

Training Curriculum for Online Campaigning

Prepared by WIDE+ for CB4VOL



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About this document

This is a training curriculum that introduces online campaigning to women’s rights organisations, civil society organisations and other NGOs working with youth volunteers to advocate for issues like gender equality, social inclusion, economic justice, and other related topics. This training curriculum outlines a series of topics related to online campaigning.

Online campaigning is the strategic use of digital technology to advance advocacy initiatives to create social or political change. This can be done via e-newsletters, websites, online messaging apps, or social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and more. Online campaigning helps to make issues public, raises awareness, educates people and encourages them to participate in pushing for change. It also helps to highlight these issues by bringing them to the attention of stakeholders like governments, policymakers, civil society and the media.

This curriculum is developed for the project: “Across borders: strengthening youth volunteering to fight for gender equality and social inclusion”, also known by its acronym, CB4VOL. This project is a collaboration between four partner associations which are working together for the first time as a consortium, consisting of Asticude in Nador, Morocco, YWCA in Jerusalem, Palestine, Alianza por La Solidaridad in Madrid, Spain, and WIDE+ in Brussels, Belgium.

This training curriculum is based on the experiences and knowledge of the WIDE+ network, its members and partner organisations in online campaigning. The topics suggested here can support civil society organisations and their volunteers to build an effective online campaign. The resources here will support strategising, planning, and implementing. At the same time, it highlights the issue of digital safety that can be considered in the planning process.



Training Curriculum:



1. Introduction to Online Campaigning

- a. What is online campaigning
- b. Feminist online campaigning

2. Strategising and Planning an Online Campaign

- a. Developing a campaign strategy
- b. Planning the online campaign
- c. Campaign communication template
- d. Examples of online campaigns on youth, gender equality and/or social inclusion

3. Creating the Online Campaign

- a. Creating the campaign's identity
- b. Steps in choosing the social networking tools for the campaign

4. Digital Safety during Online Campaigning

- a. Introduction to digital safety
- b. What are the common digital security risks and how to minimise them

1. Introduction to Online Campaigning

This section provides an overview of online campaigning, helping to understand what are the essential blocks to online campaigning and what are the tools that they can use to create an impactful online campaign. In today's digital age, there are many tools at one's disposal.

a. What is online campaigning

Social movements, activists, civil society organisations and other social justice actors have looked to optimising their online or digital campaigning efforts to grow movements, build legitimacy, garner support, raise awareness and educate – their campaigning actions can now cross geographical boundaries due to the ease of using digital tools. While online campaigning often complements offline efforts, campaigns can only be solely online, powered by online communities and social media storytelling. Online campaigning has become an increasingly important tool especially seen during the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to be a significant pillar of work for social justice actors.

Online campaigning refers to the use of information-communication technologies (ICT) to fulfil a campaign strategy. Common ICT tools include websites, email newsletters, social media platforms, online advertising and online messaging apps like WhatsApp. **A campaign is essentially a series of organised efforts to create change, normally for a political or social issue (or both).** Online campaigns can reach anyone with an Internet connection; hence it allows for broad dissemination of information. It also allows better tracking of campaigning efforts through analytics service that usually comes with ICT tools.

b. Feminist online campaigning



Image by Marga RH for WIDE+

What is feminist online campaigning, and why this is relevant to any theme that tackles gender equality, inclusion, and other intersecting topics, like economic justice, climate justice, and more?

Essentially, a feminist approach starts off with, “an analysis of women's and men's different roles in society, specifically the multiple “burdens” of women's experience in society and their access (or non-access) to resources to support their multiple roles.

And it includes: “Taking a clear stand to address the gender inequality in society, including the field of ICT through women's empowerment,” (Association for Progressive Communications,

2011). One of the key questions in feminist online campaigning is “how can women, girls and gender-nonconforming persons claim their power?”.

For digital feminists, ICT tools, such as social media platforms are seen as powerful tools of resistance, and also a way to build feminist movements that are more inclusive and intersectional. There have been powerful online interventions, such as the #MeToo movement that became an international and collective digital movement with the shared mission to protect women’s rights, especially against male violence. **Feminist online campaigning is therefore part of this larger phenomenon to mobilise the rights and voices of girls, women and other genders across the world through online platforms.**

Further resources:

- Feminist practices and politics of technology:
<https://en.ftx.apc.org/books/home/page/feminist-practices-and-politics-of-technology>
- Feminist internet ethical research practices:
<https://genderit.org/resources/feminist-internet-ethical-research-practices>

2. Strategising and Planning an Online Campaign

This chapter will explain what a campaign strategy is, which can guide campaigners to planning, designing, implementing, monitoring and improving/evaluating their online campaign. It provides the framework around building an online campaign.

a. Developing a campaign strategy

A campaign strategy is simply, “**an organised, purposeful effort to create change, and it should be guided by thoughtful planning**”, (Association for Progressive Communications, 2011).

In building a strategy, four things need to be considered:

- Analyse the existing situation.
- Who are affected by the issue of the campaign (both positively and negatively).
- What change needs to happen to improve the issue.
- What resources, approach and tools can be used in the campaign.



Diagram from: “Strategising Online Activism: A Toolkit” (Association for Progressive Communications, 2011)

b. Planning the online campaign

Activists and organisations need to first answer the four key questions in the previous section before they can start building a campaign strategy. Then a campaign plan can be developed involves these steps:

1. Problem analysis
2. Objective of the campaign
3. Who are the main stakeholders
4. Crafting the campaign's key message
5. Online tools for the campaign
6. Monitoring and evaluating the campaign

c. Campaign communication template

To complement and finalise your online campaign plan, it is advised to also answer the questions below. **Campaigning is essentially about strategic communication.** How can this communication convey the campaign's key messages, shift attitudes and make connections with others? Hence, this topic also covers the basic elements of a communication strategy, which includes:

- a) **Clearly define what you want to achieve by having a clear set of goals and objectives:** These goals should be **SMART** (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound).
- b) **Knowing who your audiences are:** Who are the decision-makers and opinion influencers you are targeting?
- c) **Clear messaging:** Ensure that you outline the problem; the solution; and a call for action.
- d) **Being creative and innovative when choosing the campaign's platform:** What are the tools you can use to effectively reach your audiences.



Image by Joseph Murica from Pixabay

d. Examples of online campaigns on youth, gender equality and/or social inclusion

- **Stop Border Violence** - <https://www.stopborderviolence.org/>: This is a campaign to force the European Commission to guarantee and apply the provisions of Article 4 of the charter of fundamental rights of the European Union. Article 4 refers to the “Prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”, where no one can be subjected to torture, or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.



Image taken from the website of "Stop Border Violence"

- **Feminists Want System Change** - <https://www.wecf.org/feministswantsystemchange/>: #FeministsWantSystemChange campaign by Women’s Major Group for civil society activism around the activities on Beijing Platform for Action. Women’s Major Group facilitates women’s civil society active participation, information sharing and input into the policy space provided by the United Nations (e.g., participation, speaking, submission of proposals, access to documents, development of sessions).
- **Stand for Something** - <https://web2.eyca.org/assoc>: #STANDFORSOMETHING is a youth engagement campaign coordinated by the European Youth Card Association and funded by the European Parliament. It’s led by 21 Youth Activists from 16 countries, eager to engage young Europeans in conversations and activities about the Future of Europe.

3. Creating the Online Campaign

a. Creating the campaign’s identity

After developing one’s campaigning strategy, the next steps are focusing in particular on the online aspects, by firstly defining the campaign’s identity and then selecting which tools and platforms are used for the strategy. **Creating a campaign identity is important to distinguish your campaign from others.** The campaign will have presence on often different social networking sites and interact with potential supporters for the cause. The campaign will need a name or title and a slogan. And a logo.

b. Steps in choosing the social networking tools for the campaign

For an online campaign different social networking tools, such as website, social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok, etc.), podcasts and more, can be used to support the online campaign. **Different tools play different roles in the campaign.** For instance, a website hosts exhaustive content like long articles, research papers, etc., whereas different social media platforms handle different kinds of content - eg: videos on TikTok and images on FB and Instagram. Each social media platform has its own etiquette and use. See the links for suggestions on how to select and use different tools.

Further resources:

- a) **Association for Progressive Communications (APC)** - www.apc.org: APC is an international network of civil society organisations that empowers and supports people working for peace, human rights, development and protection of the environment, through the strategic use of information and communications technologies (ICTs). It works to build a world in which all people have easy, equal and affordable access to the creative potential of ICTs to improve their lives and create more democratic and egalitarian societies.
https://www.apc.org/sites/default/files/ICTs%20Toolkit_2015_0_0.pdf
- b) **Social Movement Technologies** (<https://socialmovementtechnologies.org/>): Social Movement Technologies collaborates with campaigners and activists around the world to build people power for justice in the digital age. It provides organizing strategy, training and campaign support. They also have many online resources around using digital media for campaigning, some are free, some require a fee. Example of an available on-demand training course: <https://courses.socialmovementtechnologies.org/p/developing-your-digital-campaigning-plan>
- c) **WeMove Europe** - www.wemove.eu: WeMove Europe runs campaigns that put people at the heart of change. Our own individual acts, when put together, create something bigger than we can ever achieve alone. WeMove Europe is an independent and values-based organisation that seeks to build people power to transform Europe in the name of our community, future generations and the planet.
- d) **Young Feminist Europe** - <https://www.youngfeminist.eu/>: Young Feminist Europe (YFE) is an open platform that aims to amplify young feminist voices and activities across Europe through campaigns, advocacy and movement building. YFE has run many campaigns and has expertise on online campaign strategy. To achieve Young Feminist Europe's vision, we aim to harness the power of feminist grassroots and hashtag activism.

4. Digital Safety during Online Campaigning

This section covers the basics of digital safety and what it means to build a safe online campaign. Groups working on social/racial justice, environmental, immigration and refugee issues, as well as gender and reproductive rights are being targeted by hackers/trolls that are intent on subverting their work for political reasons.

a. Introduction to digital safety

Digital security practices help protect campaigners from malicious online attacks and intrusive surveillance efforts led either by groups that are hostile to the campaign's purpose or by repressive governments/authorities. Online campaigners have to take digital safety seriously as it can compromise their work, rights and safety (depending on the context).

Digital security is about ensuring that all data in the communications are safe from others, and it involves protecting campaigners' online identity (email account, social platforms logins, credit card information etc). It also entails the protection and safekeeping of data and other information about the campaign, the people involved in running the campaign, online files, etc.

b. What are the common digital security risks and how to minimise them

This chapter will highlight some risks involved when running an online campaign, such as breach of data privacy, malware, phishing, social media monitoring, online violence, and more. It will also provide strategies to minimise these digital risks. **Digital safety protocol takes time to plan and implement, but it is an important step in online campaign planning.**

The chapter will also begin with a risk/threat assessment that campaigners must reflect on, including:

- What do I need to protect?
- Who do I need to protect it from?
- How much do they want that information, and how easy is it for them to get it?
- What happens if they do get it?
- What am I willing to do to stop that from happening?

(Activist Handbook, 2019)

Further resources:

- Safe online campaigning: <https://cyber-women.com/safe-online-advocacy/safe-online-campaigns/>
- Digital security for activists: <https://www.activisthandbook.org/en/tools/security#:~:text=Digital%20security%20practices%20help%20protect,or%20by%20repressive%20government%20agencies.>
- Security in a box: <https://securityinabox.org/en/>

Digital Safety for Feminists - These resources were prepared for an online workshop provided by Spideralex from Donestech in Spain in 2021 for WIDE+ members of the migration and gender working group: [Workshop-Digital-safety-WIDE-2021](#) (English), [Taller-Seguridad-WIDE-2021](#) (Spanish).

- Organizations providing emergency and rapid response support or funds to Human Rights Defender facing digital emergencies
- Helpline de AccessNow: <https://www.accessnow.org/help-es/?ignorelocale> (EN/ES)
- Programa Defensoras Digitales: <https://www.digitaldefenders.org/es/bienvenida/> (EN/ES)
- Fondo de accion urgente latino america: <https://fondoaccionurgente.org.co/> (ES)
- Fondo respuesta rapida Derechos Digitales: <https://www.derechosdigitales.org/sobre-el-fondo-derespuesta-rapida/> (ES)
- Developing a digital safety Strategy + evaluation: For doing an evaluation of one's digital safety in order to improve it, one can use below tools or this [comprehensive tool including scan](#). Or read the [slides for the workshop provided by Donestech to WIDE+ members](#).
- [Holistic security website](#): The holistic security website is a gathering space for information on safety for human rights defenders. The purpose of the guide is to help human rights defenders take an organised approach, building strategies to maintain their well-being and creating space for activism and resistance, whether working alone, in small groups, collectives or organisations. It offers an intersectional approach to security, which takes into consideration all aspects of security - physical, psycho-social and digital, instead of treating each of them as separate and such that does not influence or affect others. The guide tries to integrate these aspects of security and highlight their interrelatedness.