STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS:
LOCAL INNOVATIONS FOR NEW CLIMATE REALITIES IN CITIES

VISIBILITY PRODUCT OPTIONS FOR GRANTEES
Overview
Pictures are one of the primary methods of providing information quickly and efficiently. The rise of photo sharing through social media platforms attests to its effectiveness in engaging individuals and oftentimes impacting change on a large scale. By harnessing an online platform specifically for photo sharing, images can be easily uploaded, accessed and downloaded as needed (with the potential to extend to graphics and video files as well). This will enable information on various projects to be quickly digested and disseminated between relevant parties.

Methodology
Grantees will use available hardware (digital cameras, mobile phones, etc.) to take photos of the projects they are involved with and their key features. These photos will be digitally collected (as JPG or PNG files) and uploaded onto an online photo album that can be freely accessed by relevant parties (grantees, Cities Alliance staff, and, potentially, stakeholders and members of the public). Though seemingly a simple task, grantees must ensure that photos are recognisable and cover the important details of the project, including the problem and the solution. Text descriptions/captions should also be provided by grantees for each photo, and implementing and funding partner(s) should be mentioned (e.g., in the general description of the album). Grantees can use the platform of their choice. For instance, a dedicated album can be created on Facebook, Instagram, Flickr or other(s) platform.
Pros

• Photos are particularly effective at keeping individuals up-to-date and have a very high rate of online engagement.
• Many online platforms specifically for photos do exist and are relatively cheap to use.
• Having the photo bank available online will allow easy and effective sharing with relevant parties and stakeholders.
• Taking and uploading photos of project progress will likely endow a sense of pride and ownership, further encouraging active contribution.
• This method will enable transparency between parties around the project on what is being done, how much is being done and what changes need to be made.

Cons

• Grantees will require access to decent hardware and basic knowledge on lighting to get effective shots of the project.
• Taking photos of project details could be arduous and important details could be missed. In addition, writing captions/descriptions could prove time consuming.
• Photo banks could become oversaturated with similar images. It is recommended that a designated individual or group of individuals will need to review and moderate the photo bank regularly.
• Though many online platforms exist, finding the ideal one may be complicated depending on the required features.
• Training may be required to learn how to take, organize and upload digital photos on the chosen platform.
ONLINE PHOTO BANK DO’S AND DON’TS

Do use the best quality images you can
Make sure photos are clear, in focus, and not blurry when displayed at the size you want to use them.

Do try to convey the impact of your organization and project
Show the people you’re helping and where they live. Take before and after pictures of the work carried out and how it has made a difference.

Do choose natural or un-posed images
These are more effective than a picture of a group of people smiling at the camera. For example, pictures of volunteers or locals going about their everyday tasks are more compelling than a people pulling poses.

Do mix up the types of pictures you take
For example, for event photos, mix it up. Use group shots, wide shots, and close-ups of attendees.

Do be careful using pictures of young people
For young people under 16, you should get parental consent to use an image. Make sure parents or carers are aware of your photography and filming policy statement. Ask them to sign a written consent form.

Do consult people about the use of their image and give consent to it being used
They must be aware that a photo or video is being taken and understand what the image is going to be used for. You should ask them how they feel about the image being shared online and record this on a written consent form.

Do use your own pictures
If you took a picture yourself it’s yours and you can do what you want with it. So feel free to post.

Do use “public domain” images
There are some good sources of free media files – Wikimedia Commons, offer public domain or freely licensed images. Some images are still subject to a license, which have attribution or other requirements. Check any license before you post one of these images.

Don’t simply take pictures from the Internet
If you come find an image you would like to use, get permission from the owner to post it on your site or social media. If you can’t get permission, post a link.

Do license images that you don’t own
If you find a commercial image you like and you want to post it, license it. The license is an agreement between you and copyright owner that gives you the right to display an image that does not belong to you. Usually you pay someone for the license.

Don’t use stock images unless you have paid for them under a valid license
If you upload stock photos make sure you have license otherwise you risk receiving a threatening letter. Many stock and other commercially sold images have embedded watermarks or “fingerprints” that special software can detect.
**ONLINE PHOTO BANK EXAMPLES**

Flickr (https://www.flickr.com)

Still the biggest photo site online and is widely used by amateurs, professionals, businesses, and NGOs. There are strict guidelines that protect the community and your photos. Privacy options let you limit who can see your photos to who can comment on and tag them, and you can easily share your photos on Facebook, Twitter, Tumbler, Pinterest, and by email.

Instagram (https://www.instagram.com)

Instagram is simple to use, requiring only a simple app. Browsing, liking, and commenting on photos is easy. And because it’s mobile, you can share images from anywhere. The Collections Feature lets you make your own Pinterest-style inspiration boards. Instagram’s focus on social media platforms means it isn’t the best platform for storing and backing up your photos. Posts are sorted chronologically and older photos are harder to find. But it is a well known site if you want to be shared and get the latest news of your project out.

Juicebox (https://www.juicebox.net)

This user-friendly software offers a complete web image gallery solution. Without needing code, you can have a photo gallery insert into your website. It also supports mobile devices. The features include a responsive user interface, easy gallery creation, and social sharing.
Overview

Videos are one of the most effective mediums of reaching an audience due to their ability to garner and retain attention. With the popularity of online video-sharing sites and social media, providing information via video distribution is at an all-time high and serves as a popular gateway for the messaging of both organizations and individuals. Videos make use of visuals and sound, and are particularly good at explaining new concepts. Making a video has a comparatively low bar for entry as most modern smartphones, laptops and tablets come pre-installed with video recording hardware and technology, and editing apps are widely available often free.

Methodology

Grantees will use available devices (mobile phones, cameras, etc.) to create one or more short videos (30 seconds to 2 minutes) explaining the key elements of the project and with testimonies from beneficiaries. Grantees will write, direct and edit their videos (making use of available software). The level of production is not expected to be high, but grantees must make sure that they clearly explain the issue at hand, the project and the solution while visually showing the project in action. The completed video will then be shared as a digital video file (MP4, MOV, etc.) with relevant parties. There are many useful tools available online, including: Headliner, Filmora Go and ClipChampCreate.
Pros

• This format is one of the most effective methods of reaching a target audience.

• Videos can effectively communicate the messaging of your project through sound, images and music. Each aspect is entirely under the control of the grantees.

• Shorter videos can be uploaded to social media and easily shared online. In addition, the files can be passed on to stakeholders or relevant parties with ease.

Cons

• Video quality is unpredictable as it depends on the filming equipment available to grantees, as well as their knowledge of visual details such as framing and lighting, and their individual ability to clearly present information about the project.

• Editing videos can be time-consuming and complex. If grantees have little experience in this field, videos may end up unfocused and the message unclear.

• Videos should be engaging and relatively short to gain the most benefits. If the project has a lot of detailed information, audiences may start to lose interest.

• Due to the sheer number of videos currently online, the project video may be overlooked.
VIDEOS DO’S AND DON’TS

Do prepare
Do put together a brief before you start filming. The brief needs to:
• Identify the audience: existing or new donors, local people etc. Knowing the target audience will help guide tone and style.
• Decide key messages and have clear idea of the impression you want to leave viewers with and leave them with a call to action this message.
• Encapsulate your key message in a clear and simple statement. For example: “This film will show donors how their funding has led to greater tenure security for the community”

Do try to build a channel
You need a YouTube presence where you can post your videos. A personal YouTube channel can act as a second website and carry your branding and links alongside filmed content.

Don’t forget SEO
Optimize your video content for search engines. You can do this by including a transcript of the video, including a well-crafted title and engaging video description.

Do make sound optional
Many people watching videos on social media watch without sound. So have subtitles that are easily read on small screens and make sure they don’t obscure images.

Do tell a story
Videos need to be sharable so make them entertaining and engaging with content that people can relate to. If people are not entertained or informed they will turn off.

Don’t make long videos
People’s attention spans are shorter on line. If you are sharing videos on social media platforms, Instagram, Twitter etc. make sure your content is short and to the point. No longer than four minutes or so is optimum.

Do avoid shaky footage
A shaky video is unprofessional and off-putting. Getting a tripod for your camera or phone can help keep footage steady. Cut to new scenes or people rather than pan the camera and use stabilization software when editing.
**VIDEOS DO’S AND DON’TS**

**Using a phone?**
- Do use the camera on the back of your phone. The front camera’s quality is not as good on most phones.
- Do record in landscape mode (that is, horizontally instead of vertically). This will give you footage that looks good on larger devices, not just phone screens.
- If your phone has a feature that allows you to overlay a grid on your screen, use it to keep your phone level and avoid tilted footage.

**Presenting your video?**
- The way you carry yourself has an impact on how professional your videos are.
- Use calm body language. Stand up straight, take deep breaths. Don’t cross your arms, as it makes you look closed-off. Smile at the camera and other people.
- Talk slowly and clearly. Try not to use jargon.
- If you feel nervous, keep your hands occupied. Writing on a whiteboard, or carrying a microphone, can give you something to focus on.
- Practice beforehand. Watch footage of yourself and identify the areas where you could improve.

**Keep editing simple**
- Don’t use too many distracting effects. A clean editing style is most professional.
- Use noise cancelling to clean up any background noise.
- Cut awkward pauses and silences.
- Add background music and transitions.

**Do use plenty of light**
Light makes a difference in video quality. Sunlight is free but the best footage is made in the morning or evening, when the light is less harsh.

**Do not forget to mention your partner(s)**
When sharing the video, please do not forget to mention implementing and funding partner(s).
Digital storytelling
Digital storytelling uses photos, video, film or found materials, combined with voice-over narration, to convey powerful, evocative stories with a rich emotional dimension.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSJ7pN4ElJg&feature=player_embedded

Mountaintop Library Expands Horizons, by Room to Read used stunning photos taken in Nepal to tell a simple story about the San Francisco nonprofit’s global literacy mission.

Mobile phone videos
Simple is better. Video producers and photographers are known to say the best device is the one you have to hand. These days that is most likely a smartphone — an iPhone or Android device.

https://vimeo.com/5636613

The BBC’s Save Our Sounds project seeks to preserve disappearing sounds in society. In this simple video filmed on a mobile, Kate Arkless Gray explains how the project has begun preserving users’ contributions of sound snippets, from a 64k modem to bird calls and cityscapes.

Creative mashups
One way of storytelling is the kind that takes advantage of the visually interesting styles you can get by using sites like RockYou, Slide, Animoto and Stupeflix.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdaq-qn_98Q

This example is the Will Steger Foundation Mashup Video, showing climate change made accessible.

Be clear and have a call to action
Neverthirst raised almost $220,000 to provide clean water for 300,000 people in 87 villages.

https://vimeo.com/167163522

In this video about their work in India, Neverthirst clearly explains their model and the impact on individuals. It also includes a specific call to action.
Overview

Podcasts are a series of spoken audio episodes, often focused on a particular topic or theme. They are one of the more popular formats for learning today and their distribution has been facilitated greatly by the worldwide adoption of the internet (additionally, some of the most popular online distribution services for podcasts are free). Podcasts are typically run by a podcast host who guides the topic discussion and serves to present and clarify aspects of the discussed topic to listeners. In some cases, the host will be joined by a guest or expert who will talk at length with the host about the topic with the host providing questions to drive the discussion. Unlike videos, the average listening time for podcasts is quite long (20 minutes), providing ample time for topics to be addressed in their entirety.

Methodology

Grantees will plan and record an audio podcast about their project using available recording devices or will participate in an episode of an already existing podcast. Grantees should ensure that the project is discussed thoroughly and clearly, while keeping the discussion engaging and relatively succinct. Grantees will need to decide whether their discussion should be broken up into a series of smaller episodes or if the project should be covered in a single episode. Distribution will need to be decided with relevant parties (uploaded as downloadable audio files on a website, distributed through podcast distribution services, etc.).
Pros

• Spoken language can be more effective than the written word at conveying information.
• A locally produced podcast creates authentic and personal connections within a community, giving a sense of relatability to the messaging.
• Podcasts are quickly growing in popularity with most listeners staying with the medium for a long time.
• Podcasts are direct with no distracting adverts and can be re-listened to.
• The number of listeners are easily trackable through podcast platforms.

Cons

• Podcasting often takes a while to build an audience and can be considered quite niche. They typically require regular output and a consistent schedule.
• Many people are still not sure what podcasts are or how they can be accessed. Getting word out about a podcast can be difficult.
• The primary podcast demographic in South Africa are between the ages of 35 and 54. Older and younger listeners may be harder to reach.
• Podcasts are often difficult to find when using a search engine.
• Skimming through a podcast to find relevant information is much harder than skimming through print media or a website.
• Good quality recording equipment may be hard to find.
• The podcast host/guest needs to be engaging and speak clearly.
PODCASTS DO’S AND DON’TS

Do stick to a format
Podcast listeners like consistency. So create a formula for your podcast and stick with it. If your podcast has segments, always have them in the same order.

Do get the very best hardware you can afford
It’s important for a podcast to have good sound quality, so invest in a decent microphone. In terms of recording, there are many quality open platform programs such as Audacity. Whichever you choose, make sure you’re comfortable how it works and that the program produced high quality files.

Do edit
This means removing extraneous noises and gaffs, and adding intro/outro music. Editing also allows you to even out the sound levels and remove background noises if you’re recording outside.

Do mind your language
This means speaking clearly, avoiding jargon and explaining technical terms.

Do have a focus for each podcast
Pick a topic for every podcast. You don’t need a script but be sure you have a list of points to cover.

Do measure your success
After each podcast, check your metrics. This allows you to measure the number of listeners, subscribers, social shares and reviews. By measuring these metrics you get insight into how people are engaging with your message and what topics are popular.

Don’t go on for too long
People tend to zone out after around 20 minutes or so. Try to keep your podcast under 30 minutes.

Don’t expect to be found
You need to find your listeners by promoting your podcast. This could be done by email marketing, social media, or by making appearances on other podcasts that cover similar issues.

Don’t forget your visual brand
Have a recognizable logo or cover image for your podcast. Professional artwork will enhance the credibility of the cast’s content.

Do not forget to mention your partner(s)
Do not forget to mention implementing and funding partner(s).
African Tech Round-up

https://soundcloud.com/african-tech-round-up

Produced in Johannesburg, African Tech Round-Up covers technological innovation in Africa with diverse content from “Medical Drones in Rwanda” to the war between Uber and taxi drivers.”

Talking Heads

https://soundcloud.com/talkingheads-2

Talking Heads podcasts examines, showcases and create opportunities for African thought leaders. The show profiles some of the extraordinary Africans making a meaningful and affirmative contribution to their communities and cities.

Hubcast

https://nonprofithub.org/hubcast/

The non-profit hub community is dedicated to giving nonprofits tools and information to operate at their peak and serve their communities to the fullest. They aim to help organizations increase their fundraising revenue and share ideas and strategies.
INFOGRAPHICS

Overview

Infographics are particularly effective because they combine the written word with visual elements to pack large concepts and a lot of data into a compact space. Infographics are particularly useful for telling a story that emphasizes cause and effect. While statistics and numbers can quickly overwhelm an audience, presenting them in an infographic makes data more user-friendly. Infographics are steadily growing in popularity and are easily used in several mediums, such as online, in print media and in physical spaces.

Methodology

Grantees will identify key information about their project and create an attractive infographic or series of infographics that effectively convey the issue at hand. Data, written information and images should be gathered by grantees who will need to ensure that the design is both clear and eye-catching. It is recommended that the infographic be created in a digital format, whereupon it will be saved digitally as an image file (JPG, PNG, etc.) and shared with relevant parties. Grantees can use the platform/software of their choice to produce the infographic. Free tools are available online that can help making this process easier (e.g. https://www.canva.com/).
Pros

• Very effective in turning complex information into easy-to-understand visuals.
• They are eye-catching and entice people to take in and retain key information and complex data.
• Infographics are versatile and can be applied over several platforms (social media, print media, websites, emails, etc.).
• Easy to share online via social media, tweets, upload to blogs, etc.

Cons

• Infographics benefit greatly with help from design professionals and the use of design software, which may add to the cost. It is not recommended for infographics to be created as physical outputs as, in order to disseminate them electronically, they will need to be photographed, which can greatly reduce the image quality.
• Good infographics take time and skill to make, bad ones can hurt your messaging. Infographics have the potential to be confusing if they are overdesigned, difficult to interpret or poorly worded.
• Information may be further misinterpreted without a full story/explanation behind the messaging.
• Unless shared or promoted in some way, infographics may not be seen (digital images are not often picked up by search engines).
• The effectiveness of infographics relies heavily on creativity and communication capabilities. If explanations are not clear in an infographic, messaging will be harmed.
• If online, infographics can be difficult to read, especially on smaller screens.
INFOGRAPHICS DO’S AND DON’TS

Do identify your audience
Before putting together an infographic, decide on your audience: local people? Donors? Experts? Younger or older people with differing levels of literacy or understanding. When you know your target, you can decide how much and what type of information to provide.

Do collate the content and choose a template
Make sure all the data used in the infographic is relevant to your audience. Then make sure it is comprehensive enough to give context. If you are using data from a third party remember to cite the source.

Don’t start without a plan of the basic structure
Using a pen and paper draw out the design or an infographic. This is faster than doing concepts on screen.

Do make sure your infographics are shareable
Make infographics more shareable by embedding them into your website or blog. You also want to be sure that the facts, figures and pictures are readable on mobile phones and tablets. Use the “share” on social media and ensure that titles and summaries of the graphics appear automatically when people hit the share button.

Do organize the data so it tells the story you want
This depends on the sort of infographic template you use. It may be a timeline, flowchart, side-by-side comparison etc.

• Side-by-side comparison:
  This design helps show the advantage of one concept over another, or explain the differences between two entities.

• Flowchart:
  This design is a great way of presenting a project workflow

• Timeline:
  This is good to tell the chronological story, or history, of a project or scheme, or show a person’s individual journey.

• Graph-based:
  This design is suitable when you need to convey a high volume of data and statistical information. This means it is good when there is a lot of data to take in.

• Geographic Infographic:
  Good for location-based data especially demographic data. You can compare data by region or demographic and make an infographic more personal to people in your region.
Do include a footer
A footer will give sources for the data, but it allows you to put your logo and link to your website. This gives your project recognition when infographics are shared and also allows people to contact you directly.

Do not forget to mention your partner(s)
Do not forget to mention implementing and funding partner(s).

Do add embedding code
An embed code is a tiny line of Html code that someone can copy into their website and display your infographic in all of its glory. It can then spread across media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. Nowadays, you don’t need to know coding to do this and free “Embed Code Generators” are easily found with a simple Google Search.

Don’t overload your infographics
Don’t try and say too much in one infographic. It can look unorganized and be off-putting. Stay focussed on categories that help make your point succinctly.

Do encourage people to take action
Infographics are not just to give information and facts. They should make people act. So in addition to your contact details, be sure to include a call to action. This could encourage people to donate, volunteer or simply to visit your website.
OPTION 4

INFOGRAPHIC EXAMPLES

Geographical infographic
Flowchart infographic
Side-by-side comparison
OPTION 4

INFOGRAPHIC EXAMPLES

Graph-based infographic

Timeline infographic
BLOG POSTS

Overview

A blog post is a short article published on a type of website called a blog (or web log) or in dedicated sections of regular websites. Each post usually covers a single topic and has a clear message. Blog posts are typically written in an informal style and contain photos, graphics or videos. They may also include links to other websites that offer more information. Blogs are a good way to provide news and updates about project accomplishments and progress. Links to blog posts can be shared easily on social media—an effective way to reach potential new audiences!

Methodology

Here is a general strategy for getting started with writing blog posts.

Step 1: Understand your audience before you begin to write. What do they want to know about? What will resonate with them?

Step 2: What do you want to share? Start with a general topic related to your project and come up with a few different ways of approaching it. Choose one as your focus and write a compelling title and as short and sharp as possible. Ideally 9 words maximum. Sometimes is also easier to write the title at the end once the content has been finalized.

Step 3: Create an outline to organize your message. Include section headings, along with any bullet points, lists, tips, photos and graphics you intend to use. These will help you stay organized as you write your content—and will later help guide the reader through the post!

Step 4: Write an intro that grabs the reader’s attention in the first sentence: tell a story or cite a riveting fact or statistic. Then briefly describe the purpose of the post in the rest of the first paragraph.

Step 5: With your outline as a guide, write the rest of the post. Expand on your points, using what you already know. If needed, do additional research to back up your points with more data and examples. Be sure to properly attribute any external sources and photos/figures you use. Include links to sites where readers can find more information.

Tips adapted from https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/how-to-write-blog-post-simple-formula.html#sm.00012xvp8emcbdwegz1rsux81ijc

Info about blog length may be found at https://www.wesfed.com/blog/ideal-blog-post-length-seo
Pros

• Blog posts with an advocacy angle and stories from the ground can be particularly effective to help personalize a project and generate ongoing interest in its success.
• A locally written blog post—especially with site photos and quotes from participants—creates authentic and personal connections within a community, giving a sense of relatability to the messaging.
• Blogs are already very popular! There are millions of blogs covering every conceivable topic. Blog posts are a friendly and often familiar means of communicating news and information.
• A blog post can be easily shared with new readers because its link can be emailed, sent by text or shared through social media.
• Blogs are readily accessible to anyone with access to the Internet.

Cons

• A blog may be difficult to find with search engines. Search engine optimization (SEO) strategies such as paying attention to word counts and key phrases should be used to increase visibility.
• Blog posts are only available online, so readers without web access may be excluded.
**OPTION 5**

**BLOG POST DO’S AND DON’TS**

**Do choose a topic related to the project being funded**
Consider writing about the key issues being addressed by your project, with a focus on urban poverty reduction. Other cross-cutting themes include gender equality, the inclusion of vulnerable and underrepresented groups, innovation and partnerships.

**Do focus on a single key message for each blog post**
After choosing the topic for each post, keep the writing focused on it. Include a quote if possible to help reinforce your message. For extra emphasis, highlight the quote in a text box.

**Do use accessible language**
Write clearly, avoid jargon and explain technical terms. Use a friendly writing style that is engaging and suitable for general audiences.

**Do insert a call-to-action at the end (if applicable).**
Indicate what you want the reader to do next: increase awareness of an issue, engage in advocacy, or take action. Provide links as needed.

**Do consider word count**
Blog posts generally should be brief, with an ideal length of around 500-700 words. Shorter posts are often easier to read—and to write—which may help with keeping readers regularly informed and engaged. But research suggests that longer posts are shared more often on social media and perform better in searches. Aim for a balance of between 300 (minimum) and about 1200 words.

**Do link to other blogs and informative websites**
Including links to other sites can help your readers find additional information and may help broaden your audience—especially if other sites in turn link back to you.

**Don’t offer readers a ‘wall’ of text**
Blog posts should have visual appeal. Break up large blocks of text with headings and subheadings. Use extra elements such as lists and bullet points for organization and to add interest. Include photos or simple infographics, maps or videos. Don’t forget the captions! Get permission for use and properly credit elements from other sources.

**Don’t expect to be found**
Expand your readership by sharing new blog posts through social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Consider creating a podcast version of your blog post for greater outreach.

**Don’t forget your visual brand**
Include a recognizable logo on each blog post. Professional artwork will enhance the credibility of the content.

**Don’t forget to mention your partner(s)**
Do not forget to mention implementing and funding partner(s).

**Don’t forget your contact details**
Include a short paragraph about the author(s).
BLOG POST EXAMPLES

Housing Innovation in Latin America and the Caribbean

[Link](https://citiesalliance.org/newsroom/blog/housing-innovation-latin-america-and-caribbean)

Helping Informal Communities Realize Tenure Security: The Social Tenure Domain Model

[Link](https://citiesalliance.org/newsroom/news/urban-news/helping-informal-communities-realize-tenure-security)

Planning for Survival Spaces in the City - How Urban Agriculture Could be Promoted

[Link](https://citiesalliance.org/newsroom/news/urban-news/planning-for-survival-spaces-city-how-urban-agriculture-could-be-promoted)