



► CRS Outreach Guidelines for Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteers

HOW TO TELL STORIES THAT SHOWCASE YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS!




Catholic Relief Services is the official international humanitarian agency of the United States Catholic community. CRS' relief and development work is accomplished through programs of emergency response, HIV, health, agriculture, education, microfinance and peacebuilding. CRS eases suffering and provides assistance to people in need in more than 100 countries, without regard to race, religion or nationality.

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Introduction

Volunteer outreach is an important component of the Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) program. As a volunteer, you are in a unique position to share stories directly from your assignment and to demonstrate the positive impact of the program to a wider audience. We also encourage you to share your volunteer experience to inform the public about the good work that you are undertaking and to raise public awareness of U.S. development programs.



As part of her volunteer assignment, Megan Amara Szrom worked with women's farmer groups in Benin to implement a sheet mulching technique over perennial cassava beds as a low-maintenance way to cover soil and keep weeds from taking over. *Mountaga Drame for CRS*

Why do we provide these guidelines?

CRS uses stories to share impact, enhance understanding, build relationships and inspire action. CRS expects all F2F volunteers to attempt at least two outreach activities. Our donor, USAID, also requires that we report on F2F volunteer outreach activities annually.

These guidelines have been developed to support you with your outreach activities and to provide guidance on effective, impactful outreach.

As part of our continuing commitment to [equity in storytelling](#), these volunteer guidelines will always be a work in progress, based on our learning in a changing world, as well as the needs of our mission, staff, partners, donors, constituents, the people that we serve, and of course, you!

What kinds of outreach can you do?

Sharing information about your assignment can take many forms, including but not limited to :



A social media post about your F2F assignment (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)



A presentation to a group which you are affiliated with
(e.g., professional association, education institution, staff meeting)



A blog post about your F2F assignment



A publication in an academic journal or industry publication that features or mentions your assignment



An interview, article or other media feature
(e.g., radio interview, article in your local newspaper, guest on a podcast)



An email blast to family and friends

What needs prior approval?

As a F2F volunteer, your outreach activities will reflect upon CRS and the donor, USAID. As such, we ask you to be mindful and use your best judgement when making public statements. All volunteers must read CRS' [social media policy](#) prior to their assignment and adhere to it during all their volunteer outreach activities. This policy applies to social and traditional media. (CRS does not have a separate policy for traditional media.)

All blog posts, press releases, articles, and any other form of media outreach must be reviewed and approved by CRS communications staff BEFORE you can post them on the internet. In these pieces, please also clearly state that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of CRS or USAID.

Social media posts do not need prior approval, but please use your best judgement.

When in doubt, please contact your F2F HQ point of contact (prior or after your assignment) or your in-country point of contact during your volunteer assignment. Before taking any photos or interviews during your F2F assignment, please also review the [CRS Guidelines for Interviews and Releases \(International Version\)](#), which details when you must request permission to photograph or film and get a signed release form. Please note that this only applies to photography, videos, and interviews outside of the United States.

Now, with all of this in mind, please do:

- Share stories featuring your thoughts, experiences, and insights from your F2F assignment.
- Tell stories that focus on the dignity, strength and integrity of the hosts, training participants and community members, and your collaborations with them (see CRS' Guidelines for [Equity in Storytelling](#)).
- Clearly state that you are speaking as a F2F volunteer and not on behalf of CRS or USAID.
- Ask for permission from people before taking photos or videos of them, even if you are not required to get a written photo release (see next section). Briefly explain how you plan to use the photo and/or video, such as posting on your personal social media or sending the image to a local publication as part of a feature on your volunteer assignment.
- Obtain a signed release for photography or videography and submit the signed release with your final documents to your F2F point of contact if: a) a person's face is visually identifiable and prominent in the photo, AND you intend to use their name (applicable to both children and adults), OR b) in socially sensitive situations, regardless of whether you intend to use their name or not. See the [CRS Guidelines for Interviews and Releases: International Version](#) for the full list of situations which require written releases and suggestions for alternative photos).
- Please check with the F2F team in-country for any sensitive topics or words to avoid in your outreach and be mindful of any local legislation or customs around taking or sharing photos (country-specific guidance will be provided during your in-country orientation).
- If you post on social media, please tag us and use the hashtags below to help us to know about your posts and to use CRS channels to amplify them.

FACEBOOK



@CRSFarmerToFarmer
@CatholicReliefServicesNepal (when relevant)

#FarmertoFarmer
#F2F
#F2FVolunteer
#F2FCRS

LINKEDIN



@Catholic-relief-services

#FarmertoFarmer
#F2F
#F2FVolunteer
#F2FCRS

INSTAGRAM



@catholicreliefservices

#FarmertoFarmer
#F2F
#F2FVolunteer

X (FORMERLY TWITTER)



@CRS_Expertise
@CatholicRelief
@farmertofarmer
@CRS_Uganda (when relevant)

#FarmertoFarmer
#F2F
#F2FVolunteer
#F2FCRS

Please refrain from:

Posting or disclosing information or views that might jeopardize your security and safety, or that of any CRS program, staff, host members, or program participants, such as locations in security-sensitive countries.

Posting derogatory statements about the country you are in, CRS, host organizations, the F2F Program, USAID or the Catholic Church.

Making or posting statements about the host country's political situation. CRS strives to have positive working relationships with the host government and communities where we operate F2F programs. In the past, international development organizations have been asked to leave some countries due to a lack of discretion in their public statements.

Taking or posting photos, videos, and/or stories which use one-dimensional labels (ex: poor, suffering) or which portray people in an undignified manner (see CRS' Guidelines for [Equity in Storytelling](#)).

Posting statements which contradict the teachings of the Catholic Church and the US Council of Bishops, including but not limited to artificial family planning, birth control, same-sex marriage or abortion.

Disclosing CRS' confidential and proprietary information (ex: financial information from your volunteer assignment, F2F host project costs, HR or personnel issues, etc.).

Using social media or other public statements to raise issues with your assignment. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your F2F HQ or country program point of contact directly to find a resolution).

How can I share my outreach with CRS?

USAID, the F2F donor, requires that CRS report on volunteer outreach activities annually. To help us with our reporting requirements, please send documentation of your outreach, and any required consent forms, within four weeks of completing your F2F assignment to farmertofarmer@crs.org.

social media



Send the link to the post OR a full screenshot of the post (including the date).

media or other publications



Send a link OR screenshot (including the name of the outlet & date of publication)

Please also forward any emails in which you pitch your F2F story, even if they do not result in publication. As a reminder, any media pitch must be reviewed by CRS (see "What Needs Prior Approval?" above).

presentations



Send a short text description of whom you presented to (audience) and when (date). Please also send photos of your presentation or the presentation announcement (ex: invitation, flyer, etc.).

email



Forward the original email or send a screenshot (including the date sent).

Resources

- [CRS Social Media Policy](#)
- F2F Storytelling and Photography Training: [will be ready in October after the photography training]
- [CRS Guidelines for Equity in Storytelling](#)
- [CRS Guidelines for Interviews and Releases: International Version](#)
 - English Release Form: <https://crs.widen.net/s/vglnjht2fj/crs-english-release>
 - Spanish Release Form: <https://crs.widen.net/s/mk9sbn529s/crs-spanish-release>
 - Arabic Release Form: <https://crs.widen.net/s/bfl5skc7nz/crs-arabic-release>
 - French Release Form: <https://crs.widen.net/s/qtwdhcznj/crs-french-release>
- Storytelling Template: [add link when finalized (from Holly)]

Annexes

- » Preparing for outreach
- » F2F talking points
- » Photography tips
- » Pitching to media
- » Interview tips
- » Presentation tips and tricks
- » Outreach examples



DeVonne Jackson (center), CRS F2F volunteer, spending time with students in Uganda. *Mountaga Drame for CRS*

PREPARING FOR OUTREACH

While outreach generally happens during or after your assignment, you can also start preparing for outreach activities before your volunteer assignment. For example, before you leave for your F2F assignment, you can:

- Visit the CRS F2F Facebook page for ideas for social media posts
- Identify and contact local media or publications that might be interested in covering your assignment
- Identify publication opportunities with technical journals, industry blogs, academic publications, etc.
- Schedule presentations with local groups you are involved with
- Ask your manager or colleagues if you can make a presentation about your assignment to your colleagues upon your return

FARMER-TO-FARMER (F2F) TALKING POINTS

- Managed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the 35-year-old Farmer-to-Farmer program supports farmers by sending U.S.-based volunteers on short-term technical assignments to assist agribusiness professionals in developing countries to improve their livelihoods and food security.
- Since 1985, more than 20,000 Farmer-to-Farmer volunteers have supported over 136 million people by providing technical assistance in 116 countries.
- Today, the program continues to be funded through the U.S. Farm Bill, administered by USAID, and implemented by U.S.-based NGOs.
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is one of several F2F implementers. CRS first implemented the program from 2014-2018 in four East African countries: Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania. CRS then implemented a second round in Uganda, Ethiopia Benin, Rwanda, Nepal and Timor-Leste (2018-2023).
- This people-to-people exchange promotes international goodwill, understanding of U.S. foreign assistance programs, and private involvement in development activities.

PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS

BASIC PHOTOGRAPHY

Photos have four main elements: subject, background, light and story:

The subject

- Be very clear in your mind who or what the subject of your photo is.
- It often helps to get closer to your subject to make it clear who your subject is.
- Use techniques to draw attention to your subject:



LEADING LINES

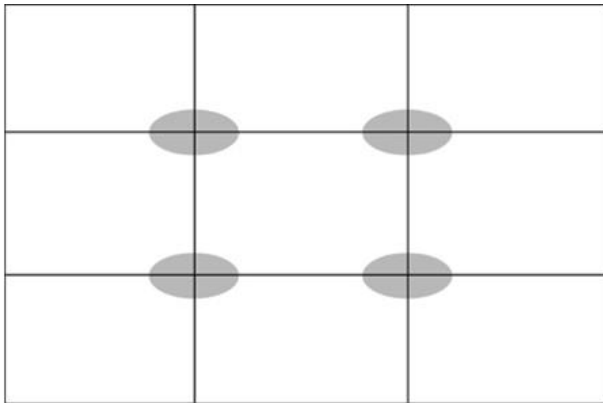


DIAGONAL LINES



FRAMING

Avoid putting people right in the center of the photo. Remember the Rule of Thirds.



The background

Look closely at your background. Avoid a cluttered, busy background when possible. Look for things that make for a clean background like:



THE SKY



THE GROUND



A WALL

The light

The basic rule of thumb when shooting people in sunlight is to make sure the sun is behind you, not behind your subject. That way, the sun is on their face.

Two things to avoid:

- Bright sunlight that creates harsh shadows on people's faces.
- A mix of strong sunlight and large areas of shadow in the same photo.

Options for dealing with difficult light:

- Shoot during the "Golden Hour" (the hour after sunrise and the hour before sunset)
- When possible, shoot during cloudy or overcast days
- Move people into open shade. Do NOT include bright light behind them or they will be a silhouette. When indoors, move people near a window for more natural light. Do NOT include the window in the photo or they will be a silhouette.
- Turn on your flash in bright sunlight to fill in the shadows on people's faces.

The story

To tell stories with photos, take a variety of photos that together will tell a story.

Take many photos and push yourself:

- Look for different angles
- Keep moving around and looking for different angles
- Look for different backgrounds
- Get up high for an overview shot
- Get down on the ground and shoot up
- Get a portrait

Get three levels of photos:



WIDE TO SHOW CONTEXT



MEDIUM TO SHOW ACTION



DETAIL PHOTOS

While it's good to get some portraits, be sure to get a lot of action photos!



TAKE THIS...

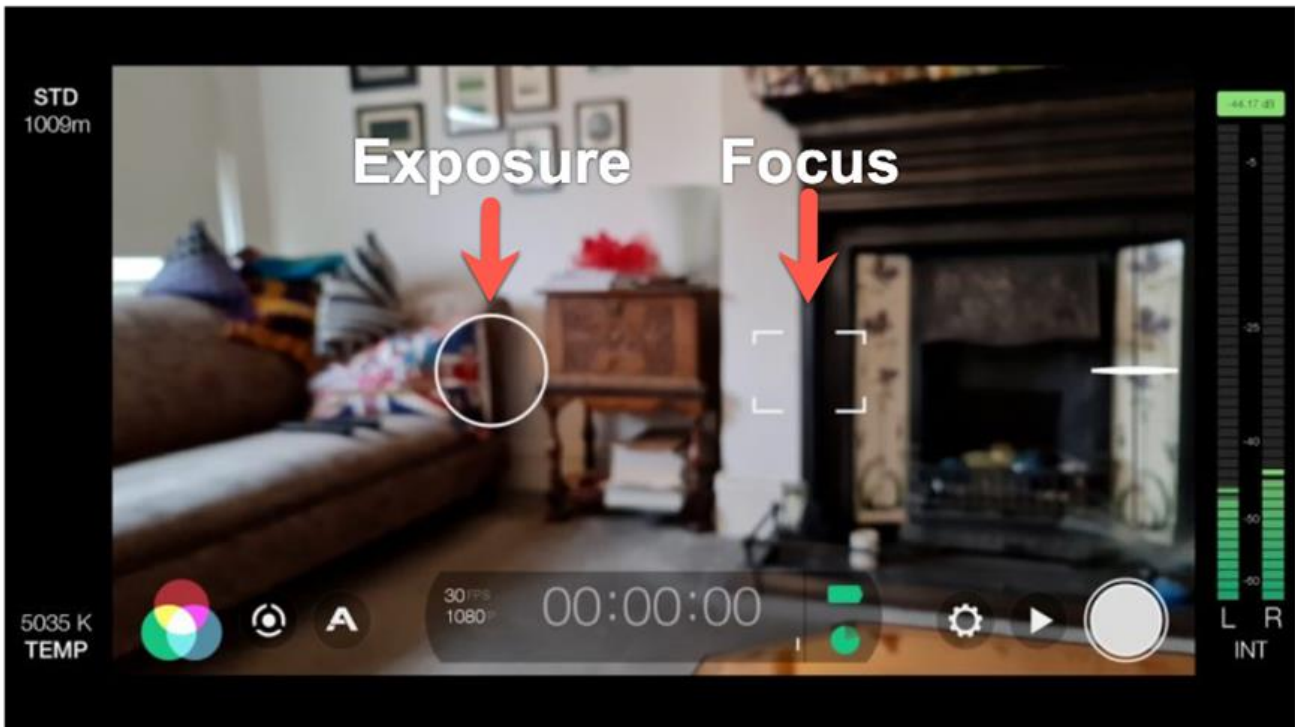


NOT THIS

BASIC SMART PHONE FUNCTIONS

There are many types of photo apps for smart phones, and each one is different. But most look like one of the following two examples

TYPE 1



EXPOSURE



If the image is too dark, move the exposure symbol onto a dark part of the image to lighten it up.

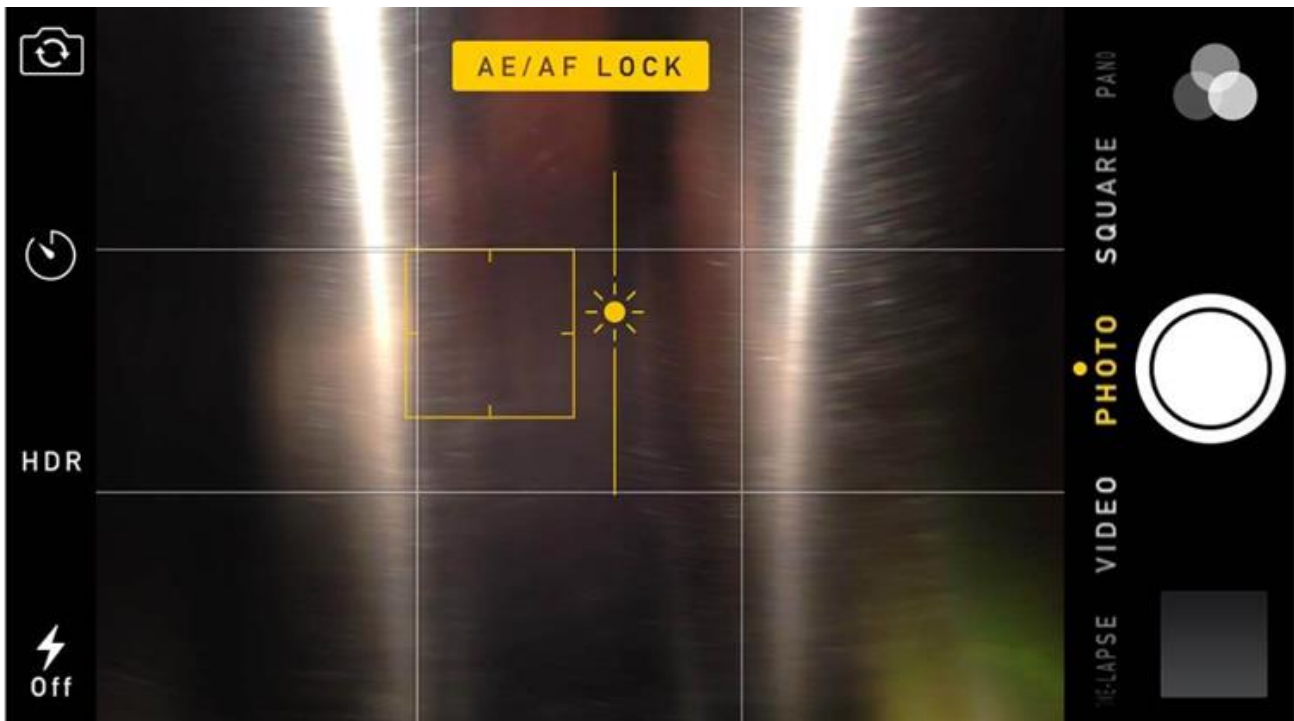
If it is too light, move the symbol onto a brighter part of the image.

FOCUS



Move the focus symbol onto what most needs to be in focus: a person's face, etc.

IMPORTANT: If your exposure or focus symbols look similar to the photo above and the symbols are white, that means they are unlocked and your camera will adjust exposure and focus as you move around. However, if they are any color other than white (such as red or yellow), that means your exposure or focus are now locked, and your camera will not change exposure or focus as you move around. Generally speaking, you want them unlocked so that your camera will adjust as you move. To unlock them, tap the symbol once or twice until it changes back to white. These instructions do not apply if your app looks like the photo on the following page.



EXPOSURE



If the image is too dark, use your finger to slide the little sun symbol up to make the image brighter, down to make it darker.

FOCUS



Move the focus symbol onto what most needs to be in focus: a person's face, etc.

PITCHING TO MEDIA

Interested in pitching your story to a media outlet? Review CRS' [social media policy](#) (which also applies to traditional media) and then follow the steps below. As a reminder, all blog posts, press releases, articles, and any other form of media outreach must be reviewed and approved by CRS communications staff before you can post them on the internet. When reaching out to media, please do:

- Identify a specific reporter, blogger, podcast host or correspondent. Instead of emailing the general email for the news outlet, contact a specific person who has covered similar stories. You're more likely to get a positive response.
- Share a brief (1-2 paragraph) description of your assignment: Send an email with a brief greeting such as, "I read your piece on [insert topic] and thought you might be interested in my recent Farmer-to-Farmer volunteer service in [insert country]."
- Clearly state that you are speaking for yourself as a Farmer-to-Farmer volunteer who participated in a CRS-managed program and that you are not speaking on behalf of CRS or USAID.
- Forward this email to us! We count press pitches as outreach even if they are not ultimately picked up, so please forward your pitch email to farmertofarmer@crs.org.

INTERVIEW TIPS

- Plan your key messages/answers in advance. Typical questions you could be asked:
 - How did you hear about F2F and get to be a volunteer with CRS? What skills/area of expertise did you share?
 - Where did you go? What did you do? What was the experience like for you?
 - What are the challenges faced by farmers where you went? Will they be able to overcome these challenges?
 - Is F2F helping these farmers? How?
- Explicitly say that you were a volunteer participant in a CRS-managed F2F program and that your views do not necessarily reflect the views of CRS or USAID.

PRESENTATION TIPS AND TRICKS

Giving a presentation about your F2F assignment is a fantastic way to raise public awareness about U.S. overseas development programs, reach out to future potential F2F volunteers (especially first-time volunteers and volunteers from underrepresented backgrounds in the F2F program), and to share your F2F experience with your broader community. Below are a few tips for preparing your presentation:

- Create a short PowerPoint (5-7 slides with text, plus any additional photos) to structure your presentation, including:
 - An introduction to F2F as a whole, as your audience may be unfamiliar with the program. See the “F2F Talking Points” section for a brief description of the CRS-implemented F2F program.
 - Highlights or key moments from your F2F volunteer assignment, such as:
 - ✓ Your greatest accomplishment during the assignment
 - ✓ How you overcame a challenging moment
 - ✓ Lessons learned through your assignment
 - ✓ Recommendations that you made to the host organization at the conclusion of your volunteer assignment
 - ✓ How your assignment connects to the “bigger picture” of the F2F program (ex: increased economic growth, food security, and agricultural development in assignment countries)
 - ✓ A person who had a significant impact on you during your assignment
- Mention how to volunteer: If you or someone that you know is interested in volunteering for CRS’ F2F program, please direct them to visit: <https://farmertofarmer.crs.org/assignment/>

OUTREACH EXAMPLES



Valerie Varco · 1st
Business Planning and Strategy Specialist
3w · 🌐

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In August of last year, I traveled to Nepal to provide guidance to Munaa Krishna Limited on their marketing and brand strategy as a [Farmer-to-Farmer Program](#) volunteer with [Catholic Relief Services](#).

I'm thrilled to read about Munaa's progress as well as have the hard work of Yubaraj Gurung (not on LinkedIn), [Divya Pandey](#), and other members of the team recognized.

Munaa buys directly from Nepalese farmers and sells their products through their chain of grocery stores in Kathmandu and Pokhara. Essentially, they're creating a retail outlet and distribution system for farmers and small food-based businesses united under the principle of a fair price from farm to fork (fair pay for farmers and an affordable price for customers).

Furthermore, they're creating a profitable option for farmers to grow popular, indigenous crops rather than problematic, imported ones.

Click on the link below to read more about the impact they're having as well as their plans for the future.

[#agriculture](#) [#farmers](#) [#F2F](#) [#nepalifood](#) [#naturalfoods](#) [#nepal](#) [#marketlinkages](#) [#inclusivemarkets](#)



Farmer-to-Farmer Nepal Host Impact Story - Catholic Relief Services Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F)

farmertofarmer.crs.org · 2 min read



DeVonne Jackson Perez is in Mpigi, Uganda
August 1 · 🌐

...

Shared a sound bite or two with [@nycfoodpolicy](#) about my recent teaching trip to Kampala 🌐

"Without a doubt, urban farming in Kampala has the potential to contribute to sustainability and improve local food access, but the answer isn't that simple. I wish food security were only about educating the farmer to grow the food and getting the food to the consumer's plate, but there are so many branches on the tree of connectivity. Farmers need ongoing technical help, they need tools, tractors, irrigation systems, cold storage, trucks, funding, wifi to research. They need proper pest management and soil assessments, they need marketing and promotion skills, and the list goes on, to maintain a food system that works and will continue to do so. Kampala faces water scarcity issues, which can impact the viability of urban farming. Efficient water management systems, such as rainwater harvesting and drip irrigation, are implemented to reduce reliance on municipal water sources but they are not enough."



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Interview with DeVonne Jackson Perez, Urban Farmer

written by NYC Food Policy Editor · July 12, 2023



61

1 comment 3 shares



Sushil Paudyal, CRS F2F volunteer, speaking with Bosco Kajianiako, the coordinator of the Balawoli Milk Production Cooperative. *Mountaga Drame for CRS*



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