

## What's a Result?

An easy-to-follow formula to produce a result is issue-action-impact, adopted by UNICEF as part of its branding exercise.

### Issue-Action-Impact

Starting with the issue allows you to present the situation or problem.

**Issue:** A lack of participatory local governance and the ineffective use of local resources.

The action is what UNDP is doing about the problem.

**Action:** Training local officials on participatory budgeting so that local people have a role in the process.

The impact is the result.

**Impact:** Oversight improves, the budget has increased allocations for social services, and people have greater control over concerns basic to their quality of life.

## STORYTELLING GUIDELINES

With increased competition for donor funds and international scrutiny of the organization, it has become essential that UNDP communicates its results better, a consensus point at the 2009 Partnerships Bureau retreat. One critical way of achieving this goal is by gathering and disseminating compelling human interest stories about how UNDP's work changes the lives of ordinary people around the world in a positive and sustainable way. These guidelines have been compiled to assist staff managing or visiting projects to harvest these stories, merging both relevant technical information about the project and the human interest element. These guidelines are to be used with the Storytelling Template and additionally serve to minimize ad-hoc requests to the Country Offices for success stories.

### 1. What is a compelling UNDP human interest story?

This is a story that has a particular human being/s at the centre of the narrative whose life has been impacted positively and sustainably by a UNDP intervention, presented in an interesting way. Meetings, workshops, launches, reports, plans, pledges, intentions, etc., do not, by themselves, make a compelling human interest story. Trainings only work as a story if the training is used to a positive end. Remember that this story is competing with others for the reader's attention.

### 2. What is the technical information required?

This provides the context, the factual background to the story, and covers the basic journalistic questions of Who, What, Where, When, How and more importantly, Why. Without using jargon.

- **What** is the project? (Access to justice or micro-finance, reducing the effects of climate change, etc.)
- **Why** is this project in existence? (To improve participation of women in the political sphere, or enable sustainable livelihoods, etc)
- **Where** is the project? (Country plus: urban, rural, desert, coastal, forest, etc.)
- **Who** benefits from the project? (**Number** of women, children, ex-combatants, IDPs, etc.)  
Also, **who** are the partners? (Donors, government counterparts, NGOs, other UN agencies, private sector, etc)
- **How** is the project being implemented? (training and deployment of judges to rural areas, rehabilitation and equipping of local government buildings, etc)
- **When** was this project started?
- **What** arrangements are in place to promote self-reliance among the beneficiaries when the project is over?

Once all this information has been established, we then look for the human interest angle of the story.

### 3. What is the story?

As mentioned above, the story essentially is how people's lives have been changed by UNDP's work. You want to choose a person who can convey the project's impact, and tell the story through their experience. Select a consenting adult (or minor with a guardian's consent) who can elaborate how their life was before the intervention, and how it has changed since. It is important to identify how the intervention supports the beneficiary to become self-reliant. This is the back-bone of the success story.

Keep in mind that in a story there can be additional benefits e.g. with access to a multi-functional platform, a person can begin to run a business. In addition, there may be electricity, which allows for running water, which means nobody (particularly girls) has to go fetch water, which means the kids (particularly girls) can go to school all day, etc. Think of the story in a broad fashion that allows the detail of the story to emerge.

Key points to remember when writing the story:

1. No UN jargon, use plain language
2. Confirm the basic facts of the story – background and human interest story.
3. Get the name, age (if appropriate to ask) and other relevant facts of the person being interviewed e.g. number of children, title (if any), current occupation, previous occupation, etc.
4. Include quotes from the beneficiary as it adds authenticity to the story.
5. Ensure you include numbers (of people assisted, of money provided for microfinance, etc).
6. Give credit where it is due – name your partners.
7. Take a picture.
8. And finally, put yourself in the shoes of the reader. Would you want to read this story?