

UNICEF COUNTRY OFFICE BULGARIA

**TERMS OF REFERENCE
FOR**

A COMMUNICATION EXPERT ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

(FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND STAKEHOLDERS UPTAKE STRATEGY OF THE UNICEF-SUPPORTED CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS ZONA ZAKRILA)

Start date: 1 March 2021
End date: 31 December 2021 (with possibility for extension in 2022)
Reporting to: Child Protection Specialist and C4SC Officer

I. BACKGROUND

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child; in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere. UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF, as the United Nations Children’s Fund, turns 75 years in 2021. The organization is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

UNICEF Bulgaria and the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria are in their 3rd year of implementation of the Cooperation Programme for the period 2018-2022. This cooperation is guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well by the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 and the 2030 Agenda as well the rolling work plan for 2021-2022. The document is fully aligned with the national priorities and will contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

For UNICEF Bulgaria VAC is one of the main cross-sectoral priorities. The Country Office works together with the Government, State institutions, United Nations partners, media, private sector, academia, civil society organizations, parents, children and adolescents to achieve sustainable impact in the following areas:

- (1) Early Childhood Development and Child Care**
- (2) Inclusive Education and Early Learning**
- (3) Prevention of Violence against Children, Protection of Victims and Access to Justice**
- (4) Partnerships for monitoring, communication and promotion of child rights in Bulgaria and globally.**

II. UNICEF’S ROLE

Violence against children takes many forms. It can be physical, emotional, sexual, neglect or deprivation. It happens in all countries and any setting – in a child's home, community, school and online. In some parts of the world, violent discipline is socially accepted and common. And for many girls and boys, violence comes at the hands of the people they trust – their parents or caregivers, teachers, peers and neighbors.

A new research that UNICEF Bulgaria will publish in 2021 shows the following prevalence levels and types of VAC:

- **Over 1 in 2 children (53 per cent) is found to have experienced any type of violence** under the age of 18 years.
- **Emotional violence is the most common type of violence** reported (45.9 per cent), followed by physical violence (31.2 per cent), sexual violence (15.6 per cent) and neglect (10.5 per cent).
- Violence was **most commonly experienced by children at school** (38.3 per cent), closely followed by in the community (37.6 per cent).

In 2015, after the integrated public campaign “Future free of violence for every child”¹, UNICEF Bulgaria partnered with two NGOs (Foundation Association Animus and Social Activities and Practices Institute) to establish the innovative for Bulgaria Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) to support child victims and witnesses of violence and crimes, particularly children who experienced sexual and/or physical violence, domestic violence, school violence and community violence, and their parents. CACs were designed to utilize a multi-sectoral approach to provide coordinated and integrated services.

The objectives of the Child Advocacy Centres (CaC) are to provide support to children victims of violence and crime and their parents to receive crisis intervention, consultation, support, legal aid, psychological and social support, assistance for medical examination, child-sensitive forensic interview or hearing and advocacy for their best interests. They provide a 24/7 response to incidents of violence and support primary and secondary prevention to violence through raising awareness among children, parents and communities and working with specialists from other sectors such as health, education, social, justice, etc.

The CaC have supported more than 2500 children and parents since their establishment in 2016 (1241 children reached by preventative services and 785 children and 569 parents with response ones). In 2020 the three CaCs have supported 538 children (female: 318 and male 220) and 413 parents (female: 323, male: 90) with integrated services related to prevention and response to violence against children and women (crisis interventions, therapeutic and legal support, medical and forensic expertise, etc.).

The CaCs were among the few services which continued providing essential services during the lockdowns and were critical part of UNICEF COVID-19 response plan. Since the beginning of the pandemic, 1428 MHPSS consultations to 687 children and 741 parents were provided.

An independent external evaluation² of the model and the services was completed in June 2020. The evaluation provides ample qualitative and quantitative evidence that CACs are relevant, effective and impactful, and fill a significant gap with regard to delivery of quality specialised and integrated services to children victims and witnesses of violence and crimes and their families which should be scaled up.

To support the above goals, in December 2020 a comprehensive Strategy for Community Awareness and Stakeholder Uptake of CACs was developed and is intended to be implemented in 2021-2022. The current Consultancy seeks to find a Communication expert who can work together with UNICEF, Animus and SAPI to implement the Strategy³.

III. OBJECTIVES AND SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES OF THE CONSULTANCY

UNICEF Bulgaria and the implementing partners – Animus and SAPI – are seeking to recruit a Communication Expert on violence against children (VAC) who will contribute to the implementation of the Strategy for Community Awareness and Stakeholders Uptake of CACs. The Strategy was designed, following

¹ <https://uni.cf/36GoxmK>

² <https://www.unicef.org/bulgaria/media/9436/file/BGR-evaluation-of-child-advocacy-centers-ENG.pdf>

³ The Strategy will be provided to the selected candidate.

the independent Evaluation of the CACs and consists of a proposed Action plan with timeframe, indicators and budget.

The main purpose of the Consultancy is to support the institutionalization and scale-up of the CaC model and services through provision of communication and advocacy support for the finalization and implementation of an action plan for increasing the community awareness and key stakeholder's uptake of the CaCs.

Main objectives:

- To increase community awareness of the CACs in the 3 pilot regions of Sofia, Shumen and Montana;
- To increase key stakeholders' willingness and readiness for institutionalization and scale-up of CACs
- To coordinate the communication and advocacy activities regarding CACs between the implementing partners – Animus, SAPI - and UNICEF.

Specific activities:

- **Co-ordinate the review, up-date and finalisation of the Action plan** for the implementation of the Communication Strategy for 2021-2022 including key activities, timeframe, people responsible and indicators for monitoring and evaluation.
- **Lead on the creation and maintenance of an information infrastructure** for CACs (incl. website, social media presence, materials for awareness and visibility);
- **Support the promotion and dissemination of results of the CaC external independent evaluation.**
- **Consult and contribute to creation of engaging content**, based on real stories from the practice of the services, targeting various audiences.
- **Support the capacity building trainings** of selected CACs experts and partners on communication skills (incl. with various groups and stakeholders);
- **Contribute to the organization and promotion of online and physical service-driven events** in the 3 regions (a menu of options for such events is provided in the Strategy).
- **Support the 3 CACs to develop their own in-house local communication and advocacy annual plans** in compliance with their needs and local context.
- **Contribute to attracting** leaders on policy and decision-making level and influencers.
- **Follow, track and maintain information** about the indicators outlined in the Strategy and the Action plan for its implementation.

IV. Timeframe and duration of the assignment

The assignment will take place from 1 March 2021 until the end of December 2021, with a possibility of extension thought 2022, after a mandatory 2 weeks break in between contracts.

V. Required education, experience and competences

The successful candidate is expected to have the following competencies:

- Relevant university degree, preferably in communication, journalism, international development, human rights, psychology, sociology, social work, international law or other relevant area;

- At least 5 years of professional experience in communication and/or journalism;
- Knowledge and expertise in the area of human rights, particularly child rights
- Good communication, planning and project management skills;
- Respect for cultural diversity and human rights;
- Willingness and availability to travel across the country;
- Knowledge of the UN system and UNICEF mandates is an advantage;
- Proficient command of English is an advantage.

VI. Remuneration and incurred cost

Payment as per consultancy fee and number of working hours per month (deducted from the budget of the implementing partners).

Working arrangements are flexible – half day, full time, as per demand.

The Consultant will not be UNICEF office-based, thus can work from home, remotely or in Animus/SAPI premises.

VII. Supervision

The Communication Expert will work directly with the implementing partners (Animus, SAPI) and will collaborate with the UNICEF Bulgaria VAC Consultant. The Communication Expert's working plans and months payments will be an object of final approval by UNICEF Bulgaria's Child Protection Specialist and Communication for Social Change Officer.