



Using stories to make change happen:

Hints and tips for videos and blogs

1

What to look for

Tell your story through short videos and blogs

Both videos and blogs are great ways of raising the profile of the issue that you are campaigning on – people's stories are really powerful.

This leaflet will take you through how to make short videos using a smart phone, and will also give tips on how to write a good blog.

As well as telling your own, or other people's stories about experiences of food poverty, look out for any opportunity to make a short video – are you at an event where something interesting is happening? Have you learned something new, or heard about something shocking or exciting?

Where to share your stories

You can share your videos through Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Don't forget to send them to us at info@endhungeruk.org so that we can share them too.

You might also have thoughts to share or a story to tell in written format. You may already know where you want to publish it, but think about sending it to us too and we can talk about including on the End Hunger UK blog.



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Hints and tips for videos and blogs

2

Equipment

You don't actually need anything other than a smartphone to capture good videos and photos. But if you know you're going to be making a video, you might want to think about taking some other equipment with you:

- If you'll be recording somebody else's story, make sure you have **consent forms** for them to sign (see page 4).
- Using a **stand** of some kind makes it much easier to take a good video. You need a tripod with extendible legs that sits on the floor, rather than a little one that goes on a table, and a mobile phone adaptor to go in the top. See our video on using your smart phone to make short videos.
- If you want the very best quality, think about using a **camera** rather than your phone.
- Using a **microphone** can ensure much better sound quality, especially if you will be recording in a place with lots of background noise. Again, you can get simple mics that plug into your phone or camera quite cheaply.



It's not hard to carry a tripod!



Using stories to make change happen:

Hints and tips for videos and blogs

3

Photographs

Video is a quick, easy way to tell your story, especially on social media. But you may also want to share it in print or in other places, so it will really help if you can take some still photos as well.

Try to get a selection of the following:

- **Portraits** of any people in the story
- Photos of the **building or location**
- Photos of any **activity** the people are doing – these could be closeups of any creative work they are doing, for example
- Photos of any **objects** relevant to the story
- Photos of any **event** that is taking place – but avoid taking photos that just feature the backs of people's heads at a meeting!

It's fine to take these photos on your smartphone if you don't have a camera with you. But please make sure it is set to take photos at the highest quality possible, so that they will still look good if they are printed or displayed in a large size.

Taking good photos

Here are some ideas to help you take photos that are nice to look at:

- Take **several shots** of each subject so you can choose the best one afterwards.
- Photos in **landscape** format, rather than portrait, are generally much more useful for our blog and social media.
- Portraits of people are often more effective if they are shown in **context** – for example, if the background shows their home or place of work.
- Don't be afraid to take a **long-distance, wide shot** – it can always be cropped afterwards.
- Use the **Rule of Thirds**. Position key elements (someone's face, the horizon, etc) a third of the way down the image and/or a third of the way across the image. (So in a portrait, the subject might be on one side of the image, rather than in the centre.)
- If the subject of your story wants to be **anonymous**, consider whether you could take a closeup photo of their hands doing some work, or an object that is important to them.



Using stories to make change happen:

Hints and tips for videos and blogs

4

Consent

If you are making a video of someone telling their story, it is **vital** that you get their consent for the story to be shared more widely.

- Make sure that they **understand** why you are recording their story, and what we will do with the video and any photos.
- Find out whether they are happy to be **named**, or would prefer to remain anonymous.
- Get them to sign a **consent form** and keep it safe somewhere. Or if you don't have any forms on you, video them saying that they give their consent to be filmed, and they also give their consent for the video to be shared. Keep a copy of that video
- Make sure they know how to **contact you**, in case they later have any questions or change their mind about having their story published.

Consent forms

End Hunger policy and form details???



Using stories to make change happen:

Hints and tips for videos and blogs

5

Video styles

There are lots of different ways you could tell your story. Take a moment to think about what way would work best.

In general, your videos should last for two minutes or less. If you can get it under one minute, it's much easier to share on social media – and it will be watched by more people!



- **Vlog**
A piece to camera – just you talking directly to the lens with thoughts, reflections, or stories.
- **Show and tell**
Pointing at something and describing it. For new resources, locations, walkabouts. Say what you see.
- **How to**
Tips or instructions on how to do something. Could be a series of videos.
- **At a live event**
This can make a lively video. Say why you're at the event, what it's about, and what you've learned.
- **Testimonial**
Record a supporter or project participant saying what their experience has been, and how working with End Hunger UK has made a difference for them.
- **Interview**
Record yourself asking questions of a supporter or an 'expert by experience'. You could appear in shot and make it more of a conversation, or you could be behind the camera and focus more on their story.



Using stories to make change happen:

Hints and tips for videos and blogs

6

Video: smartphone filming tips

- **Rule of Thirds**
Position yourself or your interviewee a third of the way across the screen, and a third of the way down the screen.
- **Landscape format**
Make sure your phone is horizontal, not vertical. Landscape videos are much easier to share and watch than portrait videos.
- **Lighting**
Think about how you can get light onto the subject's face. Try to avoid overhead lighting, and definitely avoid light behind the subject. Try to use daylight, e.g. by standing near a window.
- **Background**
Try not to have a boring blank background, but make sure it isn't distracting. (Movement in the background is fine, e.g. at an event.)
- **Sound**
Are you close enough to the phone (1m or less)? Is there background noise that could be a problem?
- **Stability**
Use a stand if you have one, or put your phone on a shelf or windowsill. If you have to hold it in your hand, try using something to steady it.
- **Eye levels**
Place your phone's camera directly at eye level, or at mid-point between your eye level and your interviewee's, if you're both in shot.
- **Lens**
Avoid looking at yourself on the phone screen. Talk to the lens on the camera instead. You could put a post-it note on the screen with an arrow pointing at the lens if it helps.
- **Interview technique**
If you are interviewing someone but not appearing in shot yourself, it's often best to ask your interviewee to look at you rather than at the camera. If you have some time to edit the video, you could plan to edit out your questions – just ask the interviewee to phrase their answers in a way that will still make sense if you do this.
- **Aeroplane mode**
It's a good idea to set your phone not to receive incoming calls while you're recording!



Using stories to make change happen:

Hints and tips for videos and blogs

7

Video: preparing what to say

1. Open with shared values

If you can, open your video by talking about the values embodied in our work, values shared by the audience. “We all want to live in a just and compassionate society” ... ‘ “No one should have to go to bed hungry.”

2. Tone down the politics

Avoid language associated with political ideologies, such as ‘austerity’. Focus on shared values and collective responsibility.

3. Describe the problem using a strong image

Use a metaphor about how poverty/hunger ‘restricts and restrains’ or ‘acts like a current’ to explain the situation you’re talking about. (See the JRF Framing Toolkit for more detail.) You can include some facts and figures here if they help.

4. Tell a story

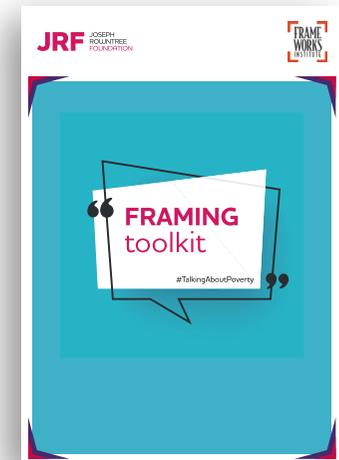
Show how a real person’s experience reflects the issue you are talking about.

5. Talk about the solution

Explain how our project, or the policy we’re campaigning for, will address the problem – still using the metaphor. So it might ‘loosen the grip of poverty’ or ‘act like an anchor’.

These guidelines come from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation’s Framing Toolkit. It outlines a proven way of telling stories about poverty in order to engage people and build their support for action to tackle its root causes. The toolkit is available online.

We ask all End Hunger campaigners to bear the guidelines in mind when speaking about our work, including in videos. If you are interviewing somebody else, you could share some of the ideas with them, and explain that it’s a useful tool for making sure audiences understand what you’re saying about poverty and its effects.





Using stories to make change happen:

Hints and tips for videos and blogs

8

Video: tips for performing on camera

- **Record your rehearsal**
They can often be good enough to use. If not, go back and listen to what you said – there might be things to learn from or reuse.
- **Pause and smile**
Do this for a second or two at the beginning and end of the video. It makes it easier to trim off the part where you are reaching out to push the button on your phone.
(You can often do the editing really easily just on the phone itself. Just google 'how to edit my videos on my iPhone / android phone'.)
- **Start strong, finish strong**
Think especially about how you will open and close what you have to say.
- **Use connective phrases**
'In addition'... 'Also'... 'And because of that'... help to move the topic on.
- **Be yourself**
Move your arms. Be expressive and enthusiastic.
- **Speak in 'pub talk'**
Avoid jargon and acronyms. Don't assume knowledge.
- **Keep it brief**
Make your point once. Remember that most of your viewers will be on social media and won't watch for long.
- **Play to your strengths**
Nervous about appearing on camera? Perhaps you can focus more on capturing stories from people you work with.



Using stories to make change happen:

Hints and tips for videos and blogs

9

Sharing stories

The point of creating short videos like this is to share them quickly with people, letting them see that they're part of an active, lively movement. So don't wait around too long before sharing your story.

- Don't worry too much about **editing** your video before uploading it – but the software on your phone should allow you to snip off any unnecessary footage at the start and end of your clip, for example.
- If you manage **social media** for your own project or campaign (e.g. a Twitter account or Facebook page), share your video as soon as you can! The only time to hesitate would be when you have several clips to share. In that case, you should space them out so that you don't share them all on the same day.
- It's a good idea to include **subtitles** with your video, so that people can follow the story even if their volume is turned down. Facebook and YouTube will both create subtitles automatically for you, but do check and correct them before publishing!
- If you've taken **photos**, you could share them on your social media feeds as well.
- Also **email the video and any photos to the End Hunger team** (info@endhungeruk.org). They will share them to the campaign's main social media feeds and with partners, and maybe on the blog, website, and elsewhere.

- It's really important that you have people's **consent** to share their stories. You can find a template consent form on the End Hunger UK website ([link](#)). File it somewhere safe. If you've got no forms with you, you could video the person saying that they are happy to appear on the video and for this video to be shared. And **let them know** when it appears online.





Using stories to make change happen:

Hints and tips for videos and blogs

10

Blog writing tips

- Each article should generally be around **500 words** long.
- Adopt a **conversational, chatty style**.
- **Avoid using jargon, acronyms or academic language.** This is an opportunity to share your work with people who may not have encountered the concepts before.
- **Keep the audience in mind while you are writing.** Most readers of the blog are likely to be grassroots End Hunger campaigners - volunteers in food banks, etc.
- **Put some work into your introductory paragraph.** Is it intriguing, engaging or different? Does it draw the reader in?
- **Think about what will interest the audience about the topic you are discussing.** If you're reporting on a piece of work, don't provide a blow-by-blow account of what you did when. Tell them what transformation it produced, how it made the participants feel, and what will happen next.
- **If you can, always include quotes from people with direct experience of the issues.** If you have photos of them, even better.
- Include links to **recent research or media coverage of the topic** if appropriate.
- **Try to find a subject that has not been written about over and over again** – or have something really fresh and surprising to say about an old theme.
- One of the unique strengths of blogging as a medium is that readers are able to share your post with others, and to join in the discussion by posting their own comments. So try to include some **questions or discussion starters** in your article.
- **Read it aloud** when you've finished. Is that how you talk?
- The reader should emerge **clear about what you're saying**, what other people have said on the subject, and what they are being asked to comment on.



Using stories to make change happen:

Hints and tips for videos and blogs

11

Checklist

- Have I made sure any participants understand how their story will be used, and got them to sign a consent form?
- Do I need anyone's permission to film at this location?
- Do I have enough available memory on my camera or phone?
- Have I made sure I am not facing into a light source?
- Am I recording in landscape format (with my phone on its side)?
- Is there much background noise? Do I need to find a quieter location?
- Is my phone 1m or less away, for good sound quality?
- Am I looking at the lens rather than at the screen?
- Have I applied the Rule of Thirds?
- Am I in focus? (Touch the screen where you want the image to be in focus.)
- Have I paused with a smile at the start and finish?
- Have I also taken still photographs of the location, people, and activity?