

# Tips on storytelling & great case studies

## What makes a good story?

Ideally, a story should **evoke an emotional response** in people, to create a connection or rapport with them. So, if you think about what you enjoy reading about, what inspires you, that's a good guide to what will make a good story – go with your instincts. If you think, "Hey wow, that's really cool!" or "What a great outcome we achieved!", or "I'm really pleased we got this funded", or "Other groups could learn from this", then you know you've probably landed on a good story.

The information below will help you think about the finer points of what helps you tell a good story and showcase the great work being done.

## Story elements

Most stories have some core basic elements and answer a few basic questions:

- **Context** – what **problem or issue** was it trying to solve? What was the opportunity?
- **Solution** – **what** did you actually do, and **who** was involved in making the magic happen?
- **Outcomes and impacts** – what **change** did it bring about? This is perhaps most important.
- **Did it lead to anything else?** Money, relationships, opportunities.

## Context – issues, challenges and opportunities

No one can ever know your community like you do, so you need to set the scene – briefly – about what your community is like; what's it known for; what are the challenges you're facing; or the opportunities in front of you? In essence, you're answering the who, what, when, where and most importantly **why** funding was needed (i.e. what was the gap in services that needed to be filled?) It is also helpful to set out the barriers or challenges. This information helps to give the story context and add some 'colour'. And remember to also introduce your organisation and the role that you play. But keep it brief.

For example, information about the economic driver of the community, demographics of the beneficiaries, changes that have affected service provision or access would be useful if it's available to you. It's painting the picture about what it's like in your community.

For example: "With a population whose average age is 64, and with no local taxi service and a bus service to Sale that only runs three days a week, the community bus was a vital link for the Community House's 181 members and other residents."

This is great context about what the issues and challenges were in this community, and why this grant was needed.



## Solution

Make sure you actually include the detail of what you did. It doesn't need to be super detailed but you need to convey **what activities you actually undertook**. If it was to employ a coordinator, for example, explain a little about how you decided that role was needed and what tasks that person took on. If it was to install a new kitchen in a community facility, explain some of the things you considered and how you decided on the six burner stove vs the four, for example; or if you ran mental health workshops or first aid classes, explain to us where they were held, and what topics were covered.

Importantly, tell us who actually did the work. This is a chance to give credit to those who may have volunteered, or to the tradies who may have discounted their prices to support your project. And **think laterally** – while some people may have been very hands on painting the hall or planting out the community garden, others may have been on hand to feed the hungry workers, or pick up the volunteers to transport them to the site for example.

## Impact – what happened, what's different?

**Strong outcomes are essential** for a case study, even if it was for a pretty straight forward project. So, tell us what happened as a result of the grant or activity, what is different as a result of your work.

Most of this information around outcomes will also be needed for your final report, so it's important to capture it as you go (questions like: What specific activities took place, where, when and who participated / benefitted? Tell us about what you achieved, what was most successful? What are you most proud of?).

For example, how is the community hall being used now? What's happening there that couldn't before? What became easier or more manageable with the grant funding? Who is benefiting? What items were purchased with the grant? What did that mean, in terms of better access, or addressing inequity? Did the grant make it easier to secure additional funding? Are there any figures / stats / evaluation that has been undertaken that demonstrates / illustrates the impact of the project?

You need to be able to **show the impact of the project**, not only for donors, but it can also inspire other groups – and even attract more people to join or volunteer with your organisation.

Keep an eye out too for **unexpected or multiplier benefits** that you can highlight. If more was achieved with the funding than originally planned, this is important to share. People love to read about how you leveraged a small grant. For example, a grant to plant trees at a school may mean that there is now shade on a public area that can be used as an RV site to generate income for the community.

## Additional points that enhance a case study

### Quotable quote

It's always better to have someone else tell your story – or in this case, speak to the impact of your project. Is there someone who benefitted who can speak about what it means to them? Or a respected person in your community, especially one that has character or offers a story that captures the human interest side of things, who could offer a quote.



## Extra Information

It is always useful to know if your organisation has received previous funding – from FRRR or others. Perhaps someone seed-funded the project in the past, and this is a further development / iteration of it. It is great if it shows / demonstrates the long-term impact of the grant funds.

## The clincher – photos or videos

Photos are almost essential but you can also **consider including video or audio content**. Words are great, but there's **nothing like a photo to bring it to life**. Refer to [FRRR's Photo Tips](#) to capture good photos – and make sure you do so along the way. The most impactful photos, certainly on infrastructure projects, are the before and after. But make sure you include people, as that's what every project is ultimately about – making things better for those in your community.

## Finally, it's also good to capture:

- Great new or unusual **partnerships** that make things happen;
- **Diversity** in the voices that speak about the projects we fund – cultural, age, gender, etc;
- How your project created or strengthened **connections** within or between communities; and
- Innovation and new locally led **solutions**.

## What's next?

Now that you have a great story, what's next? You could:

- Share it through a [media release](#) to promote your organisation and activities;
- Include it in your grant acquittal project report;
- Add it to your website;
- Include it in your newsletter;
- Promote it through your [social media channels](#); or
- [Share it with FRRR](#) to amplify your work.

For inspiration on case studies, read some of the [stories on FRRR's website](#).