

Digital activism as a transformative advocate for tackling climate change in Africa

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Warning!

The globe is rapidly changing before our eyes for the worse. Desertification. Flooding. Rising temperatures and changing climate. Population displacement.

WE DO NOT HAVE ANOTHER PLANET!

Situational Framing

For the last 2 decades, humanity is greatly suffering the effects of climate change.

Africa is vulnerable to climate change and climate variability (Boko et al. 2007) partly due to its heavy reliance on climate sensitive activities e.g. agro-business and lack of law enforcement (deforestation).

The Problem

Whereas the rest of the world is taking a position fighting climate change through policy and practice, most African countries are still lagging in uptake of innovations to stagnate or counter climate change trigger activities.

Part Solution: Social Media

We live in a digital era with over a billion social media users.

Africa claims 243,200,000 social media users of this billion (Statista.com).

SM has been adopted as a facilitatory tool across institutions and causes.

Social Media Use

**E-Government. Public Participation for
Policy Change & Development.**

**E-Commerce. Awareness Creation. Learning
& Knowledge Management. News Breaking.**

**Social Networking. Entertainment, and
Advancing Social Change & Activism**

Social Change Activism

Due to social media attributes it can; Draw attention and discourse around worthy causes (Agitate). Mobilise pressurise for social and policy change (Action). Moderate climate change conversations and knowledge transfer for desired change.

Challenges

How to transform digital activism to offline activities. Inclusion of all in the campaign (IT illiterate, the unconnected). Cost of connectivity. Government taxes and stiff regulation of social media. Government ban of social media (e.g. Tahrir Square - Egypt). Individualism approach challenges cause sustainability.

Way Forward

Sustain online activations. Enjoin Influencers & Opinion Shapers. Advance online dialogue into tangible action. Embrace hybridity to back online activism. Formalise digital activism into organised structures for sustainability (leadership, physical meetings). Involve conservationists, communication experts in online climate change discourse. Re-skill the Youth (60%). Government-led interventions.

“Climate change is no longer some far-off problem; it is happening here, it is happening now” (Barack Obama quoted in Davis and Myers 2015). Let us Act Now! Let us place social media at the heart of the climate change campaign.

Thank You!

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