Media Training Toolkit

- Activist photography
- Mainstream media
- Social media

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#women2030

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Women2030 is a programme by an alliance of five global women's networks working as part of the Women's Major Group to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a gender-equitable and climate-just way. They are part of a five year partnership agreement with the European Commission called "Women CSOs implementing SDGs Agenda 2030. The five groups are WECF International, Women Environmental Programme, Global Forest Coalition, Gender and Water Alliance, and Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development. Together they represent over 200 organisations in more than 52 countries that will directly engage in the project, as well as a network of over 900 member organisations in over 100 countries.

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Introduction: gender and the media

Media in all its forms—print, film, television, social media, and radio—plays an important role in society. It provides entertainment and news about current events, mobilises citizens about various issues, provides frameworks for interpreting events and issues, and reinforces cultural and social norms.

In all these functions the media can potentially contribute to the promotion of gender equality through the way it portrays women and men of different ages, races, sexual orientation and religions, and from different places. But it can also validate gender stereotypes that worsen prejudices and discrimination against specific groups of women and men.

It is therefore very important to be conscious of this while using media, especially as a tool to communicate, inform, educate, and mobilise in development work. While the chapters of this media toolkit do not specifically detail the gender-sensitive use of photography, and social and mainstream media, there are some simple ways that you can use these media to help fight gender bias and thus contribute to gender equality.

Firstly, aim to involve women and men from under-represented groups (rural, poor, ethnic minorities, disabled, LGBT) in reporting and documenting their own lives and causes, through photographs, videos, testimonies and press releases about their own communities. This will reveal new perspectives that help to breakdown old ideas. Showing women as sources of information and interviewees will also help to attract a female audience.

Secondly, challenge gender stereotypes and the status quo, and depict empowered women whenever possible. For example, in photos show women in action, especially in sectors where they tend to be invisible (as farmers, politicians, or engineers for instance). When making photos of women and girls, take level shots—avoid filming them from above as this makes them look smaller (and vulnerable). When writing press releases, quote women spokespersons, experts, and celebrities and raise awareness about certain marginalised categories of women and men, such as the poor, elderly, or those belonging to ethnic minorities. When posting about advocacy events on social media, balance pictures of people in international/regional meetings with pictures of grassroots people in action.

Thirdly, respect tradition, culture and native languages, and use them as a means to bridge gaps between different women and men, as this can resonate with grassroots communities, as well as helping to mute opposition from conservative segments of society. Involving key community leaders such as teachers, cultural leaders and government officials in local media activities is also important for greater impact and sustainable change. Participatory approaches are an effective tool in encouraging alternative discourses, norms and practices, and in empowering women. The use of sketches and photography in participatory media workshops, for example, has encouraged women who have traditionally been reluctant to engage in public forums to express themselves.

Fourthly, be sensitive to the heightened risk of violence, harassment, and intimidation that women and girls face, and do not put their security at risk through public 'scoops' in social media, print, or videos. If necessary, keep female sources anonymous, do not take or publish photos of women in certain sensitive cultural contexts, and turn off tags relating to names and locations in postings on social media.

Fifthly, aim to increase women's and girls' access to media education and equipment (such as cameras, smart phones and the internet) to reduce the gender digital divide. Encourage women to use the internet and social media as a critical enabler of human rights, and to participate more fully in public life/society. An important part of education is also raising women's awareness about the misuse of digital and social media for (sexual) abuse and the violation of individual privacy and rights. Women and young girls and boys need to know how to avoid and report cyber bullying and rights violation through social media.

Finally, the more women photographers and journalists there are, the more gender diverse media organisations and structures, which still tend to be very male-dominated, will become. They will also provide positive role models for women and girls, and help to attract a female audience. The involvement of women in technical, decision-making, and agenda-setting activities in the media not only has the potential to develop the capacities of women as sociopolitical actors, but can also improve the perception of women in the minds of policymakers, government bureaucrats, and technical staff of projects.

There is of course a lot more written on the topic of gender and media, and for those who are interested here is a small list of **useful resources on gender in media**:

The ***Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG)*** is a global movement to promote gender equality in and through media
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/crosscutting-priorities/gender-and-media/global-alliance-on-media-and-gender/homepage/

The ***Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSRDC) website has a guide on 'Gender and Media'***, with information on the subject and resources for further reading
http://www.gsdrc.org/topic-guides/gender/gender-and-media/

Civicus Guide to reporting on civic space – media toolkit. Section 2 outlines gender balanced reporting among other topics. http://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-center/toolkits/2746-guide-to-reporting-civic-space

CHAYN is an open-source project that began in 2013, leveraging digital technology to empower women against violence and oppression so they can live happier and healthier lives. Their projects include a digital skills sharing network for women, a platform informing women experiencing domestic abuse in India to make informed decisions, and a crowd-sourced information portal for women experiencing violence and oppression in Pakistan. http://chayn.co/about/

Part 1 Activist photos—by activists, for activists

Photographs are a powerful way of telling stories. They can be understood almost instantaneously, engaging the viewer without needing to be translated. Specifically in terms of campaign communications—including advocacy and communicating with supporters and funders—photographs are a critical campaign tool.

Yet they are not used nearly as much as they could or should be. Strong campaign images—the kind needed by under-resourced and over-stretched activists and communities—are very hard to find, even using online search engines and platforms such as Google and Flickr. Free ones are even harder to find, and free ones you can use without permission are like gold dust! (And no, you can't steal them…)

One solution is for activists to learn to take better photographs themselves, understanding how to create and use more compelling campaign images, and becoming familiar with related ethical, security and legal aspects.

In addition, if activists share their images with each other we can create a bigger pool of visual imagery to use collectively.

Story-telling

In general, activist photographs can be used to tell powerful narratives that **explain underlying problems**, and **inspire people** to support or participate in change.

A narrative can sometimes be illustrated with a **single image**, if there is enough content that is specific to your story.

However photographs are often used **in groups**, where they collectively create or illustrate a narrative arc. For example, they might be displayed as an exhibition or they might be used to illustrate a report. In this case you will need to think about the different types of activist photo you need for different parts of the narrative. For example, you might want some that are **scene-setting**, some that **illustrate conflict and incidents**, and some that **show solutions**.

However, it is important to realise that your images don't have to tell the whole story on their own. It is perfectly acceptable to provide **additional written information** about your images, so that the images and text tell the story together.

Photographs of people are particularly important for activists as they can help other people to empathise with your story. We love to look at photos of other people and we can often read a great deal about their thoughts and emotions from their facial expressions and body language. You can photograph your community as a **group**, and take **individual portraits** of community members.

You should definitely try to take **photographs of people doing things** as well. For example, activists focusing on communities and their involvement in conservation might photograph people undertaking traditional activities such as farming, cooking and making things—especially activities that depend on local foods and materials, and activities that might have an impact on the local environment.

These photographs might also show people harvesting and cooking local foods. Other photographs can depict where people live: houses, streets, farms, villages or towns. They can include panoramic landscapes and detailed shots of local animals and plants.

Activist photos can also focus on activities in general—**people working together to create solutions**, doing something practical like, for example, erecting fences or planting trees—or the results of those activities.

Don't forget you can also use photographs to **record documents for security**, and then store them on your computer or online somewhere (both if possible).

Key compositional tips and tricks

If you want your photographs to tell a story effectively, they also need to attract and hold your viewers' interest. There are a number of technical and compositional tips and tricks that can help with this.

(1) Make sure your image is interesting

Emphasising key features in your image helps to attract attention and show the viewer what, in particular, you want them to look at.

It really helps to have **a key focal point** in the image – it might be a face or a banner for example. In an ideal world, that **focal point should also be the brightest point** of the image, so if you can move the subject of your image into a brighter spot, do so.

Many activist photos are meant to convey drama and emotion as well, highlighting the importance of the issue being considered. You can significantly **increase the drama or tension in your photo in a number of ways**, including by using:

- Bright colours
- Contrasting colours
- Converting to black & white
- Contrasting content (see next page for example)

Conversely, of course, if you want to create an image that is calm and reassuring, you can do the opposite, using soft pastel colours.

G8 riot clown. Orin Langelle, photolangelle.org

It's also important to **avoid or remove distracting elements**. You should watch out for clutter and rubbish that you can remove from the scene. This is harder than it sounds, because your brain naturally 'zones out' some of the things that you see. For example, there might be a plastic chair in the forefront of your image or a bright plastic bag thrown on the ground. These can seem irrelevant at the time, but they really show up when you look at the final photo.

On the other hand, if the moment will be lost by fiddling around with the setting, just take the photo! It is more important to get the story.

Top tip: if you are photographing a 'busy' scene, a demo for example, it will often look better in black and white. By converting to black and white you are removing the 'distraction' of colour.

There are other ways to emphasise your focal point as well. For example, you can **fill the frame** by standing closer to your subject (if it is safe to do so), or by ‘zooming in’ if you have a camera or phone with a zoom lens. You can also achieve the same effect by **cropping the image afterwards**—but this is not such a good option as you will be reducing the size of your digital file.

People really like to look at other people, so it’s a great idea to **include portraits** and perhaps **photos of families, communities and other groups** who might be, for example, impacted by an issue, campaigning for change, or creating solutions. This is especially the case if there is **direct eye contact** as though the person you are photographing is looking right at the viewer, out of the photograph; or if there is obviously some emotional connection between the people within the photograph. If you can position your subject or your lighting so that there are ‘**catchlights**’ showing in your subject’s eyes, this will also make them seem more alive - although a lack of catchlights can also convey unhappiness with a situation.

The realities of climate change in El Salvador: crab fisherman. Jason Taylor/FoEI/CIC

(2) Make your image easy to look at

You want to make sure that your viewer can look at your image for some time without feeling any discomfort, so that they can think about what you are trying to say.

Perhaps the most important point of all is to **make sure that your image is sharp**. If the key part of the image is in anyway blurry your viewer will be straining to look at it, trying to compensate for the lack of focus by adjusting their own gaze. This can be quite uncomfortable. (Also, it is not something that can be corrected later on your computer.)

So, **avoiding ‘camera shake’** is essential. This is most likely to happen in low light conditions, when the camera’s shutter has to be kept open for longer to make sure that enough light hits the sensor to create the image. This means there is more chance of you moving slightly while you are taking the image.

To get sharp photos you need to make sure you are **holding the camera very still**. But exactly how still you need to hold it depends on a number of things - including how much light there is, how still the subject is, and the focal length of your lens. In general though you shouldn't be taking any photos at less than 1/50 second, unless you are **steadying the camera** somehow. You can use a tripod, but if you don't have one you can lean against a wall, or rest the camera on something (maybe a colleague's shoulder for example).

Alternatively (or additionally) you can **change the camera sensor's sensitivity**. On a digital camera this is known as the 'ISO'. Be careful about increasing the ISO too far (beyond 1600 generally), because on many cameras it will tend to make the image very 'noisy', with lots of random coloured pixels in the darkest areas. But again, for activist photographers, if this is the only way to get an important shot, dial up the ISO to what you need and go for it!

Another kind of blur—'**motion blur'**—can either be avoided or used creatively. Motion blur occurs when your subject is moving (rather than you). For example, you might be photographing a demonstration, or people dancing, or someone on a bicycle or in a car passing you.

To avoid motion blur you will need to use a **higher shutter speed setting** so that the photograph is taken very quickly, with the subject effectively in just one position. Exactly how quickly the shutter needs to open depends on how fast your subject is moving, so you might need to experiment a little bit. A high shutter speed setting might be 1/500 – 1/1000 second for example.

However you can also use motion blur creatively, to show that your subject is moving. There are two ways to do this:

- You can simply have a lower shutter speed setting, and **let the subject be blurry** (this is true 'motion blur'). For this to work you need to make sure the camera is held very still, so that the background is still sharp.

- You can have a lower shutter speed setting, but follow the subject with your camera. This results in a **sharp subject and a blurred background**. This is called 'panning'. It can look great, and it is fun to do, but it can take a little practice!

You also need to make sure your image is **properly exposed.** This basically means that you need to have the image as bright as you can manage without the brightest bits of it 'burning out'. A digital camera sensor has 'pixels' which collect light. These are sometimes described as being like buckets. If you catch too much light in the bucket it will overflow and affect all the buckets around it. It can’t be corrected on the computer later, and is quite uncomfortable to look at.

So **rule number one on exposure is ‘bright but not *too* bright’!** When you are setting your exposure think about the brightest bits first. How are they going to turn out? If you have to guess, then go for slightly less light than needed—this is something than *can* be improved later on the computer, although it works better if you can get it right ‘in camera’.

On many cameras you can choose a setting that makes parts of the image flash on the viewing panel if they are over-exposed. The very non-technical term for this is the ‘blinkies’! You can reduce the exposure in a number of ways (unless you are on ‘auto’ when you can’t do this). For example, try increasing the shutter speed a little bit, or decreasing the aperture (by selecting a higher ‘f number’)—both of these options let less light into the camera.

(3) Creating an attractive composition

You might not always have a choice about the composition of your photograph, especially if what you are photographing is on the street, and/or you are capturing a fleeting moment. But even then it is possible to make quick decisions about composition that can change the impact of your final image quite significantly.

For example, you can make your image more interesting very easily by **changing your viewpoint**, and taking it from an unusual angle (ie anything other than normal ‘eye height’). For instance, you can take photos of demonstrations from a low angle to give an added sense of power.

Climate change protestor in Copenhagen. Luka Tomac/CIC.

You can also look for actual or implied '**leading lines**' in your image. You can use these leading lines to lead your viewer directly to what you want them to look at. You can also use leading lines to show depth and/or scale of an issue.

Protest against corporate immunity by FoEI. Victor Barro/photosconletra.com

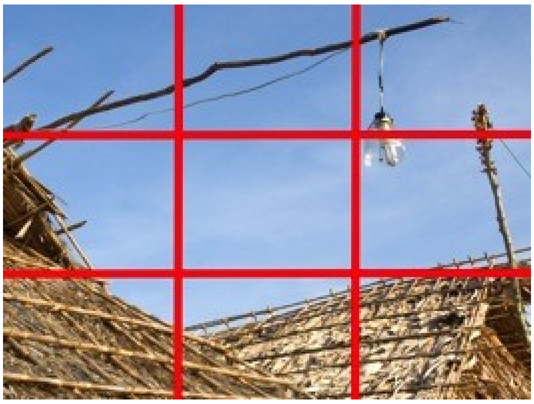
It is also useful to know that strong horizontal lines tend to give an impression of stability. On the other hand **diagonals increase drama and tension**, which is generally useful in activist photos. You can do this by using diagonals in the scene, or by introducing them yourself by holding your camera at a slant.

Time to Act 2015 Climate Change March, London. Ronnie Hall/CIC.

There is one exception to this—the horizon. Keep your **horizon straight** (unless you are on a hill, but very definitely if you are at sea)! If not it will need to be corrected on the computer later (straighten and cropping tools) but that will mean your file size is reduced. It's easy to forget the horizon while taking a photo, but you may be able to switch on a grid in your camera's viewfinder to help you.

Where you place your focal point in the image is also surprisingly important. In general, the closer your focal point is to the edge of the image (the 'frame'), the more tension there is. Conversely, the closer to the centre it is the less tension there is. (In fact in fine art photography a focal point right in the centre of the image would generally be considered static and very boring.)

This is related to a key composition rule called the **'rule of thirds'**: the focal point is placed on the lines dividing a photo into thirds, or, even better, where those lines cross each other. In this example you can see that the energy efficient light bulb is close to an intersection:



Energy efficient light bulb powered by solar power, Kuna Yala. Ronnie Hall/CIC.

Finally, taking photographs can be great fun, and there is **plenty of room to experiment**. For example you can look for reflections in puddles, mirrors, and windows. You can include shadows in your composition (again the brain often zones these out). And silhouettes, where you shoot into the sun, can also be very dramatic (and useful for disguising identities if there is a security issue).

Remember, however, that photography is not just a technical skill but a creative way of communicating with the rest of the world:

> *"There are no rules and regulations for perfect composition. If there were we would be able to put all the information into a computer and it would come out with a masterpiece. We know that's impossible. You have to compose by the seat of your pants."*
>
> Arnold Newman, American photographer

Photographing people

As an activist photographer, it is highly likely that you will be photographing people. For example, you might be showing a particular situation that they are facing, or you might be taking a portrait shot to accompany an interview. Photographing people engages viewers.

It can also be quite addictive! Every person is different, and facial expressions change from second to second as well. No two photographs look the same.

However, photographing people raises a number of important ethical and practical concerns.

Firstly, it is important to remember that the photographer is generally in a **position of power** in relation to any people being photographed. The photographer usually chooses who and what is in the photograph, and what is excluded. In most cases they also write the description and choose the context within which the image is used. In addition, photos posted online may remain there forever, with the people portrayed losing any control over what happens with their image.

Thus the photographer has an **on-going responsibility** and this is one of the arguments for maintaining copyright over your photos—so that you can fulfil your responsibilities to the people you have photographed long into the future, should anyone try to use or manipulate the images without permission.

There are often privacy laws about photographing people, and it is important to know the relevant laws in the country you are shooting in. You particularly need to know about any laws on photographing people in public places (ie 'street photography'). A good place to start your research is the 'Wikimedia Commons: country specific consent requirements' page,[1] but you should check locally too.

You need to know local cultural norms as well as local laws. In addition to legal aspects there are important **ethical concerns**. For example, even if laws do not come into play, in some cultures photographing people may be unacceptable (making your subjects appear deeply uncomfortable as well). In others it might be taboo to photograph children.

Legally speaking it is often the case that a '**model release'** is required for any photographs that have a commercial purpose. This is a form that is signed by the person you are photographing, giving their consent. Your subject should **fully understand what the photo and/or interview is for**, and

1 https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Country_specific_consent_requirements

where and when it will be used, and agree to that. It's also possible for them to give permission for a single use, eg in one specific publication only.

However, this is something of a grey area for activist photographers. Model releases are not required for news or 'editorial' photos, or for 'fair usage', because all these are considered to be for information, education, or generally in the public interest. But…you could still be sued for **defamation** if a person that has been photographed thinks they have been libelled.[2]

A healthy dose of **common sense** should be applied! If in doubt about whether someone objects to their photograph being taken, don't take it—unless they are committing a crime or other abuse that you intend to record in the public interest. If the situation is less volatile and you think it's probably OK but you want to be 100% sure, then use a model release form, even for a non-commercial photo. Verbal consent is probably acceptable as well, but you might want to record that on your phone and back the file up somewhere secure.

Of course, you may not always be able to ask permission. Consider whether the people in the photograph will be happy with the *use* that the photograph is being put to. If so they are unlikely to challenge that use. For example, people participating in a public demonstration are both newsworthy and unlikely to object to their photograph being in the media—in fact they are likely to welcome it. (You can read a useful article about model releases here.)[3]

You should also aim to try and **expose underlying problems rather than shock the viewer**, and not to stereotype. The use of shock tactics by some development agencies seeking to raise funds is a continuing hot topic. In simple practical terms, it is also important to bear in mind that distressing images, even if true, may not be successful on social media, because they are unlikely to get shared. Subtler emotive images work better.[4]

From a practical point of view it is also important to remember that **some people like to be photographed and some do not**. If you are conducting an interview, it can really help to have an informal chat and then the interview, before any photographs are taken, so that you both have time to get to know each other. You can also take some practice shots 'to get the light right', and show your subject the photos you are taking so that they feel more relaxed. You can also try taking 'experimental' shots in between poses; sometimes these are the most natural.

2 http://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/journalism/skills/picture-editing/article/art20150629130443978

3 https://www.videomaker.com/article/f16/15398-why-do-you-need-release-forms

4 http://www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/2016/apr/20/charity-ads-shock-barnados

If you have enough time you could also consider asking the person you want to photograph if you may **follow them around for an hour, or a day perhaps**, and photograph them in their home or office environment, interacting with others, or undertaking daily tasks, so that you have even more time to become comfortable in each other's presence. These can make particularly interesting and informative activist images, and may give you an opportunity to take photographs that also illustrate the story you want to tell (for example, you might be able to photograph a peasant farmer, their family, their community, their farm, the farmers at work, and any problems they face on their farm).

You might decide not to take interview notes (although notes can be quicker to refer back to later). This can interfere with the conversation, eye contact and body language. Instead ask if you can **record an interview on your mobile phone**, letting them know that you will be deleting the recording as soon as you have transcribed it (unless you have both agreed that the recording will be used later, but in this case you would should use a better quality audio recording device, such as a dedicated digital recorder). Either way, try to find a quiet space so that you can clearly hear and understand the recording later on.

It's also advisable to find a flattering light. Most importantly avoid harsh shadows, especially from overhead. Your brain will 'zone out' the shadows when you are simply looking at the person, but the shadows will be much more obvious in the photographs. So, taking portrait shots outdoors at noon on a sunny day with no cloud cover is not a good idea!

Using an on-camera flash is also unpleasant, since it flattens the picture. It's essential to know how to switch the flash on your camera or phone off (and leave it off).

Professional photographers will use off-camera flashes positioned to the side, or bounce flashlights off walls so that it is again coming from the side. This gives a nice three-dimensional look to the face. In the same way you need to be looking for light coming from the side naturally, without too much contrast. An ideal place indoors is near a well-lit window. Outside try underneath tree branches or arches, for example. The 'golden hour' at sunset and sunrise is also ideal for taking attractive portraits, because the sun is low in the sky.

If you can position your subject so that there are also 'catchlights' showing in both eyes, they will look more real and alive, and your photograph will be more arresting.

Finally, try to avoid images in which you cannot see your subject's eyes. This incudes people blinking! The best way to do this is simply to take several shots (don't waste time checking each shot on the back of your camera because you will lose people's attention). But do remember, the more people there are in a group, the higher the chance that at least one of them will be blinking, so take even more photos, just to be on the safe side!

You might also want to ask for glasses to be removed, as the reflections can obscure people's eyes.

Photographing meetings

As an activist using social media and with funders to report to you are very likely to have to photograph meetings. However photographing meetings can be rather difficult, and the following tips may help…

If the meeting is indoors, it will most likely be in a room with few windows and **poor light**. You can bump up your ISO setting a little to make your camera sensor more sensitive, or you can open the camera aperture for longer (eg 1/20 sec) but that means you will need to use a tripod or rest your camera on something.

You will also have to deal with **different kinds of light sources**. These affect the colour of the final photos (the 'white balance'). For example, tungsten lighting will make your photos go yellow/orange. You might be able to set your camera to cope with tungsten lighting specifically, or to adjust to lighting conditions automatically (look for 'white balance' options in the camera's menu). If you are shooting 'raw' photos you can also adjust the white balance on your computer later.

It is often the case that **all speakers on a panel will be looking down at their notes**, thinking about what they plan to say! This makes for a very boring photograph and the fact that you may have had a lively and intense meeting overall may not be conveyed at all.

Look out for a speaker that stands up, makes eye contact and waves their hands around a lot—they will give you your best shots. The images will also work better because there is more chance the other panel members may be looking at them. If you are lucky you might get an additional bit of **motion blur** if they are moving their arms around a lot, and you are using a slow shutter speed because of the low light. This can look quite dynamic.

Also if you watch a person reading from notes you will quickly learn to work out the next time they are going to look up, so that you can press the button just as they do so.

Watch out for **interesting viewpoints** too. For example, if there is a balcony anywhere, a view from above can be more interesting than one from the floor.

Finally, **if a powerpoint is being used**, try to get a shot of your speaker before the lights are switched off. Otherwise you will be looking for a nice silhouette shot! Even when the lights are on, you may find you have to choose between exposing for your speaker, or exposing so that you can see what is on the powerpoint slide—usually the powerpoint is so bright that the camera is not able to capture both in one shot. (In technical terms, the camera's 'dynamic range' is not as good as that of your eyes.)

Interviewing techniques, editing testimonies

The key to interviewing someone successfully is to create a **relaxed and trusting atmosphere**, even if they have opinions that are different from yours (in fact your opinions should not be mentioned at all). You want your subject to be inclined to talk to you, rather than feeling resistant, and not to be influenced by any remarks you may make. It might be helpful to start with informal introductions and a discussion about what you both hope for from the interview, if there is enough time. You can keep it short, but it will help to break the ice.

If you are interviewing someone that is not used to being interviewed it is also helpful if you are both sitting somewhere where you are comfortable and unlikely to be disturbed. Unless you are interviewing in a crowded situation, such as at a demonstration, it is definitely best to be somewhere where no one is listening in, because your subject will feel much freer to speak.

You might think this is almost impossible to achieve on the street, but Brandon Stanton from Humans of New York has used this technique to talk to thousands of strangers about the most intimate aspects of their lives. If you want to find out more about interviewing strangers on the street, Brandon's explanation about his techniques, in a speech to University College Dublin, is strongly recommended.[5]

When you transcribe the interview consider whether it will be in **the third or first person**. Interviews in the first person ("I") are likely to be more interesting, because it is the person in the image speaking directly to the viewer.

5 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPxzlGPrM3A

Part 2 Mainstream media starter kit

Getting your message right

Communication is about how we share information and connect with others, whether we're talking to friends and colleagues or lobbying governments. It is at the heart of all advocacy and outreach campaigns—without communication, advocacy and outreach are not possible. There are a number of different aspects to consider if you want your communication to be effective—especially the 'who', the 'what', the 'how', the 'when' and the 'why'.

The 'Who': determining who you want to hear your message

We usually communicate because we want someone to hear what we have to say – but identifying who we want to hear our message is crucial when we are planning advocacy and outreach. You want your message to be easy to understand and relevant, so you need to know exactly who you are talking to.

Your audience should influence how you shape what you have to say—what kind of issues and language resonate with the people you want to reach?

Who you want to reach will also influence the channels you use to communicate (eg should you talk to them directly, through social media or maybe through the mainstream media?).

The 'What': honing your message

Communication is a two-way process—if you want audience to listen to what you have to say, you need to attract their interest—so your message needs to appeal to people.

You also need to think about exactly *what* you want your audience to hear. Do you know what you want to say? (And, crucially, are they the same thing? It is easy to be misunderstood…) In particular, what is the real essence of your message? It's essential to keep your message short and simple, excluding any non-essential information that might obscure the main message.

There are different ways of appealing to your audience too. For example, the Greek philosopher Aristotle is said to have identified three elements to rhetoric (or the art of communication)—'pathos', which appeals to emotion, 'logos' which appeals to reason, and 'ethos' which appeals to people's sense of what is right. It is worth thinking about how to combine these elements to help get your message across.

A good message is short, easy to understand, appealing, relevant and memorable.

The 'How': crafting a message for your key audiences

Getting the attention of your audience is crucial. We are all busy, we do not read everything we see, and we do not listen to everything that is said. So you need to work hard to make your message appeal to your audience. Use your rhetorical skills to develop a good message.

If you want your communication to be powerful—and remembering that people's attention is a valuable resource—you need to be strategic in the way you communicate. There are different ways to get your message across to your audience, and the best way will depend on your audience and the message you want to get across.

One approach that is widely used by the mainstream media, and also on social media, is telling 'stories'. People have shared information and shaped behaviour through telling stories throughout the ages. Stories are a way of engaging the listener, providing entertainment and passing on useful information. Research suggests that stories help give credibility to what you have to say.[6]

When we tell people stories, we tend to use everyday language, and we make it relevant to the people listening. A good storyteller finds a way to engage the audience, whether through words, humour, or photographs and films (including videos and TV).

Telling a story around your message involves developing a narrative—fixing the message by relating it to people and situations in everyday experience. Your message might have started out as a story anyway—a community's story about being denied access or a voice, or a story about an individual who faced a problem. These examples and case studies make the message much more engaging to other people—and that also means they might be more relevant for the media.

Who delivers your message can also be important, and can be a good way of appealing to your audience. For example, an economist might appeal to politicians or business leaders, or a celebrity might be useful if you are trying

6 https://blog.bufferapp.com/science-of-storytelling-why-telling-a-story-is-the-most-powerful-way-to-activate-our-brains

to reach a broad (young) public audience. You might need more than one messenger if you are talking to different audiences.

The 'When': getting the timing right

We've already said that your message needs to be relevant – and that means thinking about the timing. When will your audiences be most interested in what you have to say? If you are trying to influence a political decision, when will the politicians or voters be looking for information? When will the media be interested in the story (remember that these are not necessarily the same)?

If you want to comment on a decision that has already been made, then it is important that you comment quickly – the media will not be interested two weeks after the event. They will have moved on to something else.

The 'Why': linking to your campaign strategy

It is also worth thinking about why you want to communicate with your audiences. You need to correlate your communications with your strategy—why does *this* audience need to hear *this* message right now? What do you want to achieve as a result?

If you are planning an important piece of work, it is probably worth planning your communications strategy in detail, relating it to each step of your campaign strategy, and discussing it with colleagues.

You don't need to write down a communications strategy every time you want to talk to someone, but when you decide on your audience and your message, you will need to have thought about why you want to communicate in this way.

Sharing your story with mainstream media

Getting to know your target media

All journalists want stories, whether for newspapers, magazines, radio, television or online. They want different kinds of stories though, depending on the type of outlet, their audience and their remit. Journalists working in mainstream media also expect to be contacted in certain ways, and for information to appear in a certain format that is most convenient for them.

Here we will look at all those questions in relation to 'news' stories.

Journalists working for mainstream media news outlets (newspapers, TV news etc.) need stories that are very definitely about the 'news'—something that has just happened, is happening now, or is just about to happen. If you send in a story too late or too early, for example, it is likely to be ignored. Your story also needs to be relevant to that news outlet's particular audience.

Journalists tend to use five key criteria to identify a good news story, considering whether it is:

- timely
- significant / relevant
- of local or national interest
- important
- a human interest story

Source: Journalism Trends (2016)

You can find more tips online: https://www.theguardian.com/small-business-network/2014/jul/14/how-to-write-press-release

Contacting journalists

You need to work on developing contacts with journalists over time, building relationships and compiling a 'press list'.

Building up good contacts with the media is really valuable. That means identifying the journalists who are likely to be interested in your stories (and that reach the audiences you want to reach), getting their contact details (often available online, or through a media database), and building up a relationship. Find out what kind of stories they usually write, and what topics they are interested in.

A survey of journalists found that their preferred way of getting stories is via personal connections. Next best is via press releases sent by email. Social media comes in third (Journalism Trends, 2016).

Remember, journalists are very busy people. They are under huge time pressure, especially if they are producing rolling news or working to daily deadlines. So when you contact a journalist make sure you have something relevant to offer them. Make their life easy, and don't waste their time.

Keep your media contact details all together in a file—some people like to use a database—and make sure you keep them up to date. Journalists often move jobs, so you should aim to keep track of who is still relevant and update your press list on a regular basis.

Contacting journalists at international meetings

International meetings such as climate COPs can be a good way to identify journalists covering these issues – and a great way to build relationships with them, especially if you have a relevant story that can help them bring the issues being discussed to life.

Journalists who are accredited to UN meetings have special "press" badges and there is usually a dedicated "media" area with booths for broadcast media in the conference venue. It is worth finding out which journalists are there from media outlets you are interested in and building a special email list for the conference to reach out to journalists who are there.

You may also be able to distribute press releases in the media area – but entry can be restricted to journalists, so it is good to use email as well.

At UN meetings, civil society groups are usually allocated a space to organise press conferences. The space can usually be booked through the meeting organisers (eg UNFCCC / UNEP) and notification of the press conference will be included in daily programmes / schedules on screens.

Journalists at international meetings are often looking for a good way to bring the story to life, or for background information to understand the issues being discussed. Most media look for comment from civil society after a decision has been made. You can provide comment by issuing a press release as the meeting finishes, but it can also be helpful to have your media spokesperson on hand to talk to journalists, either in the corridors or via a press conference as the meeting closes. Broadcast media may book in spokespeople to comment ahead of the decision being made.

Journalists can spend a lot of time hanging around trying to find out what is happening at big meetings – and this can be a great time to chat with them over coffee and build relationships.

Structuring press releases

As well as thinking about the kind of story that will appeal to a journalist on the mainstream media publication you are targeting, you need to present the information to them in a way that means they recognise this as a story that is interesting for them.

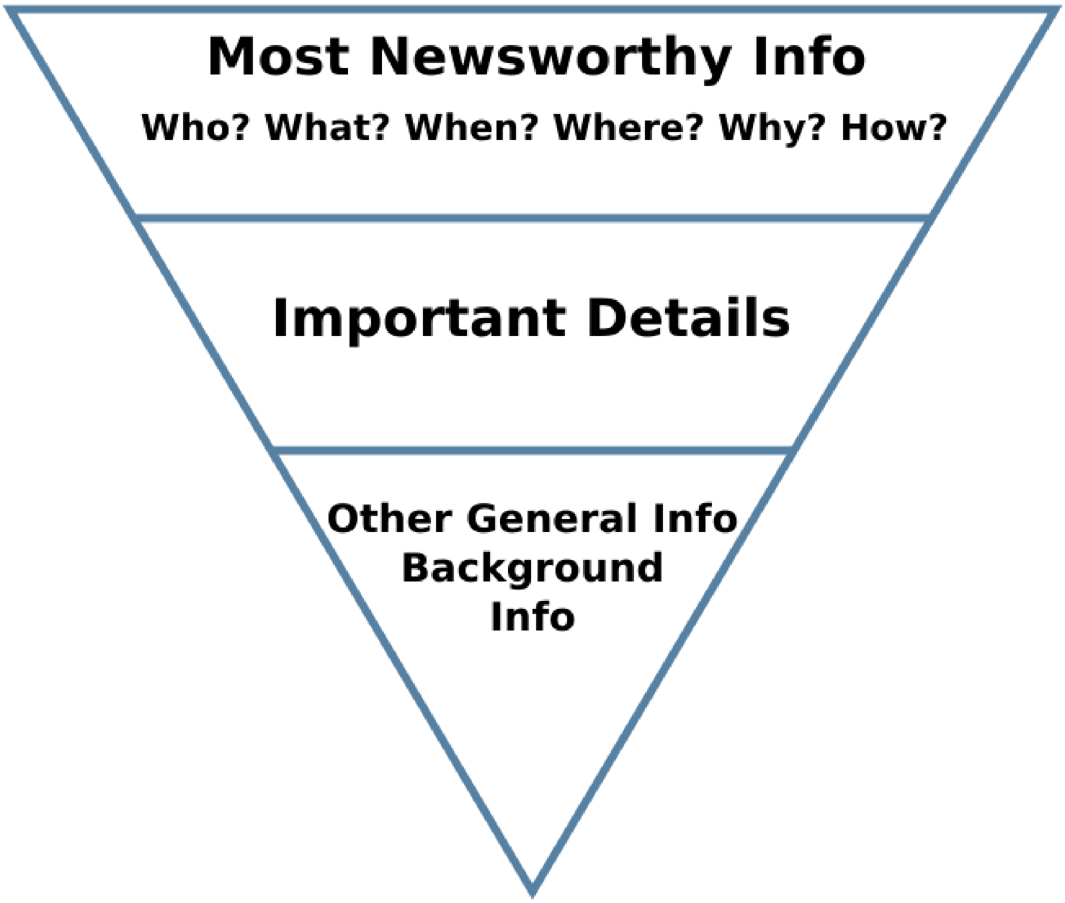
Press releases are the traditional way of sharing a story with journalists. They are also a way of making sure you have all the information you need for your story. A press release needs to contain all the basic elements of your story—which can be summed up as Who, What, Why, Where, When and How (the ‘5 Ws+’). It should also include some other crucial information, including a good headline, a date, a contact name, and information about who the press release is from.

The inverted pyramid of news

This is a technique commonly used when writing news stories, especially in the English-speaking world. It works on the basis that people need to know the most important information first, because most readers—and most journalists—will not read to the bottom of an article. They tend to read just a few lines before moving on. (It stems from the days when newspapers were laid out by hand and the subeditors would cut an article from the bottom upwards when they ran out of space.)

So the first paragraph of your press release needs to contain the key elements of the story (the 5Ws +), with the rest of the press release providing background and interesting details.

It’s also useful to use a very newsy style—short, active sentences, that are factual rather than descriptive, and one-sentence paragraphs. Don’t use words such as ‘therefore’ or ‘however’ or jargon.



Building your press release, step by step

1. Write your introduction—what, who, why, when, where—using just one or two sentences. Think of how a TV or radio news report might introduce the story. You need to be able to say it in 5-6 seconds.

2. Add one or two paragraphs to explain the context and the ‘how’.

3. Add a quote from a named spokesperson. This should be no more than three sentences, and should sound like something someone would say—and it should be interesting. This is where you need to include a ‘soundbite’—a snappy comment that journalists will want to repeat.

4. Add a final paragraph with background information or related details.

5. Then go back and write your headline. This needs to be attention grabbing and should be no more than one line.

6. At the beginning of the press release make sure it is also clear who it is from and add the date of the press release (making it clear whether it is embargoed for a date coming soon or whether it is for immediate release). At the end add one or more contact names and contact details, including telephone numbers and email and web addresses. You can also mention what languages the contact people speak if you are issuing your press release internationally.

7. Provide background notes if really necessary.

8. Check the length. Your press release should fit on one side of A4.

If you haven't had a lot of practice at writing press releases, have a look at some news stories on similar topics and check what details they include. You can also look at press releases written by other organisations available online.

Here is an example of key parts of a press release:

> <u>Headline:</u>
> Growing meat consumption threatens rainforest
>
> <u>Introduction:</u>
> Increased global demand for meat is threatening the Brazilian rainforest, a new report shows, launched ahead of National Vegetarian Day. Campaigners are urging people to reduce their meat consumption and help protect the forest, which they say is vital to the planet's health.
>
> <u>Paragraphs with context about the report</u> follow, then:
>
> <u>Quote:</u>
> Commenting on the report, Mary Meatfree said:
> *"We already know that eating less meat would be better for our health, but we now know that it would be better for the planet as well. The rainforest is being eaten away to make way for cattle farms – so we all need to do our bit to help the rainforest and pledge to eat less meat this National Vegetarian Day. Going meat free can help keep the loggers away."*
>
> <u>Contact:</u>
> Mary Meatfree, tel: XXX XXXXX

Interviews with mainstream media

Interviews with journalists can be conducted face-to-face, on the phone, via email, or pre-recorded for TV, radio or use online, or for live broadcast (also on TV or radio, or online).

The key to being interviewed is to be prepared. Know what you want to say—your message—and think about the questions you will be asked. It can be helpful to prepare a 'soundbite', or a short memorable phrase, perhaps a key fact, which will help your audience remember what you said.

Good sound bites often use analogies to compare what you are talking about with an issue that your audience might relate to. Or they might use an eye-catching fact or statistic. But keep it short and try to avoid clichés.

Sound bites:

A 'sound bite' is the name given to a short clip that radio or TV journalists and editors extract from a longer interview to sum up what has been said. It might be used in a shorter news summary or played in an introduction. Sound bites are also used in written media in the form of quotes. If you can include a good short memorable phrase in your interview, the chances are this is what they will pick.

Examples:
"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself", Franklin D Roosevelt
"Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country", John F Kennedy
"We're going to build a wall", Donald Trump
"Brexit means Brexit", Theresa May

If you were advocating for increased educational opportunities for girls yours might read:
"Eight out of ten girls in the community cannot read—and that is why it is crucial that they go to school."

Practice your soundbite, and make sure you use it in the interview. And remember, practice makes it easier to come up with good soundbites—you don't have to wait for a media interview.

Don't be put off by unexpected questions. Focus on what you want to say and turn the question round. You want to be able to engage your audience with your message, even if you are asked about something else.

If a journalist asks you to give an interview, make sure you know where it is for and whether it is live or pre-recorded. If live, ask how long? If pre-recorded, check when it will be used. If it is pre-recorded you need to be wary of how you may be edited.

Top tips for a strong face-to-face interview:

1. Know who you are talking to, what they want to talk about, and how the interview will be used.

2. Think about the questions you will be asked and what you want to say. Practice what you want to say as well. Write down your message and make sure it is short and catchy. You should have one key message and don't try to make more than three points. Say them out loud. (Talk to a mirror, or practice with a colleague or friend).

3. Make notes / prompt cards with the key details you need to remember. Take this with you to the interview, and read them before you start (and then leave then somewhere out of sight).

4. If you are going to be filmed, or photographed, make sure the way you look won't distract from what you want to say. Dress appropriately, and if you are on TV avoid checks, stripes and white tops (they don't work well on camera).

5. Give yourself plenty of time to get to the studio or filming location.

6. Immediately before the interview, warm up your voice. If you get nervous, try breathing exercises—deep breaths from the diaphragm. Try some vocal exercises: standing, relax all muscles, roll shoulders, diaphragm breaths, as you exhale say 'ha', inhale, lift shoulders, exhale, repeat and say 'ha'.

7. Make sure your mobile phone is turned off, or give it to someone to look after during the interview.

8. If you are being filmed, look at the person who is interviewing you—not at the camera.

9. If you are doing a 'live' interview, remember time is limited. Keep your answers reasonably short, and get your core message in early—and if possible try and repeat it at the end.

10. Relax—this is your opportunity to get your message across to your target audience.

11. Check your posture—listen to the interviewer, appear engaged, and look up, not down.

12. Speak slowly and imagine your audience (who will be busy eating their tea, or driving).

13. Do not get angry or annoyed with the questions.

If you are being interviewed on the telephone, or from a remote camera (ie the interviewer is not in the same room), the same advice applies, but you won't be able to make eye contact. This can make interviews harder, especially because there's less personal rapport with the interviewer, so you might have to make more of an effort to remember your audience and be personable.

If you are being interviewed by a print journalist, the same rules still apply. But remember that everything you say can be used in print and remarks may be taken out of context, so pay attention to what you say. (And if you are being interviewed for a feature/longer piece, beware that everything that happens during the interview can also be used as 'colour').

Last but definitely not least: When you are talking to a journalist, you can say that your remarks are "off the record" – but avoid doing this unless you know the journalist well and you trust them. Otherwise, you are dangling a carrot in front of a journalist that they may find very hard to resist…

References:

Journalism Trends (2016). Journalism Trends 2016: A look into the world of journalism and the implications for communicators, mynewsdesk, http://www.medienorge.uib.no/files/Eksterne_pub/Final_Journalism_Trends_2016.pdf

Part 3 Social media starter kit

The basics of social media—the 'social media matrix'

In this toolkit we mainly consider three key social media platforms, in order to address the most important aspects of using social media without becoming too confused about all the different options. Those three platforms are Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Facebook

Facebook (www.facebook.com) is the world's largest social media network with 1.6 billion users; and globally one in seven minutes online is spent on Facebook.[7] It is also the most downloaded app for smart-phones. People use Facebook to keep in touch with friends, post photos, share links and exchange other information.

Whatever you may think about this behemoth it is clearly an important potential campaign communications tool. It was started for individual users, but groups, organisations, communities and corporations all use it as a way of maximising their brand and engagement now. Many non-profits are using

7 New Internationalist (2016). Smiley-faced monopolists: the digital titans unmasked, NI494, July/August 2016, pp 22 & 13 respectively.

a Facebook page to build their online 'personality' and then connect to their members and sympathetic members of the public.

Facebook is typically used to share text, photos, videos, updates, links, web articles and blog posts.

On the plus side are Facebook's extensive reach, and the fact that people can like, comment on and share each other's posts. This means you can reach a broad audience. Facebook is the easiest platform to start a campaign on.

On the other hand so many people are already on Facebook, that you may find yourself in competition with other organisations that have very similar campaigns. There are also many fake accounts, and there is concern that although Facebook and Instagram are still used by young people,[8] many are spending more time on private messaging networks where there is almost no exposure to news and political ideas.[9] Facebook is also becoming more of a pay-to-play platform for games, and a platform for paid advertising.

Twitter

Twitter is another significant social network with 302 million active users. People converse with each other in real time with very short messages ('tweets' that must be under 140 characters in length). Like Facebook, Twitter can be accessed via computer or smart phone (with a downloaded app), but 80% of Twitter users actually engage with the platform on their smart phones.[10]

8 Pew (2015). Teens, Social Media & Technology overview 2015, Pew Research Centre, 9 April 2015, http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/04/09/teens-social-media-technology-2015/

9 Conversation.com (2016). 2 February 2016, http://theconversation.com/so-long-social-media-the-kids-are-opting-out-of-the-online-public-square-53274

10 Statista (2016). 80% of Twitter Users are Mobile, The Statistics Portal, data source Twitter, https://www.statista.com/chart/1520/number-of-monthly-active-twitter-users/

Twitter also has varied users, including individuals, organisations and corporations. Twitter is particularly popular with millennials and young people, and also professionals. Many non-profits—like Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and CARE—are already Twitter-savvy and have a good number of followers. Although messages must be short, you can also send photos, videos, and links to longer web articles and blog posts.

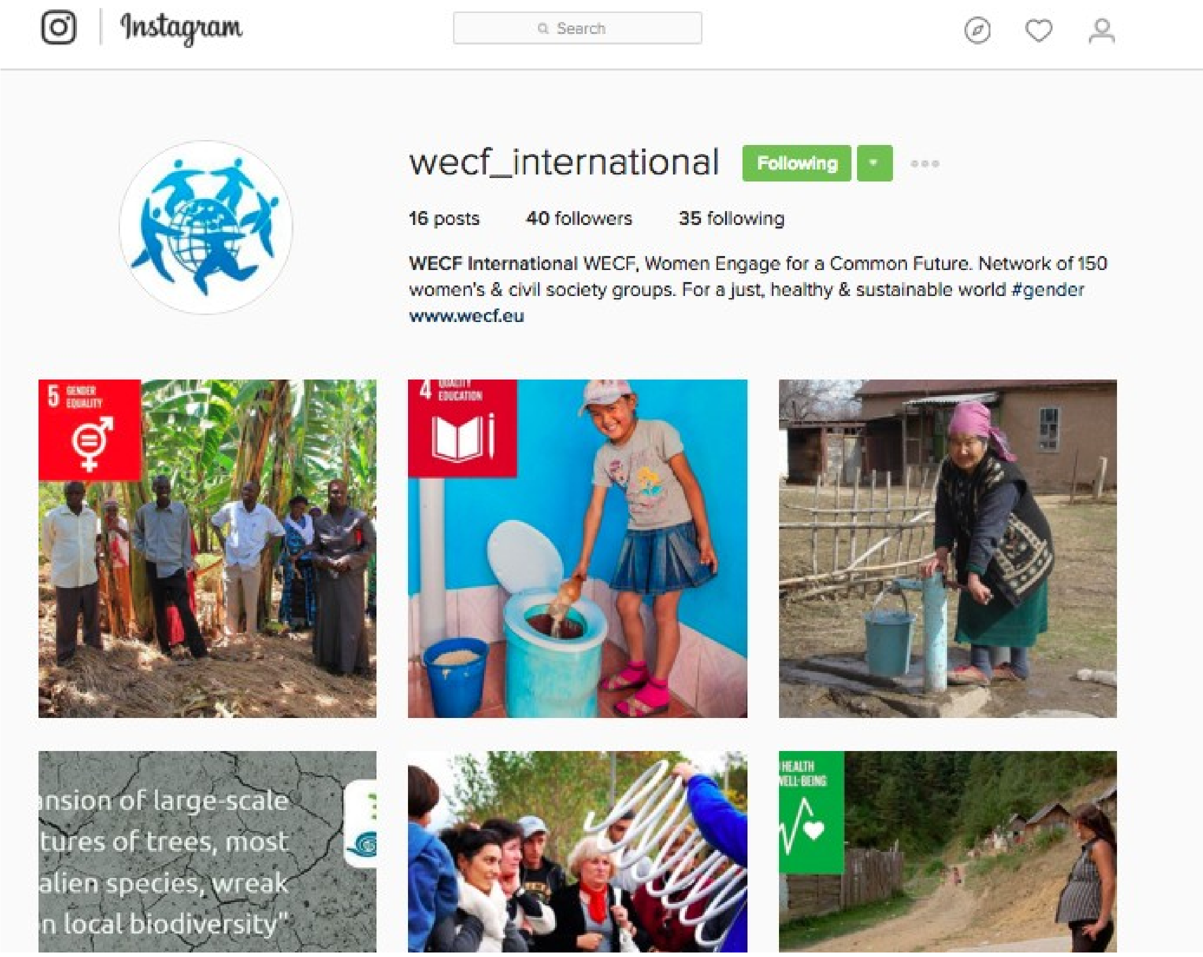
An important feature, which used to be unique to Twitter but is now commonly used on other platforms, is the ‘hashtag’ (#). You can use this in front of words to create keywords. Click on a hashtag and it will take you to a stream of tweets that also contain the same hashtag. This makes it an effective way of getting your tweet noticed by other Twitter users talking about the same topic. If a hashtag is being used a lot on Twitter at any particular time it becomes a ‘trending topic’.

Another positive aspect of Twitter is the ability to send tweets directly to people or organisations that you do not already know, by including their username with the @ symbol in front of it in your tweet. Twitter facilitates two-way connections between its users (note, if you use @username at the beginning of your tweet, this creates a direct message to that user only).

These two features combined mean that Twitter provides the opportunity to communicate both publicly and privately. It is very quick to write and easy to read—but it is also a very fast moving network and can be a little overwhelming to start with. Your updates can get drowned in a sea of other updates.

Instagram

Instagram is perfect for very visual campaigns, because it is a social network specifically designed for sharing pictures and very short videos. It's possible to post several photos and videos in one post, with captions. It has over 500 million active monthly users,[11] mostly teenagers and adults under the age of 30.



Instagram is designed for use by people with smart phones only (although it is possible to passively view Instagram photos on a computer, and to upload from a computer with some software, such as Adobe Lightroom).

People use it to showcase their best pictures and there is plenty of space for associated story-telling, making it ideal for non-profits' campaigns, using culture, art and stories. You can also use hashtags to tap into (or create) visual conversations about particular topics.

11 Statista (2016b). Number of monthly active Instagram users from January 2013 to June 2016 (in millions), The Statistics Portal, https://www.statista.com/statistics/253577/number-of-monthly-active-instagram-users/

However, like Facebook, Instagram is now pushing for more and more advertising, which appear in Instagram feeds as 'sponsored posts'. This is gradually making it more difficult to reach users and build followers, and this is an increasing problem for non-profits.

Youtube

YouTube is a video-sharing social network where users can watch, like, share, comment and upload videos. Videos can be accessed and downloaded on computers, tablets or smart-phones. It has a wide range of different types of users, as do the other social networks, and has over a billion users.[12] Youtube is popular because of the ability to like, comment on and share videos. You can use it to connect to your audience, build loyalty, and educate viewers. For this reason it is popular amongst both corporations and non-profits, many of who have their own 'Youtube channels' with all their videos collected together in one place.

Pinterest

Pinterest is a social network where users can curate collections of other people's photos and videos (as 'pins'). Pinterest has over 100 million active monthly users[13] and the majority of its users are female. It has a wide range of types of user, and is particularly used for advertising and marketing by companies. However it is also used for educational purposes, and is useful for campaigning. For example, if you want to share forest pictures then you can 'pin' 10 photos from different forests to one board, which you can then share with others. It can be accessed via your computer or via an app on your smartphone.

12 Youtube (2016). Youtube statistics, https://www.youtube.com/yt/press/en-GB/statistics.html, as accessed 29 September 2016.

13 Marketingland.com (2015). 17 September 2015, http://marketingland.com/pinterest-says-it-has-100-million-monthly-active-users-143077

Social media plans and top tips for each platform

Social media in the real world

Social media is now an established way of reaching out to new audiences, and offers civil society exciting new opportunities that aren't available through mainstream media, especially in terms of reaching new audiences in creative new ways.

It can seem a little daunting at first, especially since it is an exciting but fast moving world. But don't worry about that. Pick a platform to start with and jump in, don't be scared or overly cautious. You will find you soon start to attract followers and it will become enjoyable. Connect with like-minded people and organisations, and search for allies rather than enemies.

To avoid social media becoming too time-consuming, try and allocate some time every day but not too much (1-2 hours per day is okay). Little and often is best: try not to post intensively for a short period of time and then disappear for a month! Try to be consistent and professional, just as in other areas of work, and if you have any doubts about your post, check with a colleague first.

Don't forget to thank people for sharing your messages, and discussing your topics. You can also share relevant contents from others in your own social media 'feeds' (which also means you don't have to post original material all the time).

Don't forget to double check everything before hitting the 'send' button. Try to avoid typos, and make sure the links you have included are working and correct. In a nutshell: check everything before posting!

Finally, if you want to stand out on social media your post has to be memorable. It is better to stand out than to be one in a big crowd. Be a personality! Be honest. Be witty and funny. Be yourself. Be clear about what you are saying and be polite, as it's easy to be misunderstood.

You can also add value to your content. For example you can:

- add insightful comments about or summarise things you are sharing to make them easier to understand
- expand your content, adding links to longer versions
- make your posts a series that people can follow with interest
- invite people to join in conversation and discussion
- point to other references, and reliable sources, and

- generally make your content as interesting and entertaining as possible!

Don't forget to attribute content (written and visual) to the original authors or sources. Always link to original articles, and mention credits for photos.

Planning your social media strategy

It's important to be clear about who is doing what in your organisation/community, in order to make sure your social media outreach is consistent. Collectively you will need to decide on:

- **Goals**: How can social media outreach contribute to your organisation's mission?
- **Strategies**: What do you need to do (and on which social media platforms) in order to achieve your organisation's objectives?
- **Audiences**: Who are you trying to reach? Government? Mainstream media? Alternative media? Sympathetic public? Other civil society organisations?
- **Messages**: What key messages do you want to deliver to your audiences?
- **Content**: Where will your content come from? Internet only or also printed news? Where will you get your photos and videos from?
- **Resources**: What staff, time and funds are available for social media?
- **Evaluation**: How are you going to measure the growth and success of your social media activities?

Creating a good 'bio' or profile

In every social network, you need a 'bio' (short for 'biography') or profile. This 'bio' is where you describe yourself to others, in a short and accessible way. It's really important to have a great bio. There are three elements:

Your Username: It helps to have an easy name to remember, a name that reflects your organisation or community.

Your Avatar: An image that reflects the username. Your avatar should be attractive and in high resolution, and should work well at a small size (details won't show). It might be your logo, or it could be something more creative. Basically it should stand out and be easily recognisable.

Your Biography: A short and simple description of your organisation or community. This short description should appeal to your target audience, telling people who you are and what you do.

Don't forget to add other important information, such as your w**ebsite**, or landing page. This is the place where people can locate you later. You should also add **contact details**, usually your formal email or telephone number, so people can easily contact you. And you can provide your **location**—the office, or where your activities are located.

Working with social media admins/team

Here are some additional tips if you are collaborating with others in a social media team:

(1) Exchange information with other 'admins' using WhatsApp groups

WhatsApp (http://www.whatsapp.com) is easily the best platform for chatting, or sharing a quick update, in a small group of people who have admin access/control of your social media platforms. It's 'light' and therefore quick, and it allows you to share links, images and videos as well. It's especially useful if people in your team are working in different time zones—a one-liner update via WhatsApp can be very helpful.

(2) Use Flipboard to share and curate potential contents for your social media

Flipboard magazine (www.flipboard.com) is a 'content aggregator app' (a bit like Pinterest but for a wider range of communications, not just photographs). You can use Flipboard to collect and share articles, videos and photos. Members of your team can add relevant news to a Flipboard magazine and others in your team can view and share it later on social media.

(3) Use shared documents to curate contents

There are other platforms that you can use to share and curate contents with a team working anywhere in the world, such as Google Docs and Evernote (evernote.com)

(4) Build a content bank, including photos/videos

A content bank is a curated contents system that allows you to save and share images, videos, blog posts, infographics, jokes, quotes and quick tips for later use on your social media. For example, in addition to visual materials you can look for: information about relevant policies; public figures' messages, quotes and actions; and shocking facts. Search using keywords relating to your chosen topics (eg #gender, #women, #SDGs). You can curate and archive what you find using shareable platforms such as Evernote, OneNote, Google Docs, or Flipboard Magazine. For images and videos especially, Dropbox, Google Drive and Flickr are useful free platforms, and there are some other flexible pay-to-use options such as SmugMug. Set your content bank up so that admins can access it from anywhere, whether in the office, at home, or on-the-move.

If you make mistakes: dos and don’ts

Everyone makes mistakes. Do not ignore, deny or panic about it. A little mistake is tolerable in social media, especially on Twitter, where everything goes so fast.

What should you do?

If you’re the first to notice also be the first to respond! This will give you an opportunity to correct the error or apologise sincerely and gracefully. Ranging from a little typo to incorrect information, we can just say sorry for the mistake. If someone else notices first, respond in the same way but don't forget to thank people politely for their feedback later. You can even use mild humour to address the situation. The critical thing is to fix the problem and then move on.

What should you not do?

Don't stop being that personality you want to portray, so answer or respond in your normal style. Don't pass people on to someone else, ignore the problem, or sound defensive. Just apologise quickly, or explain and discuss a little bit. Don't pick fights over mistakes, or even in a general discussion. There's no need to argue in social media. Don't overreact, or get into pointless arguments. They can be time-wasting and counter-productive.

Facebook page general tips

You can use your new Facebook page to show your ‘personality’ to other organisations/communities/corporates on Facebook, and connect to their members or customers and a sympathetic public.

- **You should take the time to build a strong profile**

Use a high resolution logo for your profile’s avatar, and add high resolution pictures for your background image. Make sure there are relevant keywords that people might search for in your bio/about section. Make sure your bio is comprehensive, but clear and concise—you need to be able to tell people all they need to know about you here.

- **Set a ‘vanity URL’ for your Facebook page**

This has to be relevant to your organisation's name (or slight variations of it). The result should be something like this: www.facebook.com/women2030. A vanity URL for a Facebook page will make it much easier for people to search for and find your page. And for organisations/communities without their own website, this could be a smart way to create a 'landing page', where others can find you. You can change the URL in your General Account Settings once your page has 25 likes.

- **Feature popular/strategic content by pinning it to the top of your Facebook page**

If you have an important recent press release, or a popular, important post, you can 'pin' it to the top of your Facebook page, so that people see it before anything else, even if you or other people have posted other items since you posted it. But remember to change this frequently, or your page will begin to look dull and unchanging. You can find the option to pin your post on the drop down menu opened via the arrow on the top right hand corner of your post. (Note: you cannot use this function on personal Facebook timelines, only on organisational pages.)

- **Manage invites/shares to your closest friends/allies**

In Facebook page 'admin' mode, you should see a list of your Facebook friends somewhere on the front page. Remember that when you share a post you can opt to invite your friends or family members first, which can help you to avoid 'spamming' others (sending unwanted messages).

- **Choose at least two people to administer your Facebook page**

There are several reasons why it's a good idea to share the admin of your Facebook page. For example, one person might want to be responsible for the updates, and another might track engagement. Or you might set up 24-hour coverage by having people located in different time zones.

- **Allow other people to post photos and messages, so you can engage more with them**

This can make your Facebook page feel more inclusive, but it also requires moderation, and therefore resources: time and a person to do the moderation.

- **Add Facebook, Twitter and Instagram buttons to your own website for easy sharing**

This is called cross-platform promotion. If we have interesting content, it's likely people will want to share it. Make sure it's easy for them to do that!

Twitter general tips

It’s important to know that Twitter is faster and the crowd are younger. Many people also think it is more fun.

- **You should take the time to build a strong profile**

Again, use a high resolution logo for your profile’s avatar, and add high resolution pictures for your background image. Make sure there are relevant keywords that people might search for in your bio/about section. Make sure your bio is comprehensive, but clear and concise—you need to be able to tell people all they need to know about you here. Practice, look at other profiles: which one is good, which one is not? You can update your bio but don't change it too often.

- **You will need to enrich your feed with photos and videos**

If it’s your first time on Twitter, try uploading 6 photos and 2 videos to your timeline. Add more and more in the future! You should aim to have a photo with every tweet ideally, as people pay more attention to tweets with photos. You can now **tag people** in your photos (alerting them to you tweets), and add up to four photos to a tweet. You could develop a list of friends and allies you want to tag in different messages and on different occasions.

- **Feature popular content by pinning it to your Twitter profile**

Do you have a recent tweet that has a good number of retweets? Or a recent press release? An image that’s really important for your campaign? Feature it by pinning it to the top of your profile, so people who access your profile can see the most important tweet at the time!

- **Build Twitter lists to contact different users with different lists**

You could have different lists of partners, like-minded activists, government officials, UN bodies, media contacts, etc. You can create public and private lists, and you can subscribe to other people's lists. This makes it easier to access, for example, governments’ Twitter accounts when we want to lobby for a cause. They will know when they have been added to a list as well, so it’s a good way to increase engagement.

- **Like, like, like!**

Click Twitter’s heart symbol to like other users’ tweets. It's just one click away! Also, don’t forget to like positive responses to your tweets, comments, and when you are quoted by others. When people access your profile, they can see you have great content and others are following your account with interest.

- **Using hashtags**

Use a common ‘hashtag’ for a particular campaign, or specific contents. Effectively this means we are using a common language for a common campaign or conversation. We can use a simple, catchy hashtag (preceded by # in Twitter) to make it easier to track the campaign. For example, check out ‘#gender’—Who uses this hashtag? Is it widely used? What are others' messages?

Instagram general tips

Instagram is all about visual communication, so great pictures are essential, the story follows along with them.

- **Building a strong profile**

You still need to take time to build a strong profile. Use a high resolution logo for your profile. And then, add relevant keywords to your bio/about section. Make sure people can easily skim your most important information when they see your bio—and that all the necessary information is there.

- **Make sure your website address is correct**

In Instagram there is only one clickable link in your bio, so don’t waste it. Generally it will be used for your website address. You can change this link occasionally, for instance to reflect your current post. But if there’s anything wrong with it, no-one can click through to the additional information you want to show them. Make sure it’s correct!

- **Set to ‘public account’**

You want your posts to be seen by as many people as possible so you should set your account to ‘public’. People who are not following already cannot see your campaign at all if it's not public.

- **Note you can tag up to 50 users in Instagram**

So make sure you have friends and allies you can engage (but only with content they will want, don’t spam them).

- **You can also use up to 30 hashtags**

This means you can use a combination of popular and unique hashtags, to reach new but existing audiences at the same time as creating new conversations. Save regular hashtags for future posts, so you can just copy and paste them in next time.

- **If you have enough great photographs embed Instagram in your own website**

This way you can create a photo gallery on your home page. This is a cross-platform promotion. This will add a visual connection between you and your your audience, and spark engagement.

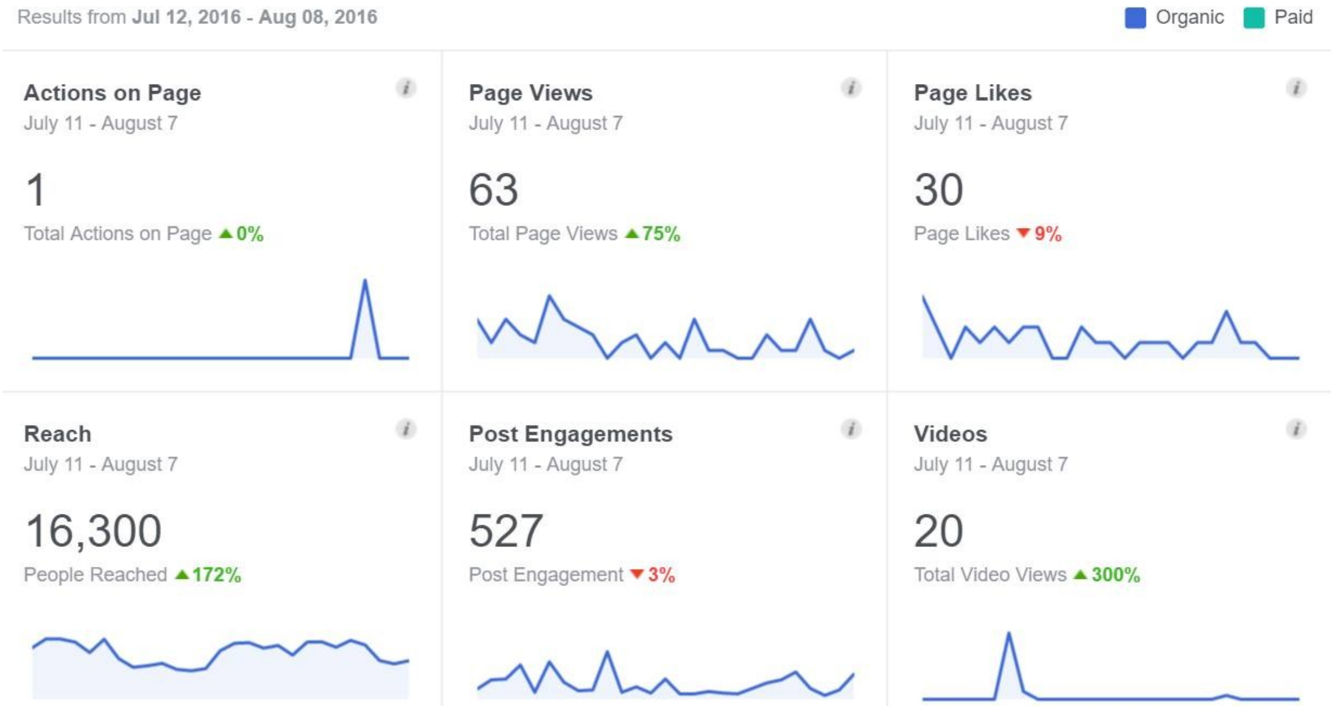
Monitoring and evaluation

Are you getting your social media right? Are you conveying relevant messages? And are you reaching your target audiences?

In this section, we will look at what we need to monitor, how to monitor it and how to interpret the data when we have it. We also consider how we can use this data to improve our social media activities in the future.

...on Facebook...

We can monitor (some of) our posts' performance—and also watch similar pages to see how they are doing in comparison to ours. Access your Facebook page, and look for the 'Insights' tab on the upper left hand side of the screen. You should be able to see monthly summaries of **'Page Likes'**, **'Reach'**, **'Page Views'**, and **'Post Engagement'** and similar data.



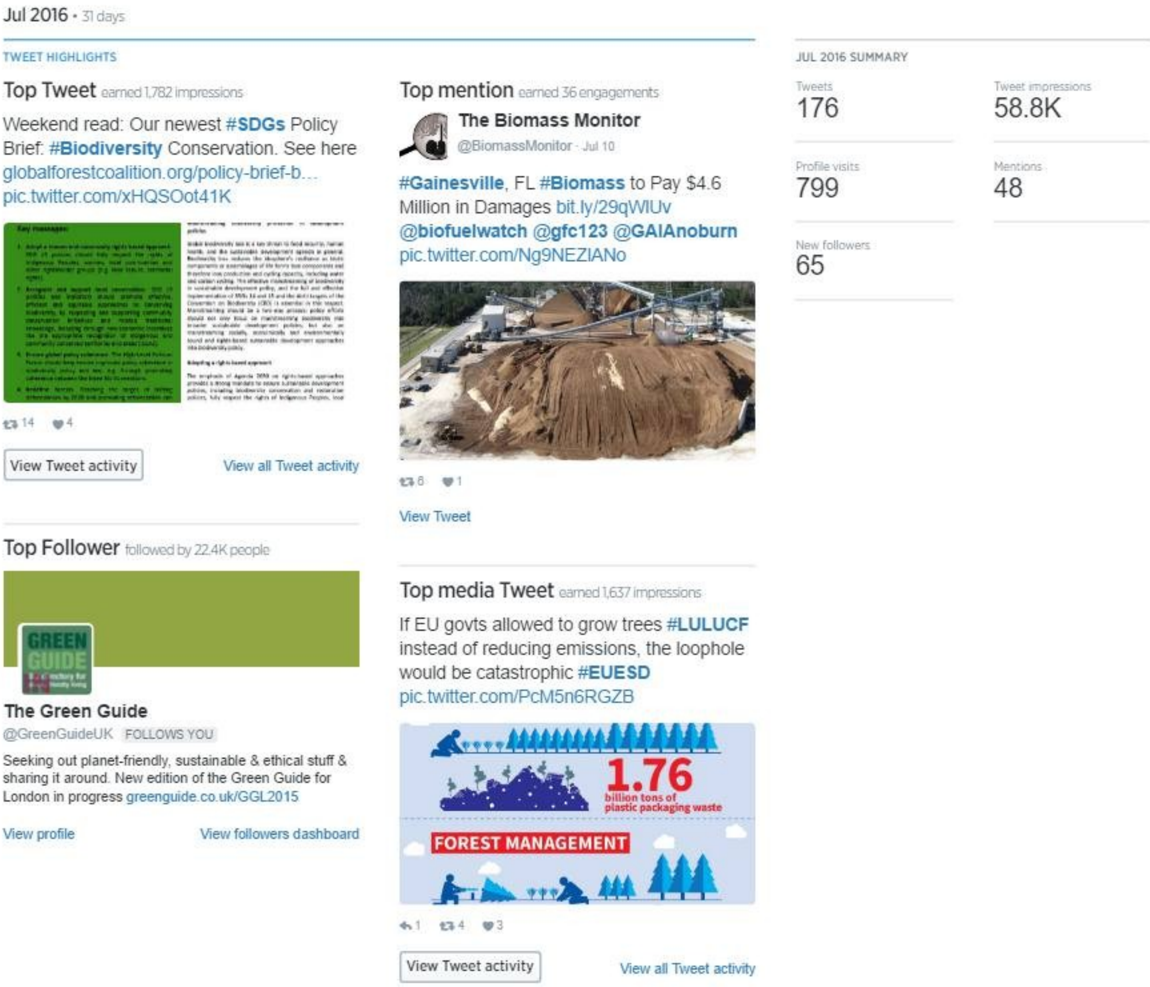
When you want to measure **awareness of your posts**, see the data for 'Reach'. In Facebook, each reach means that your one post has reached one user's account. If the number is high or if your reach is getting better month by month, it means that a good number of Facebook users are receiving your posts.

If you want to measure for **engagement**, where users have actually responded to your post in some way, look for 'Page Likes', 'Page Views', and 'Post Engagements'. Do people like your page? Are they engaging with your posts, sharing and commenting on them? Is the number increasing?

...on Twitter...

To access Twitter analytics, open your Twitter account, and then in your profile tab, access 'Analytics'. Or when you are logged in, simply go to analytics.twitter.com

You will be able to see your monthly summary for **'Top tweet'**, **'Tweet Impressions'**, **'Profile visits'**, and **'Followers'**. You can also see your 'Top tweet', 'Top mention', 'Top media tweet' and 'Top follower'. You can also find monthly summaries.



If you want to measure **awareness** in your Twitter account, use metrics like ‘Number of tweets’ and ‘Impressions’, which shows how far your message is spreading. A good and improving number (compared to the month before) implies good awareness.

To measure active **engagement**, look for ‘Mentions’ and ‘Followers’. You can also check the number of retweets you are getting. Check ‘Top tweet’, ‘Top mention’, and/or ‘Top media tweet’ to see what kind of tweets your existing audience likes best.

Buffer can help!

You can also use a third-party application called Buffer (http://www.buffer.com) to monitor and evaluate your social media activities. In Buffer, you can see weekly reports about your Twitter, Facebook pages, etc, including information about your top posts.

For your Twitter account, you can use free analytics to see how many posts, clicks, retweets, and likes you have received on a weekly basis.

For your Facebook Page, you will receive a weekly report about the number of posts, clicks, shares and likes.

For Instagram, you will receive a report on the number of posts, comments, and likes.

Take a little time to set it up correctly and you can have a report about all of them (Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram) sent to your email in a weekly basis!

(See social media best practices below on how to use Buffer.)

Social media best practices

Getting your timings right – how often should you post?

You need to think about how often to post. This varies depending on the platform you are using. For example, on Facebook you might post two to three times a day, trying to generate more engagement, especially during prime time.

Prime time is the time that most people are using a social media platform. Usually it's in the morning before office hours (07.00 to 09.00), at lunchtime (12.00-13.00) and in the evening (20.00-22.00). But there is no exact pattern for this prime time, and posting is of course more complicated if you have people following your feeds in different time zones. Analyse your audience and practice to see what works best for you.

On Twitter you could increase your posting rate to nine to ten times per day, again during prime time.

On the other hand on Instagram don’t post more than two photos per day, ideally in the morning and evening.

That might seem like a lot of posts but you can share other people's contents too. This saves you having to generate so much content yourself and is helpful to your friends and allies.

To schedule or not to schedule?

To save time it is possible to schedule the various tweets and posts in advance. For example, we can schedule Facebook posts, using the scheduling option available for Facebook pages (this isn't available for personal profiles though, just pages).

We can also schedule tweets via Buffer. If you do schedule though, you need to find a way to ensure that you are still allocating enough time (at the right time), to engage with your audience, so that you can still reply to comments, retweet others' tweets, say thanks, or simply have discussions with other users.

Using a social media 'assistant' like Buffer

Using a social media assistant can be a good way of tackling the problem of resources, time constraints, and time differences, and can help to you to have a more constant 'flow' of posts and tweets. The free version of Buffer can schedule ten tweets per day, and ten Facebook updates.

You can sign in to Buffer with email, or through your social media accounts. Buffer also has a free reporting feature, and can send weekly reports about your social media accounts (see above in monitoring and evaluation).

Engage, engage

We're not only talking to ourselves. Reply to mentions. Retweet others. Favourite/like positive posts. Reply to comments and inquiries. Engagement is key, especially if you use a social media assistant like Buffer.

Create buzzwords and unique hashtags

Campaigning through social media is also about constant and consistent messaging. One message is simply not enough. So for example, in Twitter, we can always repeat tweets every once in a while. In Facebook, we can repeat but not *too* soon. But in Instagram, never repeat a picture, it will show in your gallery—you can repeat the message, but make sure it is with a different photo or video.

You can also choose buzzwords and hashtags to use throughout your relevant messages and tweets, to ensure you are getting the message across.

The longer your social media campaign lasts, the more likely it is that people will recognise your buzzwords and hashtags.

Reach out to influencers

'Influencers' are social media users who have a large number of followers. Because of this, their support can have a massive effect on a campaign. There are also influencers who have a medium number of followers, but very loyal ones (these influencers are important as well!). You should identify influencers, users who are relevant to your campaign, and tag them, mention them, ask for their opinion, and/or ask them to join your cause.

Resources

Podium Hootsuite (You can subscribe to free lessons at https://education.hootsuite.com/)

ICTs for Feminist Movement Building: Activist Toolkit, Just Associates (JASS), the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and Women'sNet, with illustrations by Donovan Ward (APC/JASS/Women'sNet), August 2015, can be downloaded at https://www.apc.org/en/system/files/ICTs%20Toolkit_2015_0.pdf

Social Media Engagement for Dummies, Aliza Sherman and Danielle Elliot Smith, published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2013