



# Communication and ICT's for Feminist Movement Building

*"[O]ur body is a map where the entire history of our lives can be traced,  
where every step that we have taken has left its imprint." - Artemisa and Elige*

**Overview:** Activists around the world use information and communications technologies (ICTs) as part of movements for transformative change. The following resources will help you think about your communications strategy from a movement building perspective so you are more impactful, creative and safer.

**Purpose:** Communications is a vital part of any strategy. If approached from a feminist movement building standpoint, communication can help us: amplify the stories and voices of people otherwise marginalized; it can challenge and change stereotypes and the public conversation on key topics; it can enable people to speak up in strategic ways and spaces that influence agendas and advance our goals; it can help protect activists from digital vulnerabilities. As an integral part of our organizing, the resources we share below will help you be more strategic about who you communicate to, how you do it, what tools you use, and what messages/ content you develop.

They will help you with common activist questions like: How do we tell our own stories and make ourselves heard? How do we tell stories that empower and inspire, and challenge mainstream stories that tend to silence, erase women's lives, experiences and voices? How do we communicate with each other and with people beyond our movements? What is the best way to develop messages that reach out to people and make our movements bigger? What tools make the most sense for our context and capacity? How can we communicate safely and securely in a world that has become increasingly risky for activists and women's rights activists online and offline?



**WERISE-TOOLKIT.ORG**





**We have two primary resources to offer:**

1. [ICT's for Feminist Movement Building: An Activist Toolkit](http://www.justassociates.org/en/resources/icts-feminist-movement-building-activist-toolkit). A toolkit designed to help activists harness information and communications technologies (ICTs) to support more effective, strategic, resilient, visible and safe movements! *ICTs for Feminist Movement Building: Activist Toolkit* was created by JASS in partnership with the [Association for Progressive Communications \(APC\)](http://www.progressivecommunications.org/) and Women'sNet. Chapter 3 will be of particular interest to those seeking guidance on feminist communication. (<http://www.justassociates.org/en/resources/icts-feminist-movement-building-activist-toolkit>)
2. "[Message and the Media](http://www.justassociates.org/en/resources/new-weave-power-people-politics-action-guide-advocacy-and-citizen-participation)", a chapter from *A New Weave of Power, People and Politics*. *A New Weave* provides a well-tested approach for building people's participation and collective power that goes beyond influencing policy and politics to transforming public decision-making altogether. (see Chapter 13) (<http://www.justassociates.org/en/resources/new-weave-power-people-politics-action-guide-advocacy-and-citizen-participation>)

**An additional resource:**

3. For Feminist Principles of the Internet see: <http://www.genderit.org/?q=articles/feminist-principles-internet>

**Credit:** Created by JASS and the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) with support from Women's Net



## About ICTs for Feminist Movement Building: Activist Toolkit

It will help YOU:

- **Experiment** and be creative about communicating
- **Think** about how communications can help to build movements for social justice
- **Fight** gender stereotypes and **Amplify** women's voices so they can tell their own stories
- **Design** strategies that make sense for their organisations and movements
- **Be safe, be smart and be secure!**

In this toolkit, we draw on the experience and contexts of women activists in southern Africa and beyond. And while we focus on women's rights activists, anyone who is part of a movement for social change will find it useful.

The toolkit aims to assist activists to think through their communication strategies in a way that supports movement building. It offers an exciting and practical guide to writing a communication strategy and reviews a number of tools (ICTs) and technology-related campaigns which can be used in organising work. At the core, this toolkit is also about feminist practice and how to use tools to communicate in ways that are democratic, amplify women's voices whilst challenging stereotypes and discriminatory social norms. We hope it will assist activists in making creative, safe and sustainable choices in using ICTs in our communication strategies.

This toolkit highlights the extraordinary potential of ICTs to help us bring about social justice, equality between women and men, as well as for all oppressed groups. While much of our activism and organising happens in-person and "offline", linking tools of the online world creates powerful ways to make our campaigns visible in new and wider spaces.

Two Handouts that may be helpful are on the following pages.



## Generating Feminist Content and Messages

If we want our messages (and our movements) to be successful we also want them to be feminist. Feminist messaging changes the way in which women are portrayed and communicates stories from women's perspectives. This kind of messaging challenge readers/viewers to think different and challenge sexist thinking. Women are often excluded from receiving information due to lack of money, access to computers and the internet, specialised knowledge and other resources.

Here are some ideas of what feminist messaging looks like!

Feminist messaging must:

- reclaim women's power and voice
- tell 'herstories' and reclaim women's history of struggles
- raise consciousness and awareness about women's stories and struggles
- address regressive (cultural and traditional) beliefs
- analyse and assess the root causes of women's experiences and lived realities
- based on principles of women's rights, inclusion and equality
- produce content in democratic ways, giving space to all voices and allowing women to tell their own stories

To achieve this, aim to design content that will:

- amplify women's voices and experiences
- represent women as actors, change agents and survivors, not as objects, constant victims or mere recipients
- challenge the harmful, degrading stereotypes of women in mainstream media (highly sexualised, 'emotional' in a derogatory sense, powerless, weak, incompetent, confined only to acceptable societal roles such as mother, good women, caregivers, victims or negative societal archetypes such as the witch or 'loose' woman)
- expose how 'power over' women is operating in regard to the problem (provides an analysis of inequality and discrimination)
- promote respect for diversity and sexual rights
- make the connection between the main problem and broader social issues

Adapted by JASS/ APC from:

[http://modemmujer.org/odm3/docs/tecnicas\\_reflexiones\\_feministas.pdf](http://modemmujer.org/odm3/docs/tecnicas_reflexiones_feministas.pdf)



## Principles of Feminist Communications

(from ICT Toolkit, chapter 2)

Communications are a critical part of movement building. Feminist communication strategies that are part of broader organising have the potential to amplify women's voices, shift attitudes and connect local struggles to global solidarity. We can use our communications in ways that challenge the *status quo* i.e. communications that challenge negative power, build positive power and are feminist in content and process. Here are a few key principles to think about when we generate our messages for action.

### We must ensure:

- we produce content in a democratic manner. Women take the lead. The process serves to build positive power
- women's experiences and stories are visible. Women are telling their own stories. They are agents in their own stories. Our communication responds to the context and the issues that sit close to women's hearts
- respect for diversity across multiple lines e.g. sexuality, location, class, ability, race
- inclusion of the voices of marginalised people e.g. women, LGBTI, sex workers
- ICTs chosen are appropriate to our context
- ICTs are secure and will not put women at risk
- skills are shared and everyone in the organisation is equipped to use the technology safely
- informed and continuous consent of any quotations, videos, interviews and photographs
- your organisation has planned for the human capacity, skills and money to support your communications

Ref: *ICTs for Feminist Movement Building, Chapter 2*

[http://www.justassociates.org/sites/justassociates.org/files/ict\\_2015\\_chapter2\\_web.pdf](http://www.justassociates.org/sites/justassociates.org/files/ict_2015_chapter2_web.pdf)