

POLICY ON PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

PREAMBLE

Being aware that violence against children and young people is widespread and present in all countries and communities, and that it can take different, sometimes non-obvious forms, we hereby declare our full commitment to work towards the elimination of all forms of violence against children and young people and to promote the protection of children and young people and promote their welfare.

We are aware that when talking about violence against children and adolescents it is necessary to refer to physical or psychological violence, abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment, as well as sexual violence in the form of sexual exploitation, harassment or abuse. Violence against children also includes exploiting their vulnerability and susceptibility to injury because of their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, age or illness.

Alliance 4 Europe declares its full commitment to the protection of children with whom it works or with whom it comes into contact in the context of its projects. Every employee and associate of the organisation or person representing it in its external relations is aware of the rights and obligations arising from the principles adopted in this Policy and declares to combat violence against children and young people. At the same time, the organisation takes measures to prevent the employment and involvement of persons who may pose a risk to children and young people, and implements severe sanctions against any employee or collaborator who commits an act of violence against a child.

We declare that we will promote safe practices for children and young people, interventions, and ensure a safe environment, ensuring that children's unique needs are respected, recognised and met with protection related to gender diversity and gender identities. We declare zero tolerance and fight against any form of discrimination, exclusion or inequality.

We promote the active involvement of children and young people in their own protection.

This Policy applies to all employees and collaborators and associates of Alliance 4 Europe, regardless of the legal basis of collaboration, in all its branches and subsidiaries, and applies to all activities of these persons both during and outside working hours.

ART. I DEFINITIONS

"Collaborator" refers to persons contracted on a paid or unpaid basis to collaborate with or support Alliance 4 Europe in the performance of tasks. This includes, but is not limited to, board members, volunteers (including community volunteers), interns, sponsors, researchers, donors, consultants and contractors, staff and/or representatives of partner organisations and local authorities.

"Child" under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and for the purposes of this Global Policy, is defined as any person - girl, boy, young woman, young man and children of other gender identity - under the age of 18.

"Child abuse" any form of physical and/or emotional maltreatment, Sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or any type of abuse resulting in actual or potential harm to the health, survival, development or dignity of a child in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, online violence.

"Complainant" This is the person making the complaint; it may be the person who experienced what is being reported (victim/victim), or it may be another person (third party complainant) who learns of the violation and makes a complaint.

"Harm" is any harmful effect on the physical, mental or emotional wellbeing of a person (child or adult). Harm can be caused by Abuse or Exploitation, whether intentional or unintentional.

"Beneficiary" a direct and indirect participant in the Programme. A direct participant in the Programme is a person who is targeted by one or more Project outputs and will receive support from the Project. An indirect participant is a person who is not a direct participant but will benefit from the Project.

"Employees" refers to persons who receive regular remuneration for their work at Alliance 4 Europe as well as in affiliated entities.

"Stakeholder" is any person, organisation, social group or society in general that has a connection to our work, it can be the community of participants in our programmes, governments and donors.

"Young person(s)" or "Young People" as defined by the United Nations includes persons - young women, young men and young people of other gender identity - between the ages of 15 and 24. This group includes the categories of 'children', 'adolescents' and 'adults', but considers that Young People have special protection needs and require separate treatment, in addition to younger children and older adults.

"Harm" is any harmful effect on the physical, mental or emotional wellbeing of a child or young person. Harm can be caused by abuse or exploitation, whether intentional or unintentional.

"Safeguarding children and young people" are the responsibilities, preventative measures we take to protect children and young people, ensuring that no child or young person is at risk of any form of harm as a result of their relationship with the organisation. This includes ensuring that their contact with us and those associated with us and/or their participation in our activities, interventions and operations is safe and where there are concerns about the welfare of a child or young person or where

a child or young person has been the victim of violence, appropriate and timely action is taken to address this and incidents are reviewed to ensure the best possible protection.

"Gender-sensitive conservation is an approach to conservation that:

- takes full account of gender in considering the specific protection needs of girls, boys and other gender identities;
- integrates safeguards that address risks to the protection of children and young people (girls, boys, young women, young men and children with a different gender identity) arising from issues of gender bias and discrimination; and
- Supports the empowerment of girls and fosters their inclusion, particularly in the safeguarding process, in ways that promote equality, equity and ultimately their greater safety and security

ART. II POLICY OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this Policy is:

- Introduce clear rules in the organisation for the prevention of violence against children and young people and for their protection and well-being, and put in place procedures related to violations of these rules.
- To communicate to all staff and colleagues the principles of protecting children and young people from violence and to ensure that all staff and colleagues are aware of these principles and act in accordance with them.
- outline to the children and young people we work with our responsibilities to them to prevent and respond to any behaviour that may cause them harm arising from the actions and behaviours of our staff, colleagues, and provide children and young people with a pathway to report such incidents.

ART. III. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

3.1 Violence against a child or young person includes any form of physical or psychological violence, physical injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, emotional maltreatment or psychological abuse, exploitation and sexual abuse, harassment and commercial or other exploitation of a child or young person which results or is likely to result in actual or potential harm to a child or young person's welfare, dignity and development. Acts of violence can also occur online, for example via the internet, social media or mobile phones. It can be a deliberate act involving the use of physical force or power, or a failure to act to prevent violence against a child or young person.,.

3.2 All children and young people under the age of 18 have equal rights to protection from all forms of violence, as declared in Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. All young persons up to the age of 24 are guaranteed equal rights to protection from all forms of violence.

3.3 Inequality, exclusion and discrimination on any grounds will not be tolerated.

3.4 The priority in the relationship with children and young people is to enhance their potential and support their development and to look after their best interests.

3.5 No child or young person shall be harmed, intentionally or unintentionally, as a result of their involvement or contact with the organisation.

3.6 Each child beneficiary of the organisation will be informed of their rights under this Policy and child protection rights generally and will be encouraged to exercise their rights and report breaches of this Policy.

3.7 Openness and transparency of activities. Proposals to change and improve the provisions of the Policy, discussion of cases, good practices will be promoted.

3.8 Timeliness of actions, speed of response.

3.9 Focusing on the welfare of the child is a priority for action.

3.10. Exclude involvement on the part of the organisation of persons convicted of any common offence or suspected of offences against children.

3.11. Protection taking into account gender diversity, which means appropriate to the specific needs of gender and gender non-identified persons and threats to their integrity

3.12. All employees and associates at every stage of the organisation's activities are required to comply with the principles expressed in this Policy.

ART. IV. PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED

4.1 Every employee and associate is required to read this Policy and the Code of Conduct, which is attached as Appendix No 1 to this Policy, and to certify with his/her own signature that he/she has read these documents.

4.2 Any person applying to work for an organisation on projects where children or young people are beneficiaries is required to submit a criminal record certificate and inform the organisation of any change or pending criminal proceedings against them.

4.3 Beneficiaries /children and young people/ and their parents are informed by the organisation of the content of the Policy and their rights and obligations arising from it at every stage of the project.

4.4 Potential beneficiaries /children and adolescents/ or, in the case of beneficiaries under 18 years of age, their parents give their consent to participate in the project. The consent should be given in writing and be preceded by a careful explanation by the organisation of all the details of the participation in the project including the risks involved. Publicising voice recordings or images of children is only possible with the consent of their legal guardians, and of young people with their consent.

4.5 Personal information relating to any Child or children and/or young people, whether or not such information has been obtained through programmes involving children and/or young people is confidential and may only be shared under appropriate authorisations in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act GDPR.

4.6 The organisation's staff and associates in direct contact with the beneficiaries /children and young people/ are provided with training to develop their capacity to work with young people and children and to increase their sensitivity to the specific needs of children, especially those from groups at risk of exclusion due to gender or gender non-identity and other reasons.

4.7 Children and/or young people are treated with dignity and due respect, are included in the building of procedures to protect children from violence and have a say at every stage of their participation in projects.

4.8 A pathway for reporting incidents of breaches of the principles expressed in this Policy shall be established. Confidentiality and acting with respect for the dignity and welfare of children and young people is ensured at every stage.

4.9 The investigation of the circumstances of the incident carried out under this policy will be undertaken with the best interests of children and young people in mind and the organisation will ensure that children and young people directly involved in the incident are safe and appropriately supported and, above all, that no additional harm is caused as a result of the investigation.

4.10 The organisation shall monitor the implementation and enforcement of the Child and/Young Person Protection Policy and shall review its provisions at regular intervals determined as necessary by the organisation, at least once every three (3) years.

4.11 Incidents involving violations of the principles described in the Policy shall be reported to the responsible persons in the Human Resources department, the designated manager, director or to the Board of Directors of the organisation, who will take immediate action to set up an internal independent Commission to investigate the reported matter.

4.11.1. The Commission conducts the investigation in a discreet and confidential manner respecting the privacy and interests of the child and their welfare. The child's legal guardians shall be informed of every stage of the investigation.

4.11.2 Minutes shall be kept of the proceedings of the Commission.

4.12 Any allegation/suspected breach of the Policy made against a member of staff, Co-worker shall be dealt with without undue delay, in a fair and consistent manner that ensures the effective protection of children and young people. The member of staff of the organisation to whom the allegation relates shall be directed to carry out other non-child contact duties, the Co-worker's co-operation shall be suspended until the matter is resolved.

4.13 A finding of a breach will result in sanctions as set out in the Labour Code, including disciplinary sanctions leading to possible dismissal, termination of any contract binding the organisation to the offender and, where appropriate, appropriate legal action.

4.14. If the allegations are found to be unfounded during the investigation, no action will be taken against the reporting person.

4.15 Support, including psychological support, will be offered to children and young people at every stage of the investigation. Support will also be offered where appropriate to others involved in the investigation process, for example witnesses and those accused of inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

4.15.1 Support may include referral to specialist psychosocial counselling, medical support, legal support and/or access to other specialist and appropriate support as required.

ART. V INFORMATION OBLIGATIONS

5.1 Alliance4Europe undertakes to inform all employees, collaborators, associates and beneficiaries and stakeholders about the Policy and undertakes to conduct information campaigns and publish information about the Child Protection from Violence Policy on the website.

5.2 The Board also ensures that it supports and develops an organisational culture that is safe for children and young people and that looks after their welfare.

Annex 1 of the Child and Youth Protection Policy: Code of conduct for the protection of children and young people

Alliance 4Europe is **committed to creating a safe environment for children and young people. All staff are required to comply with the Child and Youth Protection Policy and are committed to preventing violence against children and young people.**

I therefore declare that I will:

- a. Comply with the provisions of the Child and Youth Protection Policy and be guided by the integrity and well-being of children and young people in their dealings with children and young people, their families and communities participating in programmes, projects, processes, events and activities.
- b. Respect the rights of children and young people, their integrity and dignity, and take into account their best interests regardless of age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, colour, race, language, religious or political beliefs, marital status, disability, physical or mental health, family, socio-economic or cultural background, class or any history of conflict with the law.
- c. Co-create and maintain an environment and culture that prevents abuse and exploitation of children and young people and take appropriate action to minimise risk to children and young people.
- d. Contribute to building an environment where the children and young people we work with are respected and empowered to participate in and discuss decision-making and interventions about their protection, in line with their age, maturity and changing abilities, and informed of their rights in relation to protection and safeguarding and what to do if they have concerns.
- e. Demonstrate high standards of professional behaviour at all times, providing a positive role model for children and young people.
- f. Comply with all relevant international and local child labour standards and refrain from using children and young people under the age of 18 for domestic or other work if such work is inappropriate, exploitative or harmful in view of their age or developmental capabilities, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which exposes them to significant risk of injury, exploitation or violence. I further understand that I am not permitted to use children or young people of any age with whom we work for domestic or other work.
- g. Respect the privacy and confidentiality of children and young people of project beneficiaries, which means
 - Never ask for or accept personal contact information or invitations to share personal contact information (this includes email, phone numbers, social media contacts, address, skype, etc.) from any child or family of a beneficiary of a current or past project, nor provide personal

contact information to such persons, except where expressly authorised and/or for business purposes;

- Never disclose, or support the disclosure of information that identifies sponsored families or children, through any medium, unless the disclosure is in accordance with the project's standard policies and procedures and/or has explicit consent. Media includes paper media, photographs and social media.
- Never make contact with a child, young person or family members related to the organisation's work that is not supervised by (or otherwise supervised by) a member of the organisation's staff. Such contact may include, but is not limited to, visits and all forms of communication via social media, emails and letters.
- Always ask permission to take and use photographs of a child or young person (or in the case of young children, their parent or guardian), informing them of the specific purpose(s) and intended use (including how and where) and respect their decision to refuse, making it clear that refusing to give such permission will have absolutely no negative repercussions.
- Ensure that photos are respectful and do not negatively affect their dignity and privacy.
- Ensure that the use of images does not put the child or young person at risk of identification or location.

h. Report and respond to any suspicions, incidents or allegations of actual or potential violations of the rights of a child or young person in accordance with applicable procedures.

i. Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation seeking to clarify suspicions or allegations of abuse against children and young people.

j. Disclose all charges, convictions and other results of an offence that occurred prior to or during the course of an employment relationship or collaboration with the organisation that relate to violations of children's rights or other common offences.

I declare that I will not:

a. abuse or exploit a child or young person or behave in any way that puts a child or young person at risk of harm, including through harmful traditional practices such as, for example, female genital mutilation, forced or child marriage.

b. Engage in any form of sexual activity or develop physical/sexual relations with anyone under the age of 18 regardless of the age of consent applicable locally. Misconception of a child's age is not a defence.

c. Engage in sexual relationships with direct beneficiaries of the youth organisation between the ages of 18 and 24, as these undermine the credibility and integrity of the organisation's work **and are** based on an inherently unequal position.

d. Use physical punishment/discipline or physical force of any kind against children and young people.

- e. Engage young people in any form of sexual activity that involves the exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour. This includes the exchange of aid due to the beneficiaries
- f. Use language or behave towards a child or young person in an inappropriate, abusive, insulting, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate manner.
- g. caress, hold, kiss, hug or touch children or young people in an inappropriate manner /bad touch/.
- h. Recommend a child/children/young person with whom I have contact in the context of work to stay overnight at my home or other personal residence or accommodation.
- i. Sleep in the same room or bed as a child or young person with whom I have contact in a work-related context. If it is necessary to sleep near unaccompanied children and young people, I will ensure that another adult is present and in accordance with permitted procedures.
- j. Carry out activities of a personal nature for children or young people with whom I come into contact in a work-related context, (e.g. taking a child/young person to the toilet/bathroom; helping them to undress/dress etc.) that they can do for themselves.
- k. Spend time alone away from others with children and young people with whom I have contact in a work-related context; I will always ensure that another adult is with me and/or I am with a child/young person in an open public place where others are around and in view of others.
- l. Strike or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children or young people.
- m. Behave in a manner that embarrasses, humiliates, belittles or demeans children and young people, or otherwise commit any form of emotional abuse.
- n. Discriminate, show differentiation or preference towards specific children and young people to the detriment of them or others.
- o. Develop relationships with children and young people, engage in any practice with them or develop behaviour towards children and young people that could in any way be considered or interpreted as exploitation or abuse.
- p. Permit or participate in behaviour by children or young people that is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- q. Use any computer, mobile phone, video or digital camera or other such means to abuse, harass or intimidate children or young people.
- r. Use computers, mobile phones or video/digital cameras or other electronic devices to access, view, create, download or distribute pornography, especially offensive images of children or young people.

The above list is not exhaustive. Employees and Associates should consider all actions and behaviours that may jeopardise the rights and safety of children and young people and at all times, at work and away from work, adhere to the principles of the Child and Young Person Protection Policy and the Rules of Conduct forming this Appendix to it.

Signature of Employee/Co-worker