

Press, publication, video and web-posting policy of CLS

Community Legal Services (CLS) is committed to the safety and security of all its beneficiaries and their families. Admittedly, as a legal justice programme CLS caters to a client base or beneficiary group who are mostly poor vulnerable people or groups whose rights have been violated, victims or survivors of domestic and other types of violence whose security should be the prime concern for CLS and all its grantee NGOs. Therefore, in order to facilitate and encourage effective reporting of project success stories and human interest stories for electronic and print media, website posting, publication, video documentation this policy identifies a few principles in compliance with existing legal provisions which the CLS practitioners should take into account prior to any public domain sharing of beneficiary information. Particularly, this policy identifies areas where we should practice caution in disclosing the identity and use of photographs of beneficiaries. However, it is assumed that any information documented and shared publicly by CLS and its grantees would be original work or documentation of project stories and will not fall under an act of plagiarism or violation of copyright laws.

General Principles as to documentation or reporting of stories

- Security and protection of a survivor and his or her family must be considered before revealing any issue in public.
- No story of survivor shall be published or placed before electronic or print media without prior consent of survivor or his/her actual guardian if he/she is a minor or a person with psycho-social disabilities.
- CLS or its grantee NGOs should avoid making any comment on a matter/case when it is under trial or subjudice. However, reporting of the incidence or documentation of the story for public domain is allowed provided the narrative refers to the victim's version of the story or uses an eyewitness account as a reference.
- No defamatory statement against a person shall be published if there is any apprehension of being charged with committing libel under existing laws.

Principles as to Disclosing Identity

- In case of matters which invoke Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000, Human Trafficking Prevention Act 2012, Children Act 2013 and Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013 and other Statutes having provisions restricting press interventions, CLS shall strictly comply with the legal requirements.
- If the issue involves a minor offender or a child in conflict with law or a women charged with committing offence, identity shall not be published until his/her guilt is proven in due process of law.
- Names of the survivors should change when documenting their stories for public domain documents. However, genuine identity will be used in official documents e.g. quarterly and annual reports.

- Subject to the compliance with existing legal provisions and prior permission of the survivor identity of beneficiaries may be disclosed in public.
- Security of the survivor must be considered especially in case of trans-national organized crimes i.e. human trafficking case before revealing identity even if the survivor consents to disclose their identity.

Principles as to using Photographs of Survivors

- Aforesaid principles are also applicable in terms of publication of photographs of survivors.
- Prior permission of the beneficiary should be sought before taking a photograph.
- In reporting sensational or sensitive matters there must be a written statement of survivor endorsing consent to publication of his/her photographs.
- If necessary the identifying portion of the photograph shall be kept out-of-focus or be made hazy.
- Graphic representation of Images of violence inflicted on body parts of particularly female beneficiaries should be avoided.

CLS liability

- CLS will not be liable for publication of any confidential data if made on record by grantees or others without lawful authority or prior permission.
- CLS does not recognize vicarious liability in terms of violations of press related laws and policies by grantees or by others referring to CLS without its' consent.
- On reporting a sensational case to the media in case of a sudden incidence of violence in their respective project areas the NGOs are expected to operate independently but quickly. Prior to use of CLS and UKAID logos for banners at such press conferences NGOs should seek permission from the CLS office.