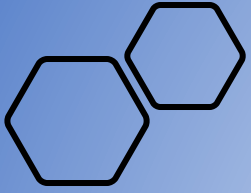


Storytelling in Building Post Disaster Community Resiliency: Impact, Challenges, and Lessons Learned

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The Art of Storytelling

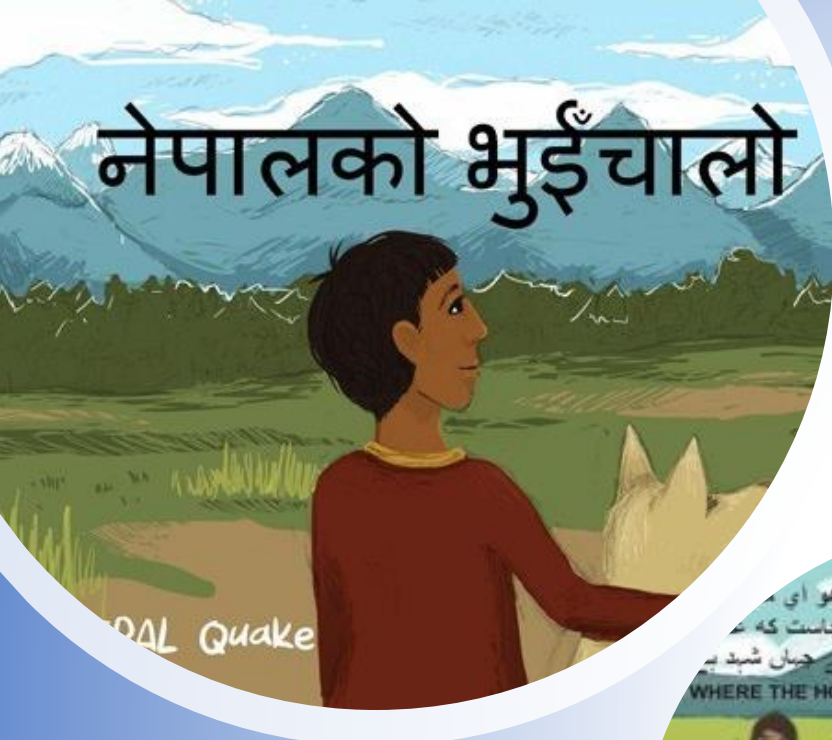
- Storytelling is a socio-cultural tool, which can assist children in articulating their thoughts and feelings
- We have developed nine unique children's books in response to disasters



Who are We?

- Headwaters Relief Organization is an international, non-profit organization that engages volunteers in disaster relief, public health and psychosocial support, cleanup and rebuilding, meeting the needs of families and communities
- Our mission is to bring hope and build resiliency
- We seek to inspire a passion to serve others. We forge connections between those who are being served, the volunteers and the community at large





Our Books

- **When Haiti Shakes**- first book created in 2011 after the earthquake in Haiti
- **When Strong Winds Blow**- Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) the Philippines
- **When the Great Sickness Came**- Ebola crisis in West Africa
- **Together again**- trafficking issues in Nepal



When We All Stayed Home

- Coloring book to support children and families cope with the uncertainties of COVID-19 pandemic
- As children engage in artwork, COVID-19 is explained through a story allowing for discussions
- Skill building components like handwashing techniques. The need to socially distance and wear a mask is also explained
- For adults, supportive ideas on communicating about Coronavirus, common questions children might have, and homeschooling tips are also provided





Assessment

Qualitative assessments and feedback surveys

- Refugee book in Jordan
- Human trafficking in Nepal
- Earthquake in Puerto Rico
- Covid-19 coloring book





Findings

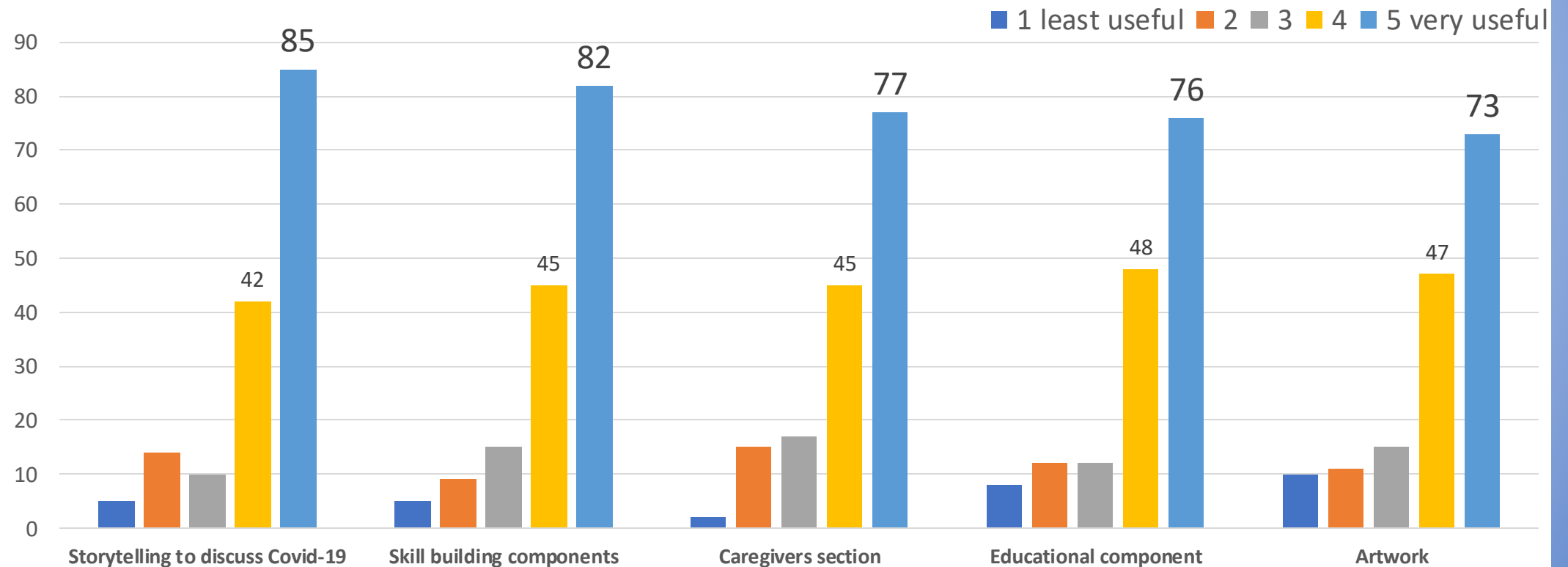
>80% of respondents had used storytelling

"We really liked the optimism you brought to the story by portraying her as a strong character. She was not frightened by the situation but overcame; life is not only about mistakes". Nepal_teacher_2

"You have presented very sensitive material in simple sentences that children can read. They also look at the activities through the pictures and it allows them to use their imaginations". -Jordan_communitymember_3

Covid-19 book survey

- 71 adults with 156 children
- 87% reported that they will recommend this book to their friends and families



Discussion

- In times of disaster communities unite to protecting the vulnerable
- Story telling assists children in articulating their thoughts and feelings and help them make sense of their world
- Stories can help caregivers explain difficult topics, explain abstract ideas, teach new skills and healthy behaviors to children
- These books initiate a process of learning and empowerment, allowing children to reinterpret a situation of adversity and positively redefine their experiences

“Yes, the information will reach the parents as well. The children tell everything to their parents. That is the first thing they will do today, as soon as they reach home”. Nepal_teacher_6

Challenges

- Creating a book unique to the disaster and community served
- Working with children and communities post disaster is a major challenge
- Delivering books to these regions impacted
- Financial challenges

“A play in my opinion would have helped reach wider crowds and easily encompass children of all age groups”. Nepal_caregiver_1

Lessons learned

- Children can play a pivotal role in developing community resiliency
- Diligent research on people, animals, vegetation, artwork as well as culture is critical
- Engaging local partners and training interpreters was important to gain access and ensure accurate delivery of the messages



Conclusion

Story books and story telling are important tools in helping communities recover from disaster. Story telling can foster the development of coping skills and support resiliency.

Through books with representative artwork and language we were able to effectively engage the communities after disaster and aid in their recovery.



Thank you

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