

CHARTER for the CUNINA godparent

The basic principles of CUNINA godparenthood are listed below. By signing this charter, CUNINA godparents agree that they will follow and respect these principles.

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CUNINA can elucidate the following principles orally or in writing if requested.

1. Vision and Mission

CUNINA is a Belgian non-governmental development organization that aims to provide access to quality education in the South, irrespective of political, religious and social beliefs.

Vision: **CUNINA** strongly believes that education is an important catalyst for individual and social development. According to **CUNINA**, every child is entitled to access to quality primary and secondary education.

Mission: **CUNINA** aims to improve access to and the quality of primary and secondary education by closely cooperating with their local partners in the South. The organization pays special attention to the position of girls and education in the countryside.

2. Core values of CUNINA

The operation of **CUNINA** is based on the following core values:

1. **CUNINA** subscribes to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The protection of every child is a priority to **CUNINA**. Every form of child abuse is totally unacceptable. **CUNINA** expects that everyone who cooperates with and/or supports our organization, always strives, promotes and aims to protect children –in their relationship with **CUNINA**, as well as in the daily life.

2. **CUNINA** subscribes to the Millennium Development Goals, especially to the second goal: achieve universal primary education. Removing access barriers to education for children always has to go hand in hand with improving the quality of education. Therefore, **CUNINA** also subscribes to the 'Education for all' goals of UNESCO.

Every child is entitled to education, but a lot of children do not get the opportunity to go to school. The core value –every child is entitled to education- is reflected in the meaning of the word '**CUNINA**'. '**CUNINA**' refers to the cradle that you were born in. Nobody decides where their cradle stands when they are born, but you can substantially improve the opportunities of a child by giving them the chance to have a quality education.

3. Personal connection-family feeling-security. **CUNINA** concentrates on a direct link between individuals in the South and individuals in the North. This does not only concern the personal connection between godparents and their godchildren, but also the family feeling, which **CUNINA** focuses on when they communicate with their staff members, godparents, parents, sponsors and co-workers in the South.
4. **CUNINA** sets very high standards for ethics and integrity of all individuals and organizations that we cooperate with (staff members of **CUNINA**, godparents, schools, companies, ambassadors and other organizations).
5. It is very important to **CUNINA** that they communicate with godchildren, godparents and organizations in an honest and transparent way.
6. The staff members of **CUNINA** are driven by professionalism and social commitment. The combination of these two is what makes **CUNINA** unique. Professionalism represents the head of our organization, while social commitment represents the heart. Professionalism guarantees an improved impact of your activities. The staff members of **CUNINA** consider critical thinking, open communication and giving of positive criticism as important values of the organization.

3. CUNINA child sponsorship

A **CUNINA** child sponsorship is a long-term commitment to providing a child in the South (your 'godchild') quality education. This way, they will have the chance to develop themselves and take their future in their own hands.

In order to provide quality education, **CUNINA** starts educational projects like the training of teachers, the improvement of the education infrastructure or the provision of didactical materials.

4. CUNINA godparents

CUNINA godparents start a child sponsorship because they believe in "access to quality education" as a social development tool. Providing education opportunities is the most important motive behind the commitment of **CUNINA** godparents.

All of the information supplied to **CUNINA** concerning godparents is kept strictly confidential and will, without preceding written permission of the parties involved, not be given to third parties or will not be used for other purposes than the child sponsorship.

5. CUNINA godchildren

All **CUNINA** godchildren are selected by local **CUNINA** co-workers in the **CUNINA** partner countries. These selections are based on locally established criteria. Race, class/caste or religious/political beliefs are not taken into account during this selection process. All godchildren have reached school age, which is determined by the government of the partner country in question.

Here are some general selection criteria:

1. The family is in financial distress
2. The child is capable of going to school
3. The parents of the child motivate him/her to go to school everyday
4. The child comes from a somewhat stable family situation

The godparents can choose the godchild's sex and country of origin themselves. **CUNINA** will propose an alternative if the first choice of the godparents is not possible. The godparents are not obliged to accept this alternative.

An individual godchild will be assigned to the godparents. Godparents are not allowed to switch godchildren between them, except when there is written permission of **CUNINA**. This way, we can guarantee that the child sponsorship files are managed in the correct way.

The godparents get a child sponsorship book, which contains an identification sheet, a picture of the godchild, information on the country of the godchild and practical information on the course of the child sponsorship. In order to protect the godchild's privacy, these details are only to be used for the child sponsorship.

6. Contact between CUNINA godparents and CUNINA godchildren

- 6.1. Godparents receive a letter from their godchildren twice a year: one letter during the school year and one letter, which includes the school results of the godchild, at the end of the school year.
- 6.2. Godparents can only correspond by letter with their godchildren. It is not allowed to exchange personal details like addresses. Godparents cannot communicate with their godchildren through the Internet (e-mails, social network, forums...). They have to send their letter to **CUNINA** and the organization will then send it to the godchild. **CUNINA** is allowed to read the letters; this way they can guarantee the safety and integrity of the godchildren.
- 6.3. Godparents are not allowed to send gifts to their godchildren, because this can cause division and disappointment among the **CUNINA** godchildren. It would lead to discussions if some godchildren in a certain region often receive (expensive) gifts from their godparents and other godchildren from the same region do not. **CUNINA** wants to avoid this. We hope that **CUNINA** godparents can understand and accept this.
- 6.4. Godparents are not allowed to visit their godchildren on their own. Godparents can participate in a **CUNINA** immersion trip, during which they will visit different **CUNINA** projects and have the chance to meet their godchild. We will always inform godparents that have godchildren in a certain country when it is possible to sign up for an immersion trip.

7. Contact between CUNINA and CUNINA godparents

CUNINA godparents are informed about the latest news on regional, national and international level within the organization and operation of **CUNINA** through the two-yearly magazine 'Cunina Courant', the e-newsletter and the website of **CUNINA**.

CUNINA is always available to give further information to godparents to make sure that their child sponsorship file is managed in the best way possible. The head office in Geel can be reached by phone every working day from 09.00 am until 05.00 pm.

Godparents do not intervene with the actual organization and the policy of **CUNINA**.

8. Duration of the CUNINA child sponsorship

In principle, the child sponsorships lasts until the godchild has graduated secondary school in the country in question. If it turns out that the godchild qualifies for higher education and the godparents want to continue their financial support, they will have to consult **CUNINA** first. Godparents are by no means obliged to continue their support after secondary school.

9. Financial contribution of the CUNINA godparent

Godparents pay a non-recurring cost of €35 to start their child sponsorship. The financial support of a CUNINA godchild consists of a monthly contribution of €25 and a monthly management cost of €5, so €30 in total.

Godparents pay this amount into account number 230-0366025-64, the account of **CUNINA**. We prefer this payment to be made by direct debit. In May of next (calendar) year, Belgian **CUNINA** godparents receive a tax certificate for their monthly contributions. In Belgium, you are entitled to a tax certificate if you donate €40 or more on an annual basis, which a **CUNINA** child sponsorship of €30 per month easily surpasses. Godparents can use this tax certificate to get 45% of their annual contributions back through income tax.

If a godparent pays a higher amount for their godchild, **CUNINA** will use the extra money to fund **CUNINA** projects in the partner country in question. It is not possible to support the godchild for more than €30 a month. It would lead to discussions if some godchildren in a certain region often receive extra financial support from their godparents and other godchildren from the same region do not. **CUNINA** wants to avoid this. We hope that **CUNINA** godparents can understand and accept this.

CUNINA manages the amounts received as best as possible. The child sponsorship contribution of €25 is used to pay for the education costs of the godchild (school fee, school uniform, school supplies and other school costs). In a lot of regions, and especially in urban areas, this contribution will not be enough to pay for all these costs. If there is extra money in a certain region, **CUNINA** will use the money to fund local **CUNINA** projects in the region in question.

CUNINA is in close contact with their local representatives in order to guarantee that the funds are spent in the best way possible.

If a child sponsorship is terminated, CUNINA will inform the godparent by letter and ask them to stop their payment. If a godparent does not stop their payment, the money will be used for **CUNINA** projects.

10. Early termination of the child sponsorship

- 10.1. If godparents wish to terminate their child sponsorship early, they will have to inform **CUNINA**, except for serious or urgent reasons, in writing at least three months in advance. The godparents will make sure that the early termination does not cause unnecessary damage to **CUNINA** or to the godchild involved. They will no longer make use of the data that was given to them by **CUNINA** for their child sponsorship. All contact between the godparent(s) and the godchild will be terminated immediately and **CUNINA** will give the godchild new godparents as quickly as possible. Godparents are not entitled to any reimbursement or compensation if they terminate the child sponsorship early.
- 10.2. Godparents can terminate the child sponsorship, without notice of default, for serious or urgent reasons, which include serious illness, death in the family, divorce and loss of income.
- 10.3. **CUNINA** can terminate the child sponsorship by letter, without notice of default, for serious or urgent reasons. Serious or urgent reasons include godparents not complying with one or more of the principles mentioned above, not having the required seriousness and reliability, making abuse of the child sponsorship and not paying the child sponsorship contributions in time.

We would also like to refer to the protocol agreed upon by the Belgian Federal Police in the interest of the child and his or her integrity in grave and urgent circumstances which are potentially a crime of which the children are a victim. This police is authorized to track down people in Belgium who have committed sexual crimes against children in a foreign country. They work together with the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation and NGOs like ECPAT.

- 10.4. A new child sponsorship file will be automatically sent to the **CUNINA** godparent if **CUNINA** has to terminate the child sponsorship for a reason that is not mentioned above. This could be: move, the godchild being very ill or having passed away, lack of motivation from the godchild or him/her skipping school. The godparent receives a letter with a picture of his new godchild and the reason why the child sponsorship file has been terminated. If the godparent does not wish to support a new **CUNINA** godchild, he will have to inform **CUNINA** about this in writing within two weeks after reception of the letter. If not, the payment order of the **CUNINA** godparent will be automatically transferred to the new child sponsorship file.

11. Settlement of possible disputes

Any conflicts that should occur between **CUNINA** and the godparent during the child sponsorship or at the end of the child sponsorship, will be discussed between the parties involved and solved amicably. If necessary, the parties can appeal to the mediation procedure recognized by the Judicial Code. Together the parties will then appoint a mediator or a third party that is willing to mediate.

12. Expectations concerning this charter

This charter is not a static code, but will be adjusted to the growth of **CUNINA** organization if needed, and will be corrected if the conditions in the **CUNINA** partner countries change.

We thank you for your support and we hope that we can welcome you as a new **CUNINA** godparent soon.

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