



**AUSTRALIAN
HIMALAYAN
FOUNDATION**

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

REVIEWED MARCH 2016
BOARD APPROVAL: JULY 2016
NEXT REVIEW: 2018

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Communications Policy is to provide a framework for the Australian Himalayan Foundation's (AHF) dealings with all communications, media and privacy considerations in keeping with its commitment to integrity, inclusivity and respect for all.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of all Directors, employees, volunteers, contractors and program partners to ensure that they comply with this Policy.

It is the responsibility of the CEO to ensure that:

- Board members, staff, volunteers, contractors and in-country partners are familiar with their obligations under this Policy; and
- any breaches of this Policy coming to the attention of management are dealt with appropriately.

In all communication with the public, AHF will act in an honest and transparent way. AHF is committed to accounting for cultural and social sensitivities in its communications and will be inclusive and respectful of all the people it works with.

All documents produced, for both internal uses and wider circulation, will comply with appropriate State and Federal laws, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) policies and requirements, and the ACFID Code of Conduct.

3. INTEGRITY

AHF is committed to the values of partnership, respect and honesty and to the long-term effectiveness of aid and development. As such all public materials are quality checked by the Communications Manager to ensure accuracy and quality; reviewed by a third party; and then forwarded to the CEO for final approval before publication. The Communications Manager has primary responsibility for ensuring that all AHF publications and communications are accurate, up-to-date, accessible, respectful and compliant with AHF policies (such as the *Child Protection and Development and Non-Development Policies*). The Communications Manager also ensures that all public communications comply with appropriate State and Federal laws, DFAT requirements, and the ACFID Code of Conduct and Fundraising Charter.

AHF ensures that the use of images and messages portraying primary stakeholders is appropriate, accurate and consensual. Images used by AHF of women and men, boys and girls in their communications will respect the dignity, values, history, religion and culture of the people portrayed. (Refer to [Annex A: AHF Guidelines for the Use of Images and Messages](#)). Children will be portrayed positively as part of their community.

All Directors, staff, volunteers and contractors and project partners must seek the appropriate permission and consent of primary stakeholders or their adult guardians

when collecting images, taking photos and documenting stories in the field. The *AHF Image Release Form (Annex B)* will be used in such instances unless verbal permission is deemed more suitable. In these situations, advice should be sought from project partners on the appropriate permissions and on any potential risks related to using images and case studies.

Records of the origins of images and case studies, permissions and copyright releases, as well as key details including name, age, location, date, program association and form of consent gained must be kept on file in the AHF Sydney office.

4. ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Annual Report will be prepared in accordance with the ACFID Code of Conduct guidelines and presented to all Members annually at the AHF Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Annual Report will also be published and shared publicly on the AHF website and with all AHF supporters and donors via quarterly *Yakety-Yak* newsletters and social media.

AHF will also keep all Members, supporters and the broader community informed of its activities via: donor reports; the news section of the AHF website; quarterly newsletters (*Yakety-Yak*); quarterly Member communications; flyers and brochures; social media (refer Annex D: Social Media Policy); activities relating to AHF Ambassadors (refer Annex C)¹; and the Annual Report. Volunteers' contributions will be highlighted in AHF's newsletters/website as appropriate.

These activities maintain and develop support for and involvement in AHF from the Australian community (detailed in *AHF's Community Engagement and Fundraising Strategy*). All publicity, associated press releases, fundraising proposals and other fundraising documentation will be prepared to reflect this Policy and will describe AHF's work and operations with honesty, integrity and accountability.

Fundraising documentation will also clearly state the purpose for which funds are being raised, how money collected will be used, how money collected in excess of the required amount will be spent, and any other information as required by appropriate Federal and State Legislation and the ACFID Fundraising Charter.

Fundraising materials will make a clear distinction between development and non-development activities. Where there is reference to both development and non-development activities, they will be reviewed to ensure that donors are provided with the choice of contributing to development activities only.

5. MEDIA

The CEO and AHF Chair are the key spokespersons authorised to speak to the media on behalf of AHF. Where information or public comment is requested or required by other AHF personnel, the Communications and Fundraising Manager shall determine the most appropriate person to respond. Other staff, Board members and volunteers are advised

¹ AHF appoints a number of high-profile and youth Ambassadors as volunteers to publicly promote its work and achievements.

to ensure they are properly briefed and guided by the Communications and Fundraising Manager, CEO or Board Chair before talking to the media on any issue.

Staff, Board members, volunteers and third parties are encouraged to deliver public presentations that discuss AHF's work and its goals, provided that they make it clear where such presentations are or are not authorised by the Foundation.

Significant statements on behalf of AHF shall be made as authorised by the Communications and Fundraising Manager, CEO or Board Chair as detailed above. It should always be made absolutely clear whether the views put forward regarding any issue relating to AHF are those of the organisation or of an individual. At all times consideration should be given as to how the correspondence may affect AHF's reputation.

Any filming or taping of AHF's programs or of the organisation's proceedings by the media is subject to prior permission of the Communications and Fundraising Manager, CEO or Board Chair.

Where media queries involve requests for information that will require substantial staff resources, such work must be authorised by the CEO. It will usually be necessary to provide information in addition to that which is requested in order to set the facts and figures in context. Requests for detailed information of this nature, whether from the local or national media, should be referred to the Communications and Fundraising Manager.

6. PRIVACY

AHF is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information that the organisation collects, holds and administers. Personal information is information which directly or indirectly identifies a person. AHF complies with the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the *Privacy Act 1988* in handling personal information collected from clients/beneficiaries, business partners, donors, members of the public and AHF personnel (including members, volunteers, employees, delegates, candidates for volunteer work and prospective employees)

AHF recognises the right of individuals to have their information administered in ways which they would reasonably expect – protected on one hand, and made accessible to them on the other. AHF will:

- Collect only relevant information that the organisation requires for its primary function.
- Ensure that stakeholders are informed as to why information is collected and administered.
- Use and disclose personal information only for primary functions or a directly related purpose, or for another purpose with the person's consent.
- Store personal information securely, protecting it from unauthorised access.

- Provide stakeholders with access to their own information, and the right to seek its correction.

All staff, Board members, volunteers, consultants project partners must observe these privacy approaches in regards to any public information presented to the media or general public.

7. COPYRIGHT

All material created by employees, volunteers and consultants of AHF in the course of their engagement, irrespective of whether it is created using AHF facilities or materials, or during normal working hours, will belong to AHF. What constitutes the course of engagement will be determined by: the employee's/volunteer's position description and usual duties; or the consultant's contract.

Staff and volunteers of AHF should ensure that every publication of AHF including any books, newsletters, brochures, forms, reports and computer software contains the following statement:

© Australian Himalayan Foundation, Australia, [Year of creation of material]

8. PARTNERSHIP RECOGNITION

AHF is committed to promoting and recognising Australian Government, private sector and individual donor support for its international projects and programs. Examples include:

- encouraging and inviting visits by Australian officials and major donors;
- keeping Australian Embassy and High Commission personnel informed of work funded by the Australian Government and other major Australian funding bodies;
- ensuring beneficiaries understand where support is coming from;
- labelling and badging of project materials;
- ensuring signage used in-country features partner support; and
- ensuring that media releases refer to activities and achievements supported by partners.

Specific approaches for acknowledging the Australian identity and support of the Australian Government, in line with DFAT's *Visual Identity Guidelines*, will include through:

- the Australian Aid identifier on the AHF website
- quarterly newsletters distributed to the AHF national database
- all publications including the Annual Report
- all event promotional material
- AHF fundraising events (e.g. on screens and banners)
- relevant social, digital media and e-marketing campaigns
- traditional print and radio media where it is permitted

- other donor reports (e.g. for corporate donors - end of financial year reports, end of project reports, and annual reports).

A wide range of community events include speeches at AHF supporter events, the work of AHF Ambassadors and individuals involved in AHF fundraising treks that will represent a range of platforms to acknowledge the support of the Australian Government.

9. IN-COUNTRY PARTNERS

All program and project partners will be requested to comply with this Policy through *Partnership Agreements*.

If partners are collecting images from the field, then AHF *Image Release Forms* should be used. All communications developed by partners should reflect the above guidelines and all activities must be communicated to the public and the communities in which they work in an accurate and honest fashion.

AHF partners that receive ANCP funding will acknowledge the support of DFAT, and to follow DFAT's *Visual Identity Guidelines*, in public communications such as press releases, newsletters, annual reports, on websites and project signage.

AHF will seek to ensure that program partners make a separation between development and non-development activities in fundraising material, other public communications and in program reporting. Ongoing dialogue between AHF and its partners will reinforce the definitions of development and non-development activities and the need for a separation between development and non-development activities.

10. COMPLAINTS

AHF welcomes feedback from its members, supporters, the Australian community and partners and stakeholders in the the countries in which it works. AHF's *Complaints Policy* provides a mechanism to register feedback, concerns and complaints and receive a response through an accessible and safe process. The Policy is distributed to all Directors, staff, volunteers, and program partners. It is also communicated to primary stakeholders as a part of in-country project activities. When working in communities AHF will endeavour to translate the Policy into the local language. A link to this Policy can be found on the homepage of the AHF website.

Further, as AHF adheres to the ACFID Code of Conduct, it draws to the attention of its donors, supporters and members of the public that complaints can be made directly to ACFID if it is believed that AHF has breached any aspect of the ACFID Code of Conduct. Details for lodging a complaint are contained in the Complaints Policy. The AHF also has a child-friendly Complaints Form for children.

Related Documents

Australian Privacy Act 1988

AHF Community Engagement and Fundraising Strategy

AHF Complaints Policy

AHF Child Friendly Complaints Form

AHF Development and Non-Development Policy

AHF Child Protection Policy

AHF Conflict of Interest Policy

AHF Guidelines for the Use of Images and Messages

- Present photographs, films, videos, DVDs and messages of women and men, boys and girls in a respectful manner, honestly portraying their personal experience and context and as partners in the development process.
- Avoid images or messages that manipulate the story to portray people in a pitiful way.
- Children will be portrayed positively as part of their community.
- Do not create images of children where they are not adequately clothed and in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and facts.
- Portray participants in activities which reflect their daily lives.
- Convey the context and complexity of the situations in which local people live. 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.
- Inform key persons in images of what the image is being used for and obtain their permission. In the case of a child, obtain consent from a parent or guardian.
- Show some examples of the kinds of materials that are produced so that those involved understand how their personal details and story might be used.
- Ensure that the identification of or use of images of local people will not bring them into any danger.
- When photographing or filming a person, identify and seek to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images.
- Ensure that those whose situation is being represented have the opportunity to communicate their stories themselves. E.G. Use local spokespersons to show that local people are actively involved in development or humanitarian work.

AHF Image Release Form

The Australian Himalayan Foundation seeks your permission to include photographs and/or video images of yourself in our Photo Library. The images may be used by AHF and/or, with prior permission from AHF, by Government agencies or stakeholder organisations including the media. Primarily, they will be used to promote awareness of the work of AHF in publications and other printed materials, on websites, and in social and broadcast media.

Acknowledgment and Consent

I or my legal representative (which could include a legal guardian or person with power of attorney):

- Acknowledge that I have read the contents and been given a copy of this form;
- Acknowledge that I am over 18 years of age (for children under 18 years a parent or guardian must sign);
- Consent to the use of the photographs/images described on this form by AHF now, and at any time in the future, for the purposes outlined above;
- Understand that once any of the images referred to above have been published, AHF has no control over the subsequent use and disclosure of the images;
- Understand that AHF does not guarantee that the images will necessarily be used in any public awareness campaign;
- Understand that I will receive no payment from AHF for the use of my image in generally available publications as part of any public awareness campaign; and
- Understand that I can request the removal of my image from the AHF photo library at any time by written request to AHF at the address below.

Name of person whose image is taken:	Signature of person whose image is taken:*
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*For persons under 18 years, parent or guardian can sign consent:

Name of legal representative, parent or guardian if individual is under 18:	Signature of legal representative, parent or guardian if individual is under 18:
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Address:	Email address:
State: Postcode:	Phone:

Description of photo:
Date of photo taken:
If verbal consent was given but the person did not sign the form please tick here:

AHF Ambassador Contract

Thank you for agreeing to be an Ambassador of the Australian Himalayan Foundation (AHF). We are extremely excited about this partnership and thank you for your support.

As a non-profit organisation we rely on the goodwill and generosity of our supporters and advocates such as you to assist us in achieving our objectives as an organisation and in helping the people of the Himalaya through essential improvements in education, health and conservation.

This document serves as an agreement between AHF and

As part of this association, AHF agrees to:

- Regularly notify you of briefings and updates of the work of AHF.
- Inform you of present and future events for your possible involvement.
- Provide copies of publications, media and other material with reference to you for your approval.
- Promptly answer any queries you have.
- Provide you with all legal and policy-related information and documents prior to visiting AHF projects in the field.

As an AHF Ambassador, you agree to:

- Demonstrate a commitment to and an understanding of AHF's work.
- Promote AHF's work and achievements whenever possible and depict AHF activities in an honest and accurate way.
- Communicate your involvement with AHF to your networks, in promotions, events and to the media as often as possible.
- Attend/participate in at least two events annually.
- Provide AHF access to the use of your name and image for AHF purposes.
- Provide personal endorsements on our website and media releases.
- Abide by AHF procedures and policies and codes of conduct.

AMBASSADOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Ambassadors agree to:

- Uphold the standards articulated in the [ACFID Code of Conduct](#).
- Abide by the laws, regulations and employment rules of the country of placement and employer (as relevant).
- Maintain a professional standard of behaviour, in line with your signatory to the AHF Australia [Child Protection Code of Conduct](#) (see AHF *Child Protection Policy*).

- Avoid involvement in party or sectarian politics, and any public comment on political or religious matters when representing AHF, recognising that AHF is a non-political and non-religious organisation (refer to AHF *Development and Non-Development Policy*).
- Refrain from any wrongdoing or conduct that may bring AHF, its program or the Commonwealth of Australia into disrepute.
- Perform the duties in the best interests of the requesting community (as relevant).
- Provide accurate and reliable reports to AHF.
- Act in a manner which gives due respect to the dignity, values, history, religion and culture of the people with whom AHF works.
- Take adequate precautions to ensure personal security including:
 - abiding by the security advice given by AHF when travelling overseas;
 - immediately advising AHF of any health, safety or security threat; and
 - avoiding all comment to the media during any period of controversy, crisis, health or security threat, including during or after an evacuation.

This agreement is valid for 12 months or until such time as either party terminates the arrangement.

To agree to the above-mentioned clauses please sign and return this document to AHF. We look forward to working with you. For any queries or questions please contact the Office on 02 9438-1822.

Signature of Ambassador: _____

Date: _____

Signature of AHF: _____

Date: _____

AHF SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Purpose

These guidelines have been developed with the purpose of making AHF discussions online a productive, appropriate and enjoyable experience for the entire AHF community.

AHF encourages employees, volunteers and Directors to use social media channels as a way to connect with stakeholders and promote AHF's work. While social media is important and valuable to AHF, there are some risks that should be kept in mind when using these tools.

Protocols

In the social media world, the lines are blurred between what is public, private, personal or professional. AHF's various social media profiles (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) are part of a conversation between real people.

As such, activity on these platforms requires guidelines with regards to what is appropriate interaction with the AHF online community. These include:

- Use good judgment
 - Employees, volunteers and Directors should use good judgment in all situations.

- Be respectful
 - Always treat others (including, customers, non-customers, co-workers, competitors, donors and donation receivers) in a respectful, positive and considerate manner.

- Be responsible
 - Please have the best interests of AHF at heart at all times and always remain a positive advocate of AHF's work. While Staff members, volunteers and Directors have the right to express themselves online, they should take individual responsibility for contributions as an AHF representative on AHF channels.

 - Do not post photos without permission, including photos of children without the permission of a parent or guardian (refer: AHF Communications and Child Protection Policies).

- Tone of voice
 - Adhere to a tone of voice that is always educational, inclusive, respectful, neutral and empowering.

- Be ethical
 - Although staff members, volunteers and Directors are approved to represent AHF in social media, they must specifically state that the views expressed in postings are their individual views.
 - Do not respond to negative or insulting commentary. Such comments will be handled offline by AHF Management.

- Be humble
 - AHF's goal is to make a difference to the families, children, and people in the Himalaya. Stay focused on working to make an impact to those that need it most in the Himalaya region.

AHF has engaged the professional services of a social media agency to manage most of its social media. As part of this engagement, the agency agrees to abide by these guidelines.

AHF welcomes constructive feedback and makes best endeavours to respond to comments as quickly as possible. However, AHF reserves the right to remove any comments that are inappropriate due to inappropriate language, attacks on a single person or group, unsupported accusations, or spam that explicitly promotes a product or service.

If contact information is available, AHF's social media agency will notify comment authors personally to advise that their comments have been removed. AHF reserves the right to ban repeat offenders.