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A foundation builds a legacy project with storytellers by starting with a clear purpose, finding people who can tell the story with care, and showing audiences what the work changes—not just what it intends. That takes more than a campaign or a podcast. It takes a plan for consent, editorial decisions, distribution, and what happens after the first wave of attention.

For foundation leaders, communications directors, strategists, and creators, the central question is practical: how can a story honour a person or cause while helping a purpose-driven movement continue? The answer is to treat storytelling as part of the project's work, not decoration around it.

Start With Meaning, Not a Media Plan

A legacy project usually begins with something people want to carry forward: a founder's values, a community's history, a response to injustice, or a commitment to future generations. Before choosing a format, the foundation should be able to explain what that legacy means in the present tense.

That explanation should be more specific than "inspiring change." What is the foundation trying to protect, build, or make possible? Who is already doing that work? What will be different if the project succeeds? Clear answers help a team decide which stories belong—and which would simply make the project look polished.

Consider Free The Children, an organization whose name is associated with youth-led activism and social action. A foundation drawing on that kind of public legacy should not rely on the name alone. It should explain the values it is carrying forward, acknowledge the people and communities involved, and describe how the current work connects to the original purpose. A legacy is strongest when it is presented as an active responsibility, not a commemorative label.





Turn values into editorial questions

Before interviews begin, write down a small set of questions that can guide decisions. For example:

- Whose experience is central to this project, and who has been left out of the usual account?
- What can participants choose not to share?
- What evidence will show that the work has changed something?
- How will the foundation credit community knowledge and creative labour?
- What should audiences understand or do after hearing the story?

These questions make values usable. They also help strategists and creators make consistent choices when they face deadlines, sensitive material, or pressure to simplify a complicated story.

Build With Storytellers, Not Just About Them

“Storyteller” can mean a participant, a journalist, a photographer, a podcast host, a filmmaker, an archivist, or a community historian. The title matters less than the role the person has in shaping the work. If someone supplies a moving quote but has no say in how it is edited, credited, or distributed, the project may be using their story without meaningfully sharing control.

Foundations can improve that relationship by agreeing on expectations early. Explain the project’s purpose, where the material may appear, how long it may remain online, and whether it may be adapted into other formats. Set a clear process for reviewing factual details and handling concerns. A participant does not need to control every editorial choice, but they should understand the process and have a way to raise an issue.

Fair compensation is another practical part of respect. Budget for the work of creators, translators, editors, and community advisers rather than treating their time as an informal contribution. If a project depends on lived experience, make room for people to participate on terms that do not require them to disclose more than they wish.

Use a simple project agreement

A short written agreement can reduce confusion. It can identify the project lead, the storyteller's role, the approved uses of the material, payment or other compensation, and the contact for questions. It should also explain what the foundation can and cannot promise about reach or impact.

This is particularly important when stories involve grief, health, family history, discrimination, or financial hardship. A compelling narrative is not a licence to expose someone. The goal is not to extract the most emotional account; it is to make truthful, useful storytelling possible while protecting people's dignity.

Make Behind-the-Scenes Impact Visible

Public storytelling often favours the visible moment: a launch, a speech, a donation, a finished building. But foundations also need to show the less dramatic work that makes results possible—relationship-building, training, logistics, research, maintenance, and the decisions that do not work the first time.

Showing this behind-the-scenes work can make a legacy project more credible. It helps audiences see how resources move, who is doing the work, and what it takes to sustain a change. It also gives staff, partners, and community members a fuller picture than a single celebratory image can offer.

For example, a foundation supporting a youth program might tell a series of stories rather than one success narrative: how young people helped shape the program, what facilitators changed after listening to them, what barriers remain, and what the next stage requires. That account is more useful than implying that one event solved a long-standing problem.

Story element What to show What to avoid Purpose The need the project addresses and why it matters now Broad promises without a defined goal Process The people, decisions, and practical work behind the result Presenting outcomes as if they happened automatically Evidence Specific changes, limitations, and what remains unfinished Claims of impact that cannot be supported Participation How storytellers shaped or reviewed the project Using a person's image or experience without clear consent

Use Podcasting for Depth, Not Just Reach

A podcast can give a legacy project space for context, disagreement, memory, and reflection. It allows listeners to hear how people speak, not only what a campaign summary says about them. But audio is not automatically intimate or trustworthy. The production choices still matter: who hosts, who is interviewed, what gets edited out, and whether the story has a clear reason to exist in audio.

An iHeartMedia partnership for a podcast can be one route to production support or audience distribution, depending on the agreement. The foundation should establish the actual scope before announcing it: who owns the content, who makes editorial decisions, where episodes will be available, how promotion will work, and what audience reporting the partners will share. Naming a media partner should clarify the arrangement, not stand in for a description of the project.

Plan the series before recording

A focused podcast does not need a long season. A short run of well-researched episodes may serve a legacy project better than an streetsoftoronto open-ended show. Each episode should have a distinct purpose—such as documenting an origin, examining a current challenge, or exploring what the next generation wants to preserve.

1. **Choose the listening question.** Decide what listeners should understand by the end of the episode.

2. **Prepare with participants.** Explain the format and topics in advance, and make clear that a guest can decline a question.
3. **Record for accuracy.** Keep notes on names, dates, figures, and claims that need checking.
4. **Edit for meaning.** Remove repetition and confusion without making a speaker seem more certain, cheerful, or resolved than they were.
5. **Publish with context.** Add a transcript, relevant links, credits, and a plain-language note about the project's purpose.

Audio also needs an afterlife. A transcript can make the material more accessible and searchable. Short excerpts can introduce an episode on social media, while the full conversation gives interested listeners a deeper account. These formats should point back to the original story rather than detach a dramatic quote from its context.

Give Social Platforms Different Jobs

Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter/X can help a foundation bring a story to different audiences. They should not all be treated as interchangeable announcement boards. A platform plan works best when each channel has a purpose and the organization has the capacity to maintain it.

- **Facebook:** Share event details, community updates, longer captions, and links to full resources.
- **Instagram:** Use photo essays, short video, and carousel posts to show people and process, with captions that provide context.
- **TikTok:** Publish concise explainers or creator-led clips when the format and audience fit the subject. Do not force complex experiences into a trend or sound bite.
- **Twitter/X:** Post timely updates, quotations with context, and links to reporting or project information, while considering how quickly posts may circulate without their original framing.

Every post should have a clear job: invite people to listen, explain a decision, credit a creator, or point to a concrete next step. A schedule full of content is not the same as a communications strategy. If a platform creates more moderation and production work than the team can support, it is reasonable to focus on fewer channels.

Keep the Legacy Accountable Over Time

A legacy project should answer two different questions: what story did the foundation tell, and what changed because the work took place? The first can be measured through production and distribution. The second requires evidence connected to the project's goals.

Useful measures might include whether community partners helped set priorities, whether a training program reached the intended participants, or whether a service became easier to access. Downloads, views, and shares can show exposure; they cannot, by themselves, prove a social outcome. Be precise about the difference.

Foundations can also publish updates after the launch. If a project promised to report on a program, return with the findings. If circumstances changed, explain what changed and why. A public record of unfinished work can strengthen trust more than a glossy recap that leaves audiences to guess.

Make room for the next chapter

Legacy is not only about looking backward. It is also about making choices that allow others to continue, question, or reshape the work. A foundation might preserve interviews in an archive, commission new voices, fund community-led interpretation, or invite younger participants to define what should carry forward.

Names such as Legacy+ and Legacy College can appear in conversations about legacy, learning, and the future, but a foundation should be specific about each organization's role in a particular project. Do not imply a partnership, endorsement, or shared program unless one has been confirmed. The same standard applies to any creator, media company, or community organization.

In the end, a lasting project is not the one with the most posts or the most polished trailer. It is the one that connects meaning to action: it gives storytellers a fair role, makes the work behind the scenes understandable, and tells audiences what has—and has not—changed. That is how foundations turn a story into part of a living legacy.