YOUTH on BOARD

4
HANDBOOK
steps
to reach the goal

CONTENT

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ABOUT THE GUIDELINE

This document is a step-by-step guide to developing a digital advocacy campaign. It will provide organizations and young people with a conceptual framework for integrating technology with youth advocacy efforts to affect social change and influence social determinants. This toolkit is for any young person who wants to start their own advocacy campaign. If you are a teacher or a facilitator, you can also use this toolkit with your group to inspire them to work.

The guideline is one of the main results of the Erasmus + project "Digital advocacy for active citizens".

The overall goal of the project was to strengthen the capacities of young people through appropriate skills and methods for digitalization and e-advocacy. With this, they will be active in social processes and will gain a sense of national and European affiliation. Through this project, young people will become creators of social processes and their own future thus reducing the number of young people who emigrate due to dissatisfaction.

The project involved 24 young people from 6 countries.

WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Advocacy means getting support from another person to help you express your views and wishes, and help you stand up for your rights. Someone who helps you in this way is called your advocate.

1. Figuring out what needs to change and deciding on a plan to get there;
2. Making sure as many people as possible know about the problems we're looking to tackle so that they can support us;
3. Understanding who has the power to make the change, and how we can convince them to do that;

Youth advocacy is the process of identifying, understanding and addressing issues that are important to young people. By advocating for kids in school, communities, and society at large, we can empower them to take on responsibility for their own safety and well-being. This article discusses what youth advocacy is, why it's so important to have this process in place, and how you can become an advocate.

Dictionary definition:
Advocacy /'advekesi/
Noun: public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy "his outspoken advocacy of the agreement has won no friends"
Synonyms: support for, argument for, arguing for, calling for, pushing for; pressing for

Use over time for: advocacy
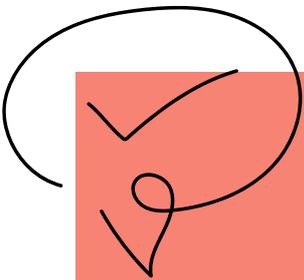
WHAT IS DIGITAL ADVOCACY?

Social media helps amplify advocacy efforts by potentially reaching more people, in more places, faster than ever before. To use social media effectively, you should have a clear plan in mind of who your audience is, which social media platforms are most suited to that audience, and what results in you hope to gain from your efforts.
The modern digital era means that social media will no longer be a stand-alone aspect of your advocacy plan, but rather something that should be integrated at the most basic level.
Digital advocacy is the use of digital technology to contact, inform, and mobilize a group of concerned people around an issue or cause. The purpose of digital advocacy is to galvanize supporters to take action.

Digital tools have become a central component of almost any movement. Some of the most-used digital advocacy tools include websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, email, and texts. Hundreds of social media applications exist that could be used for digital advocacy, but to get started, spend your time and resources where your supporters are most likely to be (Facebook and Twitter are good bets). Then integrate your efforts for better overall results.
DEFINITION: Advocacy is an organized process of influencing people or institutions to achieve a stated positive change. Digital advocacy means the "process" is mostly digital, by using digital tools.

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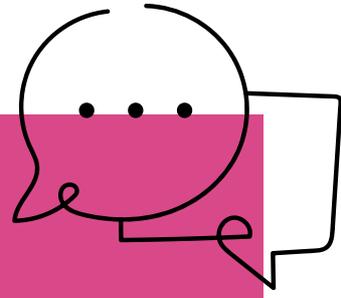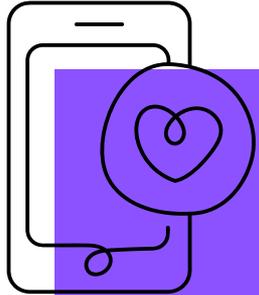
DEFINITION 2: Digital advocacy is the use of digital technology to contact, inform, and mobilize a group of concerned people around an issue or cause. The purpose of digital advocacy is to galvanize supporters to take action.

ONLINE ADVOCACY is a relatively new pursuit that focuses on using the Internet and the tools it provides to promote a certain issue, candidate, or group of candidates.

Type of technology: Website development tools

Description:
These sites can help you create "drag and drop" or "point and click" websites with no technical skills. (You can create a blog space within each of these.)
Examples include:

Wix (Wix is a free and easy web-design tool that allows you to build elegant websites with any coding skills);
Weebly (On Weebly, you can create a free website or blog in minutes by using a simple drag-and-drop interface);
Squarespace (The all-in-one solution for anyone looking to create a beautiful website & comes with in-built analytics. They have a collection of written guides as well as videos for visual learners on their website);
Shorthand (A visual storytelling Paid platform to engage audiences & move them to action, often used by journalists. The platform comes with beautiful visualization tools that require minimal or no coding experience)
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GET FAMILIAR WITH THE SOCIAL NETWORKS

Type of Technology	DESCRIPTION
Social Networking Site	An online community. People create personal profiles; organizations create pages. Allows users to maintain contact with friends, strengthen existing social networks, find new friends and expand networks. Features on social networking sites that allow people to customize their page and interact with each other. Examples are causes, photos, groups, events, gifts, videos, notes.
Twitter	A social networking service that allows people to share brief (140 characters or less) updates on their location, activities, thoughts, and so forth, with followers. Messages can be sent or received using a mobile phone or the Internet. It is also referred to as microblogging.
Blog	A type of webpage where a person makes (or posts) regular entries (e.g., text, photos, videos) similar to an online journal. Individual blogs can include personal information, thoughts and feelings, and read like a journal. Organization or topic-based blogs (e.g. breastfeeding or sexually transmitted infections) tend to be content-specific. Readers can comment on posts.
Podcast	A podcast is a collection or series of digital audio files that are made available for downloading or listening via the Internet. Each individual audio recording is known as a podcast episode. Podcasts are typically hosted by an individual or individuals who lead a conversation, share stories, or report the news.

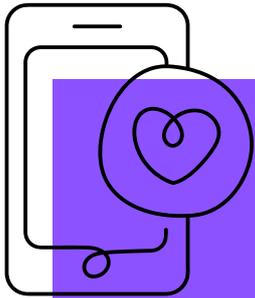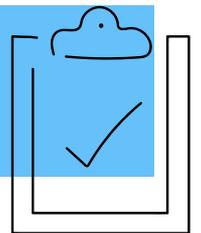# IDENTIFY THE MISSION
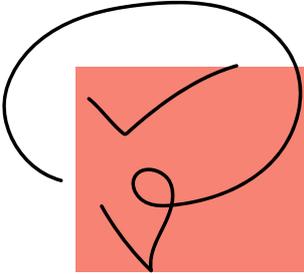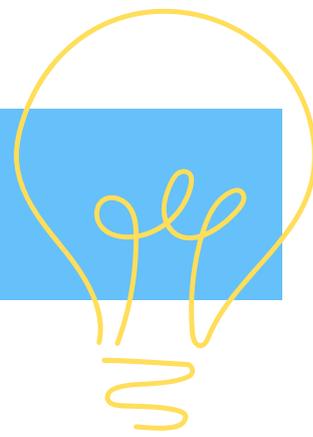
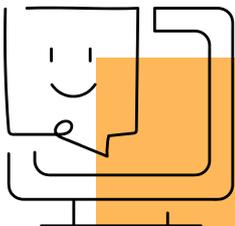What are the long-term social changes you wish to see?
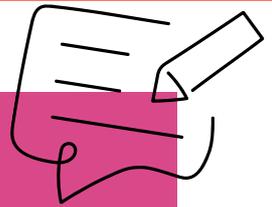
Who is affected by these changes and how?

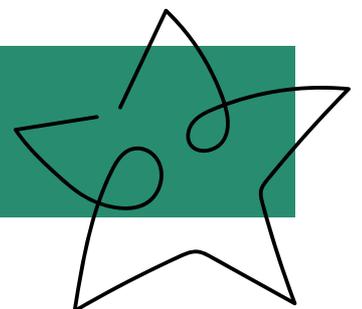What changes, if any, are you seeking to make to decision-making or power structures?

What are the short-term outcomes or solutions you wish to achieve?

Name 3-5 objectives that will help you achieve your short-term outcomes or solutions.

What is the expected impact of your plan?

1 Focus – hatch a goal that will make an impact and find your audience - who are you trying to influence?

Your goal is the main change you want to see take place as a result of your advocacy efforts. Try to limit the number of goals you set - if you're overambitious you may find yourself struggling to achieve any of them. Try to be as clear as possible about what you want to achieve and use the SMART approach to come up with your goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound. The first step is to have a vision and do the proper research.

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What do I know?	What do I need to find out?	What are the causes?	What are the consequences?	Who is working to tackle the problem?
What are they doing?	Is it working? Why? Or why not?	What's not working? What needs to happen?	Who do I need to talk to?	Who or what can help with my research?

Before you start campaigning, it's really important that you get to grips with what is causing the problem. You'll need to explore all of the causes and the effects of the problem to figure out what you can do to best solve it. Anyone problem may have many different causes and effects, some of which may not be obvious at first.

Audience - who are you trying to influence?

Your audiences are people or institutions you seek to influence in order to achieve your goal. Try to define your audience(s) as clearly as possible:

- Profession - are they in school, university, have a specific job, or does it not matter?
- Location - where do they live, are they urban or rural (or both)?
- Age - how old are they?
- Gender - are they a specific gender?
- Passion - what do they care about?
- Attitude - how do they feel about your issue/cause?
- Change factor - how can they bring about the change you are trying to achieve?
- Media habits - what media do they consume?
- Influencers - who do they listen to?

Difficult to Influence High Impact	Easy to Influence High Impact
Reach out to these people and try to find ways to get their attention but keep in mind it may not be easy;	Focus on these people! They are your main targets;
Difficult to Influence Low Impact	Easy to Influence Low Impact
Remember these people in case they become easy to influence or more powerful in the future but don't focus on them for now	Get in touch with these people right away. They may be able to help you reach your targets or give you important information for your campaign

2 Grab Attention – stick out in an overcrowded, over-messaged, noisy world

An advocacy message is a core statement that you would use to define your advocacy mission to the public. An advocacy campaign message is critical to ensuring folks understand what you are about and what you want to accomplish. Your messages will convince your audience to think about something or take an action, in order to create change.

Three key questions to guide the development of your messages:

- What do we want people to know?
- What do we want people to feel?
- What do we want people to do?

Try to tailor your messages to your target audience (that's why you did step 2).
Be as succinct and specific as possible - we all have short attention spans - and use simple language, avoiding jargon.
In case you want the audience to take any action, make sure to include a call to action!
And remember to use relevant hashtags on your platforms to link into conversations.

Your campaign can have a few key messages because different audiences need different messages. So remember to adapt your message based on who you're speaking to – the best way to get someone's attention is to speak their language!

The way we structure our stories is key to maximizing their impact. Our words matter, but the way we organize them is just as important.

While it may be tempting to lead with the problem, it's actually more effective to lead with shared values. Frankly, people don't want any more problems. And they certainly don't want problems that seem insurmountable like sexual violence or homelessness. By leading with shared values (that you now understand because you did step #1), you disarm people and connect with them on a more human level.

What's most critical, however, is painting a picture of the world we want to create. (If there's no compelling future to work towards, what's the point of any of this?)

What does it look like to live in a world without sexual violence?

To me, it's full of people without trauma or fear who are free to move about the world as their authentic selves as they strive to reach their full potential.

Create engaging content

This is what it finally comes down to. The success of your campaign ultimately depends on how effectively you explain your objectives and needs.

In order to achieve your digital advocacy objectives:

Develop a content plan or calendar of topics to post, including the timeline and key dates for your desired outcomes;

Keep some room for flexibility to consider current or unexpected events or outcomes.

Do not spam your users with stale or repeated content. Ensure that your content is in some way, useful to your audience, whether it's spreading awareness, creating a dialogue or providing support and solidarity.

Maximize your online efforts with offline efforts by distributing printed material and holding in-person meetings.

Be sure to use visuals and pictures. Some user-friendly and free platforms to create visuals are Canva and Pablo. Create a catchy hashtag to accompany your campaign. Most importantly, remember to include your call to action.

Data visualizations are also very effective in breaking down complex statistics into bite-sized information for your audience, with the added bonus that the data strengthens your key message. There are now a number of free tools available online to help you visualize your data such as RawGraphs & Infogram.

3 Digital Tactics - how will you get there?

Your tactics are the content and channels through which you will communicate your messages to your audience:

- Make sure that you create compelling content that conveys your messages: videos, graphics/visuals, blogs, interviews, human interest stories, first-person narratives, email communication (newsletters, appeals, etc.)
- Use digital channels that reach your target audience: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Medium, Tumblr etc.

Don't overstretch yourself and adapt your content to individual channels.

Make sure you think about the relationship between channels and content - some content works better on some channels than others.

2 Infographics are a perfect example of the benefits of design. A study by Levie & Lentz found that people following directions with text and illustrations carry them out 323% better than people following directions without illustrations. Data visualisations can present patterns and insights that are not visible in a written list.

1 Consider the use of strong visuals to catch people's attention and make an impact. A poignant photo can speak volumes. An emotional appeal accompanied by a video can compel your user to act.

4 Monitoring - how successful are you?

Monitoring means observing and measuring the impact of your advocacy efforts.
Make sure to periodically check whether you are on track to achieve your goals - this is why it's advised to set SMART goals. Measurable means quantifiable, e.g. We want 100 people to go and vote.
In case you see that you're not on track to achieve your goals, consider reviewing your messaging and adapting your tactics.

RISKS AND CHALLENGES

Risks and Challenges	Rating: Low/Medium/High	What will we do to lower the risk?
1		
2		
3		

Monitoring and evaluating advocacy are important for performance management, learning and accountability. It enables you to understand what factors and approaches lead to change, helps you improve your advocacy strategies, and enables you to be accountable to donors and internal and external stakeholders. Ongoing monitoring and real-time information gathering are particularly important for advocacy as political opportunities can change quickly, requiring you to react and 'course correct' your strategy swiftly. Advocacy evaluation can also help donors understand the complexity of policy change and manage expectations about what grantees can accomplish in what timeframes. You should consider monitoring and evaluation when you are planning an advocacy strategy. This will ensure that everyone working on the strategy has a shared understanding of what your strategy is trying to achieve and how success will be measured and documented.

Measuring the impact of your digital campaign can be tricky for several reasons such as unpredictable timeframes as policy change can take years to come into effect. Oftentimes, local contexts change, and this means shifting milestones. It is important to think more of your contribution towards your goals, rather than attributing the success of your advocacy strategy to your work. As part of this, we should think of the journey, rather than just the destination. Be sure to measure progress along the way to make sure you can see the impact of your work over time.

To begin, ask yourself these five questions:

Question	Information
Who are the monitoring & evaluation users?	Think about who will benefit from the information generated through your M&E activities and how will they use the data. Will the data be used internally, or shared externally with donors, partners and the general public?
How will monitoring & evaluation be used?	Next, figure out how this information is going to beneficial for the users. It could be used for improving and re-iterating the program design, for future fundraising, for accountability and impact measurement, or for general learning purposes etc.

What evaluation design should be used?	At this point, things might get a bit technical. There are three main categories of an evaluation design which can be termed as experimental, quasi-experimental and non-experimental which basically determine the rigour of your research.
What should be measured?	As we mentioned before, it is important to measure incremental progress over the course of your digital advocacy campaign. You can choose to measure the results of your activities, also known as outputs or measures of e-ort. You can also measure interim outcomes, your actual goals or even better, the impact of your digital advocacy strategy
What data collection tools should be used?	The last step determines what kind of data will be collected & how that data will be collected. There are several different tools & methodologies out there such as network mapping, media tracking, interviews, crowdsourcing, snapshot surveys, research panels, and policy analysis and so on. You can analyze the reach of your hashtag or pour over policy documents to analyze the change in the language used over time. In the end, this is totally up to your abilities and resources. Sending out an online survey will cost you nothing but hiring enumerators to do eld research with a representative sample could quickly deplete your financial resources.

EXTRA PLAN

What needs to change? The problem:	What do you want to happen? Our vision:

What steps do we need to take? OBJECTIVES

Conclusion:

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide a conceptual framework for integrating technology with youth advocacy efforts to affect social change and influence social determinants of youth participation, particularly with 1) Focus – hatch a goal that will make an impact and find your audience - who are you trying to influence? 2) Grab Attention – stick out in an overcrowded, over-messaged, noisy world 3) Digital Tactics - how will you get there? 4) Monitoring - how successful are you? Making strategic decisions to combine technology and youth advocacy will give youth a voice, arm them with advocacy skills, and increase their self-efficacy. These youth may become adults who are involved in larger policy-based decisions that will address the social determinants that affect the youth status of the young people in their communities and throughout the world.

Advocacy, at its most basic level, is communication. It is one person or a group of people sending messages for the purpose of persuading or influencing others. While various tools aid with the communication process, technological advances, including software and associated devices, are expanding advocates' communication options. With these options comes the potential to make advocacy efforts more effective and efficient.