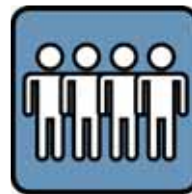


"Don't Lose Your Spirit, the Friend is here"



Taking place in the town of Gorna Orjahovitza in Bulgaria, the aim of the 'Don't lose your Spirit, the Friend is here' project was to integrate a group of isolated orphaned children living in an orphanage into the wider society of the town. Members of the Youth Parliament of Gorna Orjahovika, having identified the need, devised a project to support the orphans to create and perform theatre pieces based upon their lives.

In the first phase, members of the Youth Parliament were given training to carry out the project, a partnership developed with the youth theatre Alternativa and a plan of possible public performances of the finished products developed.

In the second phase, 10 members of the Youth Parliament of Gorna Orjahovika and 10 members of the youth theatre Alternativa worked with a group of 23 orphans to develop theatre pieces based on the orphans' experiences. These were presented to the public in a free performance in November 05, attended by approx 300 people.



The positive response to this performance led to more pieces being developed and performed in the city's Christmas concert and a further performance on Valentine's Day.

The project has highlighted to the citizens of Gorna Orjahovitza, the isolation of some its most vulnerable habitants whilst demonstrating a means of integrating them. The performance pieces and the learning from the project has been compiled as a CD-Rom to be used for education purposes.

