

TRAINING ON NARRATIVE BUILDING AND STORY TELLING

11-12 March 2019
Sofia, Bulgaria

Key messages and learnings

INSPIRE

PROMOTE

SUPPORT

RESPECT

EQUALITY

JUSTICE



Equality bodies are champions for the core European value of equality and defenders of the right to equal treatment. They aim to contribute to an awareness of rights and a societal valuing of equality, but that is not always easy to explain in a way that is accessible for all.

Story telling is one way of doing this! As part of its capacity building for members, Equinet wanted to provide equality bodies' staff with the knowledge and practical experience to be able to develop narratives and stories that promote positive values that all equality bodies hold, such as equality, justice and respect. We asked Brian Fitzgerald [from Dancing Fox](#) to be our guide on this exciting journey of creativity. Here are the main highlights and learnings from our two-day training.

The full presentation from the two days is available [here](#). The Dancing Fox [reading list is here](#).

What are the stories that our organisations want to amplify? What positive stories do you need to reinforce?

During the training, staff members of equality bodies identified the messages listed below as core stories they want to strengthen and promote through their work on national level:

- Everyone is equal
- Everyone deserves love
- Refugees are welcome because they are human
- Don't let your fear overcome – rule your mind
- Human need is more important than differences between us
- Hate is easy, try harder!
- Someone should do something – YOU are someone!
- Accessibility is good for everyone
- The “good ones” are a larger group and is growing faster
- Diversity is tasty
- We should not be the same, we should be equal
- Humanity has more in common than what separates it



- Diversity makes societies bloom
- Solidarity makes us stronger
- You own your dignity
- Together for each other
- We are one under the sun
- When solidarity stops, the world stops.

**What are the stories we want to debunk/deflect?
What stories hold back our vision of a more equitable world?
What myths are ripe for a new story?**

Migrants are criminals/terrorists	Migrants often leave their home for fear of terror and war. They come here for safety.*
Immigrants are considered as a burden to the state	Migrants are hardworking and bring benefits to communities.*
Old traditional family values are best	It's up to each individual how they define their family.*
Skin color is a marker of someone's value as a human being	People's actions are a marker of their value as a human being.*
LGBTI+ are perverts and can be dangerous	LGBTI+ have the same hopes and fears as everyone else.*
It takes an effort to change	Change comes from within. Be your best self.*
Us vs. them / I before you	We are one under the sun.*
Stereotypes express the normal	Don't suppose or assume. Start a discussion and get to know others.*
Refugees destroy our society	Refugees are welcome because they are human.*
Nations need to stay pure	Diversity is tasty!*

**These are some examples of alternative stories. Feel free to find your own!*



What are the Values and Verbs we want to own? What reaction are we looking to get?

What **values** reflect the vision and mission of your organisation, and what **actions** do you want to see? These were questions that the participants of the training were assigned to discuss and present during the training. **This is the result** (with the ones in bold being the most voted ones). **Do the same for your organisation!**

VERBS

Inspire
Promote
Support
Communicate
Motivate
Embrace
Engage
Network
Criticize
Protect
Reflect
Care
Share
Lead
Act
Influence
Understand
Defend
Connect
Create

VALUES

Community
Solidarity
Courage
Dignity
People
Love
Equality
Respect
Justice
Inclusion
Sustainability
Peace
Empowerment
Opportunity
Diversity
Humanity
Liberty
Participation
Curiosity
Well-being
Hope



The art of motivational story telling!

How do we motivate disconnected, but compliant individuals, to take action?

An important part of the training was to learn what tools to use in order to tell our different audiences the story of our organisations. One way is to use the structure explained below: Start your story by telling the story of *self*, then go on to the story of *us* and finish by telling the story of *now*. It can be a story about a specific case, our general work or a certain topic. The participants had the chance to learn about the power to tell a **personal story** that unites the **heart, head and hands**, and different ways to tell those important stories.

Then *how do we motivate disconnected but compliant individuals to take action?* **By telling and sharing personal stories that unite heart, head and hands.**

Story of SELF	Story of US	Story of NOW
Your values	Community	Urgent call to action/call to adventure
Your choice	Shared values	
Your call to lead	Invitation to join	



We want to tell stories that reflect our:

- Emotions
- Values
- Empathy
- Connection
- Motivation
- Action

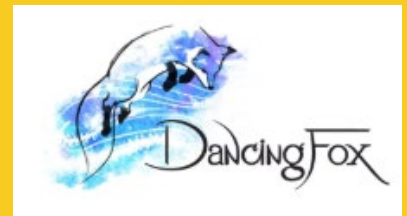
Find simple stories about common daily choices to make your audience feel your story is theirs.

Story mapping – drawing an organisational story

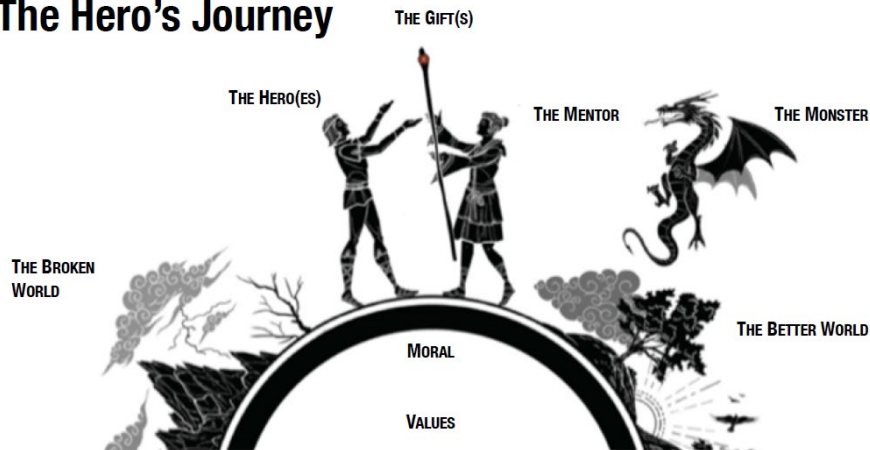
To build upon the tools illustrated above that we can use to share our organisational story to the rest of the world, the participants were asked to identify different actors and characters in our respective story. Look at the image below and identify the roles in your organisational story!

Use story maps...

- As a tool for identifying strategies, audiences and unmasking monsters (opponents);
- To plan a campaign story for example, and;
- To better understand & articulate your own organisational story.



The Hero's Journey



Dancing Fox

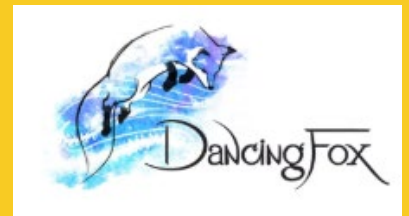
Example of what the different roles can identify in the story of equality bodies:



Moral: : Equality bodies role in society is to support victims of discrimination and to enforce their rights

www.Dancing-Fox.com

Build your own story here: <https://dancing-fox.com/storymap/>



15 tips from Dancing Fox to make you a better story teller!

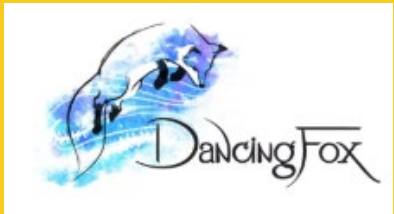
1. Open strong
2. Tell short stories for short attention spans
3. Harness the power of freaks, cheats and familiars
4. One person's story is more powerful than any statistic
5. Show the urgency of your call (encourage "Fear of Missing Out")
6. Change your narrator
7. Simplify your language
8. Get new story ideas from: your staff, supporters, Facebook comments
9. Keep it short! Cut your story in half, and again and again...
10. Tell human every day stories
11. A good story 'should click shut like a well – made box'
12. Try to be a rainbow in someone else's cloud
13. Grip onto stories that are racing by (be prepared to capture a moment with your camera or write down simple notes)
14. Shift from "look at me" communication to "look at you"
15. If you take away a table leg be sure you put another in its place (have a new narrative in place to replace the old one you wish to change)



Change Makers often have an ‘irrational emotional attachment to rationality’

10 ways to ‘preach beyond the choir’

1. Abandon the ‘Information deficit model’
2. Focus on the ‘not quite progressive’, not the hard-core racists bigots
3. Team up with relevant actors who disagrees with you in a joint attempt to solve a mystery
4. Adjust your framing & vocabulary to avoid triggers
5. Change behavior to change opinion, and amplify that behavior change to signal norm shift
6. Make someone feel GREAT about their other values. Take identity off the table
7. Make the behavior change you seek seem common and widespread
8. Don’t overkill. If one fact is enough, two might completely undermine your case
9. Replace the table leg you are taking away
10. **Don’t use facts at all. Avoid talking to the head. Talk to the heart. Triggers someone’s values with a STORY.**



7 shifts – How we will bring a billion acts of courage to life

How we can develop a “From – To” method for moving to positive story telling



FROM	TO
Symptoms	Root-Causes
Reinforcing old stories	Building new ones
Secretive	Opensource
Fearing failure	Fearless innovators
Lone hero	Hero among heroes
Supporters	Change agents
Dogmatic defender	Champions of the “impossible”





Last important messages from our trainer

Remember the
importance of the
possible!

Express your
organisation's verbs
and values

Find simple stories about
common daily choices to
make your audience feel
your story is theirs!

Make the weird look
normal and the
normal look weird

Find a story teller who can
tell an effective story of self!

Flesh out your universe! What
positive stories do you need to
reinforce?