

**Ivan Vazov**

---

**Bulgaria**

A child with long brown hair is holding a large, colorful drawing in front of their face. The drawing features abstract shapes in shades of pink, purple, yellow, and green. The child is wearing a red and white striped shirt. In the background, a television screen displays colorful balloons, and a window with sheer curtains is visible.

# **HOME IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP**

**January | 2023**



# Overview of this Children's Home

---

## Background, Mission, and Vision

Ivan Vazov is a family-type care center (FTCC) located in Sofia, Bulgaria. The home was converted from a traditional orphanage to an FTCC in August 2015 as part of the project called "Chance for the Children." Since December 2015, Ivan Vazov has been under the leadership of director Galina Malinova.

Eleven children from 7 to 18 years old live in the home. Of the children, 2 have mental disabilities (one mild and one severe). The home has seven permanent, long-term teachers/caregivers who have worked there for several years--there is minimal staff turnover.

In 2019, Galina won the Manager of the Year award. She is a true leader and gifted manager of the FTCC. She runs the home very efficiently, which is good for both the children and the staff. Galina has built relationships with various charitable organizations to provide these opportunities for the children.

Good connections and partnerships:

Over the years, Ivan Vazov has benefited from American and Bulgarian connections. One Heart Bulgaria has been in partnership with Ivan Vazov since the foundation of the FTCC. Several other Bulgarian organizations, such as Studio Hug Me and The Children's Foundation, also donate food and provide funds for children's art activities and vacations. Thanks to these partnership services, and facilities for the children have been improved. This, in turn, allows the orphanage to continue to function and offer appropriate experiences to children in their care from 2017 to the present day.

## A Child's Hope Foundation

The mission of Ivan Vazov is to continue to maintain and improve the standard of living and care in the FTCC, with a special focus on developing an authentic “family-type” atmosphere. To achieve this, Galina and her team are seeking to raise happy children by providing them with everything necessary for their education and learning, including excellent housing conditions, appropriate nutrition, healthcare, and education.

In order to accomplish this mission, Ivan Vazov offers the children more than just the basic necessities of life. Galina and the caregivers treat the children with respect, teach them how to behave properly, and seek support to help each child realize his or her full potential.

The main goal of the FTCC is to ensure a quality of life that guarantees the full physical, emotional, and cognitive development and social inclusion of the children in a natural environment by providing individualized care under gentle and supportive conditions.

The leadership and staff are a wonderful part of the “family” at Ivan Vazov. The staff are motivated and desire to stay and provide longevity and constancy for the children, which is a unique situation for FTCCs and orphanages in Bulgaria. Ivan Vazov is a great example of a home that creates the feeling of a real family for the children.

Also, because the conditions at the home are excellent and there is a sense of community, the turnover of caregivers has been zero for the last several years.

Over the next ten years, Galina hopes to achieve the FTCC’s full potential of housing 12 children, which is the maximum number allowed by law, including housing for children who have transitioned into adulthood but would like a place to stay temporarily while they’re at school or moving towards housing independence.

In order to reach this vision, Ivan Vazov needs help from organizations such as One Heart Bulgaria and ACHF.



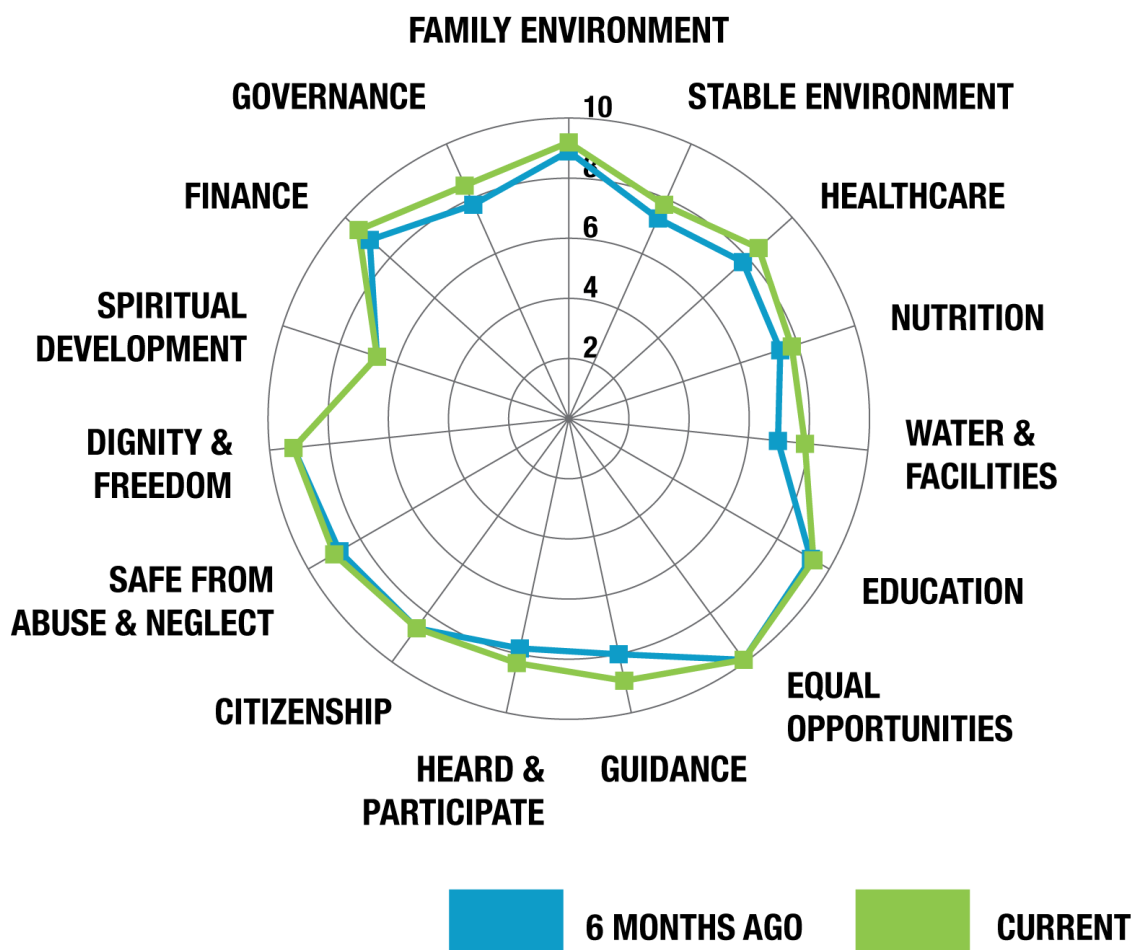
# The Thrive Assessment

## What is the Thrive Assessment?

In 1959, the United Nations (UN) adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which defines children's rights to protection, education, healthcare, shelter, nutrition and more. We have codified all 13 Rights, as well as a Finance Standard and a Governance and Human Resource Standard, resulting in a total of 15 standards. These standards ensure that children receive care that truly helps them to thrive, now and in the future.

The Thrive Assessment will be administered every 6 months with each partner home to chart the progress of each standard. Our team works with caregivers to outline next steps which are then compiled into an Improvement Roadmap.

## Current Thrive Scale



# Strategic Initiatives

## FIELD TRIP TO VELINGRAD

<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>	Galina would like to raise money to take the children on an overnight field trip to Velingrad, a popular vacation area about two hours from Sofia.
<b>ESTIMATED FUNDING</b>	\$800

## PURCHASE TWO AIR CONDITIONERS/HEATERS

<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>	In order to improve the facilities, the FTCC would like to purchase two air conditioners/heaters.
<b>ESTIMATED FUNDING</b>	\$2,500

## PURCHASE TWO WATER DISPENSERS

<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>	The FTCC would like to purchase two water dispensers so that the children can access potable water.
<b>ESTIMATED FUNDING</b>	\$200



## Right to Live with Family

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Ivan Vazov is currently at the **THRIVING** level. A team of caregivers works eight-hour shifts, ensuring that the children receive full-time care. Galina has developed such a good work and home environment that the caretakers have remained constant over the past several years and provide a sense of constancy to the children, even though they are not there 24/7. This is quite unusual in Bulgaria.

Although many of the children have biological families, only a few children have any kind of regular contact with them. Galina tries to encourage visitation where appropriate, but in the end, this is a complex situation that is dependent on the family and the social services department.

Over the past six months, the training opportunities on trauma-informed care at Ivan Vazov improved. The FTCC has begun to work with Nina, the therapist employed by One Heart Bulgaria. The FTCC has also been able to identify other opportunities for training in trauma-informed care.



## Right to a Stable Environment

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Ivan Vazov is currently at the **SUSTAINING** level. Galina, with Hristo, the home's social worker, and the caregivers, try to interact with the children in a loving and nurturing way. They engage in joint activities like mealtime and playtime and strive to have positive contact with the children daily.

Discipline is an issue, not because it is harsh in any way, but because the staff are obligated to follow rules set for them by government agencies and have little latitude to develop appropriate disciplinary measures. For example, one of the older children steals items (tablets, a laptop, and money) from the home and other areas. Still, the police cannot do anything about the situation, and Galina lacks the authority to enforce discipline. Although Galina is trying to foster a family-type atmosphere, she sometimes has to lock up rooms or items in order to protect them. Other children have been engaged in hoarding food, which has resulted in the food being locked up.

Although therapy has always been available, most children have not wanted to participate, and the directors have been unable to compel them to participate. To remedy this, the caregivers have begun to receive more regular coaching on creating a more stable, loving, and nurturing environment in the home. They have already begun to see a big difference in the children's well-being. The children are more willing to participate in therapy opportunities.

- ☐ The FTCC would like more access to psychologists and therapists.
- ☐ The caregivers would like to identify and participate in more coaching and training opportunities.



## Right to Healthcare

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Ivan Vazov is currently at a **THRIVING** level. The children have access to basic medical and dental care, and the caregivers help them learn proper health and hygiene habits. The facilities are all appropriate and clean. Ivan Vazov keeps good records; if a child arrives without the appropriate documentation, the home immediately starts a file and maintains it.

Although the children receive vision screening, this does not happen on a yearly basis.

Children usually have not received orthodontic treatment since it is so expensive and is considered nonessential. However, Galina tries to find funding to pay for treatment for children who would benefit from orthodontic care. Although the children have struggled to remember to brush their teeth twice a day, a new focus on this has increased their score in this area.



## Right to Nutrition

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Ivan Vazov is currently at a **SUSTAINING** level. According to current guidelines, the FTCC provides a balanced diet of healthy, nutritious, and tasty food. The food is delivered by an external provider, and the director and caregivers cook for the children at the FTCC. The food preparation area is clean and well-maintained. Over the past six months, care has been taken to ensure that sufficient protein and plenty of fruits and vegetables are provided daily.

Ongoing food handling and hygiene training is also important for the FTCC staff.

- ☐ Provide staff training on food handling and hygiene
- ☐ Identify and consult a nutritionist to assess current menus



## Right to Clean Water and Electricity

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Ivan Vazov is currently at a **SUSTAINING** level. The home has potable water for all needs (drinking, preparing food, washing, etc.). Although the water, in general, is considered safe for drinking, the standards for potable water are quite low, and there are high levels of chlorine. It would be better for the children to have access to purified water.

The facilities are generally in good shape, except for the basement, which has water damage from recent flooding. The home also needs two air conditioners, one for the large living area and kitchen on the first floor and another for the second floor.

Over the past six months, the facilities installed new window locks and blinds, improving the entire complex's safety.

- ☐ Buy two water dispensers (\$200)
- ☐ Purchase two air conditioners (\$2,500)



## Right to Quality Education

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Ivan Vazov is currently at a **THRIVING** level. Most of the children attend school consistently throughout the academic year. Some of the children take English classes and computer, art, or finance education workshops as extracurricular activities.

To maintain the thriving level, the director would like to create continuing education or training plans with individual children so that they are more prepared for life after graduating from high school and transitioning out of the FTCC.

Although the FTCC has a library, the children are not interested in reading. The caregivers have begun to spend more time reading with the children to work on this. Finding a tutor or volunteer to help interest the children in reading programs would be helpful. Updates to the library that include books the children are interested in would help them develop a love for reading and make use of the library facilities.

- ☐ Get more books for the library, either through direct donation or as part of a program
- ☐ Find volunteers for tutoring and reading

## Right to Equal Opportunities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Ivan Vazov is currently at a **THRIVING** level. Children can participate in extracurricular activities such as English lessons, computer classes, financial education, and arts and drawing classes.

To maintain a thriving level, the FTCC needs ongoing funding for children to participate in activities such as excursions, dance, music, crafts, and sport. This would cost about \$30 USD per month per child for 11 children.

- ☐ Find monthly funding of \$330 per month to pay for extracurricular activities for 11 children
- ☐ The director would like to provide the children with a two-day field trip to a nearby historical area (\$800)

## Right to Guidance

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Ivan Vazov is currently at a **THRIVING** level. The home has sufficient caregivers who are trained to work with and provide consistent guidance to children. The children now have more regular access to a therapist. Since the FTCC has begun working with Nina, she has been able to help the children learn patterns of respectful behavior in general. This has improved the home atmosphere and helped create a more family-like feeling.

To maintain the Thriving level, the FTCC will have to implement a life skills development plan and education or training plan for teenagers over the age of 15 to support them as they develop independence and when they transition from the home.

- ☐ Deploy Child's Hope Plans



## Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Ivan Vazov is currently at a **SUSTAINING** level. The children at the home can make decisions about what they wear or do in their spare time. Some of the children like drawing and painting, while others enjoy playing video games and watching TV. They also have a say in what they eat and make suggestions when purchasing food and preparing the menu. The children also make decisions about vacation plans, leisure time, etc.

To move from Sustaining to Thriving, the home needs to model and train children's committees so they can develop leadership skills. For this initiative, no funds are needed, but the staff would need templates and training from a counseling expert to teach them how to run this kind of meeting.

- ☐ The home would like to have individualized plans for each child and their goals and future.



## Right to Be Prepared for Citizenship

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Ivan Vazov is currently at the **THRIVING** level. All children have been assigned age-appropriate chores and are expected to complete them. They are also taught how to make restitution when they do something wrong. They understand the importance of responsibility and their role in their home, giving them a sense of dignity.

The children are supported by various organizations, volunteers, and donors. In addition to teaching subjects such as arts, finance, computer science, and English, they also talk to them during their classes about social responsibility, motivation, personal goal setting, and values. Because of the adult role models in their lives, the children also learn about everyday life, responsibilities, and occupations outside the home.

To maintain the Thriving level at Ivan Vazov, kids over 15 years of age need to continue to develop daily living skills from mentors within the home and the support of therapists.

- ☐ There are no next steps until the individualized child plans are completed.



## Right to Be Safe from Abuse & Neglect

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Ivan Vazov is currently at the **THRIVING** level. The staff treats children respectfully and avoids physical punishment because it is forbidden by law and because they don't believe in corporal discipline. Galina and all of the caretakers try to maintain an atmosphere of peace and love for the children. Whenever there is a need for a psychologist, the home requests one so the children can receive support. The director and caregivers also talk to the children about rules and boundaries, proper sexual and romantic behavior, self-esteem, and emotion management.

In order for Ivan Vazov to remain at the thriving level, they would like to find therapists and psychologists who can provide training to both the children and the staff.

- ☐ Obtain the support of psychologists and therapists - the salary of one therapist is about \$600 a month.



## Right to Dignity & Freedom

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Ivan Vazov is currently at the **THRIVING** level. The children have the right to privacy and are treated respectfully. Galina, the social workers, and the caretakers encourage the children to get along with their peers. Unkind comments and bullying are corrected immediately. In particular, the FTCC ensures that the children are never called rude nicknames or belittled by staff members.

To maintain a thriving level, the home director must provide additional opportunities for children to do more activities outside the home. Depending on the age-appropriate activity, caregivers or volunteers would be involved.



## Right to Spiritual Development

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Ivan Vazov is currently at the **SUSTAINING** level. Since religious life is not specifically encouraged as part of the Bulgarian culture, the children cannot be part of a particularly spiritual or religious community. However, they are free to practice communal prayer daily or other spiritual rituals, and the home celebrates major religious holidays such as Easter, Christmas, and “name days” (which are part of the Bulgarian liturgical calendar and are celebrated much like a birthday) of the children, the director, and the caregivers. The only spiritual or religious material that is available and accessible is the Bible. The director and caregivers are excellent role models for the children of ethical living because they provide examples of love and respect.

In order to move to the THRIVING level, the home could provide, according to the desires of the children, more spiritual and religious materials and more opportunities for visiting a church and for service. An important aspect here would be learning about the Orthodox Church’s historical role in Bulgarian history and the variety of religious and spiritual options that are now available.

- ☐ Provide appropriate spiritual and religious materials.
- ☐ Visit the Orthodox Church on religious holidays.



## Finance Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Ivan Vazov is currently at the **THRIVING** level. The home is meticulous with its budget; all records are maintained and available for review or audit. The FTCC conducted an external review of its financials within the past six months. Income taxes are filed according to government requirements on time every year. The home maintains records and documentation for each child as well. The director and caregivers meet weekly to discuss the most urgent situations they are dealing with and come up with solutions.

In order for Ivan Vazov to remain at a thriving level, the director would like to be trained in creating a collaborative annual budget that will integrate the various needs of the FTCC into a single, comprehensive budget.

- ☐ The director would like training on budgeting.



## Governance and Human Resource Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Ivan Vazov is currently at the **THRIVING** level. The home complies with all licensing, audit, and governance requirements. They have regular daily and weekly staff meetings. The activities and roles of all the staff have been clearly defined, and they have every legal document supporting their activities within the home. The director and caregivers have received sufficient training in their roles, and there is a plan in place for continuing education and training to ensure quality care for children. All staff members have a record which is continuously updated.

The staff has begun to attend training on attachment and child development. As part of this, they are specifically considering ways to facilitate child participation. Galina is working on holding more regular meetings with the staff and caregivers about these issues.

☐ The above-mentioned meetings could be facilitated throughout the year.



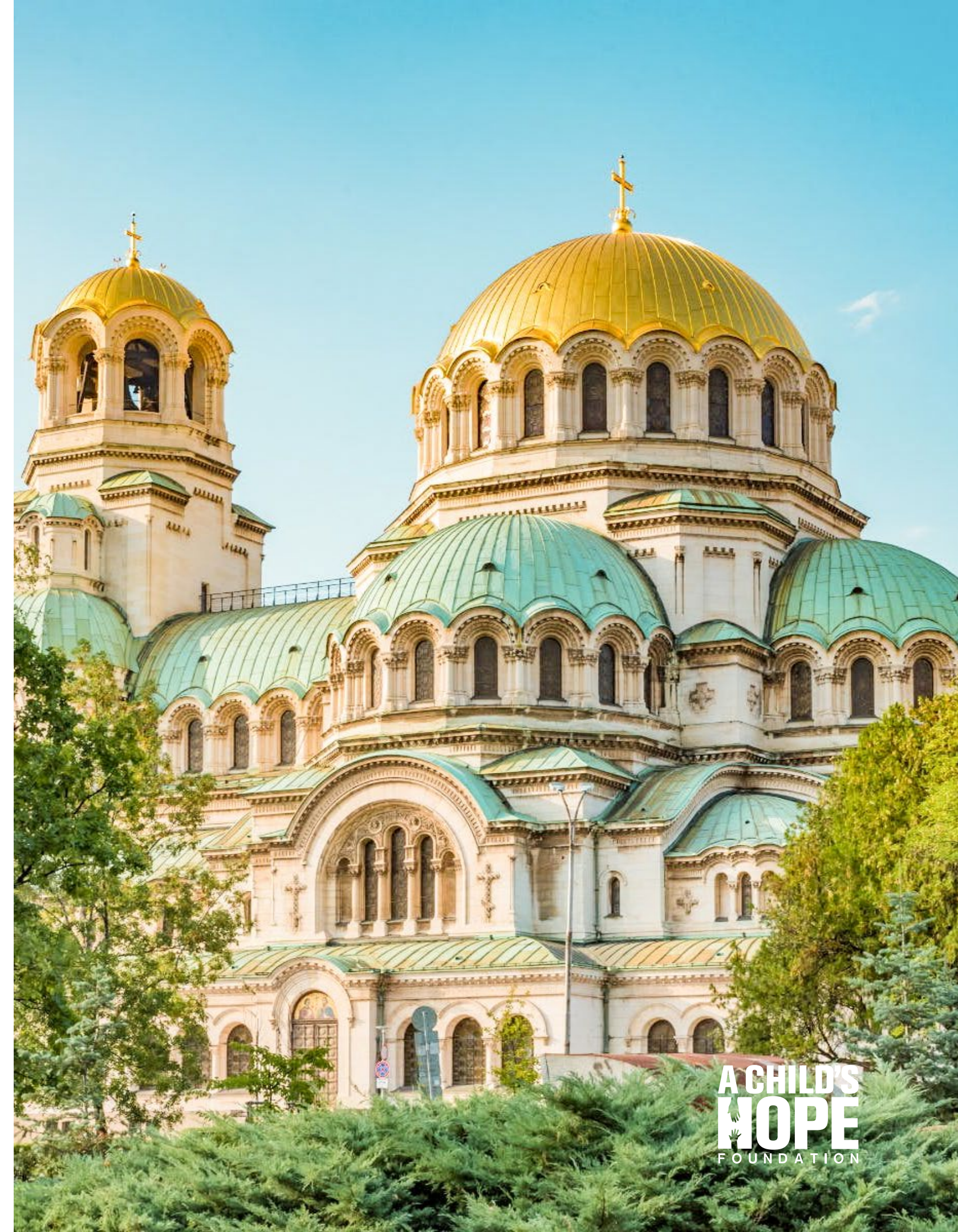
## Current Improvement Partners



### One Heart Bulgaria

One Heart Bulgaria was founded in 2003 in order to improve the lives of children living in Bulgarian orphanages. Since that time, they have impacted thousands of children through their programs and initiatives. Visit [www.oneheart-bg.org](http://www.oneheart-bg.org) for more information!

For a list of projects and opportunities to coordinate on initiatives go to [www.AChildsHopeFoundation.org](http://www.AChildsHopeFoundation.org).



A CHILD'S  
**HOPE**  
FOUNDATION