ETHICAL LIFE STORIES POLICY

ORGANISATION:	Kokoda Track Foundation
ACN:	103 660 948
POLICY TITLE:	Ethical Life Stories Policy
	(Formerly: Life Stories & Photography Policy)
VERSION:	6.0
STATUS:	FINAL
ALLIED POLICIES:	Communications & Media Policy
	Attribution of Australian Identity
	Child Protection Policy
	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse & Harassment Policy
	Disability & Social Inclusion Policy
	Gender Equality Policy
OWNER:	Senior Management
APPROVED BY:	CEO
LAST UPDATE	15.01.2022
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	15.01.2024

INTRODUCTION

Kokoda Track Foundation (KTF) uses life stories and images in its promotional materials and communications through a variety of platforms to describe the organisation, its objectives, and projects. Often images and stories feature the people who are the direct beneficiaries of KTF's projects in the communities it works with in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

KTF uses a range of platforms to provide detailed information to its stakeholders, including donors, supporters, beneficiaries or members of the general public. This includes the use of KTF's website, social media platforms, newsletters updating stakeholders on its activities, as well as public presentations to stakeholders, its peers or the wider community.

DEFINITIONS

Images - Moving or still representation of an individual in either film or digital media.
KTF Partner - Any implementing partner organisation engaged by KTF in the delivery of KTF programs and projects.
KTF Staff - All employees, volunteers, interns, contractors, consultants, officers and directors of KTF.
Partner Staff - All employees, volunteers, interns, contractors, consultants, officers and directors of a KTF Partner.
Publication - Anything made public by print, computer program, internet, poster, brochure or pamphlet.
Story or life story – Any written material or message about KTF, KTF staff, KTF programs or projects, or other work or KTF Partners

POLICY STATEMENT

KTF is committed to ensuring that any images, stories and publications portraying communities, beneficiaries and people that we work with respect the dignity, values, history, religion and culture of the people portrayed and protects their safety and rights. Further, the collection of information, images and stories will not harm people or the environment.

This commitment is in strict compliance with the Australian Council for International Development's (ACFID) Code of Conduct and Fundraising Charter.

This Policy includes KTF's Ethical Decision-Making Framework (EDMF) for communications which explains how to make ethical decisions when creating and disseminating publications.

SCOPE

This policy applies to everyone who collects and publishes stories at KTF, including KTF directors, staff, volunteers, contractors, and representatives. It also applies to all KTF Partner Staff.

The expectation for Partner adherence to KTF policies is clearly outlined in partnership MOUs, with relevant training delivered during partnership implementation, review and capacity building.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

All images of community members and stories about their lives are presented and used in a dignified and respectful manner. All people are portrayed as equal partners in the development process and as having equal access to KTF's development programs. All people are portrayed in a way that respects their dignity, values, history, religion, language, and culture and protects their safety and rights. Focus is primarily given to empowering messages that demonstrate improved lives and livelihoods of the communities in which we work.

KTF's images and stories honestly convey the context and complexity of the situations in which local people live; however, the disadvantage that often defines these situations is never exploited or taken advantage of in communications. Local knowledge and expertise are always used to define our marketing and communications strategy.

Images of local community members in which KTF works will never be used if they might endanger the people that they portray, nor the environment in which they live. Utmost care is taken when deciding on which images should be used for communication purposes in line with the EDMF outlined at Section 6.

Guidelines

The following guidelines must be followed by the KTF in the collection, use and publication of life stories and images:

a) KTF will always ask permission from an individual, group, parents, guardians, teacher/s or community leaders when collecting life stories or taking images of individuals (including children) in PNG.
b) Informed consent for taking and using images and stories of individuals (including children) will be sought directly from the individual (or parents, guardians, teacher/s or community leader/s of the children).
c) KTF will always explain to the subject the likely use of the life stories and images.
d) KTF will never take pictures of people who say they do not want to be photographed or filmed.
e) KTF will not manipulate the subject in a way that distorts the reality of the situation.
f) All case histories/descriptions used by KTF are real although they may have been edited.
g) KTF is always sensitive to the concerns and advice of our PNG staff and program partners in our gathering and use of visual material and life stories.
h) KTF will always aim to use only high-quality images.
i) KTF may use digital manipulation of images for creative effect, but not in a way that deliberately and misleadingly distorts the reality of the situation depicted.
j) KTF will not crop an image in a way that misleadingly distorts the reality of the situation.
k) In video editing, KTF does not misleadingly distort the reality of the situation.
l) Images will be current and appropriate.

Images and stories used publication will not:

m) Be untruthful, exaggerated or misleading (e.g. not doctored, created as fiction, or misrepresenting PNG or the community)
n) Be used if they may endanger the people they are portraying
o) Be used without the free, prior and informed consent of the person/s portrayed, including children, their parents or guardians
p) Present people in a dehumanized manner
q) Infringe on KTF's Child Protection Policy and in particular show children in a naked and/or sexualized manner

r) Feature dead bodies or dying people.

Where KTF works with partners, KTF will ensure that partners are appropriately briefed on, and adhere to, the requirements of this Policy. This requirement will be outlined in partner MOUs where relevant.

KTF has the right to edit any stories submitted by KTF staff and partner staff and other individuals associated with KTF who may capture Images or write stories for KTF, to ensure it complies with the requirements of this Policy.

Where KTF works with other NGOs, promotional materials should clearly distinguish between KTF's work and the work of other NGOs.

KTF's Chief Executive Officer and General Manager – Partnerships are responsible for all communications planning, ensuring adherence to policy (including all related policies listed above) and decisions regarding approval of and public use of images and stories.

ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

As noted above, KTF is committed to the capturing and publication of images and stories of people from the communities with which we work, in a manner that respects the dignity, values, history, religion and culture of the people portrayed. Images and stories about the people KTF work with play a vital role in helping KTF raising awareness, bringing to life KTF's work to life and engaging supporters, stakeholders and the public.

All promotional material and communications must use images and stories in alignment with reflect KTF's vision – to work with people and communities to improve lives, livelihoods and futures of Papua New Guineans – and its values of integrity, perseverance, compassion, ingenuity and mateship.

Images and stories will accurately reflect programs in education, health, equality and leadership, including all associated projects and activities. They should directly relate to the place, context and activities undertaken or supported by KTF. All KTF promotional materials and communications will promote Partners and beneficiaries as active agents and not as passive recipients of aid.

KTF's EDMF for life stories and communications explains how to make ethical decisions when creating and publishing publications. It uses a framework of structured discussions at ethically important moments during the storytelling process to reduce the risks associated with storytelling and protect contributors. This EDMF sets out important questions and explains when these questions ought to be asked when capturing and publishing images and stories. It also explains who is responsible for having these discussions and what to do if a decision can't be made.

- **Ethically Important Moments** - While all ethical issues should be considered throughout the storytelling process, there are times when certain issues are more important. Appendix A contains seven key 'ethically important' moments during the storytelling and publishing process, accompanied by key issues to discuss at those times.

- **Ethical Framework** – KTF's EDMF is set out in Appendix B, which presents six key ethical issues that are relevant for the capture and publication of its images and stories. These ethical issues should be discussed at the ethically important moments outlined above.

DECLARATION

I confirm that I have read and understood KTF's Ethical Life Stories Policy. I have had the opportunity to ask questions in relation to the understanding and application of this policy.

I agree to comply with the Policy.

Name:	
Role / Position: (e.g. Staff, student, affiliate)	
Signature:	
Date:	

Outlined below are seven key 'ethically important' moments during KTF's storytelling and publishing process, and a range of key issues for consideration at those times.

Moment 1 - When scoping a story
- Connection to KTF's values and vision
- Protection of key figures, particularly children, women, people living with disabilities and victims of violence

Moment 2 - When planning to gather content
- Informed consent
- Protection of key figures, particularly children, women, people with disabilities and victims of violence
- Context, factoring in the varied and unique cultural and linguistic landscape of PNG
- Fuzzy boundaries
- Privacy, particularly children, women, people living with disabilities and victims of violence

Moment 3 - While gathering content
- Informed consent
- Connection to KTF's values and vision
- Protection and privacy of key figures, particularly children, women, people with disabilities and victims of violence
- Fuzzy boundaries and context
- Authorship and ownership
- Respectful and accurate portrayal

Moment 4 - Directly after gathering content
- Informed consent
- Fuzzy boundaries and context
- Protection and privacy of key figures, particularly children, women, people with disabilities and victims of violence

Moment 5 - While creating the storytelling content
- Connection to KTF's values and vision
- Protection and privacy of key figures, particularly children, women, people with disabilities and victims of violence
- Fuzzy boundaries and context
- Respectful and accurate portrayal
- Authorship and ownership

Moment 6 – Publishing a story
- Connection to KTF's values and vision
- Fuzzy boundaries and context
- Protection and privacy of key figures, particularly children, women, people with disabilities and victims of violence
- Respectful and accurate portrayal
- Informed consent
- Authorship and ownership

Moment 7 - After publishing a story
- Informed consent
- Fuzzy boundaries and context
- Authorship and ownership

There are six key ethical issues that are relevant for KTF's storytelling and publishing process. Below are some questions to help reflect on and discuss these issues as part of the decision-making process at ethically important moments indicated in Appendix A.

1. **Connection to KTF's values and vision**

   Everything KTF does is to improve lives, livelihoods and futures of Papua New Guineans. Our work is built on our values, which underpin our activities and ensure our actions are ethical.

   KTF values
   - Integrity - Does the image or story uphold our expectation of utmost integrity in all scenarios, in our aid and development work in PNG, and in our fundraising and administration in Australia?
   - Perseverance - Does the image or story illustrate our value of patience, perseverance and creativity do everything in our power to deliver our commitment to improve lives, livelihoods and futures?
   - Compassion - Does the image or story show empathy and compassion in sharing about the communities we work with and their needs?
   - Ingenuity - Does the image or story display optimism and ingenuity to overcome hurdles and work towards solutions alongside communities?
   - Mateship - Does the image or story have at its core the great bond and friendship, forged between nearest neighbours Australia and Papua New Guinea during the Kokoda Campaign.

   Human rights
   - Have we put the best interests of the contributor first?
   - Have we ensured we 'do no harm' to the contributor during the storytelling process?
   - Have we treated the contributor with dignity and fairness?
   - Have we respected the personal freedom and privacy of the contributor?
   - Have we encouraged the contributor to freely express their thoughts and feelings?
   - Have we given the contributor control over how their identity and thoughts are portrayed in their story?
   - Have we ensured the content is accurate?

   Children's rights
   - Have we ensured the best interest of children have been put before the interests of adults and our organisation?
   - Have we adequately protected children?
   - Have we respected children's rights to dignity and fairness?
   - Have we attempted to reduce stereotyping of children?
   - Have we treated all children equally?

   Women's rights
   - Have we carefully considered how women are portrayed?
   - Have we considered how sex-role stereotyping is portrayed?
   - Have we given voice to women?
   - Are we empowering girls and women through this story?
   - Have we considered the unique protection needs of women in this story?

   Disability rights
   - Have we given people with disabilities the opportunity to contribute to this story?
   - Have we considered how ableism has affected this story?
   - Have we carefully considered how people with a disability are portrayed?
   - When published, will this story be accessible to people with disabilities?

2. **Protection**

   KTF is committed to putting the wellbeing of its stakeholders first through application of our policies and procedures covering Child Protection, PSEAH, Gender Equity, Disability and Inclusion, Communications and Media, Privacy and Risk Management Policy. All staff and stakeholders must uphold these policies with NO exception. Further, KTF should also consider the following:

Protection of life
- Could the contributor's life be put at risk by sharing their story?
- Do we know enough about the contributor's history to make a confident assessment of their safety?

Protection of health
- Could the contributor's health be put at risk by sharing their story?
- Could the contributor risk being cut off from important services by sharing their story?

Protection of dignity
- Could we be putting the contributor or their community at risk of vilification or retribution by sharing their story?
- Have we considered how the contributor's family, friends and community might feel about the storytelling project?

3. Informed consent

KTF's informed consent process is clearly defined in this policy's guidelines. All staff and stakeholders <u>must</u> uphold this process with NO exception. Further, KTF should also consider the following regarding informed consent:

Correct information
- Have we provided all the necessary information to the contributor so they can decide whether to consent to participate?
- Have we shown the contributor appropriate examples of how their story might be used (including where it may be published and who will see it)?
- Have we explained different ways the contributor's identity can be revealed and concealed?
- Have we consulted with the right people (including children's guardians and community elders)?

Clear comprehension
- Does the contributor fully understand the risks and opportunities associated with sharing and publishing their image and story with our organisation?
- Have we given the contributor enough advance notice about the project so they have time to consider the risks and opportunities?
- Have we explained the storytelling process in a way the contributor fully understands (including children), using the best-possible language?
- Is there a single point of contact for the contributor to discuss the project and any consent issues? Is it easy for the contributor to discuss the project with us?

Voluntary consent
- Is there a power imbalance between the contributor and the organisation?
- If there is a power imbalance, can you describe it?
- If there is a power imbalance, how can we reduce it?
- Is there an element of duress in the contributor's consent?
- If there is an element of duress, how can we address it?
- How can we ensure the contributor can say 'no' to being involved in the storytelling project?
- How can we ensure the contributor can withdraw their consent at any time?

4. Privacy

KTF values and upholds the privacy of their contributors. All staff and stakeholders <u>must</u> maintain privacy with NO exception. Further, KTF should also consider the following regarding the right to privacy:

Protection
- Have we adequately protected the privacy of the contributor?
- Have we discussed how the contributor's story may expose them to the public?
- If appropriate, have we adequately concealed the name, location and visual identity of the contributor?

Information storage
- Have we safely and securely stored the contributor's personal information?

- Does the contributor understand how their personal information is stored and used?

Access to information
- Who has access to the contributor's information and are they aware of who can access it?
- Have we explained how the contributor can access their personal information, make amendments to their story and withdraw consent?

5. Authorship and ownership

KTF respect the right of contributors to control their stories. We also respect the right of contracted writers and photographers to moral ownership of their works. While we always abide by our Privacy Policy, KTF should also consider the following regarding informed consent:

Authorship
- How will contributors and content creators be acknowledged when publishing their stories?
- Does acknowledgement of authorship have implications for the privacy, anonymity or confidentiality assurances given to contributors?
- What ethical obligations do contributors and content creators have to the truthful representation of stories and data?

Copyright
- Who owns the copyright of our storytelling content?
- Are there any conflicting copyright claims for storytelling materials we've published (or seek to publish)?
- How do we ensure contributors and content creators understand their legal rights?

6. Fuzzy boundaries and context

KTF understands the storytelling process is built on relationships, and sometimes the network of relationships is complex. We acknowledge that relational boundaries between contributors, content collectors, program staff and others can become blurred. In addition, the stories they create may be used to serve multiple purposes, such as fundraising, advocacy, and community engagement. This blurring of roles and purposes is referred to as 'fuzzy boundaries'.

We acknowledge there is the potential for the content-collector role to become blurred in storytelling processes that involve building rapport with contributors. We also acknowledge that this potential is intensified in storytelling projects where content collectors spend significant periods of time engaged in fieldwork. Our discussions should ask:

Content-creator responsibilities
- How should we develop a relationship with the contributor?
- Should we explore how our unconscious biases affects this project? How might we change the storytelling process as a result of exploring our unconscious biases?
- What are the moral responsibilities that fall directly on the content collector?

Other people's responsibilities
- What are the different roles of those involved in the storytelling project?
- Does everyone in the project understand their role and others' expectations of them?
- How do different people involved in the project see the purpose of the storytelling project? If there are different perspectives, how do we manage any conflicts?

Blurred boundaries
- How do we respect the personal relationships (and possible friendships) developed during the project?
- How do we respond to any blurred roles and relationships during the course of the project?
- What impacts do blurred roles have on the ethical conduct of the project?
- Can content collectors, contributors or others become personally over-invested?

If in doubt

If in double at any stage of the storytelling and publishing process, keep these questions in mind:

1. If I share this story, will this person be safe?
2. If I share this story, will this person be empowered?
3. If I share this story, will this person feel respected – by themselves and others?

Contacts for further discussion

If you have discussed the questions outlined above and need more information to make a decision, contact the following people:

- Child safeguarding: KTF Child Protection Officer
- Protecting identities: General Manager - Partnerships
- Consent: General Manager - Partnerships
- Authorship and ownership: General Manager - Partnerships
- Privacy requirements: General Manager - Partnerships
- Disability and Social Inclusion: GEDSI Working Group Head
- Gender Equality: GEDSI Working Group Head

The final decision on all communications materials lies with KTF's CEO.