

ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR 2016

Association “Social Activities and Practices Institute” is a non-government organization and a non-profit entity registered in 2001 in accordance with the regulations of the Bulgarian legislation.

MISSION OF THE ORGANIZATION

We work for the development of social work as a helping profession aimed at the social inclusion of vulnerable groups of people in the public life in Bulgaria, as we believe that each and every person could be a useful and active citizen of her/his country.

We are a community of experts in the sphere of assisting children and families by combining theory and practice.

We work for the professionalization of the social practice with children and families by:

- developing new models, and carrying out scientific and scientifically applied research;
- we analyze our experience and we transfer it to the professional community;
- we disseminate new knowledge and skills, and we support professional development through sharing and reanalysis of personal professional experience.

We understand the process of helping others as a good treatment of the client, respect for people's rights and their empowerment.

We achieve our mission by:

Organizing specialized trainings for experts from the helping professions, judges and prosecutors;

Providing social services to vulnerable people by offering them support and assistance for their inclusion in the public life.

Carrying out supervision of teams working in the social and educational sphere;

Initiating various forms of development of the capacity of the professionals, based on action, participation and mutual support;

Participating actively in the development of social policy by organizing public discussions, round tables, and campaigns related to the social inclusion of isolated groups of people;

Supporting management decisions by carrying out research and assessment in the social sphere.

Our general activities are organized in four methodological programs: Training, Methodological Support and Supervision, Social Services for Children and Families at Risk and Children and Justice, Prevention of Abuse. Our contribution is not limited only to a national level, but we also work on international level through a series of initiatives **within projects with international partners, participation in forums of the EC, expression of statements and recommendations.**

The activities in the Institute are carried out by an organizational and expert teams.

In the Social Activities and Practices Institute there are **113 people that work on a labour contract** and these are: an Executive Director, 3 Program Directors, CSC Director, 3 Directors of Complexes for Social Services, one of them is also the 4th Program Director, 2 Directors of „Protection Zone“ Centres, Head of „Public Relations“, expert on programs and projects, Head of a CSC, social activities experts – 37, of whom 10 are Heads of Sectors, 20 psychologists, of whom 3 are Heads of Sectors, social activities assistants – 8, Program Coordinator, Coordinator of the activities in PTC, Senior Accountant, Junior Accountant and Human Resources, host-cashiers – 4, Cashier-Accountant, receptionists – 4, hygiene workers – 4, drivers – 2.

I. „Training“ Program

Strategic Goal:

INCREASING THE CAPACITY OF HELPING SPECIALISTS THROUGH THE PROVISION OF TRAININGS AND TRAINING RESOURCES.

PART I. ANALYSIS OF THE ACTIVITY OF THE „TRAINING“ PROGRAM IN 2016

Total number of trained specialists by SAPI in 2016 - 4369 hours (546 training days).

Result 1

Increased capacity of the specialists working in the organizations.

1.1 General Analysis

The total number of training hours provided to the experts of SAPI is 3 353 hours. The total number of participants is 67 out of 75 people staff (8 specialists from the CSSCF in Shoumen have not used specialized trainings in 2016). Fig. 1 presents quantitative data about the trainings that have been organized in 2016 based on services. The most intensively trained personnel are the experts from the “Protection Zone” Centre in Shoumen and the “Protection Zone” Centre in Montana as they have over 100 training hours per specialist due to the innovative character of the services and their inauguration at the end of 2015 and beginning of 2016. The trainings were targeted at the development of their capacity for work with children victims and witnesses of abuse.

In accordance with the internal standards of the organization, the trained specialists have received a minimum of 20 hours of training. Specialists in the organization have received 50 training hours on average.

1.2. Specialized trainings

The topics and contents of the specialized trainings for the experts of SAPI were defined according to the profile of the particular service, the professional experience and the problems that professionals encounter on a daily basis in their direct work with the clients.

1.3. Internal Trainings

Each team in our services has used several forms of internal trainings of specialists: a literature coffee, club «Development» and others. Within these forms the following topics have been discussed: techniques for working with children (Shoumen), methods for intervention in the work on cases, trauma pedagogics (Vidin), leading a group program (Vidin), discussion of specialized literature.

Result 2

Trainings provided to professionals within projects implemented by SAPI.

2.1. Increased competence of the professionals from the justice, social and health systems.

Within the implementation of the project „Justice — a friend of the child — training of professionals for better collaboration», funded by the European Commission, 1149 professionals from 28 regions were trained on the topic „Integrated approach for fair justice provision“. *The trainings were aimed at increasing the competence of people working in the system for guaranteeing the rights of the vulnerable victims of crimes – justice provision, police, social protection and services, healthcare and municipalities. Their goal was also to improve of the collaboration and coordination on a regional and local level in the process of guaranteeing the rights and the protection of children and adult victims.*

2.2. Trained specialists for working with children in conflict with the law in the region of Sliven.

In 2016 continued the trainings of the teams of the services for work with children in conflict with the law in the region of Sliven, created within the project of UNICEF „Support for children in conflict with the law, children at risk and their families“. The trainings were funded again by UNICEF within the project “Consultant Services for Training and Supervision of the Social Services for Children in Conflict with the Law in the Region of Sliven”.

The target group includes the teams of the CSC Nova Zagora, Centre for working with street children – Kotel, Centre for psychological support of children and families – Sliven, Centre for intensive socio-pedagogical support and Monitored Home – Sliven. During the trainings the target group was extended and specialists from the CSSCF Sliven and the CSC Sliven were included. Moreover, additional training topics were developed based on the needs expressed by the service teams.

2.3. Increased competences of teachers and social workers in cases of abuse.

As part of the project «Prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation of children in Central and Eastern Europe — a general approach» funded by the OAK Foundation, a training was held on the topic «How to protect children from abuse», aimed at teachers and specialists from the social services in Sofia, Stara Zagora, Montana and Shoumen. **20 teachers and social workers** participated in the training that lasted 2 days /16 hours/.

2.4. Training of probation officers.

In 2016 we organized 6 days /a total of 48 hours/ of training of probation officers within the project «Increase of the competence of probation officers», funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the Ministry of Justice. The total number of participants in the trainings were **70 probation officers and heads of probation services.**

Result 3

Consolidation of the capacity of the PTC and organization of trainings

3.1. Introduced efficient systems and organs for quality control.

In 2016 the Professional Training Centre of SAPI consolidated all its forms and procedures in agreement with the quality standards, and according to the successful procedure for certifying the Quality Standard ISO – 9001 at the end of 2015 by an international certifying organization. This set a higher criteria and requirements regarding the activities of the Professional Training Centre, aiming to guarantee a higher quality of the provided training courses.

A Training-Methodological Council to the PTC established its functions as an organ that has methodological management functions for the training-qualification activity of the Centre.

3.2. Trainings carried out in PTC

3.2.1. Professional trainings.

In 2016 in PTC a professional training was carried out with **23 experts** on the Profession “Social Activities Associate”, Speciality: Social work with children and families at risk. Trainees that passed the course successfully were provided with Professional Training Certificate.

3.2.2. Trainings for professional competence increase

The total number of participants in trainings in PTC (who have received professional trainings or trainings for the increase of their professional competence) - 131.

PART II. ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Achievements and good practices

Introduced systems for ensuring and managing the quality of professional training, certification from ISO 9001:2008.

Developed training programs, corresponding to the needs of the professional community that are being updated based on the existing training needs and the changes in the European and national legislationS.

Exceptionally-qualified teachers that maintain and increase the level of their preparation and knowledge/skills as trainers and supervisors.

The training content is developed and based on theoretical knowledge, and it has been approbate in the practice of social work, in particular in the area of the social services provided by SAPI.

Functioning Training-Methodological Council as an organ for methodological management of the training-qualification activity of PTC, and participation of its members in the discussion and approval of the training programs.

Satisfaction of the trainees from the quality and organization of the provided trainings.

2. Challenges and areas that need improvement.

2.1. Opportunities for a wider access and information about the Program „Training“ and the services provided by the SAPI PTC.

2.2. Efficient communication with potential partners and participants in our trainings: research and analysis of the needs for training and support, and analysis of the training feedbacks and evaluations.

2.3. Extension of our international activity and partnerships.

PART III. PRIORITIES FOR 2017

1. Results from a survey about the needs and attitudes of the professional community.

At the end of the previous and the beginning of the current year we developed and distributed an online survey. Its main goal was to understand the attitudes towards potential trainings and to extend our existing training package, so that they correspond better to the needs for development and professional support. The survey was targeted at heads of organizations providing services; heads of teams in social services; municipal administrations; NGO. The answers to the questions in the survey informed us about the topics that need to be thought, the duration of potential trainings, the preferred opportunities and forms of their organization. We will use this information in the planning of the indicative Training Program for 2017.

Priorities:

PRIORITY 1. SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAM „TRAINING“

Measures and activities:

Improvement of the training resources of PTC

Extension of the target groups

Efficient communication with potential partners and participants in the trainings: research and analysis of the needs for training and support , and analysis of the evaluations and feedbacks from our trainings

Building good partnerships with educational institutions

A system for validation of professional knowledge, skills and competences:

- development of the system;
- studying the needs;
- promotion and implementation.

PRIORITY 2. INFORMATION AND DISSEMINATION OF THE RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Measures and activities:

Development of a long-term communication strategy for PTC in accordance with the Communication Policy of SAPI, with the following accents:

- information and feedback channels;
- ways for studying and analysing the needs;
- follow-up feedback.

Improvement of the opportunities provided by the website and the electronic mail of the organization for placing orders, distributing surveys and receiving feedback in regards to the Program „Trainings“

PRIORITY 3. BUILDING INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

PRIORITY 4. DEVELOPMENT OF A PLATFORM FOR REMOTE ONLINE TRAINING AND BUILDING AN ONLINE RESOURCE CENTRE

II. PROGRAM „METHODOLOGICAL SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION“

Strategic goal:

Ensuring and guaranteeing the quality of the psycho-social work with children and families in the social services that the Social Activities and Practices Institute manages in the municipalities of Shoumen, Vidin, Montana, Stara Zagora, and Sofia.

Sub-goals:

Ensuring the professional development and improvement of the skills and competences of the teams. Guaranteeing a monthly methodological and expert support in the work on cases, as well as provision of supervision for all cases of children victims or witnesses of abuse.

Increasing the capacity of the expert team of the organization.

PART I. ANALYSIS OF THE ACTIVITY OF THE PROGRAM «METHODOLOGICAL SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION» IN 2016

Total number of experts, supported methodologically by SAPI in 2016 –145

Total number of supervisions on cases /individual and group/ in 2016 –466

Result 1

Increased capacity of the experts working in the organization as a result of provided methodological support and supervision /individual and group/.

Total number of experts from SAPI that have been methodologically supported in 2016 – 75

Total number of supervisions on cases in 2016 – 388

SAPI is an organization that not only provides social services, but also insists on the high quality of the application of psycho-social practices for children and families within these services. One of the opportunities to guarantee quality is the professional assistance of the teams with methodological support and monthly individual or group supervision for every specialist in accordance with the consolidated standards for professional development of the organization. It has been approved as a standard that all cases of children victims or witnesses of abuse should pass through supervision.

In 2016 apart from the experts of SAPI, the teams in the social services were supported by an international supervisor – Vitoria Cuondamateo, a family therapist.

In some of the services we also started external supervision for the psychologists.

Result 2

Increased capacity of the experts working in the organization for the provision of methodological support of newly-hired specialists in the teams and in other services.

Throughout the year we carried out regular work meetings of the expert team of the organization, which includes **19 experts** that were gathered based on the expertise of the Institute gained over the years. During the work meetings we discussed and presented various interactive methods for provision of methodological support and supervision.

Result 3

Increased capacity of the experts from external for the organization social services through provided methodological support and supervision.

Within the project Consultant services for training and supervision of the social services for children in conflict with the law in the region of Sliven, funded by UNICEF

The target group includes the teams of the services for children in conflict with the law in the region of Sliven gathered within the UNICEF project Tupport for children in conflict with the law, children at risk and their families* The services in question are a Community Support Centre in Nova Zagora, Centre for Working with Street Children – Kotel, Centre for Psychological Support of Children and Families – Sliven, Centre for Intensive Socio-Pedagogical Support and Monitored Home in Sliven. During the implementation of the project the target group was enlarged and in the trainings and supervisions were included the specialists from the CSC of the CSSCF-Sliven. The total number of supervisions were 64 group and 4 individual ones.

PART II. CHALLENGES AND AREAS THAT NEED IMPROVEMENT

As challenges we could point out:

Ensuring that all professionals of the organization use individual supervision and present cases in the form of group supervisions.

Organizing work meetings to assist the development of the experts of the organization at least every three months.

Introducing new theoretical concepts and instruments, and applying them in practice.

PART III. PRIORITIES FOR 2017.

Priorities:

1. Sustainability of the program

2. Development of the program through:

- Applying a working strategy to solve the afore-mentioned challenges.
- Increasing the expert team and developing the competences of the experts for carrying out supervision.
- Extending the forms of support through the introduction of clinical meetings on cases, literature coffee, forms of reflection, etc.
- Active participation of the experts in the meetings, equality in the provision of the methodological support and instrumentation.
- Inclusion of external experts and therapists.



3. Extending the range of activities of the program through:

Promotion of the activity of the program in front of other institutions and service providers.

Provision of methodological support and supervision for professionals external for the organization.

Carrying out supervisions of foster families and professionals working on foster care in the municipalities – partners on the project „Accept me”, implemented in 2015 by SSA.

Carrying out supervisions within the project „Criminal Justice“ in cases of children victims or witnesses of abuse.

III. PROGRAM „SOCIAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN RISK”

In 2016 the Social Activities and Practices Institute celebrated 15 years, in which we have provided psycho-social practices for children and families, and have actively participated in all processes of reformation and de-institutionalization of childcare, as well as in the development of the child protection system and the related social services.

In 2016 the Social Activities and Practices Institute continued to manage state delegated services in the municipalities of Shoumen, Vidin, Sofia and Stara Zagora within the project funded by UNICEF – Child Centre for Advocacy and Support “Protection Zone” in the Municipalities of Montana and Shoumen. Until August 2016 we managed the services in the Child and Youth Zone – a Complex of Services for Children and Youths within the project „Support for children in conflict with the law, children at risk and their families“. Our efforts in the course of one year were aimed at the development and inauguration of a new model for supporting children at a high level of risk.



2016 for the Social Activities and Practices Institute is the year in which we **successfully ended the second five-year period of the management of the services in Shoumen, the first five-year period of the management of the services in Vidin, and the first three-year period of the management of the services in the CSC Nadejda – Sofia.**

The important topics that we worked on throughout the year

- Integrated approach and quality
- Justice and children
- Abuse prevention
- Professionalization
- Lobbying for the protection of the rights of children

The network of services managed by SAPI



1. Team for the provision and management of social services, supervision and methodological support

At the end of the year in SAPI worked 113 people based on labour contracts and about 10 experts that support the teams and are based on civil contracts – jurists, therapists and a rehabilitators. We have hired 6 directors; 53 specialists in social activities, including 10 – heads of sectors, psychologists - 17, including 3 heads of sectors; host-cashiers - 4; receptionists - 4; hygiene workers - 4; drivers - 2 and 8 social activities associates.

For the fifth year the organization applies and perfects its system for career development. A total of 6 consultants and 17 experts from the teams in Shoumen, Vidin, CSC Sofia and CSSCF Stara Zagora have the competence and preparation to lead trainings, to develop training programs and to carry out supervisions of social workers under the supervision and methodological support of Dr. Nelly Petrova, Dr. Nadya Stoykova, Darinka Yankova and Elena Manasieva – experts of SAPI.

What type of groups did we support

The social structures in 2016 planned and implemented their activities in accordance with the priorities of the organization for the quality of the provided services and professionalization of the psycho-social practice.

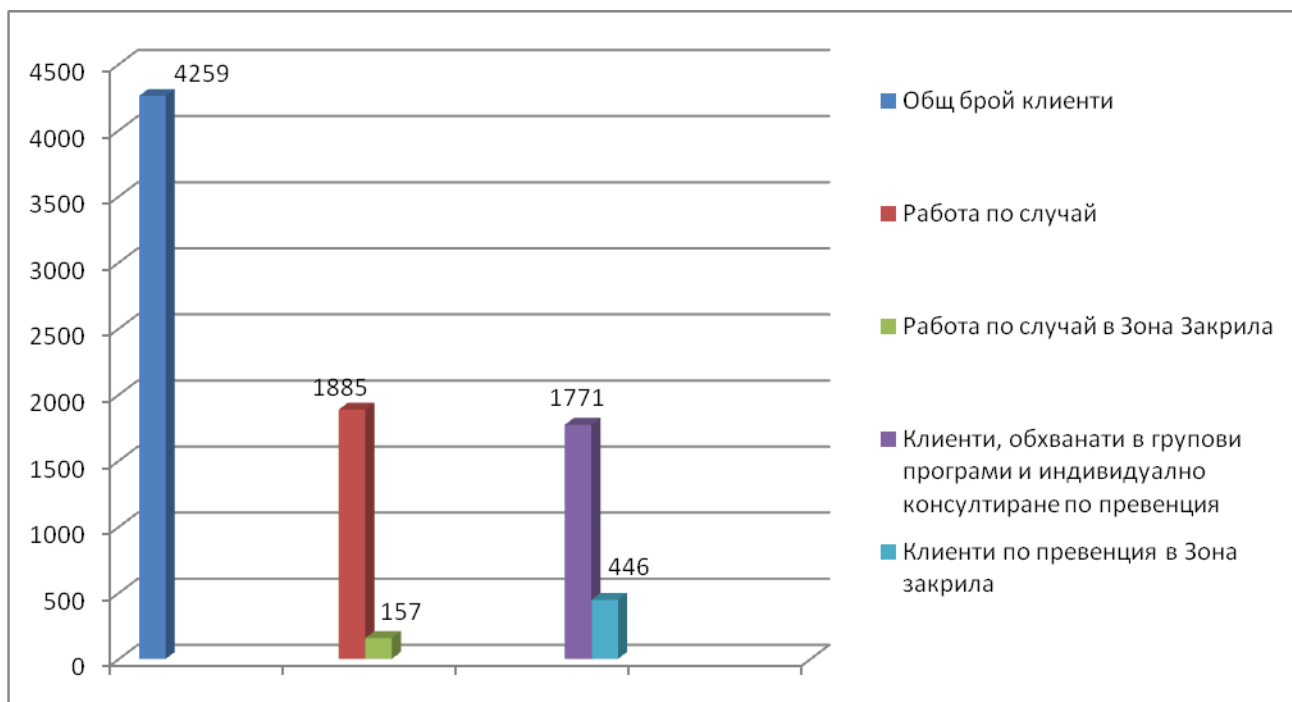
In order to fulfil our pre-set priorities, this year we have further improved our management system of coordination, interaction, and unification of our approaches in the management of the various structures of the organization. We also put serious efforts in **encouraging the active participation of the service users and their inclusion as partners for the achievement of change.**

In the social services we have provided support to a total of 4 259 clients. In comparison to the previous year, the total number of clients has increased by 30% /2 979 /, from which:

In the work on cases there were 2 042. The clients that approached us without being directed by other institutions are 145 in our work on cases, and they were 150 during the previous year, which demonstrates sustainability. In comparison to the previous year, the clients in the work on cases have increased by 16% /1718/, which to a large extent is due to the clients that have been supported in cases of identified abuse of children and children at high risk.

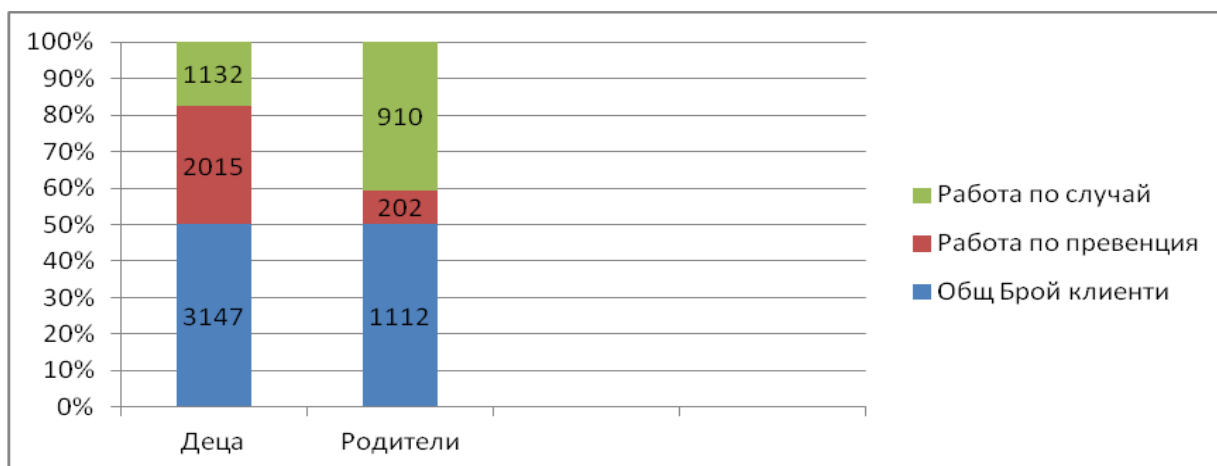
The clients of the group programs and individual consultations were a total of 2217. In comparison to the previous year, the clients within the programs for prevention of abuse of children have increased by 43 % / 1 261/. The numbers are indicative of the fact that we have extended the range of clients in our programs and trainings with students and professionals, and our services maintain openness and accessibility not only for the risk groups of children, but also for other children, parents and professionals.

The total number of clients in the work on cases is **2042** and they are based on **1955 directions, orders and signals from various institutions**. The analysis of the cases reveals that the highest share continues to be from directions of CPU – about 50 %, followed by directed orders - about 25 %.



A total of 4 259 clients

in the work on cases 2042 clients / 1955 cases, including 157 from the “Protection Zone” Centres/
in prevention 2 217, including 446 from the “Protection Zone” Centres in group prevention programs.



The schematic shows that for the total number of clients the ratio is 27 % adults to 73% children. Within case working the ratio is 45 % adults/parents to 55 % children, which keeps the ratios from the previous year.

The total capacity of the state delegated services managed by SAPI is 391. For another year the capacity of the services in Shoumen and Vidin have remained unchanged, while the teams worked on the regional level, and this required that in 2016 they worked again at about 30% above the existing capacity in almost all structures in Shoumen, and in Vidin it was even 50% above the capacity.

The total financial contribution that SAPI has indicated in the financial and technical reports in the structures is 119 641 BGN. In 2015 the contribution of the organization was 81 000 BGN, which is an increase of 33%.

2.1) Priorities in the support of risk groups of children

The lessons we learned from the SAPI experience and our work in 2016 on de-institutionalization of children shows that the **children in residential services** are vulnerable and need special care. These are children with complex needs, multitude of problems, and some of them are in a high level of risk, and the type of care and accompaniment in the residential service are not sufficient.

Intensive integrated services is an approach that SAPI develops in support of children at high risk.

In the recent years it became clear that a group of children whose life and well-being is at high risk need a new type of services. These are children between 12-17 years old who run away from home, from alternative care, are involved in exploitation, prostitution, and use psycho-active substances. Part of this group are also children that commit crimes.

Within the framework of the specialized service “Intensive socio-educational support of children in conflict with the law”, in the city of Sliven up until the completion of the project in 2016 we have directed our efforts towards the promotion of activities, identification of the users and implementation of the pilot model. **We developed an intensive socio-educational support for youths in the cities of Sofia, Shoumen and Stara Zagora.** The age of the children poses various challenges for the adults who take care of them, as well as for the specialists who work with them. This target group includes the children from **8 CAFT – a total of 175 children** that have received support from SAPI, a

significant part of the children are from the school support cases - **81**, the children from the cases for individual support who amount to a total of **164 children with behavioural problems**, including youths with inflicted punitive measures -**164**. Our goal is to introduce the “Program for intensive socio-educational and psycho-social support” for children at high risk in the Centres for Working with Street Children in the cities of Shoumen and Vidin.



This goal was defined as a result of the performed analysis and conclusions from the activities of the Centre for Working with Street Children.

The analysis of the data shows that the number of children who live and work on the street has significantly decreased over the last few years and, therefore, the service is rather oriented towards children that are neglected by their parents. A total of 37 children have received intensive support with the help of a multidisciplinary team of specialists and different activities, which include pedagogues, medical personnel, a psychologist, a speech therapist, etc. The intensive socio-educational support includes also the participation of children in group programs such as „**Life skills**“, „**We better talk**“, „**Bulgarian**“, „**Working-bee**“, „**Think before...**“, the workshops „**School Support**“, „**Art**“, „**Cooking**“, „**Style**“, „**Profession**“, „**Computer**“, „**Story telling**“, „**Photos and Cinema**“, **Art Atelier**, led by a professional painter, **Puppet theatre**, led by a professional actor, and 2-week long vacation camp programs.

Within the program for Children and Youth Participation, the teams in the cities of Sofia and Shoumen worked toward an informed and voluntary participation of the children, including children from marginalized groups, children of different ages and with different abilities, in the decisions regarding all issues that concern them directly or indirectly. „**The advice of the user**“ is one of the ways we provide time and space and give the children the opportunity to express their opinions regarding the services they receive. **We also take into consideration their ideas and recommendations for the service development, and we receive and give each other feedbacks.**

A priority for us continued to be the application of an integrated approach towards the specific needs of the children victims of abuse. During the report period in the social services we worked with **339 children victims of abuse**. In comparison to the previous year, when the number of the children victims of abuse we worked with was **188**, we report an increase of 45%. This comes as a result of the intensive and specialized work of the Child Centres for Advocacy and Support in the cities of Shoumen and Montana /108 children /, the intensive work of the teams in the cities of Sofia /164

children/, Stara Zagora /18/ and Vidin /17/, and the service we provide in the city of Shoumen /34 children/ called **“Emergency Reception” Centre**. Within the framework of the intensive support, the trained specialists from the teams of the CSSCF in Stara Zagora, Vidin and Sofia have provided assessment, preparation and support for child interviews of **a total of 36 children** victims of abuse and witnesses of crimes.

Throughout all the structures of SAPI, a total of 2015 children have been included in group programs and trainings for prevention of abuse and aggression in schools. The team of CSSCF in the city of Shoumen has worked with the largest number of children – 1325, and has performed 47 trainings in 10 secondary schools. We also conducted a series of focus groups and open door days for children that took place in the specialized rooms for hearing of children in the cities of Shoumen, Stara Zagora, Vidin, Sofia and Montana.

*In 2016 we continued to work on the second part of the **campaign “One of five” which is called “Think before.....”** and is directed towards prevention among teenagers of four different types of sexual exploitation and abuse – first sexual contact under pressure, sexting, sponsoring and trafficking.*

Child Centre for Advocacy and Support “Protection Zone” for children victims and witnesses of abuse and their families

Result: Application of an integrated approach directed towards the specific needs of children victims and witnesses of abuse.

Achievements

We continued to develop the innovative practice of the Child Centre for Advocacy and Support of children victims and witnesses of abuse and their families in the municipalities of Shoumen and Montana, in partnership with UNICEF and the mayors of the respective municipalities. We managed to successfully implement the model «All together under one roof to protect the rights and interests of children victims of abuse», to attract key partners, to provide a framework for cooperation between the institutions for protection and psychotherapeutic support - the judicial system, the health care system and the education system - and to obtain a license for the new service in accordance with the legal framework requirements. During the past year **108 children and 86 parents have benefit** from the good coordination and have received psycho-social and judicial consultation, advocacy, accompaniment when dealing with institutions and, therapeutic support.

A total of 47 children have received support by the «Protection Zone» Centre in the city of Montana, of which 18 have been victims of physical abuse, **16** children have been victims of sexual abuse, **10** children have suffered psychological abuse, **2 children** have suffered negligence, and **1** child was a victim of school bullying. The age distribution of the children is as follows: 0-3 years old - **1 victim, from 3-7 years old – 4 victims, from 7-14 years old 23 victims and from 14-18 years old – 19 victims.**

For **29 of the children** the abuse has happened within the family, **6** of the children have suffered abuse in a foster family environment, **2** of them at school, **4** were street abuse victims and **6** children were abused in a public place. **In 18 of the cases the abuse has been inflicted by a parent- father,** and the mother in 4 of the cases. Relatives, people close to the family or neighbours are the abusers in **14 of the cases, and in 4 of the cases the abuser is a foster parent.** In **7 cases** the abuse has occurred between children.

We have provided psychotherapeutic support to 30 children, **16 children** have received legal consultation, **10 children** have received child-friendly hearing procedures or hearing conducted in specialized rooms, and **6 children have received preparation for hearing. Individual assessments for the purposes of the judicial system** have been prepared for **44 children**.

During 2016 a total of 62 parents have used the services of the Centre - legal consultation regarding the Protection from the Domestic Violence Act, socio-psychological help, advocacy and accompaniment while dealing with institutions.

The «Protection Zone» Centre in the city of Shoumen has provided support to 61 children, where 20 children have received psychotherapeutic support, legal consultation at the Centre has been given to **42 children**, and **28 children** have participated in child-friendly hearing procedures or in hearings conducted in specialized rooms. **The victims of physical abuse are 5, of sexual abuse 16, and 15 are the victims of psychological abuse. In 21 of the cases** the abuse has happened within the family, in **5 of the cases** at school (or at an institution), and in **10 of the cases** the abuse occurred in a public place. The perpetrators in 15 of the cases are parents, relatives, and people close to the family, in 12 of the cases the perpetrators are neighbours, in 5 of the cases the perpetrator is a stranger, and 4 of the cases constituted violence between children.

Throughout the year 24 parents have received support and consultation at the Centre for Support and Consultation in the city of Shoumen, including assessment of parental capacity, consultation and support of parents with abusive behaviour, consultation and legal accompaniment of parents victims of domestic violence, consultation of parents who have severe conflicts.

Priorities:

To develop the service and to involve more partners, to improve the inter-institutional partnership, and to promote the participation and feedback from clients.

In 2015 we launched an integrated service for a follow-up support of youths who have previously been detained. In 2016 we continued to develop this service under the Project: "Integrated service for follow-up support of youths who have previously been detained».

The project included the establishment and development of an integrated service for a follow-up support of youths, who have previously been detained, with a special focus on youths from the Roma ethnicity, in order to improve their options for re-socialization.

The target groups of the project were probation officers and youths, who have been previously detained, as well as youths between the ages of 14-29 who have been recently released from prison and from the Juvenile Detention Centre in the city of Boychinovtzi, including youths from the Roma ethnicity.

Using information obtained from the youths who have been previously detained, we developed a map of needs, as well as manuals for youths and professionals. The project included carrying out a sensitivity seminar, which required the establishment of 3 teams for a period of 6 months, for the approbation of the integrated service in the cities of Sofia, Shoumen and Vidin. The teams included a psychologist, a social worker and a lawyer. The integrated service has provided opportunities for legal consultation of youths, social accompaniment and mediation, psychological consultation and therapeutic activities, activities and services for development of parental skills. We report an increase of the cases of **children going through critical and difficult family situations, children with age crisis/ 169 /, and children with addictions and children with inflicted punitive measures by the Local Commissions for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency /164/.** There is an increase in the number of children with

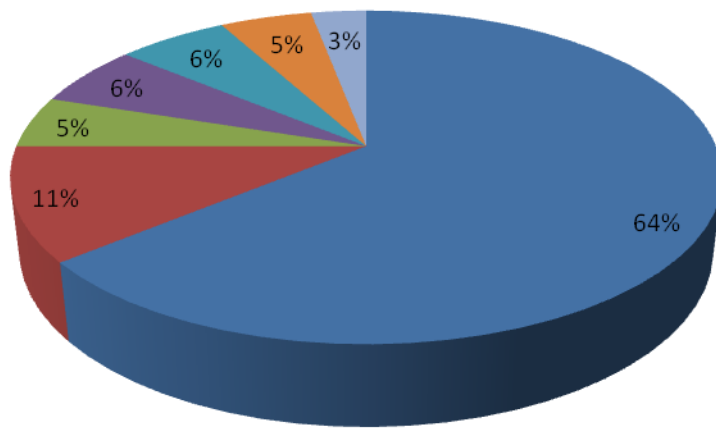
behavioural problems as follows - in the city of Vidin / 31/, in the city of Sofia /76/ and in the city of Shoumen /38/.

The majority of the cases are for consultation of children in cases of **family conflicts** in the city of Sofia - **90 children altogether**, followed by **64 cases** in the city of Stara Zagora. A priority of the services during 2016 from the point of view of the children has been the **prevention of parental estrangement, and working to maintain relationships with both parents**. In the mediated meetings between children and parents took part 25 children and 43 parents.

We continued the individual and group work for supporting the opportunities of children to live in a prosperous family environment or similar-to-a-family environment. We provided family care to 5 new-born babies in the city of Shoumen. The cases related to work with children who have been placed in a foster family are 159 altogether. The largest number of requests has been reported in the city of Shoumen, 94 requests for a total of 61 children in need of foster family care. The work we have done with adopted children and children placed in foster families has been rather in the direction towards abuse prevention, establishment of the children's personal stories, building up the relationships with their biological families. With the same purposes, we also used group programs and workshops such as „We communicate while creating”, “I communicate and travel”, "Story-telling" and "My backpack".



Подкрепа на деца



- Превенция на насилие и агресия над деца
- Подкрепа и консултиране на деца, жертви на насилие, в т.ч. изслушвания в специализираните стаи
- Подкрепа и консултиране на деца в приемни семейства, психологически характеристики, подготовка за осиновяване, подкрепа при адаптация, възрастови кризи и пр.
- Подкрепа и консултиране на деца в резидентни услуги
- Подкрепа и консултиране на деца при тежки семейни конфликти
- Подкрепа и консултиране на деца с поведенчески проблеми, в т.ч. Младежи с наложени наказателни мерки
- Превенция на отпадане от образователната система

¹ Trainings and group programs on prevention of abuse–2015 ; Work with children in foster care - 159; children in residential services - 175; Prevention of dropping out from the education system -81; Intensive work with children in conflict with the law - 141; Support of children victims of abuse – 339 ; Psychological consultation of children with behavioural problems -164 and children with severe family conflicts - 169.

2.2) We have supported a total of 1 112 parents—910 within case work and 202 who have submitted voluntary requests

The analysis shows an 18% increase of clients in case work and 38% decrease in the voluntarily submitted requests in comparison to the previous year.



2016 has been yet another year when the tendency for almost equal number of caseworks of children and parents was preserved / **55%-45%**/. We report an increase in the number of parents that were looking for support in the process of upbringing and educating their children. We report an increased popularity of the parent programs that we offer for different child age groups, more and more parents are seeking support from the specialists of SAPI in cases of difficulties in the family, crisis, or in cases of child personality problems. **The number of foster families has significantly decreased during 2016 /113 compared to 175 for 2015/ and** this comes as a result of the legislative changes and the delegation of the service to the municipalities.



There is a significant increase in the referrals for **psychological consultation of parents in cases of family conflicts, problematic behaviours of children, age crisis, addictions, etc.** We worked with a total of 250 families; compared to the previous year their number has increased by 30%.

We use family consultation and mediated meetings between parents/children and parent/parent in the work process with a family (87 clients in total compared to 71 for the previous year).



In the family work we also focus on the **advocacy for observing the child's rights**, and this shows mostly in our work to defend the right of a child to stay in contact with both parents, the right of a child to receive education, healthcare, etc.

The training and support of candidates for adopters has also increased (115 clients compared to 105 for the previous year). The largest number of clients from this target group is reported in the Centre for Social Support in the city of Sofia (83).

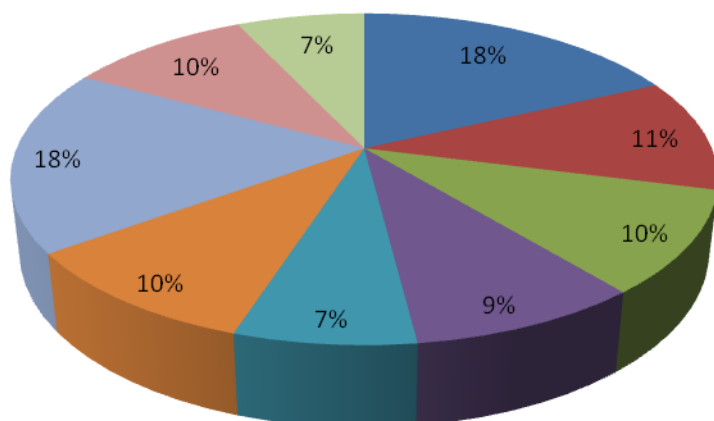
The largest group of parents we worked with in 2016 (in total **316 clients**), that make up **30% of the total number of parents we worked with throughout the year**, has received support, consultation and accompaniment for **improvement of their parental skills**. The group programs for parents consolidated themselves, and we became a recognized provider in the country that develops a series of programs such as «Positive Parenthood», «Smack-Free – How to Educate Our Children with Love and Respect», School for Parents. The number of mothers under the age of 18 continues to raise concern – **42 cases in total**.

Within the framework of abuse prevention, we worked additionally on the project «Men Care», with the main goal to promote the role and function of the father in the life and development of the child. We conducted trainings on the topic of parental estrangement and we developed methodological materials with theoretical overview and a practical focus for specialists working with the syndrome of parental estrangement.

We have also been working with parents who have abused their children under the Program for parents who have abused their children. The number of abusive parents has increased during 2016 to **71 compared to 50 for the previous year**.



Услуги за родители



- Превенция на насилие над деца
- Оценка на родителски капацитет
- Подкрепа на приемни семейства, в т.ч. обучени приемни родители
- Семейно консултиране, медиирани срещи
- Психологическо консултиране на родители при тежки семейни конфликти
- Обучение и подкрепа на кандидат-осиновители
- Подкрепа на родители за повишаване на родителския капацитет с цел реинтеграция, след реинтеграция, превенция на изоставянето
- Консултиране на родители при проблемно поведение на дете /възрастови кризи, бягства, риск от отпадане от училище, извършители на прояви/
- Работа с родители, извършили насилие

Group work with parents related to abuse prevention – 202; Assessment of parental capacity - 127; Individual support and consultation of families for increase of parental capacity – 189; Trainings and support of foster families – 113; Training and support of adopters and candidates for adopters - 115; Psychological consultation of parents in case of severe family crisis – 67; Support of parents for increasing parental capacity -11%; consultation of parents in case of problematic behaviours of children - 97; work with abusive parents - 71 ; family consultation and mediated meetings - 87 .

Quality management

We applied the system for management and internal quality control in the social work via:

Review of the case assessments, on the basis of which we provide services, and of the service plans and their update. Reviews of dossiers pertaining to the cases. Adherence to the weekly work schedules and to the total monthly schedule. Adherence to the working time and requiring 65% of the workload to consist of direct work with clients. Performing attestation of specialists. Feedback from clients and partners. User advice. Team meetings to discuss cases.

We successfully completed work on 1073 referrals/orders/requests/. In more than 30% of those we have received a request for continuous support. In all of these client cases the positive results or the benefits for the client have been reported after a minimum of 12 months of work. We have determined as ***an indicator the analysis of fulfilled goals from the plan for support provision***. Upon expiration of the time limit, our goal is to conduct a team meeting with the representative of CPU [Child Protection Unit] and to discuss the need for on-going support, to motivate it and to set a concrete goal in favour of the client.

We also started to use as an ***indicator all performed advocacy activities for the protection of the rights of children and their parents***. Another measure that we use for quality assessment is the ***dynamics during the direct work with clients***. In their monthly analysis, the leaders ***keep track of the active cases, and the number of hours spent in direct work for each case***. We concluded that the SAPI experts perform as a standard ***a minimum of one weekly meeting with the client while working on a case***. We conduct more than one meeting per week in large number of the cases that are still in their initial stage or in the cases of severe need. ***We analyse the results also with regard to how the case has been managed – number of team meetings and of multidisciplinary meetings***. We also use ***the feedback that we receive from our clients*** as a measure of quality. ***The performed analysis shows that the results we have achieved meet the clients' needs for support.***

What our clients say about us:

„Yes, it was very helpful for me to have support. It showed me that I have to be a more responsible parent, to provide the needed care for my child and to fulfil his needs, to always be there for my child and to support and help him.“

„I see a positive change in me – I became calmer. I can rely on myself to make the right decisions and to successfully tackle certain situations. I feel more confident“ „ I wish my social worker to be always that good and to help all people who are in the same situation as me. She is the right person whom you can always trust. I would turn to you again in case I need support because you help and support people when they experience difficult times to continue fighting and to not give up.“

"I feel good and more self-confident. I had the chance to think about my goals and to fulfil them. I am no longer only thinking about the conflicts I have with my parents".

The analysis performed by the directors of the services shows that we have fulfilled our goals in 90% of the cases, and in 60% of those this happened as a result of continuous work for 12 months on average. In 10 % of the cases we have performed activities, but we have closed the cases due to an assessment, characteristics, or a statement by the CPU [Child Protection Unit] to perform closure before the expiration term. The number of requests where we have not achieved results is very low, and usually it is due to the requests not having been negotiated.

IV. PROGRAM „CHILDREN AND JUSTICE. PREVENTION OF ABUSE.“

The main program priorities that we worked on are the same as they were the previous year:

- **Increasing the competence of professionals working with children victims and their families.**
- **Dissemination and raising awareness of a wider circle of professionals.**
- **Increasing the quality of the direct work with children victims of abuse, and guaranteeing the access of more children to high-quality services.**
- **Introducing the integrated approach to work on cases of child abuse.**
- **Extending the range of services for children and youths in conflict with the law.**
- **Guaranteeing the active participation of our clients in the activities, policies and services for children victims of crimes and their families.**

Result 1: In 2016 SAPI contributed for the formulation of adequate policies for children victims or witnesses of crimes, for the legislation application in accordance with the best interest of the child, as well as for guaranteeing the rights of children participating in legal procedures in compliance with the international standards.

In 2016 the SAPI team continued its targeted actions for the *introduction of the integrated approach* to work in the system in cases of child abuse, with which we contribute for the application of Directive 2012/29/EU in regards to the minimum standards for the rights, support and protection of crime victims. In April 2016 SAPI successfully brought to an end the implementation of the project „Listen to the Child – Is Justice Provision Becoming Child-Friendly?“ **with contract № JUST/2013/JPEN/AG/4601**, supported by EU. Within this project we organized a wrap-up international conference, and the results from the 12-month piloting of the model for integrated approach of collaboration in the Municipality of Vidin were presented. The analysis of the model application was carried out by an external examiner and was presented in a special report.

In order to guarantee the *active participation of the users* – children victims of crimes and their parents, SAPI carried out 5 interviews and 1 focus group with the users (children and parents participants in legal procedures), in order to analyse and assess the current justice provision for children and the practices regarding children participating in legal procedures. This allowed for the voice of the child victim to be heard, and for us to come up with suggestions for the improvement of the practice

based on the opinion of the users. This is an approach that SAPI introduces sustainably in its work on the evaluation of services and suggestions for improvements of the policies for children participating in legal procedures.

In January 2016 SAPI started a new project „Justice – a Friend to the Child – Training of Professionals for Better Collaboration“ with contract № JUST/2013/JPEN/AG/4601. The project is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, The Supreme Cassation Prosecution of the Republic of Bulgaria, the General Directorate „Criminal Police“ to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Agency for Child Protection, and the Social Support Agency to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. With this project SAPI continued its targeted work and support for the introduction of the requirements of Directive 2012/29/EU, and especially of article 22 for the preparation of individual assessments of the affected children, articles 23, 24 and 25.

Result 2: In 2015 SAPI contributed for the creation of better conditions to ensure the rights of the children victims or witnesses of crimes, and to decrease the risk of secondary trauma of the children when they meet with the law-enforcement organs.

Within the project „Justice Provision for Children – Abuse Prevention” SAPI provided support to the Ministry of Justice for the **construction of specialized premises for hearing children victims or witnesses** of abuse in some additional cities in the country: Pleven, Varna, etc. In this way, 13 of all 16 existing premises in the country at the end of 2016 had been constructed with the help of SAPI.

As part of the activities for promotion and protection of the rights of children victims of abuse SAPI has carried out 28 regional press-conferences for the rights of abused children in the country, as well as for the introduction of an integrated approach towards collaboration. The concluding press-conference on the topic „Together for the children victims of crimes“ took place in Sofia in partnership with BTA.

Result 3: In 2016 SAPI contributed for greater access to the service for preparation of children for hearing in front of a judge or for court hearing, as well as provided the opportunity for a greater number of children to have access to child-friendly conditions when they are victims or witnesses of crimes.

In 2016 SAPI also continued to provide services in support of children victims of abuse and crimes who have passed through child-friendly hearing procedures.

According to data from the mobile teams in Shumen, Vidin, Sofia, Montana and Stara Zagora **the total number of children** that have passed through child-friendly hearing procedures since the opening of the blue rooms at the end of 2016 is **206**.

The mobile team for child interviews of the Social Activities and Practices Institute continued its activity on a national level. The mobile teams of CSSCF in the cities of Vidin, Stara Zagora, the teams of “Protection Zone” Centre in Montana and Shumen as well as the team from Sliven have supported the territorial structures of the police, SSD [“Social Support” Directorate]/CPD [Child Protection Department], the court and prosecutor’s office in the above mentioned provinces but also in other provinces and cities such as Yambol, Varna etc.

During the past year, a total of **339 children victims of abuse** have received psycho-social support at the service centres for children and families managed by the Social Activities and Practices Institute.

Result 4: In 2016 SAPI contributed for the raising of the awareness of citizens and professionals in regards to the abuse phenomenon, and to good practices for prevention of child abuse in the country and on an international level.

During the past year, within the framework of the project „Prevention of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children in Central and Eastern Europe – a thorough approach”, we launched the campaign „Think before ...” with the aim of prevention of phenomena such as sexting, sponsorship etc., which represent forms of sexual abuse between youths and of children. We also printed materials for the purposes of the campaign such as posters and brochures.



At the end of 2016 SAPI launched the project „Hands off: promotion of the abolition of corporal punishment of children”, aiming to contribute to the effective enforcement of the legislation, and to promote positive educational practices and the abolition of corporal punishment.

Result 5: In 2016 SAPI contributed for the spreading of good practices for prevention of violence against children through trainings and consultations of parents.

The experience of SAPI, gained throughout the previous years, in regards to the programs for working with parents on prevention and support of parents and children victims of abuse continued to be multiplied in 2016 mainly through activities and services provided in the CSSCF and CSC in Sofia, Vidin, Shoumen, Stara Zagora and the «Protection Zone» Centres in Montana and Shoumen. Some of the programs are «Positive Parenthood» for parents of children between 7 and 14 years old, and «Smack-Free – How to Educate Our Children with Love and Respect» for parents of children between 0 and 6 years old.

Result 6: In 2016 SAPI contributed for the improvement of the policies for children in conflict with the law and for the introduction of innovative services.

In 2016 SAPI with the financial support of UNICEF-Bulgaria, continued to provide trainings and methodological support in the region of Sliven for the development of innovative social services for children at high risk of getting in conflict with the law.

Result 7: Contributions to lobbying and reformation of the youth justice system.

In 2016 SAPI continued some of its activities for lobbying and support of the reformation of the youth justice system. In partnership **with the Foundation (C.E.Γ.A.), we organized a public discussion** on the topic: „Is our society ready to provide support for youths who have been released from prison?“. The discussion was conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, the Social Support Agency, etc.

In the beginning of 2016 SAPI in partnership with the Ministry of Justice organized a **Support Council** for the fulfilment of Directive 2012/29/EU and the need to reform the youth justice system. All key institutions participated in the initiative.

In 2016 SAPI **conducted seminars** in the cities of Plovdiv, Veliko Turnovo, Burgas and Sofia aimed at professionals whose field of work is related to child justice. In the seminars participated a total of **200** judges, public prosecutors, police investigators, representatives of the district offices „Sentence Execution“, Regional „Social Support“ Directorates, regional inspectors from the Ministry of Education, Regional Health Inspectorates, municipalities, NGOs and providers of social services.

Publications and research studies

Manual for professionals and movies

In 2016 SAPI published a series of materials and publications on the working topics from the past year such as: „Manual for professionals working with prisoners“ within the project „Integrated service for follow-up support of youths who have been previously detained“, aiming to support the increase of the capacity of professionals who work with youths in conflict with the law; Methodological guidelines for educators of probation officers under the **project „Increasing the competences of the probation officers“, funded by** the “Norwegian Financial Mechanism” 2009-2014; the Manual „Integrated Approach for Fair Justice Provision” – available in 5 languages (Bulgarian, French, English, Romanian and Italian), and it comes with educational movies presenting practices of child-friendly justice in three countries - Bulgaria, France and Italy. Program for prevention of risk behaviors of youths which also includes video materials.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES INSTITUTE ON A NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

For 16 years the Social Activities and Practices Institute continues to be a key partner of the state, and of other NGOs and other structures in the process of democratization of the country, of guaranteeing the rights of children, of the de-institutionalization of the care and services for children at risk, of reformation of the justice for children and the prevention of child abuse.

Participation of SAPI in working groups for changes in the normative regulation and for policy changes.

Representatives of the organization participate in a working group for changes in the CPC of the Ministry of Justice, in a working group for changes in the legislation for children victims of abuse of the Ministry of Justice, in working groups for changes in the regulation of social services, in working groups for the development of a Plan for Poverty of the MLSP, and in working groups for professionalization of foster care, etc. The expertise of the Institute is highly valued by the responsible agencies for carrying out the policies for children and families. The organization was invited and participated in the consultative processes for analysis and preparation of a plan for de-institutionalization, and for changes of the methodologies for provision of social services.

The difficulties associated with the many changes in our country in the sphere of guaranteeing people's rights motivated us to develop standards, recommendations, and official positions. We have delivered all of these to the competent institutions.

The Social Activities and Practices Institute is a member of Eurochild and EOJJ since their establishment. Thanks to this as well as to our participation in non-formal networks with NGOs from other European countries, we are able to influence the introduction of European standards in our country and, at the same time, to represent our experience and the voice of Bulgaria in Europe.

On a national level, the Social Activities and Practices Institute is a partner of the state and of local authorities and organizations in the process of changing the policies for children and families and, most of all, for children at risk, including children in contact and in conflict with the law.

We interact very closely and on a daily basis with SSD ["Social Support" Directorate]/CPU [Child Protection Unit], and we can clearly say that we have good cooperation with all of the nine directorates on the territory of the city of Sofia.

We have a good cooperation also with the structures of the Ministry of Interior – Capital Directorate of Interior, Regional Police Department, police investigators and inspectors „Juvenile's Pedagogical Department in the police”.

We cooperate with them when we work with children victims of abuse, but also when we work with child perpetrators.

We have always maintained good partner and collegial interactions with colleagues from other NGOs, with which we cooperate, and we rely on their professional and collegial support.

In 2016 the Social Activities and Practices Institute took part in the project “PROMISE”, that supports the model „all under one roof” for work with children victims of abuse and crime. The participation in this project helped us conclude that the models “all under one roof” that we develop in Bulgaria, namely child-friendly justice practices in the Social Services Centres, as well as in the Child Centres for Advocacy and Support „Protection Zone”, are relevant to the best international experience. At the same time, we are aware of the areas in which we need to concentrate our efforts - more explicit inclusion of medical specialists, increasing the capacity of our specialists to provide psychotherapy,

and most of all, concentrating our efforts to make those practices accessible to children and guaranteeing that every child in the country is able to benefit from them.

The social services provided by the organization were frequently visited by international delegations, which allowed us to compare our experience and to become more daring, claiming that we work on a European level. We received visits from the University of Nantes, University of Paris, from Italian and French NGOs, representatives of different ministries in Europe, Asia and America.

The Social Activities and Practices Institute is expanding the operation of its Resilience Resource Centre in Eastern Europe by becoming the leading organization for the execution of the project **“Building the strengths of children for abuse prevention”**, that is carried out in partnership with the Association for Child and Family Empowerment "Ave Copiii" (Moldova), the Social Services Agency (Latvia), the First Children's Embassy in the World – Megjashi, (Macedonia), the Federatia Organizatiilor Neguvernamentale pentru Copil, (Romania), the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia – MODS, (Serbia), the Association for a better world, (Slovenia), TIRANA LEGAL AID SOCIETY (TLAS) (Albania). The project is funded by the Oak Foundation for the period of 2016 - 2021.

The goal of the project is the establishment of transnational and local networks for the implementation of a systematic approach for abuse prevention and child protection from all forms of abuse, including sexual abuse. In the network will participate not only professionals from protection authorities but also professionals from universal services such as education and healthcare, as well as children and parents from all over the country. The establishment of functioning networks will contribute to a permanent change of the attitude and the long-term commitment of all participants.

Priorities of the Organization for 2017

Abuse prevention and support of children victims of abuse – the implementation for all services of the model “All together under one roof”

Integrated approach towards children in conflict with the law

Child participation

Implementation/ description/ application of methodologies that include a minimum set of work techniques and work tools

Implementation of a system for monitoring and assessment of case work.