



**BULGARIA  
CHILD PROTECTION SECTORAL AND  
OR+ (THEMATIC) REPORT  
JANUARY - DECEMBER 2016**

unicef  | for every child

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March 2017

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

CAC	Child Advocacy Centre
CEECIS	Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States
CO	Country Office
CP	Country Programme
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPD	Country Programme Document
DI	De-institutionalization
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EU	European Union
JJA	Juvenile Justice Act
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPHRD	Operational Programme Human Resource Development
RKLA	Regional Knowledge and Leadership Area
RO	Regional Office
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TV	Television
UAM	Unaccompanied minors
UASC	Unaccompanied and separated children
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

## Executive summary

The main goal of the current Country Partnership (2013 – 2017) between UNICEF and the Government of Bulgaria is to enhance the national capacity for social inclusion and reduction of child poverty, furthering the realization of the rights of all children to equal access to education, health and protection and to strengthen child rights monitoring systems. It places a special focus on the most vulnerable children and families, and promotes innovations to help leverage funds, including EU structural funds and other social funds, to directly benefit the most disadvantaged children. It also contributes to facilitating national dialogue for the realisation of children's rights and strengthening broad partnerships with civil society, private sector and media to leverage results for children in Bulgaria and globally.

In support of government efforts to build on inclusiveness for Bulgarian society, as described in Europe 2020 strategy of the EU, Bulgaria CO contributes to the design of policies and the implementation of innovative practices focused on the most disadvantaged children: children living in institutions or at risk of being institutionalized; children living in poverty, especially children of ethnic minority groups; children with disabilities; children, especially girls, who leave school before completing compulsory education; children in conflict with law; and adolescents out of school and out of work. Implementation approaches include: (a) reinforcement of institutional capacity through modelling innovative practices, including communication for development approaches to tackle harmful practices and increase demand for services, (b) demonstration of new services, reaching out to the most marginalized families and children, and (c) policy dialogue and advice to improve regulatory and budgetary frameworks for the implementation of inclusive policies and services.

Critical contribution to the realization of a child's right to live in a family environment was provided through participation in the development of the up-dated Action Plan on Deinstitutionalisation, which places greater focus on preventing family separation. The process of reducing the numbers of children living in residential care continued and dropped to 1,029 by the end of 2016.

New projects for developing social services, strengthening the child protection system and supporting marginalized communities, were launched under the Operational Programme 'Human Resources Development' (OPHRD). UNICEF participated in the Monitoring Committee of OPHRD and influenced the increased allocation of funding for children through knowledge sharing and technical advice.

The State Agency for Child Protection, with UNICEF support, initiated the development of a National Programme for Prevention of Violence against Children (2017 – 2021), which was adopted in February 2017. The Government also initiated the drafting of a new Law on Social Services as well as amendments to the Family Code.

An important step forward in the area of Juvenile Justice was the preparation draft Diversion and Implementation of Educational Measures Act, supported by UNICEF,

which introduces the international principles for children in conflict with the law and the guarantees of the due process. The Act went through a public discussion, accompanied by a national advocacy and information campaign. The adoption of the Act by the Council of Ministers was stopped due to the resignation of the Government in November 2016.

The partnership between UNICEF and the Office of the Ombudsman was further strengthened and the Ombudsman was actively engaged in joint advocacy for accelerating the reform of the juvenile justice system and ending the detention of unaccompanied and separated children.

UNICEF Bulgaria worked with the Government, UNHCR and NGOs to improve the protection of the rights of refugee and migrant children. The CO monitored and reported on the situation of refugee and migrant children in detention centers, especially unaccompanied and separated children; supported the reforms of the legal framework and practices that guarantee those rights, and provided recreational and non-formal education activities in the reception centers.

## Strategic context of 2016

Despite the frequent changes of Governments in the period 2013 – 2016, children issues have remained high on the national policy agenda and significant progress has been achieved in key areas such as deinstitutionalisation, early childhood development, pre-school and school education, and access to justice with support from UNICEF and other partners. Bulgaria is also increasingly providing technical assistance to other countries for advancing child rights by sharing its knowledge and experience through horizontal cooperation.

A key challenge continues to be the disparity between the general population and some vulnerable groups. The Gini coefficient of 37 (after social transfers) is among the highest in the EU, indicating significant income inequalities. Almost half of Bulgarian children (43.7%, EU SILC, or 527,200 children) live at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Children in situations of particular vulnerability and marginalization are those living in poor households, in families with more than 3 children or with a single parent, of Roma and Turkish ethnic groups, out of school, with disability, in detention, from migrant and refugee families (and especially unaccompanied and separated children), and in residential care.

Bulgaria has made impressive progress in the area of child care reform and in ensuring the right of the child to live in a family environment. The number of children in the old-type residential institutions dropped from 7,587 in 2010 to 1,069 in December 2016. As a result of the ambitious Vision on Deinstitutionalization Strategy, all institutions for children with mental disabilities and almost half of the institutions for children under 3 years have been closed down. This progress has been made possible by the establishment of a large network of foster care families and of family-type homes for children. One third of children in foster care (766 out of 2,312 as of September 2015) are below the age of 3 years and more than 6,000 children are in kinship care.

However, many children continue to be separated from their families every year. Children from the marginalized communities and children with disabilities are at highest risk of family separation. Lack of quality services for children and the insufficient resources allocated by the State to support families combined with stigma and discrimination, and traditional harmful practices and social norms, such as child marriages and adolescent pregnancies, are the main factors leading to separation of children from their families. The up-dated Action Plan on Deinstitutionalisation, adopted in October 2016, articulates the steps for the continuation of child care reform and puts a stronger focus on the prevention of family separation.

Since the adoption of the Child Protection Act in 2000 Bulgaria has built a child protection system, which also addresses prevention, identification and response to violence against children. Corporal punishment is prohibited by law. However, violence against children continues to be a major issue. Recent studies show high tolerance and acceptance of violence in society and weak understanding of some emerging forms such as online sexual exploitation of children and abuse. 68% of parents accept the use of “reasonable violence” as a means of discipline and there are no major

programmes to support parents to use non-violent disciplinary measures. In 2015, Child Protection Departments received 3,741 notifications of violence against children and opened 957 cases after investigation. Registered cases are predominantly about severe abuse at home.

Since 2011 the Government has taken initiatives to reform the juvenile justice system but the legal framework is still not aligned with the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the International Standards. A major breakthrough in replacing the punitive approach with restorative and socio-educative interventions based on the individual adolescent's needs is the draft Diversion and Implementation of Educational Measures Act and the amendments to the Penal and Penal Procedure Codes, which are still pending approval. The adoption of this Act and the draft amendments to the Penal and Penal Procedure Codes related to children victims and witnesses of violence and crime will be an important first step to ensuring equitable access to justice to especially vulnerable groups of children in the country. Nevertheless, the full implementation of the international standards related to the treatment of children in the administration of justice will require amendments in several legal bodies and introduction of new – child-sensitive practices to ensure that the best interest of the child is given primary consideration, equal treatment and the right to be heard in any judicial/administrative proceedings is respected.

Bulgaria has played an active role in promoting child rights internationally as a member of UNICEF Executive Board and co-founder of the Group of Friends of Children and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The country has put children's rights in the centre of its Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe highlighting the Strategy for the Rights of the Child launched in Sofia in April 2016. The Government has provided its biggest bilateral contribution to UNICEF in Georgia for a project focusing on children with disabilities. During the past country programme UNICEF has supported the sharing of Bulgaria good practices and facilitated horizontal cooperation in child care reform, early childhood development, education and adolescents & youth with countries in the region.

Since 2013, the country has experienced an influx of asylum seekers. In 2016, 19,418 migrants and refugees have applied for international protection, of which approximately 30% are children, including unaccompanied and separated children (UASC). The Government has significantly improved the reception conditions and the basic needs of asylum-seekers related to shelter, food and medical are met. UNICEF provided support to the Government to meet the needs of children and to improve the protection of the unaccompanied and separated children.

One year after the launch of the SDGs the main challenges in Bulgaria are related to the child poverty, persisting inequalities between the general population and some vulnerable groups, higher child mortality some disadvantaged communities and regions, obesity, teenage pregnancies and births, unequal access to quality pre-school and school education and poor educational outcomes, high proportion of adolescents and young people not education, employment or training, violence against children,



including gender-based violence. UNICEF works with partners – State institutions, local authorities, civil society, academia, private sector, UN agencies and international organizations, children and adolescents – to strengthen national capacities for accelerating progress on achieving the SDGs in the areas of poverty reduction and social protection, health, education, prevention and response to violence.

## Results in the Outcome Area

The key outcome and outputs for child protection in Bulgaria, based on the Results Framework for Bulgaria's Country Programme 2013-2017, and corresponding outcome and outputs of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017 are:

### **Outcome 1: By 2017, more children from excluded and poor families benefit from equal access to education and protection systems**

#### ***Output 1: Child and Social Protection System***

By end 2017, based on the results of tailored approaches in three regions, key stakeholders at central level (especially the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and Ministry of Health) ensure that relevant regulatory provisions and budget allocations incorporate effective, culturally sensitive and accessible prevention and protection services for vulnerable and marginalized children, especially children at risk of family separation, children living in institutions and children with disabilities

#### ***Output 4 Child Friendly Justice:***

By 2017 government enacts revised legislation that introduces intersectoral coordination and alternatives to custodial service for children in conflict with the law.

They contribute to outcome areas 6 and 7 in the MTSP 2014 – 2017 and their outputs as listed below:

### **Outcome Area 6: Improved and equitable prevention of and response to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children**

- **Output a:** Enhanced support and increased capacities of children and families to protect themselves and eliminate practices and behaviours harmful to children
- **Output b:** Increased national capacity to provide access to child protection systems that prevent and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect
- **Output c:** Strengthened political commitment, accountability and national capacity to legislate, plan and budget for scaling up interventions that prevent and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect
- **Output d:** Increased country capacity and delivery of services to ensure that children's rights to protection from violence, abuse and exploitation are sustained and promoted in humanitarian situations
- **Output e:** Increased capacity of governments and communities to identify and respond to human rights and gender dimensions of child protection
- **Output f:** Enhanced global and regional capacity to accelerate progress in child protection

### **Outcome Area 7: Social inclusion**

**Outcome:** Improved policy environment and systems for disadvantaged and excluded children, guided by improved knowledge and data

- **Output a:** Enhanced support for disadvantaged and marginalized children and families to use social protection systems and participate in decision-making processes affecting them
- **Output b:** Increased national capacity to provide access to inclusive systems that protect children and adolescents from poverty and promote social inclusion
- **Output c:** Strengthened political commitment, accountability and national capacity to legislate, plan and budget for inclusive social policies and social protection measures, including in risk-prone and fragile contexts
- **Output e:** Increased capacity of governments and partners, as duty-bearers, to identify and respond to key human rights and gender equality dimensions of social inclusion
- **Output f:** Enhanced global and regional capacity to accelerate progress towards social inclusion

### ***Results achieved in 2016 under CPD Output 1***

UNICEF Bulgaria supported important legislative developments through active participation in the task forces, established by the Government, in the areas of social services, adoption, and protection of child victims and witnesses of crime and violence. A review of the national legislation related to the country regulations for prevention and response to violence against children was initiated to inform a task force established by the Parliament to develop amendments to legislation. A comprehensive review of the national legislation on domestic and intercountry adoption in line with international standards was initiated to inform the amendment of the Family Code.

The CO provided technical assistance and policy advice for the up-date of Action Plan for De-institutionalization, approved in October 2016. A needs analysis of the foster care system informed the development of the Annual Action Plan for the 'Foster Me' project. The CO also supported the development of a training programme for social workers and initiated a discussion on the specialization of the foster care service in order to improve its quality. An evaluation of the UNICEF-supported 'Family for Every Child' project in the Shumen region was carried out with the involvement by all project partners. The report, expected in 2017, will inform national policies for preventing family separation and improvement of child-care and development in marginalized communities.

Demonstration modelling interventions on outreach family support services (i.e. Family Centres) continued in the region of Shumen and 2 new Centres were established in the region of Montana. In 2016, the 5 Family Centres ensured the access of 606 children to health care and to pre-school education, developed positive parenting practices of 927 families and provided individual counselling and group programmes to 850 children.

The knowledge generated through the modelling of family support services informed the CO contribution to the RKLA 1 on the right of every child to a family environment.

UNICEF continued to promote the development of child-sensitive alternatives to detention. A Centre for Psychological Support, a Centre for Intensive Socio-Pedagogical Support, and Transitional and Supervised Homes Services provided support to children in conflict with the law and at risk, in Sliven region. State funding was ensured for majority of the services. The capacity of the social workers, police, prosecutors and judges from the child protection and Juvenile Justice Systems in the region were also strengthened through trainings.

The three Child Advocacy Centres in Sofia, Montana and Shumen provided support to 164 child victims of violence and their families. The practices established and results achieved were reviewed in 2016 against the international best practice and recommendations were made to further strengthen their capacity. The management capacity of the Centres and the coordination with the justice, child protection, health, and education systems were strengthened through technical assistance and joint trainings in Sofia, Shumen and Montana.

In 2016, UNICEF Bulgaria supported the Government and civil society to improve the protection of the rights of the refugee and migrant children through policy dialogue and advice for legal amendments and through strengthening the capacity of the police, child protection departments and NGOs. The CO actively advocated for ending the detention of UASC and worked with the Government on developing alternative solutions. The CO also supported strategic litigation and provided legal aid and counselling to the UASC in detention to facilitate their immediate release and create jurisprudence on the issue. UNICEF Bulgaria monitored the situation of the refugee and migrant children in the detention centres and reported violations of their rights. The information gathered helped to address gaps in the child protection system, develop a robust evidence-based advocacy and plan programmatic interventions.

The CO also worked on improving the resilience of refugee children to help them overcome the effect of conflict and displacement by initiating the provision of recreational and non-formal learning activities in the reception centres, during the last of quarter of 2016. To address anti-refugee sentiment and sensitize Bulgarian society to the adversities and hardships of children on the move globally, the CO participated in two large UNICEF global campaigns (Unfair tales and Acts of Humanity).

### ***Results achieved in 2016 under CPD Output 4***

UNICEF Bulgaria continued to provide policy advice and technical assistance to the Government to ensure equitable access to justice for children. The main advocacy efforts and support were focused on the reform of the Juvenile Justice System and the procedures and practices involving children victims and witnesses of violence and crime.

The CO provided substantive support to the Ministry of Justice for the drafting of the new Diversion from Criminal Proceedings and Implementation of Alternative Measures Act (the Act) and of the amendments to the Penal Code and Penal Procedure Code (PPC). The Act went through a public discussion procedure with strong support by the Ombudsman, facilitated by UNICEF. The process of adoption of the Act by the Council of Ministers was stopped due to the resignation of the Government in November 2016.

A national communication campaign was launched by UNICEF Bulgaria in partnership with NOVA TV, the Ministry of Justice, the Ombudsman, the Prosecutor General and the Ministry of Education and Science to inform citizens on juvenile justice reform and raise awareness about the negative impacts of the deprivation of liberty on children's *health and development*.

The efforts to ensure fair and just treatment of children placed in correctional facilities and children in conflict with the law, continued with the provision of free legal aid, including strategic litigation in several key cases, as well as provision of consultation and support services in the Sliven region.

Regarding children victims and witnesses of violence and crime, UNICEF took an active role in drafting the amendments in the PPC aimed at creating procedural guarantees for child-sensitive hearings and prevention of further and secondary victimisation.

Cooperation with the Prosecutor General was consolidated through new activities aimed to strengthen institutional capacity to ensure children's access to justice; collecting desegregated data on children participants in judicial proceedings and building prosecutors' capability to handle cases involving children in a child-sensitive manner. A series of train the trainer sessions were organised on child rights and procedural guarantees for children involved in judicial proceedings during the year. In 2016, 18 prosecutors were trained who trained another 40 prosecutors by November 2016.

UNICEF Bulgaria continued supporting the overall process of specialization for all professionals working with children in judicial proceedings, through advocacy for change in legislation and internal procedures. Furthermore, court specialization was supported through advocacy for the inclusion of more Regional and District courts in piloting specialized panels and chambers in cases involving children and providing technical assistance to train experts and implement rules and guidance for the pilot courts.

The CO actively contributed to RKLA2 on Access to Justice, including through piloting the self-assessment of the indicators in the area of Access to Justice and collecting useful feedback from both government and non-government partners.

## **Results Assessment Framework**

No	Context-Specific Indicators	Baseline	Target	As of Date	Status
<b>Outcome 1 - By 2017, more children from excluded and poor families benefit from equal access to education and protection systems</b>					
1	Number of referrals of children and families to family-support services	8,539 referrals (2010)	10,245 (20% increase)	31.12.2015	12,562 children that use community-based services
2	Number of children living in residential institutions [0-18 years of age, 0-3 years, number with disabilities]	5 695 children 0-18 years of age, of which 2,350 children aged 0-3 years; and 2,406 children with disabilities (2010)	30% decrease in children 0-18 years; 80 % decrease in children aged 0-3 years; 60 % decrease in children with disabilities	31.12.2015	1,300 children in specialized institutions (77% reduction) and 2,416 children in other types of residential care. 588 children 0-3 years (75% reduction) in specialized institutions. 841 children with disabilities in residential care
3	Proportion of children aged 0-17 years at risk of poverty and social exclusion, by district	51,8% of children aged 0-17 (2010)	35% of children aged 0-17 years (2017)	31.12.2015	43.7% of children aged 0-17 years
4	Number of children in family-based care [extended family, foster care]	6,310 children placed with extended family; 645 children placed in foster care [2011]. A disaggregation by sex and age will be available in 2012.	7,255 [extended family]; 1,800 [foster care]. Targets disaggregated by sex and age will be available in 2012.	31.12.2015	8,725 children in family-based care (6,402 with extended family; 2,323 in foster care)
5	JJ legislative framework in line with international standards adopted	Active legislation not harmonized with international standards (2013)	New JJ Act adopted; relevant amendments in Penal Procedure Code and Child Protection Act adopted (2017)	31.12.2016	Completion of the process of public discussion of the newly proposed act on Diversion and Implementation of Educational Measures for underage offenders; Pending adoption by Council of Ministers and introduction to Parliament (no clarity when

					this will happen)
6	Number of children in correctional closed facilities (disaggregated by age and sex)	275 children in correctional-educational institutions (2012); 80 children under the age of 14 deprived of liberty in correctional-educational institutions (2012); number of girls 52 (2012)	40 % decrease in number of children in all types of correctional-educational institutions; 10% decrease in number of children deprived of liberty 14-18 years of age; 60% decrease in number of children.	31.12.2015	213 children in correctional-educational institutions; 51 children under the age of 14 deprived of liberty in correctional-educational institutions; number of girls 45
Output 1 – Child and Social Protection Systems					
1	Legislative provisions, developed by the Government, prohibiting the placement of children under 3 in residential care	Legislation prohibiting the placement of children 0-3 in residential care is not enacted (2012)	Legislation prohibiting the placement of children under 3 year in residential care adopted and established functioning assurance mechanism to inform on its implementation.	31.12.2016	Legislation prohibiting the placement of children 0-3 years in residential care not adopted.
2	#of municipalities in three regions that provide community based and integrated family support services, in accordance with established service methodology	6 out of 25	12 out of 25	31.12.2016	12 municipalities out of a total number of 25 in 3 demonstration regions
3	Per year, number of new cases of children aged 0-3 referred to institutional care at national level and in 3 target regions	Nationally 1820 (2011)	80% decrease	31.12.2015	762 nationally (58% decrease) and 49 in 3 target regions
4	Per year, number of new signals and cases for children victims of violence, handled by the child protection system (in 3 target regions)	1917 new signals in 3 target regions (Montana, Shumen and Sofia) 349 new cases in 3 target regions in 2015	Increase	30.11.2016	1,497 new signals in 3 target regions 187 new cases in 3 target regions

Output 4 – Access to Justice					
1	Justice system complies with the minimum standards laid down in the Beijing Rules of Justice	Bulgarian Justice system complies only partially with Beijing Rules minimum standards in 2013	New JJA drafted with minimum standards incorporated;	31.12.2016	Draft a JJA (Act on Diversion and Implementation of Educational Measures) fully complies with Beijing Rules ; Completion of the process of public discussion: Pending adoption
2	Existence of procedures and services for children in contact with law that are applied and delivered in line with international norms	Procedure and services for children in contact with the law are not fully in line with international norms in 2013	Procedures for children in conflict with the law, victims and witnesses drafted	31.12.2016	Drafted procedure for children in conflict with the law, victims and witnesses; Few existing services mainly in some regional centers
3	Status of the enactment of a Juvenile Justice Act that incorporates inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms and integrated alternatives to custodial services for children in conflict with the law	No integrated legislation on JJ (2012)	New JJ legislation is elaborated in the period 2016 - 2017	31.12.2016	Completed public discussion of the new JJA (Act on Diversion and Implementation of Educational Measures for underage offenders); Pending adoption by Council of Ministers and introduction to Parliament due to resignation of the Government in November 2016.
4	Number of Prosecutors' Offices and Regional and District Courts with specialized units and panels dealing with cases involving children	0 in 2012	8 Prosecutors' Offices and 15 Regional and District Courts pilot specialized units and panels by 2017	31.12.2016	2 Prosecutors' Offices and 5 Regional and District Courts



5	Training materials for justice professionals address the capacities of children, including young children and children with disabilities, to voice their opinion and give evidence in judicial proceedings, and the need for communication with children to be gender- and culture-sensitive.	Only partially, usually project based in 2013	Training material for justice professionals addressing children's capacities to voice their opinion and testify in courts, including young children and children with disabilities are drafted	31.12.2016	Partially available
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## Financial Analysis

**Table 1: Planned Budget for 2016 (in US dollars)**  
**Outcome Area 6: Child Protection, Bulgaria**

Row Lables	Other Regular Resources	Regular Resources	Total
0570/A0/04/001/001 Child and Social protection Systems	1,292,406	114,747	1,407,153
0570/A0/04/001/004 Child Friendly Justice	104,704	52,782	157,486
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,397,110</b>	<b>167,529</b>	<b>1,564,639</b>

<sup>1</sup> RR: Regular Resources, ORR: Other Resources - Regular (add ORE: Other Resources - Emergency, if applicable)

<sup>2</sup> Planned budget for ORR (and ORE, if applicable) does not include estimated recovery cost.

<sup>3</sup> ORR (and ORE, if applicable) funded amount exclude cost recovery (only programmable amounts).

**Table 2: Bulgaria thematic contributions to outcome area received in 2016**

Donors	Contribution Amount	Programmable Amount
SM149910 Global - Thematic Humanitarian Response	172,000	172,000
SC149905 Thematic MTSP 2014-2017 Outcome 5: Education	112,000	112,000
SC149906 Thematic MTSP 2014-2017 Outcome 6: Child Protection	90,000	85,714
<b>Total</b>	<b>374,000</b>	<b>369,714</b>

**Table 3: Expenditures in Outcome area 6: Child Protection, Bulgaria CO**

Organizational targets	Expenditure amount			
	Other Resources-Emergency	Other resources	Regular resources	All programme amounts
06-02 Child Protection systems		126,155	85,844	211,999
06-04 Justice for children		7,825	30,517	38,341
06-08 Child Protection # General	56,554	1,296,114	114,671	1,467,338
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,554</b>	<b>1,430,094</b>	<b>231,031</b>	<b>1,717,679</b>

**Table 4: Thematic expenses by programme area 6 Child Protection in 2016, Bulgaria CO**

Organizational Targets	Expenditure Amount			
	Other Resources-Emergency	Other Resources-Regular	Regular Resources	All Programme Account
06-04 Justice for children		123		123
06-08 Child Protection # General	56,554	166,281		222,835
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,554</b>	<b>166,403</b>		<b>222,957</b>

**Table 5: Expenses by Specific Intervention Codes in 2016, Bulgaria CO**

Specific intervention codes	Total Utilized (US\$)
06-04-01 Access to justice (for all children)	4,701
06-04-02 Diversion programmes and other alternatives to detention of children	24,210
06-08-01 Child Protection # general	774,929
06-08-03 Child Protection -support to achieving global and regional goals	226,536
08-04-01 Parenting programmes / parenting education and support	54,503
08-04-02 Community based child care	207,965
08-04-03 Early Childhood Development # General	65,125
10-07-12 Management and Operations support at CO	-506
12-02-01 Private sector fundraising (Offset budget)	123,918
4011 Mapping and assessing child protection systems	3,385
4012 Support to strengthen laws, policies, standards, regulations and budget analysis of child protection systems	143,786
6902 Operating costs to support multiple focus areas of the MTSP	4
7921 Operations # financial and administration	49,519
7931 Human resources and learning	39,602
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,717,679</b>

## Future Work Plan

In line with the priorities and strategies of the Country Programme 2013-2017 and the recommendations from the MTR process, UNICEF will continue to support child protection system strengthening in 2017. Priority activities and indicators are included in the table below.

Output	Priority Activities for 2017	Indicators
<b>Output 1:</b> By end 2017, based on the results of tailored approaches in three regions, key stakeholders at central level will work towards enhanced legislation and ensuring budget allocations for development of effective and culturally sensitive, accessible preventive and protection services for vulnerable and marginalised children, especially children in risk of family separation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provision of technical assistance for the implementation of a new Action Plan for the implementation of the Vision for De-institutionalization</li> <li>- Provision of technical assistance and knowledge for adoption and implementation of a new concept for closure of all Infant Homes</li> <li>- Advocacy and technical assistance for strengthening of the child protection system</li> <li>- Provision of technical assistance to support the implementation of national child protection projects (e.g. foster care, etc.)</li> <li>- Advocacy for development of national and local policies in support of vulnerable families and children. Evidence-based advocacy for scaling-up and ensuring the sustainability of joint demonstration models (e.g. Shumen – Family Centres, networks of services)</li> <li>- Advocacy for amendments in the coordination mechanism for children victims of violence to ensure proper protection</li> <li>- Technical assistance and monitoring of demonstration services for children victims of violence</li> <li>- Provision of technical assistance for drafting and adoption of a national</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assessment of different approaches of closure of Infant Homes completed by April 2017</li> <li>- New concept for closure of all Infant Homes drafted by May 2017</li> <li>- Evaluation of Family for Every Child project completed by February 2017</li> <li>- Amendments to the Coordination Mechanism for children victims of violence adopted by end 2017</li> <li>- Provision of services to more than 150 children and parents in the Child Advocacy Centres</li> <li>- National mechanism for protection of UAM drafted by June 2017</li> </ul>

	mechanism for protection of unaccompanied minors	
<b>Output 4:</b> By 2017 government initiates revised legislation that introduces intersectoral coordination and alternatives to custodial service for children in conflict with the law.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advocacy for the adoption of new JJ Act</li> <li>- Advocacy and technical support for the adoption of the amendments to the Penal Procedure Code to guarantee child-sensitive approach to children victims and witnesses of violence and crime</li> <li>- Technical assistance for strengthening the capacity of professionals to work with children participant in legal proceedings, including refugee and migrant children</li> <li>- Provision of legal aid and consultation to children participants in legal proceedings, including refugee and migrant children</li> <li>- Advocacy for the closure of Correctional Schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draft Juvenile Justice Act/package of legislation included in the legislative agenda of the Government and Parliament by the end of 2017</li> <li>- Amendments to the Penal Procedure Code adopted by December 2017</li> <li>- Training modules on child rights and procedural guarantees for children participants in legal procedures, including refugee and migrant children for the Police Academy drafted by September 2017</li> <li>- Training on child rights and procedural guarantees for children participants in legal proceedings, including refugee and migrant children delivered to 300 professionals (police officers, prosecutors, judges) by December 2017</li> <li>- Legal aid and consultation provided to around 2000 children participants in legal proceedings, including refugee and migrant children by December 2017</li> <li>- Road Map for the closure of Correctional Schools adopted by Government by December 2017</li> </ul>

## Expression of Thanks

UNICEF Bulgaria would like to express its sincere appreciation to all donors who have provided contribution to the thematic funds for Outcome Area 6 “Child Protection”, and in particular the Polish National Committee for UNICEF, whose support has been instrumental in protecting the vulnerable children of Bulgaria. Without this contribution, UNICEF Bulgaria would not have been able to achieve the major milestones and longer-term sustainable gains that have improved the wellbeing of children throughout the country and especially in the most marginalized communities. Important advances have been made in child protection systems in Bulgaria and the issues affecting children have been a priority on the national policy agenda.

## Annex1: Human Interest Stories

How much does a magazine cost? A year, two, three...



Meet Zlatko - he himself chose to call him so, because he wants to be like Zlatan Ibrahimovic and football is his greatest passion.

This is his escape from the harsh reality in which he is placed. He is kicking the ball and trying to keep out of others "kicking" him... Zlatko is the youngest occupant of one of the 6 Correctional Boarding Schools in Bulgaria. He is only 11 years old, and Bulgaria is the only country in the European Union in which children under 14 years are punished by deprivation of liberty.

The Correctional Boarding School is an old and large building where boys and girls are enclosed – to be punished for "antisocial" acts like stealing a magazine, running away from home or begging on the street and roaming around. It is difficult to explain to Zlatko why a child at his age is punished for something that is not a crime and no adults would be punished. His placement in the correctional boarding school aims to "re-educate" him, to make him a better person. But the reality is very different – he is detained and isolated from his family, he spends every day in a semi-empty building, fighting for food, shampoo and personal space with other children, often he becomes a victim of violence. He is studying together with other children from different classes and ages – being taught by teachers who teach both Math and sports. Zlatko earns pocket money by begging and doing small "favors" for the people in the nearby village.

He does not know how long he will stay in the correctional boarding school or whether he will be released for the holidays...whether he has future at all. The main thing he feels is that he is "nobody" and he "deserves" his destiny. He is getting the lifelong label - "inmate of a correctional boarding school".

Children in conflict with the law are often victims of the poverty of their parents and the society's failure to support them. Zlatko too. The system has concluded that his parents cannot protect him and it is better for him to be in the correctional boarding school instead with them. Children in conflict with the law are often victims of violence. Zlatko too. Zlatko does not know how long he will be "sentenced". He counts on his small fingers not the days but the years ... But still – he has dreams, he shows us the movements of his favorite ninja from the cartoons. He wants to protect the weaker and to be a role model.

He says he is sorry, but also – that it is unfair for him to be in the correctional boarding school. He fights for his life by doing sports, making pottery and believes that there will be justice for him and for the others.



## A glance into the Future



*Yulia Hristova is visually impaired and lives in a world of shadows and isolation. A fact that had turned her life into a survival mission. After her encounter with Ilka Stoyanova from the Family Center in Shumen, supported by UNICEF and The Velux Foundations, she choose a way opposite of despair. Today, she dreams of a fulfilled, complete life, where she can be a good mother to her children*

### Family story

“We received a call from the mayor of Drumevo (village in Bulgaria), saying that a visually impaired pregnant woman wants to leave her child right after birth. My colleague and I arrived at the address. We already knew beforehand, that there were also living: her brother with his wife and four children, her mother and her son who’s blind as well. They let us in. The atmosphere was good but we were not welcomed there. We felt it by the way they greeted us – with suspicion. We introduced ourselves and explained we had come to offer our support. The one who first reached out to us by shaking our hands was the brother of Yulia. Later on we have found out why – the man who Yulia was pregnant from for the second time, only visited her when she was home alone. He was taking advantage of the fact that she is blind, to robe her every time. The story became clearer. Each member of the family shared something to make the picture bigger, only Yulia and her son remained silent. She hugged him as if she was trying to protect him from us. I knew the walls between us would eventually fall,

but I felt she was in denial – she hadn't seen a doctor yet and didn't know what month into her pregnancy she was. It seemed to me, that she didn't want to know anything that could make her change her mind into keeping the child. Despite of all, we talked her into going to see a doctor."

Every child needs their own mother

"Yulia had a high-risk first pregnancy. She gave birth to her son prematurely, his life was at risk. Then she spent two months in hospital, along with him and her mother. She took it hard when the doctors told her son is visually impaired.

After so many challenges, the fear that everything might repeat itself was holding Yulia back. Physically she looked fine, but actually she was confused and couldn't really see what was going on with her. She was convinced, that she cannot take care of one more child. I was secretly hoping that the doctor's appointment would wake her maternal instincts up. And so it was. The doctor said the pregnancy was going well, Yulia was almost six months pregnant and it seemed like she was carrying a girl.

Right there at the doctor's office, I knew Yulia had changed her mind, but only later on she told me about her decision to keep the child. Obviously, the good results of the medical report soothed the worries of all family members away. Then everything passed quickly and without any surprises. We prepared documents for C-section delivery, because her condition couldn't allow her to give birth the normal way. We signed up her mother as her companion, so she can help her at the hospital. When the time arrived, we made sure she would receive a one-time delivery financial support and we also ensured what was needed for the newborn to get back home safely. We wanted to make sure she won't get scared at the very last moment and refuse to take care of the child. We even suggested to place them both at the "Mother and baby" medical care department for a while, but they refused. The delivery went well. When leaving the hospital, we accompanied Yulia and her child home. Afterwards, the time we spent with them was very beneficial to me as a person."

From now on

"It's been three years now since we have been working with Yulia and her family. After she went home from the hospital, she haven't even doubted her decision. She was taking a good care of the baby. With the help of her mother, she was breastfeeding, giving bath to the newborn and doing everything else needed. She opened her heart, started to share more with us and even established a trusted relationship between us and her son, who used to cry every single time when there was someone unknown around. We brought psychologist to work with him. We didn't have to wait long until the results came along. The child naturally put itself at ease and even let a doctor check his eyes. We found out that his eyesight could recover after one surgery procedure. We had to wait up though, until his sister grows up a bit and starts visiting a nursery, so that the mother of Yulia could stay with him at the hospital. We started a fundraising campaign to collect the needed money for the medical intervention.

Children from the local school sang at a charity concert and Radio Shumen helped us by sharing fundraising appeals. We are waiting now, as the time has almost come.

Now, when we pay a visit to Yulia's family, she insist that all of all sit at the table, drink coffee and talk, while the children play around.

I am part of the Family Center in Shumen since the very beginning, stories like this makes me look back with a smile on my face."

## Annex 2: Donor Report Feedback Form

UNICEF is working to improve the quality of our reports and would highly appreciate your feedback. Kindly answer the questions below for the above-mentioned report and return to the Public Sector Alliances and Resource Mobilization Office (PARMO) who will share your input with relevant colleagues in the field and in headquarters. Thank you!

Please return the completed form back to UNICEF by email to:

**Name:** Maria Jesus Conde, Representative **Email:** mjconde@unicef.org

**SCORING: 5 indicates “highest level of satisfaction” while  
0 indicates “complete dissatisfaction”**

1. To what extent did the narrative content of the report conform to your reporting expectations? (For example, the overall analysis and identification of challenges and solutions)

5	4	3	2	1	0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what did we miss or what could we do better next time?

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2. To what extent did the fund utilization part of the report meet your reporting expectations?

5	4	3	2	1	0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what did we miss or what could we do better next time?

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3. To what extent does the report meet your expectations in regard to the analysis provided, including identification of difficulties and shortcomings as well as remedies to these?

5	4	3	2	1	0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what could we do better next time?

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4. To what extent does the report meet your expectations with regard to reporting on results?

5	4	3	2	1	0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what did we miss or what could we do better next time?

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5. Please provide us with your suggestions on how this report could be improved to meet your expectations.

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6. Are there any other comments that you would like to share with us?

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