

**RISK ASSESSMENT for CAST PROJECTS AT SUMMER CAMPS IN BULGARIA**

Your safety is very important to us. This document covers the basics you need to be aware of before you travel to Bulgaria with us. You should take this risk assessment with you to Bulgaria in order to refer to it during your trip. You should also read your induction pack thoroughly alongside this document. If you need help or advice, please contact Claire Brown, the CAST assistant project co-ordinator for Bulgaria on [bulgaria@cast-uk.com](mailto:bulgaria@cast-uk.com)

**Please read it carefully, act on the points which we suggest, and have a great trip! Thank you!**

	<b><u>Potential Risks/Factors That May Affect Your Work:</u></b>	<b><u>Ways To Reduce The Potential Risk:</u></b>
<b><u>1. Travel - General</u></b>		
<b>1.1</b>	Difficulties in travel from England to Sofia, Bulgaria and vice versa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fly from London Heathrow to Sofia and vice versa with your team.</li> <li>• Ensure you arrive at the airport at least two hours before the flight in order to check in with your team.</li> <li>• Ensure your luggage is packed and presented appropriately.</li> <li>• Ensure you have a passport which is in date and take all relevant tickets/booking numbers/bank cards/insurance details with you to the airport.</li> </ul>
<b>1.2</b>	Difficulties in travel from Sofia airport to hostel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You will arrive as a team and once arrived at the airport will be met by the hostel mini bus that will take you to Hostel Mostel in Sofia.</li> <li>• You must make sure you have the contact details that are in your Induction packs for the Hostel, Jack &amp; Elsabe &amp; the taxi company number and the name of the company in case of emergencies. The transport from the airport to the hostel is about 5 leva per person. This is to be paid on arrival. Therefore you need to make sure you change money in UK before travelling.</li> </ul>
<b>1.3</b>	Not having the relevant documents: visas, insurance, EHIC, official permission, documents for Jack & Elsabe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No visa required for British citizens. If you are of another nationality it is your responsibility to make the necessary arrangements.</li> <li>• Appropriate insurance should be obtained well in advance to your trip through a reputable company.</li> <li>• Make sure you have a valid European Health Insurance Card well in advance of your trip (as well as insurance).</li> <li>• Make sure you have signed and read carefully the documents sent via email from both CAST and Jack &amp; Elsabe regarding the camp. You may not be allowed to take part in the camp if you do not bring these documents. They are also part of your Induction Packs for your information.</li> </ul>
<b>1.4</b>	Travel around Sofia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When travelling around Sofia, please stay together as a team and make sure you are have the appropriate numbers/addresses for the Hostel, jack &amp; Elsabe and so on. Please make sure someone knows where you are going and approximately when</li> </ul>

## Lora Foundation Youth Camp, Bulgaria Risk Assessment

			<p>you will be returning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If eating out please remember to stay together and don't go off by yourself at any time. If you wish to eat out at restaurants, the staff at the Hostel will be able to provide you with information on this.</li> </ul>
	1.5	Pick Pockets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may be at higher risk of pick pockets (especially children) when walking or on public transport. Please be careful!</li> </ul>
<b>2. Travel- To &amp; From the Hostel to the camp</b>			
2.	2.1	Difficulties in travel to and from hostel to the bus station for travel to the camp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel will be via taxi. The staff at the hostel speak English and if asked will order you a taxi to the bus station on the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> July. You need to be at the bus stop for 8.30 am, and so will need to leave in plenty of time. An email will have already informed the hostel that you need to have a taxi ordered for this date &amp; time. However, on arrival at the hostel this is your responsibility as a team that you check this arrangement with a member of staff.</li> <li>In case of emergencies, make sure you have the contact number for the taxi firm given in your Induction Packs (they speak English)</li> <li>Ensure you have address of bus station and Jack &amp; Elsabe's number written down.</li> <li>Ensure you carry a mobile phone and contact numbers for your team and Jack &amp; Elsabe.</li> <li>Ensure you have adequate money (inc. Bulgarian Leva- for the taxi and so on)</li> </ul>
	2.2	Difficulties finding Jack & Elsabe at the bus stop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You must stay together as a team. Once arrived at the bus station, you should have already informed Jack &amp; Elsabe you have arrived in Sofia (see Induction Pack) and so should have their contact details. If it is unclear where they are, do not hesitate to phone them!</li> </ul>
	2.3	Travel Sickness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The bus journey will take between 3-5 hours depending on traffic and conditions and so on. Please make sure you have appropriate medicines/food/drink for the journey. If you suffer from travel sickness, you need to make sure you have the correct tablets for this. Inform Jack &amp; Elsabe if there are any concerns/problems.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Accommodation- at the Hostel</b>			
3.	3.1	Hostel Accommodation/safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be aware of your personal belongings and keep them safe at all times</li> <li>Hostel info will be on their internet page, you will find the web address in your Induction packs.</li> <li>Safety in the hostel- Be aware of others and keep yourself safe at all times</li> <li>Stay as a team!</li> <li>Drinking and clubs and so on... Please remember why you are on the trip, and we ask that you do not go to clubs or bars and behave in anyway inappropriate. If you are under the age of 18, then you should not be drinking alcohol at all.</li> </ul>

If you have any queries/concerns please contact Claire Brown, CAST Project co-ordinator for Sophia at [bulgaria@cast-uk.com](mailto:bulgaria@cast-uk.com)  
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## Lora Foundation Youth Camp, Bulgaria Risk Assessment

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please respect the Bulgarian laws.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Accommodation – at the camp</b>			
4.	4.1	Camp Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You will be staying at an apartment at the camp- site. This will be in bedded dorms.</li> <li>Ensure the apartment is always locked whether you are in or out of the apartment.</li> <li>Shut all windows and doors when not in the apartment.</li> <li>Avoid taking valuable items unnecessarily.</li> <li>Conceal any valuable items you do need to take.</li> <li>Turn off all plug sockets, water, and lights when ever you leave the apartment unattended if applicable.</li> </ul>
	4.2	Wandering in and around the camp/appropriate behaviour in the rooms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take care when in and around the camp. Don't venture out alone around the camp.</li> <li>Remember that you should never go into the children's rooms, even if invited by them. The children should not be allowed in your rooms at any time. This is very important. There are two separate areas for the volunteers and the children. Please respect the rules and regulations given by Jack &amp; Elsabe upon arrival.</li> <li>Please respect the camps rules. No inappropriate relationships between volunteers. Remember why you are at the camp!</li> </ul>
	4.3	Electrical faults/fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although there should not be faults with the electricity supply you should take care when using plug sockets and not leave items plugged in unsupervised, if applicable.</li> <li>Ensure you know where exits &amp; fire extinguishers are.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Medical- General</b>			
5.	5.1	Need to use local medical facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is not advisable to use the local health centres. The conditions at the local hospital are quite poor.</li> <li>Volunteers should consider their health carefully before participating in the project. It is the responsibility of the individual volunteer to discuss their individual needs with their GP.</li> <li>Volunteers should carry double doses of all prescribed medicines with them in case of losses.</li> <li>It is the responsibility of individual volunteers to discuss health concerns with their team leaders or the relevant officers.</li> </ul>
	5.2	Lack of appropriate vaccinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers should ensure they visit their GP/practice nurse well in advance of their trip.</li> <li>It is the responsibility of the volunteer to discuss the nature of their work with their GP/practice nurse to ensure they receive all necessary vaccinations.</li> </ul>
	5.3	General illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mild sickness of some sort is common due to the proximity to children and adults who invariably carry</li> </ul>

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## Lora Foundation Youth Camp, Bulgaria Risk Assessment

			<p>germs (e.g. stomach upset/cold). It is the responsibility of the volunteer to bring an appropriate first aid kit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers should inform Claire and Jack or Elsabe if they feel unable to attend a project due to illness.</li> </ul>
	5.4	HIV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are not aware of any children/adults with HIV/AIDS in the camp. However, we can not be 100% sure and volunteers should take responsibility for themselves.</li> <li>The main risks of infection with HIV whilst working with infected children come via infected blood coming into contact with your blood (e.g. in an open cut) or mucous membranes (e.g. the eye or the inside of the nose). The risk is very low. However volunteers should take reasonable precautions such as covering any cuts with plasters. If a child cuts themselves or is bleeding please alert a member of staff rather than manage it yourself. If you do come into contact with blood or bodily fluids make sure you wash it off immediately.</li> </ul>
	5.5	Head lice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is possible that some of the children/adults may have head lice. It is your responsibility to take treatments for head lice if they wish.</li> </ul>
	5.6	Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some of the people we work with may have TB and Hepatitis.</li> <li>Volunteers should ensure they have been sufficiently vaccinated.</li> </ul>
<b>6.</b>	<b><u>6. Use of equipment</u></b>		
	6.1	Risk of using equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If there is equipment at the camp for the volunteers to use. Please make sure this is done so in an appropriate manner and that you are aware of how to use the equipment safely. Please ask Jack &amp; Elsabe if unsure.</li> </ul>
	6.2	Maintenance of equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notify staff if equipment is broken or unsafe.</li> </ul>
<b>7.</b>	<b><u>7. Catering- General</u></b>		
	7.1	Restaurants & Eating Out- Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safety when eating out. Ask staff at Hostel for advice on restaurants. Use the Lonely Planet guide on the internet for further information on the surrounding areas and so on!</li> </ul>
<b><u>8. Catering- Camp</u></b>			
<b>8.</b>	8.1	Camp food not able to satisfy special dietary requirements/Using the kitchen facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If volunteers have special dietary requirements, it is their responsibility to take appropriate foods and food supplements from the UK and alert Jack &amp; Elsabe on arrival. You will be expected to be able to provide for your own dietary requirements (i.e. vegetarian) as the cooks will be providing the food for the majority of the camp, they may not be able to satisfy your specific requirements, therefore you will need to make sure you have the correct food for your own dietary</li> </ul>

## Lora Foundation Youth Camp, Bulgaria Risk Assessment

			<p>requirements. (For further info see info sent via email from Jack &amp; Elsabe regarding the camp)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If this is the case, you will be able to make use of the kitchen facilities at the camp, to make your own food in regulation with your specific dietary need. Make sure you are fully aware of how the kitchen facilities work and follow safety precautions when preparing your food. Always ask Jack &amp; Elsabe if unsure!</li> </ul>
	<b>8.2</b>	Risk of illness from eating local food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food is available from the shops in Sofia and also last minute buys at the bus station. It is the responsibility of volunteers to be fully prepared to meet their own needs.</li> </ul>
<b>9. Personal Safety- General</b>			
<i>Read ALL points below and above for advice on safety in Sofia inc 1.4/1.5</i>			
<b>9.</b>	<b>9.1</b>	Accident/emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers are responsible for their own safety.</li> <li>It is the responsibility of the volunteer to have the appropriate insurance.</li> <li>If a volunteer is aware of a potential issue which may affect their safety, this should be discussed with Claire, the CAST assistant project co-ordinator prior to their trip. If this occurs whilst in Sofia, please discuss this with Jack &amp; Elsabe.</li> <li>Accidents should be formally reported in the accident book.</li> </ul>
	<b>9.2</b>	Risk of mugging/assault in Bulgaria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers are responsible for their own personal safety and if the volunteers follow our advice the risk of this should remain fairly low.</li> <li>Volunteers should not go out alone, especially at night</li> <li>Do not have valuable items visible on your person.</li> <li>Be sensitive and sensible when withdrawing money from the bank.</li> <li>Do not act distastefully foreign (e.g. shouting, 'practising' Bulgarian loudly in public, mimicking, clearly describing downfalls, or not using any Bulgarian for pleasantries).</li> </ul>
<b>10. Personal Safety- Camp</b>			
<i>Also see below for further advice when working at the camp</i>			
	<b>10.1</b>	Working alone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers should not be working alone at any time. If you find yourself in this situation you must find another team member immediately.</li> <li>Volunteers must read the risk assessments for all the projects and follow and act upon the advice given.</li> <li>It is the responsibility of the volunteer to read the information in the induction pack regarding their projects thoroughly.</li> </ul>
	<b>10.2</b>	Risk of violence from the children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is the responsibility of the volunteer to read the risk assessments for all the projects and follow and act upon the advice given.</li> <li>If you are concerned with any behaviour that you deem inappropriate from the children. Please talk to Jack &amp; Elsabe at the camp.</li> </ul>

## Lora Foundation Youth Camp, Bulgaria Risk Assessment

	<b>10.3</b>	Not wandering around the camp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please keep Jack &amp; Elsabe informed at all times if you plan to look at the surrounding areas. Please respect their rules and boundaries and act upon any advice given by them.</li> </ul>
<b>11.</b>	<b><u>11. Physical hazards</u></b>		
	<b>11.1</b>	Risk of injury when out around the camp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is the responsibility of the volunteer to be sensible and to take sensible precautions to avoid injury (e.g. sensible footwear when walking to avoid injury due to pot holes).</li> </ul>
	<b>11.2</b>	Risk of illness/harm due to climate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is very warm in the summers and usually very cold in the winters. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to be sensible about this and follow standard procedures for these temperature extremes (e.g. drink plenty of water and wear sensible clothing).</li> </ul>
<b>12.</b>	<b><u>12. Biological Hazards</u></b>		
	<b>12.1</b>	Risk of injury from animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mosquitoes are especially prevalent during summer months and volunteers should obtain necessary items in order to tackle this prior to their trip.</li> <li>Stray dogs wonder the streets in Bulgaria but generally do not go too near humans if they are sensible. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to avoid them. It is up to individual volunteers whether they choose to have the rabies vaccine. See section 3.2.</li> <li>Horses are still widely used as a form of transport and volunteers should be careful around horses.</li> </ul>
<b>13.</b>	<b><u>13. Culture</u></b>		
	<b>13.1</b>	Risk of offending local people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers should dress modestly and conduct themselves in a manner which fits their work.</li> <li>Volunteers should respect the religious beliefs held by team members and staff/children and so on.</li> <li>Volunteers are expected to respect Bulgarian laws.</li> </ul>
<b>14.</b>	<b><u>14. Stress at the Camp &amp; in General</u></b>		
	<b>14.1</b>	Risk of loneliness, isolation and home sickness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is the responsibility of the volunteer to discuss concerns with other members of their team or a CAST officer.</li> <li>Volunteers should work with their team in order to form friendships and contribute socially.</li> <li>Volunteers may make use of the local internet café and cheap phone cards to maintain contact with home.</li> <li>Volunteers should make the most of training days and forums in order to get to know their team.</li> </ul>

Lora Foundation Youth Camp, Bulgaria Risk Assessment

15.	<b><u>15. Photography</u></b>		
	15.1	Taking photos inappropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers MUST ask before taking photographs and make sure this is done so in an appropriate manner and at an appropriate time. Jack &amp; Elsabe will tell volunteers if they are unable to take photographs. If in doubt always ask never assume! It is nice to keep photos as memories but they should be happy memories – we only agree with positive photos!</li> </ul>
16.	<b><u>16 Children at the Camp</u></b>		
	16.1	Being pushed/having objects thrown at you/hair being pulled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The children you work with will not deliberately hurt you. However, some may have behavioural problems and may act out in frustration/excitement/fear/confusion. Please remember the background of the people you work with and possible reasons for their behaviour. You should not put yourself at any extra risk so it is important to rely on your own intuition when deciding the best course of action.</li> <li>It may often be appropriate to give no reaction to this behaviour other than calmly walking away so as not to encourage this behaviour. However it may be that turning your back on the child would be more risky than staying with them. Use your judgement or ask for help.</li> <li>Under no circumstances must you ever punish a child for being aggressive with you.</li> <li>It is advisable for those with long hair to tie it back.</li> <li>Don't wear jewellery at all – it's too tempting to pull!</li> <li>If you wear glasses where an old pair that you don't mind getting broken or if possible, contact lenses.</li> <li>Wear old clothes that you don't mind getting damaged/dirty!</li> </ul>
	16.2	Being scratched by the children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any cuts or scratches should be disinfected and plastered straight away as many of the children enjoy playing in the soil and sand outside so the risk of infection will be fairly high.</li> <li>If scratched ask a team member to come with you and help you clean and plaster the cut. (it is your responsibility to bring your own first aid kit)</li> </ul>
	16.3	The children wanting to be picked up/swung around	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are responsible for knowing your own limits. If you know that you have a weak back, please do not attempt to pick up the children continuously. Obviously many of the children are very small and light and so shouldn't pose any risk to hurting your back. However, many of the older children will also want to be picked up. Please be sensitive to this and try to be consistent with the children and the way that your work with them (although obviously you will be</li> </ul>

## Lora Foundation Youth Camp, Bulgaria Risk Assessment

			<p>able to play in different ways with the different children).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't be afraid to say no to a child if you feel it would be unsafe for you or the child to carry them/swing them in a way they want. Try to explain why using gestures and distract them with another game/object. You could also involve another volunteer and play in pairs.</li> </ul>
	<b>16.4</b>	Taking the children out of the camp/ into inappropriate areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You must never take the children anywhere without the permission of Jack &amp; Elsabe. Please read ALL documents from CAST and sent directly from Jack &amp; Elsabe regarding the camp.</li> </ul>
	<b>16.5</b>	Inappropriate behaviour towards children due to cultural differences from volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to cultural differences, you may find that certain behaviour is not appropriate. For example, a male volunteer hugging a girl and vice versa. Please listen carefully to the induction talk given by Jack &amp; Elsabe at the beginning and follow all advice. If you are unsure please ask Jack &amp; Elsabe for further guidance.</li> </ul>
<b>17</b>	<b>17 Language Barriers at the Camp</b>		
	<b>17.1</b>	Misunderstanding with the carers/teachers exacerbated by the language barrier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask for help/support if needed</li> <li>• There will be teachers and other volunteers that can translate, however please try and learn a few basic phrases and key words to help you communicate</li> <li>• Read Induction Pack and listen to instructions given and advice by Jack &amp; Elsabe on arrival at the camp. They will provide information on the potential language barrier on the Induction session before the camp.</li> </ul>
	<b>17.2</b>	Difficulties & misunderstanding with the children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use gestures, key words &amp; phrases.</li> <li>• Don't get frustrated and ask for help if needed from other volunteers, teachers and Jack &amp; Elsabe</li> <li>• Have Fun and smile!</li> <li>• Use your imagination to engage the children, for example, if language is becoming a difficulty, just start a game of football and gesture to others to join in</li> </ul>
	<b>17.3</b>	Feeling unsure what to do due to the language barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to instructions and Induction Day given by Jack &amp; Elsabe</li> <li>• Ask for help if unsure</li> <li>• Use the words/phrases as a starting point</li> <li>• Use non-verbal forms of communications (see above)</li> <li>• Observe other volunteers and don't forget to talk to your team and Jack &amp; Elsabe about any difficulties</li> </ul>

## Lora Foundation Youth Camp, Bulgaria Risk Assessment

			<p>and worries!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have Fun!!</li> </ul>
<b>18.</b>	<b><u>18. Working at the Camp</u></b>		
	<b>18.1</b>	Risk of sunburn/dehydration and so on	It is very warm in the summers and usually very cold in the winters. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to be sensible about this and follow standard procedures for these temperature extremes (e.g. drink plenty of water and wear sensible clothing).
	<b>18.2</b>	When playing games risk of injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know your own limitations. If you feel you can not participate in an activity speak to Jack &amp; Elsabe.</li> </ul>
	<b>18.3</b>	Uneven surfaces around the camp grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be careful in and around the camp as there will be uneven surface and possibly pot holes and so on. Be extra careful walking around the camp at night.</li> <li>• It is the responsibility of the volunteer to be sensible and to take sensible precautions to avoid injury (e.g. sensible footwear when walking to avoid injury due to pot holes).</li> </ul>
	<b>18.4</b>	Feeling exhausted and tired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a break!</li> <li>• Speak to Jack &amp; Elsabe if you feel you need to take a break.</li> <li>• Keep hydrated and drink plenty of bottled water</li> </ul>
	<b>18.5</b>	Wandering around the camp at night	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please keep to the boundaries and rules set in place by Jack &amp; Elsabe.</li> <li>• Stay in sight</li> <li>• Don't wander off at night/ or at anytime on your own.</li> <li>• Stay with other volunteers.</li> <li>• Don't put yourself at risk</li> </ul>

Whilst we have made every effort to provide a comprehensive risk assessment as with anything there may be unforeseen risks. If you encounter any of these on your trip please inform your team leader in order for us to continue to update our risk assessments. Life Improvement For Everyone and our partners cannot accept any liability for any accidents/incidents occurring during your trip unless there is a clear indication of negligence on our part. Please work with us to make your trip as safe and enjoyable as possible. Thank you! Have a great trip!

Please ensure that:

- a) You have read and understood the risks described all sections above.
- b) You are willing to undertake the work involved despite the potential risks.
- c) You will take responsibility for your own safety and well-being during your trip based on an awareness of the above risks.