

Given how deeply dominant narratives are woven into our culture, institutions, and practices, we believe that narrative change requires a multi-disciplinary approach that draws on the strength of many fields of knowledge and traditions of practice. We think these diverse approaches can complement and strengthen each other. This field guide is to help practitioners chart the lifecycle of narrative change projects, identify gaps, and make it easier to spot narrative change work in the wild. This is a working draft and we welcome your feedback.

## What is Narrative Change?

## Narrative Initiative

594 Dean Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11238

Narrative Initiative catalyzes durable narrative change in order to make equity and social justice common sense. We make connections between people and organizations, amplify the best tools and methodologies from an emerging field, and activate new collaborations that lead to greater alignment. By weaving narrative thinking into a multidisciplinary field, we build toward a community of practice that creates a long-term shift in hearts and minds.

## About Narrative Initiative

# NARRATIVE CHANGE FOUR BASKETS FIELD GUIDE

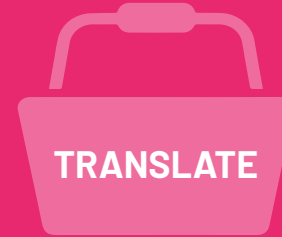
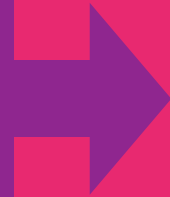
## EXAMPLES

Grassroots Policy Project's Dave Mann has crafted a member-driven process to help organizations create grounding narratives for their organizations that they can use to anchor campaigns and other work.

Midwest Culture Lab adopted a participatory design process used by marketing experts to generate narratives based on a plethora of individual stories of youth participating in their 2018 voter engagement work.



The creative act of generating a new narrative is an essential first step in narrative change practice. Early in the process, articulate both the new narrative and the existing, dominant one.



In order to effectively change a narrative, it is necessary to deploy a new one in the world. Effective deployment means it is legible in many places, to many audiences. Identify audiences to connect with, and find ways to express the narrative.

## EXAMPLES

Demos' partnered with Anat Shenker-Osorio (ASO) in 2018 to produce messaging that talks both about race and class in way that resonated both nationally and with audiences in specific states.

Our Minnesota Future made a major effort in 2018 to integrate narrative strategies into organizing, communications, and campaigning—and used the Demos/ASO research mentioned above to drive messages across all aspects of their work.

# FOUR BASKETS NECESSARY CAPACITIES FOR NARRATIVE CHANGE



Is your new narrative is being adopted? Understanding the larger narrative landscape is key to being effective. Mapping before/during/after sustained efforts of narrative shift shows what is working and where to improve practice.



Move your narrative in public by designing effective narrative interventions. New narratives only become dominant when they are both put into practice and adopted widely.



## EXAMPLES

The MIT Media Cloud is an open source tool that can be useful for people considering doing a media study.

Upwell.us baselined ocean conservation narratives online, and provided regular updates and forecasts to ocean influencers.

Tools like Radian6, Crimson Hexagon and Nexalogy can be used for identifying narratives that are dominating social media and monitor them in real time.

## EXAMPLES

The ReFrame Mentorship works with individuals and organizations to use integrated, strategic communications approaches to drive narratives forward.

Pop Culture Collab is working with groups like Color of Change, 5050by2020, and other organizations working directly with artists, producers, and other creatives to move narratives in pop culture.