

**ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANIZATION IN 2008**



Social Activities and Practices Institute
1606 Sofia, 22 Lyulin Planina Str., entr. A,
tel/fax: 02/8524713, 9533147
sapi@sapibg.org, www.sapibg.org

**SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES INSTITUTE
(SAPI)**

Primary legal registration of the candidate

Social Activities and Practices Institute is a non-profit organization registered according to the Bulgarian legislation.

Decision № 1 /5.03.2001 F.F № 11505/2000 SOFIA CITY COURT

Pre-registration in public benefit

Decision № 2 /26.02. 2004 F.F № 11505/2000 SOFIA CITY COURT

Pre-registration

Decision № 3 /09.01. 2006 F.F № 11505/2000 SOFIA CITY COURT

BULSTAT

130507277

Number of the National Tax Register

1221170446

Three names and Identity Number of the person representing the candidate

NELLY LIUDMILOVA PETROVA – DIMITROVA, Identity Number 5603016470

Members of the Management Board of the candidate

Name	Profession	Function
Nelly Liudmilova Petrova-Dimitrova	PhD in social work Associate Professor in social work	Chairperson of the Management Board
Nadq Ivanova Stoikova	PhD in social pedagogy, Social worker	Executive director
George Bogdanov	Consultant in general	Program director

Name	Profession	Function
	social work	
Diana Ruseva	Psychologist	Program director
Katerina Sergienkova	HR expert	Administrative coordinator

Official address according to the court registration (structure act)

Sofia, 11 Grigor Nachevich, entr. A, apt.3

Contact address – Sofia 1606, Liulin Planina 22, entr. A

Tel/fax: 02/8524713, 02/9533147

Internet address: sapi@sapibg.org,

Web site: www.sapibg.org

The goals of the association are:

1. Development and improvement of the social strategies and practices
2. Increasing the quality of professional training, qualification, advanced qualification, and pre-qualification of people from the helping professions;
3. Studying of the policies, strategies and practices of social activities;
4. Optimization and implementation of innovative practices in the area of social activities in Bulgaria;
5. Stimulation of the cooperation and coordination between institutions and organizations in the field of training and practices of social work;

Basic activities related to the accomplishment of the above-mentioned goals:

- Development and implementation of programs for advanced professional training of people from the helping professions in cooperation with universities and other training organizations in the country and abroad;
- Development of projects regarding qualification standards, professional standards and profiles of the helping professions;
- Development and implementation of trainer preparation programs in social activities;

- Development, approbation and implementation of social services for individuals, groups and communities; development and introduction of new programs, methods, approaches and means of social work;
- Development and implementation of projects for the creation of local, regional and national networks in the sphere of social work training, practices and activities;
- Research and expert assessment of policies, strategies and practices in the sphere of social work trainings, practices and activities; comparative research of policies, strategies and practices in other countries;
- Organization and hosting of topical conferences and seminars; development and spreading of information and methodical materials; partnership and cooperation with other institutions and organizations in the country and abroad for the development and implementation of projects and programs; experience exchange with similar international organizations;

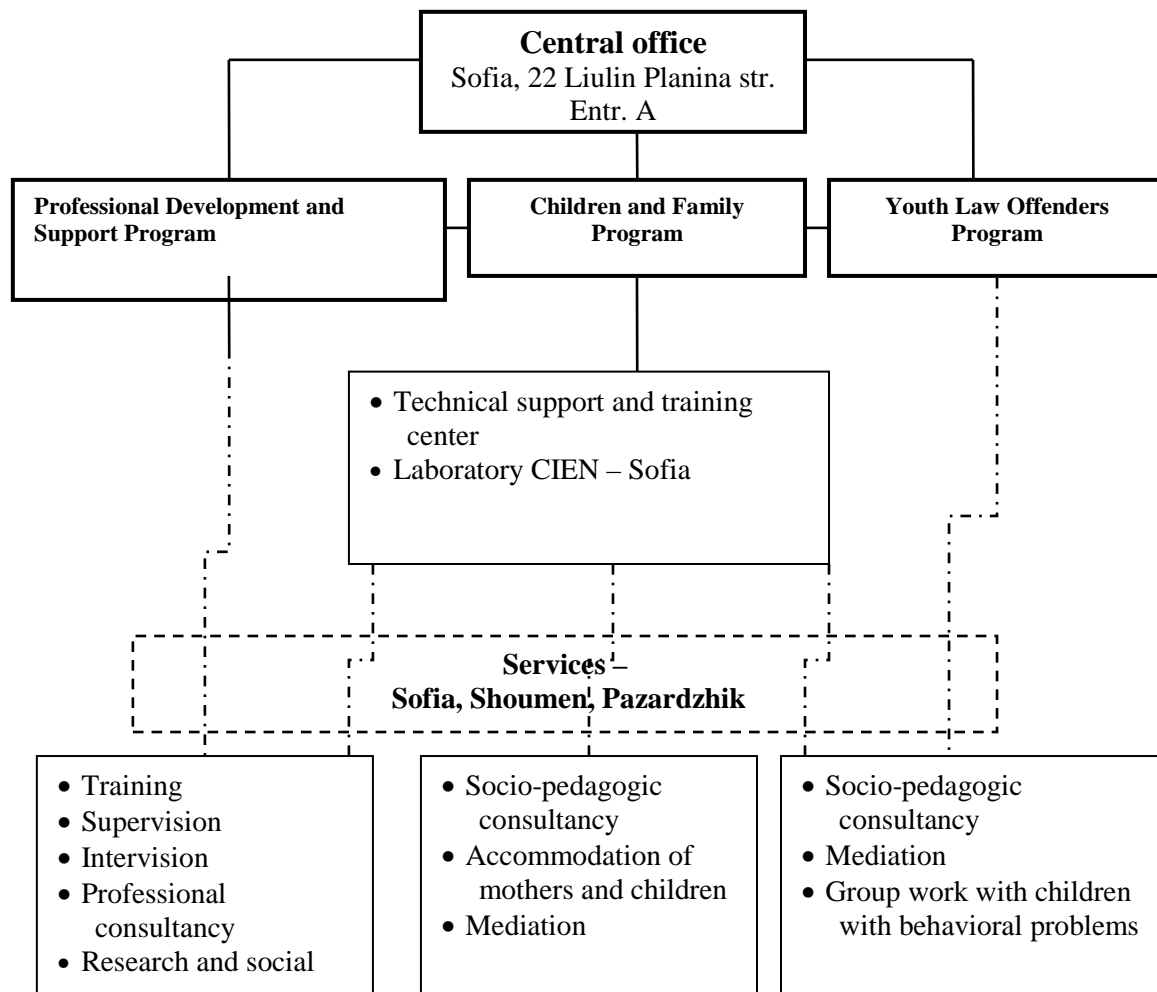
**ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANIZATION IN 2008**

Capacity of the organization

1. Professional team of 72 employees, over 20 experts and 10 volunteers

- Full-time project managers
- Full-time project assistant
- Full-time office manager
- Experts working in the central office
- Accountants
- Cashier/managers in the complexes for social services in Sofia, Shoumen and Pazardzhik
- Psychologists in the complexes for social services in Sofia, Shoumen and Pazardzhik
- Social workers in the complexes for social services in Sofia, Shoumen and Pazardzhik
- 40 volunteers in the central office and in the complexes for social services in Sofia, Shoumen and Pazardzhik

Structure



Structure of SAPI as follows:

Technical support and professional training center of SAPI

It was established in 2002. The technical support and training center is in possession of a wide range of methodological materials, training programs for social workers and other specialists working with children and youth. **In 2007 SAPI was granted a license from the National Agency for Professional Education and Training (NAPET) that enabled us to deliver professional training of social workers and associate mentors.** Our training center offers approbated curricula teaching basic skills in general social work, social work with children, social work with children with behavioral problems and juvenile delinquents, socio-pedagogic consultations; interview leading skills; group social work; supervision and intervision. The

center is well equipped with modern equipment for training purposes – training room, video technology, and presentation technology.

The trainees graduating at the technical support and training center of SAPI receive a certificate of professional qualification level. This is possible, due to the fact that the organization is licensed by NAPET for professional training of the following professions: 1) Social Worker, specialized in “Social services for children and families at risk” and in “Social services for children and adults with chronic diseases, physical and sensor disabilities”; 2) Associate Mentor, specialized as “Associate Mentor in the raising and up-bringing of children”.

The center offers the following services:

- Follow-up training on the above-mentioned programs;
- Social-pedagogic counseling of children and parents;
- Supervision of professionals;
- Consultation of NGO working on projects in the field of social work.

Coordinator: Gergana Georgieva

Laboratory for studying child behavior, “What are the adolescents called delinquents attempting to communicate?”

The laboratory was started in January 2005. It was created to fulfill the need for more profound examination of the cases with which the four youth probation and supervision centers to SAPI were involved. The laboratory was established and developed with the support of Freudian Field – laboratories CIEN (France) and the laboratory “Growing up without parents” (Bulgaria). Among the participants of the project were experts from SAPI (working directly with children and taking part in the training programs of the institute), school counselors, social workers from the Complexes for Social Services for Children and Families, from the Center for Street Children, from the Probation Directorate, from the institutions of confinement, from the Child Protection Department, as well as psychologists from the SOS Children Villages, psychotherapists and various professionals from the art sphere. Currently the laboratory functions as a group for professional support where cases are studied, particular topics are discussed and theoretical materials are analyzed. French psychoanalysts participate in some of the meetings. The laboratory has successfully helped and is currently providing help in finding ways for the solving of some particularly complicated cases in the towns of Gabrovo, Shoumen, Pazardzhik and Sofia.

A branch of the laboratory was started in Shoumen in 2006.

Directors: Phillip Lacade and Nelly Petrova

Complex for Social Services for Children and Families (CSSCF) in Shoumen, Social Activities and Practices Institute and Shoumen Municipality, 2006-2011

Description of the service:

The Social Activities and Practices Institute is a provider of social services in the municipality of Shoumen. This activity is long-term and continues for a period of 5 years, state-delegated through the municipality of Shoumen.

Main goals are:

- Improvement of the well-being of children in the municipality of Shoumen through introduction of quality services and support in a family or a close-to-family environment corresponding to the children's needs.
- Improvement of the quality and variety of community-based services delivered to children and families at risk and improvement of their efficiency and availability to people in need.

Sub-goals are:

- Designing of a sustainable working model for inter-institutional cooperation.
- Broadening of the capacity and the spectrum of services provided at the CSSCF in order to increase the degree to which they correspond to the needs of the target groups.
- Development of mobile social work on the field – on the streets and in the community, as well as in the family and in the home of the clients, especially when clients are prevented by different hindering circumstances from coming to the complexes (CSSCF).
- Greater client involvement in the decision making process regarding the kind of services needed and the appropriate ways of providing those services.
- Updating of the spectrum of services in relation to the dynamics of the needs of the people in the community.
- Development of the capacity of local providers of services to families and children.

The Complex for Social Services to Children and Families (CSSCF) continues to implement its activities in three basic sectors: 1) “Family Support” sector; 2) “Services and Support for the Child” sector; 3) “Community Work” sector. The sectors include activities in the following areas: prevention, re-integration and direct work with clients; services within the community, as well as empowering and mobilization of the local community for provision of services to children and families. The primary goal is that the Complex will foster the deinstitutionalization of the childcare by means of offering social services for children in the natural family environment.

The overall methodology of the service provision in CSSCF – Shoumen is based on the principles of Bulgarian and international child protection legislation, on the international standards for treating children at risk, as well as on the principles of contemporary social work.

Director: Veneta Gospodinova

Coordinator: Nadya Stoikova

CSSCF in the municipality of Pazardzhik, Social Activities and Practices Institute and municipality of Pazardzhik, 2007-2012

Description of the service:

The Social Activities and Practices Institute is a provider of social services in the municipality of Pazardzhik. This activity is long-term and continues for a period of 5 years, state-delegated through the municipality of Pazardzhik.

Main goals are:

- Improvement of the well-being of children in the municipality of Pazardzhik through introduction of quality services and support in a family or a close-to-family environment corresponding to children’s needs.
- Improvement of the quality and variety of community-based services delivered to children and families at risk and improvement of their efficiency and availability to people in need.

Sub-goals are:

- Designing of a sustainable working model for inter-institutional cooperation.

- Broadening of the capacity and the spectrum of services provided at the CSSCF in order to increase the degree to which they correspond to the needs of the target groups.
- Development of mobile social work on the field – on the streets and in the community, as well as in the family and in the home of the clients, especially when clients are prevented by different hindering circumstances from coming to the complexes (CSSCF).
- Greater client involvement in the decision making process regarding the kind of services needed and the appropriate ways of providing those services.
- Updating of the spectrum of services in relation to the dynamics of the needs of the people in the community.

The Complex for Social Services to Children and Families (CSSCF) continues to implement its activities in three basic sectors: 1) “Family Support” sector; 2) “Services and Support for the Child” sector; 3) “Community Work” sector. The sectors include activities in the following areas: prevention, re-integration and direct work with clients; services within the community, as well as empowering and mobilization of the local community for provision of services to children and families. The primary goal is that the Complex will foster the deinstitutionalization of the childcare by means of offering social services for children in the natural family environment.

The overall methodology of the service provision in CSSCF – Pazardzhik is based on the principles of Bulgarian and international child protection legislation, on the international standards for treating children at risk, as well as on the principles of contemporary social work.

Director: Iana Staneva

Coordinator: Zlatka Angelova

Center for Communal Support (CCS), Sofia, “Alternative environment for the children in the orphanage” project, SAPI, PHARE Program

The Center provides services organized in two basic sectors: 1) “Family Support” sector; 2) “Services and Support for the Child” sector. The sectors include activities in the following areas: prevention, re-integration and direct work with clients; services within the community, as well as empowering and mobilization of the local community for provision of services to

children and families. The Center is located at the premises of the “Pencho Slaveikov” orphanage¹. The primary goal of the Center is to foster the deinstitutionalization of the childcare, especially for the children of the “Pencho Slaveikov” orphanage, by means of offering social services in the natural family environment.

The overall methodology of the service provision in CCS – Sofia is based on the principles of Bulgarian and international child protection legislation, on the international standards for treating children at risk, as well as on the principles of contemporary social work.

Team Director Gergana Kuzmova

Project Director George Bogdanov

Analysis of the activity of SAPI for 2008

In 2008 SAPI has assumed a leadership role in the area of social policies and practices concerning children and families at risk, children’s rights protection and improvement of the quality of all social integration activities. The main priorities of the organization’s work in 2008 were:

- I. Intensification of the childcare and child protection reforms in Bulgaria
- II. Prevention of child abuse

Our organization’s impact was considerably increased both due to the development of the organization itself and to the positive change in the conditions and possibilities for NGOs in the country.

I. Intensification of the childcare and child protection reforms in Bulgaria

1. Participation of SAPI in the child related policies in Bulgaria

The reform process in childcare in Bulgaria has experienced an unjustified delay and a shift of priorities. The deinstitutionalization of social care suffered a collapse, which the authorities refused to recognize. Statistical data clearly showed that the reduction in the number of newly institutionalized children is rather caused by the decreasing of the general children population than by the child protection system. A series of scandals erupted in the beginning of the year,

¹ Orphanages in Bulgaria are officially titled: Homes for children deprived of parental care (HCDPC)

which were related to the poor quality of institutional childcare. These led to the building of public tension, which in turn stimulated the unification and better organization of the non-governmental sector with the clear intention to be much closer involved in the social care aspect of the country's sociopolitical life. **SAPI was one of the main participating organizations of ALLIANCE - an informal association** aiming to support the reform in childcare in Bulgaria. SAPI had a central role in the creating, presenting and advocating for the Vision of the Alliance, as well as in ensuring the support of 90 NGO for the implementation of that Vision. Experts from SAPI were actively involved in the development of four (of a total of 8) planned policies for the enactment of the Vision². The participation of our organization ensured the high level of professionalism in the realization of these activities. As a result a number of NGO experts, including SAPI experts, were invited to take part in different Government committees, working on changes in legislation, which would guarantee immediate reform. The participation of our experts³ induced numerous positive legislative changes, such as: a revision of the definition of children at risk, now also including in the group children who dropped out of school, or risking to drop out; changes in the judicial procedures in the Child Protection Law; changes in the procedures for foster parenting and so on. We could not but mention that we suggested much more radical changes and the fact that they were not sufficiently applied had a negative impacts on the Alliance's motivation.

SAPI is a member of the Management Board of National Network for the Children. We tried to enhance the capacity of the network and promote the expansion of its activity to a nationwide level. We discovered that achieving such goals requires substantial effort and is a long-term endeavor. It is important to note that this is a new and serious experience for our organization.

The participation of experts⁴ from SAPI in the hearing of representatives of different structures and institutions by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child was an important contribution to the development of the child-related policies. The hearing took place in Geneva in February and in June 2008 related to the Government report on the progress of Bulgaria in applying the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Our involvement was instrumental in achieving greater objectivity of the recommendations to our country in the report of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

² See the Vision of NGO and the Plan for Vision Implementation

³ d-r Nelly Petrova, d-r Nadia Stoikova, d-r Zlatka Angelova, Diana Rouseva, Dimiter Katsov, Georgi Neshkov, Gergana Kuzmova, Gergana Georgieva and others.

⁴ D-r Nelly Petrova

Support for other NGO is part of the policy of SAPI for intensification of the reforms, as we consider such support to be a very important prerequisite for the reform. SAPI has continued its support for partnering NGO – JANETA from Razgrad and from Novi Pazar. As a result of our collaboration new CCS were opened. These Centers are an activity delegated by the Government via competitions for offering social services; our partners won the competitions. We consider this to be a big success for our organization and especially for the team that led the project⁵. In 2008 SAPI supported the creation of two new civil organizations – Regional Center for Social Activities and Practices in Pazardzhik and “Center for Social Policies” foundation in Shoumen. The organization in Pazardzhik has been very active in the field of social services for children and families at risk and has won the competition for the management of CCS and CACDFC (Centers for Accommodation of Children with Disabilities in Family-like Conditions) in Velingrad. These social services are intended to facilitate the restructuring the orphanage in Velingrad. The Pazardzhic organization is a main partner in the Panagiurishte municipality project for the creation of a CCS in the orphanage in Panagiurishte. It is important to once more commemorate the late Emil Fartzov and his contribution to the swift progress of the organization.

2. Participation of SAPI in European networks and programs

SAPI is a member of two European networks - Eurochild and SMES Europe, and is trying to be as helpful as possible in the construction of a unified European policy of social integration, based on the Lisbon Strategy and the Open Method of coordination (OMC). Our representatives have taken part in the policy-making workshop of Eurochild⁶. These meetings have produced a comparative analysis of the national social integration action-plans in the area of children-related policies of the countries members of EU (including Bulgaria). We also participated in the annual Eurochild conference in Budapest in November⁷ together with the State Agency for Child Protection president Mrs. Shirin Mestan.

Through its projects, sponsored by the OAK Foundation SAPI has effectively become part of an informal network of NGO from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Moldova and Macedonia. The network is unified around the subject of child abuse prevention. Our participation in this network allowed us to host the International Conference on the Problems Child Participation in Legal Procedures. Representatives of five different countries took part in the event. The Deputy

⁵ Innovation Practices in Central North Bulgaria – director: Georgi Bogdanov; methodical manager: Nelly Petrova; CSSCF in Shoumen team: Veneta Gospodinova, Krasimira Todorova and Deiana Zhetcheva; the whole team of SAPI

⁶ Georgi Bogdanov and Nadia Stoikova

⁷ d-r Nadia Stoikova

Minister of Labor and Social Policy, Mr. Yassen Yanev opened the Conference. Our collaboration with this network also allowed us to win a project with the EU program Daphne, which is for the first time opened for Bulgaria. This is a program studying the phenomenon of abuse in childcare institutions. We should note here that we are the first Bulgarian organization (and the only one for this year) to run a project under this program. A SAPI delegation also participated in the Conference on Mental Health and Social Exclusion in Rom in January⁸.

SAPI organized and delivered the first module of the training on Socio-Educational Animation. The training was held as part of the PROCOPIL program, funded by the French organization Solidarité Laïque and the Ministry of External Affaires of France.

In conclusion:

The success of the childcare and child protection reforms of Bulgaria depends greatly on the participation of NGO in this process. The present achievements in the development of new social services and in the promoting of foster parenting is primarily due to the intensified involvement of NGO in the social care field. It is very important and necessary to fortify the role of NGO working with children as a political guarantor for the reform process.

It is necessary to increase the pressure exercised by NGO over the Government for more official support for the development of the non-governmental sector. It is very hard even for a well-established organization like ours to provide the funds and people needed for adequate participation in the current situation and it is even harder for the small and newly established NGO. That's why it is so important for the Government to perceive that a strong independent sector is needed in the best interests of the country and the people and to provide formal support for it.

Our participation in the political life of the country is important and helps further the desired changes. Such participation requires an abundant resource of people and time, as well as devoted effort for the development of good and useful documents, which in turn requires specialized training and funding.

The significance of SAPI's international activity is gradually increasing and this calls for careful planning and close attention. Our involvement with different European networks

⁸ d-r Nelly Petrova, Georgi Bogdanov, d-r Nadia Stoikova, d-r Zlatka Angelova, d-r Emilia Stantcheva

should be instrumental for the bringing of European standards and the Bulgarian realities in proper correlation, as well as for the inclusion of our priorities in the European framework. This means that we should be even more actively involved in European forums, joint projects and other European activities.

II. Prevention of child abuse

Child abuse prevention was a prime priority in the work of SAPI in 2008. Results in this field were mainly achieved through increasing the potential of social workers working with children and through development and offering services to children at risk and their families and to children who suffered abuse.

2.1. Increasing the potential of social workers working with children – a primary tool for child abuse prevention

2.1.1. SAPI policy for child protection from abuse and violence

In 2008 our organization made a decisive step in the realization of a consistent safety policy related to abuse prevention. We established a partnership with the Center for incorporated education, which inherited all of the activities of “Save the Children” in our country. Owing to this partnership, all SAPI structures offering services and having direct contact with children have improved their staff selection procedures, work procedures, action plans for situation of identification of child abuse and have solidified those into set safety policies for protection from abuse and violence.

2.1.2. Professionalizing of the SAPI team activity

Raising the level of professionalism is a primary warranty for the “**good treatment**” (**bientraitence**) of children and other consumers of social services. *Good treatment* is a neologism; such expression did not exist until recently. It was coined to convey the idea of shifting from aiming at maltreatment prevention to aiming at good attitude. In other words we presuppose that the lack of maltreatment does not necessarily mean that favorable treatment is present. Special standards have to be designed to ensure such good treatment. We have established as a main standard for good treatment a system for follow-up training for everyone involved in offering social services. In 2008 each member of our teams in Sofia, Shoumen and Pazardzhik had to go through at least 20 hours of training. New employees (and all of the CCS team in Sofia) were provided with introductory training courses, titled “Social Work

Introduction”, “Dealing with Individual Cases” and “Counseling”. CCS team also had a training on practical skills and abilities realization programs and on workshop leading. The follow-up training included a specialized practical course of careful listening to victims of abuse. Our partners from “Nobody’s Child” foundation provided the trainers. Other courses were: social animation, with trainers from France; small group leading skills and adoptive families and foster families support for the team of CSSCF in Shoumen, with trainers from USA; prevention of child labor exploitation and eradication of the most severe types of child labor, for the teams of CSSCF in Shoumen and Pazardzhik, with trainers from “Resilience”; social campaigns preparation – 8 hours training with the participation of a team from CSSCF in Shoumen; professional assessment in the socio-pedagogical practices – 16 hours, with 16 participants from CSSCF in Pazardzhik; specialized training on “Family-group conference” – 8 hours, for the whole team of CSSCF in Pazardzhik. We also participated with the Sofia University “St Clement of Ochrid” project, titled “European transfer and exchange of good practices in training and education”. Under this project a 16-hour training was held in which 7 SAPI representatives took part.

In 2008 SAPI continued to provide supervision for social workers and psychologists from CSSCF in Shoumen and Pazardzhik and from CCS in Sofia. 264 hours of individual supervision and 24 hours of group supervision were held for the team of CSSCF in Shoumen and 192 hours of individual supervision and 24 hours of group supervision were held for the team of CSSCF in Pazardzhik. For the team of CCS in Sofia 95 hours of individual supervision and 24 hours of group supervision were held.

In 2008 a children research laboratory was started in CSSCF in Pazardzhik, supported by Diana Rousseva. The three SAPI laboratories in Sofia, Shoumen and Pazardzhik are in effect intervision groups, assisting for improving of the professional level of our teams, the establishing of a common professional language and the formation of a professional community, consisting of social workers, psychologists and educators from different institutions and social services.

SAPI continues to hold to its standard of a minimum of 20 hours of training for each of its team members. Supervision and intervision are an established standard in our work.

2.1.3. Support of the potential development of our partnering NGO and of the municipality employees as a primary means for abuse prevention

In 2008 several **NGO, which had already participated in our trainings in the past applied for new trainings**. In response we organized the following courses: “Social work with children with behavioral problems” (24 hours – 12 participants) and “Family-group conference” (24 hours – 12 participants), as requested by “St Myna” Association in Vratza; “Status and professional competency of the social assistant and home helper” (16 hours of basic training) as requested by “Bulgarian Gender Research Center” Foundation (6 participants) in Kardzhaly and Haskovo.

SAPI continued its support in the form of individual and group supervision for the teams of “Janeta” Association in Razgrad (48 hours of individual supervision and 12 hours of group supervision) and “SOS – women and children – victims of abuse” in Novi Pazar (120 hours of individual supervision and 12 hours of group supervision).

Developing the potential of our partners in the municipalities was another important activity for SAPI. We thus organized several trainings. The training on “Status and professional competency of the social assistant and home helper” (32 hours of basic training) was requested by the municipalities of Shoumen and Pazardzhik and was attended by 54 people. The training on “Development and management of the social services on the municipality level” (24 hours) was attended by 16 people, representing 9 municipalities. The goal of the training was to increase the potential of the local authorities in managing social services.

Some municipal structures offering social services also applied for training. As a result we organized a training on “Child psychology and psychology of development” (24 training hours) which was attended by 22 people. It was delivered in response to the request of the orphanage “Radost” in the village of Dren (for children ages 3 to 7). We also organized a training on “Small group leading skills” (24 training hours) which was attended by 22 people. It was also delivered in response to the request of the orphanage “Radost” in the village of Dren (for children ages 3 to 7).

In 2008 a special program for municipality employees training was developed and implemented. It was titled “Development and management of the social services on the municipality level”. The program consists of 58 training hours (i.e. of two modules). It was tested with a group of employees of the municipality of Sofia and the feedback was very positive.

Staff's training for the Centers for Accommodation of Children with Disabilities in Family-like Conditions. In 2008 SAPI took part in a competition for the development of a program for training of social workers, psychologists and helping personnel in the newly created Centers for Accommodation of Children with Disabilities in Family-like Conditions, where the children from the orphanage in the village of Mogilino should be moved. The trainings are sponsored by UNYCEF. 5 groups are scheduled for that training in the towns of Rousse (2 groups), Varna, Sofia and Teteven. The first of the teams from Rousse has already taken the full course. The whole training lasted 196 hours and was organized in 7 basic modules and 7 specialized modules. The training of the remaining 4 teams of this new service is planned for 2009.

Training of policemen, magistrates and municipality administration managers were held as part of the projects "Child Participation in Legal Procedures" and "Hear the Child". The subjects were: "International standards in child participation in legal procedures", "Specialized listening to children – victims or witnesses of violence". These trainings were organized and delivered in collaboration with the Bulgarian Union of Judges and the National Institute of Justice and were attended by magistrates from Sofia, Shoumen and Pazardzhik. These trainings are part of the enactment of the agreements between SAPI and the municipalities for cooperation in the general increasing of the municipality potential in the field child related activities.

In conclusion:

A. The potential of the people involved in working with children is a leading factor in abuse prevention. Through the training, supervision and intervision SAPI is contributing to the raising of the level of professionalism in the field of childcare and child protection in Bulgaria.

The lack of professional standards for the helping professions, including standardized mandatory basic education, specialization, introductory and follow-up training, all organized based on the competency approach is still the most serious hindrance for raising the potential of structures and organizations, especially those of the central and local authorities.

B. The potential of the local authorities is key to the success of the reform and to the good attitude towards the children in risk. The present potential of the authorities still

does not correspond to the exceptional responsibilities they have been entrusted with. To stimulate the increasing of this potential it is important to introduce licensing for the municipalities as social services providers and to require training in the correlated areas of competency, as well as monitoring and control.

C. SAPI has done a lot to increase public sensitivity to the issue of children in the legal system. The considerable shift of attitudes displayed by the representatives of the corresponding authorities after going through the trainings and workshops is a testimony not so much of the quality our work but rather of the need for such training and equipment.

The lack of specialized training for investigating authorities, prosecutors and judges is a violation of the obligations the Government has committed to by ratifying a series of international agreements and does not help the functioning of the Judicial System. Child participation in legal procedures and the Juvenile Jurisdiction System are still an area of justified criticism for children rights abuse.

2.2. Development of quality social services for children and families at risk and services for children – victims of abuse

2.2.1. The prevention of child abuse depends directly on the availability and quality of social services for children and families at risk. The table below represents the variety of services offered by the structures managed by SAPI.

<p>Title of the service:</p>	<p>Services in CCS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and parents counseling; • Group work; • Center for emergency accommodation; • Telephone hotline; • Specialized rooms for listening to children victims or witnesses crimes; • School support
<p>Target group:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Abused children, abandoned children, neglected children, children risking to be involved in child traffic;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children risking to drop out of the educational system; ▪ Children placed in institutions; ▪ Children with antisocial behavior, referred by LCCJASA⁹; ▪ Children with behavioral issues; ▪ Parents, whose children are institutionalized for reintegration; ▪ Parents with low parental abilities; ▪ Single parents; ▪ Parents in the process of divorce; ▪ Parents of children with special needs; ▪ Parents of children with behavioral issues; ▪ Parents of children – victims of abuse; ▪ Interaction with relatives with whom children have been placed as a protection measure by the Children Protection Law; ▪ Adoptive children and adoptive parents;
Number of children, using the service in 2008	899
<i>Of which:</i>	
- Children using the service by reference from SSA¹⁰	530
- By order from SSA	8
- Children using the service without reference from SSA/CPD¹¹	369

⁹ Local Committee for Controlling Juvenile Anti-Social Activity

¹⁰ SSA – Social Support Agency

¹¹ CPD – Child Protection Department

Title of the service:	FOSTER CARE Scope of the service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaigning; • Training of prospective foster parents; • Assessment; • Facilitating of the adjustment process; • Support for the foster parents in the children raising process
Target group:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applicants for foster parenting ▪ Approved foster parents;
Number of client using the service in 2008. Of which:	45
- Clients using the service by reference from SSA	43
- Clients using the service without reference from SSA/CPD	2

Title of the service:	Daycare center for street children
Target group	Children who spend most of their time on the street – dropped out of the educational system or in risk to drop out of school – wandering, begging – with poor parental control and neglected
Number of children, using the service in 2008 Of which:	34
- Children using the service by reference from SSA	15
- By order from SSA	7

- Children using the service without reference from SSA/CPD	12 – for one month, with parental request;

Title of the service:	Mother and Baby department
Target group:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pregnant under age girls; ▪ Pregnant single mothers with no support from their parents; ▪ Mothers in acute crisis situations; ▪ Mothers – victims of violence; ▪ Victims of human traffic;
Number of client using the service in 2008. Of which:	9 mothers and 15 children, 1 pregnant adult woman and 1 pregnant under age girl
- Clients using the service by reference from SSA	9 mothers and 15 children, 1 pregnant adult woman and 1 pregnant under age girl

In the context of prevention of violence, we must note the good work done by the Center for emergency accommodation team, as well as that of the School Support team, Daycare, adoptee and adopter groups, and that of the parenting training.

The SAPI mechanism for applying **foster care** services received exceedingly high marks from an independent appraiser. From about 250 foster families in Bulgaria, more than 50 are the result of SAPI work through CSSCF in Shoumen and Pazardjik or through the CCS in Sofia. As a result of the Sofia CCS special project, the number of foster parents in Pernik and the district has reached 19.

A troubling tendency may be observed regarding the Mother and Baby department – there is an increase in the number of **underage pregnancies and motherhood, and recently that of girls under 14** years of age. Our teams’ efforts for guaranteeing the rights of these girls deserve praise, especially for using good interaction or exerting pressure through the threat of activating the penal system on the cohabitate. The problem of the so-called “early marriages” is becoming a bigger challenge and is raising the question whether this is a form of violence

or not. The film created by SAPI in cooperation with “Vision... Maria Vasilieva” gives an answer to that question. We are waiting for an answer from the institutions.

It was a great challenge for SAPI in 2008 to provide services to children from specialized institutions (orphanages). We have won the right to manage the orphanage “Detelina” in the city of Shoumen at the city authorities’ 2007 public bid.

We have built a CCS with the help of the “Alternative environment for the children in the orphanage” project.

2.2.2. New services in 2008 are aimed at improving the conditions of children’s participation in the judicial procedures. We have introduced the service “Court hearing prep”, for which we have published handbooks and procedure guidelines. Another new service is “Listening to children, victims or witnesses of violence”. This service is offered in modern conditions – specialized rooms with a welcoming atmosphere and skilled workers. The rooms help overcome some of the biggest problems – the many interrogations that additionally traumatize the child as well as interrogations that are not adapted to the peculiarities of children’s psyche, which renders the information gathered unreliable and unfit for court purposes.

2.2.3. Campaigns, conferences, public appearances for the prevention of violence

SAPI began in 2008 and is now continuing a large campaign for the prevention of violence against children at local and national level. The TV covered the campaigns against child mendicancy in Shoumen, the national campaign against domestic violence “Childhood without violence” which we conduct in cooperation with the “Nobody’s Children” foundation, Poland. In all the large cities of Bulgaria, posters and billboards call for attention to this problem. The campaign “Innovative practices for the development of Social Services in the Central North Bulgaria” was held in 10 towns. Its success had been aided by the film “Dimensions of violence” which deals with the question of violence by negligence in orphanages as well as the early marriages in the Roma communities.

Our work throughout the year had been summarized and presented at a round table on the topic of prevention of violence against children, which we had organized together with UNICEF and the State Agency for Child Protection. The practices presented by us and other NGO from all over Bulgaria had become the foundation for the *draft National Plan for the prevention of violence 2009-2011*.

In conclusion:

A. Lack of policies stimulating the family and lack of coordination among various institutions continues to be a major hindrance in controlling the number of children and families at risk. Despite the positive balance between foster family care and specialized institutions, the number of children placed in the orphanages continues to be exceedingly high. Especially troubling is the increased number of children under 3 years old being placed in institutions. There is a disconnection between social aid and occupational programs on one hand and social services for children and families at risk at the other hand. Prevalence of sanctions over positive measures is an indicator of inefficiency of the social policy regarding the family.

B. Social services for children and families at risk are developing in number as well as in quality. Its effectiveness is determined by the good interaction of those providing the services with all the other structures dealing with children. The Departments for Child Protection were entrusted with dealing with children at risk, but the necessary training and work organization was not provided. As a result, in many places there is a development of the tendency and practices for new cases to remain unsolved. Unfortunately the school is far from fulfilling its role as a social factor. The difficulties children face in school, the risk of potential or actual dropping out should in no way be tied to the quality of work of the school. These difficulties are transferred on to the children, their families, and the protection system. We think that formalism and incompetency in the school's dealings with challenged children is intolerable.

C. Prevention of violence requires a deep change at all levels of prevention. Again, the greatest problem is with the interaction between all the structures working with children, or more specifically, the lack of communication on signaling, registration and prevention of cases of violence against children.

Violence has many dimensions and it is important that they be identified.

- **Physical violence against children in families is a problem that needs to be brought into the light. Society and the institutions have an unjustifiably high tolerance toward it. The society lacks a minimal consensus on what good parenting entails, and punishment, including corporal, is considered to be more of an instrument of education rather than violence.**
- **Early marriages are violence against children, they cannot be justified through communal traditions. It is unacceptable to tolerate -- through lack of reaction --**

the violence against thousands of Roma girls forced to “marry”, sold as brides, etc. below the age of 16. The responsible institutions are ineffective in applying the law regulations and thus the rights if these children remain unprotected.

- **Our experience with the two orphanages leads us to the following conclusions:**
 - **traditional orphanages are places where violence against children is practiced on a daily, and even hourly, basis – especially violence through negligence. Within the orphanage, at the school, and in public places, children suffer from abandonment. They are isolated, labeled, and have no access to the achievements of the society;**
 - **due to extremely low quality of care (rather, negligence), orphanages are a fostering ground for physical abuse from adults and among the children themselves;**
 - **due to extremely low quality of care (rather, negligence), orphanages are a fostering ground for sexual abuse, both by adults from within the system itself and outsiders, as well as by the older children. Prostitution, traffic and runaways are a prove to that fact.**

2.5. SAPI research and publications in 2008

1. **“I will testify in court!” Guide for children and youth.** Copyright: “Nobody’s Children” Foundation, Poland. Published by the “Social Activities and Practices Institute”, 2008. ISBN 978-954-90306-1-7.
2. **Guidelines for judicial procedures in cases involving children – victims or witnesses of crime.** Sofia, 2008. ISBN 978-954-90306-2-4
3. **A new model for work in orphanages.** Sofia, 2008. Financed through the “Alternative environment for the children in the orphanage” project, FAR program contract # BG 2004/016-711.01.02.1.11.

SAPI management board would like to express its appreciation to all the members of the association, all of its team members throughout its structures and to all partners and friends for the success of our joint activity in 2008.

Sofia, April 2009.