

Social Media for Family Planning Advocacy

Social media is highly effective in organizing people around a specific issue. This focused use of social media can become a valuable component of any family planning advocacy strategy. For your message to reach as many people as possible, it is important to make it easy for your collaborators and supporters to spread the word about your cause via social media sites. As part of your promotion plan or dissemination strategy, create a package that contains key messages, tweets, and posts for use by your supporters. Be sure to include measurement and analytics in your social media strategy in order to gauge the impact of your social media presence. This guide offers helpful tips for using Twitter and Facebook for family planning advocacy.

Twitter

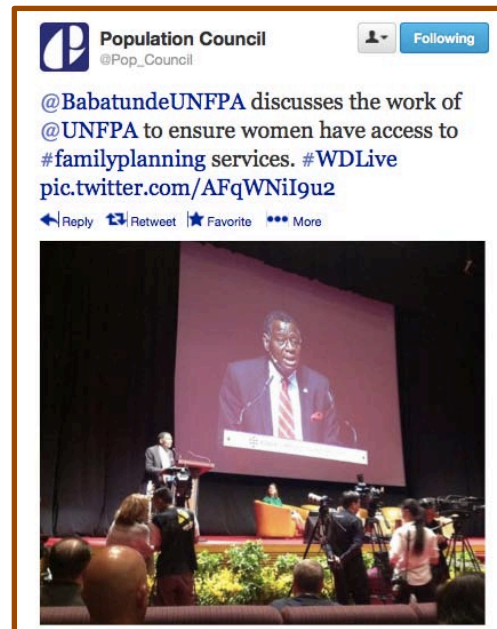
Twitter is a microblogging and social networking service through which users can share information using 140 characters or fewer. Twitter is free of charge, and its easy-to-use interface is highly interactive, enabling users to reach a wide audience and to measure interest in a certain discussion topic using tools such as hashtags.

Tips for using Twitter

- Tweets are limited to **140 characters** each.
- Always use at least one **hashtag**, but remember the characters in the hashtag count toward your allotted 140. *Sample tweet (Friends of UNFPA): Children born to undernourished mothers grow up with health problems. #UNFPA & #WFP launch new program to increase mothers' nutrition....*
- Create a **short URL** using a free service like [Bitly](#) to any article, blog, press release, or other web page you want to link to in your Tweets. *Sample tweet (Population Action International): Help meet women's needs for contraception? \$1B. The U.S. gov't spends that in 2.5 hours. <http://bit.ly/AWomansWorth> #AWomansWorth*
- Tweet **photos and video!** *Sample tweet (Population Council):* →
- Assign, or claim, a hashtag to your campaign and ensure your allies use it. *Example: The Women Deliver 2013 Conference used the hashtag #WD2013.*
- Use **handles** (@), as appropriate, to tag people, organizations or sources in your tweets. *Sample tweet (Partners in Health): #GirlRising airs on @CNN June 16. A beautiful tribute to the importance of educating #girls - watch the trailer <http://ow.ly/m0cPB>*
- If you start a tweet with a handle (for example, @UNFPA) use a period as the first character. *Sample tweet (UNICEF): .@UN's new report on children in armed conflict notes trend of schools attacked & used for military purposes. More: <http://uni.cf/ZKnWbj>*
- For any campaign in which you are asking your constituency to take action via social media, **provide them with sample tweets**, including hashtags and handles.

Sample Family Planning Hashtags

#familyplanning
#FP2020
#contraception
#childmarriage
#waronwomen
#humanrights
#population
#womensrights



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- **Retweet** (RT) tweets that reiterate your message.
- **Modify tweets** (MT) that need a slight adjustment to how they were originally posted—for example, if a tweet did not include a hashtag you wish it had.
- **Favorite tweets** to let the author know you saw and appreciated their tweet.
- **Tweet chats** convene tweeps (people who tweet) at a scheduled time to discuss a particular subject via Twitter. Tweet chats foster community, learning, and stimulating conversation. Active participation in a tweet chat will likely result in more followers and visits to your blog.

Facebook

[Facebook](#) is a free, user-friendly social networking site. Its interactive features, such as videos and widgets, attract the attention of many users and help drive web traffic to organizations' web sites. Like Twitter, Facebook has the capability to reach large audiences at once.

Tips for using Facebook

- For any campaign in which you are asking your constituency to take action via social media, **provide them with sample Facebook post**, quotes, images, and/or links.
- As of June 2013, Facebook users can use **hashtags**. (See Twitter guidance on hashtags.)
- Include a **link to your organization's or project's web site** in your status updates.
- Upload **photos and video!**
- To increase the visibility and reach of your Facebook posts:
 - Include hyperlinks, videos, and photos.
 - Encourage users to re-post your organization's posts.
 - Like your own posts.
- Encourage your fans to comment on your status by asking questions.
 - Use Facebook polls to engage users in conversations about emerging family planning issues.
 - Create a memorable banner. The size of a Facebook banner should be 315 x 851 pixels.
 - Use the highlight feature to pin posts to the top of your Facebook page.
 - Include Facebook share buttons on your organization's or project's website.
 - Engage with family planning partner organizations and advocates by sharing their posts and writing on their wall.

Measuring the Effectiveness of Social Media

- Use [SMART Objectives](#) when planning your social media campaign:
 - Specific
 - Measureable
 - Achievable
 - Relevant
 - Time Bound

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- Explore different metrics with [Facebook Insights](#).
- Social media management tools like [Hootsuite](#) often offer Twitter analytics. Other tools that provide Twitter metrics include [Tweetreach](#), [Twitalyzer](#), and [Topsy](#).
- [Referrals from social media](#) are easy to measure through [Google Analytics](#).
- Use a “Call to Action” to increase and measure engagement with your social media networks.
 - Ask people to retweet, use a particular hashtag, or link to a website.
 - These “calls to action” can grow the activity of your networks by soliciting a tangible commitment from them.
 - Posts, tweets, and other indicators can be measured against commitments made.
- Online surveys can be used to collect feedback on your advocacy campaign, including your social media strategy. Linking to your online survey via social media will help it reach a wide audience. Online survey tools include [Survey Monkey](#), [SurveyGizmo](#), [PollDaddy](#), and [Google Forms](#).

Resources for Using Social Media

- The American Association of University Women (AAUW)’s [How to Use Social Media for Advocacy](#) is an excellent starting point.
- Kipp Bodnar’s [The Ultimate Glossary: 120 Social Media Marketing Terms Explained](#) offers a user-friendly glossary of social media terminology.
- The Global Health Knowledge Collaborative Webinar [The Basics of Twitter: Learning how to Work in the Twittersphere](#) provides an introduction to Twitter and answers a range of questions about using Twitter.
- [How to Participate in a Tweet Chat](#) (by Janet Fouts) offers information on hosting or participating in a discussion forum via Twitter.
- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s [Health Communicator’s Social Media Toolkit](#) provides an overview of social media and offers guidance on developing a social media strategy, monitoring and evaluation, lessons learned, and using various social media tools. The Toolkit also provides an example of a social media campaign.
- [Hootsuite](#) and [Sprout Social](#) are helpful tools for social media management. These programs can help you:
 - **Schedule** tweets or posts throughout the day or week.
 - Create a **dashboard** on which you can follow issues via hashtags (#familyplanning) and follow people or organizations (@BabatundeUNFPA).
 - Track simple **analytics**.
- [Thunderclap](#) is a crowdspeaking platform that allows a single message to be mass-shared via Facebook or Twitter so that it “rises above the noise of your social networks.”