

A GUIDE TO ONLINE CAMPAIGNING
**A COMPANION TO THE TOOLKIT
FOR YOUTH ON ADVOCATING
AND ACHIEVING GENDER
EQUALITY BY 2030**



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About this Guide

WHAT IS THE ONLINE CAMPAIGNING GUIDE ABOUT?

The Guide to Online Campaigning accompanies UN Women's *Toolkit for Youth on Advocating and Achieving Gender Equality by 2030*. It provides guidance to create an online campaign **that is linked to a larger advocacy effort to achieve gender equality**. The guide focuses on how to best utilize websites and social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube for online advocacy.

WHO IS THIS ONLINE CAMPAIGNING GUIDE FOR?

This Guide is for individual young women and young men, youth led groups, networks and movements, including youth-focused organizations and other community-based organizations (CBOs), that want to advocate for gender equality, empowerment of young women and engagement of young men as partners for gender equality in the region, **using digital communication platforms**.

WHY IS THE ONLINE CAMPAIGNING GUIDE IMPORTANT?

The digital revolution has expanded the opportunities for advocating for achieving

gender equality. Online communication platforms, including social media, have immense ability to reach, communicate, inform and advocate to a new (connected) audience, to bring forth new champions, to create and strengthen partnerships for achieving gender equality¹. Coupled with the rise of a critical mass of youth social media users in the region, this digital revolution promises major transformations in the way youth can advocate to achieve gender equality in the region.

HOW TO USE THE ONLINE CAMPAIGNING GUIDE?

To make the most of this Guide, we suggest you read the *Toolkit for Youth on Advocating and Achieving Gender Equality by 2030* prior to the Online Campaigning Guide. The Toolkit will provide you an overall idea on how young women and young men in the region can take the lead in advocating for gender equality and how online campaigning can support your overall advocacy goals. For this reason, the Guide extensively refers to the Toolkit for more information.

Nevertheless, this Guide will be useful as a standalone resource as well. If you are already engaged in online campaigning and social media platforms, you will find useful guidance and tips to make your online advocacy for gender equality more effective.

As you read the guide, look out for the following icons to get more understanding about a topic:



¹ Adapted from UN Women. Social Media Policy and Guidelines

1. Why campaign online to advocate for gender equality

For the purpose of this guide, online campaigning (also called an e-campaign or For The purpose of this guide, online campaigning (also called an e-campaign or digital advocacy) is the process of engaging the public - **using web and digital communication platforms such as social media, websites and e-mail and mobile phone technology** - and getting them to take some action to demonstrate their support for your advocacy to achieve gender equality and empowerment of young women.

Since the term social media can be used and understood in different ways (e.g. social media and social networking are sometimes used interchangeably), it is important to create a common understanding on it at the outset. In this guide, by social media we mean a range of interactive communications, networking and organizing activities that take place using digital technologies (web-based and mobile). There are several types of social media platforms, each with a different purpose. While social media is constantly evolving, some of the current social media platforms can be categorized based on what they are used for, for example²:



- **Social networks** used to connect with people. E.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn

- **Media sharing networks** used for sharing photos, videos, and other media. E.g. YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat
- **Discussion forums** used to share news and ideas. E.g. Reddit, Quora, Digg
- **Bookmarking and content curation networks** used to discover, save, and share new content. E.g. Pinterest, Flipboard
- **Blogging and publishing networks** used to publish content online. E.g. WordPress, Tumblr, Medium

These several social media platforms, in addition to websites, emails and mobile phone technology can support your online advocacy for gender equality for the following reasons³:

- **It's easy** – Technology is developing fast and there are more and more ways to get people involved in your campaign for achieving gender equality.
- **It's quick** – You can respond to news and events, send messages to supporters, share information at the click of a button.
- **It's cost-effective** – Emails, social media and many web-based tools are there for you to use for free.
- **It has a vast reach** – People spend time on the Internet and using social media, you can reach huge numbers online, your supporters can spread what you share with others in their networks, and so on.

² <https://blog.hootsuite.com/types-of-social-media/>, accessed 2 November 2017

³ Adapted from Plan International. (2014). An Advocacy Toolkit: The Education We Want.

- **It helps to make connections** – It can help you to build relationships with online influencers and target decision makers. It also connects your supporters to each other. This makes them feel part of a community and motivates them to be part of a larger cause.
- **It's simple to act** – Engaging supporters in action to achieve gender equality can start with something simple, like signing an online petition. There are simple entry points that can lead to greater involvement.

YOUTH SOCIAL MEDIA USERS IN THE REGION

Youth in the region have successfully taken advantage of this new digital space in recent years. Social movements, including the Arab movement, have to a large extent played out on social media⁴. Here are some youth and social media trends in the Arab States today.

Youth and Social Media in the Arab States

The proportion of youth in the region aged 15-24 using the Internet



is higher than the proportion of the total Arab population using the Internet (44 percent)⁵.

About 2/3rd of social media users in the region are under 30 years old⁶.



Facebook and WhatsApp are the most used online communication channels across the Arab States⁷.



Gender gap among social media users: only one out of three social media users are female. This imbalance has not changed in six years⁸.



YOUTH DIGITAL DIVIDE IN THE ARAB STATES

About a third of the youth in the region aged 15-24, does not use the Internet⁹. To overcome this youth digital divide, ensure your online (and offline) campaign for achieving gender equality brings the voices and actions of the most marginalized young women and young men into conversations around gender equality.

⁴ UN Women. *Communications and Public Advocacy Strategy 2016-2020*.

⁵ ITU. (2017). *ICT facts and figures*.

⁶ Salem, F. (2017). *The Arab Social Media Report 2017, Arab Social Media Report Series (Vol. 7)*. Dubai: Governance and Innovation Program, MBR School of Government.

⁷ TNS. (2015). *Arab Social Media Report*.

⁸ Salem, F. (2017). *The Arab Social Media Report 2017, Arab Social Media Report Series (Vol. 7)*. Dubai: Governance and Innovation Program, MBR School of Government.

⁹ ITU. (2017). *ICT facts and figures*. About 64.2 percent of youth in the Arab region, aged 15-24, uses the Internet.



#HERSTORY EDIT-A-THON¹⁰

As part of the celebrations of the International Youth Day on 16 August 2016, the HerStory edit-a-thon initiative was launched at the United Nations in New York and eight other cities around the world including Cairo, Chennai, Dubai, Delhi, Hyderabad, London, México City and Monterrey.

The edit-a-thon was an event at a scheduled time where a group of volunteers in each of these cities edited Wikipedia together. The idea was to increase the content on Wikipedia related to gender equality and women's empowerment to raise awareness and provide more examples of female leaders.

This would help to close the gender knowledge gap online. Empower Women, the Wikimedia Foundation, and the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth with hundreds of volunteer champions, were instrumental in organizing a series of edit-a-thons in their local communities. The events included a Wikipedia 101 brief tutorial, a full day of writing and editing on Wikipedia.



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AND DISCUSS

1. Can you think of other reasons that make online campaigns a necessary tool to advocate for gender equality in the region?
2. Why do you think there is a gender gap among social media users in the region?

¹⁰ <https://www.empowerwomen.org/en/community/events-opportunities/2016/07/herstory-edit-a-thons>, accessed 8 October 2017

2. How to develop an online campaign to support advocacy for gender equality

An online campaign is only one part of a larger advocacy effort and should be in sync with your overall advocacy plan. Other advocacy techniques may include offline public campaigning such as organising events, rallies, public exhibitions, writing emails to decision makers and so on; lobbying; media work; building partnerships. Many advocates use of a mix of offline and online advocacy techniques that reinforce each other. (Refer to the Toolkit for Youth for more information on how to plan your advocacy for achieving gender equality and more details on using different advocacy techniques for achieving gender equality).

FIVE QUESTIONS FOR PLANNING ONLINE CAMPAIGNS

Answering the following questions will guide you in planning your online campaign:

Question 1: What do you want to achieve with your online campaign?

Question 2: Who is the audience you would like to reach?

Question 3: Which online communication platforms will you focus on?

Question 4: What kind of content will you share, how often and who is responsible for sharing it?

Question 5: How will you measure progress?

QUESTION 1: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE WITH YOUR ONLINE CAMPAIGN?

Answering this question involves thinking about what is the overall purpose of your online campaign within your broader advocacy plan to achieve gender equality. (Refer to the Toolkit for Youth, Question 8: How do we begin? for more information on setting broader advocacy goals and outcomes)

For example:

- Engage with the general public to raise awareness, educate and inform about youth issues, including gender equality, young women's rights and young men as partners for gender equality.
- Create conversations about your youth group's work on ending gender discrimination and insert your voice into conversations to challenge the mainstream views on gender equality and young women's rights.
- Develop meaningful relationships with online influencers around your advocacy issue to build support.
- Translate online awareness to offline action to push for gender equality.
- Publicize an event. For example, events around 16 days of activism against gender-based violence (November 25 – December 10 each year), International Women's Day and so on (Refer to the Toolkit for Youth, Question 5: How do we get them to hear it? for more information)
- Fundraise for your advocacy



ONLINE CAMPAIGNS REQUIRE TIME AND RESOURCES

When thinking about the larger vision of your online campaign, always consider how much time and resources (human and financial) you have to manage the online campaign. Remember that successful online campaigns including social media platforms can be extremely labour intensive.¹¹

¹¹ Adapted from UN Women. *Social Media Policy and Guidelines*



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AND DISCUSS

Can you think of other ways an online campaign can help your advocacy to achieve gender equality?

QUESTION 2: WHO IS YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE?

Answering this question involves determining who you would like to reach with your online campaign for achieving gender equality. For example, are you mostly communicating with people who are already familiar with your youth group and your advocacy agenda, such as your members and partners? Or are you reaching out to the wider public as well as targets and the influencers as part of your larger advocacy strategy?

(Refer to the Toolkit for Youth, Question 2: Who can give it to us? to find more information on how to determine your broader targets and influencers for advocacy)

QUESTION 3: WHICH ONLINE COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS WILL YOU FOCUS ON?

This decision should be based on your online campaign's goals and the intended target audience. For example, what social media tools do your targets and allies use? What would influence your target audience the most - text, photos or in-depth articles? Different online platforms have different strengths and purposes. Before starting out on every digital platform (e.g. websites,

emails, social media, mobile phone technology) start small by using one or two that will help you achieve your goals. Remember, it's better to use fewer channels well than to stretch yourself thin trying to maintain a presence on every digital platform. For the purpose of this guide, we will focus on how to best utilize **websites and social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube**.



TAKE BACK THE TECH!¹²

This is a collaborative campaign to reclaim information and communication technology (ICT) to end violence against women. The campaign calls on all ICT users – especially women and girls – to take control of technology and strategically use any ICT platform at hand (mobile phones, instant messengers, blogs, websites, digital cameras, email, podcasts and more) for activism against gender-based violence. Take Back the Tech! plans several campaigns throughout the year, with the biggest being 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. For more information check out the campaign [here](https://www.takebackthetech.net/).

3.1 CAMPAIGN WEBSITE¹³

Creating a website is one step to build an online presence to support your advocacy. People who see something about your campaign to achieve gender equality in the news or hear about it from one of their friends will have a place to go to learn more,

read campaign materials, find out how to get involved, and make financial contributions. The complexity of your website will depend on the size and scope of your campaign, and whether you're using the site to manage contact with your supporters. The cost of setting up a basic website is fairly minimal, or it could potentially cost nothing at all. You could create a campaign page on your existing youth group's website, if you have one. Or you could use a page on Facebook as your campaign hub. (*See the section ahead on using Facebook for advocacy to achieve gender equality*)

Here are some tips to make an effective campaign website:

- **Cover the basics:** Give people a clear sense of what your gender equality campaign is about. Tell them who you are, what your mission and goals are, what kind of activities you're engaged in, and what individuals can do to make gender equality a reality.
- **Make it engaging:** Make your home page attractive using photos, audio (or podcasts), infographics, posters, and videos. You can use infographics from the Toolkit for Youth and the IMAGES study (see the box on IMAGES MENA for more information).
- **Update it regularly:** Post the latest news about the campaign, short notes from the youth campaign manager, interviews with youth gender advocates - young women and young men - about why they are volunteering for the gender equality campaign, videos taken from campaign events or trainings, and so on.
- **Connect with important dates:** Connect to the important dates in your advocacy calendar to attract more people to your campaign website. For example, start a blog series on the website during the 16 days of activism against gender-based

¹² <https://www.takebackthetech.net/frequently-asked-questions>, accessed 8 October 2017

¹³ Adapted from Grassroots Campaigns and Advocacy. A toolkit to help you make change happen.

violence. Invite guest bloggers to contribute a blog post each day. They could be local champions of gender equality, your allies and targets and online and offline celebrities. Be innovative in using the campaign website.

(Find the advocacy calendar in the section 'identifying advocacy opportunities' in the Toolkit for Youth. A more detailed calendar on International Days is available at <http://www.un.org/en/sections/observances/international-days/>)

- **Make it easy for people** to volunteer, donate, sign a petition, or report contact with a targeted public official.

IMAGES MENA

The first study of its kind in the region - The International Men and Gender Equality Study in the Middle East and North Africa (IMAGES MENA) - offers a unique perspective on the state of male-female relations in the region. The study supported by Promundo and UN Women, includes nearly 10,000 men and women aged 18 to 59 in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine, including both urban and rural areas. Equally important, IMAGES provides women's perspectives on these same issues.

Get more information on the study at www.imagesmena.org. In addition, refer to the Toolkit for Youth for ideas on how you can use findings from the IMAGES study to support your online and offline advocacy for gender equality.



USING UN WOMEN'S WEBSITE AS AN ADVOCACY TOOL

UN Women uses their [website](#) as a tool to create awareness and advocate for achieving gender equality. In addition to the information the website provides on UN Women's work to achieve gender equality, it uses the platform to raise awareness on key international days that promote women's rights. For specific International Days - such as International Women's Day (8 March), International Youth's Day (12 August), International Day of the Girl Child (11 October), 16 days of activism to end gender-based violence among others - the website features detailed 'In Focus' packages. These include background information on the issue, human-interest stories, infographics, quizzes, videos, links to local events, including tips on how to join the social media conversation and so on. For examples see the UN Women [In Focus page](#) and specifically [the International Youth Day's](#) page for ideas.

For issues that do not have detailed In Focus packages, the website's editorial team highlights a single story on the theme or a news item or recent development. For example, see the Editorial spotlight: [What does gender have to do with reducing and addressing disaster risk?](#)

The website also runs five [editorial series](#) called 'From where I stand...'; 'Take Five' (a question and answer series

on gender equality); 'A day on the life of...', 'Expert's Take', 'In the words of...'. This helps to provide a global perspective on gender equality from the point of view of young women and young men, gender equality experts, local and international organizations and governments.

You can use these ideas to develop your own campaign's website structure and content. You can also link to the relevant pages on UN Women's website on key International Days and other gender focused themes.

3.2 SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, TWITTER AND YouTube)

The idea of using social media for online campaigning is to connect people and provide them with a platform for dialogue and discussion on gender equality. As highlighted earlier, there are several social media platforms out there, each with its own purpose. In this guide we will focus on using three social media platforms - Facebook, Twitter and YouTube - for online campaigning¹⁴.

WHY FOCUS ON FACEBOOK, TWITTER AND YouTube?

Facebook is by far the most popular social media platform in the Arab region with more than 150 million users by early 2017. Almost two-thirds of Facebook users in the region are under 30 years old. Twitter users in the region have almost doubled in the last three years, to more than 11 million users in 2017.¹⁵

Given the large amount of users, Facebook and Twitter are indispensable tools for advocates as they help in reaching a wide audience. News and information travel quickly through these channels around the clock, and they are better equipped to directly connect with people. Facebook and Twitter also have features that make it easy for advocates to engage with the public, including photo and video posts and social share options. These tools also focus on dialogue and engagement with users, which are critical for youth advocates looking to raise awareness about gender equality issues, and build relationships with a variety of individuals and groups.¹⁶ Facebook and Twitter can also be used to draw users to your main website and other social media platforms to keep them updated on the campaign's activities and issues.

With one billion viewers¹⁷ on YouTube every month, you can use YouTube videos to share stories and messages on gender equality with a global, regional and national audience. YouTube is also particularly useful to reach out to audience with low literacy levels.

TIPS FOR USING FACEBOOK TO CAMPAIGN ONLINE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Have your content ready before you set up your Facebook Page or Group for your campaign on gender equality. Post your campaign logo, your campaign name, goals, activities and your contact details. Target invitations to your allies. Send a message to the people who have joined you to invite

¹⁴ The material on using Facebook, Twitter and YouTube for online advocacy is adapted APC WNSP VNC. (2011). Strategizing Online Activism: A Toolkit, And, The Greenlining Institute. (2013). The Art of Listening: Social media toolkit for nonprofits.

¹⁵ Salem, F. (2017). The Arab Social Media Report 2017. Arab Social Media Report Series. (Vol. 7). Dubai: Governance and Innovation Program, MBR School of Government.

¹⁶ The Greenlining Institute. (2013). The Art of Listening: Social media toolkit for nonprofits.

¹⁷ <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/3545195?hl=en>, accessed 1 October 2017

their friends to your Facebook group, page or cause. Make sure your messages about your campaign are crisp and concise so that the people you invite will know what it is about. It is also good to be clear about what actions your members can take.

FACEBOOK PAGE OR GROUP: WHICH ONE SHOULD YOU USE?

A Facebook page provides a more formal presence to the campaign and helps to share information about your issues and work with the larger public audience. Groups on the other hand help smaller groups of individuals wishing to engage around a particular issue and organize themselves around actions or discussions.

For example, you can use Pages to design your youth group's official profile on Facebook. You can then use Facebook Groups for small group communication and for people to share their common interests and express their opinion on a specific gender equality topic linked to your advocacy.

Facebook also has a Causes application that enables users to organize themselves into communities of action that support specific issues and campaigns. Explore the application further to see if it supports your online campaign's objectives.

Here are a few more ways to use Facebook to further your online campaign:

- **Keep your Facebook group and page updated.** Post questions, links and new information about your gender equality issue regularly to keep your members interested in your campaign.
- Use **pictures and videos posts**, and put them at the top of newsfeeds. If you want your content to be visible, attach-

ing a photo or video will generate more feedback in the form of likes, comments, and shares. Make sure the photos and videos you share are relevant to your work and the story you want to tell. For example, share pictures from events that you hosted or attended; infographics that explain gender equality issues and numbers; YouTube video clips of news segments and stories related to your gender equality issue and so on. Links you may want to share include news articles, online resources, event invites, and important websites. At the end of the day, choose content that you think will resonate with your audience.

- Use **Facebook live** to stream video content directly to an audience in real time. Use this feature to stream any public event you may organize such as Orange Day celebrations, a public talk with a target decision-maker on gender equality, a panel discussion and so on. While streaming the live content, the **'donate button'** feature also allows campaigns to collect donations.
- **Hashtag (#)** your campaign and all of your major events to build online communities and expand your audience base. This allows people to contribute to online conversations at events and throughout the duration of campaigns in real time. In addition, people who aren't physically present for events will still have an opportunity to follow conversations online, build relationships, and engage. Moreover, as long as the conversation is related to what you're talking about, then it's completely okay to use the existing hashtag. In fact, you'll be offering new perspectives to on-going conversations. Here are some hashtags that you can use: #orangeday, #hefor-she, #planet5050, #imagesmena.
- Use the **Facebook Graph Search**, the search tool built into the Facebook platform to search user accounts and hashtags to listen to what is being said about your gender equality issue.



See [Socialbrite's](#) tips and guidance on how you can use Facebook for advocacy

Refer to '[How to Use Facebook Graph Search](#)' on five ways that Facebook Graph can help your campaign for gender equality.

TIPS FOR USING TWITTER TO CAMPAIGN ONLINE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- Use **Twitter Polls** to get public opinion on a gender equality issue, such as role of young men as gender equality advocates, young women's right to decent work and pay, ending violence against young women, refugee youth and sons. Create your own two-choice poll right from the compose box, and it will stay live for 24 hours. (See *Toolkit for Youth on how to use polls to support target analysis for advocacy in the section Question 2: Who can give it to us?*)
- **Tweet at news reporters** for coverage on topics around gender equality, empowerment of all young women, young men as partners in gender equality. Reporters often check social media for news, but it's also a good way to reach them.
- Create **Twitter Lists** to make listening easy. The number of accounts you like and follow may become overwhelming to the point that your newsfeeds are overloaded with information. For example, you can maintain lists for each of your issue areas (e.g. young men as

gender equality advocates, economic empowerment of young women, ending violence against women and so on) and lists for different media sources (e.g. national and local). By creating lists, you can sort user accounts into different groups and create focused streams of posts.

- **Twitter Chats** are scheduled ahead of time and provide an opportunity for users to join a focused dialogue on a specific topic for example around a recent passing of a bill to end sexual harassment in public spaces and so on. As a result, campaigns can experience increased engagement and follow after a successful Twitter Chat.
- Organize a **Twitter thunderclap** to get hundreds of users tweeting at your advocacy target simultaneously during a key moment in your timeline.
- Use **live tweeting** to promote interaction and engagement at public events. Use Twitter to solicit immediate feedback, take questions, and share the event with people who are unable to attend in person.
- Use **Twitter Search**, built right into the Twitter platform, to search what keywords are being discussed in real-time on Twitter through the use of hashtags.



Connect with UN Women's global Twitter handle for youth: @UNWOM-EN4Youth, #Youth4GenderEquality, #YoungWomenLeaders, #YoungMeninGenderEquality

Using this twitter handle UN Women organizes monthly twitter chats on every 25th of the month, on the occasion of [Orange Day](#) (a day to take

action to raise awareness and prevent violence against women). On every 8th of the month it highlights youth action in achieving gender equality. You can mention this twitter handle and the hashtag in your own campaign tweets.

You can also connect with the CSW's (Commission on Status of Women) annual Youth Forum @YouthForumCSW, run by youth civil society groups that support youth participation in CSW. (See the Part 1 of the Toolkit for Youth on more information on CSW)

Other hashtags you can use in your online campaign are as follows:

#Planet5050 from the [Step it Up campaign](#) for gender equality

#HeForShe from the [He for She campaign](#)

@SayNO_UNITE, #orangetheworld, #16days from the [UNiTE campaign](#) to end violence against women



Refer to [Socialbrite's](#) tips and guidance on how you can use Twitter for advocacy.

See Act.ly and TinyPetition to set up a petition on Twitter.

TIPS FOR USING YOUTUBE TO CAMPAIGN ONLINE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

After setting up your campaign's channel on YouTube, you can start creating videos and uploading them to their channels. You can create videos easily from a computer, tablet, or mobile phone camera. Make sure your videos are compelling and short. YouTube has many tools that you can use to raise the profile of your campaign:

- Use the Call-to-Action Overlay on your video, that can highlight a request for donations, a link to a website, or additional content.
- Connect with [YouTube video volunteers](#), that train advocates on how to create effective video-based advocacy campaigns.
- Use YouTube to live stream events.
- Finally, embed the videos onto other social media platforms to increase visibility.



Get to know more on how to maximise YouTube for advocacy, see [10 fundamentals of a creative strategy on YouTube](#).



MANAGING DIFFERENT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

If you are using many different social media platforms, you can manage them all together in one place using tools like hootsuite.com, tweetdeck.com, seismic.com. Each of these tools has advantages and disadvantages, so check out each one and find what works best for you. If you're starting out, try Hootsuite first. The basic version of Hootsuite is free and allows you to manage your Facebook and Twitter accounts at the same time.

or organizations' posts to start new conversations, and join in the conversations that are occurring on your social media pages. The more you engage with your followers, the more they will understand that your priorities are their priorities, too.¹⁹



Read [ICTs for feminist movement building: Activist toolkit](#), to learn how technology-based campaigns can be used in advocating for gender equality.

HERE ARE A FEW MORE GENERAL WAYS TO MAXIMISE YOUR ONLINE CAMPAIGN TO ACHIEVE YOUR ADVOCACY GOAL:

Use Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to push traffic to your campaign website.

Your website is the hub for all the work you do. Most of the links that you share on social media should be to your own website. That way, you're encouraging users to learn more about your work and to get involved in additional ways.¹⁸

Be Responsive: Make your audience a priority and reply promptly to any comments or replies that you receive. Prompt replies indicate that there's an attentive person behind your social media accounts. Even if you receive negative feedback, your replies should be respectful and constructive.

Get social. Social media is about conversation. Share and comment on other peoples'



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AND DISCUSS

In what ways are you already using Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to create online conversations around gender equality? What has been your experience? What challenges do you face?

¹⁸ <http://www.aauw.org/resource/how-to-use-social-media-for-advocacy/>, accessed 1 October 2017

¹⁹ <http://www.aauw.org/resource/how-to-use-social-media-for-advocacy/>, accessed 1 October 2017



USING INSTANT MESSAGING APPS TO CAMPAIGN FOR GENDER EQUALITY

There are about 124 million²⁰ smart-phone users in the region, with WhatsApp being the most popular app being used for instant messaging. In fact, almost two out of five users in the Arab states consider WhatsApp their most preferred social media channel²¹. Other popular instant messaging apps include Facebook messenger, Telegram and Viber.

Given that smartphones and data costs are getting cheaper and more accessible, WhatsApp and other instant messaging apps have a great

potential to be used as a campaign tool for gender equality. With these tools you can send team messages, inform people of campaign events and emergencies, collect data and feedback on events or any recent development related to your advocacy topic, update supporters with news, send out a call to action on your advocacy issue and so on. Instant messengers also do not limit the number of characters in a message. Pictures, audio and videos can easily be shared adding more detail and engagement to conversations²².

BEST PRACTICES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS²³

The infographic is titled "Best Practice for Social Media Campaigns". It features a large number "1" in a circle, followed by the heading "USE PHOTOS TO TELL STORIES". Below this, a text box states: "Visual content gets 94% more views and 150% more retweets. Use photos and infographics to tell visual stories. Photos should be properly sized to ensure their message is not lost in the image preview and can engage the audience without clicking." At the bottom, there are two icons: an eye icon followed by "+94%" and a retweet icon followed by "+150%".

²⁰ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/494580/smartphone-users-in-middle-east-and-africa/>, accessed 2 November 2017

²¹ TNS. (2015). Arab Social Media Report.

²² Adapted from <https://www.theengineroom.org/what-were-learning-about-using-whatsapp-in-advocacy-initiatives/>, accessed 2 November 2017

²³ Global Social Service Workforce Alliance. (2017). Global Advocacy Toolkit for the Social Service Workforce.

2

SHARE QUOTES AND DATA TO INCREASE CREDIBILITY

Give the audience interesting quotes and data that they can share and that will quickly build the story of the social media campaign. Ideally these can be integrated with custom made images. 56% of people who support nonprofits online say they do so because of compelling stories told through social media.



56%
 ^^^
 ^^^
 ^^^

3

ASK FOR RETWEETS AND DON'T SHORTEN IT TO "RT"

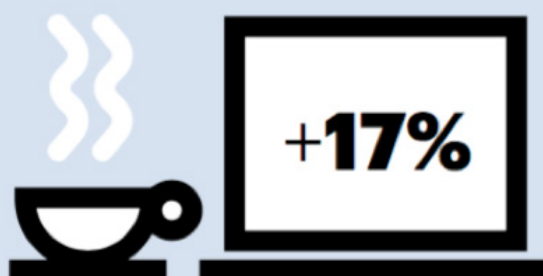
Posts that ask for a retweet are 12 times more likely to actually be shared by followers. And those that spell out the word "retweet" rather than using RT are 23 times more likely to receive engagement than those that use RT.



4

TWEET ON THE WEEKEND TOO

Tweets on the weekend receive up to 17% more engagement than during the week. Scheduling weekend tweets is an important way to increase engagement with audience members with more time on their days off.



5

INCLUDE A CALL TO ACTION AND PROVIDE A WAY TO SIGN UP FOR MORE INFORMATION

Organizations should use an email newsletter sign up box or a social media follow button and ensure that their websites are responsive for mobile devices. *Responsive websites are 34% more likely to convert click-throughs from social media in to donations.*



+34%



6

USE HASHTAGS* BUT DON'T OVERDO IT

Hashtags are an implicit call to action and double post engagements. However, *tweets with more than 2 hashtags have a 17% drop in engagement.*

-17%

#

* A Hashtag is a word or phrase preceded by a hash sign (#), used on social media, especially Twitter, to identify messages on a specific topic.

7

INCLUDE A LINK IN THE POST

92% of all Twitter interactions happen when readers click on a link. Posts with links are also 86% more likely to get retweeted.



+86%



CREATING A SOCIAL MEDIA PLAN

The five questions model for planning online campaigns can also be used for developing a social media plan to support your advocacy for gender equality.

For example:

Question 1: What do you want to achieve with your social media engagement?

Question 2: Who is the audience you would like to reach?

Question 3: Which social media platforms will you focus on?

Question 4: What kind of content will you share on social media?

Question 5: How will you measure progress of your social media engagement?

QUESTION 4: WHAT KIND OF CONTENT WILL YOU SHARE?

Creative, engaging content and consistency is key for an effective online campaign. Regularly updating your website and constant activity on social media establishes your campaign as a legitimate source of information on your key gender equality issue.

Here are **types of content** that you can use for your online campaign²⁴:

- Stories, articles, special features, human-interest stories and other content related to your advocacy issue. Explore the [UN Women website](#) for content ideas. Some of these content ideas are mentioned in the case study earlier 'Using UN Women's website as an advocacy tool'.

- Call to action around your advocacy issue.
- Your youth group's photos and videos, or photos and videos for which you have the right to use.
- GIFs (commonly referred to a short, animated picture without sound).
- Live videos from events.
- Relevant facts and figures, infographics on your issue.
- Quotes from young women and young men, community leaders, government figures in support of your advocacy issue.
- Interesting external news articles on gender equality and young women's empowerment.

Make an effort to mix up the types of content that you share. You want to ensure that your audience is engaged by varying your content. Challenge yourself and take the time to brainstorm with others to think of new, engaging content to share to further the goals of your online campaign on gender equality. Popular online messaging techniques include posts that ask a question or 'fill in the blank'. Above all, keep in mind cultural sensitivities around gender equality issues when sharing content. ²⁵

FRAMING CONTENT FOR ONLINE CAMPAIGNS

The language used on social media differs slightly from the style used in traditional media and communications. The following guidelines apply²⁶:

- There is now a 280-character limit on Twitter. On Facebook, there is currently no character limit, but for high engagement rates, messages of 120-300 characters are recommended.

²⁴ Adapted from UN Women. Social Media Policy and Guidelines.

²⁵ The Greenlining Institute. (2013). The Art of Listening: Social media toolkit for nonprofits.

²⁶ UN Women. Social Media Policy and Guidelines.

- Messages need to be short and concise, catchy, and engaging. Keep it simple and free of acronyms.
- Provide context and give the audience a chance to follow up – a post should not include only plain text, but a link to the website/articles/source of information, or a photo or video.
- Shorten all links in bit.ly. It looks cleaner, and – more importantly – it allows for monitoring of the click-through rate (number of times a link was clicked on).
- Give credit to partners. For example, if a partner is mentioned in a message, search if they have an account on the respective platform, then write @user-name instead of spelling out their actual name.
- When using a word or phrase that is highly topical or relevant to your online campaign, use hashtags (the # sign followed by a word). Through relevant hashtags, you tap into discussions other people with similar interest are having, and make your content easily searchable. For example, #endgenderdiscrimination, #youngwomen'srights

The most effective way to manage your content is by developing a **Content Calendar** for your online campaign. Consider what type of post you would share each day of the week. By doing this, you can focus your efforts each day on finding specific content, rather than fishing through your newsfeed for relevant material. For example, on Mondays you could post motivational stories related to your campaign, Wednesdays could be designated for Twitter Chats, Fridays could be dedicated for sharing facts and so on.

You should also sync your Content Calendar to important dates in your advocacy calendar, including key international campaigns on achieving gender equality, such as the Step It Up campaign, HeForShe campaign and Unite campaign to end violence against women. Insert yourself into these existing

conversations to further profile your online campaign. You could also assign specific days to tweet with hashtags from global campaigns.

(For more information: see the section on 'campaign websites' earlier for ideas around using important dates in your advocacy calendar. Also refer to the proceeding section 'Tips on using Twitter' to see global campaign hashtags that you can use. The Toolkit for Youth also provides detailed ideas on how you can use these campaigns in your advocacy work, which will be applicable to online advocacy as well).

Finally, remember posting regularly for an online campaign requires many hours of work each week. As you develop your content calendar, consider which youth group members will be responsible for content planning and posting, and what is the number of hours of work expected from them each week.



STAY IN THE LOOP ON RELEVANT CONVERSATIONS ON GENDER EQUALITY AND YOUNG WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Set up a [Google Alert](#) for your online campaign and it will send you notifications any time it finds a mention of your campaign on a website.

Type your campaign's name into the [Socialmention](#) search bar, and you'll see a list of all places you've been mentioned online, along with ratings (positive, negative, or neutral) for the type of mention it's used in.



RESOURCES THAT YOU CAN USE IN YOUR ONLINE CAMPAIGNS (AND ALSO OFFLINE)

IMAGES [infographics](#) in Arabic and English.

An eight-minute [film](#) on the IMAGES Study.

See UN Women, Regional Office for Arab State's [YouTube](#) playlist for powerful videos on gender equality you can use in your campaign.

ABAAD has developed several [videos](#) on gender equality and role of men and boys in gender equality in Arabic that you use in your campaign.

QUESTION 5: HOW WILL YOU MEASURE PROGRESS?

After you've had a chance to publish some posts and get some engagement, the next step is to analyze and measure the results. The goal is to figure out what works for your audience and what doesn't. For example, you might notice the Facebook posts you send out in the afternoon aren't getting any engagement. That could be a sign you need to adjust your posting times.²⁷ In order to track all of this, you need social media analytics tools. You can use Hootsuite for basic analytics that help you measure your social media impact. You can also use Google Analytics for tracking your campaign website's traffic. These analytics will help you to shape future advocacy strategies, adapt plans, and

engage with key influencers to achieve your broader advocacy goal.

EXAMPLES OF ONLINE CAMPAIGNS THAT ADVOCATE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS' RIGHTS

#BringBackOurGirls: After hundreds of Nigerian girls were kidnapped by terrorist group Boko Haram in 2014, #BringBackOurGirls became the social media rallying cry for tweeters across the globe. The hashtag continues to draw attention to this devastating crisis.

#WeAreSilent: Malala Yousafzai inspired the world with her brave commitment to education. In 2014, the Malala Fund joined forces with Free the Children and dozens of celebrities to launch the #WeAreSilent campaign, a 24-hour silent stand to raise awareness about the millions of girls who have been denied the right to go to school.

#BecauseIamAGirl: Plan International's 'Because I am a Girl' campaign supports the youth-led, global movement for girls' rights and gender equality.



TURNING ONLINE SUPPORT INTO REAL ACTION

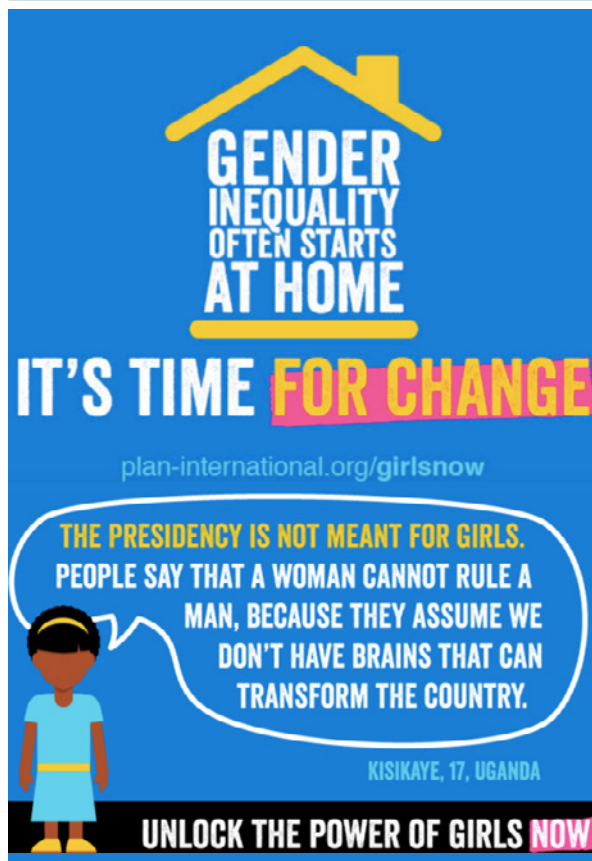
One of the biggest challenges in online campaigning is ensuring that online activities have impact on the ground. The use of social media for online campaigning does not ensure that the people who support your

²⁷ <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-content-management/>, accessed 1 October 2017

cause on Facebook and Twitter will join you, when you are for example, lobbying with a policy maker face-to-face to put a specific gender equitable law on the policy agenda.



Plan International's Because I am Girl campaign has developed a [social media toolkit](#) to support their online advocacy. Read the toolkit to get ideas for your own campaign. Below are some infographics from the campaign that can give you ideas to develop your own.



GENDER INEQUALITY OFTEN STARTS AT HOME

IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE

plan-international.org/girlsnow

THE PRESIDENCY IS NOT MEANT FOR GIRLS. PEOPLE SAY THAT A WOMAN CANNOT RULE A MAN, BECAUSE THEY ASSUME WE DON'T HAVE BRAINS THAT CAN TRANSFORM THE COUNTRY.

KISIKAYE, 17, UGANDA

UNLOCK THE POWER OF GIRLS NOW



CHANGE DOES NOT START WITH A SINGLE PERSON, IT STARTS WITH EVERYONE - WORKING IN TEAMS, WE CAN ATTRACT MORE ATTENTION.

SOFIA, 15, COLOMBIA

UNLOCK THE POWER OF GIRLS NOW

GENDER ZERO TOLERANCE INEQUALITY

plan-international.org/girlsnow

3. Using the internet safely

While online technologies provide a tremendous opportunity to advocate for gender equality, you should be aware of the risks associated with online activism. This may include misrepresentation of your posted content, misuse of personal data and online sexual harassment and abuse. There is no simple solution to this menace. However, these are a few tips to keep safe when campaigning online:

Secure personal information: When joining social networks including when you enter a chat room and online forums, you often have to compile a personal profile. In such cases, be cautious about sharing identifiable or traceable data (such as full name, address, the name of your university, mobile phone number, personal e-mail address and so on). Such details can become accessible to anyone, and it is therefore advisable to create an identity for yourself using nicknames or aliases and not provide any detailed personal information or pictures. The privacy settings on social media platforms can also be set to help filter who sees your information, photos and videos. In addition, also refrain from meeting people that you met online.

Keep tight editorial control: Once information is posted online it is out of your control and available to anyone to any sort of use. Since social media makes it easy for people to comment on your information, tag it and share it within their own networks, the content you publish online can be misrepresented. One way to overcome this is to keep a tight editorial control over your content to minimize risks.

Report abuse: If you face inappropriate responses and aggression on social networks (e.g. abuse, sexual harassment, bullying) it is important you talk to a trusted person. Share with your youth group, organization, parents, friends, a university teacher. Remember, you have the right to be protected as well as the responsibility to act appropriately, offline as well as online.

Internet service providers will also often allow users to report incidents by clicking on 'report' or 'notify', in order to report the abuse. Most social networking sites have tools to help you block or delete that person. Look up Childnet International's webpage '[How to make a report](#)', which provides information on how to report online harassment on different sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat among others.

In more serious cases, such as those involving physical threats, it is advisable you inform the police. In most countries it is a criminal offence to threaten someone or to harass or stalk them, whether in real life or online. You should also save e-mails, take screenshots of social network pages, chat room texts and SMS messages that can be provided as evidence to the police (as well as to internet service providers).

In addition, there are local organizations in many countries that you can also turn to for help if you face online harassment. Therefore, before you start your online campaign, together with other youth group members, make a list of local organizations that can help you in case you experience abuse online. For example, in Egypt, the [Harass Map](#)

initiative is working to end sexual harassment and encourage people to stop making excuses for the harassers. In addition to raising awareness on sexual harassment that women undergo on Egyptian streets, they also focus on ending online sexual harassment. Harass Map also offers women judicial support in case they decide to pursue legal action against their harasser²⁸.



Read WHO@ (Working to Halt Online Abuse)'s guidelines on [how to stay safe online](#) and how to respond to [online physical threats](#).

In addition look at UNICEF's [online safety](#) tips, put together for their #ReplyforAll campaign on Internet safety for adolescents. The tips are useful for youth as well.

²⁸ <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/04/egypt-anti-cyber-sexual-harassment-social-media.html#ixzz4z5XMUM35>, Accessed 21 November 2017

ANNEX 1:

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UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



**Planet 50-50 by 2030
Step It Up for Gender Equality**

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<http://arabstates.unwomen.org>
www.facebook.com/unwomenarabic
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www.youtube.com/unwomenarabic
www.flickr.com/unwomenarabic