

POLICY

Communications and Media

Established:	July 2018	Review frequency:	Every three years
Prepared by:	P Simmons/E Graetz (2021)	Approved by:	Board

Purpose

To guide open, honest, transparent and responsible communication with all stakeholders in line with organisational values

Introduction

GraceWorks Myanmar (GWM) is committed to the highest standards of communications practice across all aspects of our organisation and operations. Communicating and engaging with diverse audiences, across a range of channels, is essential to promoting our work, fulfilling our vision and contributing positively to the world. Recognising the ubiquitous nature of communications, this policy focuses solely on mass and/or publicly available communications.

Definitions

Channel

A communications channel is any verbal, written and/or digital outlet through which communications activities occur. Some are owned and governed by an organisation (eg corporate websites, newsletters etc) while some are third party with varying levels of control (eg partner communications, media outlets and social media platforms).

Media

The media comprises mass communications broadcasting such as news outlets (print and online), radio and television.

Social media

Social media relates to internet and mobile-based tools for creating and sharing information and engaging in discussions, such as social networking sites (eg Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn); video and photo sharing sites (eg YouTube); open blogs, forums and discussion boards; and other websites that provide simple publishing capability to contributors.

Key principles of communication

- ◆ Good communication is always open, honest, transparent, responsible and respectful.
- ◆ Every effort is to always be made to ensure information is accurate and current, and free from exaggeration or misinformation.
- ◆ Communications activities are to be conducted thoughtfully on the basis of fair belief in the quality and value of the information being shared.
- ◆ All communication is to uphold the standards set by GWM's policies.
- ◆ Even at the simplest level, communications activities can shape our brand and reputation, and impact relationships, positively or negatively, and are to be conducted with this in mind.
- ◆ We have a duty of care and accountability to our stakeholders, including to protect vulnerable individuals from harm, and need to communicate through this lens at all times.
- ◆ Rules and social norms that apply to professional and personal conduct in the workplace apply to all communications practice, including on platforms such as social media.



Roles and responsibilities

Spokespeople

When engaging with the media, whether proactively or reactively, our official spokespeople for strategic matters including those relating to brand, reputation, relationships, and/or risk, are the:

- ◆ CEO, or their appointed delegate
- ◆ Chairperson of the Board, or their appointed delegate.

For tactical commentary not appropriately made by the CEO and/or Chairperson, such as fundraising or event promotions, our official spokesperson is the Communications, Marketing and Fundraising Officer, or their appointed delegate.

For official requests for commentary from donors, government departments, educational institutions and partners, about GWM's overall work or a specific program/project, any qualified, informed GWM representative may comment, with the approval of the CEO or Chairperson. This recognises the appropriate role of subject matter experts and project managers as the lead commentators for specific communications requests.

For commentary relating to research, monitoring and evaluation – commissioned by, conducted for or focused on GWM – we recognise the independent nature of some stakeholders involved in that work. We respect the right of independent parties to make independent comment. In these instances, we expect such commentary to uphold GWM's policies, particularly as it relates to the protection of people and their safety. We also expect to be able to inform the timing of such commentary to ensure it complies with commitments made to donors and other parties, and/or that it respects appropriate roles in relation to the release of new data and/or insights.

Coordination

The Communications, Marketing and Fundraising Officer will coordinate all corporately managed channels, collateral and other promotions, including media and social media, that relate to:

- ◆ GWM's strategy and overall organisation
- ◆ GWM's operations including programs/projects, events and other activities
- ◆ Official commentary on Myanmar's socio-political status.

All corporate statements about GWM are issued by the CEO, with Chairperson approval.

GWM staff, volunteers, partners and consultants who have a story/promotional opportunity that highlights our work – whether for issue by GWM or provision to a third party – are to liaise first with the Communications, Marketing and Fundraising Officer with at least 10 working days' notice before a desired release date.

Key communications

Promotional collateral and advertising

GWM promotional collateral – such flyers, brochures, newsletters, videos and the GWM website – and advertising will always be developed by skilled team members trained in communications and/or marketing practice and approved as official corporate documents.

Corporate presentations

Presentations by a GWM representative are explicitly or implicitly official GWM statements. Presentation notes and slides, if prepared, are to be reviewed in advance in line with our approvals process. Independent presentations referencing GWM's work are encouraged to be reviewed by GWM in advance to ensure the accuracy, currency, suitability and protection/security of information being shared.



Reports

GWM will provide reports on topics such as significant programs and projects, general company-wide strategic documents, policy papers, and published research that is not otherwise copyright-protected. Abstracts of research papers affiliated with GWM will be made publicly available on GWM's website with a link to the original full research where possible.

Corporate social media

GWM's social media channels, such as Facebook, are to be managed by trained personnel. Social media accounts have administrators who are pre-authorised to post news/updates. Given the fast-moving and responsive nature of social media, in most instances, a post can be reviewed by one other GWM representative for quality control, compliance and the protection of vulnerable stakeholders. In some instances, where a post is merely resharing content from other parties and/or repurposing pre-approved content (eg from collateral already in the public domain), a review step can be omitted at the discretion of the administrator. In other instances, where a more strategic and/or critical post is planned, the potential need for CEO and/or Chairperson approval is to be considered at the discretion of the administrator.

Media statements

While communications via our own channels is typically highly controlled, we recognise the uncontrolled nature of promoting our work via third-party channels, including with the media. All media releases/distributions are to follow our approvals process below, be issued by an authorised officer, and include comments only by an authorised spokesperson.

Board-issued communications

Board-issued communications, such as our annual reports, will be prepared in accordance with the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct guidelines and/or other industry or legislative requirements.

Approvals

Most official communication about GWM and our programs/projects, events and other activities – issued by, or for, GWM – is to be approved by the CEO. This includes:

- ◆ Promotional collateral and advertising
- ◆ Corporate presentations
- ◆ Reports
- ◆ Corporate social media.

Official communication that needs the approval of both the CEO and Chairperson includes:

- ◆ Media statements
- ◆ Board-issued communications – eg annual reports.

In light of GWM's small team, unless a communication requirement is urgent with little warning, a minimum turnaround time of five working days is to be allowed for all approvals.

Personal social media

We encourage people to promote GWM via their personal social media accounts, such as on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter. Social media use is to always consider the broader context of GWM's organisation and operations, and comply and/or align with:

- ◆ GWM policies including our Code of Conduct, values and behavioural standards
- ◆ Reasonable protection of confidential or copyrighted information and/or intellectual property
- ◆ Social media platform rules/terms and norms of good and respectful social behaviour.



The following social media use is encouraged, with no approval needed or expected:

- ◆ Sharing corporate social media posts among personal networks to further the reach of GWM's work
- ◆ Posting factual information/information already in the public domain, particularly where that information is already available via GWM communications channels.

The following social media use is discouraged, with advice and/or approval sought where possible:

- ◆ Sharing political and/or religious information that may reasonably discredit GWM and/or the work of our partners and/or place our key stakeholders at risk in any way
- ◆ Posting political and/or religious opinion that may reasonably discredit GWM and/or the work of our partners, particularly in the event it opposes GWM's policies and corporate positions
- ◆ Sharing information, such as research findings, in advance of formal publication and authorisation.

GWM representatives are to take all reasonable measures to ensure information they post on personal social media accounts does not appear as official statements or to represent the opinions or views of GWM, unless approved by the CEO and/or Chairperson. Even if the intent is personal, information posted by a GWM representative about GWM may nevertheless appear to be official.

Ethics and compliance

Photos and stories

Images, messages and stories used in public materials will always be obtained and used according to ethical practice.

Permission will always be sought for the use of photos (and other images) showing individual people in any context (private or public), and showing groups of people in a private setting (eg training). Permission is not required for photos taken in public-domain spaces (eg sporting events and markets). However, the use of those images will always be respectful and consider the safety of all identifiable people. Similarly, permission will always be sought by an individual or group for the use of their stories and/or testimonials. Where possible, a copy of communications using the photos, stories and/or testimonials of primary stakeholders will be provided to those stakeholders.

Requests for permission will use our Consent – Communications and Media Form, which is available in English and Burmese to ensure the permission being granted is understood by those involved.

Where third-party photos are used, such as those available via sites such as Unsplash, Shutterstock and iStockphoto, they will be used in compliance with the terms and conditions set by those sites.

Protection of stakeholders

Exemptions may apply for data protection regarding our work in Rakhine State, the naming of donors and the naming of local partners. Sensitive information may include the names and photos of GWM facilitators and the villages in which they work. Larger township names and the numbers of villages involved in GWM's work may be permissible if the CEO determines very low or no risk of harm to stakeholders.

Compliance

All communications produced for internal and external use will comply with GWM's policies, state and federal laws, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) policies and requirements, and the ACFID Code of Conduct including Fundraising Charter.

GWM will not make statements about other ACFID members with the intention of creating reputational or any other advantage. If we have legitimate and well-founded concern about another non-government organisation (NGO), we will use the complaint mechanisms available through ACFID's Code of Conduct Committee.



Fundraising

Communications about fundraising will comply with the Fundraising Institute of Australia's (FIA) Code and standards. All fundraising material will state the purpose for which funds are being raised, how money collected will be used, including administrative costs, how money collected in excess of the required amount will be spent, and any other information as required by relevant legislation. GWM will acknowledge the contributions of our donors and partners, except where they specifically request to not be named.

References and related documents

References

- ◆ ACFID Code of Conduct
- ◆ FIA Code – <https://fia.org.au/fiacode/>

Related documents

- ◆ Code of Conduct
- ◆ Privacy Policy
- ◆ Consent – Communications and Media Form

Review

Previous reviews: June 2021

Next review: June 2024