THE PEOPLE IN THE PICTURES

Save the Children

**Vital perspectives on
Save the Children's image making**

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A research project to understand how contributors and their communities experience and perceive Save the Children's communications and its image-making process

UK, Jordan, Bangladesh, Niger

March 2017
Siobhan Warrington with Jess Crombie

Every child has the right to a future. Save the Children works around the world to give children a healthy start in life, and the chance to learn and be safe. We do whatever it takes to get children the things they need – every day and in times of crisis.

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FOREWORD

Images, still and moving, are fundamental to Save the Children. They are how we connect those who seek to help with those with whom we work. They create empathy, change understanding, and motivate action.

We are aware of our very serious responsibility to those who generously allow us to tell their stories, our contributors. How to do this with sensitivity, integrity, collaboration and, that thorniest of words, dignity, is something that many of us have spent a great deal of our professional lives considering and working towards.

I was inspired to commission this particular research after many years gathering stories for use by international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). On every trip I met person after person who asked what story I was there to tell, and then proceeded to tell me what story I *should* be telling, often different from the one I was there to gather. People who demonstrated, rather unsurprisingly, that they have views, opinions and ideas on their own situation, who were aware of the reach and influence of media and communications. Views that ultimately challenged the existing and entrenched perception that those portrayed in our images are innocent others unaware of the wider world and their role within it.

In 2015 in Za'atari camp, as part of this research, a young girl who had taken part in one of our learning projects, this one to teach her photography and film skills, told me: "I want to take the photos, not be an object". I wanted to hear more. What stories would she tell if she had the chance, how would she want to tell the stories we wanted to hear, and, most importantly, how could we work out a way of telling her stories in partnership with her? This moment crystallised my long-held belief that within INGO communications there is the potential for story-telling partnerships, and that an unquestioning belief in those we portray as 'innocent others', however well intentioned, stifles the possibility for real partnership. What *The People in the Pictures* demonstrates is that those whose stories we tell have their own views on what stories

should be told and how, and that they have valuable feedback to share on the image-making process.

Ultimately *The People in the Pictures* demonstrates Save the Children's commitment to listening to contributors. Involving programme participants in critical review has become standard practice in many interventions by INGOs, but until now this approach hasn't been applied in the context of image making. And as far as we know, this (together with Save the Children's unpublished 2010 *Depicting Injustice* research) is the first time contributors have been consulted as part of a formal research project.

We knew that we would find areas where we needed to do better, and while the research has highlighted many instances of good image-making practice, it also reveals a number of areas for improvement. This has enabled us to develop a series of informed practical recommendations, outlined in the report, which will be tested over the next six months before being rolled out globally.

Our long-term ambition is that this research contributes to the ongoing conversation and debates on INGO image making and visual representations of global poverty. We know that many in the sector wish to ensure greater agency and accountability for the children, women and men who share their image and stories with us, and we hope that this research can contribute to creating positive changes.

For those engaged in INGO image making there may not be many surprises in these pages. But the very act of engaging with our contributors, listening to their views, and sharing them in this report is, I believe, a critical step forward in changing how we work and, ultimately reaching a goal where storytelling partnerships between INGOs and contributors exist as standard. As Siobhan Warrington has consistently asserted, the debate about representation shouldn't exclude the very people we are representing.

Jess Crombie
Director of Creative Content

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Images – both photographs and films – are fundamental to how Save the Children communicates its work. Images are used for fundraising, campaigning and advocacy and in these ways support the aims and objectives of the organisation.

Debates about representations of global poverty and images of suffering have been going on for many years, yet the voices of the people featured in the images – the contributors – have been notably absent. There has been a tendency to consider and judge the image alone, rather than recognise it as the result of a process involving multiple stakeholders, one of whom is the person in the image.

Discussions about human dignity have long focused on the image itself, with much of what is considered 'famine' imagery, such as images of children suffering from malnutrition, being regarded as undignified. While it is important to consider different ways of visually representing suffering, we must not rely on this to resolve the dignity problem. Instead, the site for addressing dignity must move beyond the image to the image-making process and towards recognition of the contributor as a stakeholder in that process. For contributors, having a choice in how they are represented and a clear understanding of the purpose and value of sharing their image and story is dignified. It is this notion of dignity which has informed, and is reinforced by, this research.

In late 2014, Save the Children embarked on a four-country (UK, Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger) research project to listen to and learn from those who contribute their images and stories (contributors), as well as members of their communities and Save the Children staff. This builds on the *Depicting Injustice* research carried out in 2010 into contributor responses to Save the Children photographs and the photography process in the occupied Palestinian territory, India, Kenya and Afghanistan (Miskelly & Warrington, unpublished).

It is believed that these two initiatives represent the first time that contributors have been engaged as part of formal research on both the process of image making and their portrayal in the resulting communications. The experiences and perspectives of contributors, and their communities, provide a much-needed input to discussions on representations of global poverty and INGO communications.

THE RESEARCH

- The research took place across four countries: **UK** (East Anglia, London, Kent, Wales and Yorkshire), **Jordan** (Amman and Zaatari refugee camp), **Bangladesh** (Dhaka and rural Habiganj) and **Niger** (Niamey, rural Tessaoua and Zinder). At the time of the research none of these places were the location of sudden emergencies.
- A total of 39 interviews and 21 focus groups took place, using inclusive and participatory methods.
- In each research site, participants reviewed and discussed a range of Save the Children communications, including TV adverts, short films, media features and fundraising materials, all translated into relevant languages.
- Most of the image making referenced in this research involved a professional filmmaker or photographer. In Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger these image makers were often from overseas
- There were 202 research participants: 69 women, 50 men and 83 children.
- Of these 202, 53 were contributors (men, women and children who featured in finished content), 19 were staff members, and 130 were members of contributors' communities who did not feature in the finished content (referred to as non-contributors).
- Interviews and focus groups took place between November 2014 and July 2015.

Save the Children's motivation in embarking on this research was to find out what they were doing well in relation to image making, and where they should seek to improve their practice. Many in the

organisation are concerned with responsible image making and representation and wanted to hear from contributors, whose lives are affected by the charity's work, and ensure their experiences and views provide the foundations for improvements to image making and use. By investing in listening to and learning from contributors, the research demonstrates Save the Children's commitment to accountability in all areas of its work.

The research aimed to explore:
• What **motivated** people to agree to Save the Children filming or photographing themselves or their children?
• How did people experience and perceive the image-making **process**?
• How did people feel about their **portrayal** in the resulting Save the Children communications? And what were the consequences (real and anticipated), positive and negative, in agreeing to contribute?

For the purposes of providing important context, the research also sought to understand research participants' existing relationship with visual media. There were differences in participants' relationship with visual media both between and within research sites. Access to visual media was influenced by geography and infrastructure – electricity supply, internet coverage and mobile phone ownership – but also by gender and literacy. Research participants in rural areas of Bangladesh and Niger had least access to visual media, and within these areas, women had less access than men.

KEY FINDINGS

The research has highlighted many areas of good practice, as well as some concerns and challenges. Save the Children hopes that by sharing the findings, they will catalyse new conversations and contribute new perspectives to the long-running debates on INGO image making.

The research findings are grouped into three main themes: **motivations**, **process** and **portrayal**.

Motivations

Contributors' decisions to be photographed or filmed by Save the Children were informed by a range of factors and motivations, from wanting to share their stories and raise awareness to hoping that agreeing to contribute would result in help for themselves and others.

Contributors were motivated by a desire to have a voice, raise awareness and help others
A number of contributors at each research site wanted to raise awareness of an issue or a situation by sharing their image and story. Some contributors from the UK believed their story could encourage others to come forward and seek the help they need; several contributors in Jordan described their contribution as "a message to the world".

Contributors were motivated by a belief that sharing their image and story would lead to assistance for themselves and others
For many contributors in Bangladesh and Niger, there was a generally positive association with image making. They viewed it as an activity "for good" that was likely to result in some form of assistance for themselves or others. This highlighted the levels of trust from contributors towards Save the Children and the need to manage contributors' expectations carefully.

The relationship with Save the Children influenced the decision to contribute
It's not a neutral situation for an INGO to ask someone who is a past, existing or potential beneficiary to contribute their image and story. For many contributors, their relationship with Save the Children had the most influence on their decision to contribute, whether their agreement was out of gratitude, a sense of obligation, or in anticipation of assistance for their child.

Many non-contributors (people who are part of a contributor's community but do not feature in the finished content) believed that vulnerability or desperation were key factors in influencing someone to participate in Save the Children photography or filming
During focus groups at all research locations, desperation was cited as the reason why some parents may have agreed for their children to appear in the Save the Children communications shown to them.

Process

Images are produced for others, but the process happens to, and affects, contributors. The research showed that, for both contributors and Save the Children staff, good practice in the image-making process matters.

Most contributors were satisfied with the image-making process
Across all locations, most contributors were satisfied with the process of image making, with a good number referring to their enjoyment or sense of pride in taking part.

The use of consent forms was universal, but contributors in Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger didn't fully understand the purpose of image making
In the UK, contributors described a multistage and thorough consent process, resulting in their clear understanding of the purpose of image making, and their ability to make an informed choice to contribute. In contrast, most contributors in Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger only had a vague idea of the purpose.

Feedback and follow-up were valued by contributors and staff, but only standard practice in the UK
Only in the UK is returning photographs and sharing final communications considered standard practice. While some contributors in Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger were shown images on the back of a camera at the time they were taken, only one had received a copy of a photograph. (All contributors interviewed for this research received copies of photographs/communications at the time of the interview.)

Child research participants felt strongly about image making and consent
Most of the children who participated in the research (most of whom were not contributors themselves) spoke positively about photographs of themselves, associating them with days out, celebrations, friends and family. Children, did however, feel strongly about the need for image makers to always seek permission from them. Some of the research participants aged 14–18 years in Jordan were involved in the participatory photography project, *Inside Zaatari*. They shared positive feedback on their experience of being supported to become image makers themselves.

Sensitive and responsible staff
Interviews with staff across all research sites served to demonstrate their empathy with, and sense of responsibility towards, contributors. A number of specific areas of responsibility emerged, including: to manage expectations, to protect those who are vulnerable, to avoid stereotyping and protect dignity, and to communicate clearly with contributors.

Portrayal

Contributors' responses to their portrayal in Save the Children communications were influenced by their own access to visual media, their understanding of the purpose of the communications, their proximity to the intended audiences, and their relationship with Save the Children. The majority of contributors and non-contributors understood that Save the Children content had a positive purpose – to help bring assistance to those in need – even if this understanding was based on a limited awareness of how this would be achieved, or who would be assisted.

Contributors were largely satisfied with their portrayal in Save the Children communications
All contributors in the UK were familiar and happy with most of the content they featured in. For contributors in Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger, the interview for this research was the first time they'd

seen the communications featuring themselves or their children. Feelings about their portrayal reflected the immediate pleasure of seeing the images for the first time; some, however, also expressed their sadness at seeing their children who were ill at the time of filming or photography.

Concerns about consequences
Research participants in the UK and Jordan – with greater media access, and who are closer to the audiences for whom the content is intended – were more aware of the potential negative consequences of their contribution. They mentioned the stigma of being seen as poor (in the UK), as a beggar (in Jordan), or the fear of reprisals for themselves or relatives in Syria if recognised (in Jordan).

Research participants understood the need to use images of suffering to support fundraising
Even research participants with limited media access understood that, while they may not like watching images of children suffering, such depictions are necessary to raise funds to assist those in need.

Research participants expressed preferences for balance in portrayal
Across all sites, clear preferences were expressed for more balance in Save the Children communications – showing solutions as well as problems, and resilience as well as need.

Research participants preferred the content in which contributors spoke for themselves
Many research participants expressed preferences for communications where contributors speak for themselves. In Niger research participants shared the Hausa proverb *A song sounds sweeter from the author's mouth*, to express this sentiment. In Jordan, research participants who had been involved in the participatory photography project, *Inside Zaatari*, expressed their desire to be image makers (as opposed to contributors).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of the research was to give voice to and understand contributors' (and members of their communities') experiences and perceptions of the image-making process and the resulting Save the Children communications. Several themes emerge from the research – communication, rights and the duty of care, agency, accountability and dignity – the recommendations provide a practical response to these themes.

The research recommendations support improved image making that is responsible, accountable, and that respects the rights and priorities of contributors. As the research demonstrates, much of this happens already, but not everywhere, and not all the time. This research requires Save the Children to put in place changes to guidelines, policy and procedures to work towards responsible image making becoming a reality for all contributors all the time.

Invest in more collaborative content
Save the Children will continue to ensure its communications provide a balanced portrayal of the individuals and communities it works with and use first-hand accounts wherever possible. It will also continue to explore and test the potential of more collaborative, contributor-led content for different purposes (including fundraising). Possible approaches include:
- increased use of first-hand accounts and contributor-led narratives
- engaging children and other contributors as spokespeople on issues, as well as in telling their own stories
- image making with the same individuals over time – enabling contributors to take a more active role in their portrayal, and the sharing of stories that show need, support and impact.

A duty of care and contributors' rights
Save the Children, first and foremost, has a duty of care towards potential contributors – children and adults – many of whom experience multiple vulnerabilities. During the image-making process, responsible staff should ensure that contributors are able to exercise their right to participation alongside their right to protection, and that filming

or photography never furthers a contributor's vulnerability. Save the Children should work towards image making being a positive and empowering interaction between staff, image makers and contributors.

Informed consent as an essential process
Save the Children is currently reviewing its image guidelines and consent process to improve procedures for all stakeholders: image makers, Save the Children, and, particularly, contributors.

New approaches for testing include:
- consent based on an essential multi-stage process that is followed by all image makers, ensuring sufficient time between dialogue and the actual filming or photography
- two-way consent: as contributors give their consent Save the Children commits to use contributors' images responsibly and to return that image (unless the contributor is particularly difficult to trace at a later date)
- establishing a clear channel of communication for contributors to be able to withdraw consent, if required, after image gathering has taken place
- produce a child-friendly version of consent procedures.

Sensitive and effective communication before, during and after image gathering
- Prioritise communication with contributors before any image gathering, and create time and space between this communication and the filming/photography so contributors can consider whether to participate or not.
- Invest in experienced (and where necessary, female) translators for all image gathering where there are language barriers between image makers and contributors.
- Develop location- and language-specific resources

to communicate image use more effectively; to support contributors' understanding of purpose and to help manage expectations.
- Ensure consistency by making sure that contributors' contact with Save the Children before, during and after image gathering is with the same individual.
- Feedback and follow-up to become standard. This can achieve much more than just the return of photographs: it can help manage expectations, it demonstrates a duty of care, and it enables Save the Children to check if contributors are still happy for photographs to be used in future communications.

Ensure that human dignity is upheld in the image-making process, not just in the image itself
In debates over image making, discussions about human dignity have long focused on the image itself. Those involved in representing global poverty must consider who defines dignity. Dignity can mean different things to different people, with individuals' values and views on what constitutes dignity changing according to their circumstances.

The research findings point to the image-making process as the site for realising dignity. Without wanting to place the full burden of representation on individual contributors, addressing dignity must involve consideration of how contributors feel about their portrayal and offering them genuine respect and agency in the process of image making. For contributors, having a choice in how they are represented, and coming away from the image-making process with a clear understanding of the purpose and value of their contribution, is dignified. For contributors, dignity involves listening, choice, and voice.

Images from a selection of the content used in the research, including printed Save the Children fundraising materials, online media features and Save the Children films.

PART ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Images – both photographs and film – are central to Save the Children's fundraising, campaigning and awareness raising. Save the Children UK's Imagery and Portrayal in Communications: Statement of Principles[1] states: "The use of imagery across our communications is key to our engagement of supporters and audiences… Images bring the stories of those with whom we work to life, allowing us to share the need for our life-saving work, the positive impact that we have in the short term and the dramatic scale of the progress we are making more widely."

Save the Children UK has a long-standing commitment to reviewing its policies and practices relating to image gathering and the use of imagery. Since the development of its first image guidelines in 1991, Save the Children has sought to address concerns, reflect on and set down the organisation's ethics and principles in relation to image making and its use of images.[2]

The People in the Pictures is a qualitative research project which aims to understand how **contributors** and their communities experience the image-making process and the resulting use of those images in Save the Children **content**. The research involved data collection with 202 research participants in four countries – the UK, Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger. Participants included children (aged 7 to 17), young adults (aged 18 to 21), adult parents (male and female), and a small number of Save the Children staff members.

The purpose of this research was to promote learning and change within Save the Children. The research is aligned with Save the Children's commitment to accountability and transparency by engaging those who contribute their image and story to share their experiences and perspectives of the image-making process and Save the Children's use of those images in its content.

The People in the Pictures builds on previous research, particularly the *Depicting Injustice* research in 2010 which engaged contributors and their communities to explore issues of process and representation in relation to Save the Children UK photography.[3] *Depicting Injustice* contributed to a revised set of guidelines that have informed Save the Children UK's image-making practice since 2013.

The People in the Pictures aims to go further and influence image-making and use across the Save the Children network with a set of recommendations. It is hoped that the publication of *The People in the Pictures* will also contribute to the debates on representation and the image-making process within the wider INGO sector, by highlighting the value and importance of contributor experiences and perspectives.

1.2 WIDER DEBATES

This section outlines some key aspects of the wider debates about INGO representations of global poverty.[4] It is based, in part, on a review of relevant literature (see Appendix 1). The intention is to situate *The People in the Pictures* in the context of those wider debates; it does not provide a comprehensive overview of what is an

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Contributors are individuals (parents and children) who have contributed their image and story to Save the Children for fundraising, campaigning and/or awareness raising purposes. They are usually beneficiaries of Save the Children supported services or participants in Save the Children programming.

Save the Children **content** refers to finished communications involving images (still or moving) alongside stories and messages, developed with a particular purpose and audience in mind, including: fundraising adverts for television; posters for fundraising and campaigning; feature articles for newspapers, television news and online outlets; and social media content.

Overview of the 2010 *Depicting Injustice* research

In 2010, Save the Children's *Depicting Injustice* research project aimed to explore the responses of both UK audiences and contributors to a series of Save the Children-commissioned photographs from the occupied Palestinian territory, India, Kenya and Afghanistan.

The overseas component of the research explored how the people depicted in the photographs, and members of their communities, felt about their representation, about the use of the photographs and about the process of photography itself.

The research highlighted the plurality of ways in which photographs were 'read' by research participants. Within each research location there were photographs which generated a similar positive or negative response from research participants, but there were also photographs for which there were multiple readings and at times contradictory interpretations. For contributors, feelings about their portrayal shifted during discussions about use of and audiences for the photographs. There was a participatory photography element to the project which allowed some participants in each location to take their own photographs to show how they wished to be represented. The concerns that emerged related to the themes of dignity versus vulnerability; public versus private; and incompleteness. The research demonstrated that contributors and their communities care a great deal about how they are represented and that receiving copies of the photographs taken of them was something they valued highly.

The research resulted in a set of recommendations for the image-making process including: more time for communication between image makers and contributors and their communities; greater efforts to ensure consent is more fully informed; and the need to carefully manage contributors' expectations.

The results of the *Depicting Injustice* research justified further research into representation and the image-making process. *The People in the Pictures* research built on the approach and methods of *Depicting Injustice* but is distinct in a number of areas: it involved the return (and discussion) of finished content (images and stories, film and printed content); and the area of enquiry was expanded to include people's motivations for agreeing to be filmed and photographed and the consequences of being portrayed, both actual and perceived.

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[1] http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Save_the_Children_Image_Statement_Principles.pdf

[2] *Focus on Images: The Save the Children Fund Image Guidelines* (1991), *Interviewing children – a guide for journalists and others* 3rd edition (2003), *Depicting Injustice* (2010)

[3] Miskelly C and Warrington S: *Depicting Injustice overseas research: final report* (September 2010 unpublished). Overseas research in Gaza, India, Afghanistan and Kenya, with a total of 156 research participants (children, women and men).

[4] 'Global poverty' is used as a catch-all term in this section to cover poverty and inequality in its many forms as well as development interventions to respond to it.

extensive (and contentious and contested) field of practice and perspectives.

INGO image making and use take place in a complex context of inequality and change across multiple sites. Any debate on representations of global poverty must also acknowledge the unequal power relationships inherent in the production and consumption of these images, especially those produced in the global South by and for those in the global North.

Anyone involved in these debates or working on communications within INGOs does so in the context of a constantly evolving media and communications landscape. Increasing internet access, smartphone ownership and the use of social media are changing audience consumption habits as well as their expectations and preferences. It is also contributing to an ever-increasing democratisation of media, further blurring the traditional boundaries between the subjects and producers of media.

Despite this changing environment, the debates tend to focus on still images as opposed to video and film (a notable exception being the Rusty Radiator Awards[5]) and commentators do not always make a distinction between representations created by media agencies and those by INGOs. Reaction, debate and research around how global poverty is represented in the wider media to public audiences feeds directly into discussions about INGOs' image use, but these debates often fail to consider the diversity of formats and purposes of content produced by INGOs.

By way of summary, it is possible to identify four distinct positions of knowledge and debate in relation to INGO representations of global poverty:

- the significant critique (by academics and commentators from within the INGO sector) of the use of 'famine' imagery by INGOs and of the negative representations of individuals in the global South[6]

- the fundraising imperative, within INGOs, to produce compelling and hard hitting images that elicit the greatest response from audiences and potential donors[7]
- the development of guidelines and codes of conduct to promote best practice in relation to INGO image making
- the growth of participatory and citizen media (both in terms of formal INGO initiatives and self-generated community media).

1.2.1 Stereotypes and 'the danger of the single story'

The critique of 'famine' imagery and the negative representations of global poverty and development by the media and INGOs has its roots in responses to the 1983–85 Ethiopian famine (Lissner 1981, Van De Gaag and Nash 1997). Central to this debate is a critique of images that reinforce paternalistic, neo-colonial approaches to development, and which construct and replicate stereotypes, both positive and negative, of the global South (Benthall 1993, Manzo 2006).

Campbell sums up the argument about images of starving children depicted on their own: "The problem is that these images individualise an economic and political issue, and focus our attention on passive victims awaiting external assistance… This structuring of the isolated victim awaiting external assistance is what invests such imagery with colonial relations of power." [8] Campbell also suggests that "the problem lies with the absence of alternatives as much as it does with the presence of the stereotypes." [9] This view is shared by Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, who explored the problems with stereotypes, particularly of Africa, in a 2009 TED talk:[10] "If you show a people as one thing over and over again this is what they become… if all we see is how poor people are it becomes impossible to imagine them as anything

else, their poverty becomes the single story… The single story creates stereotypes and the problem with stereotypes is not that they aren't true, [it] is that they are incomplete and they make one story become the only story."

A more recent contribution to the debate was an online conversation facilitated by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in July 2015, which explored how INGOs can improve their use of photography. The twitter chat, titled #DevPix, covered aspects of the image-making process such as informed consent, as well as generating critique of various types of content.[11] During the #DevPix debate Save the Children's participatory photography project, Inside Zaatari,[12] was upheld as a positive example of doing development photography differently, yet other examples of its fundraising content were criticised for perpetuating stereotypes of African children as hungry and helpless.

There is a well-recognised tension surrounding the use of images for fundraising. Many argue that INGO content should reflect the rights-based rhetoric championed by INGOs and illustrate the different realities of the people with whom they work, using images that reflect multiple truths and avoid perpetuating a 'single story' of the global South. Dogra (2012) argues that, as "trusted institutions of representation", NGOs should not perpetuate stereotypes of helplessness, neediness and suffering, but instead should challenge and extend audiences' existing knowledge of the world. She goes on to highlight the contradictory way INGOs continue to use images that actively undermine their own rhetoric of rights and participation.

1.2.2 Fundraising and audiences

Despite this long-standing critique, many INGOs, including Save the Children, continue to produce *some* content that is seen by some as problematic. For such INGOs, public donations make up a

significant portion of overall funds, and fundraising and communications departments need to create powerful content that will generate the public donations that allow INGOs to increase the impact of their work.

There has been considerable audience research undertaken to establish the responses and preferences of UK publics in order to inform and improve the effectiveness of INGOs' communications. Findings largely demonstrate that in order to give, a donor must feel a strong emotional response, ideally sadness, combined with empathy for the person in the content.

The multi-agency *Narrative Project*[13] (funded by the Gates Foundation) was a research and communication initiative that aimed to support INGOs with evidence and ideas for changing the narrative to "create a broader base of public support for global issues". It included research which also demonstrated that a response of empathy (as opposed to pity) can lead to an act of financial donation.[14] However, while such external research calls for more empowered imagery showing the resilience of those INGOs seek to help, internal research carried out by Save the Children often demonstrates that what compels donors to give is the opposite. For example, research carried out as part of the (unpublished) *Depicting Injustice* research in 2010 demonstrated that UK audiences made their own judgments on whether someone was 'in need' and that surprisingly small indications of resilience could stop them donating, for example: "They look quite well fed. They're not starving enough." and "To me, I'd give more to a baby or a child I see suffering than a child with a pencil in his hand".

Save the Children, aware of this conflicting dialogue, is actively testing multiple ways of telling stories, and audience responses to those, with the aim of demonstrating resilience across its portfolio of communications while also ensuring they are effective for fundraising.

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[5] http://www.rustyradiator.com/ The Rusty Radiator Awards serve to highlight the best and worst of video/TV fundraising campaigns by INGOs and create a debate on how make these better in the future.

[6] The Imaging Famine website, http://www.imaging-famine.org/ provides a summary of these debates and links to further resources and articles.

[7] As outlined by Gidley in 2005 http://news.trust.org/item/20050914121000-6e5r9

[8] https://www.david-campbell.org/2011/08/19/imaging-famine-how-critique-can-help/

[9] https://www.david-campbell.org/2010/04/13/famine-photographs-critique/

[10] http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

[11] A number of useful summaries were created of the #DevPix debate, for example http://africasacountry.com/2015/07/devpix-5-things-that-cant-be-ignored-about-development-photography/

[12] See: https://www.instagram.com/insidezaatari/

[13] See: http://www.narrativeproject.org

[14] Presentation: *Engagement Experiment: What role do emotions play in engagement* (2015) UCL Hudson, D. and Heerde-Hudson, J.

Notwithstanding the importance of the research and debates on the impact of imagery on audiences, this research shifts the focus by investigating the responses and experiences of **contributors** (and their communities) to Save the Children's use of images and the image-making process.

1.2.3 Best practice guidelines

Despite the critiques and tensions described above, INGOs have undertaken, collectively and individually, to avoid images that homogenise, falsify, fuel prejudice or foster a sense of Northern superiority. They have also produced Image Codes of Conducts and guidelines such as the Code of Conduct on Images and Message (Dóchas 2006).[15] Save the Children's initial image guidelines, *Focus on Images* (1991), heralded as ground breaking at the time, demanded respect for beneficiaries' dignity and cautioned against representing communities as helpless recipients of hand-outs; their current Image Guidelines maintain this position.

1.2.4 Participatory image making

While the majority of content produced (and critiqued) by INGOs is produced by professional media makers, it is also important to acknowledge the established fields of practice and knowledge relating to participatory photography, participatory video, and citizen journalism that have in recent decades become increasingly used and adopted by INGOs. These forms of media have the potential to redress traditional hierarchies and relationships of media production and enable self-representation.

Save the Children has undertaken a number of participatory photography projects with children, including *Eye-to-Eye* in Palestine more than 10 years ago and the *Inside Zaatari* project in Jordan with Syrian refugees aged 14–18 years. Such projects can fulfil a range of purposes, including self-expression, advocacy and communication, and enable participants to develop new skills while taking control of their own representation. Such activities are not, however, inherently free from ethical

issues and power struggles (discussed in detail by Fairey 2015)[16] and they also take place within wider structural inequalities and are subject to the influence of an ever-changing media landscape.

While participatory communication projects are increasingly part of the portfolio of INGOs' communication activities, for the foreseeable future the majority of INGO content will continue to be produced and edited by professional image makers from outside the communities depicted. There is, therefore, a need to understand how contributors experience this type of image-making process.

1.3 CONTRIBUTORS' PERSPECTIVES

The voices of the contributors featured in INGO imagery have been notably absent from the debates on representations of global poverty, which have been led largely by academics, audiences, image makers and INGO staff. It is believed that, there has been no formal research undertaken to explore how the subjects of images and films, and their communities, experience the image-making process and how they feel about the resulting content. At the time of undertaking the *Depicting Injustice* research (2010) the researchers found only one example, in an article by photographer DJ Clark in which he shares a conversation between himself and a subject in a photograph used by the British media in its reporting of the famine in Ethiopia in 2003 (Clark 2004).

The People in the Pictures addresses that absence of contributors' perspectives. It does not claim to respond comprehensively to the extensive and multi-faceted debates on representation of global poverty, rather it aims to widen the debate to include the experiences and perspectives of contributors and their communities. In doing so, it hopes to contribute to improvements in both the production and use of images of global poverty for all stakeholders – INGOs, audiences, image-makers, but especially contributors, the adults and children who freely share their images and stories with wider publics.

2 METHODOLOGY

The research project *The People in the Pictures* was commissioned by Save the Children in late 2014 to explore contributors' responses to the Save the Children content featuring them, and their experiences of the image-making process. During the design and development of the research, the following research questions were identified:

1. What are contributors' and their communities' current **relationships with media**, particularly visual media?
2. What are the **motivations for and expectations of contributing** to Save the Children photography or filmmaking?
3. What are contributors' **experiences of**, and communities' opinions on, the image-making **process**?
4. What are contributors' and their communities' **responses to their portrayal** in Save the Children content? What are their preferences? What are their ideas for future portrayal?
5. What are the **consequences, real and anticipated**, positive and negative, for contributors, and their communities, of agreeing to be a contributor?

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology for this research, further details are presented in Appendix 2.

2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The People in the Pictures was a piece of exploratory qualitative research which was undertaken with an emphasis on responsible research methods and encouraged research participants to share their personal views and experiences. Key aspects of the research design and principles are detailed below.

Safe and ethical practice: The researchers worked to create a safe, sensitive and accessible research environment (both physical and

non-physical): one which engendered participation and was based on informed consent. It adhered to UK guidelines on ethical practice in social research, including those specifically focused on children and young people.[17]

Participation of children: Images of children (often with their parents) make up the majority of Save the Children content, and therefore it was essential to ensure children could participate in the research, by designing appropriate and safe ways for them to do so.

Prioritising first-hand accounts: The research is underpinned by a belief in the importance and value of the personal, subjective and verbal accounts of those represented in images and members of their communities. All interviews and focus groups were audio recorded, transcribed and translated to provide a more comprehensive data set than notes made by researchers and interpreters. The use of verbatim transcripts also ensures participants have more control over how they are represented within the research.

No photography or filming during research: It was important that participants clearly understood that the research was distinct from the Save the Children image and story-gathering activities to which they had contributed. Taking photographs or video during the research process might have compromised that distinction.

Location and language specific: To support the clear understanding of the research among Save the Children staff and research participants, the researchers prepared location- and language-specific research documentation, including a research overview for the participating Save the Children Country Programmes, and a research introduction form and consent form for participants. All content used in the research was translated into the national or local languages of the participants.

15 http://www.dochas.ie/images-and-messages

16 Fairey, Tiffany (2015) *Whose photos are these? Reframing the promise of participatory photography* PhD thesis. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/18521741/Whose_Pictures_Are_These_Re-framing_the_promise_of_participatory_photography

17 For example, *Guidelines for Research with Children and Young People* (National Children's Bureau): https://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/schools/developing-young-researchers/NCBguidelines.pdf

This included translations of any text in printed and online content, and translated sub-titles or dubbing for the films. Interpreters read aloud translated sub-titles or text for any non-literate research participants.

2.2 DATA COLLECTION

The main focus of this research was primary data collection in four countries. The research also involved a review of relevant articles and publications on representations of global poverty by INGOs and a selection of relevant grey literature, including image guidelines and consent forms used by various INGOs, including Save the Children. A full list of documents and online materials reviewed is presented in Appendix 3.

2.2.1 Research sites

Primary data collection took place in several sites across four countries between November 2014 and July 2015.
- UK (East Anglia, London, Kent, Wales and Yorkshire)
- Jordan (Amman and Zaatari refugee camp)
- Bangladesh (Dhaka and Habiganj)
- Niger (Niamey, Zinder and rural Tessaoua)

Differences between (and in some cases within) these locations include: the nature and causes of childhood poverty, livelihood opportunities, environment, culture and beliefs. There are also differences in access to media – TV, print and online – and these are explored in Chapter 4.

Research sites: selection and programme information

The **UK** was selected due to the ongoing challenge of identifying willing contributors to Save the Children's visual content from their UK programmes and Save the Children UK's desire to understand and explore the reasons behind this. In addition, including the UK enabled the researchers to test the methods in a context where translation and interpretation were not required.

Save the Children UK has around 100 staff working on UK programming and a budget of approximately £9 million (US$11 million). Current programming is focused on childhood poverty and literacy. Research participants in the UK were connected to Save the Children either as recipients of an Eat Sleep Learn Play (ESLP) grant or as a participant in the Families and Schools Together (FAST) programme.[18] All interviews and focus groups were conducted in English.

Jordan was selected due to the large amount of content Save the Children had produced about Syrian refugees in Jordan and an assumption that this group may have a more critical perspective

on representation than in other non-UK sites, due, in part, to their greater access to media. Most of the research took place in Zaatari refugee camp. In 2014 Save the Children Jordan had a budget of around US$76 million and employed 495 staff. Research participants were approached through their involvement in the Children's Centre or Youth Media Centre in Zaatari (both run by Save the Children). They included some who had been involved in Save the Children's *Inside Zaatari* initiative – a participatory photograph project for young people aged 14–18 years – and a research and advocacy project on early marriage which also had a participatory communication element. Most interviews and all focus groups were conducted in Arabic.[19]

Bangladesh was selected because it is the location for a significant amount of image making. In 2014 Save the Children Bangladesh had a budget of around US$60 million and employed 689 staff; its communications work is extensive. Research took place in urban Dhaka

Research sites: selection and programme information *continued*

and rural Habiganj (100km north-east of Dhaka) across a number of programmes: child protection, HIV and AIDS, child-led banking (in Dhaka); and mother and child health clinics (in Habiganj).[20] All interviews and focus groups apart from those with staff were conducted in Bengali.

Niger was suggested as a research site by the West Africa regional team and has also been the location of considerable image making. The research took place in both rural (Tessaoua

and Zinder regions) and urban (the capital, Niamey) locations. Save the Children Niger has approximately 380 staff and a budget of around US$30 million. Research participants were approached through their relationship with maternal and child health clinics in Zinder and Tessaoua and through the child protection programme with the government's local child protection agency, SEJUP,[21] in Niamey. Interviews and focus groups were mainly in Hausa with some Zarma and French spoken (in Niamey).

2.2.2 Research participants

A total of 202 men, women and children participated in the *People in the Pictures* research across the four countries. Research participants included the following groups:

Contributors including parents (mainly female), younger children with their parents, a small number of older children, and one Save the Children staff member.[22] Of the 53 contributors who participated, there were 29 women, 11 men, and 13 children (4 boys, 9 girls).

Non-contributors refer to members of the contributors' community (or similar) who are connected to Save the Children programmes, but who are not contributors themselves. Of the 130 non-contributors who participated in the research, there were 60 adults (34 women and 26 men), and 70 children (38 girls, 32 boys).

In each research site, several Save the Children staff were interviewed in order to capture their perspectives and experiences of the image-making process and the portrayal of Save the Children

beneficiaries and programme participants. A total of 19 staff were interviewed: 13 men and 6 women.

The two pie charts on page 10 provide an overview of research participants.

It is important to acknowledge that at the time of the research, all participants had a relationship with Save the Children as beneficiary, programme participant or staff member. Inevitably, this relationship introduced an element of potential bias; those who are benefiting from Save the Children services or programmes are possibly less likely to criticise its image-making process and communications. Several measures were taken in response to this risk,[23] including all participants being assured anonymity. All names used in this report are pseudonyms.

2.2.3 Methods

The research design centred on semi-structured interviews with contributors and focus groups with non-contributors. Across the four research locations there were a total of 39 interviews (with contributors and staff) and 21 focus groups with non-contributors.

FIGURE 1: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Relationship with Save the Children

Staff member — 9.4%
Contributor — 26.2%
Non-contributor — 64.4%

Age and gender

Boys — 18%
Women — 34%
Girls — 23%
Men — 25%
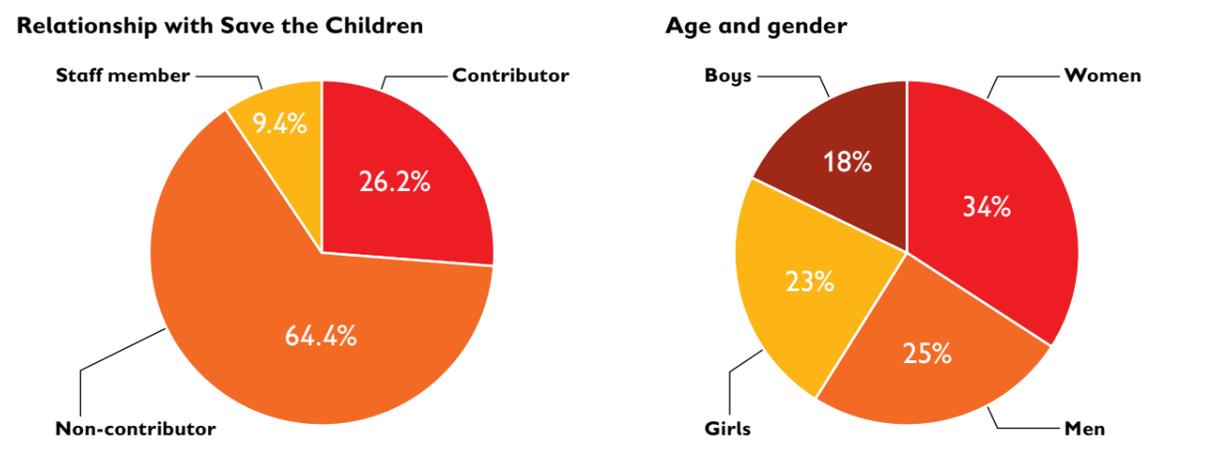
Interviews and focus groups followed a semi-structured schedule and were framed by the five overarching research questions; they were adapted according to location, age, and in some cases gender, of research participants. Methods and questioning in the focus groups involved some physical movement and interaction alongside verbal communication, for example, coloured YES and NO cards were used to encourage expression of individual opinions on content (rather than risk one or two perspectives dominating a group discussion). The researchers designed methods suitable for children with playful and physical approaches, for example, use of a ball, and movement, as a way to communicate a response to a question. Role play activities were also used.

2.2.4 Use of visual content

The research involved returning specific Save the Children content to contributors, and sharing a range of other Save the Children content with both contributors and non-contributors. For the purposes of this research, content was viewed as a tool to generate discussion about experiences, perspectives and concerns in relation to the image-making process and portrayal. It was not the intention of this research to seek comparable data on specific pieces of content.

The majority of content used in this research was produced between 2012 and 2014. Content used in interviews and focus groups consisted of still images and text (printed and online materials) as well as films (including TV adverts). Different sets of content were collated for each research location, and different variations of these were developed for each individual interview and focus group. Across the research we used 20 films and 11 other pieces of Save the Children content (posters, online features, reports). Some examples are included throughout the report; no explicit links are made between content and contributors to ensure research participants retain anonymity.

2.3 RECORDING, DOCUMENTATION AND ANALYSIS

All interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded. Audio files were shared with a transcription and translation service, which prepared English transcriptions of all sessions. In addition, the researchers all kept reflective field notes and produced short field reports to share their immediate impressions of the data.

Analysis and write-up of the research in each location took place sequentially. An iterative approach to analysis meant that emerging findings from one location provided a lens through which to reconsider data that had emerged from other locations. The overall report presented here is based on that analysis and includes comments on earlier drafts from a range of people involved in the research, including one staff member from each of the country offices involved.

3 OVERVIEW OF VISUAL CONTENT USED IN THE RESEARCH

This short chapter provides an overview of the content used in the focus groups in each research site; it also presents a number of ethical issues that emerged during the research in relation to selecting and sharing content with research participants. Care has been taken to avoid linking the contributors interviewed for this research with the content they feature in as this would compromise the anonymity they were assured at the time of the interview.

Content, contributors and audiences

UK contributors can be considered part of the UK public audience for which much of Save the Children's UK content is intended. Some of the content produced in Jordan had been disseminated online via Al Jazeera, aimed at both international and regional Middle East audiences. Most of the content produced in Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger was made for overseas audiences. In Bangladesh, even content produced for national audiences is highly unlikely to be accessible to contributors from rural areas, due to language differences and limited media access.

Sensitive content

During the selection process of content to share and discuss in each site, a number of ethical issues emerged relating to the potential for the content to cause offence or distress to research participants.

All of Save the Children UK's film content is categorised as U, however it was not all deemed appropriate for sharing with child research participants. The researchers decided to only show the first 23 seconds of the film about the FAST programme during children's focus groups in the UK. The messaging in the rest of the film associates childhood poverty with the possibility of lower educational attainment. This message would be in contrast to the mission and ambition of a school in a deprived area (where the focus groups

were held) which seeks to support all children to achieve their full potential.

In the first focus group carried out in the UK the set of content selected for discussion included a report with references to stillbirth and miscarriages. One of the participants had a quick look at this content and stated that she could not look at it any more because she had experienced a stillbirth herself, something previously unknown to staff or researchers. This content was removed from the research due to the risk of causing distress to any other participants who may have experienced a stillbirth or miscarriage themselves.

In one of the research sites the content relating to one contributor included a poster featuring a photograph of her and her baby, who was sick at the time the photograph was taken. The poster contained an image of her baby crying and the words: "He's so sick, he could die before you've read your paper". The researchers spent time considering whether to show the contributor this content as part of the interview, balancing the responsibility to avoid distress with her rights to see the content she had contributed to. Ultimately the researchers decided it was important for the contributor to see the content and to manage the risk of causing her distress with a careful introduction to the content and of course the option not to see it. The contributor in question appeared not to find the content in question distressing. Yet the dilemma in itself is significant and a reminder that the messaging accompanying images is very often conceived after the image-making process, when it would be difficult to contact the contributor.

The remainder of this chapter presents a selection of the content used at each of the research sites. A full list of content used in focus groups in each country is presented in Appendix 3.

A selection of the Save the Children content used in the research

Images from the Save the Children content used in the UK focus groups
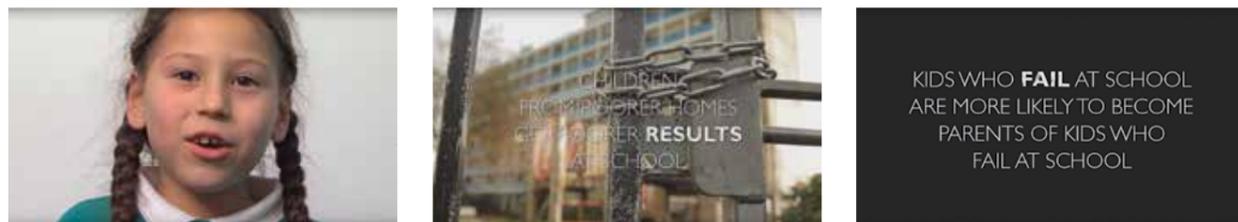
Still images from the short film on the FAST programme (2012)

Fundraising letter for supporters (2012)

Still images from a 2014 TV advert on childhood poverty in the UK
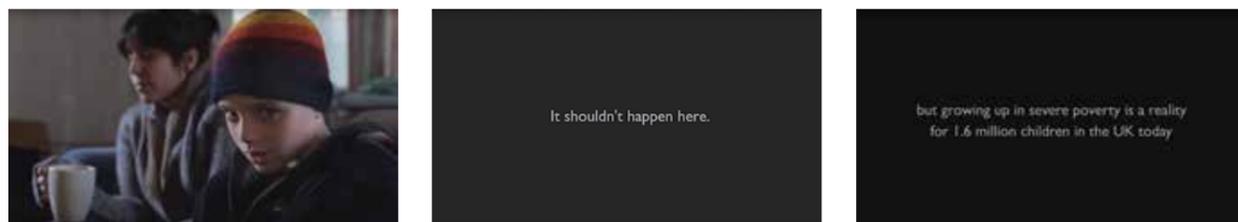
Still images from the film *It Shouldn't Happen Here* (2012)

Images from the Save the Children content used in the Jordan focus groups

Still images from the *Most Shocking Second a Day* film (2014)
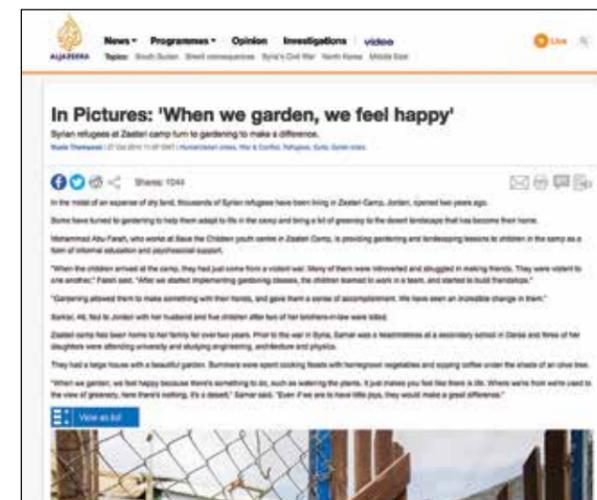
Screen grab and sample images from an online feature for Al Jazeera (2014) (Photos: Rosie Thomson/ Save the Children)

Screen grab and sample image from an online feature on Giles Duley's portraits of women and their children in Zaatari (2013)

Images by Moises Saman that formed part of a widely reproduced photo essay for World Refugee Day 2013

Images from the Save the Children content used in the Bangladesh focus groups
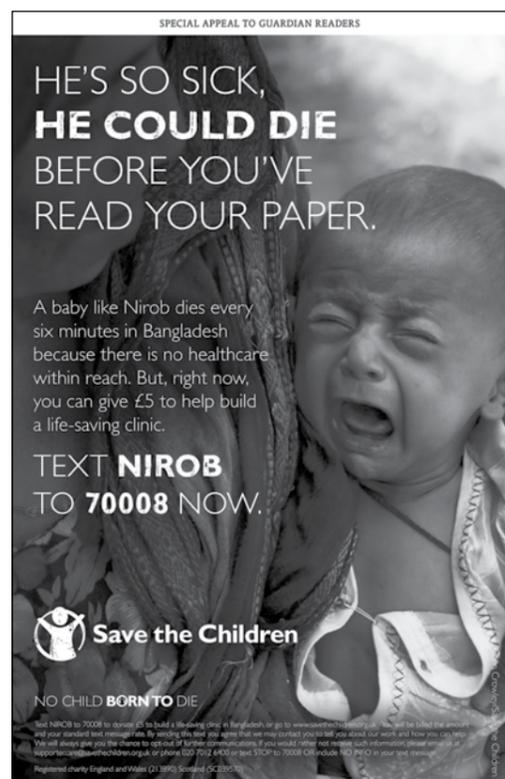
Fundraising adverts for display on public transport in the UK (above) and for a UK newspaper (left) (2012)

Still images from TV advert *Tomorrow* (Christmas 2013) showing children asleep and waking up around the world, including in Bangladesh

Photo-feature for BBC website on child malnutrition in India and Bangladesh (2012)

Still image from the short film *Why we won't rest in Bangladesh: Meherun's story* (2013)

Images from the Save the Children content used in the Niger focus groups

Still images from the short film *Djamila's story* (2010)

Still images from the TV advert *Issia* (2014)

Still images from the Street Children documentary (2012)

Still images from the TV advert *Waiting* (2013)

Images from the Save the Children content used in all research sites

Fundraising poster (2012)

Still images from TV advert *Kayembe* (2014)

PART TWO
FINDINGS

4 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS' CURRENT RELATIONSHIP WITH MEDIA

This chapter presents the findings that relate to the research question:

What are contributors' and their communities' current relationships with media, particularly visual media?

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This research question served to explore participants' access to, use of, and attitudes towards, different forms of media, particularly visual media. The findings provide valuable context for this research, particularly in relation to participants' responses to the content shared with them during interviews and focus groups.

Questions and activities on research participants' current relationships with media took place at the beginning of interviews with contributors and focus groups. They were a useful introduction to the theme of the research (before the more abstract questions relating to portrayal and representation). Most research participants were also asked to show or describe their favourite photograph(s). Again, this question was useful for building participants' confidence by enabling them to talk about their own photographs before researchers presented them with Save the Children content to review and discuss.

Research participants in the UK have the greatest access to and engagement with visual media, followed by those in Jordan. In Bangladesh and Niger there was a marked difference in access to media between research participants in urban and rural areas. Research participants in Dhaka city (Bangladesh) were regular viewers of television and many were regular internet users. In Niamey

city (Niger) all research participants had access to television but rarely used the internet. Research participants in rural areas of Bangladesh and Niger had limited or no access to visual media.

More detailed findings from each research site are presented below in relation to access to television and internet, along with participants' views on bias and truthfulness of the media they access. There is also a short section on research participants' relationship with photography.

4.2 RELATIONSHIP WITH VISUAL MEDIA

4.2.1 UK

All but one of the adults and all of the children interviewed watch **television** regularly. Half of the adult research participants reported that they watch **television news** every day. Many referred to it as "depressing", one explained: "I kind of hide from the news. It's not very happy".[24] Another explained why she feels she has to watch the news: "I'm one of the people that [Prime Minister David Cameron] doesn't like very much so I have to keep my finger on the pulse… because you know, they're thinking about cutting benefits and stuff like that. So I have to kind of keep my eye on it… to work out what might happen to us as a family."[25] The same contributor, when asked if she feels the televised or printed news delivers the truth, answers: "No, of course it doesn't."

There is some discussion between participants in one focus group about different news agencies – they believe the BBC to be a less biased source of news.

Nearly all of the UK adult research participants use the **internet**. Uses include Facebook, searching for information for themselves or their children, and shopping. A participant in one focus group referred to the risks associated with Facebook in terms of hurtful comments from people about photographs; and others talked about its benefits for staying in touch with people. One participant prefers accessing the news through the internet so she can select the stories she is interested in rather than having to watch a whole televised news programme.

All adult research participants were familiar with **television adverts for charities**. Some stated that it was important for their children to see these to understand that there are people in the world who are less fortunate than themselves. For example, "Well there's been a few times when we've been sat in the room and the kids are there and I've said to the kids, 'you should realise how lucky you are because that child in that programme hasn't got clean water… they've got to walk miles to find some clean water'".[26] Others had a more critical perspective, for example, "I think some of them are just a bit too upsetting to watch. A bit heartstring pulling… So I look at them with a pinch of salt."[27] Most research participants were also familiar with printed materials from charities delivered door-to-door.

4.2.2 Jordan

Internet access and electricity supply in Zaatari refugee camp – where most of the interviews and focus groups took place – are intermittent, however most research participants had access to visual media, either television or the internet (mainly it seems via mobile phones), despite these limitations.

Almost all research participants watch **television**; namely drama shows, films and the news. Approximately half of the adult research participants watch television news. One participant in the focus group with men stated: "We watch the news, hoping that the war will end, and we will eventually go back to Syria", another suggested that television and the internet provide different accounts: "We get the news of all Syria's provinces through the internet, while we get those of the opposition on TV channels."

Research participants had their own direct experience of the conflict in Syria and unsurprisingly some were cynical about the truthfulness of the media and its potential to misinform. For example, during the focus group with older girls there was a discussion about the news being "false" and one participant stated that the media provoked the uprising that led to the conflict.

"I have witnessed some events so I know that they [the media] tell a different story."

"The stories that they put out are either not true or completely exaggerated, saying places are being bombed when they're not. My family lives in Daraa [in Syria] and the news said it was bombed and it wasn't. Sometimes they are the opposite, they are saying places are not bombed when they are."

"Massacres in [places like] my town are not reported; we didn't see them in the news."

"Pictures and videos are published too late and are irrelevant… They use old videos that they claim are live."

"On Syria Drama (a pro-regime channel) they describe the revolution as terrorism."

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[24] Mary, adult female, contributor, UK

[25] Wendy, adult female, contributor, UK

[26] Dave, adult male, contributor, UK

[27] Mary, adult female, contributor, UK

"Al Jazeera channel is supporting the revolutionaries. …the media incited the people to revolt. Every small story of trouble was published from other countries (Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen); this agitated people and led them to revolt."
Focus group with older girls (aged 14–18), Jordan

Almost all research participants access the **internet** regularly, many through smartphones. Main uses are to stay in touch with friends and relatives in Syria, through Facebook, email and Whatsapp, and to keep up to date with events in Syria through news sites. Seven out of ten women in the focus group referred to using the internet regularly, however, none said they used Facebook. A few of the older children who participated in focus groups also referred to using the internet to educate themselves and for watching films on YouTube.

4.2.3 Bangladesh

Most research participants had access to the radio and television. Some participants living in Dhaka used the internet regularly for accessing news media, YouTube or Facebook, and downloading music. Research participants living in rural Habiganj did not use the internet.

During the focus groups with adults in Habiganj, initial responses suggested everyone trusted the news, however differing opinions did emerge. For example, while some participants in the focus group with men were of the opinion the news generally did reflect the truth, others said, "not all news speaks the truth", "Sometimes they lie", with one man explaining, "for political situations, the truth is not always spoken… they are divided into two groups, that's why the news is not true".

There are several indications that men in Habiganj have more access to **television** than women. One of the contributors said she has never watched it yet her husband regularly visits other people's houses to watch television. Another two women interviewed said they are too busy looking after their children to watch TV, which is only available in others' homes.

With the exception of these three women from Habiganj, all research participants watch television – news, drama and sport were the most mentioned programmes watched, and in the focus groups with children in Dhaka cartoons were also mentioned.

Half of the children who took part in focus groups in Dhaka use the internet for Facebook, Google, and downloading songs or movies, however, only one of the four contributors interviewed in Dhaka uses the **internet** (the only male contributor). None of the men or women who took part in the focus groups or interviews in Habiganj use the internet, many said they had heard of it, but none had used it. Two women interviewed attributed their non-use to lack of literacy: "The internet is related to reading and writing. I don't understand things involving reading and writing."[28]

4.2.4 Niger

Among research participants in Niger access to media is dependent on geography and gender. Those in Niamey had more access to visual media than those in rural Tessaoua or Zinder, and in rural areas, men had more access to visual media than women. In rural areas, radio is the most commonly accessed form of media for men and women.

Boys and girls who took part in the focus groups in Niamey are all regular viewers of **television**, enjoying dramas, action films and the news. Women in both focus groups in the rural areas said they had little access to television, and describe their husbands and children going to places to pay to watch films or dramas more regularly than themselves. Several women explained that the only time they watch television is when they are invited to watch the video of a naming ceremony or a baptism, for example: "Teachers usually bring films from the city, I can go and watch it if my husband allows but I usually do not go. I only go… if something draws me to the place… like a naming ceremony… Usually the celebrant pays and everyone can go and watch… But those going to the village square do pay to watch films that are shown at night. Kids usually go but we adults don't. They pay three cents to gain entry."[29]

One contributor (a Save the Children staff member) describes the impact of poor electricity supply and internet coverage in Tessaoua: "Yes, we do watch TV… I even have a satellite dish… but often there is no power supply. Sometimes a generator must be used… Sometimes a phone call is a problem, let alone the internet… there are some days when there is network and other days there is not."[30]

Both men and women in rural areas listen to the news on the radio and mentioned BBC Hausa. Some women said they listen to songs, drama and public information programmes on the radio.

The majority of research participants said they trust the media. One contributor explained this trust in relation to her own ignorance: "If they say it I do believe in it… we agree with what they say. We are like blind people here, so we have to take what comes to us. We don't have a way out."[31] One contributor and some older boys shared critical comments relating to what they see on the news. For example, one older boy stated: "Some [news stories] are true and some are not true. Like when assistance is brought for the masses, they do not give it to them, they take it for themselves."[32]

4.3 EXISTING RELATIONSHIP WITH PHOTOGRAPHY

In the **UK** contributors were interviewed in their homes where photographs of themselves and their family members were often displayed. In one focus group children talked about how they enjoyed looking at old family photographs. Children also expressed their preference for photographs of themselves on special days out, or together with their friends and family.

In **Jordan** the favourite photographs that research participants shared or described were mainly of their children. There were several references to favourite photographs showing happier and safer times in Syria, for example:

"There is this one, a photo of my son Mubarak. [It was taken] in Syria, in the porch of our house with our horse. [I love this photo] because it was taken in his childhood, in the days where he was safe and sound in our house. We were happy that time."
Mohamad, adult male, contributor, Jordan

Children in the focus groups also recalled their favourite photographs, most of which were photographs with family members or photographs in gardens or natural environments – in contrast to the lack of greenery in the Zaatari camp.

In **Bangladesh** one of the female contributors said she did not have any photographs of herself, and another said her favourite photograph is a formal one taken of her in a studio. Another mentions the importance to her of photographs of her deceased husband. Children told the researcher they had photographs of themselves on their mobiles but they are not allowed to bring their phones into the Drop in Centre (where they were interviewed).

Children's preferences for photographs (either of them, or taken by them) related to scenarios of them wearing nice clothes, or being in nice places, and with their friends; photographs were seen primarily as a way of recording happy times, as the following extracts from the focus groups with younger children illustrate:

"The day when we get to wear new clothes, that day is a day of happiness for us. Me and my friends take pictures of ourselves on those days."

"My favourite photo? The most beautiful one – that time when we went for a picnic they took our photographs."

"I left home, then I got lost… [When I found my parents] I took a picture of myself with my mother. I find that very beautiful."

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28 Aklima, adult female, contributor, Bangladesh

29 Zara, adult female, contributor, Niger
30 Nassiru, adult male, contributor, Niger
31 Zara, adult female, contributor, Niger
32 Focus group with older boys (aged 14–18), Niger

In **Niger**, the relationship with photography appears to be different for those living in Niamey and those in rural areas. The girls who took part in the focus group in Niamey said they take photographs during Eid and other celebrations; having their photograph taken is something they like to do. In contrast the contributors interviewed in Tessaoua and Zinder either had no photographs of themselves or just one or two; and some had never seen any photographs of themselves.

4.4 CONCLUSIONS

The findings demonstrate considerable difference in research participants' access to and familiarity with visual media and photography, both between research sites and within some sites. Factors that influence access to visual media include those to do with geography and infrastructure – electricity supply, internet coverage and mobile phone ownership – but also relate to gender and literacy.

All participants in the UK and Dhaka (Bangladesh) have regular access to a range of visual media through broadcast television, the internet (accessed through phones or computers) and newspapers. Research participants in Jordan are all regular

consumers of visual media and users of social media but their access can be affected by the intermittent electricity supply (and internet coverage) at Zaatari camp. For participants in rural areas of Niger and Bangladesh, men have more access to visual media than women, but all participants living in rural areas had less access to media than those in urban locations. From this research, the participants with least access to visual media are women living in rural areas of Niger, who rely on the radio as the main means of accessing information.

Broadly speaking, the majority of research participants trusted the news (through whatever medium), though there were participants at all research sites who were more cynical about bias or even incorrect reporting in the news.

This research recognises there is a relationship between research participants' access to visual media and their attitudes towards Save the Children's communications. This is explored further in Chapter 7. Access to visual media may also influence contributors' experience of the image-making process and non-contributors' perceptions of this, in terms of their degree of understanding of the purpose of image-making as well as their decisions surrounding consent.

5 MOTIVATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings that relate to the research question:

What are the motivations for and expectations of contributing to Save the Children photography or filmmaking?

The research aimed to explore with contributors their motivations for (and related expectations of) contributing their (and/or their child's) image to Save the Children for inclusion in its communications. Non-contributors, staff (and some contributors) were asked to share their ideas about the motivations of others in relation to content featuring individuals from their own community or country, as well as those from other countries. Research participants were also asked to consider the reasons why someone might not wish to be filmed or photographed by Save the Children.

Exploring and understanding motivations provides clues to the level of contributors' understanding of image making and the degree of agency[33] contributors experienced as part of the image-making process. The findings demonstrate that there were a range of factors and motivations that influence the decisions to agree to be photographed or filmed, these include:
• a desire to have a voice and be heard by others
• a desire to raise awareness of an issue and help others
• a belief that contributing could lead to assistance for themselves and others
• an existing relationship with Save the Children.

5.2 CONTRIBUTORS' MOTIVATIONS

Contributors' motivations were informed by a range of factors. Some, were clearly motivated by a belief that their contribution would help others – by raising awareness of a situation or encouraging others to come forward to seek support from Save the Children. Others were keen to have their voices heard, and to tell their story to the world. For many, their motivation related to a general positive association with image-making, viewing it as an activity, 'for good' that may result in some form of assistance for themselves or others like them.[34] Some contributors (in Niger and Bangladesh) were open about their desperation to receive assistance for their child at the time of image making. For many contributors, it is ultimately their relationship with Save the Children that had the most influence on their decision to contribute, whether their agreement was out of gratitude, a sense of obligation or dependence, a reciprocal gesture, or in anticipation of assistance for their child.

The reasons given by contributors for contributing their (and/or their children's) image and story are presented below, by research location.

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[33] The capacity to act independently and make free choices within the image-making process

[34] For a small number of research participants, it was clear they held expectations that the interview for this research could also be linked to assistance (no doubt due to its association with Save the Children). In the words of one contributor, "We agreed to come [to the interview] with great hope." (Aklima, adult female, contributor, Bangladesh)

5.2.1 UK contributors

The reasons given by contributors in the UK for agreeing to contribute their (and/or their children's) image and story for Save the Children content relate mainly to helping Save the Children and raising awareness; they can be summarised as:

• to raise awareness of UK poverty among others
• to help Save the Children (in gratitude for help they had already received)
• to encourage other people to come forward and ask for help or break down the stigma surrounding poverty
• to provide their children with a new experience
• because they felt comfortable sharing their story, and were aware not everyone in a similar situation would feel the same way.

"My aim for having our pictures taken was to make people more aware and to help families like mine. No one knows what it's like unless you're in that person's shoes. And the thing is, I didn't look like I was struggling, but I was… [I said] 'I'd love to give something back… because of what you gave me – it was a life-changing thing at the time'. So yeah, we were more than happy to do our share."
Mary, adult female, contributor, UK

"Lots of people knew we were going to do it because lots of people were at the nursery… and they were like, 'Oh, I don't know how you could do it cos I'd be so nervous'. But to me, because they'd (Save the Children) helped us, when we were in need, and needed a cooker and stuff, it was only fair for us to help them with what they wanted to do. And it must have been hard for them to find people who would be so honest and open and just say exactly how it is. And that's what I did."
Nicola, adult female, contributor, UK

"They rang me up and asked me if I would like to be in it; they said I don't have to, they're not pressurising me, but they told me how it would benefit other people… I said, 'If it helps, yeah go for it'. I thought the kids are
never going to get a thing like it ever in their lifetime, you know what I mean? So, it was a good opportunity as well."**
Sarah, adult female, contributor, UK

"We just thought it would be nice for the kids, to be honest. Obviously because I was one of the parent partners on the FAST programme I thought there's no harm in getting involved with it… I put my name forward because there weren't many dads… who do the facilitating bit… I thought it would be good to say dads can read to their children, because a lot of dads haven't got the time for that."
Dave, adult male, contributor, UK

5.2.2 Jordan contributors

The reasons given by contributors in Jordan for agreeing to contribute their (and/or their children's) image and story for Save the Children content relate primarily to generating awareness of, and assistance for, Syrian refugees, and having a voice; they can be summarised as:

• to raise awareness of and generate support for Syrian refugees
• a desire to have a voice and reach others with a message
• a belief in the power of the media and communication; that sharing their own stories is a positive action that can help make a difference
• they felt pleased to have been asked
• out of gratitude for help received
• an expectation that participation will result in further assistance for themselves and other Syrian refugees
• as something different to do; thereby alleviating the boredom of living in a refugee camp.[35]

"That day I felt nobody cared about us in Syria. The Danish man told me he came to the camp to make a film about me. I was happy because I realised that the whole world seemed to care about the Syrians and their conflict, I was also happy because they chose me to be part of the film."
Yusuf, aged 18, male, contributor, Jordan

"[I remember why I agreed to be photographed]… It was meant as message to the world. Syrians deserve to live. Syrians are humans and they are capable of creating beautiful things even though everything is destroyed around them. The living conditions are harsh and the weather is bitter, yet we have created something beautiful for the world."
Mohamad, adult male, contributor, Jordan[36]

Tariq: **"We wanted to deliver a message to the world that we are living in a camp as refugees."**

Reem: **"We wanted to talk about the bad living conditions we face since we first came to this camp."**
Tariq (male) and Reem (female), parents, contributors, Jordan

"We wanted other people to learn from our story… I was nervous because it was the first time I went through such an experience. I wanted to do something that would help people."
Fatima, aged 18, female, contributor, Jordan

"I said yes because they told us the film aims to provide care for children and support for the kindergarten, and to shine a light on the situation of Syrian children."
Riwa, adult female, contributor, Jordan

One interviewee did not feel his expectations had been met:

"We expected more than this… We expected more care and attention. They only took some snapshots and they left… They took many photos, but they didn't show them to us… She told us this film would be seen in the UK, then people there would learn about the suffering of Syrian children. That's what we thought when we had photographs taken for
the film. I thought they would show the world the suffering of Syrian children in the camp."**
Mustafa, adult male, contributor, Jordan

5.2.3 Bangladesh contributors

In Bangladesh, most contributors referred to their motivations to contribute their (and/or their children's) image and story in terms of their general understanding that this is a good thing to do and is likely to lead to some form of assistance. It is difficult to tell whether this reflects accurately what they were told at the time of image gathering or rather their own assumptions and beliefs about image making. Their reasons for agreeing to contribute can be summarised as:

• because they were told (or believed) it would do some good, or lead to assistance
• to have a voice and create awareness among others
• simply because they were asked and felt obliged to agree.

"My son was not supposed to live. He suffered a lot at the time he was born. Even now his full health is not here… we do not have the power to educate him… we do not have anything. So when they asked [to film him] we agreed… His condition was so bad. I thought, they have come, so if they can help a bit with his poor condition I'll feel good. With their blessing, with him being a bit better now – whether it was their help or not – it was still a help for us. Our neighbours also told us 'you'll get money' [as a result of the filming]."
Retna, adult female, contributor, Bangladesh

Later in her interview Retna recalled what she was told at the time of image making: "They told us that we will show this to the Bangladesh government so that a hospital can be built. Children here can die like this; there are no doctors, no hospitals." She said that she agreed for the good of everyone, not just her and her son.

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[35] This reason was provided by a Save the Children staff member and the researcher, and applies especially to young people's involvement in the *Inside Zaatari* project.

[36] This contributor took part in the series of photographs on gardening in Zaatari. His motivation, relates to a desire to challenge perceptions of Syrian refugees with 'positive' imagery. The same motivation was expressed by women in Delhi who took their own photographs as part of the 2010 *Depicting Injustice* project to show their clean and organised homes in a slum area, in contrast to images by Save the Children of children playing on a rubbish dump close to their homes.

"They told me that if my son is shown then there'll be advantages… I thought, 'Our area is not getting any facilities, if they can show this and we get a few facilities, why not do this? Along with my son, all the others can get [something]'."
Retna, adult female, contributor, Bangladesh

"I thought if media coverage for it happens… such as with the BBC, a worldwide channel, it could reach to all places. And everyone will know about our project, this [children's banking] initiative… If it becomes a news item in the BBC then our government will also want to help in this work… if I sit here telling people, no one will listen, but through the media, I can reach them."
Selim, aged 18, male, contributor, Bangladesh

"I liked it that despite being a Bengali I could speak to them; people in the other parts of the world will see my picture. This is matter of pride for me."
Parveen, adult female, contributor, Bangladesh

For one contributor the request to contribute came in the context of her ongoing relationship with a service that has supported her. Her account suggests that she agreed simply because she was asked, and in order to maintain her reputation as a 'good beneficiary'.

"I thought they are asking for my own good. They may help or take care of my daughter. If there is any problem, if I inform them, they may help. Often they call me into this clinic… I have been admitted here for three years, but in these three years I haven't missed even one day. If I have work I leave that and come.[37] That's why they have called me [for the photography session]… before taking the photo, they said to me, 'You have to let us take a picture' I asked, 'Why?' They said they needed it… I said, 'Take it if you need it, take it'. Then they took the photo.
Nabiha, adult female, contributor, Bangladesh

The following extract from an interview with two female contributors in Habiganj illustrates the rationale of those in need assuming that image making by Save the Children must be directly related to assistance; it is this expectation that informs their decision to agree to be photographed:

Sanchita: "We had no idea why they took the photos, what did we know? We thought that as we are in a helpless state it will be helpful for us."

Aklima: "We didn't say no. We thought if they were taking pictures it will be for our good only. That is what we thought; if they were doing something it must be for our betterment. That's why we didn't stop them. I don't know if we will get help or not."
Aklima and Sanchita, adult females, contributors, Bangladesh

However, a remark made later in the interview by one of these contributors demonstrated a certain cynicism in terms of whether they will benefit from the photography. In response to a question about agreeing to be photographed in the future by Save the Children, she responds:

"Whether we do it one time or seven times it makes no difference. People already know us. It will just spread our names. It has no other benefits. It's not like they have to give us anything or do something for us. It's not like that."
Sanchita, adult female, contributor, Bangladesh

5.2.4 Niger contributors

Most contributors had a relationship with Save the Children at the time of image gathering; either they had received or were receiving assistance, and for some it is clear that they agreed out of gratitude for this assistance. The reasons given by contributors in Niger for agreeing to contribute their (and/or their children's) image and story for Save the Children content are summarised as follows:

- in the hope of receiving help or assistance
- in gratitude for assistance received
- a good relationship with Save the Children
- to raise awareness.

Because the film in which they featured shows their child receiving assistance, some contributors assumed there was a direct link between the filming and the assistance received and/or their child's well-being. For example, one contributor, presumably understanding the film crew was Save the Children, exclaimed that they saved her son's life:

If they come back and say they want to do another film with your son, will you agree?

[Laughs] "I will agree… Because they have saved his life. Even now I am happy because people are coming to see him and I am happy… If they come I will think they want to check on him and… to show that the medicine they gave him really worked."
Zara, adult female, contributor, Niger

Others had a more general understanding of image making being something that relates to good:

Haliku: "When they came they said they will take our pictures; we only thought of it being something good."

Zoulaye: "We were happy that they came… thinking that this filming is something good, we will reap good things from it some time in the future, that is what we said."
Haliku (male) and Zoulaye (female), parents, contributors, Niger

One contributor, a child, referred to the potential of the film in which he features to raise awareness among decision-makers, and how that motivated him to take part:

"[I agreed to be filmed] because I want even the minister to see it, his wife will also see it – the condition we are in… [We need] food,

clothes, and to show people out there that there are a lot of people suffering in Niger, a lot have died. There is no school, no jobs…"
Ousmane, aged 19, male, contributor, Niger

5.3 SHARING VIEWS ON THE MOTIVATIONS OF OTHERS

5.3.1 Non-contributors on the motivations of others

Non-contributors (and contributors) at all research sites were shown Save the Children content featuring children and asked to share their ideas about the possible motivations of the parents of the children featured. Some of the responses to this question relate to two pieces of content (see page 16) that were shown in almost all interviews and focus groups across the four research sites:
- a fundraising poster featuring a photograph of a Syrian refugee child in front of a tent in the snow
- a TV advert featuring a severely malnourished child in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) receiving treatment at a centre supported by Save the Children.

At all of the research sites, participants expressed the view that that the parents of the children featured allowed their children to be filmed or photographed because they were desperate for assistance with the child's immediate needs: hunger, illness, or lack of shelter. Several participants also stated that people would not agree if they were not so vulnerable, for example one contributor responded to the fundraising poster for Syrian refugees saying, "If they weren't in need, they wouldn't do it."[38] Some expressed empathy, explaining that they would do the same if they found themselves in a similar situation. Several also said a motivation for contributing could be to generate help for others in a similar situation as well as for your own child. A selection of responses are provided below from across all of the research sites:

"If it were to the point where my children were [suffering]… because we couldn't

[37] Unclear from transcript whether she goes to the clinic every day for medication and whether she has been called before for other non-medication related tasks. She seems to believe that she is seen to be a reliable programme participant.

[38] Amira, young adult female, contributor, Jordan

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afford heating or where we were having to give them just toast or something, then yes. I would do anything in my power to try and improve that situation. If it meant putting myself on TV in the hope that someone would help, then of course I would do it because I want to do the best for my children."
Focus group with women, UK, in response to a TV advertisement about poverty in the UK

"Of course their parents will let them [be photographed] because it says here that they have no blankets or any plastic covers. That's why the parents didn't mind that they take photos of their children… Under such conditions, I would accept."
Yusuf, aged 18, male, contributor, Jordan, in response to fundraising poster about Syrian refugees

Several participants in Jordan recognised that parents would not agree to contribute if they were not desperate.

"If they didn't really need help they wouldn't let someone take the photo. It's not just for them, it's for other people in the camp."
Focus group with older children (aged 14–18), Jordan, in response to fundraising poster about Syrian refugees

"Look at their condition. They don't have any monetary power… they don't have the ability to cure this illness. That's why they thought maybe we could save my child like this."
Focus group with men, Bangladesh, in response to TV advert featuring a child in DRC

"They did it to raise money; they do not get anything to eat. Due to the pangs of hunger they've given permission to take such pictures."

"They did it because they are about to die from hunger… They do not have rice in their homes, and want some help, they can't get any work [to help themselves]. Either father is sick or mother is sick."
Focus group with older boys (aged 14–18), Bangladesh, in response to a BBC online report

In one of the adult focus groups in the UK, several participants assumed that contributors must receive some form of payment for featuring their stories, and that this could be a motivating factor. Talking about a UK newspaper article one said:

"Obviously, the *Mirror* is going to pay her a little bit of money for this. She is probably like, 'That's great. I can feed my child. I can give my child this, that, and the other'. If you have got no money and you think that is the only way to get a little bit of extra money, you probably are going to do it."
Focus group with women, UK, in response to a newspaper article

5.3.2 Staff on motivations of others

Save the Children staff at each research site shared their views on (and experiences of) the motivations of contributors for agreeing to be photographed or filmed for Save the Children content. Some of the reasons given echo those of contributors themselves, such as expectations for assistance and gratitude to Save the Children, and staff also pointed to contributors' possible sense of obligation or dependence.

Several staff in Jordan and Niger referred to contributing being seen by some (especially children) as an interesting or exciting thing to do.

"I think life as a refugee is very boring. So having something like this in your week, and talking to different people who aren't refugees themselves, I think it's interesting for them. And also I feel it's a form of therapy; that they really like to let their emotions out. You saw them today, they like the idea of this having an impact. Maybe their message will affect people and something will change, because otherwise they're just waiting."
Adult female, Save the Children staff (02), Jordan

"I would say, for some of them, it gives them pride to be seen on TV. It is not something which occurs every day. Maybe that is why they agreed to be photographed without

asking questions, without knowing what would happen [afterwards]."
Adult male, Save the Children staff (02), Niger

Several of the staff in Bangladesh asserted that it was their Country Programme's policy never to make promises to potential contributors. Despite this policy, they recognised that people have their own expectations of support and assistance in these situations. Several staff recognised that for someone in extreme poverty, having someone show an interest in your life, or asking you to travel some distance to participate, could suggest some aid or assistance might be forthcoming.

Two staff members in Niger believe that participation is largely to do with the contributors' positive relationship with and experience of Save the Children, and their desire to give something back, as explained in extracts from their interviews below.

"When there is a formal request from Save the Children, people will gladly respond because they will feel that it is for their own good. And in return it is not something that will cause problems for them… Sometimes when the population sees someone showing some kind of interest, they feel it is time to express some of their needs, etc, so they are willing to talk."
Adult female, Save the Children staff (04), Niger

"Why will they [agree to be photographed/filmed]? Not to be on television in England. I don't think that is a specific objective for these people. I think that if they were granted a service and they have enjoyed it, if the relationship with Save was positive… then I think they [agree] because it helps them to give something back to Save who came to do this job without asking for something in return."
Adult male, Save the Children staff (05), Niger

5.4 REASONS FOR NOT CONTRIBUTING

All groups of research participants (contributors, non-contributors and staff) shared their ideas about why potential contributors may decide not to contribute their image and story. For staff, some of what they describe may be based on experience; for contributors and non-contributors the reasons they put forward are based on imagining themselves being asked to contribute to some of the content shared with them during the interview or focus group. Several distinct rationales were provided for these decisions, and these are presented below. While some of these were site-specific, others were mentioned in more than one location. Similar themes emerged in the questions relating to the real (and anticipated) consequences of being featured in Save the Children communications, and are presented in Chapter 7.

Social stigma: Several research participants in the **UK** explained that they would not agree to have their or their children's image included in Save the Children content, such as the TV adverts shown to them, due to the social stigma attached to the poverty depicted.

"I wouldn't [agree to have my child in a film like that], because I would feel that people would definitely be looking at me then, and be like… 'Oh, how could she? How could she let her son, how could she let herself get in such a state with this child?'"
Mel, adult female, contributor, UK

"You probably don't want people seeing that you're poor. You're probably quite ashamed of it."
Focus group with women, UK

"My situation has been pretty dire in the past, but I never would have done that… I wouldn't want my child to be labelled with that image forever. It may be a pride thing… I wouldn't go to the media and tell them that I am poor. What would I gain from that? We know there's poverty in Britain. I don't see why I should stand up and go 'I'm poor. Look at me.' I wouldn't do it."
Focus group with women, UK

A UK staff member also empathised with these concerns:

"If you're trying to talk about poverty and families struggling with income, that's something that people don't confess to anyone… support workers and social services, they all know… but the [people themselves] won't be advertising it to everyone that actually things are really tough and things are really difficult… And I totally understand when they say no."
Adult male, Save the Children staff (01), UK

For some research participants in **Jordan**, there appeared to be some concern attached to how women featured alone in images will be perceived by others. Several female contributors (and/or relatives of female contributors) expressed their preference for not being filmed/photographed in the future, and a number requested that their images (already taken by Save the Children) are not used in any future content.[39] In the 2010 *Depicting Injustice* research, Somali research participants in a refugee camp in Kenya explained why images featuring their children on their own were problematic. They felt that if others in the community saw these images it would bring shame to the family for not being able to care properly for their children.[40]

Fear of reprisals: One of the reasons for people not wanting to contribute their image or story in Jordan, according to staff there, relates to a fear of reprisals for their relations still in Syria. This is explored in further detail in Chapter 7.

The permanence of portrayal: There was a specific concern among UK non-contributors about how children might feel in the future about media content they feature in. They questioned whether their children would want a permanent record of themselves in poverty.

"I don't think I would be happy, because, with film and everything, especially these days, everything's permanent."

"Your child could be associated with that for the rest of their lives."

"It's not the child's choice. They have got to live with that the rest of their life."
Focus group with women, UK

Lack of confidence or self-esteem: Two staff in UK explained that the reason behind someone saying 'no' in the UK, in their experience, is often to do with low self-esteem and a belief that their story isn't good enough.

Lack of direct benefit: Several staff in Bangladesh and one in Niger mentioned a view held within certain communities or among potential contributors that there is no follow-up or benefit for those who participate in content production, while the INGO benefits from funds raised.

One member of staff from Bangladesh[41] reported an example of the time a woman refused to be photographed for the reason that "you are collecting money which doesn't come to us".

"Sometimes when you go to a family, some will say 'I will not answer because you are the type of NGO who just come to confuse us with your questions and then you go. We no longer see you'."
Adult female, Save the Children staff (03), Niger

"[Some communities] in Bangladesh are very well-informed about NGOs' activities: filming, photography, case studies… and they actually hold a frustration, 'Oh, some NGOs have come. They will take photos and print them and will collect donations and they'll not give a single penny [to us].' This is their inner voice… They'll allow you, but they have an inner voice. They have a feeling that 'Okay, after taking the photos, you'll go away. And I'll not see you ever again and you will share my picture with donors and get our money'. Sometimes, when we try to take photos they'll say, 'OK, give me

money, because I know… he (photographer? Save the Children?) will earn money… selling my pictures."
Adult male, Save the Children staff (02), Bangladesh

5.5 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has explored the expectations, experiences, values and meanings surrounding the motivations and decisions to contribute that are not specifically related to a formal consent process. Agreement for one's image or story to be used in communication materials is generally the outcome of a dialogue, influenced by relationships between – and assumptions and expectations held by – both the 'giver' and the 'taker' of the story.

The intention (and assumption) of consent processes is that informed consent is the result of a contributor understanding the purpose and use of the content in which they will feature and the consequences of doing so. This research demonstrates, however, that consent is influenced by a range of factors that include but go beyond an understanding of purpose.

There were a number of contributors in the UK and Jordan, and one or two in Bangladesh and Niger, who understood the power of the media and recognise that through sharing their image and story they can raise awareness of an issue and in doing so help others. These accounts suggest a degree of agency on the part of the contributor in participating in image making.

The accounts of UK contributors of their reasons for participating in image making highlight its empowering potential – an opportunity for someone who has received help from a programme to play a role in helping others. It is important to question when this sentiment is a demonstration of contributors' agency – the ability to give rather than just receive – and when it could be a sign of indebtedness representing the unequal power relationship between beneficiary and INGO. While it is important to acknowledge that the act of 'giving' (rather than receiving) can be empowering, it is equally important to remember that choice is critical in maintaining agency.

Contributors and non-contributors in Jordan, Niger and Bangladesh held an expectation that contributing to image making may lead to further assistance for contributors and their communities. It is easy to empathise with this expectation: the process of contributing involves a film crew or photographer, and interviewer, demonstrating interest and concern in your and your children's welfare; if assumed to be genuine concern, an individual may hope for further support and follow-up beyond the actual image making.

Regardless of whether contributors' participation in Save the Children image making is a sign of their agency, or is motivated by a sense of obligation or expectation, the research demonstrates the significance of contributors' (and potential contributors') relationship with Save the Children, and the power and dependence within that relationship, on their decision making. Indeed, it is likely that this is the key influencing factor, especially for those contributors with limited access to visual media, and who face language and literacy barriers which may restrict their understanding and awareness of different media formats and channels that are explained to them at the time of image-making.

The relationship with Save the Children informs a range of motivations. People contribute because:
- they are grateful for assistance received from Save the Children
- they want to help Save the Children in return for help they received
- they have an expectation that participation will result in further assistance
- they feel obliged to say yes to Save the Children.

Relationships between Save the Children and contributors are context specific. The contributors interviewed in Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan may feel more dependent on Save the Children than in other contexts. Similarly, research participants who receive daily support from a Save the Children drop-in-centre or regular check-ups at a Save the Children-supported mother and baby clinic have a different relationship with Save the Children from a parent in the UK who received a one-off donation of a cot, for example. Even in the UK, however, staff shared concerns about people feeling grateful to Save the Children and that being the reason they

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[39] This was actioned immediately following the Jordan field trip and the images in question were removed from Save the Children UK's image database.

[40] This links to the critique of lone child imagery by Manzo 2008.

[41] Adult male, Save the Children staff (06), Bangladesh

agreed to contribute, regardless of whether they fully understand the purpose and potential use of their contribution. One project manager in the UK explained how occasionally she has to use her professional judgement to decide that someone may be too vulnerable to contribute, despite their willingness.

Regardless of how careful and considered the consent process, the situation of vulnerable beneficiaries being asked, by the organisation that has provided them with assistance or will do, to contribute their image and story, is not a neutral situation. There are a small number of contributors who expressed their lack of choice because of their relationship of dependence with Save the Children (or its partner). More commonly, contributors understood image making to be linked to assistance, and agreed in the hope that their contribution would result in some form of help.

Relationships of trust and respect between programme participants and the INGO concerned are essential to all INGO activity. It is inevitable, (and appropriate) that this relationship will impact on the participants' willingness to take part in a communications activity. However, it is vital to acknowledge the influence of that relationship and for INGOs to ensure that this relationship is not exploited in the interests of content production. It is similarly important for overseas staff and image-makers to acknowledge the relationship between local staff and potential contributors, and to understand the pressure local staff may be subject to: on the one hand to please the external image-maker; on the other hand, to maintain their duty of care towards programme beneficiaries.

Acknowledging the impact of these relationships can support those involved in image making to work towards consent being as fully informed as possible and to effectively manage expectations. The next chapter presents contributors' experiences of the image-making process, including the formal consent process.

6 PROCESS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research findings that relate to the research question:

What are contributors' experiences of, and the communities' opinions on, the image-making process?

First-hand experiences of the image-making process were shared by contributors and some Save the Children staff. Non-contributors had limited first-hand experience of the image-making process to share, however some, especially children, did share views on the importance of gathering permissions and consent.

Most of the image making discussed during this research involved a professional filmmaker or photographer.[42] In the case of Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger, these professionals were often from overseas, and the image making that took place was not in the context of a rapid onset emergency.

Some of the image making involved Save the Children working together with an external media agency, including the BBC and Al Jazeera, which at times may have resulted in a different process from one led by Save the Children. This research, however, is focused on the experience of the contributor who is unlikely to distinguish between a Save the Children image maker and one from a media agency; these differences in process were therefore not examined within this research.

There are notable differences between image making in the UK and in the other research sites. The UK does not host image-making trips from overseas offices, and so image making does not involve the use of translators. It also tends to be overseen by the same member of staff who communicates with contributors in advance of, during, and after any image gathering. These factors appear to contribute to a consistently good image-making process for UK contributors, and the opportunity for staff involved to easily amend practice based on experience and learning.

The other significant difference with the UK as a research site is that UK contributors also form part of the audience for whom the content is produced (the UK general public).[43] It is presumed this close proximity to the audience could affect the image-making process as it creates a greater imperative for informed consent to be fully realised due to the likelihood of the finished content being seen by the contributors and people they know (friends, neighbours and relatives).

This chapter is divided into three main sections:
- contributors' experiences of the image-making process, presented stage-by-stage
- non-contributors' views on permissions and consent
- staff experiences of, and reflections on, the image-making process.

6.2 CONTRIBUTORS' EXPERIENCES OF THE IMAGE-MAKING PROCESS

Most accounts of the image-making process from all four sites were uncritical, and included some positive responses, particularly in the UK. Contributors referred to:
- good communication, before, during and after the image gathering (UK)
- being treated with sensitivity and respect (UK, Jordan, Bangladesh)
- having an enjoyable and fun experience (UK, Jordan, Bangladesh).

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[42] The participatory photography project *Inside Zaatari* was evidently different in terms of process, but this research did not aim to explore that particular process in detail.

[43] The data therefore contains some limited audience feedback, from women from low-income households in the UK, for example references to TV adverts making them feel guilty and preferences for information about how funds raised are spent.

Alongside the positive accounts, some significant concerns did arise about different aspects of the image-making process from contributors at all sites. These concerns can be outlined as follows:

- lack of advance notice of image making taking place (Jordan, Bangladesh, Niger)
- a limited understanding of the purpose of the image making and the resulting content (Jordan, Bangladesh, Niger)
- long and tiring process (Bangladesh and UK)
- lack of awareness of contributors' needs during image making (UK)
- image making when contributor was preoccupied with needs of her child – impairing her ability to make a decision regarding consent (Niger)
- lack of any follow-up and return of photographs or finished content (Jordan, Bangladesh, Niger).

Contributors' experiences of the image-making process are presented below according to the different stages of that process.

6.2.1 Communication with contributors before image gathering takes place

Interaction between contributors and Save the Children (or its partner) in advance of image making is an opportunity to explain purpose and process, and to enable contributors to ask questions and to consider, in advance, whether they want to contribute. All UK contributors referred to clear and timely communication before the filming or photography; this is evidently standard practice in the UK and constitutes an important part of the consent process. Only a few contributors from Jordan, Niger and Bangladesh referred to being consulted prior to the image gathering taking place.

The researchers recognised that the arrangements and advance communication that took place for this research could reflect those that take place in advance of image making. While most research participants had been informed in advance of their need to be present for someone coming to talk with them, the majority were still not clear why they had been asked to participate in the research.

6.2.2 Informed consent: contributors' understanding and procedures

There are two key aspects to the consent process. First is the 'informed' part, which aims to ensure that potential contributors are clear about the purpose and format of the intended content and the expected audience. Becoming 'informed' relies on clear communication by Save the Children, its partner, or the image maker. Second is the procedure of completing a consent form. Save the Children, like other organisations involved in image-making, places the emphasis on informed consent being achieved through meaningful dialogue, not form-filling alone.

Almost all contributors at the four research sites recall signing a consent form at the time of image making, however, many in Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger were unclear or had only a vague understanding of why they had been photographed or filmed.

It is important to note the interviews carried out for this research took place many months – in some cases one or two years – after the image making. Contributors' reported limited understanding of the purpose of image making could suggest inadequate communication at the time of the filming or photography, but could also be because they no longer remember (even if it was explained to them clearly at the time).

Among contributors interviewed in **Jordan**, understanding of the use of and potential audiences for the content to which they had contributed was mixed. Some remembered clearly what they had been told at the time of image making, others were less clear. For some contributors, uncertainty around purpose, audience, and use fuelled anxiety over possible consequences of their contribution (for more on this see the following chapter). For those contributors, receiving copies of their content and information on audiences during the interviews for this research served to assuage that anxiety.

Tariq: **"Yes, we signed a form [like the one we signed today]."**

Did you understand what they were going to use the interview and the filming for?

Tariq: **"No, they didn't tell us, and we didn't understand what they were going to use the film for. They told us they were going to make a film about a little girl. We didn't know why."**

Reem: **"I thought the film would be about the living conditions here in this camp."**
Tariq (male) and Reem (female), parents, contributors, Jordan

The extract below from the focus group with women in Jordan, some of whom were contributors themselves, demonstrates a lack of clarity, and some confusion about purpose and use among those contributors.

"They asked us to bring our children… that's the reason why we accepted the offer; the pictures were for our children… The priority was given to children." [44]

"Apart from taking pictures, there were other activities such as plays… It was up to us whether to have our pictures taken or not. They picked just a few of those women who agreed to be photographed. There were numerous women who decided not to have their picture taken… We covered our faces."

"We were afraid that someone would see us."

"If we had known the purpose of the meeting, we would not have covered our faces."

"They should have told us about the purpose of these pictures."

"The head of the Children's Centre encouraged us to have our pictures taken."
Focus group with women, Jordan

Six out of the seven contributors in **Bangladesh** said they had signed a consent form.[45] Several contributors however referred to not understanding these forms and most contributors appear to have only a very general understanding of the purpose of the image making; of it being a positive action that could result in support or assistance. Several contributors in **Niger** said they were not told about the purpose of the image making and one said she had not been asked for her consent. The use of consent forms was mentioned by most contributors in Niger, but again, some said they did not understand them. One woman said she did not have the education to understand the form.

Zoulaye: **"No [I was not told the reasons for the filming]. They did not do anything, they only took the pictures. I think they came about three times."**

Haliku: **"They only asked us if they could take shots of us and put us in a video… And we said if it is something for good then they can take it that is all."**

But they did not tell you what they will do with it?

Zoulaye: **"No, they did not."**
Haliku (male) and Zoulaye (female), parents, contributors, Niger

Zara: **"(Laughs) they gave me the chance [to agree or not]. He explained to me that they**

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[44] Unclear whether they thought photographs were to be given to their children or would support their children's welfare.

[45] The contributor who didn't sign a consent form was interviewed by a BBC journalist as opposed to Save the Children, and consent forms had not been on offer.

will only snap[46] [my son] if I agree. I said I have agreed, they can snap him.They gave me [a paper to sign] and said I should do that there, so I wrote it down."

Did they read out what was on the paper to you?

Zara: **"Your work cannot be understood. If I was educated I could understand and I could say it was with my consent or not. But I do not know."**
Zara, adult female, contributor, Niger

6.2.3 Experiences of the image gathering itself

Most contributors did not refer to any particular problems or difficulties during the filming or photography. For some, their experiences reflect their motivation for participating: they felt good about the experience because they understood they were doing something positive that will ultimately help others. They also appreciated the acknowledgement by others that their experiences and opinions are worth listening to and recording. Across all four research sites, however, a small number of contributors shared their less positive experiences of the image-making process.

Contributors in the **UK** used the following words to describe the experience: 'relaxed', 'fun', 'enjoyable', but also 'long' and 'tiring'. Most contributors described how they were treated sensitively and with respect, in terms of receiving full explanations of what was going to happen as well as being asked regularly if they were comfortable with the interview questions and image making, and being clearly told they could pull out at any time. Only one contributor in the UK was critical of the process, in relation to the image-gathering team all being male, and the fact that refreshments weren't provided despite the fact she was with them for three hours.

"The house was overrun with all these people. But it was good fun. It was good fun. I think it did start to raise awareness and did help a lot of people."
Nicola, adult female, contributor, UK

"They came, and they explained what would go on with Save the Children, how there'd always be somebody there with me. And if I wasn't happy I could stop any interview."
Mel, adult female, contributor, UK

"We had some paper we signed and it was saying that any time we might want to back out or anything like that… He left me his number [saying] they won't be offended if we say, 'No, we don't want these published, or we don't want this put out'. He said, 'It's fine, it's up to you…' So we didn't feel as though we were pressured into anything."
Dave, adult male, contributor, UK

"I think that Save the Children treated us very delicately with everything. And everything was questioned, and over-questioned. 'Are you okay with this? Are you okay with that? Would you mind if this happened? Would you mind if it was in the photograph?' Everything was clearly explained so that if there was anything that we didn't want to happen, it wouldn't… There's nothing that I can say that should have been done in a different way, or we weren't treated right, or nothing. Everything was perfect."
Nicola, adult female, contributor, UK

The majority of the contributors in Jordan expressed positive feelings about the process of being filmed or photographed and interviewed. Two contributors admitted to finding the interview emotional because of the issues being discussed. One parent felt that the process was tiring for their child – but that this did not detract from the child's enjoyment of the day.

"I was nervous because it was the first time I went through such an experience. I wanted to do something that would help people. We were happy and excited in the beginning. Then later, we started crying because we were overwhelmed by the interview."
Amira, aged 18, female, contributor, Jordan

"I remember they came to my house. I sat with the photographer, we spent the day together, and we had much fun."
Yusuf, aged 18, male, contributor, Jordan

Reem: **"They spent the whole day with us… we had a great time together. They were very humble… I cooked for them, we had lunch together, and the photographer used his hands to eat the meal. I was surprised! They were from the UK. One of the guys even talked a bit about his life…he told us he was engaged, and he had been to Afghanistan… it was a good experience."**

Tariq: **"We love having guests."**

Reem: **"We were happy to have them here."**
Tariq (male) and Reem (female), parents, contributors, Jordan

Words contributors in **Bangladesh** used to describe the experience of the filming or photography include: 'affectionate', 'fine', 'polite', 'good', 'happy', and 'irritating'.

"I felt good [when the photographs were being taken]. I felt happy. It seemed like, with the photos they took, it seemed like my fate will be changed now. I felt some kind of happiness. They have a purpose and it might bring good to me… This is a kind of happy feeling that I felt."
Habiba, adult female, contributor, Bangladesh

"I felt good… They took my pictures; everyone will see my picture, they took my pictures very affectionately… They talked to me very nicely, they did everything nicely."
Retna, adult female, contributor, Bangladesh

Aklima: **"How did we feel? We left our work to do that. But they said that they are taking the photos for a good reason. So okay."**

Sanchita: **"With all these children, I am helpless. I have to work a lot. Sometimes**

I felt OK but sometimes I felt irritated. What could I do?"
Aklima and Sanchita, adult females, contributors, Bangladesh

For some of the **Niger** contributors, their recollection of the filming or photography is tied closely to the well-being of their child, either in terms of their concern or the assistance they were receiving at the time (or were about to receive). Zara recalled much detail of the filming and extracts from her interview are presented below. She explained she didn't ask about the purpose of the film, because at the time her only concern was her child's welfare:

"They asked me if I have a problem… Yes, they told me to get set because they will film us… I went to the hospital with my child, who was sick, and they told me to get ready for a picture that they will take there to show how he is… And it was the other man (interpreter) who was telling me what they said as they do not understand the language I speak… He said I should cover him, that it is not proper to snap him without clothes on… I covered him with a wrapper and that was how the picture was snapped.

"No, I did not ask them [what they are going to do with the film]. When they snapped, all I wanted was to see that my child got cured. That is all.

"They took the film, and I thought it was done in order to find a way to get the boy cured. They said they will come back… They just took the film and told me that they will be leaving but will return…

"When the picture was taken, I was not looking at the camera. I was looking at the man. They sometimes had to tell me to look at the camera. My mind was not there; I was in tears when they were doing it. I was upset and hugging him. People gathered, many Muslims, everyone was looking at me."

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[46] 'Snap' is the literal translation from the Hausa; there are not different words for 'photographed' and 'filmed'. In this interview, the contributor is referring to the time she was filmed.

Zara compared the film featuring her and her son with another Save the Children film shown to her in which the contributor talks to the camera. Zara explained that the reason why she didn't talk to the camera was because she was so upset and preoccupied with her son:

"At that time, it was only the boy that was in my mind… his condition was my main problem… At that time even if I was asked a question, I was not feeling good. He was on my mind, he was sick and there is no one else that can hold him."
Zara, adult female, contributor, Niger

Another contributor, a nurse working with Save the Children, contributed to the same film as Zara. It is important to acknowledge he was contributing in his professional capacity whereas Zara was contributing as the mother of a critically ill child. He remembered being informed in advance and understanding clearly the purpose of the film. He also recalled that the father of the ill child agreed to the filming because "the goal was to save his child and he didn't see [filming] would be a problem".

6.2.4 Follow-up and returning photographs

This research found that it is only in the UK that returning photographs and sharing final content are considered usual practice. However, three contributors from Jordan do refer to some form of feedback, such as a phone call or being shown some of the images taken.

Some contributors in Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger were shown images on the back of a camera at the time they were taken, however, only one out of the 44 non-UK contributors had received a copy of a photograph. Several expressed their disappointment with the lack of follow-up and the failure to return copies of photographs or content.

All contributors received copies of photographs and/or the content featuring them at the time of the interview for this research, and these were warmly received and valued.

Contributors in the **UK** shared their appreciation of receiving copies of photographs taken and related content as well as follow-up communication with Save the Children after the image gathering.

"He kept me in touch…'I'll send you some copies of the pictures and I'll send you the pamphlets which things have featured in as well'. So I was kept up to date with what was happening. I think he's been the only contact… it's been very good because of the continuity with families… It's not different people [being in touch], it's the same person."
Mary, adult female, contributor, UK

"They sent us a package of photos – a big massive envelope with all the photos they took… they sent some bookmarks through and then I got this big booklet about research and it shows all different things about kids reading aloud and stuff like that."
Dave, adult male, contributor, UK

One contributor described positively the support she received from Save the Children immediately following the broadcast of a TV news item she featured in, to help her cope with the negative feedback directed at her, posted online by members of the public (see Chapter 7).

Three contributors in **Jordan** – those who had contributed to image gathering led by the Jordan office rather than an overseas production team – referred to some form of follow-up. Two[47] stated that the media officer returned after the interview to show them their photographs on the back of the camera so that they could select which ones should be included in the report. Another[48] said that the media officer called him to tell him that his photographs were in an Al Jazeera article; as it happened, he had already been informed of this by his relatives. Other experiences in relation to follow-up and returning images were less positive.

"We expected to see what they filmed. Nothing more and nothing less."
Reem, adult female, contributor, Jordan

"I didn't hear back from them. I didn't have the chance to get to know him (the filmmaker) better, it was only one day, afterwards he left. I didn't hear back from him again… I know all the reporters that came here; no one ever comes back."
Yusuf, aged 18, male, contributor, Jordan

For the parents of one contributor the lack of follow-up clearly caused some anxiety.

Mustafa: **"They made an interview with us, but they should have shown us all the photos they took. They took the photos and they left, we don't know what they used them for."**

Riwa: **"We agreed to take such photos."**

Mustafa: **"I know, but she didn't show us the photos. She took the photos and she left. We don't know what she will use the photos for… we were worried because they could use them to tell a different story. They should use them in the right way. They should show the pictures to people in the UK, the US, France and other countries of the world. That would be OK, we wouldn't mind. We would like to get some guarantees that our pictures will be used in the right way. We wouldn't like to make the world think that people living in Zaatari camp are beggars or terrorists."**
Mustafa (male) and Riwa (female), parents, contributors, Jordan

Several of the contributors in **Bangladesh** had been shown their photographs on the back of the camera at the time they were taken. Only one contributor[49] had been given a copy of a photograph. The same contributor referred to several follow-up visits since the image was taken, but it is not clear whether these related to concern with her welfare, interest in her story, or both. Another[50] had seen the film he was part of via the organisation he works for, but had not received his own copy of it nor an online link to it.

Still image from the Street Children documentary, Niger (2012)

"I talked with my sister. Then my sister said 'Where are the pictures? Show the pictures. Why didn't you keep one of the pictures?' I told her that they came from our office and they took my pictures. I asked for the pictures and they told me they would give them to me, but they never gave them back."
Habiba, adult female, contributor, Bangladesh

In Niger, some of the contributors from the Street Children documentary (commissioned by the Niger Country Programme) had been invited to view a penultimate edit of this film, prior to it being finalised. None of the other image making experienced by contributors in Niger for this research involved returning photographs or content. One contributor explained,

"No. I did not [see the film], it was never brought to me. It was taken but it was not brought here."
Zoulaye, adult female, contributor, Niger

Even the contributor from Niger who was a member of Save the Children staff and had access to the internet had not heard back from the Save the Children UK production team following filming and had not had a chance to see the film in which he featured.[51]

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47 Amira and Fatima, aged 18, females, contributors, Jordan

48 Mohamad, adult male, contributor, Jordan

49 Retna, adult female, contributor, Bangladesh

50 Selim, aged 18, male, contributor, Bangladesh

51 He wanted to keep a copy of the film when he was finally shown it during this research project, but lacked enough space on his USB. A copy was left at the Tessaoua Save the Children field office so he and others could access it there.

6.3 PERMISSIONS AND CONSENT: NON-CONTRIBUTORS' VIEWS

Some non-contributors, especially children, shared their views on permissions and consent. Some of these views were based on their own experiences of being photographed (not by Save the Children), others were based on discussing some of the content shared during the focus group and considering whether those featured had been asked.

Children in focus groups were encouraged to share their views and ideas, using imagined scenarios or role play. Children in the UK, without any prompting, shared their dislike of being photographed without their knowledge, for example, when busy playing or asleep. Children in Bangladesh and Niger explained how they would assert their right to be asked if someone tried to photograph them. Not all child research participants like having their photograph taken and some were aware of the potential negative consequences of being portrayed in INGO communications.

"If someone wants to take my photo, he must ask me, then he can take it, but if he does not ask me then we may fight… If he asks me plainly then it is okay, I will agree. But don't go and put me all over town."
Focus group with older boys (aged 14–18), Niger

"I don't like photos, only sometimes… sometimes you're a bit like 'oh I'll have my picture taken', sometimes you're like 'no – go away from me, no picture'."
Focus group with children (aged 9–11), UK

The children in Bangladesh had much to say about permissions; they had received advice from staff at the Drop in Centre on how to respond to people trying to photograph them while they are out on the street – it was clearly something they had considered before.

When watching the *Tomorrow* TV advert (showing children asleep and waking up around the world, including in Bangladesh), the older girls (aged 14–18)

Still image from TV advert Tomorrow (2013)

in Bangladesh were concerned about the potential lack of permission for those children featured.[52] For some, these concerns were based on their own experiences; for others they were based on hearsay about street children being drugged and images being manipulated and sold.

Do you think that it was right to film the children when they were sleeping?

"I think… as a girl, I sleep on the road, if he takes the photo, he may take a bad photo of me and upload it on the internet. That [represents] harm done to me but he (the photographer) may gain a profit. If people see that they will say I saw that girl, she is bad. Of course, I didn't do anything bad, but he can cut my face and add it [into a picture]. It is not right. He will attach my face, he won't attach my body, just my face – and then make a bad video and sell that in the market. Many people do that. So many people wanted to do that to me."

"Many people do that."

"If anyone takes a photo of me, and does not ask me… This even happened a few days earlier."
Focus group with older girls (aged 14–18), Bangladesh

One child in the focus group with younger children (aged 7–11) recounted their own experience (which is *not* in relation to an image maker with Save the Children):

"It happened to me… I was sleeping at Kamalapur. Then a woman came followed by a man. They wanted to take my picture and publish it in the newspaper, wanted to send it to foreign countries. I told them not to take my picture without my permission… They told lies; they said 'we did not take your picture'. So I told them 'let me check your mobile then', but they didn't let me."

Younger children in Bangladesh were very clear about what they would say to someone who took their photograph without permission:

"I would say, 'Why did you take my photo without my permission?'"

"You took my photo without telling me. You did wrong by taking my picture without telling me."

"You should not have taken our photos. You have taken our photos without any written permission. Take our sign (signature/mark) on permission paper. Without taking our sign on permission paper, you didn't do the right thing by taking our pictures."

"I would say, 'you took my photo, did you take my permission for that? You could have asked me first. I might give you the permission, I might say 'yes', or 'no', or something and then you could take my photo.'"
Focus group with younger children (aged 7–11), Bangladesh

Only one child out of all those engaged in the research said he wouldn't mind if someone took his photograph without asking, provided its purpose was to bring assistance:

"Even without my knowledge I want my picture to be taken and sent abroad, so that when they see it over there they will help us. Yes [even if I wasn't asked], they should take it and send it, if they see the picture they will assist."
Focus group with older boys (aged 14–18), Niger

A community stakeholder in the UK explained how the idea of informed consent could be compromised if the contributor in question is totally focused on the well-being of their child. Her comments echo the experience shared by the contributor Zara from Niger quoted above:

How might you feel if your child was very sick and Save the Children said, "Can we make a film of that to help raise awareness?"

"I think, in all honesty, if I was in that situation, I would be so completely worried about my own child, I wouldn't listen to what anybody else said, so I could well just say yes… When your child is ill, you're not thinking straight."
Focus group with women, UK

6.4 STAFF EXPERIENCES OF AND PERSPECTIVES ON THE IMAGE-MAKING PROCESS

A number of staff at each research site had first-hand experience of the image-making process. Much of this chapter (with the exception of data from the UK) relates to experiences shared by staff and contributors of filming or photography arranged by other Save the Children offices.

In Jordan and Niger, however, some staff interviewed talked proudly of the communications which had been devised and driven by their Country Programme. It appears that image gathering for these projects was likely to have been less rushed, with more opportunities for communication with contributors before and after photography or filming than those involving overseas image makers. The staff interviewed in Niger who were directly involved with the making of the Street Children documentary (commissioned by Save the Children Niger) talked about being actively involved in the production of the film and all interaction with children. They were also asked to provide their feedback on an initial edit of the film and to share the penultimate edit with the children interviewed and their families.

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52 In this case, permission of children featured in the film had been sought unless the children were fully anonymised.

During interviews with staff, a number of responsibilities towards contributors emerged and were discussed. There was a strong emphasis on the importance of explaining the purpose of photography or filmmaking to contributors, alongside a commitment to the care and well-being of those being filmed or photographed, especially children. To summarise, they felt they had a responsibility to:

• protect those who are vulnerable, especially children (All)
• manage expectations (All)
• ensure established policies and procedures are followed (All)
• communicate clearly with contributors (All)
• maintain relationships (Niger, Jordan)
• understand context and culture (Jordan)
• protect dignity and avoid stereotyping (Jordan and Niger)
• provide reassurance and good translation (Jordan)
• feedback with contributors after image making (All)
• ensure consent is obtained for re-use (UK only).

A number of these responsibilities are explored in more detail below.

Responsibility to those who are vulnerable: Staff at each site talked about their responsibilities to ensure Save the Children protects those contributors who may be very willing to be photographed or filmed and tell their story, but whom they consider to be vulnerable and for whom the process, or subsequent use of images, poses risks. In Niger and Bangladesh, staff referred to vulnerable children who are living on the streets, or who have been sexually exploited. They explained that the solution is to spend more time with child contributors, allowing time for clear explanation, and for children to be able to absorb that information and consider their response.

"If you develop rapport with children, you can do many things. They will be very happy to have your company, and you know photography is exciting for children, they like it… and most children don't know that images can be used in a negative way…"[53]

"So, to me, just getting an agreement from a child… shouldn't be the end. Because they should know the implications, what the consequences are… then they can give the right answer… Sometimes, we are in a hurry, and we give just a brief explanation of the objective of taking the photographs… we don't let them know about the negative consequences. But if they know that, then they can think from a different perspective also."
Adult male, Save the Children staff (04), Bangladesh

"The only challenge, at the level of protection, that I noticed concerns the consent of street children… It is not obvious for them to understand what it is all about and what the stakes are of consenting, of what he will sign… especially a street child who is not necessarily in a stable condition, under the influence of drugs."
Adult male, Save the Children staff (02), Niger

"[Children] don't understand the scope of what they will participate in. They will see a camera, they will be happy to know that they will be photographed, they will be happy to talk on a mic. It means that their consent is guaranteed… But, I think these rights have to be respected anyway and explained… their consent is required – in a written voluntary way."
Adult female, Save the Children staff (04), Niger

"Child safeguarding will always take priority over foreign media demands… at the end of the day we are a child rights organisation and not a media agency."
Adult male, Save the Children staff (01), Jordan

Responsibility to communicate clearly and manage expectations: Two UK staff members emphasised the importance of meetings with contributors before photography or filming takes place as part of the consent process. These meetings also serve as an opportunity to gather useful information to brief the image maker and alert them to any sensitivities or areas that cannot

be covered. Staff in Jordan described the process of visiting potential contributors prior to any image making to introduce the purpose and to check their willingness to contribute:

"We never go to the field without someone having previously gone to talk to them, before having the camera in their faces and telling them 'OK, this is what we want'. No, we talk to them, we try to engage with them and we tend to do that through someone who they already know from our team on the ground."
Adult male, Save the Children staff (01), Jordan

Staff in Bangladesh and Niger also talked about the importance of spending time with contributors and potential contributors before image gathering. However, this was rarely referred to by contributors, suggesting that it is perhaps not as consistently adhered to as in the UK or that contributors don't necessarily connect the prior communication by the Country Programme staff with the filming or photography by a team from overseas.

Responsibility to follow-up and feedback: Staff at all sites shared a belief in the importance and value of follow-up and feedback with contributors as part of the image-making process, however the research suggests that it is only in the UK that this is standard practice. Staff in Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger cited limitations to effective follow-up and the returning of images, including logistical difficulties reaching contributors in remote locations and general lack of capacity. A staff member from Niger also raised the issue of some content requiring translation before it could be shared with contributors.

One staff member in the UK saw feedback as an important way to demonstrate respect to the contributor as an equal stakeholder in the image-making process:

"It's about keeping promises… and making sure they feel safe and looked after. It's about consistency – that they always get copies of things to keep… It's just treating them as part of a team, in the same way you would if somebody had done a fantastic piece of work for you. It's about adhering to promises that you make so they walk away

from it with their head held high, thinking, 'That was a good experience. I might do that again.' [Ensuring that] they don't walk away feeling a little bit used."
Adult female, Save the Children staff (02), UK

The same staff member emphasised Save the Children's responsibility to alert potential contributors to any negative consequences resulting from their contribution, such as critical comments on social media, and to provide any necessary support.

Responsibility to check consent for re-use (UK only): During the research period this became standard practice in the UK. A UK member of staff explained why this was important:

• Contributors' circumstances and preferences can change between the time of the original image gathering and any re-use.
• As child contributors grow up they may not want to see images of their younger selves associated with Save the Children messaging.
• It could be uncomfortable for a contributor to come across an image of themselves in published content of which they were unaware.
• A contributor could withdraw all consent if they felt that something was produced without their knowledge.

6.5 CONCLUSIONS

The debate on INGO images of global poverty has tended to consider and judge the image alone, rather than recognise it as the result of a process that involves multiple stakeholders, one of whom is the individual featured in the image – the contributor. For the contributor, it is the image-making process they have direct experience of; the image may be produced for and consumed by distant audiences, but the image-making process is what happens to the contributor.

The research showed that for contributors (and staff) good practice in the image-making process matters; when contributors felt they were treated with sensitivity and respect, they expressed this and clearly felt valued, and good about their contribution.

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[53] During the focus groups with children, however, they demonstrated their awareness of potential 'negative' uses of their image.

Much of what we refer to as 'process' is about communication. Contributors in UK were by far the most positive about the process; they talked with enthusiasm (often unprompted) about the way image making was conducted. They also appreciated the regular communication with the same person, before, during and after image gathering.

Most research participants assume an association between Save the Children content and potential assistance for those depicted. Yet for many contributors in Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger there was a definite lack of clarity over why their image and story had been taken, how it will be used, and its intended audience. It would appear there are several factors contributing to this lack of clarity:

- Image makers generally don't speak the language of the contributor and communication is dependent on interpretation, of varying quality.
- In some locations contributors' lack of media literacy means they will face challenges in understanding the explanations given for how their image and story will be used. A staff member interviewed as part of the Niger research believes that many contributors from Niger portrayed in Save the Children content will be unable to conceptualise the use of their images because of their own lack of access to visual media, she explained, "we are asking people to make a decision on something that they don't really [understand]."
- At the time of some image gathering, contributors were entirely focused on their child's well-being and therefore could not engage in discussions about purpose and use.

An aspect of good practice which emerged during the UK research were the examples of contributors' agency during image gathering to realise some of their preferences in relation to their portrayal. For example, one contributor did not want to be filmed outside in her neighbourhood and another refers to being asked about a particular shot. While it is acknowledged that it will not always be possible to reconcile completely contributors' preferences with the brief, providing opportunities to discuss preferences with contributors helps to build trust and an openness in which contributors' concerns in relation to their portrayal may emerge.

Only in the UK is returning photographs and sharing final content considered usual practice. Disappointment at the lack of any follow-up or the return of photographs or content was mentioned by many research participants, including staff, in Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger, who felt this was something that should happen as part of the process. Uncertainty over how images were used caused some concern among contributors in Jordan; follow-up would have addressed this concern. And for those contributors in Niger who were distressed or distracted at the time of the image gathering, follow-up to double check consent could be especially important. Staff interviewed were supportive of returning photographs to and following up with contributors, however they identified several challenges which made this difficult; namely, staff capacity and insufficient time and budget.

Interviews with staff across all research sites show an awareness and great willingness to improve the image-making process for contributors. Their commitment and sensitivity towards contributors and potential contributors is a great opportunity when it comes to making changes to improve the image-making process.

7 PORTRAYAL

This chapter presents the findings that relate to the following research questions:

How do contributors and their communities respond to and feel about their portrayal in Save the Children content? What are their preferences? What are their ideas for future portrayal?

What are the consequences, real and anticipated, positive and negative, for contributors and their communities, in agreeing to contribute their images and stories?

7.1 INTRODUCTION

During the research, contributors were asked to respond to their own portrayal in Save the Children content; and non-contributors (and contributors) shared their views on the portrayal of others.[54] This chapter also includes research participants' experiences of, and thoughts on, the consequences (real and anticipated) of being featured in Save the Children content and their image and story being in the public domain. Staff from all sites also shared their views on Save the Children content.

With the exception of the UK, the interviews for this research were the first time contributors had seen the Save the Children content in which they featured. Responses by contributors in Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger therefore reflected the immediate pleasure of seeing oneself or one's child in a poster, publication or film for the first time. Some, however, also expressed their sadness at seeing their child who was ill at the time their image was taken. Many had no photographs (or very few) of themselves or their children, and for most contributors interviewed there was evidently a physical and emotional value attached to the photographs and content returned to them during this research.

Research participants viewing the Save the Children content which did not feature themselves or their children tended to share their feelings about the reality depicted and/or their understanding of the content's purpose. Research participants in Jordan and UK provided more critical perspectives on content than those in Bangladesh and Niger, and had considerably more to say about the actual or potential consequences of being portrayed. Participants in Niger and Bangladesh did not refer to concerns relating to stereotypes, prejudices or how others might see them. The exception was the adolescent girls in Bangladesh, who were concerned that their image could be manipulated and that people might think they were 'bad'. Among those in rural areas, the notions of any negative consequences of portrayal were absent. This position could result from their limited access to visual media and distance from potential audiences (see Chapter 4), and the related challenge of imagining how they would be seen by others.

The findings presented in this chapter are presented by research location and within those sections, organised under the following headings: Contributors' responses (to their own portrayal); Consequences (real and anticipated – UK and Jordan only); and Portrayal of others (preferences and ideas for the future).

7.2 UK

The majority of content used in the UK research relates to childhood poverty in the UK as this is the focus of Save the Children's programme work in the UK. In some content, the existence and experience of childhood poverty was the main focus; in others the support provided by Save the Children and its partners were also a key part of the message and story. Content promoting the importance of parents' involvement in their

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[54] Research participants responded to content that mainly featured children of the same nationality as themselves, but all were also asked to respond to at least one piece of content featuring a child from a different country. A TV advert featuring a child in the Democratic Republic of Congo and a fundraising poster showing a Syrian child refugee during winter were used across all research sites.

children's education, in particular reading, was also included in the research. The types of content used included a television advert, television news features, newspaper articles, promotional or fundraising material (film and online), and policy reports. All content used was produced by Save the Children UK or in collaboration with a mainstream news agency. As noted, research participants also responded to several pieces of Save the Children content including images and stories from children in another country.

7.2.1 Contributors' responses

In four of the six contributor interviews, contributors (and any participating relatives) were entirely satisfied with the content featuring themselves and/or their partners and children. During an interview, one contributor pointed to photographs from the Save the Children photography session which she had framed on her wall: "I think they're lovely".[55] UK contributors' existing familiarity with the content may explain why most had little to say about their portrayal and their interviews tended to focus on the process of image making.

Two of the UK contributors were critical of the way they had been portrayed in the content they featured in. One felt that critical details of her story had been **edited out** of a TV news feature (her appearance on which had been arranged by Save the Children) and she believes this contributed to members of the public making negative assumptions about her as a single mother. The other, a recipient of an ESLP grant, felt the content featuring her and her child was **overly negative** and that it contrasted with the "light-hearted" discussions beforehand and consequently her expectations of what would be depicted. Her feelings about the resulting film are mixed.

Wendy: **"There were questions like, 'How bad did it really get?', 'What was the worst thing you had to cope with?', 'How does it feel being a mother and not being able to provide for your children?' That kind of language – very emotive… I thought it was going to focus on**

what life is like now and thank you so much for Save the Children for helping me through this. But it wasn't like that."

Do you feel that it tells your story – the film?

Wendy: **"Not really, but I've done marketing before, so I kind of knew pretty much what was going on… they wanted an emotive response. One of the questions was, 'Would you have survived without our help?' I was like, 'Of course I would.'"**
Wendy, adult female, contributor, UK

The contrast between Save the Children's positive and aspirational programming in the UK and the focus on the deficits or negative aspects of someone's life during some image making was also referred to by a UK staff member:

"I think there's a real conflict between the work we do as a charity, which is always uplifting and positive, and then the… conversations we have with people, [which at times] try to dig into the negative – why things are really hard or 'what's the worst thing about your life?'… So often it's difficult going into situations where people are feeling good, or trying to make good, and then you take them to… a more troubled time in their life, to get them to talk about that."
Adult male, Save the Children staff (01), UK

One contributor, however, recognised the value in sharing a candid account of her personal challenges, but she also explained how nervous she felt about publicly revealing her experience of poverty. When asked if she found anything difficult about the image gathering, she said:

"I think just being totally honest about everything. So saying that you can't afford to have fresh fruit and vegetables all the time, and you can't afford to buy fresh meat… You wouldn't normally say that to anyone, never mind the whole world… But it was about being honest, and it was about letting people know

that times are hard, and things are like that. That was the only hard part… I don't think I was expecting it to be as private and personal, but I didn't mind. I didn't mind sharing things; I wouldn't have said them if I did."
Nicola, adult female, contributor, UK

7.2.2 Consequences (real and anticipated)

Contributors talked about consequences arising from their participation, mostly in relation to feedback from others, but also their belief that their contribution did make a positive difference in terms of raising awareness about an issue and helping others. For example, one explained,

"I think it did start to raise awareness and did help a lot of people… a lot of people don't realise – they don't think that you can be poor if you live in England… [People] thought it was really good that we would help raise awareness… because it's not something that people talk about."
Nicola, adult female, contributor, UK

While contributors were aware of the potential for negative feedback from the public, most only referred to positive feedback from friends and family or other community members such as teachers who had seen the content.

"Family and friends at school… They were happy about it, they liked it. They said it's a good thing that's happened. There weren't any people… you know, that nasty side. No, we've had no bad things from it. I mean obviously being in the *Independent* newspaper you are going to have a side of people saying, 'Well he's got six kids, he's not working, that's why he can spend time reading with his kids because he doesn't do anything all day anyway'. You are going to get that, I know that and my wife knows that. But if they want to talk like that, it's their opinion… I can face it."
Dave, adult male, contributor, UK

One of the child contributors explained that her teachers saw the film she featured in and that they "…talk to me about it sometimes. They say that it was wonderful, that they liked it." Later in the interview she again said that the teachers told her, "They said I were really, really good at doing it."[56]

The contributor who spoke in detail about the negative feedback from members of the public following her appearance on a TV news feature, believes this was partly as a result of editorial choices. She explained that the feature did not share her "full story", and so fuelled common stereotypes and assumptions about unemployed single mothers. She did acknowledge the support and ongoing communication received from Save the Children while these negative comments were being posted. The same contributor reported also receiving positive feedback from the public on Facebook.

"Although I got some good feedback from people… there were a couple of internet sites that were really… being quite nasty about me. But then they weren't seeing the full story… Because obviously a lot of the stuff that I was asked in the interview… wasn't put in there [the final version]… So they didn't put things like his father at the time had completely abandoned us and didn't want to pay, didn't want anything to do with us. They didn't include that I was being treated for depression, and I was on medication which was making me… gain a lot of weight. So all this little stuff, certain things, weren't in the [final] interview, and of course that was what I was being criticised for. 'Look at her, she can't be poor because she's so fat.' That was a big one… and 'What about the father? Another one that's gone out and got herself [pregnant]'… Save the Children were good [with] that. They were calling up to make sure I was all right."
Mel, adult female, contributor, UK

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[55] Mary, adult female, contributor, UK

[56] Alice, child female, contributor, UK

7.2.3 Portrayal of others

As the above section demonstrates, contributors in the UK were largely satisfied and proud of the content featuring their (or their children's) story and image. However, when non-contributors and contributors were shown UK content which they did not feature in, the responses were generally more critical.

UK participants felt that some of the UK content shown to them was judgemental and potentially stigmatising and some was considered inaccurate or misrepresentative. Two of the staff interviewed also pointed to contradictions between Save the Children's aspirational advocacy and programming in the UK and the messages of some of its content. These concerns are explored below.

Poverty and stigma: Non-contributors shared their concerns about the risks of social stigma for those contributing to Save the Children content about poverty. It is for this reason that some said they would not agree for their children to contribute their image and story (see Chapter 5). As one said, "It's one thing telling their story, but another thing showing them in that story."[57]

In two of the adult focus groups, participants felt that part of the film promoting the FAST programme was judgemental, inaccurate and could ultimately discourage some from participating in the programme, as the following extracts from some of the focus groups illustrate.

"There is something I didn't like about it – I've got to be honest... Saying that about the poor families – that the children are failing at school, I don't believe that's true at all, I think it's down to parenting."
Focus group with women, UK

"So, people aren't going to come to FAST and go, 'Oh, yeah, I'm part of the poor community'. No, people, if they are poor or not, like they said, [they're] doing their best and everything. They don't want to be labelled."
Focus group with women, UK

*Still image from **It Shouldn't Happen Here** (2012)*

Children in one of the focus groups were also aware of the stigma attached to being seen as poor. In response to the question about why actors were used in one of the films about poverty in the UK (*It Shouldn't Happen Here*), one boy explained:

"Because poor people may not want other people out there to know they're poor, they may want to keep it a secret... So if there was a real poor person on there and he went on there and maybe his school mates saw him, then when he went back to school he might have got bullied because he was poor. Then people don't want that."
Focus group with younger children (aged 9–11), UK

Some content seen as problematic: Several research participants and one staff member shared concerns that aspects of the films shown were misrepresentative. Their comments included assertions that:
• the childhood poverty shown in one UK TV advert and a fundraising leaflet actually looks more like neglect and would result in those children being taken into care
• the implication in some content is that there's no other help available aside from Save the Children
• the experiences of childhood poverty shown in one UK TV advert misrepresents the wider reality
• the film about the FAST programme suggests all poor children will fail at school.

Despite the verbal messaging within the 2013 TV advert about the content depicting childhood poverty and not neglect, several research participants felt that it did in fact show neglect. They based this on their own experience of the UK benefits system and their opinion that any parent could make a choice that would mean that they could provide their children with sufficient food and warm clothing (the things shown as absent in the film). Watching the film made them feel "cross towards the mother, towards the parents". They felt that any children found to be in this situation would be taken into care because social services would perceive it as neglect.

"If I'd been in a situation like that... I'd have people pity me, and I'd possibly have other people report me. Because – although he said, 'this child's not abused' – people would class that as abuse. I really do think people would say, 'She's not putting a blanket on her kid, and just giving him toast'. I think the social would probably get involved... which I think is the last thing somebody needs."
Mel, adult female, contributor, UK

"I think the film's made it look like there's no help out there for them, other than Save the Children.
Focus group with women, UK

One staff member explained why he found a different UK TV advert from 2014 misleading or misrepresentative and goes on to suggest an alternative for the portrayal of poverty:

"I think it just gives a very skewed picture of families on low incomes... depicting a child all alone in a house, looking at a birthday card, where there's no adult... in what looks like quite a grubby household. It gives the impression that the parents aren't there, the parents don't care. There's no reason why the parent couldn't be talking about the guilt they feel for not being able to provide a present or a party rather than showing the child looking despondent and depressed."
Adult male, Save the Children staff (03), UK

Differences between Save the Children fundraising content and its advocacy and programming: Two staff members pointed out a tension between programming and advocacy, and content, in the words of one:

"Our advocacy... across the UK is that parents do the best they can and that quite often families on low incomes... have so little... that they make really tough choices about where that money goes... In most cases parents are making sacrifices in order that their children aren't going without basic essentials... and that's what we say in our advocacy, but we have a TV advert that kind of says the opposite. This undermines our advocacy messages, which are based on having talked to families and which aim to bust the myths that people might have about low-income households."
Adult male, Save the Children staff (03), UK

Differences for UK and overseas TV fundraising adverts: All of the TV adverts used in this research that portray childhood poverty in the UK use actors. Research participants (including staff) in the UK questioned why this wasn't the case for TV adverts portraying childhood poverty overseas, where actors are not used. Several concluded that poverty is less hidden in the overseas contexts shown – "he's not the only one like that" – and therefore the risk of social stigma would be low for those contributors. In contrast, they felt poverty in the UK

Still image from a 2014 TV advert on childhood poverty in the UK

is more hidden, more taboo, and so there are greater risks to being identified: "You know, it's not very known, it's quietened down, it's not acceptable, it's hidden." Others added that contributors from other countries would be less likely to see themselves, or identify others, as they are not the intended audience and have less access to television.

Ideas for future portrayal: As part of the interviews and focus groups, research participants were asked to share their ideas for future Save the Children content. Responses to this question from UK participants were fairly limited, with some references to covering stories on the increasing use of food banks and the poverty facing working families.

7.3 JORDAN

The content used in the Jordan research covers a range of issues including: the challenges facing child refugees; life in Zaatari refugee camp; early marriage among Syrian female refugee populations; and support for mothers and their children. The types of content used included: online news features (for Al Jazeera, the *Guardian* and the BBC); fundraising material (print and film); and an advocacy report. The content used was produced by either Save the Children UK or Save the Children Jordan.

7.3.1 Contributors' responses

Most contributors responded positively to their portrayal in the Save the Children content on seeing it for the first time during the interview for this research. For some who were concerned about the use of their image, seeing the final content prompted feelings of relief. A selection of responses is provided below. For some, reasons for liking the content relate to their motivations and its purpose of raising awareness about the situation of Syrian refugees. The concerns presented below relate to contributors' specific responses regarding their portrayal (dislike of rubbish shown in shot, issue covered considered a private matter, and dislike of

individual images of women), but also to potential consequences of their images being seen, which is covered in the next section.

"I like the film because the person who shot the movie is very talented. You can see from the film that I was tired. I like how he photographed everything. I didn't imagine it would be this way, but it turned out perfect… The film tells a sad story about my cousin who died as a martyr. [I think other people] would be very sad watching the film… I think they did a good job [editing it]… they left out some parts but the parts they left in are really sad; they tell the story I want to tell."
Yusuf, aged 18, male, contributor, Jordan

A mother who appears in some content along with her husband recognise their portrayal as being not just about themselves, but also representing other Syrian refugees. She also referred to their desire to convey the suffering experienced by those living in Zaatari.

"We liked the film… The film helps people to better understand the meaning of being a Syrian refugee. The film is also a good way to provide support and help to Syrian refugees and their children, it also raises awareness of women in the camp… Yes, [the film] represents our story… they should have included our suffering, for example… Every day is a journey of struggle. We also have to go a long distance to bring water."
Reem, adult female, contributor, Jordan

Later in the interview, Reem points out one aspect of the image making she didn't agree with: "When they were taking pictures of me while cooking, there was some garbage in my tent, so I didn't want them to take pictures of that. I didn't like that part."[58]

One group of contributors were concerned that the image and story shared in the content related to a private matter, something that should not be shared with others and that this could upset others in their

wider family. When asked how they would feel if friends or relatives saw the report they answered:

"They might blame us…"

"The older people in the family wouldn't like it because they wouldn't like to share the secrets of the family."

"Yes, this is a family's privacy."
Amira, Fatima (both aged 18) and their aunt, contributors, Jordan

Some of the women who had been photographed said they were happy about Save the Children using the group image in the future, but despite giving consent at the time it was taken, they now stated "we object to publishing our individual pictures". As requested, Save the Children UK removed several photographs from its image database to ensure they are no longer used.

7.3.2 Consequences (real and anticipated)

During interviews and focus groups, some of the contributors, or contributors' relatives, expressed their anxiety in relation to uncertainty over the use of their image and story and the potential audiences. These expressions suggest that, for some, the decision to contribute their image and story carries a perceived risk. The concerns or risks mainly relate to potential negative implications of being seen by others; a concern about how others will view them.

For one contributor the concern of 'being seen' and 'being recognised' emerged following a viewing of a film made for a 2014 fundraising event. Asked if they would allow their child to be in such a film, they said:

"We're worried about our safety, we don't want to be recognised, you know. If it's a child, then that's OK. No one can recognise who he is."
Amira, aged 18, female, contributor, Jordan

Some contributors expressed their fear of reprisals towards their relatives in Syria and to themselves if and when they manage to return – an understandable concern after fleeing a violent conflict.

How did you feel when people in Syria told you that they saw you on TV?

"We were surprised because they told us it would only appear on foreign channels… It was a good surprise even though my family didn't want us to appear on TV… because they are worried about our safety when we go back to Syria. We appeared on Alarabiya channel and Orient. They were afraid that we might get arrested by the Syrian regime if we ever went back to Syria because we appeared on TV… I was a little afraid in the beginning. We are OK now because we didn't talk about anything to make us worried; we only talked about the camp and our living conditions here."
Reem, adult female, contributor, Jordan

Some were concerned about the reputation of Syrian refugees, and not wanting to be seen as terrorists or beggars. The husband of a woman who features in Save the Children content together with his daughter was particularly anxious about possible misuse of their images.

"No, we don't have a problem if they use the pictures of the children, but they should not use the pictures of my wife… Some people might think we're begging for money… We wouldn't like to make the world think that people living in Zaatari camp are beggars or terrorists."
Mustafa, adult male, father and husband of contributors, Jordan

Seven of the ten women who participated in the focus group had been photographed as part of a Save the Children project. Several women referred to an exhibition of portrait photographs arranged by UNICEF at the camp where large images were displayed around the camp.[59] Women interviewed

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58 One contributor in the UK, a child, expressed a similar concern about not wanting others to see damaged things in her home.

59 Noor photography agency worked with UNICEF in 2012 to create a pop up studio and document images of life in Zaatari. At the time of the research the images could still be seen pasted onto the walls of the camp. http://noorimages.com/outdoor-installation-in-zaatari-refugee-camp/

referred to these images several times during the focus group and clearly did not want this to happen to the photographs of themselves. For these contributors the proximity of usage of their images was an issue; they were most concerned about local dissemination.

"We were scared of taking pictures."

"But now that we have seen them, we feel happy."

Why were you scared?

"Because some pictures are hung on walls of the camp."

"I was afraid that someone would see my pictures, and people would start talking immediately."

"When I went home [after the photographs were taken], my husband started asking me. I told him that we had pictures taken and then he got angry. He said that I should not have had the pictures taken. I tried to convince him that I covered my face. He thought that those pictures would get me into trouble. He was afraid and told me not have any pictures taken again."

"I was afraid to appear on TV, and then people will believe that I am a terrorist."
Focus group with women, Jordan

Among these women there were differences of opinion; several did not want their photographs published again; yet others were happy with their continued use. Similar disagreement occurred, or was reported, in several other interviews, between husbands and wives, between older and younger relatives and between parents and their children, demonstrating discussion and negotiation taking place in relation to portrayal, and a plurality of views, even within families.

7.3.3 Portrayal of others: preferences and ideas for future

A set of preferences for portrayal emerged during interviews and focus groups in Jordan as participants compared the content shared with them during the research or offered ideas for what they would wish to see portrayed in future content. These preferences can be outlined as:
- more stories about the difficulties and challenges of everyday life in Zaatari refugee camp
- balance in the representation of themselves and other Syrian refugees: to show their suffering but also their resilience
- to communicate the dramatic changes in circumstance that Syrian refugees had experienced – their good lives left behind as well as current difficulties
- a desire to 'speak for oneself'; for Syrian refugees communicating about their experiences directly.

Difficulties and challenges of everyday life:
The majority of ideas for future portrayal in Save the Children content related to the day-to-day difficulties of living in Zaatari camp. The extracts below illustrate these preferences and suggestions for future portrayal and show a desire to communicate the current suffering of Syrian refugees living in Zaatari.

"I would love to tell a story about how people are suffering in Zaatari camp regarding water, power, and bread… we would tell a story about our children and their suffering when they go to school. They have no shoes, they have no books… We have to go for a long distance to bring water."
Mustafa, adult male, contributor, Jordan

"There are no hospitals here, I would like to show sick people not getting help. We only get headache pills, nothing else."

"I would show people who were hurt in the war and lost their limbs."

"I would show people whose tents have been flooded."

"I would like to show floods – whenever we see a black [rain] cloud we are scared."

"Electricity being cut off, and standing in line for hours and hours to get coupons. Some women don't leave till 12am."

"When we're sick, we call ambulances but no one ever comes."
Focus group with men, Jordan

Balance in portrayal to show resilience as well as suffering: Alongside imagery that shows suffering, there was also a call for 'positive' [60] images linked to a desire to demonstrate resilience. They were keen to show that despite their situation and suffering, Syrian refugees were getting on with their lives, helping one another, educating their children and learning new skills. For example, women in the focus group said they would like to tell others that, "We're helping each other in deeds, my neighbour is about 60 years old, she is a widow… We help each other in this neighbourhood."

Many participants clearly enjoyed seeing some of the more positive content such as the series of photographs about gardening in Zaatari.

"It's wonderful to see such pictures… Regardless of the bad conditions and the suffering, beautiful things can happen."
Mohamad, adult male, contributor, Jordan

A recognition that images of suffering are necessary for fundraising: There was, however, a recognition by some that the use of more positive imagery could be risky from a fundraising perspective, as the following comments illustrate:

"Happiness doesn't move people."
From focus group with older children (aged 14–18), Inside Zaatari project participants, Jordan

"If people see we are helping ourselves they will forget us and not want to help us."
From focus group with men, Jordan

Others recognised that images of suffering could lead to donations:

"I hope Save the Children would take pictures of [the] Syrian children so that the world would see their situation, and then some people would help them through donations."
Mohamad, adult male, contributor, Jordan

"If you don't show a picture like this (fundraising poster for Syrian refugees) no one would feel their suffering. When you show them a picture like this they would donate money. They need to show this to show pain and suffering."
Focus group with older children (aged 14–18), Jordan

Good lives lost: A preference emerged from several of the interviews to show the contrast between Syrian refugees' existence now and how they lived before the conflict. One participant gave the following reason for not liking the photographs by Moises Saman: "I don't think it is good to show the Syrian people this way because they were not living in such conditions before." When asked what stories Save the Children should show in the future he refers to people's previous "good" lives:

"They should tell more stories like for example a guy who came from Syria, he had a good life in Syria, he was an architect, he came here, he didn't find anything to work on… There are lots of people like him, they're living here in the camp, they share the same story."
Yusuf, aged 18, male, contributor, Jordan

One of the staff interviewed shares this concern, and felt the *Most Shocking Second a Day* [61] film went some way to addressing it:

"People don't really understand that Syrians had a normal life. They were middle income [earners]. They went to school, they had

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[60] The researchers recognise that positive images of individuals can be just as problematic as negative ones and appreciate Guy Tillim's call for 'positive' images being ones 'that are self-aware or are interesting, penetrating, and original no matter what they look at' (https://www.david-campbell.org/2010/03/16/visualising-africa/). However, for the purposes of interviews and focus groups, often carried out in translation, positive and negative were used in their more usual (and crude) way to categorise images.

[61] *Most Shocking Second a Day* uses a creative and fictional device to raise awareness about Syrian refugees' experiences, and had the most emotional impact for some of the adult participants, in that it reminded them of their own traumatic experiences in Syria. They were moved by the film and felt it represented their experiences, despite the fact that it involved a British actor.

Still image from the *Most Shocking Second a Day* film (2014)

houses, they had gardens, they had cars…
I don't think people knew much about Syria
before… And I think the *Most Shocking Second
a Day* film put it into perspective. I really
appreciated that. It did a good job."
Staff, female, Jordan

This desire to tell people about the contrast between
their lives now and in the past also emerged in the
discussion among older girls. They also felt the
Most Shocking Second a Day film represented what
happened to them and appreciated its message that
this could happen anywhere in the world.

"The film shows that children lost all their
rights."

"The events shown in the film are real
in Syria!"

"This movie is a warning to the world, this can
happen in the US and anywhere in the world."

"We've been through this ourselves, we
would tell a better story."

"How all the houses and palaces are gone,
now we live in tents and caravans."

"How we were before and how we are now."

"When we used to go to school we were
afraid of being bombed."

"We wish Syria would go back to the way
it was."
Focus group with older girls, Jordan

Questioning what is portrayed: While many
Jordan research participants appreciated the
fundraising poster for Syrian refugees, some of
the older children who had taken part in the
Inside Zaatari project, 'deconstructed' the image,
suggesting incompleteness, possible manipulation
and changing values attached to snow.

"It is very moving – but there is more than
this to show."

"It's better to take pictures other than this,
you have to show pain and suffering inside
tents, not just one girl on her own, you have
to show the family too. I would do this myself,
I could put mud on my sister's face, dress her
up and take this picture. You have to show
the truth, this isn't the truth."

"This is only one tent, one child, and a house
behind."

"There's is also snow. Lucky child, she has
snow. Here it's a catastrophe to have snow,
but in Syria we loved snow."
Focus group with older children (aged 14–18), Inside
Zaatari *project participants, Jordan*

A member of staff also contrasted the experience
of the contributor with the aesthetic requirements of
the image maker in reference to the photographs
of refugee children sleeping:

"The Moises story came around the time
of World Refugee Day two years ago… the
angle of it is children sleeping… It was very
difficult… because to have children sleeping,
that means the photographer, and someone
with him, needed to be inside the tent, which
is smaller than this room. A tent where five
people are sleeping, including the mother, the
daughter, the father… and it would need to
be at least at five in the morning – and that's
an inconvenience… I'm not a refugee, I'm
not vulnerable… if you ask to come [to my
house] and photograph my son at five in the
morning, I wouldn't… be comfortable with it.
So it was very difficult to get that and get the
children sleeping. [In the end] you have…
great pictures, he's a great photographer, he's
experienced… yes it was a media hit, it got a

few clicks, a thousand clicks, fine, but I don't
think it added any value for the contributor. It
didn't mean anything to the contributor and
I saw that in the father's face, in the mother's
face. Yes, OK he's sleeping – but you know,
even in a tent, we're not – it's not home."
Adult male, Save the Children staff (01), Jordan

Telling their own story: "We know better":
The teenage boys and girls in the focus groups
had been involved in participatory communication
projects in Zaatari,[62] telling their own stories using
drawing, writing and photography. This experience
had clearly provided them with new skills for
producing and consuming images; as a group they
were firmly committed to representing themselves,
as the following extracts demonstrate:

"We know better. We would say what we see.
We should do it ourselves, the person who's
living the ordeal can explain it better."

"We know better than you do. We're living
the situation."
Focus group with older girls (aged 14–18), Jordan

"We want to show the world how people are
living. They think we're having a good time,
but we are very distant from our country."

"We want to show people the truth and
how we're living."

"The world needs to see pictures taken
by us."

"I want to take the photos, not be an object."
Focus group with older children (aged 14–18), Inside
Zaatari *project participants, Jordan*

7.4 BANGLADESH

The content used in the Bangladesh research covers
the following issues: maternal and newborn health;
living with HIV and AIDS; childhood poverty; a
children's banking initiative and street children. The
types of content used include: television advert for
UK audiences, a television news feature (for the BBC),
fundraising posters (for UK audiences), and Save the
Children Bangladesh reports for donors. Some of the
content was produced by Save the Children UK, but
content produced by Save the Children Bangladesh,
Save the Children Sweden, Save the Children
Australia, and the BBC (in collaboration with
Save the Children) was also used.

7.4.1 Contributors' responses

During the interviews for this research, most
contributors responded positively to seeing the
content featuring their image and story for the
first time; their initial reaction was generally
one of pleasure at seeing themselves and their
children. Most perceived a link between content
and assistance and shared a positive association
with image making by Save the Children and
the resulting content with remarks such as it is
"for good" or "for our improvement". Research
participants in Bangladesh had very little to say
about the consequences of portrayal other than
the assumption that the content would lead to
assistance in some form.

Three contributors referred to feeling satisfied
with the way they were interviewed and how their
story was told, one referring to the importance of
the caption to see beyond the photograph alone:
"[Looking at the photograph] they would just think
that this is a beautiful woman with a child… They are
only learning the truth from the writing [caption]…
They will understand by seeing the writing."[63]
Another[64] expressed her preference for the film in
which "I told the story" out of two films featuring
her and her child (the other had a voiceover).

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62 Two initiatives: 1) *Inside Zaatari* participatory photography project, and 2) creative writing and drawing activities as part of work designed
for Save the Children's research and advocacy work on early marriage. See: https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/
Too_Young_to_Wed.pdf
63 Nabiha, adult female, contributor, Bangladesh
64 Retna, adult female, contributor, Bangladesh

When prompted further, however, some contributors expressed feelings of dislike or sadness at the content depicting themselves or their children suffering or sick. For example, one[65] explained: "I liked it. [But I felt] a little bit sad, how my son used to be; watching it I felt sad." She also said that her son doesn't like seeing images of himself when he was ill.

For two of the seven contributors, there was a sense of pride associated with seeing themselves in content they evidently felt portrayed them in a positive light. For one, this related to his work: "If I talk about my feelings at that time… it was a good chance for me to show, in front of the people, my initiative and this organisation's initiative (child banking). For that I was feeling very good."[66]

For the other contributor, the pride related to her awareness that many people around the world will see her picture and read her story: "Everybody can see this magazine and will come to know about me and my child… they will understand our condition. That is what I feel good about… They will think that I am leading a happy life with my daughter. I love her a lot. I am proud of my daughter. I shall bring her up to be a good person." She feels the content reflects her expectations and explained why she would definitely agree to be photographed again: "Yes, I shall agree… I like to see these pictures; I am feeling proud of it. It may lead to further improvements. The hospital can improve further."[67]

Three contributors reinforced the link between feeling good about being portrayed 'positively' by explaining that they *would* feel good about the content featuring them if the photographs had showed them in a positive light. They explained their pictures are 'not good' because **'there is nothing good about us'**. The following extracts further illustrate their position:

Aklima: **"We do not live a healthy life, that's why our names have been spread. If we could live a healthy life, if we had enough food, then our names would not be known to all in the area."**

[65] Retna, adult female, contributor, Bangladesh

[66] Selim, aged 18, male, contributor, Bangladesh

[67] Parveen, adult female, contributor, Bangladesh

Sanchita: **"We are lower people, there is nothing good about us, if we were educated, if we were doing something better which was shown then it would have been good. It is not a good picture. We cannot live [well] because of poverty; if we could give medical treatment to our children, if we were eating good food then the pictures could be good."**
Aklima and Sanchita, adult females, contributors, Bangladesh

Another contributor, a sex worker, makes a similar point:

"If I had a good life then I would feel good, but in reality… I am in this profession. Now, nothing can be done if I feel good or if I feel bad. If I were in a good position then I would be able to say that this is a good photograph… Looking at this photo, I feel like I am in a vulnerable position. I am vulnerable, that's why the photo was taken."
Habiba, adult female, contributor, Bangladesh

7.4.2 Portrayal of others: preferences and concerns

Non-contributors, like contributors, did not criticise the content shared with them. Their responses were generally informed by their emotional reaction to the situation depicted. However, perceptions of the *purpose* of content also influenced opinions: research participants would remark that they 'disliked' what was depicted, but they 'liked' the content because it was asking for help and provided an opportunity to tell the world about problems faced. There were also several references to the advocacy potential of the images in relation to urging more government intervention.

Responses from both the men's and women's focus groups to the fundraising poster for Syrian refugees and a fundraising poster featuring a child from Bangladesh demonstrate this dual response:

"I'm feeling really sad looking at this picture because in Bangladesh many have this condition. But most people can't tell others about it or do not know about it. That's why I'm very happy this poster came out – so that other people or other children do not suffer."
Focus group with women, Bangladesh

"It shows too much poverty. They are suffering a lot. It looks worse. That's why I hate it."

"They are suffering because of the cold. They are asking for help. That's why I like it… if anyone provides any help."
Focus group with men, Bangladesh

A need to show suffering to raise awareness and elicit help: In the men's focus group the reasons given for liking the newspaper advert featuring a sick child relate to their hopes that the child featured will get help: "The kid may live by having treatment, that's why I like it." All the men felt it was OK to show this advert; one explained: "The kid gets the help – that's what we want." Two others agreed, saying "it's good" and "it's necessary to show [suffering]".

Older boys who participated in a focus group had a similar view, a consensus that it is right to show this suffering and that the boy's parents had consented because he was sick, they had no money and needed help. None of the boys expressed concern about the child being photographed while ill and crying, despite being questioned about this several times.

As in Jordan, participants in Bangladesh understood the purpose of content was to create awareness among an overseas audience.

"If people are shown they'll learn by watching… people abroad will get to know about Bangladesh's children, how they live."
Selim, aged 18, male, contributor, Bangladesh

"Those who are looking at the photos will understand that Bangladesh is a poor country, and [its] government is not taking care of them, not taking steps for their rehabilitation."
Focus group with men, Bangladesh

Voiceover or in their own words: There were different opinions about this in the men's focus group. Several of the men felt that a voiceover is better, because it would deliver the right message or story in a shorter amount of time, and because people can exaggerate when talking about their own problems, and so: "If someone else tells [the story] then it is understood that this is not made up, this is real." However, several other participants disagreed: "It is good [to tell your own story] because the one who has the problem knows it better. My problem no one else will know." In the women's focus group one participant explained why she appreciated the TV advert featuring the sick boy and his mother: "The words she said were expressing her own sorrows… she's been able to convey the message to all of us, we got to know it, that's why I liked it."

Concern about others' perceptions: When asked to imagine if one of their own children were in the film *Tomorrow* featuring street children asleep, several of the men said that they would not give permission because the film would "prove my failure – as a father – to the world". However, another acknowledged that if his child is in that condition, it is evident that he as a father can't save him, so Save the Children would need to step in.

Ideas for future portrayal: Male non-contributors in rural Habiganj referred to the need for image making in remote rural locations that lack essential services.

"We'll take you to this place, where it is a very rough area where there is no communication medium. They do not get medical care. They do not get education. We will take [the photographer] to those places."
Focus group with men, Bangladesh.

7.5 NIGER

The content used in the Niger research relates to child poverty, child malnutrition, street children and maternal health. The types of content used include: a policy report; several TV adverts for UK audiences; and three films which are available online for general awareness-raising purposes. The majority of the content used was produced by Save the Children UK; there was one film produced by Save the Children Niger and one poster produced by Save the Children's West Africa regional office. Shortly after completing the research, Save the Children Niger (together with a producer on placement from the UK) published a photo story and film which is also referred to in one of the staff interviews.[68]

7.5.1 Contributors' responses

Contributors' responses to watching the films or seeing the photographs of themselves and their children often related to their feelings about their child's well-being. They shared the sadness and concern they felt at the time their child was ill and the happiness and relief at their child getting better. None of the contributors had any criticisms of or concerns about the content featuring their image and, when asked, said they felt the content accurately portrayed their reality.

One mother and father were pleased to see themselves and their child in the film shown to them. They added their own commentary while watching and asked to watch it a second time. Although they initially said they were happy to see the film, the mother explained why she also 'felt bad' watching her child, who was sick at the time the film was made:

"I felt bad only because I saw the way the child was lean, that he was filmed looking that way, I felt bad, very bad, to see my child, and I did not like it. He was not feeling well,

we were caring for him every day at home, I went to the doctor who gave me medicine… but he did not get better until he was taken and given this milk. He took it and became healthy… and plump… And we are very grateful, we are happy with it, may God bless them, I was very happy… And when they came back and said 'Is this him?', he ran to them, and I was very happy.**[69]**
Zoulaye, adult female, contributor, Niger

Zoulaye went on to explain how she felt that the film is a true reflection of their situation:

"What was filmed is the way it is. There is no lie in it – that is the way it is… even what he said about the soup being prepared without salt."

When another contributor[70] watched the film featuring her critically ill son being treated by Save the Children staff, she was clearly moved and kept showing it to her son, now recovered. (She also asked to watch the film twice.) For her there is a strong association between the image making and her child's survival.

Two of the staff interviewed had been actively involved in the commissioning, production and final editorial decisions of the Street Children documentary. They were understandably proud of this content, both in terms of its process and the final output, and their responses to this film differ markedly to their responses to other content used in the research. One staff member said:

"It was very wonderful… because it… reflects a number of activities carried out by people… [it can] serve as an advocacy tool… for children who are in a difficult situation. [The final product] reflected the reality of our work… it was 100% of every activity."
Adult male, Save the Children staff (02), Niger

7.5.2 Portrayal of others: preferences, concerns and ideas for the future

Among staff in Niger there was a consensus on the need for Save the Children content to share more context and solutions as well as problems, and to feature children speaking for themselves. For other research participants, their feelings about portrayal often shifted when discussions turned to the purpose of content; depictions they may have 'disliked' because of the suffering shown often became acceptable once their purpose to elicit assistance was discussed. Among non-contributors there was a common understanding that the types of films they were shown were produced in order to elicit help from others. Many of the research participants could easily imagine themselves in the situation facing those featured in some of the films, and many had first-hand experience of caring for sick and malnourished children. When asked whether they would let their child be filmed in such a condition, most said they would, in order to receive assistance.

Portrayal of suffering will lead to assistance: This statement from the focus group with women demonstrates the belief that portraying suffering will lead to assistance:

"These children with problems should be shown… Because if not they will not be taken care of, is that not so?… Since we are truly with problems now, [that suffering] should be shown so that those who can help will help."

Although participants said they feel "pity" or "sadness" when viewing the films (*Waiting*, *Issia* and *Mpata*), they felt the making of these films is always justified because of the need to show reality "so that people will know what is happening"[71] and give assistance.

A preference for balance in portrayal: While research participants were not critical of the Save the Children content shared with them, they did share their preferences for certain kinds of portrayal. These are:
• to show assistance or solutions alongside suffering
• to show resilience and action
• to feature contributors speaking for themselves.

Still image from Waiting *(2013)*

One contributor, looking at two contrasting pieces of Save the Children content, also believed in the value of sharing both types of images, children in distress followed by children smiling, to show a fundraiser their assistance is making a difference:

"Yes, if this one is sent first, then next time, with another situation, send this one. Then they will feel that their assistance is good, it is effective, and its benefits are reaped, right?"
Hassisa, adult female, contributor, Niger

Among several research participants and staff there was a clear request for balance in portrayal: to show problems and solutions, people's potential as well as their needs. There was a general preference for the films *Habou: Inside Story* and *Djamila*. *Habou* was cited as a favourite because it showed the child getting better, it showed a solution to the problem; *Djamila* was liked because research participants strongly related to her reality and admired her resilience.

There was also an appreciation of children speaking for themselves.

"For me it is Djamila [that is my favourite] because she is also speaking by herself, and she is suffering but also has to be a part of the [solution] for it. That means she is not a dependent any more but a provider."
Focus group with men, Niger

68 https://savethechildrenwca.exposure.co/diffa-a-crisis-unfolds

69 Unclear who 'them' is referring to: the researcher believes it was Save the Children medical staff, but it could be a reference to the image maker, who made two films about their child, one before and one after treatment.

70 Zara, adult female, contributor, Niger

71 Zoulaye, adult female, contributor, Niger
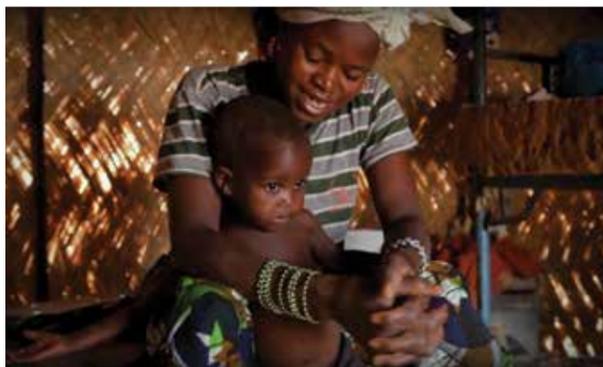
Still image from short film *Habou's story, part 2* (2012)

Mpata was included in the research as a contrast to *Issia* and *Waiting*, because the child shown receiving treatment speaks to camera. At times the interviewer prompted the research participants to discuss this aspect of the film. They responded positively to the idea of the contributor speaking for themselves, and many shared a Hausa proverb which supports this idea: *Ouaka a bakin mey ita, tahi dadi*. The English translation is "A song sounds sweeter from the author's mouth."

One contributor compares the film *Mpata* with the film in which he features:

"Mpata is better [than the film I'm in] because nobody can put himself in his shoes, and that is reality as it is… from his own mouth. And one feels the pain; he himself is in the best position to explain."
Nassiru, adult male, contributor, Niger

All of the women in one of the focus groups raised their red card to show they did not like the *Mpata* film but said it was important to show to UK audiences because it depicted the reality of his life and because he was telling his own story.

In your opinion which is better: the one where the man was narrating the boy's situation, or the one where the boy in the critical condition is the one talking about the pain he feels?

"The one the boy is talking, as he is saying it by himself."

"What the boy is saying is the truth, as the man may not know."

"But he is the one feeling it and can say it, it is better to hear it from the horse's mouth."

"Honestly, listening to the boy, it is true, because he is the one feeling it, and he is being shown."
Focus group with women, Niger

Several of the staff interviewed made the case for content to show solutions and outcomes as well as problems. Another argued for the need to show Nigeriens' potential as well as their shortfalls, which reflects their belief that programming should be designed to avoid dependency.

"They [should] show that they have a shortfall, but they should also show that they have potential to flourish in order for them to move out of this situation. Instead of turning them into permanently dependent people, we should act in such a way that people put in the means in order for them to get out of this dependent condition."
Adult male, Save the Children staff (02), Niger

Two staff members explain the importance of ensuring children are given a voice in Save the Children content, linking this to Save the Children's aspirations for children's participation in "decisions concerning their life".

"First of all, I will say that allowing the child to express himself is better than allowing his family to talk in his place. If it's a child who can express himself, it's good to allow him to do this because there is a right there, the right for participation, for decision making, for anything concerning his life… It is really necessary to give the floor to children; they should express themselves. It is only at that time that we as humanitarians can act."
Adult female, Save the Children staff (03), Niger

Feelings of misrepresentation or lack of context: Two staff were very critical of the Save the Children UK TV adverts made in Niger.

One felt that while *Issia* does portray reality, it is lacking in important context. "There is not much explanation… undernutrition is not necessarily because there is no food in the house… There are things that happen in the community and that cause this… But the film only points out the fact that children are undernourished because there is no food in the community."[72] The other made a similar comment about lack of context in the film *Habou*:

"[There are] images of people trying to scrape something out of that land and it looks so unfeasible… everything is barren… It's as if it is absolutely impossible, but people are doing it anyway, so it looks futile… it would help to explain a bit more about why things are the way they are…"
Adult female, Save the Children staff (01) Niger

7.6 COMMUNICATION FOR OTHER PURPOSES: IDEAS FROM RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

In response to the questions about ideas for future Save the Children content, a number of research participants at each research site shared their thoughts and ideas on communication for different purposes and to reach different audiences than the content shared with them during the research.

Communication for behavioural or attitudinal change of beneficiaries
In the UK, Bangladesh and Niger, research participants, including staff, shared ideas on using communication as a tool to reach potential beneficiaries (as opposed to potential donors), in order to raise awareness, impart information and change behaviour. For example, in the UK participants in both adult focus groups suggested that Save the Children could produce content to help break down some of the stigma attached to poverty that prevents people from accessing the support they need – "Show people that there is help even if they are embarrassed to ask" – and that a telephone helpline could be useful for those

who feel ashamed to access support in person.

In Niger, one of the contributors, a nurse employed by Save the Children, spoke about the behavioural change potential of films, such as *Issia*, for communities affected by child malnutrition:

"For example: a woman comes with a child in distress and we have to evacuate him to the district level clinic… but she will refuse. But if she had access to this type of film, and could see the impact – that this child who was in a critical situation… [that would make a difference]. Instead of keeping children at home, it will encourage and sensitise people [to seek medical help]."
Nassiru, adult male, contributor, Niger

Several other staff members in Niger felt that it was important to produce media content that related to other challenges facing children in Niger, such as rape and child marriage, to reach a Nigerien audience whose attitudes and behaviour might be influenced by such media. They shared their belief that using films to explain the consequences of early marriage, or convey messages about sanitation, could be much more effective "than all the explanations you may give".[73]

Video as a tool for documenting evidence of abuse
In all three focus groups with children in Bangladesh, participants referred to the potential of video as a tool to document and provide evidence of abuse suffered by children who spend some of their life on the street or engaged in sex work. They believed such video evidence could be used for public awareness as well as in legal proceedings and help to bring an end to the abuse they face. It is important to note, however, that some also expressed concern about being identifiable in videos.

"There are some police who took money from small children, then they hit them… If [a video of that] was shown they would not hit the children any more."

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[72] Adult male, Save the Children staff (03), Niger

[73] Adult female, Save the Children staff (04), Niger

"If many people see it, then there will be trials."

"If a policeman hit a child, if an officer saw that, then he may fire him. Maybe he would protest."

"If everybody watches it, they will not torture."
Focus group with older boys (aged 14–18), Bangladesh

Communication for self-expression and self-representation
In Jordan, the older children involved in the research had been involved in communication activities which had involved them producing drawings, writing and photography – providing them with an opportunity, which they clearly valued, to reflect upon and communicate important aspects of their lives and represent themselves. Two adult research participants in Jordan referred to their own needs to express the trauma they had experienced, and how their writing on this had not been published by a magazine published in Zaatari.

7.7 PORTRAYAL: CONCLUSIONS

Like audiences, contributors and their communities are neither homogeneous nor static in terms of their relationship with media and their attitudes towards what is portrayed. The research suggests that responses to content are influenced by individuals' access to visual media, their distance from audiences, their understanding of the content's purpose, and their relationship with Save the Children, alongside specific contextual circumstances and individual biographies.

Most contributors were satisfied and happy with the content they featured in and some shared the positive consequences of their contribution, which include a sense of pride and satisfaction and receiving encouraging feedback from friends and family. For a number of contributors in Bangladesh and Niger, the content they feature in shows their children at a time of particular need;

understandably they had mixed feelings about this content. For those whose child was featured receiving assistance there is a positive association between the content and the help received.

Some contributors did share their concerns about the content featuring themselves and/or their children in relation to how others might see them. For a small number in the UK and Jordan, there is clearly some anxiety about being judged by others; a fear of criticism from friends and family and negative feedback from wider publics. A small number of research participants expressed concern in relation to images which feature individuals on their own: in the UK a staff member questioned the portrayal of children without their parents in a TV advert, in Jordan there were concerns about images of women alone or alone with their children, and in Niger, there were concerns about a baby depicted by itself, without its mother beside it. Despite the fact these are a small number of isolated references within this research, the problem of the lone child image is one that has received considerable academic discussion.[74]

Most research participants had an awareness of the association between content and fundraising and this influenced their responses on portrayal. Even those with limited media access understood that that while they may not 'like' images of children suffering, such depictions may be necessary to raise funds to assist those in need.

In Jordan, some participants extended the discussion on the link between portraying suffering and fundraising by questioning whether showing happiness or independence would have as much impact. However, one participant in the UK and one in Niger felt that balance could be important for fundraising in terms of showing solutions to demonstrate to supporters the effectiveness of their donation. Despite the largely uncritical view of the portrayal of suffering for fundraising purposes, during interviews and focus groups, clear preferences were expressed across all sites for more balance in Save the Children's portrayal, thereby endorsing Save the Children's own commitment to

"providing a balance of stories and images".[75] Many participants expressed a desire for content which showed solutions as well as problems and resilience as well as need. And many expressed a preference for content in which contributors are speaking for themselves.

Several staff and non-contributors in the UK, and staff in Niger, found some Save the Children UK and Save the Children Niger content to perpetuate stereotypes, with staff also pointing to contradictions between content focusing on need and Save the Children's rights-based policy and advocacy.

Evidence of these concerns about the influence of stereotypes also emerged during a focus group with younger children in the UK, when there was a disagreement on whether there were any countries as poor as the one shown in the *Real Giving This Christmas* film. One child said, "Africa. And Lesotho." When asked why he had said this he went on: "Because it's got a bad thirst and they had to drink dirty water and they couldn't get any food. And their houses aren't very nice. Because they're made out of broken bits of wood. Maybe it's cold inside. Because I see a lot of holes." When asked how he knows this, he replied: "On adverts on films".

Within this research, however, the content which attracted most criticism from contributors and non-contributors was the UK content. The themes which emerged in their criticism – stigmatising, contradictory, inaccurate, judgemental – are terms we may associate with critique of famine imagery. In the UK, research participants had greater engagement with visual media, perceive poverty as stigmatising, and are themselves part of the audience for which content is intended. The claim that there is a contradiction between an INGO's programming and some of its communication would seem to be most problematic in the UK because of the potential for fundraising content to stigmatise or alienate potential beneficiaries who are part of the audience.

These concerns were also identified by a UK member of staff in relation to a UK TV advert on childhood poverty: "I think that for UK work in particular, our TV adverts are also going out to families who live on low incomes and going out to families who we want to engage in our work so we have to be careful that we are not excluding them or, you know, making them feel worse about their situation or stigmatised."

74 As explored in Manzo, K. 2008 *Imaging Humanitarianism: NGO Identity and the Iconography of Childhood*

75 Save the Children UK's *Imagery and Portrayal in Communications: Statement of Principles* sets out its principles in relation to portrayal, in particular its commitment to sharing difficult truths but also to providing a balance of stories and images across the various communication channels it uses.

8 CONCLUSIONS

This research has enabled contributors (and their communities) to have a voice in the debate on the representation of global poverty and to provide critical feedback on the image-making process. The research itself sought to model the principles of promoting agency and accountability for those involved in image making. It recognised contributors as key stakeholders in Save the Children image making, returning images and content to them, and seeking out their experiences and perspectives on the image-making process and their portrayal in Save the Children communications.

As with any aspect of development, contributors' experiences and perspectives must count when it comes to reflecting on and learning from current image-making practice, and identifying areas for change and improvement. The research highlighted examples of good practice and positive experiences in relation to Save the Children's image making and communications, and also challenges, concerns and preferences from the perspective of contributors, non-contributors, and staff.

The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on the key themes that emerge from the research. These are:
- Communication
- Rights and the duty of care
- Agency
- Accountability
- Dignity.

Communication

The findings point to the importance of communication in the image-making process. The research shows that within communities, and even between family members, a plurality of views on, and preferences for, portrayal can exist. To ensure these views are considered there must be effective communication with contributors as individuals; those involved in image making must avoid making assumptions about the preferences or values of particular communities (of interest or geography).

There are multiple challenges to ensuring consent is as fully informed as possible. Communication approaches and resources must be developed to support contributors (especially those with limited literacy and access to visual media) to understand the purpose, use and likely audience of their content, and any potential consequences.

Children have a right to informed consent in parallel with the requirements of seeking informed consent from their legal parent/guardian. The research demonstrates that children have strong views on permission and want to be in control of whether their image is taken and used. Meaningful communication with children should be in accordance with their capacity[76] and should enable child contributors to express their own preferences and choices regarding their portrayal. For example, the 1998 Save the Children guidelines on interviewing children suggest always asking children if there is anything they do NOT want published or broadcast.

Good communication engenders sensitivity and respect, and supports two-way dialogue between the contributor and the image maker, and between the contributor and the staff member from Save the Children or its partner organisation. Ideally, this dialogue should enable those with less power to feel comfortable expressing their preferences and concerns to others involved in the process.

Contributors' rights and the duty of care

Save the Children has a duty of care to those who contribute their image and story. It is Save the Children's policy only to photograph or film adults and children who are currently receiving support from Save the Children or who are about to receive support. It was clear from many of the staff interviews that staff feel a responsibility for ensuring contributors are able to realise their rights to both protection and participation. Many staff interviewed referred to Save the Children's responsibility to ensure all image making with children fully adheres to its Child Protection policies and procedures, especially when involving external image makers or media agencies.

Concern for the comfort and well-being of contributors, both adults and children, during image making, was also expressed during staff interviews. Save the Children UK's current image guidelines refer to the essential presence of a Child Protection focal point during any filming or photography with children; their role is imbued with a bias towards the needs of the child over the image-making process and to balance the duties of child protection with children's right to participate and have their voices heard. Given that many adult contributors experience a range of vulnerabilities, a similar bias and role is required to ensure their needs are also taken into account.

A number of staff referred to the rights of contributors to speak directly to camera, and to have their voices heard. They saw this as being in line with Save the Children's aims as a children's rights organisation and for those it works with to participate in decisions affecting their lives.

Contributors' agency: power and relationships

Ideally a contributor, through a meaningful process of informed consent, has the power (and knowledge) to decide whether to contribute. The research shows, however, that this is rarely a neutral choice, rather it is informed by the contributors' relationship with Save the Children, as well as their expectations and current needs. This is also acknowledged by McGee (2005), "The relative power of beneficiaries is low… even if permission is granted it may not be fully voluntary if their livelihood is associated with the requesting NGO."

For some, contributing to Save the Children content can be an empowering experience, where the contributor is depicted positively (helping others, providing for their child) or knowingly raising awareness about an issue. For some, the request to contribute is seen as an opportunity to shift roles from a recipient of support to someone who is 'giving back' and doing something which will benefit others. Others may feel pride in telling their story and for some, having their experiences and views acknowledged can be an empowering or therapeutic experience in itself.

There are, however, others interviewed as part of this research who described the image-making process as one in which their agency was clearly limited: they had little knowledge of why their image was being taken; they agreed to contribute primarily because of their relationship with Save the Children; and they did not receive copies of the image and/or content or any other follow-up afterwards.

Agency is not simply a result of INGO actions designed to 'empower' individuals; some contributors may not engage in the 'empowered' way we anticipate due to wider circumstances that leave them feeling disempowered, regardless of the INGO's interaction. It is also important to avoid any stereotyping of contributors as 'innocent' and willing storytellers, and acknowledge that some contributors will choose to give or withhold information for their own reasons. This research demonstrates that some participants have firm opinions about their portrayal which may be linked to concerns about their own self-image and reputation, or their own views on what is effective when it comes to communication. It is important to create space in the image-making process for such opinions and views to be heard.

[76] Even a child who is unable to form sentences may be able to communicate their feelings about interacting with a photographer whom they have not met before.

Accountability: establishing what is possible

It is clear from the research that contributors and potential contributors value good process and being clearly communicated with. Most would expect, or hope, to be visited by Save the Children after the image gathering, to receive copies of any photographs taken and to learn how their image and story were used. Providing clear explanations of the purpose of image making, and returning imagery and content to contributors, embeds accountability into Save the Children's image making.

It is acknowledged, that it will not always be possible to be fully accountable to contributors when decisions around content – the exact messaging that accompanies an image, for example – can happen long after the content is gathered and when it may not be possible to report back to individuals at that time.

Clarity and transparency in communicating purpose and use of image and stories is essential in managing contributors' expectations, both at the time they are gathered and during any follow-up. This is especially important given the research has demonstrated that at times contributors' assumptions and beliefs about their participation may differ from how Save the Children will use their image and story.

Dignity: beyond the image

Although research participants did not talk specifically about 'dignity', across all the research sites, they shared their preferences and concerns in relation to the process of image making and the resulting portrayal of themselves or their communities. Across all research sites there was agreement with the portrayal of suffering but a desire for images and stories that also showed solutions to problems, people helping themselves and resilience. There were also calls for children (and adults) speaking for themselves.

Many of the values and labels used when discussing the representation of others, such as 'authentic', 'real', 'human', 'positive', 'negative', and 'dignity', are abstract, relative and subjective. This adds to the complexity of the debate surrounding the representation of others and to the task of developing any guidelines on portrayal. 'Dignity', especially, is a principle which appears in image guidelines, and as with other relative and abstract terms, risks being ineffective if left open to interpretation only by those commissioning and producing images. Dogra (2012) makes a similar point when describing INGO imagery: "Showing need with dignity was encouraged at least in rhetoric and policy. Translating it into practice was a more complex endeavour… because their understanding of the concept of dignity was relative and abstract and therefore hard to operationalize."

Within the debate on representation there is a consensus that much of what is considered 'famine imagery' – for example, an image of a malnourished child lying alone in a clinic – is not dignified (and this view was shared by some of the staff interviewed for this research). A logical response may be to develop other ways of representing suffering; and during the period of this research a Save the Children producer working in Niger was exploring visual alternatives to the usual images of child malnutrition. While it is important for Save the Children and other INGOs to explore different ways of representing the people it works with, it is vital that resolving the problem of dignified portrayal does not become primarily concerned with pleasing the sensibilities of Northern audiences. Those involved in representing global poverty must consider who defines dignity. Dignity can mean different things to different people, with individual values and views on what constitutes dignity changing according to the circumstances in which one finds oneself.

[77] Dogra, N. 2012 *Representations of global poverty: aid, development and international NGOs* (page 131)

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

This research demands greater recognition of contributors as stakeholders in the image-making process. This requires Save the Children to find ways to ensure contributors:

- have knowledge and understanding of the purpose of the image making
- experience genuine choice about whether to be portrayed or not
- are able to share any preferences and concerns about their portrayal
- have opportunities to express themselves and tell the stories that are important to them
- receive copies of the images taken and content they contributed to.

The recommendations presented below aim to provide practical ways to achieve this and should help to embed greater agency and accountability into the image-making process. They support improved image making that is responsible and that respects the rights and priorities of contributors. As the research demonstrates, much of this happens already, but not everywhere, and not all the time. This research requires Save the Children to put in places changes to guidelines, policy and procedures to ensure responsible image making is a reality for all contributors all the time.

The recommendations can be summarised as follows:

- **Invest in creative and collaborative approaches to image making.**

- **Uphold contributors' rights and fulfil the duty of care.**

- **Informed consent to be understood as an essential process.**

- **Commit to sensitive and effective communication before, during and after image gathering.**

- **Ensure that human dignity is upheld in the image-making process, not just in the image itself.**

Invest in creative and collaborative approaches to image making

Save the Children's on-going *Inside Zaatari* project, and a recent project with child refugees led by Patrick Willocq, enable contributors to become image makers themselves or actively collaborate in the creation of images. The findings of the research support Save the Children's efforts to continue to invest in more creative, collaborative and participatory approaches to image making. In parallel, it will be important to test the wider communications potential of such initiatives, particularly whether they can be a source of images and stories for fundraising and campaigning. Possible approaches to explore include:

- Replicate participatory media initiatives: The *Inside Zaatari* participatory photography initiative could be replicated in other areas where Save the Children has a long-term commitment. Through such initiatives Save the Children can explore how programme participants want to be portrayed and what stories they feel are important to tell.

Twelve young people aged 14–18 living in Zaatari refugee camp were given cameras and training with Magnum photographer Michael Christopher Brown, enabling them to tell their stories through their own eyes. (Photo: Khaled/Save the Children)

- Explore the role of children, and other contributors, as spokespeople on issues, rather than solely as tellers of their own stories. In the UK and Jordan, several research participants had strong views on, and made powerful statements about, poverty in Britain and problems facing Syrian refugees; they spoke about the wider context beyond their personal story.

- Invest in multiple stories over time with the same individuals. This will enable supporters to see problems, solutions and the impact of those solutions in the lives and stories of individuals, thereby strengthening the case for support. It will respond to research participants' requests for balanced portrayal and for people telling stories themselves directly. This approach could serve a number of functions: it could build relationships of trust between Save the Children and participants, enabling contributors to take a more active role in their portrayal; it could generate a deeper understanding of the realities of people's lives to support programming; and it could help to identify story ideas and potential contributors for future communications.[78]

  Note: The risk of other members of the community becoming suspicious of an extended relationship between the contributor and Save the Children must be managed appropriately to ensure that selected contributors are not penalised by others for their repeated participation, and rather the wider community recognises the benefits from their contribution.

- An open call for story ideas: Save the Children could involve representatives from country offices and programme participants in suggesting new and reviewing potential story ideas. In 2014, Save the Children involved a group of parents in a focus group to generate ideas for the next UK TV advert; the recently established Parents' Network in the UK could be another potential means of sourcing and testing ideas for stories and representation.

Photographer Patrick Willocq worked with refugee children in Tanzania and Lebanon, to design decorative sets that show their hopes, fears and everyday challenges. (Photo: Patrick Willocq/Save the Children)

Uphold contributors' rights and fulfil the duty of care

The image-making process (as well as the image) should reflect the values of Save the Children. There should be someone present whenever image gathering is taking place who is responsible for ensuring contributors are able to realise their rights to participation alongside their right to protection, and that filming or photography never furthers their vulnerability.

Save the Children has developed a set of interviewing guidelines for children with the specific aim of ensuring its communication activities support the well-being of the children it works with, particularly in the case of children who have experienced some form of trauma.[79] All image making with children will work in accordance with these guidelines.

First and foremost, Save the Children has a duty of care towards potential contributors – children and adults – many of whom experience multiple vulnerabilities. The responsible staff member should have the confidence and authority to stop or suggest changes to a photography or filming session in the unlikely event that they feel the well-being of a contributor is jeopardised as a consequence of image making. The opinions and decisions of this

individual must be respected by all involved in the process, regardless of their position in relation to other staff present.

Any relevant feedback on Save the Children services or programmes, as well as particular concerns (and capacities) of the contributor, should be shared with the relevant Save the Children Country programme in addition to the office which has commissioned the image gathering.

Fulfilling a duty of care may include making appropriate referrals for contributors who have concerns or problems outside Save the Children's remit that emerge during the image-making process.

Informed consent to be understood as an essential process with clear procedures in place

It is widely recognised that informed consent is a result of dialogue and not form filling alone. In the UK, it is clear that contributors' consent results from sensitive and effective communication before, during and after image gathering. Some of the non-UK contributors, however, gave their consent on what could not be termed a truly 'informed' basis. Save the Children is currently reviewing its image guidelines and consent process, testing new approaches to improve procedures for all stakeholders: image makers, Save the Children, and the contributor. New approaches for testing include:

- consent to be based on an essential multi-stage process followed by all image makers, ensuring sufficient time between dialogue and the actual filming or photography
- consent to be two-way: as contributors give their consent, Save the Children commits to use their images responsibly and to return them to contributors (unless the contributor is particularly difficult to trace at a later date)
- establishment of a clear channel of communication for contributors to be able to withdraw consent, if required, after image gathering has taken place
- child-friendly versions of consent procedures.

Commit to sensitive and effective communication before, during and after image gathering

Communication with contributors during image gathering should go beyond building rapport to ensure meaningful dialogue and engagement that result in more informed contributors (and image makers). Practical approaches include the following:

1. Prioritise communication with contributors before any image gathering, and create time and space between this communication and the filming/photography so contributors can consider whether to participate or not.
For image makers it can be important to spend time building rapport with contributors – if they feel comfortable, filming or photography is likely to be easier and more successful. Good communication with potential contributors (and where possible others in their community) before any filming or photography takes place is essential to support informed consent and to manage expectations.[80]

A separate visit to potential contributors will not always be possible for an overseas production team. Nevertheless, it should be possible to commit to communication before filming or photography takes place as a distinct stage of the image-making process, with time and space between conversations relating to consent and the image gathering itself to provide contributors with the time to reflect on discussions and make their own informed decision about whether to participate or not.

Before any filming or photography takes place, potential contributors should be provided with the time and encouragement to share and discuss any questions they may have, any fears and concerns about the consequences of their portrayal, and any preferences they may have. A discussion around their existing relationship with media and photography can be a useful way of exploring contributors' attitudes and support further conversations around use and audience. Understanding a contributor's existing reference

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points can help those involved in image making to pitch their explanations of purpose and use appropriately.

It is important to provide potential contributors with multiple opportunities to express their preferences, especially given that many may feel uneasy about asserting their opinions to the organisation which has provided them with assistance. Those involved in image making, should not just accept a contributor's initial agreement, because the research shows that agreement to contribute does not mean the contributor is informed.

2. Develop location- and language-specific resources to communicate image use more effectively; to support contributors' understanding of purpose and to help manage expectations.
Specific resources could help potential contributors move beyond a vague understanding of purpose as 'doing good', 'raising awareness' and 'generating assistance' towards a more detailed understanding of the use of their image and story. Improved contributor awareness of the purpose and use of image making is also important in relation to effectively managing their expectations.

Resources could include language- and location-specific examples of content, together with a visual tool, such as a comic book or photo-story which communicates the purpose, use and audience for different types of content. Resources need to be accessible, engaging, and left behind with contributors after filming or photography.[81] There is a related need to develop clear and honest ways to explain whether there will be any direct benefits for the contributor or their community as a result of contributing their image and/or story.

3. Ensure personal consistency by making sure that contributors' contact with Save the Children before, during and after image gathering is with the same individual.
In the UK, contributors appreciated the consistency of communicating with only one Save the Children

staff member – before, during and after image gathering. In other countries, where possible, it would also make sense from the contributor's perspective that communication before, during and after image gathering is with the same individual, and preferably someone they are already familiar with.

All contributors should be left with a laminated card with the contact details of this staff member in case they have any questions or concerns about the filming or photography after it has happened.

4. Invest in experienced translators (and where necessary, female) for all image gathering involving contributors who do not speak the same language as the image makers.
The availability of good quality and experienced translators is essential for good communication on any image gathering assignment where image makers do not speak the same language as contributors. Translators are also required to ensure that contributors' words are translated accurately for any text or sub-titles accompanying their content. The commissioning office and the Country Programme must be mindful of not overburdening individual staff with multiple roles and bring in additional skilled translators as required.

5. Feedback and follow-up must become standard.
Although returning images to contributors, where possible, is part of Save the Children UK's current image guidelines[82] this research found that in practice, beyond the UK, such follow-up only happened in exceptional cases. Many of the contributors and staff we spoke to during the research felt returning photographs and content to be important and most staff felt that it would be possible in most circumstances providing the associated, capacity, budget and logistical issues could be overcome.

Follow-up with contributors and returning images must shift from being an exceptional occurrence to standard practice, and must be seen as a joint responsibility of the Country Programmes and the commissioning office. It is recognised that such

Artist Delphine Diallo held workshops at a safe house in Senegal, enabling girls and women who had experienced sexual abuse to express themselves through collage. (Photo: Delphine Diallo/Save the Children)

follow-up must be budgeted for, and agreed in advance of filming or photography, with the onus on the commissioning office to manage the printing and packaging of images/content and delivery to the country offices. The budget for image gathering must therefore include the staff time and travel costs to enable Country Programme staff to follow up with contributors.

The experience of returning images as part of this research demonstrated the value of such follow-up with contributors. Follow-up with, and returning content and/or images to, contributors offers solutions to a number of the current challenges in the image-making process relating to expectations, accountability, duty of care, and consent: It can:
• demonstrate respect towards contributors and acknowledge the value of their contribution
• assuage any anxiety caused by uncertainty over audience and use

• help to manage expectations, some of which may have been created by the initial demonstration of interest shown in their lives at the time of image-making
• provide an opportunity to check contributors' well-being and fulfil Save the Children's duty of care towards those who contribute to its image making
• check that contributors are comfortable with how their image and story has been used by Save the Children and are happy to give consent for it to be used in the future.

Ensure that human dignity is upheld in the image-making process, not just in the image itself

While the site for discussing dignity has long been the image itself, this research suggests that the image-making process is the place for realising dignity. Without wanting to place the full burden of representation on individual contributors, addressing dignity must involve consideration of how the contributor feels about their portrayal and offering them genuine respect and agency in the process of image making. For contributors, having a choice in how they are represented and coming away from the image-making process with a clear understanding of the purpose and value of their contribution is dignified. For contributors, dignity involves listening, voice and choice.

NEXT STEPS

The Save the Children staff interviewed as part of this research expressed a firm commitment towards working responsibly with contributors. They engaged in discussions about ways to improve the process of image making with interest and ideas, and shared examples of communication outputs or processes they were proud of as well as areas where they felt there was room for improvement. This engagement and professionalism will serve as a strong foundation for implementing the recommendations of this research and improving image making across the Save the Children network.

The experience of the research illustrated some of the numerous challenges image makers and Save the Children face in relation to communication,

[81] In the past Save the Children used a leaflet titled 'Your Story is Important' but no references were made to this during the research. This document can be used as a starting point to consider the best ways to clearly communicate purpose/audience/use, with an understanding that resources should be tailored according to language and location.

[82] Also included in MSF, WaterAid, and Oxfam image guidelines – but the researchers had no access to data on the extent to which this happens.

consent and managing expectations. Some of these challenges relate to language issues, staff capacity, time and budget constraints and logistics on overseas filming and photography projects. These challenges occur regularly in the context of overseas image gathering assignments (that do not take place in rapid onset emergencies). It is therefore important for Save the Children to find ways of addressing these and design methods and approaches which support those involved in image making to work towards best practice despite these challenges.

A revised set of image guidelines (including consent procedures) will be developed and tested during 2017. This will provide a framework for improving image-making policy and practice in response to the research findings and recommendations.

When it comes to monitoring and reviewing new approaches and procedures, listening to and taking account of the experiences and perspectives of contributors and potential contributors will be essential. By doing so, Save the Children will continue its commitment to recognising contributors as stakeholders in its image making and demonstrate that the perspectives of the people in the pictures are vital in any debates on representation and image-making practice.

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Stop the Pity Campaign http://www.mamahope.org/unlock-potential/

GREY LITERATURE

Consent forms and image guidelines were requested from each of the country offices which took part in the research. These will be assessed in further detail at the time of piloting the recommendations emerging from this research in several of the country offices.

From Save the Children

Save the Children UK 2013 *Image guidelines*

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Save the Children *Your story is important*

Save the Children 2011 *Child Safeguarding Policy*

Save the Children UK *Consent Form*

Save the Children UK 2017 *Interviewing Children: Guidance for Save the Children's media and communications staff*

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MSF 2007 *Image guidelines: Producing and using images in an ethical way*

Oxfam 2011 *Image guidelines: Content Standards Document*

WaterAid 2011 *Ethical Image Policy 2011*

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APPENDIX 2: FURTHER DETAILS ON METHODOLOGY

The participation of children

All research activities with children supported their rights to protection from harm alongside their rights to participate and have their views and opinions heard. Researchers carrying out interviews and focus groups with children in the UK were DBS checked, and across all research sites an appointed staff member with responsibility for child protection was present during focus groups with children. All researchers were familiar with the Save the Children Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding Policy and planned research activities with children were reviewed with relevant Save the Children staff. Following usual Save the Children protocol, consent to participate was taken from the children's parents or guardians (as well as the children directly).

A total of **83 children** participated; they were aged between 5 and 17 years[83] and the majority were not contributors. A small number of child contributors in each country were present at some of the individual interviews with their parents (usually also contributors), and two of those chose to participate in the research. In Niger and Jordan some older children, who were contributors, participated in focus groups rather than individual interviews.[84] In Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger, a small number of the adult research participants were young adults aged between 18 and 21 years.

Research participants

The table below provides a breakdown of research participants according to location, age, gender and their relationship with Save the Children (contributor, non-contributor, staff member).

Interviews and focus groups

The majority of interviews and focus groups – those in the UK, Jordan and Bangladesh – were carried out by researcher Anna Gormley. Lead researcher Siobhan Warrington carried out some of the interviews and focus groups in the UK and research consultant Hannane Ferdjani was

BREAKDOWN OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Research locations	Contributors	Non-contributors	Staff	Total by country	Women	Men	Girls	Boys
UK: London, Yorkshire, Kent, Wales, East Anglia	9	27	3	**39**	18	3	10	8
Jordan: Amman and Zaatari refugee camp	26	25	3	**54**	17	13	21	3
Bangladesh: Dhaka and Habiganj	9	42	7	**58**	14	19	10	15
Niger: Niamey, Tessaoua and Zinder	9	36	6	**51**	20	15	6	10
Totals by type	**53**	**130**	**19**	**202**	**69**	**50**	**47**	**36**

[83] For the purposes of this report, we are using the UN and Save the Children convention of defining those under 18 as a child.

[84] In Jordan, they had contributed to a short film for the BBC about a project they were involved in, and in Niger to a documentary about street children.

recruited to manage data collection in Niger. Female interpreters, appointed by the Save the Children country offices, supported the research in Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger.

Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and one hour. Focus groups lasted between 45 minutes (with younger children) and up to two hours (with adults). Interviews with contributors were generally carried out on a one-to-one basis; but in some cases a close relative also participated. In Jordan and Niger some contributors participated in focus groups. All interviews and focus groups were audio recorded. The table below shows the number of interviews and focus groups carried out in each research location.

Research location	Number of interviews	Number of focus groups
UK	9	5
Jordan	8	5
Bangladesh	12	5
Niger	10	6
Totals	39	21

Interviews took place in contributors' homes, spaces connected with Save the Children (or its partner), or, in the case of most staff interviews, the Save the Children country office. All focus groups in the UK took place in primary schools participating in the Families and Schools Together (FAST) programme; in Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger focus groups took place in spaces connected to Save the Children (or its partner) such as clinics or drop-in centres.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Support from Country Programmes

All Save the Children staff who engaged in the research (either by supporting logistics or as interviewees) shared an interest in and enthusiasm for the issues being explored and discussed. Country offices supported the planning and implementation of the research in numerous ways, despite this being an additional activity alongside many other existing commitments and demands.

Engaged and open research participants

Research participants appeared to engage openly in interviews and focus groups. Some contributors welcomed researchers into their homes for the duration of the interview, and all research participants took time out of their day and their normal work or parental duties to participate willingly in the research. For many contributors and members of their communities, who do not have a professional role in communication, the research was a rare opportunity to explore, reflect upon, and discuss issues to do with portrayal and representation. The majority of staff interviewed had experience in or responsibilities for producing Save the Children content and were able to talk extensively about issues of process and portrayal based on their professional experience.

Research perceived as a Save the Children activity

The researchers were external to Save the Children and this was emphasised at the beginning of all interviews and focus groups. Nevertheless, the research was understood as a Save the Children activity for a number of reasons: interviews and focus groups were arranged by Save the Children staff, many interviews or focus groups took place in Save the Children spaces, and sometimes with Save the Children staff present. In several interviews in Niger and Bangladesh, the interview itself was perceived as a potential source of help and consequently research participants shared their ongoing struggles and priorities for assistance with the researchers and interpreters.

Sample limitations and bias

There is an unavoidable element of bias inherent within the sample due to the participants' relationship with Save the Children in each research location. By necessity the contributors interviewed were individuals whom Save the Children were able to contact to arrange the interview; in many instances these were individuals who either had an ongoing relationship with Save the Children or who had recently contributed their image and story

for Save the Children content. The researchers felt this created a context in which some research participants could be unlikely to say anything too critical or negative about Save the Children. To minimise the potential for such bias, the researchers emphasised to all participants that they did not work for Save the Children and that nothing research participants said during their interview or focus group would affect their relationship with Save the Children in any way. All research participants were assured anonymity: no photographs were taken during the research; no links are made between research participants and content they contributed to; and all names that appear in the report are pseudonyms. Finally, interviews and focus groups were designed to put research participants at ease, and to feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and sharing their experiences.

In the UK, for example, the sample of contributors all had a positive and ongoing relationship with Save the Children's UK Programmes Communication Manager. Their willingness to participate in the research is, in part, a reflection of this relationship. The difficulty of contacting and encouraging former contributors who may have been less happy with the experience of being photographed and/or interviewed, or who were not satisfied with their portrayal in Save the Children content, was acknowledged by those involved in the research. In response to this bias, as well as the low turnout for the initial adult focus groups, the researchers arranged a further adult focus group and one contributor interview some months later. These additional sessions elicited a number of more critical views and provided a valuable addition to the research data from the UK.

In Jordan, all research participants were either beneficiaries of Save the Children services or current participants in Save the Children activities and programmes. For refugees living in a camp situation, the relationship with a humanitarian aid organisation can be one of greater dependence than in other contexts. This was reflected in the fact that during several interviews for this research, participants expressed, unprompted, their appreciation of Save the Children's support and services at the camp.

Some of the content used in Jordan and Niger had been commissioned by those Country Programmes, and some of the staff interviewed for this research had been directly (or indirectly) involved in the production of that content. It is that content, and the making of it, which those staff, understandably, felt most positive about.

General logistical challenges

There were both expected and unexpected logistical challenges in each research location. In the UK there was a low turnout for two of the adult focus groups, and many children were present in the other adult focus group. In Jordan visitors are only permitted to Zaatari between the hours of 9am and 3.30pm, resulting in a more rushed schedule, with little time for follow-up conversation after interviews and focus groups.

Ongoing political instability in Bangladesh and related travel restrictions resulted in the research schedule being finalised later than ideal. In addition, the combination of several research locations and the involvement of numerous programmes and staff added an inevitable layer of complexity to both the planning and implementation of the research there. The earthquake on 27 April 2015 affected one set of interviews; others were cut short due to traffic, travel problems, and research participants' existing commitments.

Language and translation

Translation and interpretation were required during preparation for and implementation of the research in Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger. The skills and approach of interpreters varied across research locations, with some more experienced and skilled than others. For example, the interpreter recruited in Niger was highly experienced both in terms of interpreting and research, and the researcher working in Niger also had a good command of the main language used throughout the research – Hausa – enabling her to interact directly with research participants. The use of up to three languages (Hausa, French and Zarma) during some focus groups in Niamey posed a challenge.

APPENDIX 3: SAVE THE CHILDREN CONTENT USED IN FOCUS GROUPS

CONTENT USED IN THE UK RESEARCH

Working title	Issue	Date	Communication channel/ Type of communication	Link to content if available
Films				
Paul O'Grady TV advert	Child poverty in the UK	2013	TV advert for UK audiences	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_Q4uLA0h3U
Mpata	Child malnutrition, DRC	2013	Produced as a TV advert	
FAST programme	Education in the UK	2012	Save the Children website/ promotional	https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=NRxX5x1yftk
It shouldn't happen here	Child poverty in the UK	2012	Promoted on social media channels	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eKJ972iZ-U
Real Giving This Christmas	Importance of giving	2014	TV advert for UK audiences	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9nJkAnqc-8
Printed materials				
Lauren's story	Child poverty in the UK	2012	Fundraising letter	
Fundraising poster for Syrian refugees	Winter conditions for Syrian refugees	2012	Fundraising advert for newspapers and public transport in the UK	

CONTENT USED IN THE JORDAN RESEARCH

Working title	Issue	Date	Communication channel/ Type of communication	Link to content if available
Films				
Winter Gala film	Save the Children in Jordan, UK and Kenya	2014	Produced for Save the Children's annual fundraiser	
Most Shocking Second a Day	Impact of Syrian conflict on children	2014	Online film promoted on social media channels	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBQ-IoHfimQ
Kayembe	Child malnutrition, DRC	2014	TV advert for UK audiences	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWdWOMuqU_k
World Cup film	Activities for children in Zaatari	2014	Produced by Save the Children Jordan	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChxV-CHOagg
Online/printed materials				
Fundraising poster for Syrian refugees	Winter conditions for Syrian refugees	2012	Fundraising advert for newspapers and public transport in the UK	
Photography of Syrian refugees by Moises Saman	Conditions for Syrian refugee children	2013	Online and print newspaper articles for 2013 UN Refugee Day	
Garden photography by Rosie Thomson	Creation of garden areas in Zaatari camp	2014	Shared through social media and online news media, including Al Jazeera	http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2014/10/pictures-when-garden-feel-happ-2014102771959578411.html
Photographs of mothers by Giles Duley	Portraits of mothers with children born in camp	2013	Online news feature	http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-26475736

CONTENT USED IN THE BANGLADESH RESEARCH

Working title	Issue	Date	Communication channel/ Type of communication	Link to content if available
Films				
Kayembe	Child malnutrition, DRC	2014	TV advert for UK audiences	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWdWOMuqU_k
No Child Born to Die TV advert	Child mortality, Bangladesh	2014	TV advert for UK audiences	
Tomorrow	Street children, Bangladesh	2013	TV advert for UK audiences	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rL7gZ9alh4o
Meherun's Story	Street children, Bangladesh	2013	Online film promoted on social media channels	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_1LUrfITAg
Save the Children Australia Child sponsorship film	Child sponsorship education	2014	TV advert for Australia audiences	
Online/printed materials				
Fundraising poster for Syrian refugees	Winter conditions for Syrian refugees	2012	Fundraising advert for newspapers and public transport in the UK	
Build it for Babies poster	Childbirth	2012	Fundraising poster	
Nirob *Guardian* Capital appeal Ad	Child mortality	2012	*Guardian* Newspaper Advert	
Workplace Giving Poster	Child mortality	2012	Poster to recruit workplace giving	
BBC news photo-feature	Child malnutrition	2012	BBC website	http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-17043198

CONTENT USED IN THE NIGER RESEARCH

Working title	Issue	Date	Communication channel/ Type of communication	Link to content if available
Films				
Issia	Child malnutrition, Niger	2014	TV advert for UK audiences	
Waiting	Child malnutrition, Niger	2013	TV advert for UK audiences	
Mpata	Child malnutrition, DRC	2013	Produced as a TV advert	
Djamila's story	Child poverty, Niger	2010	Online film	https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=O6JgF81RZ1g
Habou's story, part 2	Child malnutrition, Niger	2012	Online film	
Street Children documentary	Street children, Niger	2012	Short fundraising documentary	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28hSwgB0kcY
Online/printed materials				
Fundraising poster for Syrian refugees	Winter conditions for Syrian refugees	2012	Fundraising poster	
The Lottery of Birth report	Infant mortality	2015	Policy report	
West Africa poster	Save the Children	2013	Poster	

THE PEOPLE IN THE PICTURES

Vital perspectives on Save the Children's image making

"My aim for us, having our pictures taken, was to make people more aware and to help families like mine… no one knows what it's like unless you're in that person's shoes."
Mary, adult female, UK

"What was filmed is the way it is. There is no lie in it – that is the way it is… even what he said about the soup being prepared without salt."
Zoulaye, adult female, Niger

"We want to show people the truth and how we're living… the world needs to see pictures taken by us."
Focus group with children (aged 14–18), Jordan

Debates about the visual representations of global poverty have been going on for many years, yet the experiences and views of those featured have been notably absent.

The People in the Pictures addresses that gap. Save the Children commissioned research in the UK, Jordan, Bangladesh and Niger, to listen to and learn from those who contribute their images and stories, as well as members of their communities.

The research explored:
- what motivated people to agree to Save the Children filming or photographing them or their children
- how people experienced and perceived the image-making process
- how people felt about their portrayal in the resulting Save the Children communications.

The research highlighted many areas of good practice, as well as some concerns and challenges. It has resulted in a set of recommendations to embed greater agency and accountability for contributors into Save the Children's image making.

Save the Children hopes *The People in the Pictures* will extend the focus of discussions beyond images and audiences to include the process itself, and the perspectives of contributors and their communities.