

Ethical Communications Statement

Assisi understands that engagement with the public not only influences how the public view Assisi, but also how the public view development work, gender equality, poverty, and the communities where Assisi works. As such, Assisi ensures that public engagement activities are accurate, respectful and ethical.

Assisi is committed to ensuring that our public communication is accurate, timely and accessible.

Promoting our values

Assisi's values of partnership, accountability, honesty, responsiveness and enhancement are aligned with the ACFID Code of Conduct. We:

- Promote our commitment to these values in our public communication, including newsletters, website, promotional brochures and reports.
- Take care to ensure nothing is done intentionally that can be deemed to be counter to these values, including making statements about organisations with the intent of creating reputational advantage to Assisi.

Sharing information with the public

We recognise it is important to report honestly and transparently to stakeholders and acknowledge our successes, failures and share learnings. We do this by:

- Making our Annual Report available on our website. This includes an overview of our work for the year, and a breakdown of how funds were spent, including the amount allocated to administrative costs.
- Regularly updating the website with project specific updates and news.
- Sharing learnings and project information in regular newsletters and correspondence sent to supporters.
- Only providing updates on projects that are current, or if not current, ensuring that this is clearly stated.
- Publishing evaluation reports on our website when appropriate; this is assessed on a case-by-case basis, with consideration given to protecting sensitive information or partner relationships, in line with our Ethical Guidelines for M&E outlined in the Assisi Program Guidelines.
- Seeking information from partners, to accurately represent the projects we support. This information might include beneficiary stories, photographs and project reports. We only use information where accuracy can be verified, and which upholds Assisi's values.
- Encouraging partners to regularly contribute to communications with project stakeholders throughout the project cycle, keeping them informed of project plans, progress, successes and challenges.

Using stories and images of people

Throughout our public engagement work, Assisi often represents project participants who are involved in our work through sharing their stories or using images of them in public

communication. We are committed to maintaining their dignity, and truthfully conveying the complexities of their situation.

We comply with our Child Protection Policy (which is in line with DFAT's Child Protection Policy) and Code of Conduct, by only using images and personal information which ensure the privacy and safeguarding of children.

In addition, when using stories from participants or communities in our public communication, we:

- Always ensure informed consent is obtained. This includes ensuring the person understands what the image is being used for and obtaining their permission. In the case of a child, Assisi will ensure consent is obtained from a parent/guardian (as well as the child where age-appropriate).
- Present people in a respectful manner, honestly portraying their personal experience and context and as active partners in the development process.
- Do not use images or messages that manipulate the story to portray people in a pitiful way or as victims.
- Portray participants in activities that reflect their daily lives.
- Convey the context and complexity of the situations. 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.
- Honestly portray the diversity of local people including age, disability and other marginalised groups.
- Ensure that the identification of or use of images of local people will not bring them into any danger. Only use real names and real and specific locations if it is not deemed a risk, and never use the real names of children.
- Identify and seek to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images.
- Leverage local staff to ensure that local people are actively involved in development or humanitarian work.
- Use local spokespeople where possible, so people can communicate their own story.
- Ensure images, information and associated permissions are current, and never use information indefinitely. Images will not be used 5 years from consent being given.
- Protect the identity, personal information, and privacy of those appearing in communications, as per Assisi's Privacy Policy, and procedures outlined in the Good Practice Manual.

Use of language

In public communication we use:

- Plain language and avoid the use of jargon.
- Language that is inclusive and non-discriminatory. This includes avoiding generalisations, or descriptors that refer to personal attributes such as race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age, unless they are relevant and valid.
- 'People First language' when required to use a descriptor. For example, 'person with a disability.' This respectfully puts the person before their disability.

Australian Identity and support from the Australian Government

When our projects receive support from the Australian Government, we are always open and transparent about the level or type of support received. This includes promoting Australian interests in Assisi's communications, and overseas with partners and project stakeholders.

When acknowledging this support, we ensure we adhere to the most recent DFAT guidelines. This includes ensuring correct branding such as using the Australian Aid Identifier (logo) and statements.