



PROJECT FACTSHEET

Western Balkans April 2015

SWITZERLAND WORKS TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS



“Stop Nasilu!” – “Stop arbitrary justice!” – Children and young people speak out for a child and youth-friendly judicial system. © SDC

The government in Bosnia and Herzegovina wants to reform the country’s juvenile criminal legislation and improve the conditions of detention and follow-up for juvenile criminal offenders. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) have been conducting a project to this end since 2009.

Approximately 10% of children in Bosnia and Herzegovina live in socially disadvantaged families, a quarter of them in absolute poverty. Socially disadvantaged children and adolescents living in poverty are exposed to a higher risk of becoming perpetrators or victims of a crime.

The prevention of juvenile delinquency has so far been given scant consideration. Available resources for improving the conditions of detention and the follow-up of young offenders who have been released from detention and their reintegration into society were scarce. For the last five years Bosnian juvenile criminal law has been undergoing a process of reform with the aim of establishing the necessary legal framework for a justice system adapted to the specific needs of children and adolescents. The Bos-

nian government has given priority to the creation of a juvenile justice system based on international standards – also in view of its future candidature for membership of the EU.

PRIORITY TO STRENGTHENING PREVENTIVE MEASURES

In this phase the project aims to improve protection for children and adolescents in the justice system through preventive measures or through support in the case of delinquency. The social reintegration of juvenile offenders is also to be improved.

The long-term objective of the project is to reduce the level of child and juvenile delinquency in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project primarily targets juvenile criminal offenders and potential offenders. Protection is also provided to victims of violence or crime as well as witnesses of a criminal act.



Female state prosecutors at a seminar to raise awareness of alternative preventive and follow-up measures. © Almir Panjeta

CONTINUATION OF SPECIALISED TRAINING

The provision of further training and public relations are central aspects of the project. About 1,000 professionals, including judges, state prosecutors, social workers and police officers, are receiving specialised further training, the purpose of which is to develop a more positive attitude towards prevention and follow-up. At the same time, the public is to be increasingly sensitised to the issue of juvenile criminal justice and the reforms under way in juvenile law.

BUILDING ON SUCCESSES AND PROMOTING THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

In the first phase, from 2009 to 2013, the focus was on improving the legal framework conditions of juvenile justice. For example, at 16 police stations and at courts, child-friendly rooms were set up in which children and young adults could be questioned under conditions appropriate for their age. The prevention measures targeted the entire population of young people (about 800,000).

Thanks to numerous further training courses, justice professionals have developed greater comprehension for alternative prevention and follow-up measures. Public opinion towards juvenile delinquency has also changed, as is shown by a survey conducted by the NGO Knowledge, Attitude and Practices.

Strengthening preventive measures has so far proved to be successful. Improved methods of treatment and follow-up for adolescents and children have led to a reduction in juvenile delinquency in some areas. Data from three municipalities show that juvenile delinquency in Tuzla and Capljina has declined by 50% and in Zenica by 16% (as at 2013).

FURTHER INFORMATION

SDC activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (en):
https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/laender/bosnien_herzegowina.html

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

NAME

Support to Juvenile Justice Reform

DEPARTMENT

SDC – Cooperation with Eastern Europe

THEME

Governance

COUNTRY/REGION

Bosnia and Herzegovina

PARTNERS

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The SDC, together with UNICEF and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is providing a financial contribution to promote age-appropriate prevention and follow-up measures. The principal objective of the current phase is to increase the security and social reintegration of young offenders and to reduce juvenile delinquency in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the long term.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Juvenile law to reflect international standards.

TARGET GROUP

Approximately 800,000 children and adolescents up to 18 years old – in particular the 10% at especially high risk of coming into conflict with the law, falling victim to or being witness to criminal activities.
local and national courts, police authorities

PHASE DURATION

January 2014 – December 2017

PHASE BUDGET

CHF 2,050,000

CONTACT

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Cooperation with Eastern Europe, Western Balkans
Division
Freiburgstrasse 130
3003 Bern
phone: +41 (0)58 462 22 12
E-Mail: deza-oz@eda.admin.ch
www.sdc.admin.ch