

## The DaNa Facility Story Writing Guidelines

The best success stories are about people. They are real-life examples of our projects told from the point of view of the people that have benefitted from them. They should:

- Spotlight a beneficiary to bring the story to life
- Show progress – describe the situation *before* and *after* the intervention
- Use statistics that back up our claims to success

### Suggested story structure:

Start by giving some background on how things were before the project, told through the eyes of the beneficiary. What was the problem/challenge? Quote the beneficiary talking about the challenge/issue/situation.

**Note:** Quotes must sound real – like the people actually said them. People don't talk like they are reading from a project report.

Then explain how the project – what the project did – has improved the beneficiary's life/addressed the challenge (results must be backed up by clear statistics). Quote the beneficiary (or expert) again talking about the project and how it has led to improvements.

**Note:** Don't use meaningless percentages or terms but figures that show specific scale/context – e.g. *'the project trained 60 farmers'* is clearer than *'the project trained 85 percent of farmers in the village'*.

*'U Tun Mg increased the yield from 1000 to 1,900 viss'* is more specific than *'almost doubled the yield'*.

End by linking the story to the project's wider impact – how other people/areas are also benefiting. Include measurable results. For example: *'Since the project began, almost 470 smallholder farmers have adopted Good Agricultural Practices. The project will extend its activities to include neighbouring villages in July 2019'*.

**Note:** Write for a general audience. No technical speak! Translate technical terms such as 'capacity building' to 'training'. Use words that the person on the street can understand.

### Success story Do's

**Do** include why the project is important (the big picture/ the 'so what?' question) – why your audience should care. For example: *'Providing employment opportunities for people living with disabilities can unlock their potential to contribute to the country's development'*.

**Do** tell stories that showcase a sustainable change – change that can continue after the project has ended.

**Do** create emotional/personal connections that bring readers into the story.

**Do**, if possible, add quotes from experts on the project. Ensure you have the correct names, (job) title and organisation for each person quoted. This is optional as experts may not always be available.

**Do**, if possible, explain how the project intervention has impacted the beneficiary regarding long-term aspirations or ambitions. For example: enabled them to start saving to send their children to school/increase farm land or business.

### Success Story Checklist

- Is your story between **450-600 words/between 1 and 1.5 pages (A4)?**
- (Is your story written in a way that will **make the audience care** about your topic or is it just a list of facts? (Note: Best way to do this is through descriptions of beneficiaries and good quotes).
- Does your story include at least one **real person**, and contain all the necessary information about them? (*full names, ages, town names, etc.*)
- Does your story use **real quotes** from these beneficiaries?
- Does your story include all other **basic details** as it unfolds? (*Village, township, state and region, names, distances travelled, timelines, etc.?*)
- Does your story use **plain language**, not technical language?
- Does your story include the **real, measurable results** of the project you are writing about?
- Do you explain the '**so what?**' (*Why your audience should care—why this work important in the 'big picture'*).
- Have you included 2/3 **high resolution photos of the beneficiary with caption and credit?**  
Suggestions: With family members; undertaking the activity outlined in the project; the context of the project – training centre, farm, factory or workshop.
- Did you explain the purpose of the interview/story and **ask for the consent** of the interviewee before the interview? If we do not have consent, we will not use the story. [Consent forms](#) can be found on our website.

Visit our website to access our [success story template](#) and view a [sample success story](#).

For any questions or support for story writing, please contact the DaNa communications team at [danapress@danafacility.com](mailto:danapress@danafacility.com)