact.

b) In 2008, the main problematic illicit drug in Bulgaria was still the heroin but it was expected to be seen a rise in the number of people seeking help because of stimulant related problems (mostly amphetamine). These expectations were confirmed over the years – the number of heroin related contacts fell from 21% in 2009 to just 4% in 2018. At the same time the contacts about amphetamine rose by more than two times (from 5% in 2008 to 11% in 2018; in 2016 it was 13%).

c) Since 2011, the cannabis remains the illegal drug which most often prompts the people to contact us. In our opinion, this confirms the official statistics according to which the cannabis is the most prevalent illegal drug in the country, especially among the Bulgarian adolescents and young adults.

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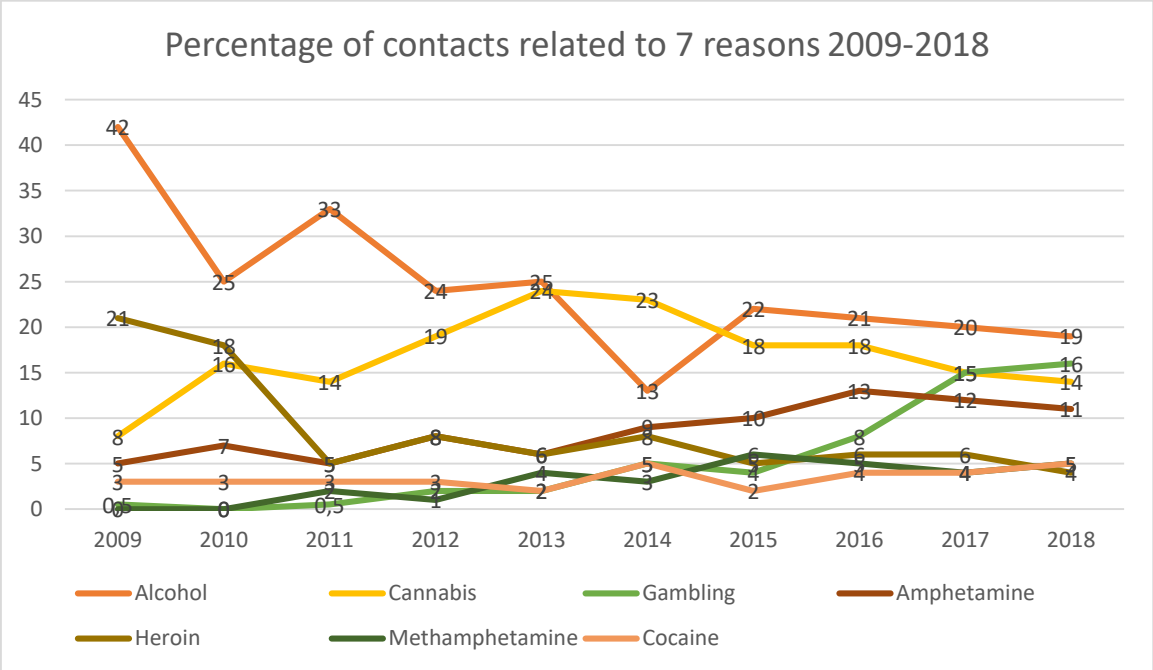
d) Within the 10-year period, we can see an increase in the contacts related to other two stimulants – methamphetamine and cocaine, although in the last three years, the percentage of these contacts has remained at a relatively constant level – within 4% -5% for each of the two drugs.

e) The problem with the gambling addiction emerged but there is no official data on the matter and no measures are taken by the Government. In 2017 and in 2018, the problem gambling was the second leading cause for contact and the number of these calls has been rising constantly (form 0% in 2009 to 15% in 2017 and 16% in 2018).

Note: NDAGH does not have the resources to conduct research in order to examine our hypotheses, which could explain the observed tendencies. The team can only make assumptions.



Graphic 7

2. **Supervision:** In 2018, the team of the NDAGH did not have supervisions.

3. **Trainings of the team:**

3.1. In June 2018, a member of the NDAGH attended a training "ITSESI - individually-tailored support and education for safer injection", led by "Initiative for Health" Foundation. "Initiative for Health" is a non-governmental organization with a leading role in the harm reduction approach in Bulgaria.

3.2. In November 2018, members of the NDAGH team attended a free-of-charge training seminar on "New Psychoactive Substances: Definitions, situation, treatment", organized by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the National Center for Addictions (NCA). NCA is a Bulgarian expert body in the field of the drug addictions to the Ministry of Health.

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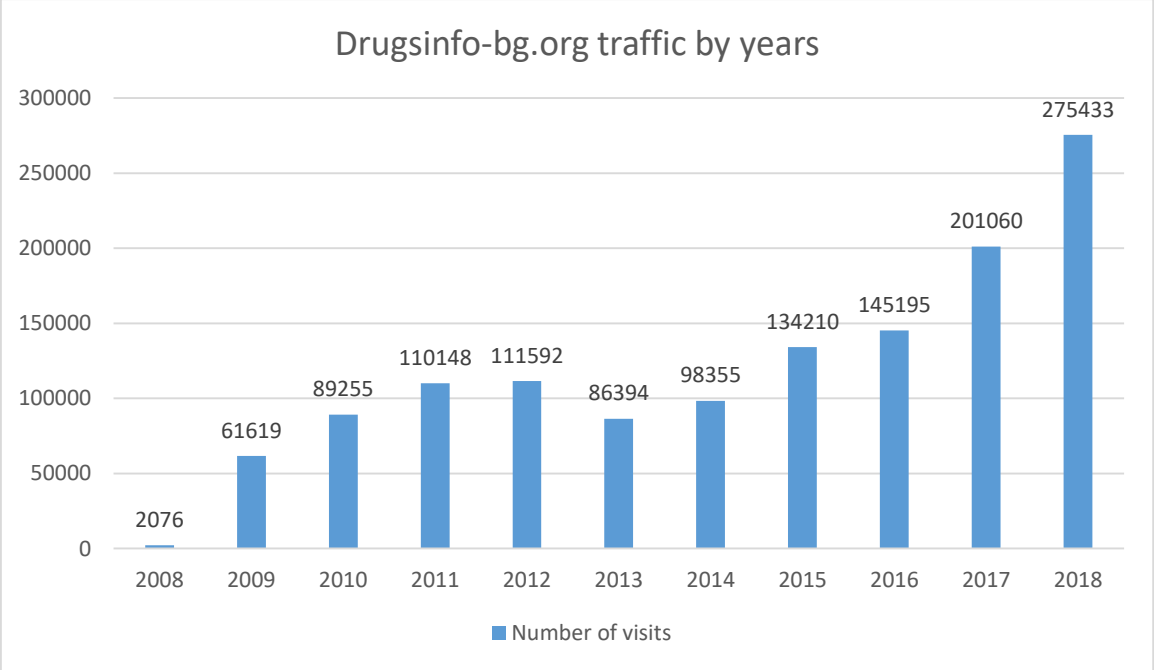
4. **Trainings provided by the team of NDAGH:** In May 2018, the team of the NDAGH led a training for the teams of "Solidarnost" therapeutic program and "Posoka" House about the New Psychoactive Substances.

5. **Maintenance of the NDAGH website**: Throughout the year, we continued updating the articles in our website:
   - **5.1** We updated the Terms of use and Privacy policy according to the European Data Protection Regulation.
   - **5.2** New information in the menu "In case of emergency" was added.
   - **5.3** We made a new article about the New Psychoactive Substances in the rubric "Drugs ABC".
   - **5.4** We updated seven articles in "Drugs ABC": Ayahuasca, Kratom, Anabolic steroids, Synthetic cathinones, Synthetic cannabinoids, GHB/GBL/1,4-BD and Peyote.
   - **5.5** We were adding new information in the "Where to find help" list and on the map of the country all the year round.
   - **5.6** We translated and published 109 articles in the "News" section.

6. **Website traffic - www.drugsinfo-bg.org:** In 2018, the NDAGH website was visited **275 433** times. The number of the unique visitors was **201 186**. The website traffic has increased with 37% compared to the previous year.



Graphic 8

Possible reasons for the traffic increase:

a) In the end of March 2016, the new NDAGH website was launched. The new website is mobile-friendly and given the fact that nearly 70% of the visits in 2018 were made from smartphones and tablets, it serves the needs of the users.

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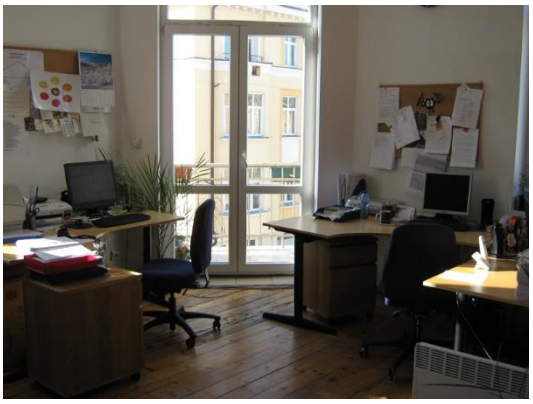

b) The NDAGH website is the biggest platform in Bulgaria, related to drug and alcohol use and addiction, and problem gambling.

c) For the past four years, the team of NDAGH have increased greatly their time and work on the website maintenance, which includes constant updating of the content and adding new information and articles. This allows the website to remain on leading positions in the Google's search engine for a large number of keywords related to our work.

d) For the past six years, the team of NDAGH has created and has been constantly maintaining a social media network, including a blog, which additionally promote the NDAGH website on the Internet.

7. **Creation of advertisement materials:** In 2018, no new advertisement materials of the NDAGH were printed, although we need such.

8. **Dissemination of information about the NDAGH.**

8.1 Contacts with other institutions, organizations and specialists.

8.1.1 During the autumn in 2018, we contacted via email and telephone all the hospitals, day centers, methadone maintaining programs, outreach organizations and organizations of/groups for parents in the country in order to update our database which we use to refer the NDAGH users.

8.1.2 We were sending information about events organized by "Fracarita Bulgaria" to the National Patients' Organization for their bulletins.

8.2 Dissemination of advertising materials: In February 2018, we sent 65 brochures of the NDAGH to the Municipal Council on Narcotic Drugs in the town of Smolyan. In July 2018, we sent 150 brochures of the NDAGH to "Vasil Levski" Secondary School in the town of Dolni Chiflic.

8.3 Media participations: In 2018, members of the NDAGH's team took part in two broadcasts: on Bulgaria on Air Television in August (https://www.bgonair.bg/direktno/2018-08-02/v-balgariya-nay-mnogo-piyat-zavisimite) and on Bulgarian National Radio in November (http://bnr.bg/shumen/post/101047342/dizainerskata-droga-vse-po-razprostranena).

8.4 Social media: The team of the NDAGH constantly maintains the following social media: Facebook, Google+, YouTube, Twitter, Google My Business, and blog. They are additional channels through which we promote our services and websites, and we use them to disseminate much more information.

8.4.1 Facebook page Drugsinfo-bg.org – page of the NDAGH. At the end of 2018, the page was liked by 1818 people.

8.4.2 Facebook page PartyFriends BG – page of the NDAGH created during a European project. This page was archived in September because the project's website was closed down.

8.4.3 Facebook page Solidarnost Association – the page of "Fracarita Bulgaria". At the end of 2018, the page was liked by 1503 people.

8.4.4 Google+ pages – page of the NDAGH and page of "Fracarita Bulgaria". We expect this social media to be closed soon but until then we will maintain the two pages.

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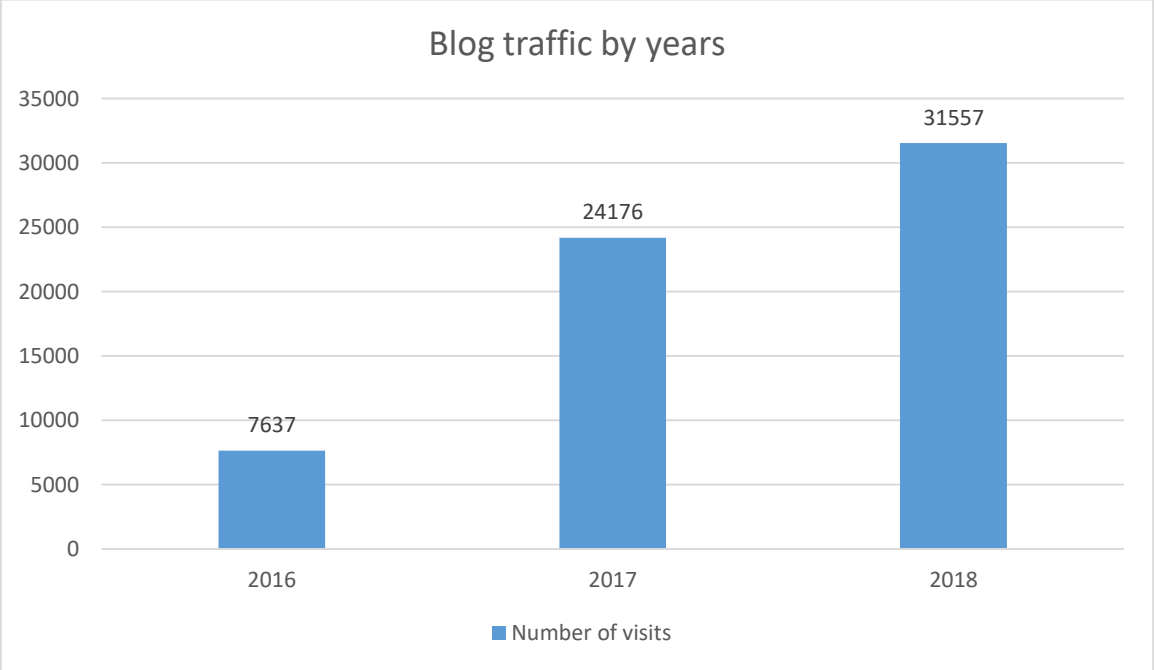
8.4.5 YouTube – channel of "Fracarita Bulgaria". At the end of 2018, the channel had 26 subscribers. Five new videos were published.

8.4.6 Twitter – account of "Fracarita Bulgaria". At the end of 2018, the account had 63 followers.

8.4.7 Google My Business – this is the official profile of "Fracarita Bulgaria". It gives us the opportunity to publish in the Google's search engine free-of-charge announcements and the business card of the organization, which contains many photos and a lot of information. Every month over 1000 people look through this information but there is no statistics for the entire year.

8.4.8 Drugsinfo Blog – blog of the NDAGH. The blog is integrated in the Bulgarian version of the website of the NDAGH (http://blog.drugsinfo-bg.org/). In 2018, the team published **57 articles.** Three new pages were added: with information about the risks of combining different drugs; with advice for the people who do not feel well after drug and alcohol use (Afterparty help); Privacy policy in relation to the European Data Protection Regulation. In February, the team marked three years since the creation of the blog, and on May 9th the blog articles became 200. Compared to 2017, the traffic to the blog increased with over 30% in 2018.



Graphic 9

9. **Module trainings:** In 2018, the NDAGH did not carry out trainings on the program for universal prevention of psychoactive substances use developed by joint team of NDAGH and "Solidarnost" therapeutic program. This is mainly due to the fact that we do not have the opportunity to offer these trainings to the schools free of charge.

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The program for universal prevention of psychoactive substances use for school students from 5th, 6th and 7th grade was developed in 2017 and it has an approval for realization issued by the National Center for Addictions and the Ministry of Education and Science.

10. **Work on projects: Project "Skills and Knowledge Exchange Project for Drug and Alcohol Helplines (SKEPDAH)":**
"Fracarita Bulgaria" – and more specifically NDAGH – participated in this project as a partner of 7 more Helplines from Ireland, Belgium, Portugal, Cyprus, Norway, the Netherlands and Germany as well as a British company specialized in training and consultancy services in the sphere of mental health, social care and addiction to alcohol and drugs.

The project was funded by the European program for education, training, youth and sport Erasmus+ through the Irish National Agency Léargas. The duration of the project was 20 months, from 31.12.2016 to 31.08.2018.

The objectives of the project were related to some of the needs of the Helpline workers, which were identified with the help of two questionnaires distributed in advance by FESAT (European Foundation of drug helplines, http://www.fesat.org/en/):

a) Topic 1: Helpline skills for new workers; Seasoned workers and burn-out prevention;
b) Topic 2: New Psychoactive Substances and the challenges for Helplines;
c) Topic 3: Drug and Alcohol Helplines and Mental Health/ Dual Diagnosis.

Curricula on each topic were designed and they can be used by every organization to create its own training program for the staff.

Five meeting were planned: in Portugal, Bulgaria, Germany, Belgium and Cyprus. In February and June 2018, the last two meetings were held. The team of the NDAGH was also responsible for the dissemination of information about the project and its outcomes, and the most intensive work on this task was done in August.

The Curricula can be downloaded free-of-charge in Bulgarian and English form the websites of NDAGH and "Fracarita Bulgaria", for example from here:
http://www.drugsinfo-bg.org/aktualno/proektat-skepdah-priklyuchva-izteglete-nashite-uchebni-programi/
http://www.drugsinfo-bg.org/en/news/skepdah-project-comes-to-its-end-download-our-curricula/

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11. **Funding from the National Anti-Drug Strategy:**
NDAGH has not received funding from the Ministry of Health under the National Anti-Drug Strategy 2014-2018 for this 5-year period.

12. **Conclusions and recommendations:** NDAGH is the first and currently the only service in Bulgaria, designed to provide to the whole society extensive and reliable information on the types of psychoactive substances, effects and risks of drug and alcohol use, problem gambling, and on the methods for their treatment, consultation and rehabilitation centers in the country, as well as guidance for parents, relatives and teachers.

The role of NDAGH is of great importance for the society because the service helps the people across the entire country, and often from abroad, to take the first steps of seeking help, providing them with information, referral, secure space for sharing, understanding, support and professional attitude.

12.1 Recommendations about the state policies: Our data suggests that the problems related to psychoactive substances use and gambling in Bulgaria have been worsening but in the same time, we observe the lack of a consistent state policy for their solving. During the first ten years of the NDAGH's existence, the state has funded us under the National Anti-Drug Strategy only twice.

We would like to make the following recommendations with regard to the state policies:

12.1.1 NDAGH should receive the annual funding, which is provided for under the National Anti-Drug Strategy.

12.1.2 A National strategy for the fight against alcohol abuse as well as a National strategy for the fight against problem gambling should be developed, through which the state will fund activities related to prevention, consultation and treatment.

12.2 Assessment of the work of the NDAGH and the functioning of the team:

12.2.1 Strengths: The NDAGH carries the good practices of the European drug helplines and we were praised by our colleagues from the Dutch Helpline of Trimbos Institute who took part in the creation of our Helpline from 2008 to 2010. We are a member of FESAT (European Foundation of Drug Helplines) and a wanted partner for European projects. From 2013 to 2018, we participated successfully in three international projects with other helplines from Europe and this serves as a positive assessment for our work and reliability as a partner.

The NDAGH is quite isolated because in Bulgaria there is no other service like ours. It is very difficult to use the experience of helplines in other countries when there is no direct contact. In spite of this, we managed to create high standards for quality work. The evidence for this are not only the improvements in our annual statistic but also the feedback from the people who use our service.

Our work during the past 10 years, the self-education and our interaction with (more experienced) colleagues from other countries while working on European projects allowed us to gather a large professional experience and serious expertise in the sphere of drug use and addiction to drugs, alcohol and gambling. In spite of the constant financial limits and very often with voluntary work the team succeeded in the development of new activities that improve the functioning of the service and "Fracarita Bulgaria", and to popularize it in the society.

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We can give several examples for additional activities that we have developed with our own efforts in the past years:

- We created and currently maintain several social media channels that popularize not only the NDAGH but the organization as well.
- The team of the NDAGH cares for the popularization and the PR of the organization. We organize various events related to the activities of the therapeutic program, "FotoFozzie" and the whole organization.
- We created our own blog which broadened significantly the topics of the website and through which the NDAGH reaches an even larger public.

The rising number of contacts and the increasing popularity of our website in the past years proves our professionalism and the good work of the NDAGH.

One of the factors that contribute to our success is the good team. During the last five years, it has remained constant and the new member – Gergana Raynova – came with large experience in phone consulting from the Child Helpline and this helped her to step into the work process very quickly. Our constant interaction, trust, the calm working environment and mutual help makes our team effective and maintains our motivation high.

12.2.2 What do we have to improve?

- The main problem of the NDAGH is related to funding. We are a National helpline that provides free of charge services and does not receive funding from the government. If the next four-year Anti-Drug Strategy includes funding for services like ours, it is important to seek it each year, as this has not been done over the past few years.
- Due to the constant financial difficulties, the NDAGH hardly satisfies its important needs related to its daily functioning. For example, funds are needed for the constant maintenance of the telephone and computer equipment, internal network, software, the website, and some problems are left unresolved for years. We rarely have funds for print materials and advertising and this makes popularization very hard.
- The financial hardships lead to another problem – the low salaries of the team. Although the good relationships between the team members and their work satisfaction keep their motivation high, the low salaries that have not been increased over the past years are a serious factor for professional burnout and are a constant risk for loss of qualified personnel.
- All team members work part time. This leads to even lower salaries and ineffective distribution of work resources. There are 5 consultants on the team and the total number of hours they work per week is 80 – the work time of two people who work full time. Two of them work two hours per day and this leads to difficulties in the organization of the work process, the even distribution of tasks and substitution when someone is not at work. Until the end of April 2019, two team

Association "Fracarita Bulgaria"
Sofia 1000, 1, Ekzarh Yosif str.,
Tel.:+359 2 971 99 20, +359 884 38 99 30,
+ 359 879 47 42 24
E-mail: info@solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.drugsinfo-bg.org

members will begin their maternity leave. This means that no one of the remaining three team members will be able to use their annual leave because there will be no one to substitute them in the following months until new team members are hired and trained. Keeping in mind the number of contacts and the overall workload there should be two or three people on shift which is hard to accomplish even now.

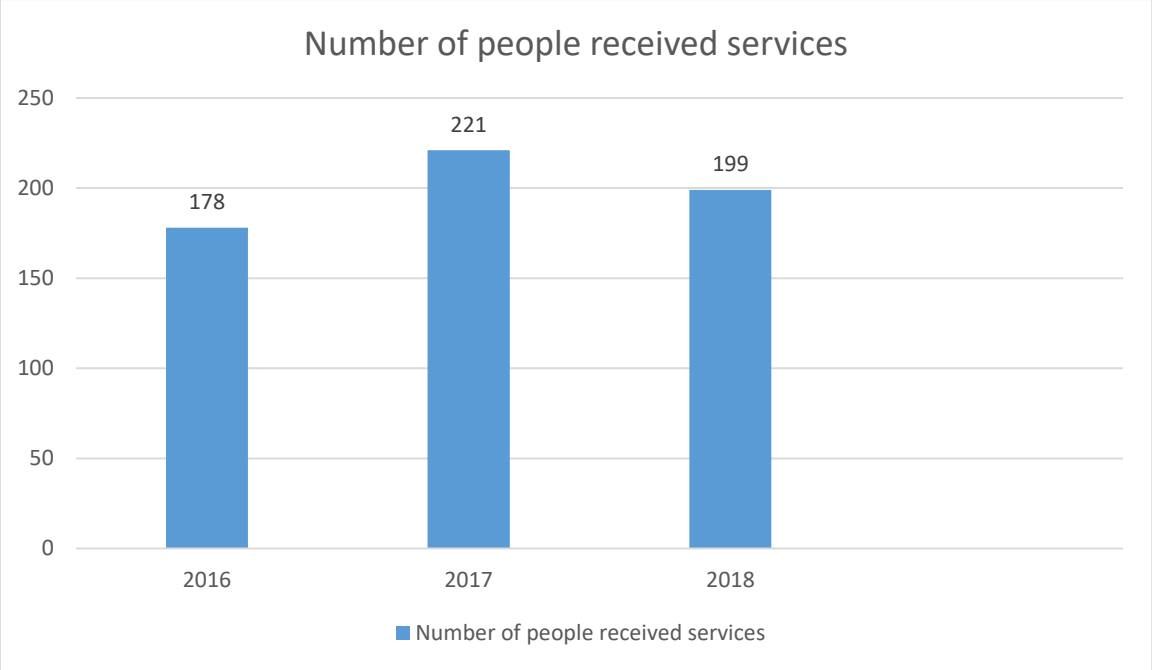
- Because of the specifics of the work, the fact that it is the only such service in Bulgaria and its isolation, and the insufficient funding, its staff members do not have opportunities for training and supervision according to their needs. We are trying to satisfy the needs of supervision and training with our own resources although they are limited – information sharing, discussion of cases, mutual help and emotional support, but this is not enough.

IV. Report of "Solidarnost" therapeutic program and statistics for 2018.

1. **Statistics:** "Solidarnost" therapeutic program offers to its clients two forms of therapeutic work: day therapeutic program (based on the model of the therapeutic community) and individual psychological consultations.

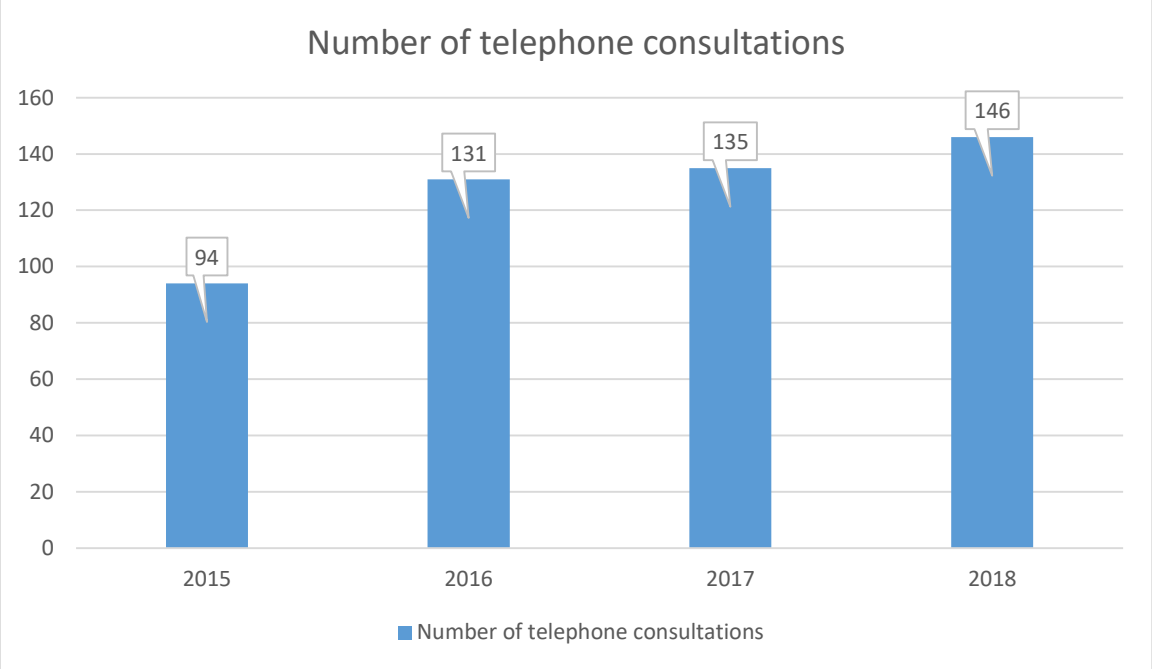
In the period January – December 2018, the team of "Solidarnost" therapeutic program worked with **199 people overall**. In 2017, this number was 221, and in 2016 – 178.

Association "Fracarita Bulgaria"
Sofia 1000, 1, Ekzarh Yosif str.,
Tel.:+359 2 971 99 20, +359 884 38 99 30,
+ 359 879 47 42 24
E-mail: info@solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.drugsinfo-bg.org



Graphic 10

1.1 146 people were consulted through telephone interviews. The aims of these consultations are support, building motivation for treatment and/or referral according to the clients' needs.



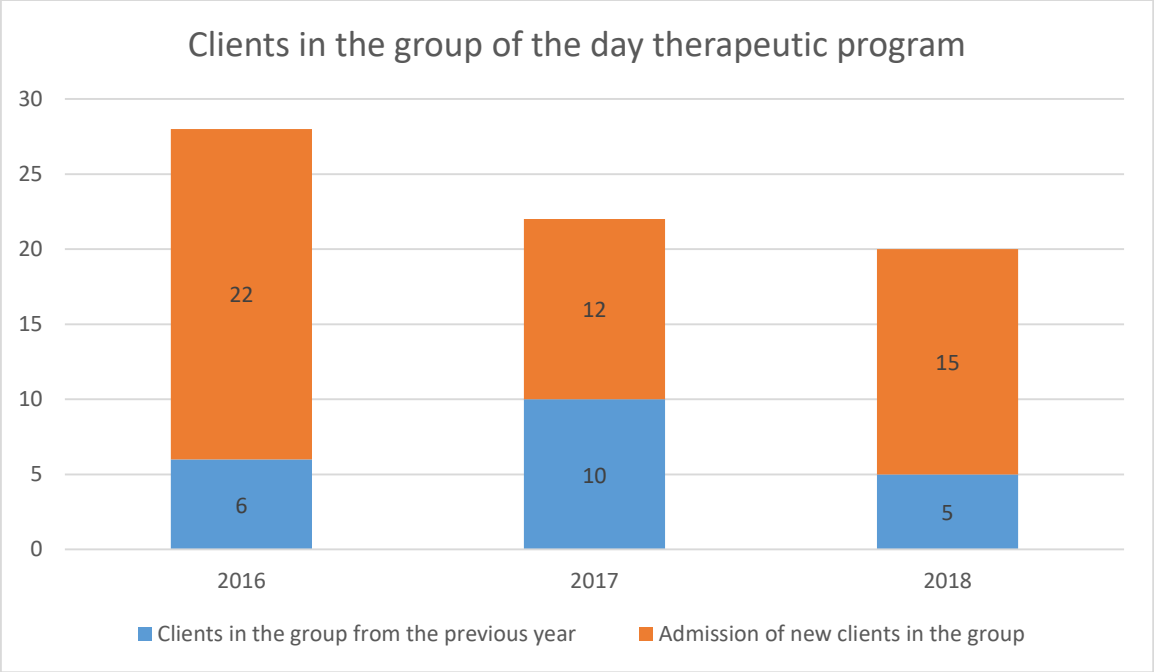
Graphic 11

Because of this, in 2018, **66 people with different addictions and 25 relatives and/or parents** came for primary consultations face-to-face, taken place in the Information Center. The aims

Association "Fracarita Bulgaria"
Sofia 1000, 1, Ekzarh Yosif str.,
Tel.:+359 2 971 99 20, +359 884 38 99 30,
+ 359 879 47 42 24
E-mail: info@solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.drugsinfo-bg.org

of these primary consultations are case evaluation, motivation for treatment and rehabilitation, and also referral to detoxification or referral to suitable forms of treatment and other programs for rehabilitation and similar activities. During the consultations of relatives and parents, the aims are to provide support and some directions on how to motivate their addicted relatives for treatment.

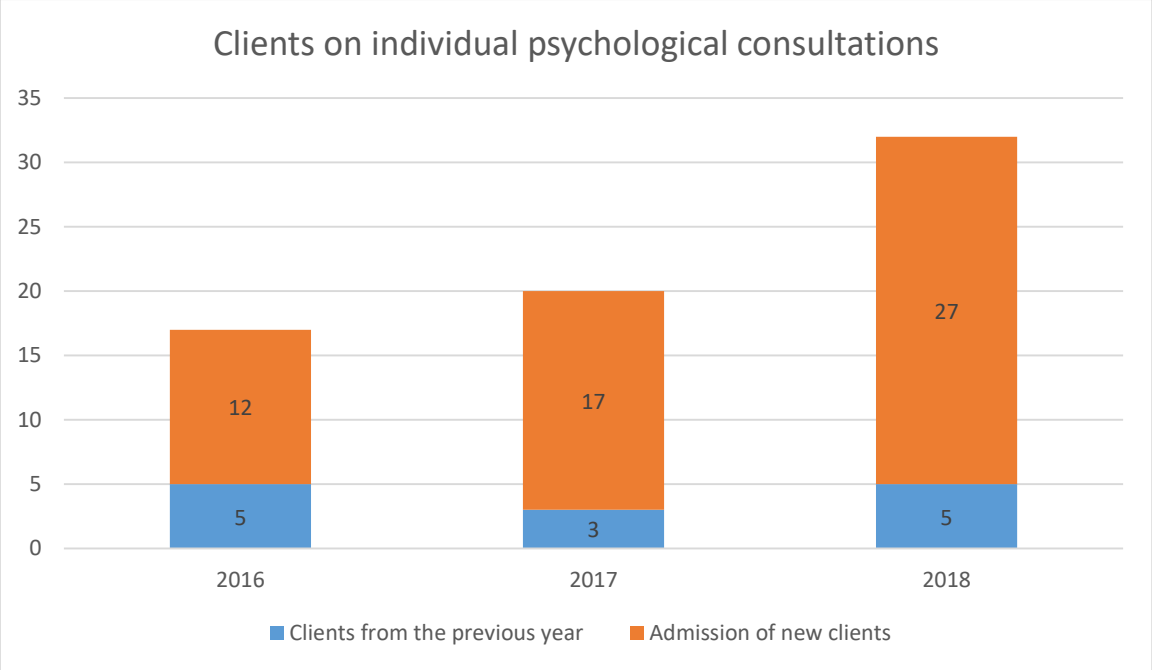
1.2 In 2018, **20 people** were in the group of the day therapeutic program with 5 people who had been in the group since 2017 year. The newly admitted clients were 15.



Graphic 12

1.3 In 2018, **32 people** were on individual psychological consultations with 5 people from the previous 2017.

Association "Fracarita Bulgaria"
Sofia 1000, 1, Ekzarh Yosif str.,
Tel.:+359 2 971 99 20, +359 884 38 99 30,
+ 359 879 47 42 24
E-mail: info@solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.drugsinfo-bg.org



Graphic 13

1.4 In 2018, the family consultant worked with **43 parents and relatives** of the participants in the day therapeutic program as well as relatives of the clients on individual consultations.
There were 102 sessions on family topics, 53 of these were with the primary family (parents and siblings), 10 – with spouses, 23 – individual sessions on family topics with the clients of the day program, 6 – sessions with couples (a client in re-entry) and 10 sessions were with the primary family or spouses of clients on individual consultations.
There were also **23 groups** for parents for support and mutual help. The groups were held twice per month. The average number of participants was 8.

1.5 In 2018, **5 people** from the day therapeutic program were in re-entry phase (1 person had been in re-entry phase since the end of 2016; one entered the group in 2017 and 3 more entered this phase in April, May and July). These clients had regular sessions with the psychologist leading their case and a group twice a month. All of them were (and are) successfully integrated into society, four of them are employed and one of them is also a university student. In 2018 there were **25 group sessions with the people in re-entry phase** (January – 3, February – 2, March – 2, April – 2, May – 2, June – 2, July – 2, August – 3, September – 2, October – 1, November – 2, December – 2). The participants participated in the organization of public events of the organization (exhibition, football tournament). A part of them take part in the activities of the workshop "PhotoFozzie" and participate in its activities – seminars, missions with Time Heroes. At the end of 2018, we have 5 people in this phase.

Association "Fracarita Bulgaria"
Sofia 1000, 1, Ekzarh Yosif str.,
Tel.:+359 2 971 99 20, +359 884 38 99 30,
+ 359 879 47 42 24
E-mail: info@solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.drugsinfo-bg.org

2. **Tendencies for 2018.**

2.1 Data shows that the number of the primary consultations is increasing. Their number for 2018 is a record.

2.2 There is a tendency towards minimal increase of the number of new clients in the therapeutic program in comparison to the previous year.

2.3 The same tendency of increase is seen in the clients who entered individual psychological consultations.

2.4 Because there was an increase in the number of primary consultations in 2018, we can expect an increase in the average group size for 2019.

2.5 Although less people completed the day therapeutic program in 2018 in comparison to 2017, the tendency towards good results compared to the average value is preserved.

3. **Working with volunteers and trainees:** In 2018, we had three people as trainees in "Solidarnost" therapeutic program: one from Bulgaria and two from the Czech Republic in November. The clients in re-entry supported various workshops and the team of the program.

4. **Workshops:** The workshops are part of the pedagogical work in "Solidarnost" therapeutic program. During the workshops, the participants enter in various relationships and learn new skills and values. They represent the "school of life", where relationships between participants allow apart from everything else effective therapeutic work in groups like group for meetings (Encounter) and focus groups.

4.1 Creativity workshop: The main activity of Creativity workshop is impartible connected with the participants in "Solidarnost" therapeutic program and their relationships. The general objective of this workshop is to give expression to the inner world of the client, to the connection between their experiences and the outside world. From January to December 2018, the following activities were carried out: organization and performing a theatrical play, work with polymer clay, making origami and quilling. Some workshops were facilitated by the clients in re-entry. A part of the activities of this workshop supported the activity of PhotoFozzie photography workshop.

4.2 Photography workshop ("FotoFozzie"):
http://solidarnost-bg.org/groups_and_workshops/services/en
https://www.fotofozzie.com/en/
Since its creation in 2015, "FotoFozzie" workshop has been a significant part of the therapeutic process of the people in rehabilitation and their transition to adaptations and realization in life after the completion of the program. Photography gives to many of them new perspectives and helps them unleash their potential in a new constructive activity.

From January to June 2018, all clients in re-entry took part in the workshop. The workshop was led by a client who had successfully completed the therapeutic and re-entry phase with the help and support of the team. Since the beginning of 2018, the workshop has been working successfully with the **volunteer platform Time Heroes**. The participants in the workshop take photos of volunteer missions and give the photos to the platform.

Association "Fracarita Bulgaria"
Sofia 1000, 1, Ekzarh Yosif str.,
Tel.:+359 2 971 99 20, +359 884 38 99 30,
+ 359 879 47 42 24
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For the whole year, the participants **supported with photos the following volunteer missions of the Time Heroes platform:** "Computer courses for the elderly" (10 February); "Accompany visually impaired people on a walk in the park" (February, June and August); "Charity bazaar for martenitzas of I Can Too"(March); "Gathering food for people in need (2 April); "Gathering food for people in need" (12 April at "Posoka" House); "Festival of solidarity" at the Indoor market place (23 June).

In the beginning of May 2018, we started having training seminars for theory and practice led voluntarily by the professional photographer Vladimir Spasov. The seminars were on the following topics: "Who I am (lighthouses) and what conceptual photography is" (12 May); "Composition" (2 June); "Introduction to studio photography" (23 June); "Portait in a studio" (21 July); "Outdoor portrait" (4 August). In September another photographer, Ivo Bozhilov, held a seminar on a general topic about photography.

In 2018, four new professional photographers donated their art for the website of the workshop: Irena Lazarova, Radoslav Sarov, Vladimir Spasov and Polina Ivanova.

In May, the workshop got its own studio equipment and the participants were developing their skills with this type of technology.

From May one of the main activities of the workshop was to **organize the third charity photography exhibition "Focus inside" on the occasion of the anniversary of "Solidarnost" therapeutic program**. In 2018, we organized two charity exhibitions overall: on 9 July - "Focus inside" and in October – a charity exhibition at the Residence of the Ambassador of Belgium. We had two meetings with photographers in order to choose suitable photographs for the exhibitions: in September with Vladimir Spasov to choose the photographs for the exhibition at the Ambassador's Residence; in June we consulted with Antoan Bozhilov to choose the photographs for the "Focus inside" exhibition.

The participants in the workshop attended the following events: Anniversary of Photo World in January and the Ceremony for awarding the second Annual prizes for volunteering HEROES 2018. On 2 September the participants in the workshop took photos at the football

Association "Fracarita Bulgaria"
Sofia 1000, 1, Ekzarh Yosif str.,
Tel.:+359 2 971 99 20, +359 884 38 99 30,
+ 359 879 47 42 24
E-mail: info@solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.drugsinfo-bg.org

tournament "5:0 for the people" supporting young people in treatment for addiction to drugs or alcohol.

Planned initiatives still in process of realization: continuation of Ivo Bozhilov's seminar; mobile photography course with Vera Gotseva; trip to Aleko, Vitosha mountain, with Radoslav Sarov and landscape photography training. Seminar for retouch of the photographs from the trip. Continuation of the seminars and cooperation with Vladimir Spasov. Meeting with Irena Lazarova about a seminar for the re-entry group on her personal story how she began doing photography. Seminars with one of authors from the exhibition – Dimo Dimov. Improvements of the website and the deliveries of purchased photos. Market for the postcards of the workshop. Realization of a space for a photo studio.

5. **Organization of and participation in public events.**

5.1 In February and April, video clips with interviews with members of the Management board of "Fracarita Bulgaria", with the Executive director and team members of the three structures of the organization. Unfortunately, the two volunteers who shot the clips, could not complete their work on editing the videos because of their busyness and we are looking for another volunteer.

5.2 On 22 and 23 February 2018, we held a **two-day training for pedagogical counselors and school psychologists working in the town of Kardzhali**. The training was organized by the Municipal council on narcotic substances and was aimed at development of skills for identification and early intervention in cases of problems related to drug use or abuse. Fifteen pedagogical counselors and school psychologists took part and the training was led by the representative of "Fracarita Bulgaria" Svetlana Velkova, clinical psychologist.

5.3 One of the main activities during the months of **April, May and June** was the organization of the third **charity photography exhibition "Focus inside"**, dedicated to the 15 anniversary of "Solidarnost" therapeutic program and 10 years since the National Drug, Alcohol and Gambling Helpline was established. For this purpose, a PR campaign was conducted via all available information and social channels, accessible for the team of the organization. Participants of the workshop "FotoFozzie" prepared photos for the exhibition, as the professional photographer Antoan Bojinov selected the most appropriate of them. A hall was rented and invitations were prepared. **The photos were prepared as well as edition of postcards**. **The exhibition was held on 9th of July 2018** as the official guests were His Excellency the Ambassador of Kingdom of Belgium and his wife. The collected funds will support the activities of workshop "FotoFozzie", which is part of ''Solidarnost" therapeutic program.

Association "Fracarita Bulgaria"
Sofia 1000, 1, Ekzarh Yosif str.,
Tel.:+359 2 971 99 20, +359 884 38 99 30,
+ 359 879 47 42 24
E-mail: info@solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.drugsinfo-bg.org

5.4 On 1 and 2 September, the team of the organization and clients of the ''Solidarnost" therapeutic program and the phase of re-entry took part in the annual **football tournament for dependent people "5:00 for the people"**, as the team of "Fracarita Bulgaria" took the honorable second place.

5.5 On the 5th of October 2018, the team of "Fracarita Bulgaria" **organized discussion with main topic "New challenges in the work with dependent people"** on the occasion of the 15-year anniversary of "Solidarnost" therapeutic program and 10 years of the establishing of the National Drug, Alcohol and Gambling Helpline. Colleagues, partners and specialists in the field were invited. The event was covered by the national media btv.

5.6 On the same occasion, **the second photography exhibition for the year was also organized on 5 October 2018** and it was conducted under patronage and hospitality of the wife of the Ambassador of Kingdom of Belgium Madame Bontemps and collected donations will be used to support activities of organization.

5.7 For the period three interviews were given for the Bulgarian National Radio – Program "Horizon", related to the prevention and services, provided by the organization. On 6th of November 2018, the therapeutic director took a participation in a TV show on BNT, related to gambling (https://www.bnt.bg/bg/a/khazarta-klopkata-ot-koyato-trudno-izlizame) and on 3rd of December 2018 a reportage reflecting the discussion for the Birthdays of the "Solidarnost" therapeutic program and National Drug, Alcohol and Gambling Helpline was broadcasted (https://www.btv.bg/video/shows/predi-obed/videos/ne-zavisimite-sreshta-s-edin-mazh-ne-zavisim-ot-40-godini.html).

5.8 The team of the organization and clients of the program organized a **Christmas party** in December.

Association "Fracarita Bulgaria"
Sofia 1000, 1, Ekzarh Yosif str.,
Tel.:+359 2 971 99 20, +359 884 38 99 30,
+ 359 879 47 42 24
E-mail: info@solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.solidarnost-bg.org
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6. **Conclusions and recommendations:** During this year the number of clients who successfully completed the therapeutic program is above the average. Although the result is not a record as in 2017, it is positive. We report a new increase in the number of contacts with new clients. In 2016 and 2017, it was 80 contacts and in 2018, it was just above 90. This is the best result since we started recording this statistics. The fact that the group for re-entry continues to function and is stable in time is also positive.

6.1 Recommendations in relation to state policy:

6.1.1 The "Solidarnost" therapeutic program should receive funding over the whole year from the National Anti-Drug strategy. If the funding is throughout the whole year, it will be enough to cover the complete therapeutic process.

6.1.2 A National strategy against alcohol abuse and a National strategy against problem gambling should be created and the Government should fund psychosocial rehabilitation of people addicted to alcohol and gambling through them.

6.2 Assessment of the team and team work:

6.2.1 Strengths: as in 2017, one of the best qualities of the team of the treatment program is the trust between the team members and the sense of support and solidarity in hard times.

A particular strength is the experience of the team in the work with people suffering from addiction. The communication and active cooperation between the family consultant and the psychologists who lead the cases of clients is improved and this gives good results in the work with the clients. This is thanks to the fact that the family consultant spends more time with the team on shift, knows more about the clients' individual therapeutic plans and their difficulties, and receives information about the individual clients as well.

We can confidently say that this is the best team since the creation of the program.

6.2.2 Improvements and challenges: at this stage, it is more important to keep the positive results in the work with the clients from the past few years on their current level.

It is important to keep the entirety of the team because of their professionalism and experience.

It is very important that the team members continue to find satisfaction from their work and security in the perspective for development. This would keep their motivation high. It is certain that here are expectations accumulated over the past years due to the upcoming changes in the organization.

The hopes in more detail are:

- More opportunities for trainings.
- Participation in projects with decent payment.
- Perspectives for new activities and increased income.

Association "Fracarita Bulgaria"
Sofia 1000, 1, Ekzarh Yosif str.,
Tel.:+359 2 971 99 20, +359 884 38 99 30,
+ 359 879 47 42 24
E-mail: info@solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.drugsinfo-bg.org

V. Low-treshold drop-in center "Posoka" House: Functioning and activities report 2018.

1. **Functioning in 2018.**

1.1 Number of clients.

1.1.1 Total number of clients: For the period January – December 2018 the Center was open for 151 days and worked with **120** clients. Compared to 2017, the number of clients was approximately the same (in 2017 it was **126**).

1.1.2 New clients: The clients who visited the Center for the first time for the period were 65.

1.1.3 Regular use of the services: **73 people** visited and used the services in the Center more than once, **18 people** visited more than 20 times for the period. Out of those, **12 people** were regular clients with 40 or more visits yearly. For comparison, the clients who visited the Center more than once during 2017 were **67**.

1.1.4 Gender and age: Among the clients the women were 31 with an average age of 35 (min. 22 and max. 48). The men were 89 with an average age of 36 (min. 19 and max. 51). The ratio men-women and the average ages were close to those for 2017.

1.2 Services.

1.2.1 Providing shelter: The services shelter from weather conditions, warm or refreshing drinks, vitamins and informational brochures were used by all visitors every working day. The working days for the period were 151.

1.2.2 Laundry and dryer: This service was used 106 times.

1.2.3 Psychiatric consultations: There were no consultations.

1.2.4 Juridical consultations: There were 7 consultations with a lawyer upon clients' request. Two of the clients are being defended in legal cases against them.

1.2.5 Social work: Social consultations were provided on daily basis. Members of the team consulted clients concerning their day-to-day difficulties, and helped them deal with interpersonal conflicts arising in and outside the Center. Clothes form donations were distributed 420 times upon requests.

On April 11th, there was a meeting with a lawyer about social rights and opportunities for work for people with addiction and functional limitations due to disability. This meeting was in consideration with the target group of "Posoka" House. On December 14th there was a second meeting when the lawyer presented the lawsuits she had filed on behalf of clients.

1.2.6 Trainings: In 2018, fifteen training groups were conducted. Topics included safe drug and intravenous use and HIV/AIDS; Tuberculosis, Rights in the Health-care System; Human Rights and rights during police detention and arrest; Rights and social services; Hepatitis.

1.2.7 Clients responded positively to these educational groups and participated with great interest.

For the International day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking (June 26th) the team conducted an educational group about human rights and distributed "Support. Don't Punish" campaign t-shirts.

For the World HIV/AIDS day (on December 1st) the team and clients were tested for HIV, hepatitis C, and syphilis by Caritas' mobile medical team.

Association "Fracarita Bulgaria"
Sofia 1000, 1, Ekzarh Yosif str.,
Tel.:+359 2 971 99 20, +359 884 38 99 30,
+ 359 879 47 42 24
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http://www.drugsinfo-bg.org

1.2.8 Pedagogical work: Ten groups were conducted with clients concerning the organization, rules and roles in the Center, as well as planned activities.

1.2.9 Health care: Ten clients were accompanied to medical institutions. In collaboration with Caritas Bulgaria upon request the clients received free of charge dressings for their wounds by a nurse on grounds.

2. **Organizing of events:** Three holiday celebrations took place in the Center in 2018 – St. Valentine's Day, Easter, and Christmas. Sixteen clients took part in the Christmas party and received presents thanks to the campaign Knit Warmth, which donated hats and scarves for the Center's clients.

3. **Volunteers and donators:** "Posoka" House works with volunteers through the online platform TimeHeroes (www.timeheroes.org).

3.1 For this period the team of "Posoka" House worked with three very committed volunteers, who visited regularly and were very helpful in the daily work.

3.2 In 2018, the campaign for donations of hygiene and cosmetic materials was supported by 38 people through the online platform TimeHeroes.

4. **Popularization of the "Posoka" House activities:** The campaigns for donating hygiene and cosmetic materials and the volunteering program through the online platform TimeHeroes contribute to the efforts to make the program known throughout the community.

Association "Fracarita Bulgaria"
Sofia 1000, 1, Ekzarh Yosif str.,
Tel.:+359 2 971 99 20, +359 884 38 99 30,
+ 359 879 47 42 24
E-mail: info@solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.solidarnost-bg.org
http://www.drugsinfo-bg.org

What are the public's reactions and what is our conclusion?
As a whole, the community is dominated by a stigma concerning people with addictions and they are not seen as people in need of help. Awareness of the group's problems is on the rise, judged by the considerable increase in received donations – in 2018 thirty-eight people participated in the campaign, while in comparison to 2017, they were 18. In spite of that, the group of concerned people who assist the activities of "Posoka" House is very small and closed.

5. **Teamwork:** There were no changes in the team during the period. The members of the team complement each other's skills and knowledge well and have built an atmosphere of respect, which benefits the clients. The communication between the members of the team regarding the day-to-day operation is very good, which increases the effectiveness of the offered services.

6. **Conclusions and recommendations:**

6.1 Taking into account the clients' needs at "Posoka" House, who are indigent and many of them homeless, the Center responds to the needs very well. Despite that, the team's recommendation is in favour of an increase in the number of working days of "Posoka" House, in order to respond more efficiently to the target group's needs.

6.2 During 2018, there were no changes in the team. That has affected positively both the working process and the clients, since the members of the team coordinate tasks between themselves very well and the clients place their trust in the team. Despite that, there is possibility that the team's motivation to drop, given the low salaries and the lack of social benefits.

VI. Financing.

1. **Financing from Bulgaria.**

1.1 The National Center for Addictions funded a project for socially disadvantaged people who do not have the resources to pay their participation fees for the rehabilitation program from January to March 2018 and in December 2018.

1.2 The International Women's Club of Sofia funded a project for medical services of the clients of "Posoka" House from January to March 2018.

2. **Financing from abroad.**

2.1 The organization World Mission Help (Wereld Missie Hulp) funded a part of the activities of the "Solidarnost" therapeutic program through a donation.

2.2 L'Abbaye de Leffe funded a part of the activities of the "Solidarnost" therapeutic program and "Posoka" House.

2.3 The "Femmes d'Europe" Association funded through a project the activities of photography workshop "FotoFozzie" at "Solidarnost" therapeutic program and the functioning of "Posoka" House.

2.4 Private donors supported the activities of the "Solidarnost" therapeutic program and the NDAGH through the "Roi Baudouin" Foundation.

Association "Fracarita Bulgaria"
Sofia 1000, 1, Ekzarh Yosif str.,
Tel.:+359 2 971 99 20, +359 884 38 99 30,
+ 359 879 47 42 24
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2.5 On the occasion of the 15th Anniversary of "Solidarnost" therapeutic program and the 10th Anniversary of the National Drugs, Alcohol and Gambling Helpline, the wife of His Excellency Mr. François Bontemps – the Ambassador of Belgium – organized on 5th of October 2018 a reception in the Ambassador's residence. Many of the guests donated funds for the functioning of "Fracarita Bulgaria".

2.6 Through "Fracarita International", we are looking for other donors in order to find a break-even in our financial management.

2.7 The Skills and Knowledge Exchange Project for Drug and Alcohol Helplines (SKEPDAH) was funded by the European programme for education, training, youth and sport (Erasmus +) through the Irish National Agency "Léargas" and then through the HSE Drugs/HIV Helpline, Ireland (the Coordinator of the project).

The Board of Managers and the team of "Fracarita Bulgaria" would like to express their deep gratitude towards all people whose donations enabled us to continue our work and to help the people suffering from addiction in Bulgaria!

Note: We can provide the entire report of the activities in Bulgarian language. To ask it, please write to us at info@solidarnost-bg.org.