

## CHILD SAFEGUARDING TEAM

### Who we are?

**The Child Safeguarding Team** has been created in 2010 in the frame of Issues Affecting Children Program of the International Center "La Strada". It consists from **an attorney** and **several psychologists** who provide assistance and support to children victims and witnesses of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation throughout the criminal proceedings.

### Our mission

Ensuring that the rights and interests of the child are respected throughout the criminal procedure in order to avoid the repeated victimization and ensuring into practice all the principles of restorative justice.

### Area of competence

**Any form of sexual violence against children**, either it is sexual abuse or sexual exploitation, represents the area of our activity. **The informational technologies** as recruiting and enticement method as well as environment of sexual abuse or exploitation are the key elements of our specialization. We provide legal and psychological assistance to the child victim or witness of the following offences:

- Rape (art. 171 Criminal Code of RM)
- Violent actions of sexual nature (art. 172 CP RM)
- Sexual harassment (art. 173 CP RM)
- Engaging in sexual activities with a child who has not reached 16 years old (art. 174 CP RM)
- Pervert actions (art. 175 CP RM)
- Solicitation of children for sexual purposes (art. 175/1 CP RM)
- Child trafficking (art. 206 alin. (1) lit. a) CP RM)
- Child pornography (art. 208/1 CP RM)
- Recourse to child prostitution (art. 208/2 CP RM)

### Our principles

- Ensuring the balance between criminal justice and the best interests of the child;
- Confidentiality and protection of the victim's identity
- Avoid interventions where the child benefit is reduced while the risk of harm is high;
- Child participation in the decision-making process that concerns him / her.

### Who can ask for our services?

- Law enforcement agencies;
- Frontline specialists from child protection and related fields (social assistance, education, health).

### Our services

- ✓ **Consulting and assisting law enforcement agencies** at the investigation stage;
- ✓ **Specialized psychological support and assistance for children and their families** during criminal proceedings;
- ✓ **Legal consulting and specialized legal assistance for children and their families;**
- ✓ **Child friendly hearing space** for victims / witnesses of sexual abuse or sexual exploitation.

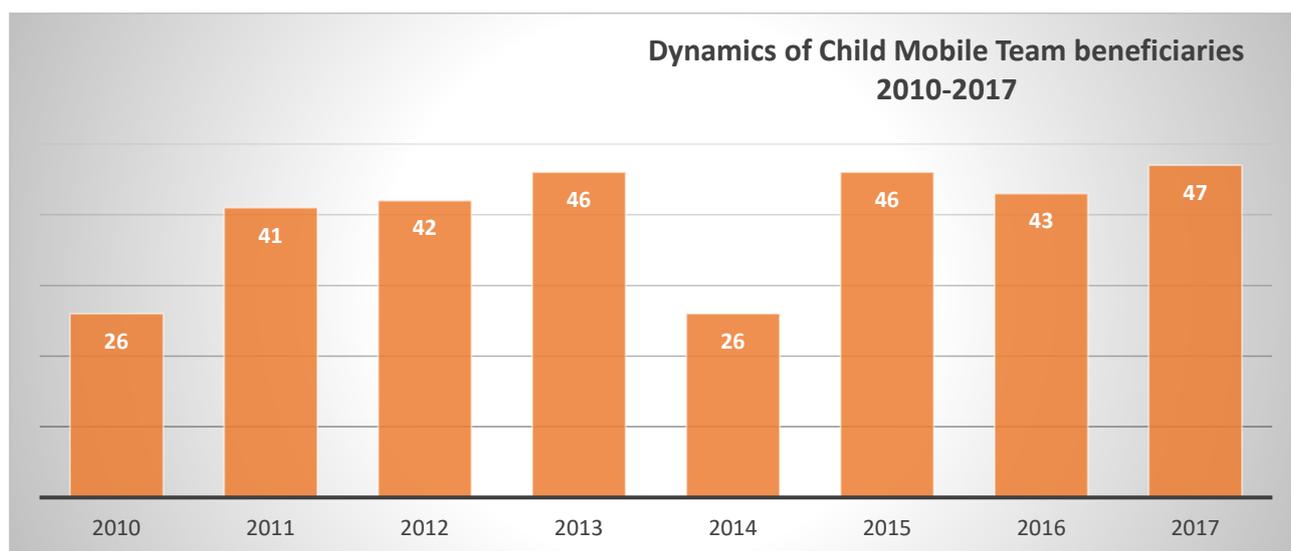
### Contacts

- ✓ **Phone:** +373 78 330 406, +373 78 405 660
- ✓ **Web:** [siguronline.md](http://siguronline.md), [lastrada.md](http://lastrada.md)
- ✓ **Working hours:** 24/24, daily.

## CHILD SAFEGUARDING TEAM

### A short overview of assisted cases in the last 8 years of activity

From the first day of its activity to the end of the first semester of 2018, the lawyer and the psychologist of Child Safeguarding Team have provided assistance and qualified support to 352 beneficiaries. These are children and adolescents who became victims or witnesses of **sexual offences** (rape, sexual harassment, solicitation of children for sexual purposes, violent actions of sexual nature, pervert actions) or **sexual exploitation** (child trafficking, child pornography, child prostitution).



### The first half of 2018: figures, facts and trends

In the first half of 2018, La Strada psychologist and attorney took on 35 new cases and continued to provide assistance for 5 cases from the previous year. In all these cases, the Internet was the main environment for recruiting or for communication between the abuser and the victim. The crime itself happens more and more often online, especially when it comes to pornography and child trafficking.



**40 cases**

child sexual abuse  
and/or sexual  
exploitation



Trafficking - **23 children**

Pornography - **5 children**

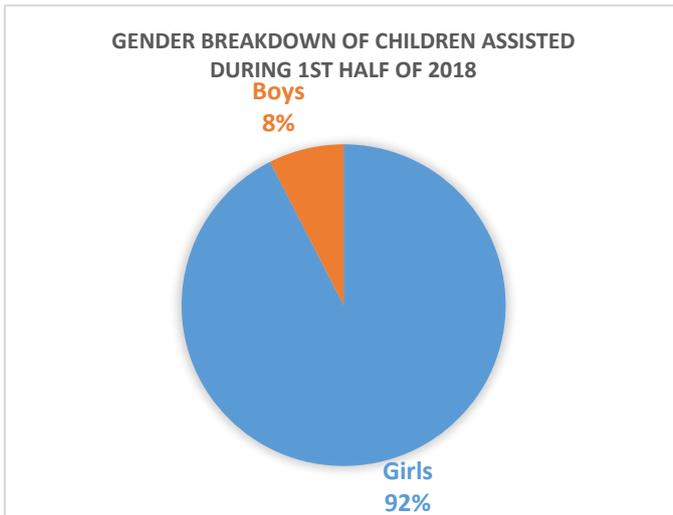
Pervert actions - **4 children**

Rape - **4 children**

Violent actions of sexual nature - **4 children**

\*The share of cases assisted by the attorney and the psychologist in the first half of 2018

## CHILD SAFEGUARDING TEAM



- **The profile of children who get abused/exploited and how they have been recruited**

The profile of cases (40) assisted in the first half of 2018 reveals several worrying trends related to online communication among children and teens.

Once communication and social life of youngsters move to online, abusers adapt their enticement and recruiting methods to virtual communication rules and requirements. On the other hand,

children who become victims of sexual abuses and/or THB via internet are getting younger. Girls are the most vulnerable victims. More than 20% of beneficiaries are between 14 and 16 years, 5 children are 17, 4 children are between 12 and 14, other 4 children - between 8 and 10, 1 child is 5 years old. In most situations, financial vulnerability of minors is the main risk factor related to trafficking cases – from 23 children 14 are orphan or without parents' care, living in orphanages; 6 of them are cared for by their grandparents. **The economic vulnerability** as well as **the lack of communication**, relationships based on trust and sense of security in their own family get those children in prey to the easily lure.

The psychological evaluation reports of these children have shown serious miscommunication and complicated relationships with their parents. Only 30% of children who have been abused (or their parents) have reported the abuse on their own initiative. The rest of them have been identified and reported by the competent bodies.

- **The abuser's profile**

The perpetrators are usually up to 30 years old men, people who are not specifically working in IT area but are supposed to use ICTs (technologies as a communication tool). However, these features do not exclude the involvement of other persons in committing sexual abuse of minors.

Our case studies show that abusers are quite skillful manipulators. First of all, they make sure that they built trust and even love in their relationship with the victim. The aim of the recruiter is to give the child the feeling he/she is absolutely disinterested, that his/her intention is totally "humanistic" indeed. During the communication, the abuser "is constantly worrying" about the child's relationships with his parents, friends, colleagues; sometimes he's faking jealousy until he becomes accepted by the child in his virtual life as a loved one or a trusted person. It is only later that the abuser is taking action. He/ she uses to constraint or threat the child by creating false profiles on social media containing humiliating, denigrating, offend information which is compromising the image of the minor, as well as pornographic and indecent content.