



MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

# Tips for running public awareness campaigns in Africa

Insights from eight case studies



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MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

# Tips for running public awareness campaigns in Africa

Insights from eight case studies

**Martin Vogl**

# Introduction

How do we make people care about an issue or make an important and meaningful change in society? This is where public awareness campaigns can play a crucial role in changing people's hearts and minds.

Such campaigns are often at the core of an organization's strategy, driving its most important activities and determining how it allocates its resources.

Effective campaigns require careful planning and execution. And drawing on the experiences and knowledge of others can help overcome some common stumbling blocks and improve the chances of success.

To this end, this booklet profiles eight public awareness campaigns conducted in African countries. It gives an overview of how the campaigns were designed and implemented, and outlines the lessons learned.

The idea for this publication came from DW Akademie's ongoing cooperation with national chapters of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), which advocates for freedom of expression and access to information in the SADC region. To strengthen its support of MISA's advocacy work, DW Akademie turned to others campaigning on similar topics in Africa to learn from their experiences.

We looked for campaigns with strong links to Africa – that is, they are either run by organizations or individuals in Africa, or they target African countries.

We also specifically sought insight from people working on campaigns that were diverse in the way they were created, organized and funded – from large organizations with considerable resources and formal structures to volunteer-led coalitions with limited funding.

Despite their different models, however, the campaigns had much in common in that the challenges they faced and the lessons learned were strikingly similar.

DW Akademie, and many of the campaigners we spoke to, felt it was important to share these insights with others looking for ideas to embark on a similar journey. We also believe the diversity of campaign models can serve as an inspiration to others looking to advocate for change.

Barbara Gruber  
Project Manager, DW Akademie Africa Division

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# Overview of case studies

CAMPAIGN	ORGANIZATION	GEOGRAPHICAL TARGET	PERIOD	CAMPAIGN GOAL
<b>#KeepItOn</b>	Access Now	International, including Africa	2016 to present	Promote the importance of Internet access and put a stop to Internet shutdowns
<b>Right2Know</b>	Consortium of NGOs	South Africa	2010 to present	Raise awareness and mobilize communities to ensure the free flow of information
<b>African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms</b>	Consortium of NGOs	Africa	2013 to present	Increase awareness and acceptance of the Declaration, both by decision makers and the general public
<b>#BringBackOurGirls</b>	Diverse volunteers	Nigeria and international	2014 to present	Push for the release of schoolgirls abducted in northern Nigeria by the militant Islamic group Boko Haram
<b>Take Back the Tech!</b>	Association for Progressive Communications	International, including Africa	2006 to present	Highlight the problem of online harassment of women and encourage women in tech
<b>Web Rangers</b>	Media Monitoring Africa	South Africa	2016 to present	Make South African teens aware of Internet dangers and how to stay safe online
<b>#LipaKamaTender</b>	Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union	Kenya	December 2016 – March 2017	Convince government officials and the general public of the legitimacy of a public hospital strike
<b>Kony 2012</b>	Invisible Children	International, including Africa	2012	Get the fugitive Ugandan warlord Joseph Kony brought to justice

# Key insights

Here are our top recommendations for launching and running public awareness campaigns in Africa. These insights come from analyzing eight campaigns and talking extensively to those involved.

## Understand the issue and what you want to achieve

- Take time to understand and engage with the issue you want to campaign about.
- Don't start planning your campaign until you know the issue inside out.
- Be precise and define what you want to achieve before you launch.

## Make sure the topic is a concern for people outside of your organization

- Campaign on a topic that people understand and that is of growing concern to people's lives.
- If the topic isn't an issue for others in the community, then you will have problems generating interest in, and support for, your campaign.
- If your message can feed off a general feeling of concern already within your community, you'll have a better chance of getting support. In fact, it could become the symbolic cause that channels people's emotions.

## Involve the target group in campaign planning

- Design the campaign together with members of the community you want to target.
- If you are campaigning on behalf of a marginalized group, try to get this group to play an active part in the campaign. If this isn't practical, involve the group as much as you can.

## Use language and media used by your target group

- Make your message simple so that it's understood by ordinary people.
- Use the media and platforms most commonly used by your target group.
- Use real stories from ordinary people as a powerful way to illustrate your point.
- A cheeky provocative slogan can help get people's attention.

## Make it easy for the target group to participate

- Provide a few options for people to support your campaign. Don't overwhelm them.
- Make it obvious how people can support the campaign and easy to do so.

## Use mainstream media and networks to amplify your message

- The mainstream media can be a big help in getting the message across.
- Time your actions to coincide with moments when the media are focused on the issue you are campaigning about (such as World Press Freedom Day).
- Reach out to your existing networks to help amplify your campaign.
- Use community members as multipliers.

## Be accurate

- Check any information carefully before you release it. Inaccuracies can be used to undermine the legitimacy of the campaign, especially if it's a controversial topic.

## Be flexible about the campaign plan

- Once your campaign is up and running, listen to feedback and be prepared to make changes to improve the campaign.
- If you can see your campaign is getting a lot of interest or support, scale it up quickly.

## Make sure you can sustain the campaign over the planned period

- Running an ongoing campaign through a loose coalition or group of volunteers is difficult to sustain.
- Even if your campaign is planned so that different partners or chapters work autonomously, organizing and coordinating this centrally can ease communication and workflows.
- Be aware that you often need a range of skills in a campaign, from web design to fundraising.

# #KeepItOn

Fighting Internet Shutdowns around the World



## #KeepItOn

Access Now

2016 to present

[↗ accessnow.org/keepiton](https://accessnow.org/keepiton) | [↗ twitter.com/hashtag/keepiton](https://twitter.com/hashtag/keepiton)



Access Now is a US-based NGO with offices around the world, including in Nairobi and Tunis.

#### What is the campaign about?

The #KeepItOn campaign aims to bring together voices from across the globe, from governments to telecommunications companies and everyday Internet users, to push back on Internet shutdowns at every level. The campaign has several messages: it challenges service providers to fight back against government shutdown requests; highlights the use of shutdowns during elections; and aims to build consensus at the UN and other intergovernmental organizations that people have a basic right to access information and speak freely online.

#KeepItOn includes many aspects, most of which are grouped together on the campaign website. These include an online petition, a system for reporting Internet shutdowns, a latest news section, and both online and offline visuals for supporters to share (from videos and graphics to posters and stickers).

In 2016, Access Now also worked together with Lush, an international cosmetics company, which created a special bath product to go with the campaign. Profits from sales of the product were donated to Access Now. Lush also promoted the campaign in their stores and on the Lush website.

#### How did the campaign come about?

Access Now was founded in 2009 when the Iranian government limited Internet access during post-election protests. As the organization expanded its work in other regions, it noted a growing number of Internet disruptions around the globe. An increasing number of activists were also contacting the organization's digital security hotline for help during Internet shutdowns. This experience meant that by the time Access Now launched its campaign in 2016, it had been dealing with the issue, from both a practical and policy perspective, for several years.

Before starting the #KeepItOn campaign, the team spent more than a year preparing – thinking about what they wanted to achieve and how they should communicate their message. They also talked extensively with partners to collect their input and ideas.

#### How was the campaign planned and executed?

The campaign message, graphics, and branding were developed in-house by Access Now's advocacy team, which has around 15 people. Once it had the campaign materials ready, Access Now relied heavily on its partner organizations to share and distribute the materials.

#### What are some of the challenges?

One challenge is keeping the different aspects of the campaign going and making sure they work together. In addition, the team has had trouble defining the campaign's final goal. Do they want a law in each country making Internet shutdowns illegal? Or rather some global principles about when shutdowns can happen? Or something else entirely? Without a clear picture of what success looks like, it is harder to keep the campaign focused.

Because of its strict privacy rules, Access Now has had trouble maintaining mailing lists of supporters.

#### What does the campaign do well?

According to Access Now, several different factors help explain the campaign's success. They had deep knowledge of Internet shutdowns and had prepared extensively before launching the campaign. They also worked closely with local partners who promoted the campaign. This helped Access Now reach different audiences and allowed for creative local campaigning. Access Now says it is important to value your partners and give them credit for their work.

Internet shutdowns have been growing in number since the campaign started, which has given #KeepItOn natural momentum. Every time there is a shutdown somewhere, this gives the campaign a concrete issue to mobilize people around.

Access Now also says it is important to cultivate relationships with the mainstream media. That way, when journalists need an expert on your issue, they are likely to contact you, which provides a platform to talk about the campaign. #KeepItOn is now often referred to when the media reports an Internet shutdown somewhere.

The partnership with Lush allowed the campaign message to be transmitted through a fun product and reach people who might not normally be aware of the issue.

### Key takeaways

- Don't think about launching your campaign until you know your issue inside out.
- Take time to understand and engage with the issue you want to campaign about.
- Campaign on an issue that affects people's lives.
- Having one well-funded, well-organized central organization to coordinate various partners is advantageous.
- Work with the mainstream press to get your message out.



# Right2Know

Consortium of NGOs

2010 to present

[r2k.org.za](http://r2k.org.za) | [twitter.com/r2kcampaign](https://twitter.com/r2kcampaign)

Right2Know is organized by a collective of hundreds of South African individuals and civil society organizations.

#### What is the campaign about?

The coalition of civil rights groups that launched the Right2Know campaign originally formed to demand the rewriting of South Africa's Secrecy Bill (officially called the Protection of State Information Bill), which could muzzle media and stop whistleblowers. The Bill has a long history – first proposed in 2010, it was then passed by parliament, sent to the president, sent back to parliament for amendment, then sent back to the president, who has yet to sign it as of September 2018.

Initially, the campaign was most active whenever there was new activity around the Secrecy Bill. For example, every time the parliamentary committee met to discuss the Bill, Right2Know activists would march or picket the venue and ensure the committee room was full of people wearing Right2Know T-shirts. The campaign also tweeted and commented on Facebook during the parliamentary debate to keep people up to date.

The campaign has since widened its scope to push to popularize access to information as a crucial part of combating social injustice. The campaign, run by a loose coalition of civil society organizations, includes community education, mass mobilization, and advocacy groups.

#### How did the campaign come about?

Initially, a few organizations circulated an online petition called "Stop the Secrecy Bill". There was an overwhelming response to the petition with other groups wanting to become involved. The next step was a national week of action culminating with marches – some of the biggest South Africa had seen since the end of apartheid in 1994.

Activists also started visiting working class communities to inform them about the campaign and mobilize support. Around 400 organizations eventually came together to form the Right2Know Campaign to make South Africans more aware of the Bill's dangers.

#### How is the campaign planned and executed?

As a first step, the coalition convened a national dialogue of its supporters to ask some basic questions like: What sort of organization are we? What is our focus? What are our principles? It held a number of meetings around the country which culminated in Right2Know's first national summit in February 2011 where participants adopted a vision statement, principles, and a broad strategy.

It was agreed that the Secrecy Bill was only part of the problem that the coalition wanted to address. The campaign broadened to become about the free flow of information – focusing on both transparency and freedom of expression in order to combat the rise of authoritarianism and an unaccountable state. The coalition also developed an internal democratic structure, keeping away from high-profile leaders, and opting for decision-making processes open to all activists. (The coalition felt it had to practice the democratic standards it was demanding of the government.)

#### What does the campaign do well?

The campaign kicked off at a time when many South Africans were becoming disillusioned with the ability of the ruling ANC party to improve people's lives.

Mobilizing support in working-class communities enabled the campaign to quickly become a broad, grassroots movement. Although the campaign originally focused on legislation (quite an abstract subject), activists explained its implications by using concrete examples from everyday people's lives.

The campaign also benefits from the coalition's diversity both in skills and political views. Some activists support the campaign through traditional lobbying and legal challenges while others have committed to strategies like mass mobilization, disruption, and online actions. This diverse skill set allows the campaign to choose the best method at any given time.

The strategy of organizing some sort of action whenever there was an important step in the process of turning the Bill into law maximized media attention and reminded politicians and the president that they were being watched. In addition, posting information to social media from parliament in real time allowed the campaign to get their argument out to the public before the government had time to comment. This allowed the campaign to reach public opinion first and, to a large extent, frame the debate.

### Key takeaways

- If you can see your campaign is rapidly gaining support, scale up quickly.
- Dominate the online space by posting information in real time.
- Get a range of different types of campaigners onboard and make use of their skills when you need them – one day you might need someone to organize a march, the next day someone to mount a legal challenge.
- Time your actions to coincide with moments when the media will be focused on the issue you are campaigning about.



# African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms

Consortium of NGOs

2013 to present

↗ [africaninternetrights.org](http://africaninternetrights.org)

## The Declaration sets out 13 key principles for Internet rights and freedoms and is promoted by a pan-African consortium of NGOs.

### What is the campaign about?

Launched in 2013, the campaign aims to increase awareness and acceptance of the African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms, both by decision makers and by the general public. The work is being done by a loose coalition of NGOs, most of which are African.

### How did the campaign come about?

The idea of creating an African document dealing with Internet rights and freedoms was first discussed several years ago at an Internet Governance Forum meeting in Kenya. Participants felt that the global movement pushing Internet rights wasn't reaching Africa. Against the background of African governments increasingly limiting Internet rights (though Internet shutdowns, repressive laws, arresting bloggers, etc.), this was worrying. Privacy and cyberbullying were also becoming more prominent issues.

Rather than working within existing global structures (such as the Internet Governance Forum), those involved in the initial discussions felt there should be a separate push by Africans for Africa. The goal quickly became not just to outline a set of principles but also get these principles accepted by regional and national institutions in Africa. Civil society, private industry, and even government were involved in the collective drafting of the Declaration.

### How is the campaign planned and executed?

The coalition has a decision-making body, the Secretariat, which is currently made up of around 10 organizations who volunteered to assume a more active role. Each organization provides assistance based on the resources (human or financial) they can spare. The Secretariat meets in an online call every two months to review past work and plan upcoming activities, which can be joint actions or individual member activities.

Initially, campaign activities focused less on promoting the Declaration among the general public and more on targeting African governments and institutions. This has been largely successful: the Declaration is the leading document dealing with Internet rights in Africa and there are many cases of Internet freedom activists using it to lobby government when an abuse takes place. Although no African government or regional body has officially ratified the Declaration, in 2016 the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights referred to it in favorable terms. Several African governments seem to have modeled parts of their own Internet legislation around parts of the Declaration.

Making the public more aware of the Declaration has now become a higher priority. As part of their activities, the coalition launched a website to solicit stories from ordinary people about Internet rights violations and victories. The website also displays the Declaration's key principles in graphic form. This website has, however, attracted little interest and generally efforts to popularize the Declaration have stalled.

### What are some of the challenges?

More needs to be done to inform the public about the Declaration. One method would be to make greater use of traditional media, such as TV and radio. More also needs to be done to communicate the Declaration's formal ideals using ordinary language and situations, for instance, by using real examples of Internet rights violations that people can relate to and get passionate about.

The coalition is currently looking at how it can work more effectively within its informal structure. Although a loose coalition has some advantages (such as allowing organizations the flexibility to offer whatever resources they can spare), the lack of a centralized administration makes it difficult to keep up campaign momentum – roles aren't clear and the voluntary nature means deadlines often aren't met. The lack of a dedicated budget also makes it hard to maintain projects that need ongoing attention, such as the website.

In addition, it is difficult dealing with partners in different countries with diverse cultures. There is only so much constructive discussion you can have over Skype: such meetings don't always work, even on a technical level.

### What does the campaign do well?

Those involved in the Declaration responded to a real need for a framework to deal with Internet rights and freedoms and being written with input from a wide array of actors means its principles are widely accepted.

## Key takeaways

- Having many organizations involved in your campaign means reaching a larger audience faster.
- Use language ordinary people can understand. Even better than simple language, use real stories to illustrate your argument.
- Getting funding for public awareness is often more difficult than for institutional work.
- Running a public awareness campaign through a loose coalition can be difficult.



# #BringBackOurGirls

Diverse volunteers

2014 to present

[twitter.com/BBOG\\_Nigeria](https://twitter.com/BBOG_Nigeria) | [twitter.com/hashtag/bringbackourgirls](https://twitter.com/hashtag/bringbackourgirls)

**#BringBackOurGirls started as a viral social media hashtag. Now, diverse individuals in Nigeria work together to keep up the pressure.**

#### What is the campaign about?

In 2014, the militant Islamic group Boko Haram kidnapped nearly 300 schoolgirls in the town of Chibok in northern Nigeria.

The fate of the Chibok girls went viral on social media. By May 2014, #BringBackOurGirls had been used on Twitter more than 3 million times. Interest spread internationally and political leaders and celebrities showed their support. Michelle Obama, for example, tweeted a photo of herself holding a card with the #BringBackOurGirls hashtag.

Those behind the campaign have since created a website to deliver information about the plight of the Chibok girls, and others, and keep up pressure on the Nigerian government to find those girls who are still being held captive. They continue to run various social media campaigns to draw attention to the issue – such as the #CountdownTo4Years in 2018 – and organize protests.

#### How did the campaign come about?

The kidnapping came at a time of widespread frustration in Nigeria about insecurity in the north and the government's inability to contain Boko Haram.

With the government playing down the kidnapping, people on social media started discussing the Chibok girls. Shortly afterwards, a former Nigerian minister gave a speech on TV, saying: "We all want to bring back our girls." The hashtag quickly became popular.

#### How is the campaign planned and executed?

Initially, the campaign didn't have a formal strategy – rather it started with a few community leaders who used social media and radio to call for a street rally to protest the government's inaction.

After this first protest, a loose group of people decided to continue to pressure the government until the Chibok girls were freed. The group has no legal structure and is not controlled by any one organization or person. The campaigners split themselves into teams early on, however, creating teams such as strategic, resource, mobilization, media, and legal.

The group also decided not to accept any external funding; those interested in supporting the movement donate their own time and money as individuals. The group released press releases, held conferences, and met with political leaders from Nigeria and abroad. Links were formed between community leaders and parents in the remote town of Chibok and those campaigning in cities like Abuja and Lagos.

#### What are some of the challenges?

Nigerian authorities have been quite hostile to the campaign, asking the group to focus more on pressuring Boko Haram to free the girls rather than pressing for government action. Some critics have even called the campaigners Boko Haram sympathizers, which has resulted in some public hostility to the campaign.

It has been difficult to keep volunteers motivated over such a long period of time and several have left because of fatigue. In addition, translating social media success into long-term tangible change on the ground is challenging.

#### What does the campaign do well?

Within Nigeria, #BringBackOurGirls was initially a success in that it brought protesters out onto the streets. Internationally, the outcry focused attention on an issue in a remote area of the world and led to foreign powers sending forces to help combat Boko Haram.

The hashtag's message was clear and appealed directly to people's concerns. Although the online campaign only reached a small proportion of Nigeria's population, those who are online tend to be educated and wealthy and therefore more influential.

The decision not to accept institutional funding freed the group to decide which actions to take and think strategically instead of chasing funding.

In addition, the fairly loose organizational structure and lack of hierarchy has helped volunteers remain motivated – they feel they are part of something innovative. However, creating some basic structure around different teams helped the campaign organize efficiently.

Making links with the local people in Chibok was important. Although it has proved difficult to get people from Chibok to campaign themselves, having ties to the affected community gave the group legitimacy.

### Key takeaways

- When campaigning on behalf of a marginalized group, try to get this group to play an active part in the campaign. If this isn't practical, involve the group as much as you can.
- A decision not to accept funding from any outside group can give a campaign more independence and flexibility; however, you need to be aware that you can't rely on using volunteers in the long haul.
- Even though an online campaign may only reach a small proportion of the population (the educated and wealthy), it is worth it if this group has the power to set the agenda.



# Take Back the Tech!

Association for Progressive Communications

2006 to present

➤ [takebackthetech.net](http://takebackthetech.net) | ➤ [twitter.com/takebackthetech](https://twitter.com/takebackthetech)



Take Back the Tech! is coordinated by the Association for Progressive Communications, an international NGO with its main office in South Africa.

#### What is the campaign about?

Take Back the Tech! is a global campaign that aims to highlight the problem of technology-related violence against women. It invites people to use technology to combat online violence while also encouraging women to get involved in tech. Although the campaign runs all year, its main annual activity is its 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. Actions during this period may include everything from coding workshops to SMS campaigns, discussions, and street marches.

#### How did the campaign come about?

The idea for the campaign came from research showing how information and communication technologies were being used to perpetuate violence against women. At the time, the issue was receiving little notice.

#### How was the campaign planned and executed?

In its early days, the Take Back the Tech! campaign was informal and collaborative with little funding. Female activists from different countries came up with ideas, wrote texts, designed some campaign materials, and worked on a website. During this early period, an action was planned for each day of the 16 Days of Activism. These activities varied widely – from asking people to write a love letter to a survivor of gender-based violence to getting people to improve their digital security.

Around 2013, the campaign was broadened to push for women to become more involved in technology and to make women's involvement more visible. It was also decided to reduce the number of actions held during the 16 Days from 16 to three or four activities (people were having a tough time keeping up with an activity a day). With fewer actions, people didn't feel so overwhelmed and had time to participate more fully.

Each year, well before the annual 16 Days events, the central Take Back the Tech! team contacts partners to see if they want to take part in the planned activities, put their own local spin on the actions, or do something else entirely that the central team could support. In Africa, the campaign has especially strong partners in Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In 2014, the Take Back the Tech! campaign released a report card rating how Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube (owned by Google) dealt with violence against women. This generated more media attention than any previous Take Back the Tech! activity. Pressure was also put on advertisers by pointing out that their ads sometimes appeared next to content promoting violence against women. As a result, Twitter, Facebook, and

YouTube, which had previously showed little interest in working with the campaign, approached the organization and asked to cooperate.

#### What are some of the challenges?

In the past few years, Take Back the Tech! has encountered heavy opposition from some men's rights groups and Internet trolls, who have done things like disrupt Twitter chats on women's rights, written false articles about campaigners or targeted specific women's activists with threatening messages. The campaign has, at times, had to scale down its online activities to protect activists from abuse and focus on offline activities.

As an international campaign, language barriers and differing cultures can make communication difficult. An additional challenge faced by the campaign is how to measure results – something organizers are now working on.

#### What does the campaign do well?

It encouraged and acted on feedback from its network of participants to improve the campaign, for example, by cutting the number of actions from 16 to just a few during the annual 16 Days of Activism.

Targeting Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook attracted media attention as the Internet giants and their impact on society are popular media topics. The creative, playful idea of a report card made the story even more attractive to mainstream media. Taking the campaign to advertisers was powerful as it made it clear to social media platforms that if they didn't take action, they could lose revenue.

### Key takeaways

- Give yourself plenty of time. Everything takes longer to organize than you think.
- Give people a few simple ways they can support your campaign. Don't overwhelm them.
- Once your campaign is up and running, listen to feedback and make changes to improve the campaign.
- If your campaign criticizes well known people or companies, there is a good chance the mainstream media will pick it up.



# Web Rangers

## Media Monitoring Africa

2016 to present

[webrangers.co.za](http://webrangers.co.za) | [facebook.com/webrangersSA](https://facebook.com/webrangersSA)

## Web Rangers is run by Media Monitoring Africa, a South African-based media literacy organization.

### What is the campaign about?

The Web Rangers project aims to make 14 to 17-year-old children in South Africa more aware of dangers they may encounter online, such as privacy, viruses, cyberbullying, sexting, and grooming by pedophiles. The teenagers who participate in the project develop and run campaigns themselves to promote on-line safety.

In the first part of the project, teenagers are taught about responsible Internet use. They are then asked to come up with and run creative campaigns to pass this information on to their peers. In the past, campaigns have included social media messages, creating and posting online videos, posters, talks, and theater presentations.

The various campaigns are judged by a jury and the best are presented prizes at an awards ceremony (the prizes are significant, such as a trip to the United States or digital equipment).

### How did the campaign come about?

Before it started the campaign, Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) had been working with young people for more than 10 years on media literacy. With increasing internet use by young people in South Africa, especially on mobile, the organization felt it made sense to move into working on digital skills for young people, too. Some of the young people they worked with were already telling them that this sort of training was needed. MMA approached Internet companies for funding for a digital skills project. Google said it would support the work but asked for the program to be called Web Rangers as Google ran similar programs under this name elsewhere. MMA was, however, free to create the project content themselves. The project was launched in 2016. As well as Google, it is funded by the Film and Publication Board of South Africa, the telecommunications company MTN, and Facebook.

### How was the campaign planned and executed?

MMA worked together with youth and teachers to design the program structure and the campaign branding such as the logo.

### What are some of the challenges?

Although Web Rangers has big-name backers, they only donate small sums. MMA would like to do a much bigger rollout of the program but is being held back by lack of funding.

One of the biggest challenges is that the program targets teenagers who already have access to the Internet – but these teenagers make up only a small percentage of South Africa's youth

population. MMA would like to start a program that provides young people with Internet access as well as teaching them on-line skills.

### What does the campaign do well?

The strategy of getting young people to help design the campaign and using young people to inform their peers about the campaign messages works well. Teenagers better understand how other teens are using the Internet, which means their messages are more on target. In addition, having the message come from a peer, rather than an adult, gives it extra legitimacy.

This is especially important because most young people use the Internet without adult supervision so they really have to believe in the values they are being taught.

MMA thinks this is the first campaign that has been able to win support from partners that can be – at times – wary of each other: government, big Internet companies such as Google and Facebook and a telecommunications company.

## Key takeaways

- Get your target group to help you design the campaign.
- Find ways to use people from your target group as multipliers.
- If campaigning in a new field, make sure this makes sense for your organization.
- Even if you have big-name backers, don't assume you'll get a lot of funding.



# #LipaKamaTender

Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union

December 2016 – March 2017

➤ [twitter.com/hashtag/lipakamatender](https://twitter.com/hashtag/lipakamatender)

## Kenya's medical union launched the hashtag #LipaKamaTender to highlight the poor working conditions of public doctors.

### What was the campaign about?

When Kenya's public sector doctors went on strike at the end of 2016, their union ran a campaign to convince both government officials and the general public of the legitimacy of the strike action. The Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union (KMPDU) targeted poorer sections of the population with messages on local-language radio stations.

While the Union also used the national press to communicate their message, they particularly focused on the digital space. Union officials came up with the hashtag #LipaKamaTender ("pay it like a tender"). Government tenders in Kenya are widely seen as corrupt with practices such as officials overpaying for goods and services and receiving a cut from the overpayment. The idea behind the hashtag was that if the government had money for such corrupt practices, it should also have the funds to increase doctors' salaries.

Another strategy was encouraging doctors to post their own experiences of working in the public healthcare system to Facebook and Twitter under the hashtag #MyBadDoctorExperience. Doctors wrote about many different issues that personally affected their work.

For example, @FridiDydi tweeted on January 16, 2017: "Using pieces of carton and crepe to secure a child's fracture coz Plaster is unavailable at level 4 hospital. #MyBadDoctorExperience." @ali-roz89 tweeted on January 16, 2017: "Having 10 babies die on you in one night. WHY?-No oxygen available, no antibiotics, no antimalarials."

### How was the campaign planned and executed?

The Union developed a deliberate strategy of using social media and supportive bloggers to spread the campaign message. Although it's the middle class in Kenya who are more often online, and these people usually use private rather than public hospitals, the medical union felt it was important to win over the middle class because of the influence they have in Kenyan society.

Campaign funding came from many sources including doctors working in the private sector and Kenyan doctors in the diaspora, as well as pro bono help from lawyers.

### What were some of the challenges?

In some cases, doctors made inaccurate statements, which were seized upon and amplified by pro-government media to discredit the campaign. The Union learned to manage this better and made an effort to get everyone speaking from the same script.

The Union also quickly learned that it needed a strategy for dealing with rumors, which risked doing the campaign serious damage. The Union's solution was to stress that people should only believe information if it came directly from the Union's Secretary General.

### What did the campaign do well?

The hashtag #LipaKamaTender worked because it was funny and provocative. It reminded people of corruption surrounding government contracts – an issue that angers ordinary Kenyans.

The idea to ask doctors to share their experiences working in the public sector gave authenticity to the campaign. The stories allowed people to hear specific details from many different doctors and were more captivating than talking generally about poor pay or working conditions. This tactic was especially important when it came to winning over wealthier Kenyans who have little experience of the reality of public health services (they can afford to attend private clinics). The stories elicited sympathy and showed doctors weren't being greedy and putting lives at risk by striking – which was the message being circulated by the strike's opponents.

The Union also learned to ignore some of the attacks on its campaign, such as rumors that the opposition was funding the strike movement. They simply ignored these claims, refusing to respond so as not to give the claims more weight.

## Key takeaways

- A cheeky provocative slogan can help get people's attention.
- Strengthening your arguments with real stories from ordinary people is a powerful way to make your point.
- If your message can feed off a general feeling already within your community, you'll have a better chance of support. In fact, your cause could become the symbolic cause that channels people's emotions.
- You need to think strategically about how you are going deal with your opponents' arguments. In some cases, it may be better not to respond to an argument at all.



# Kony 2012

Invisible Children

2012

➤ [invisiblechildren.com/kony-2012](http://invisiblechildren.com/kony-2012)

## Kony 2012 was created by the US-based non-profit Invisible Children, which at the time ran diverse projects in Africa.

### What was the campaign about?

Kony 2012 was a campaign run by Invisible Children to make people in the United States, and elsewhere, aware of the acts perpetrated by the fugitive Ugandan warlord Joseph Kony, the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army.

The campaign centered around a 28-minute online video (still available on YouTube). This explained Kony's alleged crimes and aimed to mobilize people to exert pressure on the US government to find Kony. When it was launched in March 2012, the video received more than 100 million views. At the time, it was the most viral video ever.

The Kony 2012 campaign also extensively harnessed social media to promote its message.

### How did the campaign come about?

Invisible Children had been working on issues surrounding Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army for some time. However, many in the US and in Africa didn't know who Kony was. Invisible Children believed that by publicizing Kony's actions, they could generate pressure for authorities to find him and bring him to justice.

### How was the campaign planned and executed?

The campaign structure and materials were developed by the Invisible Children team, which had film-making, web design, and graphic design experience. Some 12 people worked on the creative team responsible for the film and accompanying website, while around five people dealt with the marketing and communications aspects.

Before its release, the film was shown in small screenings in several US cities. Around ten people coordinated the screenings, which were, in turn, organized by some 100 volunteers. Those who viewed the film, as well as other long-standing partners (both in the US and overseas), were then asked to share the film on social media on the film's public release date.

The campaign also included specific actions that people could take to exert pressure. The website listed names of celebrities and decision makers who people could contact directly. People could sign a pledge, buy a bracelet and T-shirt, and download posters to put up in their cities on a specific day. People were asked to send in photos of their actions, too. Invisible Children saw all this as offering different ways to engage but in the end, the take-up on these actions was dwarfed by the film.

### What were some of the challenges?

Invisible Children didn't anticipate the film's huge success and weren't ready to deal with the substantial backlash against the film. Among other things, Invisible Children was criticized for simplifying the conflict in the video and spending too much money making the video rather than using the money to finance projects on the ground.

Faced with criticism that the film achieved little in the long term (Kony is still alive and presumably hiding out in Sudan), the team felt they could have better explained how the campaign was part of a greater strategy to bring about change and improve the lives of those affected by the Lord's Resistance Army.

### What did the campaign do well?

The Kony 2012 campaign demonstrated the massive potential of using video and social media for large-scale human rights advocacy. The video itself was high quality and easy to watch. It was also specifically made for young people. Although some critics found the film too simplistic, the team felt that the video's catchy nature was one of the major factors behind its success.

The advance film screenings were also a key factor in generating the initial buzz that led to the film going viral. Invisible Children believe campaigners shouldn't underestimate the value of such face-to-face connections even when planning a digital campaign.

Invisible Children believe that even a campaign aimed at creating general public awareness should be linked to a concrete result (in this case, the capture of Kony) to engage those who want to get more involved. It's no good launching campaigns simply to raise funds or to grow the organization's Facebook and Twitter audience.

However, those involved in the campaign admit that part of the success was pure luck: it's impossible to deliberately create viral campaign content. All you can do is prepare as best you can, put all the right elements in place and hope that your campaign reaches as many of your target audience as possible.

## Key takeaways

- It's worth investing in a high-quality media product.
- Make your message simple to understand.
- Prepare your existing networks to help amplify your campaign.
- Make sure your audience knows what you want to achieve.

DW Akademie would like to thank following campaigns for taking the time to speak about their experiences.



Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union







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