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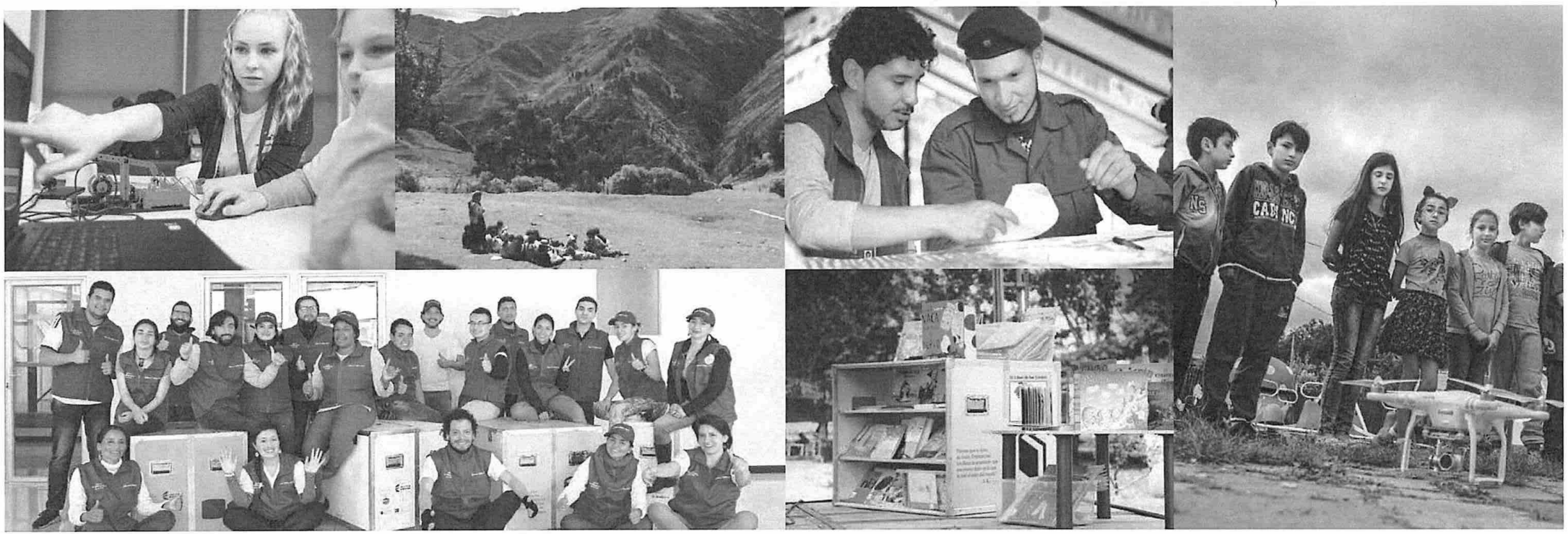
Libraries and the Sustainable Development Goals

a storytelling manual



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Contents

Why this Manual? 2

What story to tell 3
the SDGs explained for librarians and library advocates

- **What are the SDGs?** 4
- **How do libraries support the SDGs?** 4

How to tell your story 8
Elements of compelling evidence-based storytelling

- **Title** 10
- **Narrative** 10
  - Why? 11
  - Who did what, how and when? 12
  - A meaningful ending 12

How to tell your story visually 13
Preparing pictures and videos for the Library Map of the World

- **Pictures** 14
- **Videos** 15
  - Creating a video 16
  - Sharing a video 16

How to deal with copyright and permissions 17
Preparing your story for use and re-use

- **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) – what does it mean?** 18
- **What if I use material from other people in your stories? – Copyright and other issues** 18
  - Pictures 19
  - Permission from people in photos 19
  - Videos 19

How to get your story into the Library Map of the World 20

- **What will it look like?** 22
- **Submission** 21
  - Filling in the submission form 21
  - Language of your story 23
- **Curation** 23
- **Publishing** 23

How to use your story 24
Stories – your community engagement and advocacy tool

- **Checklist** 26

Resources 27

- **Why this Manual?** 27
- **What story to tell** 27
  the SDGs explained for librarians and library advocates
- **How to tell your story** 28
  Elements of compelling evidence- based storytelling
- **How to tell your story visually** 28
  Preparing pictures and videos for the Library Map of the World
- **How to deal with copyright and permissions** 28
  Preparing your story for use and re-use
- **How to get your story into the Library Map of the World** 28
- **How to use your story** 28
  Stories – your community engagement and advocacy tool

What story to tell
the SDGs explained for librarians
and library advocates

Take a look at the list of SDGs below, and examples of how libraries contribute. Hopefully these will inspire you and help you to identify the many activities, projects and programmes in your library that help deliver on the issues that decision-makers care about:

SDG 1 - End poverty in all its forms everywhere:
Libraries provide opportunities for people to improve their own lives and support informed decision-making. Mobile libraries make books, services, and internet access available in rural and remote communities, providing opportunities to people that would otherwise be isolated.

SDG 2 - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture:
Agricultural libraries provide access to research and data on crops, market information, and farming methods that help develop resilient, sustainable produce. Public and community libraries also promote literacy, provide ICT training, access to information in local languages, and a gateway to government services and funding for rural communities, as well as fostering partnerships to support local development.

SDG 3 - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages:
Medical libraries and hospital libraries provide access to medical research that supports improved clinical and public health outcomes. Public access to health information in all libraries help people to make better lifestyle choices and to stay healthy. Public libraries have a key role in providing health information to vulnerable groups such as new immigrants and people experiencing homelessness. Services include: accessing reliable health information, developing health literacy skills, providing help in researching and acquiring appropriate health insurance, and organising and participating in first aid training.

SDG 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all:
Libraries are at the heart of schools, universities and colleges in every country around the world. All libraries support literacy programmes, provide a safe space for learning, and support researchers to access, apply and reuse research and data to create new knowledge. Hands-on computer classes, after-school support, and programmes addressing subject areas with high failure rates are just a few examples of how libraries respond to local needs and take action to improve education. Libraries also act as facilitators in their communities, setting up local learning centres to support learning.

SDG 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls:
Libraries offer programmes for women and girls to access information about their rights and health. They also provide ICT and literacy programmes, as well as coding-clubs and entrepreneurship training. Libraries provide a safe environment for women to read or pursue learning, access computers and the internet, undertake technology training, or talk with other women.

SDG 6 - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all:
Libraries provide public access to information on water, energy usage and sanitation. They offer access to research and evidence for policy makers and development organisations, to support the effective allocation of resources to sustainable water infrastructure and sanitation projects.

SDG 13 - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts:
Libraries play a key role in providing access to reliable data, research and knowledge that supports informed research and public access to information about climate change. They ensure long-term access to environmental data and information for future generations through thorough preservation strategies that outlast the policies of individual governments. School and public libraries help raise awareness among younger generations about the critical and urgent need to protect our environment and to work together to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

SDG 14 - Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development:
Libraries support decision-making by preserving and giving access to data and information related to the sustainable use of oceans, seas and other water bodies, appropriate fishing practices, and effective water management.

SDG 15 - Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss:
Libraries foster research and help protect the earth's ecosystems by offering open access to biodiversity data and literature. Botanical and forest libraries help raise awareness among younger generations about the need to respect and protect nature.

SDG 16 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels:
Libraries are a key source of information for the public. They are also equipped to teach and enable citizens to benefit from this open access. Libraries are a trusted information source, with skilled staff that help individuals, institutions and governments to communicate, organise, structure and use information in a meaningful way to promote development.

SDG 17 - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development:
Libraries partner at all levels with local, regional and national civil society institutions, governments and organisations from private sectors to offer community-based programmes and services that engage and empower citizens, in turn, strengthening societies.

So, feeling inspired? Found your story?

Let's see now how you can share it!

How to tell your story
Elements of compelling evidence-based storytelling

A catchy title: that grabs the attention of the reader

A strong opening: your first paragraph should draw the reader in

Effective scene-setting: make the reader understand why action from the library was necessary

A clear narrative: a description of what the library did

A meaningful ending: how did the action from the library make a real, provable difference?

Coding for Kids in Libraries

Since January 2017, Progress Foundation, Etic Association and 29 rural librarians, with the funding support and partnership of the Romanian American Foundation are developing the coding skills of over 450 kids from Romania. Coding for Kids in Libraries or shorter said CODE Kids has managed to bring together a large array of stakeholders and is due to continue after this pilot year.

It all started with an understanding and an acknowledgement: Romania has one of the fastest growing IT sectors in Central and Eastern Europe, however its education system and human resources development policies are far behind of what the economy needs. In 2014 for example, according to the Commission's Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content & Technology (DG CONNECT), 23% of the EU population had no digital skills, while Romania's number is 50% (the highest in Europe), and 85% of the Romanians had low digital skills. Also, by 2020, Europe may experience a shortage of more than 800,000 professionals skilled in computing/informatics. Coding skills will be a key

To mitigate this situation is a task beyond the capacity of two organizations or one funder, but one needs to start somewhere. Project partners decided to focus on secondary school kids from 10 to 14 years old and piloted an intervention

educational purposes, librarians are more confident in working with youth and, due to better communication, services they offer to kids are more diverse. At the same time, project partners have already witnessed some incipient community development

Great illustrations: use pictures and video to bring your story to life!

Overall, your story must provide answers to the following questions:

Why?
Description of a problem or challenge in the community that this activity, project or programme was designed to address.

Who did what, how and when?
Brief description of an activity, project or programme.

So what?
Description of impact on the community and evidence of its contribution to local, regional or national development needs.

Community needs assessment is a combination of information-gathering, engagement and focused action with the goal of community improvement. It is aimed at identifying community issues and priorities as well as creating and discussing solutions (e.g. new or improved library services targeted at under-served community groups). The goal of community needs assessment is **to make sure that the service, activity, project or programme you are developing and delivering fits the needs of the community you serve.**

Librarians do a lot to measure the needs of their community whether they know it or not. Some of the existing data sources may be:

- Library use statistics
- Suggestion box/comment cards
- Public records and statistics
- Information gathered from reports, newsletters, and newspapers
- Casual conversations with community members and library users
- Surveys, interviews, discussions, key opinion-formers in the community
- Observations in the community and library

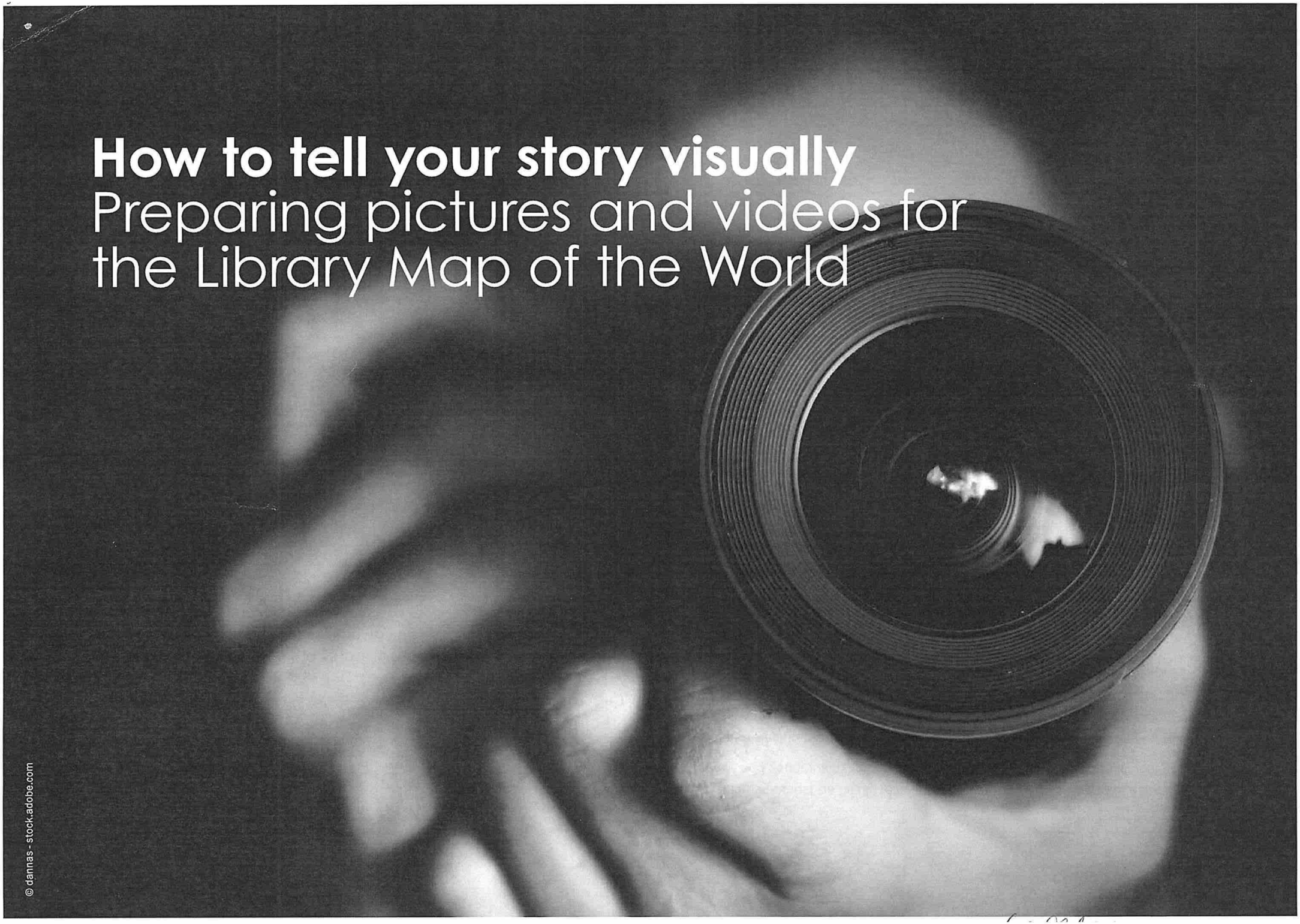
Why?
Spend more time to describe the "why" than the "who did what, how and when". Your readers may know nothing about your community and what's important for you. To feel part of your story, it is important that the reader can picture themselves in the situation you are describing, and that they understand the problem or challenge in your community that your library activity, project or programme aimed to address.

This does not need to be difficult. You will have had a reason for organising your activity, project or programme, based on your knowledge and understanding of what your community needs.

To do this, you can talk about community demographics (older/younger, male/female), social and/or economic characteristics (rich/poor, well-educated or not, rural/urban), problems and/or issues that your community experiences and how your library contributes to solving these. Knowing the conditions in your community and an issue, problem or challenge that your activity, project or programme was designed to address and contribute, you can talk about the changes that you expected to see.

Remember that the community problem or challenge that your library service was designed to address can be closely related to existing local, regional or national development needs and priorities that may be described in policy documents or development plans. If these exist, try to put things into context to demonstrate how your activity, project or programme is contributing to the goals mentioned in these documents and link to the SDGs, thus helping to meet local, regional or national development needs.

How to tell your story visually
Preparing pictures and videos for the Library Map of the World



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Videos

Video can bring life to your story and can be the perfect way to reinforce your message. On the Library Map of the World, videos will feature first in the story. However, they are not compulsory. A picture is worth a thousand words – now imagine what moving images can do! If you add a video to your story, people can listen and see what your library is doing, and feel empathy. It gives you a way to invite them to know more about your story and the libraries in your country. A video can show a variety of points of view – from staff, users, or families.

On the Library Map of the World you will be able to add up to five links to videos related to your story, so be strategic when you choose your videos. They can make your story understood by more people and you can deliver a clear message to your audience.

You don't need to be a filmmaker to make a compelling video! Looking for tips?

Ten tips on how to produce a short video by Brian Hebb.

10 quick tips for creating compelling videos for social media by Sydney Parker.

10 simple tips to make home videos look professional by Sherwin Coelho.

10 tips for editing video by TED staff.

Did you know that you can make a short video from pictures you have? These tools can help!

Stop Motion Studio combines everything that you could need to put pictures together into one video. It helps to create terrific stop action movies with a whole host of unique features.

Shotcut is a free, open-source, cross-platform video editor and encoder that can handle wide range of media formats.

Check out the full list of free video editing software compiled by Samuel Axon.

Ever thought about aspect ratio? Full frame or widescreen? 4:3 or a vertical video? Making informed decisions about your aspect ratio can improve the style of your story. Learn more:

Choosing the best aspect ratio for your video by Zach Ramelan.

It's Hip to be Square: The Impact of Aspect Ratio on Social Media by Chris Smith.

Looking for free sounds and music for your video?

Many musicians choose to release their songs under Creative Commons licenses, which gives you the legal right to do things like use their music in your videos. Creative Commons maintains the list of sites that offer music published under Creative Commons' flexible copyright licenses.

Bensound Royalty Free Music – on this site you will find music that you can use for free in your multimedia project (online videos, including YouTube and Facebook, websites, animations, etc.) as long as you credit the author.

StockMusicSite – this site contains over 497,000 music tracks from over 5,616 independent artists, bands and producers.

How to deal with copyright and permissions

Preparing your story for use and re-use

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Pictures

We recommend that you take your own photos to visualise your activity, project or programme. However, in many cases it will not be possible. If it is so, you will have to ask the photographer's permission to use the selected photos and explain that these will be published online under the CC BY 4.0 licence (in line with the conditions described above). Such a use will not remove the photographer's own rights. In turn, you should indicate which elements are not yours to license.

In the case of the Library Map of the World we will credit the author/creator by displaying the name of the author/creator, the title of photo, and copyright information (if relevant).

Permission from people in photos

In most countries, it's not illegal to take pictures of people in public places, however you must consider asking people's permission especially if individuals on the photo are identifiable and particularly if you plan to publish these photos including posting online. This is especially sensitive if you take pictures of children; in that case you must consider asking parents' or guardians' permission.

We recommend that you try to find out what are the legal regulations in your country and act accordingly.

Tips on how to ask for permission to take a picture

How to ask strangers for permission to photograph them

10 tips on how to ask permission to take photos of people

Videos

The same applies for videos that you will select to add to your story. Consider adding videos licensed under the licence which allows the maximum dissemination.

In case of existing videos which are licensed other than CC BY 4.0 we recommend you negotiate with authors/creators of the video regarding the possibility to open it up. If that is not possible, the Creative Commons guidelines for including third party content should be followed.

In case you are creating the video especially for the SDG story on the Library Map of the World, make sure that it complies with conditions allowing licensing under CC BY 4.0 (e.g. musical work that you may want to use as a soundtrack to your video could have its own copyright and you must ask the permission of its author/creator before it can be published online).

The Library Map of the World will credit the author/creator of the video by listing the name of the author/creator, the title of video, and copyright information (if relevant).

How to get your story into the Library Map of the World

IFLA Library Map of the World is the unifying platform providing access to SDG stories that demonstrate how libraries in different countries contribute to the SDGs and serve as partners in meeting local development needs.

This section will guide you through the practical steps of the submission of your story.

Submission

The submission of SDG stories takes place through an online submission form. It will not take long to fill this in if you have your content, including the narrative, pictures, videos and further information links, ready in advance.

Referring to the section "How to tell your story" and using the Checklist (in Annex) will help you to prepare.

Do you have questions or need an assistance during the submission?
Contact the Library Map of the World team for support at librarymap@ifla.org

Filling in the submission form

The submission language is English.

The SDG story submission form consists of five parts:

1. Contributor identification

You will be asked to identify the contributing organisation. The name of your organisation will later be listed as the contributor on the Library Map of the World Contributors' page.

Also, you will be asked to identify the main contact person and her/his email address. The Library Map of the World team is looking for the person with whom they can communicate to curate your story before publishing online.

2. Narrative

This part consists of the title and descriptive part of your story as well as a list of the SDGs. You will be asked to select up to three related SDGs.

Your title should be maximum 10 words and the description maximum 500 words.

3. Pictures

This is the place to upload pictures representing your story.

Prepare the file names of your photos by identifying your country, the title of the story (include first three words from the title), and the number of the picture (e.g. Country_TitleOfStory_NumberOfThePicture.jpg, Colombia_MobileLibrariesFor_1.jpg).

The submission form is set up to allow upload of JPG, JPEG, and PNG file formats.

Additionally, the form is set up to allow upload photos of maximum 120KB per picture. If your pictures are larger, you will need to optimise your pictures for the web (this practical guide will help you).

When you are uploading pictures, you will be asked to add metadata for each of them. This includes the file name, title of photo, author of photo, and the licence.

4. Videos

This is the place to provide the links and metadata of videos representing your story. These can be links to YouTube or Vimeo videos.

Have the URL (copy the link from your hosting site) of your video and the metadata ready. This includes the title and author of the video, as well as licence.

5. Further information

This is the place to provide links to further information related to your story. Further information should contain 3-5 links to sources and information about the described activity, such as a link to the website, social media, news coverage, etc.

In addition, if you need a space for more detailed description of your activities, please use this section to link additional information that is published elsewhere to your story on the Library Map of the World.

Be ready to copy/paste the URL from the Internet browser as well as to give a name to each further information link.

Language of your story

A story in your own language is a powerful tool for communication with decision-makers on a local or national level. The same story in English can be used by other library advocates from around the world to make a stronger case in working towards advocacy goals.

The Library Map of the World can support stories in English and one other language (your choice). All stories must be submitted in English by default. You can decide if you also want to have your story published in another language, for example the language that is most commonly used in your country. In that case, once the curation of an English version is complete, you will need to prepare the narrative and metadata information in your native language.

Curation

When received, all stories will be curated by the Library Map of the World team, who will review if the narrative and visual elements of the story, including crucial elements of a compelling digital story, meet the minimum requirements set for each part of the story.

A curator will contact you within a week after the submission.

Curation of your story may take a shorter or longer time depending on the conformity of your story to the guidelines described in the section "How to tell your story? – Elements of compelling evidence-based story" as well as on your flexibility and responsiveness during the curation process.

You may be asked to add additional information to your story and/or to change the narrative and/or visual material.

When the final English language text and visual materials are agreed, and in case you want to add a translation of the story in your native language, you will be asked to submit the translation through a separate form.

If you don't want to add the translation, curation is considered complete when the translation is received or when the final English version is agreed.

Publishing

Before publishing your story on the Library Map of the World, you will be asked to fill in the Contributor's Permission Form by which you will indicate:

- your agreement for IFLA to publish your SDG story on the Library Map of the World website, and
- your permission to acknowledge your organisation's contribution on the Library Map of the World Contributors' page.

When the completed Contributor's Permission Form is received, your story will be scheduled for upload onto the Library Map of the World.

We will add stories on an ongoing basis. The time taken to curate your story may vary. Allow a minimum of one month to get your story published on the Library Map of the World website.

advocacy = Support

How to use your story

Stories – your community engagement and advocacy tool

Stories can motivate, persuade and inspire others to act. As creative researcher Matt Finch says – "Storytelling in a library context means capturing the initial spark of inspiration, then allowing that spark to guide you. Together we surface new ideas, build relationships, and deliver sustained community engagement."

13

P2

Stories can make change happen. We use stories in advocacy because they help raise awareness, change attitudes, and mobilise. They bring us closer to our goals – educating communities and decision-makers, promoting the work of libraries, and delivering the funds and laws that allow our institutions to do the best by our users.

When sharing your story to support an "ask" (e.g. applying for project funding to introduce a new library service or programme), you give a voice to the community. Challenges and needs in your community become something real and tangible rather than something abstract. When you share your story with your decision makers, it not only helps them understand how their decisions affect people's lives but also lets them understand your library's contribution to solving problems and making change happen in your community.

While this manual was primarily prepared to support storytelling about library activities that contribute to outcomes across the UN 2030 Agenda, the ideas and principles of how to tell a great, compelling story can be applied to any library advocacy. Take inspiration from the section on "How to tell your story" (pages 8-12).

When using social media to share SDG stories uploaded on the Library Map of the World, add hashtags #SDGs #WorldLibraryMap #StoriesThatMatter #Lib4Dev

What are you waiting for? Tell your story!

Resources

This list includes all sources that are referenced in the **Libraries and the SDGs – a storytelling manual.** You will find many sources of additional information on topics covered in the Manual as well as websites and platforms providing access to free resources or tools that you could consider in your digital storytelling.

The resources are listed in the order of its mention in the Manual.

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