

#OverExposed: reframe our thinking, reshape their future

Wednesday 7 September, 2022

Children in Africa cannot, and have not, agreed that organisations thousands of miles away can raise money by using their images. Rather than helping, images of children experiencing poverty, disaster, conflict, and injustice is exploitative and can cause considerable damage. It strips children of their dignity and objectifies them in a bid to attract attention and funding. These photos often live forever online. These children deserve better.

Chance for Childhood will stop the use of identifiable features of the children aged under 18 from its photography and videos and completely remove children's faces from all fundraising activities from 7th September 2022.

The charity, which has been at the forefront of fighting for every child in Africa and across the world for 30 years, is also urging all International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) to follow its lead as it strives to stop the use of images of children for fundraising causes.

Its newly launched campaign, OverExposed, which carries the strapline: reframe our thinking, reshape their future, will petition for organisations to consider the use of images of children that could be harmful or increase risk to the children they support and is expected to galvanise a sector-wide change in the way that organisations consider their own editorial standards.

#OverExposed highlights the unequal power dynamics that dictate their lives and the importance of how this power is managed properly and respectfully. It wants to end presenting children as 'helpless victims' by using dignified storytelling and images that truly protect their identity, rights, and wishes.

Anna Mai Andrews, CEO at Chance for Childhood, said: "The #OverExposed campaign marks our commitment to ethical storytelling that puts children's rights at the centre of our communications as well as a public commitment to raising standards in the ethical use of child-centred imagery. Perhaps the biggest shift of all, is that we will completely remove children's faces from all fundraising campaigns from 7th September 2022."

#OverExposed considers the way images of children are collected, stored, and used, recognising the critical importance of their own privacy and intellectual property as highlighted by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It also acts as a catalyst to improve policy, educational resources, and ethical standards.

Mr David Lammy, Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and Labour MP for Tottenham is backing the campaign. He said: "I completely support and applaud Chance for Childhood's decision to remove children's faces from all fundraising campaigns as part of their #OverExposed campaign. For all too long, images of children suffering around the world have been plastered all over the media without any consideration of the long-term damage it causes, or any thought of their rights. Children in Africa deserve the same protections and rights as children in Europe, and this campaign comes not a moment too soon."

Chance for Childhood will be launching their #Overexposed campaign at the House of Lords, London, on the 8th of September 2022 with third-sector speakers including keynote speaker Professor Abiodun Alao, Professor of African Studies at the African Leadership Centre, Kings College. Press are invited to attend the event.

Committed to a child-centred approach, Chance for Childhood works to ensure every child in Africa can thrive from their early years through to adulthood. This campaign will change the visual conversation on how children in Africa are represented in funding campaigns and, ultimately, ensure they experience the same protections, considerations, and rights as any other child in the world.

Organisations can find out more and pledge support at www.chanceforchildhood.org/overexposed

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