

# Online Communication Guidelines

## Guidelines for Team and short-term volunteers and visitors to Africa

*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. Proverbs 31:8-9*

While serving with Hands at Work in Africa you will meet many people who will touch your lives and whose stories you will want to tell. While we challenge and encourage you to tell these stories; we have a few guidelines we ask you to follow in order to protect the people we are serving.

The Communications Team is always available and willing to talk to you about how you communicate your stories, photos, and experiences in Africa. It's our passion and we are happy to answer any questions and provide any help as we work together to give a voice to the voiceless.

## TELLING STORIES

---

### **Blogs, Vlogs, and any online platform where you mainly discuss Hands**

Nearly every visitor and volunteer can tell you a personal story of someone they know in Africa. Many times these stories are heart wrenching and bring the reader to tears. Stories of loss, stories of desperation, and stories of need are as common as the stories of hope.

We ask that you be very sensitive when telling the stories of children or Care Workers who have been affected by HIV/AIDS. Often, children are not told the real reason for their parents passing due to stigma in the communities around this disease. Care Workers may confide in you that they are HIV positive and may not have told their own families. We want to avoid any chance of a child or Care Worker's confidentiality being compromised. Therefore, we ask you to be very cautious of the information you are sharing and where you are sharing it. As a further precaution we ask that you **change the name** of any and all children and Care Workers you are sharing about.

Please include the following disclaimer on all personal and team blogs, vlogs, media channels, and online platforms primarily discussing Hands at Work:

*The contents of this media represent the sole views and opinions of the author, not of Hands at Work or any other groups or persons*

This disclaimer lets the world know that your stories and your ideas are your own. They represent you, they are not things Hands has asked you to say, or stories that represent our organisation directly. It protects your experience and ensures authenticity for you and Hands.

Consent Forms: If you feel very strongly that you would like to share someone's story in its entirety without changing names, you can ask those who the story is about (or their guardian) to sign a consent form which should be given to a member of the Service Centre or Communications Team.

## PHOTOS

---

Sharing photos is a great way to give people a better understanding of the things you have seen in Africa. Again we would just ask you to **change the name** of any child or Care Worker in your photos. Please be very cautious of any personal details that may go with the photo. Many people in our communities have access to cell phones and Facebook – always consider how the person you are posting about would feel if they read your post.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

---

Hands at Work recognises the opportunity to use Social Media to communicate our message of hope across the world. With so many people communicating over Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other channels, Social Media an amazing way to let your friends and family know about your experience in Africa.

As with other online tools, we ask you follow some guidelines with Social Media. Please feel free to say you support and volunteer with Hands at Work. Please be very aware of sensitive information such as travel plans of our volunteers, situations of our kids and Care Workers, and political situations in the countries we work in. This information can be more serious than you realise. Even when we discuss and pray for certain situations here at Hands, that information could be hazardous to our operations if posted publicly.

Regarding your own personal matters while serving with us, in the event of an emergency or illness, we ask that you alert the person who is responsible for you (Hands Host, Teams Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, etc) before commenting on Social Media. It can cause concern and panic if Hands at Work finds out second-hand about your situation. We want to be able to help you immediately and have all the needed information.

If you are interested in following Hands at Work on Social Media, you can find us here:

Facebook: Hands at Work in Africa

Twitter: @handsatwork

You Tube: HandsatWorkAfrica

Instagram: handsatwork