

## JUSTICE FOR EVERY CHILD

### PROTECTION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The concept of justice for children is a holistic one which seeks to improve respect for international standards for all children who come into contact with the justice and related systems whether as alleged offenders, victims/witnesses, or in relation to their care, custody and protection.

Justice for Every Child project (2018-2021) is UNICEF's project financed by the Swiss and Swedish governments. It builds on UNICEF's previous project by capturing the momentum created, consolidating reforms, and ensuring the sustainability of key efforts.

It has supported and built on a key milestone: the Republika Srpska, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Brcko District have adopted comprehensive legislation affecting justice for children—the Law on Protection and Treatment of Juveniles and Children in Criminal Proceedings. Building on these efforts, the Project supports authorities at State, Entity, Cantonal, and Municipal levels to enhance access to protection and services for children at-risk, children in conflict with the law, child victim/witnesses and children in civil proceedings which protect their rights, promote prevention, and reduce offending.

### COOPERATION OF JUSTICE, SECURITY AND SOCIAL WELFARE

The overall objective of the Justice for Every Child is to improve the application of international standards in BiH so that children at-risk, child victims/witnesses, children

involved in civil proceedings, and children in conflict with the law are better served and protected by the justice, security and social welfare sectors.

### IN THE INTERESTS OF THE CHILD

- Support legislative and policy reforms and practices designed to enhance secondary and tertiary prevention measures, and improve children's access to justice.
- Children at-risk, child victims/witnesses, children in civil proceedings, and children in conflict with the law have increased access to efficient support and protection services, in line with their best interests.

### KEY RESULTS

1. Based on the assessment of the implementation of the Republika Srpska (RS) Law on Protection and Treatment of Children and Juveniles in Criminal Proceedings, finalised in 2018, amendments to the legislation were adopted by the RS Assembly in 2020, which will further improve implementation of diversion measures, protection of victims and witness and child-friendly interviewing.
2. Regional Conference on 'Children's Access to Justice' which took place in February 2020 in Sarajevo. Over 150 participants consisting of government officials and child protection experts from 22 countries across the Europe and Central Asia region took stock of what has been achieved over the past years in justice for children

reforms and reconfirmed their commitment to accelerate the necessary reforms.

3. The BiH High Judiciary Prosecutorial Council developed and adopted Minimum Standards for child-friendly interviewing rooms. The standards prescribe psychosocial support as mandatory to all child victims and witnesses, as opposed to only child victims under 16, which was the case before.
4. The work of 16 Justice for Children Working Groups in 27 municipalities, together with development and implementation of specialised capacity building programmes in collaboration with ministries of justice, social welfare and interior, resulted in 63% of all municipalities in BiH have created conditions for implementation of diversion measures for children in conflict with the law. At the same time, constant advocacy on the benefits of diverting children from criminal proceedings resulted in 66% of prosecutor's offices implementing correction recommendation or police warning in 2020.
4. The secondary prevention programme which aim at enhancing the wellbeing and protection of children and adolescents through early identification and support from risk factors (offending, violence, neglect and abuse), has been rolled out in all municipalities in RS, in Canton Sarajevo, Tuzla Canton, Canton 10 and Una Sana Canton. In close collaboration with Ministries of Education and Pedagogical Institutes, more than 150,000 children benefitted from programme indirectly, out of which more than 7,000 directly.
5. The advancements made to the court and prosecutor's case management systems enable urgent treatment of cases involving children victims of serious crime, in line with the legislation. Also, gender disaggregation of the case management systems data on children in judiciary proceedings became mandatory in mid-2019 by the BiH High Judiciary and Prosecutorial Council decision. The case management systems were further strengthened in 2021 to provide a higher quality of data on children, including children with disabilities and children on the move.



**Together, we move forward**