

Portfolio:	OPERATIONS	Ref. No.	EXA-RGH-045
Department:	RACS Global Health		
Title:	Ethical Stories and Images Policy		

1. PURPOSE

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) Global Health communicates about its Global Health programs and their impact to a range of stakeholders, for reporting and promotional purposes. This includes the production and distribution of communications materials through RACS publications, external publications, intranet and internet sites, social media platforms, television and radio interviews, and podcasts.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that images and stories collected by staff, volunteers and other contributors to RACS Global Health program activities are collected, sourced and used honestly and ethically, according to RACS values, and safeguarding and compliance obligations. All stories and images collected and used must portray the people and communities, with whom RACS Global Health works, with respect, dignity and accuracy. This policy is part of RACS accountability to its local partners and patients whose stories and images it shares, to ensure that their rights, safety, dignity, privacy, cultural and religious beliefs are respected and protected.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all **RACS people** – those who are engaged by RACS or RACS Global Health to perform any part of a RACS Global Health-related activity, who are collecting, sourcing and using stories and images about these activities, including:

- staff;
- contractors/consultants;
- program volunteers;
- program sub-contractors; and
- Council members

This policy **covers both still (photographs) and moving (video) imagery and recorded, transcribed or written interviews and direct quotes**, collected by RACS people (as defined above). It applies to information, stories and images collected for research, evaluation, donor, supporter and public engagement purposes and all material published by RACS about its Global Health-related activities regardless of format

3. DEFINITIONS

RACS defines the key terms in this policy as follows:

Stories – the direct quotes, facts and personal details obtained during an interview and used in messaging, case studies, reports and communications.

Images – means still (photographs and illustrations) and moving (video and animation).

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Department:	RACS Global Health		
Title:	Ethical Stories and Images Policy		

Child – is an individual below the age of 18 years.

Content — videos, photos, stories and interviews that may be used to illustrate any aspect of RACS Global Health programs and activities.

Free, prior and informed consent — a person understands why their image, story and/or personal details are being collected; where and how they will be used and over what period of time; that their participation is entirely voluntary; the potential risks and consequences of their image, name and words being published; and then agrees to RACS Global Health collecting the content. The person feels free to say ‘no’ to their image or story being collected and understands that this will not negatively impact on the benefit they derive from participating in a RACS Global Health program.

Adequately clothed — no full nudity; no genitals, nipples or naked bottom clearly visible; any partial nudity is appropriate to age and gender and relevant to the context and RACS Global Health work.

4. COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS

RACS content must comply with the:

- **Writing Style Guide and Brand Guidelines.** RACS approval for all final versions of stories must be obtained from the content owner, and the Head of Global Health or their nominated representative and the RACS Communications team, prior to publication;
- **Child Safeguarding Policy** as well as the **Child Safeguarding Manual** which include RACS’ specific commitments relating to the photographing or filming of children and use of children’s images and personal information;
- **Australian Council of International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct.** RACS is a signatory to the code and is therefore committed to meeting the quality principles and commitments within that Code as it relates to the way that RACS portrays local people that benefit from RACS Global Health programs in the Asia-Pacific region, in communications about its work. (Principle 6: Communications); and
- **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Branding Guidelines** where appropriate, in relation to promotional materials that publicise DFAT-funded programs. <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/corporate/Pages/logos-and-style-guides.aspx>.

RACS people must comply with the **Workforce Conduct Policy** which includes commitments to abide by these standards.

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Title:	Ethical Stories and Images Policy		

RACS people will be provided with a copy of this policy and be required to adhere to this policy. All program volunteers must adhere to this policy as part of their participation in a Global Health program activity.

RACS people will collect and use content ethically in line with the following minimum standards.

(a) Stories and images collected from adult and children by RACS people will:

- depict people and their issues, experiences and lives respectfully and truthfully, retaining the intended meaning of the information they provide and ensuring honest visual portrayals.
- protect the privacy and safety of people and their information by identifying people by first name only and in the case of children, not using their name (or using a pseudonym). All content will be accurately credited and captioned while also protecting people’s privacy and safety;
- present people in a respectful rather than vulnerable or demeaning way. This includes ensuring that images are taken of people that are adequately clothed;
- respect people’s self-worth, values, history, religion, language and culture, protects their rights and ensure they are portrayed with dignity and strength as active partners in their own development, with the ability to change. People will not be portrayed as victims or presented in a dehumanised manner;
- authentically represent the environment, context, situation and people — the need, the proposed solutions, and the impact of RACS Global Health work. This will be done without embellishment, exaggeration, material omissions, manipulation or significant alteration to mislead audiences or to alter meaning, facts, concept or context;
- be gathered in a respectful and sensitive way that does not exacerbate people’s trauma, and respects cultural differences and local traditions, laws and restrictions; and
- provide people, with whom RACS works, with an opportunity to communicate their stories to RACS, in their own words, without prejudice, judgement or fear of retribution, and also have the opportunity to seek information from RACS about any aspect of the collection and use of content involving them.

(b) Free, prior and informed consent of people will be obtained before collecting and using their personal information, stories and images:

- Before stories and photos are collected, RACS people will obtain free, prior and informed consent from the person being photographed, filmed or interviewed using the **RACS Consent Form**. For children in all circumstances, consent must be obtained from the child’s parent and guardian. Where appropriate and possible consent must also be obtained from the child;

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- The consent process will be explained clearly in the local language of the person whose consent is being obtained to ensure that their consent (if provided) is informed;
- Informed consent must be acknowledged in writing by the subjects if possible, and where not possible in writing by the RACS person to indicate that verbal informed consent has been received. Where possible, the RACS person will record or film the consent process;
- RACS will respect a person’s right to refuse to be interviewed, photographed or filmed. If RACS people sense any reluctance or confusion, they should refrain from continuing the interview or taking the photo or video;
- RACS will not provide payment or any other form of compensation to local people in exchange for their photograph or film to be taken or their information collected, and story told;
- RACS will ensure that the content being used, and the associated permissions, are current and consistent with the terms of consent provided; and
- RACS will stop using content when requested by the subjects to remove the content from circulation.

(c) Stories and images will be stored securely:

- all images and images will be securely stored, and only approved content published;
- all content developed will be approved by the Head of Global Health or their nominated representative and the Manager Marketing and Communications prior to publication; and
- all stories and images that are collected by RACS people will be handed over to Global Health staff at the end of a program activity and all information and images deleted from devices on which they are stored. RACS people will not share stories and images gained during a Global Health program activity for personal use on social media or in public presentations.

(d) Additional standards relating to children:

In addition, when collecting stories or images of children, RACS people must adhere to standards outlined in the **Child Safeguarding Policy** to ensure children are portrayed in a respectful, appropriate and consensual manner at all times. This means that when collecting children’s stories and images must:

- ensure that local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming a child;

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- Obtain informed consent from the child's parent/guardian/caretaker of the child in all circumstances, and the child where appropriate and possible, before photographing, filming a child or using their personal information. At a minimum, informed consent means explaining to the parent/guardian/caretaker and child the implication, purpose and potential uses of the photograph, film or personal information. This consent should be documented using the **RACS Consent Form**;
- ensure that children are represented in a dignified and respectful manner (i.e. adequately clothed and depicted in a manner which is not vulnerable, submissive or sexually suggestive) in all photographs, films, videos and DVDs;
- ensure that images of children are honest and factual representations of the context in which they were taken;
- ensure that file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child (such as a child's name, village or hospital/clinic name) when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form; and
- obtain RACS consent before storing, transferring or using any images for medical research, education, promotional and/or fundraising purposes.

RACS Global Health is committed to keeping children safe when collecting and using their images and personal information. Detailed guidelines on Taking and Using Visual Images and Personal Information of Children are outlined in the **Child Safeguarding Manual**.

5. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Child Safeguarding Policy

Child Safeguarding Manual

Privacy of Personal Information Policy

RACS Consent Form

Workforce Conduct Policy

Writing Style Guide and Brand Guidelines

DFAT Branding Guidelines

Approver Global Health Committee

Authoriser PDSB

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