

**[DSWD ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 119,
October 30, 1991]**

GUIDELINES ON THE BANTAY BATA HOTLINE PROJECT

The Child and Youth Welfare Code provides for the protection and promotion of the welfare of children and youth who are considered as the most important assets of the nation. With the many problems our country is currently facing, brought about by the worsening social and economic situation the children and youth who are the most vulnerable group are greatly affected. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on November 20, 1989 and eventually ratified by the Philippine Government on July 26, 1990 and entered in force as an international agreement on September 2, 1990, recognizes that there are children living in difficult situations, as such, need special consideration. Furthermore, as stated in Articles 19 (1) and (2), the Convention calls for the undertaking of appropriate measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. Such protective measures shall include effective procedures for the establishment of social programs to provide necessary support for the child and those who have the care of the child, as well as other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child treatment.

National situationers show an increasing number of street children, abandoned, neglected, maltreated, sexually abused and exploited children specifically in urban and urbanizing areas. To respond to this alarming issue, the government has initiated programs and services, in coordination with non-government agencies. The Department of Social Welfare and Development as mandated through Executive Order No. 123 provides for the care, protection and rehabilitation of children and youth under difficult situations, among others. This mandate sets the new direction for DSWD which spells for the active participation of individuals, families and communities for their development. DSWD capitalizes on human strength through organization of people. Without their participation and support these problems cannot be addressed effectively.

The public/community's involvement is an essential factor in the protection of children and youth, hence, this project. Early identification, reporting and intervention are essential and vital to protect and save the child from future permanent injury or death. The immediate and future protection of the child is often dependent on the awareness and concern of the members of the community. It is recognized that problems related to children and youth are community-related problems which can be prevented through the active involvement of the members in the surveillance, identification and report of cases so that immediate intervention can be made. Persons, organizations, hospitals and other entities reporting in good faith, cases of child abuse, neglect, maltreatment, abandonment, sexual abuse/exploitation, are free from any civil or criminal liability as provided for under

the law. Individual and community concern and involvement is critical — it may save a life.

Description of the Project

The "Bantay Bata Hotline" is a joint project of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, ABS-CBN and the UNICEF. This is designed as a strategy to advocate for the promotion and protection of children's rights.

It is an information dissemination and education campaign to enable the public to be aware of and understand the plight and right of abused, abandoned, exploited and neglected children. As a result of which, the public will know what and how to proceed in helping these children. Primarily, the people will get involved through reporting cases of exploited and abused children to DZMM Bantay Bata Hotline.

Most importantly, it is envisioned that community participation will go beyond reporting cases by involving themselves in the prevention and treatment of child abuse, through their provision of assistance to isolated or troubled families with whom they are in contact, offering of personal support as volunteers, making occasional visits, providing child care to give parents and increase available resources in their area by providing material support, community education and/or advocating for the welfare of children. This involvement may be formalized by establishing a local "Bantay Bata".

Objectives

The objectives of the project are as follows:

1. To generate public awareness and understanding on the plight of abused, abandoned, neglected and exploited children as well as measures being undertaken to address this problem:
2. To enable the public to advocate, promote and protect the rights of children; and
3. To enable the public to get involved in project/activities designed to prevent child abuse and exploitation.

Components

A. Pre-Implementation

1. An orientation on the project shall be conducted by the Bureau of Child and Youth Welfare (BCYW) and the Public Affairs and Liaison Service (PALS) to Child and Youth Welfare Specialists (CYWS), Regional Information Officers (RIO) and ABS-CBN Staff.
2. Likewise, an orientation shall be provided by the Region to the child welfare workers before the launching of the project.
3. The CYWS and RIO shall coordinate with the local DZMM radio station ABS-CBN project coordinators as follows to ensure smooth implementation of the project:

Metro Manila — Fely Salvahan — 922-66-26

Cebu — Sonia Hidalgo — 9-39-81

Davao — Danilo Bernardo — 8-11-10

4. For areas where there are no DZMM or ABS-CBN stations, the following steps shall be taken:

- 4.1 The RIO shall negotiate with the local radio and TV stations to tie-up with the project;
- 4.2 ABS-CBN shall be informed in writing of these negotiations through PALS;
- 4.3 A copy of the three (3) scripts for the production of radio and TV plugs shall be provided to the Regional Offices. These scripts can be amended as to the carrying station and hotline numbers.

B. Project Implementation

1. Project launching

- 1.1 Launching of the project shall be preferably done simultaneously in all regions.

2. Use of stickers

- 2.1 Stickers of BBH numbers shall be provided to the Regional Offices to be posted in conspicuous areas like theaters, markets, municipal/city halls, etc.

3. Referral network

- 3.1 DZMM and ABS-CBN shall assign hotlines where cases of abused, neglected, exploited children can be reported by concerned citizens. Reporting of cases through long distance calls to DZMM shall be charged to ABS-CBN provided calling parties identify themselves properly.
- 3.2 Information received shall be verified by DZMM and ABS-CBN before reporting cases either through telephone or letter to the Regional Office or the Central Office through BCYW or PALS, which in turn shall refer the cases to the Branch Offices, using BBH Form No. 001 attached as Appendix "A".
- 3.3 Referrals received shall be stamped with Bantay Bata Hotline Project stamp to indicate that these need immediate attention.
- 3.4 BBH Form No. 001 shall be provided to DZMM/ABS-CBN or local radio/tv stations and the law enforcement agencies by the Regional Office.
- 3.5 Referrals shall be acted upon by the concerned social worker within 24 hours after receipt. The social worker shall coordinate with the proper government and/or non-government agencies, e.g. hospital, Prosecutor's Office, to provide immediate intervention and appropriate services to the child. In referring the child for medical examination, attach BBH Form No. 003 (Appendix "D"), to be filled up by the medical officer. Likewise, BBH Form No. 003 shall be distributed to all hospitals and clinics in your respective areas.
- 3.6 The social worker shall provide an initial feedback to the Regional Office through the CYWS or the RIO also within the stipulated period, through the telephone which shall be relayed in turn to ABS-CBN or DZMM