



# Reflecting Back, Looking Ahead

Stakeholder Survey Report

Photo credit: Griela, a member of a GFC partner organisation participating in the initiative, is one of the authors of the letter (GFC).



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In this photo: Guests attending the Dignified Storytelling event - Food from the Roots - at Expo 2020 Dubai.





# Executive Summary



Photo credit: ©Esteban Tapella - Incas Heritage  
Cuzco Peru FAO.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Background and purpose

As the first phase of Dignified Storytelling wrapped up with the close of Expo 2020 Dubai on 31 March 2022, the Dignified Storytelling Team commissioned Altamont Group, to conduct a stakeholder survey with the aim to gather stakeholder opinions on progress made by the initiative thus far and to solicit insights for future planning.

The purpose of conducting the survey was two-fold:

- To seek feedback on the key outputs of the first phase of implementation (“Reflecting Back”)
- To gather perspectives from stakeholders that will guide future priorities and planning (“Looking Ahead”)

Additionally, the survey provided an opportunity for stakeholders to register interest in exploring future partnerships with Dignified Storytelling, whether strategic, technical, or financial.



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





# What has been achieved so far?

In its **first 18 months**, Dignified Storytelling focused on building momentum and providing resources for storytelling policies and practices that are grounded in a deep respect for human dignity.



## 6 Online Consultations

Attended by representatives of over 100 different entities as well as freelance photographers, journalists, and videographers.



## The Principles

A framework in the form of 10 principles for what it means to practice and promote dignified storytelling.



## The Handbook

'How-to' guidance on applying the Dignified Storytelling Principles, accompanied by illustrative case studies.



## The Pledge

Which has over 1,000 signatories to date who together form the Dignified Storytelling Alliance, a network of champions and supporters.



## Expo Events

Hosting the Dignified Storytelling Forum and 13 thematic events at Expo 2020 Dubai.



# Methodology

Since its inception, Dignified Storytelling has sought to be inclusive in its engagement with a diverse group of individuals and organisations who are interested in storytelling, and the humanitarian and development sectors.

The invitation to participate in the Dignified Storytelling Survey via Survey Monkey was circulated to a mailing list of 783 people, all of whom had some interaction with Dignified Storytelling. An open call to participate was also shared via social media with the link remaining open for three weeks, from 28 January 2022 until 18 February 2022.

During this period, four reminder emails were sent out, on 3, 9, 15, and 17 February 2022, and an invitation with the survey link was also posted to Dignified Storytelling's social media platforms to solicit responses. Regular reminder emails were also circulated as follow-up.



## Questions

The survey featured **14 questions** that included a combination of multiple choice, open responses, Yes/No, and Likert scale questions.



## Response rate

The survey closed with **89 total responses received**, exceeding the target of a **10% response rate** (with **51-66 responses** on any given question).



## Estimated time

To increase the likelihood of participation, the survey was designed to take **only 5-7 minutes** to complete.





## Company representation

Approximately **42% of all survey respondents listed an INGO or NGO** as their place of employment, the largest cohort of respondents (with those working for-profit companies second most represented). Demographic data collected indicates that the survey participants work for a variety of industries and types of institutions, including: media, INGOs and NGOs, foundations, academic institutions, corporations, UN agencies, and as freelance content creators.



## Geographical representation

Survey participants responded from **32 different countries**. The largest contingency of survey participants (**n=23**) was from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where Dignified Storytelling has its origins, followed by the United States of America (**n=11**).

### GEOGRAPHICAL SPAN

## 32 countries

Survey participants were geographically diverse, based in 32 countries.





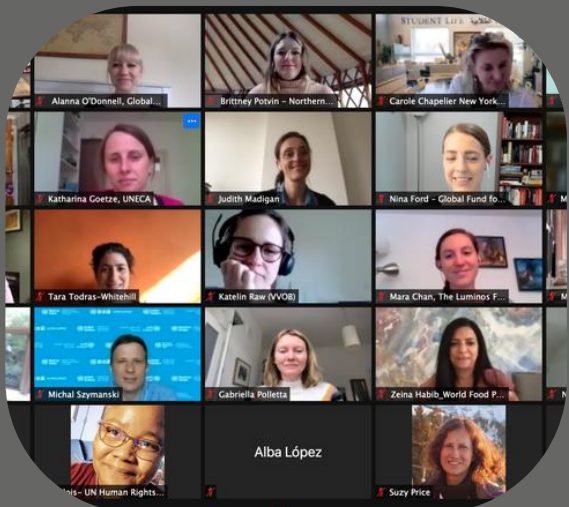
# Participant profile

Survey participants indicated that they had participated in a range of Dignified Storytelling activities.



## CONSULTATIONS

**50%**  
had attended at least one Dignified Storytelling Consultation.



## PLEDGE TAKERS

**47%**  
had signed the Dignified Storytelling Pledge and/or joined the Dignified Storytelling Alliance.



## EXPO ATTENDEES

**32%**  
had participated in the Dignified Storytelling Forum at Expo 2020 Dubai, either virtually or in person.





# Introduction



In this photo: Guests attending the Dignified Storytelling event, Food from the Roots, at Expo 2020 Dubai.



Photo credit: Skaydu Û 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).



INTRODUCTION

# Data highlights

## Reflecting Back

In the first part of the survey, responses affirmed the value of key Dignified Storytelling outputs under phase one. Most respondents reported that they:

- find the Dignified Storytelling Principles to be a useful framework (**61% “strongly agreed”** and a further **36% “agreed”**)
- would share the Dignified Storytelling Handbook as a resource for others in their networks (**62% were “very likely”** and another **33% were “likely”**), and would encourage colleagues to sign the Dignified Storytelling Pledge (**52% were “very likely”** and **35% were “likely”** to do so)

The **Consultations** (and peer learning opportunities, more generally), were cited as the **most appreciated** followed by the Dignified Storytelling Principles and Pledge, and the Handbook.

Comments in open responses frequently expressed an enthusiastic appreciation for Dignified Storytelling’s efforts to **build momentum** and provide a **platform** for **discussion** on this important topic.

Many noted that the **framework** provides a **useful standard** and **language** around dignified storytelling.

Those respondents involved with Expo 2020 Dubai clearly view Dignified Storytelling as an important **legacy** to come out of **Expo 2020 Dubai**.





## INTRODUCTION

# Data highlights

## Looking forward

It is clear too from the comments that survey participants envision Dignified Storytelling as a movement that is characterised by **inclusivity** – reaching as many different geographies, languages and special interest groups, and types of staff across as many industries as possible. Survey participants noted a need for additional outreach to a variety of stakeholder types with **high-level management (33%), journalists (31%),** and **non-profit organisations' communications staff (31%)** selected most for targeted future activities.

Interest in ongoing engagement with Dignified Storytelling was high amongst survey participants. **Over 80% of respondents** indicated that they would be open to **exploring collaboration** possibilities with Dignified Storytelling in some way in the future, and **96% also noted that they would be interested in receiving a monthly Dignified Storytelling newsletter** with updates and resources.



## PARTNERSHIPS

### Over 80%

of respondents indicated that they would be open to exploring collaboration possibilities with Dignified Storytelling.

Photo courtesy: Migration Jam.



## INTRODUCTION

# Data highlights

## Looking forward

Responses to the second part of the survey showed that, in general, stakeholders would like to see a continuation of what has been started through the first phase with more **community-building**, more **advocacy** and **outreach**, and more support to **contextualise** the Dignified Storytelling **Principles**.

### CAPACITY BUILDING

**65%**

of respondents felt that “capacity building and training” was the area of greatest need.



### Second highest demand

More “advocacy and awareness-building” and “networking and partnerships,” were the second highest selection.



In terms of specific possible activities under Dignified Storytelling – and selecting all options of interest – the most interest was registered for attending other Dignified Storytelling events, such as **talks and workshops (53%)**.



## INTRODUCTION

# Top 3 recommendations

Following an analysis of all survey responses and in alignment with the Top 3 **identified priority areas (capacity-building and training; advocacy and awareness-building; and networking and partnerships)**, the report highlights recommendations around three “Cs”: **Contextualisation, Culture, and Community**.

### CONTEXTUALISATION

#### 1. Contextualise of the Dignified Storytelling Framework



There is significant interest in both internal (within a home organisation) and external trainings on Dignified Storytelling. Having validated the relevance and appropriateness of the Dignified Storytelling Principles, stakeholders would now appreciate support in contextualising the universal Principles and the Handbook’s guidance for specific cultures, groups, and situations.

### CULTURE

#### 2. Create a Dignified Storytelling Culture



Survey participants would like to see more done in terms of marketing and outreach to make dignified storytelling a standard across industries and media. Dignified Storytelling’s online presence will play a large role in creating a culture, ensuring that stakeholders around the world both know about the movement and have access to resources, tools, and advocacy materials.

### COMMUNITY

#### 3. Build a Community of Supporters and Practitioners



Survey results showed that peer learning opportunities offered in the first phase were greatly valued. If Dignified Storytelling can offer platforms, with online and in-person components, for discussion and connection amongst professionals, it will fill a felt gap. Dignified Storytellers need encouragement, support, and informal knowledge sharing opportunities to stay passionate and continue improving their craft.



Having affirmed the work of Dignified Storytelling thus far, survey participants seemed eager to take the next step – with the Dignified Storytelling team leading the way – to see the Dignified Storytelling Principles widely shared, contextualised, and applied to diverse situations.



## INTRODUCTION

# Limitations

In **20** of the **89 total responses** submitted, only the demographic information was completed with no answers provided to the remaining questions. These entries were often associated with either high-level professionals, who may not have had the time, or individuals with little to no involvement with Dignified Storytelling to date, who may not have felt able to provide an opinion.

While the time and effort required to click on the link and complete the survey does indicate a certain level of interest in **all 89 respondents**, the analysis of responses needs to be considered within the actual sample size for each question – which ranged from **51-66 responses**.



**2 survey takers** noted that they had issues with the questions that prompted them to “check all that apply.” It is unclear why this was the experience for the two users, but responses will be slightly skewed as they were only able to select one option on those questions.

With surveys, there is always the risk of self-selection bias, where those who opt to take the survey have either had a significantly positive experience or a significantly negative one with the platform. The results analysis needs to be considered within this wider context, gleaned insights from the data while acknowledging that surveys never perfectly reflect the experiences of a large, diverse group.



In this photo: Chef Gerardo Vazquez Lugo delivering his talk at the Dignified Storytelling event, Food from the Roots, at Expo 2020 Dubai.





# Reflecting Back: Dignified Storytelling thus far



Photo credit: Man at the beach, by Pixabay.



# Question 1

What has been your involvement in Dignified Storytelling to date?  
Check all that apply.

Question Type: Multiple choice

Key highlights:

**50%** had attended at least one Dignified Storytelling Consultation

**47%** had signed the Dignified Storytelling Pledge and/or joined the Dignified Storytelling Alliance

**32%** had participated in the Dignified Storytelling Forum at Expo 2020 Dubai, either virtually or in person

**26%** had participated in an Expo 2020 Dubai Dignified Storytelling thematic week, either virtually or in person

**23%** had reviewed the Dignified Storytelling Handbook or contributed a case study





REFLECTING BACK

## Question 2

I currently follow at least one of Dignified Storytelling's social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter).

Question Type: Yes/No

facebook Instagram LinkedIn twitter

### Social media following

#### Key highlights:

79%

Nearly all survey participants indicated that they follow at least one of Dignified Storytelling's social media accounts





# Question 3

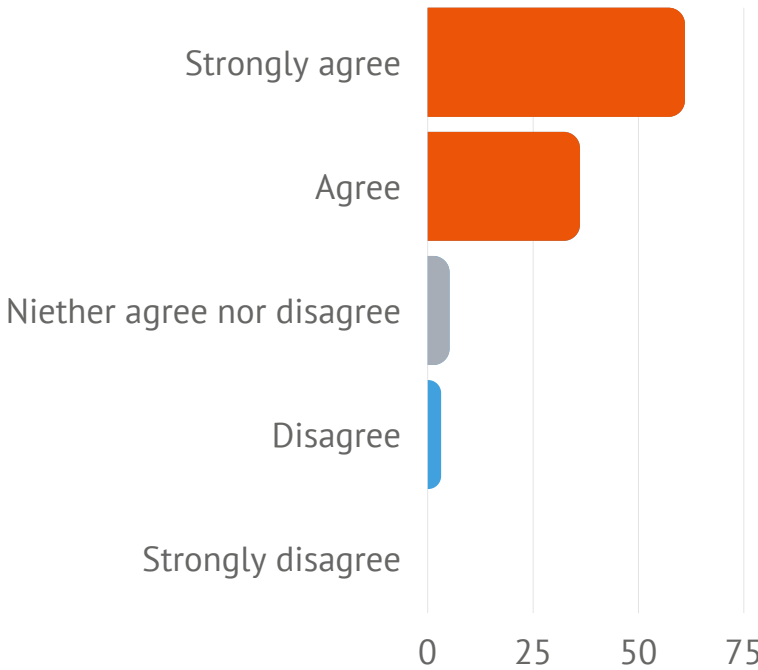
The 10 Dignified Storytelling Principles are a useful framework to help storytellers and those who work with storytellers to promote and practice dignified storytelling. Strongly Disagree - Strongly Agree (1-5)

Question Type: Likert scale

The survey questions next turned to feedback on the outputs of Dignified Storytelling thus far.

## Key highlights:

97%	of participants affirmed the usefulness of the Principles
61%	indicated they strongly agree
36%	agreed with the statement



# Question 4

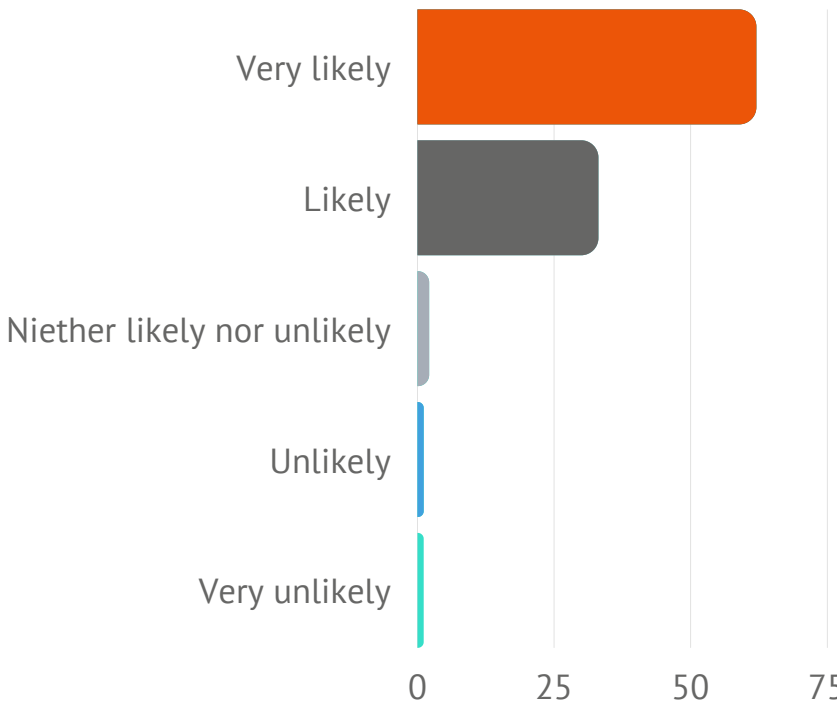
How likely are you to refer the Dignified Storytelling Handbook as a resource to colleagues and others within your network? Very Unlikely - Very Likely (1-5)

Question Type: Likert scale

There was a similar pattern of responses for this question, in which 95% of people responded favorably.

## Key highlights:

62%	indicated they were very likely to share the Handbook
33%	noted they were likely to share the handbook





# Question 5

How likely are you to encourage colleagues and others within your network to take the Dignified Storytelling Pledge? Very Unlikely - Very Likely (1-5)

Question Type: Likert scale

Key highlights:

87%

indicated they were “very likely” or “likely” to promote uptake of the Pledge

52%

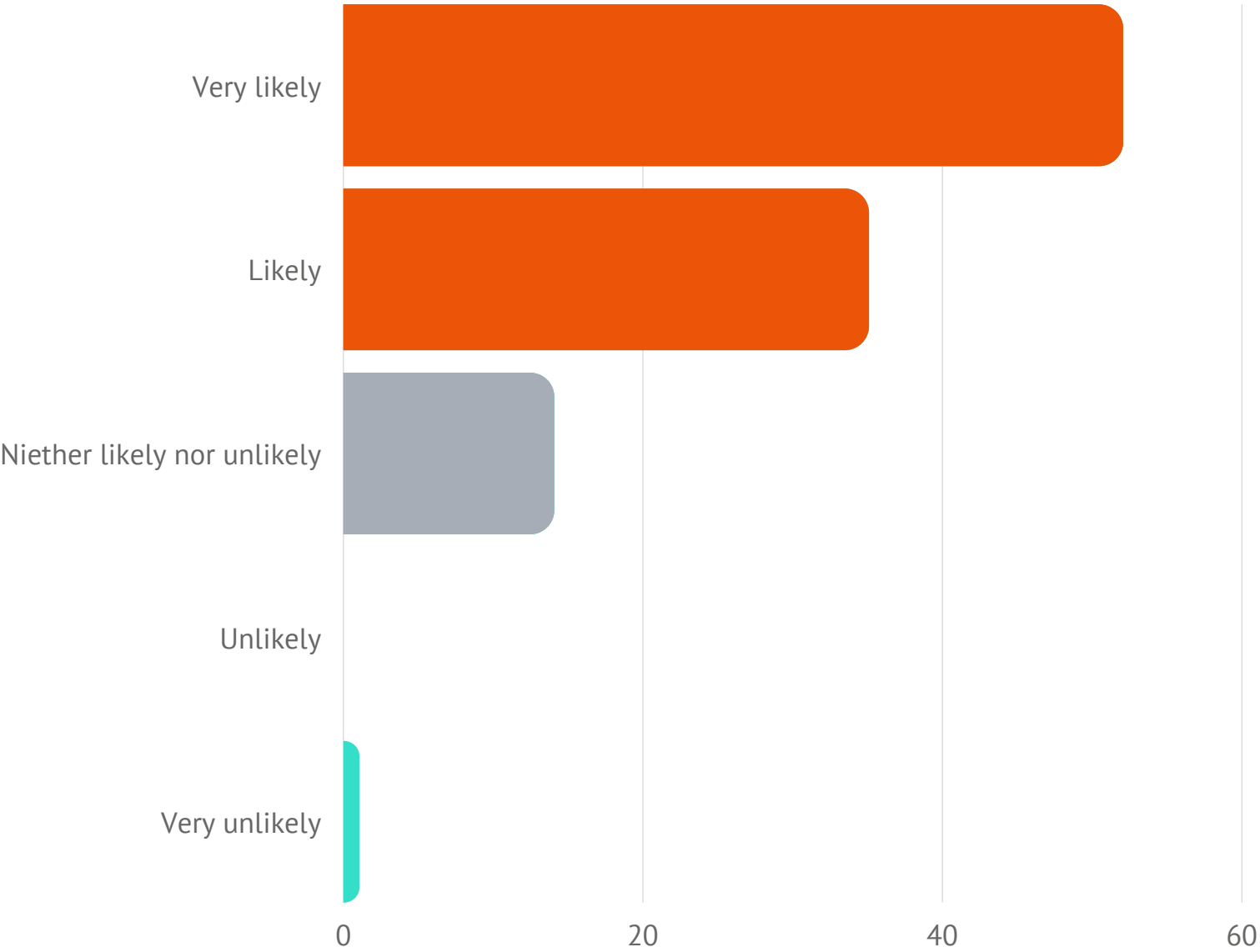
said they were very likely to share the pledge

35%

said they were likely to do so

14%

noted they were neither likely nor unlikely





# Question 6

What was your most significant takeaway from the first phase of Dignified Storytelling (details on outputs from this phase are listed under Question 1 and include: a series of consultations, the Dignified Storytelling Principles and Pledge, the Dignified Storytelling Handbook, and the Dignified Storytelling Forum and other events at Expo 2020 Dubai)?

Question Type: Open response

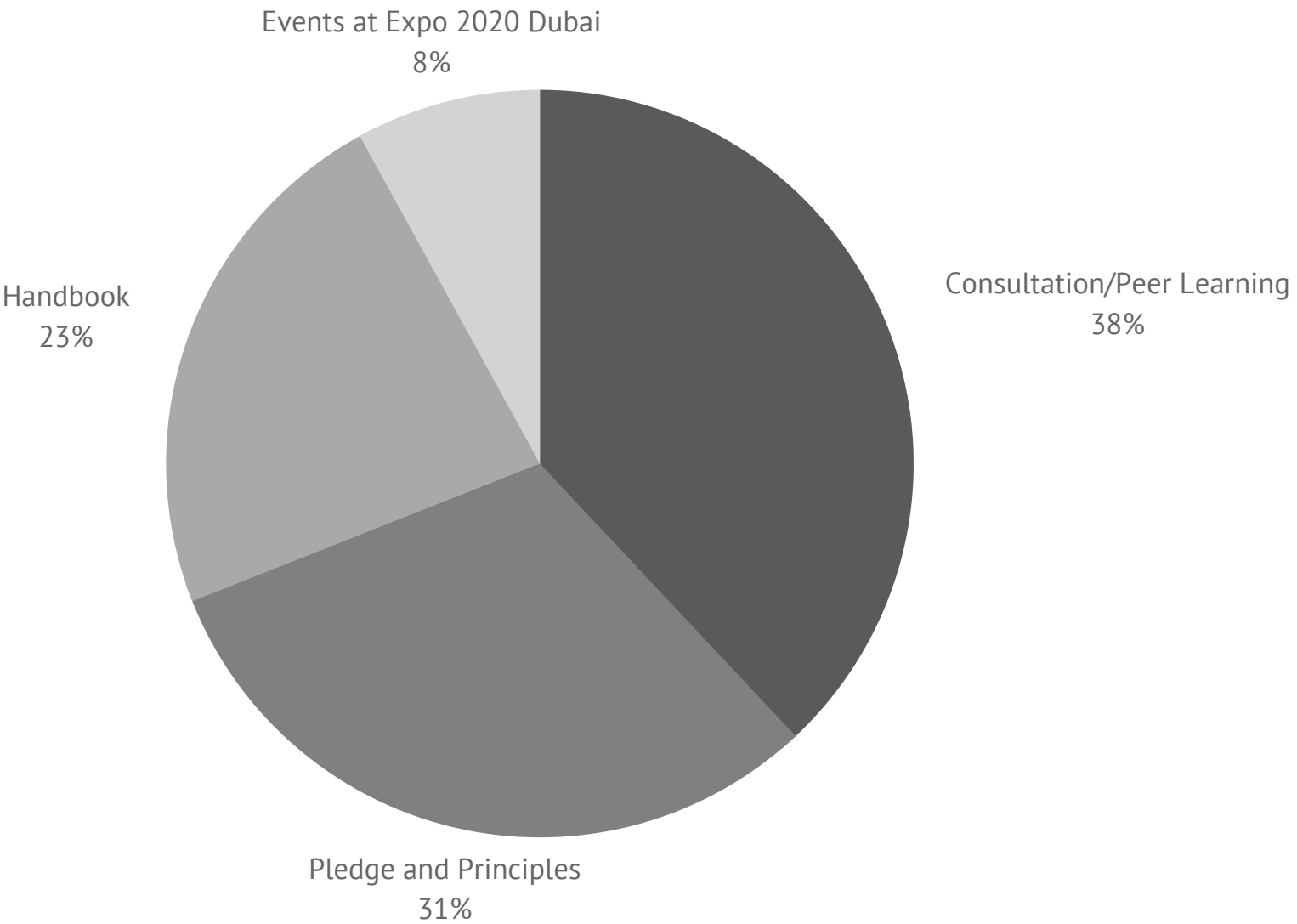
## Key highlights:

**38%** mentioned the Consultations specifically with an additional five appreciating the peer learning and networking aspects of the initiative (through both the Consultations and other Expo 2020 Dubai events)

**31%** mentioned the Dignified Storytelling Principles and/or Pledge as the most important contribution

**23%** wrote that the Dignified Storytelling Handbook is a valuable addition to available resources and tools

**8%** valued Dignified Storytelling at Expo 2020 Dubai



This open response question asked participants to note what they found the most significant output from the first phase of Dignified Storytelling with the Consultations/Peer Learning Opportunities, the Dignified Storytelling Principles and Pledge, and the Dignified Storytelling Handbook being mentioned most frequently.





## Question 6 contd.

**What was your most significant takeaway from the first phase of Dignified Storytelling (details on outputs from this phase are listed under Question 1 and include: a series of consultations, the Dignified Storytelling Principles and Pledge, the Dignified Storytelling Handbook, and the Dignified Storytelling Forum and other events at Expo 2020 Dubai)?**

**Question Type:** Open response

### Personal Takeaways

In addition to specific deliverables, survey participants also highlighted additional personal learnings from the first phase of Dignified Storytelling

“ There is a desire to move in this direction across the sector - before I've felt a little isolated in wanting to introduce this approach more, but having the Dignified Storytelling movement bringing together like-minded colleagues is a real encouragement.

“ It was very interesting to hear from others experiencing and reflecting on issues I never stopped to think about before especially those regarding consent and participatory approaches.

“ Planting the seeds of dignified storytelling requires commitment and contributions across various sectors of content creation and distribution, thus, even small efforts from stakeholders can create big impact if we pool our resources and talents together.

“ It offers ways to think about how to listen to stories and craft them.

“ I found this event gave me positivity and also encouraged me to take the initiative to do something for society's welfare.

“ This is the start of the conversation.

“ Storytellers can change the narrative.





# Question 7

Please include any additional feedback or comments on the first phase of the Dignified Storytelling below:

Question Type: Open response

## Words of appreciation:

“

I appreciated the development of the 10 principles - smart and sharp with a clear message. I appreciated the inclusivity of the events, the outreach and hybrid nature of the events.

“

Finally, a serious guide to make the storytelling part of the action for the achievements of the SDGS and for a more ethical world. I appreciate a lot the way Dignified Storytelling is approaching the opportunities and problems of storytelling.

“

This initiative is a major legacy for Expo 2020 Dubai that has the power to change the landscape of how we engage with each other and our stories. An extraordinary outcome from Expo.

“

It is especially powerful as it is being led by someone from the funding end of development work so with real power to influence change on this front.

”

“

It was a privilege to be part of the conversation!

“

It is high quality, universally applicable guidance that fills a big gap in the humanitarian sector. There was a real need for this.

“

I laud every and all efforts like these in order to uplift humankind.

“

It was an eye opener for me!

“

Refreshingly thoughtful!



## REFLECTING BACK

# Question 7 contd.

Please include any additional feedback or comments on the first phase of the Dignified Storytelling below:

Question Type: Open response

## Recommendations:

“

Please conduct regular Dignified Storytelling Forums.

“

Well executed but needs to be marketed well.

“

Very keen to see this rolled out globally and become universally accepted. Need to see news media and NGOs really engage with the steps it takes to be dignified storytellers. Requires thought and effort and not be tokenistic. Critically need donors to absorb the principles and insist recipient's improve.

“

In this day and age, discussing the political arena cannot be something this initiative shies away from. If it needs to take a stance, take it.

“

Interactive forums for exchanging ideas or getting advice would be great.





## REFLECTING BACK

# Question 7 contd.

Please include any additional feedback or comments on the first phase of the Dignified Storytelling below:

Question Type: Open response

## Recommendations:



There is need for more publicity of the Dignified Storytelling Principles, particularly among non-government organisations and media outlets.”



I wanted to better understand how you intend to take this global - I think you need a logo so that organisations can apply to use it which tells the world that something is going on beyond EXPO 2020.



I participated in one discussion, but the format made it a bit difficult to intervene. I can't remember if there were breakout groups, but I thought the facilitation should have made it easier for everyone to contribute.



I believe translating the handbook into as many languages as possible will be an important vehicle...respecting that people have different languages and not only English or Arabic. Also important to have it in Braille and sign language interpretation where needed. Go the extra mile and show that we are speaking to all peoples and not only those with certain languages. Reach wide - build a global community, a global conversation and awareness.



# Looking Ahead: what's next for Dignified Storytelling?



In this photo: Emirati Astronaut Hazza Al Mansouri delivering his talk at the Dignified Storytelling event, Stories of Great Ambition and Hope, at Expo 2020 Dubai.



# Question 8

Which stakeholder groups would you most like to see become more involved in Dignified Storytelling? Check up to three.

Question Type: Multiple choice

Key highlights:

**33%** The most popular selections indicated they would like to see more engagement with non-profit high-level management

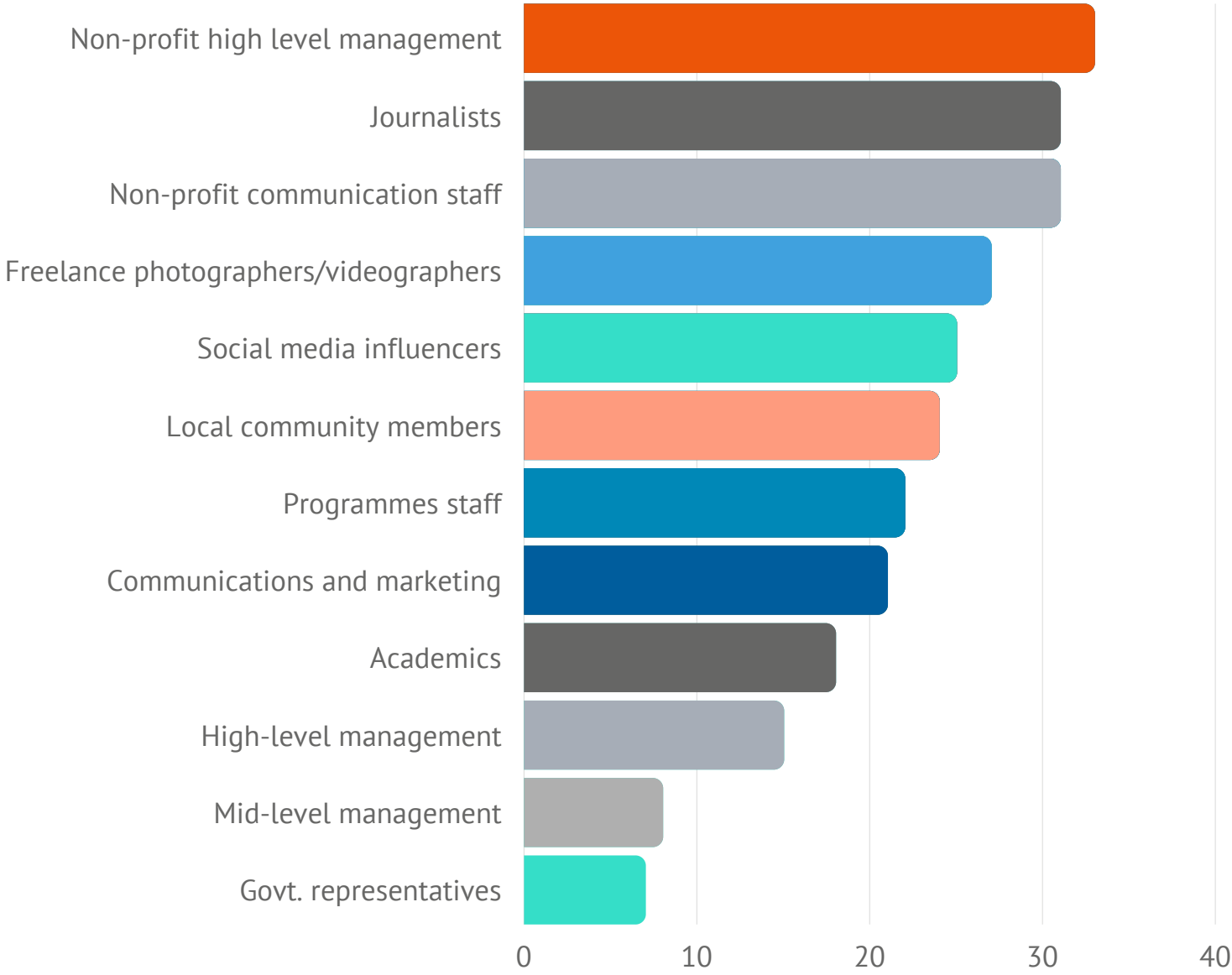
**31%** Journalists

**31%** Non-profit organisations’ communications staff

**27%** Freelance photographers/videographers

**25%** Social media influencers

**24%** Local community members/story contributors



This question enquired what groups should be pursued for further involvement in Dignified Storytelling. Responses were decidedly mixed, affirming Dignified Storytelling’s relevance to a broad range of stakeholder types.



LOOKING AHEAD

# Question 9

In your opinion, what are the priority areas for additional support from Dignified Storytelling? Select up to three.

Question Type: Multiple choice

## Key highlights:

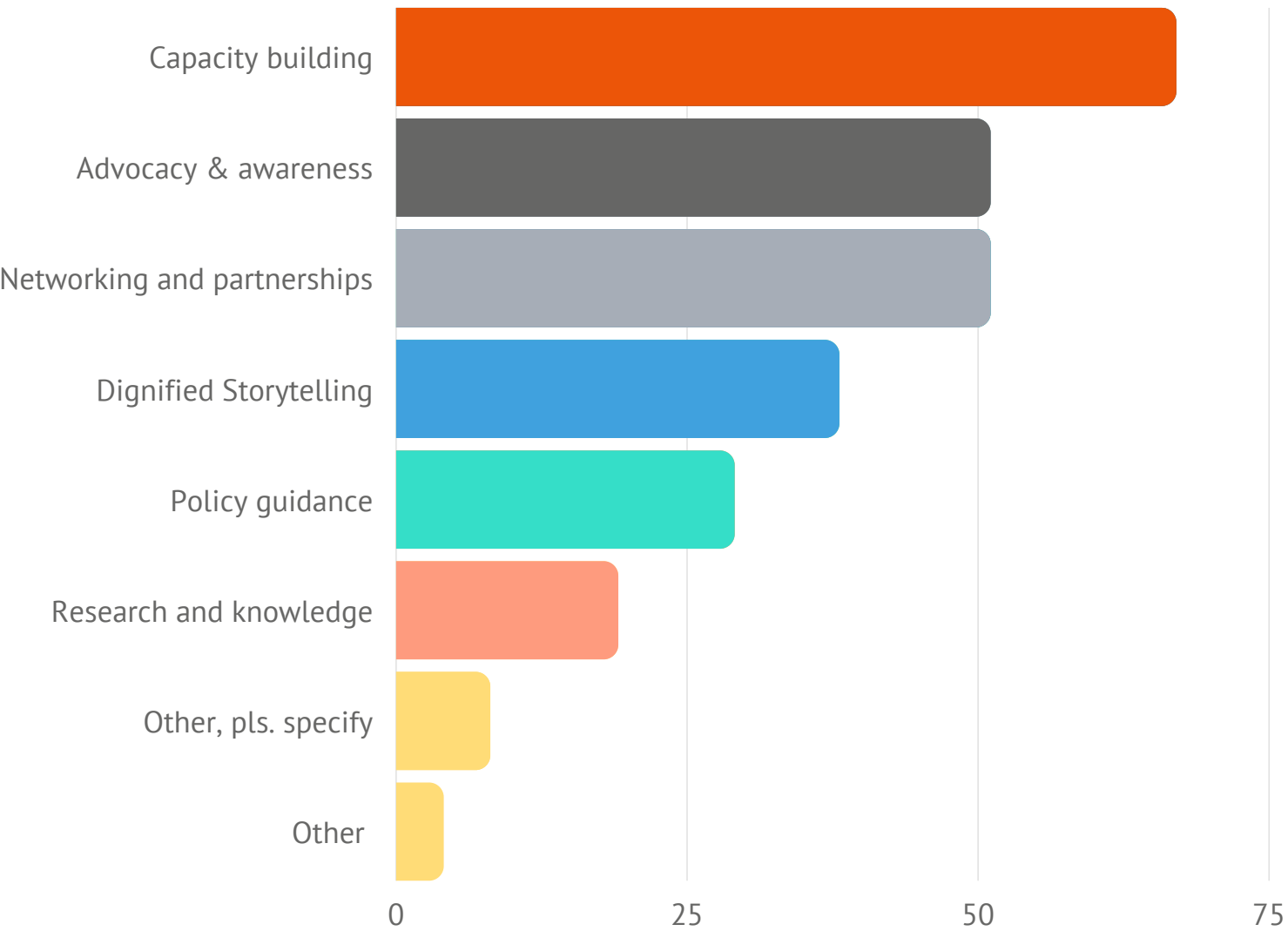
65%

felt that “capacity building and training” was the area of greatest need

50%+

chose more “advocacy and awareness-building” and “networking and partnerships“. This was the second highest selection

“Research and Knowledge-sharing” and “Policy Guidance and Development” were the least chosen options.



Survey respondents believe that there remains a need for Dignified Storytelling across a wide variety of stakeholder groups - from the media, to influencers, to programmes and communications departments, to organizational leadership and so on - (see Q8). Both the need for and appreciation of training and capacity development opportunities – as well as for their own professional development – is a sentiment expressed across comments as well as in the Q9 responses. Respondents appeared eager to spread the word about Dignified Storytelling and to form a strong network. They viewed Dignified Storytelling as a valuable platform to connect with like-minded storytelling professionals – and potentially to like-minded donors as well.





# Question 10

What possible Dignified Storytelling activities, in line with the priority areas suggested above, would you or your organisation be most interested in engaging with going forward? Check all that apply.

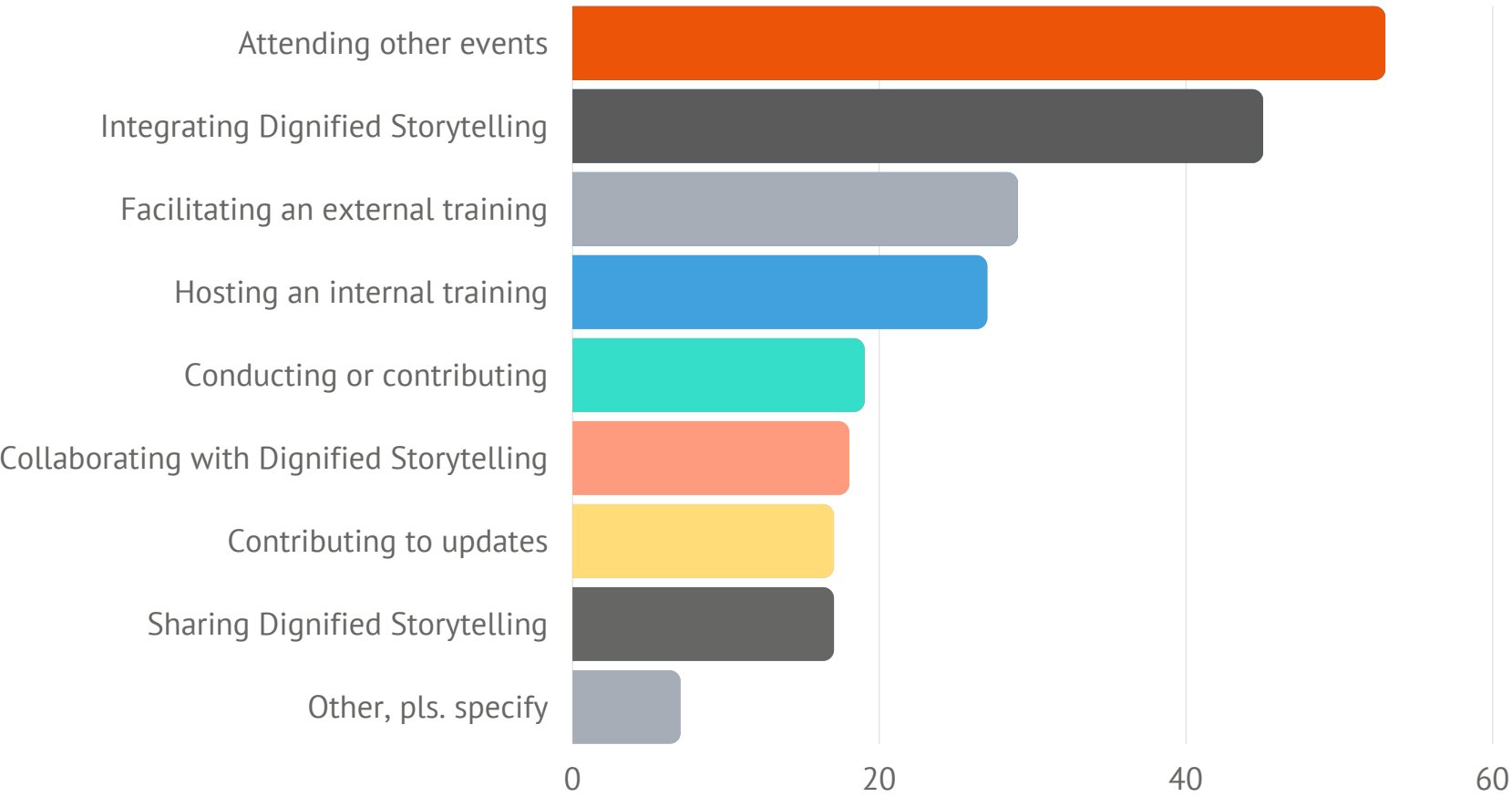
Question Type: Multiple choice

## Key highlights:

**53%** were interested in attending other Dignified Storytelling events, such as talks and workshops

**45%** indicated they would also like Dignified Storytelling to help them, or their organisation, integrate Dignified Storytelling into their work

Hosting either an internal or external training based on the Dignified Storytelling Principles and/or Handbook also received a number of selections (**27%** and **29%**, respectively)



Fewer people expressed interest in contributing updates to the Dignified Storytelling Handbook or collaborating on the development of training tools. However, they expressed significant interest in being part of a community of dignified storytellers and availing of learning and development opportunities. This trend was consistent across survey questions and in the percentage of respondents who indicated interest in receiving more communication from Dignified Storytelling (**96%; see Q13**) and/or partnering in some way (**over 80%; see Q12**).



## LOOKING AHEAD

# Question 11

**What would you like the Dignified Storytelling Team to consider as they plan for the next phase?**

**Question Type:** Open response

21 responses were received, encompassing suggestions for specific activities (“what”), who should be involved (“who”), and improved ways to work (“how”)

### Specific activities (what):

- Provide guidance on implementing the Dignified Storytelling Principles when sharing on digital/social media platforms
- Pursue capacity development and knowledge sharing to make sure the information reaches the people who need it (for example, programmes staff as well as communications staff)
- Assist freelancers and organisations in developing their own contextualised tools
- Advocate for it to become a standard practice to reference the Dignified Storytelling Principles in funding applications
- Organise more trainings on Dignified Storytelling
- Create an advocacy working group to strategise wider roll-out
- Publish metrics of success annually
- Create an active online community of those who have signed the Pledge
- Host more Dignified Storytelling Forums
- Develop resources for high school teachers and students



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



LOOKING AHEAD

# Question 11 contd.

What would you like the Dignified Storytelling Team to consider as they plan for the next phase?

Question Type: Open response

## Who should be involved (who):

- Bridge theory and practice by bringing both academics and practitioners on board
- Engage audiences beyond just advocacy organisations
- Bring more voices to the conversation that are traditionally not at the table (e.g. those who receive services etc.)\*



\*Mentioned twice.

## Improved ways to work (how):

- Facilitate in-person interactions
- Strengthen marketing and outreach
- Make events more enjoyable and memorable
- Provide more lead time when asking for participation or contributions
- Test branding
- Ensure prompt follow-up on communication
- Be open to partnerships and collaboration



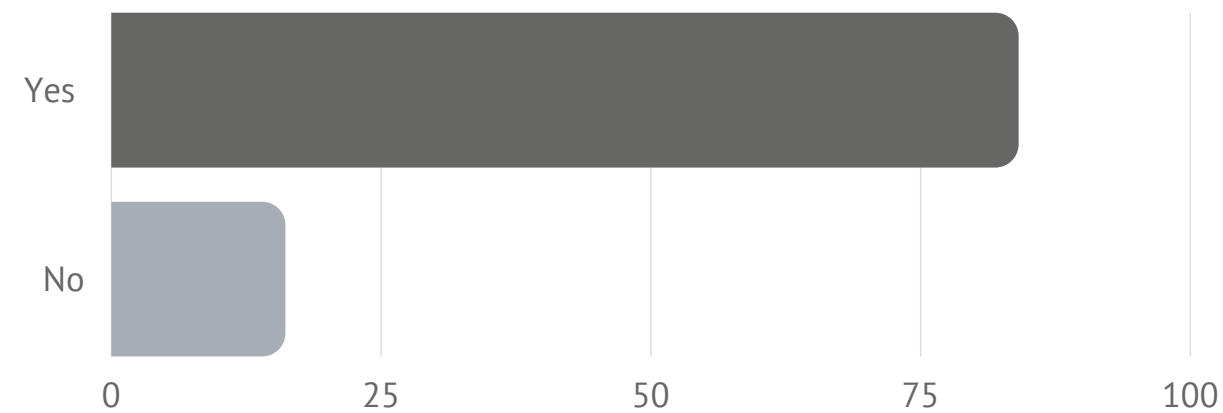


## LOOKING AHEAD

# Question 12

I, representing myself or my organisation, would be interested in exploring the possibility of a strategic, technical, or financial partnership with Dignified Storytelling in the future.

Question Type: Yes/No



### Key highlights:

**80%+**

respondents indicated that they would be open to exploring collaboration possibilities with Dignified Storytelling in some way in the future

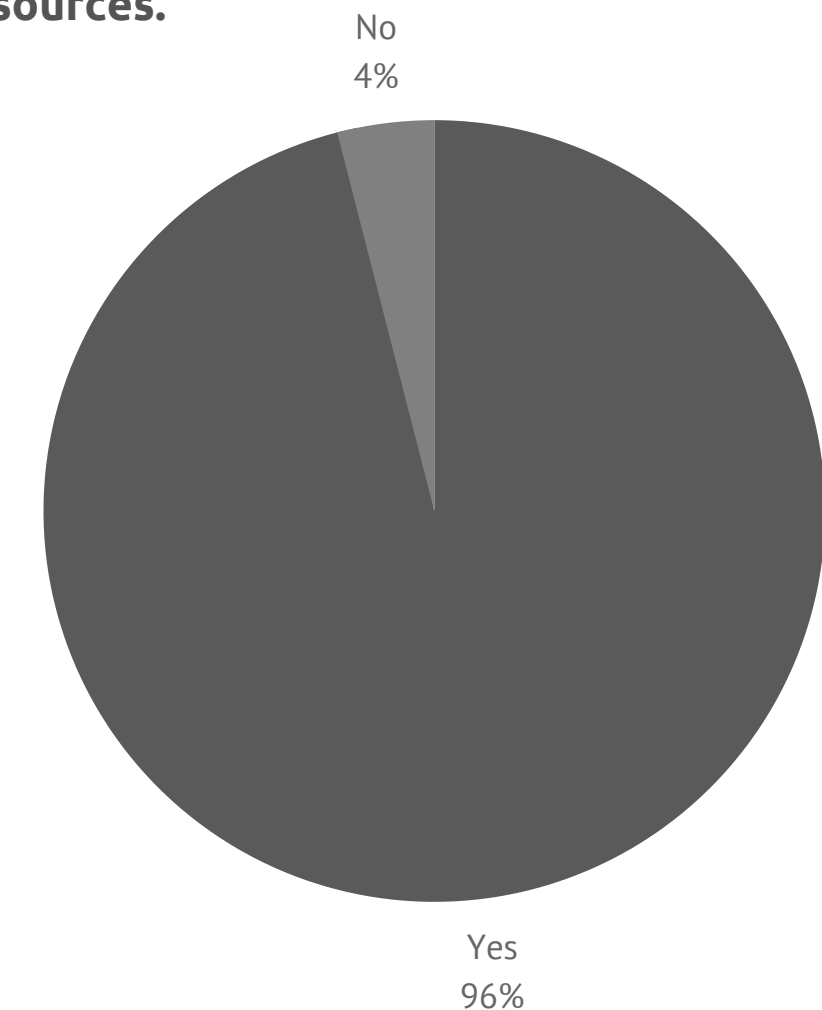
There was significant interest from survey participants in exploring further strategic, financial, or technical partnerships with Dignified Storytelling



# Question 13

I would be interested in receiving a monthly Dignified Storytelling newsletter with updates and resources.

Question Type: Yes/No



### Key highlights:

**96%**

of participants noted that they would be interested in receiving a monthly Dignified Storytelling newsletter with updates and resources, signaling their continued interest on the topic and initiative



LOOKING AHEAD

# Question 14

Please share other suggestions on how you would like to see Dignified Storytelling provide further support.

Question Type: Open response



## Suggestions included:



### Community building

Emphasising community building



### Events

Facilitating regional events and training to broaden the focus from Dubai



### Broadcasting stories

Broadcasting the stories of grassroots organisations, connecting them to possible donors or partners



### One-stop knowledge hub

Compiling all lessons in one place where we they can be accessed for later use



### Tailor-made recommendations

Developing tools and approaches for collaborative storytelling



# Conclusions and Recommendations



Photo credit: ivanovgood, Pixabay.





## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

# Conclusions

Amongst those who took the survey, appreciation for Dignified Storytelling was high with several respondents commenting on the relevance and need for the initiative. Many others noted what they had personally gained from Dignified Storytelling so far, including new perspectives on approaches to storytelling, a realisation of the importance of shared value systems, and a sense of connection with other storytelling and development professionals.

While survey participants provided valuable recommendations for improvement, the overall tenor of the comments was that of gratitude for the platforms, resources, and advocacy efforts provided by Dignified Storytelling. Several participants also recognised a welcome thoughtfulness that characterised Dignified Storytelling's approach to conversations around storytelling and development.

Nearly all of the survey participants affirmed that they found the Dignified Storytelling Principles a useful framework, that they would share the Dignified Storytelling Handbook as a resource for others in their networks, and that they would encourage colleagues to sign the Dignified Storytelling Pledge.

Looking forward, the feedback was generally that stakeholders would like to see a continuation and full fruition of what has been started through the first phase – more community-building, more advocacy and outreach, and more support to contextualise the Dignified Storytelling Principles. It's clear too that survey participants envision Dignified Storytelling as a movement that is characterised by inclusivity – reaching as many different geographies, language and special interest groups, and types of staff across industries as possible.





## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

# Forward looking recommendations

The following three recommendations for Dignified Storytelling have been drawn from the survey analysis. These align with the top three identified priority areas, as per survey respondents: capacity-building and training; advocacy and awareness-building; and networking and partnerships.

### 1. Support the contextualisation of the Dignified Storytelling framework

The aim of capacity building is to support individuals and organisations in developing the competencies needed to put the Dignified Storytelling Principles into practice.

Survey participants highlighted that capacity building is needed in many different industries and by storytellers working in many different roles, from high-level management to social media influencers. Given the diverse potential audiences for capacity building, one suggestion worth considering is to focus on training and providing tools to storytellers to undertake a step-by-step process through which they can contextualise the broader Dignified Storytelling guidance for application in their own work.

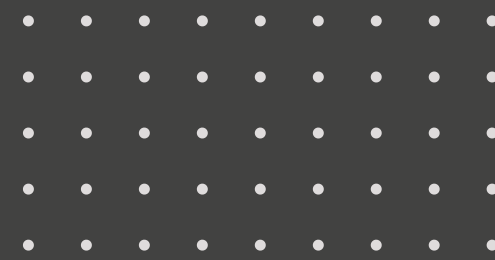


Photo credit: Business Training,  
FatCamera from Getty Images Signature.





In this photo: Guest speaking at the Dignified Storytelling event, SDG Storytelling Lab, at Expo 2020 Dubai.



## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

# Forward looking recommendations

### Ways in which contextualisation of the Dignified Storytelling framework can be supported:

- Provide guidance on implementing the Dignified Storytelling Principles that is contextualised for specific platforms (for example, digital/social media) or for specific geographies, organisations, and situations.
- This may also take the form of assisting content creators or organisations to develop their own contextualisation tools.
- Organise more trainings on Dignified Storytelling, particularly at regional or country levels for more targeted audiences.
- Ensure that Dignified Storytelling resources are widely translated and easily accessible.



## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

# Forward looking recommendations

## 2. Create a Dignified Storytelling Culture

To ensure that Dignified Storytelling grows beyond its home base of Expo 2020 Dubai, one survey taker suggested an advocacy working group be established to strategise on roll-out to specific regions and countries. Establishing regional or country champions would also help to more widely promote dignified storytelling as a standard.

One survey participant noted the idea of bolstering recognition by having individuals or organisations who have taken the Pledge advertise their support via a Dignified Storytelling logo/stamp.



In this photo: Guests attending the Dignified Storytelling event, WE, THE WOMEN Festival, at Expo 2020 Dubai.



## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

# Forward looking recommendations

### Ways in which a Dignified Storytelling culture can be created:

- Form an advocacy working group to strategise wider roll-out to specific regions/countries.
- Advocate for the Dignified Storytelling Principles to be a required standard in funding applications.
- Publish metrics of success annually.
- Increase publicity of the Dignified Storytelling Principles.



In this photo: Guests attending the Dignified Storytelling event, Working Together to Safeguard our Collective Future, at Expo 2020 Dubai.





## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

# Forward looking recommendations

### 3. Build a Community of Supporters and Practitioners

The final recommendation is focused on facilitating connections and community within diverse groups of storytellers. Survey results showed that peer learning opportunities offered in the first phase of Dignified Storytelling were greatly valued. If Dignified Storytelling can offer platforms – with online and in-person components – for discussion and connection amongst professionals, it will be bridging what seems to be perceived as a significant gap. Dignified storytellers need encouragement, support, and informal knowledge sharing opportunities to stay passionate and continue improving their craft.



Photo courtesy: Canva.

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## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

# Forward looking recommendations

### Ways in which a Dignified Storytelling community of supporters and practitioners can be built:

- Create an active community online of those who have signed the Pledge.
- Pursue ways to encourage those from under-represented communities to be actively involved.
- Broadcast the stories of grassroots organisations, helping them to connect them to like-minded possible donors or partners.
- Devise a logo/stamp that network members can use to advertise their support of Dignified Storytelling.
- Facilitate regional networking events.



In this photo: Octopizzo delivering a talk at the Dignified Storytelling event, Local Stories that Empower, Improve and Transform, at Expo 2020 Dubai.



## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

# Forward looking recommendations

In addition, survey results also indicated that interest was high in seeing the Dignified Storytelling Forum and other events (talks, workshops, etc) continued. These types of events can serve multiple objectives that include the above priority areas and recommendations, building awareness, capacity, and community.

Having validated the work of Dignified Storytelling thus far, survey participants seem eager to take the next step – with the Dignified Storytelling team leading the way – to see the Dignified Storytelling Principles widely shared, contextualised, and applied to diverse situations. Survey participants also clearly desire to feel part of a community of practitioners, valuing opportunities to connect with other passionate, thoughtful, and dignified storytellers.

Dignified Storytelling has started a movement that is both needed and appreciated. To sustainably shift the way that the world tells stories in and about global development will require working with like-minded entities to build on the Dignified Storytelling Principles – supporting contextualisation and capacity, building community, and creating a global culture of Dignified Storytelling.





# Annexes



Photo credit: Life of Pix, Pexels.



# About Dignified Storytelling

Storytelling is a powerful communication tool in global development. Stories evoke emotion and connect us across geographies and backgrounds. They can provide an avenue for understanding different perspectives and also 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. Storytelling is also a way for organisations to emotionally connect with potential supporters in an increasingly competitive fundraising landscape.

Dignified Storytelling takes a broad definition of stories to encompass any narrative account told through still or moving visual images, audio recordings, and/or in written form, and shared through any platform.

If told irresponsibly, 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.

Inaccurate or one-dimensional storytelling practices exploit contributors, impeding progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which have human dignity at their core.

While many storytellers and organisations have shifted to empathy-based practices for communication, there are no global standards, repository of best practices, or knowledge-sharing entity to guide a diverse group of stakeholders on storytelling that empathetically upholds the dignity of all.

Recognising gaps in advocacy, knowledge-sharing, and available resources related to dignified storytelling, Dubai Cares, Expo 2020 Dubai, and the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MOFAIC) launched Dignified Storytelling to help create an ecosystem that fosters a shared understanding and practice of storytelling that upholds the dignity of all persons.

Towards this end, Dignified Storytelling is bringing together storytellers and development and humanitarian actors to discuss and agree on storytelling guidelines and to promote a culture of dignified storytelling across development and humanitarian sectors, and beyond.





# About Dignified Storytelling

**Key outputs of the first phase of Dignified Storytelling, which correspond with the wrap-up of Dignified Storytelling events at Expo 2020 Dubai in March 2022, have included the following:**

**Dignified Storytelling Consultations:** Between October 2020 and May 2021, Dignified Storytelling conducted a series of six online Consultations to unpack different aspects of what it means to employ a dignified storytelling approach. The Consultations were attended by representatives of 116 different entities, including international development agencies, INGOs/NGOs, foundations, charities, corporations, universities, and media companies as well as freelance photographers and videographers. [Summary reports of each Consultation](#) can be found on the Dignified Storytelling website.

**The Dignified Storytelling Principles:** The Consultations helped to shape a series of 10 Dignified Storytelling Principles, which provide the framework for what it means to practice and promote dignified storytelling.

**The Dignified Storytelling Alliance:** The Alliance was established as a network of champions that provides advocacy, in-kind support, and input on program deliverables. Representation in the Alliance includes a deliberately diverse range of viewpoints from individuals and organisations who are able to share best practices from their on-the-ground experiences in communication within development and humanitarian contexts.

**The Dignified Storytelling Advisory Committee:** The Advisory Committee was formed as a smaller group of experts who provide valuable technical and strategic guidance for Dignified Storytelling through regular engagement, advocacy, review of program deliverables, and in-kind support.

**The Dignified Storytelling High-Level Steering Committee:** The initiative takes guidance from a Steering Committee comprising of leadership representatives of the organisations leading the initiative as well as key supporters.



# About Dignified Storytelling

**The Dignified Storytelling Handbook:** The outcomes of the Consultations, as well as results of literature review and a series of expert interviews fed directly into development of the guidance provided in the Handbook, which was launched at the Dignified Storytelling Forum on 10 December 2021, and includes ‘how-to’ guidance on applying the Dignified Storytelling Principles, accompanied by illustrative case studies.

**The Dignified Storytelling Pledge:** Individuals and organisations are invited to commit to the Dignified Storytelling Principles by signing the Dignified Storytelling Pledge. To date, there are over 1,000 signatories of the Pledge, and counting.

**Dignified Storytelling Forum:** The Dignified Storytelling Forum was held on December 10, 2021 at Expo 2020 Dubai, marking Human Rights Day. The Forum provided a platform for dialogue, engagement, and advocacy for Dignified Storytelling and was attended by members of civil society organisations, governments, the private sector, and international agencies alongside advocates, activists, and storytellers.

**Thematic Events at Expo 2020 Dubai:** Expo 2020 Dubai’s thematic weeks provided an opportunity to examine issues related to sustainable development through the lens of dignified storytelling. Through these events, many of which were held in partnership with country pavilions, Dignified Storytelling raised awareness of the importance of storytelling in inspiring and reporting on collective and individual action towards the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).





A man in a white shirt is performing on a stage. Behind him is a large screen displaying a graphic of a person's head in profile, surrounded by a pattern of dots. The stage is lit with warm, orange light. A quote is overlaid on the image in large, bold, yellow text.

**Stories connect us and  
remind us that we are more  
alike than different.**



In this photo: Award-winning poet and rapper Meta Sarmiento performing at the Dignified Storytelling event, Working Together to Safeguard our Collective Future, at Expo 2020 Dubai.





# What's next?

Dignified Storytelling is actively and consistently striving to maintain the movement created by storytellers. It is a global movement that enables content creators and policy makers to join efforts in visualising the Dignified Storytelling Principles and Handbook across industries and societies.

**Join us. Take the pledge.**



**Get in touch**

[info@dignifiedstorytelling.com](mailto:info@dignifiedstorytelling.com)

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