

## Photography and video guidelines: to protect children and adults from harm

### I. INTRODUCTION

There are many reasons why we take and use images (i.e., photographs and video). A picture is worth a thousand words. Images help us communicate messages or remember important events in time.

However, if we are not careful about protecting the subjects (i.e., adults and children who are younger than 18 years old) in our images, we can cause more harm than good.

As Oak staff, we have a duty to maintain the highest ethical and professional standards when taking and using images. As a general rule, all images taken of children and adults, regardless of where we share them, should aim to show optimism and hope. These guidelines describe how we can protect adults and children from harm.

#### **Definition of public and internal images**

We use images, either taken by staff or given to us by our grantees, on our website and in our annual reports. These photographs are considered public images.

We also take photographs for work purposes (e.g., site visits, conferences and events, etc.) to share with staff and Trustees for internal use and for the Foundation's charitable, educational and archival purposes. These are considered internal images.

**As a general rule, all images should show optimism and hope.**

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## II. GUIDELINES FOR INTERNAL USE OF IMAGES

1. **Summary:** We take photographs and video for work purposes (e.g., site visits, conferences and events, etc.) to share with staff and Trustees for internal use in advancing the Foundation's charitable, educational and archival purposes. Staff need to use their best judgement when taking images for work purposes to share internally. Follow the general principles in these photography guidelines to protect children and adults from harm.
2. **Consent:** Do not take images that reveal the face or identity of someone without their knowledge. In situations, where possible, staff should get the verbal consent of the person being filmed, recorded or photographed and explain its intended and/or possible use(s). In addition, the informed, oral consent of the child (if they are capable of giving consent) **and/or** parent/guardian where possible be obtained before a photograph, recording or image of a child and its intended and/or possible use(s) explained.
3. **Sharing:** Images taken by staff for work purposes of adults or children should be shared only through a private password protected site viewable only to staff (e.g., the intranet). The written consent of the adult and/or parent will be required if any of the material is used for public purposes (e.g., on our website, on social media sites or in our publications). Consent forms have been developed for this purpose.

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## III. GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC USE OF IMAGES

1. **Risks:** Protecting children and adults from harm should be considered a top priority when taking images. We work with people around the world on a variety of sensitive issues, including sexual exploitation, arbitrary detention, homelessness, child abuse and learning differences, among others. In many situations it is not appropriate to take images because it can pose potential risks.

The public use of images pose potential protection-related risks:<sup>1</sup>

- images containing personal information can be used as a means of identifying children and adults, making contact with them at a distance or even tracing them to where they live;
- images may be altered or adapted for inappropriate use; or
- displaying and using inappropriate images or images for which consent and permission have not been obtained, is unethical and may lead to increased organisational risks such as reputational damage.

Staff should conduct an assessment before taking a photo or video by assessing the potential risks as indicated above.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on A Child Protection Toolkit (KCS 2006) and Plan International guidelines.

2. **Protecting children:** Personal information about a child (such as full name, date of birth or full names of family members) and information that could be used to identify his/her specific location within a country (such as village or community names, school, parish, etc.) should not be used, especially where this is linked to an image. The child's name must always be changed.

Children that have experienced violence, exploitation, have been otherwise abused or are in some way particularly vulnerable or at risk if identified, should not have their faces displayed or in any other way be represented in a way that may lead to their identification. In addition, their real names must be changed, and this change indicated. Other identifying details should also be changed.

As a general rule, all images of children should show optimism and hope. Images of children in states of undress should not be used.

3. **Protecting adults:** The practice of protecting adults from harm is similar to protecting children from harm; however, adults can consent in writing if their faces are displayed or if their real names are used. Consent forms have been developed for this purpose.

As a general rule, all images of adults should show optimism and hope. Images of adults in states of undress should not be used.

4. **Storing of images:** All images, along with accompanying details of individuals, should be used and kept according to relevant data and privacy laws. It is recommended that:
  - a. images are stored securely (e.g. lockable safe/cabinet, electronic files password protected, limited access etc.); and
  - b. images of children are destroyed two years after the date on the consent form unless further consent is agreed.

5. **Consent:** The informed, oral and written consent of the child (if they are capable of giving consent) **and/or** parent/guardian should be obtained before a photograph or image of a child is used, and its intended and/or possible use(s) explained. The implications of using images, including risks and possible negative consequences, especially where images used on websites should also be fully explained. Where possible, the child and family should be shown the image before it is published. Consent forms have been developed for this purpose.

**Group Photographs:** As with individual photographs, it should be explained to the group of adults or children what the photographs will be used for and consent sought from individuals in the group. Any individuals who wish to opt out should be allowed to do so.

**General Photographs:** Where using images of children in crowd scenes where it may be difficult or impossible to get consent, the following should be taken into consideration:

- Would the children attending the event expect photographs or videos to be taken?

- Would children in the photograph or video probably consider themselves to be in a public place, with no expectation of privacy?
- Is it unlikely that anyone would object to the photograph or video being taken? (An individual could be in a public place, but may not want any images in which they are present being used.)

Where photographs and videos are being taken at a planned event, as far as possible individuals should be told in advance that cameras will be used and how the images will be used, in order that they can opt out of the event or notify organisers that they do not wish to be featured in any photograph or video.

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#### **IV. Guidelines for use of photographers/writers contracted by Oak**

Independent photographers and writers commissioned by Oak are considered as contractors/consultants and as such are subject to the Policy and Procedures and Guidance.