INTRODUCTION

This factsheet is largely based on the inputs and observations of 15 organisations working in child protection in Bulgaria. As the survey was shared through child protection national coalition, all 15 of the respondents are coalition members.

As shown in the graph below, a number of organisations working in Bulgaria that took part to the survey conduct activities that directly relate to one or more of the INSPIRE strategies.

### Number of organisations and institutions working on INSPIRE strategies in Bulgaria

Results based on information provided by 15 organisations and institutions which took part to ChildPact's INSPIRE mapping survey

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CROSS-CUTTING ASPECTS

The section below point at cross-cutting aspects that are relevant for all INSPIRE strategies. Examples of activities relevant to the different strategies will be outlined separately in the following section.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NGO SECTOR AND STATE AUTHORITIES

Only four of all respondents stated they have received public funding for their INSPIRE-related activities. One of the respondents (Learn Foundation) stated that they have received funding from the Ministry of Youth and Sport for their “Better don’t” Campaign on sexual violence and sexual exploitation. Another respondent (Women’s Association “Ekaterina Karavelova”) said that they are receiving funding from the Ministry of Justice for their service in assisting victims of violence.

Four of the respondents stated they have received some forms of public support stating mainly that they receive public support in terms of partnerships, specifically excluding financial support. The Applied Research and Communications Fund stated that the Safenet Centre they run has a public council that includes state institutions.
ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY ORGANISATIONS WHO ARE PART OF A NATIONAL LEVEL INSPIRE WORKING GROUP

There is no national level INSPIRE group in Bulgaria. Within the National Council for Child Protection chaired by the State Agency for Child Protection and comprising of representatives of all relevant governmental structures and some NGOs, there is a Working Group on “Prevention of violence and abuse against children”. The members of the working group monitor the implementation of the National Programme for the Prevention of Violence and Abuse against Children (2017 - 2020) and the Action Plan for its implementation. The National Network for Children in Bulgaria and several other organisations are members of this working group.

Respondents to the survey have stated they are a part of a national level group that has activities related to INSPIRE, citing the work of the Applied Research and Communications Fund with different ministries in prevention of sexual exploitation and media and internet literacy. The other two organisations (P.U.L.S. Foundation and Social Activities and Practices Institute) explained that as a part of the Childhood Without Violence Alliance (an informal alliance, comprised of 17 NGOs and 2 experts) they have dedicated work on the promotion of the INSPIRE technical package.

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION

Almost half of the respondents (12 organisations) stated they conduct activities directly addressing the prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation.

The respondents cite a wide range of activities that their organisations are involved in, namely:

- different campaigns against sexual exploitation (Learn Foundation)
- trafficking in children (Public Council on Education in the Municipality of Gotse Delchev)
- running an online hotline on online sexual exploitation of children and a consultative phone line on online safety (Applied Research and Communications Fund);
- working with sexual abusers (Crime Prevention Fund IGA);
- managing the Learning Action Partnership (LAP) – a network for exchanging ideas and good practices realization, that is working for prevention of sexual exploitation of children (Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association);
- Primary prevention in hospitals and social services, as well as prevention of re-victimisation in cases where sexual violence has already occurred (“For our Children” Foundation).

Examples of practices

“For our Children” Foundation has highlighted as a success story their work on developing a methodology with "Guidelines for a Secure Family Environment", in collaboration with children, families and experts, which can guide all professionals working with families to prevent and address violence against children.¹

The Crime Prevention Fund IGA has cited their work in developing Circles of Support and Accountability – a unique and innovative community justice initiative for postrelease support and monitoring of medium- and high-risk sex offenders in and by the community.²

¹ E-mail for contact: v.kaneva@detebg.org
² For more information visit: http://www.circleseurope.eu/
Two organisations – Social Activities and Practices Institute and “Association Animus” Foundation have cited their work on developing “Zona ZaKrila” services – child and youth advocacy centre developed in the basis of the Barnahus model.

The Applied Research and Communications Fund has highlighted their educational programme “Cyberscouts” as a very effective and promising practice. Running already since five years, the programme has trained hundreds of children from all over the country to recognise online hazards, prevent and respond to and disseminate their knowledge and advise their peers.

Learn Foundation has picked their “Better don’t” campaign which included a series of educational videos on their online sexual education platform Loveguide.bg and a booklet on how to protect yourself from sexual violence and sexual exploitation.

INSPIRE STRATEGIES

STRATEGY 1: IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENTS OF LAWS

Most of the respondents have stated they work on Laws criminalizing the sexual abuse and exploitation of children (10 respondents), followed by Laws banning violent punishment of children by parents (9 respondents); Laws banning violent punishment of children by other care givers (8 respondents); Laws banning violent punishment of children by teachers (7 respondents); Laws that prevent alcohol misuse and Laws limiting youth access to firearms and other weapons (4 respondents). Three respondents have said that they do not have activities under this Strategy.

Examples of activities shares by the respondents:

- Leading Learning Action Partnership (LAP) – a network of professionals, working on topics connected with prevention of sexual violence against children in institutions. (http://safesex.bg/en/implemented-projects/the-art-to-inform/265) (Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association)
- The development of the Child and Youth Advocacy Centre "Zona ZaKrila", which provides services to children victims of violence and their families by establishing a specialized approach and programs bringing together good-quality legal, medical, psychological and social practices, child-friendly working procedures and favorable support environment. (“Animus Association” Foundation).
- Conducting research and drafting public statements on different legislative initiatives (Social Activities and Practices Association)

3 E-mail for contact sapi@sapibg.org
4 E-mail for contact animus@animusassociation.org
5 E-mail for contact: safenet@online.bg
6 https://loveguide.bg/blog/po-dobre-nedej/
**Strategy 2: Norms and Values (Gender, Social, Community)**

Most of the respondents have stated they conduct activities related to Changing adherence to restrictive and harmful gender norms (11 respondents), followed by Community mobilisation programmes (7 respondents), Bystander Interventions (7 respondents) and Changing adherence to restrictive and harmful social norms (6 respondents).

**Examples of activities shares by the respondents:**

- Organising discussions and meetings with people from vulnerable communities and support groups, run by health mediators (National Network of Health Mediators).
- Running training on positive disciplinary methods in the community as a part of the “Hands Up” project against corporal punishment (Social Activities and Practices Association).

**Strategy 3: Safe Environments**

Eleven respondents have stated they work on interrupting the spread of violence. Three of the respondents said that they have activities related to reducing violence by addressing “hotspots” and only one respondent has worked on improving the built environment (interior planning).

The answers of this question show that there is no common understanding on what does Safe environments mean. It seems that most of the respondents do not necessarily recognise this strategy as a distinctive one from their work related to other strategies.

**Example of activities shares by the respondents:**

- Conducting trainings of students, teachers and social workers on safe use of technologies (Applied Research and Communications Fund)

**Strategy 4: Parent and Care Giver Support**

Most of the respondents (11) have said they conduct activities related to Parenting training and support programmes for parents. Seven organisation have had activities in relation to Parenting training and support programmes for other care givers; six – in programmes delivered in groups in community settings; three had activities delivered though home visits and through comprehensive programmes. Only one organisations stated they do not have activities that fall under this strategy.
Examples of activities, shares by the respondents:

- Provision of trainings for parents, for caregivers (foster parents, adoptive parents, candidates for foster and adoptive parents, etc.) and for professionals;
- Provision of support through individual casework with families that are at risk, with our methodology incorporating violence prevention work in all cases (“For Our Children” Foundation);
- Running the “Mother and Baby” Unit / MBU/ social service. This is a 24-hour community service which is often defined by administrative institutions as a type of residential care community service. The main target group consists of mothers victims of gender-based violence regardless of ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation. (“Association Animus” Foundation);
- Taking part on the “Being a Dad” Campaign⁷ – a national campaign aiming at focusing the public’s attention on the importance of the father’s role for the child’s full development (“Association Animus” Foundation).

**STRATEGY 5: INCOME AND ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING**

This strategy is the one that is least popular in terms of activities related to it conducted by the responding organisations. Only two of the respondents have said that they have undergone activates related to Group saving and loans combined with gender equity training. Similarly, two of the respondents have stated that they have worked on activities related to Microfinance combined with gender norm training. No respondents have chosen Cash transfers as an area that they work on.

Examples of activities shares by the respondents:

- Gathering donations that the organisation then distributes to vulnerable children and families (Women’s Association “Ekaterina Karavelova”).
- Providing trainings to Roma families through the Network of Health Mediators (Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association).

**STRATEGY 6: RESPONSE AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

The activities conducted by the responding organisations fall into the following categories:

- Counselling and therapeutic approaches (12 respondents);
- Screening combined with interventions (3 respondents);
- Treatment programmes for juvenile offenders in the criminal justice system (7 respondents);
- Foster care interventions involving social welfare services (7 respondents).

Examples of activities shares by the respondents:

- A specialised service for children in conflict with the law, running since 2009 (Crime Prevention Fund IGA)

⁷ https://mencare.bg/
• Child and Youth Advocacy Centre "Zona ZaKrila" – a service that provides services to children victims of violence and their families by establishing a specialised approach and programs bringing together good-quality legal, medical, psychological and social practices, child-friendly working procedures and favourable support environment. ("Association Anumus" Foundation, Social Activities and Practices Institute).

• Running the National Helpline for Victims of Violence (02/981 76 86 or 0800 1 86 76). The Helpline has been working since 1997 and has received more than 30,000 calls. The Helpline supports people who have experienced domestic violence, sexual violence, trafficking in human beings or another form of violence. The Helpline informs victims of their rights, consults them emotionally and encourages them to seek help and make a change in their lives for the better. ("Association Anumus" Foundation)

• Running the National Helpline for Children 116 111, which operates nation-wide and is toll free. It is aimed at children, adolescents, their parents and close relatives as well as at citizens who seek information and help in relation to problems involving children. The Helpline provides help, emotional support, space to share emotions and problems, crisis intervention, information about available resources and ways to address a particular situation. The Helpline receives more than 100,000 calls a year. ("Association Animus" Foundation)

### STRATEGY 7: EDUCATION AND LIFE SKILLS

This is the Strategy that most of the responding organisation feel that their activities fall into. None of the respondents stated that they do not have any activities in this area. The distribution in terms of the different approaches within this INSPIRE strategy is as follows:

- Life and social skills training (11 respondents)
- Improve children’s knowledge about sexual abuse and how to protect themselves against it (10 respondents)
- Establish a safe and enabling school environment (6 respondents)
- Adolescent intimate partner violence prevention programmes (6 respondents)
- Increase enrolment in pre-school, primary and secondary schools (5 respondents).

#### Examples of activities shares by the respondents:

- “Animus Association” Foundation proposes a whole school approach aimed at preventing school bullying and violence in schools. The main goal of the project is together with teachers, school principals, children, and their parents to encourage the development of a school environment which teaches healthy communication, mature conflict resolution, and tolerance towards the differences. This is how violence can be prevented, as well as school bullying, and humiliation among students.

- Key to a Fear-free School introduces teachers to implementing the teaching method proposed by the prevention programmes in all classes between 1st and 10th grade in three schools in Bulgaria for five consecutive school years. Key to a Fear-free School is co-funded by OAK Foundation, Switzerland. It started in May 2016 and will last for 5 years until 2021 ("Association Animus" Foundation)

- Loveguide is a health and sexual education platform, through which Learn Foundation develops online and offline training and provides information to teenagers in four main areas: changes in puberty, sex and safe sex, prevention of sexual violence, safe and responsible online behaviour. The information is entirely authoritative, reliable, hopeful and verified by specialists, written in a language that is understandable and interesting to students. The Foundation also does classroom classes at school, and we create content for Loveguide's online channels in social media such as YouTube, Facebook and Instagram.

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8 http://bezstrah.org/
9 https://loveguide.bg
Another project addresses the call priority DAP (European Commission) – child victims of violence by focusing on the protection and support of male children and adolescents victims and potential victims of sexualized violence in close relationships, institutions, public space, and other environments, from a child-centred and gender sensitive approach (“Association Animus” Foundation).  

LINKS AND REFERENCES

The Survey was distributed to the members of several coalitions, namely: National Network for Children; Childhood Without Violence Alliance; “Being a Dad” Campaign members; Leading Learning Action Partnership (LAP) Network.

For a list of all NGOs that are members of child protection national coalition, check out their official website:  
https://nmd.bg/

For a list of all members of the National Network for Children http://endviolence.bg/

For a list of all members of the Childhood Without Violence Alliance  
http://safesex.bg/en/implemented-projects/the-art-to-inform/265 -

For the members of the Leading Learning Action Partnership  
http://mencare.bg/

The table below includes a full list of the organisations that replied to the survey and made reference to activities that relate to INSPIRE, as well as links to the their homepage.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This factsheet is produced by ChildPact and the National Network for Children in Bulgaria in the frame of two regional projects funded by Oak Foundation and INSPIRE Fund. The two projects include complementing initiatives to map the activities that are currently being conducted in line with the INSPIRE framework in the extended Black Sea Region with the objective of better understanding the current efforts and improving synergies between existing actors working on the implementation of INSPIRE strategies.

The data was collected between April and July 2019. The Mapping Survey is available in English at this link.

We would like to thank all the organisations who have participated to this important mapping exercise during the last months.

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10 https://boyscultureofcare.wordpress.com