WHICH IMAGE DO YOU PREFER?

**RADI-AID**
# RESEARCH

A STUDY OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION
IN SIX AFRICAN COUNTRIES

**THE RADI-AID RESEARCH PROJECT IS A COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE NORWEGIAN STUDENTS' AND ACADEMICS' INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FUND (SAIH) AND THE SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA.**

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# PREFACE

## BEATHE ØGÅRD
### PRESIDENT OF SAIH

Since the 1990s, SAIH has been exploring issues around one-sided and unnuanced aid communications, which use stereotypes and oversimplifications. In recent years, through our work with Radi-Aid, we have aimed to challenge Western storytelling about Africa, contributing to a public debate about the consequences of using stereotypes in aid communications, and looking at how to change the way we communicate global issues.

Ever since our 2012 satirical spoof video Africa for Norway went viral, poking fun at the Live Aid genre of charity appeals, we have taken on a role of an international watch dog for the aid sector.Our video turned the tables, playing with traditional stereotypes found in Western charity appeals, by portraying freezing-cold Norwegians in desperate need of help from kind and generous Africans who wanted to donate radiators to us.

From 2013 our Radi-Aid awards, where we have handed out awards for the best, most dignified and worst, most stereotypical fundraising adverts, have generated great interest from both the public and the international aid sector. The awards have raised awareness and led to changes in practice within the sector. Over the years we have produced a handful of satirical videos, as well as developing a guide for how to use social media in dignified ways while volunteering in or travelling to low- and middle-income countries.

"
With this year's Radi-Aid project, we have taken a leap with a new approach, while still focusing on promoting nuanced aid communication. When addressing aid communication and charity advertisements in the past, we have often thought about the recipients of aid and the people who are portrayed in the advertising imagery. What do they think of the adverts? How do they feel about the portrayal of African countries? What would they do differently if they were to run similar fundraising campaigns themselves? What would happen if we allowed voices from the South to truly be the narrators of their own stories?

In this project, we have aimed at deepening our understanding of international aid communication and how it is perceived. By listening to the thoughts and opinions of youths and adults from six different African countries on various issues relating to aid communication we get confirmations, contradictions, we find ourselves amused, astonished and curious but, most importantly, eager to learn and listen in order to broaden our minds.

The findings of this report don't lead us to a single conclusion. We are not critiquing or promoting the different extremes of aid communication. Rather we are inviting reflection, to increase awareness, to challenge existing assumptions, and to open ourselves to a multitude of stories.

Enjoy reading!
"

# 3
# INTRODUCTION

INGO and aid advertising campaigns use images to fundraise, raise awareness and advocate around issues concerning people in need. The images used in these campaigns certainly have an impact on the amount of money collected, but sometimes they are criticised for using stereotypes, being superficial, failing to provide context and promoting an oversimplified view of reality, as well as lacking respect for those portrayed. Numerous academic books, research papers, news articles and independently commissioned reports have been published on the subject of aid communication. What is missing from this body of research is a study which asks beneficiaries of aid what they think themselves. **What is their perception and opinion of the images used in aid communication?** Are the images used in these adverts accurate or exaggerated? How do the images make them feel? How do they think the images make people in the West feel or think about low- and middle-income countries? What kinds of images would they select for fundraising?

How does a person who has never visited Africa visualise the continent? They might have seen images in news articles, on TV, or in newspapers. However, the image portrayed of Africa is often miles from the reality. People's perception of the continent is partly shaped by the images used by charities and NGOs in their external visual communication, such as fundraising campaigns. In Europe, this type of imagery is all around us. We see it on advertising hoardings, in magazines, in pop-up adverts on Facebook or on television in annual fundraising campaigns (such as Comic Relief and Children in Need in the UK, or the Norwegian telethon TV-aksjonen).

For this report, we asked people in six countries in Sub-Saharan Africa **what they think of the imagery used in different INGO campaigns.** The aim of this study is to answer this question and provide practical insights to help improve the images used in aid communication and to preserve the dignity of the people represented.

Charity appeals can be traced back to the late-eighteenth century in line with developments in print media. In the 1980s, the famine in Ethiopia provoked a huge response in Western media. It was in the aftermath of this coverage that the *Images of Africa Report* (1987) was commissioned as an international project by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Freedom from Hunger Campaign. The research included interviews with 75 young people aged 13-18 from three schools in the UK to record their perceptions of Africa. The report found that the respondents' predominant perceptions after the famine were of starving, primitive Africans.

More recently, research on aid communication has further examined how coverage of Africa has affected public perceptions of the continent. In 2001, the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) produced a report called *The Live Aid Legacy*. One of their key findings was that 80% of the British public strongly associate low- and middle-income countries with doom-laden images of famine, disaster and the need for Western aid.

In response to reports such as these, several INGOs have sought to improve their aid communication by taking steps such as establishing codes of conduct and ethical image procedures. The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations (DOCHAS) established a *Code of Conduct on Images and Messages* in 2006. The purpose of the code was to establish a framework for partner organisations developing their communication strategies based around the values of human dignity, respect and truthfulness.

There have been many academic studies on the impact of INGO fundraising appeals, often concluding that images used are either overly negative (so called 'poverty porn') or positive (deliberate positivism). In light of this, a central element of our research has been exploring whether participants preferred 'positive' or 'negative' images. In our study, we acknowledge that these two categories represent different and often conflicting discourses within aid communication. In broad terms, positive imagery aims to provide evidence of the positive effects that actions of donors have on aid recipients, e.g. illustrating a person smiling indicating a success story of someone who has previously suffered. Conversely, negative imagery aims to focus on the suffering of the recipients, e.g. illustrating a person expressing sadness in a crisis situation such as war or famine.

Nandita Dogra, who has published extensively on this subject, writes:

"
It is important to acknowledge that 'negative' and 'positive' is an oversimplified way to approach images which hides nuances, power relations and complex ideologies. With the probable exception of 'extreme' images such as starving children, images, in general, are usually somewhere in between 'negative' and 'positive' because of different potential readings, context, time, purpose of the image and the sheer richness of each image along with the anchoring text. - (2007, p.166)

*The People in the Pictures* report conducted by Save the Children in 2017 was a pioneering piece of research designed to help understand how the contributors and their communities felt about the images used by Save the Children in their communications material. The research for the study was conducted in Jordan, Bangladesh, Niger and the UK. It examined the participants' motivations, their experience of the image-making process and the response to their portrayal in the most recent image-based material from Save the Children. The findings and recommendations offer practical guidance for any INGO seeking to improve their image-making and curation process. Since the report was launched in 2017, a group of creatives and content producers at 15 NGOs in the UK have established an advisory group on ethical approaches to gathering and using images. The group meets on a bi-monthly basis to share best practice and knowledge across the sector and to improve ethical approaches to gathering and using images in INGO communications.

Our research poses questions which, to a large extent, have previously been neglected. We hope this report can contribute new insights, challenge existing knowledge, raise awareness and continue the debate around the ethical use of images in aid communications - as well as inspiring change and self-reflection, contributing to the use of more dignified and nuanced images in future aid communications. ■

# METHODOLOGY

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The Radi-Aid research project was conducted in six countries in sub-Saharan Africa: Ethiopia (Oromia Region), Ghana (Bawjiase), Malawi (Lilongwe), South Africa (Johannesburg), Uganda (Kampala) and Zambia (Lusaka). Primary data collection using focus groups took place between July 2017 and July 2018. Altogether, 12 focus group discussions were held, two in each of the six countries. In total there were 74 participants; 36 female and 38 male, across different ages (some of the same age) Each focus group was audio recorded and the transcript translated.

In other words, this is a study based on a very limited selection of informants, and we cannot generalise from the findings of this research. However, the findings provide an interesting, if restricted, insight into how aid communications are perceived at the receiving end.
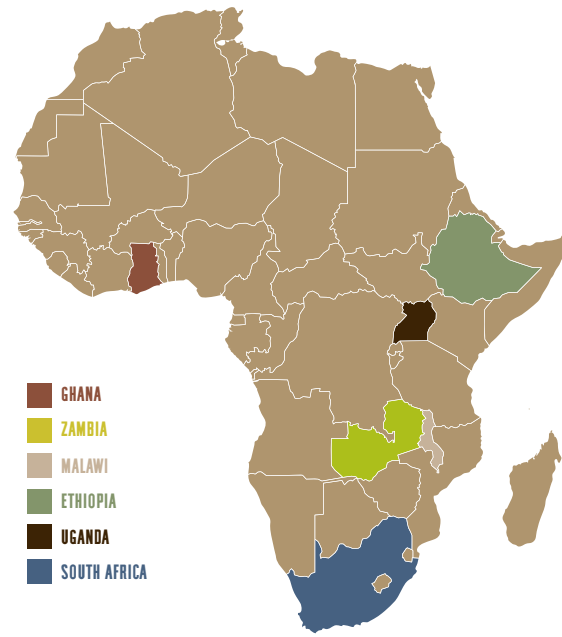
**GHANA**
**ZAMBIA**
**MALAWI**
**ETHIOPIA**
**UGANDA**
**SOUTH AFRICA**

## SELECTION OF VISUAL MATERIAL

Ten adverts from different organisations were selected to include a range of styles in aid communication. Where possible, high-resolution images were sought from the INGOs concerned. Other images were taken from publicly-accessible internet sources. From an original pool of thirty, a final selection of ten images was made by students and academic staff on the Media and International Development Bachelor and Master's programmes at the University of East Anglia. During the Ethical Clearance procedure, it was decided not to include any graphic images of violence.

The images chosen were all used in INGO campaigns. Some of them were part of fundraising campaigns, some were meant to raise awareness about specific issues, and some were calls for political action. Some were produced to raise awareness or funds for immediate humanitarian relief, others to draw attention to long-term development projects. However, they all included visual representations of people in African countries, combined with a message reaching out to the public, calling for attention. These adverts were chosen because of their representation of people. The study did not focus on the various objectives of the campaigns themselves. We acknowledge that the use of imagery will often differ depending on whether the advert is for fundraising or advocacy.

The different adverts used in the focus groups were made by Amnesty International, CARE, Cordaid, the Disasters Emergency Committee, Dubai Cares, Oxfam, Save the Children, UNICEF and War Child.

## PILOT STUDY
### SOUTH AFRICA

In July 2017, two pilot focus groups (one youth group and one adult) were conducted in Johannesburg, South Africa. In one activity, respondents were asked to rate each of the ten images out of ten, depending on how much they liked the image. In both focus groups this activity raised a lot of questions for example, "how do you define 'like'?" It was immediately apparent that this exercise was extremely confusing. One member of the adult group did not manage to complete the exercise after 15 minutes. It was therefore decided to replace this exercise with a more straightforward test, asking what kind of images respondents would choose if they were designing their own fundraising advert.

In 2013, researcher Leah Chung conducted a study in rural Uganda. She worked with local NGOs and researched how rural communities and informal settlements view fundraising adverts. In her research she used three similar images of children: one happy, one neutral and one sad. A similar style of advert was used, and the same child was photographed in the same location with different facial expressions.

Inspired by Chung's research we wanted to make a similar mock advert. Edward Echwalu is a documentary photographer and photojournalist based in Kampala, Uganda. Edward has worked on many documentary projects across East Africa and Africa for UN Commission Uganda, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Foundation, UNHCR, Dan Church Aid, UN AIDS, Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, We Effect and USAID. Edward was commissioned to take three photographs of the local 7-year old girl Katrina Nassali: one happy, one neutral and one sad.

### AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

is an international non-governmental organisation widely recognised as one of the world's leading voices working for human rights. Amnesty was founded in London in 1961. The picture of the wine glass filled with oil is from a 2010 advertising campaign aimed at shaming oil corporation Shell for their pollution of Nigerian drinking water. The 'It's not happening here, but it is happening now' outdoor poster campaign of 2006 was directed at the people of Switzerland to raise awareness of the issue of human rights abuse internationally.

### CARE INTERNATIONAL

is an international organisation, which works in over 90 countries delivering humanitarian aid and long-term development projects. It was founded in 1945. The advert used is from a campaign by CARE International UK, aiming to raise funds for clean, safe water in low- and middle-income countries.

### CORDAID

is the Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development Aid. It was established in 2000 as a merger of three Dutch Catholic development organisations, but their shared history goes back to the World War One. The advert, picturing a man with a glass of beer, was part of an extensive campaign in 2007 called 'Small Change, Big Difference', focusing on how the money we spend so easily every day in the West can make a huge difference elsewhere. The campaign received renewed attention in 2015 when several of the images went viral.

### THE DISASTERS EMERGENCY COMMITTEE (DEC)

is an umbrella group of charities in the UK formed in 1963. They launch collective appeals to raise funds for emergency aid for humanitarian crises. The picture used is from a campaign launched to raise funds for the 2017 East Africa crisis in cooperation with the aid programme of the UK Department for International Development.

### DUBAI CARES

was founded in 2007 as a philanthropic organisation aiming to ensuring quality education and supporting programmes in early childhood development. The advert picturing the boy with the truck made from plastic jugs is lifted from a campaign called 'We can teach each other', launched in 2015 to raise funds for education for children living in poverty.

### OXFAM

founded in 1942, is an international confederation of 19 organisations working against global poverty. The advert used is from 'Even It Up', a 2014 political campaign shining a light on the extreme economic inequality of the world, aimed at ensuring fair tax systems and functioning economic policies.

THE FINAL MOCK ADVERT WAS DESIGNED BY THE CLICK DESIGN CONSULTANTS, AN AWARD-WINNING DESIGN AGENCY BASED IN NORWICH, UK. ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE WORKED WITH A NUMBER OF NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS SUCH AS NORWICH CATHEDRAL, THE NATIONAL TRUST, NORWICH UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS, CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY AND MANY MORE, THEY HAD NEVER WORKED ON A CHARITY ADVERT. IT WAS FELT THAT THEIR LACK OF PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN THIS SECTOR WOULD ALLOW THEM TO DESIGN AN ADVERT WITH FRESH EYES.
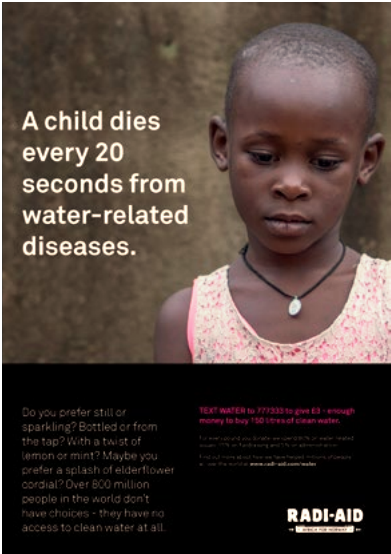


## THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

13 RESEARCH QUESTIONS WERE DEVELOPED TO EXPLORE RESPONDENT'S RESPONSES TO AID ADVERTS. EACH QUESTION WAS TESTED AND MODIFIED BY STUDENTS AND STAFF ON THE MEDIA AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BACHELOR AND MASTER'S COURSES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA.

The three mock adverts were used in Question 1. The ten INGO adverts were used in Questions 2-13. The research questions were:

1. Which advert do you like and why?

2. How do these images make you feel?

3. Which advert do you like best and why?

4. How do you think these images make people feel about countries in Africa?

5. Are these images an accurate representation or are they exaggerated?

6. If you designed a fundraising advert to raise money for NGOs supporting people in Africa, what kind of images would you use?

7. Are there some types of images you think should never be used, even if they help in raising money?

8. What kinds of problems or issues would you highlight?

9. Would you cover more complex issues such as corruption, infrastructure, governance, climate change, exploitation of national resources by multinational companies, neo-colonialism etc?

10. What kind of images do you think would make people in Europe or the USA donate the most money? Why?

11. To fundraise, is it best to show an image of the problem, the outcome, the root cause or a neutral image?

12. Or do you think it is better to show no image at all?

13. How do you feel about children being used in fundraising adverts?



**SAVE THE CHILDREN** is an international non-governmental organisation working for children's rights globally and helping support children in low- and middle-income countries. The advert is from a 2009 campaign by Save the Children Australia called 'We must make this a thing of the past', a combined outdoor advertising campaign and online exhibition, with the goal of ending injustice for children.

**UNICEF** is a UN agency founded in 1946 to provide emergency food and healthcare to children in countries that had been devastated by World War Two. UNICEF now works in 190 countries and territories to save children's lives, to defend their rights, and to help them fulfil their potential, from early childhood through adolescence. The image of the smiling Liberian girl is part of a campaign about the protection of children from violence, abuse and exploitation.

**WAR CHILD** is a non-governmental organisation founded in 1993 to provide assistance to children in countries affected by conflict and the aftermath of conflict. The organisation has offices in the UK, Netherlands, Canada and USA. The image used is from a 2014 fundraising campaign focusing on a young girl's horrific experiences in Uganda to raise awareness and funds for their cause of helping children in war zones. ■

## SELECTION OF RESEARCH PARTNERS

THE RESEARCH LOCATIONS WERE CHOSEN BASED ON EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL NGOS. THE AIM WAS TO IDENTIFY A RANGE OF NGOS WITH DIFFERENT SPECIALISMS AND AREAS OF FOCUS, E.G. HEALTH, EDUCATION, WATER SECURITY, FAITH BASED, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, ETC. THE NGOS SELECTED WERE WATERAID (ETHIOPIA), MAMA HOPE (GHANA), NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID (MALAWI), ADAPT (SOUTH AFRICA) AND NATIONAL WOMEN'S LOBBY (ZAMBIA).

**Mama Hope** is a San Francisco-based non-profit, with community-based partners in eight countries. Mama Hope supports community-led projects in education, health, women's empowerment, agriculture and beyond. The focus groups were conducted with one of Mama Hope's CBO partners, the United Hearts Children Centre (UHCC) in Bawjiase, Ghana. Bawjiase is a rural town in the Central Region of Ghana. The focus group discussions were held at the United Hearts International School, an education programme currently serving 300 children in the area.

**WaterAid** is a UK based organisation that works in 28 countries to provide clean water, decent toilets and hygiene knowledge to people who don't yet have access to them. The focus groups for this project were conducted in a district rural town called Babich, West Shewa zone, Oromia region, Ethiopia. WaterAid has implemented a project in the district for the last three years.

**Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)** is an ecumenical diaconal organisation working in over 30 countries. With the aim of eradicating poverty and injustice, NCA supports civil society networks and citizens with emergency assistance, long-term development and advocacy. Wanting to reach out to communities of faith for ▶

## SELECTION OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

IN ORDER TO GET A VARIED AND BALANCED SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANTS, WE COLLABORATED WITH LOCAL PARTNERS TO IDENTIFY BENEFICIARIES OF THEIR ACTIVITIES, AND OTHER PEOPLE FROM THE COMMUNITIES WHERE THEY WORK, WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THE ACTIVITY. ALL RESPONDENTS HAD TO BE 18 YEARS OLD OR ABOVE.

| COUNTRY | YOUTH (18-25) | | ADULTS (26+) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | MALE | FEMALE | MALE | FEMALE |
| ETHIOPIA | 2 | 2 | 7 | 1 |
| GHANA | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| MALAWI | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| SOUTH AFRICA | 3 | 3 | 0 | 6 |
| UGANDA | 6 | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| ZAMBIA | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

Two focus group discussions were conducted in each field site. One of the groups consisted of youth aged between 18 and 25, the other was made up of adults aged 26 or over. We aimed for a 50:50 split of three males and three females, but this was not always possible.

In each country, our collaborating partners already had a good understanding of the community, their culture and beliefs. Each site had either a researcher and a translator or a researcher/translator.

Due to the nature of focus groups, it is important to note how these results have been analysed and presented. The respondents were not all required to answer every question; therefore, some questions had more responses than others. Not every comment has been included in the presentation of the research results. Instead, representative examples are given for each question. Direct verbatim responses are shown to demonstrate the richness and complexity of the discussions. Quotations have been grouped under the question which elicited the response, despite the fact that in some cases the response may have better fitted another question. Respondents discussed some topics in much more detail than others. This could be for a number of reasons, from power relations within the focus group to the personal interest of the respondent.

The highlighted parts of the quotes are our own emphasis. ■

## SELECTION OF RESEARCH PARTNERS

the Malawian focus groups, we collaborated with NCA and their partner, the Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM), to identify participants. EAM works to promote education and empower communities, in particular women, to know their rights and hold decision-makers accountable. We also worked with local individuals to recruit young people to take part in the interview. Through these partnerships we were able to bring together two diverse and representative groups, comprised of people both from peri-urban and rural communities and townships in the outskirts of Lilongwe. The discussions were held at the University of Malawi's College of Medicine in Lilongwe.

**Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention and Training (ADAPT)** is a non-profit organisation based in Johannesburg, South Africa. It was founded in 1994 and started by focusing on counselling for abused women. Responding to demands from the community of Alexandra Township and its partners, it developed beyond counselling to community education, research, advocacy and

lobbying, as well as training health workers, police and others to provide support for abused women and vulnerable girls.
**Reach a Hand Uganda** is a youth-centred organisation focusing on youth empowerment programmes with an emphasis on livelihoods & skills development, behaviour change communication, sexual reproductive health & rights, and HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. Reach a Hand Uganda works with at-risk young people in schools and communities.

**The Zambia National Women's Lobby (ZNWL)** is a non-partisan, non-profit making, membership-driven non-governmental organisation committed to the equal representation and participation of women in decision making at all levels. ZNWL was formed in 1991 to respond to the exclusion of women from decision-making processes and the increasing gender imbalances in the representation of women in government departments, political parties, the public and private sectors.

# 5 KEY FINDINGS

THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH WAS TO GIVE PEOPLE IN AID-RECEIVING COUNTRIES THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE TYPE OF IMAGERY USED IN AID COMMUNICATION AND ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS. THESE IMPORTANT STAKEHOLDERS ARE OFTEN SILENT IN THIS CRITICAL DEBATE, AND THIS RESEARCH AIMS TO GIVE INSIGHT INTO THEIR RARELY PORTRAYED PERSPECTIVES.

The focus group discussions enabled respondents to explore their feelings about images used to depict their continent, to discuss the kind of imagery they would use themselves and whether the images in INGO adverts are accurate or over-dramatized. The research uncovered the complexity of aid communication and how the interpretation of visual imagery is subjective; dependent on individuals decoding of the images based on their own backgrounds, beliefs and experiences.

This section summarises some of the main findings and themes that emerged from this research.

### KEY FINDINGS

**The majority of respondents thought that the images in the adverts offer an accurate representation of the situation in Africa.**

**Most respondents demonstrated a high level of media literacy and understood that fundraising campaigns are strategic and developed to raise funds.**

**When asked to select imagery for a charity advert, 38% of respondents said they would show the problem, 18% the outcome, 27% the root cause and 18% a combination of all three.**

**The vast majority of respondents said they would choose negative imagery for a fundraising advert in order to inspire donations.**

**The images and adverts mostly made respondents feel sad.**

**The respondents felt that the images generally portrayed Africa as inferior and a continent in need.**

**Respondents emphasized that dignity and respect must be underlying elements in the portrayal of people in INGO imagery.**

**Most respondents said they were OK with the use of children in adverts, recognising that this is a deliberate tactic by INGOs to attract potential donations.**

**However, they highlighted the need for more diversity by for example using images of people of all ages and different races, and generally showing that people have something to offer.**

**Respondents felt that explicit images involving nudity or bloodshed should never be used.**

**The vast majority of respondents said it is fundamental to use images in the adverts.**

## AID COMMUNICATION IS COMPLEX AND THERE IS NO SINGLE SOLUTION

A central element of the research was exploring whether participants preferred 'positive' or 'negative' images. Through the interviews we found that there was no unanimous agreement on which type of images should be used in aid communications. 71% of respondents felt that the images they were shown were an accurate reflection of their countries or continent and that they were necessary in order to show people the current situation. In fact, some people thought that the images were an understatement of the reality. However, although the majority of respondents agreed that the images used were accurate, many felt that the pictures provided a distorted view of low- and middle-income countries, for example by stigmatising poverty and deliberately over-dramatizing to create more impact and ultimately raise more funds. In general, participants felt that

adverts imply that nothing is changing. They suggested that, as well as the problems, it was important to also show the positive outcomes of development programmes.

Most respondents demonstrated high levels of media literacy. Although they felt that the images were mostly accurate, they were fully aware that many were framed and manipulated to evoke an emotional response such as pity and/or guilt. Some felt awkward about this, others less so. Participants recognised that images motivate people to give to charity or join a cause in different ways. This also indicates an understanding that INGO campaigning and fundraising is complex, and that images speak to viewers in different ways, depending on the individual and the contexts.

At the same time, some images were lost in translation. For example, the advert with the old man holding a beer and the refugee child in the exhibition case adhered to contexts that

the some of respondents were unfamiliar with. The points they were trying to make – for example that some of of money people in Western countries spend on recreational activities like drinking beer could be used towards other important matters – were not understood. Instead these images were met with shock and frustration by several respondents who felt that they portrayed people in non-dignified ways.

When participants were asked what kind of images would make people in the UK or US donate the most, the resounding majority focused on negative imagery which depicted the problem. Only two respondents said they would focus on positive issues which signal a message of hope. It is interesting that the answers to 'What would raise the most money?' differed from those to the question 'What images would you use?'. The images respondents said they would select were not necessarily the images that they thought would elicit the highest donations.

> *As long as we are trying to fundraise to solve the problem, the sad picture is the one that drives the message home. People need to see the problem they are asked to solve. It needs to show the urgency of the matter.*
>
> (Male, 60, Ethiopia)

Although the majority of respondents said they would choose negative imagery to use in advertising, this changed according to gender and age. The majority of youth said they would use negative imagery, but the majority of adults said they would use positive imagery. The majority of males would use negative and the majority of females would use positive imagery. Some people said they would show the problem, others the solution. Further, the range of issues they would highlight in fundraising campaigns were varied. The most popular issues people said they would highlight were health and education, and one of the recurring themes when mentioning education was the distance students have to travel to school.

## IMAGES NEED TO BE ACCURATE AND SHOW DIVERSITY

The majority of respondents thought that most of the images they were shown were accurate, but this does not necessarily mean they were happy with them. The images made respondents feel uncomfortable, saddened and even shocked. They talked about a monolithic representation of Africa. Respondents were upset that black Africans are still used as the poster children for international aid, arguing that not everyone suffering from poverty and inequality in Africa is black. They posed questions like 'Where are the black doctors in these images?' and 'What about Africans helping Africans?' The discussion around colour and race was particularly strong in the South Africa focus group. If Western development organisations and charities feel they need to constantly use black people in their adverts and posters, why not include images of black doctors, aid workers and other professionals who are pioneering development every day?

There was a general consensus that aid is still required. However, the respondents wanted to encourage producers of fundraising adverts to diversify their portfolio of images to give a more balanced picture of Africa. The most popular advert that was shown, from Dubai Cares, depicts a boy

who has made a car out of scrap materials. The environment and the boy's clothes imply that he is from a disadvantaged background, but his facial expression exudes happiness and pride in his engineering skills. The strapline 'I can teach you to make a car from a plastic jug. Can you teach me to read?' shows the boy offering an equitable exchange of services. INGOs should endeavour to replicate this kind of imagery, which promotes agency and respect.

> *I like this [Dubai Cares image] because, we as people have different talents.* **You may be poor or may be suffering but there's that special thing that needs to be taken out from you.** *There's that special thing that you can use to help people even though you are poor – like this child he knows how to make cars out of plastic jugs and he can teach someone something that will help another person. He can teach a person to make a car that another child can play with. So, for me this picture is very good.*
>
> (Female, 18, South Africa)

## DIGNITY IS PARAMOUNT

As indicated above, what came out very clearly in the interviews was the need to preserve the dignity of the individuals portrayed in aid advertising, and to tell more nuanced stories of people and situations. There is more to a person than being poor, people are complex, and they have a variety of experiences, feelings and relationships that define them in different ways. Many said that adverts should strive to portray all generations, from children to grandparents, and that diversity is key to demonstrating that poverty and inequality is experienced by people of all colours and all generations. Most critically though, they highlighted the need to maintain dignity and respect for those portrayed. Many suggested that adverts could do more to show people's achievements and progress, even though they are poor or vulnerable.

When it came to using images of children in advertising campaigns, respondents clearly understood that this was a deliberate tactic employed by INGOs to elicit an emotional response from donors. Although this method was accepted by most respondents, many felt it was inappropriate to always focus on children and that if images of children were to be used for these purposes, they should be relevant, accurate and preserve dignity.

In general, the majority of respondents thought it was OK to use any images as long as they were not a misrepresentation of the truth. However, several respondents said that explicit images (for example, of nudity, war or victims of rape) should never be used. Another respondent described some images (pictures of children holding guns) as 'morally corrupting'.

> *Some images are not good for some reasons. Some requires discretion like countries that are suffering from war. Even if we are trying to raise money and awareness to concerned people who may want to come in and help.* **We can't capture pictures of dead bodies. The people who are dying still deserve some dignity.** *Such images may be disturbing to the human eye. It will have a negative effect on their psychology.* ■
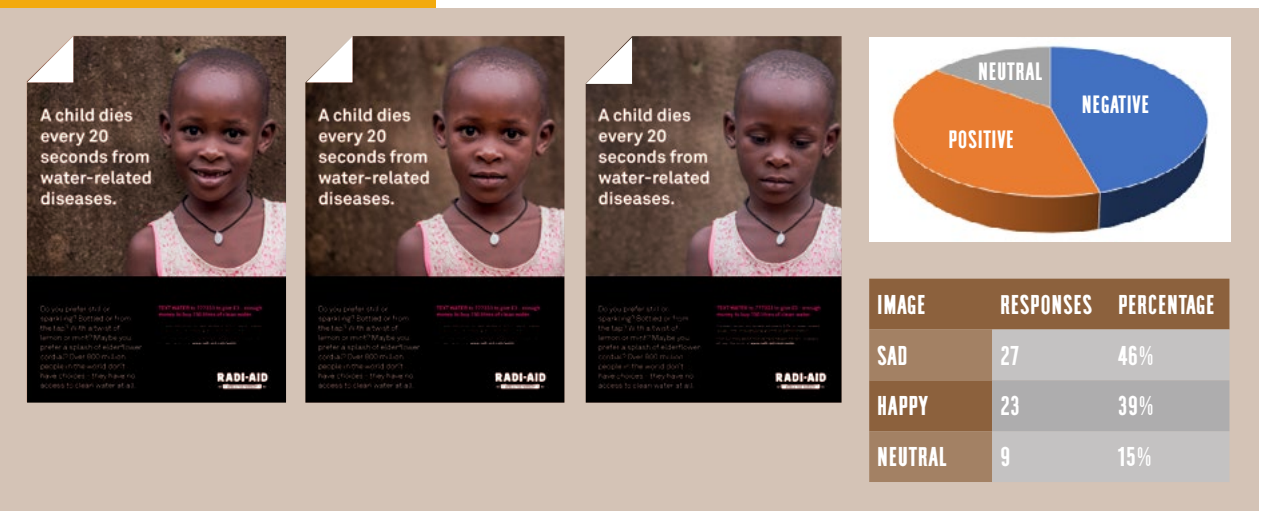>
> **(Male, 44, Zambia)**

# 6 RESULTS

**THIS CHAPTER PRESENTS THE DATA FROM THE RESEARCH, INCLUDING A SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS ANSWERS TO EACH OF THE QUESTIONS.**

## QUESTION 1
### WHICH ADVERT DO YOU LIKE AND WHY?



| IMAGE | RESPONSES | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|
| SAD | 27 | 46% |
| HAPPY | 23 | 39% |
| NEUTRAL | 9 | 15% |

As explained in the chapter on methodology, the first question was based on the mock advert with the three images of the little girl. The mock advert was designed to explore whether respondents would use a positive, negative or neutral image if they were asked to produce a fundraising advert for beneficiaries across Africa. To highlight the differences in emotions, participants were shown three pictures of the same girl with the same descriptive text but with a different expression in each. Of the 59 respondents, the majority (46%) preferred the sad image, 39% preferred the happy one and 15% preferred the neutral image.

When comparing the results between the youth and adult groups however, there is a marked difference. The majority of youth (62%) said they would use a negative image and the majority of adults (52%) would use a positive image.

| COUNTRY | YOUTH (18-25) | | | ADULTS (26+) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | NEGATIVE | POSITIVE | NEUTRAL | NEGATIVE | POSITIVE | NEUTRAL |
| ETHIOPIA | 1 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| GHANA | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| MALAWI | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 2 |
| UGANDA | 5 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 1 |
| ZAMBIA | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 16 (62%) | 6 (23%) | 4 (15%) | 11 (33%) | 17 (52%) | 5 (15%) |

**YOUTH**



**ADULTS**
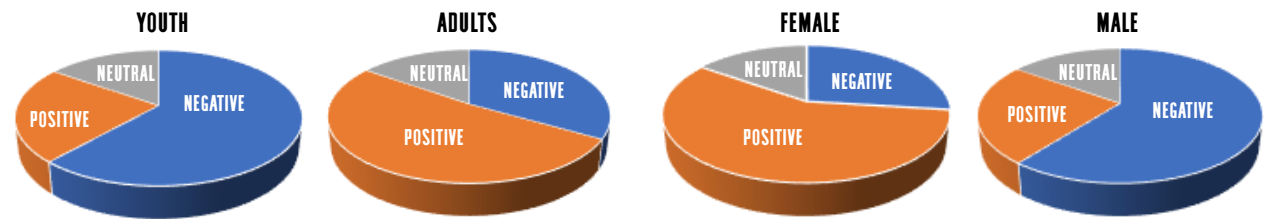


**FEMALE**



**MALE**



When you look at the image selection based on gender, the majority of females (58%) said they would choose positive images and the majority of males (61%) would choose negative images.

| COUNTRY | FEMALE | | | MALE | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | NEGATIVE | POSITIVE | NEUTRAL | NEGATIVE | POSITIVE | NEUTRAL |
| ETHIOPIA | 1 | | | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| GHANA | 1 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 1 | |
| MALAWI | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| UGANDA | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| ZAMBIA | 2 | 3 | | 4 | | |
| TOTAL | 7 (27%) | 15 (58%) | 4 (15%) | 20 (61%) | 8 (24%) | 5 (15%) |

### RESPONDENTS IN FAVOUR OF USING THE HAPPY IMAGE

*The girl is happy, and she is getting what she wants. She is getting an education, she is getting the basic needs that she needs, so she is satisfied with what she is having. Therefore, the happy image is my favourite.*

(Female, 35, Malawi)

*If you look at the pictures, in general it is about a child. And basically, children are associated with happiness. When you look at children you think of happiness. So, this child seems all smiley and happy and relaxed, which simply brings out the true picture on the ground as pertaining to children. So, I like this picture because it somehow portrays the attitude and the right state of a happy African child. So, I find this to be more fitting than the other ones because they are giving us a different picture of an African child. So, I like this one better.*

(Male, 27, Malawi)

*I would take the happy one, the smiling one. For example, if you have happy children, it indicates that everything is fine and it is the right of the children to be happy.*

(Male, 26, Uganda)

### RESPONDENTS IN FAVOUR OF USING THE SAD IMAGE

*Sad, because it shows the need that is there for the child. It shows that she lacks something like education or money or something else. And it gives out what the message is supposed to give out.*

(Male, 23, Malawi)

*As long as we are trying to fundraise to solve the problem, the sad picture is the one that drives the message home. People need to see the problem they are asked to solve. It needs to show the urgency of the matter.*

(Male, 60, Ethiopia)

*I prefer the sad child because I think she has an issue that needs to be addressed and dealt with, so she needs some assistance to do away with the problem. To have a change in her life.*

(Male, 23, Uganda)

### RESPONDENTS IN FAVOUR OF USING THE NEUTRAL IMAGE

*Neutral. Neutral is the safest option to go with. Sad picture makes us look helpless, dependent. Happy makes us look like people that don't have any problems. So neutral is safe.*

(Male, 22, Ethiopia)

I think I'll take the neutral child. Because life isn't all about happiness, it's always in between.

(Female, 22, Uganda)

## QUESTION 2
### HOW DO THESE IMAGES MAKE YOU FEEL?

**FOR QUESTION 2, THE RESPONDENTS WERE SHOWN THE TEN ADVERTS USED IN THE STUDY AND WERE ASKED ABOUT THE EMOTIONS THESE GENERATED.**

The predominant emotion felt by respondents when looking at these images was sadness. A common reaction to the images was one of recognising people in need and acknowledging that these pictures depict real life. The respondents agreed that the images showed real problems, such as people suffering from diseases, people who lack basic human needs, the effects of migration and eviction, and people who need protection against violence. The South African participants, in particular, commented on the fact that only black people were used in the adverts. Overall, the images prompted empathy among the respondents. They expressed feelings of helplessness, anger, guilt and a desire to help.

*I feel sad. This is the information we see. Most of the time it's true but again I feel it is exaggerated. This is how people look at countries in Africa, but it's not just Africa that is affected by this. When you compare the pictures with pictures from the Western countries, you find that there is a difference. They always show that Western countries are more civilised, peaceful, no such issues as Africa is going through. I feel very bad, it gives a very negative picture of Africa. It is like people are not trying to improve, but people are actually trying hard. Of course, there are still some groups of people living like what we see in the pictures, but there are some people who are standing out and trying to fight. We see the same picture over and over, it is like nothing is changing, although things are changing.*

(Female, 22, Zambia)

## RESPONDENTS WHO REACTED NEGATIVELY TO THE ADVERTS
**FOUR FEMALE RESPONDENTS IN THE SOUTH AFRICA FOCUS GROUPS TALKED ABOUT HOW THEY FELT THE IMAGES WERE MANIPULATED TO ENCOURAGE DONORS TO GIVE MORE. ONE RESPONDENT CLAIMED THAT PEOPLE ARE 'USED AS PROJECTS'. TWO OF THE RESPONDENTS HIGHLIGHTED THE FACT THAT ONLY BLACK PEOPLE WERE USED IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS, EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE MANY WHITE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN POVERTY.**

*Looking at this picture [Dubai Cares] it makes me feel very touched and makes me feel otherwise of people. Look at this statement here, it says I can teach you to make a car from a plastic jug, can you teach me to read. From me it shows that people want to benefit from other people. Looking at this picture you can see how this child, we don't want to just give, we don't just need to see a picture of someone suffering to make us want to give. To me that's not a good thing.* **Most of these images are not directly taken, they are taken in a photo shoot. Like they just organised it this way and then they took the picture. They know exactly what to do and where to take the photograph.** *So sometimes they push people to do things they're not supposed to do so that a person can feel guilty and go and give. It's not about feeling guilty – it's about what's in you to go and give to another person.*

(Female, 18, South Africa)

*Out of 10 pictures, 8 of them have used children. So why are they using children? And most of the children they are using are black. There are also white kids who are suffering. Why focus on kids as though it is the kids who are doing poverty? Why not cover their parents, or what they eat and where they live?*

(Female, 48, South Africa)

*I was checking these pictures, and all of them have pictures of black people which is not a good thing cos in South Africa we find that there are a lot of people who are poor – white, black, Indian or whatever. Whatever colour you are, you are still poor. So, while people are posting pictures like this it is not good. People should see that it's the whole of South Africa, the whole world, people of different races, they are all poor. You don't want to just donate for a black person – you are donating for a person.*

(Female, 18, South Africa)

*We are used as projects. The women need the fundraising, but is she getting what she has been used for.*

(Female, 34, South Africa)

## RESPONDENTS WHO REACTED POSITIVELY TO THE ADS

OTHER RESPONDENTS SAW THE PICTURES POSITIVELY AS THEY RAISE AWARENESS OF THE ISSUES THAT EXIST AND ALERT OTHERS WHO MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP. THERE WERE ALSO FEELINGS OF HOPE AND PRIDE TAKEN FROM SOME OF THE IMAGES.

*I see it positively. It's a fair request for people who have some to help those who do not have much. The shortage of water or the other problems that are shown exist in real life. The ads show the problem that exists. So, I think the ads are okay.*

(Male, 58, Ethiopia)

*Some of these photos are positive. For instance, this photo [UNICEF] shows that there are a lot of challenges, but the kid is happy. Because when you have a problem you don't want to show everyone, but some photos were taken in Africa, they really show that Africa is in a sorry state, so they are negative. And I'm saddened that we are in a sorry state. If you look at this it means that Africa is faced with very many wars. We don't have water but still at the end of the day we always have a drink for ourselves [the old man with a beer].* **Then this photo [Dubai Cares] gives me a lot of hope**, *if Africans can make these types of trucks then we can upgrade and make more things. Only that in Africa we exchange - you give me this, I give you this. But there's hope. Otherwise the pictures give me hope.*

(Female, 24, Uganda)

*According to me, how the images make me feel, first of all it addresses the high rate of poverty in Africa. We see that a lot of people are trying to see what they can do to get out of poverty. Also, there's health issues that are still low, whereby a lot of young children really need help. They die because of certain diseases and they don't know how to get a cure for these diseases. I also see a lot of struggling, hustling in Africa. Africans are really struggling to get out of the poverty line and earn a living and prestige and leisure. Though African children don't have a lot of money to buy toys, we see creativity. They come up with ideas to come up with something. If I can show you [holds up the Dubai Cares image], the boy with a truck, he's trying.* **He made the truck by himself which shows creativity**. *Since they don't have money to buy certain things, they become creative to get it in their hands. It can't bring happiness to me. It brings sadness, I should wake up. I shouldn't sleep. I feel more determined to work even harder to improve and get solutions to the problems.*

(Male, 19, Uganda)

*I think in Africa, as much as we are making progress, these pictures have shown me what is still going on out there.* **The pictures are giving me awareness, opening my eyes!**

(Male, 18, Zambia)

## RESPONDENTS WITH A MIXED REACTION TO THE ADVERTS

SOME OF THE RESPONDENTS REACTED TO THE IMAGES NEITHER WITH POSITIVITY, SADNESS OR NEGATIVITY, BUT WITH MIXED FEELINGS.

*It seems like the general picture is that these people are suffering from something. Generally, it seems like some are happy, and some are traumatized. They are on a quest to find something. I am very much concerned. Some are being deprived of lack of education. Some are being deprived of the home, so I am concerned.*

(Male, 25, Malawi)

*This one of the child with the car brings me some hope. I feel like he's trying to enjoy his childhood and he's being creative and by the time such a child can come up with such a car then it gives me hope that he has a bright future. This one [UNICEF image] makes me have the motherly instincts and I feel like protecting this innocent child. Then this other one [refugee image] I feel bad. I feel pain because the child looks caged, the other ones have been displaced. They have to carry all their luggage and walk to wherever they are going. This one [Care International] also makes me sad because the jerrycan is heavier for the kid. Generally, these pictures make me feel bad.*

(Female, 22, Uganda)

*What I can add is that, not all the images are the same. Some show that people are annoyed in their heart. This image on the other hand [shows the UKAID image] shows that some organisations or the government cares about the children's illnesses. This brings joy to me. When I look at this one [shows the Dubai Cares image] I feel happy because it shows that this African child has shown he can do something and therefore it is easy to help him. Looking at this image shows the child has been cared about. The image with the man holding a beer shows that even though he has been handed the beer, he is not happy. Even though he has something to drink, it's not beer he needs. Those are my thoughts.*

(Male, 25, Uganda)



## QUESTION 3
### WHICH ADVERTS DO YOU LIKE BEST AND WHY?

THE TEN IMAGES WERE PRESENTED TO THE RESPONDENTS, AND EACH OF THEM DECIDED WHICH ADVERT THEY LIKED THE MOST. THE FIRST TABLE SHOWS THE DIFFERENT RESPONSES OF MALE AND FEMALE PARTICIPANTS. THE SECOND TABLE SHOWS THE DIFFERENT RESPONSES OF YOUTH AND ADULT PARTICIPANTS. THE THIRD TABLE SHOWS THE RESPONSES ACCORDING TO COUNTRY.

The three most popular adverts were Dubai Cares (26%), Save the Children (14%), and Cordaid (13%).

| | MALE | FEMALE | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| DUBAI CARES | 11 | 7 | 18 |
| CARE INTERNATIONAL | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| AMNESTY - SHELL | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| AMNESTY | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| SAVE THE CHILDREN | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| OXFAM | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| UNICEF | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| WAR CHILD | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| CORDAID | 7 | 2 | 9 |
| UKAID | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| TOTAL | 37 | 33 | 70 |

| | YOUTH | ADULTS | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| DUBAI CARES | 12 | 6 | 18 |
| CARE INTERNATIONAL | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| AMNESTY - SHELL | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| AMNESTY | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| SAVE THE CHILDREN | 5 | 5 | 10 |
| OXFAM | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| UNICEF | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| WAR CHILD | 5 | | 5 |
| CORDAID | 3 | 6 | 9 |
| UKAID | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| TOTAL | 38 | 32 | 70 |

| | ETHIOPIA | GHANA | MALAWI | S AFRICA | UGANDA | ZAMBIA | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DUBAI CARES | 4 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 18 |
| CARE | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 3 |
| AMNESTY – SHELL | 2 | | | | | | 2 |
| AMNESTY | | 1 | | 1 | 2 | | 4 |
| SAVE | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | | 10 |
| OXFAM | | 1 | 2 | | 2 | | 5 |
| UNICEF | | 3 | | 1 | | 4 | 8 |
| WAR CHILD | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 5 |
| CORDAID | 2 | 2 | 3 | | 2 | | 9 |
| UKAID | | 2 | 2 | | | 2 | 6 |
| TOTAL | 9 | 16 | 13 | 9 | 15 | 8 | 70 |

## DUBAI CARES

THE DUBAI CARES IMAGE IS THE MOST POPULAR BECAUSE ALTHOUGH IT'S A POIGNANT IMAGE IT'S ALSO A POSITIVE ONE; THE CHILD DEPICTED IS EXTREMELY HAPPY WITH THE CAR HE HAS MADE. IT THEREFORE SYMBOLISES HOPE, CREATIVITY, INNOVATION AND VISION. AS ONE RESPONDENT RIGHTLY SAYS, IF HE CAN ACHIEVE THIS CAR ON HIS OWN, THINK WHAT HE CAN ACHIEVE WITH AN EDUCATION.



*I like the Dubai Cares advert the best, because even though the picture is showing a boy with a happy face, it is still sad. He is working on a project whilst he doesn't know how to read and write. It is a sad picture because the child can't go to school or read or write. I like it because it is sad, and because the child needs attention.*
(Female, 18, Malawi)

*I like this [Dubai Cares image] because, we as people have different talents. **You may be poor or may be suffering but there's that special thing that needs to be taken out from you.** There's that special thing that you can use to help people even though you are poor – like this child he knows how to make cars out of plastic jugs and he can teach someone something that will help another person. He can teach a person to make a car that another child can play with. So, for me this picture is very good.*
(Female, 18, South Africa)

*I like the Dubai Cares advert... Because **despite the poverty, there is still hope in that state of poverty, where you have this kid who has been able to come up with a toy using local resources and he seems to enjoy it, so I like it.** Starting from the colours as well as how it is bringing out the little element of poverty that has to be worked on, for example on the clothing, but then it shows that we still have hope. That is why it goes well with the caption: 'I can teach you to make a car from a plastic jug, can you teach me to read'. So, it sounds catchy yes, but not that saddening.*
(Male, 27, Malawi)

*I like the image with the truck [Dubai Cares]. Here you can see he's got the talent but he needs education. He needs funds to express what he's got. **The image symbolises our continent. It shows how we grew up. It shows how our kids are struggling out there.** Instead of buying a toy from the shop they have made their own toys to play with so it shows really that we need help in terms of education – everything. And you can see that the clothes he is wearing they look like they are too big for him... The clothes have been donated to him.*
(Female, 52, South Africa)

*The kid with the truck amuses me. He has a vision in this pic and tried to utilize the little resources. He has the hopes of getting a better thing through this one. I think there's hope.*
(Male, 23, Uganda)

*For me I choose Dubai Cares because it shows me that the child is able to do something for itself even if they were to grow up. He can innovate and know that this is how to make a car. Which means that if he was trained or got an education or was taken for an engineering course, he may be able to do something that could develop his country.*
(Female, 35, Uganda)

*I like Dubai Cares the most, it looks at education, like knowledge is power. And today's children are tomorrow's future leaders. So, the more we empower the young ones with knowledge, the more we procure a brighter future. Not just for them, but for the whole world.*
(Male, 18, Zambia)

*I love this [Dubai cares], it shows that Africa has something to give as much as most of the adverts that show Africa to be in a place where they always have to ask and always look up to other countries to help. We also have something we can give out, that is why I like this one.*
(Female, 22, Zambia)



## SAVE THE CHILDREN

THE SAVE THE CHILDREN ADVERT IS IN DEEP CONTRAST TO THE DUBAI CARES IMAGE. HERE PEOPLE ARE MOVED BY THE SAD REALITY OF CONFLICT, MIGRATION, REFUGEES, HOMELESSNESS AND NEED. THERE IS NO HOPE PORTRAYED IN THE IMAGE AND RESPONDENTS FELT THIS WAS MORE 'TRUTHFUL'.

*The picture I really like is Save the Children - if I look at the picture, I feel really sad. I can see a lot of people holding and carrying their belongings, and they really don't know where they are going. And because of that, some fighting among some countries and they don't know where they are going. And they really really need help. So that's why I like this picture best.*
(Male, 32, Ghana)



## CORDAID

IT IS SURPRISING THAT THE CORDAID ADVERT WAS THE THIRD MOST POPULAR, AS SOME RESPONDENTS DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE ADVERT FROM THE PICTURE ALONE. IT IS CLEAR FROM THE THREE QUOTES BELOW HOW THE RESPONDENTS HAD VERY DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THE SAME ADVERT. DURING THE RESEARCH IT BECAME APPARENT THAT TEXT IS OFTEN AS IMPORTANT AS THE IMAGE IN THE ADVERT — SOMETIMES MORE SO. SOME OF THESE ADVERTS USED CLEVER WORDPLAY, OTHERS MANIPULATED SITUATIONS TO DELIVER AN IRONIC MESSAGE. SOME RESPONDENTS FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO COMPREHEND BOTH THE VISUAL IMAGE AND THE TEXT AND HOW THESE CREATED AN OVERALL MESSAGE.

*I like the Save the Children advert. It is showing what actually happens here in our context. The child can't go to school because of the violence brought by war. **So, I like this one because it shows the truth of our continent**.*
(Female, 20, Malawi)

*I like Save the Children - I like it because they need help, and they need someone to help them to get a place to sleep, they are homeless. They need help they need support.*
(Female, 18, Ghana)

*I like the Save the Children advert. Because it depicts that these people have no home. They have no shelter and no refuge. They have no place where they can go or nobody they can look up to. So, I like this picture because **it depicts a true sense of what is happening there at that particular time**.*
(Female, 52, Malawi)

*I like the Save the Children advert. It seems like these people are refugees, and coming out of a war, and they are deprived. So, the children as well in the picture. It seems like they are deprived of a home. So that is not something that I am happy about. To me, it brings sadness.*
(Male, 32, Malawi)

*I like the Cordaid advert the best. Because it is a satire. It seems the old man could do better things, but he still sticks to drink.*
(Female, 35, Malawi)

*I like the Cordaid picture. It shows how people are suffering in some other countries, so I think to myself 'Oh, I have freedom and can enjoy life' so you have to consider how others are living their life and suffering because their life is difficult.*
(Male, 21, Ghana)

*I choose Cordaid because the background shows that they're in a dry place. Everything is dry but instead of supporting them with something beneficial, they've been given beer. In a way, this man has not been helped! It shows that he's situation is bad, but instead he's been handed a beer.*
(Male, 23, Uganda)

## QUESTION 4
### HOW DO YOU THINK THESE IMAGES MAKE PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT COUNTRIES IN AFRICA?

THIS QUESTION SEEKS TO EXPLORE THE RESPONDENTS THOUGHTS ABOUT THE EMOTIONAL RESPONSE PROVOKED BY THE IMAGES USED IN INGO COMMUNICATIONS. THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS FELT SADDENED BY THE IMAGES USED IN THE ADVERTS. SOME OF THEM REFERRED TO AFRICANS AS STILL BEING THE POSTER CHILDREN OF THE AID WORLD, OTHERS FELT SYMPATHY FOR THE PEOPLE IN THE IMAGES AND EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT SO MANY PEOPLE SUFFER ACROSS THE CONTINENT DUE TO POVERTY, INEQUALITY, DISEASE, CORRUPTION, CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE. RESPONDENTS SAID THE PICTURES WOULD ENCOURAGE NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF AFRICA WITH PEOPLE IN OTHER COUNTRIES THINKING AFRICA IS HELPLESS, INADEQUATE USERS OF THEIR OWN RESOURCES, IMPOVERISHED, CORRUPT, BACKWARD AND IN A CONSTANT STATE OF CRISIS.

*Right now, I feel like we are inferiors as a continent. We are at the tail of the world. It's as if we can't change. It's as if we are always begging.* The developed countries have had their share of troubles themselves on many occasions. **Why don't we see posters with white children that are in need? Why are we always the poster children of the aid world? We are good for begging just because we are black? Do we make for good poster children because of the colour of our skin?** It makes me sad to see that has not changed. I understand there are some of our people who are in need, who cannot even have a meal a day. But are we the only ones to whom that happens? The Western countries have problems, too. So, are the NGOs begging money in our names and pictures, but then they share the money to solve their local problems? There needs to be a balance of images used.

(Male, 22, Ethiopia)

It has made me see what I haven't seen before – that **we are still the poster children for aid**. **We are begging because we are not able to utilise our resources,** not because we don't have them

(Male, 31, Ethiopia)

I came to realise that Africa is just a continent that is haunted by crises after crises, problems after problems.
(Male, 38, Ethiopia)

I feel sad. I see that Africa is the most backward and the most impoverished continent. I felt really upset, because I know we are not naturally poor. **Our poverty is human made.** It's because 1 or 2 percent of our population embezzles our resources. It makes me upset because it's an artificially created problem.

(Male, 60, Ethiopia)

Very sad because this shows that there is a lot that our leaders should do, because if we can confront these atrocities as African leaders, we will save Africa in the next 200 years. If we leave this issue unattended to, we will see a dying Africa. We are seeing an Africa that is existing no more. Who is Africa? It is you and I.

(Male, 44, Zambia)

OTHERS, ALTHOUGH SADDENED BY THE IMAGES, BELIEVED IT WAS IMPORTANT TO SHOW SUFFERING SO THAT DONORS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEMS SOME PEOPLE ARE FACING AND SEEK TO HELP THEM.

I think these images make people feel sorry for countries in Africa, because looking at these pictures they are based on sad things – but different sad things – we have sexual violence, being poor, children's rights being neglected. So, I think these pictures make people feel like we are suffering from different situations. **It's good for people in other countries to see that we as a continent are loaded with a lot of things we are facing.**

(Female, 18, South Africa)

**It will teach them to share and have sympathy for other people.** To have knowledge that in other countries people are not as comfortable as they are here. There are countries that are suffering.

(Female, 38, South Africa)

These are issues that are happening in Africa, and they are targeting the grassroot level. The people who are poor are the ones who are going through this.

(Female, 64, Zambia)

Looking at the Amnesty ad, maybe it is not happening here, but it is happening now somewhere else. You see these young people being forced, initiated or brainwashed into being criminals. So, this is true, I watch Al-Jazeera, I watch BBC, and I see that this is happening, and it is bad. The picture is raising awareness. It's a bad situation, and it's killing somewhere out there.

(Female, 22, Zambia)

SOME RESPONDENTS FELT THAT THE IMAGES WERE MISREPRESENTATIVE, SHOWING ONLY ONE SIDE OF THE STORY. THEY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE SEEN A MORE BALANCED USE OF IMAGERY TO SHOW THAT NOT EVERYONE IS SUFFERING AND THAT THERE ARE MANY AFRICANS HELPING AFRICANS.

**I think they'll conclude that literally the whole of Africa is in a sorry state** like we need help and we are dying and maybe negative stuff only. Although that isn't the case always.

(Female, 22, Uganda)

All these images are overall showing the negative side to Africa. Okay, this image [Dubai Cares] shows a child who has made a car, but it's still a toy. Someone on the outside may see that there's nothing we can do for ourselves. This image [UKAID image] shows immunization but again they've put the UKAID logo which means it's not Africans doing it themselves so there are no medical personnel. Most of the images are sorrowful, it's like there's nothing positive Africa can offer. **If you take 20 photos, include at least 2 that are positive so people can say that, "even though they're in sorrow, it's not the overall picture." There are African doctors who are doing something.** You can't take negative images overall and expect that people will think otherwise. It's hard to pick a photo that I can say, 'this has made me happy'.

(Male, 23, Uganda)

From all the images, I haven't seen a white person. It shows that Africa needs a lot of help. **As an African it annoys me that this is what Africans are portrayed as.** Taking away the help, it angers me that this is how we are. The government is not caring about the ordinary person. As me, I feel angered. This person is a representation of everyone in his community.

(Male, 25, Uganda)

**I combine all the pictures together because some are happy and some are sad.** Because when I look at picture G [UNICEF], the girl is happy, and picture F [Oxfam], the boy has some talent and he needs help, and I hope that if someone can help him the boy will become a star. And Picture A [Dubai Cares] - I can see that the boy has a talent! Because I know in Africa boys like this have this talent and those boys need help. I think a small boy like this has this talent, there is something great ahead.

(Male, 21, Ghana)

**For me, there is a double perception.** Some of our pictures shows that in our African continent, there is hope and joy. But to some countries there is sadness as well, due to the harsh realities of war, like in advert number 10 [War Child], where the parents were shot down and the child was forced to get married. So, **for me, in some of the pictures there is hope, but in some of the pictures there is no hope at all.**

(Male, 23, Malawi)


Amnesty


UKAID


Oxfam

## QUESTION 5
### ARE THESE IMAGES AN ACCURATE REPRESENTATION OR ARE THEY EXAGGERATED?

| | ACCURATE | EXAGGERATED | MIXED |
|---|---|---|---|
| ETHIOPIA | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| GHANA | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| MALAWI | 8 | 3 | 0 |
| S AFRICA | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| UGANDA | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| ZAMBIA | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| TOTAL | 34 (71%) | 10 (21%) | 4 (8%) |

OF ALL OF THE QUESTIONS ASKED IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT, THIS PARTICULAR QUESTION DREW THE MOST UNANIMOUS RESPONSES. 71% OF THE RESPONDENTS THOUGHT THAT THE IMAGES WERE AN ACCURATE REPRESENTATION. IN GHANA 100% OF THOSE WHO RESPONDED SAID THEY WERE ACCURATE.

### RESPONDENTS WHO FOUND THE ADVERTS ACCURATE

"

*All these pictures, they are all stories even if we didn't witness some before. On television you can see news about here and there, so these pictures are accurate pictures.*
(Male, 21, Ghana)

*If I look at all of these pictures that are in front of me, they are the things that are really going on in Africa. It's really really going on. You can see some countries fighting against each other, you can see some sickness too, you can see some people will be happy, so many different things.* **All the pictures that are in front of me are the things that are going on in Africa.**
(Male, 32, Ghana)

*The pictures in front of us, they are true - really true they are things happening in Africa, in Ghana as a whole, in Bawjiase as a whole. You can see children suffering from illnesses and diseases. In Ghana you can see a town fighting against another town, and you can see children without parents, so it's all true.*
(Female, 26, Ghana)

**To me, these pictures are not exaggerated. It gives an exact picture of what is going on.** *War is true, and wars happen here in Africa, and people are forced to move from one country to another country as refugees, and they become a burden to that society which they now enter.*
(Male, 25, Malawi)

**I think they are accurate at that moment in time. If you want to sell coke you don't show beer.** *Whatever you want to show you have to show it the way it is. It shows the real place.*
(Female, 40, South Africa)

**It's an understatement of the reality**. *It just shocked us because we saw it in pictures.*
(Female, 22, Ethiopia)

"

**None of the images are exaggerated.** *This is a toy [referring to the Dubai Cares photo] that was made by an African child and wasn't carried from overseas. All these photos are not exaggerated even though they don't show the entire African picture. I guess they can't show medical doctors or well-off children in Muyenga in these images meant to show need. The photos depict slum areas where the need is greatest. This photo shows a black hand implying it's a black doctor [the UKAID photo] although medication is not enough. Speaking frankly, we need the help.*
(Male, 25, Uganda)

### RESPONDENTS WHO FOUND THE ADVERTS EXAGGERATED

ALTHOUGH 71% OF RESPONDENTS SAID THAT THEY THOUGHT THE IMAGES WERE ACCURATE, OTHERS FELT THAT SOME OF THE ADVERTS WERE EXAGGERATED. THIS ECHOES SOME OF THE RESPONSES TO QUESTION 2, WHERE RESPONDENTS MENTIONED THAT THEY THOUGHT THAT THE PHOTOGRAPHS WERE STAGED IN ORDER TO INCREASE THEIR IMPACT.

"

*Amnesty, for example, is exaggerated. I know there are people in need, but the fact that they presented the child in a city setting shows me that* **they are dramatizing it for more impact**. *In my experience, even people who do not have food do not go around gleaning cereals on the road. They beg for food.*
(Male, 22, Ethiopia)

*I find them to be somehow exaggerated.* **They are not**

*telling the full story about Africa. Africa is not totally poverty-stricken, Africa is not 100% wars, Africa does not lack 100% safe water. We have only been told a part of the story. But there is something missing from these pictures. For example, look at the picture in the Dubai Cares advert. This explains two sides. It talks of one side which has a poverty side, and then it also talks of I would say the middle side, or the balanced side, that despite us having this poverty that you see in this picture, there is still hope. But where or how is that hope being shown? This boy has managed to use a jug to at least develop or come up with a toy, which shows the hope that still lies in Africa. And yes, we can't refuse that Africa has got poverty, but these pictures don't tell the full story about Africa in general, because if I were to take the Save the Children advert, if we say that this shows the full situation in Africa, why are we not at war in Malawi? So, it only tells us a part of the story, but not the full story.*
(Male, 27, Malawi)

*I think that the pictures are exaggerated. Because if you look at the child in the CARE advert, she is carrying a container of water, but we don't know why or how, maybe she carry the container of water in good faith, but it has been but as if the girl is suffering, but we don't know because this is just a picture... I understand that maybe the pictures have been used as a source of funds or money for whosoever, so if you bring such a picture, someone will feel sorry and give money. That is what I am thinking.* **But if I was to advertise for Africa, I wouldn't use pictures. I would only use words. Because the images are stigmatizing poverty. And poverty has been stigmatized a lot.**
(Female, 54, Malawi)

*I think these images are exaggerated because most of the pictures only contain children from 10 going downwards. People of different ages are facing different things. Males, females, whatever age you are, you are still facing violence.* **So, for me it is exaggerated if only children are used in the pictures. Why not show people from the age of 25, why not our grandmothers or are grandfathers as they are also being abused.**
(Female, 18, South Africa)

*I don't think this is accurate. Many of these things are not going on everywhere in Africa as a whole. For instance, the one with the child soldier, it may be somewhere where there is war, but not everywhere. So, I don't think the ads are so accurate, so it's exaggerated. Like it is interacting some way, for example, we say that these adverts are a call for help, for donations etc, but why are they all centred on Africa?* **Most problems in the world are portrayed as if they only come from Africa.** *There are other parts of the world as well where they face even more serious problems than Africa. It is not that accurate.*
(Male, 18, Zambia)

### RESPONDENTS WITH A MIXED REACTION TO THE IMAGES

"

*Some of these images are exaggerated and some are accurate because they show and prove what's happening in the country.*
(Male, 18, South Africa)

*Some show accuracy, some don't. This is going on in some part of Africa, and it is true. But the problem when you see such an ad, you think this is going on all over Africa. For example, when I look at this ad with the young boy, are they trying to say a young boy from Africa is able to give a hand in development, is this trying to show Africa as a small continent or is it just the young boy?* **I think that some are exaggerating, but some are showing the truth.**
(Female, 22, Zambia)

## QUESTION 6

### IF YOU DESIGNED A FUNDRAISING ADVERT TO RAISE MONEY FOR NGOS SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN AFRICA, WHAT KIND OF IMAGES WOULD YOU USE?

**THE ANSWERS TO THIS QUESTION WERE EXTREMELY VARIED, AND SOME RESPONDENTS WERE SLIGHTLY CONFUSED BY THE QUESTION.**

38 respondents said that if they were to design an INGO fundraising advert, they would use images of the problem: poverty, education, conflict, child soldiers, water security, food security, pollution, natural disasters, health and disease, orphans, natural disasters, migration and inequality, etc. The most popular subjects that people wanted to see depicted were poverty (10 responses) water and food (7 responses), conflict (5 responses) and education (4 responses). One respondent thought that, although it was important to show images of poverty, it did not reflect well on Africa.

> *I want to emphasize that these pictures, maybe when they are taking pictures of us Africans, we look happy, but it will be used outside to the Western world that I am poor. Looks like we feel happy, but we are poor, which is not good. This kind of things will let us down and down and down. As Africa, we are supposed to wake up and realize that we should not be used in pictures like this. I feel that outside there in the Western world, there are also some people that are poor. But we have never seen them here in pictures. Why is it that us are sent to the Western world and we are seen as poor? The problem is that our mind-set in Africa has not woken up. We feel that our poverty is a way that we can get money. Like what was said earlier, we should do something, and if we fail to do something, we can ask the donor community that we have tried to do ABCD, and we have now reached this far. Can you now help us this way? But it shows that there is nothing that is done. Every day we need help. For how long?*
>
> (Female, 54, Malawi)

### ONE RESPONDENT SAID THEY WOULD PORTRAY FEAR IN THEIR FUNDRAISING ADVERT:

> *I will use a picture showing how people are fearing in society. I will exaggerate but use a picture that show exactly how things are.*
>
> (Female, 18, Malawi)

### ONE RESPONDENT EMPHASISED THE NEED TO DEPICT THE UGLINESS OF THE SITUATION:

> *I would use an ugly picture that really shows the people that I am looking for money for, how they look and how traumatised they are. An image that portrays what is going on. An ugly image – like the Save the Children ad.*
>
> (Male, 44, Zambia)

### A COUPLE OF RESPONDENTS TALKED ABOUT THE NEED TO SHOW PROGRESS AND SUSTAINABILITY:

> *I think that there shouldn't be something for nothing. That whatever we are doing, there has to be an initiative from us to say we have done this far, and we need help to solve the problems we are now facing. So that we on our own at the end of the day are able to sustain ourselves.*
>
> (Female, 36, Malawi)

> *A lot of these depict poverty stereotypes, which is just an image of exaggeration... But if I was to come up with a picture, I would develop one that tells all sides of the story. We are in poverty, yes, and we are in need of your help, yes, but on our own this is how far we can get to support ourselves, and on the remaining part we need you to come in and fill up this gap, which means that you are being positive rather than negative, moderate and then positive. You should capture the whole thing. Because, in the first place, no one want to help someone who cannot help themselves. I know, it will work in this case, but I wouldn't be happy to give someone money today knowing that tomorrow they will come again and they haven't made any profits from what I gave them for self-sustenance.*
>
> (Male, 27, Malawi)

### TWO RESPONDENTS SAID THEY WOULD NOT SHOW AN IMAGE AT ALL, WITH ONE OF THEM SUGGESTING THAT STATISTICS ARE A MORE POWERFUL TOOL FOR COMMUNICATION:

> *I think that I wouldn't go with pictures. I would just go with the words. Because the pictures would rather exaggerate or kind of lessen the impact of the message. I would rather use words to emphasize points to raise funds.*
>
> (Male, 66, Malawi)

### FIVE RESPONDENTS SAID THEY WOULD SHOW BOTH THE PROBLEM AND THE SOLUTION:

> *I would divide the advert in half. This side I would show a picture of someone suffering from whatever, and then on the other side I would make a picture of them survived from whatever they suffered in the previous side – to show that their money makes a difference. From a sad face to a delighted face.*
>
> (Female, 18, South Africa)

### ONLY TWO RESPONDENTS SAID THAT THEY WOULD USE A POSITIVE IMAGE:

> *I think that if I was to send an image, I wouldn't send an image of people in poverty or people in need. I would send an image of where the people have taken the initiative saying that we have gone this far and this is what we are in capable of doing. I would not send a picture saying that we are in poverty and we are from zero and we haven't taken any initiative. Like, for example, I remember there was a certain person who was given help by just given money. But at the end of the day, he was just spending money on beer and what not, which was not helpful at all and they ended up coming back asking for more help. So, my picture is more of be self-sustaining to say that we have done this far, and taken these initiatives, and this is the kind of help that we need so far to reach our goal.*
>
> (Male, 73, Malawi)

> *I don't want the pics to be exaggerated because somehow, they degrade the standards of the people which they refer to, so I will show a problem for instance, talking about protection of children from abuse, the other one on education so both are talking about problems, but the way the pictures are portrayed, this one the child has no shoes and the clothes are torn and you see the other one the child is smiling and it shows a bit of positivity. **So, I would go for a picture which shows a bit of positivity unlike exaggerating the problem.** They should not be exaggerated.*
>
> (Male, 18, Zambia)

## QUESTION 7

### ARE THERE SOME TYPES OF IMAGES YOU THINK SHOULD NEVER BE USED, EVEN IF THEY HELP IN RAISING MONEY?

**THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS SAID THAT IT WAS OK TO USE ANY IMAGE AS LONG AS IT WAS ACCURATE. THE TYPE OF IMAGE THAT MANY RESPONDENTS SAID SHOULD NOT BE USED IS OF NUDITY (6 RESPONSES), OR THAT OF EXPLICIT VIOLENCE.**

> ***I think the picture that I would never ever use is naked pictures**. I would advise that all people should not use naked pictures to put onto the internet or to use that naked picture to raise money.* (Male, 32, Ghana)

> *Even if you want to fundraise you cannot use a naked child, or even a child in dirty clothes – a child who is really suffering.* (Male, 44, Zambia)

> *Yes, there are a lot of pictures. And I would say for example pictures with nudity. You want to get money from donors to deal with child prostitution and then you use a picture of a child who is naked or a teenager who is naked. It is wrong. Morally it is not ok. Or for example, if you want to talk about what is in the first Amnesty advert, despite this picture being realistic or somewhat showing what is on the ground, come to think of other children from for example Africa who see this and are living in societies where there are guns, you are exposing and somehow attracting them to trying to touch a gun, which is wrong. So, basically, I would say explicit pictures where explicit shall mean pictures which are morally corrupting. For example, someone has stabbed someone, and then there is blood all over. **So, explicit pictures are not to be used for public consumption in the hope of finding funds from donors.***
>
> (Male, 27, Malawi)

### TWO RESPONDENTS WERE ADAMANT THAT PICTURES OF PEOPLE LOOKING HAPPY SHOULD NOT BE USED:

> *Maybe a picture of a child that has everything they could ever want. Maybe she's comfortable and enjoying life, you shouldn't use that for the fundraising aspect, because everyone will think the child has a successful life.*
>
> (Female, 18, Ghana)

> *Several people took offence to the Cordaid advert which portrayed the man drinking beer. Many people did not fully understand the image, but they believed that pictures of people drinking alcohol should never be used (5 respondents). This is interesting as 13% of respondents said the Cordaid advert was their favourite (see Question 3).*

### ONE RESPONDENT TALKED ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF DIGNITY IN ADS:

> *Some images are not good for some reasons. Some requires discretion like countries that are suffering from war. Even if we are trying to raise money and awareness to concerned people who may want to come in and help. **We can't capture pictures of dead bodies. The people who are dying still deserve some dignity.** Such images may be disturbing to the human eye. It will have a negative effect on their psychology.*
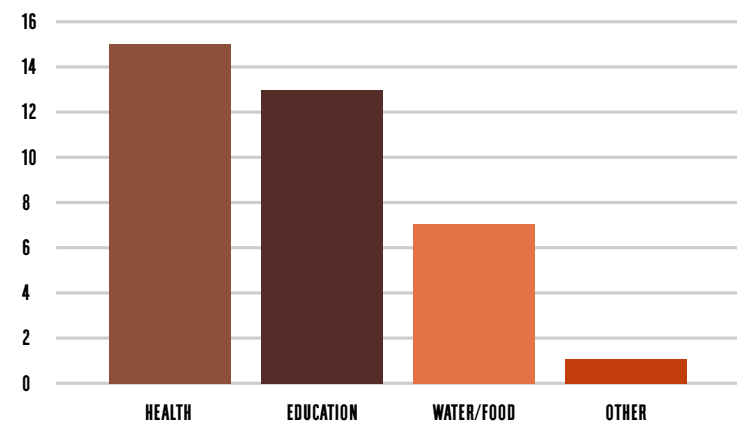>
> (Male, 44, Zambia)

# QUESTION 8
## WHAT KIND OF PROBLEMS OR ISSUES WOULD YOU HIGHLIGHT?

ALTHOUGH THIS QUESTION WAS SIMILAR TO QUESTION 6 (IF YOU DESIGNED A FUNDRAISING ADVERT TO RAISE MONEY FOR NGOS SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN AFRICA, WHAT KIND OF IMAGES WOULD YOU USE?), RESPONDENTS WERE NOT ASKED TO SPECIFICALLY SAY WHICH KINDS OF IMAGES THEY WOULD USE.

## ISSUES / PROBLEMS



Unsurprisingly respondents tended to focus on the issues that affect them in their everyday lives. The most popular answer was health (15 responses), followed closely by education (13 responses) and then water and food security (7 responses). Conflict, peace, orphans, disabilities, refugees, natural disaster, drug abuse, physical abuse, sexual education, gender-based violence, early marriages and bullying were all mentioned by one or two respondents.

*I would talk about children and how children need water, good clean water. If they drink dirty water, they will be sick. If you give them clean water, good toilet and good food, all the time they will be strong. But if you give them dirty water, they will be sick, you will be spending money and they won't get better.*

(Male, 72, Ghana)

*I would highlight and send pictures of the floods that happened in Malawi last year. And send those kinds of pictures so people would get the help they need in terms of shelter and food.*

(Female, 35, Malawi)

*I will talk about education - you see education is the key to success, so if everybody has access to education, that person can become a self-actualized person. And also, in Ghana here, our law and in our constitution, it says every person should have the right to be educated. So, if people are not being educated, it's a problem. It doesn't help. If you have migrated from other places you don't know things and you will be frustrated, so all of these things are about education. Without it you cannot achieve.*

(Male, 19, Ghana)

### ONE OF THE RECURRING THEMES WHEN DISCUSSING EDUCATION WAS THE DISTANCE THAT STUDENTS HAVE TO WALK TO SCHOOL:

*Education in rural areas where students have to walk long distances to get to school. That discourages especially girls who don't often go.*

(Male, 22, Ethiopia)

### LIFELONG LEARNING AND SKILLS TRAINING WERE ALSO MENTIONED:

*I will also talk about education but education is not only about the academic aspect. Training individuals in skills. We have training skills and untrained skills. We can go to school to learn some things but some people do not have that habit or they don't know anything about that. But in skills you take them to training and teach them how to make something, they will be able to focus on that aspect... In Ghana we are sometimes more focused on theory more than the practical. I don't like theory, but for practicals you teach me "do it like this" and I can do it, and I'm done. You don't need to read the procedures and steps and then do it. So, education can be based on practicals.*

(Male, 21, Ghana)

*I would run a project to focus on single mothers with disabilities like many disabled mothers conceive and the husbands run away. The other thing is that many women [who have] children with disabilities face a problem of the men normally running away saying that the disabled children are a curse to the family.*

(Female, 27, Uganda)

# QUESTION 9
## WOULD YOU COVER MORE COMPLEX ISSUES SUCH AS CORRUPTION, INFRASTRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE, CLIMATE CHANGE, EXPLOITATION OF NATIONAL RESOURCES BY MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES, NEO-COLONIALISM ETC?

MANY RESPONDENTS DID NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THIS QUESTION. 15 RESPONDENTS SAID THEY WOULD USE DONATIONS TO HELP STOP CORRUPTION, WHEREAS THE QUESTION WAS MORE CONCERNED WITH WHAT ISSUES THEY WOULD HIGHLIGHT TO FUNDRAISE AS OPPOSED TO HOW THE FUNDS WOULD BE UTILISED.

*Talking about corruption, in fundraising is not necessary. Why? You can't fight against corruption. In every country, no matter what. Fundraising is not about this. Talking about the violence and wars is one thing, but bringing corruption into fundraising is like promoting corruption. For me, in fundraising, I don't think talking about corruption is needed.*

(Male, 21, Ghana)

***It's important to talk about issues like corruption because it is leading to some of the issues we see in the ads.*** *If our leaders are corrupt and are not able to administer such issues, it is clear that issues of unclean water would be at play. Because if our leaders are concerned, they would channel some resources to issues like this, so there is clean water. Corruption has eaten Africa.*

(Male, 44, Zambia)

*Other complex issues that were suggested were infrastructure (4 respondents), drug abuse (3 respondents all from South Africa) and environmental issues such as conservation, climate change, deforestation and water security.*

*I would talk about infrastructures, specifically school buildings - in some of the villages, the children will walk about one or two miles to another town for school to go to school at that place. So, I think we need help that they would build schools in those small small villages so they can attend school.*

(Female, 26, Ghana)

*Infrastructure is also important in everyday life - such infrastructure like schools, hospitals, houses are very needed. So, I think if such things are brought up in fundraising, I think it will help. People will get better education, better help and better life and they'll also enjoy.*

(Male, 19, Ghana)

*I would focus on issues around deforestation. As of recent, we have experienced a lack of rains compared to what we used to have, because of high rate of deforestation. Therefore, I would focus on deforestation.*

(Female, 20, Malawi)

*I would focus on environmental conservation. It comes in as one of the most prominent contributing factors to some of these other problems. For example, if you talk of health, let's say people are failing to produce enough food in their countries because they haven't received enough rains. You find that if you don't have rains, you don't have food. Kids won't be able to go to school without food, even the teachers themselves wouldn't be able to work without food, or they would get money but where are they going to get their food from? Probably things would be expensive. I would personally focus on environmental conservations, because it is cross cutting in a lot of issues.*

(Male, 27, Malawi)

## QUESTION 10
### WHAT KIND OF IMAGES DO YOU THINK WOULD MAKE PEOPLE IN EUROPE OR THE USA DONATE THE MOST MONEY? WHY?

RESPONDENTS MENTIONED A RANGE OF TOPICS WHEN THINKING ABOUT THE KINDS OF IMAGES THAT WOULD RAISE THE MOST MONEY OVERSEAS. THESE INCLUDED IMAGES RELATING TO HOUSING, INFRASTRUCTURE, NATURAL DISASTERS AND ORPHANS. HOWEVER, THE MOST POPULAR WERE IMAGES RELATING TO CHILDREN (9 RESPONSES), CONFLICT (5 RESPONSES) AND HEALTH (5 RESPONSES).

*Images of things like violence and war. Because if the child is being abused and you can see the child is sad, those things will encourage you to have some passion for the child and raise more money.*

(Female, 18, Ghana)

*I think health. I would send a picture of the health sector to show that people are not doing well health wise. It will make people donate more money to help in the health infrastructure, in the building of hospitals and with the medication issue. I would focus on health because I believe that it is the health of the citizens that drives the economy of the nation. And once this health is addressed, it is believed that the economy of the nation will resuscitate. If the health is good, then the people is also good and productive.*

(Male, 66, Malawi)

*I would use pictures of a girl with a torn dress, or a child in a bad state, who is really in need, so that will entice or motivate donors to help that child.*

(Female, 18, Ghana)

*If you go to the village, sometimes it's just a small path. Even sometimes there are rivers cutting across. So how can kids cross that river and go to school? And if there is a flood, it can break the bridge and the kid will be at home for a while so it's better such things that they do the road, and then also build a school in that area so they have access, which would be closer than them walking for like a mile to get to school.*

(Female, 45, Ghana)

*Pictures that show the transport issues we are facing. And pictures of road infrastructure to show that the government is failing and that the donors have to provide funds for these things, because transportation is needed for goods and commodities to travel from one place to another. People need to bring funds for these things. Movement of things like tobacco and cotton which Malawi export to outside countries, is not consistent. This means that once this is not consistent, movement of these things would not be consistent as well. Therefore, we need help to improve the infrastructure.*

(Male, 25, Malawi)

*Images that has to do with education. So, where schools are being built, and pictures of those schools are being taken and shown that there is this progress and we need much help on this section. Countries in the US and Europe will be much willing to contribute.*

(Female, 52, Malawi)

*I would focus on the distance between schools and where kids live, so that more schools can be constructed, so that children don't have to travel long distances to access education. This would also engage outside communities to help more because of the education system that has to be there for the children.*

(Male, 32, Malawi)

*I would show an image that shows poverty. If I do not have food, I have no energy to do anything. I would show a situation that would not happen in their country.*

(Male, 19, South Africa)

*I would invest in this [Dubai Cares] boy because he can go overseas and get more skills, and the saying is, "East or West, home is best" so I know he'd return and become something to benefit his community. He could set up schools for other kids like himself and help his country that way.*

(Male, 25, Uganda)

*The pictures you send to donors are the pictures that show how people are suffering. You sell images that show what Africa is going through. Advert: 'Look, this is what this community is going through'. Let the picture speak for itself.*

(Male, 40, Zambia)

## QUESTION 11
### TO FUNDRAISE, IS IT BETTER TO SHOW AN IMAGE OF THE PROBLEM, THE OUTCOME, THE ROOT CAUSE OR A NEUTRAL IMAGE?

| | PROBLEM | OUTCOME | ROOT CAUSE | MIX |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ETHIOPIA | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| GHANA | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| MALAWI | 2 | 2 | 5 | 0 |
| S AFRICA | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| UGANDA | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| ZAMBIA | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| TOTAL | 17 (38%) | 8 (18%) | 12 (26%) | 8 (18%) |

WITH THIS QUESTION, WE SOUGHT TO GET A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE TYPE OF IMAGE THE RESPONDENTS THOUGHT SHOULD BE USED IN A FUNDRAISING ADVERT. SHOULD ONLY THE PROBLEM BE SHOWN, ONLY THE DESIRED OUTCOME, ONLY THE ROOT CAUSE OR A MORE NEUTRAL MIX OF SEVERAL OF THESE FACTORS? THE RESPONDENTS LEANED TOWARD THE FORMER, WITH 38% OF THE PARTICIPANTS CHOOSING TO SHOW THE PROBLEM.

### RESPONDENTS IN FAVOUR OF SHOWING THE PROBLEM

*The pictures should show the problem. People need to see the problem to be moved enough to give. If they see a water point that is already constructed, they would think that the problem is already solved.*

(Female, 22, Ethiopia)

*You need to ask why you are asking for money. What is it for? How are you going to use it? Who will benefit from that? I would highlight the problem.*

(Female, 48, South Africa)

*An image is necessary to better show the message of the issue one is fundraising for. The issue that needs to be solved. An image showing the problem such as the one for the street child is important.*

(Female, 35, Uganda)

*The problem, because not everyone can read. If I give an image with the problem it can show the message.*

(Male, 18, Zambia)

### RESPONDENTS IN FAVOUR OF SHOWING THE OUTCOME

*I would use picture of the outcome. To show people (funders) what the help has done. For example, show that the medicines they brought into the country, I would show a picture of the impacts this has had on the society.*

(Male, 25, Malawi)

*I would show the outcome of how it will impact in a child's life.*

(Male, 18, South Africa)

Respondents in favour of showing the root cause
*The root cause of the problem. Because once the root is figured out, you have stopped the whole problem.*

(Female, 36, Malawi)

*I would use root cause because it will give a clear picture of why this is happening. If I was a donor, and someone gives me the root cause, you see where it is coming from. If they just show the outcome, you don't know what the root cause is.*

(Female, 22, Zambia)

### RESPONDENTS IN FAVOUR OF SHOWING MIXED IMAGES

*Fundraising pictures should show both the problem and the solution. Their message should be: Here is the problem, this is how we solved it. But we can do more of this if you assist us.*

(Male, 22, Ethiopia)

*For me, I will show the problem but also how it came about, or the cause. In life, tell your father to do something for you, I want to do this or buy this or something, you have to tell your father and show him the reason why you need all those things. So, if I want to raise money from someone and I don't present proper details or any evidence, that shows that this is what I want to do, then it won't be effective. So, it is best to have all of these images - the problem, the root of the problem, and the outcome.*

(Male, 21, Ghana)

*I would show the root cause, the problem and the outcome. People need facts so that they can do something. If I give them facts, they need proof.*

(Male, 19, South Africa)

*The image is necessary to show the problem. But also, an image that shows the problem being solved or having been solved because it gives hope in the process. The funder may be optimistic that their funds are making a difference.*

(Male, 25, Uganda)

*I would put an image of all three so that it's totally clear what I am trying to address. An image of problem, outcome, root cause.*

(Female, 22, Zambia)

## QUESTION 12
### OR DO YOU THINK IT IS BETTER TO USE NO IMAGES AT ALL?

**ONLY TWO RESPONDENTS THOUGHT IT PREFERABLE TO USE NO IMAGES AT ALL.**

*Yes!*

(Male, 44, Zambia)

*I would just use text, no image.*

(Female, 54, Malawi)

*Seeing is believing. How can people help if they don't see the problems they are trying to change?*

(Female, 22, Ethiopia)

*No, you need pictures because where is your evidence? In everything you need evidence.*

(Male, 21, Ghana)

*Sending a message without showing a picture at all does not give the real exact picture of what is happening on the ground. People may not take it seriously. But once you send a picture people think it is serious and that they have to do something about it.*

(Male, 25, Malawi)

*Some people have artistic minds. I think we must use pictures.*

(Female, 18, South Africa)

*An image tells a story.*

(Female, 55, South Africa)

## QUESTION 13
### HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT CHILDREN BEING USED IN FUNDRAISING ADVERTS?

**RESPONDENTS FELT THAT CHILDREN ARE USED IN ADVERTISING BECAUSE THEY ARE THE MOST VULNERABLE. HOWEVER, THEY WORRIED THAT IMAGES OF CHILDREN ARE ALSO MOST LIKELY TO MANIPULATE THE EMOTIONS OF THE VIEWER, WHO IS MADE TO THINK ABOUT THEIR FUTURE OR LACK OF FUTURE.**

They were aware that there is no simple answer to this. Some expressed concern around the ethical use of photographs, thinking about responsibility for how people are represented and the photographic permissions sought. Ultimately, they thought it was OK for children to be used in charity fundraising but stressed the importance of showing older generations too.

*Using children is good. Children cannot help themselves, using the children helps highlight the problems.*

(Male, 22, Ethiopia)

*It's okay to use them as long as it's not always them on the posters. Let's use youth and adults as well.*

(Male, 23, Ethiopia)

*People look at children as the ones that hold the future. But children cannot change their own life at their age, as they are too young to right wrongs. They need protection, care etc. so showing children will move people. Using them is not a problem for me.*

(Male, 38, Ethiopia)

*Children have nothing to do with the causes of the problem. Whatever the problem is, it is the adults' own making. So, if anybody should be on the poster, it should be the adults themselves. We shouldn't use children to fix our problems.*

(Male, 31, Ethiopia)

*It's good to use children's image to raise funds, because it means that you want people to know the reality. Even there might be a smile, a kid's smile, but the children still need support.*

(Female, 45, Ghana)

*Sometimes it can be good, sometimes it cannot be good. If someone looks at the picture of a child in trouble, you feel concerned, but sometime these children do not know what is happening, so that would be the bad part of it. However, it is good to use images of children, because anyone who sees a child in this situation feels concerned.*

(Female, 54, Malawi)

*I think it is a tricky situation. Because these kids, for example if you were about to take a picture of someone,*

*you would normally ask for their consent, but then with kids it is hard to explain that this picture was taken with good faith, or what this means for kids. So, I think it is not right to use children in pictures in adverts like this, unless the situation concerns them.*

(Male, 27, Malawi)

*It is wrong to show only children. Our grandmothers, our grandfathers, our mothers or fathers – they are part of our lives as children. You can donate something for me as a child, but what about my mother, what about my father? For me it's all about my family... Without our parents and grandparents, we are nothing.*

(Female, 18, South Africa)

*It depends. Poverty is not for kids only. Poverty affects different people. You can use images of education, housing, you can use images for different reasons. They are using kids because we feel pity for kids. Instead of giving food to the mother you would give it to the kids. They want our full attention so they use kids. I personally feel that the context in which we use the children's faces or images is important. There are certain things we cannot do with children. It is important to be mindful how we use the faces or images. If the child is happy and we say this child can be happier if we do this and this for them then it has a spin off. If you use a malnourished child, what is it saying about that child because this is a true image. You have taken advantage of a malnourished child to get donations. So ethical issues are there.*

(Female, 55, South Africa)

*Using children wouldn't be bad, but it would be better to show children not as helpless but as children with potential.*

(Male, 25, Uganda)

*It's ok. They use children for attraction more than older people. When you use an older person in an advert, you won't elicit as much attraction as when you use a child. The images where they've used the children show exactly where the children are in their lives and it makes you think of their future and causes you to think about how to contribute to that future. If it was an older person, such as this one holding the beer, you may not care so much because he's already living his life and possibly has no future. So, they use children to show the potential in the future that they have.*

(Male, 25, Uganda)

*It's a two-sided thing. It is good in some way, but again, using children triggers emotional reactions when you see the picture because it gets the attention of the donors, but in my mind, I don't think it's right. **It is good for the fundraising part, but not completely right.***

(Male, 18, Zambia)

*The victim and the subject should be dealt with when making an ad. Who is the victim? It is the children. Who is the most affected? It is the children. **So, we don't have a choice but to show pictures of the children.***

(Male, 44, Zambia)

*We need to know the root cause – just taking photos of children and sending them away, without permission from parents... let's not use children to enrich ourselves! Therefore, it's better to just write a good message. No need to use pics of children running around. **It is wrong. Children are innocent. Let's not use pictures of children to enrich ourselves.*** ■

(Male, 44, Zambia)

# 7 CONCLUSIONS

This study is based on a relatively small sample of informants and is as such too restricted in scope to generalise and draw conclusions in a wide sense. However, it offers some interesting insights into the thinking of people from poorer communities in countries that receive aid and that draw a lot of attention from development organisations.

The participants in the study were presented with a set of images used in INGO advertising campaigns and given room to discuss what kind of imagery they liked best, what they would choose to use themselves, and what they find problematic in this kind of aid communication. The responses were quite varied, which pointed towards an important finding in itself, namely that INGO fundraising and communication is complex, and that different people are drawn to different types of images, depending on their personal experiences, values and culture.

Still, certain trends were evident. For example, most respondents said they would use negative images in their fundraising ads, and they felt that the pictures they were shown were an accurate depiction of reality. The majority of respondents demonstrated a high level of media literacy and recognised that negative imagery often prompts emotional reactions that lead to increased donations, and that using such images is a deliberate strategy employed by many NGOs. However, it was clear that what people would choose in an advert did not necessarily correspond with what they liked the most.

Across the board, respondents called for NGOs to diversify their strategies. As well as children, they wanted to see images of parents and grandparents, local development workers and doctors, for example. They highlighted the importance of maintaining the dignity of the individuals portrayed, especially when depicting children and called for more sharing of stories to give those presented in images identity and agency. Respondents also talked about where they would draw the line, and many agreed that images of nudity and violence should not be used. It was also clear that some images that are used by INGOs to get a specific message across – for example the image of an older African man drinking beer – may get lost in translation when viewed by a person in a completely different context. Many of the interviewees reacted negatively to this image, even though the intentions behind the campaign were good.

INGOs have a responsibility when using images in their campaign adverts and need to think about the dignity of those depicted as well as the overall reactions they will evoke by viewers. By opening up to different and more balanced approaches, INGOs can help to change perceptions of Western citizens regarding people and countries in the Global South.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study was conducted in six sub-Saharan African countries with 74 respondents. Further studies should consider extending this research to more countries across the continent to see whether these results would change.

INGOs produce a significant amount of marketing communications for education, advocacy and relationship management in addition to traditional fundraising campaigns. It is important to recognise that different strategies are deliberately employed depending on the audience and the type of communications tool. Social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and Facebook offer the opportunity to contextualise the work of charities beyond the confines of a printed advert with limited space. No significant study has ever considered the plethora of images which are shared by NGOs on a daily basis across a variety of platforms. A research project which analysed the whole gamut of visual representations would likely elicit a whole new series of results and questions. ∎

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN USING IMAGES OF PEOPLE

### 1. DIVERSITY
DO THE PEOPLE IN THE ADVERT SHOW THE DIVERSITY OF THE POPULATION? ARE A VARIETY OF AGES, GENERATIONS AND BACKGROUNDS REPRESENTED?

### 2. LOCAL MEASURES
HOW CAN YOU BETTER SHOW THAT THE LOCAL COMMUNITY HAVE THE CAPACITY TO HELP IMPROVE THEIR SITUATION? WHERE ARE THE LOCAL DOCTORS, TEACHERS OR AID DEVELOPMENT WORKERS?

### 3. IMAGE AND TEXT
IN WHAT WAY DOES THE TEXT RELATE TO OR COMPLEMENT THE IMAGE?

### 4. EMOTION
WHICH EMOTIONS DO YOU WANT TO TRIGGER WITH YOUR COMMUNICATION – BOTH FROM DONORS AND FROM THOSE DEPICTED – AND TO WHAT PURPOSE? ARE FEELINGS OF SADNESS AND ANGER THE MOST CONSTRUCTIVE, OR IS IT POSSIBLE TO BE MORE HOPEFUL?

### 5. CONNECTION TO REALITY
TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE PHOTOS DESCRIBE THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION?

### 6. VISUAL COMMUNICATION
WHAT IS THE CONTEXT, AND IS IT CLEARLY COMMUNICATED? WHO ARE THE PEOPLE IN THE PHOTOS, AND HOW DO THEY RELATE TO THE SITUATION?

### 7. RELATION
HOW DO THE PEOPLE PORTRAYED IN THE ADVERTS RELATE TO THE PHOTOS? WHAT IS THEIR CONNECTION TO THE ADVERT?

### 8. BEHIND THE IMAGE
DO THE IMAGES SHARE A STORY, AND DO THEY PRESENT PEOPLE AS HUMAN BEINGS WITH UNIQUE EXPERIENCES AND FEELINGS?

### 9. PROBLEM OR SOLUTION?
DOES YOUR IMAGE SHOW ONLY THE PROBLEM OR THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM?

### 10. DIGNITY
ARE THE PEOPLE IN THE IMAGES PORTRAYED WITH DIGNITY?

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