Dignified storytelling

The Dignified Storytelling HANDBOOK

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Please see Annex C for more information about each of these organisations.

The guidance included in this Dignified Storytelling Handbook has been synthesised from a series of Consultations as well as existing resources on ethical storytelling and communications in development and does not necessarily represent or reflect the official policy or position of the main partners of Dignified Storytelling. The Dignified Storytelling Handbook is not intended to take the place of your organisation's ethical guidelines, standards, codes of conduct and/or policies. Further, laws related to privacy and consent vary in different countries and for different professions, and all relevant international, regional, national, or local laws and policies governing issues related to storytelling, or similar approaches of sharing and disseminating stories or information, should be followed.

Acronyms

ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
DPO	Disabled Persons Organisation
FRIDA	Young Feminist Fund
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation (European Union)
GFC	Global Fund for Children
GIS	Geographic Information System
GSMA	The GSM Associations
HF	Hashoo Foundation
I4D	Innovation for Development
INGOs	International Non-governmental Organisations
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IUCN NL	International Union for Conservation of Nature (Netherlands)
LGPD	Lei Geral de Proteção de Dados (Brazil)
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MOFAIC	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
NCGC	Northern Council for Global Cooperation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
PDPA	Personal Data Protection Act (Singapore)
PIPL	Personal Information Protection Law (China)
SAIH	Norwegian Students' and Academics' International Assistance Fund
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TEGAs	Technology Enabled Girl Ambassadors (Girl Effect)
TFS	The Freedom Story
TRRC	Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission
UN	United Nations
UNAOC	United Nations Alliance of Civilizations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN Human Rights	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
USD	United States Dollar
WWF NL	World Wildlife Fund (Netherlands)

Preface

Storytelling sits at the heart of the human experience, enriching our understanding of the world and of one another. Stories connect us, unite us, and remind us that we are more alike than we are different.

In the humanitarian and development contexts, storytelling has always played a central role in facilitating change and driving action. Whether through stories that highlight the need for advocacy for pressing global issues, or through narratives that help organizations engage with donors, the practice of storytelling has been instrumental in delivering meaningful impact and outcomes.

The United Arab Emirates is leading by example in its ongoing efforts to bring communities together in the pursuit of mutual respect and human progress. Dignified Storytelling, led by Dubai Cares, Expo 2020 Dubai and the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, is one such initiative seeking to uphold our country's vision of furthering human dignity around the world, in this case through the development of an ecosystem that fosters a shared understanding and practice of storytelling.

Responsible and dignified storytelling will continue to play an enabling role in international humanitarian and development efforts. The impact of these efforts will be amplified and will last a lifetime, creating a new legacy, in parallel with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and meeting our responsibilities to Agenda 2030. These efforts will light the path towards a more human future and inspire storytellers around the world to write a fresh chapter in the history of humanitarian intervention.

To achieve this vision, we need to unite under a shared commitment to tackling irresponsible storytelling. To that end, we invite everyone – from storytellers and content creators to governments and international agencies as well as civil society activists – to join us in this effort to instil a clear understanding and practice of storytelling that brings us together and reminds us of our shared humanity.

This Dignified Storytelling Handbook is designed as an invaluable tool for storytellers. Offering critical information in the form of best practices, do's and don'ts, and hands-on advice, it has been created to enhance understanding, empower storytellers, and make dignified storytelling a common practice in and for communities across the world.

With best wishes,

H.E. Reem Al Hashimy

UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation
Director General,
Expo 2020 Dubai
Chairperson, Dubai Cares

Dr. Tariq Al Gurg

Chief Executive Officer and Vice-Chairman
Dubai Cares

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BACKGROUND ON **DIGNIFIED STORYTELLING**

Background on **Dignified Storytelling**

> **Stories can help orient the wider public to the realities of the complex contexts where development work takes place.**

What stories are told – and how they are told – matters.

Storytelling is a powerful communication tool in global development. Stories – any narrative account told through still or moving visual images, audio recordings, and/or in written form and shared through any platform – evoke emotion and connect us across geographies and backgrounds. Stories can provide an avenue for understanding different perspectives and serve as an impetus for action.

Within development contexts, stories are often used as a platform for advocacy and awareness-building and a way to share information on issues and current events. Stories can help orient the wider public to the realities of the complex contexts where development work takes place. Storytelling is also a way for organisations to emotionally connect with potential supporters in an increasingly competitive fundraising landscape.

Effective communication is central to good storytelling that captures people's attention, sheds new light on important issues, and brings people together in our shared humanity.

If told irresponsibly, however, stories can exacerbate the challenges of development and humanitarian work and fail to lead audiences to deeper and more nuanced perspectives on issues of global importance. Inaccurate or one-dimensional storytelling practices exploit contributors, impeding progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which have human dignity at their core.[1] The 17 SDGs represent global goals, developed through a consultative process, for achieving inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development for the people and the planet. Dignified Storytelling holds that we all have a role to play in achieving the SDGs and making the world a better place for future generations. Storytelling

[1] Dignified Storytelling uses the term "contributors" to generally refer to people in the stories (whether a film, photograph, interview, or other narrative account). In doing so, it follows the example of the network Bond and journalistic traditions, seeking to highlight a more active role than that implied by the terms "subject" or "beneficiary."

practices that foster agency and empowerment – amplifying voices that may otherwise go unheard – can inspire us to take individual and collective action towards the SDGs. Dignified storytelling also has an important role to play in communicating out to the wider world the progress being made for a more prosperous, equitable world.

Irresponsible storytelling perpetuates stereotypes by showing only one aspect of a person or community, and in doing so, can further bias, discrimination, and social stigma. If not approached with sensitivity and care, storytelling runs the risk of putting contributors in mental and physical danger; for example, through re-traumatisation in the sharing or a failure to protect identities in the publishing. Stories that depict contributors as passive recipients or only victims limit people's rights and their perceived and actual agency, contributing to inequitable systems.

Under pressure to mobilise resources, produce content, or attract viewership, at times organisations and individuals fall back on storytelling tactics intended to elicit pity or other strong emotions in hopes that that audiences will contribute resources to an organisation – or click on, read, or share a story. These stories are often based on overly simplified, or overly sensationalised, formulaic narratives that subtly – and sometimes explicitly – maintain uneven, status quo power dynamics and stereotypes. They often appropriate, misrepresent, or silence the voices of the very people and communities whose stories the storyteller purports to tell.

Research focused on capturing contributors' perspectives of their depiction in development communication materials is few and far between.[2] While the focus and findings of the few available studies varies, there are also common themes that emerge. For one, several studies note that the contributor research participants often had a sophisticated understanding of why communication materials were being created, whether fundraising or information sharing. Furthermore, an often-expressed sentiment amongst participants was that they would like to see more nuanced communications, containing fuller stories and with greater diversity of representation. The study, "The People in the Pictures: Vital Perspectives on Save the Children's image-making," found that, somewhat surprisingly, there were no calls from contributors to not show negative portrayals at all; however, most people expressed the desire to tell their own stories in their own way and not be seen stereotypically.[3]

The Dignified Storytelling initiative grew out of the need for additional resources to help storytellers and organisations shift to partnership-based storytelling practices and to tell fuller, more nuanced stories that prioritise human dignity – our inherent value and worth as human beings.[4] Supported by Dubai Cares, Expo 2020 Dubai, and the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MOFAIC), Dignified Storytelling seeks to foster a common understanding of how storytelling can uphold the dignity of all persons.

Dignified Storytelling maintains that when we begin to tell stories differently, our mindsets change. When that happens, broader positive development, based in human dignity, becomes possible. Dignified Storytelling seeks to contribute to an environment of positivity that strengthens long-term relationships between the public and the development sectors, and between all those involved in storytelling processes and represented in the end products. Dignified Storytelling aims to amplify the voices of contributors, especially those who often go unheard, and to influence positive social change.

One component of Dignified Storytelling has been the consultative development of this Dignified Storytelling Handbook, which is intended as a practical and accessible guide for a wide variety of storytellers and organisations.

The first phase of Dignified Storytelling will culminate at Expo 2020 Dubai, a global destination bringing the world together to be inspired, learn, innovate, and create progress. Expo 2020 Dubai will provide the platform to showcase the importance of dignified storytelling across development themes and sectors through a series of events taking place during the six-month Expo and including the Dignified Storytelling Forum in December 2021. Beyond Expo 2020 Dubai, Dignified Storytelling anticipates a further legacy phase focused on advocacy, policy guidance, research, and capacity development.

[2] The report "You've been Reframed: How ought beneficiaries be represented in fundraising materials?" (Crombie, 2020) lists only eight published studies focused on contributor perspectives, providing a useful summary of the key findings of each.

[3] Siobhan Warrington and Jess Crombie,"The People in the Pictures: Vital Perspectives on Save the Children's Image Making," (London: Save the Children, 2017). This is also a finding in the report published by Radi-Aid "Which image do you Prefer? A Study of Visual Communication in six African countries," (Girling, 2018).

[4] See the full definition of "dignity" from Global Dignity on page 12.

Methodology

The guidance included in the Dignified Storytelling Handbook has been compiled from the following sources:

- A desk review of the literature related to ethical storytelling and communications in development, including research, articles, and organisational guidelines. Please see the “References” and “Additional Reading” sections for lists of key resources used and related to dignified storytelling.
- A series of six online Consultations, held between October 2020 and May 2021 with participation from 144 individuals affiliated with 116 different entities, including: international development agencies, foundations, charities, corporations, International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), universities, and media companies as well as freelance photographers, videographers, filmmakers, photojournalists, and journalists. Please refer to Annex A for a summary of these Consultations; participating individuals and the organisations they work for are listed in Annex B.
- Expert interviews with 16 professionals in the field of development and humanitarian communications and storytelling, conducted in July 2020.
- Twenty-two story examples and reflections as shared by the organisations and individuals listed in Annex C.

Limitations

In gathering information for the Dignified Storytelling Handbook, emphasis was placed on bringing together a wide and deep, multi-sectoral network of development and humanitarian practitioners, who were able to describe their experiences working closely with their partners and contributors on a regular basis to find, shape, and tell stories. The Dignified Storytelling Handbook summarises the outcomes of these discussions and of existing resources on communications in development. In doing so, as a synthesis document, the Dignified Storytelling Handbook is one step removed from the contributors, who are nonetheless central to much of the content.

Invitations to the Consultations were open to all, advertised through direct outreach and through Dignified Storytelling’s social media channels and with participating individuals encouraged to share the invitation within their networks. As much as possible, geographic and organisational diversity was pursued; however, the Consultations were conducted in English and hosted online, resulting in stronger participation from those working in international organisations and companies. The Dignified Storytelling Handbook will be initially translated from English into three other languages (Arabic, French, and Spanish) to be more inclusive of target audiences.

The development of this Handbook has been a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral undertaking. Given the wide scope of the guidance, it does not claim to be an exhaustive resource, but should instead be viewed as a step in the process of advocating and educating for the uptake of dignified storytelling approaches.

Dignified Storytelling recognises that there is a need for additional research and engagement focused on specific situations and stakeholder groups, including contributors’ opinions on the topic of storytelling. The possibility of future advocacy, research, and training activities on the application of the Dignified Storytelling Principles to wider audiences, including story contributors, is being considered by Dignified Storytelling and its partners.


THE DIGNIFIED
STORYTELLING
PRINCIPLES

The DignifiedStorytelling **Principles**

> **Dignified Storytelling upholds human dignity, a quality that every person is born with. We all matter equally.**

The ten Dignified Storytelling Principles work together to describe, or define, “dignified storytelling.” As with this Handbook as a whole, the Dignified Storytelling Principles have been developed through consultations with storytellers and communication experts as well as the existing literature around ethical storytelling and communications in development. They serve as the framework for action and the definition of the term.

Dignified storytelling upholds human dignity, a quality that every person is born with. We all matter equally. Because everyone is equal in their humanity, we all deserve and have the right to be treated well and respectfully. In turn, we all have a responsibility to uphold everyone else’s dignity through words and action.[5]

Our sense of whether our dignity is honoured or violated is influenced by many factors, including culture, circumstances, and the ways we are treated. Words and actions can have an enormous impact on a person’s sense of dignity – which is one of the reasons it is so important to gather, tell, and share stories in ways that uphold and do not violate a person’s humanity throughout the process.

The Dignified Storytelling Principles can help guide us towards storytelling that is grounded in deep respect, full transparency, and social responsibility. The Principles are interconnected and each of the principles serves as a part of the whole.

To illustrate each Principle, Story Spotlights (short case studies) are included throughout the Handbook. The Story Spotlights are organised by Principle, but with significant cross-over application across the Handbook.

[5] Definition courtesy of Global Dignity, an organisation working to unite everyone with the belief that we all deserve to live a life of dignity. Please see https://globaldignity.org/ for more information.

1 IT'S NOT MY STORY.

2 I DO NO HARM.

3 WE ARE ALL MULTI-DIMENSIONAL.

4 CONSENT IS MORE THAN PAPERWORK.

5 I AM BIASED (REPEAT).

6 I DO MY HOMEWORK.

7 I AM EMPATHETIC.

8 I PROTECT OTHERS' DATA LIKE IT'S MY OWN.

9 TRUTH OVER HEADLINES.

10 A STORY CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DIGNIFIED STORYTELLING HANDBOOK

Introduction to the **Dignified Storytelling Handbook**

> **The Handbook provides suggestions of issues to consider and actionable steps for putting the Dignified Storytelling Principles into practice.**

What is the Dignified Storytelling Handbook?

The Dignified Storytelling Handbook is a resource to help storytellers and organisations promote and employ storytelling practices that are grounded in a deep respect for human dignity. The Handbook provides suggestions of issues to consider and actionable steps for putting the Dignified Storytelling Principles into practice. It also offers points for consideration when working with some types of groups where additional considerations are required due to sensitive circumstances or characteristics. Throughout the Dignified Storytelling Handbook, short case studies, titled “Story Spotlights,” are provided as concrete illustrations of aspects of dignified storytelling.

The guidelines included in the Handbook are designed to be broadly applicable to storytelling in development and humanitarian contexts, providing a framework and ideas for reflection and action. As cultures, situations, organisations, and types of communication differ, localisation will always be needed to appropriately apply the Dignified Storytelling Principles in a specific context. The Handbook can be used as a starting point for the necessary discussions amongst storytellers and other stakeholders and within organisations.

Why do we need the Dignified Storytelling Handbook?

Thanks to the internet and social media, we are consuming and telling stories more than ever before. With this, comes great opportunity to connect with each other, to empathise across cultures and geographies, and to think deeply about the complex issues that shape our shared world.

However, the influx and demand for information at such rapid rates – as well as the competition for audiences or for funds – also results in increasing pressure on content creators and organisations to quickly and frequently generate stories. With this, there is often little guidance on navigating the values-based decisions embedded in the gathering and telling of stories, particularly those involving complicated or sensitive circumstances.

Storytelling is an act of power, and all people involved – from donors to content gatherers, creators and managers, to contributors – need to have the opportunity to exert agency, choice, and voice. Often, however, the organisation creating the stories and the donor are the ones in control, and the contributor (ironically, as the central figure in the story) is the silent partner. Dignified Storytelling seeks to shift these inherent power dynamics towards a more equitable balance.

Audiences can be more than just passive recipients of content and have a responsibility to think critically about the stories they take in, asking questions about who they benefit and holding storytellers accountable for dignified storytelling through their feedback, reviews, and financial support.

Stories that are developed using the Dignified Storytelling Principles are stronger, more nuanced, and ultimately help to build better connections with communities of support, contributors, and internal stakeholders.

The Dignified Storytelling Handbook is a tool to encourage all those involved in story generation and consumption towards thoughtful reflection, the assessment of risk, open and honest dialogue, and renewed innovation and creativity in the process and end products of the stories we tell.

Who is the Dignified Storytelling Handbook for?

The Dignified Storytelling Handbook is for everyone who is a storyteller or who works with storytellers, particularly those telling stories within development and humanitarian contexts. This list includes but is not limited to: policymakers, programmes and communications staff in international development agencies, INGOs/NGOs, charities, foundations, and corporations; freelance content creators; journalists; photojournalists; media and communications specialists; photographers; videographers; donors; influencers; and audiences.

If you consume, gather, make, facilitate, live, create, or tell stories that touch on issues of global and local importance, then we hope you will utilise this Handbook.

Children participating in a playful activity as part of the Second Chance Program. Credit: Luminos Fund - Ethiopia

How do I use the Dignified Storytelling Handbook?

Each of us brings our own perspectives, personalities, and cultural backgrounds to the stories we consume or create. The Dignified Storytelling Handbook is not intended to prescribe a "one-fit" point of view for everyone – rather it seeks to offer tips and tools to help thoughtfully and critically examine stories, particularly those told from development and humanitarian settings, and to offer suggestions to guide value-based decisions and partnerships in storytelling.

Within this broader purpose, there are several ways in which you might use this Handbook as a reference tool for advocacy, for training, for policy development within your organisation, or for your own storytelling practice.

For example, the overarching Dignified Storytelling Principles may be a useful reference point as you discuss values and expectations with external contractors. Or perhaps, as a content creator, you can gain inspiration from exploring the Story Spotlights found throughout the Handbook. If you are writing a Terms of Reference to hire an interpreter, see the section on Working with Interpreters or Translators. Or if you need to develop a Risk Assessment, you might consult the textbox under Principle #2 on "I do no harm".

> **Each of us brings our own perspectives, personalities, and cultural backgrounds to the stories we consume or create.**

You can find a hyperlinked list of all features of the Handbook – including Story Spotlights, thematic textboxes, templates, and tools – in the Table of Contents.

In short, you do not need to read this Handbook from the front cover to the back, although you are certainly welcome to do so. Instead, feel free to jump to the sections relevant to your work and the Story Spotlights that catch your attention. You are also encouraged to come back to the Handbook repeatedly as issues or questions come up in conversations and the important work you do. The Handbook itself should be considered a first edition, to be updated and expanded on a regular basis.

Woman in Nepal. Portraits can be taken in many ways, from close up and further away, and while it's not critical to show context, it certainly has the value of adding meaning to your image.
Credit: Lola Akinmade Åkerström

GUIDELINES FOR **DIGNIFIED STORYTELLING**

Guidelines for **Dignified Storytelling**

> **Dignified Storytelling is an ongoing and evolving practice.**

The general guidelines included in this section take each Dignified Storytelling Principle in turn – unpacking what it means, suggesting action points for application, and spotlighting stories as examples of what elements of the Principle might look like in practice.

The suggested guidelines are intended to be broadly applicable across sectors and many types of communication. They will, however, need to be contextualised for specific contexts, communities, individuals, and types of storytelling through thoughtful reflection and discussion with all those involved in the story-making. The guidance is not exhaustive, but rather represent points of consensus and learnings from the series of Dignified Storytelling Consultations and existing resources. Dignified storytelling is an ongoing and evolving practice. The hope is that the resources and checklists included in this Handbook can serve as tools towards a wider shift in practices, based on the Principles, that foster a storytelling culture centred on human dignity and partnerships.

PRINCIPLE:
Amplifies contributors' voices and experiences, honouring their wishes on what story is told and how it is told.

It's not my story.
Principle #1

Respecting the inherent dignity and full humanity of contributors is at the heart of dignified storytelling. Contributors should be considered and treated as equal partners and co-creators throughout the storytelling process with the goal of elevating their voices and perspectives. They are the experts in their own stories.

Prioritising the active involvement of contributors means encouraging their participation at all stages of the process – from story planning to development to publication. Taking the time to build relationships and work with contributors acknowledges that each individual is a whole person with agency in their story. Getting to know their story is part of showing the respect and care that each person deserves; it can also help content gatherers to better understand the context and people involved, resulting in more effective, impactful – and perhaps surprising – stories.

To move away from predictable narratives requires an openness to hearing new and different stories. Building some flexibility into content gathering plans can leave room for listening more deeply and openly to contributors' wishes and the stories they tell.

If the content gatherer is coming from outside the community or country, working with contributors through community-based partners and local creatives is one way to build longer term relationships with potentially smoother communication through a common language and cultural background. All partners and potential contributors need to feel comfortable challenging story ideas or content-gathering practices that may be too risky for contributors or are potentially relationship-damaging.

Contributors are more than a case study or "sound bite" and can be insightful and powerful spokespeople for issues; indeed, communications in development should enable people to consider and speak out on issues that are important to their lives.[6],[7] To realise the active involvement of contributors requires that storytellers work closely with contributors a step at a time – actively and openly listening, providing technical advice, and ensuring that safety measures, including social and emotional support, are in place.

[6]Bond People in the Pictures Group, "Putting the People in the Pictures First: Ethical guidelines for the collection and use of content (images and stories)," (London: Bond, 2019).

[7]United Nations, "Communications for Development: Strengthening the Effectiveness of the United Nations," (New York: UNDP, 2011).

Guidelines for Principle #1:

Dignified storytelling amplifies contributors' voices and experiences, honouring their wishes on what story is told and how it is told.

TO HELP PUT PRINCIPLE #1 INTO PRACTICE, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Plan for the fact that you don't know exactly what story you will be telling before you get there, approaching each assignment ready to listen to contributors and to discover the narrative with them.
- When story gathering, adopt an attitude of self-reflection and openness to hearing new stories. All stories begin with listening, and content gathering should be pursued from a place of humility, kindness, and curiosity.
- All communication with potential contributors needs to be in a language they understand, using vocabulary that is easy to comprehend, and in a setting where they feel comfortable. Communication from contributors to the story gatherer should also be in a language that the contributors feel comfortable using, with culturally appropriate interpretation as needed.
- Build time into storytelling workplans to be able to move forward at the pace of the contributors. Informed, full, and freely given consent processes take time. It also takes time for people to tell their own stories, particularly if it is their first opportunity to craft and tell their story.
- Bring contributors into decision-making processes and let them determine how to present themselves.
  - For example, discuss contributors' preferences on the time and place for interviews that are comfortable and convenient for them. Contributors should have a say in how they would like to be photographed or interviewed in terms of their clothing, the emotion(s) depicted, the location, and the overall narrative arch or tone.
  - During story development and finalisation, seek contributor perspectives on the design and selection of the images, captions, and/or quotes that are used.
- Whenever possible, use contributors' verbatim words and voice in story messaging and captioning.

Rehema looks fondly at her son, Brighton, who is 14 months old. Rehema lives and works in Kilifi County, coastal Kenya. Credit: Jennifer Fearnley for The Good Side

- Create a safe space for people to tell their stories by putting in place appropriate safeguarding measures, in part by ensuring that social emotional support is available for contributors if needed, ideally through local service providers or community groups.[8]
- Engage with contributors to assess any challenges that may be preventing them from telling their stories. Where gaps in skills or confidence are identified, take steps to address these barriers; for example, perhaps through storytelling training, whether provided formally or informally, directly or in connection with local content creators or organisations.
- Carefully consider ways to recognise contributors for their time and work through means that are not exploitative and that do not reinforce an unequal power dynamic between storyteller and contributor. Compensation may be appropriate in some situations, where in others it could run the risk of impacting consent, expectations, or authenticity.
  - For many reasons, organisations generally avoid financial compensation for story sharing; it can unduly influence the story that is told and may result in contributors feeling indebted to the organisation. In some cases, however, a contributor may be engaged by an organisation in a longer-term role requiring significant time and effort, in which case financial or in-kind compensation is likely appropriate.
  - There are ways that organisations and storytellers can and should demonstrate gratitude for contributors; for example, through appropriate acknowledgements and recognition as agreed upon with the contributor, sharing back final products, and taking care that contributors' needs are met during the story-gathering.
  - Do not confuse the question of appropriate recognition measures with the right to receive services. A potential contributor's decision on whether to participate in a request for a story should never impact their ability to participate in an organisation's programmes, or to receive services or aid.
- Look for opportunities to showcase the voices of local content creators – including artists, writers, and journalists – by hiring them or by using your platform or network to showcase their work.[9]

[8] Safeguarding within development and humanitarian sectors generally refers to the steps taken to protect people from any harm – including all forms of exploitation, abuse, harassment, or socioemotional distress – that may come from contact with an organisation's staff or programmes.

[9] There are many databases available to locate diverse talent pools based in countries around the world; for example Women Photograph (www.womenphotograph.com), The Everyday Projects (https://www.everydayprojects.org/), Women Who Draw (https://www.womenwhodraw.com/), and the African Photojournalism Database (https://www.worldpressphoto.org/programs/develop/african-photojournalism-database).

Story Spotlight – **Mobile Stories**

The GSM Association (GSMA) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Portraits of the Mobile Stories contributors (GSMA).

Explore all 18 Mobile Stories at: **http://gsma.com/mobilestories**

Behind the Scenes

In March 2020, the GSMA and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) asked Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Barranquilla, Colombia, to share about the importance of mobile connectivity in their lives. They told their own stories using the medium of their choice, with control over the creative direction and narrative.

Colombia is usually the first stop for Venezuelans leaving their country as they seek to escape the unfolding political and economic crisis. It has now become the second home for 1.8 million Venezuelans and the largest hosting country in the region.[10]

The GSMA Mobile for Humanitarian Innovation programme works to accelerate the delivery and impact of digital humanitarian assistance, improving access to and use of life-enhancing mobile-enabled services during humanitarian and disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

Contributors told their own stories using the medium of their choice, with control over the creative direction and narrative.

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- Regular discussions, including feedback from the contributors, were held with the project facilitators. These discussions allowed the different project partners to come to agreements on the parameters for the number of stories developed and the desired contributor demographics, with an aim at gender balance and the inclusion of diverse backgrounds.
- The stories, as told directly by the contributors, offered a new and different way for the GSMA to learn about mobile usage, preferences, and challenges faced.
- The GSMA and UNHCR provided workshops to support contributors in shaping their stories in their chosen format (photography, video, audio, and writing). The result is a series of topical stories told through diverse and distinctive styles and mediums.
- In facilitating the storytelling, the GSMA and UNHCR sought to find an appropriate balance between participants owning their stories and "hands-on" support that would allow for quality, viewer-ready final materials.
- The experience highlighted the skills needed by content gathers engaging with refugees and other displaced populations, including strong on-the-ground networks and partnerships and the ability to help contributors unpack their own stories.

[10] UNHCR, "Operational Data Portal," (January 2021), Country - Colombia (unhcr.org).

Story Spotlight – **Hear Her Voice** *The Girl Effect*

Shiyona, a TEGA based in India and pictured in this Spotlight, shares her stories at: **https://voices.girleffect.org/stories/girls/shiyona**

Shiyona, a TEGA based in India, shares her stories of life in lockdown (The Girl Effect).

Behind the Scenes

The challenges adolescent girls face often go underreported or are described on their behalf. Without the inclusion of their perspectives, however, solutions meant to support them are not as effective as they could be. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed this issue; at a time when accurate data about girls' lives was needed the most, the pandemic coverage often lacked the voice of adolescent girls, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

Girl Effect's Hear Her Voice project provides a platform for 29 young women, living in six countries – including Nigeria, Malawi, Rwanda, USA, India, and Bangladesh – to tell their stories, in their own words, of how COVID-19 has impacted their lives.

Girl Effect asked their Technology Enabled Girl Ambassadors (TEGAs) to turn their mobile phone cameras on themselves, keeping digital diaries to report on life in lockdown from April until September 2020. TEGAs are young women who, in pre COVID-19 pandemic days, had been working with Girl Effect to conduct interviews with their communities to collect real-time insights into the lives of their peers.

The Hear Her Voice contributors self-reported via the bespoke TEGA research app, responding to open questions in seven semi-structured questionnaires (administered over a couple months) to track their experiences through the pandemic.

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

While the lives of girls and women have been amongst the hardest hit by COVID-19, very little was heard from the girls themselves, particularly in the early days of the pandemic. Hear Her Voice sought to explicitly change this dynamic, putting the control in the girls' hands by providing them with a platform to share their messages.

- Storytelling provided an outlet for girls to process the effects of COVID-19 on their lives; in the words of one TEGA, Rashmi: "I was really happy when I was chosen for this because I could speak about my experiences and the things that I've been facing because of COVID."
- The methodology allowed for the collection of rich data – generated by the girls themselves – to devise appropriate solutions to their challenges.
- The project also provided a safe and agile way to collect information and data when face-to-face methods became unsafe due to the pandemic.
- Rigorous safeguarding measures for the girls were put in place, including a risk assessment prior to the research and protocols for connecting the girls to needed support services during the process.
- The girls, with whom Girl Effect has a longer-term relationship through the TEGA programme, received payments for the time and creative energy they exerted doing the self- interviews over a six-month period.
- Informed digital consent was obtained through the TEGA app, which included audio recordings of the terms and quiz questions to ensure contributor understanding. Prior to publishing, the film extracts were also shared with the TEGAs again prior to reaffirm consent.

Meet the Hear Her Voice contributors and listen to their stories at: **https://voices.girleffect.org/girls**

Top Tips for Principle #1

- **Involve contributors as co-creators in the story-making, working closely with them to determine what story is told and how it is told.**
- **Find ways to "pass the microphone" to contributors so that their voices are not appropriated, silenced, or controlled. To do this requires creating a safe space for their stories and, often, some degree of training or confidence-building.**

PRINCIPLE:
Applies a “do no harm” ethic to all actions.

I do no harm.
Principle #2

Dignified storytelling maintains that the best interest and safety of the contributor(s) and their communities must always be placed above any other consideration in storytelling. The well-being of the people in the stories – and the communities they belong to – is more important than any need for advocacy or the promotion of issues, causes, or programmes.

Accordingly, dignified storytelling avoids behaviour or information-sharing that could cause or aggravate risk, harm, or mistreatment of any individual or group. Assessing whether a story could result in a risk of harm, retribution, or loss to the person, family, or community is essential on an iterative basis throughout the storytelling process – starting with the planning stage and through gathering, developing, processing, and publishing the story.

To be truly informative and accurate, the process of assessing risk should be done in collaboration with all those involved in the story-making or impacted by the story.

Specific groups of people are at greater risk and may require more comprehensive measures to safeguard against risk. Advice for working with a number of these groups is included in this Handbook in the section on Additional Guidance for Some Specific Groups.

If significant risks are identified during the initial risk assessment, potential contributors should not even be contacted if unable to ensure their safety, or if there is not enough information to make an informed determination on the level of risk.

Guidelines for Principle #2:

Dignified storytelling applies a “do no harm” ethic to all actions.

TO HELP PUT PRINCIPLE #2 INTO PRACTICE, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- The initial risk assessment, during planning stages, should consider:
  - The implications of telling a story or using an image on both the individual and the wider communities they represent, either geographically or through their identification as part of a group or sub-culture.
  - All elements of risk, including social reprisal, emotional distress, anger, and other potential negative responses to story publication.
- Contexts evolve so the process of assessing risk needs to be ongoing through all stages of storytelling process, beginning in the planning and then continuing through gathering, developing, processing, and publishing the content.
- To accurately assess risk, do so in collaboration and communication with the organisations and people closest to the situation on the ground.
- In some contexts, cameras should have their geographic information system (GIS) setting turned off so that images do not contain retrievable information on the exact location of the photograph. This metadata can also be erased in some photo editing software like Photoshop, if necessary.
- If working for an organisation, make sure you have robust policies on risk identification and response.
  - For example, some possible responses to risk may include: refraining from publishing children’s real or full names, concealing the identity of survivors of gender-based violence, avoiding specific location details, or holding publication for a later date.
  - Risk assessments need to be culturally responsive and will vary depending on the context and specific people involved. The examples listed above are possible mitigation strategies that could be considered during a culturally-specific risk assessment process.
- If there is risk of harm, retribution, or loss to the person, family, or community, choose NOT to tell the story. This decision will ideally be reached in collaboration with the potential contributors and other partners; however, if you or your organisation decides to hold the story, communicate the rationale and decision with all involved stakeholders.

Amudat, Uganda:
Agropastoral women harvest greens in a junior Farmer Field School demonstration farm.
Credit: FAO / Luis Tato

Thematic Textbox
Conducting a Risk Assessment with your Organisation

One way that organisations can start identifying potential risks is by asking themselves a series of questions. This process should involve a range of different personnel and can be done through workshops, a working group, or possibly by commissioning an external expert to help facilitate the assessment.

Questions to help think through potential risks during storytelling may include (but not be limited to):

- What consequences could individuals or groups face for contributing to your story?
- Are the potential risks greater for certain groups or individuals that you work with? Do existing procedures help mitigate these risks?
- Are there clear procedures in place for how content is collected and approved before publishing? Are these procedures well-understood by all personnel and being followed consistently?
- What risks do current processes for storing and filing images and information pose to your organisation or to contributors?
- What role do partners or other third parties have in your communications process? Do they have the knowledge, capacity, and experience to implement any relevant policies or procedures?
- What areas of your operations are higher-risk and therefore likely to require additional checks and monitoring?

Your organisation may wish to use a risk rating matrix like the one pictured here to help assess the levels of risk in terms of likelihood that it will happen and consequence if it does happen. From there, the most effective strategies to counter these risks can be put into place for the well-being of all involved.

		CONSEQUENCE		
		Low	Medium	High
LIKELIHOOD	High	Medium	High	High
	Medium	Low	Medium	High
	Low	Low	Low	Medium

Adapted from Guidance on Ethical Decision-Making Framework for Communications, Australian Council for International Development, 2019

Story Spotlight – **The Right to Be and Belong** *Global Fund for Children (GFC)*

Behind the Scenes

This video letter aims to raise awareness about the experiences and rights of adolescent migrant girls, while protecting their identities and sharing a powerful message of love and support: “Your life has a lot of value. Your dreams, your experiences, and your voice matter. You are not alone.”

Migration often offers girls and young women the possibility to exercise their agency and build a dignified life. It can be an empowering strategy to gain independence, escape violence, and contribute to their families’ wellbeing. Today, adolescent girls in the Americas are on the move, and their journeys often do not coalesce into a single trajectory, experience, or story.

At the same time, due to deeply rooted gender inequalities, xenophobia, and lack of transnational protection systems, migration exposes girls and young women to multiple forms of violence. Migration translates into a series of complex and unprecedented vulnerabilities that begin in girls’ communities of origin and that are exacerbated along – and long after – the journey.

The video letter was created as part of Global Fund for Children's Adolescent Girls and Migration initiative in Central America, Mexico, and the United States. It was written and developed by local civil society organisations who are a part of the initiative and was shared to raise awareness on World Refugee Day in 2019. Due to the sensitive nature of migration in this region, it was important to respect and safeguard the identities and individual stories of the young people whom the initiative supports.

Griela, a member of a GFC partner organisation participating izn the initiative, is one of the authors of the letter (GFC).

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- The process of developing the video letter emphasised collaboration and facilitation as local leaders in Central America, Mexico, and the United States drafted the letter in their own words. GFC provided the resources to film and edit the video and then amplified the message through its various digital platforms.
- The multilingual video included contributions in English, Spanish, Tseltal, and Tsotsil.
- The final story was available in both Spanish and English.
- The principles of safety and "do no harm" were prioritised by using a creative method of storytelling – a message of solidarity written to adolescent girls, rather than featuring them – that was able to raise awareness without putting identities or lives at risk.
- The message is one of encouragement and solidarity, affirming the girls' inherent value and their ability to achieve their dreams as well as suggesting they will have allies on their way – as the letter ends, "let's walk together."

View the Transnational Network for Migrant Girls' video letter at: **https://globalfundforchildren.org/story/the-right-to-be-and-belong/**

Top Tips for Principle #2

- **Assess risk of harm to contributors as an ongoing process, conducted in collaboration with the people closest to the story.**
- **Put the safety and well-being of contributors as the highest priority. In cases of risk of harm, retribution, or loss always choose NOT to tell the story (or tell the story another way to counter the risk).**

PRINCIPLE:
Treats each individual as a whole person and every community as dynamic and multi-dimensional.

We are all multi-dimensional.

Principle #3

Dignified storytelling embraces complexity and nuance. It actively seeks opportunities to change one-sided stories about poverty and pity – in part through representing people and communities as more than just their problems. Each individual has a personality, ideas, and a voice. Each community is an ecosystem made up of many parts in constant, dynamic interaction with each other.

Dignified storytelling requires that contributors be presented as fully dimensional and capable of serving in multiple roles. We all have a multitude of different relationships, responsibilities, and roles in our lives ranging from the professional to the personal. Rather than only focusing on one aspect of these – or one circumstance or incident – dignified storytelling presents well-rounded depictions of contributors and the contexts in which they live.

It is committed to longer-term processes that acknowledge that communities and cultures evolve and change.

Dignified storytelling ensures authentic and diverse representation of groups or communities. If only one type of contributor is represented, there is a risk of promoting limited ideas about who is affected by an issue, what a community is like, or who is participating in a programme.

Dignified storytelling is more than just showing hardships or deprivations. It is about deep and balanced portrayals that enhance feelings of solidarity, connection, and empathy based on our shared humanity.

Guidelines for Principle #3:

Dignified storytelling treats each individual as a whole person and every community as dynamic and multi-dimensional.

TO HELP PUT PRINCIPLE #3 INTO PRACTICE, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Humans are not props. Pursue more in-depth stories and profiles to better capture whole personhood. This can be especially needed in the case of stories involving people from historically excluded groups.
- Use different modes of storytelling – from film to photos to audio accounts to written narratives – to address the diverse characteristics and needs of contributors.
- Check with contributors, as well as partners and staff close to the situation, to make sure that the image or story depicts an accurate representation of the issue being covered.
- Enable audiences to easily find out more about the context of the story; for example:
  - Layer content in short and long forms, for one through clearly visible links for people to access further information on the story context from different sources.
  - Use multiple channels to provide depth, context, and detail, perhaps by linking a social media post to a more in-depth interview online.

Story Spotlight – **Mama Kwanza ("Mama First")** *The Good Side*

Behind the Scenes

On the coast of Kenya lies the sprawling rural town of Ganze and the tightly-packed urban informal settlement of Kibarani, in Mombasa. Mama Kwanza tells the stories of these communities raising and educating their children against a backdrop of community, environmental, and financial hardships. Through the film, we meet the mothers who are facing these challenges head on – providing care, play-based learning, and the basic necessities that children need during the first three key years of their lives.

Mama Kwanza, which was created as part of an ethnographic study and quantitative data collection commissioned by The Kays Foundation, was designed to cast new light on the first 1,000 days of a child's life from the vantage point of families and communities.

Eunice carries her child in the opening shot of Mama Kwanza (The Good Side).

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- The film creates a balanced and respectful picture of mothers in coastal Kenya, acknowledging and understanding the hardships they face while also spotlighting good parenting, play-based learning, and strong family bonds.
- Mama Kwanza is intentional in presenting people as multi-faceted and complex. This is grounded in The Good Side's belief that this framing allows audiences to recognise themselves in the shared elements of everyday life, helping to bridge any perceived differences.
- The filmmaking process allowed ample time to talk through consent, conducted over several occasions with each contributor, so that people knew they had the option to change their minds, ask questions, or raise any concerns. These discussions also helped to build more trust and openness between the researchers, filmmakers, and participants.
- Conversations and consent were all conducted through a translator who worked closely with the Good Side team to ensure that contributors fully understood the principles of informed consent, and why it is important.
- The film was created from collaborative workshops and in-depth interviews and is told in the words of the contributors.
- First names only are used in the film to protect contributors without dehumanising them.
- The Good Side team returned to the communities to run workshops with the people who contributed and whose stories are told. They sought feedback on the film before it was seen by anybody else, thus valuing the contributors as collaborators and allowing them to enthusiastically endorse the representation of their lives.

Watch Mama Kwanza in Kiswahili and English, with English subtitles, at:

- **Full 20 minute version**
- **6 minute version**
- **Audio description version**

Falcons coming home to roost on Doyang Reservoir at sunset (Geetanjali Krishna/Sacred Groves).

Story Spotlight – **When Hunters Become Conservationists**

Geetanjali Krishna, India Story Agency for Sacred Groves

Behind the Scenes

The author, Geetanjali Krishna – an amateur nature lover and birder – first heard about how villagers living in remote areas of Nagaland in North-eastern India had transformed from being poachers to protectors in 2017.

The Amur falcons, who arrive in the hundreds of thousands to roost in Nagaland during their epic migration from Mongolia to Africa, used to be widely hunted. In fact, locals referred to the arrival of the falcons as their annual “harvest.” However, this changed within a year, following a community-based conservation intervention.

Fascinated with this dynamic turnaround, Geetanjali wanted to see it for herself. Prior to the content gathering, she did her research, speaking to ornithologists to understand the ecological importance of the Amur falcons’ migration and connecting with the conservationists who are featured in the story. The story took shape as she spent time in the village through a homestay, using local guides to visit falcon roosting sites and interviewing villagers.

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- The story shows that communities can change, grow, and shift their own collective narrative.
- It seeks to counter myths in India of Nagaland's "exoticism" through a journalistic approach that places high value on matter-of-factly reporting realities on the ground.
- The author spent significant time interacting with locals and building the relationships required to tell more nuanced stories.
- The narrative counters common stereotypes that stigmatise Naga tribes as "born hunters" – telling instead a more surprising story of people who have traditionally hunted coming to protect a species.
- It celebrates an everyday hero, Bano Haralu, who looked beyond labels to devise a conservation strategy that hinged completely on local community support.
- The story publication serves to continue positive momentum towards an initiative that provides livelihoods and the associated economic opportunities while protecting the falcon.

Read Geetanjali's story, courtesy of Sacred Groves at: **https://blog.sacredgroves.earth/when-hunters-become-conservationists/**

Top Tips for Principle #3

- **Show contributors as fully dimensional humans who fill several roles and have wide interests, personalities, and agency.**
- **If telling a story about a community or group of people, include diverse representation and context details to show more than one dimension of that community.**

Thematic Textbox / Checklist
Social Media, Travel, and Dignified Storytelling

In this age of social media and global travel, we are all often storytellers. Posting about travel on social media presents both opportunities for – and challenges to – dignified storytelling. While both travel and social media can promote connection to others across geographies and cultures, it can also be difficult to present other people and the surroundings accurately within the confines of a short social media post. Even though harm is not intended, if not thoughtfully curated, posts from travellers are often in danger of promoting stereotypical imagery, failing to uphold people's right to privacy, or exploiting power differences. There are many types of travel and many type of travellers, and the storytelling resources and knowledge at their disposal may vary widely.

The guidance included under each Principle in this Handbook (as well as for specific groups of people) is also relevant for travellers who are looking to share their experiences via social media. The checklist below can be consulted as a quick check to see that social media posts align with the Dignified Storytelling Principles.

[11]See Principle #4 for more tips on how to make sure that consent is informed and freely-given.

Social Media Checklist

- ✓ Ask yourself: "What is my intention in sharing this post?" and "Could anyone be harmed if I share this post?"
- ✓ Gain informed consent from the person in the picture and/or the caretaker. If you need help explaining why you want to take a photo and how it will be used, find an interpreter. [11]
- ✓ Know the name and background of the people portrayed and whether the information or image may be shared.
- ✓ If possible, offer the person in the photo a copy. At minimum, show them the photo for their consent.
- ✓ Avoid sweeping and simplified generalisations. Include a caption that answers who, what, where, when, and why (unless there are safety concerns, in which case, as a traveller, choose not to post the photo).
- ✓ Be respectful of different cultures and traditions, choosing not to share images that would offend local norms.
- ✓ Ask yourself: "Would I appreciate being portrayed in the same manner?"
- ✓ Avoid sensitive, vulnerable situations and locations such as hospitals and health clinics.
- ✓ Do not portray yourself as the hero in the story conveyed.
- ✓ Challenge the perceptions, bring down stereotypes!
- ✓ Use your social media presence to re-share posts from local experts, storytellers, and artists.
- ✓ If appropriate, include links in your caption or profile to where people can find longer form articles or information.

Expanded from Radi-Aid's How to Communicate the World: A Social Media Guide for Volunteers and Travellers (2017).

PRINCIPLE:
Dignified storytelling obtains informed, full, and freely given consent from contributors.

Consent is more than paperwork.

Principle #4

As the bedrock of dignified storytelling, consent from contributors must be freely given, fully informed, and obtained prior to any story gathering. Informed consent is more than just a formality or filling in forms; it is an essential and core ethic of dignified storytelling. Images and stories truly belong to whoever is represented in them, and contributors have the right to decide on the terms of their story sharing and usage.

Time must be allotted for ongoing dialogue with potential contributors that allows them to consider and meaningfully contribute to the story-gathering request. It is imperative that all involved stakeholders clearly understand the implications of their agreement to have their story – whether visual or written – collected, documented, and shared in line with any privacy or confidentiality wishes.

To be truly informed means that potential contributors understand:[12]

- **Why** the storyteller wants to film, photograph, or interview them (in other words, the purpose for the content-gathering),
- **What** the resulting communication products will be,
- **How** and **where** it will be communicated (through what channels/ mediums and to whom),
- **How long** their image and other personal information will be used by the storyteller or organisation,
- That they have a right to withdraw consent for further use at any time, and
- How they can withdraw consent.[13]

[12] Bond People in the Pictures Group, "Putting the People in the Pictures First."
[13] There are limitations to removing media from the internet, social media, and the public domain once it has been published, and these constraints must also be communicated to potential contributors.

Consent should be sought for specific purposes and should never be forced. The process of obtaining consent must be tailored depending on whether the story involves a group or individual; minor or adult; and the level of sensitivity of the situation. Steps to address the unequal power dynamic present in these conversations can be taken by thoughtfully choosing who has the conversation and where it takes place as contributors need to feel comfortable raising any concerns or questions.

Consent is not forever, and contributors need be aware of the duration of their consent and to understand their right and the process to withdraw consent at any time. Consent processes should be simple, straightforward, and grounded in clear communication.

4 CONSENT IS MORE THAN PAPERWORK.

Guidelines for Principle #4:

Dignified Storytelling obtains informed, full, and freely given consent from contributors.

TO HELP PUT PRINCIPLE #4 INTO PRACTICE, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Explanations around consent must be provided in a language understood by the contributors.
  - Interpreters should use accessible language that avoids jargon.
  - Any written forms should be translated into a language understood by potential contributors. Check with people (for example, local staff, partners, and community members) who are knowledgeable of the situation and who speak/write the language well to make sure that the forms are easy to understand.
  - Do not make assumptions around levels of literacy. Where literacy levels are a concern, use other options to capture consent agreements – for example, an audio recording.
  - In some cases – including where potential contributors (whether children, youth, or adults) do not know how to read or write, or if a form may create mistrust – it may be inappropriate to use a written form. Again, in these instances, find other ways to discuss and record consent that are acceptable to the potential contributors.
  - Consider showing examples of other similar stories to make sure contributors understand what is being suggested.
- On multiple occasions encourage potential contributors to ask questions and make sure they know that there will be no negative consequences if they choose not to participate.
- Evidence of the informed consent should be gathered; as mentioned above, this can be a signed form, a recording of verbal consent, or completion of a consent app.
- Think about consent as a process that includes several discussion points – from identifying contributors and initial conversations, to informal dialogue around the plans with contributors, to recorded formal consent, to follow-up with contributors.
- When gathering content from anyone under 18, seek the consent from the legal caregiver as well as the child. Always follow any national laws governing the specific age requirements where parent or caregiver consent is required.
- Consent processes in groups or crowds depends on the age of the people involved and whether

the context is sensitive (see suggestions in the infographic below). There should not be differential treatment for members of the group who have consented versus for members of the group who have not.

- Even with consent, if there is risk of harm, retribution, or distress to the contributor, the image should not be used, or the story should not be told (Principle #2, I do no harm).
- If the risk of harm is due to using the contributor's name, storytellers may choose to use an alternative name to protect the identity and privacy of the individual, noting this in the caption or text.
  - Changing an interviewee's voice or obscuring or reframing images so as not to include identifying buildings, street signs, or landmarks are also ways to protect privacy and mitigate safety risks.
  - Decisions about whether to reveal or conceal the identity of a contributor should be made in consultation with the contributor and others who are deeply familiar with the context. Always honour a contributor's wishes on whether names or identifying features are included.
- Prior to publication, contributors should be asked again whether they still are (or are not) okay with being identifiable in the final story.
  - It is important that contributors have the contact details of relevant people that they can contact if any concerns arise after the content-gathering that would impact the sharing of their story. Some organisations include this as part of a "thank you" card that is left with contributors.
- Seek to share final images or the published story with contributors as a sign of respect and a two-way relationship. Showing contributors the impact resulting from the sharing of their stories can also be helpful in reaffirming their ability to make a difference.
  - Consider the time and funds needed to return end products to contributors (for example, printing or mailing costs) and allocate within the budget and human resources.
- Contributors should have an opportunity to provide feedback on the story gathering and development process with their perspectives documented and used to improve future practices.

Consent is a Process

1. Identifying contributors

This step should show the initial contact between the focal point for liaising with potential contributors. The purpose of this step is to informally describe the purpose of the content-gathering and to judge initial willingness to participate. There may be a note stating that in emergency situations this may not be possible and in some non-sensitive contexts, it may not be necessary.

2. Verbal consent (relaxed or informal dialogue)

Prior to the shoot or interview, the content lead discusses consent with the contributor.

3. Recorded consent

Either right before or after an interview or filming, the content lead takes time to show contributors footage or images on the back of camera and to discuss the use of the material. If the contributor is willing to have their story told or image used, the content lead explains the evidence of consent and the contributor signs the consent form or records consent on audio or video.

4. Follow-up

After the content is gathered, someone from the content-gathering team should follow up with the contributor at least once to reaffirm consent. This means checking how the contributor feels now about sharing their story and if they have received any feedback from others. This can also show the ideal step of following up again after publication to show contributors the final product and share about the effects of the story publications.

Based on information from Ethical Content Guidelines: Upholding the rights of the people in the pictures in content gathering, management and use, Oxfam, 2020.

Consent Conversations with Groups

Type of Group Context	Recommended Consent Measures
ADULTS IN A NON-SENSITIVE CONTEXT	• Go through an informed consent process verbally with the whole group. • Ask individuals to affirm consent either by a show of hands, or a signature on a group consent form. • If individual signatures are not collected, then a representative of the group should sign on behalf of the group (if agreed with group members). • Any individual interviews or filming/photos with members of the group require individual consent.

CHILDREN IN ANY CONTEXT	• Parental consent in advance is required with evidence of this consent; this can be managed in different ways (often by schools); for example:
	  ▸ Existing consent arrangements with all parents, or
	  ▸ Opt out consent process for parents.
	• A representative staff member may sign an appropriate consent form, guaranteeing that parental consent has been obtained.
	• Children should also be given the opportunity to opt in or out of the photo, film, or story through age-appropriate dialogue.

ADULTS IN A SENSITIVE CONTEXT	• If the context is sensitive, individual consent by group members is required. • Carefully consider if measures should be taken to conceal identities or protect them from any risks associated with the context.
CROWDS IN A PUBLIC SPACE	• If an individual is recognisable, informed consent is needed if the context of that crowd reveals personal information about the individual (health, sexuality, asylum/refugee status, political beliefs, religion) – and particularly if the context is sensitive (for example, an HIV testing center, refugee camp, or political rally). • Unless it is possible to get informed consent with everyone who is recognisable and traceable due to personal information, images should be taken so that individual identities for those who have not given consent cannot be determined.

Based on information from Putting the People in the Pictures First: Ethical guidelines for the collection and use of content (images and stories), Bond, 2019.

Consent Form Template

Consent forms will require tailoring to specific situations and people – and often translation to other languages. This form is a generic template, adapted from Ethical Storytelling, that can be customised as needed.

MEDIA CONSENT FORM

I, _____understand that my story, photo, and voice is my own and hereby grant my permission to _____ to:

[Check all that apply]

- ☐ Interview me
- ☐ Record my voice
- ☐ Take my picture
- ☐ Videotape me

I understand that the information I provide may be edited and shared both immediately and in the future with the organisation's audiences on websites, in videos, and on other public online forums (email, social networking sites, newsletters, etc.). I consent under the condition that the following requirements are met:

[Check one]

- ☐ My image is used without being obscured.
- ☐ My image is obscured so as not to reveal my identity.

[Check one]

- ☐ My real name can be used.
- ☐ A pseudonym is used to protect my identity.

[Check one]

- ☐ My voice is used without masking.
- ☐ My voice is masked to protect my identity.

I understand that media shared on the internet is subject to sharing and is accessible globally. I have the right to retract my consent after the production of the video, website, etc. My interview, picture, voice, or video can be used by [media outlet] for:

[Check one]

- ☐ One time only for _____
- ☐ Up to one month
- ☐ Up to one year
- ☐ Other: _____

OTHER CONDITIONS:

_____ Contributor signature / date

_____ Guardian witness (if required)

_____ Organisation signature

Based on Media Consent Form, Ethical Storytelling; available for download at: https://www.ethicalstorytelling.com/resources

Contributor Feedback Form Template

A simple feedback tool may be helpful in gathering information on contributors' experiences with the storytelling process. The feedback can be used to help ensure that contributors have a say in what and how stories are told and to improve future practices. The generic form below can be modified to fit specific situations and needs.

CONTRIBUTOR FEEDBACK FORM

Based on your recent storytelling experience, please rate the following:	 **Strongly agree**	 **Agree**	 **Neutral**	 **Disagree**	 **Strongly disagree**
I was asked my opinion on the plans for the story.					
I was given the opportunity to choose where and when I would like to be interviewed, filmed, or photographed, and what I would like to wear.					
Someone discussed with me why the story was being gathered, how and where it would be shared, and how long my information would be kept on file.					
Someone discussed with me the way I would like to be identified in the story.					
There was time to ask questions about the plans for the story.					
I gave my full agreement to tell and share my story.					
I was shown the story prior to publishing and able to give feedback.					
The representation of me and/or my community in the story is accurate.					
The representation of me and/or my community tells a full story (is not overly simplified or overly sensationalised).					

Story Spotlight – **Imagine Peace** *Ingrid Guyon and Mujer Diaspora*

Behind the Scenes

During more than 50 years of conflict, hundreds of thousands of Colombians left their homeland to settle in host countries. As the country pursues peace and rebuilds its collective memory, women in the diaspora are playing a crucial role in addressing the legacy of violence and looking to the future. The Truth, Memory and Reconciliation Commission of Colombian women in the diaspora, now called Mujer Diaspora, seeks to empower women to become agents of change in the Colombian peace process and in their host countries.

The photographs in this series were created over a period of three years to provide women in the diaspora with the opportunity to celebrate their achievements, to make their voices heard, and as a testimony of their capacity for resilience and healing. Mujer Diaspora's framework is centred on active listening, a methodology that the collective has developed throughout the years to use art as a tool for transformation. In this project, photography was a key component for the healing processes, helping shift stories of war to stories of peace.

The series of photographs have been exhibited at the Women and War Festival 2017, London; Belfast Exposed, Northern Ireland 2018; and the London College of Communication, Elephant and Castle, London 2018.

Ana Carolina, dancer, Barcelona 2017 (Ingrid Guyon).

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- The participatory process of creating the portraits – using photography as a methodology for healing and reconciliation – was considered as important (or perhaps more so) as the end product.
  - In the words of one of the women photographed, Elisabeth: "My experience in being photographed and interviewed has been for me the opportunity to escape from invisibility, after so many years of frustration as victims of the Colombian conflict, it has been like to denounce, to tell our truth and to demand justice, it has been a way of living, and of keeping alive those who are no longer with us. I now feel important and the protagonist of this process of post-conflict that our country is living."
  - And Sofia, on her experience with the process: "The experience of being part of a photo shoot and interviewed has been novel and has shown me an unseen part of me. In other words, it has contributed to my self-confidence building and my own empowering process."
- Each woman chose the location where they wanted to be portrayed, selected the image, and wrote the text to accompany the photographs. For many, it was the first opportunity to share their stories publicly and to reflect on them from another perspective.
- For each separate exhibition of the images held to date, consent was reaffirmed, acknowledging that both emotional states and political realities can change, which impacts associated risk levels.
- Prior to each exhibition, the accompanying text to the photo was also reviewed and edited as needed by each woman to reflect the evolving nature of reconciliation and healing processes.
- High levels of trust and connection were made possible in part by the photographer's own background, including prior working relationships with the women, a shared identity as a woman, and Spanish-speaking abilities.

See a selection of the portraits and testimonials from the women involved in the project at: **http://www.ingridguyon.com/new-page**

Top Tips for Principle #4

- **Prioritise informed, full, and freely given consent as an ethical (and often legal) requirement for dignified storytelling.**
- **Ensure that contributors understand and agree to the purpose of the story-gathering and the usage of the final story, the implications of its publication, and their right to withdraw consent at any time (including a clear, simple, accessible process of how to do so).**

PRINCIPLE:
Acknowledges and mitigates biases, stereotypes, social stigmas, and power differences.

I am biased (repeat).
Principle #5

Dignified storytelling recognises that biases, stereotypes, social stigmas, and power differences exist, whether we are aware of them or not. We all have specific lenses, both conscious and unconscious, that guide the selection and shaping of stories. These narratives develop over time and must be continually reflected upon and questioned by the storyteller to see if they promote or challenge existing status quo ways of seeing the world – and particularly the world of development. This means reflecting on historical and cultural power structures, issues of equity, and of one's individual and organisational role in either upholding or questioning how development work is delivered and communicated out to the world.[14] Dignified storytelling seeks to challenge inequalities and to promote positive social change and the realisation of human rights and potential.

Even when working closely with individuals and teams on the ground (for example, country programme teams and/or partner organisations), there are still power and privilege issues at play between local contributors, programme teams or partner organisations, and visiting staff or communication freelancers from outside of the specific community or country. Thoughtful and inclusive planning and communication are needed to put in place strategies to avoid perpetuating the stereotypes, biases, and social stigmas that underpin inequality and discrimination.

Dignified storytelling encourages continuous open reflection and dialogue amongst all stakeholders and holds local expertise and perspectives in high regard. It is committed to including and depicting contributors as equals, rather than passive recipients of any kind of assistance. Dignified storytelling seeks to follow, rather than trying to control, the story and embraces changes of perspective that can be initiated through the storytelling process.

[14] Jennifer Lentfer, author of "The Development Element: Guidelines for the future of communicating about the end of global poverty" during a four-part webinar series on Changing the narrative: Weaving #ShiftThePower throughout the #Globaldev sector, sponsored by the Global Fund for Community Foundations.

Guidelines for Principle #5:

Dignified storytelling acknowledges and mitigates biases, stereotypes, social stigmas, and power differences.

TO HELP PUT PRINCIPLE #5 INTO PRACTICE, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Acknowledge implicit bias without defensiveness. Once recognised, the dynamics of culture, race, and gender (among others) can be further dissected, understood, and then responded to.
- Language (including text and visuals) needs to be inclusive and should be examined closely for subtle connotations, including sexism, racism, and other forms of bias.[15]
- Put in place mitigating factors to lessen inequities; for example, by considering who has various conversations around consent or story planning, and where these discussions take place.
- Be aware of the danger of perpetuating a stereotype, and where needed, choose to tell a different story. Just because a stereotype may have a degree of truth behind it, does not necessarily mean that is the story that needs to be depicted.
- Look for ways to highlight new or unexpected aspects of people's lives – moments or stories that are authentic, but that also actively refute stereotypes.
- When possible, select external contractors or creative teams who already have understanding and experience working with the nuances of the situation, ideally because they are from the story setting. At minimum, request potential contractors to provide work samples with relevance to the story and the wider context, showing they can work sensitively and inclusively in that context.
- If in a position of hiring, look to commission more representative and diverse creatives.

[15] See the Additional Reading section of this Handbook for links to several language usage tools and guides.

Amudat, Uganda:
Agropastoral women harvest greens in a junior Farmer Field School demonstration farm.
Credit: FAO / Luis Tato

Story Spotlight – **My Unique Story (Suhael Al Owis)** *Innovation for Development (I4D)*

Suhael shares about his experiences as a Syrian living in Turkey (I4D).

Watch
Suhael Al Owis' story at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kaoaj2hi_xA

Behind the Scenes

Suhael Al Owis, a Syrian entrepreneur and digital marketing expert, shared his story through Project Zoom, an impact journalism grant programme aimed at bringing to light the stories that are generally overlooked and supported by Impact Hub Istanbul and the United States Mission in Turkey.

Suhael's story is part of the "My Unique Story" video series, crafted by Innovation for Development (I4D). The series highlights the success stories of Syrian entrepreneurs living in Turkey, even as they face bias and xenophobia. As a series, the project includes in-depth profiles of Syrians with different profiles and experiences who share a similar resilience that has helped lead to their success.

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- The videos counter stereotypes by explicitly aiming to tell stories about refugees that highlight the individual's resilience and ability to succeed in the midst of great challenges.
- Suhael's story is told as an in-depth profile (interview) that allows audiences a deeper look at his life story – and, in doing so, leads viewers from any bias towards empathy.
- Suhael tells his own story and, in doing so, becomes a powerful spokesperson for issues facing refugees, including questions of identity, simply by sharing about his life experiences. In his words, "The message that I wanted to deliver is that we should treat people individually, not by the stereotype that shaped many refugees, which mostly can be wrong. When the story was shared, I got many messages from my students, who did not know me, saying that they really respect and support me. These messages really meant a lot to me."
- The language spoken during the interview (English switching to Arabic) is used to highlight Suhael's journey of identity within a new, not always welcoming, culture.

Story Spotlight – **Waleed Shah for Emarat Advertising Campaign**

Behind the Scenes

The photographs were shot in 2020 as part of an advertising campaign for Emarat, a petroleum corporation serving Dubai and the Northern Emirates.

According to the photographer, Waleed Shah, in the case of the top image, the original plans called for a more expected, or traditional, positioning with the male in the driver seat and a flirtatious element to the interaction between the models. Waleed, however, saw an opportunity to tell a different story, switching the driver so that the woman was behind the wheel and depicting a more relaxed, platonic dynamic between the two models.

In the second image, the original brief had the Emirati woman in the driver's seat, the White woman in the passenger seat, and the Woman of Colour in the back seat. Waleed decided to challenge what this original positioning communicated about power by switching up the seating – this time, putting the Woman of Colour in the power position (the driver's seat), the Emirati woman as passenger, and the historically-privileged White woman in the backseat.

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- The first photo in the advertisement takes on gender stereotypes and traditional norms by telling a less-told story that puts the woman in the driver seat of a sporty car – and with relaxed and confident body language.
- It shifts prevailing narratives within many advertisements about male-female relationships by portraying a friendly and casual interaction between the individuals in the car.
- The photography also subtly challenges preconceptions about petrol station attendants by picturing the individual as cheerful, active, and untroubled in his job.
- The second photo counters typical racial hierarchies by picturing the Woman of Colour as the driver of the car, subtly intimating that she is the one with the most control and power.
- Waleed, the photographer, lives in the UAE and is thus well-positioned to understand the culture and creatively question biases and help shift perceptions.

The advertisement campaign for Emarat counters gender and racial stereotypes (Waleed Shah).

Thematic Textbox

The Language of Dignified Storytelling

The terminologies we use to tell stories about global issues are always evolving and often vary from location to location, and culture to culture.

Questions about language usage are often questions about power: Those in power shape the language used; language can reinforce power imbalances; and being the one to name something is an act of power. Language choices must, therefore, be approached thoughtfully and with humility – and with active attempts to shift the balance of power and agency to the people in the stories. Part of "passing the mic" to people to tell the stories they want to tell entails listening to how they reference themselves and others in their communities.

Language choices are best made from a posture of self-reflection as we ask ourselves: *Whose lead are we following? Who are we trying to please? Who is included in our conversations and planning?*

INFOGRAPHIC – TRAFFIC LIGHT THEME

GREEN LIGHT – Go.

- Proactively asking contributors how they want to be identified and/or represent themselves; use their words and terminologies as long as it is not doing harm to others.
- Employing human-first terms that do not lead or label people with a quality or situation. For example, in general, "children living in a refugee camp" is preferable to "refugee children," or "person with disabilities" is preferable to a "disabled person." There are instances, however, when human-first language may not be preferred or universally accepted. For this reason, it is again important to always ask contributors what language they use to describe themselves and use this where possible.
- Calling people by name, provided their safety is not at risk.
- Working closely with individual and communities to promote active participation throughout the storytelling process, including sharing back language choices and content with contributors for their feedback.
- Being as specific as possible when referring to groups of people to avoid stereotypes and to make language more accessible.
- Seeking to get back to the basics, using plain language when possible and avoiding jargon.
- While not avoiding realities, looking to emphasise solutions and work towards shared goals.

YELLOW LIGHT – Proceed with caution.

- Using abbreviations or acronyms to refer to groups of people can be confusing and difficult to navigate. Abbreviations or acronyms are rarely universally used or appropriate across contexts and risk grouping diverse populations under an ill-fitting label.

RED LIGHT – Stop.

- Exacerbating power differences or attaching harmful labels in the terms used. What is considered acceptable terminology is likely to change based on context and audiences; question commonly used terms and ask others for advice if you have questions.
- Using terminologies that have sexist or exclusionary connotations.
- Assuming details about the people in the stories – don't assume, ask.

Remember that visual language, which can be especially powerful via social media, cannot be separated from written and spoken language. Visual images need the same close examination for how they might magnify power dynamics through what images are used and how they are framed. While impossible for every single image to represent every identity or experience, over a period of time everyone should be able to see themselves or relate to the images used in your work.

Glossaries and standards are important in setting the norms for the ways we use language. Three helpful resources to this end include The Global Press Style Guide, Media Friendly Glossary on Migration, and Conscious Style Guide.

Part of "passing the mic" to people to tell the stories they want to tell entails listening to how they reference themselves and others in their communities.

Top Tips for Principle #5

- **Do the hard work of reflecting on and recognising one's own biases and positioning within existing power dynamics.**
- **Respond by making deliberate creative choices to use inclusive language and to challenge stereotypes and stigma in what stories are told, and how they are told.**

PRINCIPLE:
Values local social, moral, and cultural norms.

I do my homework.
Principle #6

Dignified storytelling pursues a deep understanding of historical and cultural issues to guide the storytelling process and as a first step towards mitigating risks of oversimplification, sensationalism, and stereotyping. A commitment to communicating the background and context of all stories can help audiences better appreciate the social, economic, cultural, and political factors that shape the story. This wider understanding is important to move audiences beyond only judgement or pity about any individual's situation, which is never the whole story.

Cultural norms are not homogenous and may even be in conflict amongst individuals, families, and communities. Appropriately responding to these dynamics takes sensitivity and thoughtfulness. When content gathering, seek to understand the social and moral underpinnings of the community, family, or individual to guide interactions with all those involved, leading to mutually beneficial decisions and ways of working.

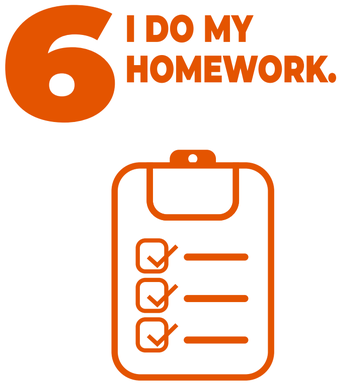
Cultural sensitivity can help to identify and address what actions may be needed to help contributors realise their rights to be actively involved in the story and to access, understand, and speak out on information. The local context is, in part, what drives any training and consultation that takes place before, during, or after the content gathering and during story development.

Guidelines for Principle #6:

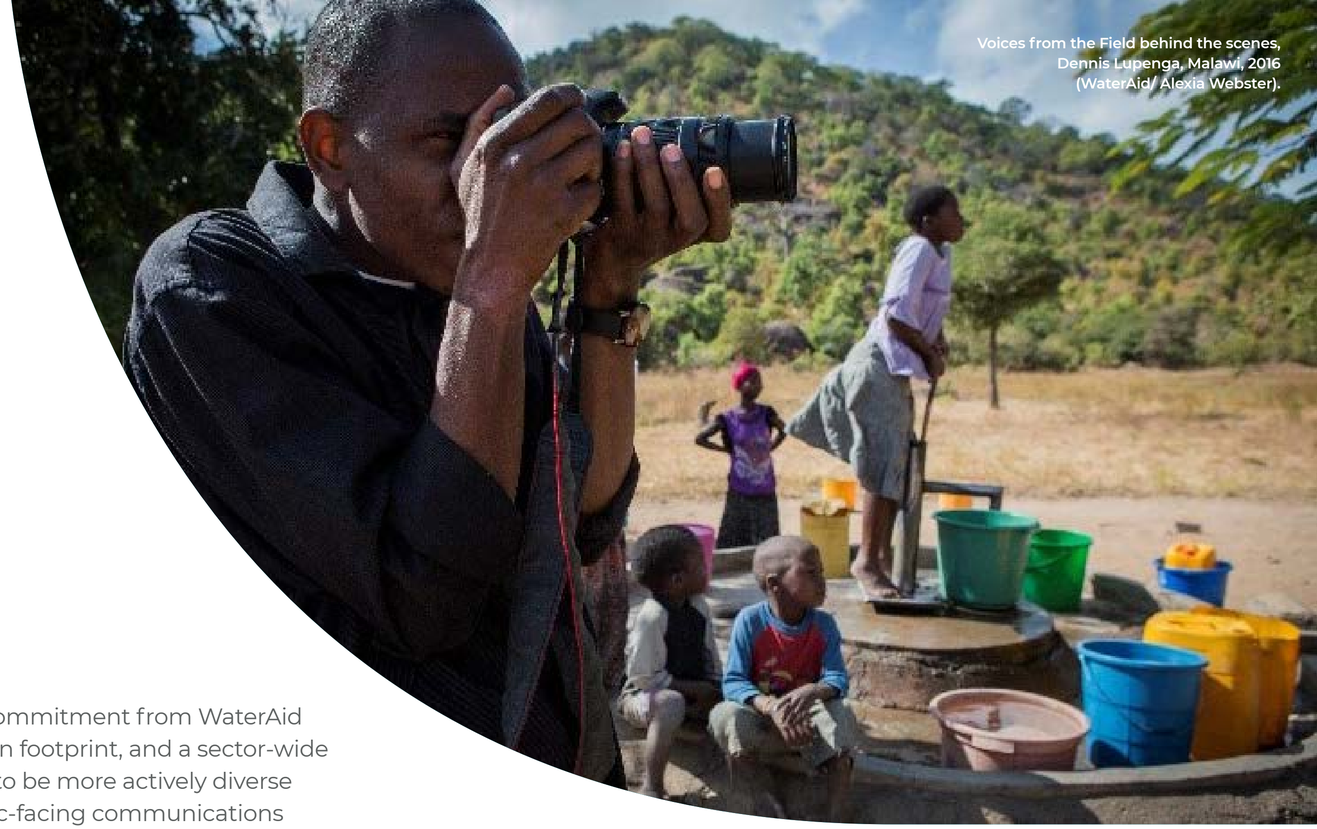
Dignified storytelling values local social, moral, and cultural norms.

TO HELP PUT PRINCIPLE #6 INTO PRACTICE, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Do the research. Storytellers have a responsibility to educate themselves on relevant cultural, religious, and social norms that might affect the storytelling processes, and to consider and respond to these factors appropriately.
  - Information on the context can be included in the Terms of Reference or storytelling brief with additional contextual information gathered with the content and filed together with images and stories, accessible to anyone working on the story.
- Pursue collaboration with creatives on the ground and from the communities or groups involved in the story, rather than bringing in outside contractors who may not fully understand the context.
  - This may include identifying interested people within your organisation who are positioned closest to the stories and supporting their engagement with storytelling. Where new storytelling roles are assigned, individuals need to be appropriately positioned, trained, recognised, and compensated for their work.
- Respectfully work with existing established systems and groups who have deep knowledge and authority within their communities.
- Note that a focus on context does not mean you must provide too many identifiable details of potentially at-risk groups or individuals. Take care to protect the identity or exact location of contributors if there is risk involved (see Principle #2 on “I do no harm” and Principle #4 on “Consent is more than paperwork”).



Story Spotlight – **Voices from the Field** *WaterAid*



Voices from the Field behind the scenes, Dennis Lupenga, Malawi, 2016 (WaterAid/ Alexia Webster).

Behind the Scenes

Voices from the Field is WaterAid's unique global communications team of seven in-country content collectors (called Field Officers), who gather regular, bespoke stories from the countries where WaterAid works.

The programme helps bridge communication between supporters around the world and the communities where WaterAid's work takes place. As Field Officers are from the country where the story is taking place, they bring with them an understanding of the local context and culture. They use their communication skills to form connections with communities, supporting contributors to share their own stories with the world. For WaterAid, relying on in-country staff to source and tell stories has many benefits, including cost and time efficiency and increased transparency and authenticity.

The Voices from the Field programme has grown organically over the nine years since its inception. In the past year, the restrictions on travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a commitment from WaterAid UK to reduce their carbon footprint, and a sector-wide recognition of the need to be more actively diverse and transparent in public-facing communications means that the programme will become even more central to how WaterAid communicates in future.

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- Field Officers seek to elevate the voices of those who may not have a platform from which to be heard: "Water is life and sanitation is dignity. So often we talk to people who are marginalised and when they speak no one listens. We're here to amplify their voices." *James Kiyimba, Voices from the Field Officer*, Uganda.
- Stories from the Voices from the Field programme are used to give donors a better sense of the communities where WaterAid works: "The Voices from the Field programme is so important because we report and illustrate stories, so our supporters can see what effect their fundraising is having." *Basile Ouedraogo, Voices from the Field Officer*, Burkina Faso.

- Field Officers are often closely connected with the communities where they source their stories: “I grew up in a small village and didn’t have clean water. My experience and seeing how bad the situation can be in other areas of the country gives me the motivation to help.” *Ernest Randriarimalala, Voices from the Field Officer*, Madagascar.
- The Field Officers prioritise listening and understanding and seek to communicate that ethos out to wider audiences: “By listening to people’s voices, we’re able to hear their stories, their struggles and perspective of life’s challenges. I feel this helps people understand each other deeply.” *Dennis Lupenga, Voices from the Field Officer*, Malawi.

Check out these stories from Voices in the Field:

- Vlog series from Nepal: **‘On the road with Mani’**
- Remote Kitchen: A **youtube series** of recipes cooked from Voices in the Field Officers in countries around the world
- Lockdown Diaries: A **youtube series** of the Field Officers’ experiences of lockdown in their home countries

Story Spotlight – **Weaving Recognition** *UN Human Rights*

Behind the Scenes

Mayan weavers in Guatemala are fighting for legal protection and recognition of their traditional patterns and fabrics. Mayan textiles are part of their ancient cultural heritage, with references that can be traced back to the 13th century. The textile tradition has survived, despite the effects of disease and threats to the culture that came via colonisation.

Recognising collective intellectual property rights encroachment as part of the broader problem of discrimination and racism in the country, the UN Human Rights Office offered assistance to the Asociación Femenina para el Desarrollo de Sacatepéquez (AFEDES), a movement of traditional Mayan female weavers based in Sacatepéquez District, in their fight to press for intellectual copyright of their traditional patterns.

In October 2017, the Constitutional Court of Guatemala, recognised the weaver's concerns and urged the Congress of the Republic to create legislative protection. The legislation will protect and allow weavers to exercise their rights as collective creators, to break with inequality of incomes they receive, and to strengthen and protect the art of indigenous Mayan women.

Maria Teodora Hernandez weaves a Huipil (an embroidered blouse worn by indigenous women) using a backstrap loom (Santiago Billy/OHCHR).

See the full story, Weaving Recognition, at:
https://unhumanrights.exposure.co/weaving-recognition

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- The story celebrates the importance of fabric as a symbol of cultural resistance among indigenous people in the region, acknowledging that textiles are a way to conserve cultural knowledge that was often made illegal during colonial times.
- Indigenous' voices are amplified and provided a platform to tell their story. The protagonists and lead activists of the story are the indigenous Mayan women, particularly weavers, who are working to protect their collective intellectual heritage.
- The story pays due respect and word count to the historical context of the story, connecting current events with the relevant background information.
- The well-captioned photos in tandem with the narrative text come together in a depiction of the community that is dynamic and multi-dimensional, with deep, beautiful traditions that are well-deserving of protection and continuation.

6 I DO MY HOMEWORK.

Top Tips for Principle #6

- **Do the research on the historical and cultural context of the story and include relevant background information in the story, consulting with experts and those with lived experience to help ensure accuracy and authenticity.**
- **Prioritise working with creatives who have deep knowledge of the culture and context, ideally because they are from the place where the story is set.**

PRINCIPLE:
Considers the impact of stories on individuals, communities, and the natural environment.

I am empathetic.
Principle #7

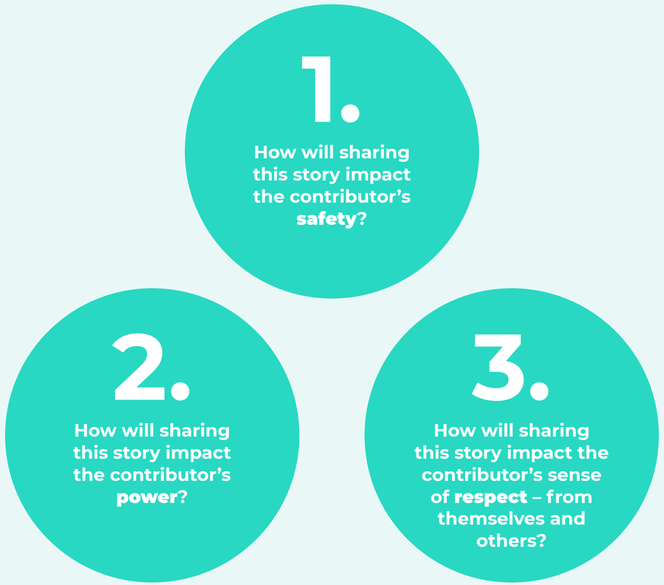
Dignified storytelling prioritises thoughtful reflection on the short and longer-term implications behind each story choice – for individuals, the wider community, and the environment. This reflection should underpin both story planning and development, with an openness to adjusting plans, processes, and narratives to help ensure positive impact.

Dignified storytelling encourages storytellers to employ “empathy checks” throughout the storytelling process, especially prior to publication, considering whether they would be comfortable sharing the visual or written story if it were a depiction of themselves or someone close to them. Imagining themselves in the position of the contributor can help storytellers consider the potential impact of the story from a deeper, more personal perspective and to make choices accordingly.

Beyond individual storytellers, there is a wider organisational responsibility to help ensure a positive impact for all. Organisational culture can promote the idea that speaking up for dignified storytelling is the responsibility of all staff members. Organisational policies and procedures should also stipulate checkpoints for the potential impact of stories on contributors and their families. Editorial boards with diverse representation can help ensure that multiple perspectives are taken into account when considering the potential impact of a story.

Prioritising Contributors' Safety, Empowerment, and Respect

These three questions can be asked throughout the story planning, gathering, developing, and publishing process to help ensure positive story impact. A negative response to any of the questions indicates that the plans for, or direction of, the story likely needs to be revisited, in collaboration with partners and contributors.



Adapted from Guidance on Ethical Decision-Making Framework for Communications, Australian Council for International Development, 2019

Guidelines for Principle #7:

Dignified storytelling considers the impact on individuals, communities, and the natural environment.

TO HELP PUT PRINCIPLE #7 INTO PRACTICE, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- In addition to the questions posed in the textbox, reflect on the questions below (while planning, gathering, processing, and publishing a story), taking steps to address any gaps or concerns that arise during the reflection:[16]
  1. Who is speaking?
  2. For whom?
  3. About what?
  4. For what purpose?
  5. What is missing?
- Check in with contributors after the story is published, asking "how did you feel about seeing the story?" or "how did you feel about your story being seen by others?" Use these responses and feedback to guide future actions.
- Tackle potentially sensitive content through creative techniques such as using illustrations rather than photographs, different modes of storytelling (for example, podcast rather than video), or ways of framing the image.
- Be mindful of publication timing and consider delaying the story if the climate is not favourable or likely to be receptive; for example, if a current event or the political atmosphere warrants at least temporarily holding the story to a time when it is likely be better received, with positive impact for the contributors.
- Find platforms and avenues to use stories and storytelling as a tool to bring about positive change - in the lives of the contributors, communities, other stakeholders, and audiences.

[16] Paraphrased from Solomé Lemma, Thousand Currents, as highlighted in Changing the narrative: Weaving #ShiftThePower throughout the #Globaldev sector, hosted by Jennifer Lentfer and sponsored by the Global Fund for Community Foundations.

Story Spotlight – **Hyena** *Gareth Benest, Transparency International, and Gambia Participates*

The opening scene screenshot from Hyena, a participatory film project based in the Gambia (Gareth Benest).

Behind the Scenes

Hyena is a short documentary created during a participatory video project in The Gambia. It documents the widespread corruption by the former dictator Yahya Jammeh and his regime, which is estimated to have stolen almost USD 1 billion of public funds from the smallest country in mainland Africa.[17] The film shows the human and societal impact of grand corruption – the abuse of high-level power to benefit the few at the expense of the many[18] – on a tiny African nation and its fragile economy.

The film was devised, filmed, and directed by a group of 11 Gambian citizens during a participatory video project in July 2019. A diverse group of citizens – including women and men, elders and youth, educated professionals and those with little or no literacy, victims of human rights abuses, and students left physically disabled by the brutal regime – were invited to participate in the project and to share their stories. None of the participants had any experience in filmmaking or journalism prior to the project. Travelling throughout the country, the participants documented their stories and those of fellow community members affected by the regime's corruption.

This participatory video project was facilitated by Gareth Benest on behalf of Transparency International, the global movement working to end corruption, in partnership with Gambia Participates, a youth-led civil society organisation working to enhance transparency and accountability in The Gambia.

[17]Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, "The Great Gambia Heist," (March, 2019).

[18]Transparency International, "Grand Corruption," www.transparency.org/en/our-priorities/grand-corruption

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Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- The participants learned the skills needed to collaboratively devise, plan, and produce their videos through facilitated games and exercises, designed to enable anyone to participate regardless of experience, literacy, disability, or any other barriers to taking part.
- The participants were both the subjects and the gatekeepers of their stories, which allowed them to determine access and control the framing of their stories. By placing the means for storytelling in the hands of historically disadvantaged sections of society, the project was able to shift perceptions and reshape representation.
- Informed consent was obtained using video-based consent techniques gathered over multiple-stages. In this case, written consent (release forms) were also required by the project partners, alongside video consent recordings.
- The film provided a platform for ordinary citizens to share their stories and to advocate for the changes necessary to ensure that future governments cannot steal the country's resources.

The most immediate and tangible impacts of the project include:

- The film was formally submitted to the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) as evidence and is being used by the commission to prepare recommendations for the government.
- Two participants (Yusupha Mbye and Abdul Karim Jammeh) gave testimonies to the TRRC about the student protests in 2000, during which they were both shot by police and left with significant injuries. Both men had been denied adequate medical treatment by the former regime, which the current government had also failed to rectify. Following their testimonies to TRRC, both men were flown to Turkey to receive the surgery they have needed for 20 years. Both Yusupha and Abdul are convinced that they would not have received this treatment were it not for the participatory video project.
- Alagie Sonko (participant) is a former member of the judiciary who was forcefully removed from office by the regime. Audiences reacted strongly to his story of injustice and the depravation his family has endured. As a result, the current judiciary is taking steps to provide compensation for his years of economic inactivity and is considering reinstating him as Deputy Sheriff.

Read more about the project and watch Hyena at: **https://www.equals.org.uk/corruption-human-rights**

Story Spotlight – **Youth Storytelling Mentorship** *Northern Council for Global Cooperation (NCGC) and StoryCentre Canada*

Behind the Scenes

In 2021, the Northern Council for Global Cooperation (NCGC) launched a new Storytelling Mentorship Programme, a virtual opportunity for youth ages 21-30 in Northern Canada and around the world to immerse themselves in the power of storytelling and to learn how to craft stories to create change.

In the first part of the programme, Northern youth participants were provided a foundation on the importance and power of storytelling, including the culture and history of storytelling from an Indigenous perspective, facilitated by Louise Profeit-LeBlanc, storykeeper and knowledge holder from the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun.

The Northern youth were then joined by youth representatives from FRIDA, the Young Feminist Fund's network of grassroots feminist organisations, from South America (Brazil, Bolivia) and North, East and Southern Africa (Egypt, Kenya, and Mozambique) for a series of storytelling workshops hosted by StoryCentre Canada. These workshops integrated creative writing, oral history, and multimedia techniques to craft stories for social change.

To prioritise the safety and anonymity of the participants and their stories, the youth themselves were supported in determining whether they want to share their digital stories publicly.

"These voices and stories from our ancestors continue today, to make a difference in the world, by reminding us all of our noble history and our continued closeness with the land where these stories originate. These stories provide us with the map that we as descendants can continue to be led by our ancestor's words, knowing that story is at heart and is the very foundation for educating, building and advancing civilization for future generations."

~ Storykeeper Louise Profeit-LeBlanc

Val Kwena, one of the youth storytellers in the programme, lives in Nairobi, Kenya and is a co-founder of Making A Difference Sisters, a community based organisation focused on the well-being of girls and women (NCGC).

Skaydu Ǔ Autum Jules is Teslin Tlingit Council First Nation. She is learning to speak the Tlingit language and is a participant in NCGC's Youth Mentorship Programme (NCGC).

Watch a video created by youth storyteller Nohely Guzmán Narváez – co-founder of Jasy Renyhê, an ecofeminist organisation based in La Paz, Bolivia – at: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQaXcDX2ncA**

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- The programme was designed around the belief that youth are the experts of their own stories and that their stories matter.
- It is grounded in the premise that everyone has a story – or many stories – to share. From that staring point, the programme provides support and mentorship for youth to craft their own stories.
- The programme helps youth to gain a better understanding of storytelling, the power of oral tradition, and the relationship between story, language preservation, culture, and land – especially by hearing stories passed down through generations from Storykeeper Louise Profeit-LeBlanc.
- It positions stories as a tool to advocate for policy change and raise awareness about issues that are both locally and globally significant.
- By working together, youth from around the world can develop the deep relationships and cross-cultural understanding necessary for transformational understanding and change to occur.
- While the digital stories created through the project are important, they are the output, and not the outcome or result. Instead, emphasis is placed on story-making, confidence and relationship building, and the learning processes.

Top Tips for Principle #7

- **Employ "empathy checks" throughout the storytelling process, especially prior to publication, considering whether you would be comfortable sharing the visual or written story if it were a depiction of yourself or someone close to you.**
- **Find platforms and avenues to facilitate the use of stories and storytelling as a tool to bring about positive impact.**

PRINCIPLE:
Processes and manages content responsibly in line with existing data protection guidance and laws.

I protect others' data like it's my own.

Principle #8

Dignified storytelling respects and strictly follows existing national or regional laws and regulations on storing and publishing stories. Many countries and regions have privacy and data protection laws and stipulations in place; for example, the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Brazil's Lei Geral de Proteção de Dados (LGPD), Singapore's Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA), or China's Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL). Organisations and storytellers often work with lawyers, particularly if taking on assignments in many regions or countries, to ensure they are adhering all relevant legal requirements.

When consent for a story is granted, it is reasonable that there is a time limit or expiry date on the consent, which needs to be agreed upon by all parties. Evidence of consent and other personal information must be stored securely, and information about people should not be kept for longer than is necessary for the purpose it was collected.

Guidelines for Principle #8:

Dignified storytelling processes and manages content responsibly in line with existing data protection guidance and laws.

TO HELP PUT PRINCIPLE #8 INTO PRACTICE, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- While there is not a prescribed time frame for keeping or using content, it is something that must be agreed upon between the storyteller and contributors at the time of granting formal consent.
- If working for an organisation, it is the organisation's responsibility to establish the policies and procedures for data storage and management and to hold all staff – as well as external contractors, interns, volunteers or anyone else involved with the organisation – accountable to these conditions.
- Evidence of informed consent should be kept for the time period that the storytellers or organisation is processing the personal data based on that consent.
  - Organisations should have a data storing system that makes it possible to link the evidence of consent to the content files (which may include images, notes, or case studies). However, the evidence of consent, which contains personal information, needs to be secure and not accessible for all users.
- After the period of consent, it is recommended that images are deleted. However, if retained for future use with reaffirmed consent, these images – as well as images for which there is active consent – need to be stored with relevant contextual data.
- If consent was not given, the image should be deleted from any databases to avoid inadvertent future use.

Ten Key MetaData

For every clearly visible contributor in saved images, Oxfam recommends including the following 10 metadata:

1. full name
2. pseudonym (if appropriate)
3. date of birth
4. caption
5. date of the story gathering
6. geographical location
7. programme work description
8. project name/number
9. partner organisation
10. image-maker/agency

From Siobhan Warrington and Wouter Fransen, "Ethical Content Guidelines: Upholding the rights of the people in the pictures in content gathering, management, and use," (Oxfam, 2020).

Top Tips for Principle #8

- **Follow all existing national or regional laws and regulations on storing and publishing stories.**
- **Agree with contributors on how long a story will be kept or used**

PRINCIPLE:
Depicts realities with accuracy and authenticity.

Truth over headlines.
Principle #9

Dignified storytelling offers honest and accurate portrayals of individuals and communities in a manner that produces a deeper understanding of the context, paying due attention to both the challenges and opportunities of any situation. Storytelling should not shy away from taking on the difficulties in the story to tell simple success stories – the contributors are real people, and audiences deserve their real stories.

Dignified storytelling does not allow for digital manipulation or edits to be made to a visual or written story that would change the meaning or the connotations of the original content. While general edits (cropping or basic colour corrections) are acceptable, looking to unduly influence the narrative – for example, by enhancing perceptions of poverty or neglect – is not and endangers the credibility of the story.

Working closely with contributors and local creatives to discover and shape the narrative is the path towards the most authentic stories. They are best positioned to provide insights and nuanced perspectives on their lived realities. Contributors know their own needs – and those of the community – and they also have the best vantage point from which to offer workable solutions for their context.

Guidelines for Principle #9:

Dignified storytelling depicts realities with accuracy and authenticity.

TO HELP PUT PRINCIPLE #9 INTO PRACTICE, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Work with experienced interpreters who can help accurately capture content without jargon and in the spirit in which it is conveyed.
- Direct quotes need to maintain the meaning, emotion, context, and authenticity of what the contributor said and should not be changed to fit communication objectives.
- Whenever possible, make an audio recording of interviews to be able to check back on contributors' own words if needed.
- When translating into another language, always double check for accuracy and to ensure that stories are communicated in culturally appropriate language.
- Subtitles should use first-person, direct speech and should not be summarised.
- Captions should answer the five W's – what can you see in the picture, who, where, when and why.[19]
- Where there is an element of set-up or staging in photographs or films, all effort should be made to authentically capture reality. Do not pass off scenes that would not occur in real life as reality.
  - Any creative or fictional manipulation of a story or image needs to make it clear that it not attempting to portray reality.
- If using a model(s) or actor(s) for the photograph or film, audiences must be informed, and communication and consent guidance should still be followed.[20]
- Avoid taking images that look down on someone from above as this tends to convey vulnerability or need.
- Do not crop, edit, colour, or do anything else that enhances the perception of poverty or abandonment. For example, do not change the tone to duller/sepia tones or more vivid/colourful tones to either make the situation look worse, or better, than it is.
- Do not create "composite stories" where several different people's stories are merged into one generalised story as this can dehumanise the individual contributors and their personal circumstances.
- Do not use an image of an individual or group of individuals to illustrate a story or an issue which has nothing to do with them.
- Avoid using images from one location to illustrate a story in another location, unless you can make this clear in the caption (which should detail the time and location of the photo).
- Work closely with contributors to discover and shape the story and check with them on the final version to ensure accuracy and authentic representation.

[19] Exception to the caption rule: If there are risks associated with sharing a person's name, location, or circumstance or with images of children do not include any identifying information in the caption; for example exact location or parent's surname.

[20] This may even be preferable if working with vulnerable individuals or populations to minimise the collection of personal information and reduce risks to actual victims. If the model or actor is a minor, all relevant child protection and safeguarding policies should be followed.

Story Spotlight – **Where I Belong** *The Freedom Story (TFS)*

Two brothers tell of their experiences with statelessness in Thailand in Where I Belong (TFS).

Watch Where I Belong at: **https://vimeo.com/193951625**

Behind the Scenes

Where I Belong is a story of two brothers in The Freedom Story's scholarship programme. They shared their story to raise awareness of statelessness in Thailand as well as the impact of The Freedom Story's work.

The boys talk about their childhood, growing up without documentation or legal status and losing their parents, and the incredible hard work it has taken to support themselves through school.

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- The Freedom Story worked directly with the brothers to tell their own story, using a knowledgeable translator and following the lead of the contributors as they developed the film.
- Original plans to interview the brothers directly were adjusted, and the Freedom Story instead worked through the brothers' mentor as that is how they felt most comfortable. To do this, they set up cameras with the boys and their mentor and had a phone in the room to listen to the video via translation and to suggest questions that the mentor could ask the boys.
- In the video, initially the brothers' faces are not shown in the frame. As they narrate their journey towards finding a place to belong, the frame shifts to reveal their full identities.
- Informed and full consent was given to share the video.
- The brothers were able to give feedback on the video prior to publication, and the Freedom Story changed some of the post-production based on their comments.

Story Spotlight – **Jamil's Story** *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*

Jamil and the Head of UNHCR's Sub-Office in Peshawar, Bernard, meet on World Refugee Day 2021 (UNHCR/Zikrea Saleah).

Behind the Scenes

Jamil's story was told through a partnership between the UNHCR Pakistan office and the UNHCR Private Sector Partnerships unit in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region as part of the Global Ramadan 2021 campaign. Jamil, 34, is a well-known figure in his community – an Afghan refugee who was born in Pakistan and who has overcome challenges to take a lead role in supporting local charities, as well as helping others with disabilities.

UNHCR's Pakistan-based team spent several days with Jamil's family, taking detailed notes and collecting hours of raw footage. The creation of the final product involved close collaboration between the two offices, discussing the messaging within the wider purpose of raising funds for refugees during Ramadan, and exchanging several drafts for feedback and consultation that assured accuracy and dignity for Jamil.

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- Jamil narrates much of his own story; the video depicts him going about his day-to-day reality, talking openly about the challenges that he has faced as well as his triumphs.
- The final video highlights Jamil's determination and strength. In fact, it is his generosity and commitment to his community that make the strongest impression, rather than any labels society might assign to him. As Jamil described his experience telling his story, "Weakness is my strength. I believe nothing is impossible in this world if you are honest and determined to reach your goals. My motto is 'serve humanity', and I aim to make sure everyone has access to schools and better education opportunities."
- While noting the support that Jamil has received from UNHCR, the story celebrates the meaningful contributions that he has been able to make as an everyday hero.
- The final video was shared with Jamil before publication for his approval, and a CD was also sent to his home after publication. Jamil was proud o share this video with his community.

Watch
Jamil's story at:
https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1zueH2-wEi4-IXpXwWGPNzpDjHsHlrffw

Top Tips for Principle #9

- **Work closely with contributors and local creatives to find, shape, and tell the most accurate and authentic stories possible.**
- **Do not digitally manipulate or edit stories in a way that would change the meaning or the connotations of the original content.**

PRINCIPLE:
Empowers and inspires both contributors and audiences to work towards positive change.

A story can change the world.

Principle #10

Dignified storytelling empowers contributors, cultivates empathy, and inspires action through the power of storytelling. It looks for the bright light in all people from a place of connection, partnership, and respect.

Dignified storytelling humbly recognises that issues related to development and human rights are present in every society. We all are responsible, and in different ways, we all are impacted. We all are human. Dignified storytelling promotes collective effort towards the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and affirms that each of us has the power to meaningfully contribute to positive change within our families, communities, and the wider world.

> **Dignified storytelling humbly recognises that issues related to development and human rights are present in every society.**

Guidelines for Principle #10:

Dignified storytelling empowers and inspires both contributors and audiences to work towards positive change.

TO HELP PUT PRINCIPLE #10 INTO PRACTICE, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Ensure there is a clear "why" for telling the story. Storytellers can start by asking themselves what they are trying to accomplish through the story – if it is pity, "othering," or division, then a different story should be told.
- Narratives should promote working together with people and communities and show people as capable of changing their own lives.
  - Prioritise content which illustrates people in the stories supporting or caring for each other, leading work, and/or being capable agents of change.
  - At the same time, acknowledge the barriers that contributors may face and the complexities of their real-life journeys. Change and growth is rarely simple or linear. There are no short cuts, and dignified stories attempt to honour the journey.
- Any calls for action within the story should allow for both the people in, or affected by, the story and audiences to claim, or reclaim, the power to act.
- Help retrain audiences to be allies, rather than "saviours," through well-crafted and creative stories that capture attention by creating connection, rather than eliciting pity.
- Position contributors as partners (co-creatives or co-researchers) to emphasise that development is a collaborative effort – and that full realisation of the SDGs will take all of us.

Three young students in the northeastern part of Bangladesh learning about school health and hygiene. This in turn brings about positive change to the lives of such highly disadvantaged children. Credit: Save the Children

Story Spotlight – **We have a message for you!**

International Union for Conservation of Nature Netherlands (IUCN NL), World Wildlife Fund Netherlands (WWF NL), and BRANDOUTLOUD

In the story, contributors from five countries around the world deliver their messages directly to viewers from a video chat (WWF).

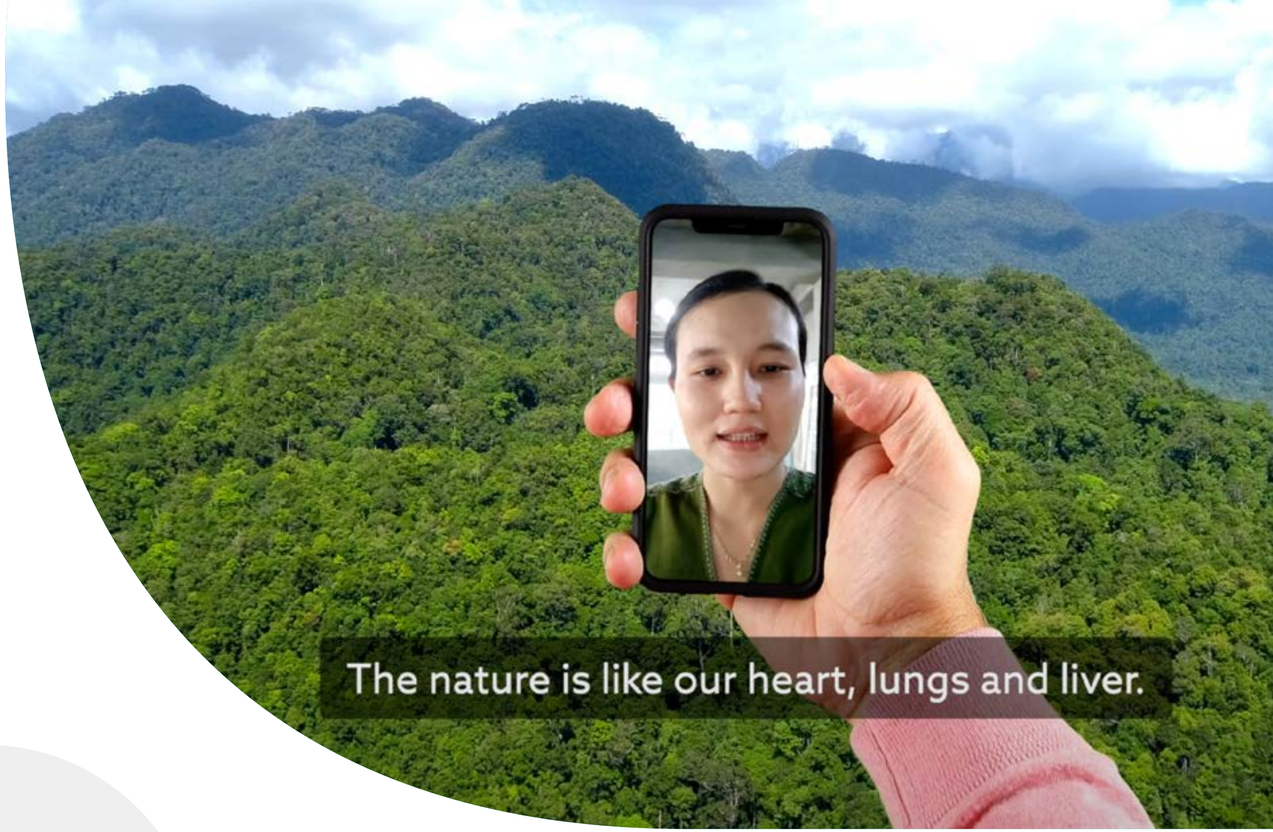
Behind the Scenes

The story was created at the conclusion of a five-year programme about inclusive conservation, representing a strategic partnership between IUCN NL, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and WWF Netherlands. It stars five local partners, who played important roles throughout the programme, from Bolivia, Indonesia, Madagascar, Myanmar and Suriname.

A key tenet of the overall programme was the value of listening to the expertise of the people closest to the stories. These were often people from historically marginalised groups – such as women, environmental defenders, and indigenous communities – who have deep knowledge and powerful stories to share.

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- The story is told by people closely involved in and passionate about the topic, which is close to their homes and hearts. It is not told from a distant location. As one contributor notes, "We are hurting ourselves when we hurt the land, when we hurt the forest, when we hurt the species."
- WWF NL worked with their regional counterparts to identify and liaise with local experts who were well-positioned to share from their experiences with inclusive conservation.
- The final script was crafted from longer-form interviews with time allowed for contributors to feel at ease and comfortable sharing their thoughts.
- Framing the story as a video chat emphasises that each person is talking directly with the viewer. It is not a story about the individual, rather collectively they have a message that viewers can learn from if we listen carefully.
- Featuring countries from around the world with a common message emphasises the shared global responsibility that we all must take care of the natural world. As one contributor observes, "I hope that someday our children and our grandchildren will enjoy clean rivers and beautiful forests."



Watch and listen to the messages at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0b24hj0Ih9s

Story Spotlight – **Refugees are Essential**

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Behind the Scenes

For World Refugee Day (June 20) 2020, the IRC launched a campaign to highlight the significant contributions that refugees on the front lines of fighting Covid-19 were making in their communities. Called Refugees are Essential, the campaign profiled refugees using various multimedia, promoting their stories across digital channels.

To source the stories, IRC's creative and media team put out a global outreach call to staff to share stories of colleagues and contributors who have stepped up during the pandemic. Stories came through of doctors on the frontlines, volunteers going the extra mile, and many people who were driven to help others in the face of the pandemic.

A contributor in the campaign who is providing care, helping neighbours, and keeping people safe (IRC).

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- The campaign portrays the contributors, who are refugees, as agents of positive change. As Dr. Edna Patricia Gomez, one of the contributors, says, "It's fundamental to understand that we, as human beings, need to unite and complement each other. Refugees always have the capacity to contribute more than people admit."
- The story counters any bias of refugees as burdensome to host communities, instead showing individuals who are helping others and meaningfully contributing to their communities. In the words of three of the campaign's contributors:
  - "I am hopeful going to work every day because I'm giving back to my community." *Torbertha Torbo*
  - "Often, people are surprised when I tell them I'm a refugee. I say it proudly, I want them to question their stereotypes. I want them to know how much refugees contribute towards society." *Dr. Anxhela Gradeci*
  - "What gives me strength is being able to provide services to people during this difficult time." *Doha Ibrahim Ammouri*
- Local staff spoke with each of the individuals identified to explain the Refugees are Essential campaign and to ensure the individuals were interested in being featured in the campaign.
- From Bangladesh to Colombia, local staff and freelancers were hired to help ensure that the interviewers, videographers, and photographers spoke the interviewees' native language and understood the local context.
- Once videos and articles were produced, they were shared back with the individuals and country staff to review and approve the final content. Everyone featured provided full informed consent according to the IRC's informed consent policy.

View the Refugees are Essential campaign at: **https://www.rescue.org/worldrefugeeday**

Story Spotlight – **I Can Teach You Too** *Dubai Cares*

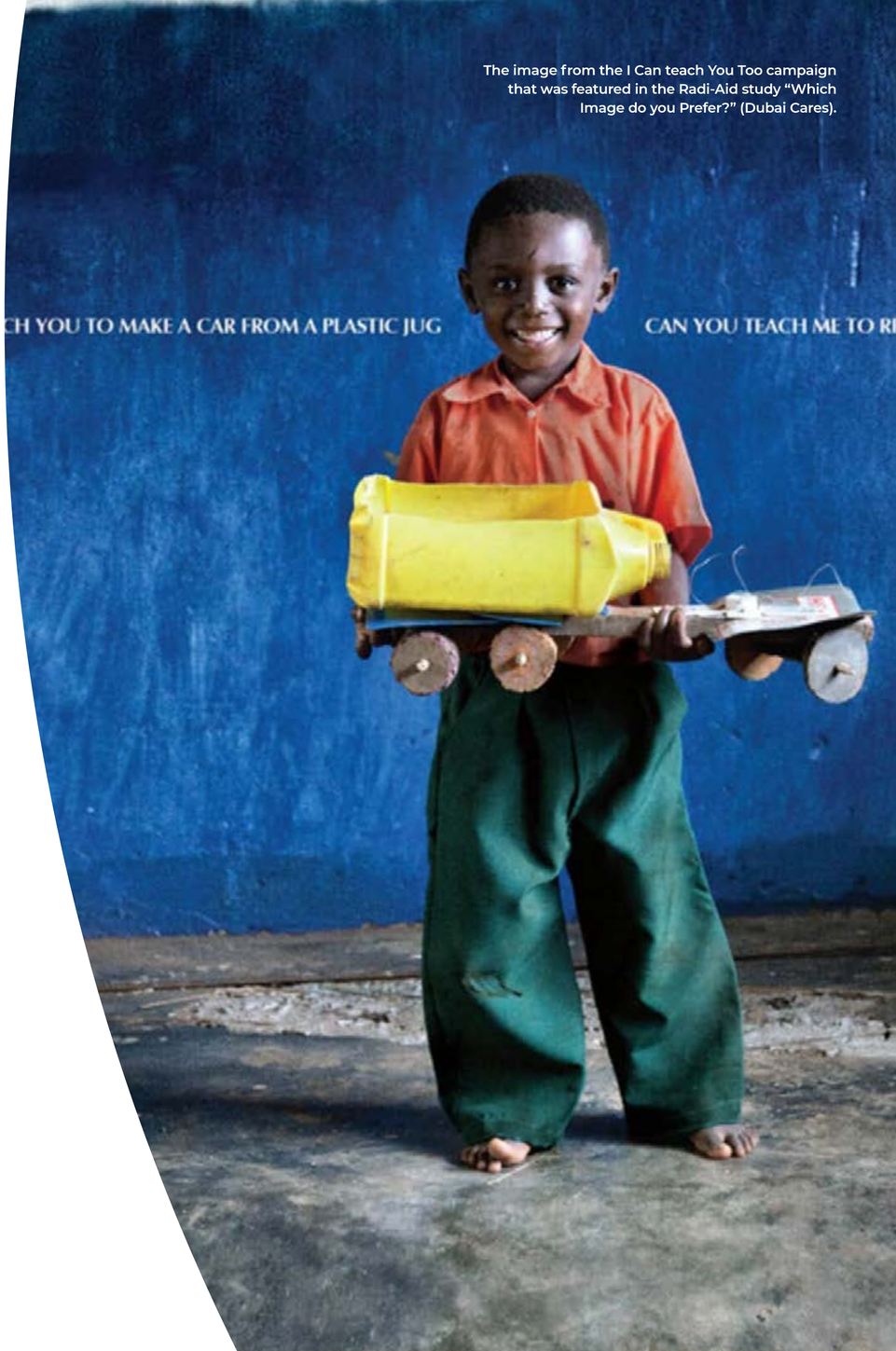
Behind the Scenes

Dubai Cares is a philanthropic organisation dedicated to providing access to quality education for children and youth around the world. During their 2016 Ramadan fundraising campaign, Dubai Cares decided to turn the typical one-way charity appeal around through a skills exchange between children living in areas where Dubai Cares supports projects and children living in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Celebrating the resourcefulness of children despite – or perhaps because of – their situations, the campaign featured a series of YouTube tutorials by children on making toys from everyday found objects. In return, viewers in the UAE donated towards programmes that provide children and youth with access to quality education and developed a crowdsourced simple alphabet book, thereby doubling the financial contributions of the previous campaign.

See all of the photos in the I Can Teach You Too series at:
https://bit.ly/3CJDRx1

Or learn how to make a football from a plastic bag from a boy in Tanzania at:
https://bit.ly/3EK2mdZ



The image from the I Can teach You Too campaign that was featured in the Radi-Aid study "Which Image do you Prefer?" (Dubai Cares).

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- The campaign shows that all children have great potential, no matter their life circumstances, and asks audiences to consider what children can accomplish with the right to education and resources.
- A photograph from the series was chosen as the most popular image in the Radi-Aid study, "Which Image do you Prefer?" The report notes that, "although a poignant image, it's also a positive one; the child depicted is extremely happy with the car he has made. It therefore symbolises hope, creativity, innovation, and vision. As one respondent rightly says, 'if he can achieve this car on his own, think what he can achieve with an education.'"[21]
- The campaign was effective in driving both donations and social media engagement, raising millions for education programming and garnering 300,000 views on YouTube, 130,000 impressions on Twitter, and a reach of over 250,000 followers on Instagram.
- The campaign pleasantly surprises viewers in its departure from what is generally expected in a YouTube tutorial or from a charity champaign, clearly and simply showing how we all have much to learn from each other.

[21] Girling, 2018.

Top Tips for Principle #10

- **While not shying away from problems, look towards solutions and celebrate hope and partnerships towards positive change.**
- **Any calls for action within the story should allow for both the people in, or affected by, the story and the audience to claim, or reclaim, the power to act and to make a difference.**

In Brief: Applying the Dignified Storytelling Principles

1 IT'S NOT MY STORY.

- Involve contributors as co-creators in the story-making, working closely with them to determine what story is told and how it is told.
- Find ways to "pass the microphone" to contributors so that their voices are not appropriated, silenced, or controlled. To do this requires creating a safe space for their stories and, often, some degree of training or confidence-building.

2 I DO NO HARM.

- Assess risk of harm to contributors as an ongoing process, conducted in collaboration with the people closest to the story.
- Put the safety and well-being of contributors as the highest priority. In cases of risk of harm, retribution, or loss always choose NOT to tell the story (or tell the story another way to counter the risk).

3 WE ARE ALL MULTI-DIMENSIONAL.

- Show contributors as fully dimensional humans who fill several roles and have wide interests, personalities, and agency.
- If telling a story about a community or group of people, include diverse representation and context details to show more than one dimension of that community.

4 CONSENT IS MORE THAN PAPERWORK.

- Prioritise informed, full, and freely given consent as an ethical (and often legal) requirement for dignified storytelling.
- Ensure that contributors understand and agree to the purpose of the story-gathering and the usage of the final story, the implications of its publication, and their right to withdraw consent at any time (including a clear, simple, accessible process of how to do so).

5 I AM BIASED (REPEAT).

- Do the hard work of reflecting on and recognising one's own biases and positioning within existing power dynamics.
- Respond by making deliberate creative choices to use inclusive language and to challenge stereotypes and stigma in what stories are told, and how they are told.

6 I DO MY HOMEWORK.

- Do the research on the historical and cultural context of the story and include relevant background information in the story, consulting with experts and those with lived experience to help ensure accuracy and authenticity.
- Prioritise working with creatives who have deep knowledge of the culture and context, ideally because they are from the place where the story is set.

7 I AM EMPATHETIC.

- Employ “empathy checks” throughout the storytelling process, especially prior to publication, considering whether you would be comfortable sharing the visual or written story if it were a depiction of yourself or someone close to you.
- Find platforms and avenues to facilitate the use of stories and storytelling as a tool to bring about positive impact.

8 I PROTECT OTHERS’ DATA LIKE IT’S MY OWN.

- Follow all existing national or regional laws and regulations on storing and publishing stories.
- Agree with contributors on how long a story will be kept or used.

9 TRUTH OVER HEADLINES.

- Work closely with contributors and local creatives to find, shape, and tell the most accurate and authentic stories possible.
- Do not digitally manipulate or edit stories in a way that would change the meaning or the connotations of the original content.

10 A STORY CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.

- While not shying away from problems, look towards solutions and celebrate hope and partnerships towards positive change.
- Any calls for action within the story should allow for both the people in, or affected by, the story and the audience to claim, or reclaim, the power to act and to make a difference.

FURTHER GUIDANCE
FOR SOME GROUPS

Further Guidance **for Some Groups**

The guidelines highlighted under each Principle in the section above apply generally across most, if not all, contexts. This includes when working with individuals or communities that identify as part of a group whose characteristics or circumstances warrant increased sensitivity. This section of further guidance highlights additional considerations for some of these groups, to be considered in tandem with the Dignified Storytelling Principles and their application.

As much as possible, information from the general guidelines on each Principle has not been repeated but is alluded to and should be considered relevant for these specific groups as well.

The guidance below focuses on five different groups of people, but these are by no means the only identities that require additional considerations. The five groups featured here have been included as they were either a focus of one or more of the Dignified Storytelling Consultations or there are significant existing resources available to help guide interactions. As with the general guidelines for each Principles, the advice here is not exhaustive and will require localisation and contextualisation for each situation.

Children and Youth

If any group is particularly susceptible to being the subject of "undignified" storytelling, it is, perhaps, children. In fundraising campaigns, images and stories of children in need – often shown in poor health, squalid conditions, and without caring adults – evoke sympathy and often work, at least in the short term, to bring in donations. However, telling stories about, and with, children, warrants additional thoughtfulness and care to safeguard against exploitation and to ensure that all involved, including the children themselves and their parents or legal caregivers, are happy with the content and its usage.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child maintains that the "best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration" in storytelling. The best interest of each individual child takes precedent over all other causes, even the promotion of children's rights or advocacy for children's issues.

In determining what is in their best interest, always consult with those closest to the children's situation who are best positioned to understand any political, social, or cultural implications of telling the story, including the children themselves.

Children are not to be used as props and must be respected as whole human beings. While, in the case of a minor, informed consent is always needed from a parent or caregiver (see Principle #4), children also have a right to have a voice in the question of consent. Use developmentally appropriate language – and perhaps examples or illustrations – to talk with children about the purpose for and how the content will be used, and take time to listen to their perspectives, respecting what they have to say. Children have their whole lives ahead of them; consider the potential impact of them coming across their story several years into the future and use this to guide creative and practical decision making.

When interviewing children, practice utmost sensitivity in the types of questions and the way in which they are asked. Avoid judgment and the chance of retriggering past pain or trauma. Children should never be exposed to danger or to humiliation for past or present events.

Make all efforts to ensure that children are comfortable during any story-gathering processes, in part by thinking about where it is taking place and who is involved, including limiting the number of interviewers or image/filmmakers. Always consider what the creative choices, whether visual, audio, or written, might say – either explicitly or implicitly – about the child and his or her situation. In photographs or films, generally avoid framing photos in a way that communicates the message that the child has no caring adults in his or her life. Additionally, in general, avoid images of sick or unclothed children, particularly if the intent is to elicit pity or judgement.[22]

Never stage a story that is not part of a child's actual life story. Check the accuracy of all accounts with other children and/or an adult – and preferably with

[22]There may be instances when a contributor would like to share images that counter these general guidelines as a means of expressing ownership of an experience or to raise awareness of a personal cause.

both. As with adults, children's lives deserve attention to the context and well-rounded, balanced accounts.

UNICEF suggests that names should be changed and visual identity obscured for any child who has been identified as: a victim of sexual abuse or exploitation; a perpetrator of physical or sexual abuse; HIV positive, or living with AIDS, unless the child, a parent or a guardian gives fully informed consent; charged or convicted of a crime; or a child combatant, or former child combatant who is holding a weapon or weapons.[23] Under other circumstances -- for example, with asylum seekers or refugees – where there is some risk or potential risk, names and identities should likely also be protected.

If there is any doubt about whether a child is at risk, choose to tell a story about the general situation for children rather than a single individual child. This is true regardless of how newsworthy, compelling, or moving the story might be.

The best interest of each individual child takes precedent over all other causes, even the promotion of children's rights or advocacy for children's issues.

The Citizens Foundation (TCF) students in a school playground in Qayyumabad, Karachi, Pakistan. Credit: TCF/Zoral Naik

[23]See UNICEF's Ethical reporting guidelines: Key principles for responsible reporting on children and young people for further guidance on interviewing and reporting on children.

Story Spotlight – **Children and Image Production**

Lisa Atkinson

Behind the Scenes

Recognising that children are key stakeholders in decisions that affect them, including effective programme design, is considered development best practice. Yet, in what ways are their rights considered during the production of images for public consumption, whether for fundraising or impact reporting? How can organisations, committed to children's development and well-being, safeguard their rights to participate and include the children as contributors in image production?

Dr. Emile Secker and charity specialist Lisa Atkinson sought to explore these questions via a pilot study, which was conducted during a 2014 consultation to assess projects geared towards street-connected children living in Port Harcourt and Calabar, Nigeria. The pilot study aimed to recognise participants in a project for street-connected children as full contributors who have the right to intentionally choose if they wish to be a part of images on an organisation's behalf and to inform how they are depicted in those images.

Contributor-led image production workshop participants (Atkinson).

Through interactive workshops, participating children discussed their feelings around sad and happy images of children, and how they connected with each image. This was followed by a group discussion on why people would want to help each group of children, whether depicted as happy or sad. For example, upon seeing happy children, some people in the world may be motivated to keep them happy. Others, when seeing images of sad children, may be motivated in wanting to make them happy.

Once this was understood, one child from the group was chosen to be the photographer and was given a digital camera for the exercise. The other children were photographed in turn in their chosen location within the centre. Before each shot the photographer would ask, “How do you want the world to see you?” The child could then choose their attitude and posture within the photo. Once the portrait picture was taken, the child was asked to explain to a volunteer whether they chose to be happy or sad for the picture, and why. Interestingly, the results were significantly split between how the children chose to pose.

If you’d like to learn more about the pilot study, please reach out to Lisa Atkinson at: **lisa@fizzycompass.co.uk**

Director’s Cut: The Principles in Practice

- The study treated each child as a unique contributor with a right to their own opinion and perspective.
- Children were given the opportunity to choose a frame of representation, mitigating the risk of stereotyping or perpetuating bias.
- The study took a proactive approach to improving safeguarding and consent practices at the content gathering stage by taking the time for meaningful discussion with the children.
- The process valued the agency of the children and their right to define the terms of their participation.
- Through their involvement, the study aimed to uncover and depict the reality of the contributors’ lived experiences as accurately and authentically as possible.

Girls and Women

Gender dynamics cannot be ignored in storytelling. In some communities, gender norms dictate who is most visible and able to make their voices heard, and often penalise those who do not conform to established roles. In societies where women's opinions are systematically ignored or silenced, content gatherers will need to carefully strategise culturally sensitive ways to hear from all those involved in the story. This is likely to include consideration of who is best positioned to have the conversations with contributors and where and when they take place. As with all people, planning for and gathering content on stories featuring women needs to be at convenient times and in safe locations for the contributors. Ask contributors what is best for them, and if they have preferences regarding who they feel most comfortable working with on the story.

In many places, prevailing gender norms prescribe limited roles for girls or women, often confined to only domestic life. Even in children's storybooks, young female characters are traditionally shown in vulnerable roles; for example, as they wait to be rescued by a long-awaited prince. Many stories portray disempowered girls who are not pursuing their dreams or achieving happiness on their own, while, in contrast, boys are often depicted in leading roles and as the heroes of the story.

These dominant and stereotypical narratives underline the importance of showing girls and women in roles and responsibilities outside of traditional expectations, which are often passive and confined to domestic, familial spheres. Shifting the stories that are told about girls and women can work to counter stereotypes by bringing to light contributors' hopes and dreams, diverse personalities and voices, and accomplishments and agency both inside and outside of the home.

When crafting a story, storytellers should be on alert for sexist language that unnecessarily identifies gender. Make choices to use gender neutral language; for example, when writing in English, by changing singular nouns to plural and using neutral titles for occupations.[24]

While gender inequity is often shaped by stories, there is an equal power to be leveraged through storytelling that promotes gender equity. There are many female photographers, filmmakers, journalists, writers, and illustrators available around the world who are well-positioned to capture and facilitate stories that feature fuller accounts of the struggles and triumphs of girls and women.[25]

[24]Each language will have unique features – for example, grammatical gender forms – which require specific guidelines to assist with gender inclusivity. The United Nations has produced guidelines for gender inclusive language for its six official languages; these can be accessed from: https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/index.shtml

[25]As footnoted earlier, see Women Photograph and Women Who Draw for two databases featuring female creatives.

Story Spotlight – **Catching Alices** *Save the Children*

Behind the Scenes

In a Liberian village, over 800 babies have been named Alice in honour of the midwife who delivered them. The story introduces the readers to Alice... and some of the many Alices!

Save the Children first met Alice in 2013 during a trip to gather stories of Save the Children's maternal healthcare provision at the White Plains clinic in Monserrado County, Liberia. Alice had been midwife for almost 30 years and was training to become a nurse. She stood out because of her passion to help pregnant mothers in remote villages get the maternal health support they needed. Alice regularly travels by motorbike to reach remote areas and, prior to the renovation of the clinic, used to work sometimes by candlelight to deliver babies.

In 2018, Save the Children met Alice again and spent several weeks with her, following her at work and at home and meeting the many “Small Alices.” Inf act, Alice believes there are approximately 1,000 children named after her – an acknowledgment of the significant role she plays in the community.

Alice the midwife stands inside White Plains Clinic, Liberia (Hanna Adcock / Save the Children).

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- The story uses photographs, video clips, direct quotes, and narrative writing to show and tell Alice's story from several angles and perspectives in a way that is engaging and multi-dimensional.
- The story does a deep dive into Alice's life and work; audiences are given a glimpse at the experiences that have shaped her and who she is as a daughter, mother, woman, and midwife.
- While an important aspect of the story is the way the clinic, built by Save the Children, has positively impacted the community and facilitated Alice's work, emphasis is placed on her incredible and heroic hard work, despite difficult conditions. Alice is clearly the hero of the story, going above and beyond for her patients – and even turning down promotions to remain in the delivery room. As Alice notes in the story, "I feel good when a baby is born, I feel I have done something good. I have brought somebody into this world."
- Save the Children has robust and thorough consent processes that include a required advance briefing for local translators, visual examples to show potential contributors on how their images or stories may be used, and "leave behind cards" to help contributors contact them if they change their mind later about participation. Save the Children also allots time for questions from individuals and families, emphasising the right of potential contributors to accept, or not accept, the consent conditions.
- Having worked with Save the Children for several years, Alice was happy and comfortable sharing her story as the trust was already established. With the other "little Alices" in surrounding communities, Save the Children spent the time explaining the rationale of why they were gathering their story – because they had named their daughter or son after their midwife.

See the story, Catching Alices, at: **https://stories.savethechildren.org.uk/catchingalices/#Catching-Alices-1IXO1WR4LG**

People with Disabilities

There is great power in amplifying the voices of people with disabilities[26], acknowledging that they are highly visible and full persons, despite what societies may say. Storytellers should be aware that, even when positively intended, stories that cast a person with disabilities as just a figure of inspiration can also be limiting. People with disabilities are whole and multi-faceted human beings and valuable, contributing members of their communities and need to be shown as such. The disability itself is often not what the person may wish to highlight as it is not what makes them who they are. Beyond that, contributors may wish for their achievements or merits to be highlighted without the addendum that they managed those feats "despite their disability." Their disability is an ever-present fact in their lives and reminders of it may be best left unsaid.

Dignified Storytelling maintains that storytelling should be a collaborative and inclusive process with contributors. People with disabilities should be involved in telling their own stories. Underlining the importance of representation, a popular hashtag states: #nothingaboutuswithoutus. To help ensure inclusive language, ask the person or the group you are working with how they would like to be described or referenced in any story and follow their guidance and preferences.

If facilitating the story-gathering, keep in mind that there may be confidence issues that need to be addressed for those who wish to tell their story. As with other types of contributors, people with disabilities may need support to identify what story to tell and how they wish to present it. Due to a disability, there may be constraints to telling a story through one method while other avenues remain accessible. Offer ideas and facilitate people's preferences to tell their stories in different ways – for example, visually, orally, or by using digital technology or sign language.

It is important, too, to take care not to treat people with disabilities as a homogeneous group – there are likely to be different needs based on whether the disability is physical or mental, visible, or invisible. As with all groups, each individual warrants attention and care.

When working with people with disabilities, it is also important to be aware that there may be compounding traumas – for example, experiences of abuse – beyond issues around the disability itself. Even with an awareness that trauma is present, great thoughtfulness is needed about both what can be seen and heard, and what cannot. Begin interactions by recognising that trauma will be there, and then make sure there are strategies and additional professional support in place to address, or avoid retriggering, that trauma.

It is also important to be mindful of the role of intersectionality plays in a person's life experiences. The many aspects of anyone's socio-political identities – for example, race, gender, and education levels – combine and result in different positive and negative impacts. When disability is also present, the discrimination or lack of power a person may feel in sharing their story can be compounded.

Storytelling may skew towards showcasing disabled people with higher education and more wealthy backgrounds because they may be more eloquent or have the means to raise their own profile. Storytellers must make a conscious effort not to leave unseen the people with disabilities who don't have access to those opportunities. This group often has rich stories as well as they manage intersectional challenges that include disability, economics, and other dimensions.

The language used when telling stories of people with disabilities often uses terminology such as "empowerment" or "inspiring" that may subtly diminish people's agency by positioning them as passive recipients or tropes. Reflect on these connotations and seek new language that does not shy away from exploring differences, allows contributors to reclaim their power and voice, and promotes whole person depictions beyond disabilities alone.

[26]While this Handbook uses person-first language, some disability advocacy groups prefer identity-first language ("disabled person"). Always ask the individual or group with whom you are working about how they would like to be referenced. It should be their personal choice as to how they are described.

Story Spotlight – **Rise for Justice** *BRANDOUTLOUD and OneFamilyPeople*

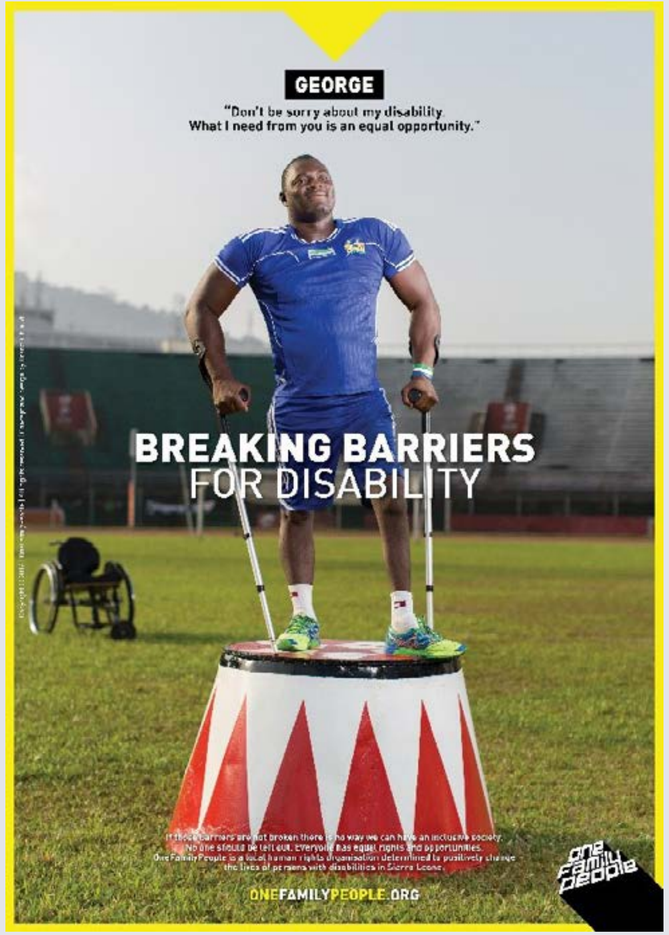
Behind the Scenes

Rise for Justice was a brand awareness campaign for the NGO OneFamilyPeople in Sierra Leone. OneFamilyPeople works to change widespread misconceptions and stereotypes around disabilities with the goal of realising a more inclusive society.

According to OneFamilyPeople, traditionally in Sierra Leone, those with disabilities would typically not be included in family portraits. In contrast, OneFamilyPeople is committed to an everyone-together approach of inclusive development.

The approach BRANDOUTLOUD took to working with OneFamilyPeople to develop a visual identity and signature images and stories was also deliberately inclusive, from the organisation's director to all of the people involved in the stories – the whole family.

Scroll through the portraits at: **https://onefamilypeople.org/context/**



George is a Paralympic table tennis player and an ambassador for the Leave No One Behind campaign (BRANDOUTLOUD and OneFamilyPeople).

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice.

The campaign features a series of posed photographs of real people who are working with OneFamilyPeople and who have chosen how they would like to be represented and referred to – including their positions, clothing, settings, and attitudes.

- The photos are celebratory, showcasing the unique personalities and abilities of each contributor, who is pictured in a position of strength on an elevated and brightly coloured pedestal.
- Content is layered on the website with longer form profiles of featured contributors available as well as the portraits.
- The tagline Breaking Barriers for Disabilities originated directly from the performances and music of Sierra Leone's active Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO).
- The messaging refutes pity, asking instead for justice and equity.

Check out the longer form profiles as well, including that of Lady S: **https://onefamilypeople.org/our-stories/1/lady-s**

Mark Van Luyk / BRANDOUTLOUD

Story Spotlight – **Shamshad Begum's Story** *The Hashoo Foundation*

Behind the Scenes

Shamshad Begum, who has a hearing impairment, is a Hashoo Foundation scholar from a remote district in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. Despite financial constraints and other challenges within her family, Shamshad has always been determined to pursue her education.

Thanks to a fully-funded scholarship from the Hashoo Foundation, Shamshad was able to complete a four-year Bachelor programme in Textile Design at the National College of Arts in Lahore, Pakistan. Recognising her talent with textiles, Hashoo Foundation has continued to support Shamshad in product development and links to international markets. Shamshad is now realising her dream of becoming a designer and contributing financially to help her household. After graduating from the National College of Arts, she is currently working as a Head of Department - Textile and Fashion, for an upcoming brand, Bahoor, and aims one day to open an NGO for children with disabilities.

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice.

- Shamshad is her own, quietly powerful spokesperson. In telling her personal story, she also educates audiences on the nature of her hearing impairment, making it understandable and relatable.
- Shamshad's determination to follow her dreams despite many challenges sends a clear message that anyone can learn skills and find success when provided with the right opportunities.
- Shamshad's hearing impairment is not the sole focus of the story. It is only one aspect of a much fuller story of Shamshad's determination, full personhood, and path to realise her dreams.
- The style of the video shows that "less can be more" as Shamshad effectively carries the narrative herself with very few effects, speaking freely and naturally in her own language and words.

Shamshad Begum, a Hashoo scholar and person with disabilities, has overcome many challenges to become a textile designer (Hashoo Foundation).

Watch Shamshad tell her story at:
https://bit.ly/3BgI1NA

People Impacted by Emergencies

The term “emergencies” is used here in its broadest sense to refer to occurrences that require immediate action, which may be due to epidemics, to natural or technological catastrophes, to strife, or other human-made causes. Emergencies threaten the health, safety, security and/or wellbeing of a community, with additional care and sensitivity needed to protect contributors and their wider communities.

When working with emergency-impacted individuals or groups, it is vital to deeply understand the context and, with that, the risks of harm. More than one individual – for example, senior leadership within an organisation, those closest to where the story is happening, or those closest to the contributors themselves (for example, case managers or officers on staff who work directly with potential contributors) – should be engaged to ensure responsible decisions are made on what stories to move forward, even when consent is obtained. Protection advisers, or those in a similar role, are often best positioned within an organisation to understand the trauma experienced by people affected by crisis and to advise on how to respond appropriately.

As with all storytelling but to a heightened degree, the needs of the community or group being impacted must be placed as first priority – above the storytellers as an artist or those of any involved organisations. When working with refugees, internally displaced persons, or migrants, this awareness of the individual or group’s situation and specific needs becomes even more crucial to ensure that the storytelling does not bring undue additional stress or risk of harm to any contributor.

It is almost guaranteed that emergency settings will not be any ideal situation for content gathering. There may be time and resource constraints, and contributors are likely to be facing external and internal difficulties, for example: anxiety, hunger, danger, trauma, and exhaustion. Plan ahead for these less-than-ideal situations in collaboration with those you are working with, including deciding what activities you will prioritise and how to approach content gathering in the most respectful way possible. Work with staff and partners closest to the contributors to determine the questions you will ask in advance, being as careful as possible to avoid re-traumatisation during the interview. Asking open-ended questions – in consultation with protection officers or their equivalent – can help the potential contributor have more agency in deciding if they want to share their experiences. Potential contributors should also understand that they can stop the interview, or change their mind, at any time. Consider having psychosocial support personnel readily available to help in case the contributor becomes upset or emotional and needs additional support.

While often more challenging to do in sensitive or crisis-affected settings, discussions on consent are even more important for safeguarding and ensuring contributors’ right to dictate the parameters of their privacy. As always, make sure people understand where and how any quotes and images will be used, and for how long. Particularly with emergencies that are likely to garner global attention, it can

be important to bring the global context into conversations about risk and consent so that contributors have a wider understanding of the implications of sharing their stories. Confidentiality of personal information is likely required, with attention to protection measures for both contributors and their families.

In emergencies, or any prolonged aftermath, seek to understand the motives of the people sharing their stories – whether positive (for example, wanting to give back) or more negative (for example, stories for cash) – and recognise your power in that situation. Take steps to mitigate power differences and address expectations from contributors, whether voiced or unvoiced, through how, when, where, and who is communicating. A component of this communication may be ensuring that contributors understand that (in most cases) they will not be compensated for sharing their story, and they will also not lose access to any services if they decide not to share.

As with all content gathering, seek to spend as much time as possible with individuals and communities to counter the potential for story gathering to be extractive rather than collaborative. With that said, it is important to remember that people affected by an emergency are often psychically and psychologically exhausted and to adjust plans as needed to avoid overburdening people. While repeatedly going back to the same families to check in on developments may build relationships and make for deeper stories, this can also add stress and raise expectations for assistance. Enter each situation with a sensitivity to the needs of the people involved, asking questions about what is appropriate and paying attention to non-verbal clues to gauge potential contributors' mental, physical, and emotional bandwidth.

Whenever possible, look to guide contributors on how to tell their stories themselves, moving towards practices that allow them to work to their own ideas and timeframes for sharing. As always, give contributors the opportunity to present themselves as they want to be presented, and be open to the different stories they will tell and the ways they want to address the issues affecting their lives.

While sharing stories can be a healing practice, both individually and collectively, the process may also re-trigger painful emotions and trauma for people. Seek to create a safe space for the telling, but also for the follow-up through engagement with informal or formal local support structures (community groups, local service providers, or informal networks). With that, the people who are gathering stories need to be trained and equipped to be able to assess situations for risks of trauma and harm – and to take steps to prevent or respond to these factors. Whenever possible, professional protection advisors should be present to help guide story-gatherers in trauma-informed practices.

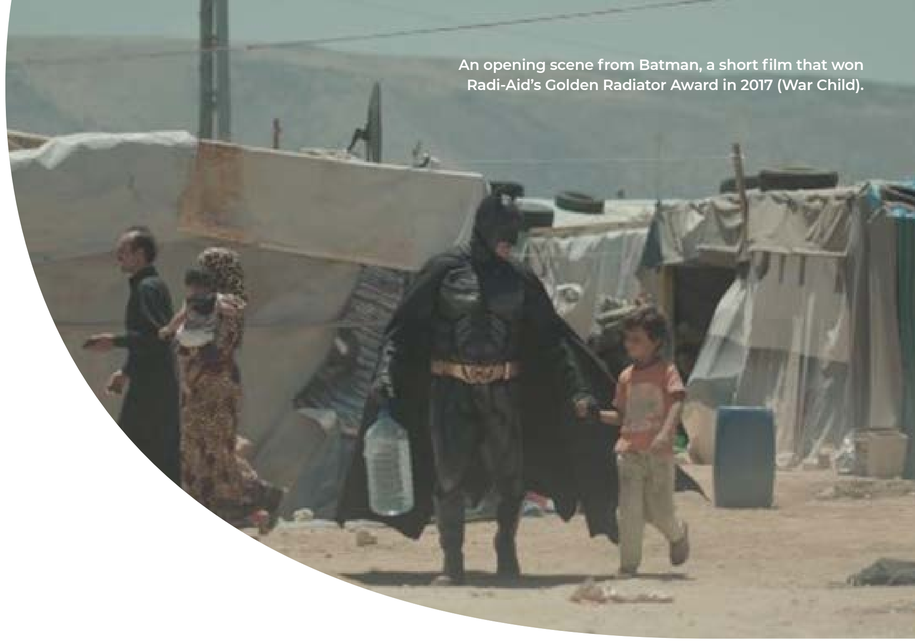
In shaping stories that feature situations and people in, or impacted by, emergencies, it can be especially important to:

- Creatively look for ways to minimise risk in the way stories are told; for example, through the use of abstract images, not showing identifying features in images, or by using anonymous testimony.
- Always put the story within context remembering that one testimony does not represent the whole community.
- Ensure that individuals are not reduced to tropes, archetypes, or stereotypes.
- Allow for nuance and complications; do not present simplified narratives solutions in the face of overwhelming complex circumstances.

In crafting stories about conflict and emergency crisis settings, it is even more important than ever to be mindful of the danger of simplifying a whole collective or situation. Careful research and reporting along with checks by diverse and knowledgeable reviewers are essential to ensure dignified stories in these situations.

Story Spotlight – **Batman** *War Child*

Watch Batman at:
https://youtu.be/PIKewZLeWU8



An opening scene from Batman, a short film that won Radi-Aid's Golden Radiator Award in 2017 (War Child).

Behind the Scenes

Eight-year-old Kadar (not his real name), who stars in the film, was forced to leave his home in Syria and now lives in a refugee camp in Lebanon with his mother and father. As War Child notes, Kadar did not want to speak about the terrible things he has experienced as a result of the war – he is a child, and often escapes into an imaginary world as children do.

The short film, by War Child in partnership with Universal, MassiveMusic, In Case of Fire, and Sony, won Gold in the category "Film Craft, Director" at Cannes Lions 2017 and the Golden Radiator Award 2017. The Golden Radiator Awards which were started by the Norwegian Students' and Academics' International Assistance Fund (SAIH), to honour the best – and the worst – in fundraising campaigns.

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice.

- In the film, Kadar is not asked to reflect on painful memories, rather his imagination and capacity for joy are celebrated.
- The harsh background of the camp is shown as the setting of the story, but it is not the focus of the narrative.
- Audiences find themselves connecting with the spirit of play shared by children around the world as the film draws attention, first of all, to what we have in common.
- While featuring real people, it minimises the risk of re-traumatisation by telling the story with a fantasy twist.
- The film shows the human capacity for a wide-ranging emotions and multiple "truths" to exist in the same space.
- The symbolic link between the father and the superhero, Batman, communicates the father's strength, rather than his need. He is positioned as the hero, and audiences are left with the sense that he is a good father doing all he can for his family in the midst of difficult circumstances.

People Impacted by Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Stories involving incidents of sexual and gender-based violence must be approached with great care and thoughtfulness given significant inherent risks of re-traumatisation and of retribution or harm to the contributors.

When working with survivors, do the preparation work necessary to understand the nuances of each situation and then create a safe space accordingly. It is important to understand as much as possible about the situation and the cultural dynamics at play. This background work should also include an analysis of where the potential contributor is at on the storytelling continuum: Have they told their story before? How often? Where? Knowing these details will help guide an approach that can address their needs and comfort level and protect their wellbeing.

It is the work of the storyteller to help potential contributors feel at ease, gaining their confidence through honest discussion and relationship-building. Providing an opportunity for survivors to share their stories can be, and should be, a cathartic and empowering experience. Many times, the voices of survivors are not pursued. Asking survivors directly and respectfully to share – wanting to hear their stories – acknowledges their inherent humanity and the value of their stories. With this, the story gatherer also needs to be able to judge if there is a need to stop the interview or to seek guidance or support from a therapist or person with more specialised training.

Limit the number of people involved in interviews to avoid any perceptions of intimidation. Depending on the type of story and the situation, it may be helpful to have someone else present who is around the same age and gender of the person sharing their story; for example, a caseworker or social worker that the contributor knows well. Note that for some types of storytelling, particularly within the field of journalism, involving a third party may not be appropriate.

Given the sensitive topic, take additional time and care to guide survivors about the implications of their consent so that they can make choices that are best for them around what they want to share and how they want to be presented. Taking time to discuss consent is also an opportunity to build the trust required for someone to share their story. Discuss their options for the medium of the story as some formats (for example, podcasts or radio) may be more helpful to obscuring or protecting identity, where necessary or desired. Always adhere to relevant laws related to privacy and identifiable details; in many places, there are cultural implications that make it vital to obscure identity.

The choice of medium will also impact the degree to which the contributor feels they can have an open conversation (for example, whether being filmed or having a more private one-on-one conversation). However, wherever, and whenever a story is being told, it matters greatly how it is received by the content gatherer – actively listen with empathy and warmth, avoiding all judgment.

There can be a tendency with “survivor stories” to play to expectations of sensational hero stories, which obscure the complex realities of difficult situations. If crafting the story, be careful of these expectations, making deliberate choices to include context and to not minimise the process involved in healing from trauma.

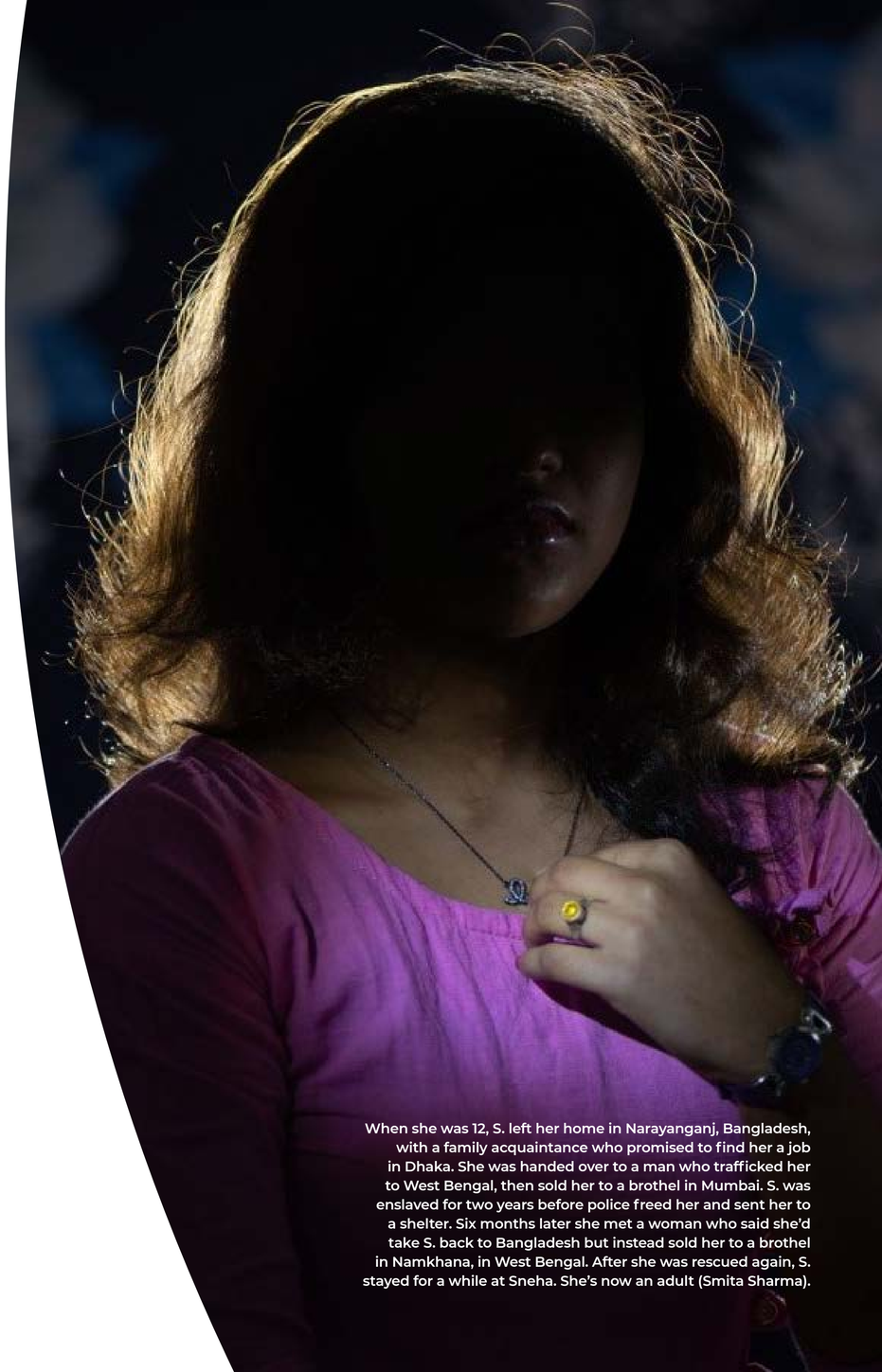
Once the story is published, individuals may face stigma and community pressure. Even after the content gathering, look for ways to continue to support contributors by connecting them with trusted service providers and community networks that are committed to, and can support, their wellbeing.

Story Spotlight – **Stolen Lives** *Smita Sharma for National Geographic*

Behind the Scenes

Smita Sharma first began working on Not my Shame, a project documenting rape and sexual violence in India, six years ago after she met a girl who was trafficked on her walk to school. For the first three years, she worked on the story independently prior to pitching it to National Geographic. In 2018, she partnered with the team at National Geographic and with writer Yudhijit Bhattacharjee, to develop Stolen Lives. Stolen Lives was published in the October 2020 issue of National Geographic magazine.

Smita approaches her photography work with empathy and thoughtfulness, building relationships and sensitively navigating around difficult questions that risk re-traumatising the contributor. As she notes during a podcast interview with Photography Ethics Centre (linked on the next page), “I think the person that we photograph, that person does us a favour by sharing their story. We are not doing a favour; they are doing a favour to us. So, we have to respect that.”



When she was 12, S. left her home in Narayanganj, Bangladesh, with a family acquaintance who promised to find her a job in Dhaka. She was handed over to a man who trafficked her to West Bengal, then sold her to a brothel in Mumbai. S. was enslaved for two years before police freed her and sent her to a shelter. Six months later she met a woman who said she’d take S. back to Bangladesh but instead sold her to a brothel in Namkhana, in West Bengal. After she was rescued again, S. stayed for a while at Sneha. She’s now an adult (Smita Sharma).

Director's Cut: The Principles in Practice

- To protect the privacy of the girls who were trafficked and to comply with Indian laws on identifying victims of sexual crimes, identities of the girls or those of their family members are not revealed in the story.

- The photographs are shot in ways intended to obscure the girls' faces. Smita seeks creative solutions to show personalities while not disclosing identifies; for example, using scarfs, light and shadow, and positioning to render an emotive yet non-identifiable photograph. She tries to avoid having contributors cover their face, which can carry a connotation of shame where there is none.

- Following the guidelines of photojournalism, Smita does not alter an image or change it through post-processing.

- Smita spent time with the girls so that they were comfortable with her prior to asking if she could photograph their daily lives. She worked according to their schedules and what was best for them and is still in touch with many of the girls.

- Smita prioritises consent, which was made possible because of the trust built and the confidence that their identities would not be revealed. As Smita notes in the interview linked below, "They understand the importance of raising awareness. They shared their stories with the hope that it will prevent other innocent girls from falling into traps that they have been victims of. They don't want anyone else to go through what they went through."

- Stolen Lives is an in-depth and multi-faceted account of human trafficking. It gives due attention to the economic and cultural contexts that enable trafficking as well as sensitively describing the entrapment and many challenges of re-integration faced by the story's contributors.

See Stolen Lives as published in National Geographic at:
https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/article/stolen-lives-harrowing-story-of-two-girls-sold-into-sexual-slavery-feature

Read Smita's interview with Photography Ethics Centre at:
https://www.photoethics.org/content/2020/11/24/interview-with-smita-sharma-on-stolen-lives

Or listen to the Photography Ethics Centre's podcast episode on empathy in storytelling with Smita at:
https://www.photoethics.org/podcast/smita-sharma

Working Together **for Dignified Storytelling**

We all have a role to play in practising and promoting storytelling that is respectful, transparent, and socially responsible. Shifting the way we expect stories to be created, shared, and consumed requires that dignified storytelling is championed vertically and horizontally within organisations and discussed with all stakeholders, including translators and interpreters, contributors, donors, audiences, and external contractors.

The following guidance is just a starting point for the formal and informal discussions needed to align how we all understand and practise dignified storytelling.

Within Organisations

All staff within an organisation – from senior leadership to entry level positions and across departments – have a responsibility for dignified storytelling. It is important that organisations clearly send the message that dignified storytelling is everyone's responsibility; we are all accountable for the stories told.

This Dignified Storytelling Handbook is not a replacement for organisational policies, but it can be used to help organisations put in place clear, accessible guidelines on dignified storytelling that are available to all staff, across departments. In general, organisational guidelines will be most helpful if they:

- Include visual examples.
- List "dos" and "don'ts."
- Use sensitive and inclusive language.
- Are accurately translated into multiple languages, as appropriate.
- Are accompanied by a toolkit that helps with the practical application, perhaps including templates for different types of stories or content gathering to guide the development of dignified storytelling.

Appropriate training is then required for ALL staff within an organisation and should not be limited only to certain departments. Beyond these formal discussions or trainings, embedding dignified storytelling takes regular informal conversations as part of the everyday practice of planning for, creating, and disseminating stories.

To create an enabling atmosphere for dignified storytelling, organisations need to leave enough time within project plans for the necessary discussions, relationship-building, and consent processes to take place during content planning and gathering in an authentic and meaningful way. Strategy sessions should also be built into project plans to conduct risk assessments, considering the possible outcomes of a story; for example, the implications if a story goes viral.

As part of their processes, organisations can also build in mechanisms to help with continual organisational learning, including:

- Feedback processes to help improve practices based on lessons learned.
- Case studies that show what works and does not work in dignified storytelling in terms of impact and fundraising.
- Discussions on organisational values and priorities, including what are the measures of success for a story.

Many organisations would do well to establish a review board with diverse representation; this can help avoid the "tyranny of the [single] editor" wherein content can lose meaning and nuance during the editing stage.

Thematic Textbox
Teaching Ethical Literacy
Photography Ethics Centre

In the moment, it can be extremely difficult to make ethical decisions, which often must happen in a split second. The Photography Ethics Centre recognises this and seeks to equip people with the tools they need to navigate the ethics of photography, in part through a workshop environment that uses examples and questions to work through complex ethical issues.

The Photography Ethics Centre approaches ethics as principles that guide a person's behaviour. Ethics are subjective, meaning that every person's ethics will be different, because ethics are rooted in our individual moral frameworks, life experiences, and personal beliefs. They are contextual, in that they change depending on where we are, who we're photographing, and how our work is presented. And they are fluid, changing shape to fit the context and situation.

Using an approach based on principles can help storytellers navigate the subjectivity, contextuality, and fluidity that is inherent in ethics. We can all agree that there are certain ethical principles that are important, like integrity and respect, but we can also understand that how we apply these principles may vary from person to person and from context to context. Using principles as the foundation allows for training that is responsive to change and can help people adapt responses depending on the context.

However, to do this well, photographers (and other storytellers) must be ethically literate, meaning that they have the skills necessary to work through ethical dilemmas and to explain their ethical reasoning. These skills include critical thinking, situational awareness, and cultural sensitivity. Ethically literate photographers can handle ethical nuance, make sound ethical decisions based on the information at hand, and understand the context they are working in.

In honing the skills needed to work through difficult ethical considerations, photographers can better position themselves to build relationships, communicate effectively, and tell visual stories in a socially responsible way.

You can learn more about the Photography Ethics Centre's approach to training and access resources at: **https://www.photoethics.org/**

Or check out Photography Ethics Centre's podcast, hosted by Founder and Director Savannah Dodd, exploring ethical issues in photography with well-known and thoughtful photographers from around the world at: **https://www.photoethics.org/podcast**

With External Partners

When working with partners outside of your organisation, guidelines for the storytelling approach, process, and end products need to be agreed upon, and ideally signed, at the beginning of a project. Having these discussions initially can help ensure that expectations are clear, setting the standard for the way partners interact with contributors and the values that are prioritised in decision making. This Dignified Storytelling Handbook can be used as tool to arrive at a shared understanding of what it means to practice dignified storytelling.

Beyond discussion, training may be required for external contractors, such as content creators or interpreters, to clarify the appropriate terminology, messaging, communication channels, and visions for the process and end products.

Organisations may wish to develop tailored guidelines for working with specific types of external partners; for example, the media, donors, celebrities and influencers, and/or government entities. Each of these groups has their own agenda and parameters for engagement that may require different steps to align with dignified storytelling. For example, Bond's "Statement of ethical practice on NGO content gathering and use" commits to ensuring that "any communications which include white celebrities or experts show contributors as their equals, rather than as people who are dependent on their knowledge, assistance or pity."

Donors and audiences are also partners in storytelling, and there is a responsibility to message the values of dignified storytelling to them as well. Stories are often driven by the perception of what a donor expects to see or hear; organisations and content creators may need to take the time to discuss issues around storytelling with donors, where needed encouraging them to shift to partnership-based models that enable fuller stories to be told.

As when working with contributors, clear, open, honest communication with external partners is key for establishing shared storytelling norms that place respect for the wellbeing of contributors as the central value.

Thematic Textbox
"Dignified" Fundraising

In development and humanitarian fundraising, the past thirty years have seen a general shift away from pity-inducing images of suffering to more positive portrayals showing the potential impact of donations. However, limited and sometimes contradictory research on the efficacy of using shocking versus positive images for fundraising leaves it a topic of debate.

Many fundraisers report that, at least in the short term, the use of shocking imagery increases donations. However, as the Common Cause Communications toolkit (2015) points out, while "morally coercive communications" may result in an initial gift to banish the unpleasant feeling that these stories create, they are unlikely to result in the deeper sense of connection and care critical for engaging people over the longer term.

There seems to be, according to Common Cause Communication, a significant difference between storytelling approaches to boost spikes in short-term donations and those that seek longer-term partnerships or advocate for increased concern and action around social and environmental problems. Over the longer-term, Common Cause Communication predicts that morally coercive communication will be less effective than that which seeks to intrinsically motivate through "compassionate" values.

In using shocking imagery, there can also be a danger on focusing on individual suffering instead of the root causes of the problems, leading people away from tackling the many systematic injustices that create and sustain poverty.[27] On the flip side, there are also many who argue against "deliberate positivism" on the grounds that it is overly simplistic and lacks the nuance required by complex situations.

Existing research studies have mixed findings on what approach works best for fundraising with some showing that guilt can elicit donations[28] and others finding little difference in the likelihood of donations between negative guilt-based pleas and more positive ones based on hope.[29]

Out of the ongoing debate, a still-new method of analysis has grown around the "frames" we use as a basis for the value judgments made in storytelling. In "Finding Frames," Andrew Darnton and Martin Kirk suggest that some of these "frames" are more likely to lead to long-term public engagement with development issues.

The study "Images in online fundraising and marketing: A critical examination of ACFID Members' practice and perspective" used this idea of frames to look at the frames most commonly employed to raise funds by the Australian development sector. The study found great reliance in organisations on the Transaction Frame as well the Charity and Help the Poor Frames. However, according to Darton and

[27]Andrew Darnton and Martin Kirk, "Finding Frames: New Ways to Engage the UK Public in Global Poverty," (Oxfam and UKAid, 2011).

[28]Debra Basil, Nancy Ridgway and Michael Basil, "Guilt appeals: The mediating effect of responsibility," Psychology and Marketing 23, no. 12: 1035-1054 (2006).

[29]David Hudson et al., "Emotional pathways to engagement with global poverty: An experimental analysis," paper presented at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, (San Francisco, September 2015).

Kirk, each have drawbacks in that they either reduce interaction with issues to a financial transaction or often represent the people in the appeals as passive recipients, helpless, and dependent on aid.

The ACFID study identified a missed opportunity for organisations to make more use of the Universalism Frame, with appeals based on drawing people's attention to values such as responsibility, helpfulness, human kindness, solidarity, and social justice.

Dignified Storytelling encourages organisations to conduct their own research into the funding appeals that are most successful in the short- and longer-term, while also considering other measures of storytelling success in terms of the contributors' perspectives and the impact of stories on the way audiences perceive cultures and situations around the world. Organisations can develop a "double bottom line" to make sure that fundraising campaigns are measured both by their fundraising success and their adherence to dignified storytelling practices, which represents a wider vision beyond just meeting financial goals.

With Interpreters and Translators

Interpreters and translators have an important role to play in dignified storytelling, which maintains that communication with contributors – including around informed consent – needs to be in a language with which they feel comfortable. The accurate translations of quotes, capturing both the literal meaning and the spirit in which the sentiment was conveyed, is also required to uphold the Dignified Storytelling Principle of authenticity and accuracy.

When identifying and selecting an interpreter to work with, consider the gender, social, and cultural norms of the locality where content gathering is to occur. With this, look to engage someone who will be able to put contributors at ease. It may be that this is someone from the same gender, religious, ethnic, or social group as the contributors – or the opposite![30] If possible, ask the contributor(s) what they would prefer.

There may be resource or other practical limitations that do not make it possible to hire an external interpreter. If this is the case, continue to prioritise finding the best possible person to serve as a communication intermediate. This may be someone from the community or from a partner organisation. Whether externally hired or utilised on a volunteer or internal basis, pursue accuracy of information through multiple lines of communication and taking the time required for in-depth conversations.

[30] Warrington, "Ethical Content Guidelines."

Advocating and Educating **for Dignified Storytelling**

Each of us has the power to contribute to positive change. Each of us has a responsibility to advocate for stories characterised by deep respect, full transparency, and social responsibility. Each of us has a role in dignified storytelling.

The Dignified Storytelling Pledge provides a platform for individuals and organisations to commit to practising and advocating for storytelling guided by the Dignified Storytelling Principles.

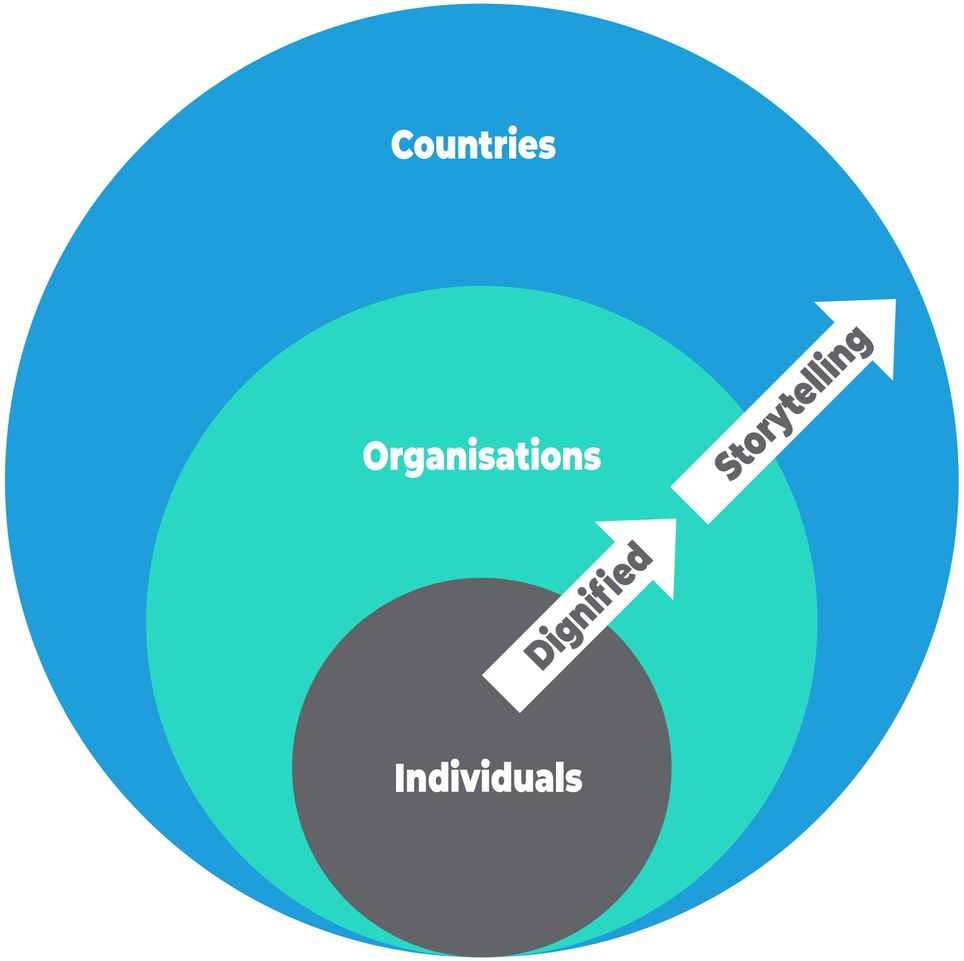
Dignified storytelling can start with the decisions made every day by individuals working in communications departments, newsrooms, programme teams and as content creators, audiences, or donors. When we individually decide to prioritise collaboration and partnerships, to choose language that is thoughtful and inclusive, to prioritise showing and telling fuller and more authentic stories, it can ripple out to transform organisational – and wider – cultures.

From the bottom up and from the top down, organisations can commit to valuing the people in the stories by embedding dignified storytelling as part of their organisational policies and practices. And as organisations make decisions to institutionalise dignified storytelling, over time the norms of whole countries can shift to expect and value stories that centre on deep respect, full transparency, and social responsibility.[31]

[31] As you and/or your organisation pursue dignified storytelling approaches, further resources and additional reading can be found in the References and Additional Reading section.

Storytelling always involves a series of choices. Each logistical, ethical, and creative choice that is made throughout story planning, gathering, developing, and publishing processes shapes the story. Dignified Storytelling is about collaboratively making small and big choices to respect and protect the agency and well-being of contributors and that result in fuller, more nuanced stories of our world.

You are warmly invited to join the network of supporters by signing the Dignified Storytelling Pledge, which can be found in full along with suggested action points at: **https://dignifiedstorytelling.com/pledge/**. We have much to learn from each other and encourage you to share the Pledge on with your own networks, growing the movement towards dignified storytelling.



Glossary

BIAS: A preconceived opinion about something or someone; may be implicit (unconscious, outside of a person's awareness) or explicit (conscious, where there is an awareness of the feelings and attitudes)

CONTENT: What stories are made of; can include copy, images, sound, video, and data (ACFID)

CONTENT GATHERER: Someone who documents a contributor's story via photographs, videos, oral interviews, and written testimony (ACFID)

CONTENT-GATHERING: The process of collecting either images (photography and videography) and/or personal stories

CONTRIBUTORS: The people who feature in films, photographs, and accompanying interviews (Bond, 2019)

CULTURAL NORMS: Informal understandings of group conduct that govern the behaviour of members of a society (ACFID)

DIGNITY: A quality that every person is born with; our inherent value and worth as a human being (Global Dignity)

EMERGENCIES: Occurrences that require immediate action that may be due to epidemics, to natural or technological catastrophes, to strife, or other human-made causes

INFORMED CONSENT: When a contributor grants permission to publish their story with full knowledge of the possible consequences, including possible risks and benefits. Informed consent must be granted freely.

LEGAL CAREGIVER: A person with the authority to make decisions for the minor(s) in his/her charge; could be a child's parent, teacher, guardian, or another responsible family member

PRIVACY: A person's right to control access to their information and identity (ACFID)

SAFEGUARDING: Protecting people's health, wellbeing, and human rights. Within development and humanitarian sectors, this is commonly understood to mean as protecting people from harm that arises from coming into contact with an organisation's staff or programmes (BOND).[32]

SOCIAL STIGMA: Social disapproval of a person on the grounds of a particular characteristic which distinguishes them from others in society; a "devalued stereotype" (Matthew Clair, Harvard University)

STEREOTYPE: A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing (Oxford Languages)

STORYTELLERS: Those responsible for creating and/or curating content, whether through writing, photography, film, audio recording, or a combination of methods

STORYTELLING: The act of sharing stories

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS): 17 Global Goals, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030

[32]Definitions of safeguarding from several international organisations can be found at: Safeguarding definitions and reporting mechanisms for UK NGOs | Bond, along with other definitions related to the concept of safeguarding.

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Annex A:
Summary of the Dignified Storytelling Consultations

The six Dignified Storytelling Consultations were conducted via Zoom between October 2021 and May 2021. In total, 144 different individuals, representing 116 entities, attended at least one Consultation. Participants included communication managers, experts, storytellers, journalists, photojournalists, videographers, academics, and programme staff from international development agencies, INGOS/NGOs, foundations, charities, corporations, universities, and media companies.

A short report on each Consultation, summarising the key discussion points, can be downloaded from the Dignified Storytelling website at: https://dignifiedstorytelling.com/consultations/

Consultations were facilitated by Sajida H. Shroff and Jamie Vinson from Altamont Group, with support from the Group Leaders and Panelists listed below.

Consultation 1

TITLE: Putting Dignified Storytelling into Practice

DATE: 21 October 2020

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 27

GROUP LEADERS: Nina Ford (Global Fund for Children) and Liz Cheesbrough (The Good Side)

Consultation #1 served as an introduction to Dignified Storytelling and to others with a shared interest in telling impactful and ethical stories. Discussion centred on the practical steps that storytellers take to ensure their stories promote a respect for human dignity.

Consultation 2

TITLE: Storytelling with Marginalized Populations

DATE: 09 December 2020

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 41

GROUP LEADERS: Michael Kass (Story & Spirit), Roger Jenkins (Federation of Asian Storytellers), and Lucy McCray (The Freedom Story)

During Consultation #2, participants discussed good practices for working with specific groups that often experience discrimination and exclusion (economic, political, cultural, and social), including: people with disabilities; people affected by conflict and emergencies; and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

Consultation 3

TITLE: Working Together for Dignified Storytelling

DATE: 23 January 2021

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 30

GROUP LEADERS: Nina Ford (Global Fund for Children) and Constance Dykhuizen (JP's Peace Love Happiness Foundation)

Consultation #3 aimed at gathering strategies for encouraging all storytelling stakeholders – within organisations and when working with external partners and audiences – to practise and promote dignified storytelling.

Consultation 4

TITLE: Addressing Ethical and Practical Dilemmas in Visual Storytelling

DATE: 03 March 2021

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 43

GROUP LEADERS: Tara Todras-Whitehill (TaraTW Visual Storytelling Agency)

PANELISTS: Munizae Jahangir (Documentary Filmmaker & Broadcast Journalist), Lisa Kristine (International Humanitarian Photographer), Waleed Shah (Photographer), Dr. Rebecca Swift (Global Head of Creative Insights, Getty Images)

A panel discussion and group conversations during Consultation #5 focused on dignified storytelling approaches – both the ethical challenges and creative, practical solutions – in photography, film, and other visual art forms.

Consultation 5

TITLE: Displacement, Migration, and Dignified Storytelling

DATE: 14 April 2021

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 52

GROUP LEADERS: Keeya-Lee Ayre (GSMA), Ingrid Guyon (Fotosynthesis), and Kellie Ryan (International Rescue Committee)

During Consultation #5, participants considered the challenges and opportunities of telling stories in contexts of displacement and migration. Discussions emphasised the potential for using participatory storytelling methods to assist people affected by displacement in telling their own stories.

Consultation 6

TITLE: The Language of Dignified Storytelling

DATE: 26 May 2021

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 45

GROUP LEADERS: Daniel Dickinson (UN Department of Global Communications), Nina Ford (Global Fund for Children), and Ragy Saro (Expo 2020 Dubai)

Consultation #6 sought participants' perspectives on commonly used terms within development and humanitarian sectors. Sharing their experiences from working in communications, content creation, and academia, participants offered advice on language usage guidelines to help storytellers honour human dignity through the words we choose.

Annex B:
Dignified Storytelling Consultation Participants

Dignified Storytelling is grateful for the valuable contributions of the following Consultation participants, who generously shared from their insights and experiences (listed in alphabetical order by first name):

Agostina Rapanelli (DP World), Alanna O-Donnell (Global Dignity), Alba Lopez (UNWTO), Anastasiya Pak (Aflatoun International), Anna Boyiazis (Photographer), Anna Uzarowska (Altamont Group), Ariel Sophia Bardi (UNFAO), Aulia Adila (ASEAN Secretariat), Ava Bahrami (APDIM-ESCAP), Ayaz Ali (Dubai Cares), Ayesha Khatib (The Citizens Foundation), Baela Jamil (ITA), Beau Barberis (Global Dignity), Brittney Potvin (Northern Council for Global Cooperation), Byrone Wayodi (Asante Africa Foundation), Carol Jimenez (Kusi Warma Association), Carole Chapelier (New York University Abu Dhabi), Carrie Pena (buildOn), Caryn Bladt (buildOn), Cassandra Wye (International Inclusive Storyteller), Chandra Chakma (BRAC), Chiara Beneventi (The Baobab Home), Christian Jepsen (NRC), Christine Condo (Sustainable Growers Rwanda), Claudia Esparza (Nanas & Amas), Claudia Rosel (IOM), Clelia Kakunze (African Union), Constance Dykhuizen (JP's Peace Love and Happiness Foundation), Dana Del Vecchio (World Education), Dane McQueen (UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Daniel Dickinson (UNDGC), Dee Abbott (Children in the Crossfire), Delice Fatiro (Resonate), Devyani Pershad (Pratham), Diana Gascon (VIVEWORLD), Elena Christy (University of Waterloo), Elisabeth Waechter (United Nations Department of Global Communications), Elizabeth English (University of Waterloo), Emily Franchett (Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health), Fernando Guevara (Holacode), Florence Kim (UN Network on Migration), Gabriella Polletta (Golletta Productions), Gareth Benest (Media Specialist), Giulia Tarantino (CESIE), Hanouf Alotaibi (UNHCR), Ingrid Guyon (Fotosynthesis), Jamie Vinson (Altamont Group), Jane Body (Mama Hope), Jayashri Wyatt (UNDGC), Joanna Demarco (Photographer), Joanna Watkins (Educate!), Jodi Hilton (Jodi Hilton Photography), Joe Ansah (Save the Children), John Sorek (buildOn), Jonathan Tiong (National University of Singapore), Jorge Fernandez (VIVEWORLD), Judith Madigan (BRANDOUTLOUD), Julie Sims (Room to Read), Karen Cirillo (UNDP), Karima Rehmani, (Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health), Katelin Raw (VVOB), Katharina Goetze (UNECA), Katja Hinz (IIEP-UNESCO), Kaylois Henry (OHCHR), Keeya-Lee Ayre (GSMA), Kellie Ryan (IRC), Khalifa Al Suwaid (Dubai Cares), Kusuma Wijaya (ASEAN Secretariat), Lauren Pires (GSMA), Leva Kwestany (The Good Side), Lilian Sayegh (Dubai Cares), Lina Elkurd (UNICEF), Lionel Ntasano (Nonara Productions Inc), Lisa Atkinson (Fizzy Compass), Lisa Kristine (Photographer), Liz Cheesbrough (The Good Side), Luciana Ciccocioppo (University of Toronto), Lucy McCray (The Freedom Story), Lucy Wilson (Teach a Man to Fish), Lunga Kupiso (African Union

Commission), Mai Farouk (Save the Children), Maitha AlSaadi, (UAE MOFAIC), Mara Chan (The Luminos Fund), Maretta Silverman (The Luminos Fund), Mariana Chaves (Expo 2020 Dubai), Mariana Miragaia (World Humanitarian Forum), Marloes van Luijk (WWF Netherlands), Md. Maksudur Rahman (Bangladesh Environment and Development Society), Michael Kass (Story & Spirit), Michal Szymanski (UN DESA), Munizae Jahangir (Broadcast Journalist & Executive Producer), Munther Ayache (Canon), Mustika Hapsoro (ASEAN Secretariat), Natasha Hirst (Photographer), Neel Shukla (Four Seasons Ramesh Gallery), Nekane Ozamiz (NKProductions.org), Nicholas March (The National), Nicky Quamina-Woo (Photographer), Nicolas Meulders (OHCHR), Nihel Chabrak (UAEU Expo Pavilion), Nina Ford (Global Fund for Children), Noha Hefny (People of Impact), Nusser Sayeed (Go Read.pk), Nyo Mee Oo (Doh Eain), Perpétue Miganda (FemWise-Africa), Peter Chege (Hydroponics Africa Limited), Quintina Valero (Quintina Valero Photography), Raefah Makki (UNHCR), Ragy Saro (Expo 2020 Dubai), Rebecca Swift (Getty Images), Rituu B Nanda (Global Fund for Children), Rodrigo Barraza (Global Fund for Children), Roger Jenkins (Federation of Asian Storytellers), Roman Levchenko (UNAIDS), Rosalia Galan (UNAOC), Rowen Ball, United World Schools, Rumana Husain (Author), Sabrina Giyasova (UN Expo 2020), Sadia Anwar (Storically), Sajida H. Shroff (Altamont Group), Sally McMillan (OHCHR), Sandra Boone (University of Minnesota), Sandra Dixon (UK Latin Community), Sara Al-Boom (Dubai Cares), Savannah Dodd (Photography Ethics Centre), Shelia Kibuthu (Sanergy), Shermin Mheidly (Dubai Cares), Simone Sales (Federation of Asian Storytellers), Sonya Armaghanyan (IOM), Sophie Pitcher, GSMA, Suhael Al Owis (Interesting Engineering), Susannah Birkwood (WWF), Susannah Price (UN-Habitat), Tamman Aloudat (MSF), Tara Todras-Whitehill (Visual Storyteller & Consultant), Thor Morales (PlusPeace & InsightShare), Tobias Denskus (Malmo University), Tom Bradley (Photographer), Victoria Bridges (Lotus Films), Waleed Shah (Photographer), Waqas Rafique (International Trade Centre), Wunpini Fatimata Mohammed (University of Georgia), Zeina Habib (WFP), Zeinab Ali (UNRCO)

Annex C:
Story Spotlight Contributors

The Story Spotlights found throughout the Dignified Storytelling Handbook are brought to you by the following organisations and individuals. Thank you for sharing your beautiful stories with us!

Listed by the Handbook section in which they appear.

PRINCIPLE #1

The GSM Association (GSMA)

The GSMA represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide, uniting over 750 operators with near 400 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem. The GSMA Mobile for Humanitarian Innovation Fund aims to promote innovation in the use of mobile technology to address humanitarian challenges.

https://www.gsma.com/

https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/mobile-for-humanitarian-innovation/innovation-fund/

The Girl Effect

Girl Effect is an international non-profit that builds media that girls want, trust, and need. From chat-bots to chat-shows and TV dramas to tech, Girl Effect content helps adolescent girls in Africa and Asia make choices and changes in their lives.

https://www.girleffect.org/

PRINCIPLE #2

Global Fund for Children (GFC)

Global Fund for Children partners with community-based organisations worldwide to help children and youth reach their full potential and advance their rights.

https://globalfundforchildren.org/

PRINCIPLE #3

The Good Side

The Good Side is an insight and creative ideas company, helping people to understand and impact systems, society, and culture.

https://thisisthegoodside.com/

Sacred Groves

Sacred Groves is a platform that enables environmentally conscious individuals and entities to play their part in protecting our environment, rainforest, wildlife, and natural habitats.

https://www.sacredgroves.earth/

PRINCIPLE #4

Ingrid Guyon

Ingrid Guyon is a is a photographer, self-shooting producer, filmmaker, and participatory visual media practitioner who is a passionate advocate of a better world through community engagement and self-representation.

http://www.ingridguyon.com/

Mujer Diaspora

Mujer Diaspora is an initiative developed by the Colombian diaspora to make itself visible both in Colombia and in their countries of residence. They prioritise psychosocial healing, the empowerment of women, and the development of innovative methodologies to contribute to more transformative and sustainable peace processes.

www.mujerdiaspora.com

PRINCIPLE #5

Innovation for Development (I4D)

Innovation for Development was founded to answer the fundamental question: How can we generate innovative ideas and develop better responses to the world's toughest problems?

https://www.i4d.com.tr/

Waleed Shah

Waleed Shah is a UAE-based photographer and an official Fuji-X-Photographer. A Chemical Engineer by training, he followed his interests into photography and now works with top brands across industries.

https://www.waleedshah.ae/

PRINCIPLE #6

WaterAid

WaterAid started in 1981 because no non-profit like it existed. WaterAid is determined to make clean water, reliable toilets, and good hygiene normal for everyone, everywhere within a generation.

https://www.wateraid.org/us/

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights)

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights) is the leading UN entity on human rights. They represent the world's commitment to the promotion and protection of the full range of human rights and freedoms set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/Home.aspx

PRINCIPLE #7

Gareth Benest

Gareth is a communications and participatory media specialist providing consultancy services for organisations across the international development sector. Gareth has authored guidebooks on various aspects of participatory video practice, available free for download at: gareth benest (equals.org.uk)

Transparency International

Transparency International is a global movement working in over 100 countries to end the injustice of corruption.

About - Transparency.org

Gambia Participates

Gambia Participates is a youth-led civil society organisation that focuses on enhancing transparency and accountability in the public sector.

Gambia Participates – Bettering The Lives of Communities by Promoting Good Governance

Northern Council for Global Cooperation (NCGC)

NCGC is a leader in engaging Northern Canadians on issues of global social justice and sustainability. NCGC provides educational opportunities on global issues such as poverty, health, equality and human rights, and encourages individuals to take meaningful action.

https://www.ncgc.ca/

StoryCentre Canada

StoryCentre Canada works with organisations and communities to create story-based programs around the world. StoryCentre's group process supports individuals in finding, sharing and listening to each others' first person stories.

https://www.storycentre.ca/

PRINCIPLE #9

The Freedom Story (TFS)

The Freedom Story to works prevent and protect vulnerable children from exploitation through education, mentorship, human rights, and alleviating poverty.

https://thefreedomstory.org/

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is a UN agency mandated to aid and protect refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless people, and to assist in their voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement to a third country.

https://www.unhcr.org/

PRINCPLE #10

World Wildlife Fund (WWF NL)

The leading organisation in wildlife conservation and endangered species with a mission to conserve nature and reduce the most pressing threats to the diversity of life on Earth.

https://www.worldwildlife.org

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN NL)

IUCN is an international nature organisation, operating from Amsterdam, working to safeguard nature as the foundation for all life on earth.

https://www.iucn.nl/

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is a global humanitarian aid, relief, and development nongovernmental organization responding to the world's worst humanitarian crises and helping people to survive and rebuild their lives.

https://www.rescue.org/

Dubai Cares

Since its inception, Dubai Cares, part of Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives, has been working towards providing children and young people in developing countries with access to quality education through the design and funding of programmes that aim to be integrated, impactful, sustainable ,and scalable. As a result, the UAE-based global philanthropic organisation has successfully launched education programs reaching over 20 million beneficiaries in 60 countries.

https://www.dubaicares.ae/

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Lisa Atkinson

Lisa Atkinson is Managing Director at Fizzy Compass Ltd, a creative marketing agency focused on supporting small to medium businesses and not-for-profits get their message, services, and products in front of the right audience for maximum success.

https://twitter.com/fizzycompass

GIRLS AND WOMEN

Save the Children

Save the Children is a leading humanitarian organisation for children, working to improve the lives of children through better education, health care, and economic opportunities, as well as providing emergency aid in natural disasters, war, and other conflicts.

https://www.savethechildren.org/

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

BRANDOUTLOUD

BRANDOUTLOUD is a creative agency driven by good vibes.

http://www.brandoutloud.org/about

OneFamilyPeople

OneFamilyPeople is based in Sierra Leone where they provide a full spectrum of services to bring persons with disabilities to their full potential. OneFamilyPeople works across health, economic empowerment and education to deliver programmes and services that make an impact.

https://onefamilypeople.org

Hashoo Foundation (HF)

Hashoo Foundation supports human development and poverty alleviation by implementing viable economic development, educational, and capacity building programmes in Pakistan.

https://hashoogroup.com/hashoo-foundation

PEOPLE IMPACTED BY EMERGENCIES

War Child

WarChild is committed to protecting and supporting children affected by armed conflict, empowering them to claim their rights, develop to their full potential, and contribute to a peaceful future for themselves and their communities.

https://www.warchild.org/

PEOPLE IMPACTED BY SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Smita Sharma

Smita Sharma is an award-winning photojournalist and visual storyteller based in Delhi, India, reporting on critical human rights and social issues in her own community as well as in the Global South on assignments for Human Rights Watch, National Geographic Magazine, and other publications.

http://www.smitasharma.com/