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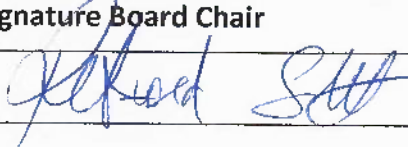
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Ethical Communications Guideline

ADRA Austria & Partners

	Date:	Signature Board Chair
Approved by:	26 May 2021	
Revision 1		
Revision 2		
Revision 3		
Revision 4		

Enactment: 26 May 2021

The present ethical communications guidelines are a set of binding decisions applying to ADRA Austria's operation and its partners.

For reasons of readability, no gender-specific wording has been used; the masculine form also stands for female persons.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Basic Organizational Data and Transparency	3
2.1	Organization's identity	3
2.2	Truthfulness on the organization's operation	3
2.3	Truthfulness to donors	3
2.4	Truthfulness to partnerships	3
3	Responsibility towards our beneficiaries	3
3.1	Safety and dignity of beneficiaries	3
3.2	Informed consent	4
3.3	Protection	5
3.4	Storytelling	5
4	Responsibility towards our Stakeholders	5
4.1	Donors	5
4.2	Marketing to Children	6
4.3	Consideration for Any Potential Roadblocks	6
4.4	Testimonials and Endorsement	7
4.5	Teaching ethical Communication	7
5	Annex A – Ethical Communication Checklist	8
6	Annex B – Declaration of Consent for Use of Photographs	9

1 Introduction

There is a renewed emphasis on ethics in non-profit communication, on argument and reasoned discourse, and on responsible rhetoric, as opposed to image and gloss.

Reputations can be developed, and recognition gained through ethically informed best practices. In the current climate of cynicism and distrust, there is surely no better way to achieve uniqueness, to gain a competitive advantage, than to strive for the rarest of outcomes nowadays — honesty and transparency.

At its root, Communications must be accurate and honest. Correct attributions must be made for images and videos, and prior permission collected. Information added to images of minors must never include personal identifying information such as name, place of residence or school.

2 Basic Organizational Data and Transparency

2.1 Organization's identity

All communication (where possible) must include a legal notice as legally required, including among others the organization's identity, name, address, charity registration number and printing details.

Financial transparency must make it possible for visitors to find information on our website on budget size, sources of revenue as well as board composition, programs, outcomes/impact, staffing and donors.

2.2 Truthfulness on the organization's operation

The organization must not claim or imply that professional fundraising and administrative activities are carried out at no cost; This is detrimental to the sustainability of the organization and its professional work. A deterred perspective of donors, leading to unrealistic expectations is a threat to professional non-profit work.

2.3 Truthfulness to donors

ADRA must clearly state if there is a specific purpose for each donation.

All communication must accurately represent the context, situation, proposed solutions and intended meaning of information provided by affected people. Material omissions, exaggerations, misleading visual portrayals and overstating the need or what the donor's response may achieve must be avoided.

ADRA will not use fake deadlines to build up pressure or promise benefits that are not guaranteed and will not claim an unrealistic ability to address social needs.

Honesty in communications includes providing attributions for images and photographs/video. Likewise, pictures used should be accurate portrayals of need, circumstances or service delivery. ADRA will not use stock photos.

2.4 Truthfulness to partnerships

In order to respect and acknowledge the contribution of partners, partners must be acknowledged in accordance with agreements.

3 Responsibility towards our beneficiaries

3.1 Safety and dignity of beneficiaries

Communications, marketing and fundraising materials MUST NOT threaten the safety or dignity of, or disparage a beneficiary, including, but not limited to:

- Commenting unnecessarily or negatively on the impairment, dependency or disability of a Beneficiary;
- Using language which disparages the Beneficiary or causes them to be feared;
- Stating or implying a falsehood regarding a Beneficiary;
- Using a Beneficiary's image, name or other personal information without their permission.
- Presenting people in a dehumanized manner, infringe child protection policies or show children in a naked and/or sexualized manner;

- Featuring dead bodies or dying people;
- Disparaging others or infringing on the intellectual property rights of others.

3.2 Informed consent

ADRA must have free, prior and informed consent of the person/s portrayed, including children, with their parents or guardians providing consent; Only images of people with prior permission will be used.

The following points must be observed:

- * Consult with local field staff regarding the culture of the local people and their sentiments regarding being photographed/video graphed.
- * Work with local field staff to attain appropriate permission/authorization from the local government as well as the communities to be visited for photography/videography, if necessary.
- * Inform subjects before they're photographed/video graphed of where/how their image may be used and share examples e.g. Newsletter, Website, Direct Mail campaigns, presentations etc.
- * For photos taken with the primary subject being three or less persons obtain the subjects signed approval before photography/videography begins using the Photo/Video/Recording Permission and Release Form (see Annex B)
- * When taking pictures of a group (more than three people), obtain verbal permission and explain to the group how the pictures may be used.
- * When images are obtained via secondary sources independent of ADRA (e.g. ADRA Connection groups, volunteers) written consent from the secondary source, confirming consent of the key person(s) in the image(s) should be obtained.
- * Images taken of an ADRA project by a secondary source independent of ADRA will need to seek consent before releasing images for mass communication (television, newspaper, etc.) or commercial use.
- * Photographs/footage should be used in context and should be representative of the project or country referenced.
- * Photo captions should be fair and accurate.

When photographing or filming a child for work-related purposes, ADRA Representatives will:

- Ensure that photographers/journalists/translators are properly vetted, and reference checked;
- Comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images;
- Obtain informed, written consent from the parent or guardian of the child, if they could be personally identified, as well as informed consent from the child, before photographing or filming a child, explaining how the photograph or film will be used (see Annex B);
- Ensure the image or file labels do not reveal identifying or potentially harmful information about a child:
 - Evaluate the risk of using images of children with easily identifiable characteristics (e.g. a wheelchair, school uniforms, etc.) which could make them a target;
 - Avoid taking identifiable photographs of children who are at risk of stigma, retaliation or abuse such as: children associated with armed groups, child survivors of trafficking, exploitation etc.;
 - Details attached must not allow a child to be traced to its home / community
 - Distinctive buildings, street signs, landmarks not included in images.

- Ensure all visual images present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner,
- Not show children undressed or in inappropriate poses,
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts.

ADRA Representatives are not allowed to post images of children who are direct or indirect beneficiaries of ADRA on their personal social media.

For more information: ADRA International Child Safeguarding Policy

3.3 Protection

We will never include information with images of minors that could be considered personal identifying information.

People will not be presented in a dehumanized manner, child protection policies infringed or children shown in a naked and/or sexualized manner. This implies all children being dressed on pictures (wearing tops and bottoms).

Health-related data will not be shared unless the beneficiary has given expressed informed consent.

Dead bodies or dying people will not be featured.

Strengthening of stereotypes must be avoided and our own prejudices interrogated.

3.4 Storytelling

To tell a story that will empower the person or community and motivate the audience, ADRA's communicators need go beyond the problem-then-solution formula. When collecting information from beneficiaries for stories, the interviewee should ask questions about the whole person. Beneficiaries shall be allowed to maintain control of their own narrative and ensure, that their perspective was included, not simply pushing their story into the narrative frame that the organization wants to convey about the project supported by donors.

Overcoming a challenge may be an unforgettable experience and may define a certain period of a person's life. But it does not tell their entire story.

The roles

Never shall a person be reduced to their problem and thus intentionally or unintentionally victimized.

Beneficiaries shall be asked and portrayed in communications, who they are, about their family and what they are proud of. Before stories introduce a problem, they should introduce the person. The aim will be to create empathy among the audience, not pity. Thus, overly focusing on circumstances will disengage readers ("that would not happen to me"), however telling stories and fully introducing the person with its emotions, engagement in a community, will build a connection and allow readers to recognize themselves in that story or community.

ADRA should not be displayed as a hero by over-simplifying a story and making the non-profit bigger than the person's story. In order to avoid this, communication shall aim at showing a fuller picture that starts before and continues after ADRA's involvement, humanizing the subject beyond their challenge.

Likewise, portrayed pictures shall not portray "white saviour syndrome", and the role and professionalism of our local partners shall be accredited truthfully. In general, photos of (white) ADRA staff and beneficiaries should be avoided. As well as the representation of beneficiaries in front of large ADRA logos. Likewise, the presentation of "gifts" to beneficiaries should be avoided.

4 Responsibility towards our Stakeholders

4.1 Donors

ADRA will not treat donors as faceless cash machines but see and treat them as individuals and credit them with their appropriate role in its communication.

ADRA communicates in a respectful and courteous manner.

We will respond to inquiries and complaints in a constructive and timely way.

We will honour requests not to receive future solicitations from our organization.

ADRA will adhere to GDPR legislation when communicating with its donors and stakeholders.

4.2 Marketing to Children

When communicating to children, ADRA will adhere to all applicable laws and will ensure the marketing is suitable for the child taking into account the age range, knowledge, sophistication and maturity of the intended audience.

ADRA will provide notice and an opportunity to opt out of the marketing process so that parents have the ability to limit the collection, use and disclosure of children's names, addresses, or other personally identifiable information.

Communicators will limit the collection of information about children in accordance with Austrian and European Law. They will take into account the age range, knowledge, sophistication and maturity of children when collecting information about them. ADRA will not knowingly collect personally identifiable information online from a child without prior parental consent, that would permit any offline contact with the child.

Marketers will take reasonable steps to prevent the online publication or posting of information that would allow a third party to contact a child offline unless the marketer has prior parental consent.

In Austria, marketing measures at schools must be approved by the school management.

The **Austrian Advertising Council** has adopted a code of ethics for marketing to children:

- Take into account children's lack of maturity and experience. Depictions and statements should not overtax or abuse the child's imagination.
- Advertising should not be gender discriminatory.
- Advertising should take into account the smaller vocabulary of children and not mislead children.
- It should not be used with representations in which children directly persuade their parents or third parties to make a purchase/donation.
- Advertising directed at children should be specially marked, that confusion with editorial content is excluded.

4.3 Consideration for Any Potential Roadblocks

Communicating in an ethical manner also requires making the message accessible. This means if you are delivering a message to a large or diverse audience, ensure that you accommodate the languages and listening preferences of everybody.

When communicating with another party, truly ethical communication entails considering any potential factor that may influence how the recipient understands - or receives - the information that is being communicated. If there are any known roadblocks, then ethical communication principles dictate that the speaker/communicator utilize whatever means possible to mitigate or attenuate the roadblocks and ensure that the recipients of the information are able to fully understand what is being communicated.

Several examples are below where roadblocks may present themselves, resulting in the communicator needing to take steps to attenuate any potential instances of miscommunication:

Language Use

Obviously, ethical communication dictates that speakers utilize the language that listeners understand. It would make little sense to present a business presentation in English to a non-English speaking Chinese audience.

Jargon

Every industry has its own jargon. When speaking to a layperson, it is ethical to speak with simple, easy-to-understand words, while avoiding the use of heavy jargon, resulting in portions of the presentation/communication being incomprehensible to a portion of the audience.

Language Fluency

Ethical communication considers the level of fluency as well as the language spoken by listeners so that recipients of the communication (whether it be spoken or written) can fully understand what is being communicated.

Accessibility to Technology

In this information and digital age, some take accessibility to advanced technology for granted. For instance, while smartphones are readily available, and translation apps are abundant, not everyone is able to access such applications or platforms. If a NPO wanted to present certain pieces of information to an audience while expecting the audience to translate it into their native language via an application, there may be confusion. Thus, the ability to access certain technology - and the know-how on how to use certain applications - may be a roadblock when it comes to ethically communicating to a particular audience.

4.4 Testimonials and Endorsement

Testimonials and endorsements in any media should only be used if they are authorized by the person quoted, not taken out of context, if they are accurate, genuine, and clearly disclose the generally expected performance of service under normal circumstances.

4.5 Teaching ethical Communication

Teaching ethical communication is about teaching ethics and professional and personal responsibility – not just how to speak to employees, colleagues or donors. ADRA Austria employees are instructed in ethical communication. This guideline is to be brought to the attention of every new employee. Raising awareness for the topic of ethical communication is of great importance.

5 Annex A – Ethical Communication Checklist

Please use this form to assess compliance of all official communications, including marketing and fundraising materials. Once complete attach to the final draft and submit to the Marketing/Communication/Fundraising Director or other person responsible for approval.

Communications, marketing and fundraising materials **MUST**:

- ☐ Include the organization's identity including name, address, charity/registration number, if required;
- ☐ Clearly state if there is a specific purpose for each donation;
- ☐ Not claim or imply that professional fundraising activities are carried out at no cost;
- ☐ Accurately represent the context, situation, proposed solutions and intended meaning of information provided by affected people
- ☐ Avoid material omissions, exaggerations, misleading visual portrayals and overstating the need or what the donor's response may achieve;
- ☐ Not endanger the people they are portraying;
- ☐ Have free, prior and informed consent of the person/s portrayed, including children, with their parents or guardians providing consent; Only use images of people with prior permission, and never include information with images of minors that could be considered personal identifying information.
- ☐ Honesty in communications includes providing attributions for images and photographs/video.
- ☐ Acknowledge partners in accordance with agreements.

Communications, marketing and fundraising materials **MUST NOT** threaten the safety or dignity of, or disparage a beneficiary, including, but not limited to:

- ☐ Commenting unnecessarily or negatively on the impairment, dependency or disability of a Beneficiary;
- ☐ Using language which disparages the Beneficiary or causes them to be feared;
- ☐ Stating or implying a falsehood regarding a Beneficiary;
- ☐ Using a Beneficiary's image, name or other personal information without their permission.
- ☐ Presenting people in a dehumanized manner, infringe child protection policies or show children in a naked and/or sexualized manner;
- ☐ Featuring dead bodies or dying people;
- ☐ Disparaging others or infringing on the intellectual property rights of others.

Submission for: _____

Submitted by: _____ Approved: _____

Position: _____ Position: _____

Signed/Dated: _____ Signed/Dated: _____

6 Annex B – Declaration of Consent for Use of Photographs

Declaration of consent for use of photographs

Between
ADRA Austria
Prager Straße 287
1210 Vienna

and

Name:

Name of legal guardian:

Note:

If the person photographed is under 14 years of age, the signature must be provided by a parent or guardian, whose name must be indicated here.

Subject

Photographic images of the photographed person

Intended use

Unrestricted publication of the pictorial representation on the websites, publications (e.g. ADRAnews) and other purposes of ADRA Austria.

Declaration

The undersigned declares his/her consent to the free use of the photographic images of him/her for the purposes described above. Any use of the photographic images for purposes other than those described above, or any placing on the market by transferring the images to third parties, is not permitted.

This consent is voluntary. This consent can be revoked at any time with effect for the future.

Place, date Signature

