BATTLE OF THE STORY WORKSHEET

This exercise is intended to help grassroots activists create more compelling narratives to communicate their campaigns. The Battle of the Story is a framework for applying a "narrative power analysis" to an issue—whether it's the story that specific power holders are telling about the issue or just the accepted status quo perception that we are campaigning to change. The worksheet asks you to apply four different elements of story (conflict, characters, imagery/show don't tell and foreshadowing) to both the power holder's story and then our story as grassroots activists. Tell each story on its own terms, not the "truth" but rather the story. The bottom row is the place to step out of the story and analyze it by identifying the assumptions that allow each of the stories to operate. For our stories these assumptions may be our core values but many times the assumptions of our opponent's story are contradictions and weaknesses that we can use to challenge their story's framing by exposing hidden agendas or contrasting alternate visions of the future. At the completion of this chart you should be able to revisit each story and beginning developing some frames and core messages that will help you win the Battle of the Story!

ELEMENTS OF STORY	OPPOSITION OR STATUS QUO STORY (THEM)	ADVOCATES / CHANGE AGENTS (US)
Conflict How is the problem being framed? Who or what is the conflict between? Are there good guys and the bad guys? What's at stake?		
Characters Who are the specific victims? Who are the messengers that tell the story? Do they get to speak for themselves or is someone speaking on their behalf?		
Imagery/show don't tell What powerful images does the story provide? Are there relevant metaphors, symbols or specific examples that embody the story?		
Foreshadowing How does each story show us the future? What is the vision that the story offers of how things will be if the conflict resolves successfully?		
Assumptions What are the unstated assumptions? What does someone have to believe to accept the story as true? What values are reflected in the story?		