



AIDE ET ACTION

MESSAGING GUIDELINES

FOR COMMUNICATIONS

OUR VISION

Changing the world through education.

OUR MISSION

Aide et Action ensures access to quality education for the most vulnerable and marginalised populations, especially children, so they can take charge of their own development and contribute to a more peaceful and sustainable world.

OUR VALUES

Dignity: We believe education helps to build an individual's capacity enabling them to live with dignity. We always value and respect every person for their own sake and treat them ethically.

Inclusion: Our belief in all humans having equal rights is unshakable. By lifting barriers to inclusion from education we help others exercise their rights. Our workplace is inclusive and does not discriminate in any way.

Integrity: Collective and personal integrity are all-important to us and help guide all decisions and initiatives we take. We strive to be honest, fair and ethical in everything we do, and live by our values.

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OUR MESSAGING

Why is consistent messaging important?

Because a strong message, makes a lasting impression.

Because our messaging provides motivation and direction to our supporters.

Because our messaging represents all of us and our commitment to Aide et Action's values and mission.

Because, for 40 years, Aide et Action has been increasing access to education for the world's most vulnerable populations and our messaging promotes recognition of this.

Why Do Guidelines Matter?

We know what we do ... but does everyone else? Messaging refers to our image, our writing, and much more in between. It is made up of a number of different components: the 'look' or visual identity, the way we communicate, the work we do.

In a world full of competing messaging, it's critical that we develop ours so it that it is recognised by the public, supporters, funders, industry, partner organisations and other charities. While we work in many different countries, we are all part of the same organisation and how we communicate should reflect this.

Our messaging must be strong, recognisable and consistent

– it must set us apart from other organisations who have similar goals and audiences. In a crowded charity world, how we represent ourselves is key to helping us grow long and fruitful relationships with our supporters and wider audiences.

All of us who represent Aide et Action must be able to communicate what we do with ease and confidence. From the Board, the Country Directors, the staff and volunteers – we should all know exactly how and what to communicate to ensure that Aide et Action's mission is as clear as crystal with public, partners, supporters and competitors.

In this document you will find everything you need to understand how we can develop consistent messaging and guidance on words you can use to describe Aide et Action, how to use photographs and video and how to communicate our work in different circumstances to different audiences.

How To Use Our Name

Aide et Action as an organisation is singular, so:

Aide et Action is ...

Aide et Action thinks ...

Aide et Action has ...

Aide et Action supports ...

Aide et Action promotes ...

Never

Aide et Action are...

Aide et Action have...

When to Use the Acronym AEA:

In a report or grant funding application always use the full name first. If you are going to repeat our name regularly then refer to the acronym in brackets first then on its own:

Aide et Action (AEA) says... and then just AEA after that.

Remember, very few members of the public know what the acronym - AEA - stands for, so please use it as little as possible to external audiences.

Needless to say, don't use the abbreviation in brackets if you don't intend to use it again.

NEW NAME
COMING SOON

Our Strapline

Changing the world through education

The strapline does exactly what it says ... it tells people what we do and our end goal.

The strapline should be used on corporate materials and literature where appropriate. It should not be overused, only appearing where space allows and in an introductory or sign off fashion.

Brand Guardian

The guardians of Aide et Action's brand are the members of the Communications team. All new branded or public-facing designed material should be passed by local, regional, or international Communications staff before proceeding to print or online usage. This is important for internally produced material too, notices, letters, posters, t-shirts, exhibition displays and more.



OUR VOICE

Just as the content of our communication is vitally important, so too is how we say it.

The tone of copywriting will naturally vary depending on the intended audience. Fundraising copy will be more emotive, advocacy more persuasive and report writing more factual and dispassionate. Despite this, it is possible to orientate all our written communication around one central tone of voice and a limited number of consistent messages. The more consistent we are, the more likely it is that people will recognise, understand, trust and like us.

In broad terms, as an organisation we communicate a message about our work and our program countries that is positive and uplifting. While this is articulated within a context of poverty and need, the core message places emphasis on achievement, potential, and the transformational impact that investment in education can have in helping disadvantaged populations to create a positive future for themselves and their communities, especially in the face of crises.

KEY MESSAGES

Our message in 10-15 Words

Aide et Action is committed to improving access to education for all.

Aide et Action works around the world to bring education to the most marginalised populations.

At Aide et Action, we believe in the power of education to transform society.

Our message in 30 words

For 40 years, Aide et Action has been increasing access to education for the world's most vulnerable populations to build a more just and sustainable future.

Our message in 50-100 words

Aide et Action is an international nonprofit organisation working in 19 countries across Africa, Europe, and Asia to increase access to quality education for all, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised populations. We believe in the universal right to quality education and, for 40 years, have based our interventions around this ethos. We know that access to education can be life-changing and is the key to building a more just and sustainable future.

Aide et Action's programs make a difference in the lives of millions of marginalised populations, giving them a chance of a better tomorrow. Our goal is to enable all children to access education and build a better future for themselves and their communities. Our community-based approach transforms the lives of the children we work with, by providing them with the quality early childhood and primary education essential to further development.

We also believe that education should be lifelong and have seen first-hand the difference access to vocational training and livelihood support can mean for vulnerable populations. Access to quality education for all has the potential to transform lives and societies.

WRITING GUIDE

Language is subjective and like all good communicators, we adapt how we speak depending on who we are talking to, for what reason and through which channel. That said, here are a few guiding principles that can work for most audiences.

Relax: Be Human

Where appropriate always communicate with a natural and human tone of voice. NGOs can often present themselves as too worthy. The work we do is important but nobody enjoys being lectured to.

Cut The Jargon And The Acronyms

Acronyms and tech-speak have a time and a place. They should remain there. Unless specifically required, it is safe to assume most readers don't know or even care about the technical aspects of a project. So if not specifically necessary for the audience, remove it.

Common tech-speak that a public audience may not understand:

- **Acronyms**; spell words in full where possible
- **Stakeholders**; try being more descriptive instead by saying project partners, local community members, etc.
- **Capacity-building**; try being more descriptive by describing the training or skills in question
- **Local actors**; try being more descriptive instead by saying project partners, school directors, local authorities, etc.
- **School readiness**; don't use this term without explaining it
- **Areas of intervention**; don't assume an audience knows what this means, use simple language such "where we work" or "what we do" is clearer
- **Thematic focus** - Try saying this in simple terms such as "the heart of our work", "our key focus" etc.
- **Beneficiaries** - This should only be reserved for in-house communication where possible, instead try project participants, students, community members, children we work with, teachers, or other terms that clearly describe who we're talking about.

Give Detail

An article or post should always include who, where, what, when, and why. Be specific and explain things clearly to the reader, do not assume they already understand.

If you mention that a family is in "a difficult situation", explain what that situation is, why is it difficult, for whom is it difficult, is it better or worse compared to previous years, what can be done to improve it, etc. Back up everything you say with detail and avoid blanket, generalised statements.

Be Active, Be Real

When writers use the **active voice**, their words are direct; they use concrete verbs and clearly state the action being performed by the subject.

Example: Thousands of families are now facing food insecurity in the affected area. Aide et Action is providing emergency food aid.

Use Quotes

Include quotes from children, teachers, parents, community members, Aide et Action staff and volunteers, partner organisations, local authorities, and more.

Be emotive with quotes. A quote that thanks Aide et Action for support does not invoke an emotion whereas a quote from someone about a specific problem they faced or a quote about a change in their life can be elicited emotion and be impactful.

Asking the right questions, can get you the right quotes.

[Download our field interview guidelines here.](#)

Ethical Representation

Language is key to describing our project participants with dignity and respecting their autonomy.

Key words or phrases that should be avoided:

- Referring to project participants as victims (unless referring to violence or trafficking)
- Referring to project participants or their lives as miserable
- Referring to anything as vicious (unless referring to literal violence)
- Referring to project participants or their lives as helpless/hopeless (unless it's a direct quote from them)
- Claiming Aide et Action can empower another person - we can only support others to become more empowered
- Avoid saying "poor" where possible and use "living in poverty"

Keep It Beautiful

Have pride in what you write and always review what you have written before allowing it to leave computer. Even if the intended audience is just one person. Sloppy, rushed or confused writing reflects badly not just on the writer but on the organisation as a whole.

Don't Waffle

NGOs can also often be excessively wordy. Why say something in four sentences that can be said in one? Write short sentences and avoid repetition in a story. Don't repeat the same words over and over in a story.

Call To Action

Always include a call to action. Offer a way for people to join us in supporting Aide et Action's mission. Donate now. Learn more. Watch this video. Join our webinar. Follow us on Facebook. Subscribe to our newsletter.

Be Confident

We believe that education has the potential to transform lives. We know this from experience and we have the evidence to back it up.

When we speak about our work, we should do so with authority and confidence. Always reassure the reader that we have the experience and knowledge to succeed.

We should also be confident in the problems we present. Every argument should be backed up with key figures and facts from recent, reliable and non-biased sources, demonstrating that we know what we are talking about.

Writing Style Checklist

When writing, ask yourself, if your article/post:

Writing style - key components	
Covers who, where, what, when, why	
Gives context of situation/problem using recent, reliable facts and figures	
Is concise, written in short, simple sentences	
Puts child/beneficiary at the centre	
Respects dignity of child/beneficiary	
Avoids jargon and acronyms	
Is conversational and human	
Uses active voice when referring to Aide et Action	
Avoids repetition	
Has a consistent grammar style	
Is inclusive	
Has a call to action	
Has been proofread and spell checked	

WRITE FOR INCLUSIVITY

When it comes to creating inclusive content, we need to do more than post a piece for national celebrations like International Women's Day. Instead, we need to write our pieces – blogs, social posts, newsletters, emails, landing pages and more – with inclusiveness in mind. It means being aware of our word choices and formatting our content for accessibility.

It's also a matter of educating ourselves on all the types of people to be conscientious of. We need to understand that inclusivity encompasses race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, gender, sex, sexual orientation, disability, mental health, education level and more.

Be Inclusive Of Culture, Race, & Ethnicity

- Monitor use of regional phrases and words.
- Be careful of cultural references that not everyone will understand due to age or geography.
- Use the respective person's preferred choice when referring to races, ethnicities and nationalities.

Be Inclusive Of Gender, Sex, & Sexuality

- Stick to gender-neutral pronouns like they if you are unsure of the subject's preferred pronoun.
- Use gender-neutral job titles (firefighter instead of fireman).
- Never rely on stereotypes.

Be Inclusive Of Disabilities

- Ensure that your copy layout follows **accessible design best practices** such as structure, space and contrast.
- Be detailed and add descriptions for hyperlinks for screen reader use.
- Person-first language (e.g. "person with disability" instead of "disabled person") is more commonly preferred and is the suggested default by the National Center on Disability and Journalism.
- Avoid ableist language (e.g., dumb or lame).
- Include accurate, detailed alt text for accessibility.
- Be inclusive of readers' different needs and goals by using information architecture that is skimmable, including hierarchies, headers and bullet points.

Be Inclusive Of Education & Non-Native Speakers

- Improve readability by using shorter sentences, cutting unnecessary words and making paragraphs smaller.
- Improve comprehension with simpler words and writing at a lower reading level.
- Avoid jargon the average person won't understand.
- Include a glossary if you use lots of unknown words.
- For activities, give step-by-step instructions, keep steps simple and provide visual guidance as a backup.

Helpful Tools For Inclusive Copywriting

Rules for inclusivity change continuously as society continues to develop more awareness on harmful language and microaggressions. Use external tools and guidelines that stay current for you. Here some suggestions:

- **The Hidden Bias Test:** Reveals your hidden biases towards different groups of people.
- **GLAAD Media Reference Guide:** A sexual orientation glossary to help determine whether you're using gender inclusive language, offensive language or if you're using terms correctly.
- **Disability Language Style Guide:** Language guide that provides a glossary with guidelines and recommendations for disability inclusion.
- **Conscious Style Guide:** Collects current news and resources on inclusive language for several categories, including age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion and more.
- **Diversity Style Guide:** Functions as an all-encompassing search engine for terms related to diversity. Anytime you feel unsure about a word, this is the place to check.

GRAMMAR GUIDE

Grammar is subjective and we are not about to proscribe a strict house spelling and grammar guide. Whether you decide to hyphenate 'email' or use double instead of single quotation marks is up to you. Just ensure whatever choices you make are consistent within the same channel or piece of communication.

Here are just a few suggestions to help you along with some areas of inconsistency we spot on a regular basis.

British v American English

When writing in English, pick a style and stick to it whether that be British English or American English.

In British English, for example, we would use:

- organisation, not organization
- marginalised, not marginalized
- travelled, not traveled
- emphasise, not emphasize
- behaviour, not behavior

The style should be agreed on before requesting content from multiple writers to ensure consistency and reduce editing from the beginning.

Common Mistranslations To Avoid

When translating French to English, some common mistranslations happen. See below for example:

Incorrect	Correct
Association	Organisation (when referring to ourselves)
Handicap	Disability (Example: children with disabilities)
«quote»	“quote”
Either / or	Either/or (no spaces before/after slash)
Exclaim !	Exclaim! (no space used in English before !)

Avoid Slang

Since the world is on the web, your audience will come from different cultures and contexts. That's why it's important to use simple and straightforward language and to avoid colloquialisms or slang that could cause confusion.

Bullet Points

These are great for breaking important information into easily digestible chunks. Use them often and remember:

- When they form a full sentence, capitalise the first letter and include a full stop.
- When they consist of short phrases or words, use lower case and no full stop.

Numbers

Always spell out cardinal numbers (one, two, three) and ordinal numbers (first, second, third) below 10. Numbers higher than 10, should be written numerically.

Example: Two schools received 300 books.

Units

Units should have a single space between the number and the unit. Thousands should be separated by commas (1,000).

Currency

In English, the currency sign immediately precedes the value. Example: Donate €10 now

Dates And Times

Dates and times need to be readable. Write, abbreviate and punctuate dates and times consistently so people can understand your content.

Months and Days

Months and days are proper nouns, so they start with an initial capital.

Example: On Monday 6 September 2021, Aide et Action...

Use abbreviations only if space is limited, for example, in tables, illustrations, charts and notes. Ensure it is obvious to users which months or days you are referring to.

In general, use numerals for the day and the year but spell out the month in words. Don't include a comma or any other punctuation. When using full dates, don't use ordinal numbers.

If you are referring to a date but not specifying the month, you can use an ordinal number. Don't put the suffix in superscript
Example: The project will conclude on the 20th

To and From

Avoid en dashes in spans of years. Write the years out in full.
Example: From 2015 to 2019, Aide et Action ...

The exceptions are financial years and information in parentheses, such as years of project duration. For these, use an en dash without any spaces on either side.

Example: The first phase of the project (2018–2021) led to ...

Specific Days

Most references to specific days, times of year or periods in history involve proper names. Use initial capitals for proper names, except for any prepositions. Generic terms – such as seasons that occur each year – use lower case.

Holidays and events

Use initial capitals for all institutional holidays, religious days and public events.

Example: International Children's Day

Acronyms

Spell out acronyms in the first instance, then use the shortened version thereafter. Full stops aren't necessary.

E.g. United Nations (UN)

Program Names

Choose either "program" or "programme" and be consistent. Program names are capitalised.

E.g. The Cambodian Consortium of Out of School Children

Titles and Subtitles

Titles and subtitles use Title Case (first letter of each word capitalised).

STORYTELLING

We are more likely to remember a fact that is wrapped in a story.

Storytelling should be at the core of what we do and what we share, connecting our readers and viewers to personal narratives that present change and impact.

Every story should have a clear point and describe a specific issue, show how Aide et Action has a direct impact on that issue and explain any other partner's role in supporting that work.

Great storytellers use simple archetypes and strategies to grab an audience's attention, and these can help you create impact updates and appeals that engage.

How To Talk About Our Project Participants

Our project participants are at the heart of everything we do. When we tell their stories in a compelling way, in words or pictures, we connect them to our audiences. These stories are one of the most powerful ways to convey the importance of Aide et Action's work.

Introduce A Main Character

One of the best ways to get an audience to take interest in your story is to give them a main character to identify with and care about. It's especially important to give your audience an individual to connect with because donors are more likely to be moved to act by a single person than by a large group.

Offer details like the individual's name, location, and personal goals (always with permission). Let the individual do the talking. Their story will be more impactful when it's told in their own words. Use pictures or video of the person so your supporters can put a face to a name.

Include Startling Facts or Statistics

The shock factor is a sure way to get an audience's attention. Consider starting a social media post, blog post, or fundraising appeal with an arresting fact that grabs your supporters' attention and draws them in. Contact the Communications team for the most up-to-date facts and figures.

Immerse Your Audience in a Moment of Crisis

Get to the action. The longer your audience has to wait to see the point of your message, the more likely you are to lose them. Thrusting your audience into a moment of conflict or crisis creates a sense of urgency, which is vital for motivating people to act. This is a particularly effective technique for disaster relief efforts where we might need to respond and fundraise spontaneously.

This "on-the-ground" approach to storytelling also keeps the focus on the problems at hand and the solutions that we offer. By detailing a dire situation such as an increase in poverty by school closures due to Covid-19, a beneficiary's personal experience of it and then detailing our swift actions, our story can help our readers to feel a more tangible connection to the crisis.

Be Descriptive

Be descriptive, not dramatic. Give your audience details like sounds, smells, and visuals and let those evoke emotion. It's not enough to convey devastation. Show readers what actions we are taking and how they can help.

Solutions

Problems should also be accompanied with solutions such as how challenges have and can be overcome or if no solution has been reached, what are the next steps, what are the recommendations? Remember to use active voice when describing Aide et Action's impact/contribution to the resolution.

Storytelling Examples

Remember:

1. Issue (giving facts and figures and general context)
2. Personal story and quote
3. Impact of project/ solution by Aide et Action and partners

Example 1: Innovative learning prioritised in Laos during Covid-19

In KohnKaen village, a rural settlement in Vientiane province home to approximately 1,400 inhabitants mostly from ethnic minority groups, internet access, and smartphones are a recent, but very welcome, arrival.

Souphaphone Jalernsouk borrows her parents' smartphone whenever she can to listen to English music, even though she doesn't understand the words yet. At just 10 years of age, Souphaphone is already thinking about her future and that of her family's – how English could enable her to leave her village and travel to neighbouring Thailand or Vietnam to support them.

Souphaphone is one of only a few children in her school to have access to the internet via her parent's smartphone. For populations living in rural areas without paved roads, access to distance-learning and technology is out of reach as only 0.3% of households have fixed broadband internet access at home, 2% a computer, 49% a TV and 15% a radio.

SomBat Xongyer – a primary school principal in NamLao village, Vientiane province – says that schools like his need support not just in terms of improved and affordable connectivity, but also basic training in how to use digital technology as just 7% of people in rural Laos aged 15-49 have used a computer, and less than 20% have used the internet in their lives.

"We don't offer our students any kind of online learning yet. I don't know how to teach online, we don't have enough ICT equipment and I also don't know how to use the equipment."

For Aide et Action, the challenges posed by Covid-19, have provided an opportunity to better understand the needs of principals like SomBat and support teachers and schools to offer flexible learning strategies for students like Souphaphone in times of crises.

In April last year, Aide et Action – in partnership with The Ministry of Education and Sport, the ICT Center, the Research Institute for Education Sciences, and the National University of Laos – piloted a Lao learning app for kindergarten and primary school students. The app seeks to improve digital and numerical literacy and will be divided into six levels tailored to different literacy levels.

To date, the four levels have been officially approved and are available to download for free via Google Play. The remaining two levels are currently being developed and tested. In addition to training teachers on how to use the app, content will also be available offline to ensure better continuity of education if schools close again.

Storytelling Examples

Remember:

1. Issue (giving facts and figures and general context)
2. Personal story and quote
3. Impact of project/ solution by Aide et Action and partners

Example 2: In India, Jhagudi Didi is a torch bearer for education!

The fifty-seven-year-old Jhagudi didi sat quietly, inquisitively peering through the long veil dangling over her face trying to make sense of the brisk preparation happening in the training hall. She had never been to a school, was illiterate and understood the value of education. She wanted all children in her village to be educated and therefore had decided to become a volunteer to facilitate children's education in her village.

Jhagudi didi lives in Badlipada village located in Petlavad block, Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh state along with her husband, two sons and daughters-in-law. They earned their living as agricultural labourers.

The 'Mission Antyodaya' project being implemented in the Petlavad block, Jhabua district in Madhya Pradesh aims to improve the status of education, health and strengthen local governance through collaborative efforts of parents, teachers, children and community. Despite being a person who never got an opportunity to go to school, Jhagudi didi volunteered to support the 'education of children' as she valued the power of education and the opportunities it creates. She underwent the training along with other volunteers but lacked the confidence to engage with the children. Noticing this, the team encouraged her to conduct activities and provided hand holding support too. Very soon she was able to interact and engage with the children.

Her story telling skills were quite helpful. She gained respect and admiration of the entire village. She also formed the Mata Samiti (Mothers Collective), Bal Parliament (Children Parliament), and the Bal Sabha (Children Collective) which enhanced her interactions with the parents and this improved the regularity of children to school and involvement of parents in education of their children. On 26th January 2020, Jhagudi didi was felicitated by village and teachers for her exemplary contribution in promoting education.

When COVID-19 struck, she supported teachers to distribute rations, books, and other support accessories. She also actively engaged in community awareness generation about COVID-19 and COVID appropriate behaviour in the village. She continued her engagement with children who loved her and followed her advice. "I enjoy being with children and I shall try my best to uphold education as this is my dream and I see it coming true," says didi with a pleasant smile on her face.

Jhagudi didi is part of a team of community volunteers spread across 238 villages and are known as the "change vectors". The main objective of this group is to bring change in their village. Their committed efforts are protecting families from COVID-19 and assisting children continue their education despite closure of schools.

WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is about connecting with people, which lends itself to a conversational style. But how do you define that? The following guidelines are a valuable base from which to build in addition to everything already covered in this guide. Combined, they will inform the voice, tone and substance of our social communications.

MOST-USED SOCIAL CHANNELS:

Facebook: Aide et Action uses Facebook to tell our story. It's an all-encompassing platform to draw attention to all aspects of our organisation. It's to share interactive photos, note yearly milestones and heavily promote campaigns, projects and organisation initiatives. Aide et Action uses this vehicle as our main social media platform.

Twitter: Aide et Action uses Twitter for interaction, relationship-building and development, to engage and create conversations. Twitter funnels any and all social activity. It's a place to share photographs and graphics as they pertain to concepts. This vehicle is the social platform we use to make a splash as an organisation and with member-to-member conversation.

Linkedin: Aide et Action uses LinkedIn to promote our expertise and to share information from the field, relevant research and findings and job opportunities.

Instagram: Aide et Action uses Instagram as our creative social platform. We use it to drive concepts, campaigns and initiatives in the most visual way possible. It's straightforward in terms of content capture as well as understanding.

DEVELOPING OUR VOICE

Who we are: Committed. Knowledgeable. Engaged. We believe every child has the right to access quality education. We are focused on making this a reality across all our countries of operation.

Our tone: We are hopeful but realistic. We believe in what we do, why it's needed and why it matters.

One of the most important aspects of creating our social media voice is realising what we want to sound like to our supporters and followers. Sometimes listing attributes that we're known for and pairing them with things we don't want Aide et Action to be known for can help establish our voice.

For example:

Aide et Action is knowledgeable but not arrogant

Aide et Action is committed but not preachy

Aide et Action is optimistic but not unrealistic

Ownership of Posts

All messages on all central media platforms are posted in the character voice described above. We DO NOT attach names or initials to posts.

Keep it Professional

Messages on all central media platforms should not reflect personal opinions or beliefs, particularly related to religion or politics, but should reflect the organisation's values as a whole.

Positivity and Transparency

We present our messages with a positive attitude, but are honest and transparent in the information we share.

Other Accounts/Sources

We always do our best to reference/tag another account in any message we share. When possible, reference the account mid-message as opposed to the end.

Social Media Writing

- Text should be easy to read. Readers scan web pages quickly
- One line of text should have no more than 8-10 words
- One paragraph should have no more than 5 lines.
- Try to stick to consistent formatting for sharing links, status updates or other types of posts.
- Make your asks clear and concise. (“Donate today,” “Watch this video”)

Facebook (FB)/LinkedIn

- Use line breaks
- Include any relevant mentions, as long as the account is ACTIVE and the names of the mentioned accounts aren’t so long as to be cumbersome.
- Delete the text URL from your post if displaying the link preview.

Twitter

- Tweets should follow might follow a format of headline, link and hashtag
- All posts containing links to our website should utilise UTMs and be shortened using bit.ly

- Replace “and” with ampersand (&), NOT plus (+) to save characters when necessary
- Include any relevant mentions, as long as the account is active
- Avoid using more than three mentions in a single post
- Use MT to signal when a quoted tweet has been modified or shortened
- When quoting tweets always add something new before the RT or MT
- Try for 1-2 native RTs (not quoting) per day.
- Try to include at least one hashtag per post. Avoid using 3+ hashtags in a single post.
- Cite the source of an article or news item by tagging the relevant account at the end of the message in [brackets]

Instagram

- Instagram posts should contain hashtags in the last paragraph of the caption. Each paragraph should be separate by three lines consisting of a full stop (.) on each line
- Edit photos and apply filters in third-party software or apps (such Lightroom or Photoshop)
- Ensure photos are visually appealing and have something to attract the viewer’s eye

Engagement Style

- Favourite tweets from followers and hashtags related to our content
- Like FB comments from users
- Use inline comments to reply to FB users when there is an opportunity to respond
- Hide spam comments

- Like pictures that are related to our work
- Follow back users who comment frequently or tag using hashtags we use in their photos
- On FB, invite people who commented on our post but didn’t like/follow our page to like/follow.

Imagery

- All avatars should align with logo guidelines
- Cover images should be the same across ALL platforms

Writing For Web

When writing articles for publication on our web pages or blogs, remember:

- Keep titles short and concise
- Text should be easy to read. Readers scan web pages quickly
- Use sub headings to break up text (use a minimum of two)
- Use captions and alt text for images
- Include links where possible when you reference research, partners, projects, etc. (a minimum of three links should be used per article)
- Include calls to action - what is the purpose of your article, what do you want your reader to do when they finish reading it?
- Use bit.ly to shorten links for posting purposes and to track reach (Tip: rename the shortened link on bit.ly in some meaningful keywords related to the post instead of using the auto-generated link)

OUR VISUAL IDENTITY

NEW IDENTITY &
GRAPHIC CHARTER
COMING SOON

All our communications should have the same look and feel to them - an overall style. We have several principles to describe this style.

A new visual identity and graphic charter will be announced in 2022 but for now, please use current charter.

Clean

Good design is about clarity. Our design choices should reflect this. The use of white space is encouraged and we keep our font choices and colour palette to a minimum. Avoid clutter.

Warm

We are a child-focused organisation and positivity and warmth should be reflected across our visual identity through the use of the red and yellow in our colour palette and strong imagery.

People Focused

Education is what we do but classrooms are not always inherently visually interesting, people are. Our design choices reflect this, the students we work with should always be front and centre of all our design choices. It is their story we are telling.



OUR LOGO



Changing the world through Education

The preferred version of the logo shows the 4-colour logo with tagline. It is strictly advised that this version be used in all print and digital publications unless it is not possible. For best legibility it is recommended that the logo appear on a white or light-coloured, plain background.



In the case that it is not possible to use the preferred version of the Aide et Action logo, it is possible to use a white/reversed version of the logo like in the example shown. Be sure there is high contrast between the logo and the background so it can be clearly read and seen.



OUR IMAGERY

Selecting the right image for a job is hugely important. Nothing can ruin a carefully researched and crafted piece of copy quicker than a poorly selected image.

While it is vital as an organisation we only use distinctive high quality photography in all communications, selecting the correct image is not just about what looks best - we don't use models, the images we use depict real people with real lives, because of this we have a responsibility to portray them truthfully and always with the utmost respect.



All communications regarding the Aide et Action children will ensure that the protection, privacy, dignity and best interests of the child are paramount.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON IMAGES

Below are a set of guiding principles that should assist us in our decision making about which images and messages to choose in our communication while maintaining full respect for human dignity:

- **Children should be adequately clothed** in photographs or images taken of them and not in poses that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive.
- Images should not be used to identify HIV-positive children, those who have been trafficked or working in sex work.
- When the real names of especially vulnerable children are changed to protect their identity, it should be indicated that they have been changed.
- Choose images and related messages based on values of respect, equality, solidarity and justice.
- Truthfully represent any image or depicted situation both in its immediate and in its wider context so as to improve public understanding of the realities and complexities of development.
- **Avoid images and messages that potentially stereotype, sensationalise or discriminate against people, situations or places.**
- Do not edit or crop photos to remove the context of the situation.

If in Doubt

Before making a final decision on the use of an image/message, consideration of the following questions may be useful:

- Does the use of the planned image and/or message fit with the core values of respect for the dignity of others?
- If used would those people directly affected by this image and/or message feel that it is a fair and true representation?
- Have all the subjects of the image and/or message agreed to this application of their image/story?
- Would the use of this image and/or message cause offence or hurt?
- Might the use of this image and/or message contribute to cultural or racial stereotyping of people, places and situations?

If in doubt whether the use of an image is appropriate, remind yourself that access to the internet and to our communications material is increasingly available to all. Ask yourself would the individual represented recognise and be happy with how they have been portrayed should they see it. If not, then simply don't use the image.

CONTEXT & AGENCY

Each piece of communication is different and will have different intended audiences and outcomes. Despite this, it is necessary to remember the images we use are real individuals and as such should be treated with respect and never deprived of agency or dignity.

The students and families we work with are not helpless and are not in receipt of handouts. As an organisation we believe in enabling individuals to improve their lives. As such their actions are central to this process not ours. Our project participants should never be depicted as helpless or passive, they should be shown actively solving their problems.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Image Selection

Key to the success of our visual communications lies in which images we select, and how we use them. These can be broken down into two broad categories: **Hero Images & Support Images**.

Hero Images

- Hero images are typically used on cover pages, landing pages or as main images in posters and exhibition displays
- Hero images generally show children actively engaged in activities (studying, playing, class participation etc.)
- Hero images connect with the audience (eye contact & faces to camera).
- Hero images are high quality images (properly exposed and in focus).
- Hero images feel positive and upbeat (smiles).
- Hero images show the context of the environment such as classroom, desk etc.
- Hero images do not contain any montage or photo-manipulated elements.



A teacher pictured in class, Benin, 2019. © Vincent REYNAUD-LACROZE



Grade 1 student receives a radio to use for distance learning during Covid school closures, in Kratie province, Cambodia, August 2020. © Aide et Action/Christine Redmond.

Support Images

- Support images illustrate or support a point of information within our message.
- Support images may be combined with other support images to create a montage.
- Support images may contain close ups of people/places/objects.
- Support images contain multiple focal points, with lots of activity taking place.

Captions

Photos should include captions to give context to the image.

- In the first sentence, describe in the present tense who is pictured and what is going on within the photo. Name the province and country and the month and year photos was taken.
- In the next sentence credit the copyright holder/photographer.
- Example: Grade 1 student Sok Chana pictured learning at home during Covid school closures, in Kratie province, Cambodia, August 2021. © Aide et Action/Christine Redmond.



Grade 1 student pictured learning at home during Covid school closures, in Kratie province, Cambodia, August 2020. © Aide et Action/Christine Redmond.



Left/Centre: Ethnic minority students learn from home during Covid-19 school closures using radios and learning materials supplied by Aide et Action, Kratie province, Cambodia, August 2020. © Aide et Action/Christine Redmond.



Above: Ethnic minority students play football after school, Mondulkiri province, Cambodia, March 2020. © Aide et Action/Christine Redmond.

VIDEO

Guidelines for Social Media

Video is a key tool to engage audiences on social media. Content must be able to stand out on a screen of a mobile phone and blend in with the newsfeed of the users.

Facebook

Facebook video ads appear in various formats. This is due to Facebook's commitment to making video ads viewable on as many formats as possible.

However, this presents a fair amount of challenges because we need to produce content that is optimised for various platforms. Here's a breakdown of the various specs for Facebook videos.

Regular Facebook Feed Video:

- Recommended size: 1280 by 720 pixels
- Minimum width: 600 pixels
- Supported aspect ratios: 16:9 (horizontal), 9:16 (full portrait), 2:3 (vertical), 4:5 (vertical), square (1:1)
- Recommended specs: Videos should also utilise H.264 compression, square pixels, fixed frame rate, progressive scan, and stereo AAC audio compression at 128kbps+. Your videos can be as long as 240 minutes, as large as 4GB large, and have a maximum frame rate of 30fps. For a post where you don't want the preview to show, use a shortened link (bit.ly) in the message itself
- Tip: To get the best quality for your video posts, Facebook recommends uploading videos in .MOV and .MP4 format, however, most video file types are supported

Facebook Messenger Stories Ads:

- Recommended size: 1280 by 720 pixels
- Supported aspect ratios: 16:9 to 1.91:1
- Recommended specs: videos can be up to 240 minutes long with a maximum size of 4GB, and have a maximum frame rate of 30fps

Instagram

Instagram In-feed Video and Video Ads

- Square video: 600 by 600 pixels (1:1 aspect ratio)
- Horizontal video: 600 by 315 pixels (1.9:1 aspect ratio)
- Vertical video: 600 by 750 pixels (4:5 aspect ratio)
- Recommended specs: .MP4 or .MOV format. The maximum file size is 4GB, maximum length 60 seconds, maximum frame rate 30fps. Your video should not exceed 4GB in size, must be within ratio limits, have H.264 compression, square pixels, fixed frame rate, progressive scan, and stereo AAC audio compression at 128kbps+

Instagram Stories Video Ads:

- Recommended size: 1080 by 1920 pixels
- Minimum size: 600 by 1067 pixels
- Supported aspect ratios: 16:9 to 4:5 and 9:16
- Recommended specs: .MP4 or .MOV format, maximum length 15 seconds, maximum file size 4GB

Instagram Reels:

- Instagram Reels are designed to be viewed as 9:16 (1080 X 1920 pixels) or vertically full screen, which is the exact same format as Instagram Stories

- When Reels appear in the newsfeed they're displayed in a 4:5 ratio (1080 X 1350 pixels)
- Get tips for image sizing [here](#)
- Get inspiration [here](#) and [here](#)

Twitter

As a mobile-first platform, Twitter video is naturally optimised for mobile device-captured video. This, however, doesn't mean you cannot upload video in other ways. For details on how to upload video recorded on other devices, see Twitter's video specs recommendations and best practices.

Twitter horizontal videos:

- Recommended size: 1280 by 1024 pixels
- Minimum size: 32 by 32 pixels
- Maximum size: 1920 by 1200 pixels
- Supported aspect ratios: between 1:2.39 – 2.39:1
- Recommended specs: use .MP4 for web, .MOV format for mobile, video cannot exceed 140 seconds in length

Editing Tips

- If editing in Adobe Premiere Pro, use [our branded motion graphics templates](#) for consistency.
- Proofread and spell check all scripts.
- If using logos, ensure they are correctly formatted and of high enough resolution.