



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

Refugee resettlement: refugees' rights in media interviews

A resource for refugees, affiliates and cosponsors

Explaining the risks and benefits

It is important to let families and individuals know that there are some risks involved with doing any media interview. For example, classmates may tease children whose families have been interviewed. Parents should be asked how they feel about having co-workers, friends or their children's teachers see or hear about their problems and the services they have received.

On the other hand, there are definite benefits. A successful interview can celebrate the family's strengths or victories. Positive coverage can help build support for the family and the programs that serve them. Personal stories help policymakers, reporters and the public understand people who are working to improve their own lives.

Clarifying the rights of an interview subject

Explain to the interviewee...

You do not have to do an interview. It is your choice. Even after agreeing to do the interview, you have the right to...

- *Stop the interview at any time if you become uncomfortable*
- *Decline to answer questions that are too personal*
- *Refuse the use of your full name, address or photograph*
- *Refuse to have your full face photographed*
- *Know the nature of specific questions before the interview is conducted*
- *Decide, as parents or guardians, whether your children under age 18 may be interviewed and/or photographed*

Presenting helpful hints to an interview subject

Advise the interviewee to ...

- *Tell the truth*
- *Tell your story*
- *Keep it simple*
- *Focus on three points you want to make*
- *Make eye contact*
- *Talk only about the things you want to see in the media story*

Credit: *The Jossey-Bass Guide to Strategic Communications for Nonprofits*, Kathy Bonk, Henry Griggs and Emily Tynes (Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1999) p. 120

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