

COMMUNICATING FOR IMPACT

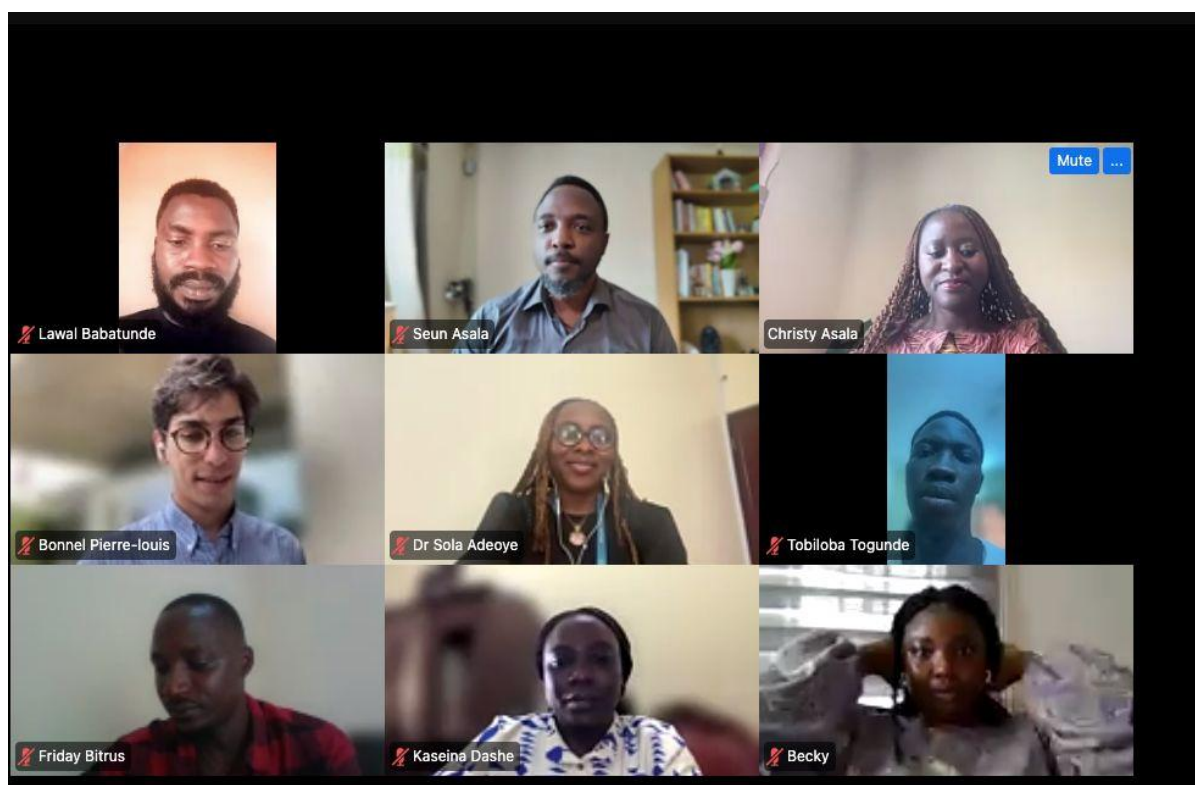
From Data to Emotion, From Stories to Change – Reflections from FEF-OSC Webinar 2

If you've ever tried to explain your work and heard, "Oh wow, I had no idea you did all that!" then this webinar was probably for you. Communicating for impact entails more than just saying what you do. It's more about showing why it matters: about visibility, connection, credibility and influence and those were the themes we explored during our recent French Embassy Fund for Civil Society Organisations in Nigeria (FEF-OSC) Capacity Building Webinar.

The FEF-OSC community gathered virtually for an engaging and reflective second capacity-building webinar themed, "Communicating for Impact. The session explored a challenge nearly every CSO faces: the struggle to communicate results in ways that are clear, audience-specific, and impactful.

While many organizations are doing powerful, people-centred work, their communication often remains donor-focused, reactive, and dry. The session set out to change that, offering practical ways for CSOs to become more strategic in how they share their stories and showcase their impact.

Communication plays out in numerous ways and formats. Sometimes just a simple word play infused with creativity makes storytelling effective, and this is where the session began: with a Mentimeter icebreaker, 'let's play a game'. Starting with 3-word prompts in a speed round, participants crafted short, albeit humorous stories that featured the words.



The Power of Storytelling

Dr. Seun Asala brought both fire and clarity in equal measure. He unpacked what it means to communicate not just *what* we do as CSOs but *why* it matters, and perhaps more importantly, *how* we tell it as we connect the dots from action to outcome. Seun reminded us that a compelling, outcome-driven narrative doesn't discard data but rather seeks to *humanize* it. Data alone is a dry ingredient, often gathering dust. But pair it with a well-told story, and it becomes transformative.

However, when stories pair with data, it sets a transformative experience in motion. So rather than report that, we trained 100 farmers,” for instance, we would better narrate it this way:

“Meet Halima, a mother of four, who can now feed her children because she learned how to cultivate a profitable home garden.”

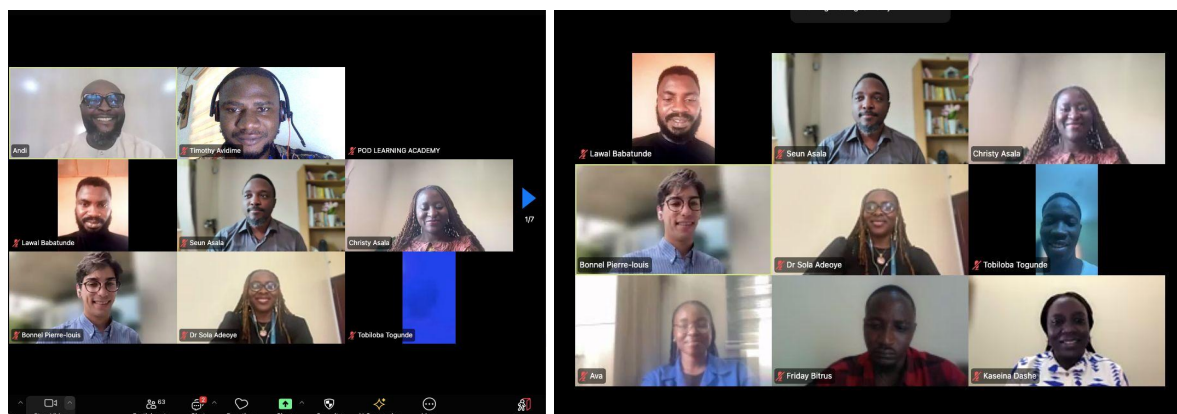
Perhaps a simple storytelling structure to follow:

- Problem
- Solution
- Impact
- Call to Action

Do this and you may well be underway to crafting a masterpiece!

Knowing your audience makes your communication inclusive of all the people that may come in contact with the material. E.g. persons with disability and other inclusive concerns. Ethical storytelling demands more than just good intentions. It must ensure: consent, truth, dignity and voice. The goal is to avoid the exhausting trap of “pity narratives,” - those stories that paint people only in need or desperation. Instead, he introduced the idea of **asset framing** which spotlights communities’ resilience and potential, not just their needs. Because truly, people are more than their problems: they’re heroes in this narrative and the CSOs are supportive actors. This is the Hero’s Journey.

The conversation didn’t end there. Christy Asala closed the session by anchoring us in our **collective journey – a roadmap for how we think, communicate, reflect and learn**. Through breakout discussions, we refined this further, reminding ourselves of how effective co-creation is as the heartbeat of collective learning. One thing remained.



The Challenge

Seun challenged us to shift from purely transactional communication to transformational storytelling where we spotlight the trajectory of change. That’s where the magic happens.

So, here’s the real question:

Are you telling the story of what you did? Or are you telling the story of what changed because of what you did?

