



## Kyeema Foundation Image and Message Guidelines

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### Introduction

The Kyeema Foundation (Kyeema) is a not-for-profit NGO that works to improve the health and prosperity of marginalised communities and their environments, predominantly in developing countries. Kyeema is committed to ensuring that all images and messages used in its communications are accurate, respectful, and protect privacy and dignity of the person(s) concerned.

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for making decisions about which images and messages to use in all Kyeema communications.

### Guiding Principles

This framework is founded on respect for the dignity, values, history, religion, language and culture of the people concerned; belief in the equality of all people; and acceptance of the need to promote fairness, solidarity and justice. It is based on the following principles:

1. Images and related messages will be chosen based on values of respect, equality, solidarity and justice;
2. Any image or situation will be truthfully represented in both its immediate and wider context so as to improve public understanding of the realities and complexities of development;
3. Images and messages that may stereotype, sensationalise, or discriminate against people, situations or places will be avoided;
4. Images, messages, and case studies will be used with the full understanding, participation and permission of the person(s) depicted (or the person's parents/ guardians);
5. Persons whose situation is being represented will have the opportunity to communicate their stories themselves;
6. Kyeema personnel will establish and record whether the subjects wish to be named or identified and always act accordingly; and
7. Kyeema personnel will conform to the highest standards in relation to human rights and the protection of vulnerable people, including safeguarding of adults and children to potential risk of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment. This includes delivering messages with a survivor centric approach.



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### Definitions

**Equality:** respecting the rights of all people, promoting an appreciation of diversity, and committing to non-discrimination.

**Justice:** promoting issues in a way which calls for actions to address the causes of poverty, for example, and is not just about taking a charitable approach.

**Partners:** individuals, groups of people or organisations that collaborate with or are contracted by Kyeema to achieve mutually agreed objectives in development activities.

**Respect:** appreciating the people and situations, showing consideration for people's privacy and dignity, and regarding people as active, valuable, and capable agents of change in their lives.

**Solidarity:** using images and messages which promote working together with rather than for communities.

### Scope

This guideline applies to all staff, Board members, partners and volunteers of Kyeema. These principles will be applied in all communications including but not limited to:

- Annual reports
- Newsletters
- Videos
- Social media
- Fundraising events
- Volunteer recruitment and training
- Newspaper articles

### Procedure

When capturing and using images and communicating messages each of the following questions must be deliberated. If the answer to any one of these is no, the image and/or message should not be used.

1. Does the use of the planned image and/or message fit with the core values of respect for the dignity of others?
2. If used, would those directly affected by this image and/or message feel that it is a fair and true representation?
3. Have all the subjects of the image and/or message agreed to this application of their image/story?
4. Would the use of this image and/or message cause offence or hurt or put the subject at unnecessary risk of harm? This is particularly important for survivors of sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment.
5. Might the use of this image and/or message contribute to cultural or racial stereotyping of people, places, and situations? Does it involve gender stereotypes?



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6. Does this image promote the active role of people in their own development and offer a fair reflection of working relationships between Kyeema personnel and people in developing countries?
7. What is the function of the communication? Is it being used to evoke pity in the viewer? Does it portray the situation accurately?
8. Does the communication contribute to stereotypes about the contributions of Kyeema personnel to development?
9. What aspects of life in communities where Kyeema works are missing from the communication, if any? Why are they omitted?
10. Does the communication convey a sense of interdependence or interconnectedness and encourage long-term engagement in development issues beyond charitable donations?
11. Would you feel comfortable using the chosen image/message about yourself or your family?

Respect for other NGOs Kyeema understands the risks to the sector as a whole if individual member NGOs develop a bad reputation and is committed to the principles of fairness and cooperation. All Kyeema's public communication will be respectful of other NGOs.

1. It will not denigrate other agencies or make inaccurate or misleading public statements regarding other agencies.
2. Any communication regarding another NGO will be factually accurate and will not intentionally or otherwise mislead.
3. Kyeema will not make statements about other NGOs with the intention of creating a reputational or other advantage for itself. If there is a legitimate and well-founded concern about another NGO a complaint may be lodged with ACFID's Code of Conduct Committee ([code@acfid.asn.au](mailto:code@acfid.asn.au)).

### Related Documents

This policy is to be read in conjunction with:

- Kyeema Foundation Privacy policy
- Kyeema Foundation Child Protection policy
- Kyeema Foundation Communications policy
- Kyeema Foundation Ethical Decision-Making Framework
- Kyeema Foundation Partner Reporting Guidelines
- Kyeema Foundation Photo & Video consent form
- Kyeema Foundation Code of Conduct

### Information Source

[ACFID Code of Conduct Quality Principle 6: Communication](#)



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### Authorisation

Sinéad Magill

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Name of Policy Officer

*Sinéad Magill*

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Signature of Policy Officer

08/10/2024

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Date



### Annex One

#### 1. Choose images and related messages based on values of respect, equality, solidarity and justice.

- Avoid using language and images which are paternalistic, based on the idea of ‘us’ giving to ‘them’.

**Messages:** Promote the ability of people and communities to transform their own lives.

**Images:** Show Kyeema as a facilitator/supporter rather than an instructor/implementer.

- Foster a sense of our interconnected common humanity rather than focusing on the differences between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Communicate issues of poverty and inequality which reflect on the causes rather than the effects.

**Messages:** Communicate the role of institutions and global systems rather than focusing solely on the individuals affected.

**Images:** Use abstract images or symbolism, rather than photographs of people, to represent the harsh reality of poverty, inequality and disadvantage.

- Avoid images and messages that victimise or dehumanise people.

**Images:** Choose images which show local communities working together for change.

- Avoid the ‘charity model’ which reduces global poverty and inequality to purely a question of money.
- Create a dialogue that shows the complexity of the situation and the many different ways that may be available to address the issues.

**Messages:** Avoid phrases like ‘\$1 a day can change a child’s life’.

**Images:** Reduce the emphasis on agency branding.

#### 2. Truthfully represent any image or depicted situation both in its immediate and wider context so as to improve public understanding of the realities and complexities of development.

- Avoid generalisations and be as specific as possible.

**Messages:** Use phrases like ‘Work with us in the rural communities of [Country X] to support children affected by HIV and AIDS’ rather than ‘Help African AIDS orphans’.

- Include exact information about places, the background to a situation, and the organisations and institutions involved (especially local or national institutions).

**Messages:** Use captions like ‘People experiencing poverty in [Country X] want change’ rather than ‘People in the developing world need your help’.



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- Depict the culture of the place and people's situations, and limit comparisons to what life is like in Ireland or Europe. Involve local staff if possible when designing communications.

**Messages:** Avoid simplistic juxtapositions such as 'They're helpless. We're not', or 'Being poor is hard, being poor in [Country X] is harder'.

- Highlight issues.
- Remember that an individual can often be taken to represent an entire country, continent, or group by those receiving the communications.

**Images:** Portray a range of people in images rather than repeatedly using photographs of children, or women and children. Show women and men in a variety of roles.

- Show complexity.

**Messages:** Identify both the good and bad things happening in a country. Focus on the wider issues - the causes and effects of a situation - rather than instilling the idea that 'aid is the solution'.

**Images:** Use a 'photo story' (a series of images that show stages of a project to provide more information than a single snapshot, for example).

- Avoid focusing solely on donations, as it can give the impression donations alone will end poverty or will address the political and economic causes of poverty and inequality.

### **3. Avoid images and messages that potentially stereotype, sensationalise, or discriminate against people, situations or places.**

- Images and messages should contribute to cultural understanding rather than misunderstandings or simplifications.

**Messages:** Avoid using slogans which make false generalisations, reinforcing stereotypes which seek to evoke pity or charity. Provide information about the context.

**Images:** Promote the partner aspect of development by limiting images of the international aid worker with a local beneficiary, as such images promote power imbalances and inequality between the development agency and the local population.

- Show the diversity of people in development.
- Try to represent the reality of local people working locally to fight poverty and inequality.

### **4. Use images, messages, and case studies with the full understanding, participation and permission of the subjects (or the subjects' parents/guardians).**

- When using photographs of individuals, seek written permission. Use a consent form where possible and translate it in writing or via an interpreter for local communities



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- Communicate how the photographs taken or information provided will be used: Where? For what purpose? When and for how long?
- If a translator is being used, ensure that the translator has read and/or understands the information, and is clear on the potential outputs of their work.
- Once consent has been granted, be as accurate as possible in recording names (where appropriate), details of the situation, and location.
- Information should not be used indefinitely. Images and information should preferably only be used for 3-5 years.
- Establish who can give consent for obtaining photographs or details about a child. Never take a photograph of a child without the full understanding and permission of the parent(s)/ guardian(s). For more information, see the Kyeema Child Protection policy

### **5. Ensure those whose situation is being represented have the opportunity to communicate their stories themselves.**

- Encourage the person/people to speak for themselves. Use local spokespersons (to show that local people are actively involved in development or humanitarian work) and the first person ('I' or 'we'). This shifts the balance to the person behind the story and their experience, creating space for 'we have' and 'we are'. Do not generalise diverse groups of people under the terms 'they' or 'these people'.
- When editing, be careful that the meaning of a story is not altered or distorted.

**Messages:** If a text is edited or added to, state this clearly in the final version.

- Be aware that women and children are frequently used to represent communities living in poverty in images.

**Images:** Create diversity by including men, older people, people with disabilities, and other groups.

**Messages:** Make every effort to give voice to women's experiences and points of view as well as representing them in images.

### **6. Establish and record whether the subjects wish to be named or identified and always act accordingly.**

- Always ask whether the person(s) or community wish to be identified, showing examples of what might be done with the information.
- Consent must be sought from a parent/guardian for any child under 18. Do not name children who appear in publicity materials. For more information, see the KYEEMA Child Protection policy.
- All images and information should be labelled and logged within an organisation's office information system.



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- Establish organisational guidelines around how long a case study/story and accompanying images can be kept and for how long it can be used, as well as who has access to it and the purpose for which it can be used.
- Be aware of cultural sensitivity.

**Images:** Show extreme care or sensitivity when photographing taboo practices or stigmatised populations. Make an effort to obtain at least verbal consent before taking a photo.

### **7. Conform to the highest standards in relation to human rights and the protection of vulnerable people.**

- Use a model (rather than an actual patient or victim), and obtain a written release from the model.
- Use an abstract image to represent an issue.
- Use pseudonyms (false names) or do not include names.
- When necessary, alter photo content to protect subjects.
- When the identity of a person is altered for a communication, or not provided, explain why (for example, by referring to the international conventions/declarations mentioned above).
- Use images of men and other demographic groups as well as images of children and women.
- Use real time or normal speed in video footage.
- Do not take images from above, which look down on a person or group. Avoid taking a closeup photograph, especially someone who is injured, ill or dying.
- All 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.
- Try to show women in the powerful position they often occupy within families and communities.