



VIDEA - Communications Policy

Our voice is strong, it will not waiver, it will speak truth to power.

VIDEA has no one spokesperson. Our voice is a collective voice. We call forward the voices of everyone that is part of VIDEA to speak on behalf of VIDEA as long as your words and intent are aligned with and uphold VIDEA's values and feminist, decolonisation, and anti-racism statements. Within VIDEA every staff and Board member will be supported to speak out against racism, discrimination and oppression – it takes everyone's voice. The voices of Indigenous and racialized staff, youth, and Board members shall always be prioritized on these issues, they will have the right to speak first, they will have the right to speak last, they will have the right to stand in silence. The role of non-Indigenous and non-racialised staff, youth and Board members is to make space for the voices of their racialized and Indigenous colleagues to be heard, to speak when it is not safe for others to speak, to hold silence, and to amplify and back up the voices of their colleagues.

1. Alignment with the Dochas Code of Conduct:

VIDEA's Communications Policy defaults to comply with the [Dochas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages](#) for organizations working on overseas development and humanitarian issues. The Dochas Code is based on three core values and seven guiding principles which all prioritize dignity, respect, solidarity, justice and truthfulness in communications. All VIDEA communications must uphold and reflect the 7 guiding principles of the Dochas Code and the 3 Core Values.

The Dochas Code recognizes that language and images can perpetuate stereotypes, and replacing one set of stereotypes with another does not challenge that narrative or construct more complex alternatives. The Code therefore calls on organization to offer a realistic portrayal of the lives people lead. This means choosing images and messages that promote working with, rather than for, communities and promoting issues in a way that calls for action to address their root causes. This is a justice-based, not charitable, approach to communications.

Adopting the Dochas Code means that VIDEA commits to ensuring that materials and communications adhere to the principles set out in the Code, and encourage feedback form the public, both positive and critical, on these communications.

The Dochas Code ensures that images and messages will be chosen based on their adherence to the following core values:

- “Respect for the dignity of the people concerned;
- Belief in the equality of all people;
- Acceptance of the need to promote fairness, solidarity and justice.”

The Seven Guiding Principles of the Dochas Code are:

1. Choose images and related messages based on values of respect, equality, solidarity and justice;
2. Truthfully represent any image or depicted situation both in its immediate and wider context so as to improve public understanding of the realities and complexities of development;
3. Avoid images and messages that potentially stereotype, sensationalise, or discriminate against people, situations or places;
4. Use images, messages, and case studies with the full understanding, participation and permission of the subjects (or the subjects’ parents/ guardians);
5. Ensure those whose situation is being represented have the opportunity to communicate their stories themselves;

6. Establish and record whether the subjects wish to be named or identified and always act accordingly;
7. Conform to the highest standards in relation to human rights and the protection of vulnerable people.

2. External Communications and Representation:

External communications and representation shall be guided by the following:

1. All VIDEA Staff and Board members are responsible for ensuring that VIDEA's programmes and activities amplify different voices, radical voices, and voices that do not fit within a capitalist, patriarchal, colonial system.
2. VIDEA Staff and Board members will take a strategic feminist anti-capitalist approach to partnership development, in support of the organization's mission and strategic objectives.
3. Staff and Board members will ensure that VIDEA is effectively represented to public audiences, through key events, the media, public meetings and communications. Ensuring that staff and youth leaders are free to represent themselves in public events and activities in the way that is most meaningful to them.
4. VIDEA Staff and Board members will ensure that responsibility is delegated and that whenever possible staff and youth-leaders are encouraged to take leadership and have their own voices heard.
5. Staff and Board members will ensure effective working relationships with key stakeholders, largely through supported delegation to members of the leadership and staff team, including with First Nations communities, Indigenous partners, institutional donors, strategic allies, and government officials.
6. Ensure that Indigenous voices, knowledge systems and cultures are recognized in all their diversity and are integrated and help up in ways that challenge pan-Indigenization.

7. Ensure external communication hold up youth and under-represented communities, are brave and hard-hitting, take a feminist, anti-oppressive, decolonized and anti-capitalist approach, and are in accordance with VIDEA's values and strategic objectives.

3. VIDEA's Values and Statements:

All communications must uphold and reflect VIDEA's values and statements on feminism, anti-racism and decolonization.

VIDEA's Values:

- We have applied a human rights-based approach across our work since 1978.
- We are a feminist organization. We believe that gender equality is central to international and Canadian community development. We believe in the right of all women to make their own decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. We are a pro-choice organization.
- We develop long-term relationships with partners in Canada and overseas that are based on solidarity and friendship. We consider our overseas partners to be our equal partners in development.
- We strive to actively participate in coalitions. We strive for humility. We recognize that our role is that of supporter and ally and that we play a small role in global development.
- We are willing to be courageous, innovative and radical in order to confront environmental, indigenous and human rights injustices.
- We believe that youth are the leaders of today and are critical agents of change. We work to ensure that youth from diverse backgrounds are represented at all levels of our organization. We believe that young people should have their voices heard and we are willing to stand up to prevent the silencing of youth.
- We believe in the value of diversity and rights for all. We believe that women's rights, disability rights, LGBTQI2+ rights, and Indigenous rights, are human rights.
- We align our work with the Sustainable Development Goals. We believe in the centrality of internally agreed-to frameworks and conventions as guiding instruments.
- We believe in every person's right to religious freedom. We are a non-religious organization.
- We support the rights of Indigenous peoples to control their own land and governance systems. We are committed to collaborating and consulting Indigenous peoples on our work.

We work to ensure that Indigenous people are represented at all levels of our organization, and support reconciliation activities in Canada.

- We integrate environmental stewardship, including environmental analysis, across our work. We work to prevent climate change, to protect biodiversity, and to honour the sanctity of our land, forests, oceans, air, and fresh water.
- We believe that the absence of armed conflict, disarmament, and non-violence are key in addressing global issues.
- We believe in the right of all workers to organize to protect their wages, working conditions and work environment. We believe that all people deserve an equal chance to earn a livable and competitive wage for their work, including workers in the not-for-profit sector and our own employees.
- We value our independent voice and protect our financial autonomy from political or corporate interests.

VIDEA's Statement on Feminism:

Our feminism will challenge and shatter everything that we've accepted as normal. To us, feminism is decolonized, Indigenous, intersectional, difficult, brave, anti-capitalist. Our feminism meets people where they are, it is dynamic and transforming. Our feminism is not business as usual – it is about challenging existing oppressive ideas, norms and structures, and shifting paradigms, power and knowledge systems. Our feminism is about hearing and amplifying different voices, radical voices, voices that do not fit within a capitalist, patriarchal, colonial system. Our feminism will be resilient. Our feminism will challenge us at our roots. Our feminism will make us uncomfortable. Our feminism will make us stronger.

VIDEA's Statement on Anti-Racism:

VIDEA denounces all forms of racism, racial discrimination, and oppression. Racism, discrimination and oppression limit opportunities, cause harm to individuals and communities, and wreck lives. Racism, discrimination and oppression are wrong. We recognize no grey areas. These issues will not be debated within VIDEA.

We will work with Indigenous youth, Elders, and others in Canadian society, especially vulnerable and racialised youth, to oppose and dismantle the Canadian systems and institutions that perpetuate systemic racism, discrimination, and oppression. We will speak loudly, we will collaborate widely, we will

stand alone, we will turn up for those who experience racism and oppression where they are – in demonstrations, on the streets and in the policy rooms.

Within VIDEA every staff and Board member will be supported to speak out against racism, discrimination and oppression – it takes everyone’s voice. The voices of Indigenous and racialized staff, youth, and Board members shall always be prioritized on these issues, they will have the right to speak first, and they will have the right to speak last. The role of non-Indigenous and non-racialised staff, youth and Board members is to make space for the voices of their racialized and Indigenous colleagues to be heard, to speak when it is not safe for others to speak, and to amplify and back up the voices of their colleagues.

We recognize that the legacy of colonial systems of oppression and harm in Canada, including the genocide of residential schools, not only continue to actively oppress and discriminate today, but also continue to disproportionately affect Indigenous women and girls.

VIDEA seeks to speak loudly in efforts to decolonize Canadian society and to dismantle systemic racism in Canada. As a country, we need to develop the self-awareness, knowledge, political will, and skills, to bring about widescale systemic change. We do not believe that Canada has met any of these benchmarks to date.

We also recognize that issues of racism, discrimination and oppression have their roots in systems of colonial oppression and that through international instruments and unfair trade relationships, these same neo-colonial systems continue to oppress and limit countries today. In order to address these issues overseas we must first recognize the role that we played in creating them, and the role that we continue to play in perpetuating them.