Ethical Communication

The European NGOs Code of Conduct on Messages and Images, best practices and challenges

Images
Messages
Raising Awareness Ireland Slovakia
European practices
NGOs Luxembourg Austria Code challenges
communication Conduct
Commission

DEEEP Developing Europeans' Engagement for the Eradication of Global Poverty

CONCORD European NGO confederation for relief and development
Confédération européenne des ONG d'urgence et de développement
Development Awareness Raising & Education

A word from DEEEP

DEEEP, Developing Europeans Engagement for the Eradication of Global Poverty, is a 3 year project co-funded by the European Union.

Strengthening the capacities of national platforms in raising awareness, educating and mobilising the European public for worldwide poverty eradication is among its overall objectives. The Code of Conduct on Messages and Images and its correct implementation is a crucial tool for DEEEP and the DARE Forum members. This is why, we decided to draft this thematic dossier focusing on the Code of Conduct, to raise the debate among the DEAR constituency, and check, 6 years after its endorsement by the CONCORD General Assembly its strengths and weaknesses, and new challenges for the future. Before drafting the dossier, the group prepared a 5 questions survey, sent out to all communication officers in CONCORD, to have an overview of the understanding and use of this tool by European NGOs.

The aim of this dossier was to gather a series of best practices around the use of the Code, but also understanding the limits and challenges of such tool. We do hope we have fulfilled this objective and brought to you a relevant reflection on the Code of Conduct!

A big thank you to all the people who contributed to the dossier, the authors, DEEEP staff and the members of the Code of Conduct working group.

Enjoy the reading,

Chiara Tripepi

DEEEP Communication Officer

The Code of Conduct and its guide are also available in other languages!

In 2009, DEEEP has funded the translation of the code of conduct in 10 languages, the translations were aimed at supporting the national platforms in implementing the Code of Conduct at the national platform. You can find the translations on DEEEP website.

If you have any queries on the Code of Conduct, do not hesitate to contact the DEEEP team. We will be happy to provide you the necessary information on the Code of Conduct, as well as on your national representative to the DARE, who will also be able to help you out!

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List of useful acronyms

AR : Awareness Raising

CoE : Council of Europe

CoC: Code of Conduct on Messages and Images

CONCORD : European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development

CSO : Civil Society Organization

DARE: Development Awareness Raising and Education

DE : Development Education

DEAR : Development Education and Awareness Raising

DEEEP : Developing Europeans' Engagement for the Eradication of Global Poverty

EC : European Commission

EP : European Parliament

ESD : Education for Sustainable Development

EYF : European Youth Forum

GE : Global Education

MDGs : Millennium Development Goals

MSH : European Multi-stakeholder Group on Development Education

NSC : North South Centre

PR : Public Relations

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Adopting the Code of Conduct for Messages and Images in Luxembourg – the current state of play

Authors : Monica Fernandez is working for the Luxembourg Platform. Nicole Etikwa Ikuku is coordinating the NGO ASTM, and is Vice Chair of the CONCORD DARE Forum, as well as representing Luxembourg in the above mentioned forum.

Since 2008, the *Cercle de coopération*, the national platform of development NGOs for Luxembourg, has run a training session called "Messages, Pictures and Ethics." So far, 31 people from 15 NGOs and 1 person from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were trained. The Platform has focussed so far on promoting the Code of Conduct for "Messages and Images" as developed by Concord and approved by the *Cercle's* General Assembly in 2008, which commits all members to follow this Code in their communication material. But is it this easy?

The *Cercle* began promoting the Code in 2008, including organising training sessions on adopting the Code. Participating NGOs members conducted internal surveys on their use of images in Luxembourg. A weakness of this process of reflection was the lack of concrete follow up carried out by the *Cercle*. Information was gathered through a meeting and informal exchanges.

Early in 2011, the platform offered a training session on the role NGOs have within the public arena in Luxembourg, entitled "NGOs - do they want to titillate or educate?" (*Les ONG veulent-elles du sensationnel ou de l'éducatif?)*

The platform tried to answer the following questions: what types of images do NGOs put out, what messages do they spread, and what picture do they create of other peoples? Can, should and do NGOs want to be sensationalist to attract public sympathy? What do NGOs expect from the audience they target with their publications? What role is expected from this audience, that of donor, supporter of the ideas being promoted, multiplier of the message, or co-builder of a just society? The range of possibilities is so vast that clearly the public can easily get lost. It is also clear that the public often has to move from one role to another and, ideally, endorse them all. But are NGOs always sufficiently clear in their communications about the expectations they have of their audience? What are NGOs telling or not telling them?

This new focus for the training in 2011 stems from a desire to continue the exchanges amongst NGOs on ethics in their communications work but also on the role of development NGOs in Luxembourg's society.

A few words about the conduct of training and our methodology for proposing peer review of the communication materials of those NGOs that took part but also of other NGO members of the *Cercle*.

The platform used two evaluation tools to screen examples of communication materials currently being seen by the population of Luxembourg. The first tool was based on the sketch-language "the South and us" from CNCD, the National Centre for Development Cooperation, in Brussels. This tool is

designed to stimulate thinking on development models and North-South solidarity actions. We used the tool's list of measures to classify the measures described in the materials according to the different development models proposed by Guy Bajoit. Participants, at a first reading, decided what type of measure the NGO was said to be engaged in, in the chosen material. And then, using the table of 4 development designs, we attempted to identify what kind of solidarity was being promoted in the materials.

The results of this exercise were surprising to participants. We were able to analyse various materials from the same NGOs and find different messages depending on the purpose of the material. In fundraising materials, the type of North-South solidarity that is promoted is largely based on technical assistance and the need for funds to improve the living conditions of people affected by the proposed development. The vision of development that is promoted is very much focussed on these people's dependence on our support and on our financial commitment to the poor.

In so-called awareness-raising or informational materials, the messages are less direct. Some NGOs provide information on their strategy for working with their partner, but in the materials that were analysed, even in this case, the examples chosen to highlight the NGOs' work were greatly oriented towards technical support, infrastructure construction, and financial support for children through sponsorships or scholarships. Again these children's dependence on our financial commitment was underlined. In some cases, this call for generosity was also accompanied by a more detailed explanation of the values held by the partner in the South and its commitment as an actor in building a more just society. But other materials did not mention partners at all; the projects were described without any mention of local actors.

This process of peer review of materials is especially interesting because of the debate it raises among NGOs and of course, feedback will be given to NGOs who have not participated in this training but whose materials have also been examined as part of the review.

In a second phase, we offered participants a template to analyse the materials, containing the following questions: In your opinion, what is this "material" for? (Fundraising? Informing? Raising awareness? Selling something?) Who put the material together? What is its message, what does this material tell us? Describe the image you see. Does this material catch your eye? Does it interest you? What could be improved in this material? What is missing?

Participants chose materials and tried to respond to these questions themselves. Then we asked them to pass the template to people in the street, in bars or cafés near our training site. In pairs, participants had to challenge passers-by and ask their opinion of two different materials.

This encounter with the public was an incredible source of information. With certain materials, passers-by could not identify the NGOs. With others, the messages were not clear. Often there lots of content, but it was sometimes difficult for passers-by to identify the purpose of the material. Passers-by did not like some of the pictures, they found them shocking without understanding the link to the material's message. They also struggled to understand the NGO's role. Often, NGOs are seen as actors who collect money for the poor. The role of information is also related to the need to raise

funds. The material used for this exercise, did not allow passers-by to identify the role of the NGO and its partners in building a democratic society promoting human rights and equitable and sustainable development for both the North and South.

Without wishing to draw hasty conclusions from this encounter with the public and the analysis of certain materials, we can say that questioning the messages and images disseminated by NGOs in Luxembourgish society is central to building the legitimacy of the development sector and mobilising people in the North to build a fairer world.

The *Cercle* will continue to get behind this process of questioning and peer review in order to assist NGOs in building a true and coherent picture of the development sector's issues as raised by civil society actors in the South and North.

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Code of Conduct – the Austrian Way!

Author: Stefan Kerl is Head of Campaigning in the Austrian NGDO Südwind, member of the Austrian Working Group on Development Awareness Raising and Development Education of the NGDO platform Global Responsibility and Austrian representative in the DARE-Forum.

The background

Since 2009 the Working Group on Development Awareness Raising and Development Education of the Austrian NGDO platform Global Responsibility has been discussing the CONCORD Code of Conduct on the use of images and messages.

The Code of Conduct itself was first discussed and appreciated, then the discussions were directed to the guide. Both the Code and the guide were translated by VENRO, the German platform and adapted to the Austrian context by an ad-hoc group of volunteers of the working group. The Austrian platform realised that the discussions around the guide were much more complex than expected.

The majority of the members decided that they did not want to transfer and adapt the European guide to the Austrian context; they rather would like to launch an Austrian process leading to the development of a new Austrian guide. The Austrian NGOs would then feel the ownership around such guide.

Such process started with a one-day workshop on 2nd December 2010. The membership of the Austrian NGDO platform Global Responsibility was widely represented with colleagues from education, campaigning, fundraising and project departments.

In the morning three background inputs where given. The first input was a scientific input dealing with the effect of photos in communication, the second one dealt with the practical side how to implement the Code of Conduct when taking pictures and was given by a photographer. The third input was held by Darina Manurova from eRko – the Christian Children Communities Movement in Slovakia on how to implement concretely the Code of Conduct in an NGDO.

In the afternoon the participants worked in groups on the 6 leading principles of the code. In each group the following questions where discussed:

- What does the principle concretely mean for our work?

- Which department of the NGDOs is concerned and how?

-        What do we need for the implementation of the principle?

-        What is hindering the implementation?

The results of the workshop where in a great majority positive. Most participants voiced the opinion that the implementation of the Code of Conduct is possible and concrete possibilities where discussed.

The next steps

In spring 2011 the discussions continued inside the NGDOs and in September a second workshop will be held with the support of DEEEP, aiming at continuing and deepening the discussions. The morning session will be again devoted to input. This time from a Gender perspective and from the perspective of migrants, the third input will give good and bad practices examples.

The afternoon will be devoted to the concrete work of the NGDOs and what they already implemented regarding the Code of Conduct. Furthermore materials of the NGDOs will be discussed in a peer review process and recommendations for improvement will be worked out.

At the end of the day working groups will discuss on how to implement the Code of Conduct in concrete situations:

-        how can I make photos that respect the Code of Conduct

-        how do I use images and messages while respecting the Code

-        how can I deal with special situations/issues (like hungry children, men/women, old and diseased people)

After the workshop a working group will be nominated and will gather the recommendations of the workshops and develop an Austrian guide on "how to use the Code of Conduct". We hope for an exciting process and that the Austrian manual will also be a valuable contribution to the European debate.

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Code of Conduct on Images and Messages- Experiences with the implementation in Slovakia

Author: Darina Maňurová is working for the Development Cooperation Department of eRko

The Slovak NGDO Platform (www.mvro.sk) joined the Code of Conduct on Images and Messages in 2010 and has invited its 32 members and other organisations including media and its partners to follow. One of the signatories of the Code of Conduct on Images and Messages is also eRko – Christian Children Communities Movement (subsequently referred to as eRko Slovakia).

eRko Slovakia is one of the biggest children and youth organizations working throughout Slovakia – with a stable base of 8 000 members and other supporters. It was set up and officially started its activities in 1990. Its national wide actions are recognized in three main programmes:

1.   Regular meetings of children communities – the basis of the work are regular meetings of children communities where more than 1 500 eRko leaders help over 6 500 children during their free time to become adult Christian personalities. Moreover summercamps, trips, different capacity building trainings for youth leaders and other activities are organised in order to achieve the eRko´s mission.

2.   Rebrik – the only Catholic magazine for children in Slovakia gives its readers – pupils at primary schools up to 10 years old – rise to build a positive relation to own family, school and the surrounding community, to think of others and to share and cooperate with other people.

3.   Dobra novina – a development cooperation department of eRko was established in 1995 along an annual Christmas solidarity action called Dobra novina (Good news in English). The campaign supports development projects in Sub-Saharian African countries with special focus on the Eastern Africa – particularly on Kenya, South Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia. Thenceforward the development education has become one of the strongest programmes in eRko throughout the year and especially with educational activities and materials ahead of the annual campaign. Volunteerism in the project countries of Dobra novina is becoming the essential part of the work as well.

The Code of Conduct on Images and Messages in eRko Slovakia

Thousands of pictures and a lot of text-based material are supporting our awareness raising and educational activities in Slovakia. We are aware of the importance to inform the Slovak

public about our projects and situation in developing countries in a coherent and balanced way. We want to respect human dignity when describing poverty and other difficult topics related to the development work and avoid strengthening stereotypes on African countries as media often do.

The implementation of the Code of Conduct on Images and Messages in eRko Slovakia was planned in several steps. It is a process which cannot be introduced in a day but requires the full understanding of all involved people in the organisation.

The National Board of eRko Slovakia decided to joining the Code of Conduct on Images and Messages in July 2010. eRko´s representatives from all over Slovakia became familiar with principles and the importance of using them in communication towards our target groups and public.

On the practical level, it was the development cooperation department Dobra novina that started implementing the Code. As human dignity, needs and responsibilities of people have been reflected in our development work since its beginning, introducing the Code and its principles was more a natural process rather than a dramatic change. In February 2010 the Code was introduced to the Committee of Dobra novina – the decision making body of representatives from all Slovak dioceses. Subsequently, the Code principles were implemented into the Christmas 2010 campaign materials and educational materials with the aim to provide a complete picture of development issues to all groups of readers – those who might get in touch with them for the first time and also those who have been familiar with them for many years.

Nowadays to attract public interest in development issues and deeper understanding of them we prepare materials with much more photos than text-based material. It is sometimes a challenge but on the other hand we realize that a photo is a good way how to show the public the immediate context (of course accompanied by a particular caption).

Our African project partners like to share pictures on their achievements or challenges with us. Such exchange is based on the long-term partnership we have built with them, so we can be sure that pictures received from them truthfully illustrate what they consider being important. Another source of photos comes from our project trips and field visits. They have been archived together with background information provided in the regular project reports or knowledge of local circumstances shared by our colleagues from the grass-root level.

Among our communication tools there are: the annual newspaper Dobré noviny Dobrej noviny, campaign promotional materials – poster, leaflet for families, leaflet for children, brochure on supported projects, stickers, a thank you card, e-presentations, then methodological materials working with the annual campaign theme and additional information

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and educational materials for young people and general public. The most recent one is a material called Habari Njema Ndani Afrika consisting of a brochure, postcards, a set of photos with explaining information and a map of Africa.

The implementation of the Code is also reflected in the recently introduced Project Agreement form. It was amended by a paragraph on the use of the visual materials in accordance with the Code. This means that project partners and beneficiaries have to be well informed about cooperation with our organization and have to give us their permission to take pictures or shoot videos during our project visits. They are also aware of the use of the visual materials in Slovakia. If possible we try to share produced information or educational materials with the particular project partners.

In the near future we would like to improve the photo archive and create a proper database for all the pictures. In this sense we got inspired by our Austrian partner organisation Dreikönigsaktion (www.dka.at). We are preparing another workshop on the importance of the Code for all three eRko´s departments. The practical implementation is shared between the staff on the daily basis. From the national perspective of our work we consider to follow the principles of the Code within the Rebrik department as well as it works with many pictures and text-based material. So the Code will gain another dimension in the North.

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Representing children rights.
A good practice.

Author: Chiara Paganuzzi coordinates human rigths education /global education projects within the Save the Children office in Milan (Italy).

The best practice described in the article is taken from: I. Biemmi and I. Tenti "With our eyes". Save the Children, Rome, 2006. The project was co-funded by the European Commission under the Non State Actors and Local Authorities in Development (NSA-LAs) programme. It was designed and coordinated by I. Biemmi. Isabella Tenti managed the project and coordinated the campaign activities in Italy during the third year.

Children are the most frequently portrayed subjects. As stated in the Code of Conduct on Images and Messages developed by CONCORD[1] (the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development) the values of human dignity, respect and truthfulness must underlie all communications and signatories should strive "to conform to the highest standards in relation to children's rights according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)"[2].

Human rights are inalienable and universal. Thus, they apply to all human beings as well as to all age groups. Children have the same general human rights as adults, but being children particularly vulnerable they also have peculiar rights that recognize their special need for protection. The UNCRC was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1989[3] to set out the rights that must be realized for children to develop their full potential[4]. The Convention was once described by Nelson Mandela as "that luminous living document that enshrines the rights of every child without exception to a life of dignity and self-fulfillment"[5]. **The Convention reflects a new vision of the child** in which children are not the property of their parents nor are the passive object of charity. They are, instead, recognized as individuals and members of a family and community, with rights and responsibilities appropriate to his or her age and stage of development. To this extent, children and young people are *right holders* and duty bearers (parents, teachers, adults and

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[1] The Code of Conduct was endorsed by the DARE Forum (Developing Awareness Raising and Education Forum - former Development Education Forum) of CONCORD, in Malta on the 20th of October 2006.
[2] Code of Conduct on Images and Messages.
[3] It was ratified by all nations except the United States and Somalia.
[4] It spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere have: the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. The four core principles of the Convention are non-discrimination; devotion to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child. Every right spelled out in the Convention is inherent to the human dignity and harmonious development of every child ("Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child", United Nations Children's Fund 2007).
[5] Taken from a statement on Building a Global Partnership for Children, Johannesburg, 6 May 2000.

institutions) should fulfill their responsibility towards them supporting them to claim their rights through active participation.

Specifically important, for anybody willing to engage in a communication that respects the dignity of the children concerned, are the following three articles set out in the UNCRC:

- Article 12 which states that Governments and Nations

    "shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child".

This article gives children and young people **the right to express their views**. It ascribes to children and young people an entitlement to participate in discussions and decisions, and an obligation on institutions to ensure that this happens.

- Article 13 which recognises children **the right to freedom of expression**:

    "The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice".

- Article 17 which states that children and young people have **the right to be addressed by the mass media** (journalists, reporters, photographers, film and documentary makers) **in an accountable way**:

    "State Parties recognise the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health".

These principles and obligations are fundamental to any code of conduct aimed at providing criteria for an ethical representation of children in images and messages. Nowadays even more as for the advancement of digital technologies makes easy to acquire and distribute images and information. According to the UNCRC, children are not just particularly vulnerable subjects, who should be protected and assisted, but **they are citizens** who have the right to participate in the life of the community they belong to and **to express themselves on all the issues that concern them**. To this extent, children should be considered as an invaluable resource whose voice can make a difference as well as introduce a fundamental perspective in the society we live in.

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In 2004 Save the Children launched an ethical and social campaign in the formal education sector on children's rights in Italy, in Spain and in the United Kingdom[6]. **The intervention was underpinned by a participatory approach**, thus it involved in the design and development of the campaign the pupils of Italian, Spanish, and British secondary schools. Particularly, the students took part in a learning path aimed at enhancing the understanding of **children's representation in the media**. This was achieved by raising awareness of the stereotypes concerning children in all communications, but especially in the press advertising, through the knowledge and the adoption of the Code of Conduct of the European NGOs as well as the Save the Children Image Guidelines[7]. The campaign was aimed at encouraging the NGO sector and mass media: a) To represent the most vulnerable and marginalised children in a way that protects their dignity; b) To tell the reality of children's lives, showing or telling the context in which they live; c) To foster children and young people's participation in expressing their views freely and imparting information and ideas of all kinds; d) To address children in an ethical way which should be aimed at the promotion of their social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health; e) To engage with children and young people in order to learn from them; f) To help develop understanding that children's trafficking, abuse and exploitation are caused by poverty; g) To be gender aware, since social exclusion and discrimination have the worst effects on girls; h) To inform people about positive actions by children and young people at local, national and global levels.

The first year of the project focused on training teachers, pupils and young people of the three different European Countries. The objective of this stage was to raise awareness of global issues and particularly of the interdependence between the North and the South, and the notion of development as inherently linked to the defence of human rights. The training also addressed issues regarding ethical and social communication, in order to raise awareness of the stereotypes and prejudices that are often at the heart of advertising campaigns that contain images and messages about children. Trainers also helped students and young people to de-construct these images through the principles stated in the existing codes of conduct.

The second year of the project focused on the planning and realization of producing ethical campaigns focusing on the respect of children's rights. The students of young people

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[6] Thanks to a project funded by the European Commission.
[7] In 1991, Save the Children published a set of image guidelines which suggested practices to assess accountability. Intended for both the photographers working for Save the Children and the staff using the images (See appendix). M. Peach, "A Photograph is Worth More than a Thousand Words. The Impact of Photojournalism on Charitable Giving". School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) London, 2004. http://www.imaging-famine.org/papers/paech_giving.pdf

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produced a diverse range of visual materials such as posters, videos and web pages, a sample of some of these can be found in here.

During the third year of the project, students work was submitted from schools and colleges from all three countries and included in the publication that has been disseminated locally. A European conference took place in the Spring of 2007, in Milan with teachers, pupils, young people, NGO workers and media professionals when the campaign was launched. The products of the participants' work was presented to key players and participants.

What game are we playing?

Example of visual material created by the *Instituto di istruzione superiore di Monza* – classe III C, involved in the project. (Secondary School of Monza - class III C, Italy)

Appendix

The Save the Children Image Guidelines.

1. The dignity of the people should be preserved.

2. Where possible, portray human crises accurately, in context and without pathos. This does not mean limiting the choice to bland, antiseptic images - they are equally untrue.

3. The images and text used in all communications must be accurate and avoid lazy stereotyping, contradictory messages and clichés.

4. People are active partners in development and not just recipients of aid.

5. Disability takes many forms. Disabled people are an integral part of the community and should be seen that way.

6. Ethnic groups, women and disabled people should not be excluded from text or photographs that involve them.

7. Give careful consideration to the language used to describe the people, not only in terms of factual accuracy but also tone.

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8. Attempts should be made where possible to identify and quote people who appear in photographs. If they wish to remain anonymous, this should be respected. Wherever possible, try to communicate the views and experience of the people featured.

9. The way a photograph is treated in the production process may caricature or diminish the subject and cause offence. Images must not be cropped or edited in a way that distorts the accurate situation.

10. Images should be used in context, and matched accurately with text.

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The Code of Conduct on Images and Messages: The Irish Experience

Author: Denis Kennedy is a PhD candidate at the University of Minnesota. This article is based on dissertation field research conducted in 2009 and 2010 in Ireland, including two dozen interviews with Code drafters and aid practitioners. His research studies the origins and impacts of humanitarian self-regulatory initiatives. Please address correspondence to kenne365@umn.edu

This article examines the Irish experience drafting and piloting the revised Code of Conduct on Images and Messages. It attributes the relative success of the Code in Ireland to lessons learned from the failure of the original Code in 1989 and highlights the shifting context within which the Code reemerges. It concludes by looking to the future of the Code of Conduct in Ireland, especially questions of enforcement.

The Code and Its Impact

The current Code of Conduct on Images and Messages was adopted by Dóchas, Ireland's national NGO platform, in April 2007. In addition to Dóchas' 43 members, 17 non-members bring the total number of Irish Code signatories to 60. At the European level, the Code was developed in consultation with and adopted by CONCORD in June 2007.

The Code was written by NGOs in the areas of emergency relief, development, and development education and applies to images and messages used to inform (media and education), to sell (marketing and fundraising), to convince (advocacy and policy), and to account for (reporting). It is intended as an ethical framework on which organizations can build when designing and implementing their communications strategy.

By many measures, the Code of Conduct has been a success in Ireland, with caveats discussed below. Certainly the overwhelming perception among practitioners is that images and messages have improved. By and large, the consensus in interviews I have conducted is that the Code is "hugely helpful" and that NGOs have made "loads of progress". However, as I outline below, the impact of the Code on actual image production is difficult to measure.

If perceptions of the Code's impact are largely positive, the few empirical indicators point to a story that is encouraging, but complex. Dóchas' annual reports indicate strong increases among member agencies over three years in basic measures of compliance, such as public references to the Code and training; annual reporting and development of a feedback mechanism remain notable exceptions. However, a disjuncture emerges between self-reported compliance (such as annual reports) and outside analysis. In 2010, Dóchas

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commissioned an outside consultant to measure signatories' compliance against the Code. The study found broad levels of compliance with the Code; at the same time, there were large inconsistencies in terms of reference to the Code, its visibility, and the availability of a feedback mechanism. In areas where comparison was possible, the external evaluation consistently found lower numbers than what organizations self-reported. (By and large, though, results were still strong).

The data highlighted here represents that which is easiest to measure about the Code of Conduct; it says little about the actual images and messages themselves. DJ Clark has argued elsewhere that "NGO usage of images has changed very little over the past 10 years, and that the concern for the nature of Majority World representation had not made a significant impact on the sourcing of images." He found that though 60% of organizations surveyed in 2003 claimed they had changed the way they used images, quantitative research revealed few statistical differences. Clark's research predates the 2007 Code, but it does point to the need to verify self-reported progress. This is clearly an area where additional research is needed.

Qualitatively, my research has found differentiation in the Code's impact within organizations and across organization type in Ireland. Within organizations, the most salient divide is between practitioners of development education and fundraisers; this issue emerged, often unsolicited, in nearly every interview conducted in Ireland. The divide is frequently framed as a battle between values and organizational imperatives. Ruth Gidley puts it as follows: "Whenever a sudden disaster strikes, aid agencies face a quandary—how to tug at donors' heartstrings with powerful images without breaking self-imposed rules about portraying survivors with dignity?". Interviews indicated that the Code has had greater success with development educators and relatively less with fundraisers

Across organizations, large, multi-mandate agencies have experienced greater difficulties with the Code than have their smaller counterparts. Notably, small to medium size agencies were more likely to report compliance, and when they did not comply, they were more likely to attribute this to lack of capacity. Larger agencies, especially those with sizeable fundraising wings, have difficulty in gaining and maintaining commitment; their reasons for deviance stemmed both from capacity—such as weighty bureaucratic structures—and from instances of planned non-compliance. Bigger organizations, I was told repeatedly, were "struggling. They're well-organized in their regular jobs, but perhaps they have too many departments—it would be easy for them to include Code in their existing strategy, but in reality I'm not sure that it's really translated as well as could be." Large agencies have

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different types of capacity issues owing to their size; there are also cases of planned deviance, where a strategic decision was made to use shocking imagery.

Of the large Irish organizations, Concern and Trócaire are quite active in Dóchas, in DEEEP, and well-represented at meetings on Code implementation and strategy. But organization buy-in has been harder to achieve, for the reasons listed above. These findings point to the need for continued institutional support for small- and medium-sized organizations and raise questions of enforcement for large, bureaucratic agencies.

Lessons learned

Considering that the Code was only revised four years ago, such progress as has been made in Ireland provides considerable reason for optimism, especially given the rapidity with which the Code's predecessor disappeared. In fact, the success of the Code of Conduct in Ireland owes greatly to lessons learned from the failure of the 1989 Code. This Code arose out of reaction to the portrayals of the Ethiopian famine in 1984-85 and fueled considerable discussion, but by the mid-90s had been forgotten. Indeed, Dóchas research in 2005 found low awareness of the existence of the Code and where it was known, few people could locate actual copies (McGee 2005a). As one of the revisers recounted: "We literally found out about it, so we knew about it because someone looked it up and found the text, but it wasn't a living document."

The impulse for the 2007 revised Code mirrors the motivations in 1989: there was a deep concern that the strong and partial nature of the images and messages disseminated by the aid and development community (in conjunction with the media) were ultimately undermining the work they were doing. There was a strong feeling among those behind the Code revisions that images and messages "had slipped back towards the 1984 apocalyptic-type images."

The 2007 Code is considerably changed from its antecedent in length and scope; the earlier document's influence is most apparent in the revisers' considerable preoccupation with keeping the new Code alive. The Code study finds: "The shift from policy to implementation or from principles to practice is widely agreed to be where the 1989 Code fell down. The absence of independent monitoring is perhaps consistent with the voluntary nature of the Code, which relies on the organisation's own motivation to comply. Missing however is supportive and practical guiding information for organisations on how the Code could become owned and institutionalised by signatories along with steps for self-evaluation." The study suggested that the relevant NGO network be tasked with raising

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awareness, promoting the Code, monitoring adherence, and serving as a focal point. This is the role that Dóchas has taken in Ireland, pushing institutionalization within organizations, such as promoting the position of a 'Code champion' within senior management, ensuring the completion of annual reports, and using its agenda-setting power to keep the Code a priority.

The Code's early success in Ireland is also due to a changed organizational environment that is more amenable to self-regulation. Key trends include the growth of the sector since 1989, increased professionalization and bureaucratization of agencies, and a changed normative context. The latter is particularly noteworthy; it has manifested itself in a crisis of legitimacy in the sector—the idea that good intentions are no longer enough—and the perception that nonprofits must increasingly base their work on agreed rules and standards. This is not unique to the Irish case; the Sphere Project arose from similar concerns post-Rwanda.

As one of the 2007 Code's drafters has recounted, traditionally in Ireland, as elsewhere, "most of the legitimacy is founded around that particular distinctive feature of a non-profit, the volunteerism, the volunteer board, and so forth." Giving was based on trust. However, "after a certain point, that's not enough as a basis for giving or asking. It isn't sufficient. It was necessary to move from that to something that was more accountable and independent." As another key figure put it, in an era in which the public is "increasingly questioning the legitimacy and the credibility of NGOs, in terms of enhancing legitimacy, codes are quite important."

In Ireland, the Code of Conduct on Images and Messages comes against a backdrop of increasing critique of traditional, respected institutions. The climate has been amenable to initiatives like the Code of Conduct that seek to codify values and standardize practices in order to increase legitimacy and credibility. Dóchas has also been a strong advocate in this regard; promoting codes is a key part of its strategic plan to increase accountability in the sector.

Conclusions

Ireland played an important role in the development of the 2007 Code and its successes and stumbling blocks bear important lessons for the sector in Europe. Ireland's story is one of qualified progress, highlighted by increased adherence to the Code, but with gaps remaining among and within agencies. To the extent that the Code has been a success in Ireland, a great deal can be attributed to the role played by the national platform in serving

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as a focal point and to the energy of a number of normative entrepreneurs in keeping the code on the agenda in Ireland.

What does the future hold? In Ireland, there has been a recurring debate over enforcement of the Code: is self-assessment sufficient, or are mechanisms needed to promote compliance? This debate has long defied consensus; however, if anything, the balance seems to be shifting in favor of some sort of light mechanism to ensure compliance. The adoption of enforcement mechanisms would appear to signal both the limits of purely voluntary codes as well as the potential for voluntary initiatives to evolve into more substantial cooperation.

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An ethical analysis of the Code of Conduct

Author: Hélène Debaisieux is an ethicist, currently working for http://www.cleverwood.be/blog/ (Cleverwood)

1. Introduction

The first questions arising with this article would be the legitimacy of an ethicist to criticize a Code of Conduct for NGOs. Why is this analysis relevant? As an ethicist, the Code of Conduct is the motor of the domain we study.

Ethics appears as a recent trend of responsibility and accountability in fields where the limits of freedom have been observed. The regulation could not be the solution because considered slow, rigid and constraining. The auto-legislative method has been chosen by many and Codes of Conduct were born.

Codes of Conduct have been seen as a solution to solve problems deriving from law regulation. With self-regulation, the limits of the juristic eyes and the snowlines of procedures have been avoided. Each field was giving their own rules because they knew the limits better than everyone.

Since the1970s, Codes of Conduct were applied to force people to respect some rules but also to demonstrate respect for the beneficiaries by accountability. Codes of Conduct were an easy way to add ethical values when abuses were observed and judged by the public.

This article will not pretend to be something more than an ethical analysis. Some relevant elements for NGOs could be ignored due to the limited perspective of this text.

More precisely, the Code of Conduct is a set-up of rules and values recognized by a field essential for the well-being and the existence of the professionals. This Code represents a to be ethically validated by others. The values of this Code are ground on which its legitimacy rests. The Code is then essential when some limits are crossed, when trust and legitimacy are at stake. Elaborating a Code is not easy, and implementing it is even more difficult. The set-up has to be analyzed during the creation of the Code.

The intrinsic difficulty of a Code of Conduct lies on 3 internal dilemmas:

    a) The opposition between the universalism of the Code and the particularism :

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· **The Code:** It must be applied in all its part, be respected by everyone, be understood and be conscious at every level of action. It must be universal.

· **The Conduct**: By the same time, the Code must consider the specificity of all the actors who will be submitted to it. The actors are not the same and do not have the same goals, actions... The Code cannot be universal.

b) The opposition between the theory and the action: The Code is a guide for Action. The formulation is theoretical but its goal is practical. The actors and the beneficiaries must understand the stakes of the Code. When they are in front of a dilemma, they must use it as a basis to solve this dilemma.

c) The autolegislation versus the legislation: The Code is written by professionals and applied for themselves. The objectivity of the Code can be (and sometimes is) questioned. As mentioned earlier, the autolegislation way has been chosen to avoid the law. Nevertheless, the legislative system has some advantages the auto-legislative system has not. This raises some questions of objectivity, closeness and sanction. Being away from a mechanism known for centuries is not simple: Is a Code sometimes obsolete? Is a Code a way to sanction the professionals or just to improve their behaviors? Must a Code be as restrictive as the law is? Would be a Code respected without sanction? All these interrogations are questioning the auto-legislative system which is in opposition to the legal system commonly known.

These aspects were there to introduce all the difficulties met in this Code. The dilemmas are internal and cannot be answered without having them in mind.

2. The Form (implementation and set up)

The first impression coming up with the reading of the Code is its shortness. The additional part (the Guide) is essential to understand and apply it. On one hand, it feels the wish of universalism. This code is applied for all European NGO's; the public is larger than the one of a professional ethical standard code. The stakes are important and the generalist axis is chosen for suiting to every NGO. On the other hand, the Code does not take into account the specificity of each NGO. Being founded on such generalist values does not require a real involvement from the NGO which subscribes to the Code. The NGO does not seem to make any effort to suit to the Code. It does not prove any involvement. The NGO which makes the effort to set up the Code does not receive neither validation nor help for respect, except the "right to challenge".

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As an ethicist, I do agree on the necessity to change some aspects of this Code and follow this ethical movement. But I would not pretend it should change without questioning the reasons of this need. The first reasons for changing it would be for giving to NGO an easy way to adopt it, change it and promote it.

a) The adoption: The implementation requires help and gives rise to questions to which the writers (the organization which created the Code) would answer. As mentioned, the introduction of the Code into the organization is the most difficult part. This situation is due to the different aspects that must be defined while setting a Code up: the internal

knowledge, the relay and the management.

1. For a good application of the Code, professionals inside the organization must have a general knowledge of its content. The existence of the Code must be recognized and promoted by managers, the topics must be understood and the Code must be used as "the" book of reference concerning dilemmas.

2. Inside this organization, all the people will not have to know the Code at the same level. Some of them will be responsible of the respect, some of them of the sanctions etc. They will be the relays of interpretations. It does not have to be the managers but is must be people who care about these topics.

3. The definition given by the organization will rely on individual responsibility. The organization has to define the degree of responsibility to which each person will be submitted. When a new Code is implemented, the settings of its respect must be defined as well as the limits of the personal responsibility: Who is responsible not to respect it? Who will take care of reporting it? What will be the sanctions (if there are some)? Etc.

b) The change: Adopting a Code is also being an actor and knowing its flaws.

The organization which creates the Code must give a way to report the unrespected actions and the propositions to improve the Code. It can be online (easier) or offline. This way, they can be aware of evolutions of practices, difficulties to which actors are confronted… This sharing process will considerably improve the Code and its practice. Less rigid the Code is, more the stakes will be understood and accepted. The flexibility must be reflected internally and externally. Therefore, each organization must have a point of contact to which comments and questions can be addressed.

c) The promotion: The promotion is an essential basis for respect. Concretely, the promotion concerns the availability and the Publicity[8]. The access to the Code must be

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[8] The term of Publicity comes from "Public", it means "be available by everyone who has a stake" in a political point of view. It does not mean advertising, it means visible.

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free and easy, so that the actor can have a look at it when a dilemma is appearing. The promotion is a duty of the organization to be recognized on a larger scale. The organization which creates the Code must promote it if they want the Code to be used and legitimated by the pears. The label is an easy way to promote it: by respecting it, organizations get the right to communicate around this label and can add the logo into the official communication channels. This system is suitable for anyone (for the ones who created the Code and the ones who adopted it): promotion and reward are both components for respecting it.

3. The Content (the values and principles)

As already mentioned, the universalism of the Code takes over the particularism of the actors for which it is written. The universalism can be translated into 2 types of Code: the Code based on values and the Code based on principles. On one hand, values rely more on the sensitive way to implement the Code, they are less formal and let the actor appropriate those values. The actor is more responsible of the practical application of those values. On the other hand, principles can be in the Code for 2 reasons:

- To explain further and practically the values demonstrated in the first part of the text.

- When they are the core text, principles are more explicit and don't let the actor interpret the text as much as it is for values. This kind of text is close to Deontological Charter (bioethics etc.). The action of the actor is guided by those principles which cannot be ignored.

In this case, the Code is more based on values than on principles. Ex: "Choose images and related messages based on values of respect equality, solidarity and justice" could be a principle but it is not. Indeed, the action to choose (the principle) is related to values. At the opposite, "Use images, messages and case studies with the full understanding, participation and permission (or subjects' parents/guardian) of the subjects" is a principle of "Autonomy of the subject". It gives a way to act and let to the actor the interpretation[9].

There is no better way to write a Code than another but the writer would know which kind of Code(s)he has written. The choice of writing such a generalist Code excludes certain

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[9] Of course, the terms "participation" , "understanding" etc. could be interpreted differently, principles do not exclude the personalization of the interpretation.

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aspects, like including the particularism of the different NGO's and the particularism of the different types of communication.

On the one hand, the values of this Code could be considered as European. Choosing a Code is not only about values with which you agree, it is also about the capacity you have to adopt it concretely.

When a NGO does not respect these values in their communication, it could be blamed but the better learning would be them to understand why it is not a good way to communicate. The goal of such a Code is to make them understand the emergency of adopting it and the reasons to change their behaviors. The Code must help the NGO to decode the reasons of their choice, make it responsible and able to choose consciousness.

On the other hand, the Code is about regulation of NGO communication but does not include a reflection on what is communication - excepting the reflection of its goal and the way to use it. This complex phenomenon is compound with a lot of different elements. First of all, communication is about a message to give, message given by the interaction of image and text (except for radio). Both have to be regulated. Secondly, communication is forwarded by a lot of different channels to a lot of different publics. Ethical communication is all about the introduction of ethical values inside those different elements. Each channel of communication gets its own specificities, public and environments that will influence the interpretation of the message[10] .

Last but not least, this text found its legal references into the European Law (Human Rights). No foundation is given to the ethical values, but it could be. This text is a deep interrogation of the NGO's goals. The text must question the system in which the NGO plays now a role; it must interrogate its way of action as reflecting the initial values of these goals. Is this kind of communication a way to achieve my goals? My way is not corrupting my end?

In this way of thinking, I would formulate, for example, the principle of "fight stereotypes communication" as "Have an internal analysis of the stereotypes about this population and don't base the image and the text on a value which promotes stereotypes. No simplification and redundancy between image and text. No illustration of stereotypes contrast: North= rich – South= poverty. No sentiment of pity or supplication. Develop the good sense and reflection on people etc." or even "No communication of NGO must be

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[10] For a reason of time, I will not explain all these aspects of "Ethics of Communication", I rather introduce this reflection.

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opposed to the fundamental principles on which it acts." The Guide to the Code is much more close to this way of thinking.

4. The limits

Before concluding this text, let us summarize the principal limits of this text. It will be easier to understand where the reflections to undertake are.

The Code is too generalist and does not include any specificity concerning the types of NGO's and the types of communication.

The Code does not include an easy way to implement it, change it, and promote it. The involvement of the values is not sufficiently strong to empower the NGO in this field. The external promotion of the Code is not a lot valorized but at the same time, the implementation is very constraining internally (trainings etc.).

5. The Actions to undertake

The actions I would recommend are reflections on the topics I submitted. I would not pretend to change everything in this Code but as mentioned, some topics are light and deserve a deepest analysis.

In each principle/value, reason and foundations are not given. It does not let the beneficiary go further and let him/her think about the reasons of this Code. By promoting it with a label, by giving "core" to this text, it would let people think about their responsible citizenship which is finally the goal of such a Code.

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Concluding remarks

2007-2011: 5 years of the Code of Conduct. What is next?

Author : Justin Kilcullen is CONCORD President and Director of the Irish NGO Trocaire.

If a picture is worth a thousand words then it must be treated with the same care and consideration we afford our policy documents and other communications. Back in the 1990s this sentiment was beginning to develop across Europe relating to how, as overseas development NGDOs, we represented people in the developing world. This culminated in the then EU-NGDO Liaison Committee publishing the first code relating to images and messaging among the INGO sector. While this code ultimately disappeared with the demise of the Liaison Committee itself, the rational and need for such a code remained ever relevant.

Approximately a decade later Irish NGOs tried once again to establish a set of principles relating to the images and messaging, this time as members of Dóchas, the national NGDO platform. In April 2007 thirty five of Ireland's aid and development agencies formally adopted the Code of Conduct relating to our public communications.Their motivation was a desire to broaden public perceptions in Ireland about development work beyond the traditional 'help feed the black babies' psyche that had developed through generations in Ireland.

We needed to challenge ourselves, our supporters and our critics, to look beyond obvious problems and quick-fix solutions to a more comprehensive understanding of the complex causes of global poverty and the sustainable solutions offered by overseas development agencies. Dóchas then decided to propose to CONCORD that it might adopt this code on a European level. This was done at the CONCORD Ggeneral Assembly in 2006.

Now, four years on Dóchas is undertaking a comprehensive review of our Code of Conduct. The review is not looking to rewrite the principles or objectives of the code but rather to examine how it can be strengthened and embedded deeper into the Irish development sector. It was commissioned after months of anecdotal feedback and public consultations with signatories who were still committed to the principles of the Code of Conduct, but felt that its main weakness was in its implementation and enforcement. It was felt that a strong monitoring and evaluation mechanism was needed to reinforce the code and prevent it from becoming redundant. Therefore the review was launched asking is there a better way to promote the principles of the Code of Conduct and challenge those among us who undermine it?

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Next year the conclusions from the research will be presented to the association with some practical recommendations on the promotion of the code. It is intended to have a new 'illustrative guide to the code' to provide further direction for NGDOs on how to implement the code and a plan to promote greater ownership of the code among signatories.

However the real challenge may be around proposals that are emerging concerning indicators and monitoring to reinforce compliance with the code. The outcome of this issue will be critical to the future success of the Code of Conduct in Ireland.

The principles of dignity, equality and justice reflect the way Irish NGDOs strive to conduct their work in the developing world. However in the ever-more competitive economic and social environment in Ireland our commitment to uphold these principles and to represent the people we work with in the developing world in an appropriate and dignified manner, is a growing challenge that must be met.

The adoption of the Code of Conduct has been a positive collaboration of Confederation members and one which can guide collaboration in the future. I hope the Irish experience of the Code of Conduct will benefit the wider European implementation of the code as members have the benefit of learning from our experience, both positive and negative.

The strength of CONCORD is in our membership and through the support we gain and give to each other across the Confederation. I look forward to learning from the individual approaches taken by CONCORD members as we endeavour to communicate the complexities of global development in a responsible, accountable way.

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Annexe 1. Outcomes of a survey carried out in NGOs across Europe in December 2010

The aim was to assess the awareness of CONCORD members on the Code of Conduct

COUNTRY	Is your platform aware of the existence of the CONCORD Code of Conduct on Messages and Images ? Has your platform subscribed to the ethic of the Code of Conduct?	Is the Code of Conduct available on your website	Has your platform received a training on the Code of Conduct, or have you trained others on the topic?	Is your platform using a different tool, aiming at an ethical communication? Please describe this tool briefly
AUSTRIA	Yes. The platform is currently in a process of developing its own manual for the use of the code, that will then be adopted together with the code by the Board of the platform	The Code will be uploaded when the process here mentioned will be finalised	yes a training/workshop was held and a follow-up is in planning. these workshops are not only trainings but are also designed to develop the austrian manual to the code. (national seminar co-funded through DEEEP in 2011)	
BELGIUM ACODEV	Yes. The Code of Conduct is shared among Belgian NGOs; some of them use it; but it was never formally adopted	http://www.acodev.be/spip.php?article1244	Workshop on it on 23rd February 2010 by Adélie Miguel Sierra (ITECO) and Chiara Tripepi (DEEEP) for french-speaking NGOs in Belgium.	
CYPRUS CYNDEP	Yes but it was never endorsed.	At the moment the platform does not have a website, but as soon as they will have on the Code will be uploaded	No specific training opportunity to date	No tools so far
CONCORD DENMARK	Yes, but it was never endorsed	The national platform in Denmark wouldn't be the right forum for this kind of exchange - an initiative like this would rather go through the NGO Forum or the common NGO MDG campaign.		There is no common tool, but most of the platform members - especially through their international alliances - have their own internal guidelines more or less covering this issue. For example, CARE International has developed Language & Image Principles that deals with how we describe and picture beneficiaries.
ESTONIA AKU	Yes. The platform has not formally subscribed to it, but doesn't use other ones either.	The website will be renewed in 2011 and the Code will then be uploaded.	No trainings, but the platform would be pleased to have one.	

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FINLAND KEHYS	yes Yes, but actual member organizations using it in their daily work are few, if any	Yes, in Finnish: http://www.kehys.fi/julkaisut/kehyksen-julkaisut/kuvien-ja-viestien-kayttoopast	A training was organised within the FEST project in 2008 with the support of an external trainer from Ireland.	No
FRANCE Coordinatio n Sud	yes		No because the platform did not subscribe to the code	There are the transparency recommendations from Coordination SUD
IRELAND Dochas	yes 2007	www.dochas.ie/code	We organised series of trainings for members - and annual training still running	No
LUXEMBO URG Cercle de Coopératio n	Yes At the Cercle (plateforme) GA in 2008	http://www.cercle.lu/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=21	3 trainings (2008 Isabelle Eshraghi, Kasia Szeniawska,2009+2010 Monica + Nicole) for NGDOs (total of +/- 33 people around 20 NGDOs)	6 Luxembourgish NGDOs have also developed a « Code de bonne conduite des organismes faisant appel à la générosité du public » in 2008. But this one is only focused on privet donors and is not really used because we never heard about it.
MALTA SKOP	yes yes the platform subscribed to the code at the Concord GA when everyone signed		Yes, by Mahira Sheikh (former DARE member)	
PORTUGAL	yes In our communication campaigns, online communication, etc..	http://www.plataformaongd.pt/conteudos/documentacao/documentos/centrodocumentacao/486/Códigos%20de%20conduta/Código%20de%20Conduta%20-%20imagens%20e%20mensagens%20(Eng).pdf	The platform organised a seminar on the code of conduct for young students of communication and also for communications experts from Portuguese NGDOs	

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ROMANIA FOND	yes No, not yet.	we will post the CONCORD Code of Conduct on our website.	No, but some of the members were informed about the Code of Conduct during the DESS 2009 (held in Romania) or other DARE/ DEEEP events. There has not yet been a training for the platform on the Code of Conduct, as only few member NGOs have started organizing campaigns on development education (MDGs...). Usually most of these campaigns are organized at the European level and the images used reflect the proper use of the Code of Conduct on Messages and Images.	No, not yet, but we are planning to start promoting and using one such.
SLOVENIA SLOGA,	yes the platform has translated Concord's CoC and it also has its own manual for the use of CoC but it has not been endorsed by the members yet	http://www.tuditi.si/sl/gradiva/prirocniki.html (2nd and 3rd link on the page)	The discussion on the Code of COnduct among members has not been very vibrant in the last half a year, it was not a priority issue, so far we also have not had sufficient funding for such a training	
CONCORD SWEDEN	yes We do not have a code of conduct, but we try to choose images and messages carefully and with respect for the people depicted.		No, since the platform did not adopt the code of conduct yet.	We are not using any tool as far as I know. But like I said above, images and messages are chosen carefully. Many of CONCORD Sweden's member organizations have their own code of conduct.
UK BOND	yes 2008	We are redesigning part of the website and will include it on a relevant page when done - at the moment there isn't a logical place for it to sit. It is included as part of our Brand Guidelines	No, we are using it in it's most basic sense. We have not been offered training.	
UK DEA	yes		It is not something that we have considered	

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Annex 2. The Code of Conduct on Messages and Images

Preface

This Code of Conduct on Images and Messages has been written by NGOs working in the areas of emergency relief, long term development and development education.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to provide a framework on which organisations can draw when designing and implementing their public communications strategy. The Code offers a set of guiding principles that can assist practitioners in their efforts to communicate their organisation's programmes and values in a coherent and balanced way.

Signatories to this Code are acutely aware of the many challenges and difficulties entailed in conveying the scandal and injustice of poverty while striving to meet the ideals of the Code. It is a reality of our world today that many of the images of extreme poverty and humanitarian distress *are* negative and cannot be ignored. To ignore them would run counter to the spirit of this Code which is to portray the reality of the lives of people with sensitivity and respect for their dignity.

Images and messages should seek to represent a complete picture of both internal and external assistance and the partnership that often results between local and international NGOs.

The values of human dignity, respect and truthfulness as outlined in the Code, must underlie all communications. The signatories to this Code are committed to these principles, and will translate them into internal policies and procedures. They are also committed to working constructively with others whose work involves communicating on issues of global poverty, to explore ways of reflecting these principles in other fields of communications.

By signing and promoting this Code, NGOs will continue to keep the development agenda very much in the public eye and to look beyond the sound bite or single image to reflect the values espoused in this Code.

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Code of Conduct on Images and Messages

a. Guiding Principles

Choices of images and messages will be made based on the paramount principles of:

Respect for the dignity of the people concerned;

Belief in the equality of all people;

Acceptance of the need to promote fairness, solidarity and justice.

Accordingly in all our communications and where practical and reasonable within the need to reflect reality, we strive to:

Choose images and related messages based on values of respect equality, solidarity and justice;

Truthfully represent any image or depicted situation both in its immediate and in its wider context so as to improve public understanding of the realities and complexities of development;

Avoid images and messages that potentially stereotype, sensationalise or discriminate against people, situations or places;

Use images, messages and case studies with the full understanding, participation and permission (or subjects' parents/guardian) of the subjects;

Ensure those whose situation is being represented have the opportunity to communicate their stories themselves;

Establish and record whether the subjects wish to be named or identifiable and always act accordingly;

Conform to the highest standards in relation to human rights and protection of the vulnerable people.

Conform to the highest standards in relation to children's rights according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); as children are the subjects most frequently portrayed

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b. Declaration of Commitment

As signatories to this Code, we confirm that our commitment to best practice in communications affects the entirety of our organisation.

By signing the Code, we commit to putting in place meaningful mechanisms to ensure that the Code's principles are implemented throughout all activities of our organisation.

Our responsibilities as a signatory to this Code lead us to be accountable in our public communications as follows:

We will make the existence of the Code known to the public and all our partners and will provide a feedback mechanism whereby anyone can comment on the fulfilment of the Code and where any member of the public will have a 'right to challenge' our application of the Code.

We will communicate our commitment to best practice in the communication of images and messages in all our public policy statements by placing the following statement on our relevant public communications (annual reports, website, policy statements, governance documents, leaflets and communication materials etc):

"<Named Organisation> has signed the code of conduct on images and messages (www.namedorganisation.org/code) please send your feedback to code@namedorganisation.org"

We commit to assess our public communications on an annual basis according to the guiding principles.

We will include reference to adherence to the Code in the guiding principles of our organisation and ensure that the top management take the responsibility of implementing and adhering to the code

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We will ensure that all relevant suppliers, contractors and media will adhere to the Code when working with our organisation.

We commit to training our staff on the use of images and messages.

We agree to meet on an annual basis and share our experience of using and implementing the Code with other Dochas members.

Signature: Organisation: Date:

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This thematic dossier focuses on the Code of Conduct of Images and Messages.

Through series of best practices and challenges, this dossier raises the debate among the Development Awareness Raising Education (DARE) constituency and aims at understanding the limits and challenges of such tool.

This document checks, six years after its endorsement by the CONCORD General Assembly its strengths and weaknesses, and new challenges for the future.

As annex, you will find the outcomes of a survey launched in December 2010 and addressed to National Platforms communication officers, to discover the level of awareness of the existence and use of such tool.

June 2011

This thematic dossier complies with the CONCORD Code of Conduct on Images and Messages.