Module 1 | Levels of impact storytelling

Session 0

30 minutes - 1 hour, depending on cohort size

Theme

Listening with intent

Materials needed

None

Methodology

- Establish why intentionally listening is important.
  - What is a conversation? A conversation is a talk between two or more people where news, thoughts and ideas are exchanged. There was a time when conversations only happened face to face. We have now moved away from that mode of conversation to conversations that are taking place all the time, on different apps, through calls, text, video calls, etc. Explain how conversations have gone from an act of both talking and listening to people talking without really listening.
  Note to facilitator: You can use examples of the old string cup-telephone toy or the walkie-talkie to talk about this. With the example of the walkie-talkie, for instance, only one person can speak at a time while the other person listens. Only once the person talking finishes and says, Over, can the other person start talking.
  [illustration of people speaking into walkie-talkie to be added]

  Now, people are so busy reacting to things or getting ready to react or respond even as they are reading texts and emails that there is no real listening.

- Listening is important. Listening with intent, empathy.
This builds trust, helps you deeply understand the other's experiences and perspectives, builds better relationships, and perhaps, most importantly, creates a safe space for honest communication because it shows that the listener cares for and respects the other person's experiences and concerns. This is very important in life, particularly in the impact work that we do.
Note to facilitator: You may bring in examples from your experience to reinforce this concept, if needed. A common example to use: Activist Kamala Bhasin's experience with communities in Rajasthan, when she was trying to build a literacy centre for a community whose real need was water; she talks about the importance of listening to the communities you are working for (quick watch: https://youtu.be/m9taRE-IPsk?si=N30G6rM2qmD6MknP)

- The next activity is an exercise in active listening. Reinforce the idea that listening with intent is learned by practice and we can practise this every day in our conversations with colleagues, friends, family, etc.

- Split up the cohort into groups of two each. Each team gets 15 minutes for the participants to get introduced to each other.
  Then they have to come back and introduce the other person to the group.

  - Instructions for the introduction:- In the first five minutes, one person asks their partner questions to know more about them, and allows them to speak as much as they want to. The first person's job then is to listen carefully. No taking notes or anything. Just active listening.
    - In the next five minutes, the roles are reversed.
    - They have five minutes for follow-up questions and to gather back at the table.
    - Each person then has to introduce their partner to the rest of the group, in under 2 minutes.

- Wrap up the session by asking feedback on how it felt to listen, any challenges faced.

Learning outcomes

- Understanding that listening with intent, empathy is a skill that can be learned.

- Understanding that this is a skill that will come in extremely handy when working in social impact.

Session 1

1.5 hours

Theme

Four levels of impact storytelling, from discoverability to visibility and engagement to impact.

4 STEPS

LEVELS OF IMPACT STORYTELLING

IMPACT L4

The following three steps have to build up to the impact you want to create through storytelling. This could be fundraising, getting more volunteers, hiring core team members, etc.

L3 ENGAGEMENT

Are you connected to your audiences? How do you keep the conversation going?

Materials needed

Whiteboard and marker

OR

Chart paper and pen

Methodology

Ground rules to set for all sessions:

- Bring only the devices you need to the session. *Note to facilitator: Explain here what is needed for this particular session*

- Mute mobile phones before you put them away

- Encourage the participants to take space and make space. To take up space is to speak up and participate actively in discussions and putting their ideas and perspectives across. It is equally important to make space for others to do the same. *Note to facilitators: Ensure you check in about this throughout the sessions, especially by making space for those who are not used to taking up space or struggling to do so.*

- This is a safe space, and we encourage everyone to check their privilege and ensure that we do not discriminate in speech or action.

- Do remember there are no right or wrong answers. *Note to facilitator: Repeating this during the sessions and activities helps participants speak up more freely.*

- In this module, the cohort learns about the different levels of impact storytelling. We are primarily looking at impact storytelling online in this exercise, because our residency will give you the tools you need to do exactly this.

- Let's take the example of a university. Ask open questions about what a university needs in order to run. Allow participants to answer individually, and discuss these answers for 5-7 minutes. *Note to facilitator: Your objective is to guide the team towards establishing that the bare minimum factors (let's introduce the word stakeholders here) the university needs to run/fulfil its purpose are students and teachers.*

- Ask the participants to openly discuss what could possibly be the best ways to reach out to students and teachers. *Note to facilitator: Let the cohort discuss this as freely as needed. Give them 5-7 minutes. Our objective is to gently guide the cohort into understanding that the website is one of the best mediums for reaching out to students,*

teachers and parents. You can use examples like: even if you see a flyer for a new product, what is the first thing you do? Which will most likely lead to the answer: look it up online or google it. Guide them to this answer, if needed.

- Establish why having a website is the first step. That is, discoverability. Which is, simply being discoverable online. *Note to facilitator: Start drawing the Levels of Impact Storytelling ladder on a chart paper or whiteboard, with Discoverability as the first step, L1.*

- Ask the cohort questions like, 'How will people know that the website exists?', 'If the school wants to make a hiring announcement, what happens after the JD is put up on the website?', 'What should the school do to ensure more people see the JD?'
  Note to the facilitator: Use the answers to build up to the concept of Visibility. Which is, making the website visible to a larger audience, which should include your target audience. Add Visibility to the ladder as L2.

- Give an example about a JD for a math teacher, that lists experience and all details except for expected salary. Explain the concept of Engagement when potential candidates comment on the post asking for more details, or asking whom they can contact for more details.
  Ask the cohort what should be done in this case.
  Note to facilitator: Give 5-7 minutes for the answers to come in. Answers will vary from responding to each participant individually, to updating the social media post, to updating the job posting on the website, etc. Write Engagement as L3 in the ladder. And explain how important is to stay connected to your audience that is already interested in what you are sharing.

- Also use this example to show how levels are interconnected. Explain how the comments on the post point to a lack of detail in the JD, which means one has to go back to L1 level (updating the JD with all details)

- Explain how doing L1, L2, and L3 consistently leads to L4, Impact; in this case, hiring the right faculty.
  Note to facilitator: You can also ask questions to explain this point further. For instance,

ask about a new course being introduced. You can ask the participants questions around what the impact should be, how to build towards that impact (what are the steps to follow), etc.

- *General note to facilitator around common queries/FAQs:*
  - Our residency is about the impact of online storytelling, which is why our focus in this exercise has been about the website.
  - Reiterate that often, NGOs know what their impact needs to be. For example, it could be fundraising. An NGO wants to raise funds and has added a donate button on the website, but no one is donating. This is because there is no shortcut to L4, the impact level. You have to build through L1, L2 and L3 consistently: the stories that encourage people to donate should be on the website, these stories should be circulated among potential donors, and they have to be kept engaged. Without that, donations won't keep coming in.

- Do a check-in session where participants are encouraged to put up a sticky note with how they are feeling after this session. Guidelines for feedback:
  - Do not use words like good, bad, ok, fine, but 'feeling' words like curious, excited, nervous, etc.
  - Those who like to draw can illustrate the way they are feeling
  - They can choose to compare it to the weather: stormy, sunny, sunny with a hint of clouds
  - Participants can put these up anonymously but those who want to talk about how they are feeling may be encouraged to do so.

Learning outcomes

- Introduction to the idea that there are different levels of storytelling
- Understanding why each level is important, and how they are all interconnected and important.
- Understanding why the work on each level has to be consistent to achieve impact.

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