ETHICAL CONTENT GUIDELINES

Upholding the rights of the people in the pictures in content gathering, management and use

2nd edition
JANUARY 2020

OXFAM

Cover image
A female farmer working with Oxfam to improve agricultural yields, takes a picture of the photographer collecting her story, outside Kayes in Western Mali (Credit:Tineke D'haese/Oxfam)

Contents

Stories change the world

Credit: Oxfam International

Raising voices and telling stories helps to connect people across time and space. They help to build our movement for change and engage our supporters, inspiring them to act, to campaign with us and support our work.

Stories shape our view of the world and the people within it. They can create stereotypes that influence our judgement – on developing countries, on "Africa" and on "Mexicans", on poverty and on poor people, on migrants and refugees. Oxfam can shift such stereotypes through the stories we tell – ours that can help to alter people's perceptions, to change the debate, and ultimately shift the power.

Alongside the privilege of telling people's stories, we assume a great responsibility. Oxfam's values – empowerment, accountability and inclusiveness – must not only be reflected in the stories we gather, but also in the way we gather them.

Our ambition to shift power to the least powerful starts with acknowledging the people we work with as equal stakeholders in the process of story gathering and being accountable to them for how, when and where we tell their story. Collecting an image must never be prioritized over how that image is collected.

Oxfam commits to uphold the rights of the people who choose to share their images and stories with us. Men, women and children who share their images and stories with Oxfam have the right to participate, to be heard, and to be protected from risk and harm. That commitment is the bedrock of these Global Ethical Content Guidelines.

I am incredibly grateful to the work that has gone into this important policy for Oxfam, which will deepen our accountability to and partnership with those we seek to support.

Let's shift the power to the people in the pictures.

Winnie Byanyima
Executive Director
Oxfam International

1 Our stories will **respect contributors and their experiences**. We will tell stories in the words of the people we work with and wherever possible show their agency and resilience.

2 Oxfam will ensure that its content gathering is **sensitive to different contexts** and circumstance.

3 Our stories will **accurately represent people** and their environment. We will reflect the reality of those featured – never limiting their representation to being victims, but instead striving to portray a fuller picture of individuals and their lives.

4 Our stories will **challenge existing stereotypes** and problematic power relationships and will reflect the diversity of people Oxfam works with.

5 Oxfam will always **consider and respond to the potential risks** facing those who share their images and stories with us.

6 Oxfam will only tell stories with the **full, free and informed consent** from contributors

7 Oxfam will be **accountable to contributors** after story gathering – wherever possible seeking contributors' feedback on the content and the story gathering process and returning content to them.

8 Oxfam commits to **processing & managing content responsibly** and in line with data protection laws.

9 Oxfam has a commitment to its contributors and its audiences to **use stories accurately and with integrity.**

10 Oxfam will **ensure that these guidelines are adhered to** in full by its own staff and freelance service providers and we will strive for compliance by the media we work with.

10 commitments

Introduction

Terminology

Contributor(s)
Individual(s) who contribute their image or story to Oxfam.

Image maker
Filmmaker or photographer who captures contributors' stories through photography or film.

Writer/interviewer
Person who leads on the interview with contributors and captures their stories in writing and/or as an audio-recording.

Story gathering/content gathering
The process in which a writer and/or image maker documents contributors' stories, either in writing or through images or a combination of both.

Content
Images and stories (first-hand accounts) that result from story gathering and form the core ingredients of Oxfam's public engagement work. These can consist of still and moving images, audio-recorded interviews, and written notes from interviews.

Communications
Catch-all term to describe the edited and produced materials based on content gathered from contributors that Oxfam uses for its public engagement work.

Content lead
The Oxfam staff person who has the overall responsibility over the content gathering assignment, including ethical aspects. This would often be the producer, writer or image maker.

Contributor focal point
The Oxfam or partner staff person who has knowledge of, or experience of working with, the contributors, their community and/or situation, and who is the single point of contact with (potential) contributors, before, during and after the story gathering. This would often be a country team member.

It is the responsibility of the content lead to ensure that the contributor focal point is identified and appointed as part of the story gathering ToR.

DAM
Digital Asset Management system. This is a database used to store and curate content. Currently Oxfam uses various DAMs, called Words & Pictures. These will be replaced by a single global DAM in 2020.

Purpose & scope

These guidelines cover the gathering of content, the management of content, and the use of content by Oxfam for its public engagement work.[1] The main purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that content is gathered, managed and used ethically, in ways that uphold contributors' rights to participate and be heard, to experience respect and dignity, to make free and informed decisions, and to be protected from risk and harm. The guidelines also cover Oxfam's commitments to audiences and to the staff and others involved in story gathering.

Ethics & content

The key driver for committing to responsible and ethical practice in content gathering is to uphold the rights of the people Oxfam works with and to deliver the humanitarian principle of Do No Harm.

Responsible and ethical practice should also result in high quality content, enhance Oxfam's relationships with the people it works with, and mitigate reputational risk. If a community has a bad experience in relation to Oxfam's story gathering or the way contributors are represented in Oxfam's communications, they will not welcome Oxfam back in the future. If Oxfam fails to present its audiences with honest and accurate representations of its activities and the people it works with, it risks losing the trust and support of those audiences. Non-ethical content gathering can also put us in breach of national legislation or other relevant regulations, which could jeopardize our access to institutional funding.

Building blocks

These guidelines build upon the OI Content Standards Manual (2012). They have been informed by current Oxfam safeguarding policies, most notably the One Oxfam Child Safeguarding Policy, Digital Safeguarding Policy[2] and Responsible Program Data Policy. The guidelines have been designed to reflect recent legislative requirements (most notably resulting from the EU General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR) as well as other relevant regulatory frameworks (such as our commitment to the Charter4Change).

Key Oxfam affiliate expertise in certain areas has been built into these guidelines. In particular: Oxfam Australia's Ethical Images and Stories Policy and Ethical Content Guidelines, Oxfam Great Britain's Undertaking Research with Ethics: Guidance note; and additional guidelines on ethical research with gender-based violence survivors, published by Oxfam Canada. In addition, 20 Oxfam staff from across the confederation were interviewed as part of the process of developing these guidelines.

Scope

These guidelines apply to all those gathering, managing or using content (that is intended for public engagement) on Oxfam's behalf, everywhere we work. This includes employees, staff from partner organisations, professional photographers and film makers, consultants, trainers, researchers, volunteers, donors, trustees, and other representatives working through its programmes, campaigns and initiatives. The guidelines must apply to people who Oxfam works with who are engaged in participatory media projects, in producing, what is sometimes referred to as, user-generated content.[3] When working with those who are not under contract with Oxfam, such as journalists, Oxfam has a responsibility to brief those individuals on its code of conduct and its ethical approach to content gathering (see Section 2 for further guidance on working with the media).

These guidelines apply to content gathering that is initiated by affiliates, country teams or OI. It is understood that several Oxfam affiliates and country teams have their own content or image guidelines which cover ethical practice. Affiliates and country teams are free to develop or continue to use their own guidelines in addition to these global guidelines, provided they do not undermine any of the guidance presented in this document. The Global Ethical Content Guidelines presented here are the guidelines that must be adhered to as the minimum standard across all of Oxfam.

It is the responsibility of the Oxfam staff member overseeing a content gathering assignment to ensure everyone directly involved is familiar with these guidelines. Content for Oxfam should always be gathered, managed and used according to the guidelines presented here, and with the need to guarantee contributors' rights as a priority.

Adherence to the guidelines will ensure mutual trust across the confederation that content is being produced in accordance to the ethical standards everyone has signed up for, so that content can be accessible for use across the confederation.

Stories reflecting our values

Stories are central to Oxfam's public engagement.

Oxfam is committed to enabling people to tell their own stories and ensuring that the stories of the least powerful are heard. Oxfam recognises its responsibility to ensure its stories challenge and inform and contribute to determining a view of the world that does not accept the status quo and existing stereotypes.

The stories gathered and used by Oxfam must reflect its values: empowerment, accountability and inclusiveness. We do not want to perpetuate the stereotypes of people living in poverty, but instead show a full and accurate account of the ways in which people live and act. These values must inform decision over which content we choose to gather as well as decisions over captioning and use in final communications including fundraising materials.

Images and stories that reflect the value of empowerment must show people as 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 others. People are survivors, not victims; they can be empowered, active participants in work, in life and in bringing about change in their lives. Images and stories that reflect the value of accountability would include those that accurately convey the realities of individuals' lives, with the aim of improving the understanding of audiences to the complexities and realities of the injustice of poverty. Images and stories that reflect the value of inclusiveness would include the diversity and range of people Oxfam works with in terms of age, gender, background, and culture. Outlined below are a series of commitments to how Oxfam will uphold these values in terms of the images and stories it chooses to gather and use.

1. Our stories will respect contributors and their experiences

- We will tell stories in the words of the contributor, using direct quotes wherever possible.

- Where appropriate our stories will show people's agency and resilience: people helping themselves, supporting or caring for each other, assuming responsibilities, having specific skills or being capable agents of change.

- Our images and stories should not exaggerate vulnerability. For example, we avoid taking images of vulnerable people from above, and we don't remove (through cropping/framing) a child or vulnerable person's care-taker out of an image.

- We do not take or use images of people who have died[4] or are at the moment of death or people who are in extreme physical or emotional distress.[5]

- We will avoid images of people with flies on their faces due to the negative connotations of this type of image.

2. Our stories will accurately represent people and their environment

- Our stories will be accurate, as in reflecting the specific situation which they documented.[6]

- Our stories will aim to communicate the wider context of the situation, beyond the individual or situation being pictured.

- We will not reduce someone to a problem but instead strive to show a 360° view of people's lives, bringing in their personality, either through their voice, or through other detail about their lives which is distinct from the problem.[7]

- Our stories will balance need with solutions and suffering with resilience.

- We will not create composite images or stories (e.g. where an image of one person is shown alongside the story of another person) as this misrepresents the true picture.

3. Our stories will challenge existing stereotypes and problematic power relationships

- Our stories will not portray people as dependent on the knowledge, assistance or pity of celebrities, supporters or experts; instead our stories will show people inspiring those same celebrities, supporters or experts in the context of an equal exchange.

- Where possible, we avoid images of white Oxfam staff formally addressing local people (e.g. standing up in front of a group of people who are sitting on the ground) as this can reinforce perceptions of power imbalances.

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

- Our stories will show our local partner organizations supporting contributors and feature their voices and they will be named alongside their international colleagues.

Ayman (42) tells his story to Oxfam Intermon's Pablo Tosco. As a Syrian refugee, his story is one of despair, but breeds hope as well. (Credit: Pablo Tosco/Oxfam Intermon)

At times these commitments can be at odds and need to be brought in a balance. A specific situation can be both a reality (which needs accurate documenting) yet also confirms an existing stereotype. It should be clear that we would challenge stereotypes and power relationships only to the extent that the actual reality offers more nuance than the stereotype.

For example in the immediate aftermath of a humanitarian emergency, accurate representation means capturing stories which communicate the severity of the situation including the multiple challenges and needs facing survivors. It is also important to acknowledge that some audiences will regard these contributors as victims, even if we consider them to be survivors. It is important that we capture the reality of the situation but are respectful in our portrayal and accompanying messaging. We can ensure that our communications portfolio of an emergency is accurate in relation to its causes and impacts, and that where appropriate our stories generate empathy, and show people as capable individuals helping or wanting to help themselves or others.

Also, these commitments need not necessarily be applied in every single image. As part of the image collection (raw content) or media mix (final comms pieces) some of the images can reflect need and others can reflect solutions.

The values of empowerment and accountability also inform the process of gathering images.

Oxfam believe that content gathering can be empowering for contributors. Ideally a contributor, through a meaningful process of informed consent, has the power and knowledge to decide whether to participate in Oxfam's content gathering.

Oxfam must strive to provide potential contributors and contributors with genuine choice over whether to be photographed/filmed or interviewed or not, predicated on an understanding of how material will be used and what the risks to them might be.

Oxfam views contributors as important stakeholders in content gathering and is committed to finding out about any preferences they may have in relation to the images and stories that are gathered and used about them. Some contributors will find the process of content gathering an empowering experience — they will feel proud of their story and their role in raising awareness of an issue or further support for Oxfam. Other contributors will not experience content gathering as empowering for reasons that may be distinct from the process of content gathering.

Oxfam will work towards being accountable to its contributors, by wherever possible, returning images and finished communications to contributors, and at times also documenting contributors' feedback on the finished content and the process of content gathering. Follow-up with contributors and listening to their feedback recognises their position as important stakeholders and will also support Oxfam's ongoing efforts to improve its practice in content gathering and use.

A young woman from Somalia seeking asylum in Italy, is interviewed by OGB Producer, Eleanor Farmer (r.). OGB used the services of a Cultural Mediator (Mahamadi Nikiema, m.) in the process. (Credit: Alessandro Rota/Oxfam)

A diverse and changing context: being responsive

It is the responsibility of those overseeing content gathering that it is sensitive to different contexts and circumstance, including different cultural, social or legal requirements.[8] The country team or relevant partner organization should consult on these sensitivities with relevant authorities (for example, a headteacher, village chief, head of police) preferably in advance and ultimately before starting the content gathering.[9]

Oxfam country offices should provide a full briefing for any incoming story gathering team on cultural sensitivities to be aware of during interviews and when taking photographs or filming certain places, objects or actions. The story gathering plans need to be adapted to ensure there is sufficient time for this briefing and the consequences should be factored in in the risk assessment.

A constantly evolving media and communications landscape

Oxfam's content gathering takes place in a diverse and constantly evolving media and communications landscape, in terms of both the production and consumption of content. Increased use of internet, smart phones and social media has changed the profile of audiences as well as their habits and preferences.

The use of digital content also means that once images or stories have been shared online, they can potentially be shared by anyone anywhere and it is almost impossible to delete or recall them. Audiences are no longer determined by their geography and so contributors and their communities must always be considered potential audiences.

Acknowledging and responding to multiple unequal relationships

Oxfam acknowledges the unequal power relationships inherent in the production and consumption of its content, particularly those produced in Oxfam program countries by and for affiliates.

These relationships can lead to Oxfam country teams feeling obliged to support affiliates' demands, partners may feel obliged to facilitate Oxfam's access to contributors, and contributors (who have an existing relationship with Oxfam or its partner) may feel obliged to share their image or story either out of gratitude for services received or out of fear for the negative consequences of saying no.

Those involved in Oxfam's content gathering have a responsibility to recognise and attempt to disrupt these unequal relationships. Throughout the guidelines and related template documents you will find practical efforts to attempt to mitigate the power imbalances and provide those with less power with genuine choice, when it comes to content gathering.

Being critical and empathetic

The ethical issues surrounding the gathering, management and use of content are numerous, and not all have straightforward practical solutions that can be applied consistently. While it is important to identify some tangible aspects of practice that all those involved in content gathering should adhere to, it is equally important for those involved to be sensitive to the ethical and power issues at play.

Thinking critically about content gathering and empathetically about those who are contributing their image and story, supports an ethical approach to the work. Engendering such an approach will enable those involved to respond sensitively and responsibly to unexpected issues.

Budgeting and planning for additional time

Ethical practice in relation to content gathering, management and use takes time, and the costs related to that additional time need to be built into content gathering budgets at the planning stage:

- For affiliate-led trips, time in advance for communicating with country team and time in-country for discussion before content gathering begins;

- When working with freelance image makers and writers/interviewers, time for them to understand our ethical guidelines (and related processes);

- When working with interpreters, time to identify (and brief) appropriate interpreters;

- Time to understand the context, and to consider and respond to risks;

- Time to talk to potential contributors in advance[10] of any content gathering, to ensure that consent is informed and freely given;

- Time to support country teams with capacity-building and strategic use of content;

- Time to screen each piece of content for its compliance with these guidelines and to ensure there is evidence of informed consent for each contributor;[11]

- Time to ensure content and related materials are stored securely and uploaded to DAM carefully and accurately with all required information;

- Time to return copies of images and/or final communications to contributors and to follow up with contributors on their experience;

It is the responsibility of the commissioning team to ensure that the budget and workplan for the content gathering allows those involved to work according to the standards/guidelines presented here. The lack of time or budget cannot be used to justify non-compliance with the guidelines.

Notes

[1] All of Oxfam's interactions with the people we work with – including content gathering as per this document – are governed by confederation-wide Data Protection Policies and the Responsible Program Data Policy. Please consult this policy for legal and ethical guidance relating to data (content) collected for program purposes.

[2] This policy is currently undergoing approval

[3] If Oxfam is to publish content that is generated by the people it works with, evidence of informed consent of contributors featured is still required, and in addition consent from the citizen photographer/filmmaker for Oxfam to use the image.

[4] This does not exclude use of images in which an image of a dead person is depicted, e.g. taking photographs of a woman holding an image of her deceased husband.

[5] People in extreme distress will not be in a position to provide informed consent.

[6] a) When using images from contributors of whom we know the situation has changed substantially since the point of collecting their story, the caption should make this plainly clear. b) There are times when it will be appropriate to 'stage' a photo, however this staging should still reflect the reality of the contributor/context being portrayed. There may also be times when Oxfam produces communications which are clearly creative as opposed to documentary and it will be clear in the captions messages that the images do not represent reality.

[7] This level of detail both brings colour to a story and helps to individualize people in the pictures, so that they do not end up as campaign objects or symbols.

[8] For example, in the Pacific it may be usual for a male community leader to be a necessary gateway for consent for anyone in that community to participate in content gathering; or in Rwanda humanitarian stories may often need sign off by UNHCR.

[9] In determining who to consult with, we should also be cognizant of power and gender dynamics within communities about who is or is not able to speak. If for example women are systematically barred from raising their voice, this constitutes a problematic power relationship, which needs to be carefully considered against cultural sensitivities at play.

[10] Advance means before, and distinct from, the content gathering. It is understood that is often not possible to visit contributors at an advanced date before the content gathering.

[11] With the exception of those featured in non-sensitive public crowd scenes (see Informed Consent, p.22).

Working together

Upholding people's rights in
collaboration with others

Working with freelancers

Oxfam has a database of trusted freelancer image makers, and a global toolkit of template contracts with image makers. These are essential tools to use for those planning any content gathering which will engage external image makers or writers/interviewers.

Data protection

Data Protection is predicated on principles including transparency with those with whom we work, clear assignment of responsibility, proportionality in using data, and specific obligations around aspects of the data lifecycle like informed consent. These obligations should all closely match our own ethical principles, and values – and should ultimately be cumulative and productive, rather than obstructive.

Affiliates will need to have contractual terms in place with photographers which includes responsibilities for the photographer to protect any personal data (which includes any personal data contained in images) in accordance with data protection laws. The contract must require image makers to comply with appropriate data security standards, and to use our current Informed Consent guidance and form when collecting images or stories from contributors.

All image makers must also be required to read and sign Oxfam Consultants Code of Conduct and for those who will be in touch with children as part of their assignment, to abide by Oxfam's minimum standards for child safeguarding (as outlined below).

Intellectual property

Even where Oxfam has commissioned and paid for content, the content provider is likely to own the intellectual property (IP) rights in the content, and be able to control it use. For this reason, Oxfam's contracts with content providers need to give Oxfam appropriate rights to use the content. This can be by way of a 'licence to use' or by a transfer of the IP rights from the content provider to Oxfam.

Oxfam requires the film-maker to transfer the IP rights in the filmed content to Oxfam. As a result, Oxfam will own the rights in the IP and will have full rights to use the content as it chooses. If you do not use the template contract when commissioning a film-maker, you should ensure that your agreement contains an 'assignment of IP clause' similar to that in the template.

Photographers frequently seek to retain intellectual property rights over their images and to not transfer

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GDPR: additional considerations

Affiliates in the EU will need to consider whether they consider photographers 'data controllers' or 'data processors' within the meaning of EU law, and include data protection clauses in their agreements appropriate to the designation. The template toolkit contains appropriate clauses in each case.

Where consent is sought for processing, there are specific requirements in GDPR (including that consent be specific for purpose, affirmative, and informed). Our guidance aligns with these requirements.

Data protection law in Europe gives individuals a "Right to be Informed", mirroring our obligations in the Responsible Data in Program Policy. Our Consent form is designed to uphold this right – and should be used and reviewed by users, ensuring the use cases and explanation provided are accurate.

Where appropriate, affiliates' Data Protection Officers should be consulted where there are questions regarding what is lawful, and in particular if in a particular context there might be additional complications or risks and further guidance is needed.

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these rights outright to Oxfam.[12] As a result, Oxfam's right to use the photographs will often arise under licence terms in the commissioning agreement. For this reason, it is important to ensure that the licence terms agreed give Oxfam as broad a right as possible to use the content for its purposes and to allow other affiliates and partners to use it. If you do not use the template agreement, you need to ensure that:

- The photographer grants Oxfam a perpetual, fully paid-up, worldwide licence (with the right to grant sub-licences to any third party) to use the images in any format for any purpose connected to Oxfam's work (including without limitation, publications, websites, intranet, media and other materials, in each case whether produced by Oxfam or its sub-licensees).[13]

- The photographer has no rights in relation to work commissioned other than in relation to the images, and that any such other IP rights which may have arisen are assigned to Oxfam.

Where Oxfam is using an image under licence, any restrictions imposed by a photographer on use of the image as well as any attribution requirements (e.g. requirements to attribute the photographer) must be included along with the designated image or story on the DAM, and users must always comply with these restrictions and requirements when using the content.

It is understood that there can be different intellectual property standards and practice in different parts of the world It is therefore important that these are made clear when images/stories are uploaded to DAM.

Working with the media

When Oxfam acts as a gatekeeper for external media (journalists and film crews) it is recommended that the media sign up to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) stipulating Oxfam's expectations in relation to ethical content gathering.

We recognize that media trips do not always feature a contractually-binding relationship with media representatives and so we cannot always require that they follow Oxfam's informed consent procedures, for example (and Oxfam will not have editorial control over final outputs).

Nevertheless, it is still Oxfam's responsibility to clearly communicate its approach and expectations to the media in advance of providing them with access to potential contributors. It is also Oxfam's responsibility, wherever possible, to identify potential contributors and establish informed consent in advance of any media trip. It is Oxfam's responsibility, regardless of the media's informed consent procedures (or lack of) to ensure that contributors who are interacting with the media are made aware, by Oxfam, of their right to choose NOT to participate, or to participate but not be identifiable visibly (face hidden) and/or to choose a pseudonym.

Extra care must be taken in humanitarian contexts and other contexts that Oxfam considers to be sensitive. Media representatives should be

Freelance videographer Patrick Harris photographed showing drone footage to members of the Ndilimba Farmers Soya Group in Lilongwe, Malawi. Oxfam Australia often works with freelancers, including Patrick. (Credit: Aurelie Marrier d'Unienville/Oxfam)

accompanied at all times by an Oxfam staff member.

Where possible, working with media representatives who have previously worked with Oxfam, will also help to mitigate any risks for either contributors, Oxfam's partners and Oxfam itself.

Working with interpreters

If the writer/interviewer and image maker do not speak one of the languages of the contributors, then it is essential that there is an experienced interpreter available for the duration of the assignment. Informed consent can only take place in a person's own language. It is also essential for realising Oxfam's values of respect and dignity and contributors' right to be heard; accurate interpretation of their words is required to ensure both accuracy and respect.

The choice of interpreter should factor in gender and social norms in the country where story gathering is taking place. We should carefully consider whether the contributor's comfort would be best served by having an interpreter from the same gender, religious, ethnic or social group as the contributors, or the opposite – and ask the contributor's opinion on this if possible.

The cost of an external and experienced interpreter (salary, per diems, transport and accommodation) is a part of the cost of story gathering and should be budgeted for as such. If an affiliate commissions the content, the onus should never be on the country team to fund this.

At times it may not be appropriate or possible to either identify or contract an external interpreter for content-gathering. Or it may be that the contributor would be more comfortable with a staff member from Oxfam or its partners to act as interpreter. In any event, those in charge of organising content gathering must be able to justify the decision to not use an external experienced interpreter.

Working together, sharing skills and content

When Oxfam affiliates are organising content gathering visits to a program country, good collaboration is critical for success. It is essential that country teams benefit from those visits in terms of skills transfer; and/or content they can use for their own communications purposes. While staffing and capacity varies across country teams, many do not have content gathering specialists and their communications officers cover multiple roles.

All affiliate-led content gathering assignment must plan for support to the country team. This can take the form of one day at the end (or the beginning if appropriate) of their trip, dedicated to supporting the country team with its communications, including how the team can use content resulting from the trip. Or it can take the form of an agreed professional development objective for the country team's communications officer to enhance their content gathering skills (writing, photography, filming, video-editing, or any related area).

Country teams should determine the type and level of support desired, based on local needs and capacity to absorb support. Affiliates cannot proceed with story gathering without building time and budget for support into their schedule.

Country teams in turn should feel empowered to share their capacity and capabilities with local partner organizations and people we work with where and when appropriate.

Notes

12 Although some may do so, and if so, the assignment clause in the film-maker contract should be used in the contract commissioning the photographer.

13 An exclusive licence means Oxfam alone can use the content (even to the exclusion of the photographer); a sole licence means Oxfam is the only party other than the photographer who may use the content; a non-exclusive licence means that the photographer can grant other parties rights to use the content. Whether this licence is exclusive, sole or non-exclusive will depend upon each context, the individual photographer, as well as the nature of the content. For example, Oxfam should require an exclusive licence in relation to any content that is deemed sensitive. If the work has been commissioned for a fee, Oxfam would normally expect to be granted a sole or exclusive licence.

Do no harm

Assessing and mitigating risks to contributors

Do no harm

The principle of do no harm will always take priority over Oxfam's content gathering and public engagement needs. When planning content gathering, those in charge should consult with relevant local partner organisations[14] to assess the potential risks for contributors in participating in Oxfam content gathering and the potential risks in relation to their image and story being published.

Risk assessment is an essential stage of any content gathering. We know specific groups of people are at greater risk:

- Children;[15]
- People living in or fleeing from conflict zones;
- People affected by a natural disaster;
- People living with HIV;
- Survivors of sexual assault or gender-based violence;
- People in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersexed (LGBTQI) communities;
- People in religious or ethnic minorities;
- People speaking out against government, authority or large corporations.

The above list is not exhaustive. When planning story gathering, the commissioning team should consider whether potential contributors face any risks, either because of who they are or the context they live in.

Main risks

Outlined below are a set of risks to contributors that should always be considered during the planning stage of a content gathering assignment.

Social reprisal

RISK: The risks of being seen being photographed/ filmed/interviewed

- Are there any risks for the contributor of being seen (or heard) being photographed, filmed or interviewed by Oxfam? What are those risks? How can we mitigate those risks?
- Could being interviewed by a male/female story gatherer trigger action against the contributor at the household or community level, given the gender and power dynamics at play?

RESPONSE

- Consider who is best placed to carry out the interview, where and when.
- Offer a comfortable and safe place for interviews that is away from the contributor's home. This might be a partner organisation's office, where the activities are not overheard by neighbours or family. Consider transport to and from this place as well.

Emotional distress

RISK: The risks to a person's emotional well-being by being interviewed

- Are contributors likely to have experienced trauma or have they experienced discrimination and exclusion?
- If so, could they be at risk of secondary trauma if they are asked to relive their experience by those gathering content?

RESPONSE

- Partners or country teams should be tasked with identifying individuals who they believe will be comfortable with this experience of being filmed, photographed or interviewed.
- It is not acceptable to interview people about sensitive issues at short notice.
- During the planning and TOR development, time should be spent developing questions that avoid causing anyone further distress. It is advisable to seek advice /feedback from country teams and thematic specialists (e.g. those working in humanitarian relief, gender-based violence, psychosocial support).
- Contributors should always have the option of being accompanied during content gathering by someone they trust and feel comfortable with, who can also offer them support after the content gathering if necessary.

Anger

RISK: Interviews with those who have suffered trauma can be unpredictable. Contributors can become upset.

RESPONSE

- Interviewers should be prepared to react appropriately and sensitively if a contributor becomes upset (pause, check if someone ok to continue, remind them they can stop at any time).

- As part of the planning stage a reaction protocol should be developed to ensure that those gathering content are have considered how to respond to distress, disclosure or requests for assistance [16] from contributors.

- The content gathering team should identify ways to refer contributors to available and appropriate support services – and do so well in advance of story gathering

- Remember in some contexts those who have experienced trauma will not have access to any services or professional support. In such contexts, Oxfam must consider very carefully whether to go ahead with content gathering.

Story publication

RISK: Individuals are at risk of violence, retribution, or discrimination if their image and story are published

RESPONSE

- We should not be contemplating interviewing anyone facing this level of risk unless we have a compelling reason to do so.

- During the planning stage, the image maker should develop initial ideas about how to gather engaging and powerful content that does not reveal people's identity.

- As part of the planning stage Oxfam should budget or arrange other types of support to compensate for any material losses which may be caused to the contributor as a consequence of them speaking out as part of Oxfam's content gathering, for example losing their job. This should be considered in close collaboration with the country team and local partners.

- For some content gathering, Oxfam will decide that the risks to individuals being identified are too great, and identities will be fully concealed, even if particular individuals are willing to be identified. For example, Oxfam will never show the faces of children who are victims of sexual violence.

- Concealing someone's identity means not showing their face and not using their real name, in some instances it may also be important to 'hide' someone's voice.

- Remember other people's names, environmental features, or signage could unintentionally reveal the identity or the location of someone who should be anonymised.

- Those involved in content gathering should be alert to things that may create a security risk to the person, or a brand/ethical risk to Oxfam if they are included within a film or photograph. For example, location signs, school emblems, name tags, jewellery, nudity, or inappropriate slogans, graphics, graffiti or multinational logos on clothing, notable buildings.

- Remember that, depending on the issue/story, staff of Oxfam's partners or country programmes might also need to be anonymised.

- Wherever possible, the contributor focal point must follow-up with contributors shortly after the content gathering. This can be phone call or face-to-face visit. This follow-up serves as an additional opportunity for contributors to discuss any concerns they may have with the content or its publication.

Additional considerations

Be aware that risks to contributors may change over time. If a contributor has spoken out against an abusive employer, corrupt politician etc, even if it does not put the contributor in danger at time photo taken, socio-political contexts can change and a

If you notice unwanted behaviour

- The first priority is the immediate safety and welfare of the people involved.

- Keep calm and act normally; do not say or show that you are shocked.

- Do not investigate or question the person reporting. If someone reports abuse directly to you, only ask questions to get enough information to understand the complaint (e.g. 'who, what, where, when' questions, but not 'why' questions).

- Never agree to keep a secret to someone under the age of 18. If a child is in danger you will have to inform others.

- Do not directly challenge parents, carers or teachers about your concerns.

- Record all the details that support your suspicion.

- Report this in line with internal reporting procedures.

contributor could be at risk in the future.

Programme staff in country may sometimes be more aware/knowledgeable about risks facing particular individuals/groups of people than the communications officer.

In high risk contexts it may be appropriate to consider changing the angle of a story and framing it around the experiences/ideas of Oxfam's staff or partners – however it is important to remember that these individuals could also be placed at risk by being identifiable in any visual communications.

In some instances, a contributor, whom due to their circumstances would normally be anonymised, may already have a public profile relating to their activism. In that context it would not be appropriate to use a pseudonym alongside a recognizable image of that individual. In such cases, the contributor should be offered the choice to either be completely identifiable (recognizable image and real name) or completely anonymised (non-recognizable image or no image, and pseudonym).

Humanitarian conflict responses and fragile states often expose individuals to additional risk. Extra care must be taken to consider these contexts, and it is imperative that if data will compromise individual(s)' safety, it not be collected.

Be aware that staff/freelancers who are involved in interviewing trauma survivors may be at risk of vicarious trauma from repeatedly talking to survivors of violence, conflict or disaster – ensure that there are systems in place to support them.

Dealing responsibly with unexpected risks

It is not possible to predict or plan for all possible risks, and there will be times during content gathering where decisions will need to be taken in response to new information or unexpected circumstances. Such decisions may determine whether/how to go ahead with content gathering. The following principles should apply to such decision-making:

- In unexpected scenarios what is important is that decisions relating to content gathering are carefully considered in relation to the risks and benefits of gathering that content, and that there is evidence of that considered decision.

- Decisions relating to risks for individuals and their families/communities, or partner

organisations, should never be made by an individual acting on their own.

- Such decisions should be informed by those who are have most knowledge of the individuals and communities concerned and their circumstances.

Our Responsible Data in Program Policy sets out explicit obligations to account for risk – including a red line around data collection of data in fragile or conflict scenarios where individuals may be exposed to risk. These obligations mirror those in European Data Protection law - that information or imagery which exposes individuals to risk must be carefully handled and accounted for - or not handled at all where the risk is high.

Risks and agreed ways to mitigate should be logged in a risk analysis document, which sits with the ToR as an annex, and thus is signed off by the Country Director before the start of the story gathering. Where these risks are high, affiliates may have legal obligations and must consult their Data Protection Officer or Focal Point, or another specialist (e.g. Safeguarding or Protection) if unclear what these are.

During the content gathering, the content lead is responsible for initiating daily discussions/reflection on risks as they evolve, including addressing any unexpected risks. This reflection should always involve the contributor focal point. A brief summary of these daily discussions will be documented in a logbook.

Notes

14 When the story gathering is initiated by an affiliate, the affiliate should contact the country team first, who would then be in touch with relevant partners.

15 Defined here as under 18 years old at the point of story gathering.

16 This will be unnecessary in some contexts depending on country team experience with particular groups.

Informed consent

Empowering people to share
their own story (or not)

Involving contributors in the process of storygathering can be a very empowering experience. Here: Oxfam in Belgium collecting stories from Sahraoui refugees. (Credit: Tineke Dhaese/Oxfam)

About informed consent

In all of our story gathering it is absolutely essential that contributors actively consent to their story being collected and used by Oxfam. A robust consent process is the cornerstone of any ethical approach to story gathering.[17]

Consent is only meaningful if it can be freely given, and if it is informed by a clear understanding of the context and usage of material. To be informed, individuals must understand:

- Why the content is being gathered;

- Who the individuals involved in filming/ photography/interviewing are;

- Basic aspects about the nature of Oxfam and/or partner organization (including which organisation it is);

- The type of communications and scope of audiences (show examples);

- That Oxfam cannot control the use of content once it is published online;

- The right to refuse to participate;

- The right to choose whether to be visibly identifiable and whether to use real name or a pseudonym;

- The right to withdraw consent in the future – and that they may have other legal rights;

- If an external photographer is involved, consent for his/her use of the images as separate from Oxfam, is deemed to be covered by Oxfam's own consent process;

Informed consent can only be achieved in an individual's own language. That means that if an image maker/team does not speak the language or dialect of the contributor(s), an interpreter must be part of the content gathering team. The informed consent guidance and form is available in various languages.[18]

Our informed consent process

Informed consent must be recognised as an essential multi-staged process, that is responsible and meaningful for contributors and potential contributors. A completed form or a video/audio recording is the evidence of informed consent, and should only be collected/recorded after a meaningful dialogue between contributor(s) and content gatherers has taken place.

An Oxfam staff member from the commissioning team must have overall responsibility for ensuring informed consent takes place and that there is evidence of this (either audio/video recording or completed form).

Oxfam adopts a '3+' staged-consent process.

An Oxfam Intermon camera crew interviews Fatoumata Sidibe, a dairy farmer living near Bobo Diolassou, Burkina Faso (Credit: Pablo Tosco/Oxfam)

1

When? 1 month – 24 hours before a shoot
Who? Contributor focal point

2

When? Right before the shoot
Who? Content lead

Identifying contributors

The contributor focal point is thoroughly briefed on the purpose and requirements of the story gathering and provided with a script for the conversation with potential contributors. Subsequently, he/she reaches out to potential contributors, explains the purpose of the story gathering and identifies those who are willing to participate.

This should happen well in advance of story gathering, to ensure that potential contributors are provided with the information and time to make a considered decision. This will also allow time for Oxfam to explore alternative options in case people decide not to participate. The story gathering budget should provide funds for any travelling costs associated with this.

In some situations (including the immediate aftermath of emergencies) this will not be possible at all. In some (less sensitive) situations this might not be needed.

Verbal consent

Upon meeting the contributor(s) the contributor focal point introduces the content lead. It can work well to request (and support) the interpreter or contributor focal point to manage the conversation.

The content lead (or alternative if decided so) explains the context of the story gathering – its purpose, people involved, etc. , as per the checklist on the informed consent form – and shares with potential contributors digital or printed samples of existing relevant content. While this conversation should cover all elements on the consent form, it should be a relaxed dialogue with the contributor. Careful delivery of Stage 1 should greatly help to facilitate this conversation.[19]

The contributor agrees or disagrees verbally to participate. The content lead flags that we will check again after the interview if the contributor is still happy to provide consent, and seek confirmation either through signing a form or recording consent on audio or video.

3

3+

Recorded consent

At the end of an interview/filming, take time to show contributors footage or images on the back of camera before leaving, and if appropriate engage them in discussion about which images should be used, without making any promises.[21]

The content lead checks if a contributor is still happy to provide consent, and if that is on the same basis as agreed at the beginning. He/she then explains that we will need to produce evidence for this consent, either by signing the consent form or recording consent on audio or video. He/she should emphasise to the contributor that recording evidence of their consent (either on paper or video/audio recording) is for their protection, to ensure that Oxfam can never use a person's photograph or story against their will etc. We then proceed to either signing the form or recording consent on audio or video.

In cases where names are to be changed, contributors should be asked to suggest a pseudonym they feel is appropriate. If this is not possible, the country team should provide a list of culturally acceptable alternatives. We should always record the full name of a contributor as well, even if they choose to change their name.

We leave the contributor with a sheet containing contact details (see consent form).

Follow-up

The contributor focal point should follow up with the contributor at least once during the weeks following the story gathering. He/she should check how the contributor feels now about sharing his/her story and if he/she has received any feedback from others, either as a consequence of the story gathering or the publication of the materials. For contributors, this provides an opportunity to withdraw consent or put caveats to the use of their images. For Oxfam, this allows to check on a contributor's situation and put additional safeguards in place if needed.

This follow-up could consist of either a personal encounter, a phone call or an email, and could coincide with the point at which copies of finished content are returned to the contributor.

In sensitive environments, depending on the risk analysis, more follow-up moments should be scheduled, ranging from a couple of weeks to six months after story gathering.

GDPR & lawful basis

This guidance requires those collecting content to follow Oxfam's ethical informed consent process and utilise the ethical informed consent form. While processes in these guidelines, including the ethical consent process and form have been designed with data protection laws in mind, affiliates should always be mindful of requirements under their own laws. In particular, affiliates in the EU may need to consider their lawful basis – GDPR sets out six of these, which include consent. The law explicitly outlines that any use of information must have a valid lawful basis, and each has specific implications.

Option 1: Consent

Where the lawful basis is consent, GDPR sets out a number of explicit requirements, including that:
- Consent must be freely given and can be withheld;
- No power imbalance which would prevent it being given must exist;
- It must be possible to easily withdraw it ;
- Consent must be a positive, affirmative step;
- It must be specific to a purpose;
- It must be informed.

The informed consent form included in this guidance has been designed with these requirements in mind, but it is not clear that – even if informed – the relationship between Oxfam and its beneficiaries is such that all photographic subjects will at all times be able to provide their informed consent as defined in Data Protection Law. Affiliates may therefore wish – based on their legal understanding and analysis – to use a different lawful basis.

Option 2: Legitimate Interest

The principal implications of using Legitimate Interest rather than consent are:

1. There is an increased obligation on the organisation to account for its 'interest' in using data, and account for the risk to which it exposes individuals;

2. There is no explicit right to withdraw consent or be forgotten – instead the law outlines a softer right to object.

If Legitimate Interest is used, these implications put more onus on the Data Controller (either the affiliate gathering the content or the Executing Affiliate if the content is gathered by a country team) to account for behaviour and carry out risk-based decision-making in order to protect individuals and respect their privacy rights – and may reduce the challenges inherent in requiring robust consent withdrawal mechanism.

The use of Legitimate Interest does not lessen the protection available to individuals, prevent a robust consent process from being carried out, or remove the need for risk analysis or follow-up mechanisms to allow consent withdrawal / objection. There are parallels in other walks of life (e.g. medical research) where an 'ethical' consent process is used alongside a non-consent lawful basis due to an imbalance of power.

Deciding on the lawful basis

This documentation has been written with consideration that the 'balance' of risk and ethical thinking it provides may provide weight to a decision to use Legitimate Interest, and that the safeguards it provides in preventing exploitation may satisfy the requirements of GDPR.

However, ultimately affiliates must conclude whether they are collecting content on the basis of legitimate interest (with the consent process an ethical rather than data protection element) or on the basis of consent within the meaning of their data protection laws (and having satisfied themselves that the consent process fulfils the requirements of those laws).

In cases where 'Special Category' data is processed – e.g. in a narrative relating to religion, trade union membership, health history, or another of the 'special category' types of data – an additional processing condition (set out in Article 9(2) of GDPR) may also be needed. This may be consent – or another condition.

Groups & crowds

There are times when adhering to the process of informed consent for all those featured in an image (still or moving) can be difficult. This is particularly in relation to images of groups of people, images in public places which may include 'crowds', and refugee and humanitarian emergency situations where there may be lots of people, often in relative levels of distress, in one place.

Oxfam must commit to careful consideration of how it is going to manage informed consent in relation to each particular content gathering trip. While situations like those described above will be difficult, Oxfam story gatherers must commit to discussing and developing strategies for managing informed consents in these contexts.

At times Oxfam will be required to take images of groups of people. We can consider two types of group situations:

1. Groups of people who are directly related to Oxfam's work, for example a savings group, a school class, a group of activists.

2. Groups of people not related to Oxfam's work (street scenes etc).

For groups of people who are directly related to Oxfam's work: it will be important for relevant staff to gather consent from individuals in that group, ideally in advance of the content gathering itself. It should be straightforward at the time of image making to review/summarise the prior consent agreements, check if anyone does not give consent, and according to how big the group is:

- For groups of less than 10 persons, have every person sign a group consent form.

- For groups of more than 10 persons, have the group leader sign on behalf of the group – however this form must still contain all contributors full names.

For groups of people not related to Oxfam's work in public places, if an individual is recognisable in a crowd shot (for example street scene, a queue outside an HIV clinic, a refugee camp), the decision as to whether informed consent is ethically required or not depends on the whether the context of that crowd reveals information about that individual which is considered sensitive(health, sexuality, asylum/refugee status, political beliefs, religion). For example, we require consent from identifiable individuals in a queue outside an HIV testing centre, or in a refugee camp, or at a political rally.

However, we do not require consent from identifiable individuals in the background of an urban or rural public scene which does not reveal any of the individuals' sensitive data.

Experience demonstrates, that for example many of those seeking asylum and refugee status do not want to be identifiable in public communications about their situation. This reluctance is based on real fears that relate to their asylum application as well as possible reprisals for relatives they have left behind. Image making in such contexts must be done with extreme care as publication of their images could lead to risks for individuals or their families. And therefore, consent cannot be assumed. And so, unless it is possible to facilitate informed consent with everyone who is recognisable in that scene, images need to be taken in ways which do not reveal the individual identities of those at the scene.[22]

When filming or taking photographs in public places there are times when we may need to seek advice and permission from local authorities before filming or photographing in those locations. Checking whether such permissions are required is an essential part of the planning/TOR development.

Notes

[17] Guidance from this section, and other sections of the guidelines, on the informed consent process is summarized in a 1-page sheet that sits with the informed consent form.

[18] All country programs should translate the informed consent form into further languages as appropriate and needed.

[19] Oxfam content gathering should minimize additional stress or concern for individuals who are already facing undue stress and difficulties. E.g. contributors who are caught up in conflict or emergency situations may feel worried about the potential use of any of their data. They should never be pressured into providing their image, or details of their story or identity.

[20] Story gatherers should consider gathering evidence of consent prior to the interview if it does not hamper a comfortable and positive story gathering experience for the contributor. This is strongly recommended in high-risk situations.

[21] This provides them with an additional opportunity to express any concerns they may have about the image being published, and allows the contributor to have some say in how they may be visually represented.

[22] This is preferable to having to manipulate the image afterwards i.e. blurring the faces of anyone whose consent you don't have.

Showing respect

Further responsibilities to contributors

Children & vulnerable adults

Oxfam is committed to upholding the rights of children, and safeguarding them against actions (intended or unintended) that place them at risk of all forms of violence and harm, including child abuse and exploitation. Freelance content gatherers who come into contact with children or vulnerable adults will be required to:

- Undergo reference checks and (where relevant/possible) criminal record checks;

- Sign One Oxfam Child safeguarding policy;

- Always be accompanied by an Oxfam staff member or representative of a partner organisation.

General safeguards

Oxfam's gathering, management and use of content featuring children must adhere to legal and ethical standards and consider: assessment of risk to the child (with extra care taken for especially vulnerable children); child safety; respect of the child's rights, integrity and dignity; obtaining and documenting informed consent from the child (if they are old enough to understand) as well as from their parent or guardian.[23] Oxfam must prioritise the best interests and protection of children over the opportunity for advocacy and promotion of the agency.

This means those involved in content gathering with children must, in addition to providing the safeguards outlined above:

- Take care to ensure local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming a child.

- Obtain informed consent from the child (if they are old enough to understand as well as from their parent or guardian before photographing or filming a child or obtaining their story.

- Information shared with anyone, but especially with children, during the process of content gathering, must be in clear and plain language that can be understood.

- Ensure all images present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive – regardless of whether they are boys or girls.

- When gathering and publishing images and stories of children, Oxfam must mitigate the risks of retribution, stigmatisation, or increased targeting by child sex-offenders.

Protecting identities

By default Oxfam changes children's names.[24]

Images of under-18s with changed names cannot feature identifying elements in the picture, nor be accompanied by identifying information in the caption/story when shared either internally (as part of metadata on the DAM visible to users) or externally (on online or offline channels). These elements may include:

- Reference to any location under 100,000 inhabitants (use a county or state name rather than a town name if needed);

- A parent's last name or location;

- A school name.

In addition to using changed names and not identifying locations, the story gathering team/child/parent can decide to not show the individual's face on film or photos, for additional protection, as per the above guidance on risk analysis and consent.

There are some exceptions to the name change rule. The story gathering team can choose to use children's real names, only if all three of the following key conditions are met:

1. The child and their parent feel strongly about doing so and they have been informed of any risks associated with children being featured in the media;

2. The local safeguarding focal point agrees;

3. The context does not involve any one of the following issues: conflict, child labour, unaccompanied minors, asylum application, trafficking, HIV and AIDS, armed groups (child soldiers/brides), sexual violence (including victims of child marriage) - or any other major risks identified as part of the risk analysis.

Even when using real names, the story gathering team should carefully consider if it is appropriate to reveal specific locations.

Vulnerable adults

Oxfam must apply similar care and responsibilities when content gathering involves vulnerable adults.

Oxfam defines a vulnerable adult as any person aged 18 years and over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental

health issues, learning or physical disability, sensory impairment, or unable to protect themselves due to age or illness and who may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation. This includes people encountering domestic abuse, substance misusers and asylum seekers. An elderly person, while they may require extra support, does not necessarily meet the definition of adult at risk.

Contributors' homes & environment

When those involved in a content gathering trip find themselves in people's homes and surrounding environment, they must be respectful and careful. If people take their shoes off before entering a home then the content gathering team must also do this. Similarly lights should not be turned on or furniture or belongings moved without first asking.

And equipment should not be left around without first asking. The content gathering team should be equally careful in outside areas belonging to the contributor(s).

All those gathering content for Oxfam must be sensitive to the environment and any impact photography, videography or interviews may have on the surrounding environment, taking care not to:

- Damage vegetation;

- Stray from marked trails;

- Intentionally disturb or harm wildlife or the natural environment;

- Leave behind any rubbish; take it with you.

While Oxfam does 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. All those involved in content gathering are expected to treat all animals humanely and not support the mistreatment of animals.

Chris Hufstader (Oxfam America) and Savann Oeurm (Oxfam in Cambodia) interview Le Thi Anh, a chicken farmer in Thai Nguyen province, Vietnam, about a farmer innovation project.
(Credit: Do Thi Hong Hanh/Oxfam)

Joint decision-making

Image makers and interviewers should talk to contributors about how they would like to photograph/film/interview them. For example, depending on the context of the image-making and if appropriate, contributors should be invited to suggest a suitable time and place for any interviewing. Contributors should be encouraged to suggest a place that is convenient and comfortable, and, if appropriate, private. Story gatherers should be aware of gender differential safe hours and places, and should take care not to place undue burden on women's hours that are often considered 'only for housework'.

Those gathering content should also allow space for the contributor to suggest how they may like to be portrayed. It is usual practice for image makers to make time to share images taken with contributors on the back of their camera. This is another opportunity for a contributor to let the image maker know if there is something they are not happy with in terms of their portrayal.

Reimbursement

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, depending on their relationship with Oxfam or its partners, some contributors and potential contributors will associate Oxfam content gathering with possible assistance for themselves or their communities. It is important that those involved in content gathering take care in managing contributors' expectations. Once it has been explained that Oxfam may use image and stories for fundraising purposes it is likely that contributors and others will want to know how, if at all, they, their families or their communities will benefit. Those on content gathering trips must be ready to answer that question.

That being said, where we may need more than half a day from a single person's time, 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. Both at community and household level, who the money is given to can be a source of conflict. There should be no discrimination related to who (men or

women) gets funds or how much. The story gathering team should always 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.

Find out with the local Oxfam team and our partners:

- 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;

- If compensation should be communicated up front or offered as a gift at the end.

In some cases, it might be appropriate to make a small gift or donation that will benefit the community or neighbourhood at large; particularly if a shoot has involved a content gathering team being present in a community for several days. It is important to consider this in the planning stage for budgeting purposes, and to include the Oxfam country program and/or partners in the decision.

Content gathering during humanitarian crisis

There are several references throughout these guidelines about content gathering during humanitarian response situations. In addition it is important to specify that Oxfam adheres to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief. This code stipulates: [25]

'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.'

Contributors who have no relationship with Oxfam

A significant portion of Oxfam's work is influencing work at a national or international level. These programmes provide indirect benefit to lots of people but have no direct programme participants. Content gathering to support these influencing programmes is likely to involve individuals who will not have a direct relationship with Oxfam. The same ethical standards must apply.

In addition, attention must be paid to ensuring those contributing are aware of services and programmes that they would be able to access and may bring benefit to their lives. Identifying appropriate referral services is an important part of the planning for such content gathering.

In the case that we knowingly plan to feature individuals (who are not involved with Oxfam's activities) in communications to support Oxfam's program or influencing work, we need to make sure that wherever possible they are able to reap the benefits of that same work as well.

Those involved in content gathering will need to work closely with partners or Oxfam country programs to put in place the necessary resources and procedures to ensure those featured can participate in and benefit from relevant, nearby programming or support. Attention should be paid that the support is appropriate to both our local work and the contributor's needs, and not seen as favouring some and discriminating others in a community. Agreeing on convenient support should be an integral part of the planning process and inform the decision on whether a trip will go ahead or not.

Following up afterwards

Oxfam's commitment does not stop with the story gathering crew leaving.

Returning images to contributors

Oxfam is committed to make every possible effort to provide images and/or finished communications materials to those who contributed their image and story. Follow-up with contributors in this way is respectful, helps to manage expectations, provides an opportunity to check contributor's well-bring (after the interest demonstrated in their lives at the time of content gathering), is an opportunity to

recheck consent, and is a way that Oxfam can give something appropriate back to those who have given Oxfam use of their image and story.

When it comes to returning images and follow-up this should always be managed by the relevant country team and the contributor focal point in particular.

IF the contributor leaves an email address and/or mobile phone number in the consent form (and provided communicating with contributors by phone or email is considered appropriate)[26], the contributor focal point should share links to relevant content and resulting communications digitally. In this case, Oxfam should always return materials to the contributor (and commit to doing so at the time of story gathering).

IF the contributor has left only a physical address in the consent form, we can return a selection of content and communications materials to the contributor focal point, who can then transfer those materials to the contributor. Recognizing that this often depends on action from our local partners, beyond our control, and may require disproportionate effort, we should share materials if we can (and commit to doing so at the time of story gathering).

The commissioning office should include in workplans and budgets, printing/postage costs and the staff time/travel costs associated with returning images to the contributors. The country program should be aware that this is a critical part of the TOR.

Some affiliates and country teams have also started to take a polaroid camera with them while content gathering so that image makers can take photographs of contributors and their families and leave these with them.

Contributors' feedback on the story gathering process

Oxfam will strive to gather feedback from contributors on how they experienced the content gathering process and how they feel about the resulting communications they feature in. Clearly this will not be possible with all content gathering assignments. As part of the TOR/planning stage commissioning teams will be considering if and how they can return content and communications to contributors.

When that is possible, Oxfam should ensure that contributors are provided with the opportunity to feedback on the process and their portrayal and Oxfam should document their feedback. On an annual basis the Content group will share feedback received and consider its implications for ongoing content gathering practice and procedures.

When the shoot is over, the work merely begins. Here: Oxfam Australia filming at the Oxfam Trailwalker event. (Credit: Keith Parsons/Oxfam)

Notes

23 In some cases a parent may not be well placed to provide or deny consent, especially if his/her interest is clearly conflicting with the child's rights. Example: a father who sold off his 14-year old daughter, would be badly placed to consent to his daughter sharing her view on child marriage. It is the duty of the content lead to assess carefully and draw upon advice from the local team. If it is determined that the parent cannot cover consent, consent should be sought from a person fulfilling the role of guardian. If such a person is not available, we should conclude that insufficient safeguards are in place and storygathering to not go ahead.

24 Except for when he/she has an existing public profile, as per above guidance

25 From the ICRC & NGOs in Disaster Relief Code of Conduct

26 It is prohibited for those working with Oxfam to contact contributors who are under 18 in this way.

Processing content
Ensuring data protection after the shoot

10 key metadata for every image

When published on the DAM and shared within Oxfam, every image should be accompanied with the following 10 key metadata for every contributor (who is clearly visible):

1. full name

2. pseudonym (if appropriate)

3. date of birth

4. caption

5. date of the story gathering

6. geographical location

7. program work description

8. project name/number

9. partner organization

10. image-maker/agency

Image makers and those involved in commissioning or producing content, are responsible for ensuring that all gathered content is processed in line with relevant Oxfam guidelines on data protection.

Equipment

While on content gathering, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) on any cameras, phones or recorders must be turned off. This requirement forms part of all of Oxfam's contracts with image makers.

Image makers – where not using Oxfam's equipment – must employ appropriate Technical and Operational safeguard on their equipment to protect content while handling it, including encryption of their phones and devices, use of supported and patched hardware and software, regular transfer of raw data from cameras, appropriate anti-malware software, and any other appropriate safeguards defined in the agreement with the Image Maker, or an appropriate annexe to the contract.

Metadata & captions

Taking care to upload detailed and accurate captions alongside each image, is respectful to the contributor and audiences and also guarantees that any use and re-use of images is appropriate to context, thereby minimising risk to contributor as well as any reputational risk resulting from inappropriate re-use of images. Oxfam cannot use images which do not have the correct information associated with them.

Image makers contracts should be provided with clear instructions on what is expected from them in relation to metadata to accompany each image (or group of images.

All images should be accompanied by clear captions and comprehensive additional information. Captions should be limited to 2-3 sentences and answer the five W's – what can you see in the picture, who, where, when and why. Additional information may should expand on the issue at stake and on Oxfam's work, explain how both are related and include at least one direct quote.

Sign-off on the final selection of stories and images, including captions, should be sought from the relevant country team's Country Director prior to publishing the content on the DAM and sharing with Oxfam staff. This approval warrants use of the materials in all Oxfam communications, as long as

these are reflective of the story and images as they were documented originally.

Storage & curation

Consent forms containing the real names of contributors should be stored next to the assets on a securely managed DAM, they must not be visible to any Oxfam staff with the notable exception of trained content managers, to guarantee anonymity for those who have requested it.

Extra care needed that when contributor has requested the use of pseudonym, that their real name should not be visible to users on the DAM.

Photos and stories on DAM will be active as long as they are deemed relevant, and for a maximum of four years - after that they are archived and restricted on a secure server where they will be stored for historical records and only used where appropriate, for example 75th anniversary, reviewing a past project etc.

Through our consent form, contributors agree to Oxfam's use of their story for five years. Archival after four years allows for one year of 'content retirement', in which no new communications are produced and existing public communications using the designated content gradually disappear. It also provides time for re-consent to be sought if we wish to create anything new from the content.

Contributors have the right to withdraw consent to the use of their images at any point before the five-year term, by means of a simple request. In case a contributor has deceased or is in any other way incapable of doing so him/herself, consent can be withdrawn by one of their first grade relatives.

It is the duty of the content manager who checked and uploaded images and stories originally, to periodically review their relevance. This review should involve relevant country teams and consider whether:

• A contributor's situation has changed significantly;

• The issue covered has changed significantly;

• The story is still in line with programs and policies.

If at any point in time it would become clear that the context on the ground has changed substantially from the time of storygathering, the story should either be archived or the changes should be clearly logged with each of the assets.

Using content

Integrity & accuracy in
our communications

Being ethical is not only about how we collect and store content, it's also about how we use content in communications. Therefore these guidelines only make sense if they are adhered to by Oxfam staff involved in using the content for public engagement purposes (creative, media, social, digital, fundraising etc.). Oxfam has a commitment to both its contributors and its audiences to ensure that it uses images and accompanying messages accurately and with integrity in its official communications.

The same goes for communication from individual Oxfam staff, both internally and externally.

- On Workplace, staff should not share sensitive or personal data, unless the images or stories have gone through the same vetting process as content for external communications.[27]

- Use of content on staff' personal social media accounts should mirror official Oxfam communications, and thus comply with all of the requirements in these guidelines as well. [28]

Changes to original content

The images (still and moving) that Oxfam use must be accurate representations of the reality covered. Manipulation of images risks changing the situation someone agreed to be photographed or filmed in (changing the conditions of informed consent) and fails to provide audiences with the credibility it expects from Oxfam. Only changes in line with the guidelines below are permissible.

Under no circumstances should images be altered by adding material or subtracting material that was not originally there. Blurring of people should only be done for security or protection reasons, and only if it has proven impossible to address any requirements relating to concealing an individual's identity, location or circumstances, at the time of the shoot.

Changing colour
Basic colour corrections such as removing red eye from a photograph, are acceptable. However, images or footage should not be changed to duller/sepia tones or more vivid/colourful tones to make the situation look worse, or better, than it is.

Cropping & flipping
Any cropping or flipping should be done with care. Do not crop or flip images if this could change context or imply a different truth.

Editing film
Oxfam will not alter film footage during editing in a way that changes the reality of what was filmed, for example by deliberately slowing footage or keying out a background to make the situation appear worse than it is. There are however times when slowing footage down, to focus on an individual, is an acceptable creative device. The key principle is not to alter the footage in a way which changes the reality or context of what was filmed.

Editing quotes
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. In subtitles, always use first-person, direct speech. Do not summarise what people are saying because it may fit more neatly onto the screen. You can omit unnecessary or irrelevant words, but you cannot edit down the quote in any significant way. For further guidance on editing quotes see Annex 2.

Any final communications which contains substantial changes to the original story need to be signed off by the relevant Country Director. We should also ask ourselves if the contributor would still feel happy about the proposed design and consider whether the piece will need re-consent. The onus is on the creative team developing the materials to make these assessments – they should consult with the story gathering team if needed.

Selecting images & text

Do not use images taken at a previous time to represent a current emergency or news, unless there are no alternatives available. The caption must reflect accurately the time that the photo was taken if it is not current.

Do not use an image from one location to illustrate a story in another location. If no alternatives are available, again the caption must detail the location of the image being used.

Oxfam must not knowingly use unrelated images to illustrate a story or campaign, nor use an image of an individual or group of individuals to illustrate an issue which has nothing to do with them. Photographs of one person should not be used to accompany a story of someone else, unless the person featured is a model and that would be stated within the caption.

Text with an image affects how it is interpreted. It can incriminate contributors, influence their lives or stereotype them in an unfavourable, negative or other way that they would not agree to if asked. [29]

Captioning

Taking care with uploading correct information with all images should help to prevent incorrect use. All images used in Oxfam communications should be accompanied by a caption which provides the individual pictured with a name (or pseudonym), a location, and relevant context, as well as a credit that attributes the photographer and Oxfam (or other agency). The standard format for credits is 'Credit: name of photographer/ Oxfam' or in the case of 3rd party content 'Credit: name of photographer/name of agency'

Do not use images without a caption/credit or a link to where these can be found. For example for audiences viewing images on social media there should be a link to a website where the caption and credits will be available.

Using images without captions can risk contributing to the perpetuation of visual stereotypes and is not respectful to contributors (or audiences). However, it is important to note that the need for captions does not override the need to manage risks in relation to disclosing someone's name/location/circumstance. Where using images of children be careful not to include any identifying information in the caption, for example exact location or parent's surname.

For some of our audiences, referring to someone without their surnames is disrespectful and patronising, in other places the use of first names is preferred to create a more personal connection with the audience. Teams using content to create communications should give consideration to whether they will use surnames or first names only.

Use of third-party content

Oxfam prefers to use commissioned content, as we can gather content in accordance with these ethical content guidelines and Oxfam values. However, when this is not possible or would require disproportionate effort, Oxfam may need to obtain imagery from third parties. This content must only come from a trusted and reputable source and must adhere to the same principles contained in these guidelines.

In case of paid stock imagery, caption and consent information must be obtained at the time of purchase. In case of using free Creative Commons - licensed content or even when re-posting content from third parties on Oxfam channels, similar care should be taken.

News agency images

In case of an urgent response to a humanitarian emergency, Oxfam will consider purchasing images from editorial and news agencies.

In many cases images from news agencies will not have consent attached, as the images will have been taken for journalistic purposes for which informed consent is not required. Oxfam must take care to consider whether it feels there are any risks posed to the individuals featured in those images as a result of publishing, and whether the benefits of using that image to raise funds to respond to an emergency outweigh any potential risks. The use of such images is strictly limited to fundraising in the immediate aftermath of humanitarian emergencies, and should be limited in time to the point at which Oxfam is able to obtain commissioned photography.

Content managers must do their best to check whether the imagery has been used by another aid organisation; doing so presents a reputational risk as it can lead to the belief that Oxfam is not on the ground and therefore not the right organisation to support.

Images from the Internet

Most photos on the internet are copyright materials. This means they cannot be used freely, or only under certain conditions. For example, Pinterest photos cannot be used unless the permissions associated with the individual photo explicitly allow to do so.

At Oxfam we respect these conditions. The Oxfam staff member who wants to use a web image in communications or presentations, is required to find out about the license arrangements. This applies to all kinds of use – regardless if internal/external comms or the reach of the communications.

When searching for non-Oxfam imagery, staff should look for images on a stock website which only offers photos under very permissive licensing arrangements (such as FreeImages or Pexels). Alternatively, some of the bigger image sites offer ways to filter search results by licensing arrangement, so you can easily identify those you can freely use.

- In Google Images search results section, click Tools and then choose the Usage Rights options;

- In Flickr's search results, choose from the dropdown menu under Any License in the top left.

Even in these cases, use may be subject to some conditions (such as attributing the author), so do make sure to always check the specific licensing arrangements.

Dorthe Nielsen from Oxfam IBIS interviews contributors at Hamadou's house in Dori, Burkina Faso (Credit: William Vest-Lillesoe)

Notes

27 See Digital Workplace Terms of Use

28 See Codes of Conduct for staff and consultants ('I will seek authorisation before communicating externally in Oxfam's name...') and the draft digital safeguarding policy ('Sharing online content of volunteers, programme participants and beneficiaries on social media must follow the guidelines outlined below in Section 7 on Data Protection, Research and Informed Consent')

29 For example, people whose photos are used on blogs about Ebola, child soldiers, rape survivors, etc. will be assumed to have experienced those issues themselves. See also: Taking photos in humanitarian emergencies.

Annexes

Annex 1: Useful links

Please note these guidelines are first of all meant as guidance to Oxfam staff and therefor bear a number of externally inaccessible links, both throughout the document and on this page. With apologies for the inconvenience for readers external to Oxfam.

Templates

Consent forms & guidance

Contract templates for photographers & filmmakers

(including data-sharing agreements)

Related Oxfam policies

One Oxfam Child Safeguarding policy

Responsible Programme Data Policy and related training materials

Charter for Change – Comms implementation guidelines

Oxfam Code of Conduct (for staff) and Oxfam Consultants Code of Conduct

OGB Undertaking Research with Ethics: Guidance note

OGB Image processing workflow

OGB Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy (2017)

OAU Ethical Images and Stories Policy (2017)

OAU Ethical Content Guidelines (2018)

Relevant research

People in the Pictures – Save The Children

Which image do you prefer? - Radi-Aid

Annex 2: Editing quotes

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.

Quoting accurately

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 transcribing direct speech into a trip report/transcription
Present the material as a direct quotation as close as possible to the actual words the person uttered. Do not significantly change, rewrite or misrepresent what people say or alter their meaning in any way.

If needed, you may omit unnecessary and irrelevant words (eg, ums or ahems or side conversations) and/or 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.

When quoting from a trip report/transcription
The words appearing in quotation marks must be identical to the actual words the persons says in the 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. 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. You can only change the meaning of what is actually said with the approval of the person being quoted.

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

Exceptions

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.

You correctly omit one or more words by inserting an ellipsis (...) with a single space either side.

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.

Points to take into account when editing quotes:

- When omitting parts of a quote, you must not change the meaning, accuracy intent or integrity of what the speaker is saying or render the quote out of context to the person's overall story.

- Do not 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.

Content created prior to March 2019

Content collected from before the release of these guidelines (March 2019) will not necessarily comply with all of the requirements set out here. Removing all of these assets would be an unacceptable waste of resources. Re-investigating and warranting all assets' compliance would represent a disproportionate effort and often be practically impossible.

Therefore, content collected prior to 2019 will remain available to be used in Oxfam communications, given that it was collected against policies in place at that time, and until archived in accordance with the guidance set out in this document (see above).

OXFAM