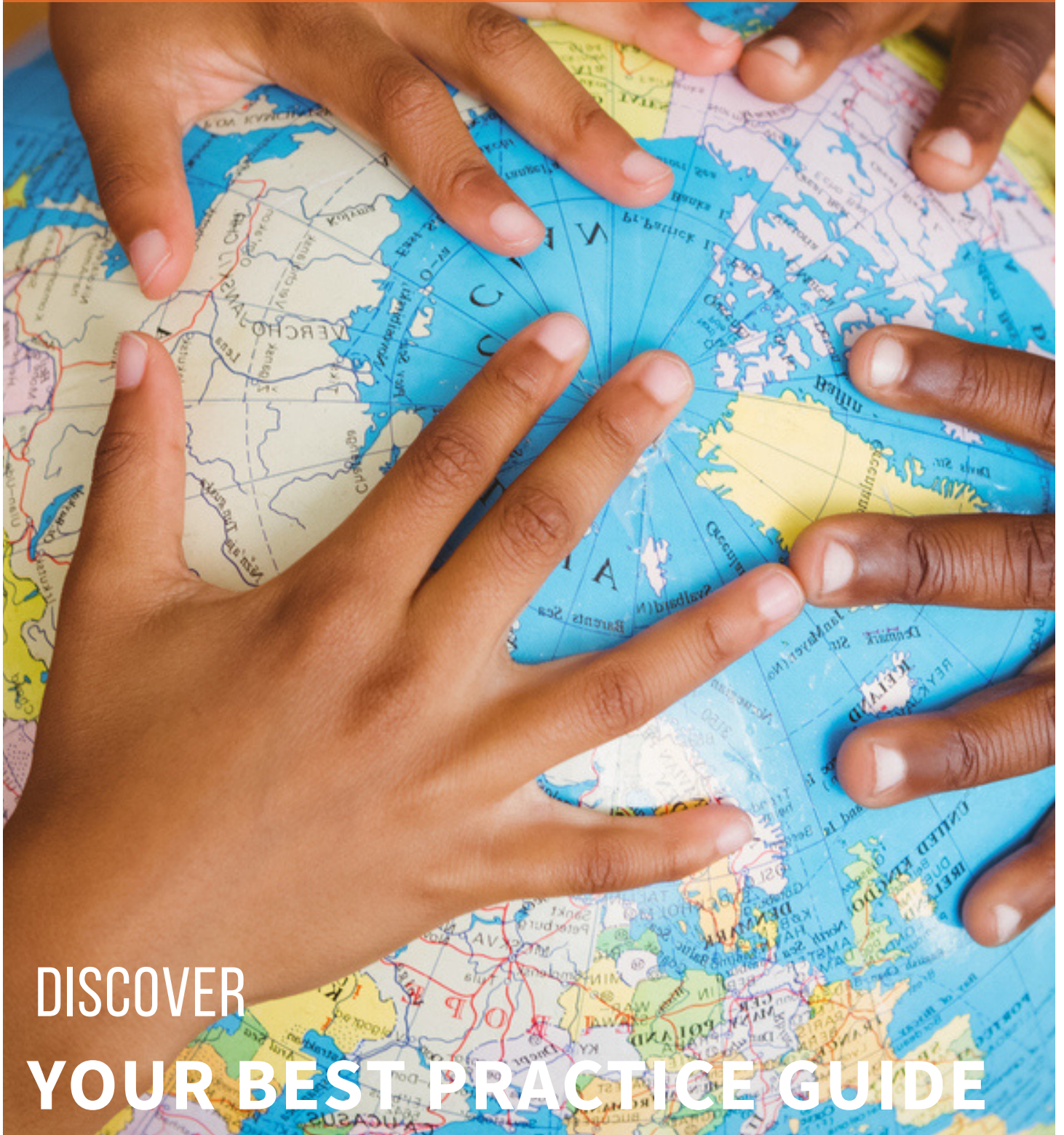
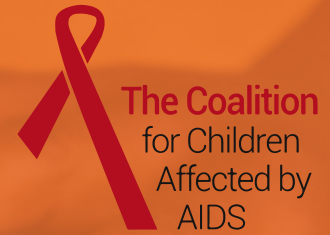


Ethical Storytelling Guidance

VERSION 1: AUGUST 2022



DISCOVER
YOUR BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

10 Ways to Improve Your Ethical Storytelling Practices

This document is a reference guide for best practice in relation to ethical storytelling. It has been created from the evidence and learnings deduced from the Conrad N.Hilton Foundation's ethical storytelling workshop hosted in June 2021. This is a working document that can act as an initial guide. We encourage you to join the discussion and to contribute to its development.

1. Provide Context For All Images

Every time you use an image, think about the message this snapshot is giving. If you use photos of people, including children, does your audience know who they are, where they are from, what they do? A little text goes a long way to ensure assumptions are not made and accurate descriptions of those pictured are included.

2. Rethinking How You Gain Consent

Check that your processes are reflective of how you and your organisation chooses to capture and store data as of now. We need to think about whether those we photograph feel as though they have a choice - it's important that they know they do. Many of those who feature in your work may have different preferences for how their data and personal information is used. If in doubt, check! It's good practice to let people know how their image(s) will be used, where they will feature and for how long.

3. Feature Willing Advocates As The Experts That They Are

Ask for advice and guidance, not advocate stories. A recent example of where this was applied by the Coalition is as part of the #YoungFamiliesFirst campaign, where Dudu Dlamini, Ambassador to the Coalition and Global Advocate of Sex Worker Rights shared her views on 'Making Space for Adolescent Mothers'. Creating a shift in the way we represent people and the things we ask them, can greatly impact the way that we work and the way that it's funded.

4. Compensate People For Their Time, Image and Expertise

Utilise financial resources to compensate people for their time, images and expertise and factor this into your budgets. Technological data costs can be expensive and any time provided by someone deserves to be compensated.

5. Pictures Are Powerful

We take the example of unidentified children and an unknown female healthcare professional from an ethnic minority featured on a website with little information to provide the context we mention in point 1. In contrast, the same website features Bill Gates. He is cited with clear labelling as to who he is and a quote is provided to complement the graphic used to display his image. Think about how your organisation is representing the voice(s) of those you present pictorially - they say an image says a thousand words. Use words to ensure the picture shares the right story for those in the picture, as told by them.

6. Ask Those You Work With and For

When reviewing your website, creating a new advocacy campaign or writing a policy report. Often we use learned techniques to recreate new content without asking the very people we work with and for how they want to be represented. Could you ask for advice and guidance from them? Feature a quote from the words they have provided next to the image of the person if possible. Small changes to the way you work and how you present imagery and words can make a big difference.

7. Storytelling - Telling Their Stories

Conveying someone or a community's plight to fundraise or demonstrate the need for programmes can be seen as re-traumatising an individual and or stereotyping an entire community. There are better ways to do this. Having representation from the communities you serve shows that people from these communities have a place in power. Telling a story in a person's own words ensures that they own their narrative. You could ask what their favourite food is or what they like to do in their spare time - adding another dimension to narratives can categorise or define people by their circumstance, condition or otherwise.

8. Words To Avoid

Leave words like "beneficiary", "marginalised", "vulnerable" and "empower" behind. Words can carry a significant amount of power and utilising the above can signify that you have power and the people or communities you are talking about, don't.

9. Do You Need To Photograph Children?

This is a hard one, especially when many of us work to support children and young people. Think about the purpose of using images of children. What's the benefit? Is there another way to convey a message and someone's power. We also live in a digital age where, even when consent is sought from a parent, carer or guardian to use an image of a child, that image could continue to circulate for many years when the circumstances of that child and their preferences can change.

10. A Work In Progress

Ethical storytelling is an ongoing process. Small steps to make improvements can have a huge and positive impact. Be curious about ways in which you can implement change in your roles and within your organisations and join in the next discussion hosted by the Coalition at the Business Meeting on 4-5 November. In the meantime, please contact Ashton as below to access the draft guidance created by the Conrad N.Hilton Foundation and share any insights within your networks to continue to improve our ethical storytelling practices as a community.



**ETHICAL STORYTELLING
YOUR BEST PRACTICE GUIDE**

Your Ethical Storytelling Checklist



1. Inform: Are the people featured in the communications aware of why and where their information will be used and for how long?

2. Safety and Consent: Do you need to use the full name, location, any identifiable photos of those featured and have you sought consent to use these identifiers? Even if consent has been gained, could you achieve the same outcome without using these to protect their identity?

3. Stock Imagery: Get to know your image libraries first. Identify images that can depict a message without losing the sentiment. We all have a duty of care to others to ensure their wellbeing and safety is duly considered, particularly in the digital age within which we live

4. Compensation: Ensure that people are remunerated for their time, expertise and associated costs such as data and travel.

5. Question and Discuss: Storytelling ethically is a process of learning from experience and sharing expertise with others from knowledge gained through doing. Even if you are about to launch a campaign and it doesn't feel right to share a particular image, ask your colleagues, peers, advocates and networks for their views and make any necessary changes.



1. Centering equity and lived expertise in communications and content development. A Guide for Non-profits and Foundations. Conrad N.Hilton Foundation.

With thanks to the team at the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation.

We are here to support you. If you would like more information, please contact Ashton Josephs, Communications Adviser to the Coalition for Children Affected by AIDS:

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