

## Use of Stories and Photos Policy

<b>Policy Title</b>	Use of Stories and Photos		
<b>Unit</b>	Partnerships, Habitat for Humanity Australia		
<b>Authorised by</b>	Board of Directors		
<b>Author</b>	Communications Manager		
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### Introduction

Stories, photos and videos that illustrate Habitat for Humanity Australia's work with poor and vulnerable communities are a vital means of making the public aware of the realities faced by millions of people living in substandard housing and unhealthy living conditions.

HFHA bases its standards for reporting and photographing children and adults on its Child Protection Policy, Core Principles, and the established industry standards such as Australian Council for International Development's (ACFID) Code of Conduct, Department Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Child Protection Code of Conduct (2013), the Code of Conduct for International Committee of the Red Cross and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These standards are observed to ensure all HFHA marketing and fundraising collateral (including solicitations and information updates) is truthful, ethical, accessible and timely. These standards also ensure subjects are portrayed in a manner that respects their dignity, real situation, privacy and culture; and that HFHA and its stakeholders uphold this policy when collecting and use stories, photos and videos of those with whom Habitat for Humanity works, especially children.

HFHA's Use of Stories and Photos Policy and Appendices are reviewed every two years and re-ratified by HFHA's Board of Directors. This Policy is reviewed more regularly if required to comply with any changes to HFHA's Child Protection Policy, the DFAT Child Protection Policy or Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code or Commonwealth Law.

These standards should be read in conjunction with the HFHA Child Protection Policy.

### Definitions

*Stakeholder* - The term 'stakeholder' include: National Board Directors, Committee Members, Staff (fulltime, part-time, casual), consultants, contractors, interns, volunteers, partners, agents and media personnel such as photographers, journalists and videographers.

*Volunteer* - The term 'volunteer' includes; National Office volunteers, interns, National Board of Directors and Global Village volunteers (HFHA's international volunteering program). Volunteers under the years of 18, also adhere to the Code of Conduct.

## **Purpose**

This Policy aims to balance practical needs with legal and marketing issues and the moral imperative to protect human dignity. This policy also outlines the practical guidelines to help HFHA meet standards outlined in our Donor Policy and uphold our Child Protection Policy. HFHA's adherence to the ACFID Code of Conduct also rests certain obligations to maintain integrity in our marketing and reporting.

The objectives of the Policy are to ensure that children and adults who become the subjects of text, photo and or video resource gathered by HFHA staff and stakeholders (including volunteers) have a general understanding of the purposes and intentions for which the resources have been secured.

Signed photo/story release forms in some situations and informed consent in all situations are required to avoid doing harm, damaging reputations, invading personal privacy and incurring libel and copyright problems.

This policy provides guidance to HFHA stakeholders on how to assure informed consent while collecting stories and images and to inform the subsequent appropriate use of such content to the subject.

## **Policy in Practice**

### **1. Informed Verbal Consent**

For volunteers and when photographing subject only, informed verbal consent from the subject(s) of a photo or video is sufficient. To obtain consent, HFHA's stakeholders should:

- Read, accept and commit to the Use of Stories and Photos Policy, Child Protection Policy and HFHA's Code of Conduct before entering the field.
- Identify themselves as representing Habitat for Humanity Australia
- Ensure that the subject(s) have an understanding of the intended use of the taking of their photo and recording of their personal details. For HFHA staff and contractors full name, location, age (where appropriate) should be recorded). For volunteers recording of first name and nearest city is sufficient (e.g. Sally, Phnom Penh). Best practice for informing a subject is to show samples of how other photos have been used in communications and marketing materials (see Appendix III). At a minimum, the subject should understand that his or her photo will be known and seen by others outside the community without any specific identifying details (e.g. name, address).
- It should be clear by a verbal response from the subject that the photo can be taken, before the HFHA stakeholder proceeds.
- Best practice is for HFHA stakeholders to strive to obtain informed consent by the subject and/or parent/guardian of subject(s) aged less than 18 years. If parent/guardian is unavailable HFHA stakeholders should refrain from taking photos of the subject, until the parent/guardian is available. In most situations, HFHA beneficiaries are accompanied and for us to truthfully document and report our work, we should be only collecting and using photos of our beneficiaries.

- After obtaining consent, the reporter, photographer or videographer should follow the guidelines under the Storage section for proper filing of photo content.
- HFHA stakeholder's returning from assignments must re-sign HFHA's Code of Conduct to show their adherence to the above steps. HFHA volunteers may be asked to do likewise, on a case-by-case basis.

## 2. Informed Written Consent

In the context of collecting a story (with accompanying photo(s)) and video footage, informed written consent from the subject(s) and their parent or guardian is required. To obtain written consent, HFHA's stakeholders should:

- Read, accept and commit to the Use of Stories and Photos Policy, Child Protection Policy and HFHA's Code of Conduct before entering the field.
- Identify themselves as representing Habitat for Humanity Australia
- Ensure that the subject(s) have an understanding of the intended use of recording their story, taking their photo and for the video footage. Best practice for informing a subject is to show samples of how other photos have been used in communications and marketing materials (see Appendix III). At a minimum, the subject should understand that his or her story/photo/video footage will be known and seen by others outside their community without any specific identifying details (e.g. name, address).
- Best practice is for HFHA stakeholders to obtain informed written consent by the subject and/or parent/guardian of subject(s) aged less than 18 years. Any child subject should also be informed in an age-appropriate manner and give permission for use of his or her photo and/or story. If parent/guardian is unavailable HFHA stakeholders should refrain from proceeding with collection of the story, video and photos, until the parent/guardian is available. In most situations, HFHA beneficiaries are accompanied and for us to truthfully document and report our work, we should be only collecting and using stories, photos and videos of our beneficiaries.
- The consent form should be explained and where possible the form should be translated into the local language. If the parent/guardian is illiterate, the explanation can be conveyed verbally through a translator or through pictorial explanation. Parents' permission does not overrule HFHA standards for child protection. HFHA have modified their written consent form to be more approachable for children and the illiterate.
- Written consent needs to be received from the subject (or their parent/guardian) that the story, photo or video can be taken, *before* the HFHA reporters, photographers and/or videographers proceeds.
- HFHA staff and contractors should record personal details including full name, location, age (where appropriate) at most to accompany the story. HFHA should only document information given by the subject(s) that they have permission to record. (For example, if the subject has HIV/AIDS but wishes not to be identified in that way, HFHA should not document that in the collection of the story). In any case, the dignity of beneficiaries must also be maintained and safeguarded.
- In the event a written consent form cannot be produced, HFHA will require the HFHA Stakeholder to re-sign HFHA's Code of Conduct to show their adherence to acquiring informed consent before proceeding with photo, video or story collection. HFHA will decide on a case-by-case basis if the material should be retained or destroyed.

### 3. Behaviour while collecting stories/photos/videos

HFHA representatives should adhere to the following guidelines for gathering story and photo resources, further guidelines are reflected in the Code of Conduct:

- Uphold and adhere to the HFHA Child Protection Code of Conduct at all times (appendix X)
- Be sensitive to and never exploit a person's vulnerability at times of trauma or grief, and always consider how a photo/story will impact on the rights, especially the safety and well-being of the person being portrayed.
- Portray subjects, especially children in a dignified manner and not in sexually suggestive poses. Children and adults should also be adequately clothed. (*E.g. Not photos of people washing themselves*).
- HFHA does not pay or otherwise compensate subjects for telling their stories, taking their pictures, or securing their signatures on a consent form.
- GPS tracking on cameras/phones should be turned off when taking pictures/video of children and adults so that any content uploaded to a website or social media cannot be identified electronically
- Maintain truthfulness and transparency when recording a story, photo or video.

### 4. Internal protocols to maintain Use of Stories and Photos Policy

All fundraising and marketing collateral must be made in consultation with / and approved by the Communications Manager. In cases where collateral includes information about our overseas programs, stories and beneficiaries, the International Program team also needs to be consulted and provide approval. This process is to ensure the information we provide is accurate and transparent. Where there is a risk that beneficiaries will be identifiable, HFHA changes the names to protect the individual(s) and in any case full names and exact locations of beneficiaries will not be disclosed. HFHA's collateral must respect the dignity, values, history, religion and culture of our beneficiaries.

### 5. Use and storage of images:

HFHA representatives must adhere to the following guidelines for use and storage of story, photo and video resources. Material that has been archived must not be used.

- Photos and stories should respect human dignity. Do not portray people as helpless victims. Balance human needs with positive language about what people are doing to help themselves.
- Ensure images are honest representations of the contexts and the facts. Photos, stories and videos will portray a truthful account of their situation. This includes not cropping photos that may alter the perception of the photo's situation, for example cropping out parent in a photo with a child; this would show the child is alone when in fact they are not.
- Pseudonyms should accompany photos in Habitat for Humanity photo records, so that a "Johnny" in one Habitat for Humanity collateral doesn't end up as "Freddy" in another. It should be noted on the photo file name.
- An image should not disclose details which could enable the child to be identified.
- An image of a child should portray a truthful account of their situation.

- No information will be published which will identify the exact location of a child e.g. surname, first name and village name may be changed to protect children's identify. This includes blurring the school crest on a subject's shirt or cropping the street name out of a photo.
- Photos, stories and videos should only be used by HFHA for a period of two years post the completion of one of their projects. For example a Housing Project in Phnom Penh Cambodia runs from 2010-2013, all photos, stories and videos from this project should no longer be used by HFHA in its marketing and communication materials after 2015.
- In the situation of 'signature' photos (photos which have been taken of a beneficiary which we consider timeless or a true reflection of our work) these can be used beyond two years after project completion, if additional informed written consent has been obtained by the beneficiary in question.
- Refer also to HFHA Brand Guidelines and GV Brand Guidelines for appropriate portrayal of our beneficiaries and programs.
- The following measures should be taken by HFHA staff to ensure file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about the subject when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form. These measures also assist with the tracking of the age of the photo/story/video content:
  - All photos, whether uploaded to our secure shared cloud server or the HFHA secured server, should be tagged where possible and filed in folders relating to Global Village Build, project field visit or project folder.
  - All stories should be dated and filed with consent forms on HFHA secured server.
  - All HFHA initiated videos should have a brief, script or layout and documentation of where it was filmed, date of filming and consent in the video folder on HFHA secured server.

## 6. Raising awareness of this Policy

- Staff in the marketing, media, publications, advocacy and communications areas as well as staff, project visitors and volunteers who escort visitors to Habitat for Humanity projects are briefed and must adhere to these standards. They are also required to sign the HFHA Child Protection Policy that complements this Policy.
- Any staff, volunteers (e.g. Global Village) or consultants seconded to, or commissioned by, HFHA offices to gather story and photo resources are briefed and must adhere to these standards before resource gathering trips.
- HFHA staff members are responsible for implementing these standards and informing other relevant staff about their use to protect human dignity and the right to personal privacy.
  - As part of the induction process for all new HFHA staff members are briefed on HFHA's Use of Stories and Photos Policy and procedures.
  - Annual staff training of Child Protection is completed for all staff (or more frequently to introduce any policy changes); this training also includes HFHA's Use of Stories and Photos Policy and procedures.
- For Global Village Volunteers

Global Village is HFHA's international volunteering program and as it involves members of the public visiting, building with and interacting with people in our project communities. Various procedures are in place to ensure they uphold both HFHA's Child Protection Policy and Use of Stories and Photos Policy.

#### Pre-departure Awareness Raising

- All volunteers must read and commit to HFHA's Child Protection Policy, which includes HFHA's Code of Conduct, the behavioral guidelines for all HFHA representatives, as well as HFHA's Use of Stories and Photos Policy.
- All volunteers are provided with a range of pre-departure trainings and briefings which outline their obligations around Child Protection and Use of Stories and Photos including; the Team Member Manual (provided to volunteers up to six months before build departure) and pre-departure briefings (between 1-2 months before build departure) for Global Village volunteers.

#### During the Build Trip

- Global Village Team Leaders (voluntary leader of the other volunteers) are also required to not only comply with HFHA's policies, such as Use of Stories and Photos Policy but also ensure their team is compliant at all times. If at any time a team member does not comply with the HFHA policies, Team Leaders are required to inform both the local host coordinator and the HFHA Global Village team immediately.
- All Global Village volunteers are only allowed in our project communities with Habitat staff at designated times. They are not left alone with children or families. Advice on collection of content (including stories and photos) for volunteers is outlined in this Policy.
- Where possible, HFHA Global Village staff monitors what photos volunteers are sharing through social media platforms. HFHA Global Village staff also encourages volunteers to use specific hashtags and tagging on social media whilst on their build, which assists with this monitoring.

#### Post-Build

- A debrief call with Team Leaders and follow up surveys post-build to Team Members capture any concerns or issues, such as Child Protection Policy and Use of Stories and Photos Policy breaches that have not be escalated during the build week.

### Use of Stories and Photos Policy Breaches

A breach is when a stakeholder's actions and/or behaviour contradicts the principles outlined in the Use of Stories and Photos Policy and or Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct, but does not constitute as abuse. Breaches to the Use of Stories and Photos Policy and the Child Protection Policy and HFHA's Code of Conduct by any HFHA stakeholder, should be reported to HFHA as soon as possible. If it is also a Child Protection Policy or HFHA's Code of Conduct breach, procedures for handling these breaches is outlined in the HFHA Child Protection Policy.

The process to assess the breach is as follows:

- 1) Any complaint is to be reported to the Communications Manager and CPO. For all complaints of breaches, the Communications Manager and CPO will make an initial assessment of the severity of the breach and the urgency of action including notifying the CEO when necessary. The Chair

of the HFHA Board of Directors will be notified that an investigation has started, depending on the severity of the breach. In the event that the alleged perpetrator is the CEO, the CPO will notify the Chair of the HFHA Board of Directors directly. Any relevant donors or third parties (such as DFAT) will be informed as required by agreement with them, where a breach involves an activity is supported by such a donor or third party.

- 2) The CEO will appoint a team to conduct a formal investigation into the complaint. The investigation team may include HFHA staff (such as Managers) or members of the HFHA Board of Directors. The investigation team will treat all complaints seriously. The investigation will be handled professionally, in confidence and in a timely manner. Procedural fairness will be applied and all decisions made will be in the best interests of the child. HFHA will ensure that the person who raises the complaint is not required to express their suspicion to the person implicated. Individuals who report a suspected breach are not responsible for investigating their concern.
- 3) If the alleged perpetrator is an HFHA employee, the CEO has the right to stand them down on full pay (if appropriate), until an investigation has been completed. If the alleged perpetrator is associated with HFHA in a volunteer capacity, they must cease HFHA activities until the investigation has been completed. If the allegations are from previous involvement with HFHA, the alleged perpetrator is not able to reengage with HFHA until the investigation has been completed.
- 4) If the breach concerns a HFHA stakeholder overseas or one of our overseas partners; HFHA will work with the relevant overseas partner and local Habitat office to investigate the matter and to manage the allegation. If it involves a HFHA stakeholder on a Global Village team, HFHA would work with the Host Coordinator, Team Leader and other team members (when required) to investigate the issue.
- 5) The team that conducts the investigation will provide a written report to the CEO setting out what the investigation has discovered and recommendations of action to address the matters raised by the investigation.
- 6) Once an outcome has been determined by the CEO, the people involved will be informed including (where appropriate) the child, family, and alleged perpetrator. Anyone else actively involved will be informed on a need to know basis consistent with confidentiality requirements.
- 7) All necessary steps will be taken after the investigation has been completed to address the outcome. This may include:
  - Compensation for a child harmed/misrepresented
  - Reinstatement of a staff member
  - Necessary actions to address any damaged reputation or confusion amongst HFHA staff and stakeholders
  - Dismissal of the perpetrator



We build **strength, stability, self-reliance** *through shelter.*

- Disciplining of a staff member
- Steps to end engagement of a volunteer with HFHA
- Requiring any associated organization such as an Affiliate to carry out appropriate steps including those set out above.

HFHA will keep a record of all complaints and the investigation and outcomes of those complaints.  
This record should be appropriately kept so as to protect confidentiality.

NB: Habitat for Humanity International has also provided a mechanism for raising in good faith any suspected violations of the laws or of Habitat for Humanity's policies. MySafeWorkPlace (MSWP) is a hotline and website provided by a third party service. This system can be used when the reporter wishes to remain anonymous.

Reports can be made online or via telephone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

- Within the United States, call toll-free 1-800-461-9330
- Outside the United States, call collect 1-720-514-4400
- Online at <https://www.mysafeworkplace.com/SplashPages/habitat/habitat.html>

