Using the internet and mobile phones to advocate in difficult political contexts

Last updated: June 2021

Mobile phones and the internet should be used with caution and care in difficult political contexts. It is best not to use them if you are in a context where access to the internet is controlled or where phone use is tracked. It is wise to assess the risks to ensure that you do not put yourself, your organisation, or other people in danger.

Good practice suggestion	Why and how to do it
• Protect your identity and location • Keep your information secure	It is important that any digital technology you use will benefit your advocacy, rather than putting anyone or anything at risk. Security is a very important consideration. Use a range of tools and materials from Tactical Tech known as Security in a Box, which have been designed for those using information and communications technology in difficult political contexts.
• Document your concerns • Record testimonies of those affected by the issue(s)	Smartphones, or mobile phones equipped with a camera, can be used to capture images or video film footage which can then be shared via internet sites, or through mobile messaging apps designed for sharing photos and videos. This can generate awareness-raising for advocacy within and outside your context. It can also provide an evidence base for advocacy itself. It is important to consider protecting the identity, and location, of witnesses. Their testimonies can still be used, but you may need to obscure their faces, anonymise their names and other identifiable information, and more.
• Raise awareness for advocacy in your context • Communicate with people within your country • Mobilise people within your country	There may be other people in your country who are concerned about the same issue or cause as you, but who you may not know about. You can use social networks or mobile messaging apps to help you find them, and to: • generate support for an issue or cause • help raise awareness for advocacy • set up events • let people know where action is taking place • encourage people to join in and take action on campaigns

• Communicate with those outside the country • Mobilise people outside the country	The internet and mobile phones can help relay messages about an issue to those outside your country. They can then give this information to their governments and decision-makers and urge them to use it to put pressure on your government to change the situation around your issue. This can be done via social networks, text messages, third party applications and proxy servers, many of which can still be used in difficult political contexts if the risks are acceptable. It is vital that you frame your advocacy messages in a way that protects the security, identity and location of the people in the country who have given you the information about the situation. See Section G5 of the Advocacy toolkit - Taking Action: Difficult Political Contexts[1].

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 mobilise people for advocacy

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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:

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