

## CHILD SAFEGUARDING TEAM

### Who we are

**The Child Safeguarding Team/CST** (established in 2010) within the Issues Affecting Children Program of the International Center "La Strada Moldova", consisting of **an attorney** and several **psychologists**, provides assistance to children victims and witnesses of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation throughout the criminal proceedings.

### Our mission

To ensure that the rights and interests of the child are respected throughout the criminal procedure in order to avoid the repeated victimization and follow all the principles of restorative justice.

### Area of competence

**Any form of sexual violence against children**, either it is sexual abuse or sexual exploitation, represents the area of our activity. **The informational technologies** as recruiting and enticement method, as well as the environment of sexual abuse or exploitation are the key elements of our specialization. We provide legal and psychological assistance to the child victim or witness of the following offences:

- Rape (art. 171 Criminal Code of RM)
- Violent actions of sexual nature (art. 172 Criminal Code of RM)
- Sexual harassment (art. 173 Criminal Code of RM)
- Sexual intercourse with the person aged under 16 (art. 174 Criminal Code of RM)
- Perverted actions (art. 175 Criminal Code of RM)
- Solicitation of children for sexual purposes (art. 175/1 Criminal Code of RM)
- Child trafficking (art. 206 para (1) let. a) Criminal Code of RM)
- Child pornography (art. 208/1 Criminal Code of RM)
- Child prostitution (art. 208/2 Criminal Code of RM)

### Our principles

- Ensure the balance between criminal justice and the best interests of the child;
- Confidentiality and protection of the victim's identity;
- Avoid interventions where the child benefit is reduced while the risk of the harm is high;
- Child participation in the decision making process that concerns him/her.

### Who can ask for our services?

- Law enforcement agencies;
- Frontline specialists from child protection and related fields (social assistance, education, health)

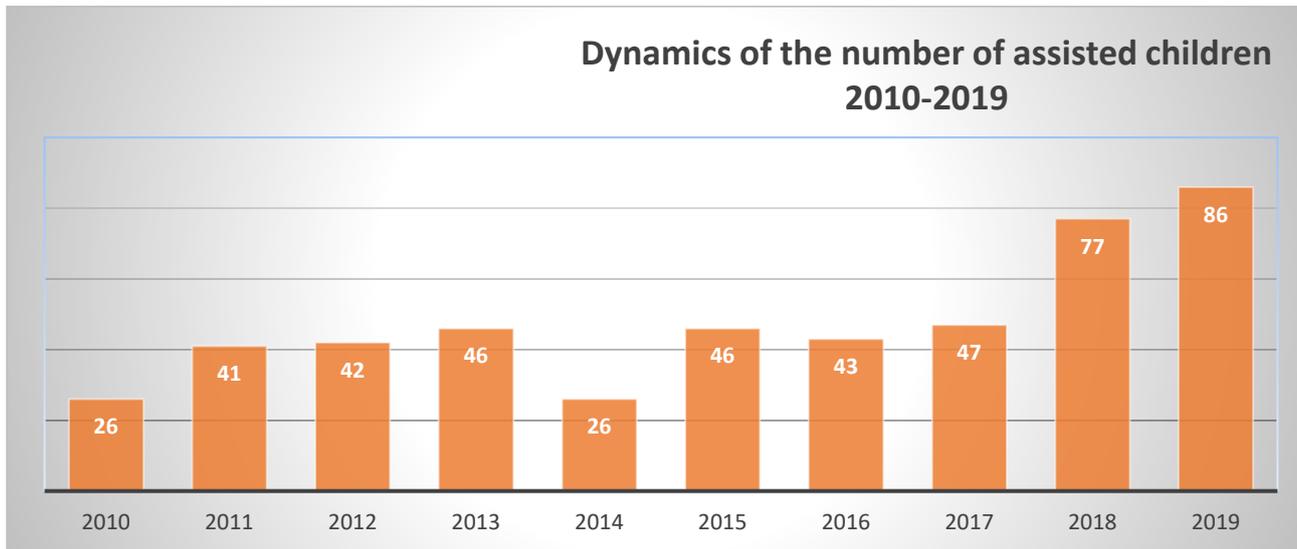
### Our services

- ✓ **Assist and consult law enforcement agencies** at the investigation stage;
- ✓ **Specialized psychological support and assistance for children and their families** during criminal proceedings;
- ✓ **Legal consulting and specialized legal assistance for children and their families;**
- ✓ **Child friendly hearing space** for victims/witnesses of sexual abuse or sexual exploitation.
- ✓ **Contacts**
- ✓ **Phone:** +373 78 330 406, +373 78 405 660
- ✓ **Web:** [siguronline.md](http://siguronline.md), [lastrada.md](http://lastrada.md)
- ✓ **Working hours: 24/24, 7 days per week.**

## CHILD SAFEGUARDING TEAM

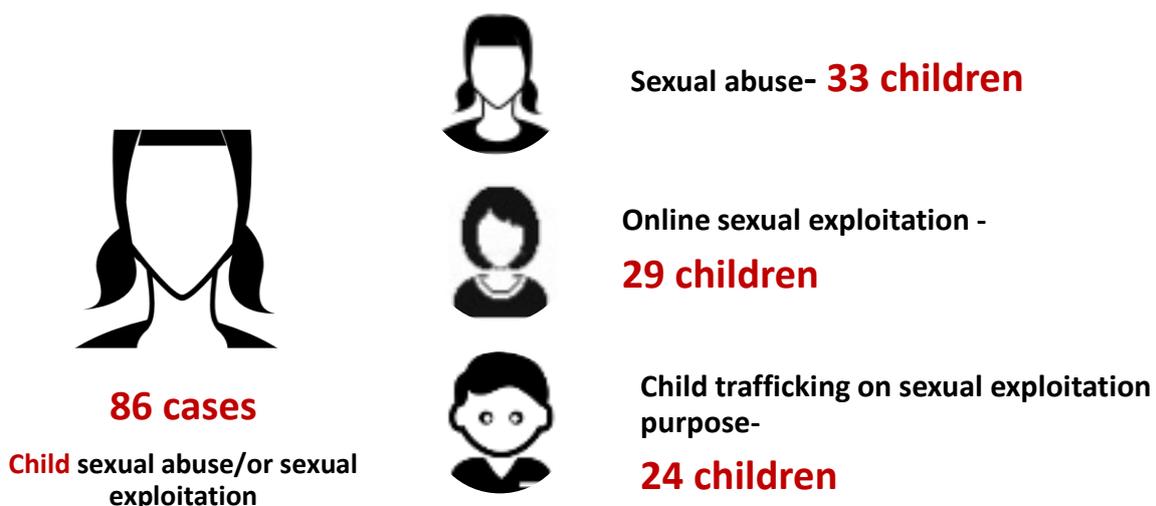
### Overview of assisted cases in the last 9 years

From the first day of its activity by the end of 2019, the lawyer and the psychologist of the Child Safeguarding Team provided assistance and support to **480 beneficiaries**. These are children and adolescents who became victims or witnesses in legal proceedings related to sexual offences (rape, sexual harassment, solicitation of children for sexual purposes, violent actions of sexual nature, perverted actions) or sexual exploitation (child trafficking, child pornography, child prostitution).



### Year 2019: statistics and trends

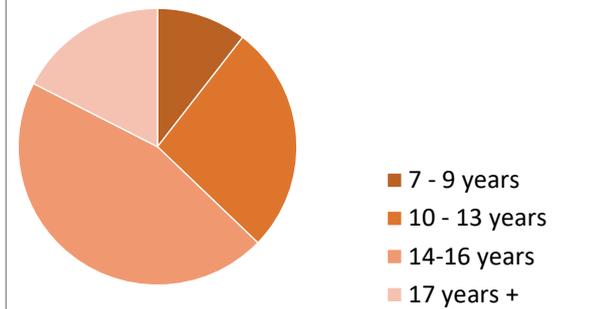
In 2019, CST provided support for **112 children victims of various forms of sexual abuse** or sexual exploitation. These minors correspond to a number of **86 new cases** registered by CST as follows:



*Breakdown of cases, assisted by the CST attorney and psychologist, 2019*

## CHILD SAFEGUARDING TEAM

### The age of beneficiaries

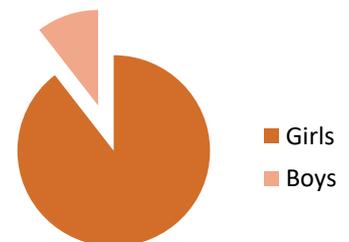


During 2019, child online sexual exploitation among 13-15 years old teenagers continues to represent a pattern. This trend could be explained by their increased interest in socializing, online communication and the curiosity to experience an online relationship. As a result, there is a high rate of minors who suffered from sextortion.

The abuser force the child to produce and share photos or videos with them in intimate situations. So then, when the child refuse to create more explicit sexual content, the perpetrator threaten the victim with publication of self produced content.

Children are manipulated and lured by the abuser who let them feel like being in an online relationship. Moreover, the child always think that he/she is speaking somebody his own age.

### Children assisted by CST



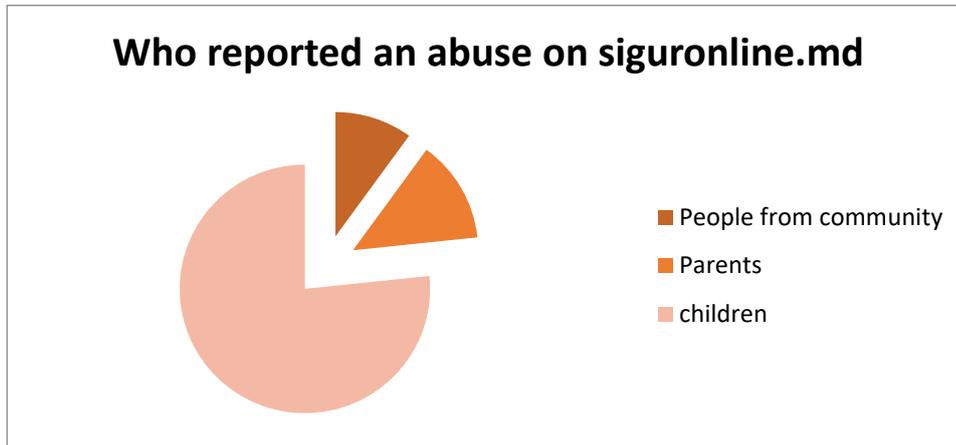
### The geography of cases



The law enforcement representatives and the prosecutor's office from the **Center region** requested the most interventions of the CST psychologist

### Cases reported on siguronline.md

During the reporting period, 20 people from the country have reported on [www.siguronline.md](http://www.siguronline.md) a presumed case of child online sexual abuse. Most of them are teenagers or parents of a teenager.



Unfortunately, in most cases, people refused to give a phone number, which made it impossible to get in touch with the supposed beneficiary and provide the necessary assistance. This is the reason why **only 1/3 of the minors who are supposed to have needed our services have get the support of the CST specialists.**

**Later, 50% of the children refused to cooperate with the police, being afraid of the parents' reactions.** The experience of 2019 shows that the biggest impediment in ensuring an effective response in cases of online abuse is, in fact, the tension in relationship between the child and the parent. The fear, mistrust and stress the child feels in relation with his parent make him/her avoid discussions about the experience he went through, no matter how painful it may be. But even when parents know about what happened, they refuse to file a police report. **Their are feeling afraid of what the neighbors, the school, the town or the community think about the situation of their child.**

In 7 of 10 cases, the child who has experienced sexual abuse online has not been able to get an effective response from the justice system for various reasons: either the self produced pictures were not qualified as pornography, or the materials were distributed among teenagers up to 16 years (they are not subjects of a crime), or there was no evidence of a discussion between the child and the abuser where the child would be threatened or blackmailed, or the videos/pictures representing the child in intimate situations are missing because the child have deleted them before asking for help.