



## MEDIA GUIDELINES<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

Sunshine Cambodia (SC), formerly known as Sunshine Centre for Children, believes that each person is created in the image of God. Therefore, regardless of the life experiences a person has previously encountered, she/he must be portrayed with dignity and respect. These Media Guidelines are informed by SC's commitment and adherence to the UNCRC (1991) which promotes rights and respect for all children<sup>2</sup>, as well as the Cambodian *Prakas* on Minimum Standards on Residential Care for Children (Ministry of Social Affairs, Youth & Rehabilitation, 2006).<sup>3</sup>

These Media Guidelines are also correlated with SC's "Guidelines for Publication"<sup>4</sup> which state that use of any and all photographs must be based on the five core principles of:

*1) protection of children; 2) informed consent from children/families for use of [media]; 3) cultural sensitivity; 4) anonymity; and 5) representation of all people (children and adults) associated with SC in a way that is dignified, wholistic, honest, and respectful (not vulnerable or submissive).*

Media and communications can be used as a positive tool for advocacy, but can also exploit vulnerable children and adults and/or portray them in demeaning or unflattering ways. The following minimum standards are outlined to ensure that human dignity and the right to personal privacy are respected when reporting stories or taking photos and videos of those with whom SC works, especially children.

SC believes that *the best interests of the child* are to be protected over *any other consideration*, including raising funds for children's projects, awareness raising & education, advocacy for children's issues, and the promotion of children's rights. SC also believes that all individuals have the right to tell their *own* story. The stories and images of all individuals belong to *them* – not to SC or its visitors or donors.

Thus, the purpose of these Media Guidelines is to:

1. Protect SC's clients<sup>5</sup> (children and adults);

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<sup>1</sup> Note that these guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the SC Child Protection Policy point 7 "Guidelines for publication." Also, SC's Media Guidelines apply equally to all staff, board members, volunteers, interns, trainers, consultants, donors, media representatives, and visitors.

<sup>2</sup> Article 16: Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their life, their good name, their families, and their homes.

<sup>3</sup> Article 9: Special attention is taken to protect children's identities, their location or any other information that could identify them. In all circumstances, communication about and disclosure of child victims' information shall respect and protect the best interest of the child and make it clear that child abuse is wrong, and the child shall not be presented as a victim except when it is in the best interest of the child and the child allows to do so.

<sup>4</sup> Sunshine Centre Child Protection Policy (vs. December 2010), point no. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Please note – there does not seem to be an entirely appropriate term by which to refer to the people who participate in SC's activities and benefit from SC's services. The following terms are often used interchangeably: beneficiary, participant, subject, client. In this document, SC has opted to use the term "client", as it best portrays the notion that children and families associated with SC have a choice to participate or not, and that they also make a contribution to their own well-being.

2. Maintain client confidentiality;
3. Maintain the best interest of the client at all times;
4. Prevent any form of exploitation by members of the media or other visitors;
5. Protect the media representative/visitors, and the Sunshine Centre.

## 1. GUIDELINES FOR VISITORS DOING MEDIA-RELATED WORK AT SC

All visitors must read and sign the Declaration of Commitment included in the SC's *Child Protection Policy for Visitors* prior to engaging with any SC children. Visitors must also sign the Visitor's Book.

Visitors must understand that they are strangers to the children associated with Sunshine Centre, unlike SC staff who are familiar to the children and have earned the children's trust. All SC staff are trained annually on child protection guidelines that are specific to the challenges faced when working with children in Cambodia. SC children are educated on the importance of personal safety and space and are made aware of the danger from foreign and local pedophiles looking to exploit vulnerable children in Cambodia. Nevertheless, SC children have a natural tendency to be too trusting of foreigners in particular.

Therefore, it is important that ALL VISITORS acknowledge that they have a role to play in this education process and that they do not inadvertently undermine the work of SC staff by being over-familiar with the children. For example, visitors hugging, carrying, and cuddling children can undermine the safety messages SC promotes to staff and children, as well as being confusing for the children themselves. Visitors must recognize that they have little or no understanding of the family background and issues of each individual child.

Visitors must never offer cash or in-kind donations direct to families or children.

SC does not hold responsibility for loss or damage of equipment during field visits regardless of how the loss or damage occurred.

## 2. INFORMED CONSENT

- 2.1 SC children, parents, and other community members who become subjects of text, photo, and/or video resource gathering must have the purposes and intentions for which all material will be used **clearly explained** to them in a language they understand (i.e. Khmer).
- 2.2 Consent must be obtained from the SC child/ren, as well as parent/guardian if the child is under-18 years of age (see Annex A).
- 2.3 SC staff will **take extra care to educate** SC children and parents about the proliferation of electronic media and warn them that information posted electronically may easily be reprinted on-line in multiple sources and even translated into other languages. Also, SC children and parents must be informed that that people all over the world, including people from Cambodia and the SC community, may have access to the electronic information.
- 2.4 The **identity of any child must not be revealed**, even those who have not been sexually exploited, unless the child and parent/guardian give written voluntary and informed consent.
- 2.5 In principle, even if indefinite consent is obtained, using images connected to particular stories *ad infinitum* (i.e. for more than two years) is highly inappropriate because the situation of the client may well have changed. At the same time, it may be appropriate to continue using a particular photograph even after two years, if it is

used in a manner not related specifically to the original story (i.e. in the same way that “stock photos” are used by media companies).

- 2.6 SC clients **always** have the **option to withdraw consent**, even after a story or photo is published.

### 3. INTERVIEWS

- 3.1 Consent must be obtained from the SC Project Director prior to the occurrence of any and all interviews with SC staff or clients.
- 3.2 Any individual story used must be portrayed within the context of describing SC’s activities in general.
- 3.3 All clients must receive a full explanation of the purpose of the media and/or article.
- 3.4 An approved social worker and/or staff member must be present at all times during an interview.
- 3.5 The child, or any other SC client, must be at ease to express her/his own opinion and share her/his story from her/his own viewpoint and may halt the interview if she/he does not wish to proceed.
- 3.6 The process of interviewing and gathering information must always maintain the best interests of SC client/s and not cause any harm or form of trauma to SC client/s or staff.

### 4. COMMUNICATIONS

- 4.1 **DIGNITY:** All communications related to Sunshine Centre (i.e. email, publications, newsletters, fact sheets, annual reports, calendars, greeting cards, etc.) must respect basic human dignity. That is:
  - a) Do not portray people as helpless victims.
  - b) Balance human needs with positive language about human resilience and hope.
  - c) Include only decent and respectful images that do not seek to exploit their circumstances.
- 4.2 **LANGUAGE:** Use dignifying terminology. Negative labeling can deeply impact client/s and influence how they are viewed by others in the community. Negative labeling can also have a deleterious affect on those who are receiving the media/publications, and reinforce untrue and unhelpful stereotypes of “poor people” in other countries.
- 4.3 **ACCURACY:** All reporting should represent a complete picture of both internal and external assistance and the partnerships that often result between local and international NGOs. That is:
  - a) Do not add exaggerated and/or sensationalized text and/or images, discriminatory and/or degrading language or images in which children are inappropriately clothed.

### 5. PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

- 5.1 **IDENTITY:** Always change the name and obscure the visual identity of a client who is identified as a victim of sexual abuse or exploitation, or who is HIV positive or who is living with AIDS (unless the client/s give fully informed, written consent).
  - a) **DO** focus on happy children busy with normal childhood activities.

- b) **DO** use natural censorship if concealment is required. Some suggested ways to conceal identity include: hair across the child's face, the child holding his/her hands over his/her face, an object obstructing the face, or the face being shadowed only or backlit with no front lighting.
- c) **DON'T** use blurred/blacked out eyes. People can still be identified and it is not dignifying.
- d) **DON'T** take any images of naked children or adults, or children who appear to be traumatized or in any vulnerable situation (crying, scared) or that may be of a sexualized nature.
- e) **DON'T** use individual, identifiable faces on fundraising products (i.e. calendars, greeting cards etc.)

## 6. DECLARATION

I accept these terms and agree to abide by SC Media guidelines at all times during my visit.

I will provide SC with copies of the publication, broadcast and/or photographs after the visit which SC will then make available to the child.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your cooperation

## REFERENCES:

1. Chab Dai Media & Communication Policy, 2010, draft.
2. Hagar Cambodia Communications Policy, 2010, draft.
3. M'Lop Tapang Media and Visitor Guidelines, 2009.
4. European Code of Conduct for Photographing Children, 1989 (Annex B).

**Annex A**

**Media Consent Form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ [Client Name] understand that my story, photo and voice is my own and hereby grant my permission to \_\_\_\_\_ [organisation/person] to (tick all that apply):

- Interview me
- Take photographs of me
- Tape record my voice
- Videotape me

I understand that the information I provide may be edited and shared both immediately and in the future with \_\_\_\_\_ [organisation]'s audiences on websites, in videos, and on other public online forums (email, social networking sites, newsletters, etc.).

I consent under the condition that the following requirements are met:

(tick one)

- My image is used without being obscured.
- My image is obscured so as not to reveal my identity.

(tick one)

- My real name is used.
- A pseudonym is used to protect my identity.

(tick one)

- My voice is used without masking.
- My voice is masked to protect my identity.

I understand that media posted on the internet is subject to sharing and is accessible globally (in Cambodia, Australia, USA, etc.). I have the right to withdraw my consent even after the production of the video, website, etc.

My interview, picture, voice, or video can be used by \_\_\_\_\_ [organisation] for:

(tick one)

- One time only for \_\_\_\_\_ [specify usage]
- Up to one month.
- Up to one year.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Other conditions:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Child Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/Guardian Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Organisation name & representative signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

## Annex B

### European Code of Conduct for Photographing Children

*By Liaison Committee of Development NGOs to the European Union on 1 Apr 1989*

#### Practical Guidelines

1. Avoid **catastrophic or idyllic images** which appeal to charity and lead to a clear conscience rather than a consideration of the root problems;
2. All people must be presented as human beings and sufficient information provided as to their social, cultural and economic environment so that their **cultural identity and dignity** are preserved ' Culture should be presented as an integral part of development in the South;
3. **Accounts given by the people concerned** should be presented rather than the interpretations of a third party;
4. People's ability to **take responsibility for themselves** must be highlighted;
5. A message should be formulated in such a way **that generalisations** are avoided in the minds of the public;
6. The internal and external **obstacles** to development should be clearly shown;
7. **Interdependence** and **joint responsibility** in underdevelopment should be emphasised;
8. The **causes of poverty** (political, structural or natural) should be apparent in a message in order to enable the public to become aware of the history and real situation in the Third World, and the structural foundations of these countries before colonisation. It is the situation today, coupled with a knowledge of the past, which should be the starting point for examining ways in which extreme poverty and oppression can be eliminated. Power struggles and vested interests should be exposed and oppression and injustice denounced;
9. Messages should avoid all forms of **discrimination** (racial, sexual, cultural, religious, socio-economic);
10. The image of our Third World partners as dependent, poor and powerless is most often applied to **women who are** invariably portrayed as dependent victims, or worse still, simply do not figure in the picture. An improvement in the images used in educational material on the Third World evidently requires a positive change in the images projected of Southern women;
11. **Southern partners** should be consulted in the formulation of all messages;
12. If an NGO calls on the services of other partners (institutions, organisations or private companies) for a fund raising activity, it should ensure that the recommendations of this Code are respected by all parties. Reference should be made to the Code in the **sponsoring contract(s)** between the NGO and its partner(s).