



A BLOG POST

A CONTINUUM OF OUR ANTIRACIST STORYTELLING TASPESTRY

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THE UNIQUENESS OF OUR ANTIRACIST STORYTELLING JOURNEY

Every chapter of the Antiracist storytelling journey has its own uniqueness. Storytelling has been a powerful means for justice, transformation and connection. The way we tell stories and collaborate with others to shape them matters, just as much as the stories themselves.

If we talk about Antiracist storytelling, it is because we first acknowledge that racism exists in storytelling and manifests through biases and prejudices. The relevance of understanding this is that storytelling is such an integral part of our existence, and it shapes how we see ourselves, how others see us and what the future of our descendants will look like.



THE BEGINNING

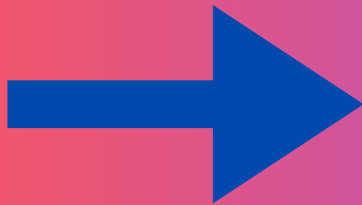
OUR FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE DECOLONIZATION CONCEPT AND ANTIRACIST STORYTELLING WAS AN EYE OPENER TO RECOGNISE HOW WE AS AFRICAN STORYTELLERS REINFORCE EXISTING STEREOTYPES ABOUT OUR PEOPLE, OUR CULTURE, OUR COUNTRIES AND OUR CONTINENT.

An important question was, what stories are we telling? Is it the white savior narrative? Stories of Africa being poor, corrupt and dependent on aid? Is it stories of helplessness? Or is it stories that uplift, showing resilience and agency? The beauty of our diversity, culture, our innovations and leadership?

The media is crowded with a single image of our continent and our people. Which has painted a picture of bleakness to non-Africans about Africa. Is this what we want to continue to accept or are we prepared to do something about it?

WHERE DOES THE GRIP OF COLONIALISM END?

WE HAVE REPEATEDLY ENCOUNTERED SITUATIONS WHERE DONOR-DRIVEN NARRATIVES HAVE IMPOSED A SKEWED VIEW OF AFRICAN REALITIES. WORSE STILL...



Fellow ActionAiders have aided this with troubling underlying requests, implying that in-country teams and professionals are not capable of telling their own stories or producing high-quality content.

This is a clear reflection of a colonial mentality that underestimates the expertise and potential within the 'Global South' - which you have also chosen to call us to reflect the ridiculous colonial powers the acclaimed Global North seem to have wielded over themselves. It often feels as though the "outsider" perspective is automatically deemed superior to local knowledge and skill - even in ActionAid.



WHERE WE ARE NOW

NOBODY CAN TELL OUR STORIES BETTER THAN WE CAN. IN FACT, THIS IS WHERE THE REAL LACUNA LIES. HOW CAN ANYONE SPEAK ON A REALITY THEY HAVE NOT LIVED? TO PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY OF STORIES FROM AFRICA, ASIA, AND LATIN AMERICA, WE MUST INSIST ON TELLING OUR STORIES OURSELVES - NOT AS CHARITY CASES OR PASSIVE RECIPIENTS OF AID, BUT AS ACTIVE AGENTS OF CHANGE - IN THE TRUE SPIRIT OF THE CONTINENTS WE BELONG TO.

That brings us to our present chapter in the Antiracist storytelling journey, **ACTION!** It is one thing to be conscious of what is unacceptable and it is a completely different thing to change that.

As part of the Antiracist storytelling hub, we have concluded that it is our responsibility to not only change the narrative, but to also raise questions, start conversations and provoke thoughts on how Africans can be better represented.

Sometimes when we get to know how people perceive us, we truly find it hilarious. Things like we cannot efficiently carry out certain tasks, that Africa is one country, that we cannot pronounce certain words, that we are not as educated...



In this day and age, we could do better as a global. We understand that when the existing narrative has been negative, that shapes how people see us, but it is also important that people educate themselves, be open to learn from the lived experiences of others because it is from that place the reality is grasped.

We must also recognise that telling people-centered stories can be challenging when internal resistance persists with pushback from colleagues who may not fully understand or acknowledge the racism embedded in their language – the audacity for some to even defend their biases.

It is high time we embraced the interconnected experiences of different races and other identities, to tell richer, more authentic stories.

LEARNINGS AND THE FUTURE WE ENVISAGE

It's easy to fall into the trap of presenting perfect success stories, but we have learned that authenticity must always come first. We've made it our practice to push back against oversimplified narratives, we will only showcase the full range of people's experiences - the successes, the ongoing challenges, and everything in between. While this sometimes mean confronting difficult conversations with donors or colleagues, we believe it is essential to maintain the integrity of our stories. **It is not only about the Donors – it is about the People We Serve!**

Going forward, we want to see a truly inclusive world where Africans are not items of tokenism. We want to see a world where people are genuinely keen to learn about other races and their experiences. We want to see African storytellers proffering alternative stories that represent the beauty of our people.

We are eager to see how this journey continues to unfold. **This journey isn't just professional - it's personal.**



THANK YOU FOR READING!



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**-AFRICAN STORYTELLERS, FEMINIST
COMMUNICATORS, AND PROUD
DAUGHTERS OF THE CONTINENT**



GOT ANY QUESTIONS?

Don't be shy! E-mail us at:

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