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**The following features will provide deeper understanding as you work your way through the toolkit:**



This icon points you to a link within the toolkit or an external source where you can find more information.



This icon asks you to think about a set of principles or questions.



This icon indicates a quote sharing different voices and views.



This icon indicates a definition of a relevant term or concept.



This icon indicates a case study and gives a description of how a strategy or tool has been used in a real life situation.



This icon indicates a quick summary of key tips in regard to developing a communications strategy.



This icon indicates a deeper look at a specific issue.



This icon indicates an applied case study – of an organisation using this toolkit to develop a communications strategy.

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction



### In this chapter:

What is this toolkit? 6

How can you use this toolkit? 8





Across the world, women are using information and communication technologies (ICTs) to support rights agendas, tell their own stories and challenge emerging issues in regard to access, women's voices and violence.

We can use ICTs for social, political and economic participation. Women can access education and health information that can change their lives and use ICTs to organise for change.



### **Information and communication technologies (ICTs)**

*Technology and tools that people use to share, distribute, gather information and to communicate with one another, one on one, or in groups. ICTs can be grouped into three categories: **Information technology** includes computers, which have become indispensable in modern societies to process data and save time and effort. **Telecommunications technologies** include telephones (with fax) and the broadcasting of radio and television, often through satellites. **Networking technologies**, of which the best known is the internet, also extend to mobile phone technology, internet telephony (VoIP), satellite communications, and other forms of communication that are still in their infancy<sup>1</sup>.*



### *Chapter 4: The internet and ICTs as political spaces and tools*

In Africa, women writers and organisers are using the internet, radio, art and other ICTs to make sure women's voices are heard and challenging how they are represented. African women are writing about sexuality, women members of parliament use social media to promote their political agendas, rural women access market prices via mobile phones, students find journals online and save themselves money.

We know that much of our activism and organising happens and always will happen in person and "offline". Linking to the tools of the online world, however, creates powerful ways to make visible our campaigns in new and wider spaces and to engage expanded networks of people.

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1. Association for Progressive Communications Glossary, <https://www.apc.org/en/glossary/term/259>



## *Chapter 2.3 Our context and the digital divide*

As with all communication, ICTs can be used as a powerful tool for our liberation, but they can also be used to threaten and marginalise us. Just as in the offline world, women can face violence and security threats online.



## *Chapter 4.1: Being secure when you use technology*

ICTs impact us all, so we need to understand them, influence how they are developed, empower ourselves to use them and harness them to make a difference.

Just as women have less access to resources in the world, they have less access to information and communication technologies. Women's voices, stories and experiences are not often told in newspapers or on television. When we do hear women's stories, they are rarely told by women themselves. Many stories show women as victims who need to be rescued rather than leaders and actors in their own lives.



## *Chapter 2.1: Women's voices and representation*



### ***Connecting offline organising, with online activism***

*In 2013, the Saartjie Baartman Women's Centre (Cape Town, South Africa) was facing closure due to lack of resources. With the African Gender Institute they created a short video that captured the voices of women survivors of domestic violence. Thousands of South Africans used Twitter to share the video widely, raise awareness and put pressure on the provincial leader to provide urgent and ongoing funding for the centre. This resulted in the*





province giving emergency funding as well as local communities bringing in food, clothing and money to support the centre.<sup>2</sup>



### **Chapter 5: Social media tools Twitter**

*The offline organising (including the provision of a shelter, skills-building and job-seeker support and awareness-raising on violence against women) plus the use of (ie use of an ICT) an ICT tool to tell the stories of women who benefit from these services (digital video) and online ICT (Twitter) proved to be powerful and bring about immediate change.*

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## **What is this toolkit?**

This toolkit aims to help organisations and activists to strengthen our use of ICTs to help build movements that challenge inequality and put women's voices and experiences front and centre in our communications. We cannot create change alone. We must build movements that work on many fronts and lift up the voices and experiences of many.

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### **Movement building**

*We organise in our communities to bring about change. When we connect with others (organisations or people) we are stronger and can create long-lasting change. A movement is not a single organisation, but includes organisations, allies and individuals who join together for a common purpose. In this toolkit, when we refer to 'movements' we are talking about the kinds of movements we are building to bring about social justice.*

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Women's organising has brought about many changes and created a more equal world but we still face many challenges. We must take advantage of the extraordinary potential of ICTs to help us bring about social justice, including gender equality (equality between women and men, as well as for all oppressed groups).

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2. Urgent Call to Action – Save the Saartjie Baartman Women's Centre from Closing <http://agi.ac.za/multimedia/urgent-call-action>

Women's organisations and other organisations interested in gender equality need to use ICTs strategically – to improve how we communicate to amplify women's voices, influence agendas and change attitudes.

We want movements that are effective, resilient, visible and safe. Building **feminist communication strategies** using ICTs helps us achieve this.



### *Chapter 2.5 Challenging negative power and building positive power*



#### **Feminism**

*A range of theories, practices and political agendas that aim to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women due to sex and gender as well as class, race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, geographic location, nationality, or other forms of social exclusion<sup>3</sup>.*

**A feminist approach** – recognises and challenges all forms of power along these lines and puts women's experiences at the centre.

#### **Feminist movement building**

*Just Associates (JASS) calls our movement building "feminist" because our work encompasses the struggles in women's personal lives for dignity, safety, equality and control of our bodies, as centrally as their shared organising and leadership in public arenas. All our work is imbued with an understanding of the need to challenge and transform power relationships so that women can rise and flourish<sup>4</sup>.*

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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.

3. Just Associates Feminist Movement Builders Dictionary, <http://www.justassociates.org/en/resources/feminist-movement-builders-dictionary>  
4. Just Associates Feminist Movement Building, <http://www.justassociates.org/en/feminist-movement-building>

## How can you use this toolkit?

The toolkit aims to assist activists to think through their communication strategies in a way that supports movement building. It offers a 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.

This toolkit can help you if you want to:



- *experiment and be creative in the way you communicate*
- *think about how communications can help us to build movements for social justice*
- *develop a feminist communication strategy for your organisation that amplifies women's voices and supports them to tell their own stories*
- *think about which ICTs to use and when*
- *adopt a feminist approach to your use and understanding of ICTs*
- *communicate in ways that challenge gender stereotypes*
- *think through safety and security concerns that women activists face when using technology*
- *understand how power works in design, governance and access to ICTs and challenge inequality in our world*
- *design a workshop for your organisation on ICTs and communications*

This toolkit is not about *how* to use the tools (there are many resources you can find on this including **How to Design an Online Campaign<sup>5</sup>** and the **Women's Rights Campaigning Info-Activism Toolkit<sup>6</sup>**) but rather about how to make strategic choices and decisions regarding strategies and tools. Whether you choose to use T-shirts in a campaign rather than Twitter, or SMS messages rather than Facebook, or perhaps some combination, this toolkit aims to assist you with these choices.

The toolkit is also about feminist practice and how to use tools and communicate in ways that are democratic, make women's voices stronger and louder 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.



5. By APC and Violence is not our Culture, <https://www.apc.org/en/pubs/books/how-design-online-campaign-toolkit>

6. By CREA and Tactical Technology Collective, <https://womensrights.informationactivism.org/>

**This toolkit is a collaboration between three organisations interested in women's rights and using ICTs to build movements for change.**

**Just Associates** (JASS) is a global women-led human rights network of activists, popular educators and scholars in countries. We work to ensure women leaders are more confident, better-organised, louder and safer as they take on some of the most critical human rights issues of our time. Learn more, meet the JASS team and take part in the Women Crossing the Line Campaign at: [www.justassociates.org](http://www.justassociates.org).

**Women'sNet** is a South African-based non-governmental organisation that strengthens women's and girls' movements for social change through the strategic use of ICTs and advocacy that promotes access, the right to information and freedom of expression.

<http://www.womensnet.org.za/vision-mission.html>

**The Association of Progressive Communications** (APC) is both a network and organisation that works to empower and support organisations, social movements and individuals in and through the use of ICTs to build strategic communities and initiatives for the purpose of making meaningful contributions to equitable human development, social justice, participatory political processes and environmental sustainability.

[www.apc.org](http://www.apc.org)

