



SUCCESS STORY

Children with Disabilities Conquer the Highest Peaks

Kazanluk NGO launches social enterprises for long-term sustainability



Disabled children scale a mountain peak for the first time in their lives.

Photo: Future for Children with Disabilities Association

The Bulgarian town of Kazanluk is famous for its rose gardens, which produce some of the world's finest rose oil for the making of perfume. It's also the home of a unique organization: the Future for Children with Disabilities Association, established in 2003. The NGO serves children with disabilities and their families. In all of their projects, kids are the major actors. The NGO has organized activities such as kite-flying, horseback riding, and art therapy. One of their proudest achievements is climbing up the peak Ispolin in the Stara Planina mountain range.

Members of the Association participated in a series of USAID training workshops on social entrepreneurship conducted by the Health for Everyone Association, a Bulgarian advocacy organization for people with disabilities. That's when they decided to launch a social enterprise that combines children's art therapy with the production of gypsum souvenir figures. They are also pursuing another business idea to ensure a source of stable income: a pastry production facility and a small cafeteria.

Many citizens of Kazanluk are involved as volunteers in the Association's activities. They say they are eager to be the first clients and regular patrons of the cafeteria.