



USE OF **SOCIAL MEDIA** IN UGANDA

Lessons and Recommendations



SMC/AMP MEETING
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Strategic Context

Background



- The Health Sector prioritized digital engagement in the Health Sector Strategic Plan 2015 (HSSP, 2015)
- Swift change: Emphasis on SBC to trigger behavioral change especially in SRH, HIV, Malaria and NCDs
- Digital platforms proved critical during public health emergencies:
 - COVID-19
 - Ebola
- Now institutionalized within MOH Communication and Health Promotion Strategic Plan
- Key Shift: From publicity → to behavior influence → to real-time public engagement and crisis response.

Uganda's Digital Landscape

- Phones and mobile gadgets are the primary gateway for connectivity.
- 2024/2025:

- 10 -11.7 million active social media users representing 24% of the population
- Conservative users 2.4%
- Digital platforms offer scalable reach but must complement offline engagement for equity.

	Platform	No. of Users
	WhatsApp:	10 million users
	TikTok:	9.3 million users.
	Facebook	3.2 million users
	YouTube	6.3
	LinkedIn:	1.8
	X (formerly Twitter)	700,000 - 789,000



Demographics and Trends in Uganda

- Over **70% of internet users** are aged between 15 and 35.
- **Urban concentration** (cities and municipalities)
- **Gender Gap**
 - 62.4% male users
 - 37.6% female users.
- **Strategic Insight:** Social media is a powerful entry point for youth-focused prevention and early adoption behaviors.

Social Media in Malaria Strategic Planning

- **Social media** is embedded within the National Malaria Elimination Division (NMED) strategy.
- **Digital objectives support:**
 - Increased ITN utilization
 - Uptake of malaria vaccine
 - IRS coverage
 - Early care-seeking
 - IPTp uptake among pregnant women
- **Approach:**
 - Define SMART Objectives: Set goals (e.g., increase net use in 6 months, increase vaccine uptake by 10% in 6 months, increase coverage of IRS, Encourage Early Treatment, Increase uptake of IPTp).
 - **Audience Segmentation**
 - **Channel selection based on behavioral data**
 - **Dedicated content creation team**



Operational model

- **Content development – produce engaging Content:**

- Use a mix of visually appealing assets
- Infographics, posters, flyers
- Short videos
- Testimonies

- **Credibility and Trust**

- Partner with trusted subject matter experts
- Religious leaders
- Cultural leaders
- Community leaders
- Reknown social media influencers

- **Engagement**

- Active response teams
- Live Q&A sessions
- Structured rumor tracking and response



Platform Specific Strategy

- **TikTok & Instagram** <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSmqJUpa9/>

- Youth-centered advocacy
- Use of hashtags (#ChaseMalariaToZero, #UnderTheNet)
- Influencer-led campaigns

- **Use of Government Citizen Interaction**

Center – GCIC - Complemented by information from Government officials for credibility. Aligned Team with Government Media Center

- **WhatsApp**

- District health coordination
- Community groups
- Thematic technical groups
- Rapid information dissemination

- **X (Twitter)**

- Real-time updates
- Distribution logistics
- Myth-busting threads
- Crisis communication



Social Media Campaigns

THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Mosquito Net Campaign

Starts January 2026

DISTRICTS:

Amolatar	Iganga
Alebtong	Kamuli
Buyende	Apac
Budaka	Kwanja
Bugweri	Mbale
Lira	Mbale City
Lira City	Dokolo
Kaliro	Otuke
Kole	Jinja
Oyam	Jinja City

Get ready to receive your Mosquito Net

Under the Net

Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng Ocerro
Minister for Health/Woman MP, Lira City

For more information visit the nearest Health facility OR call
Ministry of Health Toll free line 0800100066

Mosquito net distribution Campaigns

- Net distribution Campaigns
- Announcing the commencement of the Campaign
- Registration of Households according to the waving plans
- Distribution and net use campaigns

THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH

SAY NO to mosquito net MISUSE!

National Mosquito Net distribution campaign is underway

January to September 2026

Get ready to receive your Mosquito Net

Distribution in your district will be announced

Under the Net

For more information visit the nearest Health facility OR call
Ministry of Health Toll free line 0800100066

Complementary Model

- **Digital platforms complement:**

- Mass media (radio, TV)
- Community dialogues
- Home-to-home visits
- Health facility engagement
- Religious and cultural institutions

- **Digital is an amplifier; not a replacement.**



Crisis Communication Function

- **Digital platforms have been instrumental in addressing:**
 - Alleged sudden malaria deaths
 - ITN chemical safety concerns
 - Distribution delays
 - Vaccine safety (EFIs)
- **Outcome:** Faster rumor containment and improved transparency.





Cost & Investment Reality

- **Social Media is Not “Free”**

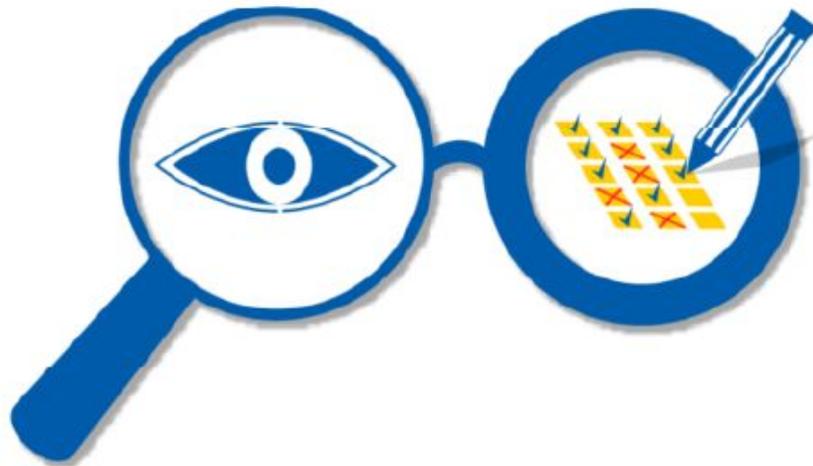
Effective digital engagement requires:

- Professional content development
- Paid amplification
- Influencer partnerships
- 24/7 monitoring capacity
- Dedicated technical staff

- **Strategic investment is required to maintain credibility and reach.**



M&E



- **Measuring Performance**

We monitor across three levels:

- 1. Engagement Indicators**

Likes, shares, comments, reposts

- 2. Reach & Exposure**

- Impressions
- Video view duration
- Audience demographics

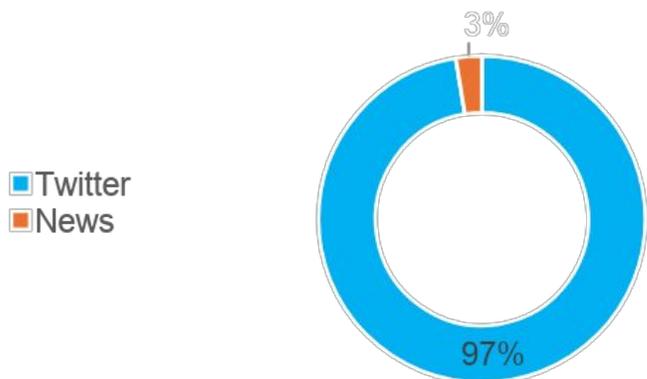
- 3. Behavioral Outcomes**

- Increased service uptake
- Facility attendance
- Screening rates
- Campaign participation

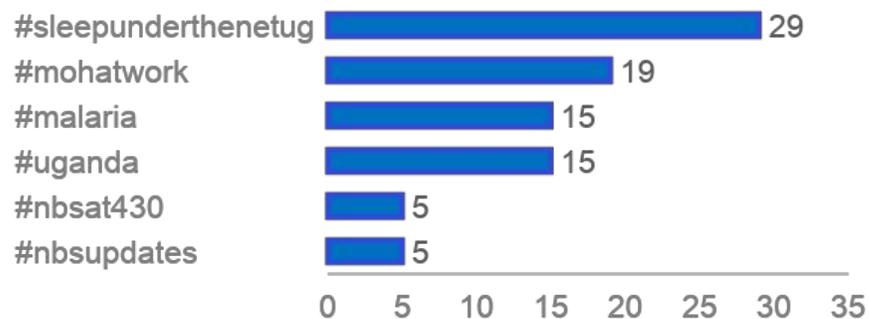
- **The goal: Move from visibility to verifiable health outcomes.**

CONVERSATIONS WERE PRIMARILY ON TWITTER, MAINLY DUE TO THE SHARING OF NEWS. THE TOP HASHTAGS WERE RELEVANT TO THE MESSAGE. ACROSS THE DISCUSSIONS, THE MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED WORDS WERE PRIMARILY KEY CAMPAIGN-RELATED TERMS SUCH AS 'MOSQUITO', 'TREATED', 'SECRETARY', 'MALARIA', AND OTHERS.

Platforms Driving conversations



Key Hashtags Amplifying Conversations



Dr Solomon: I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who has joined this campaign in the fight against malaria. As the theme suggests, we aim to eradicate malaria from households. #SleepUnderTheNetUG

In presence are; officials from @MinofHealthUG health partners @WHOUGanda | @PMIgov | @GlobalFund and royals from Tooro Kingdom, not forgetting VHTs and community members from North Division of Fortportal city. #SleepUnderTheNetUG

The National Mosquito Net Distribution Campaign 2023 has been launched in Tooro sub-Region. The focus will be on optimizing logistics and reinforcing community engagement to ensure maximum coverage and utilization of mosquito nets in the ongoing fight against #Malaria in #Uganda

#MOHatWork Dr @henrymwebesa the director of general health services, @MinofHealthUG joined the LG officials, under secretary, malaria control programme manager @opigojimmy & partners from @GlobalFund to launch the mosquito net distribution in Tooro Region. #SleepUnderTheNetUG



While at the launch of the regional mosquito net distribution, the Director General of Health Services at the Ministry of Health, Dr Henry Mwebesa highlighted the nation's progress in combating malaria, emphasizing the importance of swift action in the ongoing third wave.

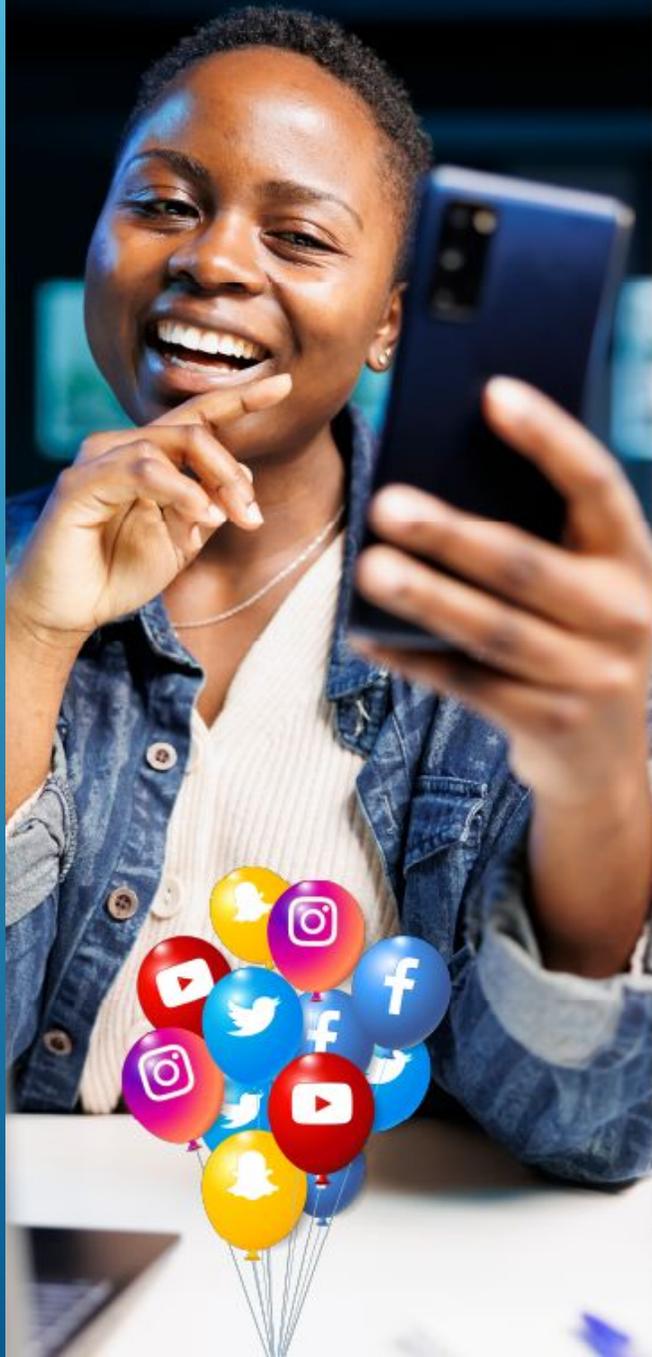
THE INFLUENTIAL AUTHORS BEHIND THE MESSAGE PUSH/AMPLIFICATION IN RELATION TO "UNDER THE NET" CAMPAIGN WERE PRIMARILY DIGITAL ONLINE USERS, MEDIA AND ENTITIES. THE CONTENT REVOLVING AROUND THESE AUTHORS WAS LARGELY FOCUSED ON THE WAVE 3 OF THE NET DISTRIBUTION CAMPAIGN.

Top 21 Influencers (Name)	Username	Influencer Rank	Total Mentions	Potential Reach	Potential Impressions	Total Interactions
Government of Uganda	@GovUganda	#1	3	430,276	1,290,828	105
Lukanga Samuel	@LukangaSamuel1	#2	2	2,483	4,966	4
#TheAccurateNewsFirst	@TheAccurateNew1	#3	2	643	1,286	2
Bumba Jimex	@BumbaJimex	#4	2	6,540	13,080	-
Sandra Nejj♥	@sandranejj	#5	1	3,889	3,889	-
Natasha Mariam	@Natashaoduka	#6	2	1,397	2,794	-
Boaz Namanya	@namanyaboaz	#7	1	3,960	3,960	-
?Nick SPARTAN	@nickspartan01	#8	1	24,552	24,552	-
????? ??????? ???????	@AgabaClintonDan	#9	1	6,501	6,501	-
Musinguzi Goodluck R #KigeziNews #Mohdelivers	@2008gomu	#10	2	3,140	6,280	-
Uganda Media Centre	@UgandaMediaCent	#11	2	554,036	1,108,072	-
ChimpReports	@ChimpReports	#12	1	144,290	144,290	-
NBS Television	@nbstv	#13	1	1,812,617	1,812,617	72
woira michael	@woira Michael	#14	2	8,480	16,960	-

Implementation Challenges



- Internet affordability
- Coverage gaps
- Gender digital divide
- Policy and regulatory limitations
- Mistrust and misinformation ecosystems



Digital Platforms Are No Longer Optional

They are:

- A frontline risk communication tool
- A youth engagement platform
- A crisis response mechanism
- A behavior influence channel
- A governance transparency instrument

The question is no longer whether to use digital, but how strategically and sustainably we invest in it.



Thank
you

