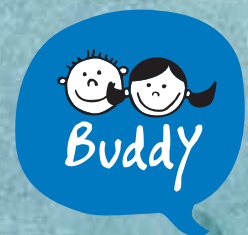


Annual Report 2022





VOLUNTEER ONCE A WEEK — FRIENDSHIP FOR A LIFETIME

With time, we create beauty

In the ancient Japanese art of kintsugi, a broken ceramic bowl is pieced back together using gold to create a new object that is perhaps even more beautiful than the original and serves its true purpose once again.

In the BUDDY program, time and friendship are the gold that changes the lives of children who are growing up away from their families. It provides them with the joy of a healthy relationship, enabling them to become fully-fledged members of society as adults.

Dear BUDDY friends



Thank you for being there.

Thank you for being the gold in the lives of children. Thank you for your time, support and energy. Thank you for your trust.

In our organisation, time is the gold that joins the pieces together again. The time of our volunteers, from Malacky to Košice.

The trust that you – our financial supporters – place in us is also gold. It is thanks to your trust over the past 17 years that we have been able to put together our BUDDY team and, together with our volunteers, transform your donations into time for children.

While not everything has worked out perfectly for us this past year, the pages that follow provide a summary of what we are thankful for.

The BUDDY children continue to teach us adults humility and gratitude. They show us, with a smile, what true perseverance is. They teach us how to love.

Thank you for your patience.

Thank you for giving us the chance to dream together, to create beauty and a better world not only for all children, but also for us adults. Thank you for helping us turn those dreams into reality.

My heartfelt thanks on behalf of the entire BUDDY team,

Laci Kossár, founder

This year we once again asked the children what has changed in their lives since they were teamed up with their BUDDY, and what they have achieved thanks to their volunteer.

Change that children can feel

"WHAT HAS CHANGED IS **MY TRUST** IN PEOPLE. HE HAS SHOWN ME THAT I CAN TRUST HIM, AND THEREFORE ALSO OTHERS."



SUPPORT

"A lot of things have changed. I don't cry so much at night any more. Now I laugh and stuff."

"I know someone's there who understands me."

QUALITY OF LIFE

"I have a different view of the world – it's brighter and shinier."

"She has helped me to change the way I think. I have gone from stressful thinking to a calmer mindset."

SELF-CONFIDENCE

"I think I'm a better person for having him in my life."

"I was quieter, now I'm more communicative."

BEHAVIOUR

"Thanks to her I've learnt how to control myself when I'm angry."

"My behaviour has changed. I know how to calm down. I benefit from that a lot, not only at work."

RESPONSIBILITY

"I'm learning how to work with finances, to be responsible. When I start a part-time job, I don't quit right away - I give it a chance, even if there are things I don't like."

"My overall behaviour... I've been trying harder since we had a serious talk. He told me he can see a change."

Many of the other comments made by the children indicate that they feel more motivated. They are keen to try new things and have improved at school, learnt various skills or found a job. All in all, their outlook on life and different situations has changed. This is also reflected in the observations made by BUDDY volunteers and staff at Centres for Children and Families (CENTRES - formerly CHILDREN'S HOMES) who care for these children and spend a lot of time with them.

* Children's responses are mapped against key areas important for a successful transition to independent living after leaving their centre, as defined by the Outcome Star™ tool.

Source: Internal survey using a standardised questionnaire for children – Youth Mentoring Survey, 2022 (56 responses)

Change observed by others

A child who doesn't have a BUDDY relationship is not the same as a child who can rely on their BUDDY volunteer. The people closest to the children describe the changes and improvements as follows:

Change observed by the VOLUNTEERS

• They spend about 4 hours a week with the children

- maturity
- ability to trust others
- better relationships with others

Points of CONVERGENCE



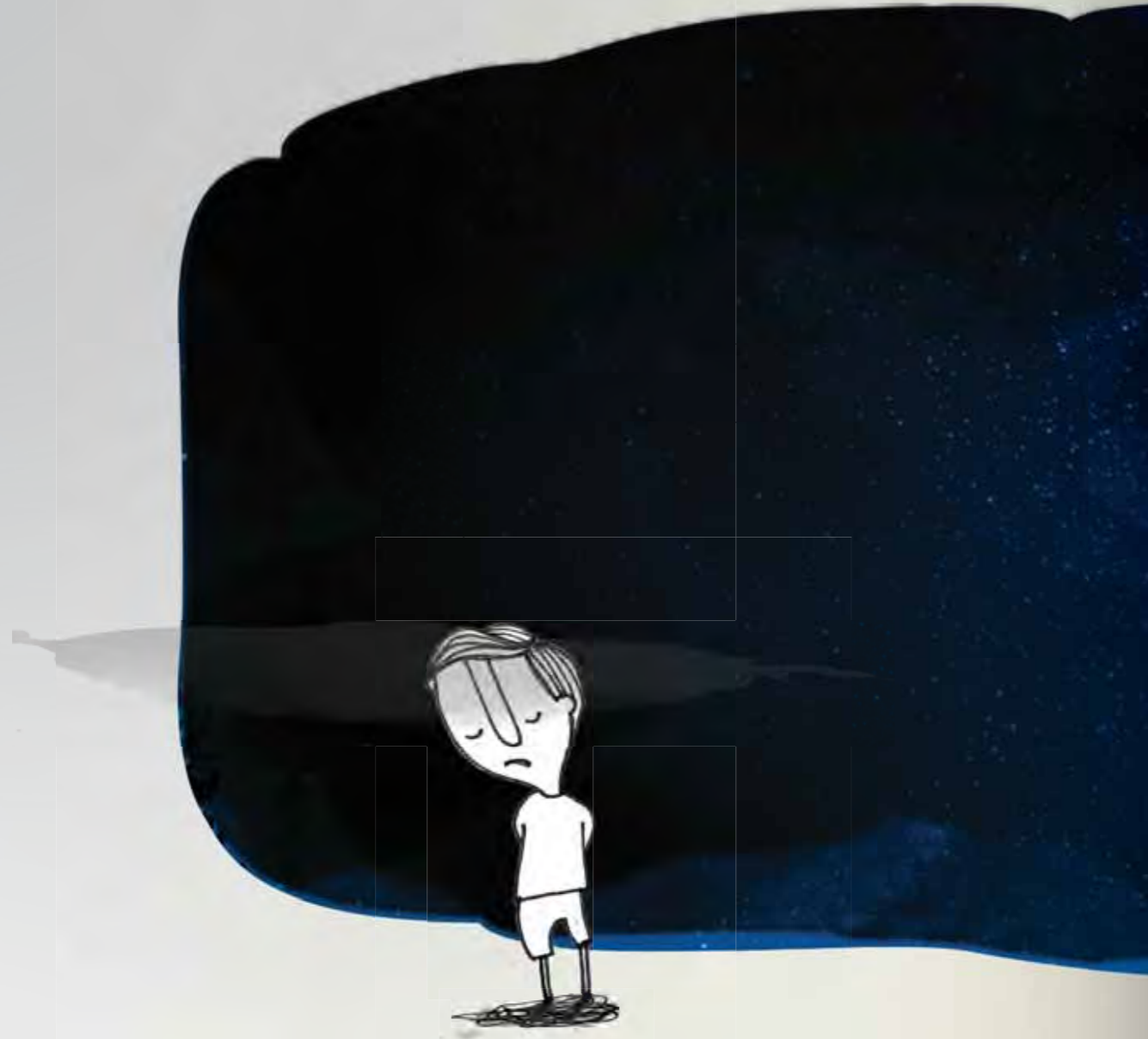
- more active and motivated
- more independent
- happier and more content
- change in attitude, different view of the world
- improvements at school and different life skills
- change in behaviour and better control over their emotions
- higher self-esteem and self-confidence
- openness and ability to communicate their needs

Change noticed by CHILDCARE WORKERS AT CENTRES

• They take care of the children every day

- perspective
- they feel they are important, that they matter
- they have a role model, a person they are close to who supports them with their life

Source: Internal survey using a standardised questionnaire for volunteers – Match Characteristics Questionnaire, 2022 (74 responses) and an annual questionnaire about BUDDY pairs for staff at the Centres (53 responses).



Calmer and safer

Zdenka Klasová is in her tenth year as director of the Centre for Children and Families in Malacky, which has been involved in the BUDDY program for seven years. She speaks highly of this experience. In our interview, she confirmed that “thanks to regular and close contact with their BUDDY volunteer, many children with behavioural problems have calmed down and found a sense of security”.



What appealed to you about becoming the director of a children's home?

I liked the idea of coming in and fixing things. I've always liked systems and order. This was at a time when children's homes were changing from the residential set-up to the system we see today. I remember that it wasn't until I was greeted at the door on my first day by this little boy, a grin on his face, clutching a white teddy bear, that something inside me clicked, and I began to look past my work and see the actual children and their stories.

What do the children from a children's home miss the most?

A person they can feel close to. Definitely. Our care workers try their hardest, but the closeness of another person, especially a family member, is extremely important for the children. And when the family is not there, it is the BUDDY volunteers who play such an immeasurable role in the lives of these children. A child does not share their BUDDY volunteer with anyone. Their BUDDY friend is there for them alone. And that's really vital.



You've been involved in the BUDDY program since 2016. Today, eight of your children have a BUDDY volunteer and four more are waiting for their BUDDY. What sort of effect do BUDDY volunteers have on children?

It varies a lot from person to person. Generally speaking, though, I have noticed that children who are volatile, exhibit problematic behaviour and attend various therapies have calmed down immensely due to the close and intense relationship they enjoy with their BUDDY volunteer.

Would you say they are happier?

Absolutely! Happier and calmer. Without a doubt.

Why is that?

A BUDDY volunteer makes a child feel they are special. It's a kind of reassurance that they are important to someone. That there's

someone out there in the world who is fond of them, someone they can turn to at any time for help.

Are there other areas in which children with a BUDDY volunteer have made progress?

Several have improved their grades in school. I know that in many cases it is clearly the volunteer and their support that play an important role here. Plus, the children become more independent and more confident. We had a child who appeared to be very socially adept. But he suddenly completely lost his way when he was attending secondary school in Bratislava. And his BUDDY volunteer was the one who helped him to come to grips with his new challenge and gain confidence. It was certainly better to have an adult BUDDY accompany him in the early days of high school than to have his care worker do it.

BUDDY volunteers open not only their hearts but also their world to these young people.

Yes, absolutely. They tackle and experience everyday worries and joys with them. They chat, they go on trips, go out for pizza, to the cinema. They fix bicycles and dripping taps together. They learn how to work on a computer, and they join their BUDDY volunteers when they're taking their own kids out for a walk. This gives them an insight into how other families and the world outside the children's home actually function. BUDDY volunteers certainly have a lot to give them. We can teach our children to do housework or how to budget but sadly we're not able to do much more than that.

What do you think this experience gives BUDDY volunteers?

(Silence for a moment)

Perhaps the same as what I get from my work. I, too, am constantly wanting our centre to be a sort of fixed point for the children. So that when they leave the children's home, they have somewhere to go back to and someone to turn to. That's one of the reasons why we have a flat for our grown-up "children" in our centre, and why we now employ three people who grew up in children's homes.

A BUDDY volunteer may feel the same way. They want to be a touchstone for someone in the future. To save at least one child. They can't rescue all of them. But at least one.



ZDENKA KLASOVÁ

Director of the Centre for Children and Families in Malacky. She also gained professional experience as the manager of the Department of Social Affairs and Family at the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in Banská Bystrica, where she was responsible for organising the running of all children's homes in the Banská Bystrica region, and at the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

Written by Simona Lučkaničová
Photography by Peter Brichta

Volunteers' most frequent answers to the question we ask each year:

“What does being a BUDDY volunteer mean to you?”

89%

of volunteers say their relationship with a BUDDY child has taught them a lot

94%

of volunteers would recommend BUDDY volunteering to others

→ A FEELING OF SATISFACTION AND JOY FROM HELPING

→ A NEW OUTLOOK ON LIFE, NEW EXPERIENCES, A CHANCE FOR PERSONAL GROWTH

→ MEETING GREAT NEW PEOPLE AND INTERACTING OUTSIDE MY SOCIAL BUBBLE

HUMILITY

→ GREATER HUMILITY, PATIENCE AND GRATITUDE FOR WHAT I HAVE

→ GETTING TO KNOW THE WORLD OF CHILDREN FROM CHILDCARE CENTRES

→ A NEW FRIEND AND A GREAT RELATIONSHIP WITH A GREAT KID



Powerful moments from our interviews with BUDDY volunteers:



EMPATHY

"My relationship with Sam has influenced my relationship with my own daughter," Dan explains. He said he used to be very strict with her, expecting perfect results at school and placing unnecessary pressure on her. "It was thanks to Sam, when I was **consciously and empathetically thinking about my reactions**, that I realised my behaviour towards my daughter was only counterproductive and was driving a wedge between us," confides Dan. He says that today he gives her a lot more freedom. "As her father, I find this approach much harder to apply, but I know it's the right thing to do."

Daniel Urban (42), Bratislava, consultant
more than 5 years in the BUDDY program



GRATITUDE

"I remember how completely fascinated she was by Trenčín Castle. It was one of the first castles she had ever visited. By her age, it felt like I had visited about 350,000 castles with my parents," she adds, rather indignantly. "Once again, it made me think about **how lucky I was to have parents** who had dragged me on all kinds of trips since I was a kid. That's all it takes. Simply to be born into the right family," she says.

Ľudka Braun (30), Bratislava, PR manager
more than 3 years in the BUDDY program



REALISATION

"Another moment that struck me was when it was Andrejka's birthday. She asked me where I went when I turned eighteen. At first I didn't understand the question. It was only after a bit that I realised what the **threshold of adulthood means for kids from children's homes**. I was at home when I was eighteen. But they have to start looking for a place to call home."

Jana Fedáková (42), Košice, lawyer
1.5 years in the BUDDY program

Read more at:
www.dennikn.sk/autor/buddy

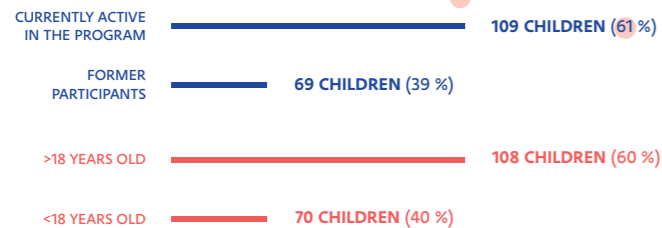


178 stories of friendship

Since we began focusing on working with BUDDY pairs, 178 children have been enrolled in the BUDDY program. Every week, in 12 towns and cities across Slovakia, children dreaming of a better future meet their BUDDY volunteers, who walk with them on their path to an independent life with dignity.



BRANKO (12), KOŠICE



ROMANA (16), MALACKY

ALTOGETHER

356

CHILDREN AND ADULTS WHOSE LIVES WERE CHANGED BY AN (EXTRA)ORDINARY FRIENDSHIP

Active children in the BUDDY program who have turned 18 years old are able to take care of themselves after leaving the Centres.

100%

HOUSING

90%

WORK/SCHOOL

100%

OF BUDDIES stay in touch even after the child leaves the Centre

178 adults have found room in their lives and hearts to help others by joining the BUDDY program. They regularly dedicate their time to the children and, with the support of the BUDDY coordinators, educate and develop themselves so they can be a source of support, reassurance and stability.

LUKÁŠ (42), BRATISLAVA



FERI (38), TREŇČÍN

179

244

356

272

302

129

173

SIMONKA (14), PIEŠŤANY

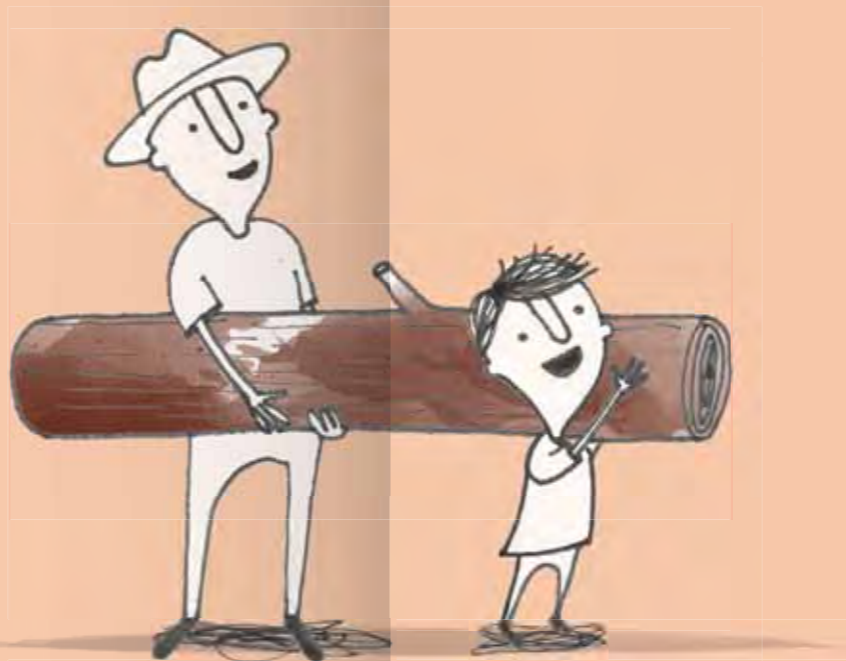


KATKA (31), NITRA

BUDDY relationship

Marek (34), BUDDY volunteer:

"IT'S A PERFECTLY ORDINARY FRIENDSHIP AND SOMETIMES WE HAVE ALMOST BEEN "PARTNERS IN CRIME", ESPECIALLY WHEN HE NEEDED TO "ESCAPE" THE CENTRE. I HAVE ALSO TRIED TO BE COMPLETELY ACCEPTING OF HIS FAMILY. I HELPED EDO TO MOVE IN WITH HIS MOTHER. IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS LIKE THAT THAT DEEPEN TRUST IN RELATIONSHIPS."



together for 5 years now

Edo (20), BUDDY child:

"MAREK AND I CLICKED RIGHT AWAY. NOT SO MUCH WITH THE VOLUNTEER I HAD BEFORE, BECAUSE HE HAD A LOT OF WORK. MAREK AND I WOULD GO OUT AND ABOUT. I NEVER KNEW MY REAL FATHER, SO I HAD MAREK. HE TAUGHT ME STUFF AND WE HAD FUN. HE SHOWED ME THINGS THAT WOULD COME IN HANDY IN LIFE, LIKE COMPUTERS. HIS WIFE HELPED ME WITH MY SLOVAK BEFORE MY EXAMS, AND MAREK KNEW A LOT ABOUT ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND ALL SORTS OF TECHNICAL STUFF FOR SCHOOL."

Edo and Marek's journey

Edo's first BUDDY relationship ended before it could even get going because of personal reasons on the part of the volunteer. This was disappointing for Edo (15). He needed a new volunteer as soon as possible, which is where Marek (29) from Trnava came in.



2018



HE STARTS TO TAKE AN INTEREST IN MAKING FRIENDS OUTSIDE THE CENTRE



Edo has an internship and is looking for part-time jobs. He starts earning money for the first time.

2019



WITH SCHOOL

EDO HAS DIFFICULTIES:



WITH MONEY (he finds it hard to budget, he has debts)



WITH RELATIONSHIPS (he has few friends outside the Centres)

2020



The pandemic period limited their contact. Despite active efforts by Marek, phone calls are rather awkward.



2021



EDO STARTS TO THRIVE:

- his grades improve
- he manages to save
- he shows initiative in interacting with Marek

2022



EDO MATURES

Edo invites Marek to visit his home for the first time. He appears to be more mature and responsible.



Edo helps his mother and sister financially in the running of the household.



EDO PASSES HIS EXAMS

His mother has health problems and needs money for medication. Edo supports her.



Edo reaches adulthood and decides to leave the Centre. He was offered the option to stay, but he goes to live with his mother. Marek is worried that this change might see Edo drop out of school, and encourages Edo to stay until his exams.



- Edo gets a job where he used to work part-time.
- he manages his finances
- he has friends at work – they plan a holiday abroad together

2023



THE PAIR ARE ON THEIR WAY TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING THE BUDDY PROGRAM.

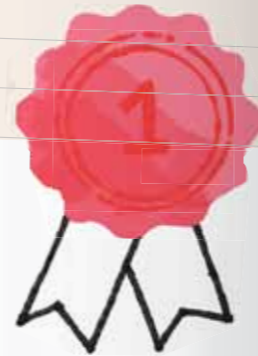


THEY KNOW THEY CAN COUNT ON EACH OTHER.

- promotion at work, completes his college course
- the relationship between Edo and Marek is now on the level of family friends

Strong relationships

THE BUDDY PROGRAM
BUILDS AND MAINTAINS
STRONG RELATIONSHIPS*



The quality and safety of BUDDY relationships is an absolute priority for us throughout the entire process – from selecting volunteers through to training them and supporting their BUDDY relationships, to ensure we help children as much as we can. We regularly monitor the quality of the relationships because quality relationships are a core requirement for ensuring a positive impact on the child.

TRUST BUDDY volunteers have an excellent ability to **listen and accept their** BUDDY children – as they are able to **avoid lecturing and judging**, the children turn to them with their problems.

SUPPORT BUDDY volunteers are working with sensitive children with many challenges and might have reservations about their own competence. This may be because we prepare them in detail for the reality of working with traumatised children, which naturally increases their sense of apprehension and responsibility for the task ahead. It also adds a powerful justification for the subsequent psychological support we provide them during the BUDDY relationship, so that they can be of long-term benefit to the children.

QUALITY CARE FOR THE VOLUNTEER

THE PREPAREDNESS OF THE VOLUNTEER:

The extent to which volunteers feel competent in their ability to form a relationship with the child and to help them.

BUDDY scores: 69 (2018) → 64 (2020) → 65 (2022)
Other mentoring programs: 72

THE CHILD TRUSTS THEIR BUDDY VOLUNTEER

SEEKING HELP WITH PROBLEMS:

The extent to which volunteers feel that a child will seek them out when they have personal problems.

BUDDY scores: 53 (2018) → 55 (2020) → 57 (2022)
Other mentoring programs: 47

THE VOLUNTEER DOES NOT LECTURE

PRESCRIPTION: The extent to which children feel that their volunteer is not overly prescriptive, and that they are given the space to express themselves.

BUDDY scores: 69 (2018) → 79 (2020) → 83 (2022)
Other mentoring programs: 78

* Based on the results of an independent comparison with similar mentoring programs in the US involving a total of more than 1,500 pairs. These programs work more with younger children (primary school). One of the factors specific to the BUDDY program is that it involves long-term work with teenagers in institutional care. This is why stricter selection criteria are set for BUDDY volunteers. Every year we monitor and assess many aspects of the relationships, with the aim of maintaining quality and continuously improving. No threshold is set, the goal is for the score not to decrease over time, but to increase (the maximum is 100).

Source: Internal survey using a standardised questionnaire for children – Youth Mentoring Survey, 2022 (56 responses – 92% of respondents – new children in the program do not fill in the questionnaire as a relationship has not yet been formed), and for volunteers – Match Characteristics Questionnaire, 2022 (74 responses – 97% of respondents).

New volunteers in 2022



+18

We are starting to look for volunteers across Slovakia. We launched a nationwide marketing campaign, with the first BUDDY matches in new cities to be made in 2023.

222

applications

As the children we work with are highly vulnerable, only applicants who exactly meet our strict selection criteria are considered.

4.7% vs. 8.0%
of applicants accepted

A more comprehensive application form increased the efficiency of the selection process and resulted in an increased proportion of appropriate applicants than in 2021.

5 regions
12 towns
in Slovakia

In 2022, we added volunteers in the eight cities shown on the map. As a result, BUDDY pairs are now actively meeting in twelve towns and cities in Slovakia.

110

Centres in Slovakia

15

More than 13% of the total number of Centres across Slovakia now participate in the BUDDY program.

Why do you support us?



"BUDDY DELIVERS REAL VALUE TO CHILDREN FROM CENTRES AND IT IS DONE BY THE RIGHT PEOPLE."

Marek Sásik, Slovenská sporiteľňa
BUDDY program supporter for 11 years

"BECAUSE IT'S A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR CHILDREN FROM CENTRES TO INTEGRATE INTO NORMAL LIFE. THEY HAVE A FRIEND THEY CAN ALWAYS RELY ON AND THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES."

"BECAUSE I PERSONALLY KNOW BOTH FOUNDERS AND I KNOW THAT THEY DO WHAT THEY DO WITH INTEGRITY, FROM THE HEART, AND WITH GREAT PROFESSIONALISM. AND ALSO BECAUSE I'VE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF GETTING TO KNOW SOME OF THE KIDS MYSELF, AND I KNOW HOW REWARDING IT CAN BE FOR OUR OWN PERSONAL GROWTH AND GRATITUDE FOR WHAT WE HAVE."

"I'M A BIG BELIEVER IN THE BUDDY CONCEPT AND I WISH THE PROGRAM COULD HELP MORE CHILDREN. BUDDY VOLUNTEERS TRY TO TEACH YOUNG PEOPLE TO CATCH FISH RATHER THAN JUST HAND THEM FISH, I THINK THAT'S EXACTLY THE RIGHT WAY TO DO IT."

"A GREAT PROJECT DRIVEN BY A GREAT IDEA, LED BY A GREAT PERSON."

"EVEN THOUGH IT OPERATES OUTSIDE THE SYSTEM, IT OFFERS A SYSTEMATIC SOLUTION TO A SEEMINGLY INVISIBLE BUT SERIOUS PROBLEM."

VGP
FOUNDATION

97%

"WE AT VGP FOUNDATION BELIEVE THAT EVERY CHILD NEEDS AND DESERVES SUPPORT TO FIND THEIR PATH TOWARDS A MEANINGFUL LIFE. THAT'S WHY WE SUPPORT THE BUDDY PROGRAM'S PROFESSIONAL TEAM AND VOLUNTEERS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO HELP CHILDREN WHO ARE UNABLE TO GROW UP WITHIN THEIR OWN FAMILIES."

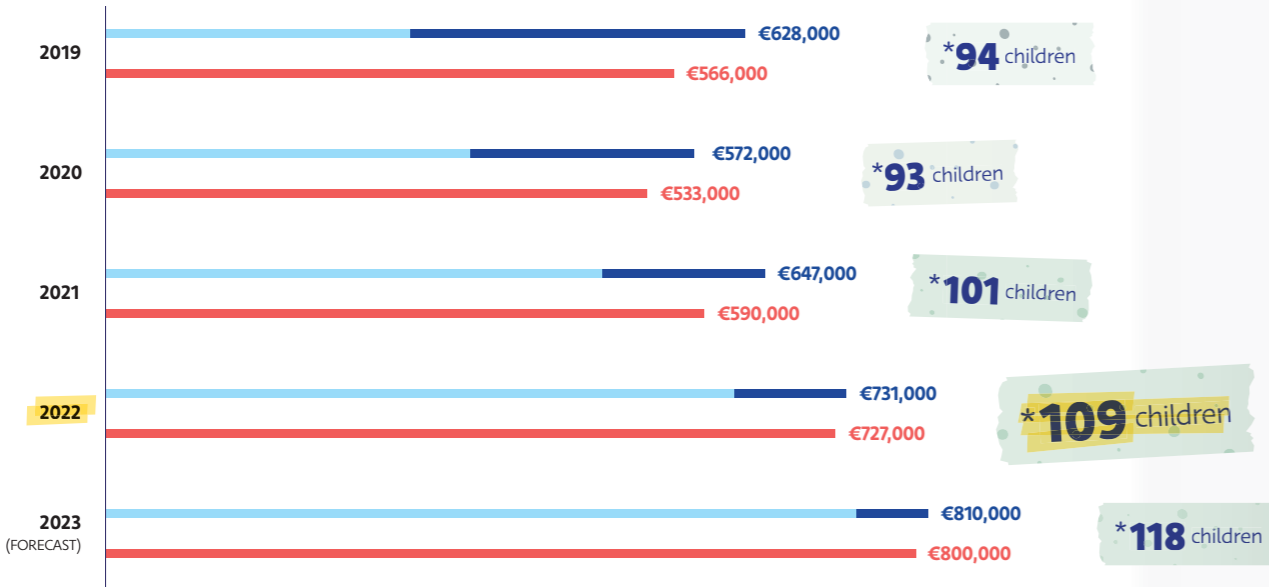
97% of BUDDY supporters would recommend others to support us financially or as volunteers

Source: Supporter Feedback Questionnaire (57 responses)

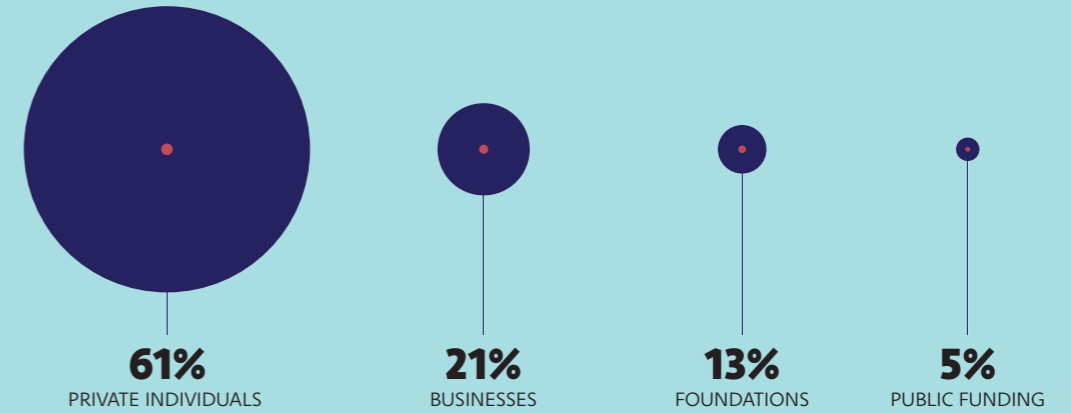
Revenue

The BUDDY program is mainly supported by private individuals who make regular monthly donations. In 2022, despite the difficult economic situation, we managed to increase our regular revenue to €621,000, an increase of €123,000 compared to the previous year.

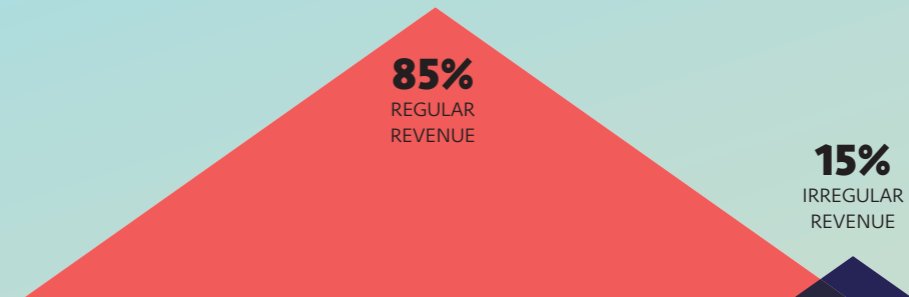
Long-term relationships with our financial supporters allow us to build quality and sustainable relationships for the children while providing the organisation with a stable base. The average duration of BUDDY sponsorship is more than 3 years.



REGULAR REVENUE REVENUE EXPENDITURE * CURRENTLY ACTIVE IN THE PROGRAM



In 2022, we received
€731,000



thanks to which we were able to take care of **109 children in the program.**

Expenditure

We are a non-profit organisation dedicated to the development of children and adults. The donations from our supporters were invested predominantly in high-quality professionals in psychology, management and marketing, to ensure that we build and maintain special relationships for the children.

We looked after **218 children and BUDDY volunteers** in the program

We strengthened our 18 member internal team with a **brand manager** and a **volunteer coordinator**.

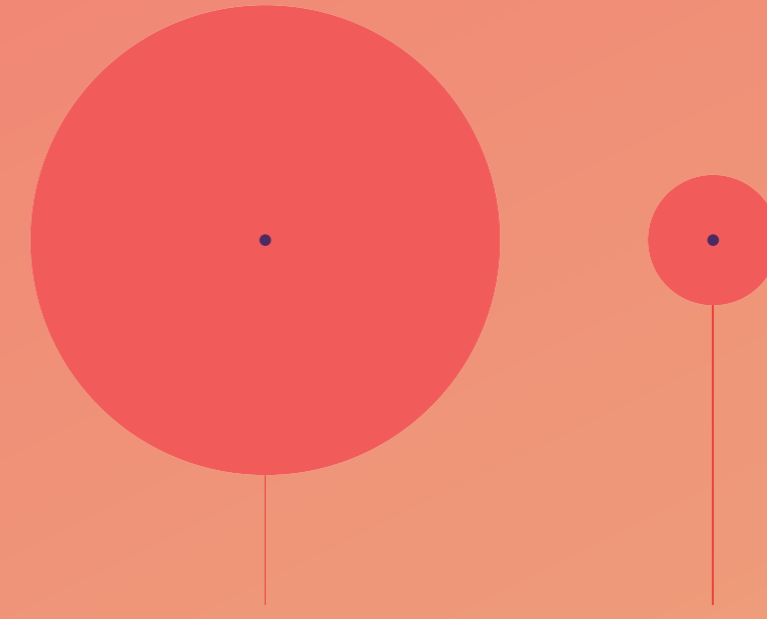
We consolidated ties with existing supporters and established new relationships, which **increased our regular revenue by €123,000**.

Our stringent processes and routine monitoring helped ensure that **no breaches of child safety** have been reported.

We assessed 222 applicants and found BUDDY volunteers for **18 children**.

Budget in 2022

€727,000



78%

SEEKING OUT AND SELECTING VOLUNTEERS AND CARING FOR BUDDY PAIRS

- Personnel costs: recruiting volunteer applicants, coordinating the selection of volunteers, caring for pairs in the program, overseeing the safety and quality of the program.
- Costs associated with recruitment campaigns and advertising (creative production, digital and print media, radio, OOH).
- Cost of advertising materials and administration.
- Operating costs.

22%

DONOR RECRUITMENT AND CARE

- Personnel costs: donor care, developing relationships with new donors, preparing donor materials and reports, financial reporting and auditing of donations, operations.
- Presentation and travel costs.
- Related administrative and operating costs (office, IT, etc.).

We're growing

In 2022, we started to become a nationwide organisation with ambitions to gradually help children not only in Slovakia but across the entire Central European region and potentially around the world.

2006

We felt strongly motivated to help children who do not grow up in a family.

2014

We came to realise that a close 1:1 relationship is what a child with traumatic life experiences needs. We stopped working directly with the children and started focusing on selecting and supporting volunteers.

2016 (53 children)

We actively created BUDDY pairs. We professionalised the care for the BUDDY pairs with experts in psychology. We started measuring the quality and impact of the program. We launched our first volunteer recruitment campaign in Bratislava.

2019 (118 children)

We improved the selection process. It consists of 8 parts, is more relevant and takes 3-6 months. It allows us to get to know the personality of the applicant and their ability to provide steady support to a child.

2022 (178 children)

Emphasis on brand awareness, with a nationwide marketing campaign. The first volunteers in Košice were matched with children. There was interest in volunteering in 5 out of Slovakia's 8 regions. Donor care – we increased the proportion of regular donations.

2025 (235 children)

Our goal is to achieve sustainable coverage across Slovakia. We will be working on a balanced budget and need to strengthen the internal team with key middle management.

2030 (400 children)

We want to help children in Central European countries where the situation is similar to Slovakia.



Our thanks to

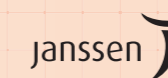
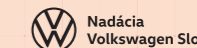
- 178 BUDDY volunteers who have created (extra)ordinary friendships with the children
- more than 200 individual and corporate supporters
- 15 participating Centres
- members of the internal BUDDY team and other collaborators
- all our friends and advocates raising awareness about the BUDDY program



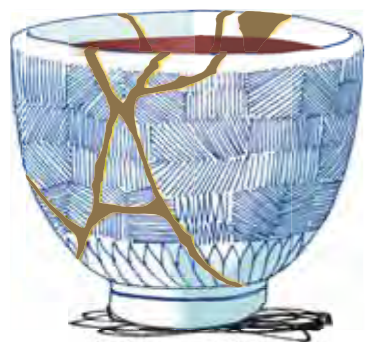
CORPORATE SUPPORT



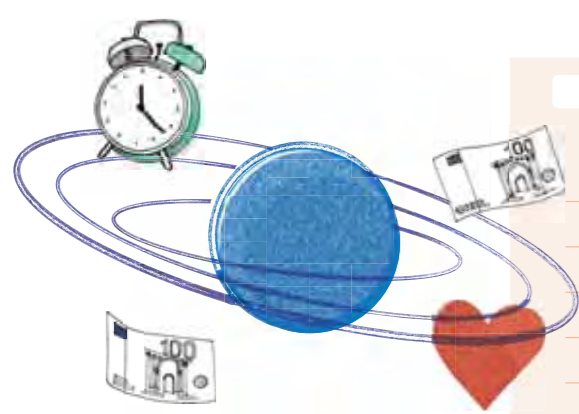
FOUNDATION SUPPORT



The BUDDY team



THANK YOU for being with us



Facebook Tvoj Buddy

Instagram tvojbuddy

LinkedIn Tvoj Buddy

www.tvojbuddy.sk

Civic association PRO VIDA
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811 02 Bratislava

COMPANY ID No: 37 927 051

IBAN: SK32 0900 0000 0051 4724 3608

The background is a textured teal color. Overlaid on this are several thick, brown, vein-like lines that meander across the page, creating an organic, interconnected pattern. The lines vary in thickness and direction, some running horizontally, some vertically, and some diagonally. They resemble biological structures like veins or perhaps a stylized map of connections.

**everybody
needs
someBUDDY**