**CARE Emergency Toolkit: Communications in Emergencies**

**How to arrange media field visits**

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Reporters will give you an idea of what they want to see, and you should arrange that to the best of your ability. As an example, let’s say a journalist is interested in seeing a CARE vocational training programme teaching women pottery skills and you have to arrange a trip to the field.

1. **Get all the information you can from the journalist** about what their story angle is, what they want to see, and how much time they have.
2. **Arrange everything in advance.** Take them to a site that shows a positive example of CARE’s work. Alert all staff that the journalist is coming. Select beneficiaries for the journalist to interview.
3. **Give them a briefing about the project**. On the way to the project site, tell the reporter what the project is, why it’s important to do it, who the beneficiaries are, when it started and when it will end. (Who, what, when, where, why.)
4. **Show them the bigger picture.** Take them to a pottery class and show them how the project works.
5. **Give them an individual** **story**. After showing them the bigger picture, arrange for the reporter to talk to **one or two** beneficiaries. The journalist doesn’t have time to interview 20 beneficiaries; they want to focus on only one or two people. If the reporter isn’t happy with the beneficiaries you picked, quickly find another beneficiary for the reporter to talk to. When picking a beneficiary as an example for the journalist, make sure to ask the beneficiary first if they want to talk to a journalist. Pick a beneficiary who is not afraid to speak to a stranger, and who speaks clearly and descriptively about her experiences.

(**NOTE on cultural sensitivity:** I know it is difficult to tell a group of people that the journalist is interested in talking to only one or two of them. BEFORE the reporter arrives, politely explain to the beneficiaries that they are all a very important part of the bigger story, but that the reporter only has time to talk to one or two of them individually.)

1. **Be flexible.** If a reporter asks to see something else or isn’t happy with the site you’ve shown them, do everything you can to accommodate them. Remember, the journalist is only trying to tell the best story possible.

**Key points to remember:**

-If the reporter isn’t happy with the site you have shown them, do everything you can to arrange something else.

-A media visit is NOT a VIP visit like a National Director visit! Do not organize welcoming ceremonies or arrange lengthy visits to local authorities. If you must visit local authorities as part of government requirements or protocol, make it as short as possible. Explain to the local authorities in advance that the journalist does not have much time. Explain to the journalist that this visit is necessary as per government requirements, and you will do your best to keep it short.

-Be patient and accommodating. Journalists can be demanding and visits can be time-consuming. They know how important your work is, but they only have a few days in the country to see everything. Understandably, they want to make the most of their time, so they will be very open about what they need from us. This is important: the better they understand CARE’s work and the situation on the ground, the more accurate and compelling their report will be.

-**NEVER** allow your staff to be used as a translator for a refugee for a television or radio interview; it could appear as though you are speaking for CARE, instead of translating someone else’s words. Remember, anything you say while working for CARE will be taken as CARE’s position. Let the reporter use their own translator.

***Respect deadlines.*** Reporter’s deadlines are different than the rest of the world: they often fall within a matter of hours, not days or weeks**.** One of the most stressful aspects of being a reporter is facing constant deadlines. What’s even more stressful is when one of your sources doesn’t understand that your deadline is “today”. There is no tomorrow. Always get back to a reporter ASAP. The story will often not wait. When you do get back to them, one of the first questions you should ask is: “When is your deadline?” This will let you know if you have hours to coordinate, or if you have days or weeks.