Creating Accessible Social Media Campaigns

To promote a message or campaign, often disabled persons' organizations (DPOs) will use traditional media sources, such as radio messages, newspaper articles, or printed posters. Though these are effective ways to share a message, there are also many advantages to using social media to promote a campaign.

Benefits of using social media

Here are some of the main benefits of using social media for a campaign:

- **Direct communication and interaction with your audiences**
  Sharing information online allows organizations to reach out directly to everyone they are connected to online, including other civil society organizations and disability rights activists.

- **Creates an online presence for an organization**
  If an organization does not have a website or does not use social media, it is difficult for donors and other organizations to know that

This is an example of a Facebook page created by a regional network that supports disability rights. It shares information and news about the organization.

Source: General Election Network for Disability Access (AGENDA)

the organization exists, especially if they are not from the same country. Having an online presence helps others to learn about the mission and goals of the organization, and see examples of the type of projects that the organization works on. This also helps the organization receive proper credit and recognition for the work it does.

- **Offers new ways to share a message or product**
  If the organization has created an article, video, poster or radio message, these can also be shared online as well as through traditional media. This helps to ensure that a message reaches as many people as possible.

Types of social media

There are many social media tools, each with an opportunity to reach a different type of audience, depending upon the size of the network in each country or region.

Social Media in Libya

In 2013, an Electoral Access Working Group was formed in Libya. The group included members of the General National Congress, disabled persons' organizations, disability rights activists, and civil society members. To promote awareness of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Libya, the Working Group launched a campaign called *Zaykum Zayna* ("As you are, we are").

The *Zaykum Zayna* campaign encouraged the development of voter education material in braille and to provide sign language interpreters for all press conferences hosted by the High National Election Commission. The campaign conducted using a [Facebook page](#), a [Twitter page](#), and a collection of advocacy tools and information about trainings.

This logo was created by Zaykom Zayna and was shared on their social media.

Source: [Zaykom Zayna](#)

Social media is different from traditional outreach approaches (such as television, radio or print media) in that they easily foster two-way communication between DPOs and their supporters.

They also create an expectation that the DPO will quickly respond to questions and comments posted through social media.

- **Networking**

These sites allow individuals or organizations to set up a profile page, which allows them to share status updates, photos, and videos with friends, fans, or those who "like" the page. The most popular social networking sites provide unparalleled opportunities to engage with users who already have an active Internet presence, as well as new social media users, who often join well-known social networking sites when they first use social media. In addition to posting narrative updates or sharing photos about projects, these sites can help DPOs engage with their audience by allowing the DPO to ask questions or create polls.

Examples: Facebook, Odnoklassniki, VK, Google+, LinkedIn

- **Blogging**

Blogging sites also allow organizations to post original articles, photos, resources, and links about their work. However, a blog is often better than a networking site for posting longer written articles, and photos and videos can easily be added to each article. Blogs can be especially useful for organizations that often produce new content, as they are easy to search since articles are saved by the date they were published.

Examples: WordPress, LiveJournal

- **Microblogging**

On these types of websites, users are only able to use a certain number of words or posts. This encourages users to post small, short messages. Users can also follow other users with similar interests. Many organizations use microblogging to connect with their followers, to provide

links to longer content on other websites, or to observe trends and conversations happening globally and locally. Microblogging sites can provide immediate information about breaking news, facilitate live question and answer sessions, and serve as a resource to quickly find other users or groups working in the same space, or with similar interests.

Examples: Twitter, Sina Weibo, Tumblr

- **Video sharing**
Websites such as YouTube and Vimeo allow individuals and organizations to post videos online. These videos can be as short as a few seconds to as long as a few hours. This can be an easy way for DPOs to share videos about their organization, to record and broadcast in-person events (such as conferences), or to promote projects for fundraising purposes. New programs such as Meerkat and Periscope also allow real-time, live videos to be broadcast through other social media, such as Twitter.

Examples: YouTube, Vimeo, Vine, Meerkat, Periscope

- **Photo sharing**
Photo sharing sites easily enable DPOs, groups, and individuals to share photos or visuals that promote their work. Publishing photos of community leaders, events, or local projects, along with a short caption, can help show other people what an organization is doing. Using hashtags or keywords along with the photo allows users to search for photos by theme, which can attract new fans, as well as increase the reach of the photo through social sharing.

Examples: Instagram, Flickr, Pinterest

Social Media in Southeast Asia

The General Election Network for Disability Access (AGENDA) is a partnership of disabled persons' organizations, election monitoring groups, and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) based in Southeast Asia. Partners are from different countries in the region, including Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Vietnam.

To promote AGENDA's activities, the organization has live-tweeted disability-related events through its Twitter account, posted news on its Facebook page, and created a YouTube channel to post videos.

This is an example of a tweet used by AGENDA to support their work on Twitter, a social media platform.

Source: General Election Network for Disability Access

- **Mobile messaging**

  Though many people use messaging as a way to communicate with friends and family by smartphone, they also allow for group conversations among users (usually up to 100 participants). This feature may be especially useful for local networks to easily coordinate with one another about project activities and events, or simply to remain in touch.

  Examples: WhatsApp, Viber, WeChat

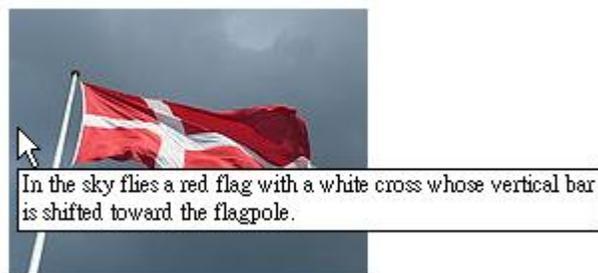## How to make your message accessible on social media

Social media tools can strengthen the reach of an organization's campaign, and connect them with new supporters. However, published content should be inclusive and accessible for everyone. While many of these social media tools already have accessible features, there are several other ways to support accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Blogs

- Choose a design with a simple layout, with a clear contrast between the background color and the text. For example, you could use a black font on a white background.
- Identify any changes in the text font or color. For example, if there is a hyperlink, write 'click link here' followed by a hyperlink.
- Use a sans serif font when possible, particularly for large sections of text. Examples of sans serif fonts are Arial, Tahoma, Trebuchet MS, and Verdana. These types of fonts are easier to read.
- Include a transcript for any videos posted on the blog.

Images

- Provide alt text for photographs and images. *Alt texts* are brief text descriptions of an image's content that is displayed when an image is not visible on the page. Persons using screen readers will be able to hear the alt tag in place of the image.
- Label images with descriptions of image content (e.g. if a photo shows a woman casting a ballot, then the alt text should say "woman casting a ballot") so that website users who are not able to see the image clearly are able to read or hear the description.
- If the social media tool does not allow images or videos to have alternative text (such as Instagram), a detailed description of the image should be provided.

In the sky flies a red flag with a white cross whose vertical bar is shifted toward the flagpole.

This is an example of alt-text for an image.

Source: Wikipedia

Video captioning

- Any video posted on the website should have captions. If this is not possible, a transcript could be used as a second choice.

- There are two different types of text for videos: Captions and subtitles.
  - *Captions* include dialogue and sound notes (for example, a doorbell chiming, a person speaking with a foreign accent, or wind blowing) for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.
  - *Subtitles* are used when people are talking, but they don't include sound notes. For this reason, deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences prefer captioning.
- To enable captioning, post videos on YouTube first and then post a link to the video on Facebook.

Microblogging

- Keep your content simple.
- Avoid using abbreviations so that screen readers can easily read the text
- In tweets that have photos, videos, or audio, use the following prefixes before the text to provide context screen readers:
  - Photos: [PIC]
  - Videos: [VIDEO]
  - Audio: [AUDIO]
- Consider grouping Twitter chats or question and answer sessions on Storify (www.storify.com), which collects tweets on a particular topic or hashtag
- Capitalize each word within a hashtag, for compound words, or when several words are joined together (e.g. PersonsWithDisabilities, NothingAboutUsWithoutUs)