

Code of Conduct on Images and Messages / Good Practice for the EU-CORD Secretariat

February 2015

Introduction

This Code of Conduct on Images and Messages is based on the 2006 code of conduct designed by Dóchas and also endorsed by CONCORD.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to provide a framework for the EU-CORD Secretariat on which to draw when designing and implementing the public communications strategy. The Code offers a set of guiding principles that can assist to communicate the networks programmes and values in a coherent and balanced way.

We are acutely aware of the many challenges and difficulties entailed in conveying the scandal and injustice of poverty while striving to meet the ideals of the Code. It is a reality of our world today that many of the images of extreme poverty and humanitarian distress are negative and cannot be ignored. To ignore them would run counter to the spirit of this Code which is to portray the reality of the lives of people with sensitivity and respect for their dignity.

Images and messages should seek to represent a complete picture of both internal and external assistance and the partnership that often results between local and international NGOs.

The values of human dignity, respect and truthfulness as outlined in the Code, must underlie all communications. We are committed to these principles, and will translate them into internal policies and procedures. They are also committed to working constructively with others whose work involves communicating on issues of global poverty, to explore ways of reflecting these principles in other fields of communications.

By signing and promoting this Code, we will continue to keep the development agenda very much in the public eye and to look beyond the sound bite or single image to reflect the values espoused in this Code.

Code of Conduct on Images and Messages

Guiding Principles

Much of the public content of material published by the Secretariat on behalf of the network comes from network members. As such, material provided by Members to the Secretariat should be in keeping with the principles of the code.

Choices of images and messages will be made based on the paramount principles of:

- Respect for the dignity and safety of the people concerned
- Belief in the equality of all people
- Acceptance of the need to promote fairness, solidarity and justice

Accordingly in all our communications and where practical and reasonable within the need to reflect reality, we strive to:

- Choose images and related messages based on values of respect equality, solidarity and justice.
- Truthfully represent any image or depicted situation both in its immediate and in its wider context so as to improve public understanding of the realities and complexities of development.
- Avoid images and messages that potentially stereotype, sensationalise or discriminate against people, situations or places.
- Use images, messages and case studies with the full understanding, participation and permission (or subjects' parents/guardian) of the subjects.
- Ensure those whose situation is being represented have the opportunity to communicate their stories themselves.
- Establish and record whether the subjects wish to be named or identifiable and always act accordingly
- Conform to the highest standards in relation to human rights and protection of the vulnerable people.
- Conform to the highest standards in relation to children's rights according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); as children are the subjects most frequently portrayed

Declaration of Commitment

By signing this Code, we confirm that our commitment to best practice in communications affects the entirety of our work.

By signing the Code, we commit to putting in place meaningful mechanisms to **ensure that the Code's principles are implemented throughout all activities undertaken by the Secretariat on behalf of the network.**

Our responsibilities as a signatory to this Code lead us to be accountable in our public communications as follows:

1. We will make the existence of the Code known to the public and all our partners and will provide a feedback mechanism whereby anyone can comment on the fulfilment of the Code and where any member of the **public will have a 'right to challenge' our application of the Code.**

2. We will communicate our commitment to best practice in the communication of images and messages in our public policy statements by placing the following statement on our relevant public communications (annual reports, website, policy statements, governance documents, leaflets and communication materials etc.):

'EU-CORD is committed to its code of conduct on images and messages (available here) please send your feedback to info@eu-cord.org'.

3. We will assess our public communications on an annual basis according to the guiding principles.

4. We will include reference to adherence to the Code in the guiding principles of our organisation so that the governing bodies take the responsibility of implementing and adhering to the code.

5. We will require relevant suppliers, contractors and media to adhere to the Code as a condition of working with our organisation.

6. We commit to training our staff on the use of images and messages.

Signed

Jim Ingram, Chair of the EU-CORD Administrative Council

February, 2015