

# ChildFund Alliance crisis management talking points relating to the Oxfam sexual abuse scandal\*

14 February 2018

## Contents

Context, Guidelines and Responsibilities.....	2
Scenarios and Statement Contents.....	5

*\* Adapted from Educo talking points*

## Context, Guidelines and Responsibilities

### Context

In 2011, Oxfam dismissed six of its members of staff in Haiti for organizing “a full-on ‘Caligula’ orgy”<sup>1</sup> in a villa rented by the organization. Staff were on the island, responding to the devastating earthquake in 2010. According to a report by *The Times* (UK), Oxfam began to investigate several members of staff in 2011 who were suspected of paying young Haitian women for sex. Exchanging money for sex is illegal in Haiti. Oxfam issued a statement on 9 February 2018 in which it stated that the behavior of some of its members of staff in Haiti in 2011 was “totally unacceptable” and contrary to its values:

<https://www.oxfam.org.uk/media-centre/the-times-statement>

The story has gained momentum, and has been covered by news outlets around the world. The media has highlighted the fact that Oxfam may have tried to hide this scandal, the impunity of the people involved and the general lack of transparency. It also cites cases of abuse by Oxfam in Chad. Other aid organizations, including Save the Children and Christian Aid, have been mentioned in coverage.

The British government is threatening to cut off funding to Oxfam. One of Oxfam’s celebrity ambassadors (Minnie Driver) has ended her association with the organization.

### Guidelines

#### Duration and scale of this crisis

It appears that this crisis will continue for some time. It is getting a lot of media coverage globally, and is being referenced, very critically, by the UK government, including at the Agenda 2030 for Children: End Violence Solutions Summit (14 Feb. 2018).

#### Which stage of the crisis is Oxfam in?

1. Prevention of the crisis
2. Early detection of the crisis
- 3. Response to the crisis**
4. End of the crisis
5. Lessons learned

#### Impact of this crisis on ChildFund Alliance

- 1. Prevention of the crisis** – *Phase we are in while the crisis does not impact us directly*
2. Early detection of the crisis
3. Response to the crisis
4. End of the crisis
5. Lessons learned

#### Aims of ChildFund Alliance if we are asked about this crisis situation

1. Inform and resolve any doubts that our target public or media may have
2. Reassure any concerns expressed by our target public or media
3. Prevent rumors

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/02/13/oxfam-prostitution-scandal-widens-to-at-least-three-countries/?utm\\_term=.4d1dbf9f3552](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/02/13/oxfam-prostitution-scandal-widens-to-at-least-three-countries/?utm_term=.4d1dbf9f3552)

**Fundamental Principles regarding our crisis communication**

1. Preparation and proactivity
2. Internal communication before external communication
3. We speak with one voice
4. Reactive capacity
5. Coherence and transparency

Any of our members or the Secretariat may be approached by the media, donors, funders or other stakeholders. Each office should be prepared to respond. See table below for an example of the crisis response team and responsibilities (Educo).

For the Alliance (Secretariat), the chief spokesperson is Meg Gardinier, Secretary General. Inquiries can be directed to Diana Quick, Communications and Digital Strategist, +1 212 697 0859 x 1005, [dquick@childfundalliance.org](mailto:dquick@childfundalliance.org).

## Teams and Responsibilities (Example from Educo)

Team	Responsibility
Executive Committee (Crisis Team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Takes the strategic decisions regarding the crisis.</li> <li>- Decides on the official statement with advice from the Communication Team.</li> </ul>
Country Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assigns a spokesperson for the issue in the country</li> <li>- Internally, shares this document with the people he or she considers relevant.</li> <li>- If the questions or doubts from our target public are covered in this document (Scenarios), follow the attached instructions and report to Global Communication afterwards.</li> <li>- If the questions or doubts from our target public are not covered in this document, contact Global Communication immediately before responding.</li> </ul>
Global Communication Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elaborates the different scenarios and statement contents with the agreement of the Management Committee.</li> <li>- If the questions or doubts from our target public are not covered in this document, provides a response to the requests for additional statements in a short period of time (less than 2 hours).</li> </ul>
Regional and Country Communication Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordinate, alongside the Country Director, all external communication related to the issued.</li> <li>- Report any doubts or potentially sensitive situations to Global Communication.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsorship Team</li> <li>• Corporate Relations</li> <li>• Resource Mobilization (Regional and Country)</li> <li>• Donor Services Spain</li> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Programs</li> <li>• Institutional Relations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Urgently evaluate all of the campaigns, projects, and communication we have (marketing, advocacy, etc.) in which our name and reputation could be connected to Oxfam.</li> <li>- If the questions or doubts from our target public are covered in this document (Scenarios), follow the instructions attached and report to Global Communication afterwards.</li> <li>- If the questions or doubts from our target public are not covered in this document, contact Global Communication immediately, before responding.</li> </ul>

## Scenarios and Statement Contents

### Scenario 1

**We are not involved in the crisis and no external stakeholder (partner, funder [foundation or corporate], government, sponsor, press, etc.) asks us about it.**

- In this situation, we do not make any statement about the issue and wait for events to unfold.

### Scenario 2

**We are not involved in the crisis, but we are asked for our opinion about the issue.**

*What do you think about the Oxfam scandal?*

- We strongly condemn any kind of abuse and exploitation of children and adolescents, both inside and outside our organization.
- We firmly condemn any type of abuse and exploitation of women.
- We reiterate our total commitment to the protection of children and adolescents.

*What do you do to avoid this kind of issue taking place?*

- ChildFund Alliance has child safeguarding policy guidelines<sup>2</sup> that include sample child safeguarding procedures and a sample code of conduct. Our members<sup>3</sup> develop their own policies that meet these standards.
- The child safeguarding policy guidelines set forth our core values and commitments to children in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These values and commitments define ChildFund's collective identity, establish our accountability, require adherence to the highest standards and promote an organizational environment supportive of our work to ensure children's protection, rights and well-being.
  - The core commitments that we hold to be inviolable:
    - *Integrity and honesty:*  
All ChildFund representatives must be forthright, transparent and accurate in their dealings with others; accurate and honest in their communications; and avoid any involvement in crime, corruption or practices that could tarnish the reputation of ChildFund or impair its work, or place children and families at risk.....
    - *Sexual conduct:*  
ChildFund representatives must create a work environment free of sexual harassment. They must not abuse their power and authority by tacitly or explicitly demanding sex from a subordinate or a beneficiary or by engaging in other forms of sexual exploitation in a program country. Relationships that are based on a tacit or explicit abuse of power will be regarded as violations of this code of conduct.

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<sup>2</sup> Keeping Children Safe: Child Safeguarding Policy Guidelines

<https://childfundalliance.org/resources/publications/tools-guidelines/1468-keeping-children-safe>

<sup>3</sup> <https://childfundalliance.org/our-members>

- *Promote human rights:*  
All ChildFund representatives must respect human rights, including gender equity and non-discrimination. Discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and exploitation, including sexual exploitation, are expressly prohibited. These terms are defined in the ChildFund Child Safeguarding Policy Guidelines and are extended here to adults.
  - *Reporting:*  
All ChildFund representatives are obligated to report violations of the code of conduct in accordance with procedures established by their respective member organization and as required by local law.
- MEMBERS CAN INSERT HERE THEIR OWN INFO. FOR EXAMPLE:
  - In Educo, we have developed policies and procedures (Ethical Code, Good Treatment Policy and Behavior Code) the aim of which is to avoid any kind of situation similar to this one, or any other that would put at risk the integrity of the children and adolescents we work with, as well as the Educo staff. These procedures include, among others:
    - the opening of an internal investigation
    - the immediate dismissal of the people involved
    - bringing the facts to the attention of the authorities and the police.
  - These policies and procedures are public and can be consulted on our website.

### *Do you work in Haiti?*

ChildFund Alliance member Un Enfant par la Main (as Enfants Sans Frontières) has been operating in Haiti since 1974. It works in the areas of education and training; family farming and sustainable development; and empowerment of local organizations.

Un Enfant par la Main currently supports 2,286 sponsored children in Haiti. It has approximately 15 staff in country: one French and about 14 local staff. Child protection and children’s rights are at the core of their work.

It does not, and has never, worked with Oxfam in Haiti.

Un Enfant par la Main is currently working on its procedures for sponsorship and child protection.

Contact for Un Enfant par la Main – Joelle Sicamois, e: [jsicamois@unenfantparlamain.org](mailto:jsicamois@unenfantparlamain.org), t: +33 6 17 25 28 49

### Scenario 3

**The press put the spotlight more broadly on NGO scandals (including sexual violence and financial scandals) but no external stakeholder (partner, funder [foundation or corporate], government, sponsor, press, etc.) asks us about it.**

- In this situation we do not talk about the issue and wait for events to unfold.

## Scenario 4

**The press put the spotlight on NGO scandals (both sexual violence and financial scandals) and ask us to express our opinion.**

*What do you think about the current scandal affecting the NGO sector?*

- We strongly condemn all types of abuse and exploitation of children and adolescents, both inside and outside our organization.
- We firmly condemn all types of abuse and exploitation of women.
- We reiterate our total commitment to the protection of children and adolescents.

*What do you do to avoid this kind of issue happening?*

- ChildFund Alliance has developed child safeguarding policy guidelines for our members, which aim to avoid situations like this, or any others that would put at risk the integrity of the children and adolescents we work with, as well as ChildFund Alliance member staff.
- All ChildFund representatives are obliged to report violations of these guidelines in keeping with the child safeguarding procedures or other policies established by their member organization and as required by local laws in the countries of operation. Concerns and breaches will be investigated and, where appropriate, will be referred to statutory authorities for criminal investigation under the law of the country in which the member works and in accordance with disciplinary procedures.
- These policy guidelines are available on our website.<sup>4</sup>

*Please contact Diana Quick, Communications and Digital Strategist, [dquick@childfundalliance.org](mailto:dquick@childfundalliance.org), with any comments or questions.*

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<sup>4</sup> Keeping Children Safe: Child Safeguarding Policy Guidelines  
<https://childfundalliance.org/resources/publications/tools-guidelines/1468-keeping-children-safe>