

ACT ALLIANCE COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

SHREEL FOUNDATION



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1. Introduction

Shreel Foundation is a grassroots non-profit organisation dedicated to rural development, healthcare, livelihoods, and humanitarian relief. The Foundation recognises that ethical, timely, and respectful communication is essential to building public trust and advancing its mission.

We are committed to sharing accurate, consistent, and meaningful updates with both internal and external audiences highlighting our achievements, learnings, and challenges. All communications reflect our core values of dignity, inclusivity, and accountability, and are grounded in journalistic principles such as truthfulness and clarity.

Shreel Foundation portrays people not as helpless victims, but as resilient individuals with dignity and strength. We communicate without bias regardless of caste, gender, religion, ethnicity, or political views and remain independent of any external interests.

We engage with a wide range of stakeholders, especially the local communities we serve. Field teams and partners play a key role in conveying our work and values in ways that are accessible and context-specific. All communication efforts are expected to align with Shreel Foundation's branding and ethical standards.

2. Scope

This policy outlines the principles for all communications made on behalf of **Shreel Foundation**, whether by staff, volunteers, consultants, media professionals, or digital content creators. It applies to both internal and external communications and provides guidance to ensure a consistent, ethical, and purposeful approach aligned with the organisation's vision and mission.

The policy supports Shreel Foundation's efforts to build credibility, share learnings, and engage meaningfully with diverse audiences. While this document applies to communications initiated directly by the Foundation or its representatives, partner organisations are encouraged to adopt similar communication policies in line with national laws and ethical standards.

Shreel Foundation relies on its team members and field networks to act as key sources of information and communication within the communities we serve.

3. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:

- **Information** refers to any content printed, digital, or visual related to the work, people, or programs of Shreel Foundation.
- **Communication** includes the methods and processes used to share such information through various media channels.
- **Shreel Foundation Representative** means any staff member, volunteer, consultant, or authorized person communicating on behalf of the Foundation.
- **Audience** refers to any internal or external group such as community members, donors, partners, or the general public receiving or engaging with the communications of Shreel.

4. Purpose of Communications

This policy guides all communications undertaken by Shreel Foundation to ensure they are strategic, meaningful, and aligned with the organisation's mission and values.

The key purposes of communication are to:

- a. Clearly articulate Shreel Foundation's mission, values, objectives, and community based work.
- b. Share success stories, key impacts, and lessons learned from development, health, education, and advocacy initiatives.
- c. Raise awareness about local and under-reported issues such as poverty, gender inequality, and public health, especially in rural and marginalised areas.
- d. Maintain transparency and accountability by openly communicating achievements as well as areas needing improvement.
- e. Mobilise support by engaging donors, partners, and the public to participate in fundraising and programmatic efforts.
- f. Promote a strong, positive, and consistent brand image for Shreel Foundation.
- g. Ensure communities we serve understand our programs, goals, and their rights fostering local trust and ownership.
- h. Address public feedback or criticism respectfully and constructively.
- i. Uphold ethical and co-branded communication in line with our organisational identity and standards.

5. Target Audiences

Shreel Foundation communicates with a diverse range of stakeholders to ensure meaningful engagement, accountability, and visibility. The key audience groups include:

- a. **Internal Team and Volunteers**
Staff, volunteers, and board members require clear and motivating communication to stay aligned with the Foundation's mission and to become strong advocates of its work.

b. **Local Communities**

The primary beneficiaries of our programs, these communities must receive timely and relevant information in a language and format they understand, to foster trust, participation, and ownership.

c. **Donors, Government & Civil Society Partners**

Includes government bodies, CSR units, funding agencies, academic institutions, and NGOs who support, evaluate or collaborate with the Foundation on thematic areas like health, livelihoods, gender, and education.

d. **General Public & Media**

Citizens, media professionals, and youth engaged in social causes especially those active on social media play a vital role in amplifying Shreel Foundation's message and mobilizing support.

6. Ethics and Standards

Shreel Foundation is committed to truthful, respectful, and responsible communication. All content whether reports, photos, videos, or social media posts must reflect dignity, honesty, and cultural sensitivity, especially when representing people in vulnerable situations.

We do not portray individuals as helpless victims, but as partners in progress with strength and resilience. Communications must respect their privacy, avoid sensationalism, and clearly explain how public or donor resources are being used.

In line with global humanitarian principles:

- We obtain **informed consent** before using photos or stories of individuals.
- **Photographs of children** require permission from a parent or guardian.
- Images never show people in humiliating or degrading conditions.
- Editing or misrepresenting photos (e.g., cropping faces without context or adding words over images) is strictly prohibited.

Shreel Foundation also abides by relevant **data protection laws**, ensuring that personal information is collected, stored, and shared ethically and securely.

We welcome public scrutiny and uphold transparency in all communications, knowing that trust is earned through accountability and respect.

7. Principles of Communications

Shreel Foundation ensures that all communications are clear, concise, respectful, and rooted in truth. We use simple, jargon-free language so that our messages are accessible to a wide and diverse audience.

Key principles include:

- Use of fact-based, balanced, and ethically sound content.

- Clear articulation of Shreel Foundation's mission, work, and values in every communication.
- Sensitivity toward vulnerable groups, especially during emergency reporting.
- First-hand information and verified data should form the basis of public stories and media content.

When working with media, we aim to build reciprocal relationships by sharing honest, timely, and well-prepared content that aligns with public interest. Communications should be adaptable for print, online, and social media, and formatted for easy dissemination.

Local communication efforts should involve the community using tools and languages that are culturally relevant and easily understood, especially for the most vulnerable.

Where possible, media outreach should highlight the Foundation's impact, and any public representation must be approved by designated spokespersons to ensure consistency and credibility.

8. Shreel Foundation Visibility and Co-branding

Shreel Foundation maintains a unified and consistent identity across all communication materials, which enhances public trust and visibility. During collaborations with partners and funders, all external communications such as reports, press releases, and campaigns prominently display the Foundation's name, logo, and values.

In joint initiatives, co-branding follows these standards:

- The Shreel Foundation logo appears clearly and respectfully.
- Partner names are included only when relevant and never overshadow the Foundation's identity.
- Every public representation reinforces the message, credibility, and purpose of Shreel Foundation.

9. Editorial Responsibility

The final responsibility for all official content, including website text, reports, brochures, and press releases, lies with the Secretary or Communications Lead of Shreel Foundation. Content is developed in coordination with relevant team members. Any disagreements over messaging are resolved through discussion, and the Secretary's decision is final.

10. Language

Shreel Foundation primarily communicates in Hindi and English to ensure inclusivity and clarity. Official documents are produced in Hindi and English, while community-facing materials are made available in Hindi or local dialects wherever possible. Teams translate key information so that it remains accessible to diverse audiences.

11. Spokesperson

Only the **Secretary of Shreel Foundation** or a designated senior representative may serve as the official spokesperson for the organisation.

- In special cases, staff members or subject experts may speak publicly with prior approval.
- If anyone from the team expresses a personal opinion that may differ from the Foundation's official stance, a disclaimer must be included clarifying that the views are personal.

12. Sign-off Process

All public statements, press releases, and advocacy messages issued in the name of Shreel Foundation must be approved by the Secretary.

- Content that represents the Foundation's position must go through a formal review before publication or broadcast.
- Discrepancies or potentially conflicting views must be escalated to the Secretary for final approval to maintain consistency and credibility.

13. Social Media and Internet

Shreel Foundation uses platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram to share updates, stories, and campaign messages.

- Only authorised personnel may post on official accounts.
- Posts must align with the Foundation's tone, values, and branding guidelines.
- Personal accounts used for professional content must clearly mention when views are personal.
- Independent websites, if created by partner teams or volunteers, must display a disclaimer stating they do not officially represent Shreel Foundation and should link to the official site: www.shreelfoundation.org

14. Visual Images

Shreel Foundation is committed to using photographs and videos that respect the dignity, privacy, and rights of individuals and communities. All visual content must represent people with fairness and humanity, avoiding any portrayal that exaggerates suffering or misrepresents reality.

Photographs should show real, hopeful, and empowering images of people, community activities, and staff in action. All photos must be properly credited as Shreel Foundation or

photographer name or partner name as applicable. The Foundation does not sell or profit from its photographs or video materials.

Informed consent must be obtained from individuals being photographed whenever possible. This includes identifying the purpose of the photo and securing written or verbal permission. For children, written consent from a parent or guardian is mandatory.

Implied consent may be accepted in public settings if the subject does not object and the image maintains the subject's dignity. However, photographs taken in sensitive situations must never be published without informed and documented consent, especially when the person is identifiable and associated with personal or sensitive information.

Photographs of children, individuals affected by trauma, illness, abuse, or involved in any sensitive context must be handled with extra care. Such images should not be used without proper permission and should always follow the Foundation's Child Safeguarding Policy.

When photos are provided by partners or external sources, it is the responsibility of the original source to ensure legal rights, consent, and usage terms. The Foundation will honor any restrictions associated with such content.

Freelance photographers retain copyright to their work unless otherwise agreed upon. For official assignments, intellectual property may be assigned to Shreel Foundation as per contract terms. All use of photos should follow agreed licensing conditions. Members may use commissioned photographs for non-commercial campaigns and publications with proper credit.

Photographs used on the Foundation's website or shared with the media must have verified legal usage rights. All photo archives should be maintained with associated permission documentation.

15. Copyright

All content and materials created by or for Shreel Foundation are subject to copyright and intellectual property protection. Materials shared on the official website or other platforms are the property of the Foundation unless otherwise stated.

External websites or third-party links shared by Shreel Foundation are for informational purposes only. The Foundation does not assume responsibility for the accuracy or content of those external sources.

Commissioned work, including reports, photographs, videos, or written materials, will be considered the intellectual property of Shreel Foundation unless specified otherwise in a written agreement. The Foundation is not obligated to credit individual authors for internal or commissioned content.

Any use of Foundation-owned materials by external parties must be approved in writing and must acknowledge the source when required. The Foundation will not be held liable for misuse or unauthorized distribution of its content by others.

16. Commitment to Local Communities

Shreel Foundation is committed to building strong relationships with the local communities it serves. These communities are not only beneficiaries of our programs but are also important stakeholders with the right to clear, accurate, and timely information. Shreel Foundation recognizes communities as active participants in development and humanitarian efforts and aims to amplify their voices.

The Foundation ensures that local people are informed about the services being provided, the reasons for the intervention, the goals of the program, and how they can communicate with Shreel Foundation or its partners. This includes information about budgets, funding sources, feedback and complaint mechanisms, and ways to participate in the planning and implementation of projects.

In accordance with our commitment to transparency, accountability, and international standards, we provide accessible information to all community members. This may include printed materials, community meetings, local media, and verbal briefings in local languages. Local partners are also encouraged to adopt similar communication practices at the project level.

Whenever possible, members of the local community are invited to share their own stories and experiences. Shreel Foundation prioritizes communications that reflect community perspectives, and where appropriate, local individuals are invited to write or speak on issues that affect them. This helps build trust and ensures programs are responsive to real needs.

During emergency responses, Shreel Foundation commits to providing affected communities with clear information about the assistance they will receive. This includes details about what support is available, how goods and services will be distributed, selection criteria, staff responsibilities, and complaint procedures. If any information is withheld for safety or security reasons, such decisions will be made collectively and not by a single organization.

Information may be shared through various channels such as community meetings, posters, flyers, notice boards, social media, radio broadcasts, or mobile messages. Communications will be designed to reach vulnerable groups, including women, children, persons with disabilities, and those in remote areas.

Field staff will be identified through co-branded name tags and identity cards. They will introduce themselves clearly as representatives of Shreel Foundation. Where possible, they will also wear clothing or display materials with the organization's branding.

Regular monitoring and community feedback are essential parts of the information-sharing process. Community leaders, local residents, and particularly vulnerable individuals will be consulted to verify that information is well understood and services are delivered fairly.

This approach ensures transparency, strengthens local ownership, and supports the success of our mission in humanitarian and development work.

Approved by
Secretary, Shreel Foundation
Dated: 21.05.2024