# Creating Comms Content

**Introduction**

This guide is intended to be used by Relief International Communications Focal Points in the gathering and creation of communications content. It includes guidance and information specifically tailored for RI staff members in country offices to be able to produce written and visual content effectively and efficiently.

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**Articles**

**Overview**

RI presents written articles in a number of different places; the RI website, social media, fundraising emails and presentations, and through corporate documents like the Annual Report.

These articles are used to showcase the countries RI works in, the work it does there, and the impact the work has on the local community. They are written and edited collaboratively by the GSO comms team and country office staff.

There are four main article types that RI regularly uses to showcase its work;

* Program Participant focused Articles,
* RI Staff focused Article
* Articles about RI’s response to an urgent situation
* Articles about RI Projects

Program Participant focused Article

Told from the perspective of a program participant(s), these stories help the audience create connections and build an emotional response to RI through connection to an individual.

*Effective Example Article* - ["Going back to education gave me great hope."](https://www.ri.org/going-back-to-education-gave-me-great-hope/)

RI Staff focused Article

Told from the perspective of the staff member, these stories are extremely popular on RI’s social media and get a lot of interaction. They tell the story of the work RI is doing from the perspective of a staff member in country.

*Effective Example Article* - ["It’s not a normal day at work”: Responding to COVID-19 and Polio in the Philippines](https://www.ri.org/its-not-a-normal-day-at-work-responding-to-covid-19-and-polio-in-the-philippines/)

Articles about RI’s response to an urgent situation

When there is an emergency in a specific country, an article will be created to update people quickly about what is happening, and how RI is responding. Timing is the critical element.

*Effective Example Article* - [Afghan families arriving in Iran](https://www.ri.org/afghan-families-arriving-in-iran/)

Articles about RI Projects

This type of article is created to explain a project, its goals, and the issue that the project is addressing. They can include interviews from program participants, but the interview/program participant is not central to the article.

*Effective Example Article* ***-*** [Cox's Bazar: Stories of Recovery and Resilience from a COVID-19 Ward](https://www.ri.org/coxs-bazar-stories-of-recovery-and-resilience-from-a-covid-19-ward/)

**How to create an Article**

Below is a step by step guide on how to write an Article for Relief International.

1) Identify the heart of the article:

* Why would an audience care about this artickle/ project?   
  *Example Answers* - *XXX overcame obstacles to access RI services that helped them make money/go to school/get the medicine they need*
* What does this article tell the audience about Relief International?   
  *Example Answers - RI provides support to those that need it most in XXX country by doing YYYY.*

2) Identify RI’s role in the article

* What did RI specifically do in this situation?   
  *Example Answers - Created youth club for children, provided healthcare facilities in rural areas, supported families through cash assistance.*
* How do these programs help people?

*Example Answers – people used the cash assistance to set up a new business. This business now helps them to pay for rent and buy food.*

* What would happen if we hadn’t done it?   
  *Example Answer – Children would have no space to socialize, people would not get healthcare, people would lose their homes.*
* How do these activities illustrate the work RI is doing in the country overall?

3) Make sure the story has a human focus

* Find and include a person (program participant/staff member/etc) to highlight in the article.
* Information to include:
  + Person’s name.
  + Person’s age.
  + Person’s background.
  + How the person has interacted with RI.
  + Any relevant anecdotes/stories.
  + How interacting with RI has improved their situation.
  + Several direct quotes from the person explaining their feelings.

4) Take photos related to the subject of the article

* Photos related to subject of the article are important to help audience visualize.
* Photos should be in JPG or PNG format.
* Include a brief explanation of what’s happening in the photos. For more information on photos, go to [Photography](#Photography) section.
* All photos require a consent form.
* Project overview/s related to the focus of the story.

5) Write the Article

* Articles should be at least 500 words long.
* Articles should be written in Microsoft Word in a simple text format.

6) Checklist for all Articles

* Includes anecdote from person involved.
* Outlines the humanitarian issue faced by person involved.
* Outlines the humanitarian issue faced by the larger community/country.
* Clearly describes what RI does in the country to help find innovative, long-term solutions to issue.
* Offers facts, figures and evidence of how RI works.
* Includes at least three quotes from people involved.
* Includes atleast two high quality photos of people involved or RI program.
* Make sure you have a consent form for all people mentioned or photographed for the article.

**Effective Article Example**

Below is an example of an effective RI web article, along with explanations of the key features that make the article effective in the comments. *To see the comments, click Review then in the Tracking Section select All Markup from the drop down box.*

**Training Female Entrepreneurs to be Market Leaders**

**In 2016, a vocational training center for both refugees and the host community was set up in Bunj. Here, 25 women are being trained in food preparation and baking.**

Class is in session when we enter the courtyard at Relief International’s Vocational Training Center in Bunj, the county capital of Maban in South Sudan’s Upper Nile state. It’s just after lunchtime, and the smell of frying oil is wafting out of a classroom where 25 students are learning to make mandazi (donuts) — a common treat on the streets of the national capital, Juba, but a rarity here in Maban that will help their small restaurant and catering businesses stand out in a crowded marketplace.

Students sit along the perimeter of the room in their crisp white aprons, attentively watching their teacher, Regina Kale, and two students mix locally sourced ingredients into dough, carefully shaping it into rings. Nearer the door, two more students are plunging the dough into hot oil, then lifting out the browned rings when they’re fully cooked. And there’s no shortage of people standing at-the-ready to do taste tests – these delicious treats strike just the right balance of sweet and savory, with a crisp shell and cake-like inside.

**A Savvy Entrepreneur**

One of the students in the catering class is 37-year-old Mariam Zakaria, a widowed refugee from Sudan’s Blue Nile state who has lived in Doro camp with her nine children since 2012. She’s one of more than 250,000 refugees that have crossed the Sudan border into South Sudan to date seeking safety. Some 148,000 are now living in four refugee camps near the town of Bunj.

Mariam is soft-spoken and a little shy, and as she shares pieces of her story it becomes apparent that beneath her modest demeanor is a savvy entrepreneur who is running multiple successful businesses. She is also very ambitious about the future. Miriam explains that she’s continuing to learn new skills at Relief International’s Vocational Training Center so that she can expand her businesses into more locations.

When Mariam and her husband fled conflict in Blue Nile, it took their young family a month to make their way to Maban. “We walked with a donkey that would carry our things. My children were very small, with the youngest just a baby, so when he was tired my husband and I would stop so the children could rest under trees,” she recalls. They finally arrived at their destination, but their perilous journey was far from over. “After two weeks of no food here we were starving, so my husband and oldest son, Abdalla, went back to find food.” Her husband was killed in an ambush, and her son, just seven years old at the time, had to make his way back to her on his own.

Though they received food rations in Doro, the largest refugee camp in the area, Mariam’s family struggled to keep hunger at bay. In 2015, the World Food Program’s overstretched budget for humanitarian emergencies forced a 30% cut in South Sudan’s food rations, leaving refugees to find ways to bridge the gap.

Abdalla once again had to take on responsibilities far beyond his years to support his family. He dropped out of school and did odd jobs around the camp to earn money, such as hauling heavy wheelbarrows of red clay soil. At age 10, Abdalla got steady work as a guard.

Mariam was also trying to earn an income for her family. She sold two of the three tables she had carried for miles from Sudan and used the money to buy tea and sugar. Mariam set up the remaining small metal table under a tree near the Freedom Market in Doro, which houses 61,000 refugees.

It was here that Relief International’s team of livelihoods experts first met Mariam. Her eagerness to establish and grow her tea shop was evident, and we invited her to compete for a small business grant. She created a business plan, pitched to a panel of judges, and in 2017 won an in-kind business investment award. “With my grant from Relief International I bought sugar, milk, butter, two jerry cans, a tank for water, and 12 cups,” says Mariam.

Relief International has given out 75 business investment grants since the vocational training program started in 2016. Previously, grants were given in-kind as materials, but in 2019 40 cash business investment grants will be awarded to individual entrepreneurs and group start-ups.

“Now that the market is fully functioning in Maban, we want to give grants as cash so that recipients have purchasing power and can support other businesses by buying local materials,” says Henry Omony, Relief International’s Food Security and Livelihoods Manager for South Sudan.

All of Relief International’s work in this border region of South Sudan is integrated, weaving health, nutrition, food security, and livelihoods activities – a concept that’s essential for sustainable development. Being a grant recipient, which provided for essential business investment capital, was a critical step in Mariam’s journey to becoming a successful business owner, but it’s equally important that she has access to business skills development, especially a foundational understanding of how to manage and maximize her earnings.

We encouraged Mariam to participate in our Village Savings and Loan Association program, which comprises sixty groups of approximately 20 members, mostly women, who work together to mobilize savings and gain access to capital. The groups meet monthly to learn simple finance concepts, buy shares, and manage earnings. Members can also take out loans from the group that are paid back with interest ranging from 10%-40%; the amount is the group’s decision. Every nine months the group splits the interest raised from the loans that members have taken out.

The grant was a catalyst to get Mariam’s tea shop off the ground, but she also used her newfound knowledge of microfinance to become a lender herself and boost her earnings even further.

“One tin of milk helped me make a profit, and I used that profit to start making loans to other people,” she says. “Over time, that interest was enough for me to buy a motorbike.”

Culturally, women in this region do not drive. “I don’t know any other women that own a motorbike,” Mariam says with a smile.

They’re a luxury in short supply regardless of gender, with the occasional one passing through the main dirt road in Bunj and a half-dozen lined up in the market area of each camp. Mariam uses her motorbike for rentals, as well as for hauling hard-to-get and lower-priced goods from the town of Bunj to Doro, where she resells them in the second shop she’s opened, housed next door to the permanent tea shop Abdalla constructed out of hundreds of slim, tightly bound branches.

The tea shop offers a welcome respite on the side of the one-lane road running through Doro. Inside, two brightly colored plastic tables and a dozen chairs give customers a place to relax. When we arrive, black tea is brewing in metal teapots. Next to the fire, glass cups rest on the small metal table that’s been a mainstay in her shop.

Narofi, Mariam’s only employee, is also a refugee, and the job Miriam provided her is the only source of income for her widowed mother and six siblings.

Some days Mariam’s 10-year-old twin boys help her in the tea shop – but only when they’re not in school or studying. All nine of Mariam’s children are in school now, and her success has ensured their time and attention can now be on education first.

“I thank Relief International for the assistance,” says Mariam. “Life wasn’t easy before, but I was able to use my new knowledge to build a business and make a living.”

In addition to her tea and small goods shops, Mariam has purchased a plot of land in another Doro market area. “I’m still deciding if I will expand my shops or rent it out to another seller,” she says. Mariam is also busy fending off numerous offers of marriage – but, for now, she’s only interested in focusing on her thriving businesses.

Photos:



*Relief International's trainer, Regina (far right), teaches the class how to make mandazi.*



*Mariam Zakaria stands in the outside courtyard of Relief International's Vocational Training Center, where she is attending a catering class to diversify her cooking skills.*



*Narofi prepares tea on the small metal table Mariam carried with her from her home in Sudan.*

**How to Submit an Article**

Please share the article with your designated Communications Focal Point who will then send the article on to James Darnbook on the Communications & Development Team. If you are the Communications Focal point, or your office does not have a designated focal point, please send your article directly to James Darnbrook ([james.darnbrook@ri.org](mailto:james.darnbrook@ri.org))

Checklist for Submissions:

* Article (including key components from How to Create an Article section). There is no need to format the document in any special ways. A simple word document format is best.
* Original photos related to article in JPG or PNG format
* Consent forms for all interviewees, and all people pictured in images.
* A project overview for any projects mentioned in the article.

Process after submission:

* GSO Comms team will edit the article, and request follow up information as needed.
* The article will then be returned to the country office.
* Sign off by Country Office
* Sign off by GSO Office
* Article is placed on RI communications channel (usually website, and social media).

**Social Media**

**Overview**

Relief International has Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts. These accounts are managed by the GSO Development and Communications team. Country offices should not have their own channels. However, country office staff are encouraged to support the organization’s social media outreach by regularly sharing information, announcements and achievements with the GSO Development and Communications team.

**Social Media Posts**

Social Media platforms are visual mediums. Every post that Relief International pushes must have a photo or a video along with a caption explaining what is happening in the image/video.

Photos:

For photos, where possible, take photos that best tell the story of the program, its participants and its impact. This could be a staff member carrying supplies, or a program participant receiving medical attention. It could be an RI facility, or the surrounding area.

Other suggestions for things to take photos of:

* people
* signs
* homes, buildings, structures
* things that would not be there if RI wasn't there
* nature, sunsets, rivers, hills, mountains, deserts, animals

The photo should be horizontal with good lighting that clearly shows the subject.

Where possible, the photo should be an “action” shot capturing an activity that is happening. Examples of action shots could be a teacher teaching their students, someone getting a vaccination, supplies being moved, etc.

Along with the photo/s, please include a caption that explains what is happening in the photo. This should include the place, person/people, and action taking place. The audience for social media posts is anyone so context is crucial. The caption should be 25/50 words long.

***SEE*** [***PHOTOGRAPHY***](#Photography) ***SECTION FOR MORE INFORMATION***

Videos

Short videos are also good for social media. These videos should focus on specific actions. This could include specific activities, sounds, people talking, etc.

The videos should be horizontal with good lighting that clearly shows the subject. Ideally the videos should be under 1-minute long.

Along with the video, please include a caption that explains what is happening in the photo. This should include the place, person/people, and action taking place. The caption should be 25/50 words long.

***SEE*** [***VIDEO***](#Video) ***SECTION FOR MORE INFORMATION***

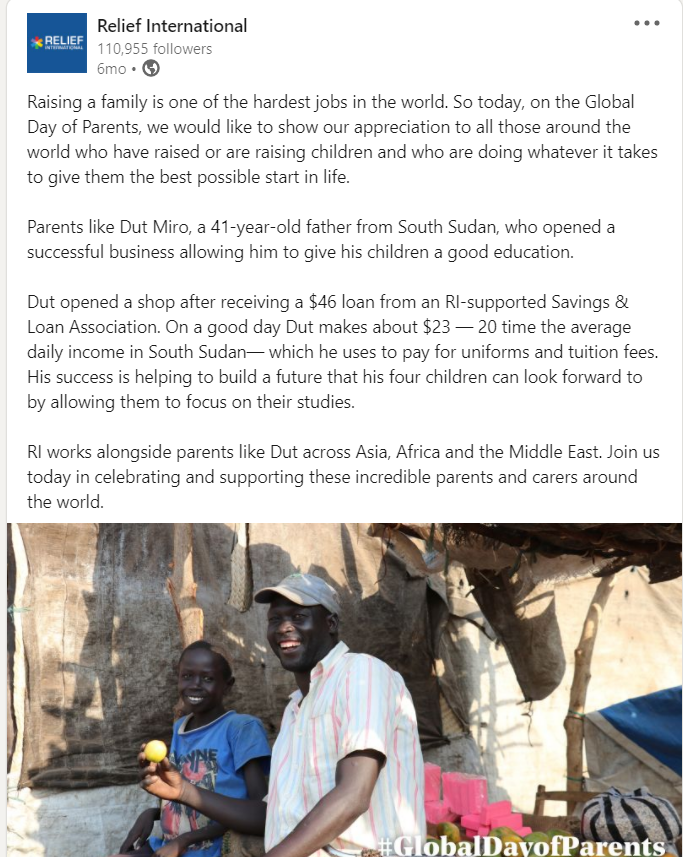
**Effective Social Media Examples**



This is an example of an effective social media post. You can see the original post itself [here](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.instagram.com%2Fp%2FCU7z53CsDji%2F%3Futm_medium%3Dcopy_link%26fbclid%3DIwAR3RijcdhxG5J9JayY89MpZCEq4fjSahw5-MDyBPa8u9997OdAFk6TA_qA8&h=AT06Whnr8ldq-r-tfNv7giHYIM4tckJU1bbIepQq6ol-y17PbxkLyQlRDQTMOpdudlxbUujF7siKmOX_lOwGv5BWIgnP2CSlIsw0t8k1EJDLxfGmYsz3xeXiHY3juSz4fbkp2kj6h84mawRZgyU).

It is effective because:

* The primary image has a clear subject. This person is at the center of the shot, and their face is clearly visible.
* The series of images are interesting, and visually tell a story of RI’s work.
* The caption is descriptive, and tells the story of the subject, while also clearly highlighting RI’s impact in their lives.



This is another example of an effective social media post. You can see the original post [here](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/relief-international_raising-a-family-is-one-of-the-hardest-jobs-activity-6805538541720887297-ueI5).

It is effective because:

* The primary image has a clear subject. The people are at the center of the shot, and their faces are clearly visible.
* The caption is descriptive, and tells the story of the subject, while also clearly highlighting RI’s impact in their lives.
* The post has a clear focus, connecting RI, a program participant, and an International Day.

**How to Submit a Post**

Please share the post with your designated Communications Focal Point who will then send the post on to James Darnbook on the Communications & Development Team. If you are the Communications Focal point, or your office does not have a designated focal point, please send your post directly to James Darnbrook ([james.darnbrook@ri.org](mailto:james.darnbrook@ri.org))

Checklist for Submission:

* Original photo in JPG or PNG format OR video in any usable format.
* Consent forms for all non-RI people in the image.
* Caption that describes photo/video including place, person/people, and action taking place. The audience for social media posts is anyone so context is crucial.

Process after Submission:

* Country focal point sends submission to GSO Comms team
* GSO Comms team will edit the photo/video and caption, and then post to social media.
* GSO Comms team will send links to social media posts back to Country Focal point.

**Interviewing**

**Overview**

Interviewing people is essential to gather basic information for an article. You can use an interview to get information about a program participant, and how they have engaged with the RI program. You can also use the interview to get their perspective/feelings/emotions about a situation.

**Questions to Ask**

*Biographical Information:*

* Full Name
* Age
* City where they are from
* If displaced, please note the city where they live now
* Number of people in their family; how many children/siblings? Boys? Girls?

*Background Interview Questions:*

* Tell me about yourself – what was your life like before the crisis broke out?
* What do you do for work?
* How has your life changed in the past few years?
* What challenges do you currently face?
* What do you hope for in the future?

*Questions Related to Relief International:*

* How did you first learn about Relief International’s services?
* What prompted you to seek out these services for yourself/ your family?
* What services do you receive from RI? How often/ for how long?
* Why are these services important for you and your family?
* How have these services helped improve your situation?
* Do you have anything else to add?

*Questions specifically for displaced people:*

* What was the day like when you decided to leave your home?
* Did you take anything with you? Sentimental items? Identification cards?
* Where did you go next? Why did you choose to go there? How long did the journey take you?
* Tell me about the first few days you spent here. What services were available? How did you feel?

*Questions specifically for RI Staff:*

* When did you join RI?
* What’s your official job title?
* Can you describe a typical day in your role?
* What are some of the greatest challenges you face in your role?
* What needs do you see on the ground? How have these changed over the years?
* Who access our services?
* What motivates you to do this type of work? How long have you worked in the humanitarian/ development field?
* What would you like RI's supporters, or those thinking of donating, to know about RI's work in country/ your project?

**Consent**

**Overview**

Consent is a complex issue, but it generally means permission. Consent also includes ensuring the individual understands the implications, purpose, and potential use of the photograph or video. The aim with consent is to do your best to ensure respect for the individual’s autonomy and privacy and to avoid harming the individual through inappropriate publication of their image or their story. Staff must always remember that you are *asking* for consent, *not informing* program participants that they will be featured in internal and external media.

**Best Practices for Ensuring Informed Consent for Adults**

*Informed consent is a process, not a form.*

1. Introduce yourself and explain why you’re meeting with the program participant. Is it for a fundraising campaign, a website story, or media publication?
2. Ask for their permission. *Is it okay to take your photo today? Can I record this interview?*
3. Review the consent form with them. These forms are often written with difficult language and jargon; be aware of this and make an effort to explain the form in a way that is accessible.
4. Explain potential uses of these visuals. Bring along print materials or use your phone to show examples of how their image, video, and/or story could be used on social media, the website, in brochures, local pamphlets, etc. Explain clearly that RI has ownership of the of the materials, and that it will not be used by others, and only with full consent from them.
   1. If you intend to capture sensitive topics (early marriage, domestic abuse, HIV status, etc.), offer alternatives to capturing these events in a way that may make them feel exposed or vulnerable – including changing their names, staging photos to hide their faces, etc.
5. If the participant says yes, you can take photos of them, interview them, and include them in future publications.
6. After taking photos/interview, sign the consent form, and confirm this with the subject.
7. Share your contact details (such as a business card) so your subject can retract their consent if they wish. This is also useful for asking follow-up questions.

**Consent Forms**

You can confirm consent either verbally or through written confirmation, however written consent is to be secured whenever possible. If written consent is impossible to secure, Field staff must obtain and document verbal consent, and include documentation of verbal consent in the “Documentation of verbal consent form”

Whenever possible, the consent form should be translated into the local language. Consent forms are available in a number of languages:

* Arabic
* Burmese
* Dari
* English
* Farsi
* Somali
* Turkish

If the consent form is not available in the local language it can be translated with the help of the GSO communications team.

***CONSENT FORMS CAN BE FOUND*** [***HERE***](https://ri.box.com/s/dlat5o709vc2ttlf51l239vqqxb6iupz)***.***

**Additional Consent Guidelines**

Be aware of local laws governing photography practices, editorial principles, and ethical issues in development photography. Weigh the value and importance of using a photograph against regard for the subjects’ reputation, privacy, and integrity.

If possible, ask those being photographed to spell their name (and title, if staff), to reference people correctly.

Photographing and using photos of people in vulnerable situations requires extreme care and sensitivity. In particular, photos of children should be taken in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner, paying attention to their dignity, their safety and their rights. Obtain permission from the child and his or her guardian for all photos.

The sick and the dying also have a right to privacy and personal dignity. Do not film people if they are receiving highly graphic medical care, are in visible distress, or are seriously injured or wounded. Avoid depicting people as helpless and weak — we want to illustrate people who are empowered because of RI’s work.

Do not seek out case studies of survivors of sexual violence or abuse. If it becomes known during an interview that the participant is a survivor of abuse, you should liaise with the country safeguarding focal point.

Do not take photos of people if they are visibly scared or uncomfortable. This is also a consideration for your safety and security, as people may become angry or offended.

In order to respect cultural customs, photographers should work with a female field staff member to act as a liaison, if the photographer isn’t female.

**Photography**

**Overview**

Good photos are vital for promoting RI programs. RI focuses on capturing images that portray people with dignity, showing their innate resilience in the face of challenging circumstances.

It is important for us to remember that every picture we take tells a story. What are the images from program activities that best tell the story of the program, its participants and its impact?

Keep the following in mind in order to ensure that your photos make the greatest impact:

**Getting Your Best Shot**

* Plan ahead by bringing verbal consent forms with you and having a translator, if needed.
* Carry with you to the field visibility items from your visibility kit – hats, vests, RI badge to give to staffer before taking photo.
* Branding/Visibility: Banners are fine but can be overwhelming. Aim instead for photos of staff in RI t-shirts, hats and ID badges. This subtle but highly visible RI branding is the most effective way of showing our work.
* Almost all of the best photos have people in them. Candid photos of people interacting are the best of the best!
* Plan the shots you want to take BEFORE going to the field. Being prepared will allow you to get more of the images you need. Anticipate the setting you’ll be working in and shots that would best capture the activities taking place there. (See below for common scenarios in the field and photo ideas and examples for each).
* Take action-oriented and candid shots.
* Get a variety of wide and close-up shots of activity (children washing their hands, beneficiaries receiving cash, beneficiaries building or making repairs, etc.).
* Capture positive interactions between RI staff and beneficiaries.
* Make sure that project participants are highlighted equally: staff, locals, different genders, ages, and races.
* Illustrate people who are empowered because of RI’s work.

**Common Scenarios/Best Practices**

* Going to a clinic? You’ll want to get shots of patients interacting with RI staff in the photos, patients on their own and RI medical staff working. Try to capture the RI logo on the staffs’ uniforms and RI badges around their necks.



Mothers feeding their babies as part of a nutrition program in a clinic in South Sudan.

An RI staff member checks on a baby at a clinic in South Sudan.

* Conducting house visits or assessments? Capture shots of RI staff interacting with beneficiaries. If possible, capture images of family members interacting together and also with RI staff. Shots of a beneficiary’s home and neighborhood – whether in a refugee camp, a village or a city – can be effective ways of showing context.



An RI staff member visits a beneficiary in her home in a Bangladesh refugee camp.

* Attending a distribution of NFIs, food, vouchers, cash, kits, etc.? Take some pictures of the items themselves. If possible, unpack a kit and arrange the items together to take an overhead shot. Also take close-ups of each individual item. Show beneficiaries holding what they’ve received.

* Taking photos without showing people’s faces: Sometimes, because of a beneficiary’s preferences or a setting in which security is particularly sensitive, you won’t be able to show peoples’ faces. You’ll need to be creative. Some tips: take a photo from behind the person or from the side, showing only a small fraction of their face. You could also take a picture just of the person’s – better yet if they are engaged in an activity like writing, drawing, sewing, cooking or holding something relevant to the aid RI is assisting them with. Another creative angle is to take a photo from above, just showing the top of someone’s head and their surroundings.



A mother and her child in Lebanon.

A beneficiary, on left, and RI staff, on right.

**What to Avoid**

* Don’t take photos of people in meetings, waiting in long lines or in other situations that aren’t visually interesting.
* Don’t take photos of beneficiaries that look like they are suffering.
* Photos should not be out of focus, too dark or too light.
* Photos of children should be taken in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner, paying attention to their dignity, their safety and their rights. Obtain permission from the child and his or her guardian for all photos.
* Do not film people if they are receiving highly graphic medical care, are in visible distress, or are seriously injured or wounded.
* Avoid depicting people as helpless and weak.
* Do not use the time/date stamp.
* Avoid capturing the logos or branding images of other NGOs.

AVOID capturing images like these:





[Here are some additional tips](https://ri.box.com/s/djixn48xwg48t7g4efg6599mld0zuy42) for taking high-quality photos in the field, courtesy of a former CFP in Yemen.

**Video**

**Overview**

Video offers a powerful storytelling tool. Like photos, try to take videos from program activities that best tell the story of the program, its participants and its impact. Show that subjects are engaged — people that are working and interacting with the people around them, rather than posing for a camera.

**Getting Your Best Shot**

Plan your shoot

Before you shoot, identify the message you want to convey. Write out the potential shots that will help tell your story, and answer the who, what, where, when, why, and how of your story.

How to Shoot Stable Footage

Always use a tripod, whether you’re using a camera or a cell phone. If you do not have a tripod, rest the camera/phone on a flat surface — the ground, a board, or a table will work. Keep your arms in tight and knees bent to stay stable.

How to Shoot Stable Footage

Always use earbuds or headphones connected to your device when shooting. Earbuds/headphones will let you hear the sounds around you much better. If you are interviewing people, use a lapel microphone. These can be ordered very inexpensively on sites like Amazon.

How to Shoot

Economize your shots: Find what you want to shoot, zoom into it, then press record. Limit the number of zooms, pans, and tilts. There is nothing wrong with using them, but using a lot of them makes the editor’s job more difficult.

Building a Sequence

A video sequence is a series of shots on the same subject that are edited together to tell a story. A well-edited video sequence adds visual variety to video storytelling. Before and during shooting, think about why you’re taking each shot. Use wide, medium, and close-ups of hands and faces to help build a sequence for your editor.

Shooting Interviews

When shooting interviews, stand to the left or right of your camera and have your subjects talk to you, not to the camera. Looking directly into the lens will appear awkward in most cases. Ask open-ended questions and don’t rush your interviewees, especially when they are describing an emotional experience. Do not interrupt while they are talking — it will ruin good quotes. Always have your interviewee pronounce and spell their name while you’re recording for the editing process.

**Effective Video Examples**

You can find an example of an effective short RI video [here](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2FQXihier-AZk%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR3ahYqnzqT3wlNPdtu0ejS4xYA9RX1fXSnFOlEwkaIcMmrGOwqvxCi55uw&h=AT35V1TjKfSFFjlZwJMvzAtFOCX7z9G85StOhxXG0F6TSO02ousKyXlTbjI2Mlrt1wLwcjwItoR99Eg_SNWN1fIPrEghUItlJ46MBzYRSPOk17cdVAeGezqoVoBgdgnS5qfygZrtENqEqGzbkDc).

It is effective because:

* It has a clear subject, who is in focus in the center of the shot throughout the video.
* It has clear audio of the subject that is easy to understand.
* It is short (around 1 minute total). This allows it to be used in multiple capacities, including all social media channels.
* It shows the context of what the subject is speaking about in the background, giving the audience a visual understanding of what is happening. This background context is vibrant, interesting, and centered on people, without taking focus away from the subject.
* It has a clear purpose throughout; explaining what is happening in Tigray, and what RI is doing to assist.

You can find an example of an effective longer RI video [here](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2FuE-wArzuwIo%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR27P_APBugNqxQYO2pyVF7DiNyFa3thLpila6PIJHHzsTyt9afQM-lYvX0&h=AT35V1TjKfSFFjlZwJMvzAtFOCX7z9G85StOhxXG0F6TSO02ousKyXlTbjI2Mlrt1wLwcjwItoR99Eg_SNWN1fIPrEghUItlJ46MBzYRSPOk17cdVAeGezqoVoBgdgnS5qfygZrtENqEqGzbkDc).

It is effective because:

* It provides relevant context clearly and efficiently at the start of the video so the audience understands background.
* The video has close captioning throughout so people can easily understand the video.
* The video’s subject is introduced early and is then centered for the remainder of the video.
* The majority of the shots in the video are ‘action shots’ of the subject doing something, giving the video energy and making it more watchable.
* The audio music does not distract from the narration.
* The video clearly explains how RI helped the subject, and describes RI’s work in the field more generally.
* RI branding is clear throughout with shots of RI staff wearing RI hats/jackets etc. The RI logo is shown clearly at the end of the video.

**Branding**

**Overview**

RI’s brand tells the world who we are and what we stand for. We express our brand through our visual identity, our social media content, the stories we feature on [www.ri.org](http://www.ri.org) and other materials we publish. When writing and talking about RI to the general public, all correspondence should seek to convey the image of an organization that embodies: innovation, agility and partnership.

Weaving these attributes together with RI’s mission and values produces the following position statement:

* *Relief International supports vulnerable communities in places other NGOs can’t, don’t or won’t go. We craft custom solutions that address the origins of poverty and empower communities to reach the goals they set.*

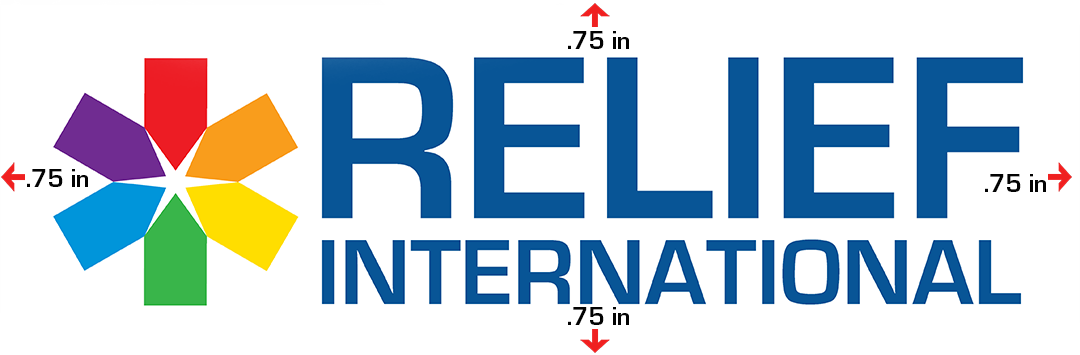
All stakeholders must perceive — and accept — the following ideas about Relief International:

* We go where other NGOs can’t, don’t or won’t.
* We are problem solvers.
* We are big enough to be effective, small enough to be responsive.
* We address the underlying causes of poverty, disease and a community’s failure to thrive.
* We offer communities the tools to realize their goals.
* We deliver hope in some of the most desperate places on earth.
* We change lives.

For a list including all of RI’s key messages, [click here](https://ri.box.com/s/3fhtlzqeomu6tdpvwaswsu4gf4607iqu).

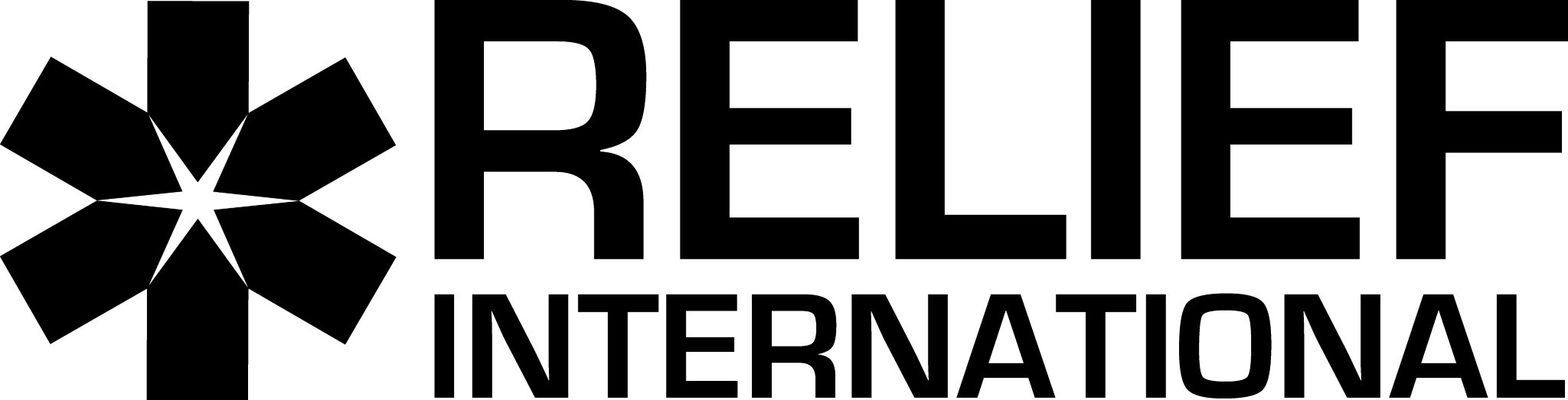
**Logos**

Relief International’s logo represents the organization’s multi-sector approach to humanitarian aid. A protected clear space around the logo ensures greatest visual impact. Keep a clear buffer around the logo measuring at least 0.75 inches/1.9 cm to maintain the legibility and visual integrity of the logo.



The standard logo features a color logo and blue logotype. The only alternatives are a color asterisk with black or white logotype and the monochromatic blue, black or white options. The asterisk may be used separately, but the logotype may only appear alone if unstacked in Eurostile font. Any of the logos, logotypes or combinations thereof may be placed against white, black or blue backgrounds. Do not use an abbreviated logo that does not spell out Relief International.

Alternative Logos

It is imperative that you maintain the correct dimensions when resizing the logo. The logo on the left below demonstrates the proper dimensions. The example on the right has been distorted by improper resizing. RI’s logo should always reflect the appearance of the logo on the left.

All official logo files are [located in Box](https://ri.box.com/s/cqu78sznzrgg803wbc4934bdm2c2dryv).

**Fonts**

Relief International uses two fonts on printed materials: Franklin Gothic and Lora. Both are specialized fonts that can only be accessed by people with the installation files. They do not come automatically loaded onto Microsoft or Apple computers. Using these limited edition fonts reinforces RI’s unique look. The font installation files and instructions can be found on Box.

**Franklin Gothic**

Franklin Gothic is a sans serif font that projects a clean, minimalist look and is prized for its readability. Sans serif fonts — those without lines at the top and bottom of each letter — are perceived as agile and direct. They are easy to read, especially in digital format. Franklin Gothic was created to suggest impartiality and universality, which reflects RI’s non-sectarian values.

Use Franklin Gothic for most documents: one-pagers, proposals (if possible), internal memos, meeting agendas and other day-to-day working documents

For visual variety in documents, feel free to use variations of Franklin Gothic as shown below:

Franklin Gothic Demi

For document titles

Franklin Gothic Medium

To offset section headings or other items that require attention

Franklin Gothic Book

For body text in all documents

**Lora**

Lora is a serif font — one that has short lines at the top and bottom of each letter, such as Times New Roman.

Serif fonts generally are considered more formal than sans serif fonts, and are used for invitations, correspondence, official documents and other items that require a formal look. Many newspapers use serif fonts. Lora was created to project the formality of serif type with a modern, agile feel. These properties project the RI image, and make Lora an appropriate complement to our use of the more informal Franklin Gothic.

Use Lora for formal external documents: letters to ministries, invitations, programs for RI events and other high level or official documents that require a sense of gravity.

For visual variety in documents, feel free to use variations of Lora as shown below:

***Lora Bold Italic***

For titles

*Lora Italic*

For footers, offset areas, or to add emphasis within body text

Lora Regular

For body text

To download the RI fonts, please visit this link in Tool Box: <https://ri.box.com/s/tep8b2kavt15z1a7fowme5vq76y6c7nm>

**Color**

RI’s primary colors are RI blue (the blue in the standard logo), the light blue and grey used for headers in this document, and black. No other colors should be used for text, but the primary colors used in the asterisk are permitted for graphics or other design elements.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| RI BLUE  CMYK: 97.73. 12.2  RGB: 13.85.150  HEX: 0D5596 | LIGHT BLUE  CMYK: 72.44. 2.0  RGB: 79.129.189  HEX: 4F81BD | LIGHT GREY  CMYK: 52.43. 43.8  RGB: 127.127.127  HEX: 7F7F7F |

The following colors can be used ONLY for graphics or other design elements. They are NOT to be used for headers or text.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ASTERISK RED  CMYK: 2.98.93.0  RGB: 234.38.42  HEX: EA262A | ASTERISK GREEN  CMYK: 74.1.99.0  RGB: 62.180.74  HEX: 3EB44A | ASTERISK ORANGE  CMYK: 1.44.98.0  RGB: 247.157.33  HEX: F79D21 |
| ASTERISK YELLOW  CMYK: 3.10.100.0  RGB: 252.218.0  HEX: FCDA00 | ASTERISK PURPLE  CMYK: 51.59.0.0  RGB: 136.116.181  HEX: 8874B5 | ASTERISK BLUE  CMYK: 76.30.0.0  RGB: 33.147.209  HEX: 2193D1 |

**Writing Style**

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Avoid heavy use of abbreviations and acronyms (sometimes a shortened form of the phrase can be a good substitute). Also, be sure to use acronyms consistently and without unnecessary repetition. Do not include the acronym if used only one time in the document.

Relief International (RI)

The first mention of Relief International should be written in full, with the acronym in parentheses following: Relief International (RI). Further mentions in the same article should be RI.

Program Names

RI program names should always be capitalized and written in full on first mention, with the acronym in parentheses following. Further mentions in the same document should use the acronym.

The rules for plurals and possessives of acronyms are the same as those for regular words

Some programs do not use acronyms. Please consult the list of acronyms for formal program names. If project or program is part of the name, be sure not to repeat that after use of the acronym.

Other Organizations

Other organization names should be written in full on first mention, with the acronym in parentheses following. Further mentions in the same document should use the acronym. Formal organization names should be capitalized when written in full. However, commonly used phrases that use acronyms should not be capitalized. The rules for plurals and possessives of acronyms are the same as those for regular words.

Active vs. Passive Voice

Use the active voice when possible. It’s more direct, clear, and powerful than the passive voice. However, the passive voice can be used sparingly when the “doer” is indefinite, unknown, or unimportant.

Computer Terms

Internet and website are lowercase unless used in a title or at the beginning of a sentence.

E-mail is one word separated by a hyphen, and lowercase unless used in a title or at the beginning of a sentence. Online is one word, and lowercase unless used in a title or at the beginning of a sentence.