

## Storywall

A story-based, qualitative method for retrospectively assembling crucial events of collective processes.

<b>What is the storywall method?</b>	The storywall method allows different actors to retrospectively look at how they have perceived a joint process, e.g. a process of co-producing knowledge. It uses storytelling to collect the individual perspectives and to create a joint understanding of the past. The starting point is a simple timeline (horizontal axis) on an empty poster. The assembled group of participants agrees on and marks major process phases or crucial events of their joint story and finds a way to exchange on what has been important, for whom and why.
<b>Why should it be applied?</b>	The storywall method allows contrasting different perspectives and increases mutual understanding. It makes use of the fact that different members of a group may – at least partly – experience a process in different ways and stress different elements as having been important.
<b>When should it be applied?</b>	Storywalls are normally made ex post, i.e. at the end of group processes.
<b>How does it work?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) As a starting point, a simple timeline indicating the start and the end dates of the joint process or story is provided.</li> <li>2) The group members collectively discuss whether to further structure the paper's timeline, for example, into project parts, organizational levels, or main process phases.</li> <li>3) The actors individually identify key events or dominant influences. They may also want to identify those that have either supported or hindered the process, as well as other relevant story elements with respect to reflection and exchange.</li> <li>4) Based on the individual elements, the actors jointly create a storywall picture of their process, representing their group's collective understanding of it. This is the main step because different perceptions and experiences are shared, and the process elements are discussed.</li> <li>5) In case the storywalls are made in subgroups, they can subsequently be presented to the full group.</li> <li>6) In addition to the reported stories with their elements, the main lessons learned can be selected and used to create an ideal storywall.</li> </ol>
<b>How are thought styles bridged?</b>	The approach to bridging thought styles is to explain to each other how one perceived and experienced a joint process. This allows for greater mutual understanding.
<b>What's the output/outcome?</b>	The outcome of a storywall exercise is a poster of the story featuring its most important elements out of the perspective of the group and its members.
<b>Who participates in what role?</b>	An actor group can come together and make a storywall on its own. Depending on the complexity of the process or the group atmosphere, a facilitator, moderator or coach may be helpful.

<b>What do I need to prepare?</b>	A table, a few flipcharts, other big sheets of paper or whiteboards and markers (different colours) are required.
<b>When not to use the method?</b>	When there is no need or no openness for reflecting on a past collaborative process.
<b>Where can I learn more?</b>	<p>Selected references:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smit A 2005. The facilitator's toolkit. Centre for Business in Society, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, pp 45.</li> <li>• Pohl C, Wuelsner G, Bebi P, Bugmann H, Buttler A, Elkin C, Grit-Regamey A, Hirschi C, Le Q B, Peringer A, Rigling A, Seidl R, Huber R 2015. How to successfully publish interdisciplinary research: learning from an Ecology and Society Special Feature. Ecology and Society, V20, N2.</li> </ul> <p>Check the online profile on <a href="http://www.transdisciplinarity.ch/toolbox">www.transdisciplinarity.ch/toolbox</a> for updated resources (e.g. most recent publications, experience reports, videos, links).</p>

### Suggested citation

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### SDGs: The International Sustainable Development Goals of the UN

In this publication, the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences make most notably a contribution to SDGs 4, 16, 17:

> [sustainabledevelopment.un.org](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org)

> [eda.admin.ch/agenda2030/en/home/agenda-2030/die-17-ziele-fuer-eine-nachhaltige-entwicklung.html](http://eda.admin.ch/agenda2030/en/home/agenda-2030/die-17-ziele-fuer-eine-nachhaltige-entwicklung.html)



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