

Strengthening Child Protection Support in Una-Sana Canton, BiH

Project Proposal



Project Title	Strengthening Child Protection Support in Una-Sana Canton, BiH
Project Location	Bihac and Cazin, Una-Sana canton, BiH
CWS Contact Person	Steve Weaver, sweaver@cwsglobal.org
Proposed Project Start/End Date	1 May 2021 – 31 January 2022
Total Budget (US\$)	\$130,068
Total Funding Request (US\$)	\$25,000 (Week of Compassion)
CWS specific funding request (US\$) if different	
Existing or identified funding (US\$)	\$20,000 (ELCA Pledge)
Include \$ equivalent for staff support, shared rent, CROP vehicles to be used, etc.	
Date of Request	20 April 2021

DHA Project Proposal

Overview

Since 2018 Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has been a transit and reception country for people on the move wanting to enter the European Union; approximately 70,000 people passed through BiH since late 2018. The north-west region (Una Sana canton) is the main reception area for new arrivals, including adults, families, and Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC).

CWS has been responding to the refugee and migrant crisis in BiH since early 2019. Since the beginning of CWS involvement, our team has provided services to approximately 5,000 people in Una-Sana canton (USC).

Since November 2019, under the mandate of the Center for Social Welfare, CWS staff have served as guardians of UASC, providing protection and support to almost 800 children in reception centers. Currently, there are between 80 and 90 UASC accommodated in reception centers in Una Sana canton and CWS is the organization with highest number of guardians in the canton. Since Social Welfare Centers do not have the capacity to deal with protection of UASC, and other actors do not plan to step up guardianship support, securing frontline, reception-based child protection remains a CWS priority.

The challenges of 2020, Covid-19 movement restrictions, rising xenophobia, and pressures from the BiH and cantonal authorities have resulted in a reduction of UN and NGO services to migrants, increasing protection threats and vulnerability. CWS will continue to provide frontline critical services and protection to children traveling alone.

Since late 2020, the protection situation in the canton has quickly deteriorated. The reception capacities were significantly reduced by the closure of the two largest reception centers, which left many people outside official facilities. This trend extended to reducing reception capacities for unaccompanied children in Bihac when around 30 children were forcibly moved outside the canton to an area without adequate services. CWS and other protection actors successfully advocated with authorities to keep remaining capacities for unaccompanied children in Bihac and for now plans of further relocations has stopped. CWS will continue to advocate for securing adequate and dignified accommodation capacities in Una-Sana canton.

DHA Project Proposal

Please complete all the following points, clearly and concisely.

I. PROJECT TITLE

Strengthening Child Protection Support in Una-Sana Canton, BiH

II. STATEMENT OF NEED

Since the beginning of 2018, close to 70,000 refugees and migrants arrived BiH via the Western Balkans migration route. The BiH government has provided an insufficient response to accommodation, services, and protection needs of migrants who stay mainly in the north-western region of the country in Una-Sana canton, in the towns of Bihac, Cazin and Velika Kladusa, near the Croatian border. This response has been complemented by national and international NGOs. Migrants have also experienced violence, xenophobia, and hostility from the local population in different locations throughout their journey, including mistreatment and violence from local and border police. Even facing all these hardships and hostility they are determined to continue their journey to the European Union in search of safety and a more stable economic future for themselves and their families.

Restrictions on human mobility in response to the Covid-19 pandemic have slowed the arrivals to BiH during 2020 but has not stopped them. According to the UN, more than 8,000 refugees and migrants are in the country at any given time; close to 6,000 are currently accommodated in official reception centers while an estimated 2,500-2,700 people are staying outside these centers, mainly in Una-Sana canton. Country of origin of those that are registered are: Afghanistan (33%), Pakistan (31.2%), Bangladesh (9.5%), Morocco (7.8%), Iran (5.6%), and Iraq (3.7%).

The population is mainly composed of single adult males (70%) and 21% are families with children. The number of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) have been steadily increasing from late 2019; an estimated 9% of arrivals are now UASC compared to 6% in 2018.

In late 2020 the situation for migrants in BiH worsened with the closing, by the local authorities, of all reception facilities for single men in Una Sana canton, leaving many people without safe accommodation during the harsh Bosnian winter. These sudden restrictions to dignified housing extended to reception facilities housing unaccompanied children. In December 2020, more than 30 children were forcibly moved to a facility 175 miles away and without adequate services. Many of these children were under the guardianship care of CWS staff and programs. Finding the services at the new facility inadequate many of the children traveled back to Bihac only to be left outside reception facilities due to bans on further in-take enacted by the local government. CWS and other child protection actors quickly mobilized and advocated with the government to stop the forced relocations and commit to guaranteeing adequate shelter in Bihac and Una-Sana canton.

Since 2019 CWS has been working with migrants through emergency and non-emergency programming within and outside reception centers in Una Sana Canton. CWS program is focused on providing immediate protection to children traveling alone through Una-Sana canton. The program has been supporting guardianship as a key element of the broader child protection system for



unaccompanied children, those traveling alone, in peer groups, with adults or those who have been separated from their primary caregivers.

CWS began providing guardianship in Nov. 2019 under the mandate and coordination of the Centers for Social Welfare (CSW), a government agency. CWS has been providing guardianship protection to UASC, ensuring all decisions respect the best interest of the child, providing general social support (including legal matters, health, education, and general wellbeing), and building children's resilience and emotional wellbeing. To date CWS has provided guardianship to 554 UASC.

Today, the guardianship support remains of vital importance. Centers for Social Welfare remain understaffed and unable to directly provide necessary protection. Outsourcing guardianship duties to CWS team members secures continual monitoring and support to children. Everyday presence of CWS guardians in the centers and on-call duties enable guardians to respond to any protection issue. Having in mind that most of these children started their journey to the EU very young several years ago, that most of them are traumatized and with various health issues, this kind of full-time assistance is essential for securing their wellbeing. CWS guardians assess their needs, safety concerns and risks, provide direct support and connect them to other service providers.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Project Goal and Approach:

The goal of this project is for protection systems in Una-Sana canton to be strong, stable and able to provide the continuum of holistic care to unaccompanied and separated children.

As a continuation of activities from previous period, CWS wishes to secure guardianship support to unaccompanied children through the end of the year. This model of protection proved to be crucial in securing safety and security of children. Four guardians (two per reception facility) supported by a senior legal guardian, cultural mediator and a supervisor will be engaged in providing protection to unaccompanied children. Team will work in two reception facilities in Una-Sana canton: Borici (Bihac municipality) and Sedra (Cazin municipality), with occasional outreach interventions when needed. Main project activities will include:

Counseling support includes educational work and counselling work with children conducted through conversations and different types of activities, contributing to maintaining their mental health and wellbeing. Many children are at heightened risk of distress, grief, and depression, brought about by the loss of the familiar and worsened by experiences in their home country, along the journey, and concerns about the future. Our guardians report that most children under their care are facing health issues, both physical and psychological, and that many are prescribed medications to treat mental health disorders. The circumstances of isolation and restriction of movement following the Covid-19 outbreak have made psychosocial support crucial, especially for children with multiple vulnerabilities. Given the nature of their job, guardians often rely on other CWS team members to work with the children in group settings or individually when they need to address concerns raised by guardians and restore a sense of normalcy through targeted interventions and activities. In cases when guardians determine that more specialized support is needed, children are referred to specialized, professional care.

Referrals to other service providers. Connecting children to needed services is one of the crucial activities of guardians. Referrals will be done when CWS program alone is not capable of meeting a particular need. Each referral will be followed from the initial contact until the service is provided. A referral tracking list will be maintained with basic data on the child, type of service, service provider, and

follow up requirements. Based on previous experiences, most referrals will be to organizations providing medical assistance, NFIs and food, counseling, legal assistance, and shelter. A list of services and service providers will be updated regularly for each location where CWS is active. If services are based outside reception facilities, CWS guardians will provide escort to services.

Assessment of vulnerability and collection of basic data. During the initial interview, CWS guardians will collect basic data on children and assess if they need immediate assistance. Children with health or protection issues will be prioritized during interventions. CWS guardians will participate in case management of children under their guardianship. CWS guardians will organize case conferences when several service providers are engaged in dealing with the most challenging cases.

Culturally appropriate support. Cultural mediators are the most important link in communication with children. A significant number of children understand basic English, which usually helps them meet basic needs. The role of a cultural mediator is key during provision of specialized services (medical examinations, psychotherapy, giving testimony in court or to the police). In addition, CWS cultural mediators ensure that each intervention is tailored to the context from which children come, respecting their culture and customs. CWS seeks, whenever possible, to engage mediators from the ranks of asylum seekers. Experience to date has shown that these individuals best understand the context and challenges that people on the move face.

Distribution of NFIs. Distributions will be done in accordance with needs of children and availability of NFIs from CWS's and other agencies supplies. Distributions will be carried out by CWS staff.

Outreach work. When a child is identified outside reception facilities, CWS guardians as the only ones authorized to provide escort will join outreach teams to ensure children are identified, registered, documented, assigned guardians, and granted prioritized access to protection. Identification and registration are a vital step in child protection that entails documenting children's age and registering with the local police's Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA). After registration, if needed, they will be accompanied to a medical checkup. The next step is coordinating with reception centers to find accommodation and accompanying them to one of the centers. CWS will occasionally be invited by the police to identify minors in Lipa camp and escort them to other camps with accommodation space for unaccompanied children.

Working with young adults (18+). A unique part of our approach is the work with young adults. Young adults have many of the same issues and needs as older children, but when UASC turn 18 they lose their special protection status and many of the services that status affords. Too mature to be included in activities for younger children and not mature enough to make well-informed decisions, young adults continue to face a unique set of challenges and risks as they move into adulthood. CWS has seen the importance of extending the scope of its protection work and include young adults as one of the main target groups. CWS will pay special attention to those turning 18 while under CWS guardianship and prepare them to move to non-UASC centers by providing information on services available to them, who to contact, and how to reduce risk in the new centers.

Group activities and workshops. Children and young adults are in an age when it is hard to make up the lost years of formal education and non-formal education remains one of the best options for their preparation for their future. Group and individual workshops and activities are also instrumental in building trust and connection with CWS staff and building resilience and reducing stress. They are one of the most important programming tools in de-traumatizing children and facilitating healing. Non-formal education, play, and arts and crafts activities provide comfort and help participants address complex emotional situations they have gone through. All activities will be designed in such a way to apply all

Covid-19 preventive measures and recommendations. CWS team will strive, whenever possible, to involve children in planning and creation of the group activities and co-organize various events with other organizations.

Trend analysis. Team members will conduct regular trend analysis interviews with children to identify new trends and needs in migration context in Una-Sana canton. Data will include relevant information on their journey (length of travel, means of transport, incidents, and risks, etc.), reason for migrating, basic data (country of origin, age) and desired destination.

Advocacy. CWS will monitor and report protection issues for unaccompanied children inside and outside of reception facilities and advocate for improved services and appropriate accommodation capacities with authorities and other stakeholders. The recent decision to restrict the accommodation of unaccompanied children in the canton aggravated the position of children and their due protection. CWS will continue to advocate for securing a minimum capacity of 200 beds for UASC in Una-Sana canton, including 25 beds for minors in the city of Bihac. (Current capacity in the canton is 150 beds).

Supervision. The team will be supervised by CWS staff member. Supervisor will be consulted and informed on each program activity. The Supervisor will work with the team in the centers, accompany the team during some outreach visits, design plan of activities and interventions, communicate with representatives of institutions and other organizations, run regular team meetings, write reports, procure NFIs, and other duties as needed.

Mentorship of legal guardians. CWS Senior Legal Guardian will coordinate the work of the four guardians, provide guidance and advice during their work, help them track weekly indicators, participate in meetings, address child protection issues to center management, etc. She will work in both Borici and Sedra in accordance with the needs and will be assigned as guardian to the most vulnerable cases.

B. Log frame

GOAL	PROTECTION SYSTEMS IN UNA-SANA CANTON ARE STRONG, STABLE AND ABLE TO PROVIDE THE CONTINUUM OF HOLISTIC CARE TO UNACOMPANIED AND SEPARATED CHILDREN			
OBJECTIVE 1	Improve the protection of UASC through guardianship.			
KEY ACTIVITIES	Targets	Indicators	Means of Verification	Risks and Critical Assumptions
1.1 SOCIAL WELFARE CENTER BIHAC ASSIGNS GUARDIANSHIPS TO PROGRAM TEAM MEMBERS	100	# of UASC with a legal guardian appointed in Bihac	Guardian appointment documents	<i>Risks</i> - A protracted emergency in BiH migration context result in more closure of accommodation facilities and movement restrictions. If accommodation capacities for UASC are further reduced, CWS will increase outreach work and continue to advocate for increased accommodation. If accommodation capacities increase, with more UASC accommodated CWS will focus on most vulnerable cases and prioritize interventions in line with the needs. If the movement is limited due to Covid-19 measures, CWS will secure
1.2 SOCIAL WELFARE CENTER CAZIN ASSIGNS GUARDIANSHIPS TO PROGRAM TEAM MEMBERS	200	# of UASC with a legal guardian appointed in Cazin		
1.3 CONDUCT BASIC ASSESSMENT AND GATHER BASIC DATA ON UASC	300	# of UASC that team have basic info on	UASC database	
1.4 PROVIDE REGULAR PROTECTION ASSESSMENTS	300	# of children reporting/facing protection risks disaggregated by risk	Daily reports	
1.5 REFER UASC TO OTHER SERVICES		# of referrals made (disaggregated by type)	Referral forms Interviews with UASC	

		% of UASC using the services they are referred to % of UASC satisfied with the quality of support and services	Satisfaction survey	permissions from the police and Social Welfare Centers for the team members to move freely.
1.6 PROVIDE REGULAR COUNSELLING	400	# of counselling sessions provided	Daily reports	<i>Assumptions:</i> - Una-Sana canton will remain main reception and transit point for migrants. - Regardless of available accommodation we can safely assume that several thousand people will be present in the canton at any given time throughout the year.
1.7 ASSIST WITH REGISTRATION	300	# of registrations assisted by guardians	Daily reports	
1.8 PROVIDE ESCORTS TO UASC	150	# of escorts during transport (disaggregated by escort type)	Daily reports	
1.9 DISTRIBUTE NFIS	100	# of UASC that received NFIs	Distribution lists	
1.10 CONDUCT OUTREACH INTERVENTIONS	100	# of guardian outreach interventions	Daily reports	
1.11 ORGANIZE DIFFERENT GROUP ACTIVITIES	400	# of activities organized (desegregated by type)	Participant lists Daily reports	
OBJECTIVE 2	Improve knowledge and skills of frontline program staff on GBV and PSS			
2.1 CONDUCT TRAINING ON GBV	20 (at least from 3 different organizations)	# number of participants % of training participants who improved their knowledge	Training ToRs Training curriculums Pre and post training evaluations List of participants Training reports	<i>Risks</i> - Due to Covid-19 prevention measures, trainings could be conducted online.
2.2 CONDUCT TRAINING ON PSS	20 (at least from 3 different organizations)	# number of participants % of training participants who improved their knowledge		
OBJECTIVE 3	Improve the protection of UASCs through coordination of activities with other actors			
3.1 PARTICIPATE IN REGULAR WEEKLY INTERAGENCY MEETINGS IN THE CENTERS	104	# of meetings attended	Meeting minutes	
3.2 ADDRESS CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES TO RELEVANT ACTORS	50	# of issues addressed % of issued resolved	Written correspondence Daily reports	
3.3 ORGANIZE CASE CONFERENCES FOR MOST AT RISK UASC	25	# of conferences organized % of conferences resolved	Case conference invitations Plan of activities	
3.4 CONDUCT REGULAR TREND ANALYSIS INTERVIEWS	400	# of interviews conducted	Filled interview sheets Trend analysis chart	

C. Target Population:

- **400 UASC will receive at least one service during the nine-month project.**
- **Of those children, 300 will be provided full guardianship protection and support.**

UASC – The team will provide protection (through guardianship) to unaccompanied children accommodated in the reception centers and, when needed, to those identified outside of the official reception facilities. Outside they will be identified by the police, CWS outreach team, other organizations, local institutions, or citizens, mostly coming back from unsuccessful attempts to cross the border or squatting in abandoned buildings, factories, or houses. Most of the children traveling alone are boys, mostly from 14-18 years of age, but sometimes as young as 10. Children come predominantly from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Iran, and Iraq. The journeys they take entail the separation from family, loss of the familiar and a path that often exposes them to things no child should experience. Many children are under enormous pressure from their families to continue their journey no matter what. There were cases that some UASC wanted to stay in BiH but were not allowed by their family. Their age, family pressure and lack of funds make them highly vulnerable, often taking serious risks while trying to reach EU, easily manipulated by smugglers or older members of the community.



With this program, we will be helping children like Kamran (16) and his friends find uninterrupted safety. Born in Pakistan and raised in Afghanistan, he reached BiH six months ago traveling through Turkey, Greece, Macedonia and Serbia. A CWS guardian identified Kamran as a minor in Lipa, a center for adults, and assisted him in registering with the police, and became his legal guardian. Kamran was transferred to Borici where he found new friends and where his life was stabilized. He says CWS changed his life, he felt supported, welcomed and surrounded with positive energy. In December, Kamran and 35 of his fellow UASC were forcibly moved from Borici reception center, in Bihac, to Duje Center 175 miles away. Many of those children returned to Bihac and are being denied housing in Borici and forced to stay outside. Kamran stayed at the new Duje Center until mid-January and stayed in touch with CWS staff. He said he was planning to return to the Una-Sana canton, even if this meant he will be staying outside reception facilities. For most of UASC we work with, BiH remains a transit country and Una-Sana canton remains the easiest transit point to the EU.

IV. MONITORING, EVALUATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

CWS will conduct regular monitoring by collecting, analyzing, and utilizing program data to inform program decisions and promote learning. The changing context in the field requires flexible and adaptable monitoring systems that will be reviewed and modified considering the changing conditions. Regular monitoring will be done by CWS Bosnia Program Supervisor and CWS Bosnia Senior Legal Guardian, backed up by his/her program team. CWS Europe Regional Coordinator and CWS Europe Refugee/Migrant Program Officer will provide technical assistance to program staff on all issues related to M&E and oversee the development of the tools and standard operating procedures for data collection processes.

Data collection, analysis, and reporting: All the relevant data to inform progress against indicators will be collected. Program performance and results will be monitored and reviewed using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Quantitative data will be obtained through program questionnaires (that will include statistical figures on the targeted population); qualitative data will be obtained through

needs assessment, interviews, and conversations and activities with children and will be used to identify and address protection gaps.

CWS strives for meaningful participation of children in program design and implementation. The program team will include children as information and data sources and will collect feedback from them through surveys on the quality of services.

CWS Europe management team (Regional Coordinator and Refugee/Migrant Program Officer) will compile quarterly reports and summaries for internal/external use. The six-month report will include actual achievements versus targeted for each indicator as well as explanatory narrative.

Identified achievements will be used for success stories, and exemplary practices will be used to inform new approaches. CWS will be responsible for dissemination of information about the program and dissemination of information about experience of targeted population in the program.

Data management: The hard copies of the collected data will be stored safely in CWS's office and will only be accessed by agreed members of the program team. All computer files that contain sensitive, personal, or identifiable data will be password protected, and only accessed by authorized members of the program team. The online databases will be password protected and accessible only to approved staff. The data will be shared only with the consent from children and Social Welfare Centers (all external communications will nevertheless protect identifiable data).

V. LEARNING

This proposal considers all the recommendations stemming from the external evaluation of our work to date. Given the current situation CWS expects that learning, both formal and informal, will be continuous. The program team will reflect monthly during the staff review/debriefing sessions on unexpected learning and developments and these reflections will be documented and shared in the internal reports. The final evaluation will capture the totality of the challenges and successes of the program and will give the program team time to reflect and discuss what worked and aspects of the program that could be improved. This analysis would inform the continuation of the program.

CWS will organize two trainings for all CWS staff and representatives of relevant institutions and organizations on recognizing, preventing, and addressing GBV cases, and methodology of providing PSS support in refugee and migrant context.

VI. SUSTAINABILITY AND EXIT STRATEGY (IF APPLICABLE)

Three years ago, institutions and individuals in Una Sana Canton had very little experience working with people migrating through BiH from other countries. Through our 2-year engagement, CWS has trained and mentored new, young frontline workers to address the complex issues of the migration crisis in a professional and flexible way, especially with unaccompanied children and young adults. Many of these young, local staff will be available to support people on the move in the area in the coming months and years.

An assumption of the program is that BiH will continue to be a primary route for refugees and migrants for crossing into the EU. CWS Europe positioned itself as a flexible responder, with a versatile team able to act quickly, follow trends and offer meaningful services. Given that local structures still need support, CWS Europe's longer-term strategy is leaving strong local capacities behind by supporting individuals

and organizations and equipping them with knowledge, skills, and experience to be able to carry on the response for as long as it is needed.

Through this project, further cooperation will also be established with government institutions that will likely continue to manage reception facilities, opening new possibilities for collaboration. CWS will continue to fundraise for refugee and migrant protection programs in the area as long as there is a need to protect people on the move and offer welcome.