

4. COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Policy Number: G04	Effective Date: 17 th June 2020
Version: 02	Revised Date: 31 st July 2020
Drafted by: Communications Manager	Responsible person: CM
Date Approved by Board: 17 th June 2020	Scheduled Review Date: June 2023

Introduction

Numerous channels of communications are available to all staff members within This Life, therefore it is necessary to have a policy to guide work undertaken in this area. While much of this policy will relate to the activities undertaken by the Communications Team, all staff members must be aware of this policy and take its contents into consideration.

Additional Authority: Law and related organisational documents

- Media Relations Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Copyright Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Partner and Affiliate Organisations Policy
- Social Media Guidelines
- Guidelines for Use of Images, Video and Messages
- Ethical Decision Making Framework

Purpose

The purpose of this Communications Policy is to provide a framework for This Life's internal and external communications, media and privacy activities in keeping with its commitment to integrity, inclusivity and respect.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all employees, volunteers, contractors and program partners to comply with this Policy.

It is the responsibility of all Board members, staff, volunteers, Advisory Committee Members, This Life Members, contractors and partners to ensure that they are familiar with their obligations under this Policy.

Additionally, it is required that if organisations entering into a formal partnership with This Life do not possess a similar policy holding them to equal or higher standards, they commit to adhere to this policy. In accordance with This Life's Partner and Affiliated Organisations Policy, and in compliance with the ACFID Code of Conduct, this requirement shall form part of all Memoranda of Understanding between This Life and partner organisations.

It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to ensure that any breaches of this Policy coming to the attention of management are dealt with appropriately.

In all communication with the public, This Life will act in an honest and transparent way. This Life is committed to accounting for cultural and social sensitivities in its communications and will be inclusive and respectful of all stakeholders.

All documents produced, for both internal uses and wider circulation, will comply with appropriate State and Federal laws, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) policies and requirements, as well as This Life's and ACFID's Codes of Conduct.

Integrity

All public materials are quality checked by a minimum of one additional staff member before they are published or produced.

The Communications Manager will review day-to-day communications and publications. Organisationally significant documents such as annual reports, research reports and strategic plans will be reviewed by the Executive Director and/or the Senior Management

Team to ensure accuracy and quality.

The Communications Manager has primary responsibility for ensuring that all This Life publications and communications are accurate, up-to-date, accessible, respectful and compliant with This Life policies (such as the Child Protection and Non-Development Activities Policies). The Head of Fundraising and Communications also ensures that all public communications comply with appropriate State and Federal laws, DFAT requirements This Life's and ACFID's Codes of Conduct, and the ACFID Fundraising Charter.

This Life ensures that the use of images and messages portraying primary stakeholders is appropriate, accurate and consensual. Images used by This Life in its communications will respect the dignity, values, history, religion and culture of the people portrayed.

All staff, volunteers and contractors and project partners must seek permission and consent of primary stakeholders or their adult guardians when collecting images, taking photos and documenting stories in the field.

This Life's Media Consent Form will be used in such instances unless verbal permission is deemed more suitable. In these situations, advice should be sought from project partners on the appropriate permissions and on any potential risks related to using images and case Studies.

Key details including the subject's name, age, location, date, program association will be collected on the Media Consent Form which will be kept on file with the images, video footage and stories collected.

Advocacy

This Life will ensure that advocacy does not do harm or increase the level of risk to affected groups.

This Life will draw on organisational knowledge, experience and expertise, utilising rigorous research methodologies and processes to ensure that program activities are evidence-based and accurate in targeting identified issues.

This Life will work with beneficiaries using a consultative approach to ensure that advocacy messages reflect the perspectives of the affected populations.

Accessible Information and Stakeholder Engagement

The Annual Report will be prepared in accordance with the ACFID Code of Conduct Guidelines. The Annual Report will be published on This Life's website and shared publicly via electronic newsletters and social media.

Additional information such as This Life's Vision, Mission, Values, Management Team, Board of Directors, Governance Structure, Strategic Plan, Funding and Community Partners, Constitution, Code of Conduct, Key Policies, Financial Records, Research and Reports can also be found on our website.

For information relating to fundraising, please refer to This Life's Ethical Fundraising Policy and Board Fundraising Policy.

Media

Please refer to This Life's Media Relations Policy.

Privacy

Please refer to This Life's Privacy Policy.

Copyright

Please refer to This Life's Copyright Policy.

Partnership Recognition

This Life is committed to promoting and recognising Australian Government, private sector and individual donor support for its projects and programs. Examples include:

- encouraging and inviting office visits by Australian officials and major donors where appropriate;
- keeping Australian Embassy and High Commission personnel informed of work funded by the Australian Government and other major Australian funding bodies;
- ensuring beneficiaries understand where support is coming from;
- labelling and badging of project materials;
- ensuring signage used in-country features partner support; and
- ensuring that media releases refer to activities and achievements supported by Partners.

Specific approaches for acknowledging the Australian identity and support of the Australian Government, in line with DFAT's Visual Identity Guidelines, will include:

- the Australian Aid identifier on This Life's website
- electronic newsletters distributed to This Life's database
- all publications including the Annual Report
- all event promotional material
- This Life fundraising events (e.g. on screens and banners)
- relevant social, digital media and marketing campaigns
- traditional print and radio media where it is permitted
- other donor reports (e.g. for corporate donors - end of financial year reports, end of project reports, and annual reports).

In-Country Partners

All program and project partners will be required to comply with This Life's Partner and Affiliate Organisation Policy. If program and project partners are collecting images of related activities from the field, then This Life's Media Consent Form should be used. All communications developed by partners should reflect the above guidelines and all activities must be communicated to the public and the communities in which they work in an accurate and honest fashion.

This Life will seek to ensure that program partners make a separation between development and non-development activities in fundraising material, other public communications and in program reporting. Ongoing dialogue between This Life and its partners will reinforce the definitions of development and non-development activities and the need for a separation between development and non-development activities.

Complaints

Please refer to This Life's Feedback and Complaints Policy.

Authorisation