GETTING STARTED

1 Check audio and microphone

2 Check if you can correctly hear interpretation in your local language

3 Rename yourself as [NAME, CITY]

Centre for Public Impact
A BCG FOUNDATION

MAYORS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

About Centre for Public Impact

[Centre for Public Impact (CPI)](#) is a charity that works with government, civil society and public sector organizations across the globe to help reimagine and redesign systems, work and cultures in governments by acting as a [Learning Partner](#). With offices in the US, Europe, Australia and India, CPI has worked with 150+ governments in 30+ countries and has built an observatory of 500+ case studies chronicling how governments around the world are seeking to achieve public impact.

AGENDA

1. [15mins] What is storytelling?
2. [15mins] Understanding systems change & potential of storytelling to create systems change
3. [10mins] Supporting better stories
4. [15mins] Q&A / Group discussion

WHAT IS STORYTELLING?

"...in the end, stories are about one person saying to another: This is the way it feels to me. Can you understand what I'm saying? Does it also feel this way to you?"

Kazuo Ishiguro
Nobel Laureate in Literature

What does storytelling mean to you?

WHAT MAKES A
GOOD STORY?

Good stories must be authentic, and must honour the voice of the person whose story is being told.

Many people we spoke to highlighted the importance of stories being told using the language and voice of the community.

WHAT MAKES A
GOOD STORY?

GOOD STORIES

• are written simply and are easy to understand

• have a clear structure, purpose and message

• are persuasive and engaging

• are emotional – they capture the heart

• go deeper than data – providing more context and insight than numbers can

• are honest, inclusive and gentle

WHAT MAKES A GOOD STORY?

Not all stories are good stories.

Stories are not good when they:

· pass judgment on a person's situation

· are centred in ego

· are designed to promote something

· are driven by the motives of the storyteller, rather than the needs and priorities of the community

WHAT CAN STORIES LOOK LIKE?

ART

Songs	Community artifacts
Wall paintings	Sculpture

EXPERIENCES

Hands-on skills such as sewing, painting etc.	Through food
Story walks	Book readings

COLLECTIVE ENDEAVOUR

Coffee table books	Photo display
Collective action and campaigns	Chain stories from multiple perspectives

UNDERSTANDING
SYSTEMS CHANGE

When we talk about 'systems' of society we are talking about the processes, institutions, or structures that shape the way we live. Like governments, education and media organisations, businesses, as well as the dominant societal norms and behaviours. These systems are shaped by the narratives and mindsets that people hold.

Talking about changing systems, or 'systems change' means focusing on conditions that hold these systems in place.
[Common Ground]

HOW CAN WE USE STORYTELLING TO
DRIVE SYSTEMS CHANGE?

Stories can be used to change the system as well as to evaluate, understand and showcase the change that is occurring in communities.

Stories also:

| Encourage new perspectives | Challenge traditional power dynamics | Are a form of healing |

HOW CAN WE USE STORYTELLING TO
DRIVE SYSTEMS CHANGE?

Stories play different roles at different levels of the system – stories both "support systems to change, and also shine a light on the change".

In other words, stories can be used to change the system; as well to evaluate, understand and showcase the change that is occurring.

Systems change when people change how they relate to others, who they are in relationship with, and what they believe they are capable of doing.
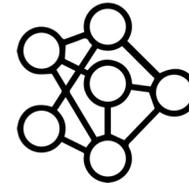
WHAT MAKES IT HARD TO
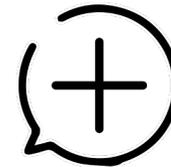# TELL STORIES ABOUT SYSTEMS CHANGE?

POWER AND TRUST

COMPLEX NATURE OF WORK

SKILLS, RESOURCES AND CAPABILITY

READINESS TO RECEIVE STORIES

LIMITATIONS OF LANGUAGE

BIAS

WHAT MAKES IT HARD TO TELL STORIES ABOUT SYSTEMS CHANGE?

The factors that make storytelling hard are **technical, structural** and **institutional**. The technical barriers – such as lack of skills, resources and capability – are easier to address than the structural and institutional barriers, such as power imbalances and bias.

HOW ARE PEOPLE
USING STORIES TO DRIVE CHANGE?

Oxford Hub and Arts at the Old Fire Station

Oxford Together, a community response to the Covid-19 pandemic to help each other, teamed up with Arts at the Old Fire Station to collect stories from the people involved - volunteers, community organisers, Oxford City Council staff and others.

https://www.oxfordtogetherstories.com/about

Burnie Works

Enabling community members to collect their own information, for purposes that are important to them helps to shift the power.

https://www.dusseldorp.org.au/2022/05/19/local-knowledge-and-stories-create-positive-change-in-burnie/

WHAT SUPPORT IS NEEDED TO
CREATE & SHARE STORIES OF SYSTEMS CHANGE?

Building understanding of storytelling traditions across different cultures and demographics

Increasing the value of different ways of telling stories of change

Challenging the bias towards quantitative data and the scientific method AND understanding effective ways to weave together qualitative and quantitative insights

Creating Communities of Practice and mentors for community storytellers

WHAT SUPPORT IS NEEDED TO CREATE & SHARE STORIES OF SYSTEMS CHANGE?

In order for stories to contribute to systems change, energy needs to be spent on both the supply and the demand sides of the equation. In other words, we need to understand both how to support people to tell better stories and how to increase the likelihood that there is an audience ready and willing to hear and respond to the stories.

CPI'S REPORT ON STORYTELLING FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

We worked with our partners to deepen our understanding of what might be needed to support those engaging in systemic change agendas to have their stories both told, and heard.

This partnership has culminated in a report - Storytelling for systems change: Insights from the field.