



## STRENGTHENING YOUTH PROTECTION AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY PREVENTION IN BULGARIA



In line with the roadmap of the 2008-2018 National Strategy for Children and a National Program on Child Protection, the National Police General Directorate (Ministry of Interior) obtained the support of the Swiss Confederation to reinforce the existing prevention capacity of the police in schools, to develop new communication tools to raise awareness on juvenile delinquency amongst students, teachers, families and communities, to establish a new database system to register and manage cases of juvenile delinquency, and to equip and train inspectors and specialists of the Child Pedagogic Rooms.

In recent years, Bulgaria experienced an increase of acts of aggression, violence and crimes against children or committed by children. Child protection departments and organizations registered a rise in cases of bullying in schools and sport environments.

Analyses concluded that violent children do not receive the appropriate support in most schools, which often leads to more violence. Teachers and school counsellors are not prepared to deal with this new trend. Repressive measures tend to be chosen instead of preventive ones with better long-term effects. Schools lack the capacity to establish in-house programs aiming at preventing a new phenomenon that requires specialized skills to deal with.

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### OBJECTIVE OF THE SWISS SUPPORT

With the ultimate objective to contain and reduce the prevalence of youth violence and juvenile delinquency in Bulgaria, four specific objectives are pursued:

- To promote institutional partnership, experience sharing and transfer of knowledge; between Switzerland and Bulgaria in the field of youth protection and juvenile delinquency prevention;
- To run in Bulgaria an upgraded National Police training program entitled “Work of the Police in Schools”;
- To develop new information/communication tools to better protect youth and prevent juvenile delinquency;
- To enhance the administrative and operational capacity of the National Police General Directorate to prevent and respond to youth violence and juvenile delinquency.

## RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

The main results of the project are listed below:

- Youth protection officers in Bulgaria are aware of international and Swiss best practices in violence prevention in schools;
- A prevention campaign called “Work of the Police in Schools” is conducted in schools throughout the country;
- An informative website on prevention of youth violence and delinquency is conceived and accessible publicly;
- A database system to register and manage cases of juvenile delinquency is established and operational;
- Inspectors of the so-called Child Pedagogical Rooms are equipped, connected to the new database on juvenile delinquency, and trained.

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## ACTIVITIES

The project implemented or shall implement a number of activities, among them the following ones:

- Two five-day study visits were conducted in Switzerland to meet youth protection specialists;
- 240 police officers conducted 8'000 interventions in schools to raise awareness on how to prevent youth violence and delinquency; 7'200 classrooms were visited throughout the country; an estimated 138'000 children benefited from the campaign;
- Six training sessions and four three-day workshops were facilitated by experts from the Police Academy of Savatan in Sofia to exchange knowledge and upgrade the skills of 601 officers involved in youth protection;
- Coaching sessions, legal consultations and technical workshops were conducted in Bulgaria to develop and regulate a police database on juvenile delinquency to manage cases;
- 100 juvenile officers have been trained in working with the new database by the end of 2017; 120 more will be trained in 2018;
- 300 computers, 200 multimedia devices, and 100 digital cameras were purchased to equip the Child Pedagogical Rooms throughout the country.

## KEY INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

### FOCUS AREA

Policing / Prevention of juvenile delinquency

### COUNTRY

Bulgaria

### GOALS

Reduced number of cases of youth violence and juvenile delinquency in Bulgaria;

### EXPECTED RESULTS

The prevention program “Work of the Police in Schools” is conducted in schools throughout the country; Juvenile delinquency officers manage cases digitally with a new police database; Inspectors from the Child Pedagogical Rooms benefit from equipment, training and knowledge exchange.

### TARGET GROUP

- Police inspectors from the Child Pedagogical Rooms
- Teachers
- Youth groups/school children
- Families and communities

### EXECUTING AGENCY

Ministry of Interior, National Police General Directorate

### PARTNERS

- Police Academy of Savatan, Switzerland

### BUDGET

CHF 770'400

(Swiss contribution CHF 654'840)

### DURATION

2013-2018

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For more information, visit:

<http://swiss-contribution.bg/en/funds/security>

