

## Ethics and Sensitivity In the field

### How to Guide your Journalist

- ❖ Keep in mind that the interests of your beneficiaries are to be protected over any other consideration, including advocacy and promotion of their issues.
- ❖ Remind reporters to pay attention to their right to privacy and confidentiality and the need to protect him/her from any harm and retribution, including the potential for harm and retribution.
- ❖ Ask the reporter to avoid questions, attitudes or comments that are insensitive to cultural values, that place the beneficiary in danger or expose them to humiliation, or that reactivate their pain and grief from traumatic events.
- ❖ Ask the reporter to pay attention to where the interview is taking place, and to make certain that the beneficiary is comfortable and able to tell his or her story without outside pressure, including from the reporter.
- ❖ Ensure that the beneficiary knows that he or she is talking to a reporter and that he or she understands the implications of being part of a story that might be disseminated locally and globally.
- ❖ Using a translator may be necessary, but he/she should be someone you've worked with before and can trust. Female translators work better for female victims, especially where sexual violence is a problem. Remember, even if the person trusts you, he/she may not trust the translator. For example, how will the interviewee view the translator's ethnic identity?
- ❖ Change the name and obscure the visual identity of any beneficiary who is:
  - A current or former child combatant, whether or not they are accused of violence or atrocities
  - A victim of sexual abuse or exploitation, unless it is an adult who wants to tell his or her story publicly,
  - A perpetrator of physical or sexual abuse,
  - HIV positive or living with AIDS, unless he/she is an adult or the

guardian of the child gives fully informed consent,

- Charged or convicted of a crime,
  - Or who asks not to be identified for personal reasons.
- ❖ Ask the reporter not to publish a story or image in instances where it may put the beneficiary at risk even when identities are changed, obscured or not used.
- ❖ In certain cases, using the beneficiary's identity – his or her name and/or recognizable image - is in his/her best interests. However he or she must still be protected against harm and supported through any stigmatization or reprisals. Some examples of these special cases are:
- When a beneficiary initiates contact with the reporter, wanting to exercise his or her right to freedom of expression.
  - When a beneficiary is part of a sustained program of activism or social mobilization and wants to be so identified.
- ❖ In addition to applying the same principles described above, the following steps should be taken when it comes to children.
- Make sure those closest to the child's situation and best able to assess it are consulted about the political, social and cultural ramifications of any reportage.
  - Secure permission for all interviews of the child from his or her parents or a guardian.