The Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association (BFPA) is a non-governmental organization, which was registered as a non-profit association with public benefit at the end of 1992. At the very beginning of 1993 BFPA started its activities in promotion and provision of services, information and trainings in the field of family planning, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), sexually transmitted infections (STI), gender equality and access of vulnerable groups to health, social and educational services. BFPA is a full member of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), and since 2004 is the first Member Association (MA) to receive a full accreditation. The accreditation process is conducted once every five years and consists of 96 different criteria.

We care for the future!
For 20 years BFPA has worked with 48 different donors and donor programs. The main ones are:

- International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)
- European Union (different programs and grant schemes
- British Know-how Fund
- Cooperating Netherlands foundations
- “Bill and Melinda Gates” Foundation
- UNFPA

The BFPA members that build up its staff team, the Management Board and the volunteer resources of the organization, have different professional background: medical doctors, midwives, nurses, lawyers, journalists, teachers, psychologists, economists, social workers, health mediators, young people and representatives of the target groups of BFPA's projects. This diversity of professional and social expertise has helped the organization to implement successfully 56 macro projects, financed by 48 different donors and donor programs. These projects were implemented along with our ongoing health, social and educational activities in Sofia and our branches in the country.

During the years of its existence the association has worked together with and for the benefit of many different target groups:

- Mainstream young people in and out of schools
- Young people in institutions – boarding schools for youth with criminal records, schools for children without parental care
- Young people with special educational needs – with impaired vision and hearing, with learning and physical disabilities
- University students
- Underserved groups – men and women with difficult access to health services and information
- People in penitentiaries as well as the personnel in prisons
- Vulnerable groups – Roma, PLHIV, women from rural areas, poor and socially deprived people
Geographically BFPA’s work has real national coverage. An extremely valuable advantage was the existence of the branches of the association which during different periods of time included also the cities of Gabrovo, Sevlievo, Varna, Burgas, Haskovo, Shumen and Dolna Mitropoliya. At the moment BFPA has branches in Sofia, Ruse, Stara Zagora, Plovdiv and Pleven. In a number of other cities, villages, municipalities and regions counties across the country close partnerships are developed with local organizations and national networks which help BFPA in conducting its SRH and family planning activities.

During these 20 years in Bulgaria the association has reached 97 600 satisfied clients of its reproductive health related medical services and has conducted over 302 500 gynaecological and contraceptive consultations. More than 28 000 consultations and tests for HIV, hepatitis B and C, chlamydia, syphilis and other STIs were done. On its own and in various networks and different partnerships, BFPA has initiated and implemented very important national campaigns on topics related to awareness raising, prevention of HIV and STIs, promoting health and improving access to healthcare for vulnerable communities. Over 10 000 young people, students, representatives of marginalized communities, teachers, health specialists, NGO experts, municipality experts, representatives of the government administration and social workers have undergone the organization’s trainings. Trained by BFPA, the educators and peer educators alone have reached over a million young people, vulnerable groups, students, specialists and ordinary people. And this is just a modest approximate figure – the real number of people we reach is substantially bigger and the effect multiplies permanently.

BFPA’s membership in national networks
- National Network for Children
- Bulgarian Platform for International Development
- National AntiAIDS Coalition
- National Network for Equal Opportunities

For the first time in Bulgaria BFPA has:
- Introduced the interactive educational methods for health education as well as the “peer education” approach, applicable to adolescents and vulnerable communities
- Implemented a project for social marketing of contraceptives
- Introduced the IPPF, WHO and UNFPA criteria for quality of care and the concept of “Youth Friendly Services”
- Introduced the concept of mobile reproductive health services in isolated and distant areas
- Created educational sexual and reproductive health materials for adolescents with special educational needs
- Together with its partners from EMHPF introduced the health mediator as a key figure in the work with minority groups
BFPA's membership in IPPF, as well as in other international networks, allows BFPA to share its experience in other countries. The association provides technical assistance and does a lot of monitoring and evaluation work in other countries. These activities are related to local organizations' capacity building for provision of reproductive health services, improving leadership abilities and implementation of activities with different institutions and different target groups. BFPA has shared its expertise many times in countries as Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland and Romania.

BFPA is active in advocacy at national and at international level. The organization's huge experience in service and information provision and its intensive field work with representatives of vulnerable communities have contributed to the clear formulation of necessary strategies and actions in the field of reproductive health. The advocacy activities are based on the values, declared in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as on the agreements, drafted at the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development. The advocacy activities of the association are related to ensuring access to services and information in the field of reproductive health, including contraception. It is BFPA’s understanding that the right of access to health services and information is an integral part of the social and economical development of the country and it contributes greatly to the people’s well-being. From this starting point the organization has established and develops further contacts with different partners – parliamentarians, members of the government and local authorities, UN agencies. For these advocacy initiatives BFPA has also joined forces with a number of other national and international institutions and has found common basis for interaction with partners of various agendas and goals. In retrospective, this exact combination of practical experience and different partnerships has allowed BFPA to prioritize and mainstream within different national and local policies the issues related to sexual and reproductive health.

The organization continues its mission and looks forward by adding new challenges to its program portfolio, concerning: ODA and SRH, prevention of trafficking, disseminating adequate messages by developing video materials and using the social networks, conduct of oncologic screenings, prevention of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, efforts towards elimination of the reasons for child abandonment and assistance for foster care. And all these new things are done without giving up any activities or target groups. BFPA is creating new strategic partnerships and opportunities and looks even beyond the borders of the European Union in its dreams for disseminating knowledge, skills and experience and supporting health policies and innovative and inspiring initiatives.
BFPA membership in international networks and organizations:

- IPPF – International Planned Parenthood Federation
- EuroNGOs – the European NGOs for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Population and Development
- AIDS Action Europe – European network of NGOs working in the field of HIV/AIDS
- ASTRA – Central and Eastern European’s Women NGO Network for Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health

www.safesex.bg  bfpa@safesex.bg