



# HOW TO CREATE A SUCCESSFUL DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

DIGITAL ACTIVISM TOOLKIT A PRACTICAL GUIDE



project This publication is part of the YEE "Youth Digital Communic[ACTION]" and "Strengthening the European Youth **Climate Movement: Showcasing and Supporting the Unheard"** 

The project and the publication have been funded by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union and the European Youth Foundation. The European Youth Foundation (EYF) is a fund by the Council of Europe providing financial and educational support for European youth activities.

The EYF provides possibilities to make the voice of youth heard, manages non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and government representatives, furthering the promotion of peace.

Disclaimer: This publication was produced by Youth and Environment Europe with the support of Climate Action Network Europe via the DEAR program from the European Commission. It does not necessarily reflect the official position of the Council of Europe, European Youth Foundation or European Commission.



# Youth Digital Communic [ACTION]





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Co-funded by the **Erasmus+ Programme** of the European Union



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# INTRODUCTION

The developing climate crisis presents a formidable challenge to tackle. Facing this heroic endeavor are youth activist groups. Who decided to take action and make their voices heard. Shared values and a firm conviction for change fuel these groups' determination. Together they create campaigns, coordinate and plan for a better future.

At YEE, we believe that the scale of the environmental crisis we are currently facing demands a rapid and better-structured response which will actually involve young leaders, not just as a token.

The voices of the future generations have to be better recognized and involved in the current and future developments of both climate action and environmental decision-making at all levels. Young engaged citizens and activists are the change-makers, and they should feel empowered as well as motivated to enact their proposals.

The modern digital media ecosystem is ripe for environmental activism. With some guidance and knowledge sharing, activists can start taking advantage of the scale of the digital landscape. Reaching far and wide to communicate their message.

Digital success generates an everlasting change in the real world. This in-depth guide aims to equip eager activists with the necessary tools to start their digital journey.



This Toolkit aims to provide young people with practical tools and digital communication strategies, which they will be able to apply to amplify their climate action and to conduct effective awareness-raising and advocacy actions through social media and other digital platforms.

This guide starts with the human side of this project. It explains the importance of coordination as well as leadership. Campaigns can only be successful if they have a strong and relatable element attached to them.

For the second part the focus lies on the consulted experts' knowledge. This publication presents the highlights of the consultations as well as useful insider tips.





Throughout this document there will be dialogue boxes with relevant information. Every color has a different intention and function and they help shape this guide into a communal work between activists and experts.

Bilbao green are the voices of the youth participants. It carries the first hand experience of creating a campaign from zero.



Persian green means an expert opinion, insight or insider tip. These are useful nuggets of knowledge of stablished experts!



Purple indicates a useful digital tool for campaign creation. Usually a software, it will lead to a hands-on approach when facing a project.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS



# THE HUMAN FACTOR



# DIGITAL CAMPAIGN



## CONCLUSION



# THE HUMAN FACTOR

I. MISSION, VISION, VALUES II. COMMAND AND CONTROL III. STORYTELLING





# MISSION, VISION VALUES

### DRAWING THE ETHOS OF YOUR ORGANISATION

A good ethos, the guiding beliefs or ideals that characterize the group, is the cornerstone of success. For people, it is a web of morals, values and beliefs. For organisations, it is the mission, the vision and the shared values. The reason behind this is simple: A well informed, motivated and cohesive group can achieve complex goals and generate true change.

Most likely your organisation already went through the formulation and conception process where mission, vision and values are established. Nonetheless, it is important to revisit the foundations when starting a new campaign.

Any endeavour that the group will undertake is underpinned by the vision, which in turn fuels the idealist engine behind the effort. The values govern both the fine detail of the strategy as well as the behaviour in the digital world.

**The goal of any campaign should always align with the current mission.** A strong identity allows recognition and recognition is the first step to generating trust and sharing knowledge.



A mission Statement defines the group main activity, its objectives and its approach to reach those objectives. The mission is the clear intention of the organization as well as the intended aims.

The vision Statement describes the desired future position of the organization. The vision is the projection of the ideal scenario. Where mission changes and adapts, vision tends to remain stable.





The values of a group are not always written down or published. These represent the guiding morals, the pillar of the ethical framework as well as the general guidelines when dealing with the external world.



# COMMAND & CONTROL

### A BOSS ORDERS, A LEADER INSPIRES

Any organization requires a chain of responsibility and control. From small to big groups every community requires a strategic oversight. A head.

Being at the top does not mean benefits or special status, it means that the responsibility of coordination, communication and motivation resides in one person. The person or group in charge of leading the team needs to pay the same degree of attention to the goals as well as the wellbeing of the team members.

The hierarchical strictness and the work specialization are tricky to fine-tune and the perfect balance possibly does not exist. That means that organizations can learn and adapt their structures according to each challenge.

### HIERACHY AND ORGANISATION

When dealing with the initial phases of a project, especially during the brainstorming the hierarchy must be flexible enough to allow fluid input from every level. Everybody's ideas are worth hearing and any contribution leads to the next step.

Once the main ideas are formulated the group must opt-in for a choice-legitimization method. Consensus makes sense in small cohesive groups, whereas the different types of majorities cater to different needs.

There is no absolute better or worse, the important factors are that project leadership ensure that all concerns are being heard as well as facilitate compromises.

After consolidating the main ideas the execution takes the front row.

A **functional, flat hierarchy** works well within digital campaign projects as it encompasses different disciplines, talents and focuses.

Communication tools like Slack allow a better oversight of internal correspondence. Organizational ones like Trello, Notion and ASANA keep track of the work done.





# STORYTELLING

### HERO, DOURNEY AND CALL TO ACTION

The human factor is not only internal but also external. To achieve any goal you need to find a receptive audience. Receptive audiences are hard to find and even harder to reach. The storytelling device can be used to convince, to describe and to inspire.

Stories are after all the retelling of memories, and we, as a society are nothing but a bungle of stories written and waiting to be written. We all can relate to a fairy tale or a classical good vs evil story. It is relatable, it is shareable and it creates an emotional response.

Take advantage of human psychology and use storytelling methods to create successful campaigns!

### STORYTELLING ELEMENTS



HERO Someone who our audience can identify with.



DOURNEY

A challenge renders a certain outcome through the hero's choice.



### CALL TO ACTION

Moral of the story, emotionally experienced understanding.





Advocacy online is based on the idea that small, well-coordinated acts can lead to big change. The hero in this campaigns is usually your regular human being.



## THE HUMAN FACTOR

# STORYTELLING



The following questions aim to put your story to the test. Apply them to your proposal after conceiving the main ideas and formulating the narrative infrastructure.

- Tangible: Does your communication provide a who, what, where and when?
- **Relatable:** Do you find that you can identify with the story, because you understand what motivates them?
- **Emotional:** Does your communication make you feel something rather than just think something?
- **Immersive:** Can you learn something of clear value for your own life from the characters' experiences?
- **Memorable:** Does your communication leave you with a lasting image that can be easily recalled and reminds you of the core message?

### CREATING A PUBLIC STORY

To create a public story you need to recollect information and expectations. Stories are deeply intertwined with personal story, you start with yourself and escalate to your goal audience.





# STORYTELLING

### STORY OF SELF

#### DRAW

The journey your life has taken to get you to this point in your life.

#### REFLECT

What are the challenges, choices and outcomes that led you to where you are now. Who influenced you?

#### **OBSERVE**

What are some of the patterns and themes that you're seeing?

#### DISTILL

Write 3 sentences that give an overview of the key choices you've made that led you to where you are.

### STORY OF US

#### DRAW

Draw an image of your community.

#### DESCRIBE

Think of all the words that you could use to describe them and write them down. What is the common thread that brings you together?

#### **OBSERVE**

Spend some time looking at your drawing and word cloud. What stands out to you?

#### REFLECT

Write 2 sentences about the people who you want to join you in this work. Who are they? What do they value?

### STORY OF NOW

#### IMAGINE

Close your eyes and imagine the future. What could it look like if we all work together? What could happen if you win your campaign?

#### DRAW

Draw the future and what would happen if you worked together and won.

#### REFLECT

Step back and think.

#### ACT

Write 2 sentences. What is the urgent action you want people to take? And why now?

### BRING IT ALL TOGETHER

Find a photo that describes your vision. Weave your sentences together into a letter from your hero remembering your story.

Do not forget to put your story to the test with the framework from above!





# CAMPAIGN

I. BUILDING THE CAMPAIGN II. THE WAR ROOM III. SPREADING THE WORD IV. SOCIAL MEDIA





# BUILDING THE CAMPAIGN

### THE ESSENCE OF STRATEGY IS CHOOSING WHAT NOT TO DO

Ideas, willpower and motivation are aplenty in youth groups. In order to translate this energy into concrete action, you need a plan.

There are many methods and literature written on how to plan, organize and coordinate available today. The gist of the strategy and planning is drawing up a concise course of action, as well as ground the work on measurable achievements.

In this document, we will review two concurrent methods that have been known to be effective in activism campaigns.

The first one leads to a streamlined campaign with concise objectives. The other is a complex framework for longer campaigns. Use the tools that suits the best to your current needs and contexts.

### STRUCTURING A CAMPAIGN - ROADMAP QUESTIONS

**Long Term Goals:** What is the future prospect of this campaign? What do we aim to achieve after all is said and done?

Short Term Goals: What is the immediate objective that can be quickly tackled?

Strategy: How do you plan to achieve your goals?

Allies, Enemies, Neutral: Who are with you?, against you? and who does not even register my existence?

**Strap Line or Slogan:** Do we have a core message that is easy to remember and to spread? Simple ideas spread faster.

**Tactics:** The pragmatical question, what activities, what channels, what action do we need to do to achieve our objectives?

**Measurement:** How do we know if we are having success? Choosing an objective metric can be a big challenge but it is, after all, the important part of every project. In other words, what are the win conditions of this campaign?





## DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

# BUILDING THE CAMPAIGN



### SOSTAC - A COMPLEX FRAMEWORK

For longer-term campaigns, especially those that require a multitude of complex objectives and larger teams SOSTAC is a good alternative.

The favourite tool of digital marketers, its business precision can also be used for activism.





# THE WAR ROOM

### SMART / SMARTER OBDECTIVES

To make sure your goals are clear and reachable, each one should be:

Specific (simple, sensible, significant): what needs to be accomplished?

Measurable (meaningful, motivating): you should be able to extract important success indicators.

Achievable (agreed on, attainable): is your objective something your team can reasonably accomplish? Use past and current campaign to check feasibility.

**Relevant** (reasonable, realistic): why is it necessary now? Saving the world is a noble goal, yet the objectives should be concrete and answering to the modern context.

**Time bound** What's your time horizon? Considering seasonality and modern attention span of the average user. Is the campaign doable in the proposed time?

**Evaluate / Review** Set your own success standards, reflect upon the learning, and adapt to succeed.



At the beginning, choosing realistic goals will be a challenge as there is no frame of reference. In this situation, aim for lower, realistic goals and adapt accordingly.



Effective website, utilizing social media, running online campaigns identifying what resources you should have online and for web marketing.

Build an effective online presence.



# THE WAR ROOM

### STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

In a nutshell, communicating the best message, through the right channels and measured against well-considered organizational and communications-specific goals.

Strategic thinking is a useful skill both at campaign formation lever and for different elements of our campaign.

Translated to digital campaign, this leads to the questions, What do we want to communicate? Which social media is our target using? What are we measuring, engagement or interaction?

### PESO MODEL

To understand the opportunities and risks of the digital landscape we can use the **PESO** analytical tool. It allows us to classify and have an **overview of available media space** to plan and budget, both time and money, to maximise the reach of the campaign.



PAID MEDIA Traditional paid advertising space.



EARNED MEDIA Invitation to mass events, interviews, petitions.

S

SHARED MEDIA Grassrooots campaigns, social media, user generated content.



### OWNED MEDIA

Own channels, platforms and content.



Choosing a strategy will always bring tension if there are conflicting opinions. Pay attention to the general mood during the session to allow harmony in debate.



### CAMPAIGN LANGUAGE

Humanity's crucibles, like social injustice, gender disparity, economic inequality or the most dangerous: the environmental crisis, are not by any measure unknown to the general public.

When we talk about communicating the crisis, it is meant in the sense of choosing the appropriate language to prime the audience for the desired behaviour.

Creating a digital campaign for the environment that wishes to have a positive result should also consider the following:

- People are not rational.
- Emotions and values are crucial in determining how we process information.
- Fear and threat can make us feel helpless, more materialistic and less concerned.

It can be tempting to rely on shocking messages, catastrophes images and appeal to the fight/flight reaction.

A proper campaign motivates and inspires to action. A negative usually does not lead to lasting change.

### POWER OF AWE - KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Awe and wonder expand our perception of time.

- Makes us more patient and happier.
- · Less materialistic.
- More willing to help others.



Use positive, inspiring language. Hope is a powerful feeling. It allow us to take action and to enact change.

**Engage intrinsic values by sharing personal experiences and provoking feelings of awe.** A good way to do this is using nature images. Graphical language is the true currency in digital media.

The core message of a campaign should always be a fix, a proposal. The problem is well known. Solutions are what we need.





### VALUES

Broadly speaking values are the principles that help you to decide what is right and wrong, and how to act in various situations. Your moral compass.

Values and morals are the true universal language. Shared values create echoes and waves across cultures, genders and distances. Campaigns that aim to reach out at international level should shape their communication focusing on values.

The complex web of morals and values of the people is important in environmental communication. A campaign that aims for the desired behavior must adapt the appropriate language to appeal to the values of the audience.

When tailoring the message of the campaign you can sort out values in 2 kinds:

### INTRINSIC

Strongly associated with behaviors that benefit the environment and society.

#### UNIVERSALISM

UNDERSTANDING, APPRECIATION, TOLERANCE AND PROTECTION FOR THE WELFARE OF ALL PEOPLE AND FOR NATURE.

#### BENEVOLENCE

PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE WELFARE OF PEOPLE WITH WHOM ONE IS IN FREQUENT PERSONAL CONTACT.

#### TRADITION

RESPECT, COMMITMENT AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE CUSTOMS AND IDEAS THAT TRADITIONAL CULTURE OR RELIGION PROVIDE THE SELF.

#### CONFORMITY

RESTRAINT OF ACTIONS, INCLINATIONS AND IMPULSES LIKELY TO UPSET OR HARM OTHERS AND VIOLATE SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS OR NORMS.

#### SECURITY

SAFETY, HARMONY, AND STABILITY OF SOCIETY, OF RELATIONSHIPS, AND OF SELF.



### VALUES



Avoid engaging both intrinsic and extrinsic values at the same time.

### EXTRINSIC

Make people more self-interested and reduce their willingness to act on behalf of the environment.



SOCIAL STATUS AND PRESTIGE, CONTROL OR DOMINANCE OVER PEOPLE AND RESOURCES.

ACHIEVEMENT PERSONAL SUCCESS THROUGH DEMONSTRATING COMPETENCE ACCORDING TO SOCIAL STANDARDS.

HEDONISM PLEASURE AND SENSUOUS GRATIFICATION FOR ONESELF.

STIMULATION EXCITEMENT, NOVELTY AND CHALLENGE IN LIFE.

SELF-DIRECTION INDEPENDENT THOUGHT AND ACTION - CHOOSING, CREATING, EXPLORING.

### WORKING WITH VALUES

Our message will have different effects on the people based upon the value that is targeted. There are a couple of value interactions that are useful to know when planning the language of a campaign.

The opposition effect: When one value is engaged, we are likely to suppress opposing values.

The spillover effect: by engaging one value, we can also engage values which are close to it. **Repetition bias:** for our brain repetition equals importance. Use values in your communication constantly to create effective messages.

Cognitive dissonance: the discomfort of holding 2 opposing points of view reduces motivation. This can be also triggered if the message appeals to opposite values.





### VALUES MIND MAP





# CREATIVE FOUNDATION

### **GRAPHICAL DESIGN 101**

The language of images is vastly more powerful than the one of words. With some clever choices and some online tools, you can ensure a high-quality graphical message.

A proper design allows the campaign to generate a brand. A developed brand is the perfect beacon for visibility and furthering your reach. Values can also be easier targeted via images as well as generate feelings of awe and hope.

The basics of graphic design are quite easy to learn and they go a long way to help you shape the graphical language of the campaign.

Canvas, Photoshop, Paint.net, GIMP and InDesign are the most useful softwares to create your graphical language.

### DESIGN BASICS - LAYOUT AND COMPOSITION

To turn the graphic design eyes, one has to think as a designer. That means paying attention to the following principles when creating content:

- Proximity: Use the visual space between element to represent relationship.
- White Space: It is the empty space between elements. It allows harmony in the composition.
- Alignment: Symmetric alignment between elements.
- **Contrast:** The difference between two elements is eye catching, used to guide the audience attention and build hierarchy.
- Repetition: Logo, style and colour palette. Consistency builds brand recognisition.



When choosing a colour palette use online tools like Coolors or even Canvas Mixer.



# CREATIVE FOUNDATION

### **GRAPHICAL DESIGN ELEMENTS**

The fundamentals of design are the foundation of every visual medium, from fine art to modern web design. They are even present in seemingly unimportant details as well as the main element of the digital world.

From complex images to simple figures, design is composing small elements into a cohesive whole. This includes some very basic elements, including line, shape, form, texture, and balance. They are part of almost everything we see and create.

#### Line

A line is a shape that connects two or more points. Any combination of weight, color, texture, and style is possible.



#### Form

A three dimensional shape is called a form. Forms make up a variety of things in the real world, including sculptures, architecture, and other three-dimensional objects.



#### Shape

A shape is any twodimensional area with a recognizable boundary. This includes circles, squares, triangles and all posible figures.



Texture Texture is the physical quality of a surface. It can be represented in a 3D form or implied in a 2D ilustration.



#### Balance

Balance is the equal distribution of visual weight (more specifically, how much any one element attracts the viewer's eye). Balance can be affected by many things, including color, size, number, and negative space.



# SOCIAL MEDIA

### THE BEATING HEART OF THE DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

Social media is one of those terms that one would think is easy to define. Especially due to their significant relevance in the way we communicate, share and express ourselves.

A concrete definition still eludes us but many terms return constantly:

- User-generated content.
- Personalised content.
- Information sharing.

Social networks have grown huge, the billion users on Facebook are a testament to their reach.

Their size puts them in the perfect spot to be the channel of any campaign.

Social Media comes in very different sizes and tastes, in this document we will focus on the current active social networks in our region.



### TIPS AND TRICKS





# SOCIAL MEDIA

### THE BEATING HEART OF THE DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

#### How does it work?

### INSTAGRAM

Feed, stories, explore, and reels. Each part of the app uses its own algorithm. Through a combination of variables like user activity, interaction history, post information and information about the account the app choses what, when and where to share personalised content.

### TIPS AND TRICKS



#### How does it work?

The three factors that are taken into account with LinkedIn are:

- Personal connections.
- Interest relevance.
- Engagement probability.

The deciding factor for LinkedIn relies always in the professional exposure.

### TIPS AND TRICKS



LINKEDIN





### DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

# SOCIAL MEDIA



### ТІКТОК



#### How does it work?

A recommendation system that determines which videos will appear on your For You page.

Key ranking signals for the TikTok algorithm:

- User interactions
- Video information.
- Device and account settings.

### TIPS AND TRICKS



#### How does it work?

The algorithm chooses the content according to the ranking, the engagement level, the recency and the relevance.

Twitter is the breaking news system. Information and content travels fast in this media.

The reach of this tool is noteworthy, members of the polity are active here.

### **TIPS AND TRICKS**



### TWITTER





### DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

# SOCIAL MEDIA

### THE BEATING HEART OF THE DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

### YOUTUBE



#### How does it work?

YouTube uses three main categories to personalize recommendations:

- Personalization User watch history and action.
- **Performance** Interest in watching the video, view duration, satisfaction.
- External factors topical interests, similar content, relevancy





Social Media Ethics is essentially a loose and continuously evolving set of rules governing online communication behavior. It addresses maintaining one's own and others' dignity, respect and privacy. As in offline behavior, abiding by etiquette and ethics online pays off in the long run.



# CONCLUSION

REFLECTION





# REFLECTION

Creating a social media campaign from the scratch can be compared to making a lasagna, said one of the participants.

It is tireless work, going step by step, waiting for the best while the project is built layer by layer. It takes even more patience once it is in the oven.

Akin to the lasagna, if during the preparation you were diligent, the quality will be superb.

Creating a campaign is not an easy task, but it is a very rewarding one. Modern times allow for unheard communication possibilities.

This guide aimed to help with the first step, the human factor. Dealing with a group is a mighty task, and it remains a paramount priority to have a cohesive group.

Once the group works in harmony, the ideas are developed and a strategy is selected.

To make this strategy reality you need structure and tools. But above all, a will. It is a matter of giving the first step and starting working.

The environmental crisis remains humanity's biggest challenge. One that we all hope we will be able to overcome. Hope, that is the true reason behind this toolkit. Hope is the true engine of change.





This publication was created by Youth and Environment Europe.Youth and Environment Europe (YEE) is the largest independent European network of environmental youth organisations. YEE unites 42 member organisations coming from 25 countries.

Our mission is to unite environmental youth non profit organisations in Europe. YEE goal is to mitigate the climate crisis by:

- Raising awareness and building capacity among youth on the climate crisis.
- Enhancing international cooperation and knowledge-sharing among our members.
- Strengthening the participation of youth in environmental and climate decision-making processes.