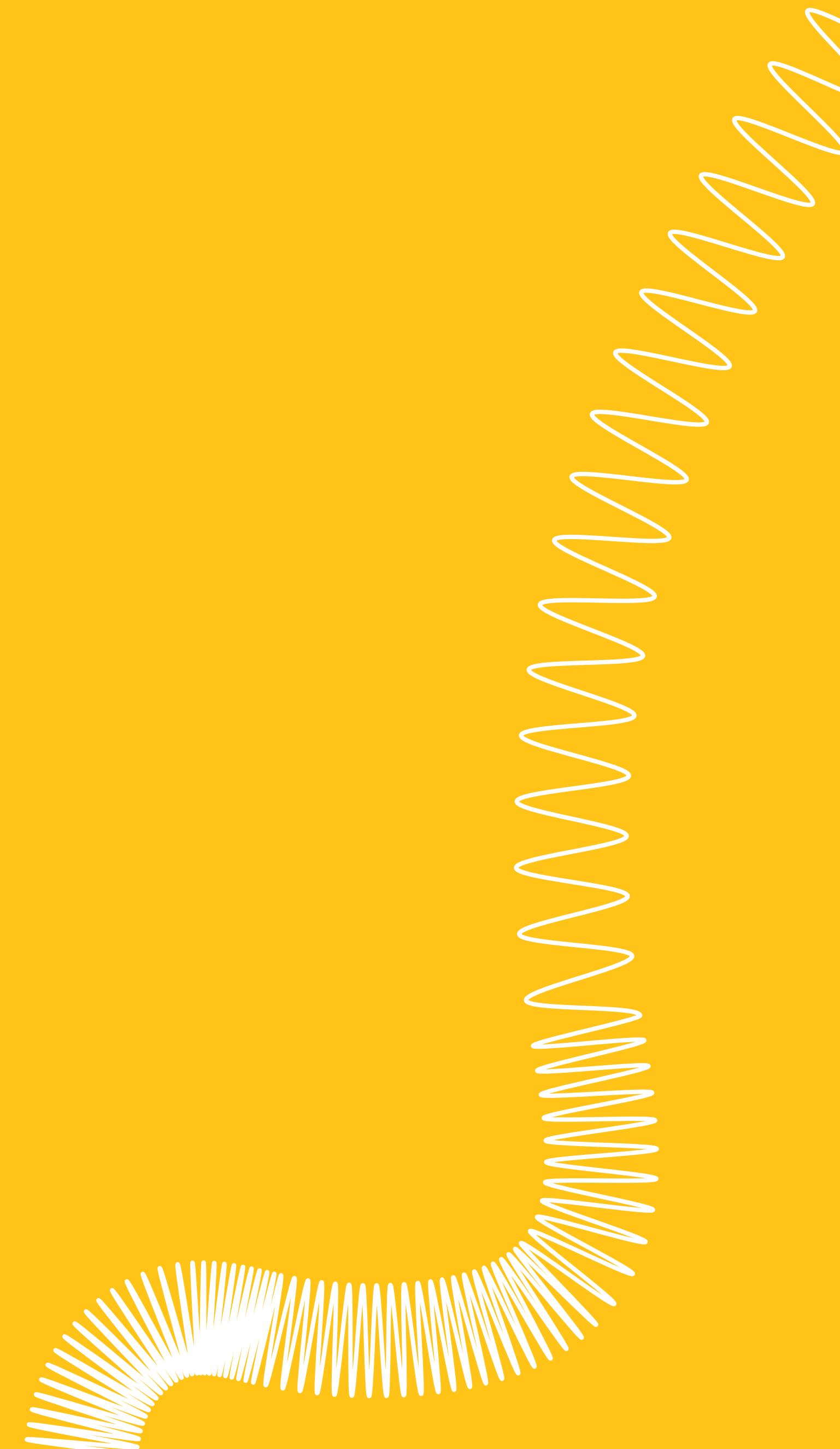


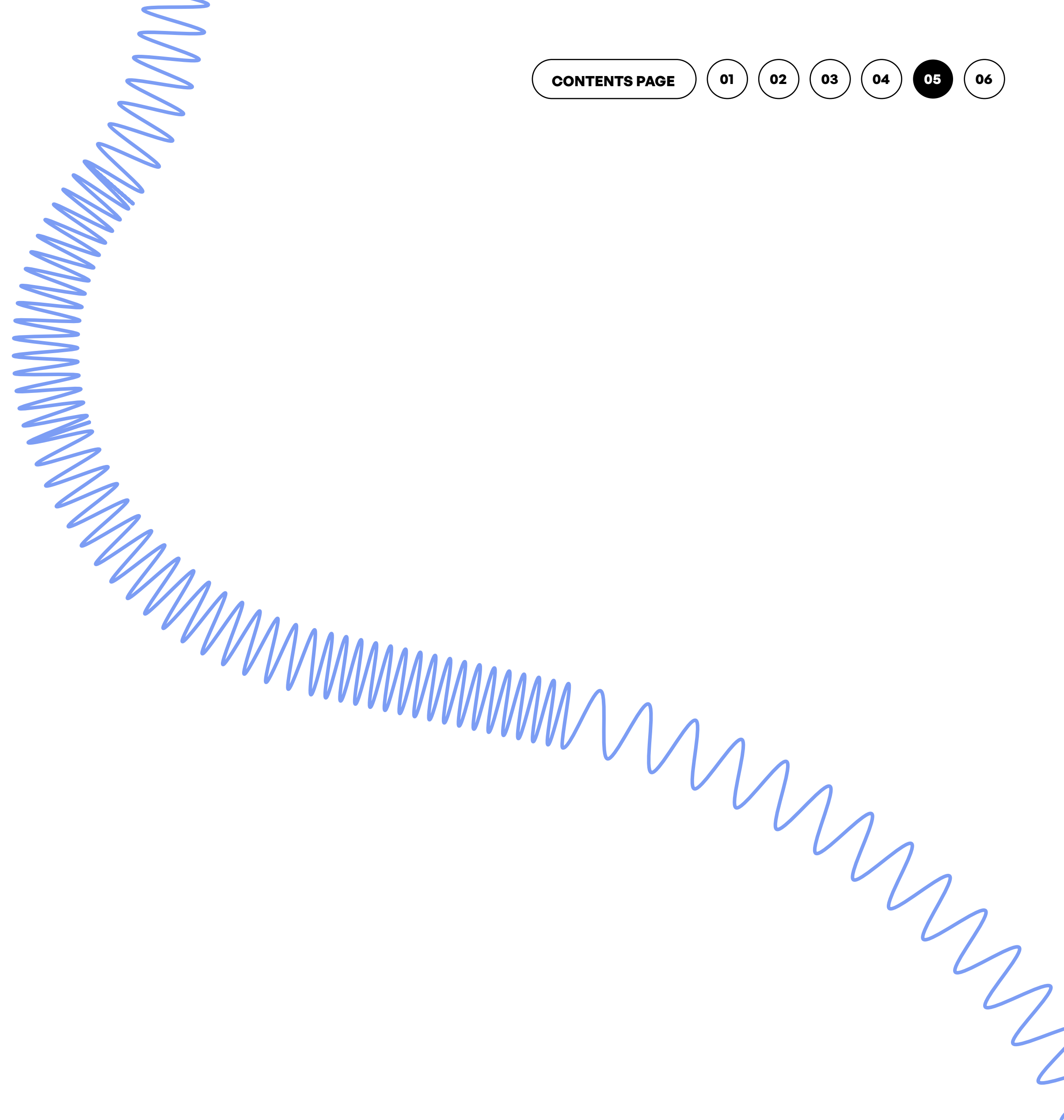
Chapter 5

How can we put it into practice?



Part 1: **Tips and advice compiled from the four chapters**

Learning and implementing new practices takes time. While each chapter takes a deep dive into the different steps of the storytelling process, the following tip sheet sums up the practical advice shared by authors throughout this toolkit in a format that's easy to use, share and adapt.



How can we use better language in our stories?

Language can be used to perpetuate stereotypes and power imbalances, but it can also influence change.

We might talk about “charity” with the best of intentions, but a community could perceive this as a term that positions them as helpless or dependent.

We have a responsibility to consider how language will be received by different people, in different contexts, and to use alternatives that respect how they want to be represented.

Language should be adjusted based on the preferences of different communities. This means there is no single correct answer for which words to use, and no blanket rules that can be applied across situations.

In this table, we suggest alternative language based on what we heard from communities during our

consultative workshops. **Organizations may use this table to initiate discussions with the people and communities featured in their communications about how they would like to be referred to.**

[Click here](#) to learn more about the impact of language in Chapter 1. Here you will also see examples of how organizations have created guidelines around language use.

Will we still achieve our fundraising objectives without sharing negative stories?

Too often, communications tend to rely on negative or sensationalist language that fails to paint a representative and complete picture of a community.

This can lead to people or situations being described based on the problems they face, rather than their

potential. Instead, we can lean more into asset-framing to reach a balance of authentic struggle, resilience and hope.

Asset-Framing® is a methodology developed by Trabian Shorters (the author of Asset-Framing®, Founder and CEO of BME and social entrepreneur) that helps communicators develop narratives based on strengths and agency when talking about a community, ensuring that the fullness of who they are comes through, not just their hardships. Refer to [his website](#) to learn more

about it, and to [Chapter 1](#) to read why we believe asset-framing is important in our sector.

Outside of these two sources, we recommend reading both of the guides below to learn more about asset-framing, and how you can use it in your communications:

[Click here](#) to read the CHCF guide, and [here](#) to read the Here to Here guide.

How can I start a conversation in my organization about shifting our communications practices?

Use one or several of the following arguments to make the case for adopting ethical principles in storytelling.

- **The business case.** By applying ethical principles to their communications, we have the power to create more effective messaging, achieve better program impact, and fulfill our strategic objectives.

- **The sociocultural case.** Communications should reflect the cultural nuances and realities of the communities we work with. Communications and programming processes that respect cultural differences are vital to building sustainable relationships, with better outcomes for all.
- **The moral case.** Better communications allow us to fulfill our duty to those we ultimately seek to serve – people with lived experience.

To learn more about each of these cases, [click here](#). You may choose a single case or a combination of different cases, and add some of your own ideas to build a comprehensive argument. Always approach your conversations from a place of empathy, trying to take into account the needs and perspectives of your stakeholders.

How do I build a comprehensive case to convince my stakeholders to make the change?

Follow our three-step process to support your case with compelling data.

- **Audit your communications.** Review your communications processes, standards and guidelines; assess your past communications outputs for a set time period; and analyze your current metrics for success. Once this initial audit is done, gather input from colleagues ensuring diverse

representation across departments, geographical locations, cultures and viewpoints. Identify the next steps for the short, mid and long term, prioritizing shifts that can put an end to harmful practices.

- **Identify key decision-makers.** Decide whom to share your audit results and case with. Understand the tensions they face in their role, and tailor your argument accordingly.
- **Assemble your case.** Use supporting quantitative and qualitative data to build your case.

[Click here](#) to learn more about this process, or click here to access the [audit checklist](#) that will guide you through the first step.

Once you've completed the three steps, you are ready to present. To access a PowerPoint deck tool which will help you make the case you choose to your senior stakeholders. The deck, which is for you to adapt and build out, includes an explanation of each case, its implications, questions for reflection, quotes from expert voices and place for a case study.

When initiating the storytelling process, what do I need to consider?

Oftentimes, organizations and the creative agencies in charge of content production neglect to include communities in the storytelling process.

Chapter 3 describes some of the negative consequences this can have on all parties involved. It

makes the case for bringing communities in as early as possible, and maintaining strong relationships throughout the production process.

[Click here](#) to see this checklist from Chapter 3, which captures actions that can be taken by the client and production team at the start of a storytelling project to shift towards more collaborative and trust-based relationships.

Beyond using consent forms, how can I make sure interviewees truly understand what they're signing up for?

While consent forms are important – and sometimes mandatory – they don't always guarantee that the person being interviewed understands what the storytelling process entails, or how the story will be used.

Language, literacy or cultural barriers can prevent someone from giving their consent by simply signing a form. Storytellers can use additional tools and practices to initiate conversations with interviewees around consent, in a way that guarantees their full and willing participation in the project.

[Click here](#) to listen to how Michel Lunanga (Multimedia Producer for Doctors Without Borders) goes beyond consent forms.

What are different metrics we can use when measuring success?

Evaluation frameworks and communications activities don't always capture impact in a way that aligns with the community's own idea of success.

In Chapter 4, the authors invite us to think beyond commonly-used metrics to feature a broader range of perspectives in the monitoring and evaluation process.

This list includes a few examples of metrics you can use to measure and communicate success in a way that reflects the community's experience, such as storyteller satisfaction, community feedback, program objectives and solutions-oriented stories.

[Click here](#) learn more at the end of Chapter 4.

Example Measurement Framework				
Inputs	Outputs	Outtakes	Outcomes	Impact
Community engagement throughout storytelling process	Which stories are told and how they're told	Community satisfaction with storytelling process & outputs	How stories are used to shape programme activity	Long-term trust and community involvement in programs
% of people who feel they provided informed consent	Breadth of types of stories told by the organisation	% of community members who feel accurately represented	No. community members who were consulted on programme goals / activity	The community feels the project was successful
% of people who feel they were fairly compensated	% of stories in which communities share advice	% of people who feel comms represent their community well	% who agree stories they share are providing insights to inform programming	The community feels motivated to continue to engage with the organisation / programme
% of people consulted on which stories were told	% of stories where communities are shown to be shaping solutions	% of people who feel the story is true to how they wanted it told	No. of community members who have received programme support	No. of community members who recall change in funding due to their feedback
% of people who had full understanding of how their story would be used	% of stories in which community voices are heard / amplified	% of people who were asked for ongoing feedback on communications	No. of people who are satisfied with the programme support received	No. of community members who recall change in programmes due to their feedback
% of people who had the chance to feed back on final communication materials	% of stories which feature the organisation's vs the community's role		No. of community members who received access to relevant services	% of community members who trust organisation to tell their story

As we've discussed, the way we measure success should include the community voice as they are at the heart of the story and programme experience. Below we've included a measurement framework your organisation can use and adapt that helps you quantify ways of measuring success from the community perspective. Through this, we can start to collect qualitative and quantitative data that can be integrated into our overall understanding of the effectiveness of our communications and programmes.

How do we create an impact report that includes qualitative and community-led data?

In Chapter 3, we learn about using a broader range of metrics to measure impact, and combining quantitative and qualitative data to build a more comprehensive picture of change.

But once those data have been collected, how do we share them in a way that's impactful and true to the community's experience?

It's all about balancing quantitative and qualitative data to create an impact report that shows the weight of both sides.

An example of this is Mama Hope's annual impact report for 2021-22, "The Power Within: Redefining Impact"



The organization added in a "partner stories" section to highlight the voices of community-led partnerships when measuring success. Denis Muwangaziw, the impact lead for Mama Hope, opens the report by explaining the decision-making process that led to this inclusion, and how the new section allows for a more authentic and relevant measure of success.

[Click here](#) to see Mama Hope's annual report (2021-2022).

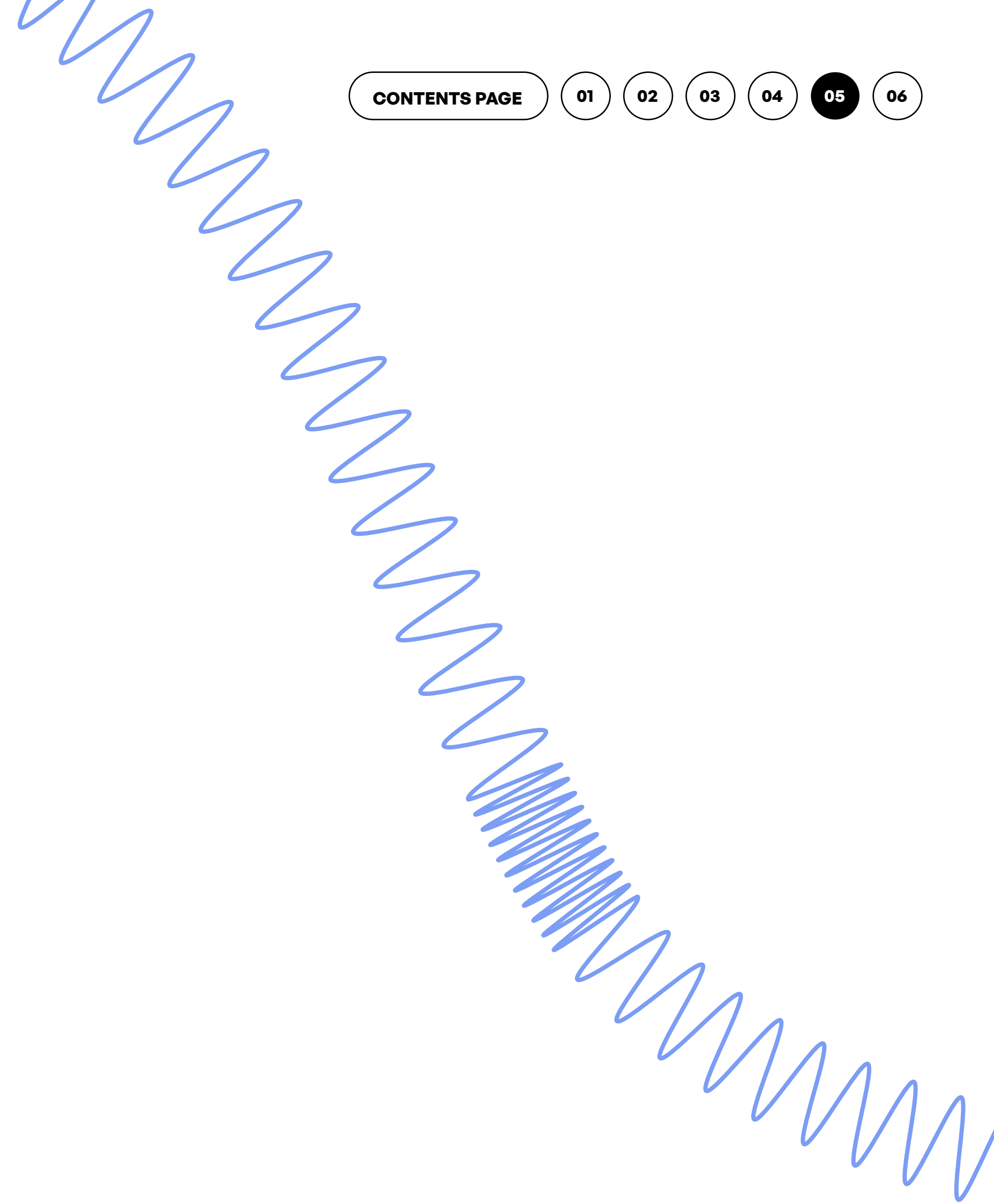
Part 2:

Practical advice to address additional barriers

While our contributors have explored (1) why we need to tell ethical stories, (2) how to make the case for ethical storytelling to decision-makers, (3) how to build trust during program and communication work, and (4) how to talk about impact in-depth, these are not the only pain points that need to be addressed.

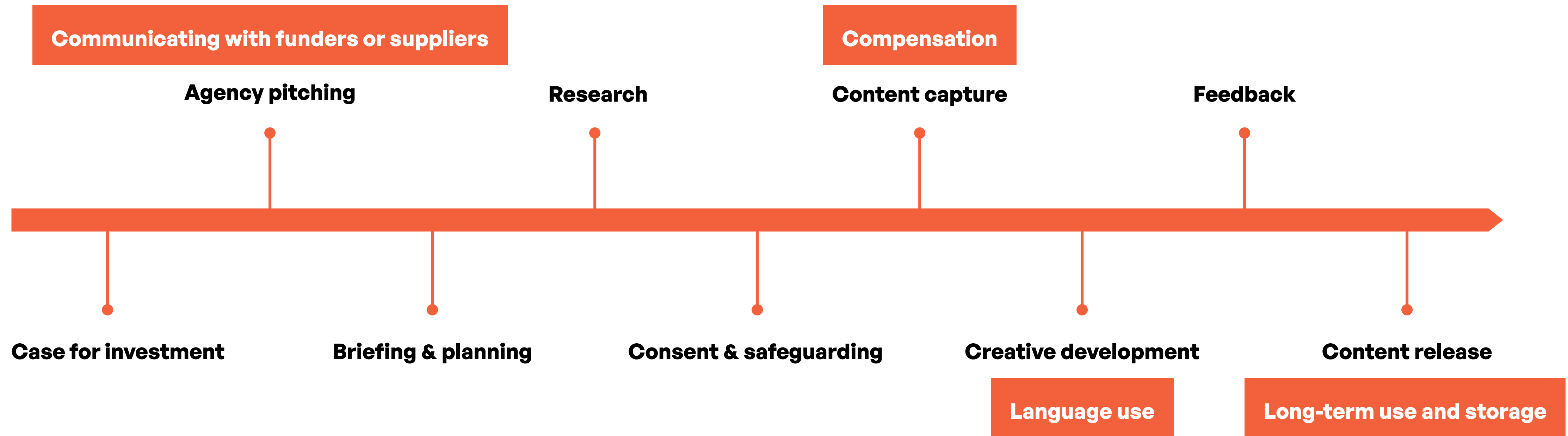
This section focuses on four different areas of tension that were identified by participants in our roundtable discussions, offering guidance for embracing those conversations in all their complexity:

- Communication with funders or potential suppliers at the pitch phase;
- Language use during the creative development phase;
- Compensation during the content capture phase;
- Long-term use and storage after content release.



For each of these four key moments, you will find:

- 1** References to existing tools, as well as new tools we've created in collaboration with chapter authors to fill any gaps. You make adapt or re-use these tools to meet the needs of the situation you're facing.
- 2** Reflection prompts to assist you in decision-making during relevant parts of the storytelling process.



Communication between funders and potential suppliers at the pitch phase:

How do we approach early conversations in a way that makes clear the value we put in ethical storytelling when creating work?

Has this ever happened to you?

You work on the communications team at an agency that is pitching for a campaign by a funder organization. The funder has dictated objectives for the campaign in the brief that don't reflect the reality on the ground for the community, nor abide by your agency's respectful storytelling guidelines.

You want to push back as an agency, but don't know how to have this conversation without endangering your relationship with the funder.

As a funder: Ethical storytelling is important to you, and moving forward you want to work with agencies who know how to embody it.

You don't know how to make clear during the early phases that this is what you want in an agency nor how to find out their strengths in relation to it.

Different perspectives to keep in mind:

Funders are evolving with the times

“The landscape is evolving to one that is more socially aware. Our audiences and our funders are evolving. My approach has been to present the need for ethical storytelling as an inevitable approach if organizations are to be considered responsive to contemporary concerns of today.”

Victor Mark-Onyegbu, Grants Lead at Africa No Filter

Sticking your ground

“I said to her, your story is too important to be watered down because they don't like it. We cannot change it to suit a funding narrative.”

Chilande Kuloba-Warria, Founder of Warande Advisory Centre

Benefiting funders

“It can be considered an invitation to funders to rethink.”

Maheen Kaleem, Vice President of Operations and Programs at Grantmakers for Girls of Color

Here is some guidance on how to move forward:

Questions to ask yourself and your team:

- 1 Have we considered what our key values as an agency or funder are when it comes to respectful storytelling, and how this plays into our brand identity and the services we offer?
- 2 Has our team made this clear to the organizations or funders we work with?
- 3 Does the brief we've given or received align with our values and if not, how can we change this?

A key tool to use:

Name: Criteria and questions to use as a funder or supplier during the pitch process

Created By: M&C Saatchi World Services

How to use: [click here](#) to access a list of:

- potential criteria you can set as a funder that helps you choose an agency that aligns with your values
- questions you can send to funders during the pitch process when you have a query or consideration related to ethical storytelling but do not know how to phrase it in a way that protects your potential partnership with them

Language use during the creative development phase:

How do we ensure that we use language that better represents people?

Has this ever happened to you?

You're writing a story about a community your organization has worked with to showcase the impact of the project.

You know established terms in the sector like "vulnerable" or "beneficiary" imply unequal power dynamics, but you don't know of any strong alternatives.

Different perspectives to keep in mind:

Consequences of harmful language

"You take away my voice and soul when you misrepresent me."

Chilande Kuloba-Warria, Founder of Warande Advisory Centre

"I would feel bad hearing such words for my community."

Workshop participant in response to language exercise, conducted by ICARUS (Pakistan, 2022)

Avoiding a prescriptive approach

"It's understanding how that individual or community wants to be portrayed because I don't think it's going to be a one size fits all."

Daphne Moore, Communications Director for Walton Family Foundation

Here is some guidance on how to move forward:

Questions to ask yourself and your team:

- 1 Have I asked the communities we're working with about how they would like to be referred to?
- 2 Does the language I currently use reinforce savior narratives or harmful power dynamics?
- 3 Have I tailored the language I use to the community's preferences, rather than choosing one-size-fits-all terms?
- 4 Would I want to be spoken about with that language?

A key tool to use:

Name: Mama Hope's Internal Language Guide

Created By: Mama Hope

How to use: Mama Hope has kindly shared their internal language guidelines, [click here](#) to access them. The guidelines were created to encourage to be used a consistently ethical approach to outward-facing communications. These can be adapted based on conversations with the people you serve, as language should take their perspective into consideration.

While there is no one right answer, this guide can start as a strong point of inspiration to create your organization's own language guidelines.

Compensation during the content capture phase:

If you decide to compensate those sharing their stories, how do you create a fair approach?

Has this ever happened to you?

You're on the ground gathering stories from community members to use in your organization's communications.

Because the community members have taken the time and effort to share their stories and perspectives, and their input will be used for public-facing communications, you wonder whether you should be compensating them in some form.

There are currently no guidelines from your team on when or how to compensate them financially or otherwise for their contribution, so you're not sure what to do.

Different perspectives to keep in mind:

Power dynamics

"Sometimes they just say what they think you want to hear because they want to be paid and they don't have that trust with you."

Shalini Moodley, Co-Founder and CEO of MetroGroup

Time and effort

"Where we may need more than half a day from a single person's time, it may be appropriate to compensate individuals on a 'loss of income' basis."

Oxfam, Ethical Content Guidelines

Non-financial options

You can "provide food, transport refund, transferable skill workshops..."

Africa No Filter, How to Write About Africa

Here is some guidance on how to move forward:

Questions to ask yourself and your team:

- 1 What internal policies on compensation do we have for external consultants that we could apply here? (e.g. if they work for us for half a day, how much do we pay them?)
- 2 Has anyone from the community represented offered feedback on whether they would like to be compensated (financially or otherwise)? If so, have they shared how they would prefer to be compensated?
- 3 Do I believe the level of compensation is fair and commensurate with what I'm asking of them?

A key tool to use:

Name: Three-Step Compensation Process and Compensation Policy Guide

Created By: M&C Saatchi World Services

How to use: [click here](#) to access a three-step compensation process guide, that helps you more ethically and collaboratively write a compensation policy for your organization, and [click here](#) to access a compensation policy template that you can adapt for your organization's project.

Long-term use and storage after content release

When capturing imagery and stories from communities, how do you ensure deep consent if you're planning to use it for a longer period of time or in the future?

Has this ever happened to you?

Your team is about to visit one of the communities you are working with to capture content. You need to obtain informed consent from those who will be featured, and explain how their images would be used.

You are currently planning to use the photos in a campaign that runs over the next two years, but don't know if you'd want to continue to use them afterwards. You're unsure how long you have the right to store the images and use them. When asking for consent, you know it's best to communicate a length of time and type of use, but confused about how to approach this.

Different perspectives to keep in mind:

Ensuring transparency beyond consent forms

“Sometimes they just say what they think you want to hear because they want to be paid and they don't have that trust with you.”

Shalini Moodley, Co-Founder and CEO of MetroGroup

Having backups for when consent isn't given or extended

“If we don't have consent, we don't use it, and we always have an alternative on deck to account for quick timelines.”

Maheen Kaleem, Vice President of Operations and Programs At Grantmakers for Girls of Color

Explaining emotional impact and checking in

“We don't know what it's going to mean for that family in a year or two, or in five years.”

Anthony Ramos, Executive Vice President at Children's Aid

Here is some guidance on how to move forward:

Questions to ask yourself and your team:

- 1 Which measures have you taken, beyond using consent forms, to ensure meaningful consent from interviewees? (e.g. open dialogue guidelines)
- 2 Have you clearly communicated the consequences of publishing their image or words on the chosen platform? (e.g., not just the name of platform, but the amount of users and long-term impact)
- 3 Does your organization have clear guidelines on the timeline of content use? Are they flexible enough to be adapted to the person's preferences?
- 4 Do you have a system in place to collect, store and protect the contact information of interviewees, should you need to contact them to change the terms of use of the image? (otherwise, content needs to be deleted from all servers, and not used after date of expiry)

A key tool to use:

Name: Principle 8 on data protection of the Dignified Storytelling Handbook

Created By: Dignified Storytelling

How to use: [click here](#) to be taken to Principle 8 “I protect other's data like it's my own.” It covers the importance of deep consent through transparent conversation with the person featured and guidelines on how to store data and set timeline limits for content. There is no one right path, but this guidance opens up internal conversations that help create policy and guidelines.