

MEDIA POLICY & COMMUNICATIONS AND VISIBILITY GUIDELINES

MEDIA POLICY

1. Scope and Purpose

This media policy is intended to provide a guide to staff interaction with members of the media. This policy is designed to ensure that any comments made to the media are consistent and in accordance with Mercy Hands for Humanitarian Aid policy.

Media coverage of the work and activities of MH and its staff can provide a valuable opportunity to promote the work of the organization. However, any contact between MH staff and the media carries the risk that MH will be exposed to negative scrutiny or misrepresentation, perhaps unintentionally.

This policy outlines the procedures to be followed by MH staff when interacting with the media.

2. Applicability and Target Groups

The policy applies to all MH staff. This includes permanent staff, temporary staff, contractors, volunteers, and work experience staff. All MH staff must comply with this policy. Managers should ensure that all relevant staff members know about this policy and how to apply it.

If anything in this policy is unclear, or you are unsure about how to apply the policy, contact the person listed on the cover page of this policy.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, all representatives of media organizations, including reporters, researchers, managers and technical staff, are referred to as journalists.

The media includes newspapers, magazines, journals, bulletins, newsletters, radio programs, television programs and electronic media such as online journals, online news websites including alternative news websites, weblogs, podcasts, electronic newsletters, electronic noticeboards and social media sites.

4. Responsibility of Managing Media Liaison

The Public Relations Manager is responsible for managing all liaison between staff and the media. In particular, the Public Relations Manager manages media enquiries from media outlets, writes and distributes media releases on behalf of MH, develops and executes media strategies for the handling of major announcements or policy changes, monitors media reporting and briefs the Executive Director (ED) and relevant Directors on pertinent media reports.

If you have any questions about this policy or want to find out who has been delegated to speak to the media on any given subject or require media training, please contact the Public Relations Manager.

The current Public Relations Manager is Duaa Falah, who can be contacted on +964(0)7724210176 or duaa.falah@mercyhands.org.

5. Standard Operating Procedure

5.1 Media enquiries and requests for filming and recording

Any media enquiry – whether seeking comment or information, or permission to take a photograph or produce an audio or video recording of MH staff and/or beneficiaries – should be directed to the Public Relations Manager. The Public Relations Manager is responsible for liaising with the media to obtain details of their enquiry, provide an authorized response to the journalist and, where appropriate, facilitate an interview with a MH spokesperson.

Who is authorized to speak to the media depends upon the type of media enquiry, as outlined below. The Public Relations Manager will obtain approval from the Executive Director as appropriate and advise staff if they have been authorized to speak to the media.

Anyone authorized to provide media comment should follow the relevant protocols in this policy.

5.2 Publicly available information of a general nature

All staff are authorized to provide to the media basic publicly available information such as copies of MH brochures and general information about MH programs.

Staff should only provide such factual information and avoid making any comment or opinion.

5.3 Enquiries about humanitarian affairs

Staff who are experts in their particular field (accredited or otherwise) may in certain circumstances provide comment to the media, but only if approved first by the Executive Director.

Such authorization might be an ongoing authorization specific to a position holder. Alternatively, the authorization might be for a restricted period of time or in relation to a restricted topic area or both.

When media comment is limited to general information including the promotion of MH, such as outreach and project locations, staff who are experts in a particular field may receive authorization from their line manager to provide media comment about details of these projects.

5.4 Sensitive, contentious, political and organizational enquiries

Only the Executive Director is authorized to make official comment to the media about sensitive or contentious issues, issues of a political nature, or issues relating to MH funding, organizational structure or management.

The Executive Director can authorize other staff members to speak to the media on his or her behalf in relation to any issue.

5.5 Initiating media contact

Any proposals for initiating media contact should be discussed in advance with the Public Relations Manager, who will provide advice about the proposal, seek authorization and liaise with the media about the issue if approved.

The Executive Director can authorize the Public Relations Manager or other staff with the relevant expertise to initiate media contact for reasons such as:

- generating media interest about a new MH project
- increasing community awareness and understanding of our projects
- promoting awareness of a particular cause

Staff with the relevant expertise may draft their own media releases, but these should be reviewed by the Public Relations Manager, unless otherwise authorized.

The Public Relations Manager will arrange for the Executive Director to approve all material to be provided to the media.

Media releases or media statements on behalf of MH should not be issued without the knowledge of the Public Relations Manager or without prior authorization. They should only quote authorized spokespeople.

5.6 Responding to incorrect information or misquotes

If an article or report appears in the media containing an inaccurate quote from a MH staff member or incorrect information about MH, the Executive Director will determine the appropriate response. If staff become aware of any such errors then they should bring them to the attention of the Public Relations Manager who will inform the Executive Director and advise on the appropriate response.

5.7 Posting on MH social media sites

Social media sites are increasingly important public communications tool for organizations, including MH. Social media sites allow MH to communicate directly with community workers, partners, donors and other members of the public. Please refer to the hereunder

Communications and Visibility Guidelines, section 7 titled “Online Communications (Social media, web stories, newsletters).

5.8 Usage of Logos

High-resolution versions in English and Arabic of MH logo are visible on partners’ agreements, banners, beneficiaries’ certificates, and all other official communication material.

All partner logos are placed on the same line on top of the page or cover. All logos are visually equal.

Donors’ and partners’ logos will be requested in English (Arabic and Kurdish may be requested if available) and are included on all official printed materials as per the inclusion and size requirements above.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This document is to be reviewed every two years. The first review will be in March 2020.

Depending on the circumstances, non-compliance with this policy may constitute a breach of employment or contractual obligations or misconduct under the Mercy Hands for Humanitarian Aids' Code of Conduct.

COMMUNICATIONS AND VISIBILITY GUIDELINES

This document provides guidance on the communication activities as below:

1. COVID-19 Protection
2. Mercy Hands Logo
3. Donor Logos
4. Marketing materials and signposting
5. Events and Training
6. Press Outreach
7. Online Communications
8. Photographs and Testimony
9. Audio-visual
10. Boilerplate description for MH
11. Gender Sensitivity
12. Environmental Sustainability

1. COVID-19 Requirements

- All photographers, videographers, and other media personnel interacting with the public for work related to Mercy Hands should protect themselves with proper PPE, including a mask and gloves.
- All people featured in photos and videos with more than a single person present or while out in public should wear proper PPE, including a mask and gloves.

2. Mercy Hands Logo

- Mercy Hands logo and the logos of the respective project partner(s) and donor(s) should be visually represented on all official documents and materials. This includes but is not

limited to brochures, signs, posters, banners, studies, joint publications, presentations, and clothing.

- The Public Relations Manager will provide high resolution versions of Mercy Hands logos and its affiliates (Dhamani, 7th Sense, Lawyers for Women) to the responsible party upon request.
- All partners and donors logos must be placed in the same line either at the bottom or at the top of the page or cover. All logos should be visually equal.
- Logos should not be compressed, distorted, discolored, truncated, adulterated, tilted, or rotated.

3. Donor visibility

- The guiding principle is that the donor logo should be branded on all project deliverables (e.g. rehabilitated buildings, flagship joint publications, official publications).
- If the project/ partnership agreement does not include a section for communications and visibility then the Project Manager shall ask the donor for guidelines regarding donor visibility in the project. These guidelines must be clearly communicated to Mercy Hands Public Relations Manager.

4. Marketing materials and signposting (Flyers, brochures, press releases)

- All logos, including Mercy Hands logo, must be depicted in equal size. Please send a digital mock-up of the proposed materials to the Public Relations Manager (details below) for approval before production. Templates for roll-up banners and participant certificates are available upon request.

5. Events and Trainings

- If Mercy Hands is organizing or participating in an event or training the responsible party is required to provide a minimum notice of 10 days to the Public Relations Department.

Note: With enough notice, a representative of the Public Relations Department will attend to capture photographs and testimony from attendees.

- If local officials and/or press are invited to attend, please inform Public Relations Department and share any proposed press outreach materials as far ahead as possible (minimum 5 days before the event).
- For events or training organized by Mercy Hands, Mercy Hands should be referenced in the official invitations and appropriate marketing materials should be prepared.

6. Press Outreach

- A draft of press outreach materials such as media advisories or press releases should be shared with the Public Relations Manager (details below) before dissemination for approval. Reference to Mercy Hands and the respective donor should be included.

7. Online Communications (Social media, web stories, newsletters)

The following guidelines governs the official use of social media, as well as the private use of social media by staff.

- Mercy Hands' social media sites are managed by the Public Relations Manager at the Headquarters. Only staff authorized by the Executive Director are allowed to post content on the official MH social media sites.
- The Public Relations Manager coordinates the posting of content on social media sites. All content should be in line with MH goals and objectives and abide by MH's Media Policy and Communications and Visibility Guidelines.
- Private use of social media by staff
 - When producing content related to the project, please include mention of Mercy Hands and the respective donor.
 - Please use relevant tags and handles on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. For example:
 - Facebook: @mercyhands @mercyhandsarabic
 - Instagram: @mercy_hands
 - Twitter: @MercyHands

- Before posting or publishing any work related content on social media, please check with Public Relations Manager for any additional guidelines or restrictions set by Mercy Hands or donors.

8. Photographs and Testimony

- Documenting the work on the ground is critical. If Public Relations Department cannot attend events, site visits, or is otherwise unable to capture photographs and testimony of beneficiaries, the Project Manager is requested to provide them. Please provide appropriate image captions and credits for publication. When taking photographs and testimony please ask for permission to publish both the photographs and the testimony.

9. Audio-Visual (AV)

- Similar to the above, the Project Manager is required to obtain video footage when appropriate. All AV products generated about the project and/or products made with support from Mercy Hands must include Mercy Hands logo and the respective donor in the opening or closing credits. If unsure, please consult the Public Relations Manager.
- When possible, please create versions of videos with English and Arabic subtitles separately. This ensures Mercy Hands can promote the videos on official channels.

10. Boilerplate description for MH

- If Donors or Partners request to include mention of MH on their website as a partner, the following text is to be utilized, along with MH logo: “Mercy Hands for Humanitarian Aid is a non-governmental not-for-profit nonpartisan organization that works in conflict torn and disaster affected areas to save lives, sustain human rights and restore a healthy community. We serve people in need, regardless of their religion, gender, ethnicity or political affiliation”.

11. Gender sensitivity in all communications

- All communications must demonstrate an equal representation of women and men and avoid any stereotypical portrayal of men and women in terms of social beliefs, norms of expected behavior, sexual division of labor, access and control to resources, decision-making and power differentials. Please consider this during the production of all materials and throughout the project implementation.

12. Environmental sustainability considerations

- The Project Manager should take reasonable steps to limit the amount of waste produced throughout activities. As a core element of the sustainable development agenda, all Mercy Hands staff and affiliates must attempt to practice and promote the sustainable use of resources. We ask that you please take measures to limit pollution and maximize resource efficiency when producing communication materials and hosting events. With regards to communication and visibility, this includes limiting single-use products. We encourage soft copies when necessary (less printing), generic publicity materials (using one generic banner many times), use of reusable and biodegradable products.

13. Approvals

All communication and visibility materials (e.g. press release, fact sheets, infographics, videos, publications) should be shared with Public Relations Manager for review and approval before publishing.

If unsure of required considerations or actions, please contact the Public Relations Manager Duaa Falah at duaa.falah@mercyhands.org



Khaldoon Al-Moosawi
Executive Director