



Child Protection Policy

In Relation to Campaigning and Website Images

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Introduction to the Child Protection Policy

This Child Protection Policy is a description of the Principles that guide the work of International Child Campaign. It also contains a Guide to the practical application of the Principles.

Introduction to International Child Campaign

International Child Campaign is an organisation that campaigns for child rights, welfare and education worldwide. We give a voice to children, who are amongst those least able to advocate for their rights. We champion the rights of children to duty-bearers and others in positions of power, as per the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Emergency response and alleviating suffering today is important, but to prevent it all happening again tomorrow and the day after, systemic changes need to be made in the way that society regards those born into poverty and with other disadvantages. We believe that overcoming poverty is not an optional act of charity; it is an act of justice based on Human Rights.

Our Vision

Our vision is of a world where the prioritisation of the rights, welfare and education of children has helped break the cycle of suffering, poverty, injustice and violent conflict.

Our Mission

To make our vision a reality, International Child Campaign promotes human rights and in particular the rights, welfare and education of children throughout the world (as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other United Nations conventions and declarations).

Our Values

- Our work is based on the freedoms, rights and duties as detailed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- We recognise that accountability and transparency are essential to good governance.
- We value a sense of community, connectedness and unity of purpose, grounded in trust and humanity, where one sector of society cannot progress at the expense of another.

Strategic Approach

To remain independent, International Child Campaign works exclusively in advocacy, campaigning and capacity-building and has no direct involvement in the provision of child welfare, accommodation or otherwise and it does not own nor manage any child facility of any kind.

Principles of the Child Protection Policy

As a duty-bearer, International Child Campaign carries the responsibility to ensure that all children are treated with dignity and respect in its campaigns. The primary principle that defines us is that all our actions should be guided by the best interest of the child.

United Nations Conventions with regards Child Protection

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states in Article 19 that duty bearers ... shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the

child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

Furthermore, the protective measures should include effective procedures for ... identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

The Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children are intended to enhance the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in paragraph 94 it states that duty bearers ... should take appropriate measures to ensure that children in alternative care are not stigmatized during or after their placement. This should include efforts to minimize the identification of the child as being looked after in an alternative care setting.

In summary, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, plus many other international and national agreements, state that all children regardless of race, gender, economic status, disability or otherwise have a right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Children's Dignity and Respect when Campaigning

Representing children as positive, able and empowered individuals (taking into account their age) is an important element in meeting their right to respect and dignity. Representing children in a positive manner and as active participants in their own development influences audiences of the campaigns to also treat children with respect and dignity.

Conversely, extensive representation of children as unable, disadvantaged, reliant and needy (taking into account their age) undermines their place in society and prolongs their disempowerment.

Show the Need for Change

To effect systemic change in the way that society regards children who are born into poverty and with other disadvantages, it is necessary to show the need for change. Showing the need for change should be done in an honest and bold manner, but always without sensationalising or exaggerating the situation. When showing the needs that children have and the disadvantages they experience, we should always aim to move the audience towards respecting children's abilities, potential, privacy and dignity.

Right to Privacy

The United Nations Guidelines on Alternative Care for Children states clearly that duty-bearers have a duty to ensure that children in alternative care are not stigmatized during or after their placement and that children have a right to privacy. Most countries have stringent national laws guaranteeing and protecting children's right to privacy.

This right to privacy must be central in all of International Child Campaign's work. The principle, which is accepted by many, that children (or their guardians) can sign away their right to privacy should be treated with utmost caution and we must always be guided by what is best for the individual child concerned.

Right not to be Exploited

Children have a right not to be exploited. This includes not exploiting the need or needy-situation of a particular child. Portraying the needs of children in a generic way is necessary to effect systemic change however an individual child has the right for his or her individual need not to be exploited.

Guidelines for Applying Child Protection Principles in Campaigns

As described in the Principles, the following need to be taken into consideration in all International Child Campaign's work.

- A Child's Right to Dignity and Respect
- Showing the Need for Change
- A Child's Right to Privacy
- A Child's Right not to be Exploited

The Problem

A quick internet survey shows that the Development sector is one of the worst culprits in denying children's right to privacy, exploiting children's needs and treating children without dignity and respect. This is generally a result of well-meaning attempts to help children or a lack of awareness of child rights.

To be able to campaign effectively and truthfully, the Development sector needs to describe the destitution, poverty, abuse, disempowerment and belittlement that many children face (collectively: 'the need'). To get the public, governments and other duty-bearers to engage with the issues to support positive change, it is necessary to discuss the need. The challenge is to do this while still showing respect and dignity to the individual and while still promoting the disadvantaged as powerful forces for their own development.

Few other sectors face this dilemma. The banking sector, tourism, manufacturing, technology and so on do not face this problem. Animal welfare is one sector that does regularly show a need for change. Showing graphic images of maimed, butchered and severely neglected animals has become a standard method of driving change or for raising funds for animal welfare agencies.

Invasion of Privacy and Exploiting a Child's Disadvantage

Much of the Development sector also shows graphic images of children's destitution, starvation, neglect and disability. Often, these graphic images are for the purpose of raising funds and in many cases they show a clearly identifiable child. The critical difference between animal welfare and child welfare using graphic images of destitution is the right to privacy (and dignity and respect). That child has a life ahead to be lived to its full potential, which will be severely undermined by the existence of posters, brochures, leaflets, TV adverts and other electronic media broadcasting the child's needy image around the world. These images tend to have a long shelf-life and the stigma can follow a child into adulthood.

Many child sponsorship programmes show clearly identifiable children. Adoption agencies also are known to photo-list children.

Many websites show images of children sniffing glue, often giving the location where the photo was taken. Many websites show images of identifiable children with HIV/AIDS. These sites are usually development agencies, but many are media websites. One example of many that can be easily found on Google shows a close up picture of a child's face with the caption "A tear runs down the cheek of an HIV-positive child at a home for the terminally-ill in Roodepoort, South Africa". It is very doubtful whether the national laws of that country allow for public announcements of a person's medical condition.

Internationalism Compounding the Problem

The international nature of many of the development agencies compounds the problem, as descriptions and photographs of children living abroad are readily shown, when that same description or image would not be allowed under say English law. The media in England has stringent guidelines about not identifying children, yet these guidelines are not used when asking for child sponsorship, when photo-listing children for adoption or when showing graphic images of famine and destitution abroad.

Lack of Awareness

Many orphanages or children's homes in the developing world show pictures of the children in care. These pictures are readily shown by agencies based in England raising funds for development or assistance abroad. Those same agencies would not show similar pictures of children in care in England because it would breach child privacy regulations. The agencies that show images of identifiable children abroad sniffing glue would not be allowed to show a similar picture of a child in England sniffing glue.

Terminology

The terminology agencies use when describing the need of children should be used with great care. Terms such as 'orphan' and 'orphanage' are commonly used to describe child living in destitution, but with one or both parents still alive. The word orphan invokes a stronger response than describing a child as poor. Similarly the term 'trafficking' creates a stronger response than the term abandoned. Some campaigners and fund-raisers use the strongest words so as to achieve their aims more quickly even when they are not technically correct.

Euphemisms are also common in the Development sector. As with jargon, some words have a technical meaning somewhat different from the general understanding. Labels are very often misleading or describe only a part of the situation.

Recommendations

When describing a child's need, we should emphasise that those currently in need have the potential and the right to be active participants in their future, as rights holders. We should not leave the audience with the image of those in need as simply requiring charity. We should explain that overcoming poverty and disadvantage is not an optional act of charity; it is an act of justice based on Human Rights.

We must make a distinction between describing the need generically and using an identifiable individual as an example. Some techniques that should be considered are:

- Changing names, when names are used.

- Showing partial face images or otherwise obscuring a clear identification.
- Using stylised images, as opposed to straight photography.
- Making clear that the images are representative and not of actual people in need.

Some people may criticise or otherwise doubt the description of the need unless real examples are used. In response, the right to privacy should be explained and if there is a proper justification for the enquiry from a recognised authority and stringent confidentiality processes are in place, real identities can be discussed in private, subject to organisational policy, national laws and international conventions.

The REPLACE Campaign and the International Child websites

All images of children on these websites are illustrative and do not show any actual children in need. The images are sourced from publically available photo libraries and all copyright requirements have been obeyed.