



MHPSS TWG - Bulgaria

Meeting Minutes



WHO, UNHCR, Association Animus Foundation, MDM, USRF, Dokovi Foundation



Members

1. Up-dates from members

UNHCR shared that Organization Red Noses International are having a mission in Bulgaria to understand the national context and plan services for children, elderly and people with disabilities. They plan to organize activities at Voenna Rampa, USRF and Compass Center in Sofia in collaboration with BRC.

WHO PM+ training is currently postponed until further notice.

MDM continue to provide MHPSS services in “Nadejda” neighborhood in Sliven. In February they have conducted 22 sessions in which 79 girls and 59 boys participated. They are also expecting confirmation from their Board of Directors on the start of a project "Migration, exile, health and rights".

Association Animus Foundation is recently part of “Family for every child” organization – and are particularly engaged in the campaign “Blue Umbrella Day” for awareness raising on sexual violence towards boys in the period of 16th April – 16th May. The idea is that UN recognizes 16th April as the international day for prevention of sexual violence to boys.



Updates & Achievements

2. Thematic focus: Domestic violence and the role of the psychologist, Part II

Animus Association Foundation presented the second part on the law for protection from domestic violence. Highlights are stated below:

1. In a public hearing, the Courts hears both sides, while the burden of proof lays with the victim with particular importance for evidence related to witnesses.
2. When issuing an order (when the offender loses the case), the Court shall assign the offender to pay the state fee and the costs of the case. In case that the Court decides that an act of domestic violence has not taken place (due to insufficient evidence), the Court refuses the plea for protection and demands the petitioner to cover the taxes for the case. In case the plea is rejected AND the petitioner is: a minor, a person under guardianship or a person with disabilities, they are exempt from paying the costs of the case.
3. Regional Centers for legal aid (under the National Legal Aid Bureau) provide legal advice and assistance (contacts are available in the PPT document).
5. YouTube link for more information is available at the following address: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2UiYwYZ6EA>
6. Services are mainly offered at “Zona ZaKmila” and at the Complex for Social Services. The Complex consists of a Community Support Centre and Mother and Baby Unit. The Crisis Centre offers crisis intervention, accommodation and social work program. Another important service is the Legal Clinic.
7. National Hotline is available 24/7, including for calls abroad. They also offer legal consultation every Wednesday from 5:30 to 9:00 pm.
8. Mapping of social services for victims of domestic violence is available at the following address: <https://animusassociation.org/za-fondaciata/partniori/sluzhbi-%20organizacii-programi/>
11. Crisis intervention is extremely important and could take more than 1 hour (the usual session time). In extreme cases of violence (e.g. weapon possession, danger for the live of the victim or of another person) the person should be accommodated in a Crisis AND a safety plan is prepared with the help of the psychologist and legal advisor that consulted the victim.
12. Victims of domestic violence return to the abuser and then go back to services on average of 7 times. As this spiral is the specificity of domestic violence, the role of the psychologist is of extreme importance when it comes to the provision of persistent and long-term work with the clients, based on trusted relationship and continuity.



Action Points

3. Topics for next month's meetings

Updates and follow-up on MHPSS services.

