Transformative Urban Coalitions

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## M2_ Developing a shared understanding of the local context

# Get Attention

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**Did you know that the same urban challenge can look completely different depending on who you ask?**

- We often think we understand our city, but we usually see it from only one angle.
  - Who sees this place differently, and why does that matter?
- Urban transformation requires seeing the same place differently, across multiple actors, who often describe issues in contrasting ways.
- That's why coalitions can build a shared understanding of the territory by framing challenges together, filling knowledge gaps, and exploring ways to address them.

# Learning Objectives

- Identify ways to collaboratively frame local challenges, identify knowledge gaps, and uncover assumptions.
- Explain how a shared understanding of a place can be developed through participatory data-informed processes such as data collection, visual documentation, and contextual analysis.
- Apply tools, such as actor mapping, icebreakers, the climate mindset quiz and world café, that explore the local context to identify, gather, analyse, and communicate findings from multiple perspectives that support urban climate action.

# Reflection

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TUC case study _ CS1 Photo trailer

# Reflection

*The Way Of Nature, Iqro Rinaldi. Link*



- Think of a place in your city that represents a challenge for your community.
  - Who usually tells the story of this place and what it means?
  - How do different groups see and describe this place?
  - Whose experiences or feelings aren't shown or heard? Which perspectives are missing from the conversation?
- Consider three common assumptions people make about whether this challenge is social, economic, environmental, or climate-related.

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA:

# Buenos Aires Urban Portfolio

## Applied exercise Examples

*Buenos Aires*
*Fotógrafa: Noelia Maruani*

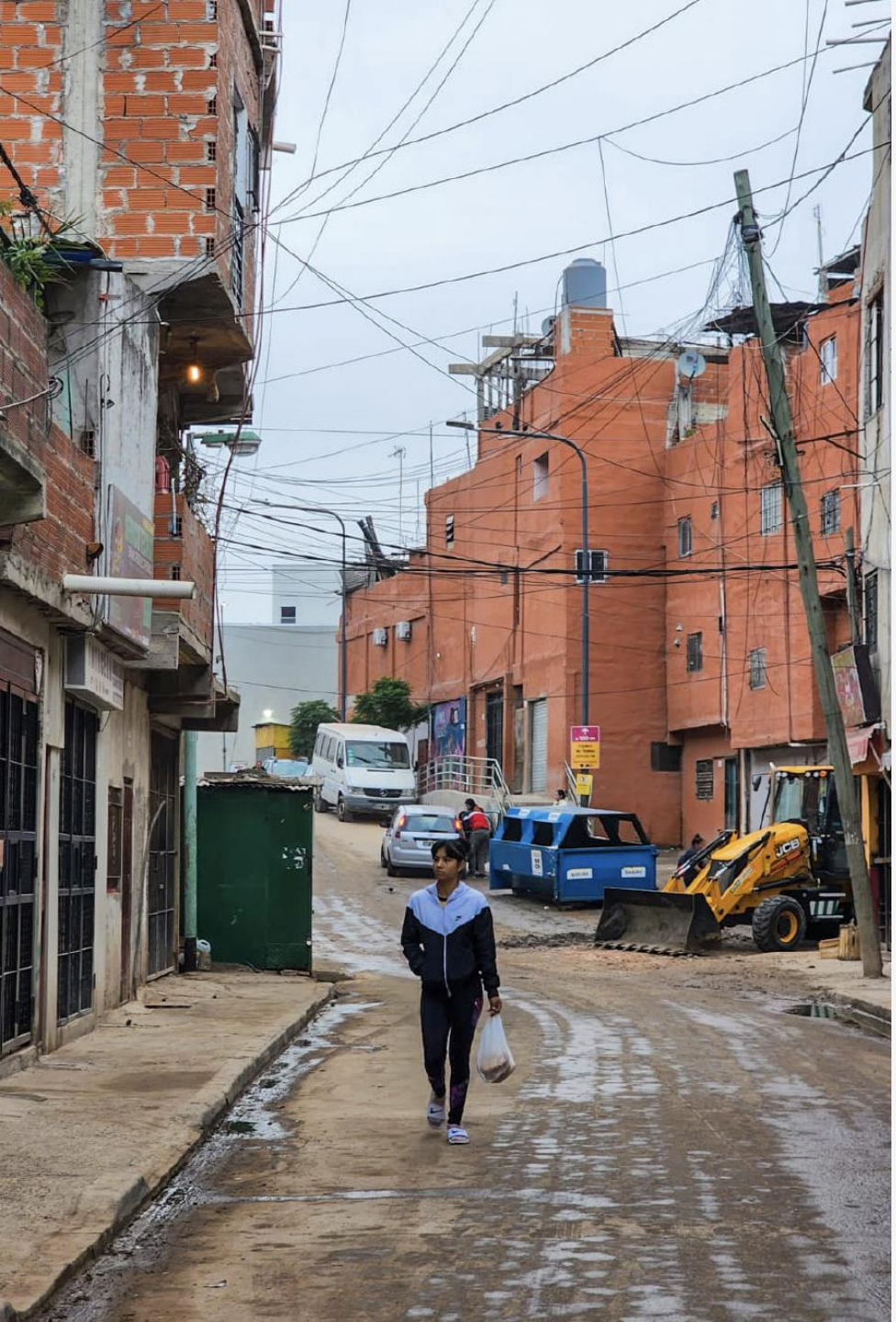




*Noelia Maruani*



*Yanina Quipildor*



*Noelia Maruani*



*Jonathan*

*Jonathan*





*Noelia Maruani*



Noelia Maruani

# Content Overview

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**Part 1.**

Sound Methodology: Problem framing, identifying knowledge gaps, and collecting data

**Part 2.**

Collaboration: Collecting and interpreting data together

**Part 3.**

Expertise: Turning insights into action

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# Part 1

## Sound Methodology: Problem framing, identifying knowledge gaps, and collecting data

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# Recommended Actions

- Frame the problem
- Identify gaps in knowledge
- Collect data
- Understand the rules of the game

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# Recommended Actions

## Frame the problem

- Defining the problem depends on who looks at it, so coalition members could agree on an initial way to frame it, knowing that this is the first definition needed, not necessarily the final one.

- It helps to start with a concrete, undesirable situation specific to the local context, identified through open dialogue among the coalition and their everyday experience in the territory.

- The problem could be broadly framed to allow further investigation and creative solutions, while still asking what the underlying issue is.

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# Recommended Actions

## Identify gaps in knowledge

- To move forward, coalitions could identify what they know, what they do not know, and what they assume to be true.
- Putting these questions together can help the group understand where assumptions and uncertainties lie.
- Working through this together can uncover shared beliefs and expectations, build transparency and help the coalition decide what information to gather next.

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# Recommended Actions

## Collect Data

- The coalition could decide how to collect the data needed to confirm what they already know, test their assumptions and explore what they still do not understand.

- Different gaps require different approaches, which entail using both quantitative and qualitative data to explore different sources, including reviewing documents, interviewing experts, talking with neighbors, or conducting fieldwork.

- Coalition members with experience in data collection can help choose the right methods, ensuring they fit the context and help build a shared understanding of the territory.

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# Recommended Actions

## Understand the rules of the game

- Then, it is important to look beyond the immediate territory and understand how it was formed and how it fits into the city's larger dynamics.

- This analysis can begin by reviewing laws, policies, plans, and budgets, and by exploring the broader political and institutional landscape.

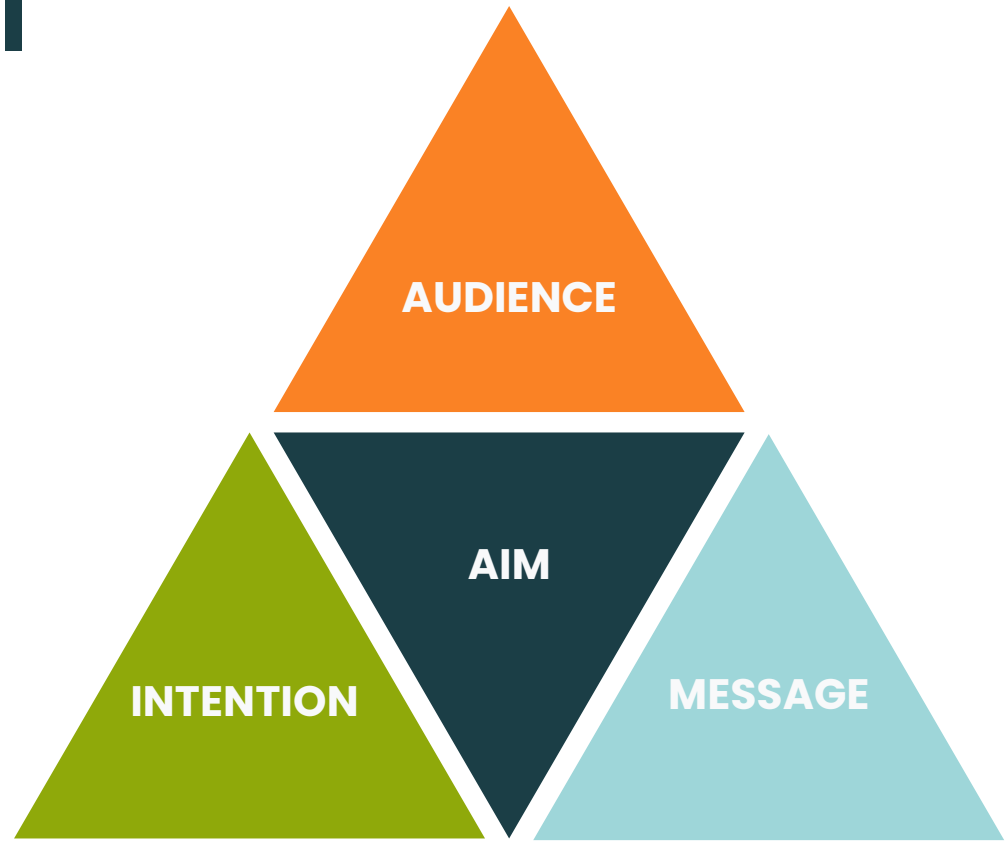
- These insights can highlight both opportunities and barriers for local action and help identify where change is possible.

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# Practical Focus

## AIM Communication Model

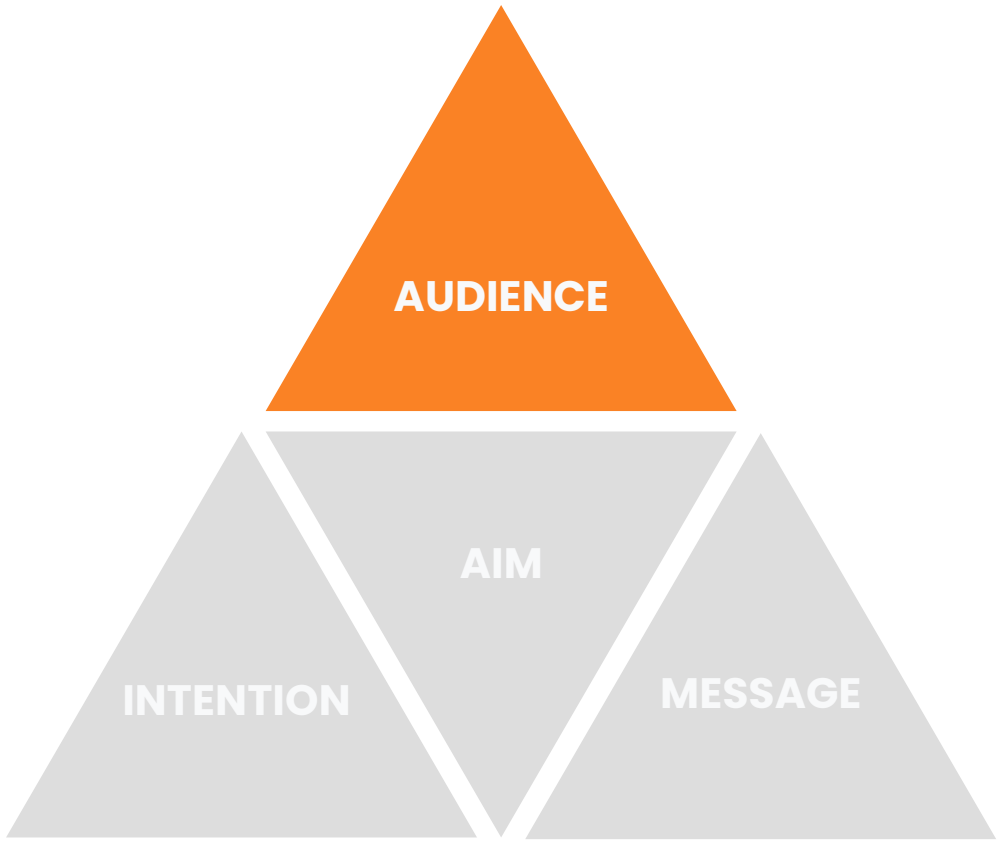
What is my AUDIENCE / INTENTION / MESSSAGE ?



# Audience – AIM Model

Questions to fully understand your Audience:

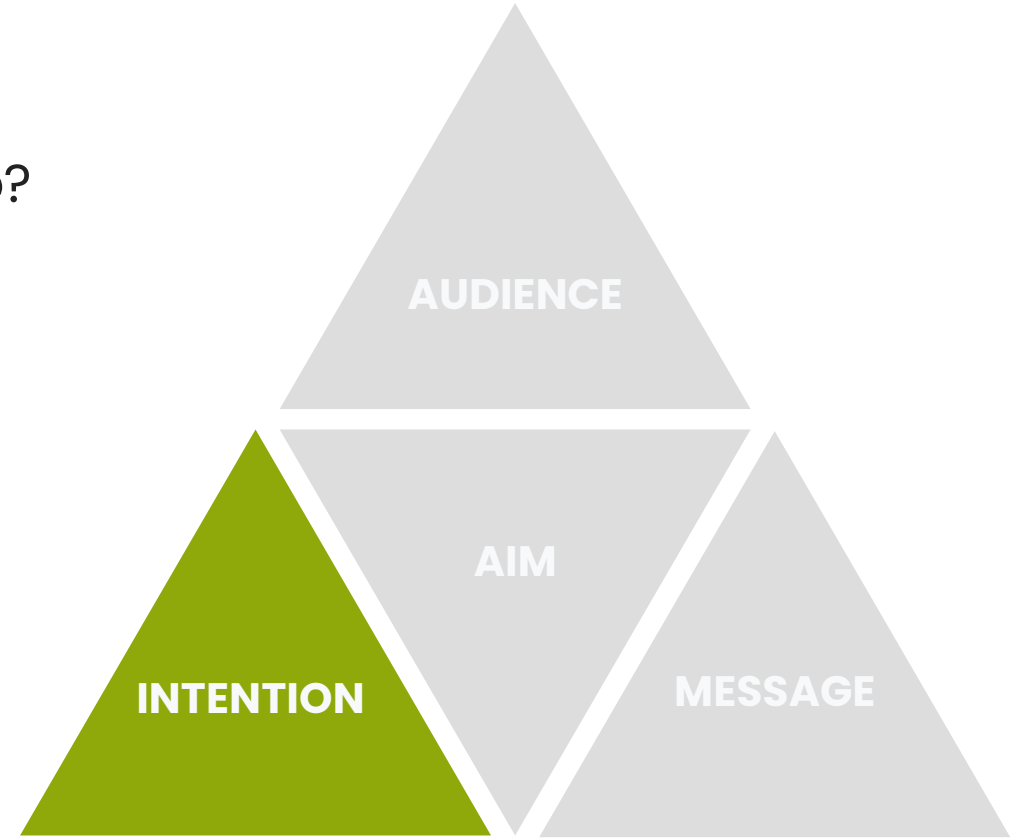
1. What **challenges** do they face?
2. What **inspires** them to act?
3. Where do they gather **information**?
4. What **resources** do they rely on?
5. Who are their peer groups and **influencers**?



# Intention – AIM Model

Questions designed to deepen the intention:
*(Be very specific)*

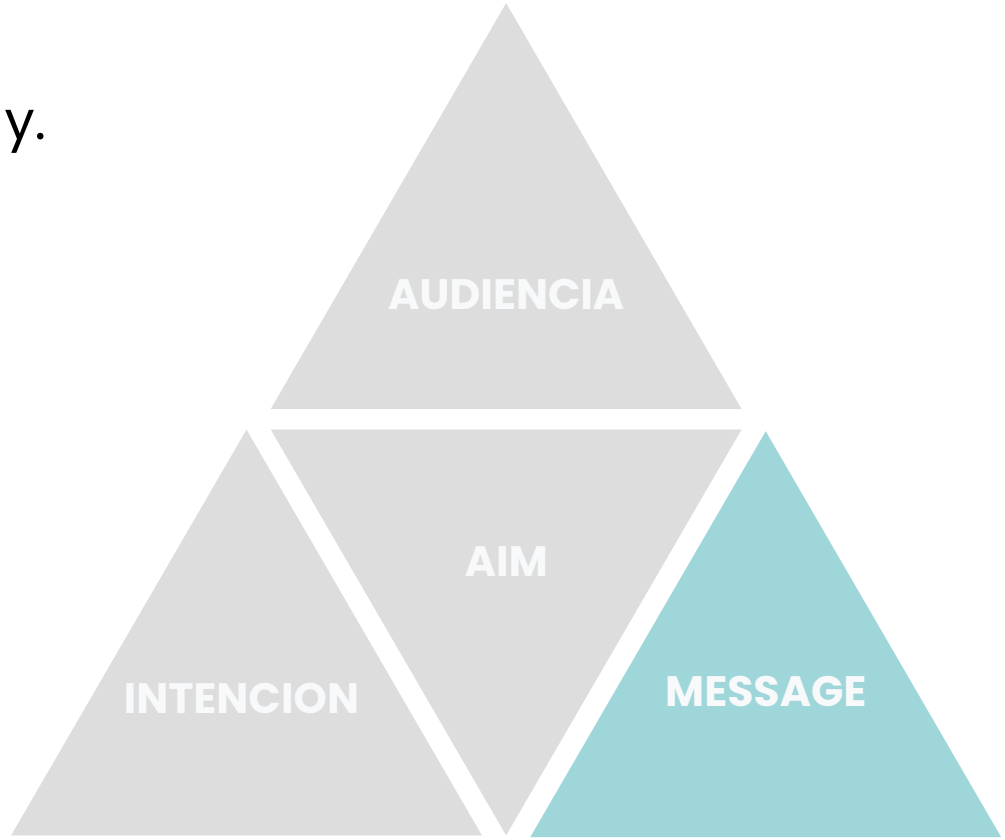
1. What exactly do you want your audience **to do**?
2. What are the concrete **next steps**?
3. **Who** needs to complete specific actions?
4. **When** does it take place?



# Message – AIM Model

These questions can help you in this quest:

1. Try to portray intent and motivation consistently.
2. Do not assume that the audience understands the message



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# The 3 Vs of Effective Communication

| VERBAL | VOCAL | VISUAL |
| --- | --- | --- |
| What you say! | How you say it! | What you look like while saying it! |

# Practical Focus

## Photography

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# Photographic Composition

*Technical elements that will help you take photographs.*

**Photographic composition is the ability to observe, select, gather, and arrange elements of reality within the frame of a camera to capture them, aiming to harmonize them into a theme and generate in the observer an expected reaction.**

- ESTABLISH THE CENTER OF INTEREST
- RULE OF THIRDS
- LESS IS MORE
- GAZE LAW
- BALANCE
- VISUAL HORIZON LAW

*Information shared by Rodrigo Jardón from:*
*Master Class Photographers. Photographic Compositionhttps://masterclassphotographers.com/composicion-fotografica/*

# Composition Rules

These will guide the creative process in service of the story you want to tell and the emotion you want to convey, in total harmony with the expected reaction of those viewing the images.

You must decide how to arrange the visual elements in the frame, starting by highlighting the chosen subject as the **center of interest** before pressing the shutter button.




*Alex Webb. The Street. Ciudad Madero, Mexico, 1983.*

# Center of Interest

It is the shape, motif, subject, or object that becomes the focal point of your image.

The other compositional elements will be arranged around it and positioned to highlight it.

*What do you want to portray?*



*Photo: Rodrigo Jardón*

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# Activity

**A. Take two types of photographs:**

1. Photographs that reflect everyday life in your community.
2. Photographs that show the actions being taken to improve your community.

These can be portraits, nature scenes, cityscapes, inside your homes or workplaces (if appropriate), or markets, day or night.

A

**B. Once the photographs have been taken, they should be shared.**

Create a folder with as many images as possible so that you have plenty to choose from and can make comments.

At the end, you can compile the best images to create a portfolio of your city.

B

## Urban Photos Portfolio

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# References and Visual Examples

A journey into the world of Mexico City's subway system.
Black-and-white urban photographs showing different types of contrast and the city's mass transit system.
Photographer: Francisco Mata Rosas
https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2011/03/110316_galeria_mexico_metro_en



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# Part 2

## Collaboration: Collecting and interpreting data together

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# Recommended Actions

- Involve other city-makers in data collection
- Create a shared understanding of the territory

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# Recommended Actions

## Involve other city-makers in data collection

- Involve residents, local practitioners, and other city-makers directly in the process from the start.

- All city-makers hold valuable knowledge, and people who live and work in the area could be part of the data collection process. Their perspectives should shape the questions asked and the forms used to answer them.

- Participatory methods such as community-led surveys, participatory mapping, focus groups, or affective mapping can help capture local realities and strengthen collaboration.

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# Recommended Actions

## Create a shared understanding of the territory

- A coalition can make sense of what they have gathered and represent the dynamics of the territory in ways all members and others can understand and engage with.

- Data can be a useful tool when interpreted collectively and connected to people's lived realities, especially with participation from local voices.

- Systems thinking and a system map can show how key elements interact, how causes and consequences connect and where opportunities for action lie.

# Practical Focus

## Drone storytelling

- Drone Storytelling: Any story that adheres to narrative principles while using a drone as a fundamental part of the data collection.



*Photo: ©africaDRONE*



*Photo: Johannesburg, South Africa, suburbs Primrose, left, and Makause ©unequalscenes by Johnny Miller. Link*


MAY 13, 2019
TIME
The World's Most Unequal Country
Johannesburg, South Africa, suburbs Primrose, left, and Makause
time.com

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# Practical Focus

## How will drones fit into your existing storytelling workflow?

Drone storytelling presents a massive opportunity for organizations. However, it also poses significant challenges to storytellers, including costs, regulations, and skills.

# Practical Focus

## The Drone storyteller or the Drone Pilot?

A drone storyteller is a person who goes beyond being just a writer, a researcher, and a pilot. The drone storyteller must also be a photographer, videographer, meteorologist, legal expert, editor, scientist, and animator.

The drone pilot also has legal responsibility for operation in all jurisdictions, meaning the storyteller needs to be aware of their liability when conducting fieldwork.

# Practical Focus

Pay careful attention to your proposed workflow in the field, especially if this is the first time you have flown at the location. Ask yourself, am I safe? Am I keeping others safe? Am I getting the information that is required?

Generally, using a drone will necessitate a larger team than storytellers are used to working with. How can you guarantee that your storytelling workflow will remain the same at the location? Are you flying ethically?

Many things can go wrong, from weather, batteries, crowds, and birds. Flying drones requires a great deal of patience and situational awareness. Having a backup plan is essential.



*Photo: ©africaDRONE*

# Practical Focus



Have you ensured that the drone flight was legal, ethical, and accurate to the best of your ability and knowledge?

- Does the total drone story package make sense? Are you highlighting the “drone” aspect of the work?
- Do you need more material?
- Have you learned new skills?
- Several excellent tutorials for multimedia storytelling, 3D models, and working with Google Earth on our website for inspiration and training.

*Photo: ©africaDRONE*

# Practical Focus

## Things to Consider

- Who is your primary audience, andhow will they ingest the media?
- Who is the IT/web liaison at yourpublishing partner?
- Is your project accessible to all?
- How will you and your organizationbe credited?
- Have you met the goals of yourproduction plan? Is the story asuccess?



*Photo: ©africaDRONE*

# Practical Focus

## Photo editing

- Editing should follow all storytelling protocols. There should be no use of Photoshop or manipulation, remove, replace, or otherwise change the integrity of the original image. However, enhancing saturation/contrast is acceptable.
- Professional software like Adobe Lightroom is encouraged, as you can batch edit many images simultaneously, saving you time.
- Knowing the type and size of the final image is essential, as there are many different options depending on where the image will be used.

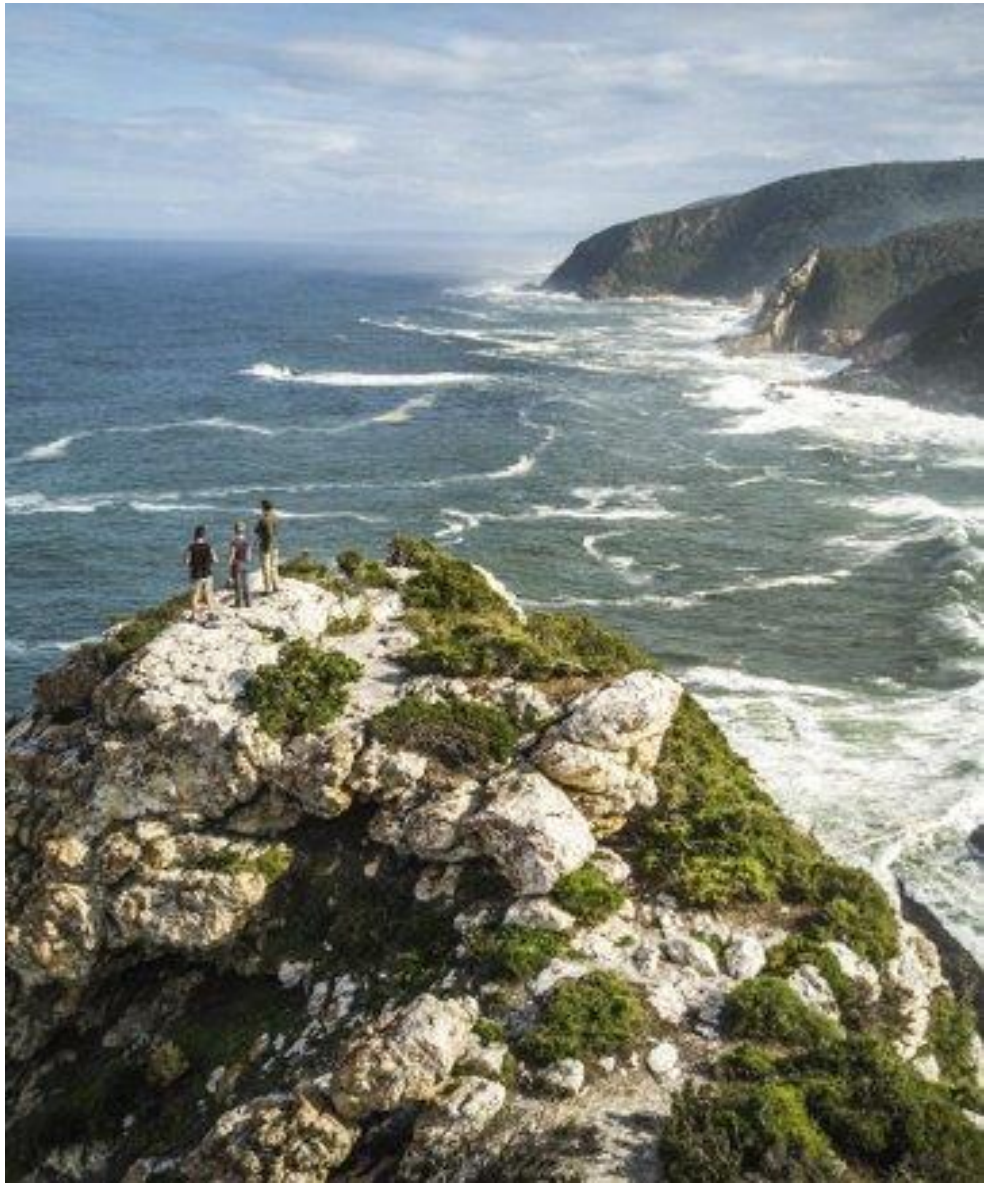


*Photo: ©africaDRONE*

# Part 3

## Expertise: Turning insights into action

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# Recommended Actions

- Identify and prioritize points for intervention
- Tell a story about the findings

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# Recommended Actions

## Identify and prioritize points for intervention

- After a shared understanding of the territory and the factors driving local problems, a coalition can begin identifying entry points that could lead to broader change in the system.

- These entry points can include prioritizing which problems to address first, using clear criteria, such as feasibility and impact.

- Prioritization could be a collective, transparent process to make it a meaningful learning experience, since people and organizations often have different priorities.

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# Recommended Actions

## Tell a story about the findings

- Coalitions could explore diverse ways to communicate findings, using formats that fit the audience, the intention and the message.

- Raw data or detailed maps alone rarely move people to action, so storytelling helps make complex issues understandable and emotionally engaging.

- When stories connect evidence with lived experience, they can inspire empathy and motivate change.

# Practical Focus

## And, But, Therefore

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**And** We set the scene.

**But** We raise conflict.

**Therefore** There's a resolution to the conflict.

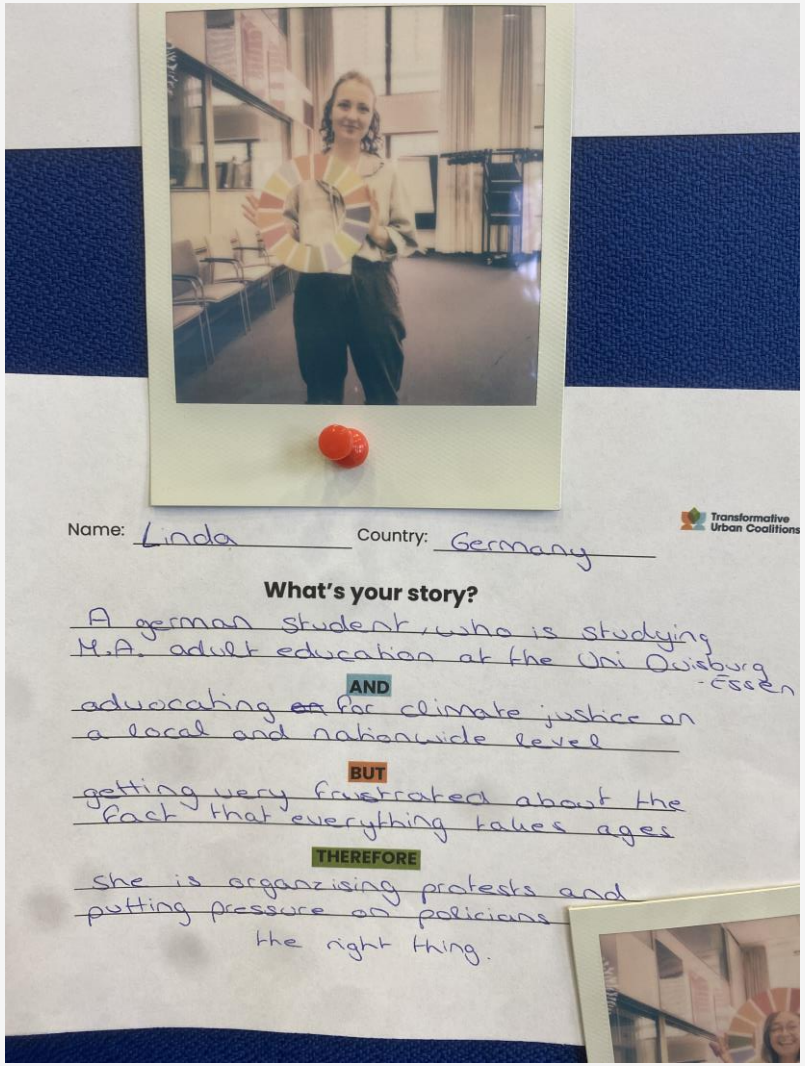
A young Swedish girl learned about the severe impacts of climate change **and** felt a deep sense of urgency to address it.

**But** even in the face of a clear scientific consensus, world leaders were not taking meaningful action to combat the issue.

**Therefore,** she initiated a school strike outside the Swedish parliament, sparking the global Fridays for Future movement, mobilizing millions to demand immediate and substantial climate action.




*Photo: ©Unsplash by Pascal Bernardon*



Name: Linda Country: Germany

**What's your story?**

A german student, who is studying M.A. adult education at the Uni Duisburg-Essen

**AND**

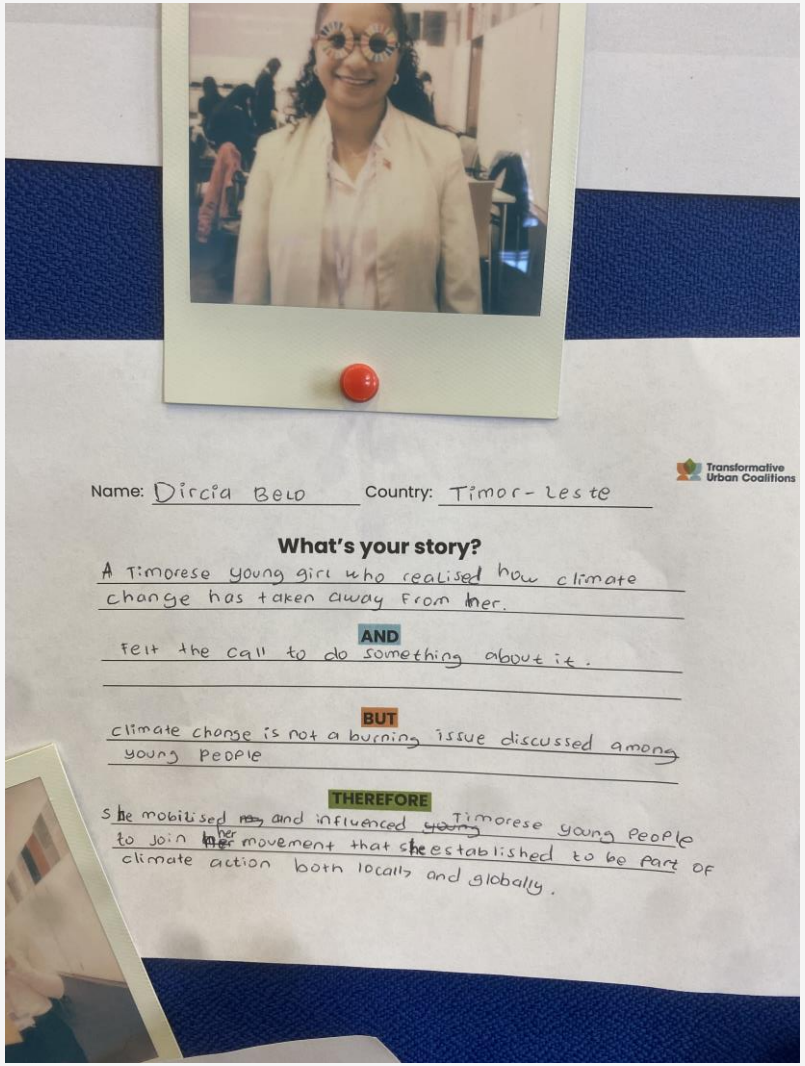
advocating ~~for~~ for climate justice on a local and nationwide level

**BUT**

getting very frustrated about the fact that everything takes ages

**THEREFORE**

She is organizing protests and putting pressure on policians the right thing.



Name: Dircia Belo Country: Timor-Leste

**What's your story?**

A Timorese young girl who realised how climate change has taken away from her.

**AND**

felt the call to do something about it.

**BUT**

climate change is not a burning issue discussed among young people

**THEREFORE**

She mobilised ~~ns~~ and influenced ~~young~~ Timorese young people to join ~~her~~ movement that she established to be part of climate action both locally and globally.

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Name: _____ Country: _____

# What's your story?

_____

_____

**AND**

_____

_____

**BUT**

_____

_____

**THEREFORE**

_____

_____

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# By understanding more about those you're talking to, you can better engage and influence them.

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**You have to know what does matter to your audience, not what should matter to them.**

**Reardon, 1991.**

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# The way we frame an issue can have a major impact on how people think about it.

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**Finding ways of communicating that resonate with people's values and worldviews (rather than challenging or contradicting them) is a crucial first step in building wider and deeper engagement.**

**Corner, 2016.**

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# More information, louder and louder, isn't enough. We need it to resonate with people.

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# Key information should be presented in a way that connects with what people already know, deem useful, and find compelling.

**Bruine de Bruin et al., 2021.**

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# Stories bring together many elements of effective communication. Use them!

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**Narrative forms of communication have been found to have the power to shape the attitudes and behaviours of people exposed to them.**

**Green & Brock, 2000.**

# Practical Focus

## Local Memory archives

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# THE ARCHIVE OF POPULAR MEMORY



# What is

- THE ARCHIVE OF THE POPULAR MEMORY OF VILLA 20 (Buenos Aires, Argentina) is a project that emerged from the Film and Memory Workshop that began in 2018. Its construction aims to create spaces for exchange among neighbors, confirming that memory is a collective and active act we construct by producing stories of history and the present.

- IT IS AN ARCHIVE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD. Because it is a neighborhood with a lot of history and many transformations in the present, and it is full of people who not only make up the neighborhood every day but also construct an attentive gaze upon it. That gaze is cared for and preserved over time.

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# MEMORY

**MEMORY IS MADE UP OF** fragments, photos, videos, testimonies, drawings, objects, letters, documents, and certificates.

It is also made up of houses that were built, windows, streets, common spaces, ways of organizing, and personal yet shared stories.

**WHAT IS THE POPULAR MEMORY OF VILLA 20 MADE OF?**

Is it part of it a personal photo from childhood, with a lagoon in the background that no longer exists?

Or a street just before it was transformed, captured by the cell phone camera of a group of young people today?

How many stories can be told about the *Cancha de los Huérfanos* (Orphans' Field), the parish, or the railway worker's house?

There are many perspectives that fit into popular memory. Protecting all of this is a way of writing the neighborhood's stories and thinking politically about the present.

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# EXPLORE THE TERRITORY

- Identify environmental problems in the neighborhood together with residents. Learn their perspective on these problems before seeking information from technical or academic sources.

- Recognize neighbors interested in environmental issues to organize a network of environmental advocates based on shared interests rather than ideological affinity.

- Identify neighbors with ancestral knowledge obtained from their places of origin (jungle, mountains, plains) that align with the nature-based urban solutions proposed by academics.

- Search for information from public archives (National Archives, historical boards, websites), private and personal archives about the neighborhood's environmental history.

- Recover footage shot as part of previous documentary projects.

- Conduct interviews with residents who have lived in the neighborhood the longest.

# CREAR UN MAPA DE LA MEMORIA AMBIENTAL DEL BARRIO

- Systematize and map the above information, with participation from neighborhood leaders and residents.

- Add information as new data becomes available.

- The residents themselves provide feedback on the search and participate in pre-production tasks, including gathering key information from previous surveys and contacting other residents who can testify on environmental issues.

# WITH THIS DATA, HELP DEFINE STRATEGIES

- The information gathered can help at neighborhood participation forums, where policymakers discuss the priorities and relevance of the technical solutions they propose.

- The survey reveals what is there, as well as what is not: overcrowding, pollution, waste disposal sites, a lack of water and trees, etc.

- The archive also highlights residents' contributions to past urbanization projects and their experiences and lessons learned in the construction of urban infrastructure.

# Lessons Learned

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- Transformative Urban Coalitions grow when people take time to see, understand, and interpret their place together:
  - Looking at the same place from multiple perspectives, such as by using photography builds empathy and trust.
  - Understanding a context is an ongoing and collective process; visual and memory-based tools make hidden realities visible and challenge assumptions.
  - Therefore, how we frame stories (AIM, ABT) shapes what people notice, care about, and ultimately choose to act on.

# References/resources

**Who we are**

- UNU-EHS- Urban Futures and Sustainability Transformation (FAST)
- https://unu.edu/ehs/our-work/transformation/urban-transformation

**What are**

**Additional Links:**

**Contact:** Dr. Andrea Ramirez, ramirez@ehs.unu.edu

# Support Materials

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