

Script

Welcome to week 5,

This week, our last week, we will explore the pledge, above all, I will continuously reflect on the power and responsibility I hold in collecting and using stories and images of children

The theme of power weaves through all of the OverExposed pledges. It is at the heart of all we must consider when we begin to reframe our thinking on image use and storytelling.

The questions and themes we have asked you to explore with your teams, as part of this campaign, are inherently linked to the often uncomfortable conversation of power within the sector, and particularly how power plays out within the many dichotomies that typical storytelling might bring: Adult vs child, subject vs photographer, vulnerability vs resilience, harm vs good intentions.

Power is ever-present in our day to day lives and the decisions we make.

In terms of our practice, unequal power dynamics can and do cause harm, and often undermine the dignity and autonomy of the children and young people we intend to support. They become other 'beneficiaries' - both in our programmes and in our collective visual mind. Chance for Childhood has made the decision that we can and must do better.

It is critical

to acknowledge the complex power dynamics between INGO's, International partner or donor and our colleagues working in the communities we are supporting.

Even if we are fully committed to the 'Shift the Power' agenda, we must acknowledge that where there is money, there is power which can create barriers to open conversations between ourselves and our partners.

These barriers might include being unable to say no to some situations and also challenges in confronting an international partners practice, policy or process.

This conversation on power can be both critical, but obvious and action-focused: we hold the power to ensure children are informed of their rights, are taken through a thorough informed consent process, are portrayed in a positive way and are not put at risk.

Power is at the heart of telling more ethical stories and taking more ethical images. On an interpersonal level, there will be power dynamics at play within your teams as you begin to discuss this campaign with regards to your own practice.

As uncomfortable as it is to acknowledge, we must talk about the power our organisations and partners hold over individuals accessing our services.

- Can a mother of a child living with disabilities really say no to the organisation who is the only NGO locally that will provide education to their child?
- Can homeless young people really say no to the only adults they trust and feel safe with?
- Can a mother of 4 living in a refugee settlement really say no to the people providing food rations to her and her children?

There is also a more nuanced power to consider when we think about the communities, we must consider the power we hold in creating true rights-based and participatory organisations: If we are a truly participatory organisation, children and young people may want to participate in storytelling about themselves, and in looking at these pledges we don't want to make these young people invisible, slipping into the old trope of protection over participation but we do need guidelines around making this as safe a process as possible

We acknowledge that change is hard. It needs resources, buy-in, and leadership. It needs support from Boards, Senior Leadership, all of these things take time.

There is a long-held perception of how we believe donors and stakeholders hold the power on how they must receive information, imagery and stories. But do we know where has this demand come from and if it still stands?

Should power sit with children and young people we support or donors who fund the work we do with them?

We believe it should sit with the children themselves. This is why we have also developed individuals' pledges, encouraging the general public to reflect on the way they engage with the stories we tell and the photos we use