



ASHOKA & SOCIAL GOOD CLUB

present



Partnering with Creators

A Campaigner's Guide to
Changemaking on Social Media

Why Creators?

According to TikTok's own internal data, **74% of Gen Z viewers perceive creators as reliable and 63% of Millennials perceive creators as likeable.** If we were talking about political polling, these numbers would be off the charts.

Today's creators have the power to shift culture in an instant. **Society no longer has a singular voice of reason in somebody** like Walter Cronkite. Today's teens and young adults have never even heard of *MTV Total Request Live*.

Creators have, slowly and mostly by accident, replaced journalists and entertainers in our day-to-day lives.

They've also replaced friends and support networks—as evidenced by the specific parasocial attachment we feel for these online faces who seem more like us than like movie stars. **Creators are community organizers, cultural ambassadors, and trusted confidants.**

As Colin Maclay, USC Annenberg Innovation Lab Director, said to us: “In a media landscape where we’ve lost trust in institutions, creators have become our trusted and defacto narrators.”

Big brands have caught onto the potential of creators—but the social impact sector has not yet figured out how to create transformational partnerships. Without this collaboration, the power of creators to become changemakers for good is dramatically diminished.

Social media has created a siloed world based on preferences. That's not news to you. And yet, we continue trying to shove broad messages onto these platforms, only to watch them fall flat time and again.

Social impact campaigners who work for the good of all need to communicate their messages, and **creators are *the* most effective way to connect with those critical corners of the internet that are entirely unreachable by traditional tactics.**

To date, campaigners have limited their interactions to a small set of similar creators, which can backfire. With this strategy, campaigns might deliver views and engagement, but they'll still reinforce the echo chamber or fail to contribute positive change. With this playbook, **we'd like to help you avoid those pitfalls.**

We believe the problem lies in the approach. This playbook summarizes the work of several strategists, campaigners, and creators—and, even still, it's just the first step. **We hope this playbook ignites curiosity and acts as an invitation.**

Let's create a more collaborative partnership between internet creators and changemakers around the world.

Because, if we can effectively collaborate with creators and acknowledge their role in social progress and systems change... the potential for forward movement becomes limitless.

How to use this playbook

This playbook is designed specifically to guide impact campaigners through the process of creating and implementing a successful creator-led campaign. If you take action when prompted throughout this playbook, **you'll walk away with a cohesive creative brief** and the motivation to bring it to life. We look forward to helping you squeeze more juice out of your next campaign, extend your reach online, and create an internet's worth of changemakers who are ready to take action.

If you need anything, just reach out: brandon@socialgoodclub.com and elawson@ashoka.org

This playbook is a follow up to a piece of research conducted in partnership with The Spotlight Initiative, a global partnership between the United Nations and The European Union

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Playbook Roadmap

1. Clarify your campaign strategy

- **Zoom out & assess** the movement that you're contributing to with this campaign.
- Identify your **campaign's intent** within the movement.
- Explore how you might **measure success**.
- Define your ideal **audience(s)**.

2. Refine your campaign essentials

- Outline your **talking points**.
- Understand how **creators can support you** on narrative expansion & delivery.
- Figure out how to do **creator curation**.

3. Execute your creator campaign

- Learn how to successfully **partner with creators**.
- Understand the role that content can play in **driving social progress** forward.
- Identify your **post-campaign steps** for continued impact.

Glossary

- ✦ **STATUS QUO:** Shorthand for the gravitational pull of “business as usual” and a way of identifying the systems that need changing. The haze that rules our work life (even on impact campaigns) and limits potential for deep change.
- ✦ **CREATOR:** Content creators across **Tik Tok, YouTube, & Instagram** (as of mid-2023) and any other social media platforms of a similar format that might pop up in the near future.
- ✦ **CHANGEMAKER:** **Someone who imagines a new reality**, takes action and collaborates with others to bring that new reality into being for the good of others.
- ✦ **SYSTEMS CHANGE:** An intentional **process designed to bring about lasting change** in a system, by altering underlying structures and supporting mechanisms which make the system operate in a particular way. It is a journey which can require a radical change in people’s attitudes as well as in the ways people work.
- ✦ **IMPACT CAMPAIGNER:** A person or group responsible for developing & executing an impact-oriented marketing effort. This could be about issue awareness, getting out the vote, lobbying for policy change, or something else.
- ✦ **FRAMEWORK CHANGE:** The strategy for **embedding new belief systems** - whereby we see and understand the world differently, which leads us to do differently - as a norm. It is a way to organize people around a purpose and entails co-creating with those individuals and institutions capable of driving social demand at a national or international level. Framework Change can lead to Systems Change, or vice-versa. In the social media world, campaigners may be aiming to change mindsets to eventually alter systems, or campaigners might be seeking users to take action to directly address aspects of systems change. Either way, usually Framework Change and Systems Change are at work in societal shifts.

About The Authors

Social Good Club

Social Good Club is a creative impact studio.

We are a network of world-class experts across internet culture, social impact, and online entrepreneurship. We're motivated by making real change happen quickly.

We work with 400+ digital content creators

(representing 600M+ followers) who are ready, right now, to show up for key issues.... but we don't just introduce you to talent and hope for the best. Instead, we deploy media and tech experts on every *single project*.

You won't be left with a deck of ideas and more questions. We will be there, with you, to strategically execute to ensure that your idea reaches its full **digital potential**.

Ashoka

Bill Drayton founded Ashoka in 1980 based on the idea that the most powerful force for good in the world is a social entrepreneur: a person driven by an innovative idea that can help correct an entrenched global problem.

Ashoka identifies and supports 4000 of the world's leading social entrepreneurs, learns from the patterns in their innovations, and mobilizes a global community that embraces these new frameworks to build an **"everyone a changemaker world."**

Ashoka sees the potential of creators to shift mindsets and systems for the good of all. As inspirers of younger generations, **creators can communicate that everyone has the power to become a changemaker** and solve problems.

CHAPTER 1:

CLARIFY YOUR

CAMPAIGN STRATEGY



*You must look at the whole puzzle,
to know which pieces fit where.*

In this section, you will...

1. Zoom out & assess the movement that you're contributing to with this campaign.
2. Identify your campaign's intent within the movement.
3. Explore how you might measure success.
4. Define your ideal audience(s).

STEP 0:

WHAT'S YOUR WHY?

Let's pause before we even begin:

What's the purpose of your efforts?

What's the point here?

Create your campaign's "why" statement by combining these two elements:

[X] your contribution

[y] the intended impact of that contribution.

"Our campaign will [do X] so that [Y happens]."

Now you try:

.....

.....



Don't overthink it. This is just a starting point, and we'll refine as we go.

Know that systems change is an inside game

To enact true framework & systems change, it's crucial to know the systems you're hoping to change.
Go on a treasure hunt to find the unseen ways they work, & how they influence you.

WARNING!

Current systems are hiding inside...

- ✦ **"Autopilot"** "business as usual" – the sentiment of "this is how it's always been done, so why question it?"
- ✦ **Limited imagination:** Assumptions that not much *can* radically change ("so why bother?")
- ✦ **Isolation & individuality:** The idea that we have to do it all by ourselves, making the burden too heavy to care.
- **Divisive thinking & relating:** Conflict within
- ✦ movements & organizations (the "zero sum" game of "if you win, I lose"), radicalized & binary dialogues.

The good news is there are antidotes!

- ✦ **Curiosity** towards our ways of working: "why do we do it this way? Is there a more effective way?"
- ✦ **Radical imagination:** Big change IS possible & perhaps, even bigger than we can currently imagine.
- ✦ **Collaboration:** The *collective* journey is far more impactful than the hero's journey. We're each pieces of the larger puzzle. My contribution isn't the only one, but it's necessary to complete the picture.
- ✦ **Genuine care** in the bigger solutions: Differences are valid, & in the end, we're all here because we give a sh*t, & we're stronger together.

*"The dominant system is an individualistic, scarcity model.
Taking on systems change requires radical collaboration, deep
interdependence, and transformative strategies."*

- Sarah Shanley Hope, Managing Director at The Solutions Project



Status quo thinking can (and will) infiltrate your campaign, if you let it.

The gravitational pull of the daily grind is real, for creators and impact organizations alike. It's tempting to hope that, by partnering with a charismatic internet personality for your campaign, the big moment of change will happen on its own. **While creators can offer a massive boost, your own enthusiasm and commitment will still be the biggest driving forces when it comes to making meaningful change.**

As you break down your campaign steps throughout this playbook, you'll see a handful of "checkpoints" where you'll be nudged to *BREAK THE STATUS QUO!* or *BREAK THE ECHO CHAMBER!* in an effort to give your campaign the very best chance possible... before anyone ever even posts a video. Videos can spread like wildfire, if you're lucky. With these checkpoint questions, the hope is that your message will truly stand out in the noise.

BREAK THE STATUS QUO

An opportunity to get off autopilot mode—either by shining light on blindspots or by connecting directly with the communities most affected by the issue area at hand. Get rid of the status quo power dynamics in both the office and in the movement.

BREAK THE ECHO CHAMBER

An opportunity to connect with people outside the movement. This could be a chance to talk to people who would be on your side if they knew more. It could also be a chance to talk to people who have zero interest in your talking points. Make your message appealing to new people.

Address the power dynamics that limit true systems change. For instance...

Ask yourself:

✦ **Who benefits from the current system I'm hoping to change?**

✦ **How do I benefit from the current system in any way?**

Systems change is a long game, and your campaign is the next play.

By anchoring into the larger movement, we can think of this creator campaign as a strategic contribution toward whatever next “big step” is needed for social progress.

Every campaign has the power to drive massive cultural shifts... if done well. If you can identify the “pulse” of modern discussion, you have the best shot at creating a campaign strategy that will be effective right now.

Remember: When it comes to the long (as in multi-generational) game of social progress, you'll never see the full impact of your efforts. In order to contribute meaningfully, you'll need to take chances and root for the unseen ripple effects caused by the campaign.

What does the movement need most right now? What's coming up on the horizon? What gaps can our contribution fill?

A few things to consider...

- ✦ **Social progress is relational.** Progress is the sum of a complex series of interactions between different systems and characters. It's forever flowing between cultural and political contexts, weaving in between all kinds of people. The process is a constant negotiation between *current power dynamics* and *possibilities for evolution*.
- ✦ **A movement has no step-by-step timeline.** Several big moments of progress are happening simultaneously, depending on who you ask. There are watershed moments. There are backslides. Almost every step forward comes with a raised eyebrow from *somebody*.
- ✦ **For this workbook, we've simplified the concept of progress.** This playbook is just an invitation. It's a toolkit to help social movements make better content. There is not one single formula for change.

To learn more about social progress timelines, check the resource guide.

How To: Locate Yourself Within The Movement

An example of locating the campaign within the movement.

For many issue areas, it might be easiest to locate yourself based on policy changes. Is there a vote that was recently won or lost? Something you're trying to get on the ballot?

In the best case scenario, perhaps the issue experienced massive progress in recent years—gay marriage would be an example to explore here. The topic is nowhere near as taboo as it in some states, and is more controversial than ever in other parts of the country.

Given this context, we can assess that the public appetite for messaging has reached a new point of maturity compared to what might have landed 10 or 15 years ago. There's an opportunity to foster intersectional allyship, to educate on what's happening in neighboring states, and to push public awareness about more niche policy changes as needed.



MEASURE WHAT'S MEANINGFUL



Think beyond vanity metrics. Standardized metrics exist for a reason. They provide a fast way to compare apples to apples. These numbers can be valuable tools, but they can also guide us in the wrong direction when they become the *only* thing we're tracking. Instead, they're far more valuable when combined with systems change metrics.

Typical “vanity” metrics for content campaigns:

- ✦ “virality” (*velocity of viewership*)
- ✦ “potential reach” (*a creator’s follower count*)
- ✦ “social engagement” (*likes*)

SYSTEMS CHANGE METRICS, on the other hand, are a moving target.

It's absolutely okay to shift what you measure and consistently iterate on your definition of success. It's complex to try and measure the short & long game simultaneously. Measuring long-term progress is nuanced and is nowhere near an exact science (in reality, it's likely that the stakeholders might all have different aims, eh?). Let's look at some success indicators to support our standardized metrics.

“What you measure is what you give meaning.

So, what's meaningful to you?”

– Matt Fitzgerald, fitz.partners

Cofounder of #TeamSeas

SUCCESS INDICATORS

cheat sheet

Context-based Indicators

What do your stakeholder group and movement need most?

- ✦ Is this campaign helping with quarterly, yearly, or cycle-based strategic goals?
- ✦ Does your **call-to-action** align with movement-wide goals?
- ✦ Consider the people most directly affected by your issue area. **Which of their needs are being supported** by *this* campaign, if any?

Let's flash forward to the post-campaign.

What, specifically, might indicate that you created a "win" for stakeholders and/or the movement?

It could be qualitative or quantitative, you pick.

Quantitative Indicators

How many people were touched by your campaign?

- ✦ **Reach:** How many people *view or receive* your campaign?
 - **Total reach:** the number of total views
 - **View-through rate:** the % of the video that somebody watched before scrolling
- ✦ **Engagement:** How many people actively *engage* with your campaign?
 - **Social reach:** the % of comments & shares & saves compared to total reach
 - **Website traffic:** how many unique visitors came from this campaign?
 - **CTA interactions:** how many sign-ups, signatures, donations, etc?

Qualitative Indicators

How deep was your impact?

Suggestion: To “quantify” some qualitative indicators, it helps to think of it like a spectrum.

Did you see any of these things happen? If so, to what extent? Create some definitions.

For example: rare [less than 25%], occasional [25-50%], frequent [50-75%], very common [75%+]

- ✦ **Creator advocacy growth:** Did creators learn & become more invested in the issue area/solutions? This positive growth can indicate wider audience ownership & proliferation of messaging.
- ✦ **Audience advocacy growth:** Did creators notice a positive shift of *[insert either awareness, ownership, action]* amongst their audiences as an effect of the campaign?

Suggestion: You can also create your own percentages for qualitative indicators. Count ‘em up.

- ✦ X out of Y creators indicated that they care more about the issue now than before.
- ✦ X out of Y creators expressed a desire to continue learning & sharing about the issue.
- ✦ X out of Y creators wanted to continue into a next phase of work, and have their own ideas about how to do so.
- ✦ In X out of Y creators’ content, there were generative debates in the comments section.
- ✦ In X out of Y creators’ content, audience shares & saves were above average.

IDENTIFY INTENDED AUDIENCES

If your first instinct is to say you're hoping to reach "wider culture" or "the masses" or "millennials" or "gen Z", it's time to get more specific. The general public is not an audience.

STEP 1

Choose your overarching target demographic

1. A subset of culture.

A specific faction of everyday folks who shape society.

Since it's a creator campaign, let's choose this option.

2. Influential power-brokers.

The people at the institutions that could mandate real change in legislation, human rights, funding, curriculum, access to healthcare, etc

3. Strategic partners.

Individuals whose influence within a certain sector could benefit the movement if you joined forces

4. Pioneers in the margins.

Experimental activists, artists, and entrepreneurs who proactively drive grassroots change. These folks might operate in the gaps where governmental or social support structures don't (yet) exist.

STEP 2

Niche it down

Remember your original campaign “why” statement. Which types of audiences might be best suited to support that goal? The more specific, the better! Here are some levers to get you started:

✦ **Life stage.** Where are they at in their own life today? Examples:

- High schoolers
- College students
- Retirees
- Newlyweds
- New parents

✦ **Complementary interests.** Whose passions align with your message? Examples:

- DIY mechanics → Clean energy movement
- American yogis → Global political support for India

✦ **Personal connections.** Who has a unique relationship to your impacted community? Examples:

- Parents or siblings of trans people in their lives
- Workers who have been laid off in agriculture

DID YOU KNOW?

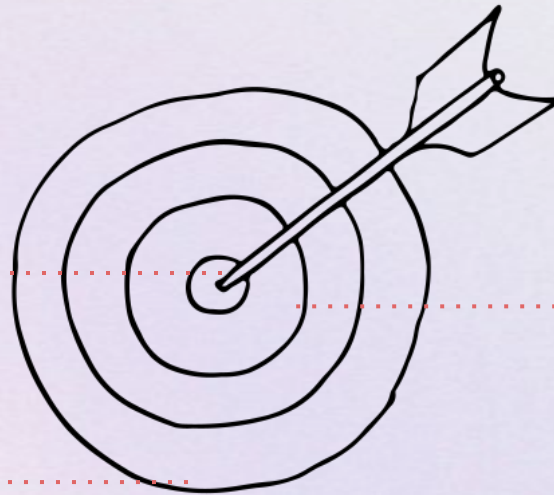
Content creators can also be your audience! If you want to expand storytelling and organic reach around your issue area, focus on learning & development for a group of creators ahead of launching campaigns.

STEP 3

Create a tiered audience target

It can be hard to choose just one niche demographic and leave it at that. Luckily, tiering your audiences will scale your impact. Which audiences influence your key demo? Who are *they* influenced by? Consider which audiences get consistently forgotten. Find the missing opportunities. And acknowledge political bias, too. What if the ideal audience *isn't* progressive?

Your most obvious audience is the bullseye.



The next ring is a group that influences your bullseye audience.

The next ring is a group that influences the influencing audience.

Reminder:

This target is your *starting place*. Best practice tells us to refine our audiences (and our content ideas!) over time, to understand over time if early hunches hold up in the market.

Regardless, the bullseye method can help you curate your creator wishlist. Ideally, you'll reach your identified audiences *plus* a few tangential audiences. Many creators speak across party lines, so there are great opportunities to break the echo chamber.

CHAPTER 2:

REFINE YOUR CAMPAIGN ESSENTIALS




In this section, you will...

1. Outline your talking points.
2. Understand how creators can support you on narrative expansion & delivery.
3. Figure out how to do creator curation.

“Meaningful work happens when we leverage creator’s creativity, not just their platforms”

– Lacy Wright, Executive Director of The Hillman Grad Foundation

UNDERSTAND YOUR ROLE



Break the Status Quo

Before diving in with creators, pause and reflect on the role you play in your campaign. You are as much a part of this campaign's success as the creator is, but in a totally different way! Look at this entire process from the creator's perspective. What do they need and want from you in order to successfully make content about your issue?

Resources

funding, data and information, introductions to experts, access to space

Personality

being a pleasant, charming person to work with on this project

Authority

the prestige associated with your position and organization

Networking opportunities

community building and long-term alliance building

Expertise

knowledge or skill related to your specific issue or topic area

Project Management

good communication and clear deadlines

On the elephant in the room: the power dynamic

Recognize that some of the things listed above might offer “power over” creators in a work setting. For instance, having resources means paying the invoices—which inherently makes you responsible for a creator's income. They're two sides of the same coin. This dynamic might stop creators from giving you their real opinion from time to time. Remember to actively seek their feedback, instead of assuming that they'll speak up naturally.

“The best videos, and I mean the ones that get the most engagement... are the ones where the client contact is open-minded and lets me talk about things in my own weird way.”

- Sketch Comedy Creator, 1.3M on YouTube



GET CLEAR ON YOUR *messaging points*

Getting the best out of a creator means being truly collaborative on the creative. This can be intimidating when you don't know the internet lingo du jour, or don't personally resonate with video styles that might get your point across most effectively to your target audience. The good news is that creators speak the language fluently, and can guide you through it!

Each creator works differently—meaning that **the most important thing you can do is get very clear on your campaign's key messaging points before you begin.**

Use the following exercise to achieve total message clarity (no matter the messenger!).

STEP 1

Define the non-negotiables

Reflect on your campaign intent, audience targets, and bigger picture systems thinking.

With all that in mind, let's establish the absolute basics for your message. What are the non-negotiables when it comes to terminology? What phrases and CTAs **must** be included and stated correctly in order to maintain integrity for the movement?

Non-negotiable keywords:

.....

Non-negotiable key phrases:

.....

Non-negotiable CTAs:

.....

DOUBLE CHECK

Is there any wiggle room for anything you listed? Flexibility or exceptions?



Break the Status Quo

Is your messaging in service to those directly affected by the issue?



It's crucial to shape your talking points in partnership with those most affected by the issue. That way, you're not assuming you know best on someone else's behalf; and your messaging can embrace the humanity of the community experiencing the issue"



Beware of “poverty porn”

When discussing poverty, messaging is often limited to the issue of poverty itself, without any humanizing focus on the people facing it everyday. The audience comes away feeling disconnected from the people experiencing the issue, which can get in the way of contributing towards the solution.

STEP 2

LOOK OUT FOR

blindspots

- ◆ What specific elements of the issue do you find **trickiest to communicate?**
- ◆ What kinds of things do you find **“put people off”?**
- ◆ What **key takeaways** take longest to “click” for people?
- ◆ What could go over someone’s head, or cause them to **disengage** for any reason?
- ◆ What are the **biggest myths & misconceptions** about the issue?
- ◆ How might we tackle those myths head-on and counteract them with **affirmative narratives?**
- ◆ Does your message include **progressive “jargon”?**
- ◆ Who are you potentially excluding with more **charged language?** Are there opportunities to **reframe?**

Break the Echo Chamber!

Ask someone who doesn't know that much about the issue. Get yourself the broadest set of insights possible.

Real-life example

When working on a **climate-related topic**, a campaign group found that creators often hesitated sharing on their channels about the issue. After some poking around, they found a trend: **the term “conservation” was alienating to audiences—because they found it too illusive and hard to comprehend in practical terms.**

Did that word really need to be included? Based on creator input, the campaigners shifted the messaging towards action. Instead of communicating on the issue of *conservation*, the campaign became an educational one—about *when to vote on natural land protection initiatives in local elections*.

This reframe opened up a new avenue for engaging both creators and audiences.

STEP 3

Identify that one big, shareable takeaway.

Imagine your completed campaign is out in the world. If it's a success and audiences start sharing your message, what's the one thing you'd want them to pass onto others?

Whether it's through Instagram DMs, or over dinner:

What should that next person walk away knowing?



Find the right creator(s).

It's easy to get distracted when building a wishlist for people to work with on your next campaign. The "coolest" or "loudest" names can be tempting. Or maybe they seem intimidating. Or maybe you assume they won't want to work with you, or they'll be too expensive, or maybe they'll be the wrong person... With a seemingly endless sea of creators, how are you supposed to find the right voice for your message?

Before you jump into compiling a shortlist, complete the following exercise.

1/ Which point-of-view feels like the best fit for the message?

SPECIALIZED EXPERT | INFORMED TEACHER | EDUCATED LEARNER | NEW LEARNER

2/ What tone or style feels most aligned with your message?

HARDCORE TRUTH | KNOW THE FACTS | INSPIRATIONAL IDEAS | SUBLIMINAL MESSAGING

3/ What's your total budget for paying talent?

EXTREMELY LIMITED (\$500) | BASIC | GENEROUS | LUXURIOUS (\$15K+)

4/ What type of reach & engagement are you hoping for with this message?

FAR, WIDE & BROAD

creators with largest audience possible

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

micro-influencers with a specific audience

5/ Do you need help building out the creative idea or do you need distribution for a pre-refined message?

CREATIVE PARTNER

DIGITAL MESSENGER

Real-life example

Through the hundreds of videos created via **The Better Internet Initiative** on a variety of progressive policy areas, a pattern has emerged: democracy is best broached in a way that feels as intimate and personal as possible to both the creator and the audience.

Whether it's a creator's personal connection to a policy or something they were humbled to learn recently, audiences connect clearly with those who are on a journey of learning themselves. Creator campaigns won't use the same kind of mass market messaging that plays well in traditional TV advertising. Instead, **audiences will be drawn to conversations that feel vulnerable and relevant to their own internal thoughts.**

Your curation checklist



Have you compared your ideal audience against the creator's audience?

Working with creators offers a unique gateway to your target audience. Make sure to look at a potential creator's followers, engagement rates, and content style to see **if it aligns with your target audience's interests** and preferences.



Have you considered how your topic fits in with the creator's other topics?

Most creators are associated with a handful of key topics. **Consider the creator's niche** before partnering with them. A creator might have a large following but if their content doesn't fit with the campaign goals, the partnership may not be successful.



Have you analyzed the creator's engagement rates and audience stats?

Look beyond the follower count. Make sure to look at **how many likes, shares, and comments their videos receive**. Assess the audience's overall sentiment towards the content. There are dozens of websites that help you do this kind of research—just Google “creator analytics tools” and start exploring.



Have you checked for alignment with your initiative's values?

Authenticity is key to a successful campaign. The creator you partner with should have **a genuine interest** in your campaign's goals, or at least a curiosity about the topic area. It's totally fine (and sometimes even better!) if they haven't spoken on the topic in the past... but take a quick look through their content and ensure that it aligns with your high-level values.



Are you looking for a long-term partnership? If so, have you asked the creator?

There are several benefits to investing in long-term creator relationships, as they can result in **more meaningful content and a better chance to engage the audience over time**. One-off transactions will help spread a message, but a longer content series from a single creator might create some true changemakers.

Stressed about picking a platform?

Don't be!



In the current ecosystem, most creators are multi-platform. Many of them will be happy to offer insight on where they think your message will be most successful. Ask for advice on the most up-to-date pros and cons of the algorithms at any given point.

“Honestly? I wish more clients reached out and asked me for their opinion on the best format. My website shows my menu of packages (Instagram videos, etc) but I’m always happy to offer advice on what would actually work best. Tell them to ask!”

- Fashion Creator, 450K on Instagram

“Okay, I have a pretty good idea of what type of creator I’m looking for... but how do I actually find these people?”

- ✦ Search by **hashtag** on platform, browse through top-ranking videos
 - ✦ Search by **location** on platform, browse through top-ranking videos
 - ✦ Work with an **agency** or consultant who can curate a shortlist for you
 - ✦ **Google** for “top fashion creators on TikTok” or “Midwestern family influencers”
 - ✦ Google “find creators” or “hire influencers” and you’ll find dozens of **databases**
 - ✦ Use an AI like ChatGPT to get more insights and ideas!
-

Write a great (and short!) pitch.

A strong campaign pitch will open a lot of doors for you. The goal of your pitch email is not to give the entire backstory or to teach a history lesson in a single email. The only goal is to explain the campaign goal, give the high-level logistics, and make sure they say yes to a call.



PITCH TEMPLATE (TO CREATOR OR TO
THEIR MANAGEMENT/AGENT)

Subject Line: [CREATOR NAME] x [ORGANIZATION]:
[CAMPAIGN TITLE]

Hi [Creator Name],

I'm a marketing director with [Organization Name] and we want to work with you on a 3-video series.

Ideal timeline: videos post in late August
Our budget: \$XX per video (\$XX total)

[Organization Name] is an organization that provides _____ for _____. Right now, we're putting together a social campaign to _____. The call-to-action for your audience would be _____.

We'd love to work with creators who want to learn more about the topic. We can provide you with all the important facts and data, and then we'd love for you to build out the video ideas for how to spread this message successfully.

If you're interested, let's hop on a 15-minute call next week to discuss logistics.

Thanks so much!

[Your Name]
[Organization Name]

Your first creative conversation: set everyone up for success

Now that you're clear on your campaign message, it's time to let creators step in and help it come to life. When you have that first chat, you want to make sure everyone is on the same page. The clarity will help both parties determine if it's a right fit and make sure expectations are set from the get-go.

To have a fruitful conversation, you might want to...

- Offer inspiration** on the issue area, especially if they don't know much yet!
 - Provide the **non-negotiable messaging points, key words, and CTAs**
 - Make sure the **terms and timelines are clear** on both sides
 - Explain the ask in more detail, including when and how you'd like to **provide feedback**
 - Ask about **why the issue resonates** with them
 - What **education** they want or need in order to create successfully
 - Ask them to flag** what might be tricky to talk about in a video and/or to flag any keywords
 - or flag **verbiage that might need tweaking** in order to succeed on platform
 - Integrate their **insights & needs** into the next phase of development
-

Creators each typically have their own process for generating, producing & sharing content. When possible, defer and plug into their process. They do this all the time. It'll be the most effective and efficient way.

CHAPTER 3

EXECUTE YOUR CREATOR CAMPAIGN



In this section, you will:

1. Learn & integrate best practices in partnerships with creators
2. Learn the different systems change roles content can play, and how it might drive the social progress map forward
3. Identify post-campaign steps for effective wrap-up and continuation of impact.

"No one can whistle a symphony. It takes an orchestra to play it."

Halford Luccock, professor emeritus
at Yale Divinity School (1885-1960)

STEP 1

Value creator contribution (on several levels)

Content creators make their money by... creating content. It's important to understand that their primary income stream does not magically change for the sake of social good. With typical vendors, paying the invoice on time is where the transaction ends. But with creators, you'll be missing out if you don't consider some additional ways to value their impact.

Here are a few ideas for how to **demonstrate that you value their participation** beyond the contractual agreement:

- ✦ Provide key updates on big progress after the fact,
- ✦ Alert them to any media buzz created by the campaign,
- ✦ Extend invites to your events or fundraisers,
- ✦ And continue to tag them on social media as appropriate.



“Valuing” the work might also mean acknowledging that the creator is risking their own personal brand by working on this campaign.

Whenever a creator works on sponsored content, they are taking on risk. And that risk will always be higher if they're speaking out on a sensitive topic—be it a drop in audience engagement or an increase in hateful comments. Creators will appreciate a nod of recognition on your part.



A note on PRO BONO

Creators will occasionally offer their services at a reduced fee—or, less often, for free—but it’s important to acknowledge the *disadvantage* to this dynamic. With free work, **your project is likely to wind up low on someone’s priority list.** And if a paid opportunity pops up at any time, even the most well-intentioned creator might have to delay until further notice.

Don’t assume that pro-bono work is the best case scenario. Instead, assume that you’ll be paying creators the same way you would pay any vendor. In fact, *paying* creators to engage in impact (just like you pay anyone on your campaign team) is more likely to encourage longer-term advocacy.

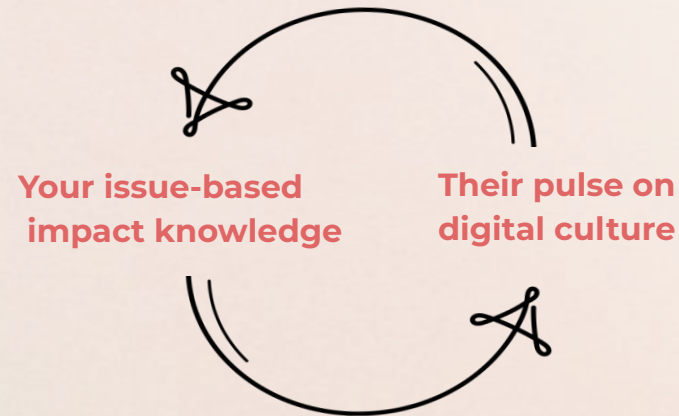
Feel free to accept pro-bono support as a bonus if it comes your way—just don’t plan your entire campaign around it!



STEP 2

Invite educational opportunities on both sides

When working with creators, there is a clear exchange of knowledge happening:



Creators can speak with more conviction and creativity on the issues when educated in ways that make them feel secure with legitimacy & correct information.

Specifically as it relates to “breaking the echo chamber,” curating creators with *less* awareness or experience on the issue means more educational guidance & capacity building.

However, this work often leads to meaningful engagement from new demographics – exciting!

And acknowledge what **you might learn from creators along the way.** Whether from their feedback on concept development or the process as a whole, your capacity to understand messaging & storytelling could expand along the way. Which leads to...

“People love data and facts on the internet! Give me every number you’ve got and I can pick ones that are most interesting.”

- History & Science Creator, 180K on TikTok

THE #WITHHER CHAMPIONS PROGRAM

The Spotlight Initiative (a partnership between the UN & EU to end violence against women & girls worldwide) was keen to explore out-of-the-box ideas to expand the conversation about their issue online and expand the reach of their #WithHer campaign. In partnership with **Social Good Club** (the co-authors of this playbook), they created a first-of-its-kind content fellowship that was designed to transform creators into true changemakers.

Because the topic of gender-based violence can be complex to broach online, the #WithHer Champions Program focused on "**learning through action**" – giving creators an opportunity to thoughtfully choose a topic area & messaging focus that was most well-matched for their audience.

A total of 8 creators each went through a bespoke process of coaching and learning in order to integrate information into a content series tailored for success on their specific channel.

This creative exploration left the organization with meaningful reach and left the creators with a clear desire to become changemakers in their post-campaign life.

STEP 3

Trust Creator Expertise (it's what works!)

✦ **Creators are known for filtering the world through their own lens.** They take in the world, interpret what's happening, and then put their own spin on it. Put another way: creators will listen thoughtfully to the goal of your campaign, and then they'll re-articulate it in a way that's incredibly unique to them.

✦ As it relates to campaign content, it's best to encourage creators to digest a message within the context of their voice & brand. **They have specific ways of relating with their audience**, whether it's inside jokes, metaphors, taglines, or a certain style. Respect their unique spin on the topic, even if you don't "get it" yourself.

✦ **Some creators may need to translate an impact message in ways that might feel less direct.** Their finesse of a message is what gives the best chance of reaching audiences. This is especially true when your topic is facing a controversial newscycle or heated moment.

✦ **You get to pick your creator. After you do, it's time to respect the unique voice you chose (within reason).** And, the more trust you build with creators, the more availability you have to push creators to challenge themselves for the purpose of impact.

✦ Sometimes, **the creator's community might offer a critique to the funding organization.** Don't shy away from these moments. Owning the tension and contradictions will strengthen systemic change over time—and the authenticity is likely to endear audiences to the cause.

Practical tip: Kick off creative concept development discussions from the creators' perspective first. What do they do best, what do they love about their own content, how do they approach new topics?

In initial conversations, share campaign goals and then immediately dive into the "And how does this relate to you?" conversation. Then, together, you can go on a "treasure hunt" to find the ideal approach.

STEP 4

Understand economic realities & political risks they may face

For the most part, impact content is not prioritized by social media algorithms aside from the occasional inflammatory moment.

Some possible risks of speaking up online...

- ✦ **Temporary demonetization** (when their entire channel is forbidden from making money for a set period of time).
- ✦ **Shadow-banning** (when the algorithm starts “hiding” videos from audience feeds).
- ✦ Corporate brands deciding to **discontinue their paid partnerships**.
- ✦ **A significant decline in audience** retention.

Acknowledge the stakes, and trust creators find the right access point—and the right time—to produce a sensitive message. Cancel culture can be prevalent when a creator speaks out on certain topics. If you push a creator outside their comfort zone, you could actually risk hurting the movement when all you were trying to do was help it grow.

Finally, consider that marginalized creators and/or creators in certain geographic regions may be knowingly opening themselves up to harm in order to help spread awareness. **Check in with your creator (or their team) in order to understand the scale of risk someone might be facing.**

STEP 5

Create space for continued engagement

As a campaign wraps up, don't drop the ball.

You have a chance to support these creators and turn them into real changemakers. It won't happen every single time, but take notice when a creator expresses particular excitement about continuing their advocacy.

Even if there's not a next campaign on the horizon, you can still cheer them on enthusiastically. As with all relationships, do your best to **not over-promise and under-deliver**. Stick to small actions that you know you can accomplish.

A story about a missed opportunity

Once upon a time, a global organization engaged 10 content creators to expand the online conversation around a policy topic.

The issue area was tricky for creators to speak about, but the creators leaned in anyway. **Over the course of the campaign, most participants expressed a desire to continue the initiative in some form.** Alas, that never happened. The organization didn't have a way to support any kind of continued relationship, so that momentum fizzled out and the potential was lost to email archives forever.

Tip: If you can, set aside some post-campaign "reserves" to capitalize on that momentum.

Make space for creators to push the movement to even further along.

The Creator Wellbeing Checklist

Use these guardrail-style questions to put best practices into action.

Just like everybody else, creators will do their best work when you prioritize their emotional and creative wellbeing.

"It's not only about the money, you know? It's also about working with kind people. Like, if I look forward to seeing your name in my inbox, that's a very good sign."

- Beauty & Skincare Creator,
880K on TikTok

Funding

- Have I offered **fair compensation** for a creator's services?
- Have I **set expectations** clearly about the deliverable?
- Have I **paid creators** in a timely manner?

Communication

- Have I opened the door for **dialogue** built upon trust, curiosity & support?
- Have I asked about the creator's typical **production process**?
- If disagreements come up, have I genuinely **listened** before offering my point of view?

Creative Process

- Have I encouraged the creator to share their concepts and ideas out loud?
- Have I provided **keywords and data** so that the creator can speak with clarity and integrity?
- Am I willing to be **"proven differently"** if the creator has feedback on essential messaging points?

Economic & Political Risk

- Have I made myself (or someone more fit) available for **emotional support**, if needed?
- If there's true possibility for harm, have I put **safety measures** into place in any way?
- Have I created **space to brainstorm** about safer and more effective ways to address the topic online?

Embodying The Cause

- Have I spent the time telling creators about the **bigger goals** of the movement?
- Have I thought of **additional ways** (beyond content) to involve creators in the campaign?
- Have I created space for **post-campaign feedback**?
Is the door open for potential **communication in the future**?

Post-campaign: assess the impact, learn from mistakes, and build on momentum

In Chapter 1, we examined three types of success indicators: context-based, quantitative, and qualitative. After your campaign wraps, go back and reflect on what you wanted to measure. Where did you struggle? Where did you exceed expectations? And, if given the chance to do it all again, what would you do differently next time? Here are a few other things to consider...

SQUEEZE THE JUICE

How else can you leverage the content you just made?

Instead of watching and waiting for the view count to go up, think about all the different levers you can pull to help spread the message you just created.

Have you sent the video to your email list? Posted about the collaboration on LinkedIn? DM'd the video to former collaborators, current colleagues, and potential funders?

LOOK FOR THE DOMINO EFFECT

Are you looking out for ripple effects in tangential issue areas?

For example, racial justice is deeply connected to topics across education, local taxes, and housing. During your post-campaign analysis, be on the lookout for any signs of a domino effect across tangential topics.

How can you use that knowledge in the future to create allyship between topics? Which future partnerships could deliver a significant shift within the overall issue area?

WATCH THE AUDIENCE

How did your campaign encourage the viewer to become a changemaker?

The story of systemic change started before your campaign and continues after your campaign. If you can identify how your campaign encouraged the audience to continue on this journey, you will better understand the role you play in the wider narrative, alongside the immediate impact you bring. What are people saying in the comments? Which part of the video resonated most clearly based on feedback? Where did viewership drop off?

How did this video support the bigger movement?

To explore how your content might sit within the larger picture of social progress, take a look at the systems change roles that a specific piece of content can play.

STRATEGY

- ✦ When the content promotes a specific call-to-action within a larger issue area or movement
- ✦ Introduces **talking points** designed to unlock significant mindset shifts

Great for driving alignment amongst diverse points-of-view and motivating a very specific action (ex: getting people to vote)

ANCHOR

- ✦ **Humanizes** the movement and makes it personal
- ✦ Showcases a creator's own connection to the issue & opens up an **interactive dialogue** between creator and audience

Great for grounding larger-than-life initiatives into the human dimension and helping people care when the issue doesn't "directly" affect them.

GUARDIANSHIP

- ✦ Showcases the **ethics and personal values** aligned with the message
- ✦ Brings clarity-of-purpose-for the campaign and acts as an **"integrity check"**

Great for reminding the base about the integrity of purpose, and especially helpful during "noisy" or "trendy" moments within the larger movement.

INQUIRY

- ✦ Deliberately opens up a can of worms and creates room for **debate**
- ✦ Invites audiences to think and explore the **gray area** of polarizing topics
- ✦ Provides tools to help people to **navigate complexity**

Great for expanding the discussion to include more nuance and holding space for curious-but-skeptical participants who may ultimately commit to the cause.

BROKERAGE

- ✦ **Weaves a story** around unlikely allies for the common good
- ✦ Looks at opposing points-of-view as a way to **find unity** in diversity

Great for uniting disparate conversations, reminding subgroups of a collective point, and helping folks save face while they reach across the aisle.

VISUALIZATION

- ✦ Uses imagination to present **alternate realities** for hopeful future
- ✦ Inspires and **educates** audiences about specific solutions
- ✦ Focuses on the possibilities and **provides solutions** as the practical pathway there

Great for stoking optimism around heavy topics, which is helpful for driving people to support specific CTAs when the time comes.

Now, go forth and do some good

Hopefully, this playbook stoked a small-but-mighty fire of inspiration for both you and your team. Let's recap what we learned, and what we can remember moving forward so that we feel confident putting this knowledge into action:

You have clarity on your campaign strategy

- ✦ Zoom out and align your campaign with the broader movement.
- ✦ Define your campaign's intent and measure success.
- ✦ Identify your ideal audience(s) to maximize impact.

You know how to refine your campaign essentials

- ✦ Outline compelling talking points that resonate with your audience.
- ✦ Embrace creators as partners in expanding narratives and delivering messages.
- ✦ Curate creators wisely to ensure authentic and effective collaboration.

You can confidently execute a creator campaign

- ✦ Master the art of partnering with creators for mutual success.
- ✦ Harness the power of content to drive social progress forward.
- ✦ Plan post-campaign steps for sustained impact and lasting change.

Embrace the media shift. Lean into it. Today's creators have become the torchbearers of culture, replacing traditional institutions as trusted narrators and community builders. They hold the key to unlocking vital corners of the internet that are inaccessible through conventional means. In a world of fragmented media and echo chambers, it's time to adapt and leverage the unique capabilities of creators. **They possess the ability to connect with diverse, niche communities.** Communities that are unreachable with more traditional tactics. As impact campaigners, you have the opportunity to **make a profound difference** by collaborating with creators. You can break down barriers, drive conversations, and propel society towards a more inclusive and progressive future.

Now armed with the insights and strategies shared in this playbook, it's time to embark on a new era of impact. Embrace the power of creators and spread progressive ideas like wildfire. **Let's go make it happen, one campaign at a time.**



Practicing Changemaking

The process of creating a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society rather than to private individuals.

New Leadership

A new kind of shared leadership – one that requires actively listening to others and identifying individual strengths, and views decision-making as an inclusive and collaborative process.

Teamwork

The active cultivation of relationships and partnerships, embedded in common values and goals, that embrace complexity and embody trust, collaboration and empathy.

Empathy

The ability to understand the feelings and perspectives of others – the basis of social cohesion, and the foundation that guides decision-making, reflection and action.



ASHOKA'S CORE CHANGEMAKER SKILLS



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Welcome to the Systems Change Masterclass

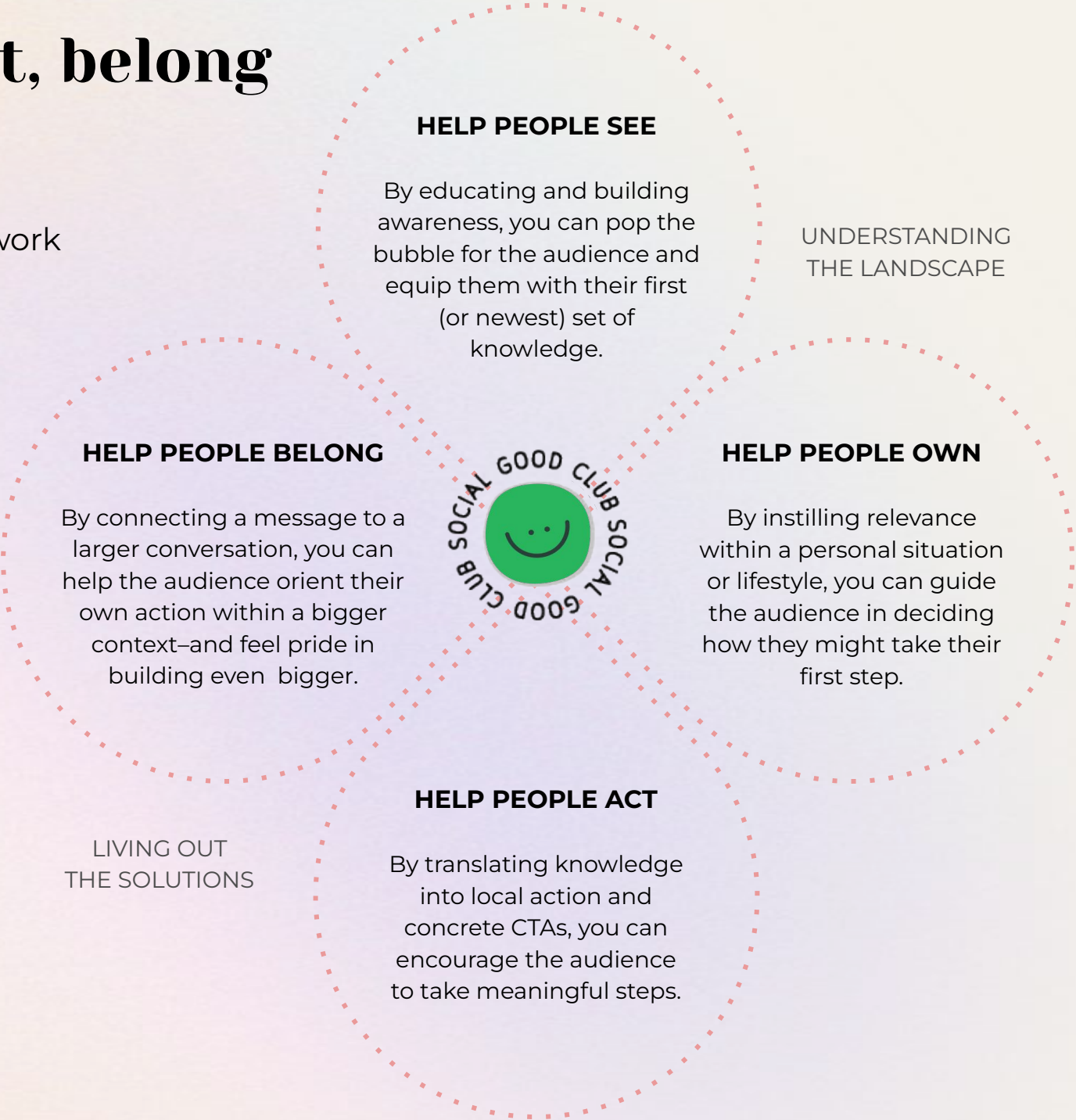
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See, own, act, belong

Social Good Club's
research-backed framework



Get involved and join the conversation

This playbook is just the first step of many, as we radically reimagine impact messaging within an ever-changing media landscape.

In partnership with Ashoka, the United Nations, Fellow Americans, and many more: the Social Good Club is on a mission to empower true collaboration between creators and impact campaigners.

We encourage you to join us. Get in touch and let's get the word out.

✦ **Contact:** brandon@socialgoodclub.com and elawson@ashoka.org

