



COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

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Purpose of this Policy

This document provides an overview of various forms of communication undertaken by the REACH for Nepal (RFN) foundation and a set of subsequent guidelines to be adhered to for all associated with the foundation (including volunteers and third-party suppliers and contractors) when communicating with, or on behalf of, the Foundation.

Our communications policy is guided by two key principles: commitment to truthful communication and upholding privacy principles in any and all communication undertaken by, or for, the Foundation.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure RFN complies with regulatory requirements and provides a framework in which the right to privacy of children, families, Nepalese communities and all people who the foundation is working with are considered and respected.

Forms of Communication

Communication includes all forms of contact with RFN, its volunteers and organisations affiliated with the foundation, including but not limited to: sponsors, volunteers, educational institutions, third-party suppliers, donors, recipients of support under RFN projects and members of the general public.

Forms of communication can include:

- Visual - photos and videos
- Written – formal correspondence, media releases, news articles, internal documentation, sponsorship and promotional material
- Verbal – conversations and meetings
- Delivery Platforms – web-site, social media, email, phone, news media, presentations
- Events and Documents – fundraising, volunteer recruitment, Annual Reports, newsletters, newspaper, radio and TV news



RFN Purpose and Values

All RFN communication, including internal and external communication, must be consistent with the RFN vision, purpose and values.

Our vision is to improve the lives of Nepalese people through projects that enable villages to become more self-sustaining and provide children opportunities for quality education and good health to provide them the opportunity as future leaders to improve the livelihood of coming generations.

The purpose of the foundation is directly linked and guided by its objectives which are encapsulated in the acronym of the name of organisation - Rebuild, Educate, Assist, Children/Communities (giving) Hope for Nepal.

RFN has universal values and principles and has no affiliation with any political or religious system.

- We are committed to the values of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID):
 - Integrity - We act with honesty and are guided by ethical and moral principles in all that we do.
 - Accountability - We take responsibility for our actions and are accountable to all our stakeholders, and in particular primary stakeholders, for our performance and integrity.
 - Transparency - We openly share information about our organisations and our work to all our stakeholders and to the public.
 - Respect - We recognise the value and diversity of every person and are committed to treating others with due regard for their rights, dignity and integrity.
 - Effectiveness - We strive to deliver outcomes that bring about positive change in the lives of people living in poverty.
 - Equity - We are committed to overcoming prejudices and disadvantages and promoting fair and just access to resources and opportunities.
 - Poverty - We work with and alongside others in a spirit of mutuality, respecting diversity and difference in the pursuit of common goals.
- We value the UN Sustainable Development Goals and use these to determine the relative priority of projects.
- We also value the sustainability of projects we deliver, so we not only build or restore capacity but also build capability to contribute and support the project in the Nepalese community receiving assistance.

Guiding Principles for Communication of RFN material



Critical to the integrity of the way we operate in the communities we serve is respecting and protecting the dignity, values, history, religion, language, culture, rights and safety of the Nepalese people.

RFN commits to respecting local traditions and customs when taking photographs and videos relating to project delivery in Nepal. RFN will provide briefings to all participants and volunteers prior to travelling to Nepal to ensure all involved understand the need to act respectfully and courteously when recording or capturing images relating to their time in Nepal with the Foundation.

We are committed to ensuring that all images and messages in all forms of communication defined above comply with the following principles:

- Images and related material will be chosen based on values of respect, equality and dignity. They will be truthfully represented to improve public understanding of the realities and complexities of the project or situation they refer to.
- Care will be taken to ensure that the identification of or use of content for publicity of local people will not endanger the people they portray
- Content for publicity will honestly portray the diversity of local people including age, disability and other marginalised groups
- Origins of any content for publicity will be known and any necessary permissions from the person(s) depicted (or the person's parents/guardian) will be recorded (Permission to Publish Template)

Requirements for Obtaining Informed Consent to Capture and Use Images and Stories

There are inherent complexities in gaining consent from people in the context of aid and development. It is important that RFN and RFN delivery partner in Nepal are conscious of the power differences that people in communities may experience, and acknowledge possible vulnerabilities. RFN must provide enough information for any person from whom it is seeking Informed Consent in order that they are able to make a well-informed decision without experiencing duress or pressure. It can be helpful to provide people from whom RFN is seeking Informed Consent with examples of how a story or photo may be used, using visual aids wherever possible.

When a local person is featured in an Image or Story, the person obtaining the Image or information for the Story (being any member of RFN Staff or Delivery Partner Staff or other individual associated with RFN obtaining Images or Stories) must ensure that:

Clear information provided prior to seeking consent: Prior to seeking consent from the key figures in the Images/Stories, the key figures are informed of and understand:

- what the Image/Story is being used for and how it may be used;

- that their Image/Story may be published for the purposes of the promotion of RFN and its mission;
- that the Published Images/Stories may be seen by people all over the world and for many years after the initial Publication of the Images/Stories;
- that they can request RFN to use a pseudonym and to remove any other identifying information when publishing their Image or Story in any publication;
- that they have the right to revoke their consent at any time by notifying RFN Staff or Delivery Partner Staff; and
- that there is a possibility that even if they revoke their consent, the nature of the internet means that some copies of their image may remain online even after RFN removes it from its online platforms.

Children: RFN avoids representing Images or Stories that feature children as key figures. However, where the key figures in the Images/Stories are a child or children under the age of 18 years, the parent, guardian or other adult care giver of a child or children under the age of 18 years must give their consent prior to capturing and using the child(ren)'s Image and/or Story and that details have been explained as to how and where the Image/Story will be used. Where possible and practical, this information should be given in writing.

Contextually sensitive: Informed Consent should be obtained in a way that is culturally appropriate and contextually sensitive. In the context in which RFN works, where communities may be very poor and people illiterate, RFN and RFN Delivery Partners will seek Informed Consent in the most culturally sensitive and appropriate way, such as verbal consent, which must be recorded in writing.

In context of work in Nepal, where communities may be very poor and people illiterate, it is not necessary for RFN to gain written consent. Rather, the onus is on RFN and Delivery Partners to seek informed consent in the most culturally sensitive and appropriate way.

Consent not provided: In the event the person refuses permission, their Image/Story may not be obtained or used in publications.

Partner Staff collection: If the person obtaining the Image or information for the Story is a member of Delivery Partner Staff, the RFN Partner has given verbal permission (whether verbally or in writing) for the Images/Stories to be sent to RFN and to be used in RFN promotional material and communications. RFN Delivery Partners who provide photos within monitoring reports will specifically state where Images/Stories have not received Informed Consent for publication.

Do no harm: The collection of Images and Stories should not harm key figures or any other person within the community and nor should it harm the environment.

Requirements for Publishing Images and Stories in Promotional Materials and Communications

RFN has the right to edit any Stories submitted by RFN Staff and Delivery Partner Staff and other individuals associated with RFN who may capture Images or write Stories for RFN, to ensure it complies with the requirements of this Policy.

All such material submitted to RFN must be approved by a Manager Nepal and Finance Operations (or a relevant member of RFN Staff) prior to Publication to ensure strict compliance with the following obligations:

- Images and Stories of women and men, boys and girls will present them in a dignified, respectful manner, portraying them as equal partners in the development process.
- Images and Stories will honestly portray the diversity of local people including age, disability and other marginalised groups.
- Images and Stories will honestly convey the context and complexity of the situations in which local people live and will not sensationalise the challenges faced in the recipient communities in which we work.
- Images and Stories of children will portray them in a dignified and respectful manner and in accordance with RFN's Safeguarding Policy.
- Images and Stories of children should not include any identifying information of the child, including the child's family name, community or school name.
- Images and Stories of children should not portray children in isolation; instead, they should be portrayed as part of their community.
- Images and Stories will utilise pseudonyms to identify key figures in the Image/Story, where the person has requested RFN to do so.
- Origins of any Images used will be known and any necessary permissions, including copyright releases, be held.
- Care will be taken to ensure that the use and Publication of Images or Stories of local people will not endanger the people they portray and if there are any such risks to local people portrayed, then those Images or Stories will not be published.

Where RFN works with other NGO's or a broader international network, promotional materials should clearly distinguish between RFN's work and the work of other NGO's or the network.

Ethical Decision Making Framework (EDMF)

RFN is committed to the capturing and publication of Images and Stories of local people from the communities in which we work, in a manner that respects the dignity, values, history, religion and culture of the people portrayed.



Images and Stories about the people RFN works with play a vital role in helping the foundation raising awareness about poverty and economic exclusion, bringing to life RFN's work and engaging supporters and the public.

All promotional material and communications must accurately reflect RFN's programs, activities and mission. Text and Images should directly relate to the country, place, context and activities supported by RFN.

All RFN promotional materials and communications will promote RFN Nepal Chapter and beneficiaries as active agents and not as passive recipients of aid.

RFN's EDMF for communications explains how to make ethical decisions when creating and publishing Publications. It uses a framework of structured discussions at ethically important moments during the storytelling process to reduce the risks associated with storytelling and protect contributors. This EDMF sets out important questions and explains when these questions ought to be asked when capturing and publishing Images and Stories. It also explains who is responsible for having these discussions and what to do if a decision can't be made.

RFN's EDMF is set out in Appendix A which presents five key ethical issues that are relevant for the capture and publication of its Images and Stories.

This framework is based on See Beyond Borders Ethical Decision Making Framework.

Privacy

RFN at all times will respect the privacy of every individual and will not publish or at any time communicate personal information without permission.

It is acknowledged that on occasions there may not be clarity on whether permission has been granted by all involved for images taken in villages and schools, and in such cases the test is whether or not that information could bring any personal harm or reflect them in a disrespectful way. This situation should be the exception and typically, informed consent for publication is required.

Ethical Communication

RFN's public communications and communications with stakeholders must also abide by the ACFID's commitment to principles of fairness and cooperation. Accordingly, RFN will not seek to make statements about other ACFID members with the intention of creating a reputational or other advantage to themselves.

Approval of External Communication

Consistency and truthfulness of messages is important and compliance with this policy is paramount. The Manager Communications & Company Secretary is the first point of contact for clarification regarding the application of this policy.

Any images or stories that are published for external use will need to be approved by a member of the executive (i.e. CEO or Manager Finance and Nepal Operations).

Responses to Requests for Information

RFN is committed to transparency in the work we do in Nepal and we will make the following information public including stakeholders:

- Details of our vision, goals and values
- Details of our governance structure including Board members
- Details of projects we are actively involved in
- Details of completed projects
- Annual financial statements
- Our Policies
- Our Strategy, focus areas and plans
- Project news
- Official contact details for staff

We will generally not make information available on any information that would breach privacy (please refer Privacy Policy), internal organisation documents and donor details.

Requests for information can be directed to Manager Communications and Company Secretary.

Your Feedback

At RFN we recognise that effective communication goes two ways, and we are committed to continuous improvement in the way we work. To that end, your input and feedback is valued, so please contact Manager Communications and Company Secretary if you have any suggestions, compliments or complaints in relation to our operation.

Administration of this Policy



This policy is administered by the Manager Communications and Company Secretary and will be fully reviewed every 3 years.

Appendix A

Ethical Framework

Ethical Issues	Questions to consider
<p>Connection to values</p>	<p>RFN's values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Image or Story uphold our core values? • Does the Image or Story respect those with who we work? • Are we being transparent about our contribution? <p>Human rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we put the best interests of the contributor first? • Have we ensured the content is accurate? • Have we ensured we 'do no harm' to the contributor during the storytelling process? • Have we treated the contributor with dignity and fairness? • Have we respected the personal freedom and privacy of the contributor? • Have we encouraged the contributor to freely express their thoughts and feelings? • Have we given the contributor control over how their identity and thoughts are portrayed in their story? <p>Children's rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we ensured the best interest of children have been put before the interests of adults and our organisation? • Have we adequately protected children? • Have we respected children's rights to dignity and fairness? • Have we attempted to reduce stereotyping of children? • Have we treated all children equally? <p>Women's rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we carefully considered how women are portrayed? • Have we considered how sex-role stereotyping is portrayed? • Have we given voice to women? • Are we empowering girls and women through this story?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we considered the unique protection needs of women in this story? <p>Disability rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we given people with disabilities the opportunity to contribute to this story? • Have we considered how ableism has affected this story? • Have we carefully considered how people with a disability are portrayed? • When published, will this story be accessible to people with disabilities?
Protection	<p>RFN is committed to putting the wellbeing the communities it works at. This is evident through our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy. In furtherance of this commitment, RFN should also consider in the Publication of any Image or Story:</p> <p>Protection of life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could the contributor’s life be put at risk by sharing their story? <p>Protection of dignity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could we be putting the contributor or their community at risk of vilification or retribution by sharing their story? • Have we considered how the contributor’s family, friends and community might feel about the storytelling project?
Informed Consent	<p>As noted in this Policy, key figures must provide their informed consent to be captured in any Image or Story. Permission should be obtained in a way that is culturally appropriate and contextually sensitive. The following are considerations that arise when obtaining such consent / permission:</p> <p>Correct information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we provided all the necessary information to the contributor so they can decide whether to consent to participate? • Have we shown the contributor appropriate examples of how their story might be used (including where it may be published and who will see it)? • Have we explained different ways the contributor’s identity can be revealed and concealed?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we consulted with the right people (including children’s guardians and community elders)? <p>Clear comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the contributor fully understand the risks and opportunities associated with sharing and publishing their Image and Story? • Have we given the contributor enough advance notice about the project so they have time to consider the risks and opportunities? • Have we explained the storytelling process in a way the contributor fully understands (including children), using the best-possible language? • Is there a single point of contact for the contributor to discuss the project and any consent issues? Is it easy for the contributor to discuss the project with us? <p>Voluntary consent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a power imbalance between the contributor and the organisation? • If there is a power imbalance, can you describe it? • If there is a power imbalance, how can we reduce it? • Is there an element of duress in the contributor’s consent? • If there is an element of duress, how can we address it? • How can we ensure the contributor can say ‘no’ to being involved in the storytelling project? • How can we ensure the contributor can withdraw their consent at any time?
<p>Privacy</p>	<p>RFN values and upholds the privacy of its contributor. All staff, directors, partners and volunteers must abide by our privacy policies contained in our Organisational Policy. There are also context-related issues that arise in relation to privacy in the capture of Images and Stories:</p> <p>Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we adequately protected the privacy of the contributor? • Have we discussed how the contributor’s story may expose

	<p>them to the public?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If appropriate, have we adequately concealed the name, location and visual identity of the contributor? <p>Information storage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we safely and securely stored the contributor's personal information? • Does the contributor understand how their personal information is stored and used? <p>Access to information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who has access to the contributor's information and are they aware of who can access it? • Have we explained how the contributor can access their personal information, make amendments to their story and withdraw consent?
<p>Authorship and Ownership</p>	<p>RFN respects the right of key figures to control their Stories. We also respect the right of contracted writers and photographers to moral ownership of their works. While RFN will abide by its privacy policies in its Organisational Policy, the following considerations should be had during the capture and Publication of Images and Stories:</p> <p>Authorship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will contributors and content creators be acknowledged when publishing their stories? • Does acknowledgement of authorship have implications for the privacy, anonymity or confidentiality assurances given to contributors? • What ethical obligations do contributors and content creators have to the truthful representation of stories and data? <p>Copyright</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who owns the copyright of our storytelling content? • Are there any conflicting copyright claims for storytelling materials we've published (or seek to publish)?