

European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA)

Annex I

Approved by the EUCPN Management Board in 2018

Please complete the template in English in compliance with the ECPA criteria contained in the Rules and procedures for awarding and presenting the European Crime Prevention Award (Par.2 §3).

General information

1. Please specify your country.

Romania

2. Is this your country's ECPA entry or an additional project?

Romania's ECPA entry

3. What is the title of the project?

Unwanted Touches

4. Who is responsible for the project? Contact details.

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5. Start date of the project (dd/mm/yyyy)? Is the project still running (Yes/No)? If not, please provide the end date of the project.

16.11.2021

6. Where can we find more information about the project? Please provide links to the project's website or online reports or publications (preferably in English).

https://youtu.be/f6aKYyx8G_I

<https://116111.ro/AtingeriNedorite/>

<https://www.instagram.com/telefonulcopilului/>

7. Please give a **one page** description of the project (**Max. 600 words**)

The project has been initiated and implemented by the Child Helpline Association, in partnership with the Romanian Police, with the support of the US Embassy in Romania. The creative concept has been made by the Mercury 360 communication agency.

This is the story about how the unspoken turns into drama.

Above anything else, all of us are parents or siblings and we would do anything to protect our kids.

Sometimes, that means anything but talk to them about sex. Kids are considered too young to understand, while parents don't know how to address the topic. Parents leave their kids to find this out on their own just like the former generations.

„Asociația Telefonul Copilului” (Child Helpline Association) is the only Romanian NGO answering children's calls on their most sensitive issues, including sexual abuse. ATC created the only free helpline for minors collecting stories & solving cases 24/7. Unfortunately, their limited resources were never enough to turn sex abuse into a mainstream issue.

People live with an irrational belief: “it won't happen to my kid or a kid I know”. And if it does happen, it will just pass, thus, minimizing the perceived impact of potential sexual abuse.

In this scenery, what we decided to do is to break the ice and start ATCs first campaign on this topic.

We had to RAISE AWARENESS and let people know what is happening to our kids. In order to do so with 0 media budget, we had to GENERATE FREE MEDIA AND PRO BONO CONTRIBUTORS.

Our strategy was to assert the negative impact of undesired touching behaviour.

The key was borrowing focus from the positive emotions brought by tender caresses and using it to sanction the abusive ones – as they both have a crucial impact on a child's life.

We showed people that WANTED OR NOT, EVERY TOUCH BECOMES AN IRREVERSIBLE PART OF EVERY HUMAN LIFE.

“We are the SUM OF ALL the touches we receive” was our message in a powerful digital video, showing the evolution of the emotional state and the trauma that an abused child suffers from.

This was brought to life by pitching the campaign idea to some partners of the association and managed to win a small budget that covered about 30% of the production costs. For the other 70%, one of the most famous Romanian photographers and image directors, Alex Galmeanu, offered his creative work for free.

Now, with 0 media budget, we had to do everything in our power to spread the message, so we started sending very personal messages to all our contacts (clients, influencers, former partners, public persons that we never worked with before). This had an amazing ripple effect. Beauty influencers, actors, comedians, twitch streamers, singers started to join our cause sharing the video, even sharing personal stories of sexual abuse, making the unspoken public.

The website offered information and instruments needed to report the abuse or ask for psychological assistance, recommendations for prevention, even the law in the children's words.

In a series of digital testimonials, we had fictional names telling **real stories**, shared with the world for the first time.

The positive feedback encouraged us to start a series of workshops in schools, helping kids, & parents understand the problem and the solutions. By sharing brochures, pins, rollups, "physical contact puzzles" and even using technology in actions, we got free media to spread the message in outdoor, public transport, malls, subway, cinemas & online.

We made the unspoken a public theme.

I. The project shall focus on prevention and/or reduction of everyday crime and fear of crime within the theme.

8. Which **crime prevention/ reduction mechanisms** were used in this project to contribute to crime prevention and/or the reduction of crime or the fear of crime? Multiple answers are possible.

Establishing and maintaining normative barriers to committing criminal acts

e.g. 'Offenders, we are watching you' campaigns

Reducing recruitment to criminal social environments and activities by eliminating or reducing the social and individual causes and processes that lead to criminality

e.g. social and financial support for disadvantaged families

Deterring potential perpetrators from committing crimes through the threat of punishment

e.g. decreasing the time between arrest and punishment

Disrupting criminal acts by stopping them before they are carried out
e.g. increasing police patrols in vulnerable areas

Protecting vulnerable targets by reducing opportunities and make it more demanding to carry out criminal acts

Reducing the harmful consequences of criminal acts by offering a way to seek and find professional help

Reducing the rewards from criminal acts

e.g. restorative justice programmes

Incapacitating (or neutralising) perpetrators by denying them the ability (capacity) to carry out new criminal acts

e.g. imprisonment of key gang members

Encouraging desistance from crime and rehabilitating former offenders so they are able to settle back into a normal life

e.g. prison rehabilitation programs

Explain how this/these crime prevention mechanisms were used ((**Max. 300 words**))

Our goal was to educate adults about the problem, the risks and the symptoms, in order for them to recognize and acknowledge the problem, educate the children about these situations in order to prevent or save them from potential abuses. Thus, increasing the number of people who have the courage to ask for help and report the cases & minimizing the number of cases by educating them. An important category of beneficiaries was the teachers, who might come in contact with children in risk. They are basically trained and equipped with minimal tools to prevent and detect early signs of possible sexual violence and abuse, and to interact with children and their families in an appropriate manner, driven by the specific needs and the best interests of the child.

On the other hand, the campaign targeted children, in order to help them not to be confronted with the abuse. We addressed a direct "call to action" for children, encouraging them to feel secure and empowered to speak up, react and report eventual abuses to the police or call the Child Helpline, available for free 24/7, where they can find professional help (legal, psychological).

II. The project shall have been evaluated and have achieved most or all of its objectives. For more information on evaluation, click [here](#)

9. What were the reasons for setting up the project? Was this context analysed before the project was initiated and in what way (How, and by whom? Which data were used)? In what way did this analysis inform the set-up of the project? (**Max. 150 words**)

The theme of the project is as sensitive as it is serious, in the context where any child victim of this kind of aggression can suffer trauma for the whole life.

Child sexual abuse is a particularly serious crime. This type of abuse can generate dramatic, serious life-long consequences for a child: suicide attempts, depression, anxiety, self-isolation tendencies, but perhaps the possibility to become, later, an abusive adult. In hurting children, these crimes also cause significant and long term social harm.

In many cases, children are sexually abused by persons they know and trust, and on whom they are dependent. This makes these crimes particularly difficult to prevent and detect.

The Romanian Police conducted a study on the topic of sexual assaults against minors, starting from the criminal cases. With this occasion, the preventive needs were determined, the type of message, the target audience we needed to address, the channels used to disseminate the message. The study revealed, among other things, the fact that, in some situations, there are adults in their close circle of trust who do not know how to recognize possible signs of abuse or how to react in such cases.

10. What were the objective(s) of the project? Please, if applicable, distinguish between main and secondary objectives. (**Max. 150 words**)

RAISING AWARENESS AND PREVENTION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

The Romanian Police and Asociația Telefonul Copilului – ATC (Child Helpline Association) act to increase awareness about the phenomenon of sexual abuse of children through a concentrated short-term campaign with the help of mass media. We had no benchmarks for this type of activity because ATC had never campaigned on this topic before. We only knew we can reduce abuse by educating silence breakers and winning as many change-makers as possible. And that more allies could mean less potential victims.

GENERATE FREE MEDIA AND PROBONO CONTRIBUTORS

ATC was never a big budget NGO and all its resources had to be used for the organization's survival = keeping alive the call center line for children. Our campaign was mandatory to happen only by the power of emotional persuasion and probono contributions (100% normal conditions the wide majority of nonprofit communications in Romania).

11. Has there been a process evaluation?¹ Who conducted the evaluation (internally or externally?) and what were the main results? Which indicators were used to measure the process? Did you make changes accordingly? **(max. 300 words)**

The process evaluation has been conducted by the Romanian Police, after 3 months of implementation. The purpose process evaluation was to establish how the campaign has been implemented in the field. The evaluation revealed that the implementation, through face-to-face actions, works in very good parameters, the presence of the police officers who carried out direct activities with the beneficiaries during the reference period being, subsequently, requested by them. In a very large proportion, the beneficiaries understood the importance of the subject, the nature of the preventive message and the need to act accordingly. The aspects resulting from the process evaluation, corroborated with those resulting from the initial study (prior to the initiation of the campaign), confirmed to us that, by reference to the available resources - material, financial and human - we made the right choice for the implementation of the campaign and continued on the same line.

12. Has there been an outcome² or impact³ evaluation? Who conducted the evaluation (internally or externally?), which data and evaluation method were used and what were the main results? Which indicators were used to measure the impact? **(Max. 300 words)**

Using Romanian Police Reports, internal agency reports, support of a Media Agency and the NGO data we managed to have a clear overview of the campaign results.

Through more than 1.700, workshops we reached more than 10.000 adults 40.000 kids. We gained more than 100.000 euro in earned resources from pro

¹ **Process evaluation:** Also called *implementation evaluation*, or *monitoring*, this process documents **how the activities were implemented** in order to determine any deviations from the original planning. It facilitates finding explanations for when the results of the intervention are not as expected.

² **Outcome evaluation:** Measures the **direct effect** (i.e., extent of the changes) **of the intervention on the target group, population, or geographic area**. The information produced by the outcome evaluation determines at what level the **objectives were achieved**.

³ **Impact evaluation:** Measures **long-term effects** of the intervention on the target group, as well as **indirect effects** on the broader community. The information produced by the impact evaluation determines at what level the **ultimate goals** of the intervention were achieved.

bono contributions, the press wrote more than 255 articles about our campaign, mentions on TV shows reached 200.000 people, 20 influencers started sharing our story. Most of all, the National Audiovisual Council joined our cause and decided to broadcast our video on 30 TV stations, reaching 11.7 million people and gaining 500.000 euro worth of earned media.

We have the strong belief that the most important achievement is to encourage people – victims, witnesses, parents, influencers etc. - to talk about this topic. The first step in solving a problem is addressing it.

Thus calls to children’s helpline increased by 50%.

So please, do that yourselves, too, if you haven’t already. Talk to your kids, nephews and nieces, protect them through knowledge.

Also, **the campaign won two important awards:**

- 1) **1st Prize** at the *Digital Communication Awards*, section *Campaign of the Year - NGOs, Associations & Institutions* - <https://www.digital-awards.eu/best-of-2022/>
- 2) **Second Prize** at the *Civil Society Gala* – section *Communication campaigns on social issues*
<https://www.galasocietatiicivile.ro/winners.php>

III. The project shall, as far as possible, be innovative, involving new methods or new approaches.

13. How is the project innovative in its methods and/or approaches? (**Max. 150 words**)

It’s the first campaign on this topic, breaking the silence and transforming sex abuse into a mainstream issue by convincing pro bono contributors & stakeholders to help us achieve our objective.

In order to convince them, we had to generate a powerful campaign, combining old style approaches, like physical workshops with children and parents with technology and novelty in activation in order to make people understand the struggle by feeling on their own skin what an abuse child feels, without touching them for a second.

IV. The project shall be based on cooperation between partners, where possible.

14. Which partners or stakeholders were involved in the project and what was their involvement? (**Max. 200 words**)

The *Unwanted touches* campaign represent an important good practice example for multi-stakeholder cooperation. There were involved public institutions and local authorities relevant in the field:

US Embassy in Romania – a part of the production budget

Romanian Police & Asociatia Telefonul copilului – promoters of the campaign and implementation partners

Mercury 360 Advertising Agency – creative development & implementation

National Audio-visual Council – broadcasting our TVC on TV

Avanpost – AV studio for the TVC

Alex Galmeanu – Photographer and Video Director – for the video and main visual

V. The project shall be capable of replication in other Member States.

15. How and by whom is the project funded? (**Max. 150 words**)

A part of the project was funded by the US Embassy, while the rest was pro bono.

16. What were the costs of the project in terms of finances, material and human resources? (**Max. 150 words**)

The NGO pitched the campaign idea to the US Embassy in Romania, where it won a part of the production budget – 13.000 euro that covered about 30% of the production costs.

The rest was pro bono.

17. Has a cost-benefit analysis⁴ been carried out? If so, describe the analysis, including how and by whom it was carried out and list the main findings of the analysis. (**Max. 150 words**)

Considering the costs involved in the initiation, creation and implementation of this type of crime prevention campaign, as well as the results obtained in a very short time, it becomes obvious that, comparing the amount of money available and the benefits obtained through the free services attracted from the creation, production and implementation partners, any cost-benefit analysis would reveal that, practically, with a very low cost (approximately 13,000 euros) were obtained results for which, under normal conditions, it would have been necessary to invest over 600,000 euros.

18. Are there adjustments to be made to the project to ensure a successful replication in another Member State?

The model this campaign addressed the problem can be easily replicated in any other Member State with minimum adjustments. Also, the video can be used by any person interested in addressing the problem.

The adjustments should be made according to the specific cultural differences between countries, depending on their no. of abuse cases, national legislation and the mindset and behaviour of the abuse kids.

19. How is the project relevant for other Member States? Please explain the European dimension of your project.

According to the European Council report, 1 in 5 kids falls victim to sexual abuse, while 90% never report the abuse to any authority.

The fight against child sexual abuse is a priority for the EU. The EU strategy for the period 2020-2025 sets out a comprehensive response to the growing threat of child sexual abuse both offline and online, by improving prevention, investigation, and assistance to victims.

The problem is a global one and it should be addressed in every country. Assaulted children suffer in silence while society turns a blind eye.

EU reports how the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the issue, with the Internet Watch foundation noting a 64% increase in reports of confirmed child sexual abuse in 2021 compared to the previous year.

⁴ **Cost-benefit analysis:** A type of economic evaluation that compares the direct and indirect cost of the resources employed in the intervention, with the equivalent economic value of the benefits.

Please provide a short general description of the project (abstract for inclusion in the conference booklet – **max. 150 words**).

The “Unwanted Touches” campaign launched by Asociația Telefonul Copilului (Child Helpline Association) and the Romanian Police in 2021 succeeded to empower Romanian adults to discuss one of the ugliest topics on the planet. It ignited difficult conversations about child sexual abuse and achieved impressive results with zero media budget. This is the story of a campaign that dared challenge the popular idea that ALL touches are desirable and good with a courageous counterclaim. It contributed to a change in cultural and social norms with the purpose of better protecting children from sexual abuse.