

Impactful Storytelling

Programme Advisory Group
16 January 2024



Setting the scene

- The impact of our work goes beyond quantitative measurement. It is also about the stories we tell, how we tell them and the long-term system change we strive to help effect.
- Our current context is one where decolonisation, localisation and overall changing the balance of power between the North and South are prominent. Christian Aid is committed to contributing to these shifts and as such, our work and how we show it needs to reflect this commitment.

Pledge for Change

Three Pledges:

Equitable Partnerships – focuses on financial flows and joint decision-making

Authentic Storytelling – focuses on how we portray people in the Global South (ie. do we give them dignity and a voice?)

Influencing Wider Change – focuses on how we are advocating for shifting the power in development and humanitarian action

P4C Metrics: Pledge 2 – Authentic Storytelling

Pledge 2: Authentic Story Telling	How will we measure this?
<p><u>2.1 Partner perceptions of communications</u>: % of local partners surveyed satisfied with INGO communication materials and feeling they are given rightful credit for their work</p>	<p>Independent partner survey and bottom-up accountability mechanism to be developed to review local partner perceptions (<i>to be implemented by WACSI</i>)</p> <p>Video conversation with selected partners, filmed over time, to assess whether feedback from partners have been taken on board, and whether the INGO has been seen to change (<i>subject to funding</i>)</p>
<p><u>2.2 Ethical communication</u>: Proportion of INGO written and visual communications which are considered ethical, inclusive, and avoid reinforcing harmful stereotypes based on agreed standards</p>	<p>Annual Southern-led (& remunerated) audit of 10 most seen/representative communications & fund-raising pieces, from each INGO Pledge Signatory, with recommendations for improvements (<i>analysis to be undertaken by an Expert Review Panel</i>)</p>
<p><u>2.3 Creating space for local voices</u>: % of speaking opportunities, and media, social and fundraising communications that facilitate direct engagement of local partners from global South</p>	<p>Analysis of a sample of comms materials based on Give/Act/Pray, so advocacy/campaigning comms, fundraising comms, church engagement/comms (incl. media/social media/mailings etc.) “Direct engagement” = a) quotes b) video c) webinar/virtual participation d) physical presence. Need to include CAW, one of the PPC campaigns, and emergency comms.</p>
<p><u>2.4 Engaging talent for content production</u>: Proportion of communications content developed, led or produced by local talent</p>	<p>% of people commissioned as comms content producers that are local talent over 12 months (Covers locally or regionally hired professional photographers, videographers, or where local partners, local community members, or local authorities lead on communications materials) Consider three aspects of content gathering: The brief, the content and the production/edit. Focus on formal content gathering trips per year: eg. Malawi, Bangladesh, Honduras, Sierra Leone this year.</p>
<p><u>2.5 Visibility and recognition to local partners</u>: Evidence of cases of public communications on programs that showcase/acknowledge local partners' work</p>	<p>Review of 1) Annual Report and 2) All media on 3 specific high profile Comms “moments”, to include CAW, one of the PPC campaigns, and emergency comms to assess whether partners are mentioned</p>

Decolonising our M&E

- MEL is an important cog in the wheel of storytelling
 - Collecting and using data both in terms of **need** (e.g. needs assessments and baselines) and **results achieved** (e.g. monitoring, reports and evaluations)
- Commitment to decolonizing our MEL means re-assessing “whose value counts?”
 - Who is setting the questions about whether we have achieved a reduction in poverty? Who is defining positive change?
 - Review of our Evaluation Policy, to reflect our commitment to decolonizing our data collection
 - Promotion of new, decolonized methodologies for data collection: [Participatory Video](#), Picture Power, Outcome Harvesting, audio reporting, using Community Generated Indicators
- Biggest challenge to decolonizing our M&E is that these methodologies cost more than the traditional M&E, mostly because they mean project staff need to spend more time with and in the communities.

Authentic Storytelling

- Authentic storytelling is central to new communications strategy – refreshed approach and thinking; developing content pipeline and plans.
- **Ethical story gathering guidelines (March 2023):** sets the ethical and quality standards expected from any staff member, freelancer or consultant collecting content.
- **Christian Aid House Style A-Z for writers and editors:** Contains an inclusive language guide for anyone writing for Christian Aid.
- **Diverse content producers:** Building our roster of photographers, videographers and content producers.
- **Participatory comms:** Picture Power 2.0 approach developed by Christian Aid and brings people's perspectives into our understanding of change and into our comms.
- **Sector wide learning and best practice:** Members of Pledge for Change Authentic Story telling working group; participating in sector workshops eg [The power of photography in a changing world \(ibt.org.uk\)](https://www.ibt.org.uk) and looking at how we can adapt our own practice e.g. **Who owns the story?** Financial testing of charity vs. participant led storytelling in fundraising example from Amref: [amref-health-africa_who-owns-the-story_report_final.pdf\(amrefuk.org\)](https://www.amrefuk.org/health-africa_who-owns-the-story_report_final.pdf)

Rethinking poverty workstream

1. What constitutes 'poverty,' beyond simply a lack of income or other economic resources?
2. Those without access to a set of diverse types of assets – i.e. financial wealth, education, networks, digital literacy, access to technology, ability to voice political and investment preferences – are more vulnerable and less resistant to shocks of all kinds: economic, social, political or environmental.
3. How poverty is experienced in different contexts, how affected communities measure it, and whether we can develop a general approach that can encompass appropriate indicators in multiple divergent contexts.
4. What is the story of poverty communities are narrating themselves?
5. "What are the wider historically embedded relations of power and accumulation that sustain situations of poverty/impooverishment?"

Discussion questions

1. What are some of the challenges for INGOs like us to tell authentic stories in line with decolonisation trends and principles?
2. Are there any gaps in what we are putting in place for our journey?
3. How can we ensure we line up our programme frameworks to support and enable our commitment to authentic storytelling and knowledge justice?