

Sightsavers Ethical Content Policy

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Contents

Ethical content policy	3
Our statement	3
Our principles	3
Respecting contributors	4
Understanding different contexts and being sensitive to individual circumstances	Error!
Bookmark not defined.	
Informed consent	4
Accurately reflecting contributors' stories	4
Managing content responsibly	4

Ethical content policy

Sightsavers' vision is of a world where no one is blind from avoidable causes and where people with visual impairments and other disabilities participate equally in society. We aim to be fair, honest and transparent in how we gather and share stories and information about the work we do.

This policy covers how we gather, manage and use content in our public communications. We must ensure that we uphold contributors' rights to participate and be heard, to experience respect and dignity, to make free and informed decisions, and to be protected from risk and harm.

Our statement

People are more than the challenges they face, and each person is an expert in their own experience. At Sightsavers, we aim to collaborate with the people whose stories we share, creating content that is authentic and honest without perpetuating damaging and derogatory stereotypes.

In gathering, creating and sharing our content, we respect the rights, safety and wellbeing of our contributors. We also strive to address and challenge misleading narratives about the people we work with and for, the countries we work in, and the role of international development.

Our principles

We will treat all of our contributors with respect and prioritise their wellbeing and safety, making sure every person who chooses to share their story with us can do so on their own terms.

We will be sensitive to different contexts and circumstances, working with regional or national experts and professionals whenever possible.

We will gain informed consent from all contributors, making sure that every child and adult (or their caregiver/guardian) understands how and where we will share their stories, and any potential consequences of this.

We will prioritise the voices of our contributors and collaborate with them to shape how their stories are told, using direct quotes wherever possible.

We will process, manage and store all content responsibly, and commit to archiving or gaining updated consent where content is more than five years old.

All staff and partners must uphold and implement these principles and values. This applies to anyone gathering, managing or using content on our behalf, anywhere in the world, including (but not limited to) employees, staff from partner organisations, professional photographers and filmmakers, consultants, trainers, researchers, volunteers, donors, trustees and other representatives working with or for our programmes, fundraising, campaigns, communications and other initiatives.

As an organisation, we aim to be inclusive, accurate, transparent, honest, fair and respectful. Decisions made by everyone involved in collecting and sharing content at Sightsavers, or on the organisation's behalf, must always follow these central principles and consider the best interests of our contributors and programme participants. We will treat all content participants with respect.

Respecting contributors

To successfully fundraise, campaign, advocate and communicate, Sightsavers needs high quality, engaging content that accurately represents the work we do and the impact it makes. It is vitally important that this content is collected and used fairly, honestly and transparently, and that we are treating all contributors with dignity and respect. In all content gathering activities, Sightsavers will ensure that the organisational safeguarding policy is followed, and all appropriate measures are taken to protect our contributors.

Sightsavers works with national country offices and local partners when gathering content. Where possible, we employ locally based photographers and videographers to gather content from the communities we work with. In doing so we aim to be respectful of local contexts and demonstrate care and sensitivity when gathering content. We will seek support from staff in our country offices to inform our content gathering approach, to make sure it is culturally sensitive and respectful.

Informed consent

In all activity related to content gathering and story collection, we must obtain informed consent from all contributors before any content is captured. It is essential that anyone we work with (and/or their parent, guardian or caregiver) in the development of content actively consents to their story being collected and used as part of Sightsavers' public communications and understands how it will be used. The request for consent will always be presented in a manner which is clearly understood, in an easily accessible form, using clear and plain language. To uphold our ethical content principles, we will ensure that consent is freely given through our consent process, and we will accurately record informed consent as part of our ethical content practices.

Accurately reflecting contributors' stories

We must actively listen to the stories being shared and aim to capture the whole story in the contributor's own words. Sharing their story can be an emotional and challenging thing to do for any contributor, so it is our responsibility to reflect the story we are told accurately and respectfully. Ownership of the story belongs to the person who is sharing it, and we should avoid imposing our own narrative on it or interpreting it in a different way than the person intended.

Managing content responsibly

We will ensure that all content collection, management, usage and storage will be done in line with relevant data protection legislation and regulations.

We work with partners in low and middle income countries to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

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