YOUNGO External Communication GUIDE

Introduction

This collaborative and living document is the guide for external communications of YOUNGO, providing guidance, suggestions and best practices. It is intended to be updated periodically and in keeping with the reality of what YOUNGO is and what it becomes and a resource for all.

Why this document?

External communication via social media and other communication platforms has proven to be tremendous tools for horizontal communication and dissemination of information and opinion. We can make use of several communication and social media platforms to better spread our message, build existing alliances, foster new ones, and keep everyone within our network up to date.

By compiling a set of basic guidelines, we will help make YOUNGO's external communication tools accessible to all youth, while ensuring the content disseminated remains relevant and helpful to all our work.

Why external communication?

Broadly speaking, people use social media and websites for various reasons: to connect with others, to find information easily and rapidly, to stay updated on the cultural phenomenon, to organise and mobilize, to spread messages, and because it is fun.

In order to get our message out, to inform and encourage fellow (youth) activists in a non-dogmatic, collaborative way, across nations, movements and interests, there are various measures we can take specific to each venue.

Important Additional YOUNGO Communication Documents

Further important document related to this guide are:
YOUNGO Communication Strategy
YOUNGO Branding Guide
YOUNGO Communication Calendar
YOUNGO Internal Communication Guidelines
YOUNGO Communication Folder

General Rules and Ethics

This section will attempt to provide a general outline of the tone and voice of YOUNGO on social media. YOUNGO is:
- Inclusive
- Accurate

We have a keen eye for detail and we always acknowledge our sources of information.
- Positive

Our aim is not to instill fear but to give hope that all is not lost and through behavior changes for example, we can restore our ecosystems.

- Youthful

We are using a youth-centered approach to deal with climate change related issues.

- Engaging

We use thought provoking and action-oriented posts and challenges. In this way, we are able to engage youth from different parts of the world

- Credibility

Our posts pass through a series of quality checks before they get posted. This ensures that we pass the right information to the public.

- Moderate
- Factual

We are empirical and we always carry out research before posting information in our social media pages.

1. When attaching files to your post, **make sure that it is of high quality and free of legal ownership**, and if applicable has the **YOUNGO logo in one of the bottom corners**.

2. When posting from YOUNGO accounts **never say "I", always talk on behalf of YOUNGO.**

3. **Scheduling** is a really useful skill, and this can be done on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. Due to our global presence, scheduling should factor our audience who are in different time zones. For Facebook when a post is written instead of clicking 'post' there is a drop-down option to schedule the post (peak times are lunchtime and evenings). For Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and also Facebook, you can use HootSuite to schedule posts.

4. **Proofread** your posts. Although you can go back and edit on the website, blogs, LinkedIn, and Facebook, this is not possible on Twitter, Instagram and Newsletters - so be extra cautious and check the language, grammar, context, structure and flow of any post before it goes public. Unless very time-sensitive, always share your post with your respective teams for feedback before posting.

5. W**rite in simple, plain language**. Complicated language can be isolating and doesn't make our work relatable to all of our followers. It is much better to get the point across clearly, than sound smart while you do it. As we have a global audience, the Comms team should aim to have members who speak any of the UN languages to assist us in sharing posts in other languages (French, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, etc)

6. **Swearing and offensive policy**: These are the key guidelines to follow:
   - Do not swear
   - Do not use any offensive language or make any politically incorrect statement
   - Make sure to check that all posts are inclusive and not tokenizing/racial profiling any particular group of people

7. **Images from the internet** require certain legal permissions before they can be used. Ideally, we would therefore only use our own graphics or photographs. If this can't be done then either use Flickr or Unsplash which has lots of free to use images.

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8. When **creating graphics**, try to retain similarity. That means, using YOUNGO colours, YOUNGO style font (see previous graphics). We want people to see it and immediately think YOUNGO!

9. **Self-promotion of any kind is not acceptable** via the YOUNGO social media accounts. The only exception to this is where a member gets express permission from YOUNGO.

10. Grammar:
- Avoid tautologies (the saying of the same thing twice in different words)
- Avoid redundant words
- If you don't know how semicolons work, please don't use them. If in doubt, leave them out!
- Capitalise names, locations, businesses and acronyms. (YOUNGO should always be in capitals)
- Avoid lengthy sentences and cumbersome language - social media needs to be quick and easy to read!

11. Permissions:
- Only the Communications team have access to the **account passwords** - any posts that need to be made can be submitted to the Communications and Review teams for checking before posting. This is to ensure that people aren't posting twice in a short space of time, over-posting, or making errors.
- Anyone can write a **blog**, but it must be checked by someone, via the Proofreading team.

12. As per the **UNFCCC participation guidelines** we are not allowed to take pictures or record during a negotiation and meeting session. Unless it is agreed and allowed by the Secretariat and Parties.

13. Please **break up large chunks of text** by spacing and the use of paragraphs. People spend less than 10 seconds sometimes on a post, and the easier it is for them to pull out information, the better.

14. Posts should be thought-provoking and not statements on behalf of YOUNGO, unless that is explicitly mandated/required (for example, if YOUNGO has a joint letter agreed on by consensus, it could be posted)

- Make sure to regularly update but not too regularly to avoid diluting messages: aim to leave between 6- hours between posts to avoid diluting our reach. You can schedule posts
- Coordinate among the admin via a schedule/rota system to avoid both double-posting and silences
- If you post a link, write something about it - a summary, a reaction, a question
- As much as possible, include a photograph or image
- Tag other organisations as much as possible
- Keep it (semi) professional rather than personal: use "we" not "I" and avoid overusing slang. Don't swear.
- Encourage comments by asking people what they think about issues, and responding to their comments
- Engage in other organisations' timeline with comments/links etc.
- Big-picture/small-picture zooming: focus on local fights *and* global issues
- keep it consistent in terms of style and format and keep it brief enough to be read
- Where possible, post in other languages
- Use a variety of source material -- videos, policy papers, news articles, blogs, memes etc. -- from a wide variety of geographical places

GUIDELINES FOR CONTENT

- For an specific event to share in social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), the Comms WG needs at least 12 hrs to debate about the message and photo we are going to use by email or by the Whatsapp group of the Social Media Comms WG.
- For partnerships, we need an email to the mailing list of Comms with the subject: [PARTNERSHIPS] and at least 24 hours for consensus to have a partnership with a Comms campaign.
- All emails on behalf of Comms Team need to be sent previously to our our mailing list for 24 hours to have consensus on it.
- For requesting a design graphic please send an email to comms mailing list with the subject [DESIGN] at least 72 hours before you need it. If you need something urgent you can send it 24 before with subject [URGENT] [DESIGN].

Social Media
ADD GENERAL SENTENCE AS INTRO

FACEBOOK

YOUNGO Facebook Page

The type of content that normally goes on Facebook is less of an instant update and more of a general post. For example, we might link to an interesting article or a new blog we put up on the YOUNGO website, or a link to a petition, documentary, or resource. Posts are for a general audience and should not be internal in nature - we have other channels such as a closed Facebook group, for such information.

To use the IYCM Facebook account you have to become an admin, moderator or editor. For the purposes of keeping our account secure, as well as coherent, we should try to minimize the numbers of admins that we have.

YOUNGO Facebook Group and YOUNGO Working Groups on Facebook

The group is a platform on Facebook to share any climate related activities or opportunity or news between members of YOUNGO. Any inappropriate shared content will be removed by the managers of the group. The platform can also be used to share instant notifications to the members.

We also have a separate individual working group's facebook group, that would be managed by their members. The has given all the access to members except deleting a post can only be done by the admins.

TWITTER

Twitter gives us a time-effective method of engaging with broader youth and climate stakeholders via hashtags and conversations. Unlike Facebook which is usually limited to followers or people who liked our

page, Twitter focuses on Keywords (e.g. Climate Action) and gives us access to audiences around the world while providing an opportunity to interact with interested stakeholders. This makes it important for us to ensure that every post follows the guideline outlined in this document and reflects the position of the constituency. Additionally, our account is verified, therefore, every tweet we make is monitored and we have a special verified notification column.

Tips for Tweeting:
- You have 280 characters only – use them wisely
- Shorter is better -- the most popular Tweets are between 120 -150 characters
- Pictures make for very popular Tweets, especially when disseminating news articles or documenting a live event such as an ongoing action
- Hashtags are your friend -- they're one of the primary ways Tweets are spread
  - Use a "#" followed by a word or phrase
  - Each major event or campaign has its own hashtag -- ex.: #COP19, #COP24, #DurbanDisaster, #PeoplesClimate, #WorldVsBank, #Youth4Climate etc.
  - DON'T just pick something -- use an already-existing hashtag to join the conversation around an event in order to reach people
  - Make sure your hashtag is perfectly typed each time -- it's useless if not
  - ALL Tweets about an event should have the same hashtag -- Tweets are virtually useless without them
  - Search Twitter by hashtags to follow along with an ongoing event or see what others are saying about something so you can amplify
- Use handles (e.g. @IYCM) to post to another person or organisation's page
  - When unsure of someone's handle, search the name or organization to find it on Twitter
  - Follow other relevant Twitter profiles from @IYCM, but don't do it for no reason
  - Tweet stories and relevant info directly at media figures to make sure they see them.
  - Try to tag respective stakeholders while posting tweet organizations, while posting a tweet.
- Retweet only useful info, or stuff that we want to endorse or highlight things especially related to climate change and sustainable development.
- It's bad form to Retweet something as your own Tweet without changing content or responding -- just Retweet their Tweet instead
- Reply to direct messages quickly -- to use DMs, you and the correspondent must be following each other
- All links and pictures count as 23 characters regardless of length, so no need to use a link-shortener
- If you are tweeting someone directly never put @something at the beginning. If you do this the tweet will go directly to their inbox rather than being public. To avoid this you can either place the @something later in the text or put a full stop in front of it like .@something
- Try to keep tweets as short as possible
- Try to avoid repeating the same tweet twice. If the content is the same try to approach it with a different angle or use a quote?

INSTAGRAM

1. Feel free to follow back like-minded organisations who follow us first but please avoid following random individuals.
2. Be aware of regramming others images without crediting them! Original content is great but ensure to tag and credit other organisations if using their graphics (if done right this can further a particular message or establish a relationship between organisations).

3. Instagram and Facebook have a "Story" feature which expires in 24 hours, you can use that feature to update something which is happening live at any event or any YOUNGO/IYCM Interventions.
4. Instagram live option…

YOUTUBE

   1.

SOUNDCLOUD

Answering to Messages

- The Social Media team will aim to respond to all messages within 24 hours. A designated timeslot will be reserved each day for the members of the team to review all messages and co-create a response to the senders.
- In drafting a response:
    - Always **sign** the message with your name and - YOUNGO. e.g. 'Serena - YOUNGO'
    - Try to be **polite** and **clear** in your response, and always point them in the direction of someone who may be better able to help them? Usually best to tell them to email hello and then you can forward it to the relevant YOUNGO member!
    - If they ask about **joining YOUNGO**. Point them to this registration form so we can add them to the mailing list and they have to join the Facebook group.
    - If they ask us to **share** something. If relevant, say thank you and that you will share it across our networks. If not relevant, do not reply to the message.
    - If they ask about **collaborating** with us. Direct them to the Focal Points and let them know that this way we can share with everyone at YOUNGO and see where collaboration would best fit!
    - Please don't indulge in **trolls**, feel free to point them towards a blog/article that debunks their ignorance but do not engage in an all-out war (however tempting it may be)
    - Responses will usually involve pointing sendeers to a relevant YOUNGO Working Group, BLT Member or YOUNGO member through email, or giving them information/support with their work.
- For Facebook, there is an automatic generic response setup for all Facebook Messages.

Website

The YOUNGO website is to serve as the go-to page for all documentation and updates regarding constituency wide projects (including events and submissions to the UNFCCC). If any Working Group

wishes to update their content on the website, the content must be submitted to the communications team to be reviewed to ensure that the content (text, images, etc) meets the requirement of the YOUNGO external communication guideline. Each WG must be prioritized and have a dedicated page on the website with regular updates.

The designated team must always check with WGs and Operational teams to ensure that documents on the website are updated and in-line with the new direction and structure of the constituency.

Content, publishing and management:

1. Every document published must be in PDF and should have the official constituency logo. The document should also have the contact details of the respective team that is responsible for developing the document and its content (Example: The Gender WG submission should have a collective email of the gender WG on the document – gender@youngo.org)
2. Every content that features on the website must be agreed by the communications team prior to publishing the content. Any content, especially those that do not represent the broader constituency such as a project or activity that features and highlights the work of an individual member or the work of a single organization within the constituency, must be agreed by the communications team before published.
3. When making posts and uploading documents, make sure that the public url is reflective of the content of the post/document. If the url is very long due to the title of the post, shorten the url to make it easy to share on social media.
4. As much as possible, new contents should be cross-referenced with old content such that new readers can always visit old posts which are being updated.
5. When posting as an editor to the website, change the name of the author to admin before publishing.
6. Test every link included in posts to make sure they are working and hyperlinks should open to a new tab.
7. When updating plugins on the homepage, always refresh the homepage afterwards to ensure that the updated plugins have not changed the structure and looks of the website.
8. The login details of the website should be changed every 3 months to ensure maximum security.

Newsletter Guide

YOUNGO newsletter will be a monthly publication of the newsletter team within the Comms WG. Inputs will be collected from Focal Points, YOUNGO representatives to relevant meetings, working groups that are active within the month and other members that may have important contributions to offer. The guide is as follows:

An email will be sent out on the 18th of every month asking for input submissions to the newsletter through a dedicated form with a 10 days deadline to submit. After the deadline, the newsletter team will review and sequence the submission accordingly for final publication on the mailing list. The monthly newsletter will be published on the 5th of every month.

Sample form for input collection here:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdSKcFJKNYu0A6EEg2A040npG177CEgj7q3krz6Hd7ZWP1oxw/viewform

YOUNGO Brand Guide

CANVA

Canva is an online photo editor that is really easy to use. It is used for the following:
- Adding the YOUNGO logo to photographs
- Creating graphics
- Creating YOUNGO cover photos & branding

To best use Canva, follow the advice below:
- **Getting Started**: Get in touch with the Communications team members, they will send you an invite which easily allows you to log-into the shared YOUNGO space on canva.
- **Moving Around Canva**: Once you have set up your account, the Canva homepage should have the following key features for you to navigate through.
    - "All your designs" - this is a private space for you to create designs
    - "Shared with you" - this space allows team members to share specific designs with you
    - "Team Members" - this is where you can add new members to the YOUNGO shared Canva space
    - You should also see the following folders: YOUNGO Branding, and YOUNGO Graphics.
- **Saving in Canva**: To make sure others have access to your design (for editing purposes) you need to open up your design and click "share" > and then change the settings so that all YOUNGO Members can edit.

Looking at the social media colours is advised: YOUNGO Colours.

When creating graphics there are no steadfast rules, however it is preferable that all **graphics maintain the same vibe**. This means:
- Using the YOUNGO colours
- Using YOUNGO font (See Canva records or previous graphics on twitter & instagram)
- Not making them too busy
- Making them high quality and not blurry

Press Releases and Media Publications

Interviews

Recommendations

Suggestions for composition and mandate of Admin Team as subset of Comms WG

- Strive for balance in the team (gender, linguistic, regional, level of experience, focus, etc.) to best represent a global youth movement
- Recommended between 8-16 people at any one time
- Defined 'term limit' of one year (Jan-Jan, or one year from date of joining)
- Cover and coordinate all channels -- Admin team will collectively decide on the division of work
- Use discretion and best judgement on posting of content

Other
- Consider expanding into other channels such as Flickr, Tumblr, Snapchat, WeChat, etc. to reach more people.

Useful Resources