

## DECISION-MAKING MATRIX: AUTHENTIC STORYTELLING



The answer to the following questions should be “yes”.

### Making editorial decisions before a story is gathered:

- Have the people at the centre of the stories, the Girls and Young Women Advisory Group, or personnel working in the location where the stories are from been consulted on the issues facing them and their communities, and their own ideas and solutions? Does their input represent the common experience among this community?
- If so, does the story gathering process consider how to present the proposed contributor-led solutions?
- Have we considered the risks to the person in the solutions they propose and, if so, how are we working with them to mitigate these? For example, are they discussing doing something that is criminalised in their country (eg, underage sexual activity), or telling a story of oppression while in a location where the oppressor is still in a position of power (eg, a married young woman stating “I am not safe living with my husband”).
- Have we considered the risk to us or our organisation by not reporting any illegal activity that is disclosed in the story, and how to mitigate this? For example, not reporting a crime to the police because reporting it could result in the criminalisation of a girl or young woman. See the section on discovering illegal activity on p. 54 of our [guidelines for ethical communications around child marriage](#).
- Have we considered how to share the original words or images shared/produced by the contributor without editing in a way that could alter their original meaning?

### Selecting or creating content after collection:

- Does this story share context from the situation in which it was told?
- If they are available, are the person’s words accompanying their images?
- If working with images, is the primary person in the image shown with their own story (rather than with a story of a different person, or a “composite” story made up of different people’s experiences presented as if it was one story)? See the section on composite stories on p. 55 of our guidelines.
- If an image is shared, is it accompanied by a caption providing context?
- If appropriate and safe, is this person or group of people named and do we tell their story in these communications (even if indirectly, for example in the click-through materials) to help show them as a named human rather than as a prop to an issue?
- Is the person in the story affected by the situation to which these communications refer?
- Is the person in this story working/participating with the organisation sharing the story?
- If working with images, are they being used without being manipulated in a way that changes their narrative? If you are unsure, see the section on manipulating images on p. 61 of our guidelines.
- Can we explain why the person in the story was working with our organisation or partner?

Full guidance and other tools are available in our [Guidelines for ethical communications around child marriage](#).