YRCI

Youth Rights & Citizenship
Initiative

YRCI ALBANIA – CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

JANUARY 6, 2025

YOUTH RIGHTS & CITIZENSHIP INITIATIVE
Neib.5 Maji, St. Kozma Naska, Doko Complex, 2-nd floor

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1. Introduction

The Youth Right & Citizenship Initiative (YRCI) Albania is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children with whom we engage. In line with our values, YRCI pledges to protect children from all forms of harm, including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This policy outlines the measures YRCI will implement to safeguard children within our programs, ensuring that all operations align with international child protection standards such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Keeping Children Safe Standards.

2. Policy Statement

YRCI Albania believes that all children have the right to be safe and free from harm. We maintain a zero-tolerance policy towards child abuse and exploitation. Our staff, volunteers, contractors, and associates must respect the dignity, safety, and rights of every child we work with, promoting their well-being at all times.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all YRCI Albania staff, volunteers, contractors, and any individual representing YRCI. All individuals must adhere to this policy when engaging with children or in situations that may affect their well-being, whether directly or indirectly.

4. Principles

- **Best Interests of the Child:** The welfare of children is paramount, and all decisions must prioritize their best interests.
- **Zero Tolerance for Abuse:** YRCI will not tolerate any form of child abuse or exploitation.
- **Informed Participation:** Children's views will be sought in matters that affect them, and their dignity and rights will be respected.
- **Confidentiality and Accountability:** Child protection concerns will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, and appropriate action will be taken in all cases of reported harm.

5. Definitions of Harm

As outlined in Keeping Children Safe standards, YRCI recognizes the following forms of harm:

- **Physical Abuse**: Inflicting physical harm on a child.
- **Sexual Abuse**: Engaging a child in sexual activities that they do not fully understand or cannot consent to.
- **Neglect**: Failure to meet a child's basic needs, which may impair their development.
- **Emotional Abuse**: Persistent emotional maltreatment affecting a child's mental well-being.

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6. Responsibilities

- **Staff and Volunteers:** All staff and volunteers must attend mandatory training on child protection, sign the YRCI code of conduct, and report any concerns of child abuse or harm.
- **Management:** YRCI management is responsible for ensuring the implementation, monitoring, and periodic review of this policy. They are also responsible for responding to any child protection concerns raised.

7. Recruitment and Selection

YRCI ensures all new hires undergo rigorous background checks, including reference checks and, where possible, criminal record checks. All job descriptions and contracts will include explicit mention of safeguarding responsibilities.

8. Code of Conduct

All staff, volunteers, and associates will adhere to YRCI's code of conduct, which outlines acceptable and unacceptable behavior when engaging with children. This includes guidelines on communication, physical contact, and digital interaction. Breach of the code will result in disciplinary action.

9. Reporting Procedures

Any concerns regarding a child's safety or well-being should be reported immediately to the designated Child Protection Officer.

- **Confidentiality:** The identity of those involved in a report will be protected to the fullest extent possible.
- **Response:** All allegations will be investigated promptly, and if necessary, reported to appropriate authorities.

10. Risk Management

YRCI will conduct regular child safeguarding risk assessments across all its programs. All activities and projects will be designed and executed with the safety of children as a priority, with clear procedures in place to address potential risks.

11. Monitoring and Review

YRCI will continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its child protection policies and procedures. This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to emerging risks or legal changes.

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12. Partnerships and Collaborations

YRCI will ensure that all partner organizations adhere to equivalent child protection standards. Collaboration agreements will include clauses that enforce child safeguarding measures, and regular audits will be conducted to ensure compliance.

13. Training and Capacity Building

YRCI will provide ongoing training for all staff, volunteers, and partners to ensure that they are fully equipped to prevent and respond to child safeguarding concerns. Training will be reviewed and updated regularly.

14. Accountability

YRCI management is responsible for ensuring the full implementation of this policy. They must ensure that all reports of abuse or exploitation are dealt with swiftly, in line with local and international laws.

15. Commitment to Child Protection

YRCI is fully committed to the protection of children and expects all associated individuals to uphold the highest standards of child safeguarding. Together, we can ensure that children are free from harm and supported to thrive in a safe and nurturing environment.

Executive Director of Youth Rights & Citizenship Initiative

Eliona Gremi

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