



COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT

BRAVE HEART

23.10.2021 TO 23.10.2023

I. Statement of continued support by executive

To our Stakeholders,

I am pleased to confirm that Brave Heart reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations Global Compact and its ten principles in the area of Human rights, Labor, Environment and Anti-Corruption. This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its content.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global compact and its principles as suggested for an organization like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,

Rama Fakhouri
Fundraising Manager

II. Description of Action

- Brave Heart is a Lebanese NGO, which provides financial assistance to underprivileged children diagnosed with Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) since 2003 without any discrimination. 100% of all donations are used to cover the cost of surgeries and medical interventions.
- Brave Heart is the first patient fund that was created at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) dedicated to pediatric cardiac care and is affiliated with the Children’s Heart Center (CHC), the most comprehensive pediatric cardiac center in Lebanon and a leader in the region.
- Brave Heart’s mission is to work towards the day when “**no child should die of heart disease because of a lack of funds**”. Our Goal is to provide financial assistance to underprivileged children suffering from Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) and to increase awareness about CHD.

- **SDG 3: Good Health and Well Being –**

A world without disease (physical as well as mental) achieved through high quality health care systems, which cover and protect all people. SDG 3.2 aims to reduce the mortality of neonates to less than 12 deaths per 1000 live births and the mortality of children to less than 25 deaths per 1000 live births. SDG 3.4 aims to reduce premature mortality due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) by one-third by 2030.

Congenital heart disease accounts for nearly one-third of all congenital birth defects and, therefore, the focus on congenital heart disease is integral to eliminating preventable child deaths and NCDs in the SDG era. (Zheleva B, Atwood JB. The invisible child: childhood heart disease in global health. *Lancet* 2017; **389**: 16–18.) One in 100 babies is diagnosed with heart disease at birth worldwide. This is more than 700 newborns every year in Lebanon alone out of which 400 will need some form of surgical intervention or non-surgical procedures to survive.

Brave Heart provides an immediate funding source for underprivileged children so they can access highly qualified medical care without undue delay, allowing for timely medical interventions with better medical outcomes, thereby avoiding complications and reducing the financial burdens on the State and the community. Brave Heart is



committed to supporting the children throughout their medical journey. It has been our practice to stand by the children we help save as their health guarantor, throughout the various stages of their medical treatment and care.

- **SDG 1: No Poverty and SDG 10: Reduced inequalities –**

Brave Heart works to alleviate poverty and reduce inequality by providing equal access to healthcare without any discrimination. We help cover the cost of hospitalization and surgeries for children whose families qualify for financial aid regardless of gender, nationality, or religious affiliation. As Lebanon's economic situation has significantly deteriorated in the last few years, so has the health of Lebanon's children especially those affected by CHD. Every 12 hours in Lebanon, a child is born with a life-threatening heart defect and will need immediate medical intervention to survive. 80% of families today cannot afford their child's heart surgery. The collapse of the healthcare system fueled by the country's financial crisis has left the Lebanese with little resources to get the proper medical care they need to survive. Many families are unfortunately compelled to postpone their child's surgery due to lack of resources. Brave Heart aims to provide an immediate and perpetual funding source for underprivileged children with CHD, so they have access to highly qualified medical care in order to treat their congenital heart defect successfully.

- **SDG 17: Partnership for the goals –**

Today, increasingly difficult economic conditions make philanthropic support more important than ever. In order to achieve its goals, Brave Heart partners with different organizations and platforms locally and internationally, including international organizations, which provide support to refugee children (UNHCR, UNRWA, Mercy US Aid and Palestinian Children relief Fund).

Brave Heart is a founding member of Global ARCH, a non-profit global alliance of organizations and individuals speaking out for the rights of rheumatic and congenital hearts worldwide.

Brave Heart is also a part of the global Giving Tuesday movement and a founding member of Giving Tuesday Lebanon. Giving Tuesday is a global generosity movement that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give, collaborate and celebrate

generosity. It gives Brave Heart the power of voice to spread and increase awareness about CHD locally and internationally.

III. Measurement of outcomes

- Since 2003, Brave Heart has funded the **heart surgeries of more than 4,500 children and more than 5,500 medical services to date** in Lebanon.
- **This year, Brave Heart has funded over 100 heart procedures and surgeries to date** despite the harsh socio-economic challenges we are facing in Lebanon today. (Data up to June 30, 2023)
- **With a surgical survival rate of 97%**, the Children’s Heart Center (CHC) of AUBMC has earned worldwide recognition as a leading center of excellence in Lebanon and the region.
- **Over 80% of patients** at the CHC of AUBMC receive financial support from Brave Heart.
- **Awareness:** As the first patient fund in Lebanon dedicated to pediatric cardiac care, Brave Heart runs the only awareness campaigns since 2004, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, to educate the public about CHD incidence, encourage early detection and treatment. With its life-partner award-winning communications agency Impact BBDO, Brave Heart has launched annual media campaigns with the support of local TV and media outlets (billboards, magazines, radios) making a significant impact. Our ‘scar’ campaigns helped alleviate the bullying and stigma suffered by children.

On an international level, in 2023 Brave Heart participated with Global ARCH at the 8th World Congress of Pediatric Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery in Washington DC, to shed light on the challenges of Congenital Heart Disease in Lebanon during these difficult economic times and advocate for CHD patients in Lebanon.

In solidarity with the World Heart Federation, Brave Heart celebrates World Heart Day every year on September 29 to raise awareness about the importance of heart health. In 2023, Brave Heart hosted an event at the Children’s Heart Center to engage the community in heart health awareness and launched a social media campaign to reinforce the need to make access to quality heart care available to all children born with heart disease.

Furthermore, Brave Heart collaborates with schools and universities in Lebanon to raise awareness about CHD in the classroom and to rally students to participate in local sports events such as the Beirut Marathon every year. Brave Heart is the oldest NGO to have participated in the Beirut Marathon since its inception in 2003, receiving numerous accolades over the years and gathering more than 28,000 runners over the course of 20 years.