



Room to Read Communications and Image Policy

Policy Name: COMMUNICATIONS AND IMAGE POLICY

Policy Owner: Chief Development and Communications Officer

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Policy Number: 103WW

Purpose:

Images and stories play a vital role in helping Room to Read raise awareness for our work to advance literacy and gender equality through education. There are many ways Room to Read uses images and stories to inspire, educate, create awareness and attract supporters. The assets we collect may be shared by Room to Read and our partners through traditional communications (print, television, radio, billboards) and digital media (social networking sites, websites, blogs, vlogs, virtual reality, podcasts).

We have a responsibility to the children¹ we serve and communities we represent to tell their stories in a responsible and ethical manner. We will take every possible measure to ensure that all representatives of Room to Read understand and abide by guidelines designed to create a respectful environment that preserves an individual's physical and mental integrity, privacy, dignity and safety. The information in this policy is intended to outline the appropriate acquisition and use of images and stories (interviews, photography and filming) featuring individuals in the communities we serve.

Principles:

1. **Integrity** – The children and communities we serve should be treated with respect and dignity and be protected from situations that could place them or the organization at risk.
2. **Informed** – Consent must be obtained for photographing/videotaping and using images of any individuals in the communities we serve. This includes children, parents and teachers.
3. **Accurate** – Images and stories used will give an accurate representation of the situation, subject identity, and physical location being depicted without disclosing sensitive personal information, unless appropriate consent has been provided.

Applicability:

This Communications and Image Policy ("Policy") applies to Room to Read worldwide, including employees, board members, volunteers, interns, vendors, contactors and implementation partners, as well as any Room to Read approved visitors to Room to Read programs (hereinafter referred to together as "**Room to Read Representatives**").

Policy:

Room to Read is committed to the children and adults in the communities we serve (hereinafter referred to as "**Room to Read Communities**") and has a responsibility to portray community members in a responsible and ethical manner. We will use images and stories in a manner that protects the safety, privacy, dignity and authenticity of all Room to Read Communities and prioritize their interests and protection over the opportunity for advocacy and awareness building. Room to Read will seek consent from a child and their guardian and from individual adults prior to filming or photographing Room to Read Communities and, unless consent is granted, will take measures to prevent transfer of a subject's personal information outside of Room to Read. The taking and use of images or stories related to children must also adhere to Room to Read's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct 101WW and Child Protection Policy Implementation Manual for each office.

¹ Room to Read defines a child as any individual under the age of 18, regardless of the applicable local age of majority or consent.

Standards and Guidelines:

It is expected that all Room to Read Representatives interact with Room to Read Communities in a respectful and dignified manner. To this end, all Room to Read Representatives must abide by the following general standards and guidelines. [Additional guidelines are linked below in the “Related Policies and Resources” section.]

- 1. Integrity** – The children and communities we serve should be treated with respect and dignity and be protected from situations that could place them or the organization at risk.
 - Unless informed consent has been provided, do not publish information that could knowingly lead to a person being identified or traced (such as last name, school name, village name) or disclose sensitive personal information, such as medical conditions or past trauma.
 - Ensure photographs and videos present people in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner; children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be regarded as sexually suggestive.
 - Photographers and filmmakers must always be accompanied by a Room to Read employee and should not spend time alone with children.
 - Do not use language or behavior that is discriminatory, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate. Avoid explicit comments or questions that could trigger a person’s pain and grief from traumatic events.
 - Comply with local traditions or restrictions in taking or reproducing images of people, objects or places.
 - Any labels used for storing or sending documentary images should not reveal a person’s full identity or specific location.
 - Before images of children are published on a website, they should be right-protected or otherwise saved in a way that ensures they cannot be used inappropriately.

- 2. Informed** –Consent must be obtained for photographing/videotaping and using images of any individuals in the communities we serve. This includes children, parents and teachers.
 - In school settings, per school level agreements between the school and Room to Read, school administration will administer consent procedures and inform Room to Read of any children that should be excluded from documentation activities.
 - For individual stories, consent must be obtained from a child and his or her guardian and from individual adults for all interviews and video, and when possible, for photographs. When possible and appropriate, this permission should be in writing or videotaped.
 - Consent must be obtained in a manner that ensures the individual is not coerced in any way and fully understands the purpose and possible use of the photograph, video or interview, and that their image or story might be disseminated locally and globally. This is usually ensured only if the permission is obtained in the person’s local language and contextualized examples of use are provided.
 - Individuals must be provided with the opportunity to give or decline permission to be photographed or filmed. Refrain from taking a photo or video if there are signs of reluctance or confusion.
 - Interviews with children should be conducted in the presence of a parent, guardian, or school staff.

- 3. Accurate** – Images and stories used will give an accurate representation of the situation, subject identity, and physical location being depicted without disclosing sensitive personal information, unless appropriate consent has been provided.
 - The portrayal of people, places or situations through words and images must not be manipulated or sensationalized in any way but rather should accurately convey the context and the facts, without disclosing sensitive personal information, unless appropriate consent has been provided
 - When telling individual stories, let people give their own accounts as much as possible rather than others speaking on their behalf.
 - All translations should be accurate and honest.

- It is unacceptable to pay people in exchange for their interview, photo or consent. If deemed appropriate, it is acceptable to give a small gift of appreciation to a person or community for giving up their time to spend the day being documented. Ideally, gifts should be educational in nature.
- When requested by a photographer, images should accompany a photo credit and a copyright symbol.

It is important for Room to Read Representatives interacting with Room to Read Communities to:

- Be aware of and manage situations that may present risks to a person’s integrity, reputation, privacy and safety;
- Plan and organize community visits to minimize risks of discomfort, harm or inauthenticity;
- Facilitate a culture of openness to enable any issues or concerns of unethical communications to be raised or discussed;
- Facilitate a culture of accountability within the organization so that poor practices or potentially disrespectful or harmful behavior does not go unchallenged; and
- Report any known or suspected activity that, if true, is a violation of this Policy.

Reporting Incidents:

Any complaints or concerns about inappropriate or intrusive images should be reported and recorded like any other child protection concern.

Contact Department:

Any questions regarding this Policy shall be directed to the Director of Marketing and Communications.

Related Policies and Resources

Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct WW101

Child Protection Policy Implementation Manual

[Branding Guidelines and Identity Standards](#)

[Visitor Agreement](#)

[Guidelines for Visiting a Local Community](#)

Coming: Social Media Guidelines

Coming: Image Consent Form