

# Statement of ethical practice on NGO content gathering and use

**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.**

We rely on the images and stories of the people we work with to communicate the importance and impact of our work. These contributors<sup>1</sup> 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 the wider 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 the challenges we are working to overcome. The global nature of our communications mean that our outputs can be seen by anyone, anywhere; therefore everyone, everywhere is an audience and so we must create communications with this in mind.

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.

<sup>1</sup> The term 'contributors' refers to the people who feature in films, photographs and accompanying interviews. It is a deliberate alternative to 'subject' to better acknowledge their active role in, and contribution to image making.

- We will adhere to the humanitarian principle of **Do no harm** when gathering and using images and stories. We recognise the vulnerable situations many contributors – particularly children – find themselves in, and 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 the challenges and circumstances facing the people we work with. Our communications aim to support understanding that issues of poverty and global inequality are a result of broader social, economic and/or political factors.
- Our images and stories must **avoid perpetuating negative stereotypes** of the people and places where we work. We will work to create fuller stories that generate empathy and understanding and use contributors' own words in their stories wherever we can.