

Policy Name:	<b>Communications Policy</b>
Policy Number & Version:	<b>14.2</b>
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Date First Approved:	<b>November 2019</b>
Last Amended By:	<b>Emma Clark Gratton</b>
Date Amendment Approved:	<b>March 2024</b>
Last Approved By:	<b>MSIAP Board</b>
Date of Next Review:	<b>June 2025</b>
Policy Owner:	<b>External Relations Team</b>

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## 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this communications policy is to guide the communication activities of MSI Asia Pacific (MSIAP). Effective communication is critical to the success of MSIAP, and we strive to maintain clear, accurate and timely communication with all stakeholders including donors, partners, beneficiaries, staff, and the public.

This policy outlines the principles and guidelines for communications activities to ensure compliance with our internal and external safeguarding requirements.

This policy applies to all MSIAP employees, board members, interns, volunteers, consultants, contractors, partners, or visitors who are sourcing, collecting, or using content for MSIAP.

It covers both still (photographs) and moving (video) imagery and recorded, transcribed or written interviews and direct quotes, whether collected by MSIAP or sourced from third parties. It applies to information, stories and images collected for research, evaluation, donor, supporter and public engagement purposes and all material published by MSIAP regardless of format.

## 3.0 Definitions

- a) **Images** – means still (photographs and illustrations) and moving (video and animation).
- b) **Child** – is an individual below the age of 18 years.
- c) **Stories** – the direct quotes, facts and personal details obtained during an interview and used in messaging, case studies, reports, and communications.
- d) **Content** — videos, photos, stories, and interviews that may be used to illustrate any aspect of MSIAP’s work, activities, and functions.
- e) **Informed consent** — a person understands why their image, story and/or personal details are being collected; where and how they will be used and over what period; that their participation is entirely voluntary; the potential risks and consequences of their image, name and words being published; and then agrees to MSIAP collecting the content.
- f) **Adequately clothed** — no full nudity; no genitals, nipples, or naked bottoms clearly visible.

## 4.0 Principles

MSIAP and its entities are not-for-profit NGOs, with no political or religious affiliations. We work for the improvement of the health and quality of life of women, men, and their families, helping them to exercise their right to enjoy reproductive health, and have children by choice, not by chance.

MSIAP and its entities are committed to saving lives through reproductive health care and do this through:

- Providing high-quality, confidential, client-centred reproductive and family planning services
- Sustainable service provision
- Advocacy

### **Transparency**

MSIAP and its entities seek to be guided by a principle of transparency in communication when engaging stakeholders and the community at large. We are committed to accurate and truthful depictions of our organisation and its work.

### **Accountability**

We will be accountable for the public materials describing our organisation and its work, in line with the principles and guidelines set out in the ACFID Code of Conduct.

### **Privacy**

MSIAP is committed to maintaining the privacy of its clients and beneficiaries, as outlined in our Privacy Policy which is publicly available here: [MSIAP Privacy Policy](#)

## **5.0 Objectives**

The objectives of our communications policy are as follows:

1. To ensure that all communication activities align with the values and mission of MSI Asia Pacific, in accordance with the ACFID Code of Conduct and the ACFID Fundraising Charter.
2. To ensure that communications materials accurately describe the organisation and its work, and we have organisational protocols for the approval of public materials.
3. That MSIAP's communication activities portray the people and communities with whom we work, with respect, dignity, and accuracy.
4. To build and maintain positive relationships with stakeholders including donors, other NGOs, partners, beneficiaries, staff, and the public.
5. To promote transparency and accountability in our activities.
6. To ensure that images and stories are collected, sourced, and used honestly and ethically, according to MSIAP's ethical content guidelines, our fundraising, legal, ethical and compliance obligations and our brand values.

## **6.0 Standards of implementation**

All communications materials and activities should be in line with the principles and procedures outlined in this document. Approval of communications materials should follow the approvals guidance included in this document. All case studies, photographs and other communications materials will be compliant with this policy.

### **6.1 Compliance with governmental and donor style guides**

Appropriate attribution and recognition of donor support is required. Adherence to the [DFAT Branding and Logo Style Guide](#) is required when preparing marketing or promotional materials for DFAT-funded projects.

In other situations, adherence to other donor branding and logo style guides may be applicable. This may include ANCP Brand Guidelines, AUSPNG Brand Guidelines and others. Appropriate attribution and recognition will be outlined in the partnership agreements with relevant implementing partners.

### **6.2 Transparency of information**

MSIAP and its entities believe that timely, accessible, and accurate information is essential for ensuring accountability to our stakeholders, encouraging learning, trust, and good performance.

As such, communications materials must meet the following requirements, subject to reasonable endeavour:

- They are used in a way that portrays the affected people in a manner that respects their dignity, values, history, religion, language, and culture, and is authentic to the context, person and terms of consent given.
- They must be truthful, accurately representing organisational activities and not have any significant omissions.
- It must recognise any partners or other bodies when the communication has made a reference to that source.
- Free, prior, and informed consent must be obtained for all images and stories, compliant with MSIAP Child Safeguarding Policy.
- Requires that the collection of information, images and stories does not harm people or the environment.
- Applies to all information, stories and images collected for research, evaluation, and donor and supporter purposes.

MSI acknowledges the NGO sector's commitment to principles of fairness and cooperation. Negative reputational issues affect the sector as a whole. As such, MSI is committed to not making statements about other ACFID Members with the intention of creating a reputational or other advantage to MSI.

### **6.3 Accessible information and stakeholder engagement**

MSIAP will also keep supporters and the broader community informed of its activities via:

- [www.msichoices.org.au](http://www.msichoices.org.au)
- Regular e-newsletters and email engagement
- Social media
- Brochures and flyers
- Annual reports. The MSIAP Annual Report will be prepared in accordance with the ACFID Code of Conduct guidelines and published and shared publicly on the MSIAP website.

All fundraising proposals and other communications activities will be prepared to reflect this policy and will describe MSIAP's work and operations with honesty, integrity, and accountability.

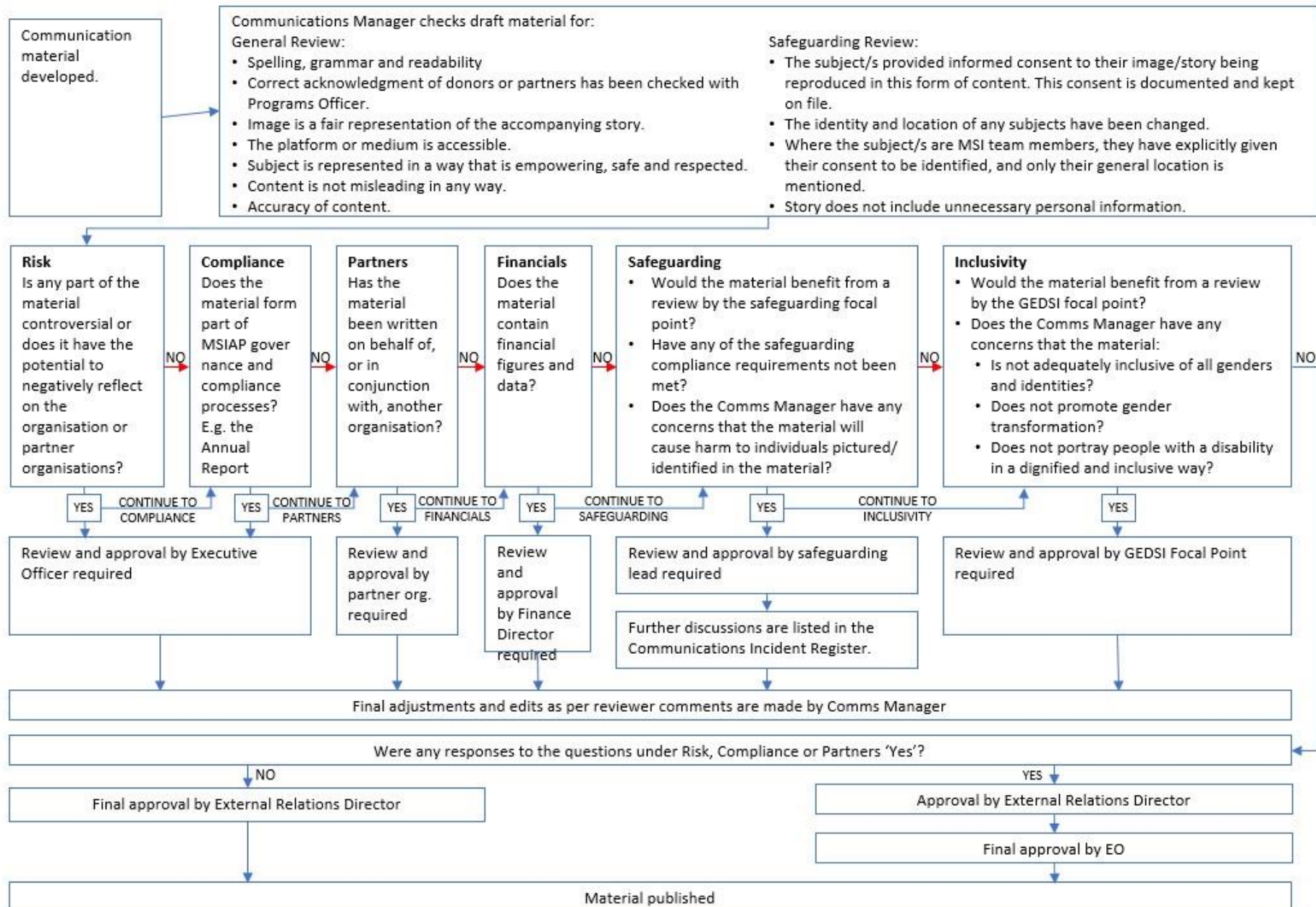
Fundraising documentation will also clearly state the purpose for which funds are being raised and how an amount will be spent, and any other information as required. Our fundraising practices follow the ACFID Fundraising Charter.

MSIAP will communicate with supporters, donors, and the public through the MSIAP website, mass emails, social media, digital advertising, printed collateral, and other channels. All information will be current at the time of posting and any printed documents will be current at the time of publication.

Where information is not available on the website, MSIAP, within the limits of its resources, will also send information as requested (as per this policy) in electronic or printed form to an authentic address of the person or the organisation requesting information. Anonymous requests for information will not be responded to.

#### **6.4 Communications approval process**

The following flowchart should be referenced to determine internal approval requirements for various communication channels:



For social media posts, the Communications Officer prepares the post in Loomly and marks it as 'Subject to Approval' within the Loomly platform. The External Relations Director then reviews and either marks it as 'Scheduled' or requests edits by the Communications Officer. All edits, comments and changes are recorded in Loomly.

For EDMs (Electronic Direct Mail), the Communications and Campaigns Manager prepares the email in Mailchimp and forwards a draft and text-only version to the External Relations Director and the Fundraising Manager. They use track changes to make any edits or comments. Once the final version is approved by the External Relations Director, the Communications and Campaigns Manager sends the email.

The questions in the communications flowchart are informed by an Ethical Decision-Making Framework which underpins our approach to comms. Any particularly sensitive content or incidents of communications materials requiring extra discussion or decision-making are logged in the Communications Incident Register.

## **6.5 Sourcing and Soliciting Case Studies, Stories, and Images**

Case studies, stories and images can be solicited from numerous sources, including but not limited to:

- Individuals interviewed by MSIAP staff in writing, video, or audio
- Photographs taken by MSI staff or contractors
- Photographs taken by consumers
- Stories or text written by consumers

Communications are verified using an ethical decision-making framework.

All incidents of communications materials requiring extra discussion or decision-making are logged in a Communications Incident Register.

Compliance with the following codes is required:

- ACFID Code of Conduct, including Quality Principle 6. Communication
- MSIAP Privacy Policy
- ACFID Fundraising Charter
- DFAT Child Protection Policy
- MSIAP Child Safeguarding Policy

MSIAP will undertake periodic reviews of all communication materials to ensure that images and messages respect the dignity, values, history, religion, and culture of the people portrayed.

MSIAP will commit to:

- Presenting photographs, films, videos, and messages of everyone in a respectful manner, honestly portraying their personal experience and context and as partners in the development process
- Not using images or messages that manipulate the story to portray people in a pitiful way or that embellishes/exaggerates the impact of your organisation's work.
- Not creating images of children where they are not adequately clothed and in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive, in alignment with the MSIAP Child Safeguarding Policy.
- Ensuring images are honest representations of the context and facts
- Portraying participants in activities which reflect their daily lives
- Conveying the context and complexity of the situations in which local people live. Images of people in vulnerable situations should focus more on the reasons for and the context of a situation, rather than on an individual's suffering.
- Honestly portraying the diversity of local people including age, disability, and other marginalised groups
- Informing key persons in images of what the image is being used for, where the image will be used and over what period.
- Ensuring that the identification of or use of images of local people will not bring them into any danger
- When photographing or filming a person, identifying and seeking to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images
- Ensuring those whose situation is being represented have the opportunity to communicate their stories themselves. Consider using local spokespersons to show that local people are actively involved in development or humanitarian work
- Use of stock images will be kept to a minimum and only in circumstances where the images accurately represents the location or situation of the actual beneficiaries
- Using images and messages to diversify voices, perspectives, and representations in our public communications, including critical reflection from partners and communities and an examination of our organisation's values.
- Quoting people accurately – without doctoring, manipulating, or altering quotes to suit communications.
- Ensuring we use a competent translator fluent in both languages.

Where communications materials are representing projects undertaken in partnership with government, other NGOs, and other bodies, MSIAP will ensure acknowledgements are included with appropriate identifiers.



In the case of children, all photographs, videos, and recordings of children must adhere to standards arising from MSIAP's Child Safeguarding Policy. Before photographing or filming a child, staff or contractors must obtain informed consent from the child and a parent or guardian and explain how the image or video will be used. In group situations such as a classroom, confirmation of previous parental consent is to be obtained from a school principal or senior teacher. In addition:

- before photographing or filming a child, assess and comply with local laws, traditions, or restrictions for reproducing personal images
- ensure photographs and recordings 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
- images must be honest representations of the context and the facts
- file labels must not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images or videos electronically.

## 7.0 Procedures

### 7.1 Communications materials collection

All materials collected require the following procedures:

- Free, prior, and informed consent acknowledging people's right to information.
- A clear indication to the individual of the intended use of the material
- Where possible, copies of communication or fundraising materials which use images or stories of primary stakeholders are provided to those stakeholders
- MSI staff will not visually alter images or significantly change/edit direct quotes after they have been obtained to alter meaning and context.
- A record of the origins of images and case studies, as well as key details including name, age, location, date, program association and form of consent gained
- MSIAP staff will also seek advice from field partners and overseas staff on risks related to using images and case studies
- Ensure file labels do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically
- Ensure geo-tags are turned off on the camera when taking images.

### 7.2 Confidentiality

MSIAP shall not disclose the following kinds of information:

- We recognise that our staff and clients have a right to Privacy and will not disclose any personal information about them without their consent.
- Intellectual property or other information which has been disclosed or provided to MSIAP under any obligation of confidentiality or which is subject to legal disclosure restrictions unless consent of such disclosure has been obtained from the owner of such intellectual property.
- Personal details of any individuals portrayed in our communications materials.

## 8.0 Media

MSIAP is a provider of sexual and reproductive health services. This is an area that is often open to much public scrutiny and debate. In the event of an incident, a change to public policy or a community debate the media may seek out our employees for comment. It is important that MSIAP's communication to the media is clear, consistent and in line with our organisational goals. Opinions expressed by any MSIAP employee may be viewed by the media as an official MSIAP position.

MSIAP staff should not make comment, including personally held views and opinions, to the media about any issue relating to their work at MSIAP, their position on public policy or any other matter relating to the organisation without the permission of the Executive Officer or the External Relations Director.

If you are authorised to speak to the media on a certain subject, please limit your comment to this subject area. Authorisation to speak on behalf of MSIAP in relation to one or more issues or events is not an authority to speak on the company's behalf in relation to other matters.

Staff should not comment to media directly. If contacted by a journalist, please take a message, and notify the Director of Fundraising and Communications.

## 9.0 Related Policies and Documents

- MSIAP Privacy Policy
- MSIAP Child Safeguarding Policy
- MSIAP Story-gathering Toolkit
- MSIAP Social Media Policy
- Ethical Decision-Making Framework
- DFAT Child Protection Policy
- ACFID Fundraising Charter
- DFAT Branding and Logo Style Guide

## 10.0 Appendices

- 10.1 Guide to preparing case studies
- 10.2 Client consent form
- 10.3 Checklist for external content
- 10.4 Communications approvals flowchart

## 10.1

### Guide to Preparing case studies

When a member of our team is travelling to one of our country programs, it is helpful to take the opportunity to collect case studies and take photos. These stories are hugely valuable in highlighting the work we do to donors, potential funders, and the public.

Always try to choose images and case studies that are based on empowerment, equality, agency, and respect.

**Make sure you get a signed consent form for each case study or photograph. Always ensure that the individual is aware that declining to participate in case studies and collection of images WILL NOT impact their impact, access to services or, for employees, their treatment at work.**

### Tips for gathering case studies

- You can either take notes or use the voice memo app on your phone to record an interview or chat with a person. We can then transcribe it later. Using a voice recorder can make for a more natural and accurate discussion but can be tricky in a noisy or crowded space.
- Capture small details if possible – the size of the community, how far do the outreach workers travel, where do they sleep, what do they eat. This will help make a better story.
- More information is always better, as we can edit stories down back in Melbourne. Capture as much as you can.
- Ask open-ended questions and allow the person to talk as much or as little as they want. You can ask the same questions in different ways to get different responses.
- 'Describe' is a great word when interviewing. Ask people to describe how they felt, what has happened, what has changed, or what they want for the future.

### Tips for photography

- If you are taking photos on your phone, make sure the resolution is set as high as possible.
- Try and get shots of the MSI logo or uniforms, especially in outreach situations.
- Try to get active shots of staff doing their jobs or speaking to clients.
- Photos of women are preferred over photos of men or children but try to take a mix where possible.
- For case studies, try to get an interviewee alone with a neutral background. Don't be afraid to get a close head shot.
- Try and show people in a natural setting, with an emotive expression.

- Don't forget to take scenery images too. Shots of the outside of clinics, cars, streets, and buildings are also helpful.
- When in doubt, take photos horizontally as they can be easily cropped.
- Always take heaps of photos, as we can edit several together if necessary.

### Interview template

#### **For someone who uses our services:**

Name:

Age:

Profession:

Location (province, general area):

Relationship status:

- How many children do you have? What are their ages? [*Prompt for more information. Ask to describe the challenges of having a large family or children close together.*]
- Why have you come to the centre / outreach today?
- Are you currently using a method of contraception? Which one? For how long?
- Why did you decide to start using contraception?
- Describe the difference contraception has made to your life.
- Before you started using contraception, was there anything that made it difficult to access it? [*For example, was there a lack of local services? Did you feel that you shouldn't be using contraception?*]
- What does having contraception mean for your plans for the future? [*For example, does it mean that you are able to stay in school, go back to work, care for your existing children?*]
- How did you hear about MSI?
- How has your experience of the service been today? What would you say about MSI to your friends and family?

#### **For MSI staff:**

Name:

Age:

Profession:

Location (province, general area):

- How long have you worked with MSI?
- Please describe what you do during a typical day at work. How many clients do you see on average?
- Please describe an average client. What is her understanding of contraception? What does it mean for her plans for the future?
- Can you tell me a story about a client who has inspired you / had an impact on you?
- Why did you decide to join MSI's mission?

- What would be the impact on local women if these services were not available?
- What do people in your country think about the services that you provide?
- Can you describe how you have seen the communities you work in change since MSI started providing services?

## 10.2 Client Consent Form for Communications Materials

To be utilised when collecting case studies, photographs, and videography.

I confirm that as a staff member of MSI who is aware of the importance of upholding informed consent, client confidentiality, and child protection, I have discussed the following with the client:

**Where their case study, photo and/or video may be used** – Information about the client, in addition to their photo or video if applicable, may be used in internal and/or external marketing and communications materials. Examples of these materials may include website content, project reports, newsletters, annual reports, advocacy documents, and promotional materials such as flyers and pamphlets.

**The purpose of sharing their case study, photo and/or video** – The purpose of collecting the client's information may vary somewhat, but in broad terms their case study, photo and/or video may be used to raise awareness about the benefits of sexual and reproductive healthcare, as well as to build the profile of Marie Stopes International and promote the organisation's work.

Ensure **confidentiality and privacy** – Under no means is a client obligated to have their name disclosed in a case study, photograph, or video. If preferred, a pseudonym name can be utilised. This is particularly relevant for clients who identify with a marginalised group, such as sex workers or people living with a communicable disease (e.g., HIV or TB).

Staff Member Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Country Program: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_



## REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES

Following discussion, the client approves the below activities to occur:

Activity:	Consent?	Comments
Is the client aware that refusal to participate in the collection of case studies, photographs and videography will <b>not</b> impact their access to, or the quality of, MSI services?.....	Yes / No	
Does the client consent to the following organisations reproducing their image in photographic or video format? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MSI.....</li> <li>MSIAP.....</li> <li>Donor organisations such as DFAT.....</li> </ul>	Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No	
Does the client consent to their following personal information accompanying a story, photo and/or video: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First name.....</li> <li>Rough location.....</li> </ul>	Yes / No Yes / No	
Use of a detailed case study about the client's background and/or experience with MSI, including their name, age, rough location (e.g., district), number of children, vocation, services accessed etc.....	Yes / No	
<b>Client's consent for the activities above - written:</b>		
Client Full Name:		
Client's Date of Birth:	/ /	Over 18? YES NO
Name of Parent/Guardian: <i>(If under 18)</i>		
Client Signature: <i>(If 13+ years old)</i>		Guardian Signature: <i>(If applicable)</i>
Date:	/ /	Date: / /
<b>Client's consent for the activities above - verbal:</b>		
Where written consent is not possible or feasible, verbal consent must be obtained. Staff member who can verify this occurred (must be different from above staff member):		
Staff Member Full Name:		Signature:
Country Program:		Date: / /
Were all the activities above explained to the client(s)?	YES NO	



*It is recommended you take a photograph of the client holding a completed copy of the consent form. This will help to ensure correct identification of clients and proof of consent.*

## 10.3 Checklist for external content

*Guiding principle: Never share surnames or specific geographical location (major/capital city is fine, otherwise regional information is the most details we share)*

For many organisations, ours included, **story is currency**. We tell stories to amplify awareness. We tell stories to raise money to enable us to continue to deliver services and to find new and innovative ways to serve our clients. And when we have done that, we tell stories about it so donors, volunteers, and supporters can participate in the work made possible by those donations. **We tell stories to invite others in.**

### *Your responsibility as a story gatherer*

As a story gatherer and storyteller, you have a duty of care to all participants. In telling someone's story, we need to realise and acknowledge the power dynamic that comes with representing MSI-A. One well-crafted message and story can raise awareness of a problem and increase engagement for a cause at the blink of an eye. At the same time, it can tear at people's dignity and self-determination. It is your responsibility when gathering the stories and writing up the copy to ensure that the story is **truthful and respectful** while avoiding images, footage or words that sensationalise or stereotype a person or situation.

### **Key principles in ethical storytelling:**

#### **DO**

1. Tell others' stories the way we want our own story told – respectfully and truthfully.
2. Truthfully represent a situation or story to educate our audiences on the realities, complexities, and nuances of the issues we advocate for.
3. Obtain prior consent, be transparent and accurate.

#### **DON'T**

1. Never use a story in a different way than intended.
2. Never use images, footage or words that sensationalise or stereotype a person or situation.
3. Do not misrepresent the individual, situation, context, or location of the photo.

### *Checklist for content before publishing*

- Do we have written permission to use the image externally, including on social media?
- Is the image respectful of everyone in the image (do not forget to pay attention to the background)?
- Is any personal information/data visible in the image?

## REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES

- If so, consider using a different image or blur the identifying information.
- Do we have written permission to share the name of the people in the image?
  - Does sharing the name of the people in the image add any value to the story? If not, **do not** include the name of the people in the image
- Is anyone (or could they be) under the age of 18?
  - If so, automatically anonymise by using a pseudonym and no detailed geographical location shared.
- Is the story sensitive or include unnecessary **personal information**?
- Is the topic something that could put them at risk either at home or legally? E.g., identifying someone who had an unsafe abortion in a country where it is restricted, or details about domestic violence.
  - If so, be extra careful about permissions and about revealing any personal information.
  - Consider choosing a different story/image, and if that is not possible, not advised for other reasons, please automatically anonymise – including name, identifying images or town name (country is still fine)
- Is the text going alongside the image a fair representation of the image? For example, we cannot use an image of one person alongside a quote from another without specifying the images are unconnected.

### **Never share more personal details than is necessary to tell the story.**

Is it relevant to the story to share the number of children, the profession of the person, marital status, any previous illnesses (etc.)? In some cases, it may be, but if it is not relevant to the story – leave it out.

### **Only share the images with stories that are relevant to the image.**

Never share an image for a different story if it can be interpreted that any person in the image is related to the story (unless making it clear that the image and story is separate). Do NOT misrepresent the individual, situation, context, or location of the photo.

### *Examples of personal information/data*

**Personal Information** means **information** identifiable to any person, including, but not limited to:

- Name
- Geographical location
- Age bracket
- Time of visit
- Profession
- Marital status
- Medical records
- Number of children

When sharing someone's story, always consider every aspect of personal information and whether it is necessary to include. **If not – leave it out!**

### *Guiding principles for when consent is required for images*

Consent is required for every image. In a group situation, a signed consent form must indicate that verbal consent was freely given.

### *Guiding principles for who can be seen as vulnerable*

- Vulnerable groups are those who may not be able to provide a valid consent or refusal. They may:



## REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES

- Experience limits on their capacity to provide a valid consent. These limits may be temporary or permanent, such as children/young adults, cognitively impaired people
- Experience limits on their freedom to consent or refuse consent. This is often referred to as voluntariness.
- Experience a reduced sense of freedom to fully express their own views and opinions, due to the unequal balance of power between them and you, the story gatherer. They may be fearful that refusal to participate will impact their chances of receiving further services or their employment.
- Be experiencing undue influence or coercion e.g., from a family member or member of the community or even a staff member. The presence of another individual may reduce their ability to refuse consent, speak freely, or influence what they have to say.
- Require additional or more targeted information to provide a valid consent because of the high risk/burden of the data activity for them. For example, people involved in unlawful activities who need to fully understand any additional risks posed by the data activity (including arrest or other legal punishment, through accidental disclosure of the participant's involvement in the data activity or mandatory reporting requirements imposed on researchers)
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# 10.4 Communications approval process

