

Who are we

The www.siguronline.md platform was launched in January 2013 by the International Centre "La Strada Moldova". The online assistance service, that is free of charge, is managed by professionals with extensive knowledge and experience in the field and it allows for multiple requests to be processed simultaneously.

Our mission

Our mission is to help the children who are suffering or have suffered from an online sexual abuse to overcome this experience and continue to grow with harmony and integrity, benefiting from the necessary legal and psychological assistance; to provide the society and all interested parties with information and tools to prevent online sexual abuse of children.

Our area of competence

To prevent online sexual abuse of children by cultivating abilities allowing them to identify and manage existing risks, particularly in terms of communication and relationships.

To provide assistance to children that are facing or have faced an online sexual abuse, taking into account their needs.

The following actions are indicators of potential online sexual abuse of a child:

- Online conversation with a child on intimate topics or topics of a sexual nature
- Asking a child to produce photographs or videos with sexual content
- Offering goods in exchange of photos or videos with sexual content
- Inviting a child to meet in real life in order to have sexual intercourse
- Blackmailing the child in order to get sexual favors (intimate photos, videos; involving the child in livestream sexual activities), money or other benefits, while threatening to share compromising information about the child
- Distributing intimate photos/videos of the child on social media or on other online platforms
- Sharing photographs or videos of a sexual nature of a child without his/her consent.

Who can reach out to us

- Any child who has faced an unpleasant situation online
- Any person who wants to help a child who is experiencing an online sexual abuse or who wants to report a potential case of abuse
- Any person who wants to get information on how they can protect a child from unpleasant experiences online

Our services

- ✓ **Provide information** on safe browsing of the Internet for children
- ✓ **Provide guidance** on identifying optimal solutions for children who do not know how to react in certain situations happening to them online
- ✓ **Provide emotional support** for children facing or who have faced an unpleasant experience online
- ✓ **Refer**, if necessary, to the free services of psychological and legal assistance

Contacts

Web: www.siguronline.md

E-mail: helpline@siguronline.md

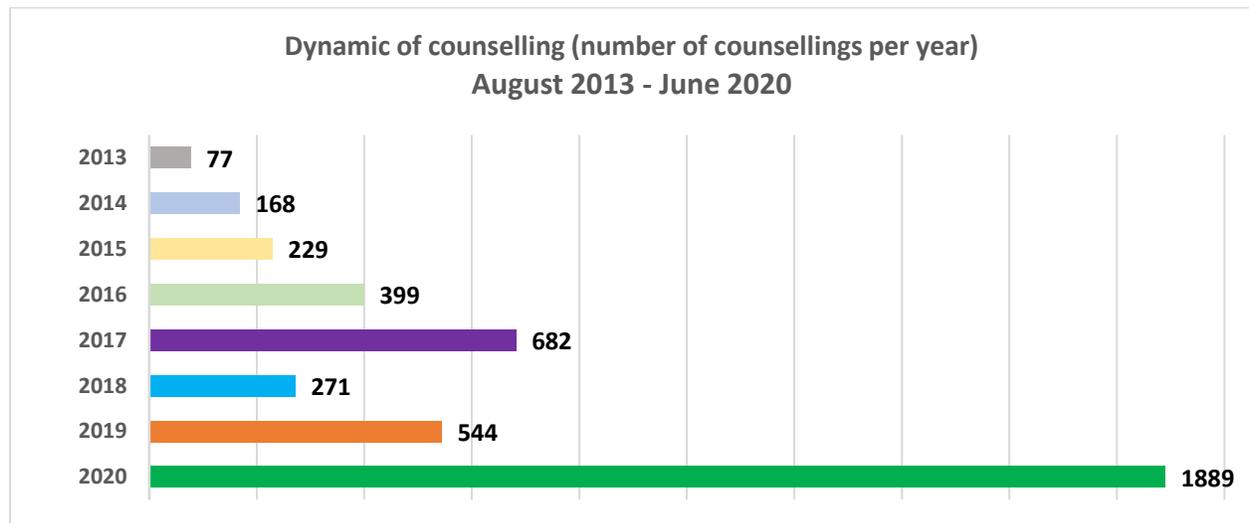
Facebook: [@SigurOnline](https://www.facebook.com/SigurOnline)

Instagram: [siguronline](https://www.instagram.com/siguronline)

Youtube: [SigurOnline.md](https://www.youtube.com/SigurOnline.md)

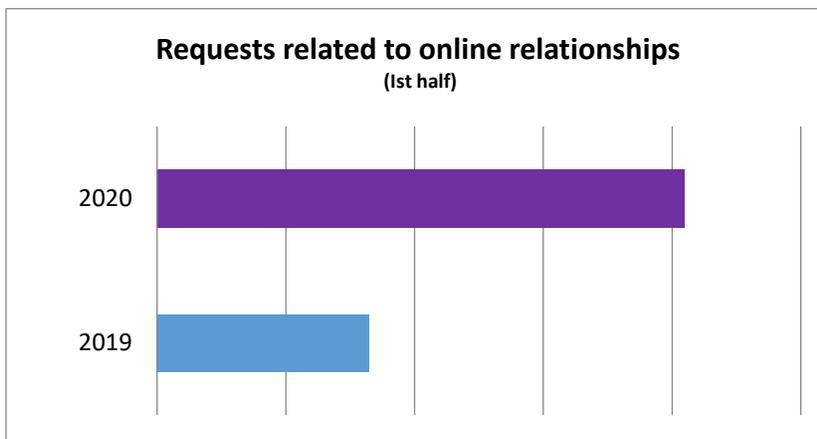
Overview of the counselling services over the past 7 years

From the moment it was launched, siguronline.md was a useful and trusted tool in promoting child online safety. The network of beneficiaries expands year on year. In the first half of 2020 we registered a record number of requests, almost 4 times more than the record-figures registered in all other years.



During the first semester of 2020, 87% of requests (1644) came from children. 38% of the beneficiaries have found out about siguronline.md from classmates or peers, the others found out from teachers or from the siguronline.md professionals who carried out informative activities online and in schools. 56% of the beneficiaries have accessed the platform regularly. The number of requests coming from children who have found us via social media has increased considerably.

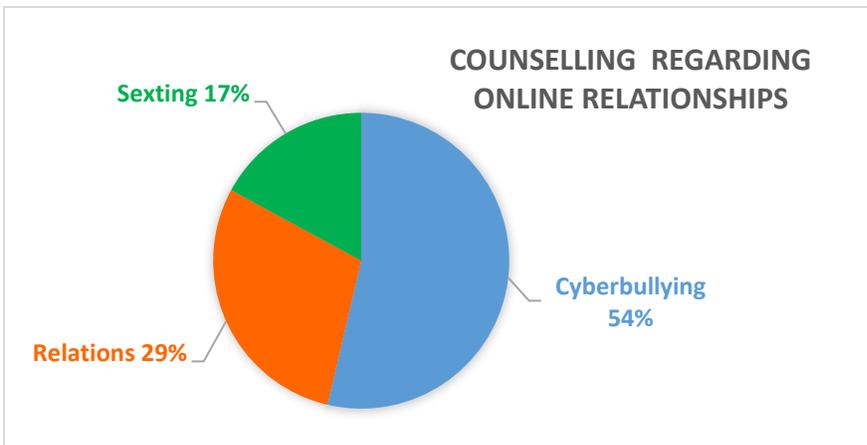
First half of 2020: figures and trends



The number of requests related to online relationships has increased by 250% compared to the previous year. This trend is directly linked to the current state of pandemic – most of the children’s activities have been moved to the online environment. Because they can’t interact with their

friends and classmates in real life, they initiated friendships and romantic relationships online, socializing and communicating virtually more than they used to. As a consequence, the issues they would encounter online have intensified in this period.

The relationship related issues that children have encountered refer especially to 3 categories:



Cyberbullying (online harassment)

Usually, it is a classmate or someone living in the same yard as the child. The most common type of cyberbullying involves messages to a group chat with the bullied child, the child who is bullying and other

participants.

Online relationships

Children want to know how to maintain or establish an online relationship, when is the best time to meet in real life with a person who they’ve met online or how to talk to their parents about the relationship they’re in.

“How do I message a girl that I like?” (boy, 15 years old)

“Should I go on a date with a boy I met on Instagram?” (girl, 15 years old)

"How do I tell my parents about my relationship with a boy?" (girl, 17 years old)

Sexting

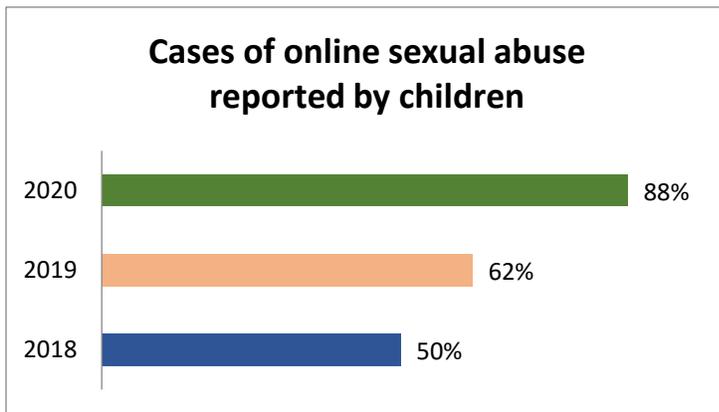
Usually, children ask about how they should react when their boyfriend/girlfriend (of the same age or similar) asks for intimate photographs. Some children ask how they should refuse to send such photos without compromising the relationship. Others don't know what decision to make and they ask us whether or not they should send such photographs:

"My boyfriend asked me for a sexy photo, and I don't know what to do." (girl, 14 years old)

"My girlfriend sent me a hot photo! I don't know what to do, should I send her one too?" (boy, 15 years old)

Sexual abuse reported through siguronline.md

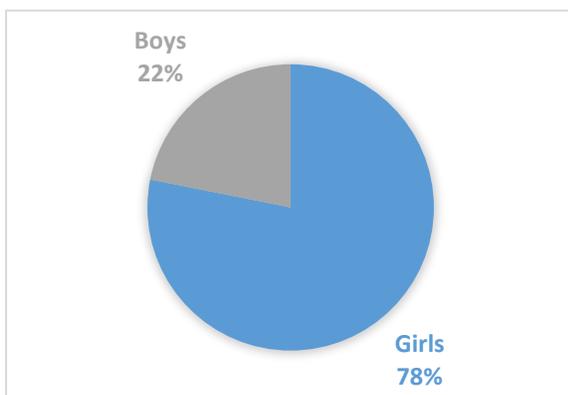
In the first half of 2020 36 cases of online sexual abuse of children have been reported – 3 times more than the same time last year.



In most of the cases, it was the children who talked to us or asked for our help with the problem they were facing. This is an important difference compared to previous years when cases of abuse were reported by third parties, usually friends or classmates of the child. This is partly because of the self-isolation measures imposed because of the pandemic, meaning children had to directly contact

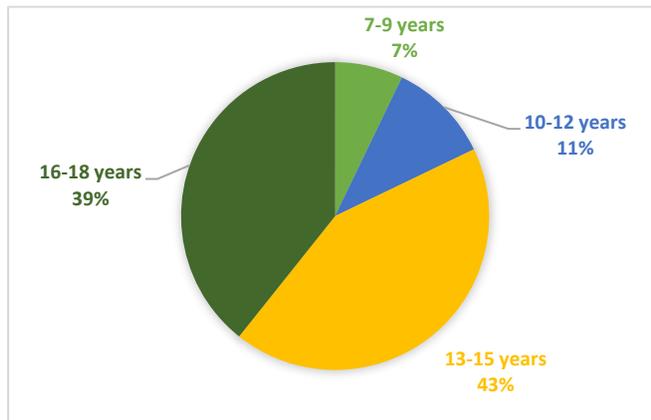
specialized services, without discussing it with friends.

We notice that both girls and boys can be exposed to this risk, but the forms of the abuse differ.



Girls usually report threats and sexual blackmail. They say they are threatened that the intimate pictures they have previously sent the abuser will be published online, or that a fake profile will be created that would "ruin her reputation". In some of the cases the photos have already been published at the point when the girl reached out to us. Boys on the other hand, are exposed to content of a sexual nature or are intimidated with messages that include explicit sexual content.

The average age of the children who have encountered online sexual abuse is 13 years, but sometimes reports refer to children aged 7-9 years being exposed to messages unsuitable for their age.



Children aged 7-9 years are exposed to sexual content after interacting with other users on online gaming platforms.

Children aged 10-12 years most often receive messages with sexual suggestions, questions about their sexual experience or about exploring sexual interests.

Children aged 13-15 years are victims of sextortion, meaning they are threatened that their photos and/or videos of explicit

sexual character that they've previously sent to the abuser will be posted online.

Adolescents aged 16-18 are threatened by their former partners that their intimate photos and/or videos will be published online as "punishment" for ending the relationship or as an incentive to continue the relationship.