

Consent with Impact - Respecting Rights, Strengthening Relationships

Nyokabi Kahura, Photographer/Videographer
Wouter Fransen, Content Manager Oxfam International
Jörg Arnold, Co-Founder Fairpicture

A woman with dark skin, wearing a bright yellow polo shirt and a colorful patterned headwrap, is looking down at a black smartphone held in her hands. She is standing outdoors in front of a building with a corrugated metal roof. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the building and some greenery.

Whose story are we telling?

Ethical Framework of (visual) communication

People photographed/filmed as rightholders

Participation and dialogue

Legal compliance

Informed Consent

Building trust

About us



Nyokabi Kahura

Visual Storyteller,
Member of the
Fairpicture Network,
Nairobi



Wouter Fransen

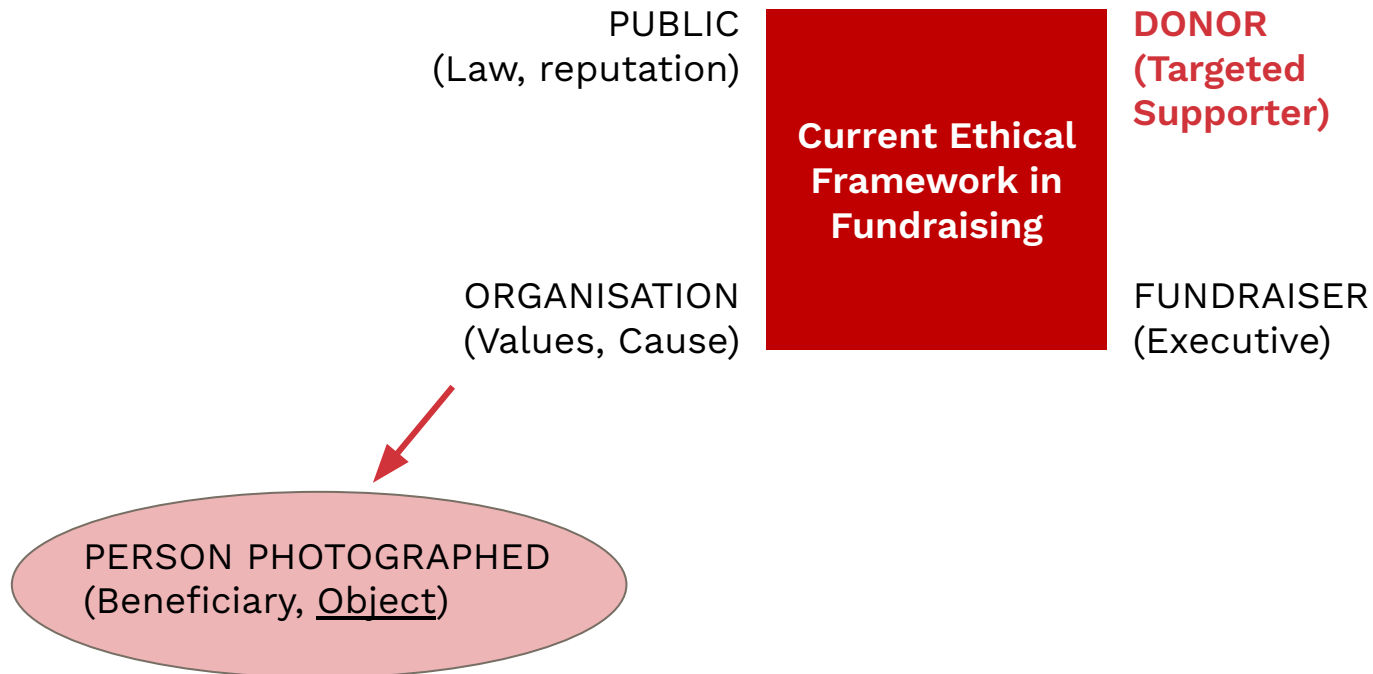
Global Content
Manager Oxfam
International,
Brussels



Jörg Arnold

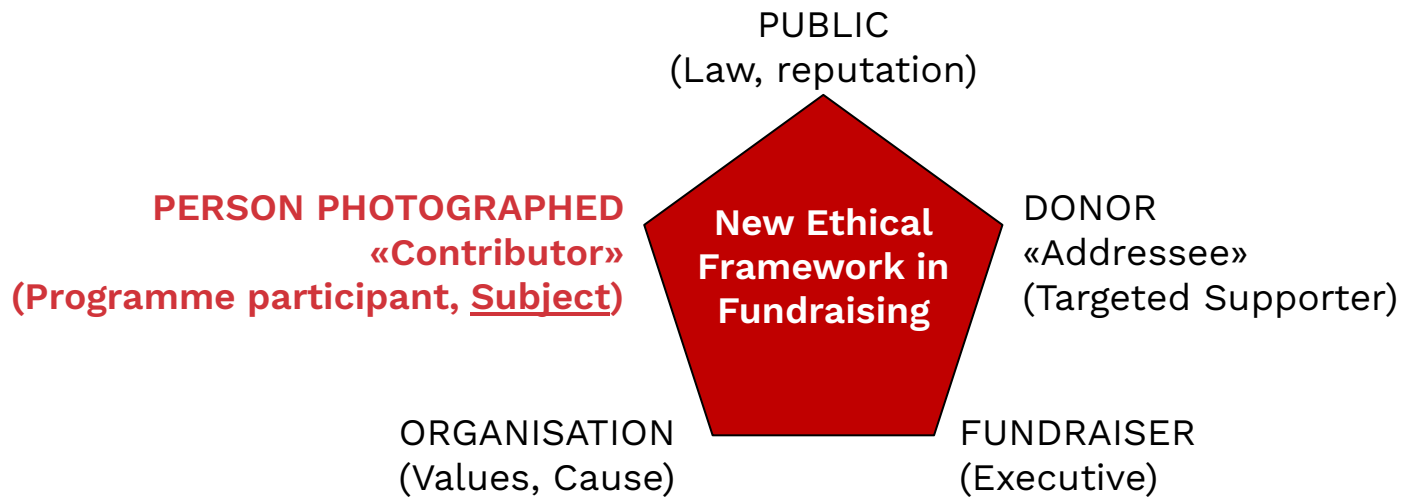
Co-Founder of
Fairpicture,
Bern

Who do we tell our stories to - and where do we focus our attention?





Decolonizing Communication





Q&A

Informed Consent as a basic tool



Consent is about Legal Rights



Right to be asked and to consent

The people photographed are often not **asked** whether they want to expose themselves with their pictures.

GDPR/DSGVO



Right to be informed

It is very rare for photographed people **to be given access** to their images and the corresponding products.

GDPR/DSGVO



Right to adequate representation

Stereotypical pictures without context **strengthen existing biases** and contribute to inequality and exclusion.



Right to withdraw

It is challenging to offer the real **possibility** of being able to withdraw a consent at any time.

GDPR/DSGVO

**Consent is more than
GDPR-compliance ...**





**... it's about building
relationships**

Foto: Nyokabi Kahura/Fairpicture

Localisation and Co-Creation as the New Normal

Local ownership in storytelling

Local visual creators are familiar with the local context, can build trust more easily and tell stories more authentically.

Collaboration and participation

The active involvement of programme participants in developing content makes the stories more credible and authentic, and communication gains trust.

Transparency and trust

An open and transparent dialogue is crucial to the success of co-creation. Trust between participants encourages the free exchange of ideas and feedback.

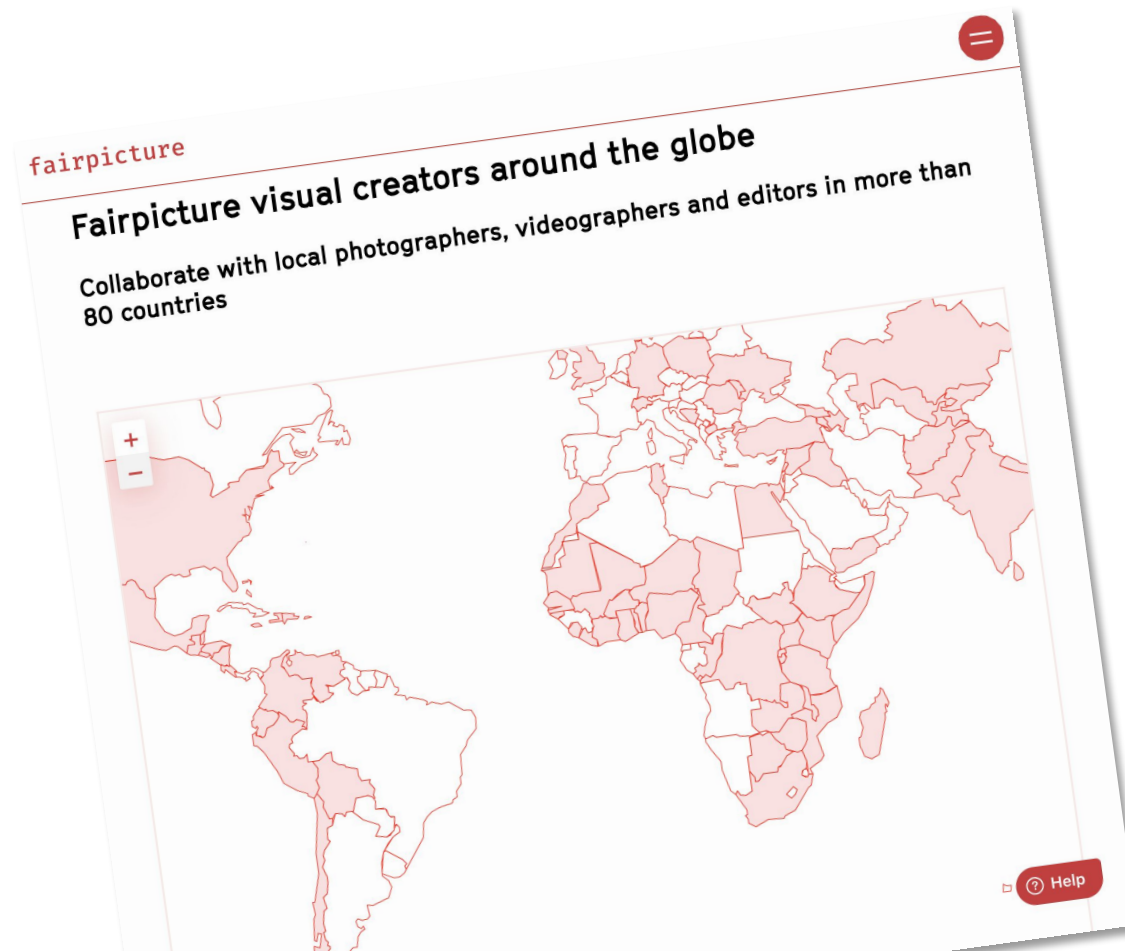
Creating shared value

Trust is the most important currency in the donation market. Shared values and tangible relationships strengthen the bond between donors and programme participants.

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Fairpicture: A Network of professional Photographers and Videographers in 100 Countries worldwide



Images can make the world a better place if ...

- ... the **right to one's own image and story** is taken for granted
- ... **Co-Creation** is a principle of narrative design
- ... **Informed Consent** is the basis for collecting content and interacting with the people involved
- ... **project/programme participants are involved** in the work of content gathering and creative work
- ... **self-determination** is the new normal in communications
- ... **communication work is** recognised and implemented as part of the **programme work**

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TRAILER:
VOLCAFE WAY COFFEE
FARMERS' STORIES

Nyokabi Kahura,



why is the consent process important
for engaging with the people being
photographed or filmed?

Nyokabi Kahura

Visual Creator's Perspective

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WORK EXPERIENCE

- Visual Creator in **photography and videography + write stories of change**
- Over **14 years of experience** in over **18 countries** in Africa
- Worked in both **conflict areas** and **non-conflict areas**
- Documented emergency responses, and development projects: Food Security, Health, Shelter, Water and Sanitation plus, Protection, Education sectors, etc.
- I usually work solo - I am capable, lower costs, and usually get help on the ground.

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Visual Creator's Perspective

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 AKTION
DREIKÖNIGSSINGEN
20 * C+M+B+22

Kinderrechtswerk 'Die Sternchen'
Band der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend (DKJ)

www.dreikoenigssingen.de

FOR WHO AND FOR WHAT?

- For International NGOs, Local NGOs, TV stations, Donors, etc.
- Used: websites, newsletters, fundraising campaigns, social media, annual reports, TV shows etc.

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Visual Creator's Perspective

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BEFORE AN ASSIGNMENT

- Despite having many years of experience, I always feel a little apprehensive before an assignment.
 - Will I be able to **build trust** with the person whose story needs to be told, within such a short time?
 - Will they give me **consent to tell their story**?
 - Will I be **able to tell their story** as they would like it told?
 - What are the **dos and don'ts**? What parts of a person's story should I or should I not tell?
 - Will I tell the story in a way that the **audience will be able to understand** and enjoy it?
 - Will I be able to tell the story according to **what the organisation has requested** without compromising the trust, rights and dignity of the person who is being told?
 - What is the **reality on the ground**?

REALITY ON THE GROUND

- Several possibilities affect the outcome of the assignment:
 - **Permits** required in specific countries and equipment that is allowed
 - **Complexities of travel**
 - **Weather/Season:** For example, documenting an agriculture project during the dry season.
 - **Conflict areas/non-conflict areas:** determines amount of time for assignment, what images may or may not be taken, how comfortable the protagonists are, how I as visual creator gets affected). Example in Central African Republic: Interviewing while gunshots in background; documenting emergency in operating theatre.



REALITY ON THE GROUND

- The **reality of the project**: Has the project started? Does HQ have a different idea of the project in comparison to the reality on the ground – what the the story that the organisation wants to tell vs the real life of the people?
- **Rapport created with the local partner** and their level of support.
- **Consent of the contributor**: Despite having asked for consent prior to the visit, the contributor may change their mind. Example: Walked up a hill 2 hours in D.R. Congo and the lady changed her mind. Did not want to tell story of her experience in the D.R.C conflict. She escorted us back and half way down the hill, she decided to tell her painful story.

CONSENT – IN THE PAST AND NOW

In the past:

- Consent was hardly ever asked for
- Mainly paper-based, and whose challenges included:
 - Some people do not know how to read and write
 - Cumbersome if very many participants
 - Difficulty in associating signed paper consent with the faces
 - Resource-intensive: printing, scanning, printing again
 - Hard copies usually had to be couriered across the world.
- Oftentimes the forms were unavailable – not printed, prepared...
- In some communities, photos and videos were taken without consent, leading to harsh responses, including violent threats, from communities who believed that their images would be sold for lots of money yet, they would not benefit.

CONSENT – IN THE PAST AND NOW

Now:

- Almost all organisations that send me on assignment ensure signed consent.
- However, mainly paper-based.
- Introduction is done by local partner: why images will be taken etc. Explain the need for consent.
- In a majority of the cases, I do the photography/videography and at the same time take/collect the consent. If paper-based, the local partner helps if the participants are many.
- Sometimes institutional consent.

CONSENT – IN THE PAST AND NOW

Now:

- For more than a year now, I have been using the FairConsent App for Fairpicture, and other assignments.
- When using the App, I usually enter the data.
- In some few cases the local partner helps.
- The App has made life easier:
 - I can collect all the important data very fast: the App is straightforward
 - I use my phone to collect the consent.
 - The Contributor and I work together to fill in the consent form on the phone.
 - The App works offline and so can be used anywhere.
 - At the end of a project, I can create and share PDF files



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Visual Creator's Perspective

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WHAT HAPPENS/CHANGES WHEN I SEEK CONSENT?

- Seen as a **sign of respect** and, that the story is regarded as important.
- When seeking consent, I explain **why the material is needed, who it will be used by, where and for how long.**
- We discuss how telling their story and sharing their images might **affect their life.**
- I make it clear that saying **'No' is Ok** and that there will be no repercussions.
- Seeking consent **builds trust.**
- When consent is given, I feel free to **openly do my work** – they allow me into their space and give me the freedom to work. This determines the nature of images that I can capture.



WHAT HAPPENS/CHANGES WHEN I SEEK CONSENT?

- The contributor is oftentimes more open to sharing their story.

Example: I did a story about Caroline, from a village in Nandi Hills, Kenya, who shared her story about infertility in addition to her farming activities. I visited her and her husband over a 3 month period. It was screened for the whole village. This started conversations about a topic that was taboo. A topic that was misunderstood. Caroline, her husband and the entire community not only learned more about agriculture but about infertility, its causes, treatment, & more.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I SEEK CONSENT?

On the other hand, there are limitations:

- **Seeking consent in public places is a challenge** e.g. in markets, roadside.
- In a sense, the visual creator is **limited to specific images/shots** yet some would make a big difference for the story.
- Getting **consent in emergency situations** is a challenge.
- After giving consent and telling their story, the material **often never makes it back to the Contributor**.
- **Cultural limitations:** In some cases, a woman might give consent as an adult but the husband might not approved, which creates some conflict.
- Question of **remuneration**.

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Visual Creator's Perspective

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Thank you!



Wouter Fransen,



why are informed consent and the
involvement of project participants so
important in Oxfam's content gathering?

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SAVING LIVES



BUILDING A FUTURE



CHANGING SYSTEMS





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WORKING WITH

2,341

LOCAL PARTNERS



WE REACHED

15.3M

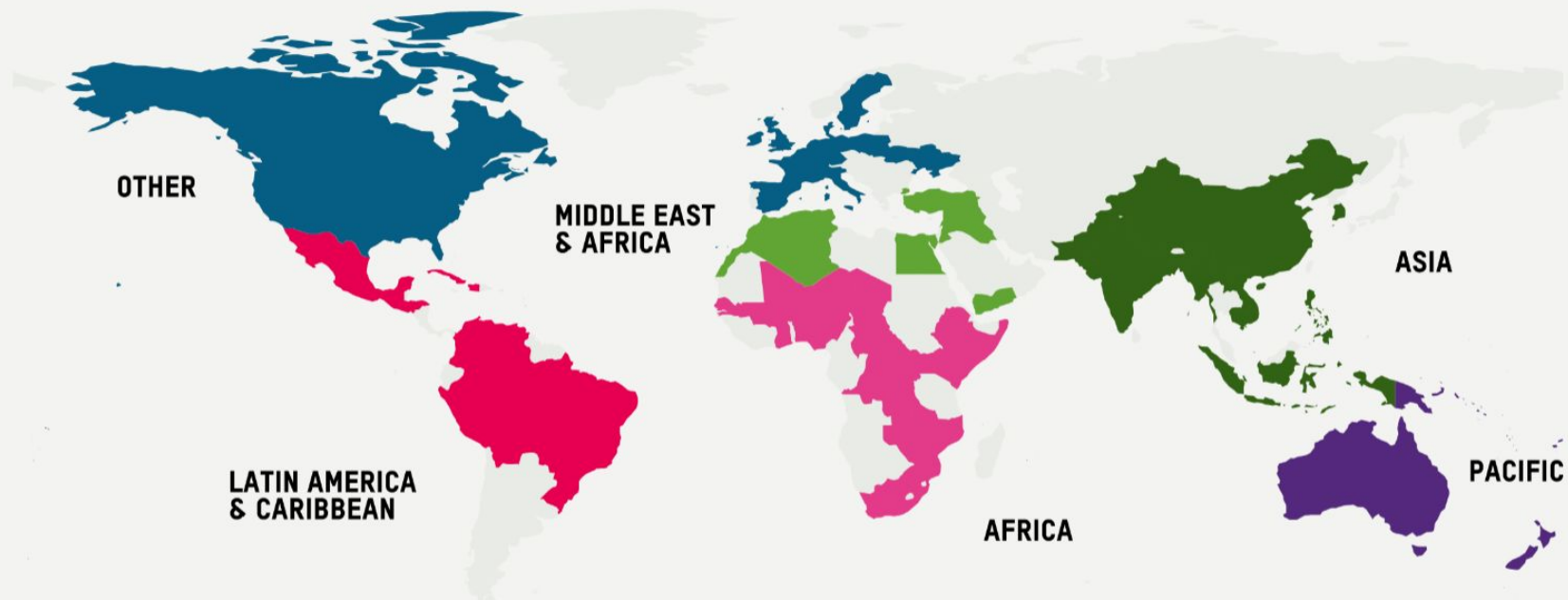
PEOPLE



IN

81

COUNTRIES





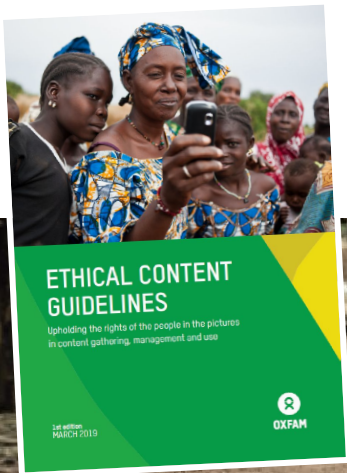
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**STORIES CAN
CHANGE
SYSTEMS**

**BUT IT NEEDS TO
BE THEIR STORY,
NOT OURS**



Oxfam Ethical Content Guidelines



1 when? 1 month – 24 hours before a shoot
who? contributor focal point

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.

2 when? right before the shoot
who? content lead

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 conversation²⁴.

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 when? right after the shoot²⁵
who? content lead

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 promises²⁶.

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).

3+ when? weeks/months after the shoot
who? contributor focal point

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 6 months after story gathering.




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 Dash


 CSV upload


 Search results


 Featured collections


 Recent

 Help and Advice

 Advanced search


 Upload

 226908

 12

Welcome to Inuru


Your source of inspiration for quality multimedia content, and Oxfam's window to the world.



Zimbabwe

Empowering Girls - Mar 2025

40




Congo - The Democra...

Update from Karuba - May/June 2025

Kalwira


2



Kenya


Remarkable SMEs - Mar 2025

118



Courage In Crisis

Funding cuts impact stories



Palestinian Territory, ...

OPTI: CAT1 - Gaza Crisis

Ongoing

Featured collections

Select...

View all

How-to?

Watch our instructional videos on how to do stuff in Inuru.

Pending Resources

User contributed resources pending review

2634

Search

Browse

Search

Q

☒ All resources

☒ Photo

☒ Document

☒ Video

☒ Audio

☒ Personal Record

☒ Artwork

Production Date

Any year

Any month

Country

Clear

Search

☒ Geographic search

☒ Advanced search

EACH ONE WITH CONSENT

29,772 PHOTOS
VIDEOS
STORIES



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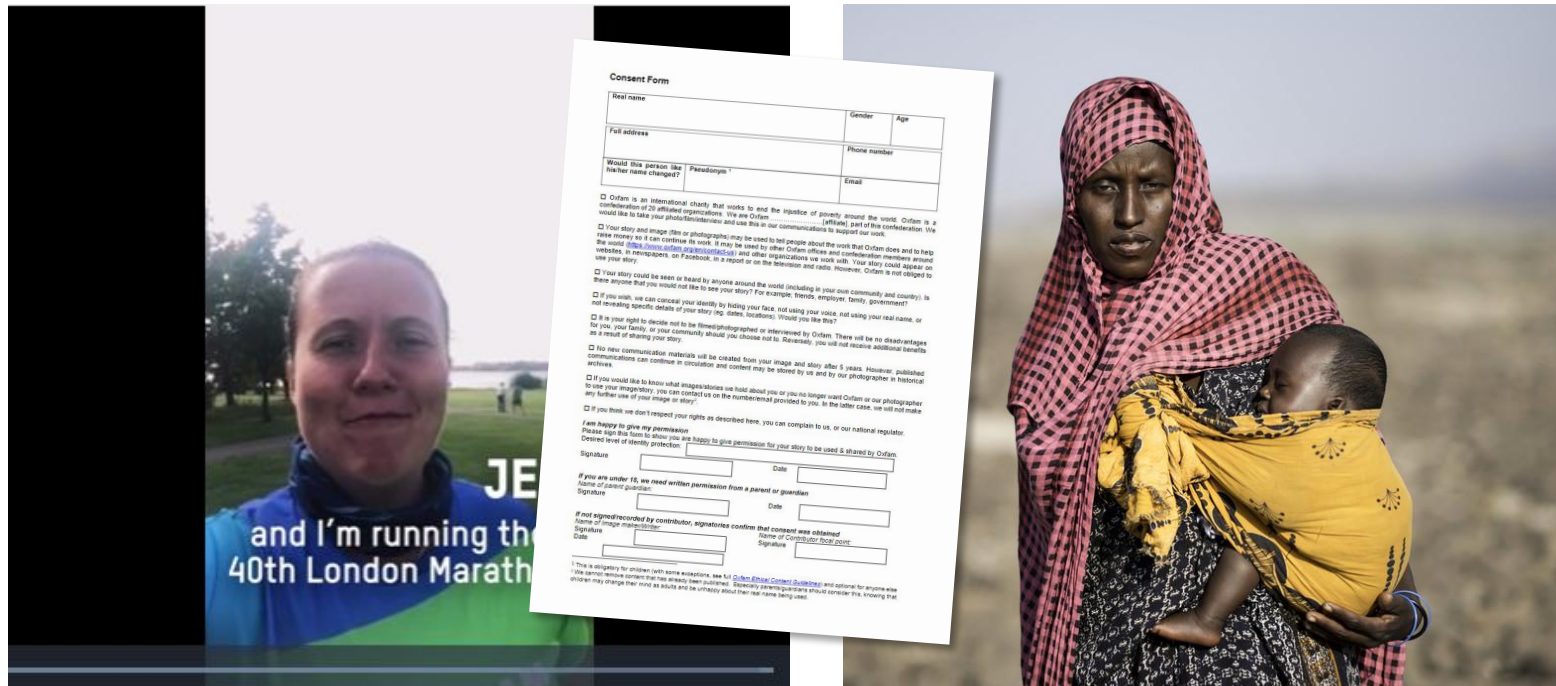
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HOWEVER,...





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**SPEECH RATHER
THAN CONVERSATION**

**LANGUAGE
BARRIER**

**CHALLENGING TO
COMMUNICATE
EFFECTIVELY**

**NO SHARED
UNDERSTANDING OF
RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS**

**DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE
HOW CONTENT MAY
BE USED**

**PAPERWORK TENDS
TO FRIGHTEN
PEOPLE**

**PAPERWORK CAUSES
STRESS AND RISK**

**LOTS OF FORMS AND
FILES TO MANAGE
AND RECONCILE**

**PAPERS CAN GET
LOST**

**A SIGNED FORM DOESN'T
MEAN THE CONVERSATION
HAPPENED**





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**EMPOWERING PEOPLE
TO TELL THEIR STORY**

VS.

**GETTING A
SIGNATURE ON A
PIECE OF PAPER**



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OUR KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

be more sensitive to context & risk

2

safeguarding goes beyond
signatures

3

make consent more meaningful for all
involved



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> BE MORE SENSITIVE TO RISK

1. age
2. gender
3. relationship with Oxfam
4. vulnerability

CONTRIBUTOR

5. sensitive data
6. previous exposure
7. contributor agency

STORY

8. rule of law
9. social support system
10. conflicting interests

CONTEXT



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> BE MORE SENSITIVE TO RISK

CONTEXT (25%) Use this section to identify any risks relating to the context in which the story is happening. Total weighted score: 1.73 Out of: 4.3 Risk level 40%		<p>How strong is the rule of law where the contributor lives? on a scale of 0 (very strong) to 10 (very weak)</p> <p>3</p> <p>How strong is the contributor's social support system? on a scale of 0 (very strong) to 10 (very weak)</p> <p>4</p> <p>Please take a moment to consider if this story may interfere/conflict with the interests of anyone who has power over the contributor (ie government, authorities, employer, religious leader, community leader, parent, etc) >> IF YES, please list those powerholders here:</p> <p>>> IF YES, please complete the below questions How much power would these stakeholders have over the contributor? on a scale of 0 (very little power) to 10 (very large power)</p> <p>4</p> <p>How likely is it that they may hear about the story? on a scale of 0 (very unlikely) to 10 (very likely)</p> <p>2</p> <p>How contentious would the story be in relation to their interests? on a scale of 0 (not contentious at all) to 10 (very contentious)</p> <p>7</p>
Risk levels Green - Low to no risk Light green - Medium to low risk Yellow - Medium risk Orange - Medium to high risk Red - High risk	Overall calculated risk score 50%	



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> SAFEGUARDING GOES BEYOND SIGNATURES, INTO...

1. whether we will collect the content yes or no
2. who can collect the content
3. when we collect content
4. which personal data we collect
5. how we handle the consent conversation
6. how consent is documented
7. how we follow up afterwards
8. when content may be published



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> SAFEGUARDING GOES BEYOND SIGNATURES

<div> <div>Final risk level</div> <div>70%</div> </div>	
Is it OK to proceed with storygathering?	please consider alternatives
Who is allowed to capture the story?	trained Oxfam staff (or if partner/freelancer, Oxfam staff member needs to be present)
Which explanation should we provide to contributors?	- extensive conversation (15-20min) - always individual
How may contributors express their choice?	formal (signature/ audio record/thumbs up picture)
How long after the consent conversation can we collect the story?	1 day after consent at the earliest
Should we consider to not capture/hide personal details? (NOTE: the contributor should be part of this decision)	it is recommended to not capture personal details or either hide those details in postproduction
Do we need to follow up with the contributor after storygathering?	active follow-up (leave contact details + check in 3-4 days after collection)
How long after the collection can we publish the content?	1 week after collection at the earliest



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> MAKE CONSENT CONVERSATION MORE MEANINGFUL

Replace our current, paper-based consent process with a more seamless digital experience. The aim is to offer a better experience for both contributors and storygatherers:

- more visuals, easier to understand
- no paperwork, less intimidating
- less stress managing paper forms
- better information security

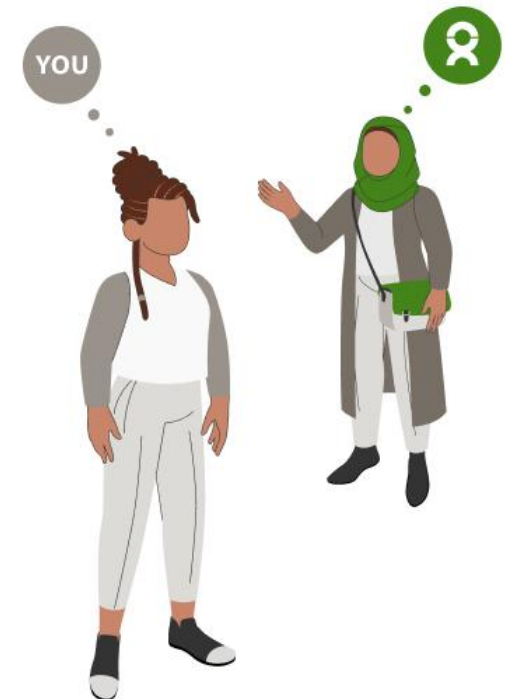


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> MAKE CONSENT CONVERSATION MORE MEANINGFUL





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THANK YOU!

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Your questions ...

Foto: Fabeha Monir/ena/Fairpicture



Thank you for your participation!

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