

CONTENT GATHERING ETHICS AND GUIDELINES

This statement, written by members of Bond, the UK network for organisations working in international development, outlines our responsibilities for and commitments to ethical practice when gathering and using images and stories to communicate our work. A set of guidelines accompanies this statement.

Bond: Statement of ethical practice on NGO content gathering and use

We rely on the images and stories of the people we work with to communicate the importance and impact of our work. These contributors generously share their time as well as their images, experiences and opinions with us and make our communications powerful and effective. Respecting their contribution means recognising them as key stakeholders in our communications and working to ensure that our image making upholds their rights to participation and protection.

We also have a responsibility to better understand our audiences and the impact of our communications. Our communications should improve public understanding of the capabilities and resilience of the people we work with, alongside the realities and complexities of global poverty we are working to overcome. The global nature of communications mean that our outputs can be seen by anyone, anywhere including individuals in the countries where we work and diaspora audiences in the UK who share aspects of the identity of the people and places portrayed.

Adhering to the **commitments** below will result in NGO communications that work well for everyone: our contributors, their communities, our audiences, and our own organisations.

- We recognise **contributors as key stakeholders** in our communications. Our guidelines outline the different ways that we aim to put our contributors first and ensure that we respect their rights to participation and protection throughout our image making.
- We will adhere to the humanitarian principle of **Do no Harm** when gathering and using images and stories. We will fully assess, and respond to, the risks to our contributors of sharing their personal data (their images and stories) through our communications.
- We will undertake **informed consent** procedures to ensure that our contributors fully understand the implications and outcomes of their contribution and are enabled to freely give (or withhold) their consent. Informed consent is the cornerstone of ethical practice.
- We will gather and communicate images and stories that **accurately** document the distinct realities of the different people we work with. In our communications, images will be accompanied by **captions** wherever possible.
- We will strive to **communicate the background and context** to situations, recognising that global poverty is systematic and not accidental.
- Our images and stories must **avoid perpetuating negative stereotypes** of the people and places where we work. We will avoid the dangers of the single story by creating fuller stories that generate empathy and understanding and use contributors' own words in their stories wherever we can.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Photography and film

When photographing or filming, please consider the following:

- Comply with local traditions or restrictions when photographing or filming in the field.
- Always get consent beforehand. Consent forms are available from the Brand & Content team at ShelterBox (brandandcontent@shelterbox.org) along with a guidance document on informed consent.
- Respect a person's right to refuse to be photographed or filmed, be sensitive to reluctance or confusion. If in doubt, don't shoot. And never shoot covertly.
- Always explain why you want to take a photo or film, and where we may use it.
- Do not misrepresent the individual, situation, context or location of the photo or film.
- Offer no payments or compensation in exchange for consent.
- Do not photograph or film issues or situations that are culturally sensitive, politically sensitive or socially stigmatised. Protecting the identity and privacy of beneficiaries is paramount.
- Never record images of military personnel or equipment unless with express permission and where part of the humanitarian response.
- When working with partners in the field, ensure approach and values are compatible and aligned.

Photos of people who have special needs should be taken with particular care, compassion and protection of privacy.

- Survivors of sexual exploitation, gender-based violence or abuse, are not to be identified as such.
- When gathering information about a beneficiary living with HIV, TB or any other serious health conditions, do not reveal their condition without written consent.
- Any engagement in sex work or other socially marginalised or criminal activities must not be identified.
- Do not exploit an individual's vulnerability in times of crisis, trauma or grief.

Children and consent

When photographing or filming a child, the best interests of the child are paramount.

- Consent must be gained from a parent or guardian before a child's photo is taken or their story recorded. The child should also have the purpose of the photo/interview explained to them in a manner appropriate to their age, and asked for their permission.
- Children have the right to be consulted and their wishes respected.
- Children must be protected from being portrayed in a way that may result in harm or discrimination.
- Parents or guardians must be present if a child is to be interviewed and this must be done sensitively. Do not continue if the child is upset or distressed.
- The permission of a parent, guardian or other responsible adult must be sought when photos or videos of children are taken.