

Using the internet and mobile phones to mobilise people for advocacy

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Mobile phones and the internet can be used to raise awareness of and mobilise people for advocacy, including those who are:

- directly affected by an advocacy issue
- concerned for the people affected
- have power - or a responsibility - to change the issue
- indifferent to or unaware of the issue

If you need to do awareness-raising for advocacy, consider whether to:

- use mobile phones to send text messages to generate awareness - both of the issue itself, and of the connection between the issue and the decisions and actions of those with power to change the situation
- use social networks to broadcast your advocacy message directly and to encourage online interaction between people
- use messaging apps, such as WhatsApp, to generate interest in campaigns, and to help mobilise engagement in them. For information on how to use WhatsApp for campaigning, [see this article¹](#).
- create online groups or use existing groups on social networks that people can join to find out more about the issue and receive regular updates
- put information about your advocacy message on your organisation's website
- ensure you have plans for how to keep online activity updated

If you need to mobilise people for advocacy, you may need to:

- send out emails about your advocacy issue, making the emails as clear and concise as possible, and setting out instructions about what the recipient needs to do in response
- consider a free online mass-email service, such as [Mailchimp](#), which allows you to manage sending of emails to large numbers of people, free of charge
- create templates of suggested text that people can use to send your advocacy message by email to local politicians
- develop an online petition and ask people to add their names to it. For example, you could use a free online service such as [change.org](#) to develop a petition, mobilise people and win support for

¹ commonslibrary.org/how-to-whatsapp-uses-for-campaigning/

your issue. Remember to follow up with the recipients of the petition, and then share their response with those who have got involved.

Example 1: Migration campaigning in Latin America

Tearfund mobilised hundreds of churches and faith organisations throughout Latin America to meet the humanitarian needs of migrants by developing an innovative, free Android app. By linking up various, spread-out faith actors and raising awareness amongst the Venezuelan migrants of their rights, Tearfund has created a powerful movement in Latin America to protect vulnerable migrants. Supporting churches not only meet migrants' humanitarian needs, but also engage in local, regional and national advocacy on behalf of and with migrants.

Example 2: Mobilising citizens in New Zealand to pressure government

Tearfund New Zealand mobilised people via a free online service to send messages to national government ministers, asking them to provide emergency funds in response to the drought in the Horn of Africa. The government did so, saying that receiving the messages played a part in their decision.

Example 3: Pan-African coalition, Fair Play for Africa

Tearfund partners in Africa were involved in a campaign organised by a pan-African coalition called Fair Play for Africa. Members of the public across southern Africa were invited to send a text message to their respective governmental leaders, asking them to commit 15 per cent of their annual budgets to improving the health sector. The campaign was promoted on the radio and through other channels. It was seen as an effective way of collecting support from across a large area.

If you need to report back to people who have been mobilised for advocacy, you may want to:

- ask your organisation to write a blog about the issue. This is often a simple way of keeping people up to date and it allows them to comment on what you have written. It can also be easier to maintain than an organisational website, especially if blog posts are written by different people involved in the work. Use [WordPress](#) or [Blogger](#) to start a blog for free.
- post photos and video clips to your organisation's website or blog.

- consider using a website such as [Instagram](#) to share photos from events that people have been involved in.
- consider using a website such as [YouTube](#) to upload and share short films as progress updates.

Also in this series

This guide is part of a series of resources on **Advocacy in the digital age**.

Other titles include:

- Using the internet and mobile phones to identify advocacy issues
- Using the internet for research and analysis in advocacy
- Ideas for managing stakeholders' contact details in advocacy campaigns
- Using the internet and mobile phones to advocate in difficult political contexts

Download the series for free from Tearfund Learn:

learn.tearfund.org/en/resources/series/advocacy-in-the-digital-age

The Advocacy toolkit

The **Advocacy in the digital age** series is designed to complement the Advocacy toolkit.

This comprehensive guide to the theory and practice of advocacy contains teaching notes, tools and exercises that will enable any individual or organisation to integrate advocacy into their programmes, in order to bring sustainable, positive change.

Explore the Advocacy toolkit on Tearfund Learn:

learn.tearfund.org/en/resources/series/roots-guides/advocacy-toolkit--a-roots-guide