



Public Relations & Social Media Policy

Details

Policy & Procedure Owner	CEO Office/ERFA Board	
Approved by	ERFA Board of Directors	
Date Approved	Date of Last Revision	Next Review
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Abbreviations

ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
ERFA	Edmund Rice Foundation Australia

Definitions

Associates	Anyone in the community who interacts with ERFA Staff and Partners
ACFID Member	A not-for-profit organisation that has obtained accreditation with ACFID
Donors	Members of the public who contribute to ERFA in cash or in kind
Partner	Any organisation which has an MOU / contract with / or receives funding from ERFA
Program	Programs are overarching development approaches and initiatives that set priorities and guide project outcomes, results and activities. Programs can comprise ministries or entities
Projects	Projects are the development activities of a Program supported by ERFA
Project Beneficiaries	Children and adults who participate in and benefit from ERFA-funded programs
Staff	Employees, contractors, subcontractors, outworkers, apprentices and trainees, work experience students, volunteers, employers and any other person who performs work for ERFA or ERFK

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Related policies

- Fundraising, Donations & Refunds Policy

Implementation plan

- Included as part of staff induction

Compliance

The terms and conditions contained in this policy document apply to ERFA Staff. The CEO is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the policy.

Organisational overview

Edmund Rice Foundation Australia (ERFA) believes education is the key to sustainable change. ERFA is an international aid organisation who supports sustainable community-based education programs in developing countries and projects for marginalised and disadvantaged groups in Australia. ERFA operates in some of the poorest communities in the world, including Africa, East Timor, the Philippines, and Papua New Guinea. ERFA's vision is for access to quality education and life-long learning opportunities for all, supporting empowered communities who determine their own futures. ERFA-partner education programs range from kindergartens to advanced microfinance projects and are designed with the needs of the community at their core.

Legal definitions

Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia) is a company limited by guarantee. The objects of the company are set out in clause 3 of ERFA's constitution. Clause 3 (f) reads as follows:

To develop partnerships with overseas aid agencies or formal arrangements with other delivery agents related to the Company but resident in Developing Countries for the implementation of the objects in paragraph (a).

One of ERFA's roles is to act as trustee of the Edmund Rice Overseas Aid Fund.

Throughout its policies and official documentation ERFA uses the term **Partners** for those organisations with which it has formed alliances in developing countries for the receipt of overseas aid funding for the in-country delivery of education programs. Whilst ERFA has an active, engaged and qualitative role with these programs, working to build capacity and maximise the impact of best practice development outcomes, these are not partnerships in the legal sense. Rather they are alliances that ERFA has formed with in-country organisations with whom ERFA has communicated its vision, mission, values, policies and expectations with respect to sustainable development and whose own vision, mission, values, policies and development goals are congruent with those of ERFA. The in-country organisations implement the programs and ERFA supports them.

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1.0 Policy overview

This policy has been developed to provide ERFA Staff with standards of use as they engage in conversations or interactions externally which may result in digital media coverage and exposure. The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that an informed and consistent message is maintained when Staff distribute or publish content related to ERFA that may attract media attention. These guidelines are especially important for public materials distributed through internet channels and social media, where audience scale is unpredictable and there is an increased risk of ERFA losing control of the intended message. This policy should be read and interpreted in conjunction with the ERFA Code of Conduct and Employment Contract.

2.0 ACFID context

The ACFID Code of Conduct requires that when disseminating public materials, members satisfy the following conditions as a minimum:

- QP 6.1.1 Members' public materials accurately describe the organisation and its work. Public materials are consistent with ACFID's Fundraising Charter where they relate to fundraising.
- QP 6.1.2 Members have organisational protocols for the approval of public materials.
- QP 6.2.3 Members are respectful and considerate of the reputation of other ACFID members.

This Public Relations Policy completely satisfies these conditions.

The ACFID Code of Conduct also makes recommendations for the following conditions to be met:

- A communications focal person is in place.
- Commitment to the ACFID Funding Charter is published on the organisation website.

These conditions are also addressed within this Public Relations Policy.

3.0 Public materials

Public material comprise any content related to ERFA disseminated through a media channel that has the potential to reach members of the public. Offline media channels may include newsletters, brochures, public addresses, appeals and interviews. Online media channels may include ERFA's website, social media content, blog posts and television advertisements.

4.0 Fundraising through informal channels

The solicitation of donations through informal channels includes communications disseminated from an unofficial source, such as a Staff member's personal social media channel. For example, Staff may wish to share official ERFA material, fundraising campaigns or links to donation landing pages to their private social network, or to use informal communication channels to promote ERFA and acknowledge their role within the organisation. The solicitation of donations through formal channels includes communications disseminated from an official ERFA channel. This Public Relations & Social Media Policy is concerned with fundraising through informal channels. Solicitation of donations through formal channels is treated differently, as is addressed in ERFA's Fundraising, Donations & Refunds Policy.

ERFA Staff are permitted to solicit donations through informal channels by sharing or referring to official ERFA public materials or an active fundraising campaign. ERFA Staff are not permitted to solicit donations through an informal channel without referring to official ERFA public materials or an active fundraising campaign. In situations where a Staff Member is unsure whether their activities comply with these requirements they are encouraged to liaise with ERFA's Communications Officer. To be compliant with the ACFID Fundraising Charter ERFA requires that public materials that solicit donations through informal channels:

- correctly identify ERFA (including name, address, ABN and purpose);
- are factually accurate, truthful and not likely to deceive or mislead any person;

- accurately represent the context, situation, proposed solutions and intended meaning of information provided by affected people;
- clearly state if there is a specific purpose of each donation;
- avoid material omissions, exaggerations, misleading visual portrayals and overstating the need or what the donor's response may achieve.
- form a part of a positive campaign to build public awareness, understanding and support for the objects and vision of ERFA;

5.0 Interacting with the Media

5.1 Guidelines

ERFA supports constructive engagement with the media that maximises transparent communication and reduces the risk of inaccurate information being disseminated.

5.2 Staff Role

All staff have a role in identifying issues and events that can potentially promote or damage ERFA through media coverage. These should all be brought to the attention of the CEO.

5.3 CEO Role

All staff engaging in public comment through the media should do so with the approval of the CEO. The CEO will generally manage all media inquiries. On other matters, and where an enquiry comes from the media, advice should be sought from the local subject matter experts. At this point an approval may be granted to a subject matter expert to undertake a media interview.

5.4 Permission

Permission must be obtained if program participants are to be photographed, filmed, interviewed or otherwise identified by the media. Permission pro formas are available from the CEO Office. If television crews are to be involved, a Media Liaison Officer should accompany them to on-site visits. If this is not possible, the CEO or a designated member of Staff will accompany the crew.

5.5 Emergencies

Safety and welfare is always the top priority in an emergency situation. If possible, a Media Liaison Officer should attend the emergency site to assist with media inquiries. Any comment on an emergency should be limited to an expression of concern for the safety of all involved, an indication of what has been done to ensure people are safe, an outline of communications that have been put in place, and a comment on what is being done to provide assistance, counselling and other support. In emergency situations, it is not appropriate to comment on the cause of the problem, the extent of damage or the extent of injury. It is also inappropriate to comment on matters currently under police investigation, likely to be part of a police investigation or subject to legal proceedings.

5.6 Portrayal of other NGOs

Any communication regarding another NGO will be factually accurate and will not intentionally or otherwise mislead. ERFA are to be respectful of other ACFID members and all other NGOs generally in their public materials. No statements about other NGOs are to be made with the intention of creating a reputational or other advantage for ERFA.

6.0 Social media guidelines

ERFA supports its employees' participation in public relations activity by using social media online applications such as social networking sites, wikis, blogs, microblogs, video and audio sharing sites and message boards that allow people to easily publish, share and discuss content.

6.1 Benefits of social media usage

Traditional and social media provides an opportunity to:

- engage and interact with our supporters and various audiences;
- provide information on the programs ERFA supports;
- promote staff expertise.
- use of web technologies/social media is increasingly part of everyday online activities.

6.2 Standards

The following standards apply to employees' work use and personal use of social media at any time, when it has a clear and close connection with ERFA or could be perceived as having a connection with ERFA. ERFA will enforce these standards as and when appropriate:

- Always follow relevant ERFA policies as outlined in staff employment contracts.
- Do not act unlawfully (such as breaching copyright) when using social media.
- Make sure your personal online activities do not interfere with the performance of your job.
- Be clear that your personal views are yours, and not necessarily the views of ERFA.
- Do not disclose confidential information obtained through work.
- All statements are to be respectful.
- No statements about other NGOs are to be made with the intention of creating a reputational or other advantage for ERFA.

6.3 Responsibilities and delegations

- Senior executive and line managers are required to ensure this policy is understood by staff working within their area of control.