







Photo by Beverly&Pack

It is the story of the plight of both captive and wild bears in Romania and how there is hope for the future of these majestic animals to live in peace in the forests of the Carpathian Mountains.

COMPANY IDENTITY

	Libearty - Bear Sanctuary	Name
	Romania	Country
	www.ampbears.ro	Web site
	2005	Starting year
	1,000,000€ (2015) *	Annual turnover
	Mature/Stable	Current status
	Local	Market scale
	Direct Markets	Market-based instruments
	---	Awards

* for all activities of the managing association, Millions of Friends, not only for Libearty.

FROM IDEA TO BUSINESS



Libearty - Saving captive bears is the largest project to rescue and care for brown bears in Romania. It is one of the most ethical wildlife attractions, with beneficial implications in several areas: environmental and species conservation, education, social involvement.

Libearty includes 69 hectares of oak forest – a concession given for 49 years by the City Hall of Zarnesti, which became a partner in this project. Libearty's role is to help captive bears, or bears kept in improper conditions in zoos, by accommodating them in their natural environment, that helps them to forget the torments of captivity. 95 bears have been rescued since the Libearty Sanctuary was open. All the bears had lived a nightmare, full of abuse, in tiny cages contrary to what they needed. Many were caged on the terraces in front of restaurants, hotels, guesthouses, lodges and gas stations, as tourist attractions. Also, many bears came to the Zarnesti Sanctuary from several Romanian zoos that did not provide decent minimum conditions for animals in their care. The Sanctuary also boasts the rescue of four bears taken from miserable conditions in other countries. Bears Maria and Marko were brought from Albania, Misha came from Georgia and Betsy is a bear rescued from Texas, USA who came through the intervention of the Houston SPCA (USA). There are more than 80 bears currently in their care.




The bears are not there for the entertainment of visitors, and the visiting public have to be aware that they may not even see any bears if the animals prefer to rest out of sight. This is basically a retirement home for rescued animals.

The Reserve attracts a large number of visitors from different backgrounds, including volunteers who help manage the Sanctuary, researchers and students from several countries (the US, the UK, France, Australia and Russia) as well as tourists.



Proceeds from visitor fees and donations are used for the maintenance of the sanctuary. Amounts raised through campaign: Adopt a bear - The minimum amount is 5€/month (60€/year), an exclusive adoption is for 500€/month; donations for volunteering (200-500€/week); redirecting 2% of annual tax to a non-governmental organization (NGO).

ACTORS INVOLVED

	Public (Zarnesty Municipality) Civil Society Org (Millions of Friends Association)	Promoters
	Civil Society Org (World Society for the Protection of Animals)	Developers
	Private (donations)	Investors

IMPACTS



positive: raising awareness of wildlife importance within the community.

Social

positive: the initiative has positive impacts for local economy (hotels and restaurants in Zarnesti). It also led to an increase in employment opportunities and opportunities to develop new business (e.g. production and sale of souvenirs).

Economic

positive: rescuing a protected species from harm and contributing to its conservation.

Environmental

negative: in the long term, the forest suffers because of the large number of animals, sometimes causing tree mortality. Pressure due to increasing number of visitors is reduced, however the number of visitors and visiting hours being limited.

positive: collaboration with Romanian National Environment Guard, the Environment Protection Agency, forestry departments and the Institute for Forest Research has been essential for this activity.

Institutional

MAIN WEAKNESSES



Since the possibility to further expand the area is uncertain, the main weakness relates to the availability of space, if the number of animals keeps increasing.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS



In order to increase awareness, the Sanctuary develops and runs campaigns, events and actions all year long.