



GlobalGiving Community Photo Standards

We, the members of the GlobalGiving Community, commit to photography, videography, and fundraising practices that uphold the dignity and safety of the people in our photos, and portray our work and communities in a responsible way. Created in collaboration with members of the GlobalGiving community, these are our community standards:



Treat All People with Dignity and Respect

We aim to protect the dignity of our photo subjects, treat them equally, and depict them in the most dignified way possible.

Avoid: A woman giving birth who is naked or whose body very exposed and who would likely prefer privacy

Instead: A recovering, clothed woman holding her new baby after giving birth

- Approach with empathy; continually ask ourselves: “Would I like to be portrayed that way?”
- Don't depict people or animals in compromising or private situations
- Demonstrate strength and resilience rather than showing people in their darkest hour
- Instead of eliciting shock or pity; portray subjects in challenging situations in ways that focus on their humanity
- Prioritize respect over getting the “perfect shot”
- Don't take photos that “look down” on the subject; choose a camera angle on the same level as the subject to imply respect and equality
- If possible, offer to print or email photos of participants for them to keep. If it is a photo they like and want to keep, chances are it depicts them in a dignified way



Prioritize Privacy, Safety, and Consent

We aim to get appropriate consent from the subjects of the photos and inform them about how their photo may be used.

Avoid: Taking photos of a group of schoolchildren without permission

Instead: Ask school to get permission from parents to take and publish photos of their children and explain how the photos may be used

- If you're not from the community, ask someone who is to facilitate a conversation about consent. They should explain what the photos will be used for, and ensure the subjects are OK with being photographed
- Ask the subjects themselves people if they want to be photographed. Show them the photos and ask for their opinions
- Be aware of power dynamics you might create when asking for consent (and taking photos/video)
- Don't publish personal information, like last names, with photos that could put the subject at risk
- Discuss with your staff and volunteers when it is or is not appropriate to share photos of participants on their own social media accounts or other platforms.
- Bring examples with you of how their photos could possibly be used

Ensure People Documenting Reinforce the Mission

We aim to train photographers (including staff) to reinforce our mission through their sensitive approach and high-quality work.

Avoid: Asking a friend to take photos of an event without explaining how the photos should reinforce your mission and ways they could possibly harm the people in them

Instead: Share this guide and discuss these important topics before the event

- Ensure the photo shoot or publications don't make the subjects feel like victims; make the process empowering and fun for them, and do it in a way that upholds your values
- Hire local photographers/ videographers when possible. Or, work with local facilitators who can ensure the process is appropriate for the culture
- Teach photographers and videographers about your work and why it matters so they can portray your work accurately and powerfully
- Be aware of the photographer/ videographer bias in capturing what he or she perceives as fulfillment of project objectives
- Get high-quality photos that show action, emotion, and context
- Discuss your organization's style with your photographer to ensure their photos align with your brand

Avoid Harmful Stereotypes in Our Imagery

We aim to avoid photos that reinforce stereotypes, misconceptions, and harmful power dynamics.

Avoid: A standing Caucasian woman handing food to a woman on the ground, implying “giver” and “receiver” roles

Instead: Two women standing together, implying they are equals, cooperating and choosing food together

- Be aware of unhealthy power dynamics like giver/receiver, us/them, or victim/hero
- Focus on the voice of the participants and not the organization
- Be careful not to portray program participants as “less than” the staff or donors. Always show them as equal
- Avoid “selfie-stye” photos of donors or outsiders posing for photos to build their own personal brand
- Take photos of people in ways viewers don't usually see them. Rather than showing them in the way they are typically portrayed (like as receivers), highlight their individuality and unique qualities outside the normal stereotype