

OCI Foundation International

Sponsors of the: (i) Cyfed Undergraduate Scholarships (ii) CBH Scholarships (iii) IFOMSSA Junior Awards (iv) IFOMSSA Senior Awards and (v) Annual JAMB Awards (vi) ArOF Health Campaign (vii) LAMS Initiative (viii) The Gynocular Project



Communications and Transparency Policy (March 2025)

A. Introduction

This Policy Document provides a framework for all OCI Foundation members and associates regarding our commitment to integrity, inclusivity, and respect in our communications, media use, and related privacy considerations. This policy is relevant to all OCI Foundation members who work in fundraising, advocacy, marketing, communications, and programs.

When we share stories about our work, we are guided by our respect for the dignity and rights of our partners, program participants, and local communities. All our communication materials for information are obtained ethically and responsibly, and we follow the principle of “do no harm”.

The OCI Foundation commits to clear, concise, and accurate communication. We train personnel who regularly collect stories, images, and data of our beneficiaries and the communities we serve, and this document provides a guideline for all concerned.

B. Responsibilities and Fundraising

- 1) The OCI Foundation's directors, employees, volunteers, contractors, program partners, and associates are expected to comply with this Policy.
- 2) The OCI Foundation will act honestly and transparently in all communications with the public.
- 3) The OCI Foundation is committed to accounting for cultural and social sensitivities in its communications and will be inclusive and respectful of all the people it works with.
- 4) All the OCI Foundation members and associates must read, understand and follow the guidelines set forth by the ethical decision-making framework.
- 5) This policy document should be adhered to by all documents from the OCI Foundation, both for internal and external circulation.
- 6) All public materials must be quality-checked to ensure accuracy and reviewed by a third party before publication.
- 7) The OCI Foundation has a communications focal person in place. This is usually the Communications Director, even though the CEO also plays that role. They are responsible for ensuring that all publications and communications are accurate, up-to-date, accessible, respectful, and compliant with the organisation's policies.
- 8) All Directors, staff, volunteers, contractors and project partners must seek the appropriate permission and consent of primary stakeholders or their adult guardians (in the case of children) when collecting images, taking photos or videos and documenting stories in the field. More on images are detailed below.

- 9) The OCI Foundation will inform all members, supporters and the broader community of its activities through publications on its website and social media handles, with contributions from volunteers highlighted where feasible.
- 10) The Foundation's annual reports and new year goodwill messages also contain annual summaries.

C. Responsibilities and Fundraising

- 1) Fundraising documentations from the OCI Foundation will clearly state the purpose for which funds are being raised, how money collected will be used, how money collected in excess of the required amount will be spent, and any other information as required by the appropriate authorities.
- 2) Fundraising materials will also make a clear distinction between development and non-development activities. Where there is reference to both development and non-development activities, they will be reviewed to ensure that donors are provided with the choice of contributing only to development activities.

D. Privacy

The OCI Foundation is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information that the organisation collects, holds, and administers. We recognise the right of individuals to have their information administered in ways they reasonably expect. All members, volunteers, consultants, project partners and other associates of the OCI Foundation must observe this commitment with respect to any public information presented to the media or public.

To achieve these, the OCI Foundation will:

- 1) Only collect relevant information needed for primary functions.
- 2) Ensure stakeholders are informed about why information is being collected and how it will be used.
- 3) Use and disclose personal information only for primary functions or a directly related purpose. If for any other purpose, a fresh consent must be obtained.
- 4) Store personal information securely. We protect them from unauthorised access.
- 5) Provide stakeholders with access to their information and the right to seek its correction.

E. Guidelines for the Use of Images and Messages

The stories and images collected by the OCI Foundation generally allow us to raise awareness about communities, the type of work we do, and the impact of our work. Having these images and stories gives us the responsibility to ensure the ethical, honest, and sensitive use of all content collected with respect for people's dignity and culture.

The OCI Foundation, therefore, commits to:

- 1) Ensuring that images and messages portraying primary stakeholders are appropriate, accurate and consensual.
- 2) The OCI Foundation will respect the dignity, values, history, religion, and culture of the people portrayed in all images of women and men, boys and girls, used in its communications.
- 3) We will avoid images or messages that manipulate the story to portray people in a pitiful way.
- 4) Photographs, films, videos, and messages will be presented respectfully, factually and honestly. The participants will only be portrayed with their personal experiences in context, and as partners in the development process.

- 5) Images of people in vulnerable situations should focus more on the reasons for and context of a situation than on an individual's suffering.
- 6) Our appeals for support must be based on justice and common humanity rather than guilt.
- 7) Children will be portrayed positively as part of their community and in a dignified and respectful manner, with prior consent sought from their parents and/or guardians.
- 8) We will strictly avoid images of children where they are not adequately clothed and in poses that could be sexually suggestive.
- 9) We will ensure that file labels, metadata, or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing them in any form.
- 10) We will ensure that cameras turn off geo-tags when taking images.
- 11) We will keep records of the origins of images and case studies, permissions and copyright releases, as well as key details including name, age, location, date, program association and form of consent gained.
- 12) We will maintain a repository for the above records, which will help with a quality control mechanism to ensure that images and case studies are appropriate, accurate, and consensual.
- 13) We will always ensure that collecting information, images, and stories does not harm people or the environment. For example, using images of local people should not put them in any danger.
- 14) We will inform key persons of what the images are being used for and obtain their permission for that. An explanation of how the photograph or film will be used must be provided.
- 15) We will show examples of the kinds of materials produced so that those involved understand how their personal details and stories might be used.
- 16) We will ensure that local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming a child.
- 17) Where necessary, the OCI Foundation procedures for seeking consent for using images and stories will be available in local languages and other forms, such as images, to ensure full accessibility to stakeholders.
- 18) In some contexts, verbal consent (informed) may be more appropriate than written consent and will therefore be acceptable.
- 19) The OCI Foundation commits that our members will not make statements about other ACFID members to gain a reputational or other advantage.
- 20) To obtain informed consent, we must obtain permission before taking a photo or video, and ensure that the person(s) involved understand:
 - a) Why are their images, stories or personal details being collected.
 - b) Where and how they will be used and over what period of time.
 - c) That their participation is entirely voluntary.
 - d) That they do not have to be identified if they don't want to be.
 - e) The potential risks and consequences of their image, name and words being published.
 - f) They may withdraw consent at any time, and CA will make all reasonable efforts to give effect to this request.
- 21) The images and text we collect will not:
 - a) Portray beneficiaries as objects of charity or as victims.
 - b) Portray beneficiaries as disempowered or inferior.
 - c) Fuel prejudice.
 - d) Foster a sense of superiority.
 - e) Present donors as 'going to the rescue'.

F. Ethical decision-making framework

This framework aims to assist OCI Foundation members and associates in making decisions about the images, messages, and stories they use in communications with the public. It helps with decisions when confronted with an ethical dilemma about using stories, images, or messages to raise awareness or funds. It also serves as a protocol that ensures that any image, photo, or story used in communication materials meets our ethical guidelines.

- 1) All releases must be approved by the Communications Director and/or the CEO. They are ultimately responsible for the public use of images and messages.
- 2) The OCI Foundation recognises both donors and the affected people or stakeholders and their interests in images and messages. We aim to strike a balance between these and acknowledge that the ultimate consideration is the interest of the primary stakeholders.
- 3) The primary stakeholders involved join in defining the use of images and stories in communications and fundraising materials.
- 4) The OCI Foundation commits to training key personnel and partners on appropriate ways to obtain informed consent and collect and use information, images, and stories.
- 5) Copies of communications or fundraising materials that use images or stories of primary stakeholders are provided to those stakeholders, and information about ways to withdraw consent at any time.
- 6) Our actions are consistent with ACFID's Fundraising Charter (8.1.2) and with the ACFID Members' Privacy Policy (7.2.2).
- 7) The OCI Foundation commits to periodic reviews of all communication materials to ensure that images and messages respect the dignity, values, history, religion, and culture of the people portrayed.

G. Review of Policy Document

This policy is subject to review in March 2028, three years after its implementation. Our appraisal tool will be used as part of that review. However, it can be sooner if legislation or other events warrant it.

H. Feedback

If you have any feedback on the OCI Foundation on this document, please get in touch with us immediately via the link [HERE](#).