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# OXFAM AUSTRALIA ETHICAL CONTENT GUIDELINES

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**OXFAM**  
Australia

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For further information or questions about these guidelines, please email [content@oxfam.org.au](mailto:content@oxfam.org.au)

## Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that photos, videos and stories are collected, sourced and used honestly and ethically, according to Oxfam Australia's [Ethical Images and Stories Policy](#), our fundraising, legal, ethical and compliance obligations and our brand values, and that they portray the people and communities, with whom we work, with respect, dignity and accuracy. These guidelines should be read and followed in conjunction with *MC01 Ethical Images and Stories Policy*.

## Definitions

- 1) **Oxfam Australia** – For the purpose of these guidelines, Oxfam Australia, Oxfam Trading and Country Offices will be referred to as a single title under Oxfam Australia.
- 2) **Images** – means still (photographs and illustrations) and moving (video and animation).
- 3) **Stories** – the direct quotes, facts and personal details obtained during an interview and used in messaging, case studies, reports and communications.
- 4) **Content** — videos, photos, stories and interviews that Oxfam Australia commissions, collects or sources that illustrates any aspect of Oxfam Australia's work, activities and functions and may be used in digital or printed communications.
- 5) **Child** – is an individual below the age of 18 years.

## Introduction

Images and personal stories about the people we work with play a vital role in helping Oxfam Australia raise awareness about poverty and injustice, in bringing Oxfam's work to life and in engaging supporters and the public.

However, in collecting and using these images and stories, we have a responsibility to protect the people that we are portraying, and to communicate truthfully with our audiences. We must ensure that all content is collected and used ethically, honestly and sensitively and with respect for people's dignity and culture.

Our content should be spirited, active, real and ultimately hopeful. Our communications should reflect people, their experiences and the context of situations truthfully and authentically, and accurately describe the nature, scope and impact of Oxfam's work.

Ethics are about more than just doing the "right" thing, they "involve acting in the 'right' spirit out of an abiding respect and concern for others"<sup>1</sup> and as such involve assessing risks and using ethical judgment at every stage of planning, content gathering, storage and use.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Government (2007), *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, p. 3.

## **Part 1: Collecting content ethically**

### **Accuracy**

Images and stories collected must be authentic. They must accurately and respectfully depict the person, their lives and experiences, their story, their environment, their relationship to Oxfam's work, and the context of their situation. People have entrusted us with their stories and images — we are the guardians of that. We do not exploit them, or misrepresent their situation.

When gathering images and stories you must accurately and honestly document and portray the conditions you witness, the personal story you are told and the intended meaning of information provided. This includes the stark reality of need, as well as Oxfam's work and the difference it has made to people's lives. You should not exaggerate the situation, misrepresent it or understate it. This means you will need to work with the relevant country team and program staff to ensure your visit is to a community that will fulfil your content requirements.

If we collect images and stories in places where Oxfam is not working and does not plan to work, either local Oxfam staff or partners must explain this clearly to the community before your visit, so that they don't get false hope.

From time to time, you may need to set up particular shots or be somewhat creative with your imagery to help tell your story. This is okay, within reason, as long as you are accurately portraying the story the person told you in their interview and the context at the time of your visit, and are not trying to misrepresent these in any way.

### **Ethical integrity**

As a representative of Oxfam, we always try to live Oxfam values in all we do. We do not want to perpetuate the stereotypes of people living in poverty, but instead show a true and accurate account of the ways in which people live. This means we show people as empowered, dignified human beings. We don't portray them as submissive or helpless, nor as victims, objects of pity, or incapable individuals waiting for help from a "white saviour".

People are survivors, not victims; they are active participants in work, in life and in bringing about change in their lives. In terms of our campaign work, we believe in collective action with freedom of association to be a basic right.

When documenting need, you should capture the reality of the situation in a way that we call "need with dignity" — portraying people respectfully; as having dignity and an inner strength and determination; capable individuals helping or wanting to help themselves.

We should not take images of vulnerable people shot from above, as this can reduce their dignity to the viewer. Ideally, images should be taken at the same level or looking up at a subject, particularly when showing need.

We do not take images of people who have died or are at the moment of death or people who are in extreme emotional distress.

Where possible, try to avoid images of white Oxfam staff formally addressing local people as this can reinforce perceptions of power imbalances. For example, rather than having the staff member standing up in front of a group of people who are sitting on the ground,

photograph them interacting among a community or in discussion with them at the same level.

The images and stories we collect should reflect the diversity of Oxfam and its work, capturing a range of ages, genders, ethnicities and being inclusive of people with disabilities, where possible.

You should only take images that directly relate to Oxfam, Oxfam's work, the issue or situation Oxfam is trying to raise awareness of, or the personal story that a subject has shared in an interview.

## **Consent and permissions**

All people we interview, photograph or film must give their free, prior and informed consent for us to do so. Where a person is under 18, we require both their consent (if they are old enough to understand) and their parents' or guardians' consent.

You must clearly explain to them:

- why you want to take their image and record their stories and/or personal details;
- how and where they will be used and over what time period;
- who may see them;
- that we will only interview and take images of people who want to participate;
- we won't identify people who wish to remain anonymous;
- we will represent them honestly and accurately;
- there won't be any repercussions if they choose not to participate (eg, we will not withdraw our program support).

You should take examples with you to illustrate this. If recording their interview on video or audio, be sure to ask their permission first, during the consent process, explaining that you wish to do so to accurately capture what they say.

People should be comfortable with the consent process and clearly indicate their willingness to participate. If they wish to place any restrictions on use of their name, stories or images, these must be clearly noted, so that we can record these with the resource on our Words and Pictures database.

Informed consent can only be achieved in the person's own language. Ideally you should have a professional, independent translator with you — one who can speak both English and the local language(s) or dialect(s) fluently. Hiring a professional translator may not always be possible, but it will ensure that stories are captured accurately.

Wherever possible, it is recommended that Oxfam program staff or partner representatives visit the community beforehand, to advise them about the content trip, explain why we wish to gather stories and images and discuss any concerns with community leaders or potential subjects. Even if this has already been done before your visit, as the content gatherer, you are responsible for ensuring the people you photograph, film or interview have given their free, prior and informed consent.

You must respect local hierarchal structures to ensure that consent is sought from the correct people. For example, in some communities a village chief must give his consent before any filming, photography or interviewing is done.

The most important aspect of informed consent is making sure a person truly understands what they are consenting to — this must be done in writing, and must be recorded.

**WHAT IS FREE CONSENT?**

A person has not been coerced, intimidated, pressured or manipulated into giving consent. If a person is not willing to participate, do not pressure them to do so.

**WHAT IS PRIOR CONSENT?**

Consent has been sought sufficiently BEFORE any interviews, photographs or video are taken and respects the time requirements of the community's consultation and consensus process.

**WHAT IS INFORMED CONSENT**

Informed consent means the person understands:

- who you are and why the content team is interviewing, photographing and filming them;
- basic aspects about Oxfam and the partner organisation;
- the project about which the information and images are being collected;
- exactly how and where their image, name, story and place of residence will be used and the potential extent/reach of the coverage. You must explain that it will be used widely and potentially internationally (it is useful to carry examples with you);
- over what time period the content will be used and that they can nominate a shorter consent period if they wish;
- that participation is entirely voluntarily and they can withdraw their permission at any time now or in the future, for use of all, or any part of the content; without any repercussions whatsoever.
- the potential risks, dangers and consequences of their name, face and words appearing online, in print and the media, potentially around the world.

And then gives Oxfam permission to:

- collect photos, film, audio and/or stories, in whole or part;
- use this material in the manner outlined or agreed to;
- use their name (full name, first name only or agreed pseudonym) and location; and
- show their face or collect images which hide their identity;

If someone places any restrictions on the terms of consent, please record these clearly in your notebook or on the consent form so they can be filed with the relevant resources on Words and Pictures.

**Verbal consent**

In some contexts, verbal consent can be sufficient, but it must be recorded and witnessed by two people on the same Oxfam consent form as if you were obtaining written consent.

Verbal consent enables a detailed discussion to take place between you and the subject and gives the subject an opportunity to ask questions and raise any concerns. It's important you don't rush this process and allow adequate time to ensure they clearly understand exactly what they are consenting to.

Always try to record this verbal consent on video or audio, recording the file name in your interview notes. If people want to put restrictions on their terms of consent, please note these in writing as they will be stored with the resource on our Words and Pictures database.

**Written consent forms**

Written consent forms must always be used when gathering content involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. There are also special consent forms and processes for content gathering involving schools, children in Australia and events such as Straight Talk or Oxfam Trailwalker. Please speak with the Content Team for more information.

Completed consent forms are stored as confidential resources on our Words and Pictures database.

## Public spaces, events and large groups

There are several things to keep in mind when filming or photographing people in public spaces or public events in action.

If the photo or video is to be used in external communications, you only need to get consent from those people whose faces are close up and/or are clearly visible and identifiable.

If people aren't clearly identifiable by their face or name, then in most instances you don't have to individually get informed consent from every person captured in the frame (or their parent or guardian). Two exceptions to this are:

- when the image may compromise someone's human dignity (eg, a person is in the background and in a compromising state and not aware they are being photographed or filmed); or
- the film or photography may contravene *Oxfam Australia's Ethical Images and Story Policy*.

In large group situations, often it is easier to explain informed consent to the whole group, then ask anyone who does not give their consent to let you know. You can then record this on film or audio, if possible.

In some places that are especially sensitive, like refugee camps, you will need to be guided by those in authority about consent in open areas.

Sometimes a village chief may give permission on behalf of his whole community for you to film, photograph or interview community members. However, always be sure you follow this up with the individual to confirm their genuine consent.

### INFORMED CONSENT CHECKLIST

- Have you explained how and where images and stories will be used and stored, over what period of time, showing examples where possible?
- Is the consent informed and has it been given freely, without coercion? If not, Oxfam Australia cannot use the material.
- Have you given the person an option *not* to appear in your photo/film/story? Do they understand they can withdraw their consent at any time, even after you have left? Have you given them the contact details of a local Oxfam or partner staff member if they wish to change their consent?
- Do they know the options for hiding their identity if they wish to remain anonymous (for example, through creative photography or filming, using a pseudonym, disguising their voice, restricting publication to a particular region or context)?
- Does the person understand that there are no repercussions from a program perspective, if they choose not to participate?

## Permissions

If you are filming or photographing on privately-owned or government-owned property, you are legally required to get consent from the owners or the relevant authority before you do so. This usually includes public areas such as parks, streets, rivers and beaches.

Be sure to research what permissions are required, from whom, well ahead of your shoot. Check whether there are any permits or licences you need to apply for or registrations you need to make, and allow adequate time in your schedule to obtain these. For example, if you plan to use a drone, you need to make sure you have met the in-country requirements around importing, licensing and registration.

When travelling to the field make sure you ask local Oxfam staff during your initial in-country briefing about any specific local laws, regulations or cultural taboos around photography and filming. You should also research if there are any restrictions or customs requirements around what audio-visual equipment you can take into the country you are visiting.

## **High-risk situations**

When planning a content-gathering trip, you should assess the potential risks and consequences for people you are interviewing, filming or photographing, especially if their names, images and stories are to be used in Oxfam communications materials.

In some cases, the Oxfam country team or our local partners may have more information about the dangers than local informants or the people being portrayed. Assessing the level of risk they face will be a key factor in determining to what degree you must protect their identity or whether you should collect the content at all.

It is imperative that you always have GPS location and geo-tagging functions turned off on your camera and mobile phone so that your subject's location details are not recorded on your image files. In identified high-risk situations, it is also advised to not include identifying information in your image files' metadata.

Particularly sensitive and high-risk situations that should be given adequate scrutiny during all stages of your content-gathering trip include:

- people living in or fleeing from conflict zones;
- people affected by a natural disaster;
- people living with HIV;
- survivors of sexual assault;
- survivors of gender-based violence;
- activities involving children; and
- people speaking out against government, authority or large corporations.

When taking images of people in high-risk personal security situations and they have given consent for you to show their face, it is advisable to shoot options with their faces hidden as well, in case they later wish to change their consent, or the risks escalate and we can no longer use any images which reveal their identity.

In high-risk situations, protect the content you collect. Keep at least two back-ups in separate locations and upload to Oxfam Box for additional security, if you have internet access.

If you are unsure, always be guided by Oxfam staff or local partners.

### RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

- Could publishing of the person's name, image or comments place them in danger or at risk of harm? Consider the sensitivities surrounding disclosing the identity of the person (for example police attention, family relations, stigmatisation or violent retributions from people in power).
- Have you discussed the potential consequences of identifying the subject with Oxfam staff and local partners?
- If the subject is an adult and they are keen to share their story, have you discussed and agreed to ways to hide their identity and a process for changing any terms of consent?
- If there is a real risk to a person, do not take or use their photo — this is particularly important if that person is a child or vulnerable adult.

### Personal security concerns

If confidentiality, anonymity or personal security is a concern for the person being interviewed, filmed and/or photographed, this should be clearly noted and respected.

Discuss alternative ways with them to represent their story while protecting their identity — have them use only their first name, or choose a pseudonym; and/or photograph/film them with their faces hidden. Please do not make guarantees about limiting where their image or name may be published. It is not possible for Oxfam to promise people that they can restrict use of their photo or story (eg, not on the internet, not in their home country).

Shooting in a way that protects identity is crucial: this may be via back-view, up-close details (eg, hands), in silhouette or with their faces hidden by a headwear, their hands or prop. If the person wishes to use a pseudonym, ask them to choose one and write it down with a clear notation that it is NOT their real name, as we need to record this on our Words and Pictures database. If a person chooses to use a pseudonym, do not record their actual name.

If the person still does not feel comfortable about being photographed, filmed or interviewed — or yourself, Oxfam program staff or partner staff feel there is too high a security risk in capturing the content — then do not proceed.

**Ensure that any sensitivities and concerns are clearly recorded and communicated with local Oxfam staff and partners. Any measures taken to protect identity also need to be recorded in your notebook and communicated to Oxfam Australia's content team, so they can be stored with the resource on our Words and Pictures database.**

### Humanitarian response situations

Oxfam Australia adheres to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief. This code stipulates:

**“In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects**

Respect for the disaster victim as an equal partner in action should never

be lost. In our public information we shall portray an objective image of the disaster situation where the capacities and aspirations of disaster victims are highlighted, and not just their vulnerabilities and fears. While we will cooperate with the media in order to enhance public response, we will not allow external or internal demands for publicity to take precedence over the principle of maximising overall relief assistance. We will avoid competing with other disaster response agencies for media coverage in situations where such coverage may be to the detriment of the service provided to the beneficiaries or to the security of our staff or the beneficiaries.”

In humanitarian situations, you must be especially sensitive when collecting content. People are usually traumatised and under high levels of shock, stress and grief. You must not do anything that could add to their trauma. Be particularly sensitive about interviewing or taking images of children, as they may have lost parents or family members.

Respect that people may not wish to be photographed or interviewed. If they do give permission, they may not wish to share everything with you. They might be scared, sceptical, ashamed or worried about the consequences. Don't ask beyond what is absolutely necessary.

Try to avoid stereotypes or objectifying people who have been affected by disaster or conflict. We have a duty to maintain people's dignity.

You must not behave or act in a way that might potentially damage Oxfam's or our partner's relationship with local communities, authorities or other stakeholders, or affect Oxfam's response.

## **HIV and AIDS**

You should remain aware and be sensitive to photographing and interviewing people living with HIV and AIDS.

If you focus on individuals, be sure they have genuinely agreed to be photographed and interviewed and know exactly where the photographs may appear and that they understand any possible consequences of this. Please be guided by local Oxfam staff in this regard.

Do not ask people if they are HIV positive or ask questions about their status even if Oxfam staff or partner staff have advised you beforehand they are living with HIV or the project you are visiting is specifically HIV focused. Only discuss the issue if the subject discloses their status directly to you.

We do not show the faces of children who are living with HIV, or reveal any other identifiable details, except if we have the consent of their parents or guardians, the relevant Oxfam program coordinator and local partner representative (consent must be obtained from all three parties).

## **Gender violence**

Photographing, filming and interviewing people who are experiencing or have experienced family or gender-based violence, requires extra care, sensitivity and scrutiny.

Take time to have a detailed informed consent discussion with them. Ensure they are fully aware of how and where the images and stories may be used and who could potentially see them, especially if they appear online. Discuss any potential risks and consequences of their

face and name being published, potentially internationally, and ensure they understand these.

If they still wish to share their story, then discuss whether they wish to conceal their identity, in whole or part, by hiding their face, using a pseudonym or withholding location details — or any combination of these. Be sure to note these so that we can include any restrictions in our Words and Pictures database. Make sure they know how they can withdraw all or part of their consent at any time, by providing contact details of relevant local partners or Oxfam staff. Please note that we never show faces of children who are survivors of gender-based violence.

Always be sensitive when interviewing survivors of gender-based violence as talking about their experiences can be highly traumatic. Take time to build a rapport with the subject and wait for them to offer details of their violent experiences directly to you, rather than jump straight in with intrusive questions. They may not want to share all the details with you, so only ask what is absolutely essential to capture the story.

Please be sensitive as to the imagery captured in these situations, as images of fresh injuries received as a result of physical violence (eg, bruising or bleeding) are generally not considered appropriate. If people have healed scars from physical violence that they show you, always make sure they are truly comfortable for you to take an image which shows the scar. If there is any hesitation from them, then do not take the photo.

Please be guided by local Oxfam staff or partners if you are uncertain about whether particular questions or images are appropriate. It is often useful to have a discussion beforehand to work out any “no go” areas.

## **Child protection**

Working with children is a sensitive issue and extra care must be taken when taking and choosing images, footage and quotes to publish, to ensure that children are properly treated and protected. Oxfam considers a child to be a person aged under 18 years.

## **Consent**

Please ensure that you get informed consent from the child (if they are old enough to understand) as well as from their parent or guardian.

When collecting content at schools in Australia, Oxfam is usually covered by the school’s own parental consent process. Please check that this is the case, well ahead of the shoot. On these shoots, the school will advise which children are not allowed to be filmed or photographed.

For all other content involving children in Australia, you need to have the child’s parent or guardian complete and sign a parental consent form before the image can be used. Please speak with the Content Team for more information.

## **Location**

We do not record or publish any details which would reveal the location of children or their families. Be especially mindful that there is nothing captured in the frame (eg, signage, emblems) that may reveal specific location details. This includes:

- the names of villages, small towns or suburbs where children or their families’ live — use district, region or province names instead;
- names of settlements or smaller “unofficial” internally-displaced persons camps. Larger camps which have official United Nations status can be named;

- names of schools (see exception for Australian schools under “names” below); and
- GPS coordinates — **ensure GPS location data and geo-tagging functions are turned off on your camera or mobile phone** before taking any images.

Please also ensure that this information is not recorded in an image file’s metadata.

If the child and their family lives in a suburb of a large city with a population of more than 100,000 people, it is okay to record the city’s name, but not the specific suburb or settlement (eg, use “Melbourne” rather than “Montmorency”).

In Australia, only record the name of a school that a child attends, if it is directly relevant to how the content is being used (ie, to promote the schools program or a National Close the Gap Day schools event) and the school has given its permission ahead of the shoot.

## Names

When photographing, filming or interviewing children **in Australia**, we:

- do not collect or use child’s surname or the surname of immediate family members;
- only collect and use the child’s real first name, if we have signed consent from their parent/guardian — either directly or through the child’s school — and the parent/guardian clearly understands where their child’s name will appear and the potential risks associated with this; and
- use an agreed pseudonym or nickname if there are any concerns from any stakeholder.

When photographing, filming or interviewing children **in the field**, we:

- do not collect or use the surnames of children or their immediate family members.
- will not record or use a child’s real first name, but instead use a culturally-appropriate pseudonym agreed to by the child’s parent/guardian at the time the image or story is collected.

Please make a clear note that the child’s name is a pseudonym, so we can record this with the resource in our Words and Pictures database.

At Oxfam, we believe in the right to be heard and work to empower people to be in charge of decisions that affect them. Therefore, if a parent/guardian insists on using their child’s actual first name for cultural reasons, and gives you permission to do so, you can either:

- ask them if they have a nickname for the child that they would be comfortable with you using instead; or
- record the child’s actual first name, as per their wishes, but also ask local Oxfam staff or partners to suggest a culturally-appropriate pseudonym that could be used in high-risk situations.

## Nudity

While it is natural for children in some communities where Oxfam works to run around fully or partially naked, this is not the norm in Australia. At Oxfam Australia, we can only use images of children where they are appropriately dressed for an Australian audience. Sadly, there have been cases where NGO images have been used inappropriately.

Do not take stills of fully naked children or children naked from the waist down, as we will not use these. Wherever possible children should be fully clothed, although this can be difficult in many countries where we work for a variety of reasons. In these instances, you may need to ask for guidance from local staff. Where it is not possible for a child to be fully clothed, please understand that we will not publish images where you can clearly see children’s

genitals, nipples or bare bottom, or where children are not considered to be “appropriately clothed” (refer to break-out box below).

Please also be aware of appropriate body positioning and camera angles. Where possible, shoot below the child’s eye line, or at least level with them; try to avoid shooting them from above and do not place the children in sexually suggestive or submissive positions.

You are required to abide by our [Child Safeguarding Policy](#) at all times and sign our [Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct](#), which will be kept on file at Oxfam Australia.

#### **WHAT IS “ADEQUATELY CLOTHED” WHEN PHOTOGRAPHING CHILDREN?**

Some questions to ask yourself before photographing or filming children who are partially clothed:

- Are they a babe in arms?
- Is it in context with the focus of Oxfam Australia’s work? (For example, a water and sanitation project.)
- Is it relevant to the story that Oxfam Australia is trying to capture?
- If this were my child, would I be comfortable with them being photographed or filmed this way?
- Can I photograph/film them so the nudity isn’t obvious or so that their nipples, genitals and/or bare bottom can’t be seen?
- Are they wearing traditional dress for a ceremony for their particular culture, clan or ethnic group?

In any of these situations, you are still required to ensure that the child’s genitals and nipples are not clearly visible — particularly for children who are not babes in arms — otherwise we cannot use the images.

## **Animals**

Oxfam is sensitive to how it photographs and videos animals, to safeguard their welfare. While we do not judge other cultures on their attitudes and behaviours regarding animals, we must do everything we can to ensure animals are not distressed or harmed in the course of our content-gathering. Animals should not be mistreated, harmed, tortured or abused for the purposes of taking a photo or collecting video — they should be treated respectfully. We can only use images of animals that are deemed suitable for an Australian audience or that have been collected ethically. This means:

- Animals should look “comfortable” and like they are being well treated and looked after.
- Livestock should always have all feet on the ground (unless being held in a person’s arms).
- They should not be seen to be struggling or pulling against ropes or restraints.
- Animals should not appear to be in pain.
- Animals should not be chased or distressed unnecessarily.
- Animals should not be beaten or otherwise coerced against their will.
- Chickens, ducks and other poultry should be held gently, around the body, not by the wings, head or feet.
- Chickens and other poultry must not be photographed in cages.

- If photographing livestock or other animals in pens or enclosures please make sure the animal has adequate room to move, access to some form of natural light and is not frightened or scared.
- Cameras should not be strapped to an animal's head or body.

While on assignment for Oxfam Australia, you are expected to treat all animals humanely and not support the mistreatment of animals or exploitative wildlife tourism that is not directly involved in animal conservation or animal welfare.

## Environment

When you are gathering content, you must be sensitive to the environment and any impact your photography, videography or interviews may have on your surroundings. We ask that you conduct your activities in an environmentally-sustainable way, including taking care *not* to:

- damage vegetation;
- stray from marked trails;
- intentionally disturb or harm wildlife or the natural environment; or
- leave behind any rubbish — always take it with you.

## Cultural awareness

Be mindful of and sensitive to any cultural differences that may exist between yourself and the people you meet during your trip. Upon your arrival in country, local Oxfam staff will provide you with a full security and cultural briefing.

Do not enter a community and impose your western ways, beliefs and expectations upon them. Be respectful and sensitive, following their lead and ways of life. Oxfam country teams have often spent decades forging relationships and building trust with partner and communities. We must be mindful not to do anything that may damage those relationships.

Always be culturally aware and culturally sensitive. If you are unsure whether something is appropriate — ask Oxfam staff first.

Do not ask people to do or say things which sensationalise their situation, go against their cultural practices, or which they might find demeaning.

Try and include them in discussions about how they will be photographed or filmed, whether they have any questions they would like to ask you, or any other information they wish to share.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Comply with local traditions or restrictions in taking or reproducing images of people, objects or places.
- Be respectful of cultural practices, attitudes and beliefs — for example, removing shoes before entering a home, not using your left hand, accepting gifts, food and drink offered to you (it is often considered highly offensive to refuse), not sitting equal to or higher than the chief among certain ethnic groups.
- Be aware of any power, gender or racial dynamics.
- Show consideration — think of the needs of others from their point of view (for example, drinking from a water bottle in front of people who have no clean water; eating food or snacks you have brought with you in front of people who are experiencing food shortages).

- Be polite and respectful — you are a guest in their house, community or workplace for example, use the preferred title and the appropriate tone of voice (particularly if you are speaking different languages).
- Always keep a positive, flexible attitude and an open mind.
- Show genuine interest.
- Respect a person's right to privacy and confidentiality.
- There is often a hierarchy about who you need to speak to in a community, in what order (eg, chief, then management committee, elders then younger people).
- You may need to get the village leader's permission to take photos, shoot video or speak to community members.

When addressing a person from another culture, you may need to consider:

- different ways of speaking, greeting people;
- titles that may be preferred;
- hierarchical structures or protocols for addressing people;
- male and female roles that are clearly defined along cultural boundaries;
- different speech patterns or languages;
- use of silence, or cultural taboos around particular questions or phrasing;
- codes of behaviour;
- what is appropriate clothing to wear;
- gender-specific tasks to complete;
- non-verbal communication and body language — for example, eye contact, use of touching, use of a specific hand or gesture; and
- use of physical space.

If you intend to film sites of cultural significance, or aspects of local culture such as traditional ceremonies, performances, music or artworks, you must always obtain and record the consent of the relevant traditional owners, Elders or leaders.

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples**

Make sure you read Oxfam Australia's [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols](#) before undertaking any content gathering relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

### **Consent**

**When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are being photographed, Oxfam Australia requires signed written consent forms from all subjects.** We have two types of consent forms — a short version which has our standard terms of consent, then a longer version in which people can opt-in and opt-out of what level and terms of consent they agree to. You will need to keep careful notes so we can link these consent forms to the correct people. Where a person is under 18, we require consent forms to be signed by the child (where old enough to understand) as well as their parent or guardian.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples should be consulted and involved in all decisions affecting their cultural heritage and, in particular, on the ways in which their history, community, stories, image, interviews, lives, families and cultural and intellectual property are represented and used. Speaking to the right people is very important, especially in identifying who can represent clans to release traditionally and collectively-owned material.

### **Permissions**

Always research what the procedure is for obtaining consent to enter into and film on an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and make sure you have these before you enter. You will need to seek permission from the relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander land council, authority or organisation, and/or the traditional owners and obtain any required documentation. Also check if you need a permit to film or photograph on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands. Always speak to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Program (ATSIPP) team before contacting an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

When entering a community, it is important to ask community members where you can and cannot walk as there may be men's areas and women's areas. Make sure that you seek permission before walking around the community. Also seek permission from Elders before taking photographs of the community and surrounding areas as there may be areas which are considered sacred sites.

You must obtain permission from Elders before filming or photographing performances, ceremonies, artworks or other items of cultural significance.

### **Cultural awareness**

Consult with Elders and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in authority to identify any sensitive, sacred or religious issues relating to images, knowledge or information.

In many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the reproduction of a deceased person's name and image is offensive to cultural beliefs. The designated time period may vary from a few months to several years, to indefinitely. The relevant ATSIPP Program Lead should consult with the partner or deceased person's family or community to find out the particular death protocols that apply, so we can ensure these are observed.

### **Language**

Do not assume that English is the first spoken language. In remote locations, English is often a second, third, fourth or fifth language. You may need to arrange to have a community interpreter or translator present. This will need to be organised well before entering the community. Be especially sensitive to non-verbal clues, body language or indirect communication styles.

Content involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be uploaded as restricted resources to our Words and Pictures database, to ensure appropriate usage approvals are obtained. When the ATSIPP team alerts the content team about someone's passing, the resource will be made "confidential" until the ATSIPP team advises differently.

### **Translation**

If we are trying to elevate the voices of people living in poverty, we need to be sure that we are representing what they say with the utmost accuracy and without any bias or censorship.

It is crucial that translations are accurate, honest and free of prejudice. The best way to ensure this happens is to engage a professional, independent local translator. The translator hired should be able to speak English and the local dialect(s) fluently so we can capture a person's full, detailed story in their own words and limit the potential for bias, censorship or misunderstanding. We also prefer to use female translators as the majority of people we interview and photograph are women and having a female translator will make them feel more comfortable.

As a charity, it is tempting to try and save money by using a low-cost translator or asking Oxfam program or partner staff to help with translation. Sometimes this produces good results, but often, it can cause significant problems and can lead to a person's story being

inaccurately captured or used. However in some situations, such as an emergency, we understand that local staff may be the only option.

If you are unable to engage a professional translator in the field, then ideally you should engage one to transcribe your interviews to ensure people's words are captured accurately.

### **Working with a translator**

When working with a translator, speak directly to the person you are interviewing. Sit face-to-face and maintain eye contact (where culturally appropriate). Ask your questions to them, not to your translator. Use the person's name when asking questions, so that they know you are speaking to them. Resist the temptation to turn to face your translator to hear answers — keep your focus on your interviewee.

Ensure responses are translated in first person (eg, "I work in the fields every day, so I can feed my family" not "She works in the field every day so she can feed her family"). Ask your translator to retain the detail of answers, exactly as they were spoken

Translation should be as close as possible to a word-for-word account of what the person is saying and should try to retain the colloquial flavour of the original words. If you don't feel the translator is providing verbatim translations, then please raise this issue with them privately, and respectfully, or ask local Oxfam staff to do this for you.

Emphasise you want to keep the detail of what is being said in the interview and that you do not want the translator to summarise, censor or edit what the person has said, or to insert their own opinion. It is imperative that we allow the person to speak in their own "voice" and talk freely about both the positives and negatives of the project, Oxfam, partners or their own situation.

It is also important to make sure the translator is presenting Oxfam's views to people being interviewed or photographed and not their own and does not make any promises or encouragement of help from Oxfam.

Agree with the interpreter that he/she has the right to suggest a certain question is not proper, too intrusive or not culturally appropriate, as well as suggest an alternative approach.

### **Manipulation**

Images and footage supplied to Oxfam Australia must be accurate and authentic representations of what was shot.

A photographer is permitted to do some basic colour corrections to their images, as part of their artistic process, before delivering them to Oxfam. However, no changes should be made that alter the concept or context of the image or misrepresents the true picture. For example:

- images or footage should not be changed to duller or sepia tones, or more vivid, colourful tones, to make the situation look worse, or better, than it is;
- people or items should not be Photoshopped out of or into images or blurred, unless the storyteller or Content Manager has given a specific direction for security or protection reasons.
- images supplied should not be cropped or flipped nor composite images created.

It is best to try address these issues during the shoot. So always be alert to things that may create a security risk to the person, or a brand or ethical risk to Oxfam if they are captured within your frame. These might include location signs, school emblems, name tags,

jewellery, nudity, or inappropriate slogans, graphics, graffiti or multinational logos on clothing, buildings or signage. Always be sensitive when discussing these matters with local Oxfam staff, partners and the people concerned.

## **Giving back**

Wherever possible and practical, Oxfam Australia will work with country offices and program staff in endeavouring to provide subjects with copies of images and materials in which their image and words are used.

## **Remuneration**

We do not normally pay communities or individuals to take their images or collect their stories, particularly during short visits where the time commitment of the subjects is not more than a few hours.

However, in exceptional circumstances, where we may need a longer time commitment, it may be appropriate to compensate individuals on a “loss of income” basis.

Care should be taken at all times to handle these issues as sensitively and transparently as possible without giving potential cause for conflict. If in any doubt, please defer to the advice of local Oxfam staff and partners. If payment is to be made in cash, it should be handed over discreetly and privately at the end of the assignment.

Speak to the local Oxfam team and our partners to find out:

- whether paying compensation is appropriate and if there are any risks involved;
- how much to pay, based on what the subject would normally be paid per day in their jobs; and
- if compensation should be communicated up front or offered as a gift at the end.

## **Archiving**

Oxfam Australia will store all raw video, photos and interview transcripts on the content archive on P Drive. An edited selection will be uploaded to our Words and Pictures database, as open resources for a period of five (5) years, as per our general terms of consent. After this time the resource will be archived and restricted.

The Content team will archive a resource or make it confidential earlier than five years in the following circumstances:

- a shorter period of consent has been requested by the subject or consent has been withdrawn;
- upon being notified of the death of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person;
- at the request of a country team due to a change in context, program or situation of the individual which renders the resource inaccurate or a high brand or security risk; or
- due to an escalation of risk to the person featured in the content.

## Part 2: Using content ethically

At Oxfam we are working to tackle poverty and injustice around the world. We are very careful in portraying this work that we protect the rights, dignity and voice of the incredible people we work with. The images and stories we use, must be an honest and accurate account of people's personal stories and the situation in which they live. Authenticity is vital to uphold Oxfam's strong reputation and brand.

That means in our communications we are very much guided by these ideas of protection, dignity, authenticity, inclusiveness and voice.

### Our content

Oxfam has a wealth of content material we use to tell the story of our work — whether it be photography, video, interviews or case studies.

In practice this means that when using this content, we take care materials:

- Have the consent of people who are in them.
  - This is gathered at the time the photograph, video or interview is created and recorded on our database.
  - We won't use the materials outside of that consent agreement. If we wish to do so, we must contact the person in the photo or interview to get additional consent, preferably in writing or clearly documented in some way.
  - We adhere to the terms of consent or any additional restrictions placed on the content, as recorded in our Words and Pictures database.
- Depict people in a dignified way, with agency over their own lives. This means:
  - photos, video and stories show empowered, strong people, even in difficult circumstances: survivors, rather than helpless victims;
  - Oxfam doesn't change people's lives — they change their own lives, with our support; and
  - using inclusive, language and imagery wherever possible.
- Give people a voice and an identity. This means:
  - we identify people in photos via photo captions, using their names or agreed pseudonyms;
  - where possible, we use people's direct quotes to tell their story;
  - we use names or agreed pseudonyms to document people's stories and reproduce their quotes; and
  - whenever photos are published, we will always credit photographers and copyright holders in printed materials, and in digital materials wherever practical.
- In depicting difficult, traumatic or high-risk situations we try to:
  - be clear about our communications purpose;
  - tell it like it is without sensationalising the material;
  - be sensitive to people's emotional wellbeing and respectful of them and their story; and
  - be sensitive to the possible risks and consequences of how we depict and people and their story and use pseudonyms or hide identity where appropriate.
- Portray the person and their story authentically:

- We quote them accurately, in their own words; we don't alter or restructure quotes to suit our purposes.
- We don't Photoshop or manipulate photos or footage to change context
- We don't sensationalise the material or exploit people
- We accurately portray the context and environment.
- We don't minimise or exaggerate Oxfam's support or the impact of our work.

## Showing need

We respect and value the people we work with and are inspired by their stories of change. However, there are times that we also must show the reality of life for people living in poverty, including the need and challenges they face.

The images and stories which show incredible need are very powerful, and can be a big motivator for people to donate money or take more action. We can show need and the reality of where we work, but we always do it with dignity and respect — portraying people as survivors, rather than victims; as capable, rather than helpless; with an inner strength, determination and self-worth. In a nutshell this means we treat people the way we would wish to be treated.

We ask the question: would I like to be depicted like this? Would I like my children to be depicted like this? If this answer is no, then either don't use it or change the way you are using it. If you are unsure, check with the Content Manager or designated Storyteller.

This can sometimes make showing the reality of where we work, what we do and the issues we tackle a bit trickier, but it is still achievable.

Please also be sensitive about using photos of dead animals. While these may help to show the reality of a drought or famine, many readers and viewers can get highly upset seeing these. If there is another powerful image you can use, try to do so.

When showing the impact of Oxfam's work, it's important not to sensationalise, embellish, exaggerate, understate or misrepresent what work Oxfam is doing in a particular community or the support it is giving to a particular family. The same goes for the impact of that work or support. Our communications should accurately reflect the situation and context at the time the content was collected.

Please also ensure that any words or phrases you use to describe a humanitarian situation comply with terminology which has been agreed to by Oxfam (either at a global or country level). For example, the terms "famine", "hunger crisis" or "extreme hunger" can often only be used once an emergency situation meets particular criteria and if agreed to by the relevant country team. The media team will usually advise what terms can and can't be used.

## Longevity

When selecting an image or story to use, always consider the date the content was collected. If the content was collected during a humanitarian emergency, is high-risk content, or more than two years old, ask yourself the following questions.

- Is it still relevant to Oxfam's message or the message I wish to convey?
- Could the situation, context or personal situation have changed?
- Is the use within the terms of consent? (If unsure check with the Content Team)
- If I was the person in the photo or story, would I be comfortable with it being used in the way being proposed?

If in doubt about whether your proposed use is appropriate, please check with the Content Manager or designated Storyteller. In most instances, the Content Team can check with the

relevant country team about whether the content can still be used in its current form, for the desired purpose, or whether an update might be needed.

Content more than five years old is automatically archived and restricted on our Words and Pictures database.

## Restrictions

Any restrictions around use of images or stories, including any special terms of consent, will be clearly noted in the “restrictions” field for the resource, on our Words and Pictures database. If your proposed use falls outside these restrictions, you must seek approval from the Content Manager or designated Storyteller.

If a person’s name has been changed or their face hidden to protect their identity, this must be clearly noted either in the caption or copy accompanying the photo.

Resources with “restricted” access can only be used with the permission of the Content Manager and any other staff member or team named in the “restrictions” field (eg, ATSIPP team for images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people).

Resources with “confidential” access cannot be used under any circumstances.

If consent is withdrawn to use an image, it will be marked “confidential” on our Words and Pictures database and Oxfam will make every effort to withdraw the image from internal resources and the public domain.

## Image manipulation

Oxfam is guided by journalistic guidelines and our *Ethical Images and Stories Policy*. For imagery, particularly from the field, this means what the photographer or videographer saw is the same thing the viewer sees. It is important images show the reality and are not set up or manipulated to make a situation look worse, better or different to what it actually is.

While it is easy to alter an image via Photoshop so it has more impact or will look aesthetically better — that is something we just don’t do. Not only is it not accurately representing the picture that was taken, but it is also considered a brand risk.

What is allowed:

- basic colour correction or colour grading;
- improving sharpness of an image;
- cropping which does not change context or accuracy;
- obvious creative treatments for design purposes that would not diminish the subject’s dignity or alter facts or context;
- deep-etching of studio or product shots (eg, Oxfam Unwrapped or Oxfam Shop); and
- composite images for promotional purposes (eg, super-imposing a toilet hanging over the Yarra River).

In the bottom three cases, it should be obvious that these images are “set up” or “created” and never presented as reality.

What’s not allowed:

- flipping or reversing images (not only does this not represent the picture that was taken, but it may also breach cultural taboos such as eating with your left hand in India);
- removing or adding things to images that change context;

- altering colour and brightness levels to make something look worse or better;

Sometimes we may be required to blur or alter part of an image due to a potential brand or security risk. You must seek approval from the Content Manager or Head of Content Strategy and Brand before doing this and then note that parts of the photo have been altered in the caption or copy accompanying the image.

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples**

Oxfam Australia has established systems to ensure we do not publish images or stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples for which we do not have the appropriate consent or who have passed away.

Each time an image, name or voice of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is displayed within Oxfam Australia communications, the following message must be displayed in a highly-visible position, ideally as close to the beginning as possible.

**“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people/readers/viewers should be aware that this publication/video/website may contain images and names of people who have since passed away.”**

All images and stories relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are restricted resources on our Words and Pictures database. To use them, you need to follow this process:

1. Check whether there is any information in the “restrictions” field of the resource.
2. Contact a member of the Content Team to see if your proposed use is appropriate and fits within the existing terms of consent.
3. If the Content Team member believes it fits within the existing terms of consent, the image usage request should be forwarded to relevant member of the ATSIPP team for checking and approval.
4. Depending on the image, and how it is to be used, the ATSIPP team may need to follow up with the subject in the image, or the relevant partner organisation, to get additional approval.
5. If the use falls outside the existing terms of consent, the Content Team will prepare a “single use consent form” and arrange for the relevant ATSIPP team member to forward this to the subject, if appropriate.
6. Consent may take up to two weeks to be confirmed or rejected, so please factor this into your timelines.
7. Once the Content Team, ATSIPP team and subject have given permission for the image to be used, the Content Team will send you an external link to download the resource.

## **Death protocols**

In many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the reproduction of a deceased person’s name and image is offensive to cultural beliefs.

When a member of the ATSIPP team alerts the Content Team to the passing of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, we will immediately make the resource “confidential” on our Words and Pictures database, so that it can be no longer used. The Content Team will then work with the ATSIPP, Media, Digital and Creative Studio teams to take all steps possible to remove the person’s image and name from public circulation — particularly Oxfam printed and online communications — and contact third parties to whom we may have supplied the resource to request them to do the same.

## Using images and stories of children

Oxfam Australia's new *Ethical Images and Stories Policy*, which came into effect on 21 November 2017, has much tighter standards around the collection and use of images and stories involving children to ensure they are protected. Unfortunately there have been instances of NGO images and stories of children being used inappropriately.

This means, if you wish to use any images or stories of children, whether commissioned by Oxfam or sourced from a third party, you must ensure that you do not publish:

- children's surnames;
- village names or school names or any other specific location references that might identify where a child lives (you can use the district or province name);
- images where you can clearly see the name of the school or village or other well-known landmark;
- surnames of family members of the children;
- images of children where they are not appropriately clothed or their nipples, genitals or bare bottoms are clearly visible; or
- images of children where they posed in a submissive or sexually-suggestive manner.

### First names

When collecting new content in the field, Oxfam Australia will provide an additional level of protection to children by no longer recording their real first names, where culturally-appropriate. In these instances, a culturally-appropriate pseudonym will be chosen and agreed to at the time the image or story is collected.

This pseudonym will be used on our Words and Pictures database and the "restrictions" field will clearly note that the child's name has been changed to protect their identity. This will only apply to new Oxfam Australia-commissioned resources collected after 21 November 2017.

For Oxfam-Australia-commissioned images and stories that were collected before 21 November 2017, and for images sourced from third parties including other Oxfam affiliates, you may use the child's real first name (unless they have used a pseudonym) providing you strictly follow the child safeguarding instructions listed above (ie, don't use the child's surname, their family's surname, their village name or any other identifying location information).

On occasion, there may be instances where a child's real first name is recorded and can be used — for example, for an Australian child with their parent or guardian's consent or for children whose parents consider the use of a pseudonym culturally inappropriate. **The simplest thing for you to do is to use the child's first name as it appears on Words and Pictures and do not include or use any other identifying information as listed above.**

### Location information

Any information which may identify the location of a child, should not be reproduced in communication materials involving children. This means:

- Using district, region, state or province names instead of village or suburb names — you may use names of cities with large populations of more than 100,000 people, for example, Melbourne or Maputo.
- Using the names of large, official United Nations refugee or internally-displaced persons camps (eg, Za'atari), but not using the names of smaller settlements or

unofficial camps — for example say “a camp near Cox’s Bazaar” or a “settlement in Gaza” instead.

- Not using the specific names of schools, childcare centres, hospitals and other similar institutions. The only exception is Australian schools, which you can name providing the use is directly relevant to the context of your communications; for example, promoting the schools program or National Close the Gap Day schools events.
- Cropping or blurring signage, emblems or logos that may have location information on them. (Please seek approval from the Content Manager or Head of Content Strategy and Brand before doing this).

As raw images can sometimes contain identifying information in the image file or metadata, please only use images of children that are already on Words and Pictures. If you wish to use an image of a child that is on our P Drive archive or supplied by a third party, please make sure there is no identifying information in the image file metadata. If you are unsure how to do this, please ask a member of the Content Team to check it for you.

## Credits, captions and third parties

### Credits

Images reproduced in Oxfam communications should be appropriately credited, wherever possible. We give an undertaking to photographers to do this in their terms of reference for assignments.

Credits should be reproduced as they appear on our Words and Pictures database, with the photographer’s name and copyright holder. Our style is either:

**Photo: Keith Parsons/OxfamAUS**  
**Photos: Kate Bensen/OxfamAUS**  
**Photo: Vlad Sokhin/Panos/OxfamAUS**

If the photo has been supplied by a third party, then we either:

- Use the credit as supplied by the third party; or
- Credit as: “Photo supplied by XXXX.”

### Captions

Oxfam believes in helping to give people an identity. Wherever possible, try to include a written caption close to the relevant image which:

- names the people in the photo;
- identifies at least the country and region where the photo is taken; and
- explains how the image relates to Oxfam’s work.

If the above details are covered in the body copy of your communication, you can insert the words “pictured” in round brackets next to the person’s name. In these instances you only need to include a photo credit.

Please refer to “captions” in the [Oxfam Australia Editorial Style Guide](#) for more details on how to write captions.

### Third parties

All content that Oxfam Australia uses in external communications which it has not gathered, commissioned or created itself must still reflect our values, Ethical Content Guidelines, and

meet our compliance obligations. This applies to all content from third parties, including content which has been:

- purchased from a supplier (such as a wire service, photo agency, stock library or photographer);
- sourced from another Oxfam confederation entity (such as another affiliate, country team or partner organisation);
- provided by the public or supporters; or
- sourced via a Creative Commons search.

Do not use images from third parties if you are not absolutely certain that:

- it complies with these Ethical Content Guidelines;
- we hold the copyright or appropriate licence or permission to use the image;
- we have received written permission from the copyright holder or agency to use the image; or
- the image has a Creative Commons license or usage permission attached to it.

If you are unsure, then please seek advice from the Content Team.

All third-party content should be appropriately licensed, credited and/or referenced, where applicable and follow any additional sign-off or restrictions, as indicated or advised, by the supplier.

If using a third-party image, supplied by another Oxfam affiliate, check whether they have obtained the appropriate global, multiplatform licence for the image before using it. Unfortunately we have received fines from photo agencies, where this has not occurred.

In most instances, Oxfam Australia's content team will be responsible for sourcing appropriate third party, non-Oxfam content for use, as needed, for external communication materials. Where the Content Team has not been directly responsible for sourcing content from third parties, the Content Manager, or Head of Content Strategy and Brand must approve usage of such content prior to its publication or distribution, except for stock product images.

Likewise, Oxfam will only grant use of its images to third parties who will use them to raise awareness of Oxfam's work, where such use complies with these Ethical Content Guidelines and is on a non-commercial basis.

## **Quoting accurately**

Oxfam believes in giving people a voice – we amplify their voice, we don't put words in their mouths or misrepresent what they say to suit Oxfam's message. Although it may be tempting to edit, omit or alter part of what a person says, to make it seem more compelling, urgent or desperate, or more aesthetically pleasing, we don't do this. We always quote a person accurately, maintaining the meaning, emotion, context and authenticity of what they are saying. We do not alter their quote to suit our communication objective.

## **When quoting directly from a transcribed interview or trip report:**

- Do not change words or grammar, or reorganise the quote, even if the speaker is grammatically incorrect. Present the words as they appear in the trip report.
- The words appearing in quotation marks must be identical to the actual words the persons says in the trip report. You can only change the meaning of what is actually said with the approval of the person being quoted.
- Do not omit words or parts of a quote, to convey a different meaning or emotion or to what was said or to alter the truth of a person's situation or story.

- If you feel the quote is unclear and needs to be changed, you must speak with the designated Storyteller or Content Manager first. If they concur, they will update the quote and change it in the official transcript/trip report and on our database.

### Editing quotes:

- You may **only** omit words or parts of a direct quote if:
  - the quote is particularly long or rambling;
  - the quote contains words that are not essential to the speaker's meaning;
  - you have limited text space;
  - you wish to make the speaker's meaning clearer;
  - you wish to link two continuous quotes within a single thought on or the same topic; or
  - you signify that words or phrases have been left out by inserting an ellipsis ( ... ) with a single space either side.

#### **CORRECT WAY TO "EDIT" A QUOTE:**

##### **Before (all words included):**

"My main source of income is charcoal burning. First I have to cut trees, fill a sand pit, burn the wood, chop it up. It's a long process and very tough work. I do everything myself," Delfinia says.

##### **After (using an ellipsis to indicate missing words):**

"My main source of income is charcoal burning ... it's a long process and very tough work. I do everything myself," Delfinia says.

- When omitting parts of a quote, you must not:
  - change the meaning, accuracy intent or integrity of what the speaker is saying;
  - render the quote out of context to the person's overall story; and
  - take quotes in completely separate parts of a transcription or trip report and link them together as though they were part of one thought.
- Sometimes it may be better to start a new quote, to indicate a fresh thought, rather than use an ellipsis.
- If you are unsure of the precise quote, or need to alter it to suit your communication, use indirect speech. However, always be sure to maintain the integrity and meaning of what was said.
- If you wish to add or replace a word to make the direct quote clearer, you must enclose the new word(s) in square brackets to indicate that they were not in the original quote.
 

**"We go [to the health centre] about once a month," he said.**
- If you feel a spoken word needs to be clarified, defined or explained, put this in round brackets immediately after the word.

**"The community fines illegal fishers 200,000 kip per person (about AUD \$27) for the first offence," Mr Xu said.**

### When quoting translated speech into a trip report or interview transcription:

- Present the material as a direct quotation as close as possible to the actual words the person uttered, bearing in mind that a translator may not say the words in Australian English.

- Do not significantly change, rewrite or misrepresent what people say or alter their meaning in any way.
- You may:
  - omit unnecessary and irrelevant words (eg, ums or ahems or side conversations);
  - lightly fix up words or terms that have been translated incorrectly, poorly or in a clumsy, clunky or jargon-filled way, providing the meaning or context isn't changed.

Please refer to the section on “Quotes” in the [Oxfam Australia Editorial Style Guide](#) for more details on how to present direct quotes.

**When writing subtitles for a video:**

We have specific guidelines for writing English subtitles for videos. This will usually be done by a member of the Content Team or Creative Studio.

Always use first-person, direct speech. Do not summarise what people are saying because it may fit neater onto the screen. You can omit unnecessary or irrelevant words, but you cannot edit down the quote in any significant way.

*Updated January 2018*