

# Communications toolkit:

## Visual images policy: the use of visual imagery and case studies

Film footage, photography and case studies are essential elements in portraying the work of Family for Every Child, enabling us to raise funds and awareness. Family for Every Child has a duty of care to the children who feature in all visual and written material and at all times must put their interests first. Any portrayal of children and their experiences must protect their identity, preserve their dignity and be accurate, balanced and fair.

The Family for Every Child Support Unit will rely heavily on members to provide visual images and case studies from their work. Members should obtain informed consent from those featured and follow the guidance below.

Frequent, good contact between members and the Communications Team within the Support Unit will be essential to maintain a healthy, accurate and valuable library of materials.

Members have requested that:

*No children or families who have participated in projects to be put in direct contact with audiences – media/donors until further discussion*

### Permission

- Fully informed verbal consent (in their first language) must be obtained from parents/guardians or carers and the children before taking and using photographs, film footage, audio recordings or personal histories. If there are no adults present, you can obtain consent from the children if they are of sufficient age and understanding.
- Where possible obtain written informed consent from the parents/guardians or carers.
- Where possible please make it clear to the individual that their image might be used not only nationally but internationally. The Family for Every Child Communications Team will provide an information sheet to help explain where, when and how images might be used to promote our work.
- Where possible show the individual their photo (e.g. on a digital camera) or quotes to confirm consent.
- Never take pictures, film or record individuals who do not want to take part, or who are unable to give informed consent.
- Do not coerce an individual into giving consent out of respect/duty felt for the adult/authority figure.

### Identification

- Members who submit photos to the Support Unit for potential publication should ensure that the specific location of children cannot be identified - either from the imagery or accompanying captions/text.
- The Support Unit will also endeavour not to publish any personal or physical information which identifies the location of a child or family on publicity materials, websites or other communications.
- Members and the Support Unit should obscure the visual identity of any child if dissemination of the image could make the child vulnerable to stigma, discrimination, abuse, violence or exploitation.
- The names of children and adults should be changed by the submitting member in both photograph captions and case studies.

### Respect and honesty

- Portrayals of children should be accurate and balanced, with emphasis upon their dignity. A child's strengths, capabilities and what they have achieved should be highlighted wherever possible.
  - Children should not be portrayed as passive victims.
  - Do not manipulate in a way which distorts the reality of the situation. Avoid sensationalism and misrepresentation. For example, children who are not street-involved children should not be portrayed as such.
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- Materials must be authentic – photos sent with case studies should be of the actual child in the story; a case study must be one person’s experience and not a compilation of many stories.
- Photos which may be interpreted ambiguously should be captioned appropriately to avoid them being taken out of context.
- Please ensure that children are appropriately clothed in images and not in poses that could be deemed sexually provocative.
- Images and case studies should respect religious or cultural sensitivities.

### **Disasters and Emergencies**

- In any publicity material dealing with disasters, Family for Every Child will follow the policy in the Code of Conduct of the International Committee of the Red Cross information: “In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects.”
- In doing this, members and the Support Unit shall portray an objective image of disasters, in which the capacities and aspirations of those affected are highlighted, not just their vulnerabilities and fears.
- We will not lose respect for those affected, but treat them as equal partners in action.

### **Third party use of images**

- If an image or case study is to be used by another organisation or media outlet permission must be sought from the Communications Team. The image must be credited to the photographer/member with an appropriate caption when possible.

## **Responsibilities**

### **The Members**

- Will only submit images and case studies which conform to their own organisational policies as well as those of Family for Every Child.
- Will only submit images and case studies for which they have obtained informed verbal consent. Whenever possible the subject should understand where, when and how their image/story might be used by Family for Every Child specifically. (It may be important to note that some subjects could be happy for materials to be used nationally but not internationally. The Support Unit will rely on the member to make this decision).
- Will advise on photo captioning and credits. When an image is part of a case study, the member will change the name and identifying details before submitting to ensure the privacy of the subject(s).
- Will notify the Communications Team immediately if an image or case study becomes unsuitable for use.
- Will work with the Support Unit if, on occasion, an example of a vulnerable child or sensitive situation is required, to ensure accuracy, balance, anonymity and dignity.

### **The Support Unit and Communications Team**

- Will provide guidance and examples of where, when and how images of children might be used which can be shown to potential subjects.
- Will provide guides and tips on how to take suitable photographs and film footage plus other technical support when requested.
- Will strive to inform the member when their images or case studies are used in a specific report, noteworthy project or campaign (i.e. other than on the website/in day-to-day usage).
- Will not crop, edit or digitally manipulate submitted material in a way which misleads or distorts the reality of the situation.
- Will respond to concerns raised and requests for material-removal as swiftly as possible.
- Will inform a member, when possible, if an image or case study is to be used by a third party.
- Will ensure images which are used by a third party are credited to the member organisation which provided them.

### **Members visiting members**

- During member exchanges all participants should be supplied with a copy of this policy and be expected to comply with it.
- The host member should brief visitors on their own policies which must be adhered to even if they are more rigorous than that of Family for Every Child.

### **Contact**

Photos should be submitted to the Communications Team who will also provide technical assistance and guidance when requested. If a photograph becomes unsuitable for use please inform as soon as possible ([communications@familyforeverychild.org](mailto:communications@familyforeverychild.org))

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