

Common Charter of the Federation of NGOs Active in Child Protection Romania

Introduction: summary of some main points of the Federation's statutes

The Federation is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation (NGO), created by and for Romanian NGOs active in the field of family and child care and protection.

The Federation's principle objective is to improve the efficiency of child protection activities in Romania.

The Federation has a three-fold scope, as written in its statutes:

The Federation represents its members as interlocutor of Authorities and other partners with respect to policies concerning the child and the family.

The Federation has as goal the support and strengthening of the NGO community active in the field of the welfare and protection of the child and the family.

The Federation has as goal to clarify and consolidate the image and impact of the NGO community active in the field of the welfare and protection of the child and the family.

CHAPTER I: Absolute Priorities for the Protection and the Rights of the Child

The Federation and its members commit themselves to make all their decisions in the best interest of the child as described in, among others, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Federation commits itself to the process of harmonising Romanian legislation to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Federation and its members consider the family as the principle party responsible and the most favourable environment for the development of the child.

The Federation and its members take steps to prevent the abandonment, neglect and abuse of the child by promoting social services addressed to families and children in difficulty.

The Federation and its members are committed to further the development and rendering of adequate and sufficiently available services to families and children in difficulty throughout Romania, allowing all those in need to have access to such services.

The Federation and its members consider the placement of a child in residential care as an emergency and temporary measure only.

The Federation commits itself to take steps to have minimal standards for the functioning of child residential institutions set and applied, allowing the institutions to provide decent care and living conditions for the proper development and education of the entrusted children. The Federation and its members commit themselves to apply these standards to their respective projects and services.

The Federation and its members are actively committed to involve the local communities in finding solutions to the problems of the families and children in difficulty.

The Federation and its members follow an active policy against any forms of discrimination and segregation of the child and promote optimal integration of disadvantaged children into society, in general, and into the local community, in particular.

The Federation and its members actively support equal opportunity for all children in the school system, as well as measures to prevent school abandonment.

The Federation commits itself to the process of adjusting public education to the present realities and needs of children.

The Federation promotes the dissemination of information on sexual education and family planning among teenagers and adolescents.

The Federation is committed to the social and professional integration of adolescents leaving the institutions.

The Federation promotes those communication activities that are meant to raise the awareness and, when the case, change the mentality of the large public concerning issues of children and families in

difficulty.

CHAPTER II: The Federation's Relations with the Outside World

The Federation represents its members to the outside world in those fields mentioned in its statutes, as well as in other fields, and, further, as agreed upon by its members.

The Federation's main partners are: Central and Local Authorities, NGOs, Federations or Federations of NGOs, NGO support organisations, local communities, universities, unions, media, international organisations, donors.

The Federation actively promotes, in accordance with the principles of this Charter, the services offered by its members to the families and children in difficulty.

The Federation can use a wide variety of communication modalities to interact with the outside world, such as, structural dialogues, joint studies, information and training sessions, audio-visual presentations, contacts with the media, public seminars and conferences, written presentations (such as a newsletter). The Federation promotes the interests of all of its members and, as such, does not promote the individual interests of one or some of its members, except in cases where an overriding policy should so require. The Federation represents its members by respecting the terms of confidentiality agreed upon by its members.

The Federation develops and maintains an active policy by which funding by third parties of relief and/or long-term programs by its members addressed to families and children in difficulty is encouraged.

The Federation actively encourages other, non-member, NGOs active in child protection to join the Federation.

In its relations with the outside world, the Federation does not have a discriminatory policy towards other organisations active in child care and protection.

The Federation and its members promote the principles specified in this Charter.

CHAPTER III: Services Offered to Families and Children in Difficulty

The Federation does not substitute its members in providing services to families and children in difficulty.

The Federation regularly assesses the needs for and the supply of social/medical/ educational services addressed to families and children in difficulty.

The Federation develops criteria, methods, and standards for child care and protection services and practices.

The Federation provides informational services to its members with the aim to assist them in the development, expansion, and improvement of projects or services addressed to families and children in difficulty.

The Federation follows an active policy by which its members can increase or maintain the quality of services to families and children in difficulty.

The Federation develops methods by which the costs of the services offered by its members can be standardised.

The Federation encourages the practice of auto-evaluation by its members of projects and services.

The Federation actively supports those projects and services offered by its members which are in accordance with the principles stipulated in the statutes and in this Charter and which, when the case, comply with the standards developed by the Federation and approved by its members.

The Federation actively pursues a policy by which projects and services developed by its members and which comply with the set standards could be generalised on a regional or national level.

The Federation actively pursues a policy by which projects and services in which the local communities are involved in solving problems of families and children in difficulty.

The Federation facilitates and encourages the exchange of information on projects and services offered by its members in order to further co-operation and mutual learning, and to prevent duplication.

CHAPTER IV: The Ethical and Professional Codes of Conduct

The Federation, where deemed necessary, develops proposals for the creation or the improvement of ethical and professional codes of conduct for the various professions in the field of child protection and care.

The Federation's members commit themselves to the furthering and respect of such codes.
The Federation's members commit themselves to the further development and maintenance of values, knowledge and methodologies of the professions of their staff, as well as for the overall strengthening of these professions.
The Federation facilitates collaboration and exchange of information among its members with the aim to increase further development and maintenance of values, knowledge and methodologies of the respective professions, as well as for the overall strengthening of these professions.

CHAPTER V: The Relations between the NGOs and their Clients

The Federation's members adhere to the fundamental principle that they shall be open-minded to and non-judgmental of their clients.
The Federation's members shall respect the right of their clients to make their own decisions.
The relationship established between the Federation's members and their clients shall be based on the principles of respect of personal dignity, confidentiality, and clients' information on their rights.
In the relationships established with their clients, the Federation's members shall respect the right of their clients to have their own culture and customs, acting impartially and without discrimination.
The Federation's members shall in principle always be of assistance to their clients.

CHAPTER VI: Criteria for Costs and Financing of Services

The Federation, when establishing standardised cost structures for services to families and children in difficulty, quality and long-term effects of the services shall be principle criteria.
The Federation and its members shall not accept financing from discredited individuals or companies, or from companies whose activity covers the production of weapons, alcohol or tobacco.
The Federation and its members shall not accept conditional financing whose terms are in contradiction with the principles of this Charter.
The Federation, when facilitating third-party financing of its members' programs and services, shall observe the principle of equal opportunity for all members.

CHAPTER VII: The Presentation of the Federation's Results

The Federation presents its results to the outside world in the framework of its objective and scope and, as such, for the benefit of all of its members.
The Federation presents its results and results by other partner organisations with an aim to promote the image of the NGO community active in child protection.
When presenting the results, the Federation promotes the importance of collaboration between the governmental and non-governmental sectors for the benefit of the families and children in difficulty.
The Federation informs its members regularly of its results and of its contacts with the media.

CHAPTER VIII: The Monitoring of the Respect of the Common Charter by the Federation's Members

The Federation's members jointly establish and further develop the indicators for monitoring the respect of the common Charter.
The Federation, through a Committee in which its members participate in turn, monitors the respect of the common Charter by its members.
The Federation's members submit to the Monitoring Committee each year an annual report to be used by the Committee to evaluate the respect of the principles of the Charter.
The non-observance of the principles of the Charter may result in losing the right of membership of the Federation.
In order to monitor the respect of the principles of the Charter, the Federation develops and maintains communication, data collection, reporting, and information systems.

CHAPTER IX: Internal Relations and Conflict Resolution

The Federation welcomes NGOs that work in a great variety of domains to join it: Institutionalised and disadvantaged children, Social assistance, Health, Humanitarian aid, Education and training, Legislation, and Services to other NGOs active in child protection.

The Federation and its members subscribe to the principles of equal treatment of all members and of fair competition.

Each member of the Federation shows an active interest in the subject matters important to the whole Federation -- being the representative of all members -- even if it does not have a direct bearing on its own functioning.

The relations among the Federation's members and between the Federation and its members are characterised by a critical, but constructive spirit, honesty, fairness, transparency, and respect for the independence of each and every one of its members.

The Federation's members adhere to the principles as laid down in this Charter and commit themselves fully to integrate them in their daily functioning.

The Federation does not have the right to interfere with the internal affairs of its member organisations.

The Federation facilitates the settlement of possible conflicts between its member organisations that affect the functioning of the Federation by promoting a climate of good cooperation and mutual respect, and the practice of correct dissemination of relevant information.

The Federation, in the case that such a conflict cannot be settled amiably, forms a mediation team consisting of three other members, as described in the statutes, with the help of which the members in conflict try to solve the problem. Such a mediation team, mutually agreed upon by both parties, shall act in the spirit of neutrality, respect for the concerned parties, and confidentiality.

The Federation's members who are in conflict can exercise their legal right to present their issue to an arbitrator or court only after it has been determined by the mediation team that mediation cannot be, or has not been, successful.

The Federation's members who are in conflict shall in no way utilise the conflict against each other in public announcements.

The Federation supports, within the limits of its resources and the principles mentioned in the Charter, its member organisations in the case of difficulties or conflicts with authorities or other parties.