

Beacon of Light Association



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Child Protection Policy

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Introduction

The Beacon of Light Association is a grass root non-profit organization founded in 2016. The work and efforts of BeLA targets all categories of women and young people with focus on the most disadvantaged and vulnerable. The choice of this group of target beneficiaries is guided by the fact that most development efforts and intervention does not fully engage and mainstream women and youth in their interventions. BeLA's strategic focus is to facilitate a platform and create a safe space for women and youth to unleash and realize their potential while achieving lasting positive change in their lives while also engaging in community development. BeLA is on a mission to promote and protect the rights of women and youth while leveraging capacity development and sports to rescue, transform and engage stakeholders to build better and safer communities.

Child Protection Plan

As a national not for profit association operating in partnership with other international bodies, Beacon of Light Association-BeLA recognizes that children within the communities with which BeLA works or comes into contact constitute a particularly vulnerable population group. As such, they are at greater risk of violence, negligence, abuse and exploitation. BeLA takes active measures to ensure children's rights are protected and are fully realized. This Child Protection Policy demonstrates BeLA's commitment to implement child protection, protect children within its internal dealings and overall external coordination. This policy also explains, how BeLA staff and others who work with its structures have children's best interests at heart and what is required in terms of child protection. It also specifies that all violations of children's rights, in whatever form, are intolerable for BeLA and its partners and will be sanctioned accordingly. This policy has been developed so that the best interests of the child can be systematically taken into account by BeLA. It also ensures the integration of child protection at the institutional level in order to promote the maximum protection of children against all forms of ill-treatment and negligence. This policy certifies the interest BeLA has in applying procedures to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, ill-treatment, negligence, abuse and exploitation regarding children involved in the carrying out of BeLA activities and projects. This child protection policy is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and by the national laws guiding the rights of children. Committed to the welfare of children, BeLA activities are focused on safeguarding children from harm, ill treatment, sexual abuse, negligence, abandonment or negligent treatment, exploitation, including commercial exploitation and makes it clear to all in the organization and its partners. BeLA is committed to take concrete measures to prevent the recruitment or engagement

with BeLA of perpetrators of all forms of violence against children, including anyone associated with BeLA. All those directly or indirectly involved in the implementation and monitoring of BeLA's programs and actions are bound by its Child Protection Values.

Child Protection Code

BeLA is devoted to actively raise awareness among all its staff, to carry out a prevention policy and if required, to sanction behavior that contravenes the present policy. Safeguarding children from harm and ensuring children's rights to protection are fully realized during its projects is the concern of BeLA. We take seriously our responsibilities to update our staff and improve their skills in new child protection policy, scrutinize the attitude of the staff to prevent child abusers from becoming involved with BeLA in any form and sanction attitude incompatible with the terms of this code. Our choices and activities in response to child protection concerns will be guided by *building a safe space for the child* so that BeLA can fulfill its role as a child safe association.

Definition of Concepts

1. **Child Protection:** It is defined in this context as the responsibilities, measures and activities that BeLA undertakes to safeguard children from both intentional and unintentional harm.
2. **A child:** It is any person under the age of 18 years according to United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child.
3. **Child Abuse:** In this policy, it is defined as all forms of physical, sexual, and/or psychological maltreatment or neglect of a child or children, especially by a staff or a partner. It may include any act or failure to act by a staff or a partner that results in actual or potential harm to a child, and can occur in the association.
4. **Partner:** It is a person or an organization you are closely involved with some way. These can be donors, experts, resource persons, visitors, other stakeholders involved in a project or activity carried out by BeLA.
5. **BeLA Staff:** Under the terms of this policy, it is any individual employed by BeLA either on a permanent or temporary basis during a project.
6. **Physical Abuse:** This abuse occurs when a person intentionally injures or threatens to injure a child. The injury may involve: slapping, kicking, punching, shaking, burning, shoving, grabbing, pinching, biting, strangling or any other form of behavior causing physical injury. Physical abuse can also involve a situation where a

staff or partner is not adequately ensuring a child or young person's safety, leading to them being placed in situations of extreme physical danger.

7. **Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse is when a person uses their power over a child to involve them in sexual activity. Sexual abuse covers a wide range of sexual activities including both contact and non-contact situations. Contact situations can involve fondling of the child genitals, being forced to touch somebody else's genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or other object. Non-contact abuse can involve obscene calls or remarks made in any written form. It involves exposure to pornography or being photographed for pornography.
8. **Emotional Abuse:** Emotional abuse involves a consistent attack on the child or young person's self-esteem to the extent that it is affecting the child or young person's physical, emotional, social and/or intellectual development. It can take the form of rejection, put-downs, intimidation, threats, frightening or isolating the child.
9. **Neglect:** This is a situation where a child or young person's basic daily needs are not being met and this is risking their health and development. It can involve a lack of food, clothing, personal hygiene, shelter, medical treatment or appropriate supervision.

The Scope of Application and Adherence to this Policy

The Child Protection Policy applies to everyone working for or in partnership with BeLA at local and international levels. It comprises **the entire BeLA** which may include BeLA associates (board members, volunteers, community volunteers, sponsors, consultants and contractors). Also the staff and/or representatives of partner organizations and local governments who have been brought into contact with children or are party to BeLA child sensitive data while working for or with BeLA, BeLA visitors (donors, journalists, media, researchers, celebrities etc) who may come into contact with children through BeLA projects are also bound by this policy.

Principles and Mechanisms under the Child Protection Policy

The staff and partners of BeLA must be neutral and apolitical in their manner of executing their duties.

The values of integrity, impartiality and efficiency that contribute to strengthen the confidence of all stakeholders must be upheld.

The staff must report to their immediate hierarchy any case of misconduct in the execution of their duties. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action against the concern.

In case a legitimate concern about suspected child abuse is raised, which proves to be unfounded on investigation, no action will be taken against the reporter. However, any employee who makes false and malicious accusations will face disciplinary action.

BeLA staff and the other entities should guarantee the security and confidentiality of the information and unveil information only in respect to instructions from BeLA hierarchy.

BeLA staff shall be briefed on the children's rights and the need to report any form of child ill-treatment or negligence.

BeLA staff who work on children's projects and activities are entitled to take a specific training on prevention and response to child ill-treatment, child protection policy, or negligence as well as on integration of child protection into programs.

It is obligatory for BeLA staff, to pay attention, prevent and respond to the child in all forms of child ill-treatment or negligence.

Set up methods in the association to fight against child neglect like the signing of the code of conduct by the staff in order to clarify unacceptable behavior and in particular child ill-treatment or negligence, reporting cases of child abuse. Individuals with a history of child abuse and neglect shall not be allowed to work with children.

At no time should they abuse and /or exploit a child or act/ behave in any way that places a child at risk of harm.

Respond to a child who may have been abused or exploited in accordance with applicable local office procedures.

Contribute towards an environment that is welcoming, secure ,supportive where children are respected and encouraged to discuss their concerns, rights and feel comfortable in expressing any difficulties or concerns they may have.

Always ask permission from children (or in the case of young children, their parent or guardian) before taking images (e.g. photographs videos) of them. Respect their decision to say no to an image being taken. Ensure that any images taken of children are dignified and respectful (for example: children should have adequate

clothing that covers up their sexual organs.) Images of children in sexually suggestive poses or that in any way impact negatively on their dignity or privacy are not acceptable. Stories and images of children should be based on the child's best interest.

Any staff or partner in relation to child protection and/or where there has been a breach of the child protection policy, this will be investigated under this policy either: by consideration of referral to statutory authorities for criminal investigation under the law of the country and /or BeLA in accordance with disciplinary procedures. This may result in disciplinary sanctions and/or dismissal for staff.

BeLA will sever all relations with any BeLA partner proven to have committed child abuse.

Ensure that each BeLA area of intervention has in place local procedures that are consistent with the global child protection policy and with the document reporting and responding to child protection issues in BeLA to respond to incidents of child abuse.

Code of Conduct

BeLA seeks to clarify acceptable behavior in order to enhance the safety and wellbeing of the children accessing its program, and to protect staff, volunteers and the association.

BeLA is steadfast to ensuring that its staff and representatives apply high standards of behavior towards children within both their professional and outside the work place without dictating the way by which BeLA employees conduct their personal lives. BeLA is determined on maintaining good relations and upholding its reputation not only as a child- focused community development association with numerous communities and organizations. Unlawful or other conducts by BeLA employees which jeopardizes BeLA reputation or position whether during or after business hours will not be permitted. Such conduct includes but is not limited to: any unlawful activity related to sexual abuse: any other unlawful activity: sexual harassment: physically/verbally abusive behaviors; and public disorderly conduct.

Implementation and Adherence

This Child Protection Policy will be implemented within the association after approval by the Board of Directors session on the 12 January 2017. It shall be read and signed by all staff, volunteers and partners involved in the running of BeLA activities and projects.