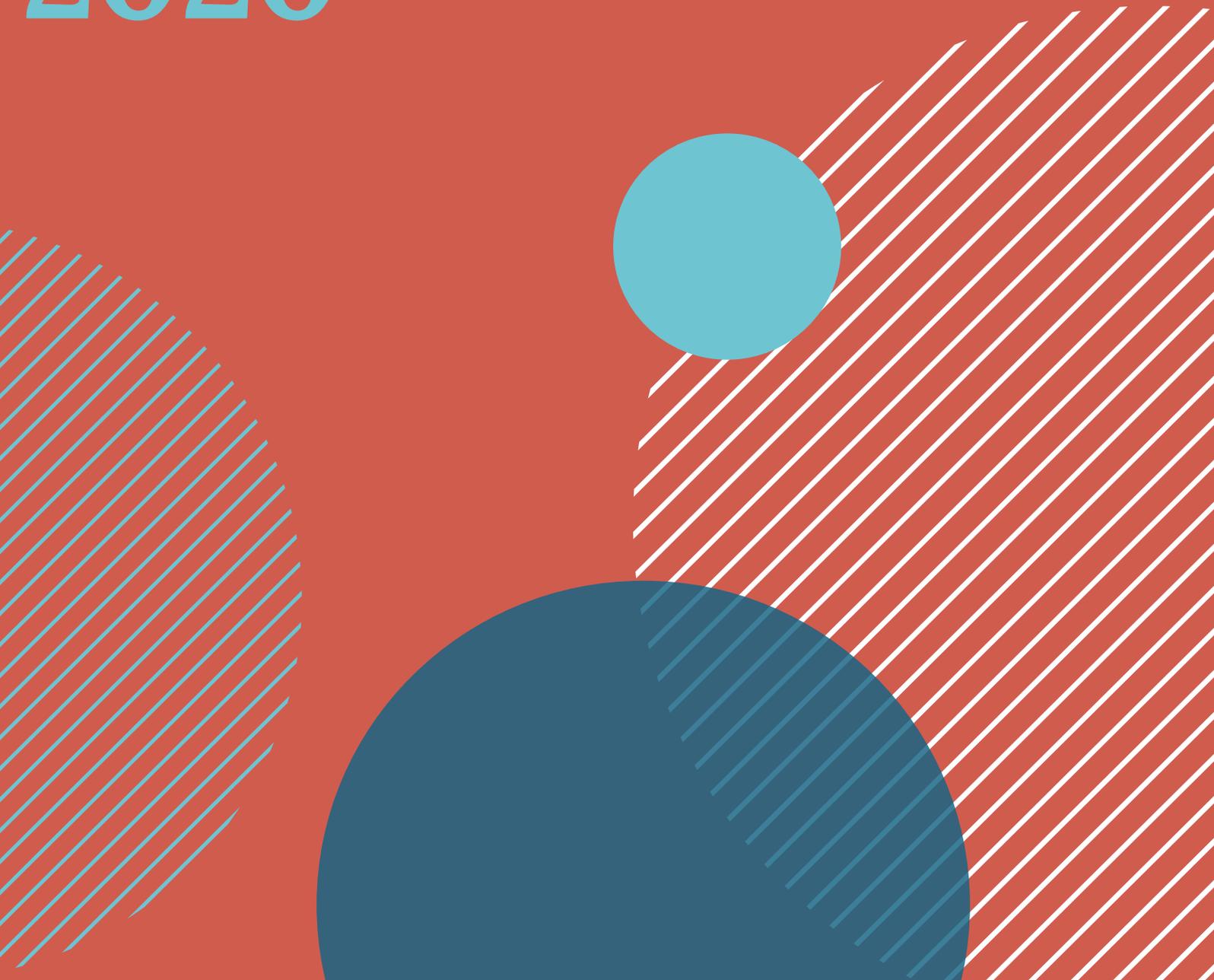


**ANIMUS
ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION**

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2020**



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INTRODUCTION

2020 was one of the most difficult years for Animus Association Foundation. The main reason for this was the COVID-19 pandemic and the state of emergency introduced in the country.

Generally, our main activities are related to providing support to people in crisis and difficult life and emotional situations, and the key to our professional success has always been in our stable organization of work. The situation posed a serious challenge for us to adapt to the new crisis situation while experiencing firsthand the unknown and the worries related to the change and to loss.

It was difficult, but we succeeded. With the timely support of UniCredit BulBank, OAK Foundation, and UNICEF Bulgaria we upgraded the technical facilities of all services and managed, in a very short time, to switch to a hybrid mode of work – online and in-person. None of the programmes closed. AAF Training Centre did not stop providing trainings and organized them online. The Crisis Centre and the Mother and Baby Unit did not close. Furthermore, we managed to provide all accommodated clients with the necessary conditions to work and study online as well as to create safe conditions. As a result, not a single client of our services was infected with COVID-19.

Additional challenges related to the AAF activities were the worsened mental health and family relationships in our society resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a clear tendency in seeking our psychological services and unfortunately, we had to introduce a waiting list more often.

A focus from last year was the upgrade in our programmes that now include migrant and refugee women victims of violence and looking for protection in Bulgaria. Their specific needs encouraged us to build a new network of partners as well as to overcome a lot of difficulties.

This is our statistical data from last year. It is based on the stories and destinies of those who came to us for help because they trust us.

A total of 7 924 people used AAF programmes and services in 2020.

- Centre for Counseling, Psychotherapy, and Psychoanalysis, and “Zona ZaKmila” – 1 978 clients
- St. Petka Crisis Centre for Survivors of Violence – 30 clients
- Social Services Centre for Children and Families
- Community Support Centre – 377 clients
- Mother and Baby Unit – 25 clients
- National Helpline for Children 116 111 /January – April/ – 3111 consultations

- National Hotline for Survivors of Violence – 2403 consultations

The numbers clearly show the increase in the social, psychotherapeutic, and counseling activities.

Our joint work with state institutions on amending the Protection against Domestic Violence Act also change into an online working group. Unfortunately, the amendments which benefit the victims completely were postponed due to an attack by nationalist political forces in the country and the clear lack of determination by the government.

In 2020, AAF prepared a number of statements, some of them together with our partners. The statements were introduced to the Parliament and to the Government in relation to the attacks of the same retrograde forces towards the Child Protection Act, the new Social Services Act as well as the status of the non-governmental organizations.

We paid the price of our success with increased working hours, higher number of misunderstandings and mistakes due to the change in communication channels, more pressure, bitterness, and sleepless nights.

We would like to thank our colleagues, friends, partners, and supporters, as well as to Sofia Municipality for the timely care for our and our clients' health.

Most of all we would like to thank our wonderful team for the energy and motivation to endure the pressure of last year.



Nadejda Stoytcheva



Maria Tchomarova

ACTIVITIES IN 2020

DIRECT WORK WITH SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE

1. **Social Services Centre for Children and Families – Community Support Centre**, (December 1, 2017 – November 30, 2022), A Sofia Municipality social service allocated for management following a competition as a state-delegated activity.
2. **Social Services Centre for Children and Families – Mother and Baby Unit**, (December 1, 2017 – November 30, 2022), A Sofia Municipality social service allocated for management following a competition as a state-delegated activity.
3. **“St. Petka” Crisis Centre for Victims of Domestic Violence** (March 1, 2018 March 1 2022), A Sofia Municipality social service allocated for management following a competition as a state-delegated activity.
4. **Child and Youth Advocacy Centre “Zona zaKmila**, (January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020), funded by UNICEF Bulgaria
5. **Support Centre for Victims of Domestic Violence**, (March 1, 2019 – February 28, 2022), funded by Medicor Foundation, Liechtenstein
6. **Maintenance of the National Hotline for Victims of Domestic Violence - 02 981 76 86; 0800 18 676**, Under contract for granting of gratuitous financial assistance with reg. № 93-00-25, 30/01/2019 concluded with the Ministry of Justice. Period of implementation of the contract: 15/02/2020 – 14/02/2020; 16/04/2020 – 15/04/2021
7. **National Helpline for Children 116 111** (November 1, 2018 – October 31, 2019, November 1, 2019 – April 30, 2020), A State Agency for Child Protection social service funded by the state budget and allocated for management under the Public Procurement Act.
8. **Support and Accommodation for Refugee and Migrant Women and Children** (January 1, 2020 – September 1, 2020; October 1, 2020 – December 1, 2021), funded by UNICEF Bulgaria
9. **Higher Skills for Better Life – Together We Can Do More** (October 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020, extended until 31.05.2020), funded by Zonta Club Sofia
10. **Zonta says “NO!”** (November 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021), funded by Zonta Club Sofia

PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. INCREASING THE AWARENESS OF THE PUBLIC ON THE ISSUES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

11. **OAK Foundation Core Support to Animus Association Foundation** (September 1, 2019 – August 31, 2022), provided by OAK Foundation

12. **Pro-active against Violence against Women** (November 1, 2019 – November 1, 2022), with the financial support of Active Citizens Fund Bulgaria under the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area
13. **BODROZI – National Response to Domestic Violence against Children** (October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2021), funded by the “Rights, Equality, and Citizenship” Programme of the European Commission
14. **WeToo - Protecting mental health: Empowering frontline workers and SGBV victims and survivors** (November 1, 2020 – October 30, 2022), funded by the “Rights, Equality, and Citizenship” Programme of the European Commission
15. **FEEL – Femicide Emergency on European Level** (October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2020), funded by the ERASMUS+ Programme of the European Union

PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AND PROMOTION OF MENTAL HEALTH

16. **Key to a Fear-free School** (May 1, 2016 – February 28, 2022), funded by OAK Foundation
17. **Being a Dad** (November 1, 2017 – February, 28, 2021), funded by OAK Foundation
18. **Research and Advocacy Campaign** (September 1, 2019 – March 31, 2021), funded by OAK Foundation

PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS AND SUPPORT TO REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

19. **TOLERANT - Transnational Network for Employment integration of women victims of trafficking** (January 2, 2019 – March 31, 2021), funded by the “Asylum, Migration, and Integration” Programme of the European Commission
20. **WIN – Trafficked Women Integration** (October 14, 2019 – October 14, 2021), funded by the “Asylum, Migration, and Integration” Programme of the European Commission
21. **ACTIVATE - enhancing the anti-Trafficking Identification, prevention and support mechanisms** (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2022), funded by the “Asylum, Migration, and Integration” Programme of the European Commission

TRAINING CENTRE

22. **Building Skills and Knowledge on Gender-based Violence for Key Professionals** (October 1, 2020 – December 31, 2021), funded by UNICEF Bulgaria

EMERGENCY SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE DURING A PANDEMIC

23. **Emergency fund for supporting victims of violence during the COVID-19 pandemic**, May 2020, provided by OAK Foundation
24. **Emergency support for women victims of violence during the COVID-19 pandemic**, provided by the Bulgaria Fund for Women
25. **Humanitarian aid for women victims of violence during the COVID-19 pandemic**, provided by the Bulgaria Fund for Women
26. **Active against Violence during a Pandemic** (December 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020), funded by the World Health Organization Country Office Bulgaria
27. **Donation of technology for ensuring the provision of social services from a distance during the state of emergency declared in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic**, provided by UniCredti Bulbank

DIRECT WORK WITH SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE

Social Services Centre for Children and Families

Community Support Centre

1 December 2017 – 30 November 2022

A Sofia Municipality social service allocated for management following a competition as a state-delegated activity.



The past year posed a lot of challenges to the Community Support Centre. Firstly, the state of emergency introduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic on 13 March 2020. Secondly, there were new regulations that entered in force with the new Social Services Act. They required a comprehensive analysis of the provisions as well as reorganization of the work of the Centre in accordance to them as well as additional amendments to our internal regulations.



In 2020, the Community Support Centre provided services to a total of 377 clients on 254 different cases. 144 of the clients were children, while 233 were adults.

The anti-pandemic measures were introduced on 13 March 2020. This posed challenges both to the team and to the clients of the social service. For the team, the new way of counseling online via Viber, phone, or email was a challenge as it required a longer period for building trusting relationships with the clients. The team also experienced technical issues such as connection problems, inability of some clients to access technical means, etc.



The team also faced challenges in relation to the clients – both children and adults. It was difficult for children to stay online and follow different channels for a long time instead being outside playing games. Such channels attracted the

children to idealized images of the person and the world which eventually led to the risk of developing various fantasy idealizations. Last but not least, some children faced the actual experience of losing a relative, family member or a friend due to COVID-19.

Adults with serious traumatic experience became even more certain that the world is an unsafe and threatening place which was further confirmed by the death of a relative due to COVID-19. What was happening in the world required additional efforts by the team of professionals to manage new crisis situations with the clients. This also required additional trainings on the new topics and the specific way of counseling. The number of supervisions, debriefings, and interventions increased.

It is hard to describe in just a few words the big challenges in providing the social service in such as specific situation, the emotional meaning of the psycho-social work, the little steps to building trust, our little efforts to change human destinies.

It must be noted that the team made it work and managed to support hundreds of children and parents not just by professionalism, but by human empathy to each case.

Social Services Centre for Children and Families

Mother and Baby Unit

1 December 2017 – 30 November 2022

A Sofia Municipality social service allocated for management following a competition as a state-delegated activity.



In 2020, the Mother and Baby Unit worked on the cases of 125 mothers and pregnant women, and 13 children. This past year was especially difficult and filled with challenges for the clients and the team of the Unit. Despite these difficulties, the Unit did not stop working. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a state of emergency in the country as well as a series of orders, anti-pandemic measures, and fear of the threat to the lives and health of both clients and staff of the social services.

The rules of procedure of the Unit had to be reorganized in accordance to the anti-pandemic measures. The pregnant women and the mothers with their children found it difficult to limit their contacts and this required daily crisis management by the team of the Unit. In order to deal successfully with the state of emergency, the team was supported by the supervisors and AAF directors via additional trainings and increased number of supervisions, debriefings, and intervisions.

It must be noted that the complex situation did not affect the quality of the service. The needs of all mothers and children were met. The Unit provided for their protection against the COVID-19 pandemic as well as other diseases by all means necessary – personal protection and hygiene materials were provided. Daily medical care was also provided. All clients could rely, if necessary, on effective social advocacy for themselves and their children.

In order to successfully reintegrate mothers and children in the community, they received help and support by the team of the Unit even after they had left the services. While keeping in mind the complex pandemic situation, the team continued counseling the mothers after their departure, as well as providing advice and cooperating in preparing documentations for jobs, kinder gardens, accommodation, and meeting basic needs (clothes, food, strollers, children's and carry cots, etc).

The Mother and Baby Unit team dealt successfully with having to work in this complex and unknown situation. A proof of that is the fact the Unit did not have a single case of COVID-19 infection among the clients in 2020.

St.Petka” Crisis Centre for Victims of Domestic Violence

1 December 2017 – 30 November 2022

A Sofia Municipality social service allocated for management following a competition as a state-delegated activity.



“St Petka” Crisis Centre is the only establishment on the territory of Sofia Municipality offering shelter to women and children survivors of domestic violence. The service is available not only to those living in Sofia and the region, but also to victims of the domestic violence from all over the country. The round-the-clock (24/7) operation of the Crisis center enables the provision of urgent support and protection, which in some cases proves to be life-saving.

In 2020, “St. Petka” Crisis Centre worked with a total of 30 people accommodated in the centre – 27 of them were victims of domestic violence, while three were victims of trafficking in human beings. 18 of the accommodated people were adults, while 12 of them were children. 23 women were accommodated, while the number of accommodated boys is seven. When it comes to trafficking in human beings, three of the cases were transit cases, while five received telephone counseling.

Our observation of the women who used the service due to experiencing domestic violence is that typically their crisis is extremely distressing. They feel confused, helpless, intimidated. Shame and guilt are the most common motives that prevent them from seeking the help of family and friends. The crisis is further intensified by the current situation associated with COVID-19, as well as their economic and social status, related to the isolation and the lack of a support system.

A tremendous challenge for the team of “St Petka” Crisis Centre for the past year was precisely the circumstances surrounding COVID-19 and the necessity to provide uninterrupted access to the service for those in need. In this situation, the fast, timely and professional intervention was of great importance, as was the psychological support in dealing with the crisis. In order to mark progress and resolve cases involving women, and children with their mothers who had suffered the consequences of domestic violence, it was central to provide them with a confidant who will take care of them, listen and believe their stories, ease the suffering and offer a meaningful step-by-step strategy for overcoming the problem.

A well-known trend in the assessment and management of the risk in cases of domestic violence, which also persisted throughout 2020, was the increase of the number of women, who had been subjected to a particularly vicious physical abuse, to a point that poses a real threat to their lives.

The setup of the work process in the Crisis Centre contributes in an effective manner to the successful management of the crisis, and to the rehabilitation and reintegration of the women and their children who sought out our service. For the most part, the focus of our efforts was directed towards recovery through the provision of psychological care, psychosocial guidance, legal support and measures for guardianship in accordance to the Protection against Domestic Violence Act.

The provision of this type of service and the multidisciplinary approach to the problem was of utmost importance for clients' legal protection and respect of their human rights.

Child and Youth Advocacy Centre Zona ZaKрила

1 January 2021 - 31 December 2021

Cofounded by UNICEF Bulgaria



In 2020, the programmes of the Child and Youth Advocacy Centre Zona ZaKрила covered 120 new cases of adults and children from the target group of the social service. Of these, 47 were children and 58 – adults. The tendency to send the most difficult cases of child victims of violence to the Zona ZaKрила Sofia team persisted in 2020. During the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the social service team provided crisis intervention via telephone consultations to 15 adults.

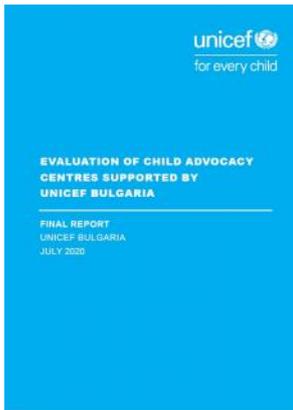


In 2020, the society faced an unprecedented threat to life, health, and the general psycho-emotional state. The COVID-19 pandemic and the strict measures imposed to ensure the physical health of families meant that children and their parents had to stay home. The crisis situation and social isolation directed our attention as specialists to take into account the risk factors in the family systems. The children were severely affected by the quarantine, and the insecurity and anxiety of their parents. This is especially true for children in a situation or risk of violence. The Zona ZaKрила team reorganized its work to comply with ant-pandemic measures and continued to operate in the usual schedule, remaining available to the clients who need help and support:

- We informed all parents and children about the possibilities for psycho-social and legal support such as online counseling; telephone consultations, etc;
- We informed parents about the possible reactions of children to stress and some of the things they can do to help them. We periodically published information and materials on our Facebook page, including videos from lawyers concerning specific current cases from practice (for example, implementation of the regime of seeing the other parents during a state of emergency);
- We opened a special section on the Animus' website, in which we published translated or original materials for clients and the general public, where we provided correct and accessible (in appropriate language) information for children - <http://animusassociation.org/covid-19/>;

- We created new ways of accessing the services of the Centre by using online counseling and a correspondence program through which those in need can share their stories in writing, and receive support and advice;
- We worked closely with partner organizations (UNICEF, WHO, partner NGOs) to develop and disseminate information and materials for home use. We adapted response algorithms to the emergency and pandemic conditions.

In May 2020, the final report of UNICEF Bulgaria was prepared on the basis of the



assessment of the Zona ZaKmila Centers by Prof. Robin Haar, Chief Consultant of UNICEF. The findings of the evaluation were related to the importance of Zona ZaKmila for children and families, the efficiency of the service and its impact. The conclusions show that:

- It is the integrated approach to providing quality services that brings the greatest benefits to children and families.
- Zona Zakmila contributes to improving access to justice for children who have experienced violence and crime, including improving access to justice for vulnerable and marginalized children.
- Zona Zakmila contributes to improving cooperation and coordination between sectors with various specialists in the best interests of child victims of violence.
- Zona Zakmila contributes to favorable changes in children's well-being, such as recovery from violence and victimization, as well as favorable changes for parents / carers.
- The benefits are invaluable given the long-term effects for children and families, for communities and for the society as a whole.

Prof. Haar's report showed the necessity of integrated services provision to children as well as testified to the high quality of work performed by Zona ZaKmila Sofia.

Support Centre for Victims of Domestic Violence

1 March 2019 – 28 February 2022

Funded by Medicor Foundation, Liechtenstein



The project “Support Centre for Victims of Domestic Violence” is supported by Medicor Foundation, Liechtenstein. Medicor Foundation is a long-term partner to the organization in providing psycho-social support to victims of domestic violence. This is a follow-up action of the previous project funded by Medicor and its implementation period is March 1, 2019 – February 28, 2022.

The overall project goal is to provide possibilities for children, adolescents and women victims of domestic violence in Bulgaria to recover from the consequences of the experienced violence and to acquire skills for an independent life, free of violence. The target groups of the project are women, adolescents, and children victims of domestic violence, couples in a situation of domestic violence and/or separation, relatives and members of the extended families of survivors of domestic violence, the staff of AAF providing direct support to victims, and the professional community.

In 2020, 216 victims of domestic violence benefitted from the programs of the Support center. 136 women and children were counseled, whereas 30 clients were accommodated in the Crisis Centre. 45 women were part of the empowerment program and 32 families or relatives of survivors participated in the family consultations programme. 31 clients received pedagogical support in 2020, and 96 clients received individual advocacy concerning their rights, access to social services etc. Experts participated in a total of 10 multidisciplinary meetings on cases of domestic violence.

COVID-19 did not stop the Support Centre from supporting victims of violence. As a result of the state of emergency, the Centre began providing online counseling to the victims in order to keep its clients and staff healthy. During the state of emergency (13 March – 13 May 2020) working directly with victims continued but we used different means – mainly online via Skype, Viber or phone. In addition, the courts in the country also continued working online on cases which were urgent and could not be postponed, included proceedings under the Protection against Domestic Violence Act.

Maintenance of the National Hotline for Victims of Domestic Violence 02/ 981 76 86; 0800 18 676

Under contract for granting of gratuitous financial assistance with reg. № 93-00-25,
30/01/2019 concluded with the Ministry of Justice
Period of implementation of the contract: 15/02/2020 – 14/02/2020

Under contract for granting of gratuitous financial assistance with reg. № 93-00-100,
16/04/2020 concluded with the Ministry of Justice
Period of implementation of the contract: 16/04/2020 – 15/04/2021



The service " **Maintenance of the National Hotline for Victims of Domestic Violence - 02 981 76 86; 0800 18 676**" has the following aims:

- to maintain twenty-four-hour service of the National hotline, including on weekends and official holidays;
- to consult and support victims of violence;
- to provide a weekly specialized legal counsel on the Hotline;
- to refer to social services throughout the country, which can assist the victims.



The project is aimed at the following target groups:

- women, men, and children victims of domestic violence, as well as their close ones throughout the country;
- consultants from the National hotline for victims of domestic violence.

The main activities in the project are:

- twenty-four hour functioning of the National hotline for victims domestic violence 02/ 981 76 86 / 0800 18 676;
- e-mail consulting (given the implemented anti-epidemic measures and restrictions, victims are often unable to hold phone conversations and instead seek help by e-mail).

Results, achieved in the period 01 January 2020 – 31 December 2020:

- **2403** telephone consultations of violence survivors;
- **133** telephone consultations with a lawyer, concerning the rights of victims in accordance to the Law on domestic violence protection;

- **144** e-mail consultations of violence survivors;
- Updated design of the informational materials (stickers and leaflets), promoting the hotline;



- **One recruitment campaign** for new consultants on the Hotline, followed by **an intensive 5-day training session** that took place from September 28 to October 2 2020, introducing the new recruits to the work on the Hotline;
- **Regular group supervisions and team meetings** on organizational topics, **annual seminar** for the estimation of the consultants' work and outlining the activities for the next year, as well as **a seminar** on the subject of "**Psychological Development Within and Outside of the Norm**";
- **Updating** of the "Map of the Services for Victims of Domestic Violence".

In 2020, after the implementation of strict anti-epidemic measures against the spread of COVID-19, the National Hotline saw a steady rise in the number of calls, the highest numbers being recorded in the summertime, immediately after lockdown procedures took place. The relaxing of said measures led to the opportunity for victims to make phone calls without being at risk, as between May and September 2020 the Hotline registered between 200 and 250 monthly calls, compared to the other months, when that number was between 170 and 190. In regard to the nationwide state of emergency, declared on 13/03/2020, a large part of the victims who contacted the hotline reported difficulties in physically separating themselves from their abusers because of social isolation or loss of work during the pandemic, which led to more incidents and escalation of the violence against them. Considering the limited opportunities for victims to hold longer phone calls, 144 e-mail consultations were provided in 2020, as in many cases the only opportunity available was to seek help by e-mail. Also during the period 01/01/2020 - 31/12/2020, 3 reports concerning victims of violence were sent to a prosecutor's office, a "Social Assistance" Directorate and/or a "Child Protection" Department.

Compared to 2019, when the hotline had registered 2486 total calls, 2020 saw a slight decrease in the total calls count; however, calls about domestic violence have increased: from 1522 in 2019 to 1632 in 2020. Another comparison between the initial lockdown period (13/03/2020-13/05/2020) and the corresponding dates in 2019 shows a 17% increase in the total calls count and an 18% increase in the calls about domestic violence.

Despite the problems that arose from the period between the two contracts with the Ministry of Justice coinciding with the declaration of a state of national emergency, the

hotline never interrupted its services, only decreasing its work time from a 24-hour period to a 12-hour period for two weeks in the beginning of April 2020. The continued support of the service in the aforementioned circumstances is owed both to the assistance of the hotline's partners and to the commitment of the team of volunteer consultants, who showed their readiness to help victims of violence in these new trying times.

On October 1, 2020, the Hotline celebrated 23 years since its establishing. So far, its consultants have held over 40 000 conversations with victims seeking help and support.

In 2020, the National Hotline for Victims of Domestic Violence was awarded a prize for fearlessness at the annual awards for volunteering services organized by the platform Time Heroes.



National Helpline for Children 116 111

November 1, 2018 – October 31, 2019

November 1, 2019 – April 1, 2020

A State Agency for Child Protection social service funded by the state budget and allocated for management under the Public Procurement Act.



The National Helpline for Children 116 111 is a service provided by the State Agency for Child Protection (SACP) and has been managed by Animus Association Foundation for the last 10 years after winning national competitions opened by the SACP under the Public Procurement Act. As of 30 April 2020, the Helpline is managed by the SACP.

116 111 is a harmonized European number; the Helpline is free of charge for any callers from Bulgaria, it operates on a 24-hour basis, and provides anonymity. The National Helpline for Children (NHC) offers psychological counseling and help to children and their parents, as well as the opportunity to send signals for at-risk children to the child protection services all around the country.

During the 01/01/2020 – 30/04/2020 period, a total of 19 868 phone calls were received on the Helpline, with the incoming calls being 18 945. 923 outgoing calls were made to the Child Protection Departments in order to deliver information about at-risk children. During the reporting period there were 3 111 consultations provided to children and adults, with 266 of them concerning violence against children. 311 signals were sent to the Child Protection Departments in the country.

After the declaration of a nationwide state of emergency on 13 March 2020 in relation to the spread of COVID-19, there was an increase in the total number of calls, as well as the provided consultations and the sent signals. In March 2020, there were 80 signals sent for at-risk children, which was the highest number of signals in a single month that was ever registered at the Helpline. Subsequently, 85 signals were sent in April 2020. Calls related to domestic abuse also increased, with 3 signals about the problem having been sent before the lockdown period (01/03/2020 – 13/03/2020), and 10 more signals for children at risk or witnessing domestic abuse having been sent by the end of



March 2020 after the implementation of strict anti-epidemic measures on 13 March 2020. The data shows that isolation correlates with a higher risk of conflicts within the family escalating to domestic abuse.

One of the common problems for which consultations were sought after at the Helpline, was the presence of parental conflicts. During the lockdown period, there was an increase in the number calls related to information about how the nationwide emergency and the pandemic were turning into a pretext for non-compliance with a court-mandated contacts between children and the noncustodial parents, which could suggest a possible risk of parental alienation.

During said period, children confided about their difficulties with the then-newly implemented online education system, as well as the changes in day-to-day life and their contacts with peers due to the social isolation, which led to feelings of fear, anxiety, loneliness, boredom.

In March and April 2020, the Helpline's capacity was increased via additional work shifts that the consultants covered during the rush-hour periods of the day, because of the expected increase in the number of call. Despite the difficulties and the crisis situation in the country, the Helpline team provided additional support to children and their parents.

On April 30, 2020, after 10 years of managing the National Helpline for Children 116 111 and amid exceptionally difficult conditions, the Animus Association Foundation team handed control of the Helpline over to the State Agency for Child Protection.

Support and Accommodation for Refugee and Migrant Women and Children

January 1, 2020 – September 1, 2020; October 1, 2020 – December 1, 2021

funded by UNICEF Bulgaria



In 2020, Animus Association Foundation continued its work on the “Support and Accommodation for Refugee and Migrant Women and Children”, supported by UNICEF Bulgaria. The project is implemented in “St. Petka” Crisis Centre and the Mother and Baby Unit to the Social Services Centre for Children and Families. The main goal of the project is to provide accommodation and support mothers and their children among migrants and refugees by providing them mediation and advocacy when looking for a job and integrating in the society and the cultural environment. The project is aimed at ensuring social inclusion of these people by also providing legal aid and pedagogical support to the clients.

In 2020, a total of 25 people received counseling. Seven refugee and migrant women were accommodated in the Crisis Center and four of them had a total of six children – four of them were boys. These women originated from countries such as Lebanon, Columbia, Turkey, Ukraine, Ghana, Afghanistan, etc. Among them, there was a mother and her underage daughter, a mother with Dutch citizenship, who originated from Morocco, with her underage son and daughter, a mother and her underage son from Ghana, and a mother with her two underage sons from Afghanistan.

Expanding our target group by providing support to this target group meant that we also needed to expand our partner network. The work on cases of these clients included various partners such as Caritas-Sofia, the Council of Refugee Women, the Bulgarian Red Cross, etc.

One of the major challenges to working with migrant and refugee women and children that our team faced was the different cultural backgrounds and languages of the clients we worked with. This often caused difficulties in the communication between the team and the clients as well as in the relationships among the clients themselves. In order to overcome this challenge the team relied on cultural mediators and interpreters working with different languages who could help the team in all aspects of the work with this target group.

Higher Skills for Better Life - Together We Can Do More

1 January 2019 – 31 March 2020, extended until 31 May 2020

Funded by Zonta Club Sofia



The project is implemented in the Mother and Baby Unit to the Social Services Centre for Children and Families managed by Animus Association Foundation.

The project goals include:

- Improving the living conditions where the Unit temporarily accommodates pregnant women, women and their children, victims of violence, of trafficking in human beings, underaged mothers and pregnant women from ethnic minorities; single mothers or pregnant women without support from relatives;
- Building the mothers' skills to handle modern techniques (considering the young age of some mothers, their way of life, poverty and long-lasting lack of attention until their adoption in the Mother and Baby Unit);
- Ensuring greater security, living and emotional comfort that mothers seek to create in their home after being empowered to live outside the Mother and Baby Unit;
- Building parental capacity, health culture, and skills of women in their care for children, through meetings and talks with psychologists, doctors, and healthcare professionals;
- Mothers and pregnant women acquiring planning skills and skills for family budgeting and rationality, through intensive counseling by social workers and through a better lifestyle at the Mother and Baby Unit;
- Organizing art therapy and labour therapy for the mothers as well as a "social workshop" in order for the mother to acquire applicable and useful skills for their lives outside of the Unit.

The project achieved long-term results and improvements to the material base of the Mother and Baby Unit. The mothers gathered skills and knowledge on how to plant and grow flowers and vegetables which they can use after leaving the services. Their and their children's health culture, social skills, and psycho-emotional status improved. The mothers of lower status achieved simple financial literacy for family budgeting and planning, parental skills, hygiene skills. The "social workshop" resulted in a temporary financial stability for the mothers but also in having society's approval, promoting causes; and increasing the image of the service.

Zonta Says “No!” to Violence against Women

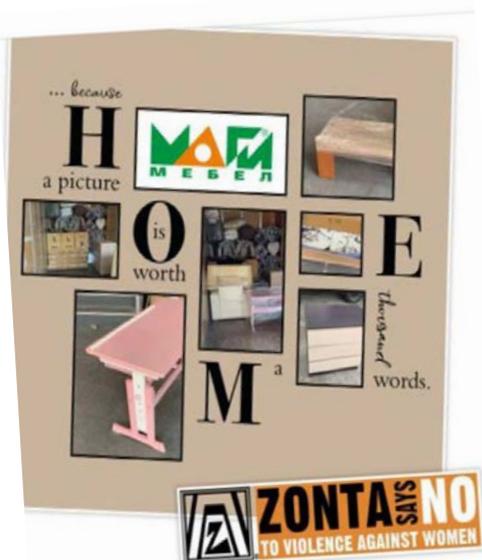
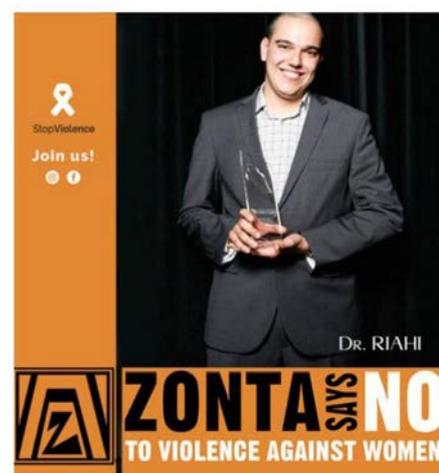
1 November 2020 – 31 March 2021

Funded by Zonta Club Sofia



The “Zonta Says “No!” to Violence against Women” includes six mini projects aimed at supporting the work of AAF emergency services in 2020.

1. “A Shining and Healthy Smile” and “White teeth” projects – ensuring dental care and treatment to women and children using the services of AAF. The project was implemented by Dr. Sofien Riahi and Dr. Dimitar Angelov;
2. “Zonta Baby” project – delivery of diapers, dry milk, purees, etc. for the babies and children accommodated in the Mother and Baby Unit;
3. “Zonta New Home” project – delivery of new furniture for the St. Petka Crisis Centre and the Social Services Centre;
4. “A Smile instead of a Tear” – a drawing competition for the children accommodated in the services managed by AAF;
5. Donations of clothes, shoes, and accessories for women and children accommodated in the Mother and Baby Unit and the St. Petka Crisis Centre.



**PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. INCREASING THE AWARENESS OF THE PUBLIC ON
THE ISSUES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Core Support to Protect the Rights of Women and Children who Have Experienced Violence in Bulgaria

1 September 2019 – 31 August 2022

Funded by OAK Foundation



OAK Foundation provides core support to Animus Association Foundation in its activities to tackle violence against women for the period 2019-2022. The Core grant is aimed at a comprehensive and sustainable development of support services for woman victims of domestic violence in Bulgaria. It is also directed towards our efforts to influence legislative changes aimed at introducing mechanisms that can effectively guarantee the rights and protection of victims of violence. This is the first such grant that AAF has received and it is extremely important for the organization's activities in this incredible relevant to the Bulgarian society topic of violence against women.

Within the second year of the core grant, the team organized a number of trainings and seminars as well as awareness-raising and advocacy activities aimed at transforming harmful practices and understandings around gender and gender-based violence.

In addition, AAF representatives took part in a number of working groups and prepared statements on relevant legislative initiatives with the goal of ensuring more effective support mechanisms for victims of violence via legislative changes. The Social Services Act entered into force on 1 July 2020 but it was faced with serious backlash that almost led to its additional postponement. AAF took active part in the working group for the preparation of the Social Services Act as well as its Regulations. We also provided a number of statements in support of the Act.

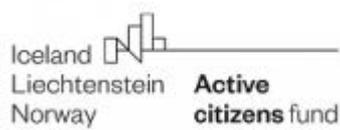
The Child Protection Act was also under attack and the proposed changes would have resulted in turning the child into an object and property of their parents that can be bequeathed. The proposed changes would have made the child protection systems go back many years. Animus Association Foundation, together with many other organizations experienced in working with children, united and prepared statements that would not allow these changes to be accepted.

AAF representatives also participated in the preparation of the changes to the Protection against Domestic Violence Act. The working group concluded the draft of the Act in the summer of 2020 but the finalized version was not introduced for a public debate for voting before the end of the year.

Pro-active against Violence against Women

1 November 2019 – 1 November 2022

Funded by Active Citizens Fund under the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area



The main goal of the project is to raise awareness and activate the general public to act against violence against women. Society and Safety Foundation is our partner in the implementation of the project. The activities take place in four regions of the country – Sofia, Silistra, Sliven, and Smolyan.

In 2020, we conducted the following activities:

- In January-February, we organized four focus groups with 40 police officers from the four regions of the project in order to study their attitudes towards domestic violence. We prepared an analytical report with the results of the focus groups after their completion.
- At the same time, we also conducted five workshops aimed at preparing the monitoring system of public policies and practices applied by institutions involved in cases of domestic violence. There were a total of 91 representatives of the Courts, police officers, Prosecutor's Offices, Lawyers' Councils, etc. By the end of the year, these institutions prepared and provided information on the number of cases of domestic violence they had worked on.



<https://activeagainstv violence.com/ot-do-ya-za-nasiliето>

Some of the data provided by the Police and the Regional Courts in Sofia-city, Sliven, Silistra, and Smolyan

Reports to the Regional Police Directorates		Cases under the Protection against Domestic Violence Act in Regional Courts	
Sofia	608	Sofia Regional Court	649
Silistra	115	Sofia-city Court	110
Smolyan	187	Smolyan Regional Court	15
Sliven	77	Devin Regional Court	1
		Madan Regional Court	4
		Chepelare Regional Court	1
		Sliven Regional Court	32
		Kotel Regional Court	9
		Nova Zagora Regional Court	12
		Silistra Regional Court	33
		Dulovo Regional Court	5
		Tutrakan Regional Court	4

- At the beginning of the year, we also started training women survivors of violence to act as ambassadors against domestic violence. Five women took part in the training led by a communication expert and aimed at teaching the women how to talk about what they had been through in public. The training activities are supported by a social worker who works with the women as a part of an empowerment programme and provides psychological support.
- The advocacy campaign was also active. The team prepared a total of five statements related to legislative changes.
- The state of emergency introduced in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic increase the interest towards the topic of domestic violence. As a result AAF provided a total of 84 consultations including lectures, supervisions, and webinars on the topic requested by governmental and non-governmental organization, as well as took part in 40 media appearances on the topic of domestic violence.

“BODROZI” – National Response to Domestic Violence against Children”

1 October 2019 – 30 September 2021

Funded by the “Rights, Equality and Citizenship” Programme of the European Commission

BODROZI



ИСДП

In 2020, we continued our work on the “BODROZI” – National Response to Domestic Violence” project, co-funded by the REC Programme of the European Commission. Animus Association Foundation is a partner to “Social Activities and Practices Institute” Association in this project where the general goal is to improve the response of child protection services in cases of domestic violence involving children as victims or witnesses. The specific objectives of the action include taking into consideration and using the children’s point of view in all stages of protection and support, improving the cooperation between key stakeholders on each case, and improving the capacity of experts to recognize, communicate and address domestic violence.

The “BODROZI” project was supported by the Social Assistance Agency as early as the application stage.



In 2020, the two project partners developed the following trainings materials:

1. “A Training Material on the Child-Centred Integrated Approach to Child Victims or Witnesses of Domestic Violence”
2. Programmes for multidisciplinary and intersectoral work on cases of child victims/ witnesses of domestic violence, identification of cases, and direct work with children and their parents.

AAF project team piloted these training materials and programmes developed during two trainings for professionals from multidisciplinary teams working with child victims of violence in Sofia. Professionals on a national level from the Social Assistance Agency and the State Agency for Child Protection took part in the trainings:

- A pilot training for the programme for identification, direct work and multidisciplinary approach to working with child victims of domestic violence;

- A pilot training on the programme on the child-centred integrated and multidisciplinary approach to working with child victims or witnesses of domestic violence.



By the end of 2020, the pilot programmes were implemented in four trainings for professionals from social services in the administrative regions of Smolyan, Sliven, Stara Zagora, Plovdiv, and Sofia-region. 90 representatives of social services took part in the training that was conducted online.

At a local level, the project represented to model of the innovative integrated service for child victims of domestic violence – Child Advocacy Centre “Zona ZaKmila”. The service was established in 2015

under the initiative and with the active participation of UNICEF Bulgaria, and is managed by the two partnering organizations – Animus Association Foundation and Social Activities and Practices Institute. The service is active in Sofia, Shumen, and Montana. In order to build the capacity of the professionals working in these specialized services for child victims of violence, in 2020, we organized two trainings:

- Psychoanalytical Understanding of Psychological Trauma;
- A Training of Trainers on the implementation of the project’s pilot programmes.

The work on this project will continue in 2021 with the organization of 12 trainings for the multidisciplinary teams on the coordination mechanism as well as with the organization of an international conference.

WeToo - Protecting mental health: Empowering frontline workers and SGBV victims and survivors

1 November 2021 – 31 October 2023

Co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Commission



#wetoocare

WeToo is a European project that aims to enable frontline workers and key stakeholders to better cope with the stress generated by working with SGBV cases and to support women survivors and victims of SGBV on their trauma recovery in Greece, Italy, Serbia, Germany and Bulgaria. It is funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) programme of the European Commission. Project partners are Oxfam Italia Intercultura, Alice Società Cooperativa Sociale Onlus, Animus Association Foundation, NGO Atina - Citizens Association for Combat against Trafficking in Human Beings and All Forms of Gender-based Violence, Kentro Merimnas Oikogeneias Kai Paidiou, Integra Filder e.v.

WeToo will succeed by...

- Developing hands-on tools and training programmes to assess frontline workers' stress and to identify mental health distress affecting SGBV victims and survivors.
- Delivering empowering and psycho-social counseling guidelines and activities in order to support local and migrant women's recovery from trauma and distress.
- Promoting working environments more attentive to its frontline workers' needs in terms of mental health.

Who will benefit?

- Frontline workers (law enforcement agencies, health and social services' workers, anti-violence centres' operators)
- Women victims and/or survivors of sexual and gender-based violence
- Public authorities

WeToo in action

- **2 tools to assess stress management** of frontline workers and identify the **mental health distress** affecting victims and survivors of SGBV will be created
- **120 frontline workers** will have the opportunity to learn more on stress, mental health distress and trauma related to SGBV during the **5 training courses** delivered in Greece, Italy, Serbia, Germany and Bulgaria.
- More than **80 women victims and survivors of SGBV** will be **empowered** to recover from trauma and distress.
- More than **100 professionals will be** invited to participate in the exchange of **best practices** and discuss **policy recommendations**, with the aim to create working environments that focuses on frontline workers' stress management and mental health of women survivors and victims of SGBV.
- **Wide dissemination of information about the structural nature of gender-based violence** and its manifestations, as well as on the **stress and trauma that professionals might experience.**

FEEL – Femicide Emergency on European Level

1 October 2018 - 24 September 2020

Co-founded by the Erasmus + VET – KA202 – Strategic Partnership



The project is implemented in partnership with five organizations from four European countries: ASSOCIAZIONE SPAZIO DONNA ONLUS (Italy), Cooperativa Sociale Il Volo (Italy), UNIVERSITAT AUTONOMA DE BARCELONA (Spain, Catalonia), ANIMUS ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION (Bulgaria), HERTIN s.r.o. (The Czech republic). The general objective is to generate a climate of trust between institutions, professionals and victims of violence through an innovative program of professional training, with the aim of increasing effective measures to protect women from the risk of relapse and countering the phenomenon of femicide.

Results:

Together with all project partners we prepared a report summarizing the national research and the description of good practices for supporting victims of violence, legislative frameworks, existing opportunities for training of professionals working with victims as well the training needs of these experts.



The training model for key experts working in social services and police departments was developed, tested, and monitored. All participants state that they found the training beneficial regardless of the position and background. 78% of those who provided written feedback confirm the highest level of utility, while 22% point to a high level of utility. The conversations showed the same results with 100% of the participants confirming the need and benefits of upgrading trainings and new approaches to the work, and sharing of contemporary methods from other countries. These results to a large extent demonstrate

the need of supporting and upgrading trainings. Another need can be seen in the organization of the seminars in different formats and with different participants - experts from different institutions who cooperate closely in their work.

FEEL *Модел за обучение:*

Обучение за обучители (18-20 ч.)

Обучителни материали: PPT презентация, методики за изследване (обратна връзка, оценка за пилотния тренинг, Насоки в проекта [случай]), други материали

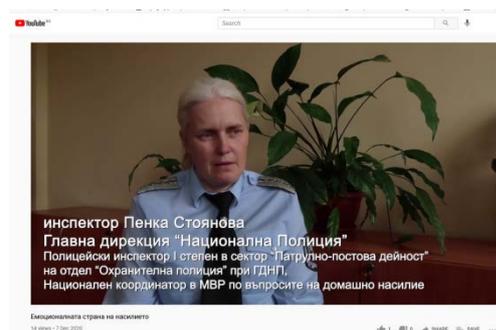
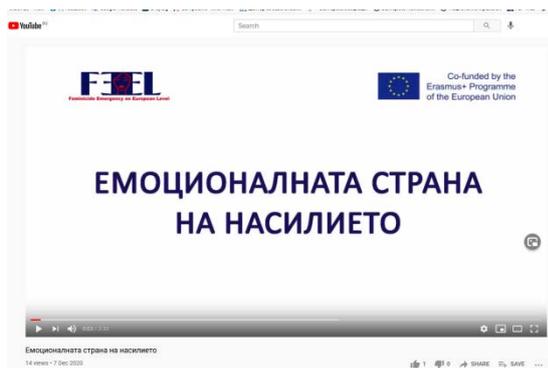
ЦЕЛ: Създаване на общност от експерти с общо съдържание, умения и методологии, които да се прилагат в пилотния тренинг

<p>M1: ПРЕДСТАВЯНЕ НА СЛУЧАЙ И МЕТОДОЛОГИЯ НА ОБУЧЕНИЕТО 3 часа</p> <p>Знания за феномена насилие Ролята на професионалистите за излизане от насилието Насилие срещу жени Стереотипи Предразсъдъци Културна принадлежност Перспективата на жените жертви Вторична виктимизация Попълване на официални документи/доклади</p> <p>SDO</p>	<p>M2: СОЦИАЛНИ УМЕНИЯ ЗА РАБОТА С ЖЕНИТЕ-ЖЕРТВИ</p> <p>1) Просоциално общуване Модел (17 фактора) Подход основан на участие 4 часа (UAB) 2) Транстеоретичен модел 2 часа (IL VOLO)</p> <p>M3: ГРИЖА ЗА ПРОФЕСИОНАЛИСТИТЕ 8 часа</p> <p>1) Качествено просоциално общуване, предотвратяване на бърнаут (UAB) 1 ч. 2) TTM PROTOCOL (самооценъчен) (IL VOLO) 2 ч. 3) Обратна връзка и въпросник за оценка на съдържанието на тренинга (HERTIN) 1 ч. 4) Кризисна интервенция (АНИМУС) 4 ч.</p>	<p>M4: ИНСТРУМЕНТИ 2 часа</p> <p>1) Психологически доклад 2) План за сигурност(АНИМУС) 3) Оценка на риска (АНИМУС) 4) Заповед за защита (АНИМУС)</p> <p>M5: Представяне на материал: как да работим със случаи и как да развиваме емпатия 1 час</p> <p>-Динамични упражнения -"Vivencial" Фотография -Психодрама -Арт терапия</p>
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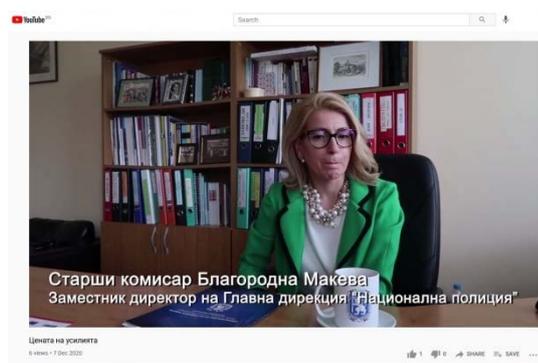
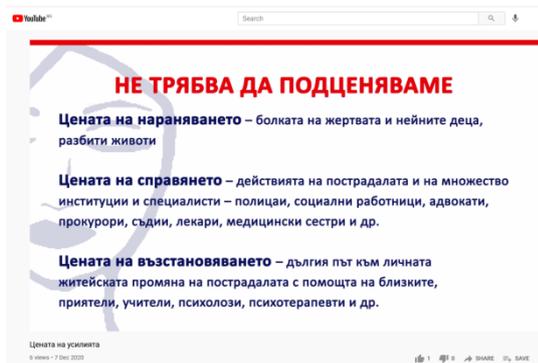


In addition to the activities planned in the project, we also created video clips where we included parts of the interviews with the police officers and comments by the AAF team. The video clips are published on the AAF webpage and are accessible via the following links on YouTube:

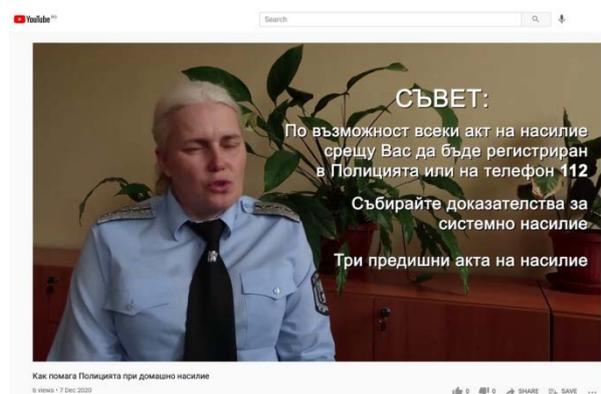
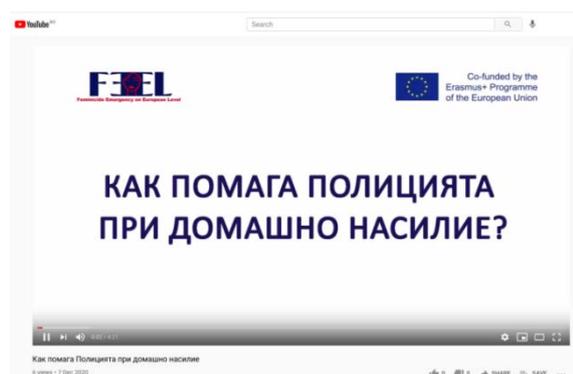
[Емоционалната страна на насилието/ The Emotional Side of Violence \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=stTL5Zq3XZg \)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=stTL5Zq3XZg) – an interview with Penka Stoyanova, police detective 1st degree in “Security Police” to the DG National Police; national coordinator on domestic violence of the Ministry of Interior



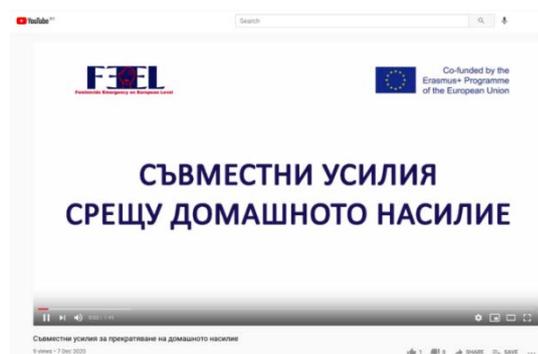
[Цената на усилията/ The Price of Efforts \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wyy4v63UvVW8\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wyy4v63UvVW8) – an interview with senior commissioner Blagorodna Makeva - deputy director of DG National Police



Как помага Полицията при домашно насилие/ How Does the Police Help in Cases of Domestic Violence (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PiyVGtiOzA>) – an interview with Penka Stoyanova, police detective 1st degree in “Security Police” to the DG National Police; national coordinator on domestic violence of the Ministry of Interior



Съвместни усилия за прекратяване на домашното насилие/ Joint Efforts in Putting an End to Domestic Violence (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evsGuVC_9QA) – an interview with senior commissioner Blagorodna Makeva - deputy director of DG National Police



We find the meeting of various experts and their points of view and approaches to working with victims of violence very valuable and successful. Such a meeting was organized during the final event of the project – a conference called “FEEL! A Look towards Domestic Violence. How Cases of Domestic Violence Affect Professionals?”. Participants’ feedback showed how important sharing the emotional side of working with violence is as well as what costs professionals pay when working with so much pain. It is encouraging to hear how different professionals experience and are close to the suffering in a professional way as well as how they manage to deal with emotions and their personal experiences in order to help the victims.

During the conference, we presented all project results – the “Look towards Domestic Violence” report, the International Comparative report, the video clips, the training model and the process of testing the training programme developed by the project partners. For our team, the “FEEL” project was another step in our professional approach to the phenomenon of violence against women, prevention, working with victims, and caring for first-point-of-contact professionals.

PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AND PROMOTION OF MENTAL HEALTH

Key to a Fear-free School

1 May 2016 – 28 February 2022

Funded by OAK Foundation



The “Key to a Fear-free School” initiative developed dynamically during the last year. The COVID-19 pandemic and the new situation that the public had to take into account made us open up the topics about loss, death, limitations, friendship, closeness, how to seek and give help. The teachers involved in teaching the mental health and emotional intelligence programmes rediscovered the topics through the prism of the current reality filled with threatening news and real loss as well as the often taboo topic of death. Teachers and parents saw these topics from a new perspective and realized how important it is to prepare their children to deal them instead of protecting them or ignoring the difficulties. Several teachers shared that the lessons helped them connect with the children and talk openly about painful topics which they usually teach with caution. “No matter how much we try to protect the children, they understand that we ourselves are confused and worried, and the Zippy lessons helped us talk openly.”



The “Zippy’s Friends”, “Apple’s Friends”, “Class of Friends”, and “Key” programmes lie on the basic principle to support children’s mental wellbeing by encouraging them to develop coping strategies in order to improve or overcome any given difficulty. Studies show that children who use various strategies deal with problems they face easier throughout their whole lives. All programmes are directed towards systemically increasing teachers’ qualifications and skills to recognize, understand, and address both individual needs of students and group problems in the class.

Together with the teachers we put efforts into continuing the programmes online or in hybrid depending on the situation and possibilities. The classes with the youngest students were the most limited as it was impossible to achieve the emotional live interaction

where children can learn from one another. Teachers tried different ways with the older students – online presentations and stories, homework for the parents, more pictures from the books, etc. Some of the classes were postponed, while others were taught in a shorter timeframe in several consecutive classes. Each teacher was free to develop their own work plan depending on their curriculum and specificities of the class.

School that implement the programme

- “Hristo Botev” Middle School, Aytos
- 23 Middle School “Frederic Joliot-Curie”, Sofia
- 68 Middle School “Academician Nikola Obreshkov”, Sofia



At the end of 2020 we began working intensively on adapting another programme – “Passport” which will be developed in a separate project.

We believe that the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the way of thinking and the attitude towards mental health was to some extent positive. Analyzing both the challenges and the benefits we can state that mental health was discussed as an important topic and many people began treating it with respect. The teachers shared that while intensively communicating with parents during the periods with online education, they often had to discuss parents’ worries about their children’s mental health.



At bezstrah.org there is detailed information about the programmes, as well as materials, articles, additional information, and free-to-download Teachers’ Manual and parents’ leaflets that can be useful to principals and teachers in

implementing activities related to mental health, emotional intelligence, abuse and aggression in the school.



„Being a Dad”

1 November 2017 – 1 November 2020, extended until 28 February 2021

Funded by OAK Foundation



Being a Dad national campaign runs for a second time and is implemented by a consortium of eight organizations: Social Activities and Practices Institute, Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, Parents Association, DOIT Foundation, PIK Foundation, Tulip Foundation, Animus Association Foundation, and National Network for Children. The campaign is supported by OAK Foundation.



“Being a Dad” aims at focusing the public attention to the importance of the father figure for the child’s development. The base of the campaign is the positive inclusion of men into the children’s lives which has a positive influence on gender equality and prevention of child abuse. <http://mencare.bg>

Activities implemented in 2020 – the final year of the project

[#МилиТатко](#) Online Campaign

In June, the consortium organized an online campaign for the presentation of the “Dear Daddy...” booklet. Famous fathers took part in the campaign – actors who read touching passages from the booklet in short video clips. “Dear Daddy...” enjoyed exceptional interest from the wide public as it is a labyrinth looking for the father figure through the eyes of the child. <http://animusassociation.org/mancare/>





At the same time, during the Spring Book Festival 2020, over 500 fathers received our gift – the “I Love You, Daddy!” book which was published with the support of FUT Publishing. “I Love You, Daddy!” contains four beautifully illustrated fairytales filled with love and warmth. The book takes the children in a fairy word and makes them feel happy and proud of their fathers.

At the start of the school year we also began preparing for the organization of the 32 prevention workshops with the children who took part in the creation of the booklet. The workshops took place in March and October. Children from the schools in Sofia, Aytos, Gabrovo, and Sredets received the “Dear Daddy...” together with the “I Love You, Daddy!” as a gift. Each child received a certificate for their participation in the workshops as well as an invitation for their fathers. The children were excited and found it easier to engage in a discussion, initiated discussions on the types of fathers on their own, and had prepared ideas on how to format the invitation and what event they wanted to attend with the fathers.



The team also developed a “Methodology on the Initiation and Monitoring of Child Participation in Programmes, Projects, and Organizations Related to Children and Families”. It contains practical guidance on how to organize activities so that children can be given the opportunity to express their views. During the development of the methodology children took part as consultants.

Adolescents' Perception of Healthy Relationships

Research and Advocacy Project

March 2017 – March 2020, March 2020 – March 2021

Co-funded by OAK Foundation



“Adolescents' Perception of Healthy Relationships”, and its follow-up - the Research and Advocacy Campaign, funded by OAK Foundation, was implemented in three phases. The first and second phases took place between March 2017 and March 2020, where AAF organized a quantitative (Phase 1) and a qualitative (Phase 2) research. Phase 3, namely the Research and Advocacy Campaign took place between March 2020 and March 2021.

The project was implemented in partnership with International Institute of Social Studies (part of Erasmus University, Rotterdam), International Child Development Institute (The Netherlands), Nascent Research and Development Organization (Uganda)

A group of 40 young peer researchers (YPRs) – girls and boys aged 15-18 from Sofia and Aitos, developed the tools for the research part of the project and realized the research on the adolescents' perception of healthy relationships.

The young peer researchers were empowered on youth participation, trained and supervised by two researchers from The Training and Research Unit of Animus Association Foundation.

As a result of the advocacy campaign in Sofia and Aytos the following activities were organized and implemented:

- Small follow-up research project, exploring young people's intimate relationships during the pandemic of COVID-19;



- Presentation of the findings during a workshop with peers;
- 7 videos as a result of the advocacy campaign;
- Several articles were published in a blog developed by the young people in order to popularize the activities during the campaign: <https://glasnamladite.wixsite.com/thevoiceoftheyouth>
- 2 workshops related to intimate relationships and violence prevention were facilitated by the young advocates;
- A social café was organized and facilitated in order to create a space for the young people and their teachers in order to find new ways to promote meaningful youth participation within the school setting.



**PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS AND SUPPORT TO REFUGEES AND
MIGRANTS**

TOLERANT -Transnational Network for Employment integrAtion of women vicTims of trafficking

1 January 2019 – 31 December 2020

Funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund of European Commission



The main applicant for the project is the Greek organization KMOP. The project is implemented in partnership with LEFO (Austria), CESIE (Italy), Differenza Donna Associazione (Italy), and AIDROM (Romania).

The general objective of the project is to enhance the integration of third-country-national women victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in the labour market in the countries of implementation, and the EU in general, through employment support.

More specifically, the project aims at:

- Enhanced transnational cooperation and exchange on the integration of women VoT for sexual exploitation in the labour market
- Enhanced access of women VoTs for sexual exploitation to integrated and gender-specific services supporting their access to employment (taking into account the specific needs of the victims of sexual exploitation) and
- Increased awareness of employers, recruiters and policy makers and/or other relevant stakeholders on the importance of facilitating access to the labour market for women VoT.

In 2020, the **“Guide for integrated service provision to support access to employment for Third Country National Women Victims of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation”** was published. It was developed by the international project team and provides a practical guidance on the most difficult aspect of working with women coming from third countries – their access to employment as a condition for sustainable integration.

The project team also developed an online platform of an international network of organizations and institutions working in support of victims’ integration into the labour market. AAF attracted its main Bulgarian partners into the network – Caritas, Mission Wings Foundation, the Council of Refugee Women, A21 campaign.

Thanks to the TOLERANT project, we supported 49 third-country-national women victims of trafficking, other forms of gender-based violence or at a high risk of becoming victims to abuse.

WIN – Trafficked Women Integration

14 October 2019 – 14 October 2021

Funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund of European Commission



The leading applicant of the WIN project FPMCI - Fondo Provinciale Milanese per la Cooperazione Internazionale (Italy). The project is implemented in partnership with AMIGA Association (Spain), LULE (Italy), and Energheia Training Center (Italy).

The general objective of the project is to improve socio-economic integration of third country national women victims of THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation (Trafficked Women TW) in the host societies as a powerful prevention of re-trafficking.

To achieve this, the project sets the following specific objectives:

- To increase mutual-learning among different EU Countries and stakeholders and to develop transnational common guidelines, methodology and practical tools for integration of trafficked women third country nationals in host societies;
- To implemented Personal Integration Plans (PIPs) for socio-economic integration of trafficked women third country nationals in host societies;
- To improve understanding and knowledge of trafficking in human beings among the business, training and job services providers, trade unions and professional associations.

Working in support of woman victims was a challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the project supported around 20 women. Individual integration plans for women were developed via a specifically prepared methodologies for an in-depth assessment of their labour and social skills. They include referral to various training programmes, support in the process of looking for employment, programmes for key competencies such as computer skills, introduction to labour and labour rights, development of social skills necessary for realization in the labour market, psychological, social, and legal counseling. The team of AAF continues providing support to women to realize their individual plans.

ACTIVATE – EnhAnCing the anti-Trafficking Identification, preVention and supporT mEchanisms

1 October 2020 - 30 September 2022

Co-funded by the “Asylum, Migration, and Integration” Programme of the European Commission



In October 2020, Animus Association Foundation started working on the “ACTIVATE – EnhAnCing the anti-Trafficking Identification, preVention and supporT mEchanisms” project funded by the AMIF programme of the European Commission. The project’s duration is 24 months. KMOP (Greece) is the leading organization, while Animus Association Foundation, Differenza Donna Associazione Di Donne Contro La Violenza Alle Donneonlus (Italy) and SOLWODI (Germany) are project partners.



Contributing to the eradication of trafficking, the ACTIVATE project aims to step up actions on the prevention, identification and support mechanisms against trafficking in human beings (THB), with a special focus on Victims of Trafficking (VoT) for sexual exploitation.

Project activities include:

- Capacity Building to enhance identification and support of VoTs;
- Creation of training manuals for training staff working in Reception Centres and lawyers;
- Trainings of professionals in Reception Centres and lawyers;
- Strengthening of the National Referral Mechanisms and improving the cooperation between public authorities and key stakeholders;
- Transnational exchange of knowledge/expertise and good practices;
- Improving support mechanisms to deal with multifaceted cases of trafficking;
- Raising Awareness and Dissemination.

Expected results:

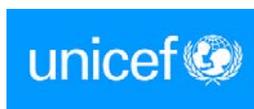
- 120-140 professionals working in the Reception Centres trained to better prevent and identify VoTs;
- 70-140 lawyers trained to better address VoT's legal issues and needs;
- 1 e-learning tool in 4 languages for future webinars/seminars on staff members of the RICs and lawyers;
- 4 digital toolkits including libraries/maps, referral mechanisms and guidelines, relevant reports, tools, etc.;
- 4 National Referral Mechanisms will be created or strengthened;
- 4 national awareness raising campaigns will be launched.

TRAINING CENTRE

Building Skills and Knowledge on Gender-based Violence for Key Professionals

1 October 2020 – 31 December 2021

Funded by UNICEF Bulgaria



On October 1, 2020, Animus Association Foundation started working on the “Building Skills and Knowledge on Gender-based Violence for Key Professionals” project, supported by UNICEF Bulgaria.

The project targets frontline officers working with migrants and refugees who will be trained to identify cases of gender-based violence (GBV), to conduct culturally sensitive interviews and to apply an integrated approach that includes all the available programs and resources. In addition, the project targets the academic community especially the relevant universities and specialties through which to aim to introduce in higher education evidence based knowledge on the topics of gender and migration.

The goal is to prepare a next generation of informed and sensitive to GBV professionals.

The activities of the project aimed at strengthening the capacity of frontline officers working with migrants to identify and react to cases of GBV include:

- Translation and adaptation of GBV Pocket guide;
- Development of information package of training materials;
- Trainings with frontline officers on the topic of integrated provision of services and support to refugees with the mobilization of community resources and cooperation among stakeholders;
- Establishing connections with academia and creating possibilities for the integration of these topics in the curriculum of institutions for higher education.

Activities of the training centre

1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020

2020 was extremely challenging for the activities of the Training Centre. The state of emergency declared in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic did not let us organize all training activities in person, but they were conducted in an online environment instead.

In 2020, the Training Centre organized the following training and research activities:

- 8 trainings on working with child victims of violence and unaccompanied children;
- 1 campaign for new consultants for the National Helpline for Survivors of Violence 0800 1 86 76 and a 5-day intensive training;
- 1 3-day seminar on the topic of “Psychoanalytical Understanding of Psychological Trauma”;
- 4 focus groups with police officers for studying their attitude towards working on cases of domestic violence;
- 5 workshops for the preparation of the monitoring system of public policies and practices related to domestic violence;
- 1 quality research of healthy relationships and an advocacy campaign;
- An online conference “A Look towards Domestic Violence”.

While respecting all anti-pandemic measures in place, the Training Centre continued its work with students from different universities in the country by providing clinical base for internships to the students under a contract with Sofia University – Faculty of Pedagogy and Faculty of Preschool and Primary School Education.

Traditionally, the activities related to expanding the knowledge and skills of the team of therapists and consultants working at Animus Association Foundation for providing psychotherapeutic and psychosocial help to clients of different programmes were very active.

The team of the organization conducted a total of 298 online supervisions that included professionals from the Centre for Counseling, Psychotherapy, and Psychoanalysis, the Social Services Centre for Children and Families, the St. Petka Crisis Centre, and the National Helpline for Survivors of Violence.

The Training Centre will continue its work in 2021.

EMERGENCY SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE DURING A PANDEMIC

Emergency fund for supporting victims of violence during the COVID-19 pandemic

May 2020

Provided by OAK Foundation



In May 2020, OAK Foundation provided an emergency fund for tackling the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding was used to rent an apartment where clients accommodated in the St. Petka Crisis Centre can be accommodated in case they are positive for a COVID-19 infection. The objective was protecting the health of both clients and staff of the Crisis Centre. At the same time, AAF had to provide a safe space where clients infected with COVID-19 can be accommodated while guaranteeing their safety and the safety of clients and staff.

In addition, the emergency fund was also used to pay for PCR tests for COVID-19 of clients and staff with flu-like symptoms again aiming at protecting the health of all. AAF also purchased medicines necessary for treating people with COVID-19.

Emergency support for women victims of violence during the COVID-19 pandemic

Provided by the Bulgaria Fund for Women



In 2020, the social services Child and Youth Advocacy Centre ZonaZaKrila and “St. Petka” Crisis Center for women and their children victims of domestic violence, managed by Animus Association Foundation, received financial support from the Bulgarian Fund for Women. Using the emergency fund for organizations working on the first line with women and children victims of violence during COVID-19, the social services provided additional support to their clients in the form of providing PCR tests necessary for the emergency accommodation of users in the Crisis Centre. In addition, the fund also provided for ensuring legal representation to women victims of domestic violence and their children in court proceedings according to the Code of Civil Procedure. This way, disadvantaged clients were able to access social services and justice procedures to suit their specific needs due to the violence they experienced.

Humanitarian aid for women victims of violence during the COVID-19 pandemic

Provided by the Bulgaria Fund for Women



In 2020, the social services Child and Youth Advocacy Centre Zona ZaKmila and “St. Petka” Crisis Centre for women and their children victims of domestic violence, managed by Animus Association Foundation, received financial support from the Bulgarian Fund for Women. Using the emergency fund for organizations working on the first line with women and children victims of violence during COVID-19. The mass COVID-19 pandemic and the strict measures imposed to ensure the physical health of families meant that children and their parents would stay at home. The crisis situation and social isolation directed our attention as specialists to taking into account the risk factors in the family systems. The children were severely affected by the quarantine and the insecurity and anxiety of their parents. This is especially true for children in a situation or at risk of violence. On the other hand, the quarantine situation, along with the loss of employment, the inability of family members to avoid problematic situations, the lack of personal space, as well as different forms of addiction have led to an escalation of violence against women by their partners.

Through the fund, the social services teams were able to provide additional support to the affected women and children in the form of humanitarian aid, providing clothing and food essentials and paying for kindergarten fees. This way, women in difficulty were given the opportunity to gain access to basic clothing and to provide themselves and their children with a proper holiday dinner. Ensuring this reassured the children’s mothers that they were not at risk of dropping out of the education system and would not be attacked by the child's father or the state for being an unfit parent. This helped the therapeutic work with the women to overcome the consequences of the experienced violence.

Active against Violence during a Pandemic

1 December 2020 – 31 December 2020

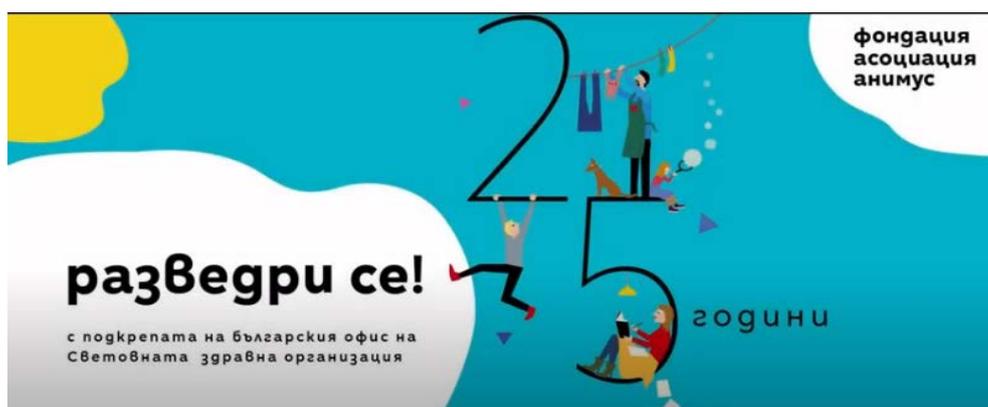
Funded by the World Health Organization – Country Office, Bulgaria



The project has two main goals:

- Help families in Bulgaria improve their mental health and communication by providing tips on how to feel better without hurting other family members;
- Help key stakeholders and first-point-of-contact personnel provide response to domestic violence

AAF organized an information campaign aimed at two target groups. In the first place, we developed a concept for a video clip which includes eight positive and pragmatic messages on how to prevent the negative consequences to our relationship with our family (family members and relatives, close friends) resulting from the difficult and tense situation we are currently living in. The content of the clip was discussed with 50 respondents divided into three focus groups: experts from helping professions, randomly chosen respondents from different age groups, and bloggers and YouTubers. Based on their feedback, we chose eight volunteers – citizens, representatives of different age and ethnicity groups - to be take part and be filmed for the video clip.



The second target group included experts from different professional fields who do not work directly with victims of violence but could be first points of contact when it comes to recognizing, supporting, and referring victims of violence – doctors, dentists, lawyers, nurses, teachers, priests, police officers, health mediators, etc. In order them to help them recognize, support, and refer victims of violence more effectively, we developed a Pocket Guide against Domestic Violence which discusses main topics related to domestic violence

such as what is domestic violence, types of domestic violence, how to recognize violence, how to talk about it, where to refer victims, where and how to report incidents, etc. The Guide also contains a directory of contacts of the main social services in the country.

In addition, we also developed a dissemination plan in order to reach more people. We conducted a number of work meetings in order to determine the target group of experts who might be first points of contact for victims of violence as well as the possibilities to disseminate the video clip. The Guide will be sent to various governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The dissemination of the materials will take place at the beginning of 2021.

Donation of technology for ensuring the provision of social services from a distance during the state of emergency declared in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic

Provided by UniCredit Bulbank



Animus Association Foundation received a donation made by UniCredit Bulbank to be used during the COVID-19 pandemic. The fund was used to purchase technological equipment such as laptops and computers that were used to organize online consultations for clients. This supported the correspondence programme to the National Hotline for Survivors of Violence, as well as online chat service.

In addition, a part of the equipment purchased with the donation was given to women and children accommodated in the St. Petka Crisis Centre and the Mother and Baby Unit. It was used by children to attend classes online as well as by some of the women who were able to keep their jobs.

The donation was also used to purchase a camera that was used to film a series of video clips with representatives from institutions working in support of victims of violence. We also filmed a video clips with the volunteers of the National Hotline.

2020 STATISTICS OF ANIMUS ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION

Total number of beneficiaries for 2020 – 7 924

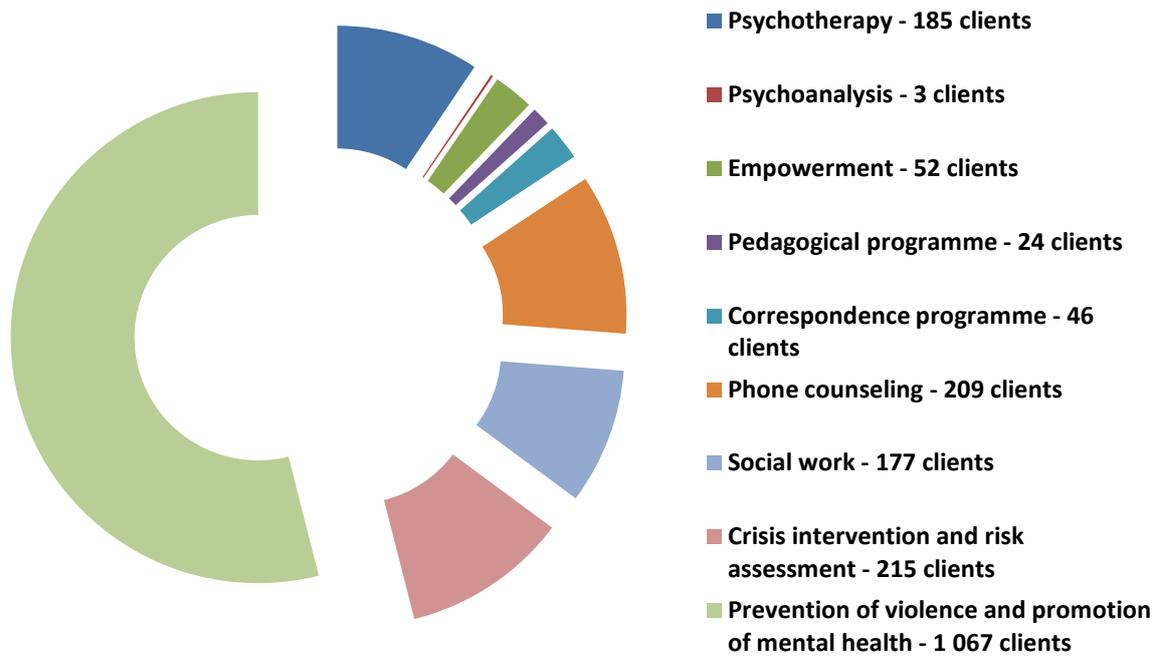
Distribution of clients of Animus Association Foundation

1. Centre for counselling, psychotherapy, psychoanalysis and “Zona zaKmila” – **1 978** clients
2. Crisis Centre for Survivors of Violence – **30** clients
3. Social Services Centre for Children and Families – **377** clients
4. Mother and Baby Unit – **25** clients
5. National Helpline for Children 116 111 – **3 111** consultations
6. National Hotline for Survivors of Violence – **2 403** clients
7. Training Centre and prevention programmes

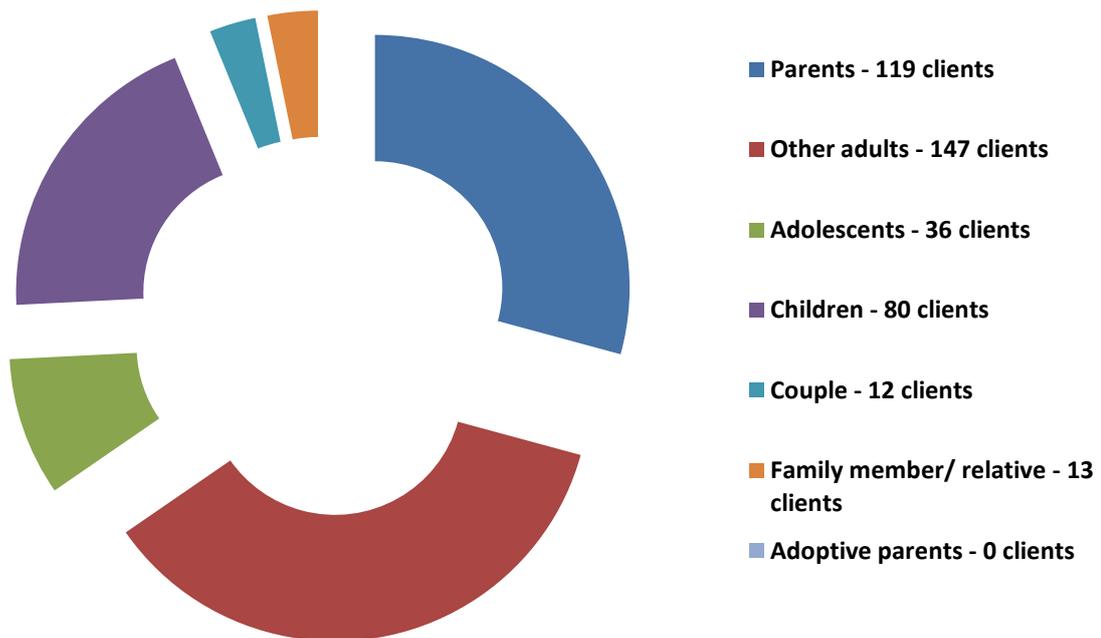
1. STATISTICS OF THE CENTRE FOR COUNSELLING, PSYCHOTHERAPY, PSYCHOANALYSIS AND "ZONA ZAKRILA"

Total – 1 978 clients

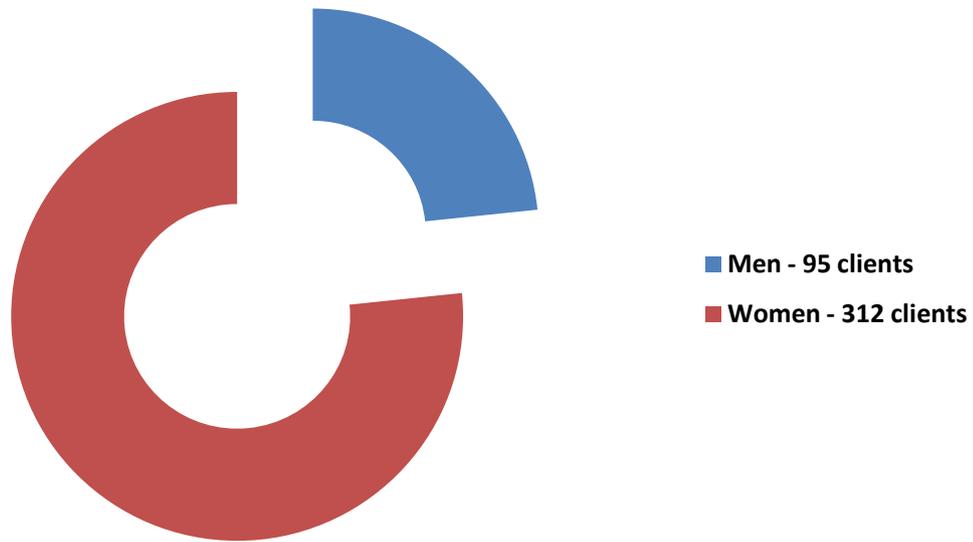
Tab. 1 Distribution of clients according to the type of programme



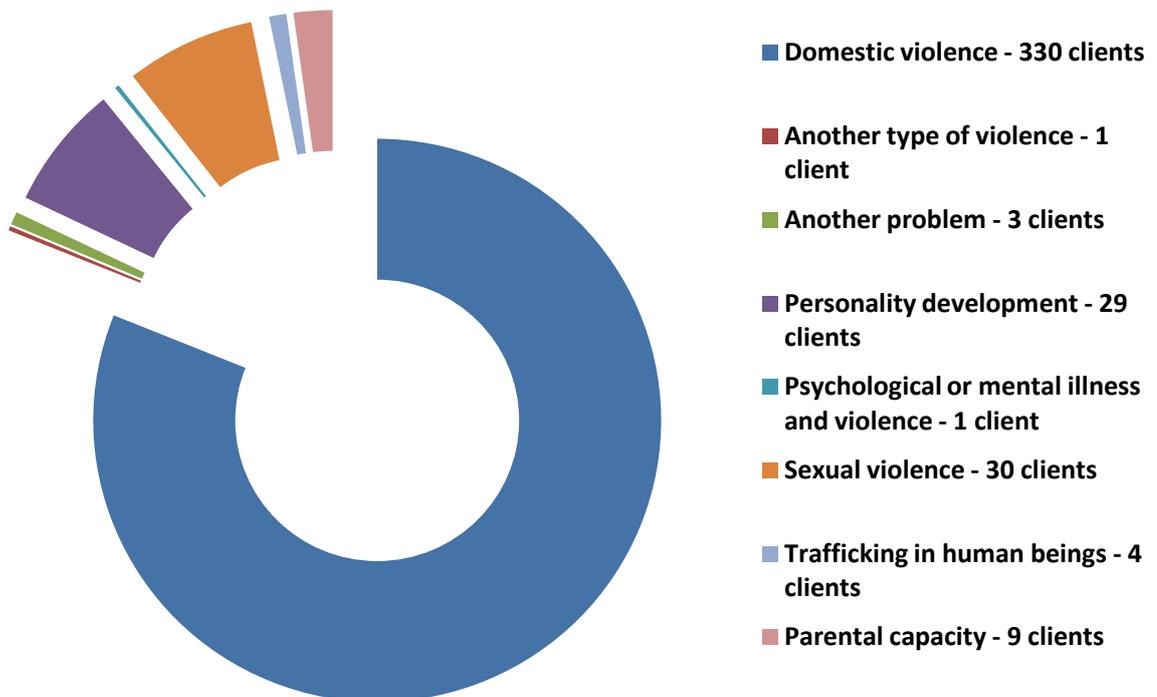
Tab. 2. Distribution of clients of the psychotherapy and psychoanalysis programme, and the empowerment programme



Tab. 3. Distribution of clients by sex



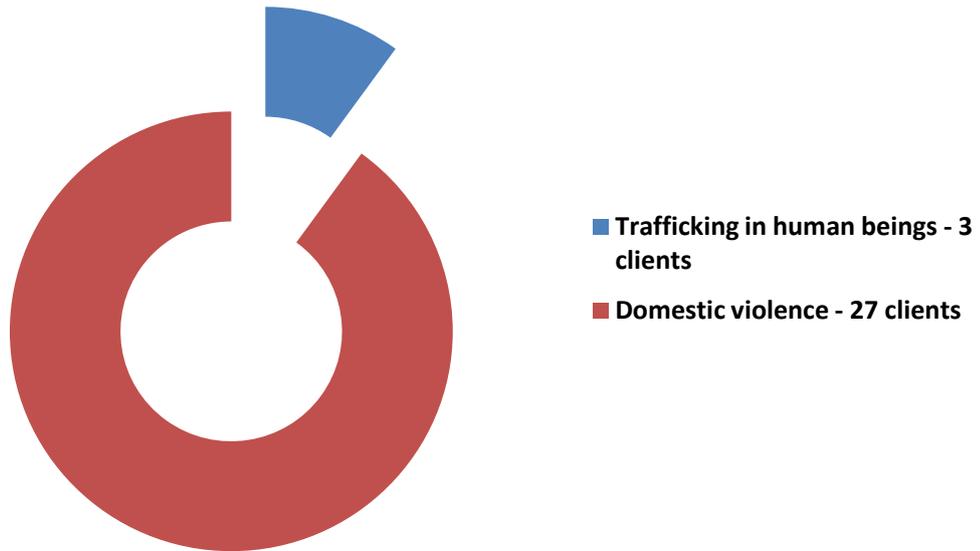
Tab. 4. Distribution of clients by the type of problem



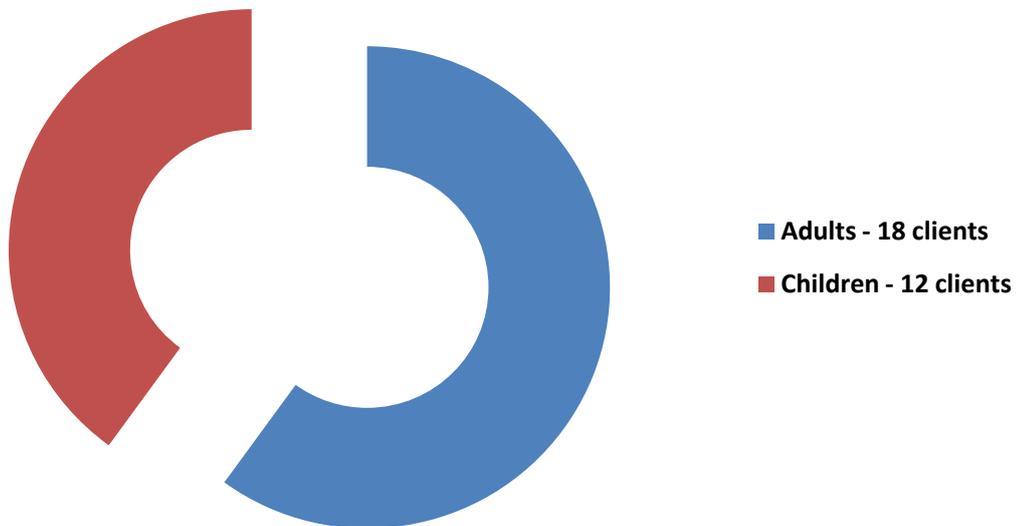
2. STATISTICS OF THE CRISIS CENTRE FOR SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE

Total – 30 accommodated clients

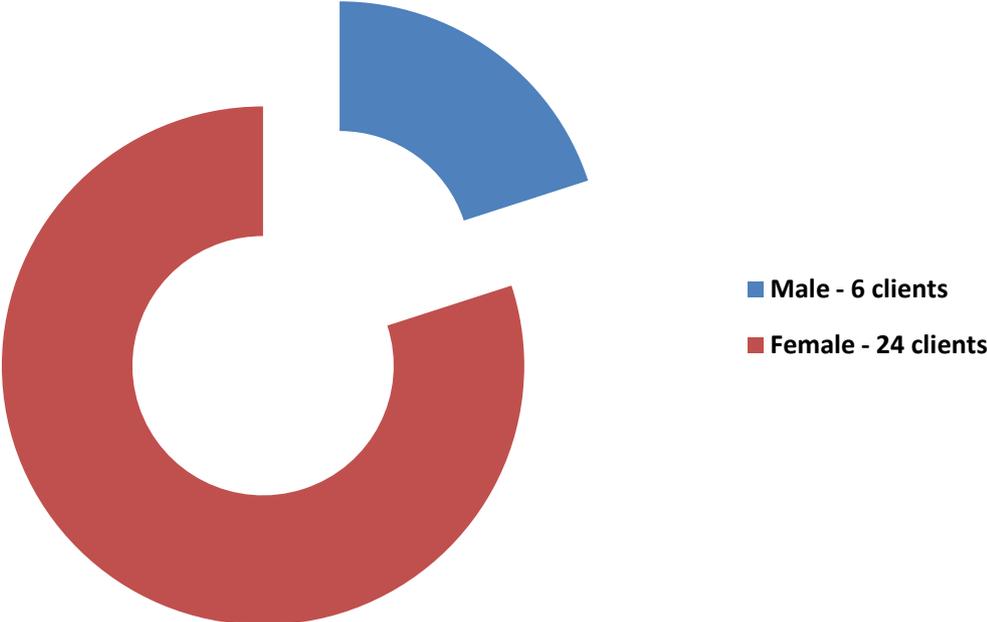
Tab. 5. Distribution of clients by type of problem



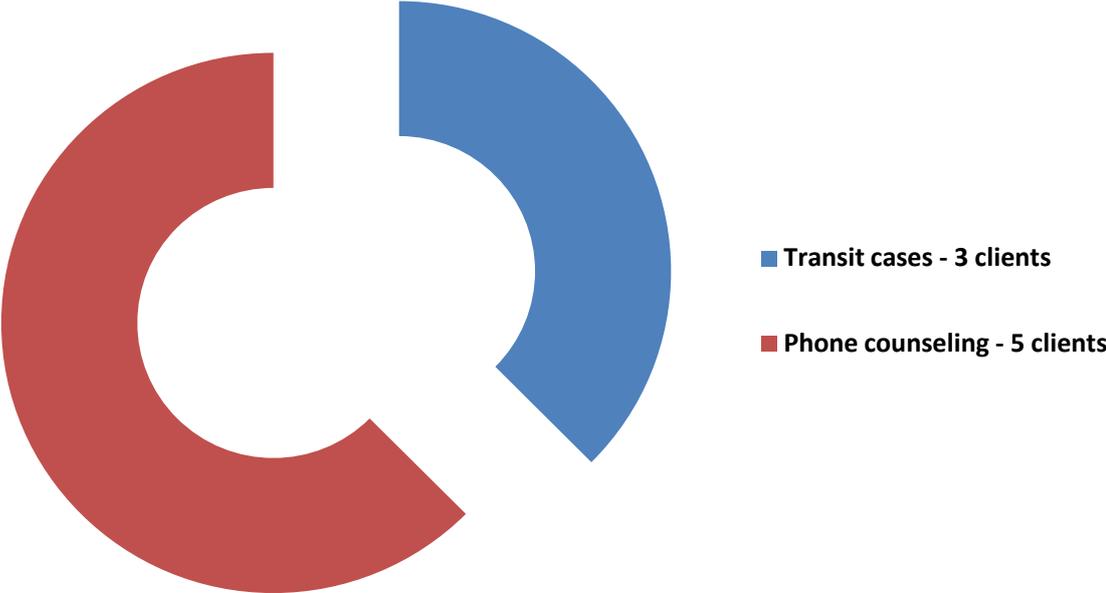
Tab. 6. Distribution of clients by age



Tab. 7. Distribution of clients by sex



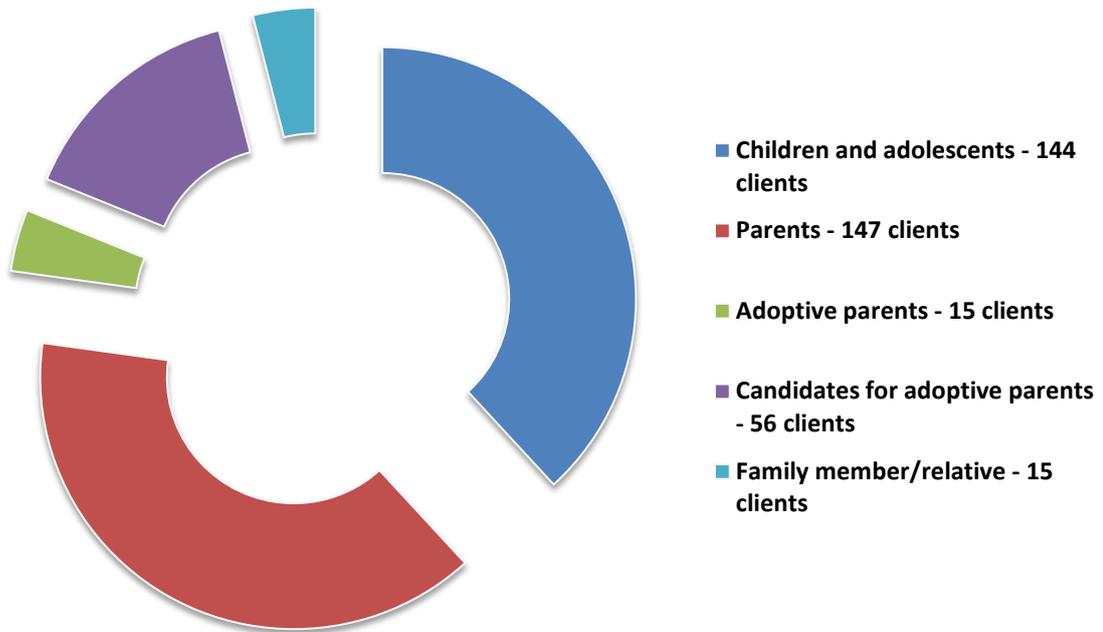
Tab. 8. Transit cases and telephone counseling related to trafficking in people



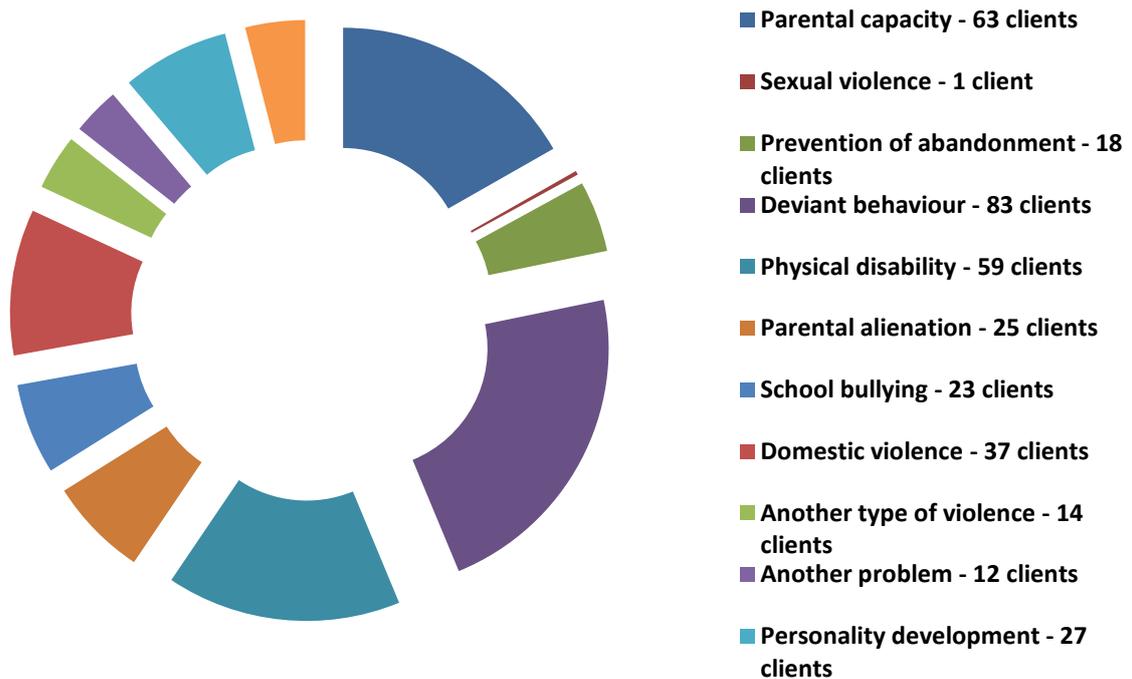
3. STATISTICS OF THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT CENTRE TO THE SOCIAL SERVICES CENTRE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Total – 377 clients

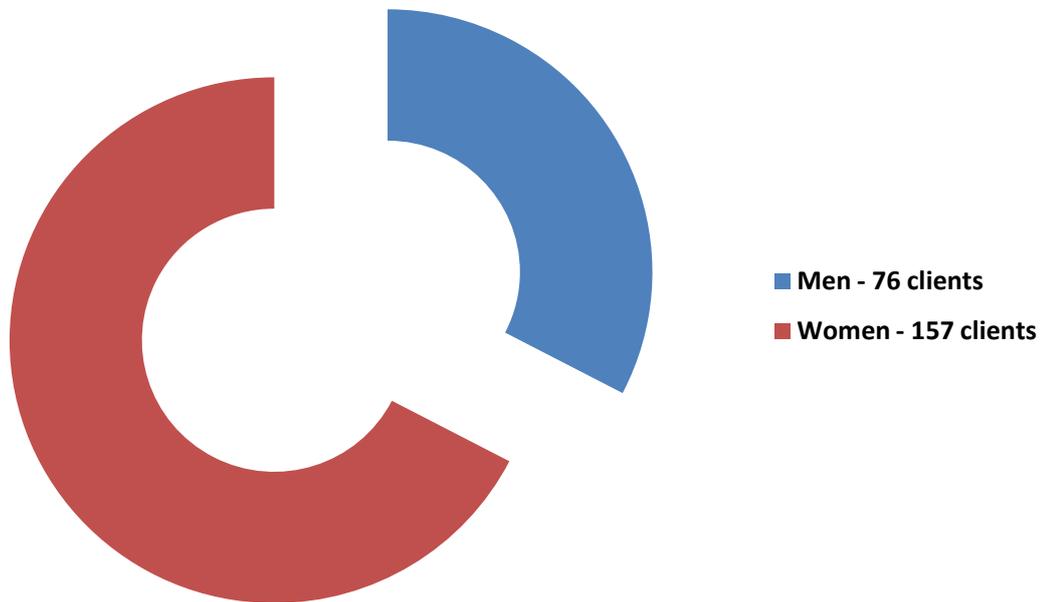
Tab. 9. Distribution of clients



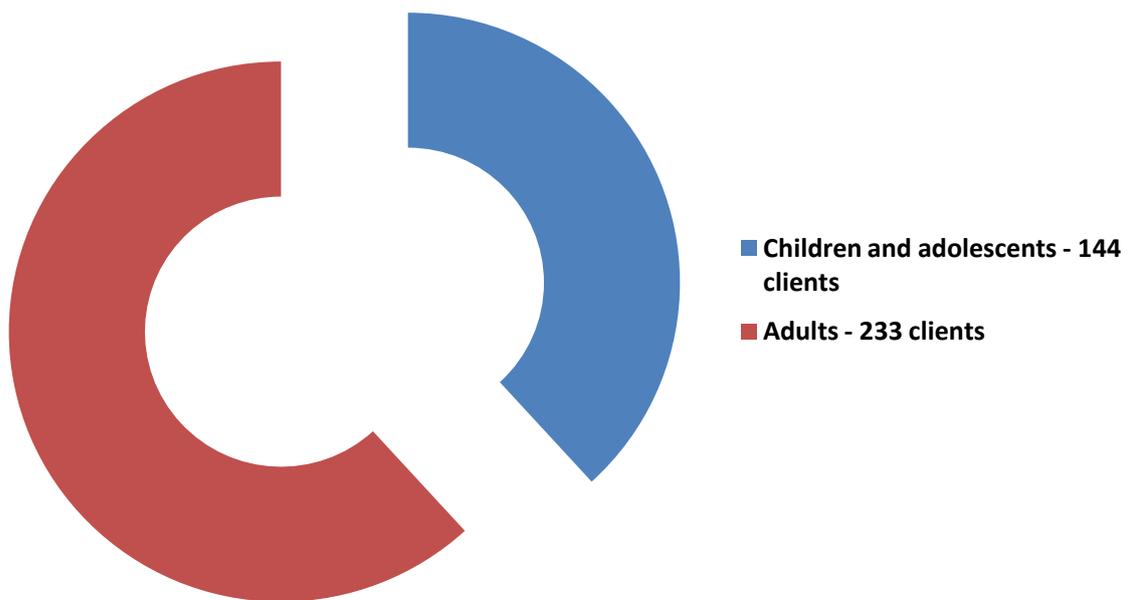
Tab. 10. Distribution of clients according to the type of problem



Tab. 11. Distribution of clients according to sex



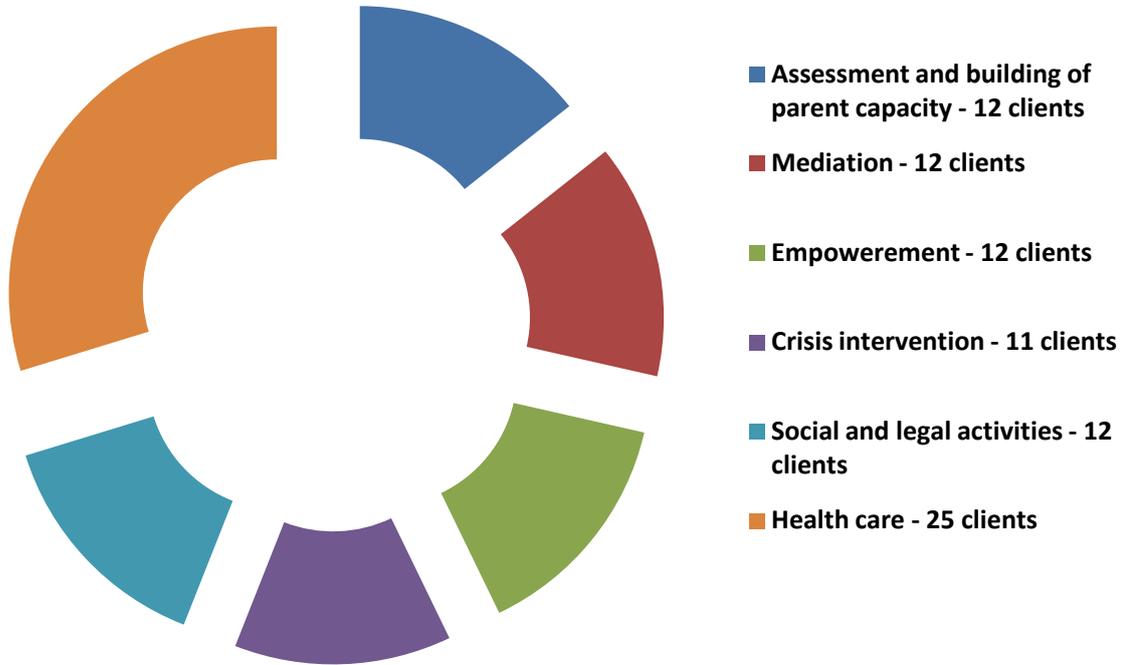
Tab. 12. Distribution of clients according to age



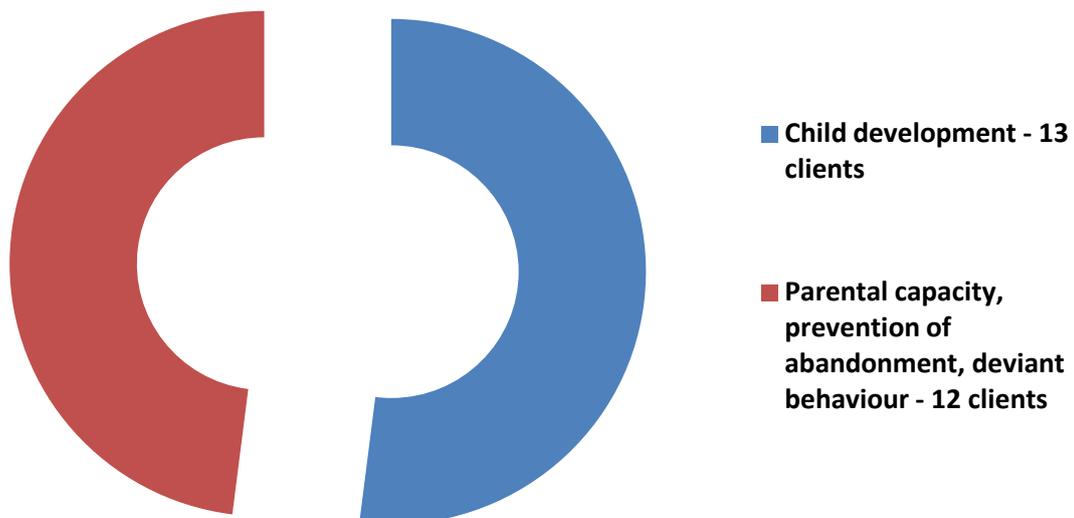
4. STATISTICS OF THE MOTHER AND BABY UNIT TO THE SOCIAL SERVICES CENTRE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Total – 25 clients

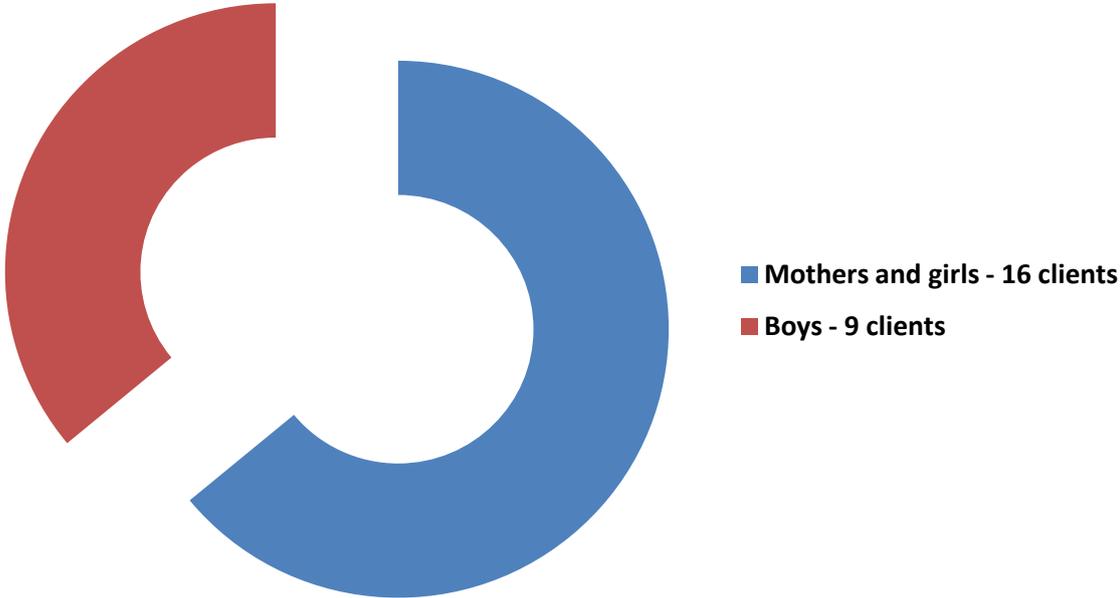
Tab. 13. Distribution of clients according to the type of service



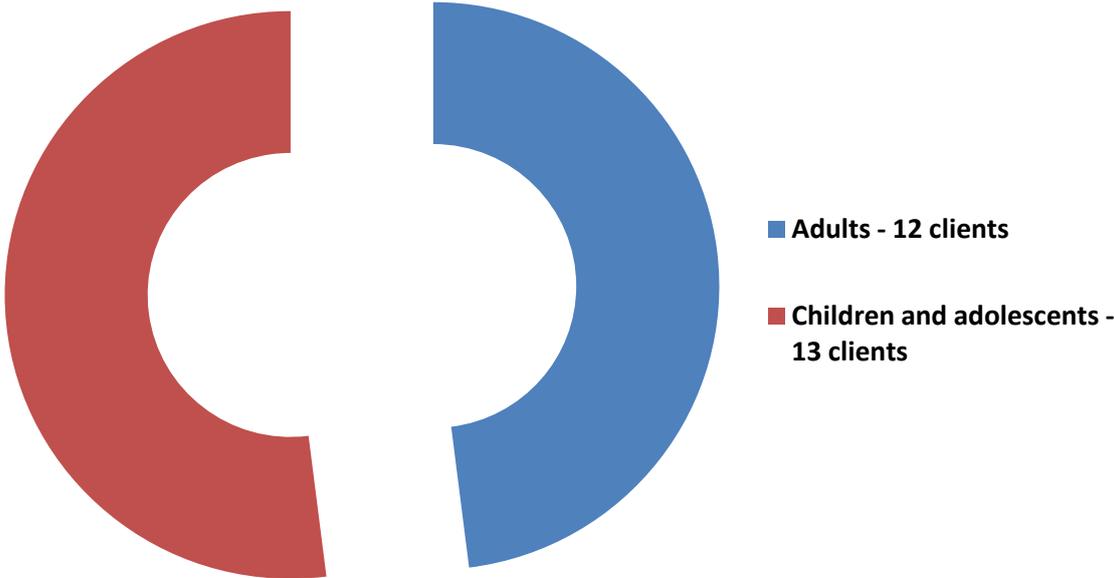
Tab. 14. Distribution of clients according to the type of problem



Tab. 15. Distribution of clients according to sex



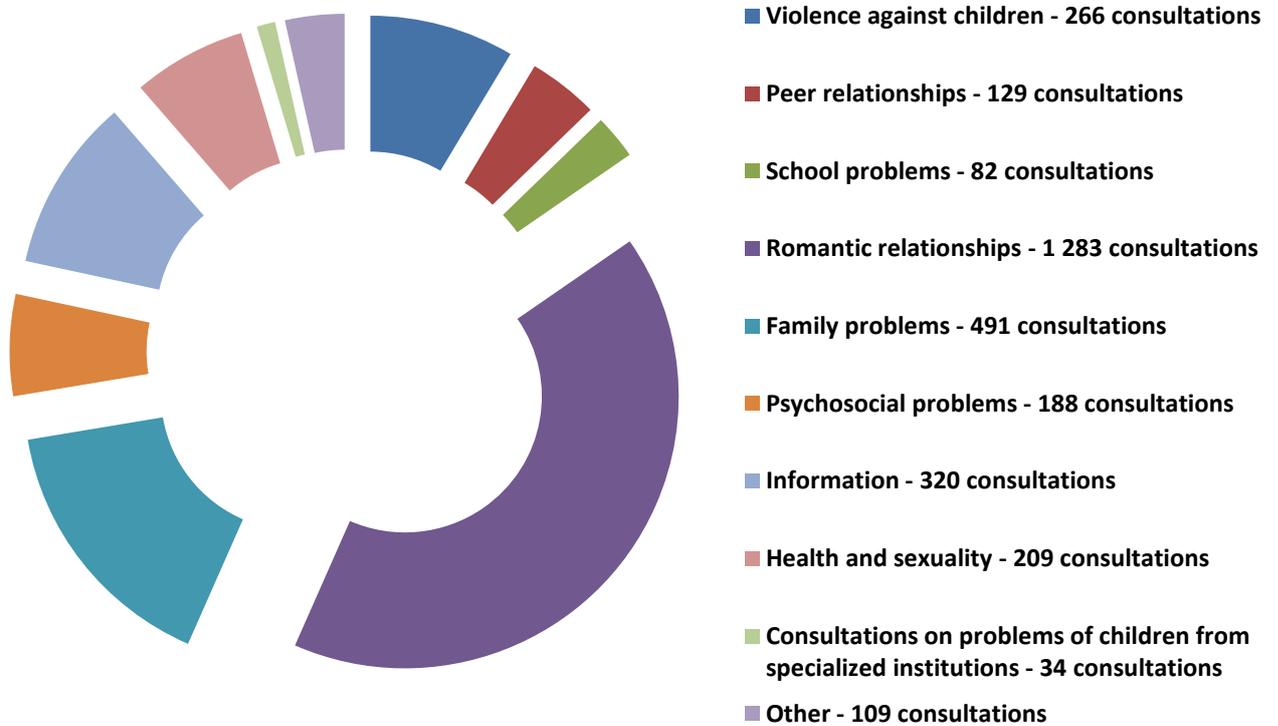
Tab. 16. Distribution of clients according to age



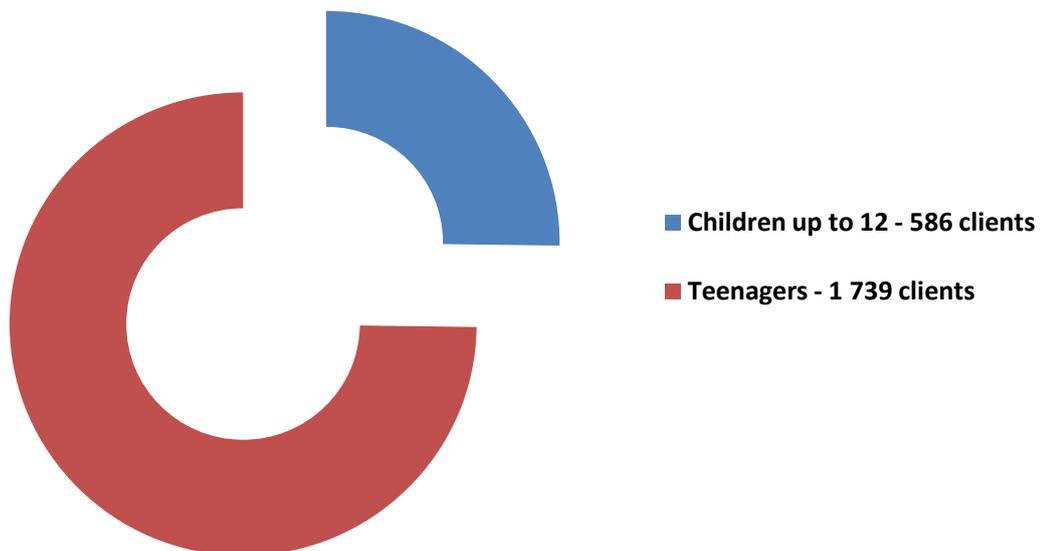
5. STATISTICS OF THE NATIONAL HELPLINE FOR CHILDREN 116 111

Total – 3111 consultations

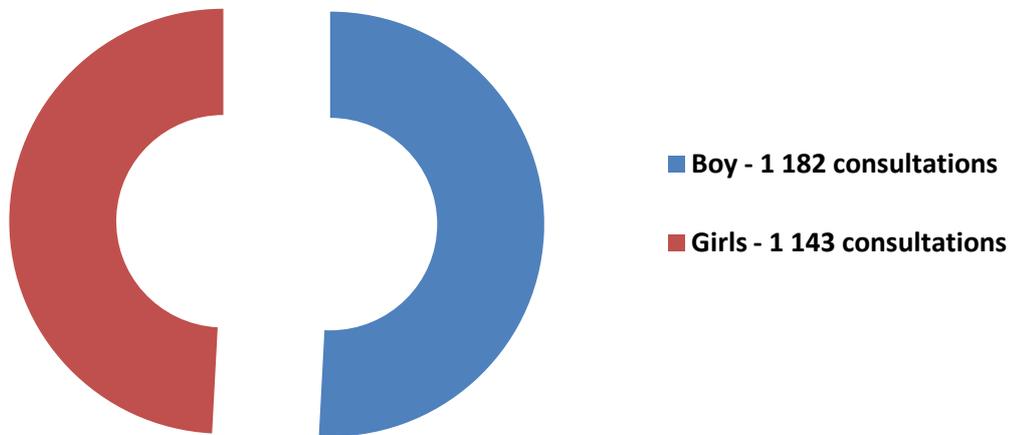
Tab. 17. Distribution of consultations according to the type of problem



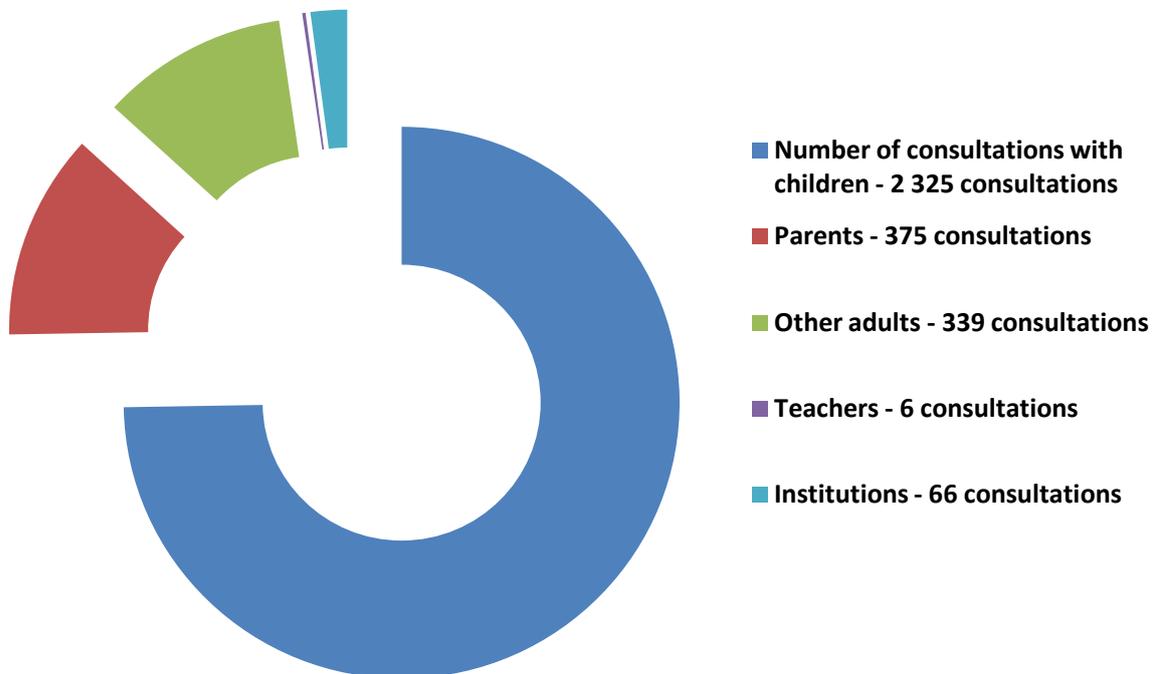
Tab. 18. Distribution of consultations - children under 12 and teenagers



Tab. 19. Distributions of callers under 18 by sex



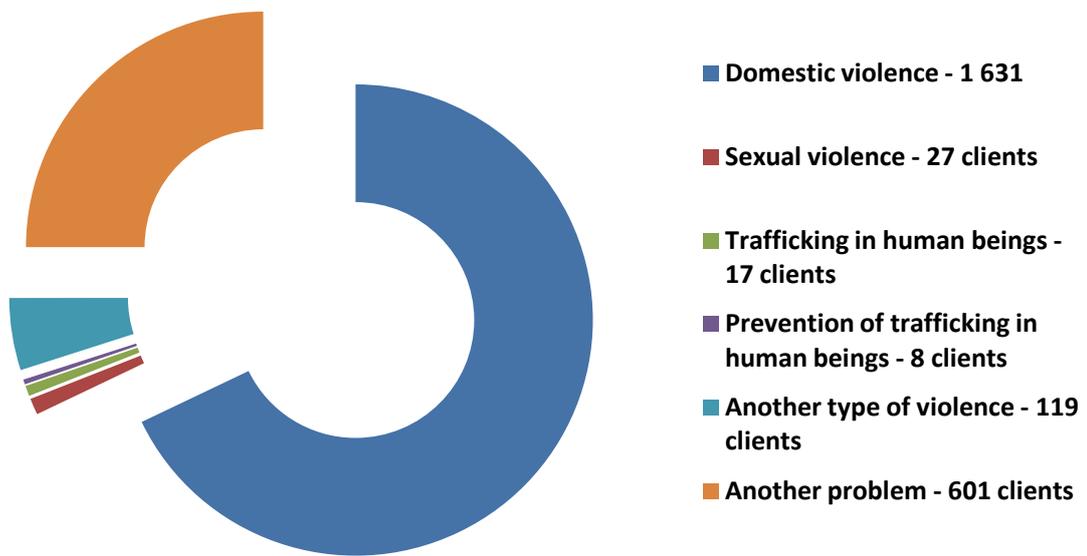
Tab. 20. Distribution of consultations according to the callers



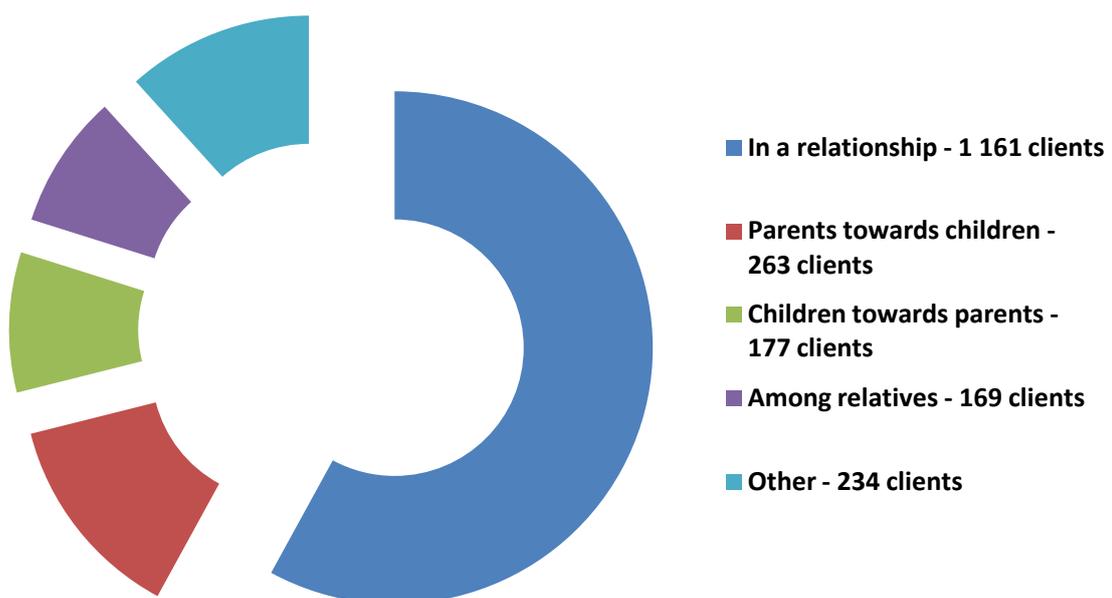
6. STATISTICS OF THE NATIONAL HOTLINE FOR SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE

Total – 2 403 consultations

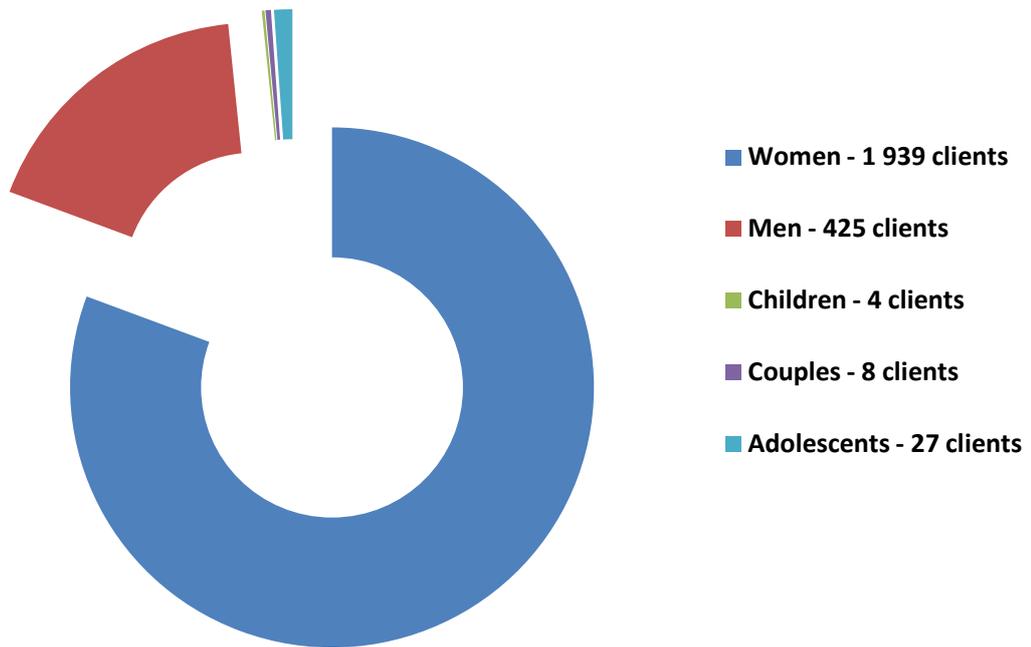
Tab. 21. Distribution of clients according to the type of problem



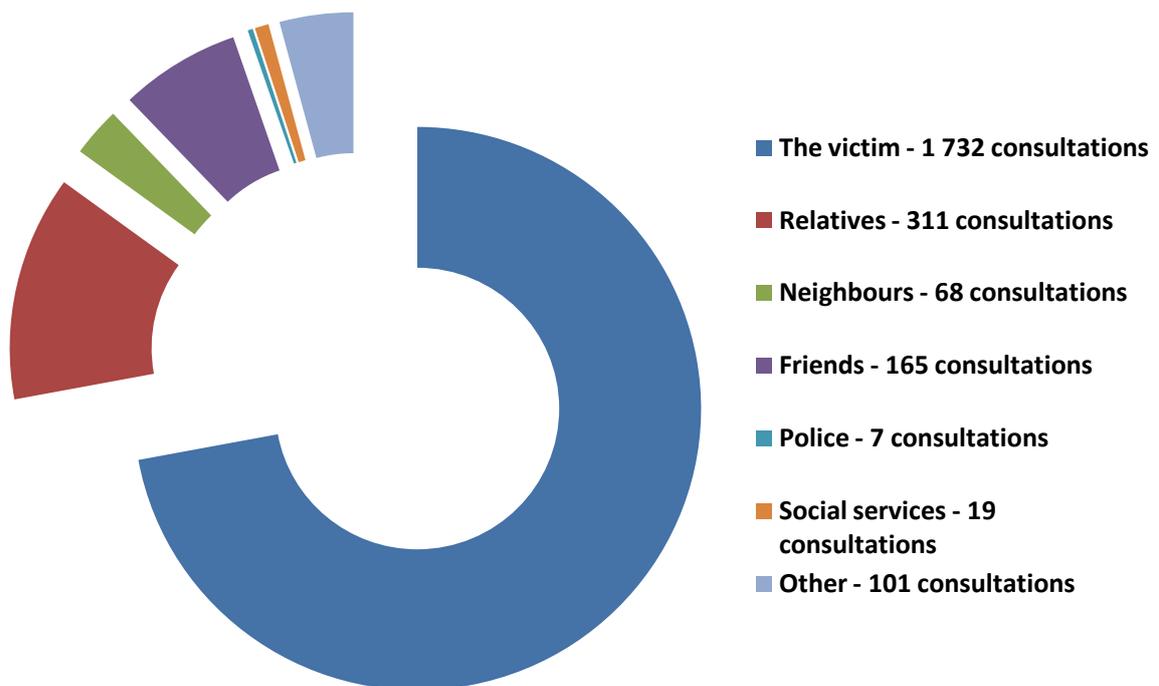
Tab. 22. Distribution of clients according to the type of domestic violence



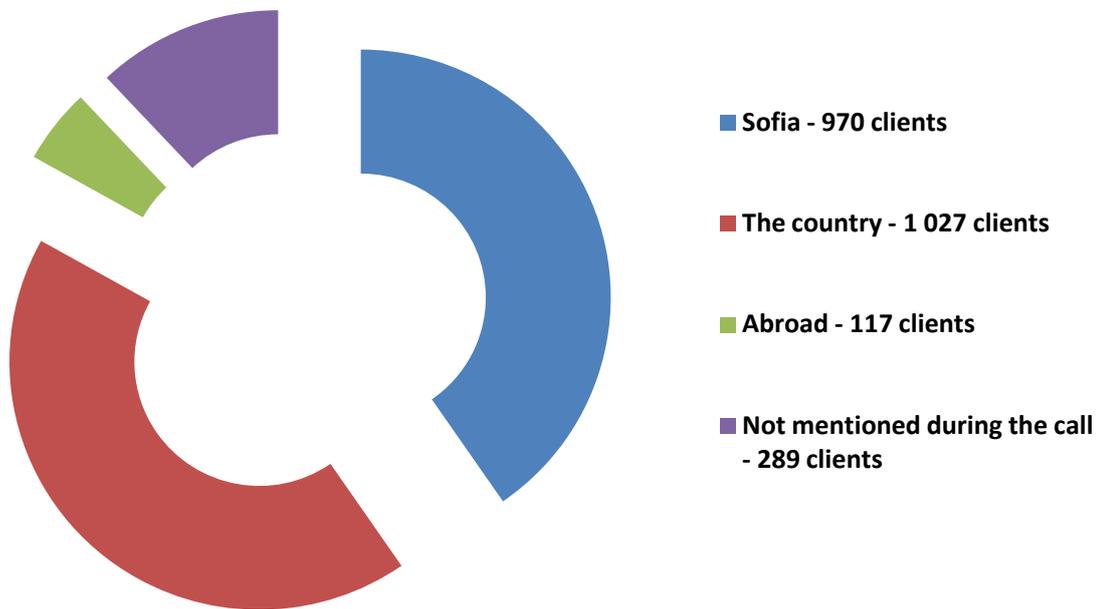
Tab. 23. Distribution of clients according to sex



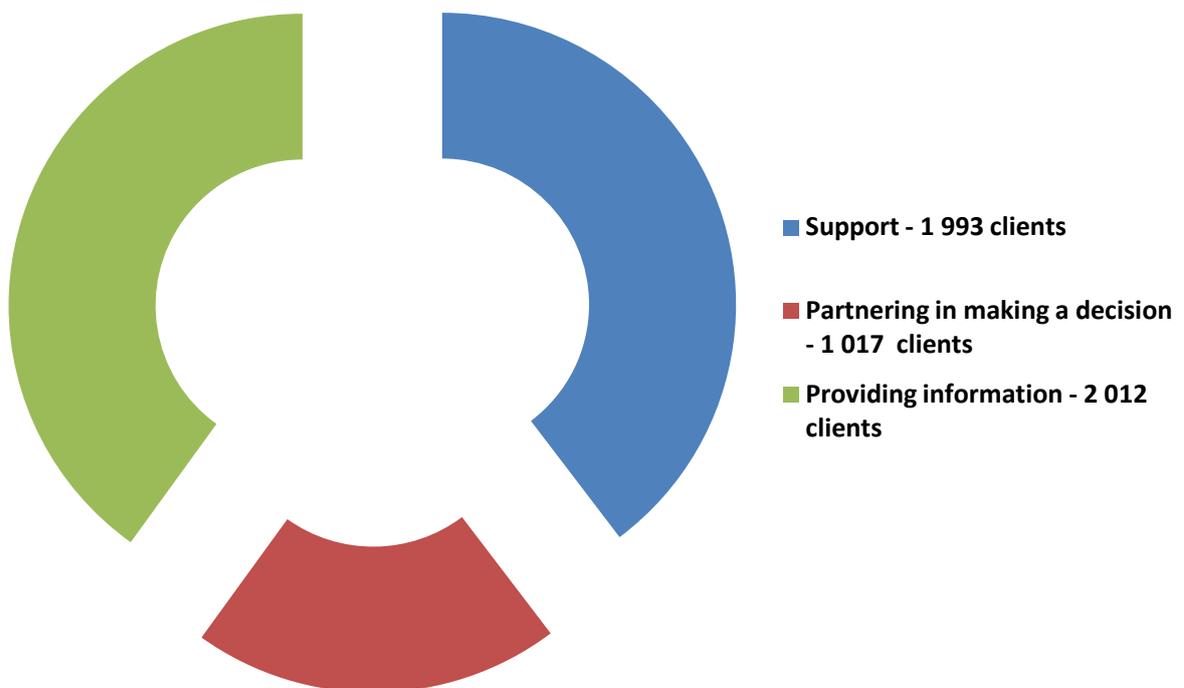
Tab. 24. Distribution of consultations according to the type of caller



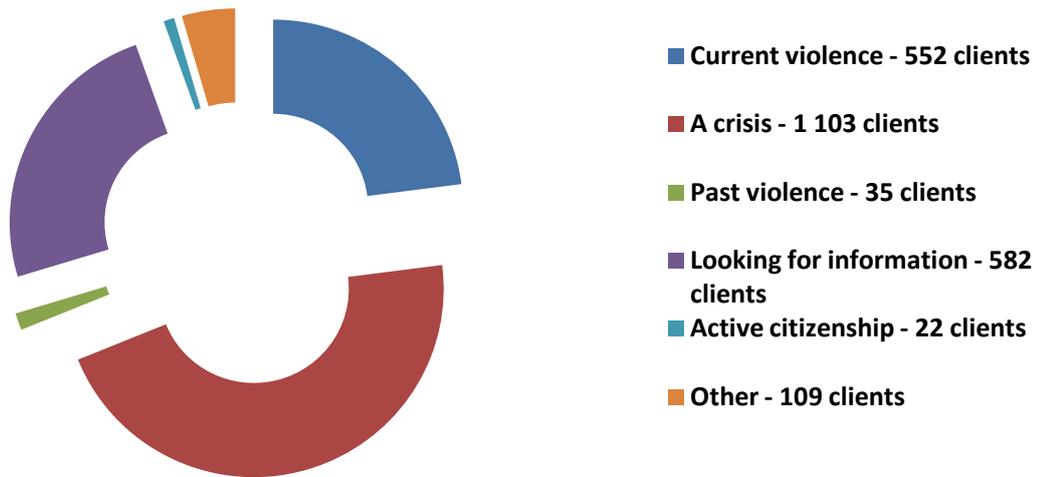
Tab. 25. Distribution of callers according to the place of residence



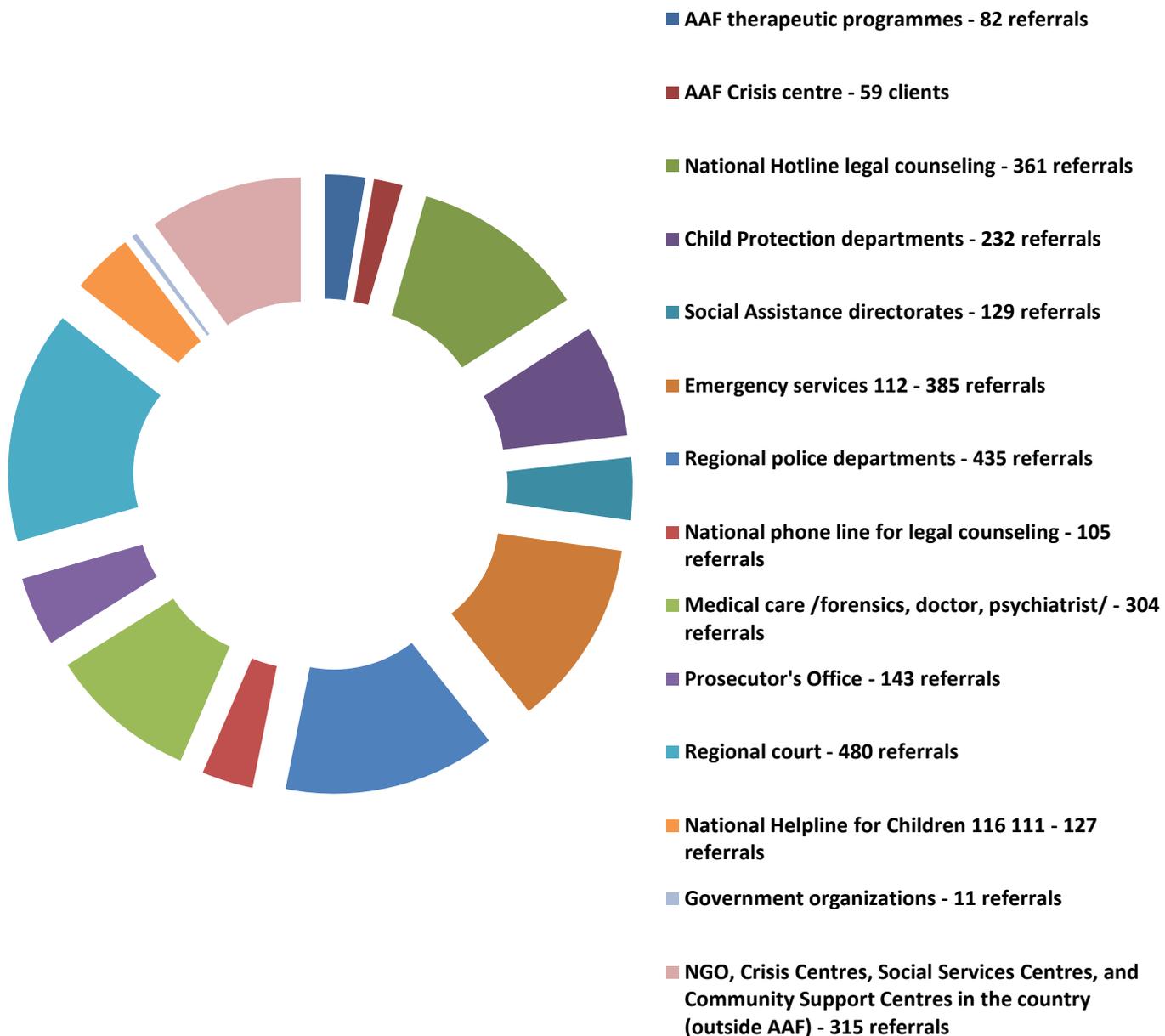
Tab. 26. Distribution of clients according to the type of support provided



Tab. 27. Distribution of clients according to the type of the call



Tab. 28. Distribution of calls in terms of referral



7. TRAINING CENTRE STATISTICS

Tab. 29. Distribution of activities



Activities - training centre:

8 trainings on working with child victims of violence and unaccompanied children with 163 participants;

1 campaign for new consultants for the National Helpline for Survivors of Violence 0800 1 86 76 and a 5-day intensive training – 18 participants;

1 3-day seminar on the topic of “Psychoanalytical Understanding of Psychological Trauma” with 22 participants;

4 focus groups with police officers for studying their attitude towards working on cases of domestic violence with 40 participants;

5 workshops for the preparation of the monitoring system of public policies and practices related to domestic violence with 91 participants;

1 quality research of healthy relationships and an advocacy campaign;

An online conference “A Look towards Domestic Violence” with 50 participants.

Training Centre in 2020:

- 298 clinical seminars and supervisions for the teams of psychoanalysts, psychotherapists, psychologists, social workers, a speech therapists, and a musical pedagogue to the Centre for Counselling, Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis, Social Services Center for Children and Families – Community Support Center, Mother and baby unit , “St.Petka” Crisis Center for Victims of Domestic Violence, National Hotline for Victims of Domestic Violence, National Helpline for Children 116 111.