

THE NARRATIVE PROJECT



UK USER GUIDE

BUILDING SUPPORT FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS



■ Introduction	1
Using This Guide	3
Methodology	4
■ Audience Overview	5
■ The Narrative	10
Narrative Approach	11
Narrative Messages	12
Narrative Tagline	13
Narrative, Long-form	14
Language Tips	15
■ Key Research Insights (Dos and Don'ts)	19
■ Applied Narrative Examples	22
■ Attacks & Responses	29
■ Creative Tools	32
Images	33
Creative Brief	39
Content Creator's Checklist	42

INTRODUCTION

GOAL: CHANGE THE CONVERSATION

CAN YOU CHANGE A NARRATIVE?

Earlier this year, a group of organisations (see sidebar) who work together on global equity issues asked a question: can the public conversation about global development be changed to foster a more positive understanding of the issues?

That is a question that has been asked for years and has prompted many studies and research efforts in search of an answer. During that time, the debate around global development has become negative and broken. The public conversation focuses on what doesn't work and what is wasted. The base of active supporters for global issues is shrinking and often ill-equipped to talk about any of the positive change happening around the world as a result of development programmes.

THE NARRATIVE PROJECT

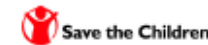
To find a new approach, these organisations created The Narrative Project: a research and communications effort focused on changing the development narrative in the United Kingdom, United States, France and Germany. The project consulted with experts across the fields of linguistics, anthropology, psychology, marketing, political science, development, political economics, public opinion and communications. It used qualitative and quantitative research and message testing to develop a set of insights about how to change the narrative and create a broader base of public support for global issues.

NEW FINDINGS

While the project confirmed many insights from previous studies, it also uncovered some exciting new findings, including language usage and messages that can help the global development sector create momentum around its work. Perhaps most importantly, The Narrative Project identified an undecided audience that, when reached in the right way, could significantly increase the base of support for development. The User Guide is a tool to bring these findings to life.



Partners



USING THIS GUIDE

The User Guide is designed to be an informative tool for communicators and advocates who want to apply The Narrative Project approach to their own messages and content. It brings together the highlights of The Narrative Project research and lays out a narrative approach, which is based on a deep analysis of those insights.

Here are some practical suggestions for how to use the guide:

- The first section, Audience Overview, describes the specific target audience and strategy that the research and User Guide were designed around. Read this section carefully. A clear understanding of it is essential to using the guide.
- The remaining sections describe the research-based narrative approach along with messages and language that bring that approach to life. They also provide examples of how the narrative approach can be applied in practice. Read through the full guide, then go back to find the pages that help you the most.
- The Narrative Project User Guide Summary is meant to be used as a quick reference tool once users understand the findings.
- The next step is to try out the narrative approach in the real world. It can be used to create anything from speeches to video content to social media. To determine if The Narrative Project approach can truly help change the conversation, organisations need to test it for themselves, see what works, refine, and test again.

The insights and recommendations presented in this guide represent one path for changing public perceptions about global development. They are not a one-size-fits-all solution. Each user will have to apply the concepts, messages, and language to their own work with care and creativity.

METHODOLOGY

CONDUCTING RESEARCH WITH THE ENGAGED PUBLIC

From February to August 2014, the 15 organisations in The Narrative Project's Working Group guided in-depth research to inform the creation of a new narrative. The process began with a comprehensive review of existing research on public attitudes, in order to build upon prior knowledge and the work of others within the sector. The Working Group also conducted an audit of the frames de velopment organisations use in their communications, which define the public dialogue today. Along with leaders in the development field, a team of social scientists, linguists, political advisors and public-opinion researchers contributed expertise and ideas.

Focus groups were used to develop and test ideas for a new narrative with people in the United Kingdom, United States, France and Germany. Online surveys with 1,200 members of the public in each of those countries measured the persuasive power of various themes, based on their ability to change attitudes and motivate people to take action to support development. The most powerful themes formed the approach for the new narrative, which was then crafted with a structure and language determined to deliver maximum motivating power to both supporters and potential supporters of development.

Research & Development Process

1) Review existing research



2) Conduct sector narrative audit



3) Develop new narrative ideas in focus groups



4) Test narrative ideas in surveys



5) Craft language



6) Test language for motivating power



7) Use language in public communications & test audience responses



AUDIENCE OVERVIEW

Research conducted for The Narrative Project divided members of the Engaged Public into three groups based on their attitudes towards global development: Supporters, Swings and Sceptics. This section describes attitudes and demographics for each segment in the United Kingdom.

AUDIENCE TARGET: THE ENGAGED PUBLIC

“I’m interested in poverty and it does sadden me but I am not in a position to help.”

– UK survey participant

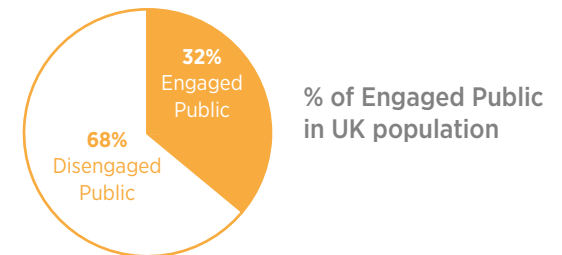
The Narrative Project Working Group commissioned a body of research to better understand public attitudes towards development. For this project, the “public” is defined as the Engaged Public in the United Kingdom, United States, France and Germany. The Engaged Public is an important slice of the general population in these countries: people who follow global issues, talk about them with others and feel that it’s important to “improve health, education and economic opportunity for the world’s poorest people.”

Focusing on the Engaged Public is critical because they are the group that is most likely to listen to information disseminated by the development sector and they are also more likely to donate money to development charities and volunteer their time to campaigns. The rest of the public tends to be far more disengaged and far more likely to have negative attitudes about development. Persuading more of the Engaged Public to support development work before turning to a broader public audience is the path to reaching more people. If we can’t convince the Engaged Public, we won’t be able to convince anyone else.

The Narrative Project examined the attitudes of three groups within the Engaged Public: Supporters, Swings and Sceptics. The Narrative Project research showed that we can expand our base of support with a narrative that will persuade Swings to think and feel more positively about development. The same messages can also empower Supporters and appease Sceptics.

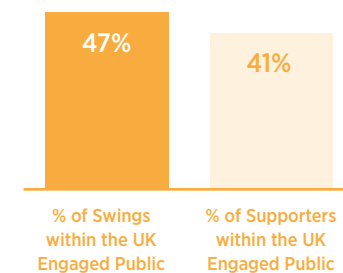
The Challenge

The Engaged Public in the United Kingdom represents less than a third of the population.



The Opportunity

Within the Engaged Public, we can potentially double the number of people who support development if we can persuade Swings to think and feel more positively about development.

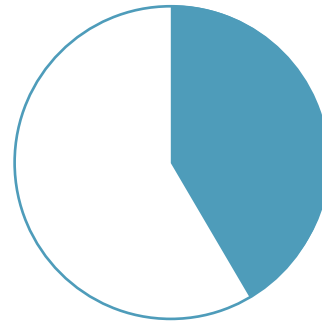


AUDIENCE STRATEGY: EMBOLDEN THE BASE

The narrative that will encourage the Swings to embrace development can also bolster Supporters and motivate them to continue to work hard to support development. Here are some key facts about Supporters.

SUPPORTERS

Supporters have a positive attitude towards development and form a powerful base of support. They volunteer, donate, raise their voices, and take other action and they believe they can make a difference. We can get them to do more, but they're already on our side. They represent just under half of the engaged public.



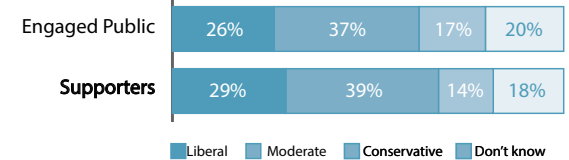
**Supporters are 41% of
the Engaged Public
in the United Kingdom**

"We have so much and some people have so little.

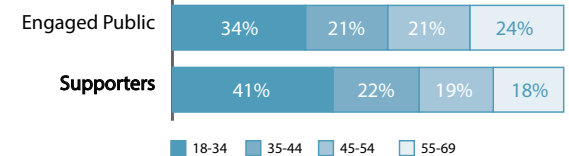
Everyone deserves to have enough food, somewhere safe to live and health and education"

— UK SURVEY PARTICIPANT

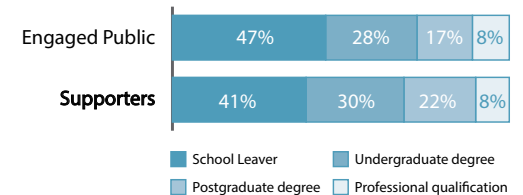
Ideology



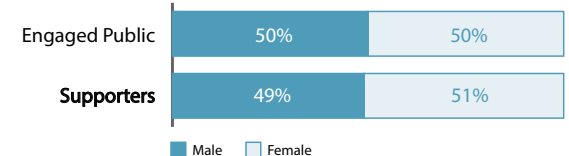
Age



Education



Gender

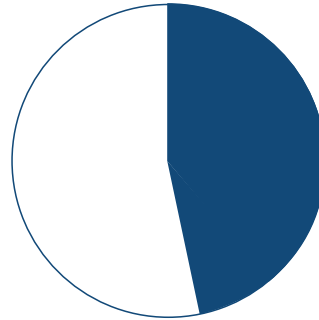


AUDIENCE STRATEGY: SWING THE SWINGS

Narrative Project research showed that we can expand our base of support with a narrative that will “swing the Swings” to embrace development. Here are some key facts about Swings.

SWINGS

Swings have a neutral to positive attitude towards development. They believe we have a strong obligation to help people in the world’s poorest places, but they also can be led to believe that development programmes are wasteful. Their opinion can “swing” from positive to negative. Swings represent our biggest opportunity and could potentially double our base of support. If we can convince them that they can make a difference, that belief will help drive them to take action.

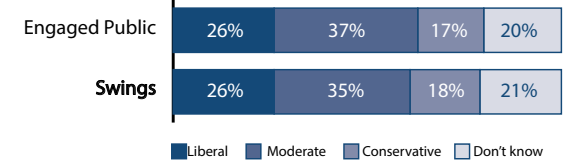


**Swings are 47% of the
Engaged Public
in the United Kingdom**

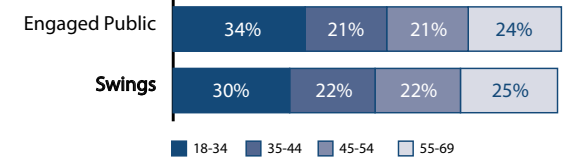
“I feel bad but then switch off at the end. Tomorrow’s another day. People are struggling in my own country.”

— UK SURVEY PARTICIPANT

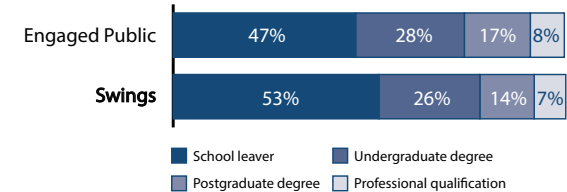
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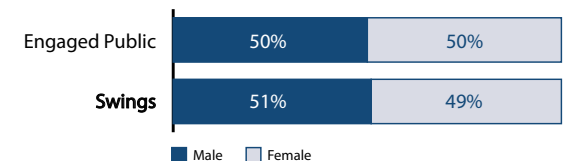
Age



Education



Gender

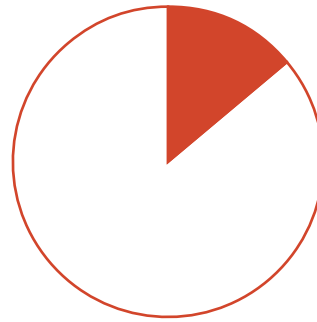


AUDIENCE STRATEGY: APPEASE THE SCEPTICS

Sceptics are helping to drive the negative narrative about global development. The same narrative that can swing the Swings and embolden Supporters can also placate Sceptics so that they don't dominate public dialogue on global development.

SCEPTICS

Sceptics are helping to drive the negative narrative about development. They feel strongly that development is not effective and their attitudes are unlikely to change. Sceptics can pull Swings away from a positive perception of development towards a negative one.

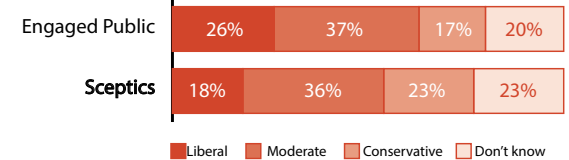


Sceptics are 12% of the
Engaged Public
in the United Kingdom

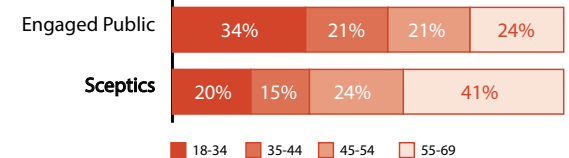
“I don't feel it is our responsibility. Their own governments who waste their money should do something about it. We give and give and give and still there really doesn't seem to be that much of a difference. If we looked after our own countries then I believe we would be fine. We are creating more issues by giving”

— UK SURVEY PARTICIPANT

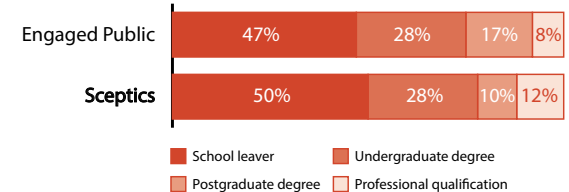
Ideology



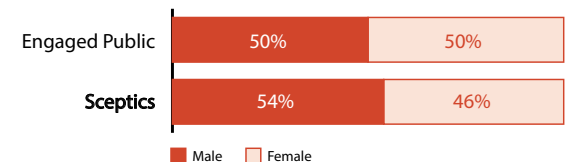
Age



Education



Gender



THE NARRATIVE

This section provides guidance on the themes and language that are most effective in building support for development among the Engaged Public.

NARRATIVE APPROACH



The most important lesson from The Narrative Project research is simple: The theme of “independence” as the end goal of development is the most critical idea to communicate to the public.

The key lesson is that the world’s poorest people have both the desire and the potential to stand on their own two feet and control their own destinies. This finding challenges the development sector’s current communications practices. It also has the power to transform our work and its impact.

Using the full narrative approach shown in the diagram below - “independence” first, followed by “shared values” and “partnership” - will pack the most persuasive punch for Swings. It also emboldens Supporters and appeases Sceptics. However, if you only have time or space to communicate one theme to any audience, “independence” is the most influential. The theme of “progress” is not part of the core narrative approach but was found to be a valuable supporting idea.

Research Insights

INDEPENDENCE

Emphasising independence as the end goal of development is the most compelling theme across all audiences—and helps convert the most Swings to Supporters.

SHARED VALUES

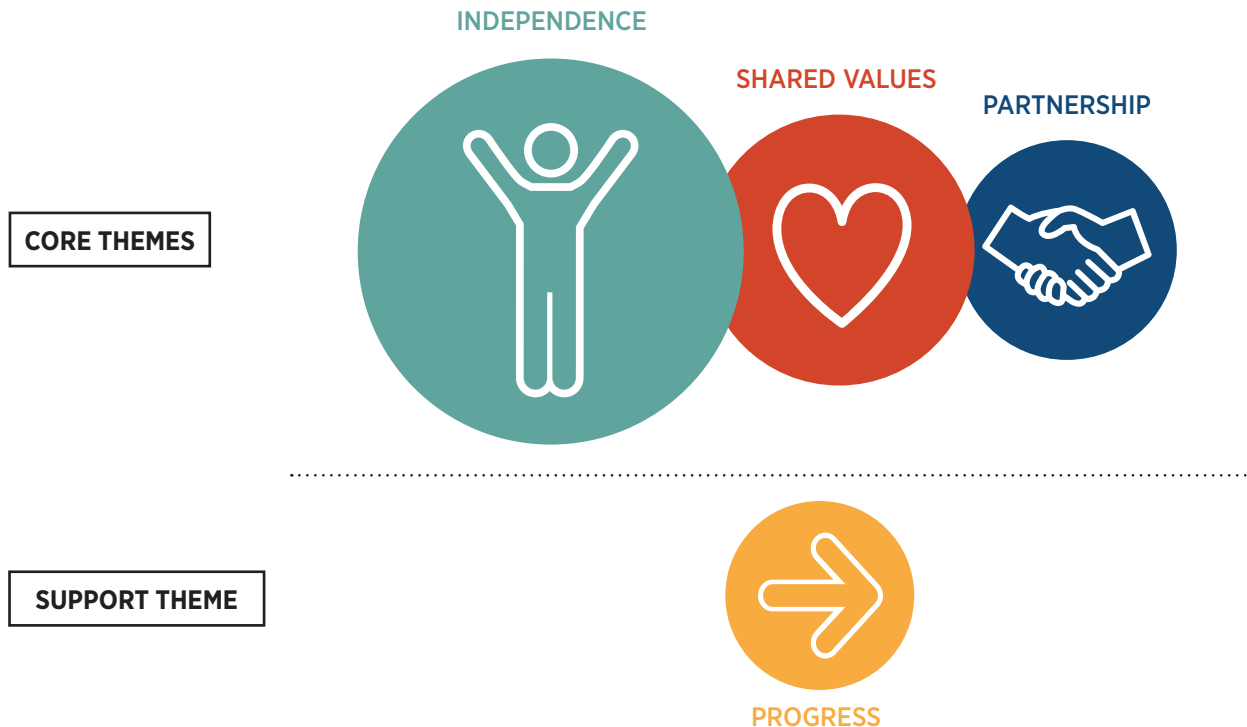
This theme reminds most people of a belief they already hold: every human life has value. That people living in the world’s poorest places have the same hopes and dreams as the rest of us and that we have a moral obligation to help them reach their potential.

PARTNERSHIP

Explaining that people in developing countries actively participate in making development programmes work is a critical theme for Swings.

PROGRESS

The theme that development programmes are effective supports the other ideas in the narrative by educating the public about what has been achieved—but was shown not to be persuasive on its own or as a lead theme.



NARRATIVE MESSAGES



INDEPENDENCE: Development programmes help people in the world's poorest places become independent and stand on their own two feet.



SHARED VALUES: People born in the world's poorest places deserve the chance to achieve their full potential, because every human life is valuable.



PARTNERSHIP: Development programmes work because people from across countries and communities join forces to share knowledge, resources and responsibility.



PROGRESS: Development programmes work. We've beaten smallpox, nearly defeated polio and helped millions of people get education and training.

Language testing with members of the Engaged Public showed that these were effective words and phrases to express the narrative themes to our target audience.

NARRATIVE TAGLINE

The tagline is a simple phrase that sums up the purpose of development. It highlights the most important theme to communicate to our target audience: development helps people achieve independence.

**Offering a hand up so everyone can stand
on their own two feet.**



In language testing, “independence” was the most popular term for the theme of self-sufficiency to UK audiences.

“Ending dependency” and “self-sufficiency” also work well.

NARRATIVE, LONG-FORM

This is an example of a full articulation of the narrative approach.

.....



The purpose of development is to help people in poor countries become independent and stand on their own two feet. The world's poorest people are striving to be self-sufficient - to be able to provide for their families and live with dignity.



People in poor countries don't need our pity, they just need a level playing field. Parents in those countries want what we want for our own children, a chance for them to reach their full potential.



Development depends on co-operation, sharing resources and responsibility to deliver education, healthcare, food, clean water.













Development is working. The number of children in developing countries who die before the age of 5 has shrunk by almost half. More and more of them are going to school happy and healthy. Preventable diseases are disappearing.

Let's keep making the world a better place. We've come too far to stop now and undo all the progress we've made.

Tips for Articulating the Narrative









- ☑ Showing how development programmes help people become independent—using specific examples such as “education, health and economic opportunity”—helps our audience understand and support the work.
- ☑ Independence has more than one meaning. Our audience responds particularly to the idea of an end to dependency, when people in poor places can stand on their own two feet. They also respond to metaphors of self-determination – when people are independent they can control their own destinies or write their own futures.
- ☑ Describing people in terms of the hopes and values they share with us—as in the phrases “have same hopes and dreams”, “want their children to reach their full potential”—creates empathy with the people served by development programmes and encourages our audience to support development.
- ☑ Presenting problems as solvable—as in “preventable diseases”—communicates that progress is possible, which motivates people to support the effort. People are more likely to take action in support of development when they hear specific, tangible examples of progress like these.
- ☑ People can be motivated to take action to avoid losing something valuable—as expressed here in the phrase “undo all the progress we've made.”

LANGUAGE TIPS: GENERAL

LANGUAGE	NARRATIVE THEME	EXPLANATION
Development		“Development” can be a vague word for people who aren’t experts in the field, but in general the term carries positive meanings. “Foreign aid” has strongly negative connotations for our audience.
Independent		In research with UK audiences, this was the favoured word to describe the goal of development. “Self-sufficient” and “ending dependency” also work.
People in the world’s poorest places		This avoids stigmatising people by associating “poor” with their circumstances, rather than the people themselves.
Stand on their own two feet		This is a metaphor that brings to life both the goal and the potential that everyone has within them.
Education, health and economic opportunity		These terms refer to specific types of development programmes that most people understand and value. You can provide other examples, too.
Deserve the same chances and opportunities, level playing field		These phrases address the idea of equity in familiar terms that our audience can relate to.
Opportunity, dignity, full potential, pride		These words express values and beliefs shared by our audience and by people who benefit from development programmes.
Sharing, co-operation		These words and phrases make the idea of partnership come alive.
Knowledge, resources and responsibility		These examples make it clear that people who benefit from development programmes contribute something valuable to the work.
Working, prevent, disappearing, improve		These action verbs and concise statements convey confidence in the idea that progress is being made.









This language tested well with Supporters, Swings and Sceptics.

LANGUAGE TIPS: SUPPORTERS

THEME	KEY IDEAS	LANGUAGE	EMPHASIS
 INDEPENDENCE	Independence	Succeed by their own merit Permanently independent Lasting difference End dependency Determine their own future Control their own destinies Do not want to rely on handouts	 Neutral
 SHARED VALUES	Equity	People cannot help where they are born Reaching their full potential Fair chance	 Dial Up
	Human Traits	Pride Energy Determination Tenacity Hope Persistence Striving to help themselves Just because you live in a poor country doesn't mean you're not smart Children everywhere have same hopes / dreams	 Dial Up
 PARTNERSHIP	Sharing	Working with poor countries Sharing knowledge and expertise Hand up not a handout	 Neutral
	Accountability	Transparent Accountable Proven long-term efforts Can't blindly support Rigorous evaluation	 Dial Down









Supporters are particularly motivated by some ideas and turned off by others. When addressing Supporters, emphasise language about shared values and the traits of people striving for a better life and de-emphasise language about accountability.

LANGUAGE TIPS: SWINGS

THEME	KEY IDEAS	LANGUAGE	EMPHASIS
 INDEPENDENCE	Independence	Succeed by their own merit Permanently independent Lasting difference End dependency Determine their own future Control their own destinies Do not want to rely on handouts	 Dial Up
 SHARED VALUES	Equity	People cannot help where they are born Reaching their full potential Fair chance	 Neutral
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 PARTNERSHIP	Sharing	Working with poor countries Sharing knowledge and expertise Hand up not a handout	 Neutral
	Accountability	Transparent Accountable Proven long-term efforts Can't blindly support Rigorous evaluation	 Dial Up

Swings found all of the narrative themes to be relevant, but responded particularly well to language about independence, traits of people striving for a better life and accountability.

LANGUAGE TIPS: SCEPTICS

THEME	KEY IDEAS	LANGUAGE	EMPHASIS
 INDEPENDENCE	Independence	Succeed by their own merit Permanently independent Lasting difference End dependency Determine their own future Control their own destinies Do not want to rely on handouts	 Dial Up
 SHARED VALUES	Equity	People cannot help where they are born Reaching their full potential Fair chance	 Dial Down
	Human Traits	Pride Energy Determination Tenacity Hope Persistence Striving to help themselves Just because you live in a poor country doesn't mean you're not smart Children everywhere have same hopes / dreams	 Neutral
 PARTNERSHIP	Sharing	Working with poor countries Sharing knowledge and expertise Hand up not a handout	 Neutral
	Accountability	Transparent Accountable Proven long-term efforts Can't blindly support Rigorous evaluation	 Dial Up

Independence and accountability are essential themes to emphasise with Sceptics. They do not respond well to language about shared values.

KEY RESEARCH INSIGHTS

This section presents the most critical narrative research insights in a simple list of Dos and Don'ts.

RESEARCH INSIGHTS:

DOs

- ✓ **Do lead with the theme of “independence” as the purpose of development programmes.**
This idea persuades Swings and motivates Supporters.

- ✓ **Do talk about empowering women and girls in the developing world.**
Gender equality is a powerful argument in support of development for the Engaged Public.

- ✓ **Do provide examples of progress in the context of other ideas in the narrative.**
Simply asserting that development programmes work is ineffective unless you pair examples of progress with messages about independence, shared values or partnership.

- ✓ **Do use simple, clear and bold language to assert the accomplishments of development programmes.**

- ✓ **Do emphasise core human values and priorities that are relatable to both donor and developing country audiences.**

- ✓ **Do highlight partnership in all aspects of development programmes.**
Describing the active contributions of development programme participants contrasts with the traditional image of passive charity recipients.

- ✓ **Do use familiar language that our audience will understand immediately.**
Speaking in development jargon makes it more difficult to build understanding and support.





RESEARCH INSIGHTS: DON'Ts

- ⊗ **Don't expect facts and figures about progress alone to convince people to support development.** Many people won't listen to the facts until they understand why they should support development (independence, shared values) and how it works (partnership).
- ⊗ **Don't invoke pity or characterise people in developing countries as helpless victims or assert that people have an obligation to support development.** People react negatively to the perception that their sense of morality is being questioned.
- ⊗ **Don't lead with negative concepts or words.** Messages that start by describing "the problems" that development programmes are working against are less convincing than talking about "why" a person should support development (for example: independence, shared values, the value of human life).
- ⊗ **Don't use long-term timeframes to communicate a goal or vision.** Referencing dates that are far into the future (such as 2030) doesn't engage people or encourage them to support development.
- ⊗ **Don't use the term "foreign aid."** For many people, including the Swings, it carries a lot of baggage. Many associate the term with short-term crisis, and others associate it with money that is wasted.
- ⊗ **Don't describe the goal of development as furthering the economic or national security interests of donor countries.** Most people don't find these "self-interest" arguments persuasive.
- ⊗ **Don't try to downplay the problem of corruption or minimise the scale of it.** Instead, talk about it as an 'injustice' against both donors and participants that should be guarded against and emphasise what is being done through development programmes to tackle corruption.
- ⊗ **Don't try to explain away or justify problems with some development programmes.** Language such as "in the past, development wasn't very effective" or "there will always be some setbacks" is not effective.

APPLIED NARRATIVE EXAMPLES





This section shows how ideas and language in the narrative can be applied in different forms of communication.

EXAMPLE: CAMPAIGN MESSAGING

ORIGINAL MESSAGE	NARRATIVE THEME	REVISED MESSAGE
<p>In poor countries, millions of children still miss out on the opportunity to go to school and learn. We can make a difference by training teachers in the poorest parts of the world, saving children from ignorance and poverty.</p>	<p>Independence →</p> 	<p>With a helping hand, communities in the poorest parts of the world are taking control of their own futures. Through education and hard work, women and girls are able to reach their full potential and improve life for themselves and their families.</p>
<p>Without an education, Amita will be trapped in poverty just like her mother and father. Every day she is forced to walk two hours to and from school.</p>	<p>Shared values →</p> 	<p>Amita walks two hours to school every day because she is determined to get an education and achieve a better future for herself and her family.</p>
<p>We work in over 30 countries, improving access to education for girls like Amita.</p>	<p>Partnership →</p> 	<p>Our work would not be possible without the strong mutual partnership between the British people, UK government and the families we are reaching in over 30 countries.</p>
<p>Let's not turn our backs on those in desperate need.</p>	<p>Progress →</p> 	<p>More and more children are going to school happy and healthy. Together, we're making a lasting difference. For every year that girls attend school beyond nine years old, an entire country's wages rise by 20%. Let's not stop now and undo the progress we've made.</p>

EXAMPLE:

MESSAGES FOR SPEECH

ORIGINAL MESSAGE	NARRATIVE THEME	REVISED MESSAGE
International aid has lifted millions of people out of poverty.	Independence → 	The purpose of development is to help people in poor countries become independent and stand on their own two feet.
There is so much needless suffering in the world. We cannot turn our back on it.	Shared values → 	People in poor countries are striving to take control of their own destinies. Like us, they want their children to grow up healthy, get an education and reach their full potential.
In times of crisis, we offer rapid assistance to help recovery from the effects of disease and natural disasters. Where we can we attack the underlying causes of poverty.	Partnership → 	Whether sharing knowledge that helps newborns survive or working with local experts to overcome natural disasters, we succeed when we work in partnership , sharing resources and responsibility.
We give the world's poorest people the opportunity to improve their lives now and for the future.	Progress → 	Development is working. Together, we are creating positive sustainable change. We must work together to keep the momentum going.

EXAMPLE: SUCCESS STORY

PURCHASE FOR PROGRESS: HELPING WOMEN FARMERS IN MALI STAND ON THEIR OWN TWO FEET

The Logo Women’s Group is comprised of female smallholder farmers in Mali who tend plots exclusively for the production of niébé—a protein and nutrient-rich bean, sometimes called a black-eyed pea. The World Food Programme (WFP)—which is the largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger—recognised an opportunity in niébé: By buying crops from smallholder farmers such as the women in the Logo Women’s Group, WFP could feed more people while also **offering a hand up to women striving to provide for their families and stand on their own two feet.**

WFP’s Purchase for Progress programme sees **development as a two-way street, in which local farmers and governments work with donor organisations to share in the effort, resources and responsibility** to make the programme work successfully for the people they serve.

In Mali, Purchase for Progress partnered with Catholic Relief Services and the government of Mali to provide seeds, train local farmers in growing the crop and help women farmers obtain both land and literacy, so they could **successfully grow and market niébé.**

To ensure the demand for niébé would continue to support the women tending the crops, these organisations worked with the local governments and school programmes to purchase niébé. **This partnership created a local market to support the women and their families, while providing nutrient-rich meals for local students to eat.**

As members of the Logo Women’s Group **strive to control their own destinies**, their efforts have a **ripple effect** throughout their communities—improving the health, education and economic opportunities for other families.



EXAMPLE: SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK POST

TWEET

When girls join forces to share knowledge and resources they start to write their own futures.

When girls join forces they start to write their own futures.

Every child, regardless of where they are born, deserves protection against diseases such as Ebola. Investing in that protection will enable children to survive, thrive and reach their full potential.

Every child, regardless of where they are born, deserves protection against #Ebola.

Investing in women and girls makes a lasting difference in their community and the world.

Investing in women and girls makes a lasting difference.

Women like Miriam use development programmes like @PEPFAR to build better lives for themselves, their children and their communities.

Women like Miriam use development programmes like @PEPFAR to build stronger families & communities.

Development programmes help people living in the world's poorest places become independent. Women like Mestawit are utilising tools to stand on their own two feet and lift up their communities.

"Just because I have this virus does not mean I cannot earn a living." Mestawit stands on her own two feet.



EXAMPLE: BLOG

EXAMPLE PROVIDED BY THE UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION

EVERY CHILD DESERVES OPPORTUNITY FROM DAY ONE:

Independence: it's what we all want for children everywhere. We hope they'll have the chance to grow up healthy, go to school, and have every opportunity to reach their full potential.

Above all, we want our children to count.

Many of us take it for granted, but receiving a birth certificate is crucial for all of this. When you're counted on the day that you're born, it's the first step towards accessing all the opportunities that lead to being an independent, self-sufficient adult.

Unfortunately, there are children all around the world missing out on this opportunity today. Nearly 230 million children around the world don't have birth certificates. As a result, it will be much harder for them to thrive throughout the rest of their lives.

Without a birth certificate or other identification, children often find it difficult to enroll in school, see a doctor, and find gainful employment later in life. Adrift in their communities, these children often become uncared-for faces vulnerable to kidnapping, trafficking, and war crimes. It's especially difficult for girls, who are at higher risk of abduction for sexual slavery, child marriage, and under-age recruitment for armed groups.

These children deserve the same thing that every child in the world deserves: the opportunity to lead a full, happy, healthy life. That's why more and more developing countries and donor countries are joining together to create innovative programmes and campaigns that target birth registration. And already, the progress has been amazing.

For instance, UNICEF worked with local authorities in Guinea to register more than 20,000 children and refugees fleeing armed conflict from Western Africa in the early 2000s. The effort placed an emphasis on girls, and had the added benefit of equipping these children with health records and connecting them with child protection services.



In Afghanistan, local authorities partnered with UNICEF and local health officials to register two million children in under two years while also administering polio vaccinations.

These efforts are crucial, because when children have birth certificates, they have a much better shot at standing on their own two feet for the rest of their lives. When they are able to get an education, find jobs, and contribute to the local economy, they are doing more than just reaching their own potential. They are beginning a virtuous cycle that helps entire communities rise up.

No matter where they live, every child deserves the same opportunity to thrive and live with dignity. Let's work together to turn their rights into realities.



ATTACKS & RESPONSES

This section offers guidance for responding to the most common arguments against development.

ATTACK & RESPONSE

ATTACK: Aid is wasted.

RESPONSE: Development programmes help people build independence

The argument that aid is a waste of money or is ineffective is the most common argument against development.

OPEN: The goal of development is to help people become independent. Our development programmes do that by helping people build the foundations of education, health and economic opportunity.

SUPPORT: Development programmes are working: The number of children who die before the age of 5 has shrunk by almost half. Millions of people use training and education they didn't have before to improve their lives. Devastating diseases are disappearing.

CLOSE: Development programmes make a difference for people striving to build the foundations of independence. Let's not turn our backs on them and undo the progress we've made.

Tips for Effective Rebuttals

- ☑ The most effective rebuttal begins by reminding people that the purpose of development programmes is to build foundations of self-sufficiency, before giving examples of effective programmes.
- ☑ Leading with facts and figures about progress will not disprove the widespread perception that aid is a waste.
- ☑ Many people won't accept the facts, unless they first believe in the goals of development.

ATTACK & RESPONSE

ATTACK: Charity begins at home.

RESPONSE: People here at home and in the world's poorest places deserve the same opportunity.

This message suggests that people should focus on helping those close to them before helping others—pitting the needs of people in donor countries against those of people in developing countries.

OPEN: People living in the world's poorest places deserve the same chances and opportunities as anyone. We can—and should—help people build the foundations of independence, whether they're here at home or living in the world's poorest places.

SUPPORT: Development programmes account for less than 1 per cent of national income in most donor countries—and they work. The number of children in the world's poorest places who die before the age of 5 has shrunk by almost half. Millions of people use training and education they didn't have before to improve their lives. Preventable diseases are disappearing. These are solvable problems: We can address them here at home and in the world's poorest places.

CLOSE: Development programmes make a difference for people striving to build the foundations of independence. Let's not turn our backs on them and undo the progress we've made.

Tips for Effective Rebuttals

- ☑ Avoid asserting or implying that people have an obligation to support development. People react very negatively to perceptions that their sense of morality is being questioned.
- ☑ Be prepared with specific examples of success, e.g. the number of children who die before the age of 5 has shrunk by almost half.

CREATIVE TOOLS

The following sections include practical tools to help users apply the narrative to different forms of communication.

IMAGES

This section presents themes that were tested to explore which visual ideas make people more likely to support development. They are shown in order, from most persuasive to least persuasive.

THEME #1: POTENTIAL

Photographs showing that development programmes help people reach their human potential were found to be persuasive with members of the Engaged Public. This type of image also supports the idea that development helps people achieve independence over the long term.



Portrait of two students with their names written on a black board at the Colobane Lansar B. school in Dakar, Senegal on November 14, 2012.

“Everyone’s got the power then to change their situation. They can go far if they want to. They can study to become a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer, and they can make the change in their own country if enough people get this opportunity”

– UK survey participant

THEME #2: PROGRESS

“Before and after” images showing tangible changes in local communities make it clear that development programmes make a real difference in the world.



Side by side comparison of fields in Oromia State, Ethiopia in 1990 and 2013.

“Seeing positive pictures of happy changes that can be made is more likely to make me give than the same picture of starving kids we have been shown for 20 years”

– UK survey participant

THEME #3: EMPOWER

Images showing that people in developing countries share our goals—such as earning an education or providing for their family—create human connections and convey the idea that development helps people build the foundations of independence.



Rehena Juma in her fields in Valeska village, near Arusha, Tanzania on October 7, 2013.

“What you want aid to do is to pull a country or a community to a place where they aren’t reliant on aid anymore, to a point where they are self-sufficient and can produce enough food, healthcare, education for everyone’s needs”

– UK survey participant

THEME #4: PITY

While images that invoke pity create emotional reactions in some people, they do not advance the idea that people in developing countries are active partners in development.



Amena Begum and her child Farzana, who is recovering from malnutrition, at the hospital.

“I feel awful for these people but I have become sort of numb to it now due to overexposure on the news. Feels like there’s not much we can do to help”

– UK survey participant

THEME #5: HOPE

Images of people that do not show the context in which they live were least effective at building support for development. People feel good seeing pictures of happy children, but it doesn't have the same impact as photos with the themes of potential of progress.

“We see these pictures all the time and they are intended to tug at our hearts but we become immune to them over time”

– UK survey participant



Children play outside the Joy Celebration Center for Nations church in Nairobi, Kenya on Wednesday December 16, 2009.

CREATIVE BRIEF

SAMPLE CREATIVE BRIEF

DELIVERABLE: 3-minute video

STRATEGIC GOAL: Motivate Swings within the Engaged Public to support global development programmes.

COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVE: Produce a video showing how a development programme helps people living in one of the world's poorest places build independence by working in partnership to share in the effort, resources and responsibility of making the programme work. The story should also subtly remind the audience what they already believe: Supporting development is the right thing to do, because all people deserve the opportunity to reach their potential.

AUDIENCE OVERVIEW

CURRENT PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES: The Engaged Public volunteer, fundraise and advocate for their causes. They represent one third of the adult population.

Swings represent our biggest opportunity—at 47 percent of the Engaged Public, they could potentially double our base of support within the biggest donor countries. Swings have a neutral to positive attitude towards development. They believe we have a strong obligation to help people in the world's poorest places, but they also believe that development is a waste.

DESIRED PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES: Swings who finish watching the video will have a more positive attitude towards development and will be more willing to take an action to support an organisation. They may still be sceptical about the value of development, but they will have a new appreciation of the purpose of development programmes, the partnerships behind development, and why they should support this work.

NARRATIVE APPROACH

The key ideas to include in a narrative to build support for development are shown in the messages below. Each one includes specific language shown to motivate Swings to support development. The ideas are shown in their order of importance to Swings—introducing these themes in this order will have the greatest effect in persuading Swings to support development. “Independence” is the most important theme and should be the first idea introduced in the video.

TAGLINE: Offering a hand up so everyone can stand on their own two feet.



INDEPENDENCE: Development programmes help people in the world’s poorest places become independent and stand on their own two feet.



SHARED VALUES: People born in the world’s poorest places deserve the same chances and opportunities as anyone, because every human life is valuable.



PARTNERSHIP: People from donor countries and developing countries join forces to share effort, resources and responsibility to make development programmes work.



PROGRESS: Development programmes work: Over the last 15 years, these programmes have helped cut the number of children dying before the age of 5 by nearly half. We’ve beaten smallpox, nearly defeated polio and helped millions of people get education and training.

CONTENT CREATOR'S CHECKLIST

CONTENT CREATOR'S CHECKLIST

Use the guidelines below to successfully apply The Narrative Project approach to your communications.

CORE THEMES



INDEPENDENCE

- Lead with “building independence” as the purpose of development programmes.
- Emphasise independence instead of invoking pity.



SHARED VALUES

- Describe people in terms of their hopes and values in order to create empathy.
- Highlight feelings that all people can relate to.



PARTNERSHIP

- Focus on partnership in all aspects of development programmes and how each player actively contributes.
- Use examples and metaphors to help your audience picture how people and countries work together.

SUPPORT THEME



PROGRESS

- Don't lead with progress. Provide examples of progress as supporting information, after the other themes in the narrative. Examples of success and change are important elements for convincing Swings.
- Present problems as preventable and solvable to show that progress is possible.
- Use simple, clear language and specific examples to assert what has been accomplished.
- Help people understand how their actions lead to change, in order to make progress feel more believable.

**THE
NARRATIVE
PROJECT**

