

UNICEF Annual Report 2019



APRIL 2020



2019 was a special year for children all over the globe, as the world celebrated the **30th anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child**, the most widely ratified human rights treaty which has helped transform children's lives around the world

Today the world is a better place for most children because since 1990 the global community has managed **to reduce deaths of children under 5 with 50%**, to almost **halved the proportion of undernourished children** and to provide **access to cleaner drinking water to 2.6 billion people more** compared to 30 years ago.

But millions of children are still left behind, as worldwide **262 million children are out of school**, more than **93 million children living with disabilities are facing daily discrimination** and are often effectively barred from realizing their rights to health care, education and even survival. As natural disasters occur more frequently in the last decades, **extreme weather events constitute a threat to access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene for children all around the world¹**.

Therefore, **UNICEF continues to work hard in more than 190 countries and territories** to protect children's rights, to help meet their needs, to provide access to education for all children and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. And we never give up.

UNICEF IN BULGARIA – 2019

Throughout 2019 UNICEF in Bulgaria continued its dedicated work **for all 1.2 million children living in Bulgaria** with focus on the most vulnerable children in the country.

Among them are **the youngest ones from 0 to 3 years of age, children and adolescents with disabilities, children at risk of abandonment, children at risk of poverty and social exclusion, victims of violence, children and adolescents without access to education, children in contact with the law and children on the move.**



1 UNICEF, For every child, every right. The convention of the Rights of the Child at a crossroads, 2019

COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY

We started 2019 with a national integrated campaign for raising the awareness, sensitivity and intolerance of society, school communities and children towards violence in and around schools, since **one third of all students report that they have at least once been subject to violence or bullying at school within one year**. The campaign culminated with **'Together Against Violence in Schools'** fundraising telethon, organized by UNICEF and NOVA TV, both reaching over 3 million people.



Following the campaign, a national program on prevention of violence in schools was developed by UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science that will be implemented in **5 pilot schools for a 2-year period**.

In June we dedicated UNICEF's **Parenting Month in Bulgaria** to parents of children with disabilities. We provided practical information, advices and experience sharing to an audience of **over 350,000 people on social media and over 1 million in traditional media**.



The topic related to children with disabilities was a central one for us, as we dedicated the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child to the **rights and empowerment of children and young people with different abilities.**

Because we, just like the 24-years-old Elena, believe that ([Read the full story here.](#))

“The people with some kind of “disability” are also strong enough and brave to be equal to everyone.”

A year-round campaign entitled **“With eyes open for all”** reached **1.3 million people** with messages and powerful human stories promoting the rights and strengths of children and young people with disabilities.



It culminated on November 20th with a National summit, where young people with different abilities took the stage and shared with the state, business, media and civil society representatives their positive and motivating experiences and their brave stories of overcoming not only physical, but also mental barriers

*“Yet, whatever the situation,
it is up to us and our horizons to accept it and deal with it!
We are the ones to decide what the course of our lives will be.
I am who I am – an ordinary young girl
trying not to create barriers for myself.
Now I’m wondering ... can you break yours?!”*

Elena, 24

To urge strong commitment by the state and professionals to support the most vulnerable children and families, we nurtured partnerships and dialogue through forums like the international conferences „Smart investment in strategies and partnerships to prevent and address violence against children“ (June) and “Deinstitutionalization of Childcare: Investing in Change” (November). These events were attended by more than 350 professionals from across Europe, Australia, Central Asia and the USA who were able to gain new knowledge, skills and exchange good practices.

In 2019 we continued to strengthen the capacity of journalists, media and PR experts, videographers/photographers and students for ethical communication and reporting on child rights with trainings and engagement of more than 200 journalists and allied professionals.

RESULTS FOR CHILDREN IN BULGARIA

With the support of all our partners and donors, in 2019 we at UNICEF dedicated the efforts of our whole team to:

Early Childhood Development by:

- Providing individualized support, guidance and information on nurturing care to **more than 6,000 caregivers of more than 6,500 children 0-3 years of age** in Shumen and Sliven districts through home visiting services.



- Providing community-based parenting support to **680 caregivers of young children, including 168 parents of children with disabilities and developmental difficulties** in 40 different municipalities thanks to a strong and committed network of partners.

- Strengthening the knowledge of more than 300 service providers and Roma health mediators on key topics related to early childhood development particularly during the first 3 years of life and Early Childhood Intervention for children with disabilities and developmental delays.



Childcare by:

- Reaching and supporting **2,501 families and 3,735 children from vulnerable and isolated communities** through the Family Consultative Centers, developed by several municipalities with the support of UNICEF.
- Initiating **the first mapping** of the social, health, education and other relevant sectors workforce in Bulgaria in order to support the effective planning, development and support of the professionals working in them. The preliminary results show that the total number of people in the social and related sectors in Bulgaria is **more than 47 000**.

Education and inclusive education by:

- Assessing and documenting the results and experience from the modelling initiative for introducing inclusive education at pre-school level **“Together from Kindergarten”**. **Through this intervention** and over a period of two and a half years more than **5,000 children received support** and over 500 teachers and 100 specialists had their skills and capacities strengthened to ensure quality inclusive education.
- Supporting more than **500 professionals from kindergartens and regional inclusive education support centers** - teachers, special educators, psychologists and speech therapists through supervisions, trainings for introduction of the functional assessment for children with disabilities and improving the awareness about assistive technologies for alternative and augmentative communication.

- **Reaching over 119,000 children through the catch-up innovative education model** developed in partnership with Ucha.se which aims to identify learning gaps and improve the learning outcomes.



- Supporting the “World’s Largest Lesson” on the Sustainable Development Goals through developing and providing schools and teachers with new lesson plans and activities that will let children understand their role in helping those in need and protecting the environment. During the school year 2018-2019, **over 46,600 school aged children from a total of 367 schools were engaged in discussion that introduced them to SDGs.**
- Providing recreational and non-formal **education activities for asylum seeking children** and adolescents in 4 registration and reception centers. More than **300 children** participated in regular activities including Bulgarian and English language classes, science, art, music, sports and school preparation.

Protection from violence, abuse and exploitation and access to justice by:

- Supporting more than **7,500 children through child protection and legal services** thanks to the work of the 3 Child Advocacy Centers in Sofia, Shumen and Montana, the specialized units in courts, prosecutors’ offices and trained lawyers.



- Providing **psychosocial support and material assistance to more than 380 vulnerable refugee and migrant children and their parents.**
- Assisting **more than 230 unaccompanied and separated children with legal consultations, representation in legal proceedings and support for reuniting with family members across Europe.**

Adolescents and youth support by:

- Engaging **adolescent girls and boys and young people as advocates** on child rights, on inclusive education for children with disabilities, on digital and media literacy, on ending violence against children and on children’s participation in decision-making and policymaking at EU level.

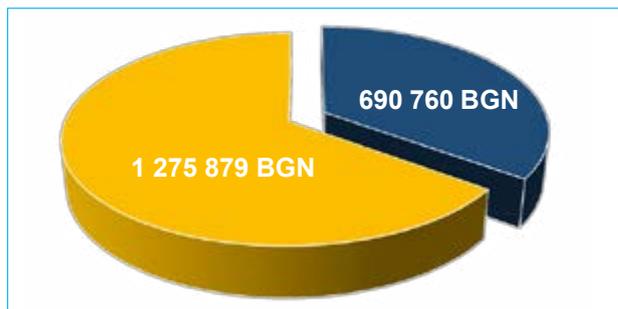


SUPPORTERS ENGAGEMENT

In 2019 once again our greatest allies were our supporters. Over 22,000 individuals supported our programme with monthly donations. Our results for children would not be possible without their constant support and the generous contributions of our corporate partners **Happy Bar&Grill, Piraeus Bank, Orange Center, LIDL, IKEA, H&M**, numerous **companies “BLAGODETEL”** and partners and media who supported our campaigns with **pro-bono services and in-kind donations.**

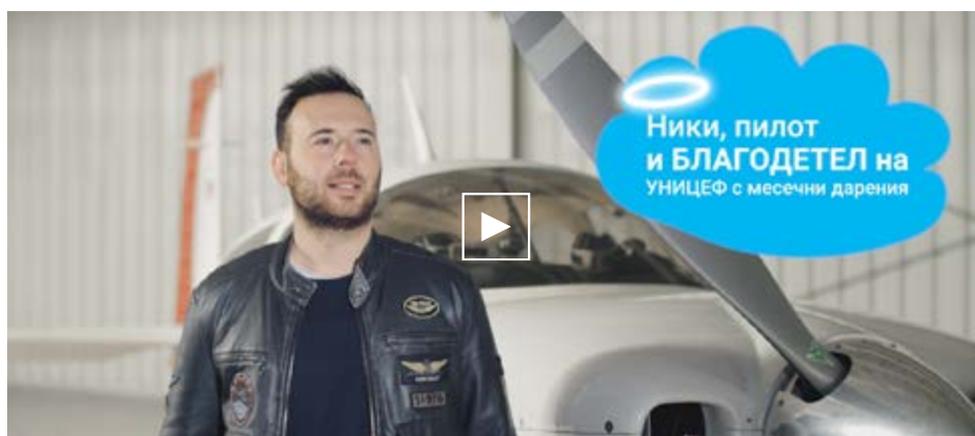


Our fundraising efforts were supported by **more than 20 motivated and inspiring fundraisers from the UNICEF team “Champions for Children”** who worked tirelessly at different locations provided by our partners in Sofia and Varna in order to enlarge our family of monthly donors.



Together we raised **1,966,639 BGN for children in Bulgaria**. The donations from corporate partnerships amounted to 690,760 BGN and the donations from our individual donors reached 1,275,879 BGN.

Thank you for the commitment and the generosity!



A big thank you to all our supporters!



In 2019 the donations that we raised on national level together with investments from UNICEF partners on international level assured a budget of 5,167,700 BGN for children in Bulgaria. The expenses were distributed among all program areas:

Program area	Budget
Early childhood development and childcare	1,573,578 BGN
Inclusive education and early learning	593,001 BGN
Prevention of violence and access to justice	1,251,187 BGN
Partnership for child rights	517,993 BGN
Resource mobilization, programme and Operational effectiveness	1,231,941 BGN

THANK YOU!

Thanks to the support of **state institutions, local authorities, medical centers, kindergartens and schools, non-governmental organizations, media and other partners**, in 2019 we continued advocating for children's rights in Bulgaria.

Together, we provided support to parents in their care for their children and to numerous families from vulnerable communities.

We supported the access to inclusive education and safe school environment for children, especially those from disadvantaged groups. We've worked tirelessly to protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation and to empower and listen to the voice of young people.

Protecting children's rights and well-being and achieving these positive results would be impossible without **the dedication and generosity of all our partners, individual and corporate donors.**

To all of you, we say a big and heartfelt "Thank you"!



Основни медийни партньори за 2019:

