

# STEP BY STEP GUIDE



## DIGITAL STORYTELLING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE



# INTRODUCTION

**A while back you attended a training on Digital Storytelling. Equipped with this new knowledge on the power of storytelling you were expected to go out in the world to record and use real life stories on SRHR issues in your country to support your work. But how to go about this? What to do first? Realizing this is a hard task we decided to develop a guidebook that takes you through all the steps identifying stories on real issues that can have the type of impact you are looking for. We hope this guidebook will inspire and motivate you to go out and find those authentic stories that can lead to social change!**

## **THE BENEFITS OF DIGITAL STORYTELLING**

A personal approach to advocacy is often more effective. Especially when you have to engage people in digital spaces or you want to hit an emotional trigger with a politician. Digitalising stories brings them to life, allowing us to see situations from different perspectives. They provide a human face to the complex challenges that communities face today and bring to light issues and perspectives that are often hidden from view.



# INDEX

  
**STEP  
1**  
IDENTIFYING  
THE STORY  
YOU NEED  
05

  
**STEP  
2**  
FIND YOUR  
STORYTELLER  
06

  
**STEP  
3**  
PLANNING  
AND LOGISTICS  
07

  
**STEP  
4**  
STORY  
COLLECTION  
08

  
**STEP  
6**  
USING AND  
SHARING  
THE STORY  
13

  
**STEP  
5**  
INFORMED  
CONSENT  
12



# STEP 1

## IDENTIFYING THE STORY YOU NEED

Look at the advocacy and communication objectives you have, think what type of story would help you to help achieve on this goal. Who is your target audience and what type of story will resonate with them? Should it be a positive story of change - showing the importance of the issues your advocating for - or a story that shows the urgency of the matter? What type of story will sensitize your target audience to feel connected to your issue? Who should be telling the story? What should be the main message and components of the story? Important to keep in mind that the story should not contribute to, or strengthen, existing stereotypes. You also have to always keep in mind that sharing the story should not put the storyteller in danger. During this step you are going to develop your story profile.

### EXAMPLE



#### GOAL

To convince the curriculum development committee that they should add age appropriate and quality comprehensive sexuality education to the school curriculum.



#### TARGET AUDIENCE

The curriculum development committee.



#### TYPE OF STORY

A story of a girl that was not aware of the risks of engaging in pre-marriage sex and got pregnant and dropped out of school or a story of a boy that was aware of sexually inappropriate behavior that has become a watchdog for respecting girls in his school.



#### EMOTIONAL TRIGGER POINT

How CSE has helped young people to make better choices in regards to their body changes, gender identify and sexual development.

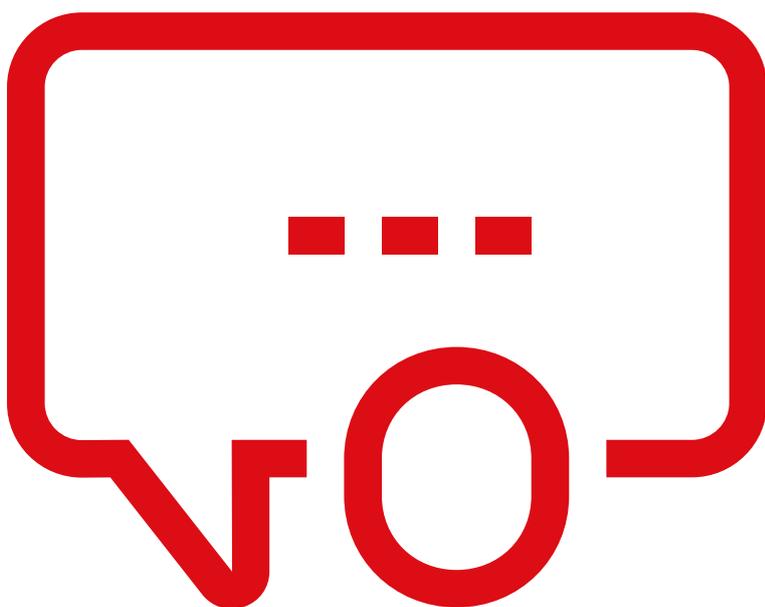
# STEP 2

## FIND YOUR STORYTELLER

So now you know what type of story you are looking for, it is time to identify a real person that has experienced this at first hand. This is the person that fits your story profile. It would be best if this is someone you know, since it is easiest to get them on board. Otherwise you could ask around in your organization or network if people might know someone that fits your story profile. Once you find a person, approach him or her and explain what you are looking for and why; that you want to use their story as a way to work on advocacy and public engagement on a SRHR related topic.



It's important that you make sure that the storyteller understands what he or she agrees to by sharing their story. Explain that the storyteller can potentially be anonymized to make it less intimidating to cooperate and to protect their identity. Find out when and where is a good time and place for the storyteller work on the process of storytelling with you and make sure they agree to the time and emotional investment from their side. It is good practice to already discuss consent at this stage. Discuss what incentive this person expects (for example, a compensation of their time) to work with you.



# STEP 3

## PLANNING AND LOGISTICS



Plan step by step what you need to do to capture this story into a video. Think about technical, logistic and budget requirements and start making arrangements for this. Develop a realistic budget and start planning your visit to the storyteller.

The time to allocate for this is 4 full days minimum: ½ day making your preparations, ½ day for post editing, 1 day story development with storyteller and 1 day to bring your voice recording and visuals together in a video. Putting everything together with or without the storyteller. If the storyteller is not included in the editing process it is really important that you check back with them to ensure they agree with the final edit of their story. If you don't remember all technical specifics you can ask support from LOOM or Dance4Life on this.

To make the logistics more efficient (for example, when the person you have asked to share his or her story lives far away), you can plan this visit along with visits for other programs so that you can extend your stay and work on this project.

### **TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**



Good working laptop



Good recording device  
(which could be your phone)



Windows movie maker software  
on your computer



USB stick or memory stick for photo's



Access to the internet



Papers and other writing or creative  
materials like paint or coloring pencils



# STEP 4

## STORY COLLECTION

### THERE ARE SEVERAL IMPORTANT POINTS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DURING THIS STEP:

**1 Trust and safe space** is essential in this part of the process. When you meet your storyteller take your time to get to know each other. Ask them about their daily life and be open yourself as well. This helps to build a trust relationship with each other. Once you feel the time is right to get down to business you can start with a story sharing exercise. You can ask the storyteller to share their story (if it's completely clear what story you are looking) with you in their own words. It's important that you actively listen to the storyteller and give them enough time and space to share the story. Try to create a comfortable environment for them in which they are able to express their emotion. A tip is to record this first version with your phone so you can easily refer back to elements of the story that you found interesting. During this story sharing you can make notes on what you find powerful think off: what inspired you, what changed your mind, and what useful or less useful elements should be included in the final version of the story. And, don't forget to keep your advocacy and communication objective in the back of your mind while listening.



“What you're trying to do, when you tell a story, is to write about an event in your life that made you feel some particular way - and get the audience to have that same feeling”

- PETE DOCTER, DIRECTOR PIXAR

**2 Getting the story straight.** After the storyteller is finished you will reflect back on the story. While doing this, you keep your target audience and the storyline you are looking for in mind, but you respect the storytellers own words. This process is to ensure you understood the story well and ask questions and clarifications to find more depth in area's that you see as relevant for the final story.



**3 Some technical information.** After this you could run the storyteller through some technical information on storytelling, like for example; the traditional story arc (beginning, middle and end), the 4 w's (who, where, when and why) and the attention span of your audience (powerful stories are maximum 2-3 minute long). You can also discuss what type of beginning (start with a hook or the 4 W's) or endings (end with a question or is the story resolved?) will be interesting for this story. If you like more tips on this please contact Dance4Life or LOOM.

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**4 Drafting a script.** Now it's time to start writing down the script. Give the storyteller the time to write down their story, while also keeping your reflections and technical information in mind. If the storyteller has difficulties writing it down, you can help them while they quote you. You could also start working with a storyboard (see point 7) at this point, especially for people who are not comfortable with writing, to create a clear storyline of events. Keep in mind that 1,5 written pages of A4 corresponds to about 2-3 minutes of reading out loud.

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**5 Polishing the script.** Go through the written script and give support in making the story stronger. Always keep your story objective in the back of your mind but make sure you don't take away ownership of the story from the storyteller. Make sure you are not too dominant in this and tell the storyteller what to do, but that you dare to be critical by leaving out irrelevant information in order for the story to be interesting and relevant for your target audience.

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**6 Record the final story.** It can help if the storyteller practices the story a couple of times, so the narration sounds as authentic as possible. Make sure you are in a quiet room so you will not be disturbed and after you tested your recording device and quality of recording.

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**7 Storyboarding.** Ask the storyteller to make a storyboard. Give them a big sheet with boxes on it and ask them to fill these boxes going through the lines of the script. This can be done by using photos from their own life, drawings or photos from the net. Encourage using images from the storyteller's own life, instead of finding them online. We do this to structure the process of visualizing the story. If we already know what type of images we are looking for, the process of getting these images is easier. You can also just work with a list of images and visuals that is needed to build the story.




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**8 Collecting images.** Start looking for images that will fit the storyboard. Remind the storyteller that personal images are more interesting for an audience than images from the internet. Remember that even anonymized images can make a story very interesting to look at. Sometimes drawings and other artistic images can also make a story very personable. If using images from the internet be sure that they match the context and that they are in high resolution. Keep in mind: that images don't contribute to negative stereotyping and that you need consent especially if you are showing people's faces.

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**9 Music or not?** Ask if the storyteller would like to add some music to play in the back. Remember that music should be instrumental and that the volume of music therefore should be very low. No music is better than very dominant music.

## 10 **Crafting the audio-visual story:**

- / Make a folder on your desktop with in it a folder for your sounds (narrative & music) and your images (photos, drawings and video's).
- / Open your video editing software and start with the button "add video's/photo" to add all the images/ video's you want to use on your digital storyboard in windows movie maker. Remember to always add a new image in the folder on your computer desktop first before adding it in windows movie maker.
- / Now hit the button "add music" to add in your file from audacity or from your audio recorder with the story narration.
- / Add your transitions. Tip: don't use too many different transitions but choose one simple one and apply to all, this usually looks more professional.
- / Organize your images in the right order by picking them up, sliding them to the right place and dropping them down. You can add missing images but remember to first save them in the right folder before adding them in windows movie maker working file.
- / Add the title of the story. Try to be creative, and not choose the most obvious title that comes up, but one that catches the attention of your audience.
- / Add credits at the end if you like. But remember that using a real name can potentially harm the storyteller.
- / Add subtitles (optional)
- / Save as project "Windows Movie Maker" because you always want to make small changes after you think you're finished.
- / Export as "for high definition display"

**11 Show this final version** to the storyteller to make sure the video matches their lived reality. Discuss consent again and make sure that the storyteller still agrees with the final version of the story. If not you will have to go back to the drawing table. The storyteller is the final judge on if this story represents their reality.



### TIPS AND TRICKS

[Tutorial on voice recording software AUDACITY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJhllsLH32I)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJhllsLH32I>

[Tutorial on video making software WINDOWS MOVIE MAKER](https://www.minitool.com/moviemaker/use-movie-maker.html)  
<https://www.minitool.com/moviemaker/use-movie-maker.html>

[Tutorial on video making software IMOVIE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LnSkOJFtPEg)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LnSkOJFtPEg>

**Tips for rights free music:**  
[www.bensound.com](http://www.bensound.com)

**Tips for rights free photo's:**  
<https://unsplash.com>  
<https://pixabay.com>

**Tips for file conversion and inspiration:**  
[www.zamzar.com](http://www.zamzar.com)

**Technical support on Digital Storytelling:**  
[willelijn@dance4life.com](mailto:willelijn@dance4life.com)

**Real impact:** when our perceptions of reality are challenged or changed by stories we hear





# STEP 5

## INFORMED CONSENT

A good practice is to talk about consent on the moment you are looking for your storyteller, so that the storyteller knows what they are getting in to. Consent means that the storyteller agrees with the fact that their story will be recorded, digitalised and used in public spaces to work on the advocacy goals that you are working on. Make sure you are honest and clear about your intentions. Always. Also discuss consent once more when you're finished with making the actual story and give the storyteller a real opportunity to back out if they feel the story turned out to be something they don't want to be shared publically. Obviously you put a lot of work in it, so if in the making process you feel an issue is potentially harmful for the storyteller, think about mitigating harm and protecting your storyteller, by for example suggest anonymization of the storyteller to protect their identity.



# STEP 6

## USING AND SHARING THE STORY

Once your story is finished and consented you are ready to share. Make sure you think and plan strategically in what way the story can make as much impact as possible. Is this in an online campaign or a regional advocacy event with policy makers? Best is to discuss this with your communication focal point to ensure it is aligned with the communication strategy.

Also have a look at the free toolkits on [www.dance4life.com/toolkits](http://www.dance4life.com/toolkits) like the ones on: [Stories for advocacy](#), [Building a communication strategy](#) or [Social Media Guide](#).

### WAYS OF SHARING



**Social media:** think of a strategy on how you will share your digital story on social media on the most impactful way. Connect it to a celebration? Create a momentum on an issue? A practical tip is to upload it on Vimeo or YouTube so it can be shared easily. Share the digital story on social media widely on the special days to create conversation around the issue. For example: you can share the digital stories related to safe abortion advocacy on 28th September, the day that is celebrated worldwide as the global day of action for safe and legal abortion. Hence a calendar with such days would be extremely helpful prior to the production of digital stories, so that you know which digital stories to share widely on which day.



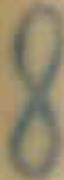
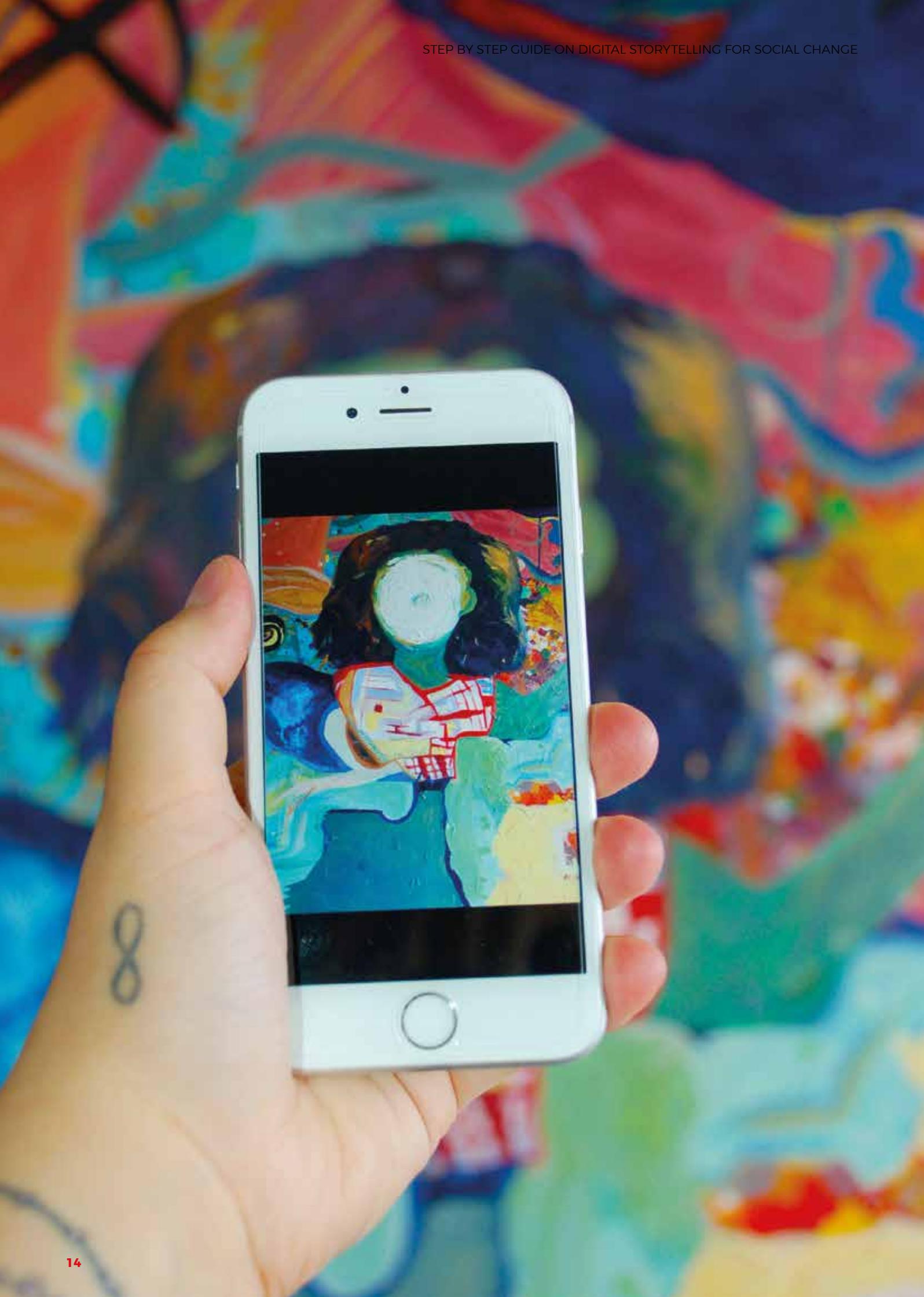
**Regional or international advocacy:** use your digital story as a personal sharing opportunity in an advocacy space or side event. Tip is to make sure you're not dependent on internet, so bring your video on a USB stick in VLC format (.wav).



**National activity:** show digital story during a public event or an event with policy makers and politicians. Think of in which space it will open up discussion or makes sense to appeal to people's emotional trigger points. Tip is to make sure you're not dependent on internet, so bring your video on a USB in VLC format (.wav).

**Tip:** For M&E purposes always record where you shared the story and how many people where there. Recording this helps you to know if the use of this digital storytelling might have supported the advancing of your advocacy ask or generated support on your topic. This is really helpful to outcome harvesting.





# COLOPHON



Want to know more about Dance4Life's approach to promote positive sexual health and relationships? Are you interested in becoming a franchisee? Or do you want to contribute, collaborate or partner with Dance4Life? Contact us:

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