

ADVOCACY GUIDE

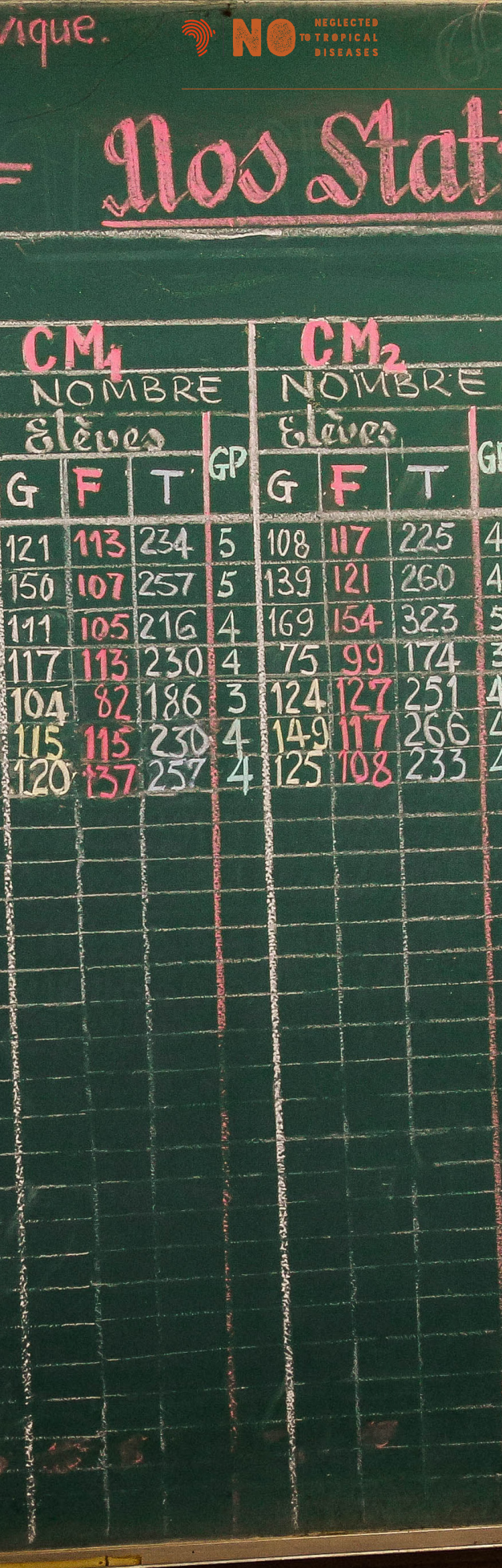
CAMPAIGNING FOR AN
AFRICA FREE OF NTDs

WORKING WITH MEDIA



SpeakUpAfrica.

NO NEGLECTED
TO TROPICAL
DISEASES



WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

The mass media, both electronic (television, radio, online) and print (newspapers, magazines) are valuable allies in your advocacy effort.

Because of their significant role as key gatekeepers for disseminating information and as socializing agents, media institutions will have a powerful impact in terms of creating support among both the general public and specific audiences for NTD elimination. Very importantly, the media can influence opinion makers and public actors – such as political, business and religious leaders to make NTD a greater public health priority. In the journalism field, such influence is widely recognized as the media’s agenda-setting role.

Policy-makers usually respond to popular appeal, and to their own social network of policy and decision makers. Political leaders, especially elected officials, are sensitive to public opinion and expectations about health and social issues because public perception of government health service delivery effectiveness may influence the way the electorate will vote. **Mass media can play two kinds of advocacy roles: (a) supporting development initiatives by the dissemination of messages that encourage the public to support development-oriented projects; and (b) providing the decision-makers with the necessary information and feedback needed to reach a decision.**

Media coverage of NTD issues will also broaden the understanding of how a relatively modest expenditure on NTD elimination will produce long term gains in reducing the human and economic burden of these diseases, thus highlighting the broader social and developmental gains to be made from NTD reduction with the goal of elimination.

The NTD program should develop and coordinate with partners to implement the media engagement strategy.

Ways of engaging the media

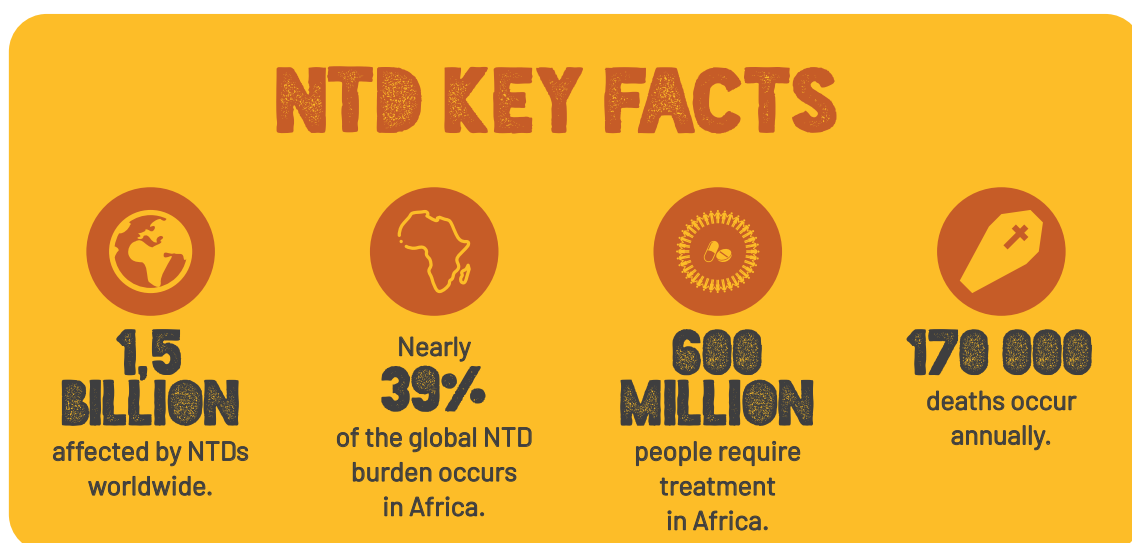
Media workshops with journalists and editors to educate them about the NTD elimination effort and the gains that will be made through elimination are a common way of engaging the media. Media workshops should be organized as opportunities for the journalists to hear from and interview a variety of sources pertinent to telling the NTD story to the public in ways that will resonate. These sources may include:

- Spokespersons for the NTD program.
- NTD champions, including members of the NTD Partners' Coalition.
- Persons whose lives have been negatively affected by the burden of NTDs and improved because of treatment.

In countries with strong subnational political and administrative structures, workshops with the local media may be called for in order to build up support for the NTD program among subnational and district level administrative and political actors. These actors often have budgetary discretion in establishing line items, so it is important to impact them.

It may also be helpful to have a workshop at the national level for media outlets that have national reach, especially because of their potential of reaching national political leaders and national religious and civil society organizations. Those journalists participating in a workshop should be selected based on the ability of their outlets, whether traditional broadcast, print or online, to reach targeted audiences. If there are journalists working for international broadcasters such as RFI, BBC, VOA and Deutsche Welle, it may be important to include them in workshops because in many countries where the international broadcasters have large audiences, they can be extremely influential, including with politicians sensitive to international opinion of domestic program effectiveness.

Journalists participating in the workshop should commit to producing, at least, one feature story or, even better, a series on NTDs. The journalists should be encouraged to put a human face on their NTD stories as a way of creating empathy with those who have had to deal with the NTD burden; this is a powerful way to go beyond numbers and statistics that illustrate the impact of NTDs. Formats such as call-in shows, round table discussions and interviews also resonate well with audiences.



Journalists participating in the workshop can also be invited to become members of an NTD elimination journalist group, perhaps with a Facebook page where they can upload their stories and share information, and to which the Program and its advocacy partners can distribute press releases and acquaint the journalists with the ongoing roll out of NTD elimination activity.

These journalists should also be provided with a media kit, ideally with a NTD elimination cap and t-shirt that they can wear, a CD with a standard musical theme to be played in association with broadcast programs dealing with NTDs, and factsheets about the NTD burden, the gains to be achieved through control and ultimately elimination, the country's programmatic goals, the international commitments that the government has made to achieve elimination, and the level of domestic and international funding.

News pegs

Besides the productions that come out of the workshop, typically journalists will produce stories or programs that are “pegged” to a particular event or activity. Such pegs may include:

- The launch of a mass drug administration campaign
- The arrival in country or in a subnational region of donated medicines
- The attaining of milestones in reaching program objectives
- An international report on NTD progress

Journalists should be sent invitations to cover such events, and provided with a press release whose information is embargoed until after the day and time of the particular event.

The Power of Social Media

The pervasiveness of mobile devices and social networking apps has resulted in a revolution of E-Health Communication in Africa that can be applied to advocacy. Today, social media is one of the most powerful tools available for increasing the visibility of your NTD work and influencing the audiences that you are targeting as part of your advocacy strategy. Social media is a frontline strategy for getting your NTD messages across to decision makers and influencers in government, private sector, civil society and the media.

Social media is an opportunity to tell your story, engage with supporters and get results. Rather than a one-way communication channel, social media creates conversations. The NTD program manager and staff can use social media to talk directly to decision-makers, partners and stakeholders.


Social media is a game-changer in that it connects governments, civil society and ideas. In an environment of competing interests, the effective use of social media can have a significant impact on the outcome of public policy decision-making that affects your NTD program. An active social media engagement can get the attention of decision-makers, potential partners, influencers, the media and your stakeholders. It's like having everyone in a room, and you, the program manager, is holding the microphone.

Your use of social media should be content-driven; in other words, what are the most effective messages and the most efficient platform to get the word out about NTD goals and objectives.


Facebook is the most popular social media network in Africa, with millions joining in recent years, mostly on their mobile phones. Today many decision-makers and influencers use Twitter and belong to Whatsapp groups. The technology for developing a Facebook page, a Twitter account and a Whatsapp group are relatively straightforward and can be easily mastered by people who have had little experience in social media.

Facebook connects users by posting interactive content such as status updates, photos, links and videos. Twitter is an information network that delivers real-time updates of the latest stories, opinions, news and ideas in 280- character format as well as photos and short videos. Organizations can quickly 'tweet' information and build relationships with their followers.

| facebook



It is especially important to create a Facebook page for your NTD program, particularly if your program has no website. You can use the Facebook Live app to post real time video of a conference or other event. Your Twitter posts should pull your followers to your Facebook page for more information.



WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a text messaging services. WhatsApp uses the internet to send messages, images audio or video and is similar to text messaging, and has the advantage of being less expensive. With the exception of a few countries, WhatsApp is easily the most popular platform across Africa. Your NTD program can build broadcast lists of people who can receive invitation to meetings, information, updates and news about your NTD program.

Another important **Whatsapp** list would be your NTD Partners' Coalition where you can share information, organize meetings and engage in strategic conversations to advance the objectives of the group. Other lists would include your advocacy partners, such as NGOs, religious institutions, private sector companies and the media.

Whatever platform you decide to use, and it is best to use multiple platforms depending on the target audience and the message, it is important to develop a social media playbook for the NTD team.



Elements of a Social Media Playbook

1. Be clear about your objectives. Is the goal to raise the visibility of the NTD program nationally among the broader public or to raise visibility among decision-makers and influencers? Or both. How will you target decision-makers? What kind of information will you post to get your target audiences' attention? It is important to post no more than once a day. Most people scroll through their newsfeeds so too many posts will saturate your audience.
2. After identifying your target audiences, match them with the appropriate social media platform. At initial meetings with your NTD Partners' Coalition or with media professionals, discuss with them what platform works best for them.
3. Define your message. What story are you telling? Be clear on what kind of values, problems, solutions, and actions are involved. Use compelling photos and graphics.
4. Engagement is the active participation of the reader or follower. This can mean a "share" on a Facebook post or a "re-tweet" on Twitter. The engagement of a community on your social media platform is a good indicator of how your messages are resonating and reach of your followers.

Facebook and Twitter are two of the most important social media platforms in Africa. Here are some tips for maximizing the impact of your social media.

FACEBOOK

- **Keep it short.** Most Facebook users skim their newsfeeds, so they're most likely to interact with content that is brief and concise. Facebook Posts of up to just 40 characters — a few words, or a short sentence at most — generate the highest engagement.
- **Make it visual.** Photos and images are overwhelmingly the most engaging type of content on Facebook, generating a whopping 87 percent interaction rate from page followers. Avoid text-only Facebook posts at all costs, and be sure to include an image whenever possible. Photos also help to humanize the story that you want to get across, and helping your story to resonate with the audience at a human level.
- **Post regularly.** The more you engage with your audience, the better off you will be. Try to post to the NTD Facebook Page at two or three times a week, but not more than once a day.
- **Activate your followers.** Every time an individual shares, likes, or comments on posts on your Facebook page, your page is made visible to that individual's own Facebook friends. That means potentially hundreds of users — including potential donors and members — see your content. The NTD program staff and its partners can be encouraged to share and like your posts. It's an easy lift with huge rewards. You can also encourage them to turn on "notifications" to find out whenever there is new content on your page, so that they can be sure not to miss a beat.
- **Branding is essential.** Make sure the content you post is branded with your NTD logo. Branding ensures that the post is credited to the NTD program and raises its visibility.
- **Push traffic to your website.** Most of the links for your posts should bring your follower to the NTD website.

TWITTER

- Tweet regularly. It's best to tweet not more than once every hour. If you're just starting off, aim to tweet at least once a day, or about five to 10 times a week. The key is not falling dormant.
- A hashtag is created by including the symbol “#” in front of a word or words without spaces. A hashtag is a label used on social media sites that makes it easier to find information with a theme or specific content. Hashtags are used to reach target audiences and to help filter information. The NTD community uses the following hashtags in their tweets:

#NoToNTDs

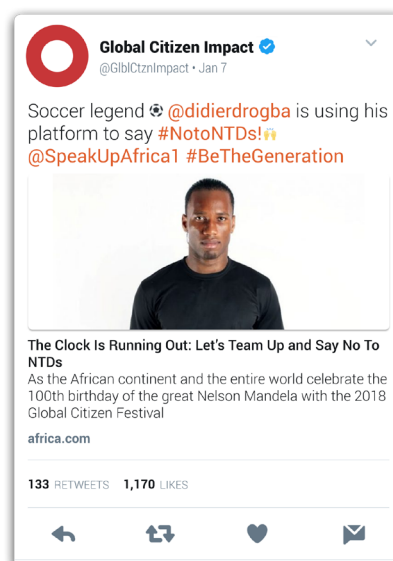
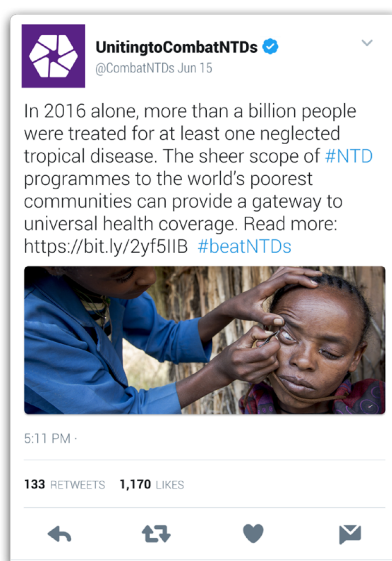
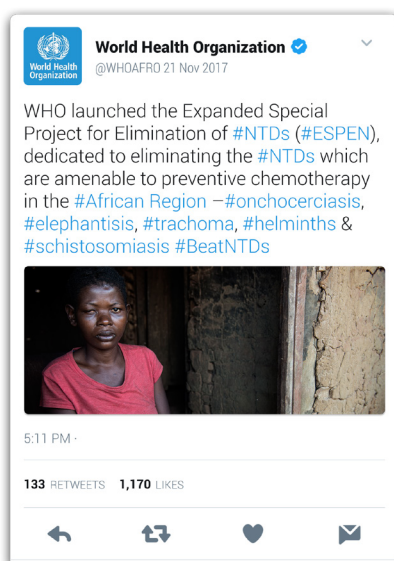
#ISayNoToNTDs

#BEATNTDs

#ESPEN

#NEGLECTEDTROPICALDISEASES

- Make it visual. You can get a 150% increase in retweets just by attaching images. Try to attach an image to a tweet whenever possible, even if it means shortening your word count.
- Carry out direct outreach to your key decision-maker and influencer groups. Social media is all about interaction. If you follow an account, that user will receive a notification and will likely follow you back. The goal is for them to engage and share your message.
- The traditional media. Find the Twitter accounts for local journalist and bloggers, and tweet them links to your events, announcements, or press releases. Many journalists list their Twitter handles in their bylines, or you can Google the journalist's name and the word “Twitter” to find it.
- Government officials. Twitter is a great way to interact directly with government officials, who are often highly active on the platform. Tweet the government official with your message. Write a sample tweet and encourage your followers to tweet the link or message to the government official. Here are some examples of NTD tweets:



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Measuring the Impact of Your Advocacy

Monitoring and evaluation are important procedures to measure progress toward short and long-term objectives and goals. A monitoring and evaluation plan needs to be included in the advocacy strategy.

Monitoring generally consists of the routine tracking of the key elements of implementation through record-keeping and regular reporting. A monitoring system focuses above all on examining the processes as the strategic plan is implemented. Through monitoring you will be able to ascertain, for instance:

- If the planned products such as toolkits, message guides, factsheets have been developed and tested;
- If the planned activities such as advocacy meetings, the formation of the Partners Coalition, the creation of an NTD journalism group, etc. have been carried out;
- If an NTD logo and slogan have been developed and resonate with the target audience.

The NTD program members should also attend the activities that take place to observe the quality of the undertakings, especially to ensure that influencers and decision makers are receiving the right messages and taking the requested action.

And, if the plan is not being implemented as expected or not obtaining commitments to take action, this will allow the NTD Program to consider requesting that mid-course corrective actions be taken in order to insure success. Samples of indicators to track long-term and intermediate outcomes:

| EXAMPLES OF LONG AND INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES TO MONITOR IN ADVOCACY | |
|---|---|
| Long-term outcomes | Tipping points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in policy • Change in legislation: changes of national legal frameworks in favor of NTD spending or interventions and/or the establishment of Parliamentary groups on NTDs • Budgetary commitments: percent change in domestic financing for NTDs • Implementation of commitments • The establishment of national Partners Coalition No to NTDs Councils • The number of people reached by mass media campaigns with NTD messages |
| Intermediate outcomes | Coalition building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New or stronger networks • More effective network activities Shaping the policy agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in oral and written rhetoric: mentions of NTDs in the media by political leaders • New items appear in political discussions • Items are framed in new ways within policy arguments • Coverage of issue in the media: the number of societal (political/private sector/ community/religious) leaders publicly committed to say no to and end NTDs |

| EXAMPLES OF LONG AND INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES TO MONITOR IN ADVOCACY | |
|---|---|
| | Influencing policy maker attitudes and behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key decision makers change rhetoric in public and in private • Key decision makers change knowledge, attitudes and behaviors |
| | Private sector contribution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent change in private sector donations or in-kind support for NTD programs |
| | Building a social movement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities acquire new information • Communities change attitudes • Communities change behaviors • Communities acquire a new strength within democratic processes (voting, speaking to their MP, getting involved in decision-making process) |

Program impacts are results that are directly attributed to program activities rather than external factors.

Types of questions answered by impact evaluations:

1. Was an action taken or commitment made by a decision maker in support of a policy, programmatic or budgetary request that was made?
2. When was the commitment made?
3. When was a concrete action fulfilling the commitment taken?
4. Does the level of commitment and action fulfil the goal? Or do other requests have to be made to in-country or external decision makers to achieve NTD program goals?
5. If no commitment was made or action taken, what other messages, tactics or communication channels may be used to reach more effectively that decision makers or other decision makers to achieve the goal?
6. What are the lessons and the best practices learned from this experience that can be applied to other NTD advocacy activities?