

Social Media Mapping Technical Brief

FOR PLANNING ONLINE HIV OUTREACH AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Summary

People use social media to communicate and connect on a variety of topics like dating, socializing, and community building. These online spaces may also be useful entry-points to introduce HIV services to the audience if implemented carefully and with respect.

Social media mapping allows HIV programs to find and list the online places or people that can be used to reach audiences at risk for HIV. At-risk populations can include young people who are dating, having multiple sex partners, and may be having transactional sex. “Sites” here does not refer to websites, but to 1) Facebook groups and pages, 2) social media influencers (popular people on a variety of social media platforms), and 3) groups chats the audiences engage with. Social media mapping allows HIV programs to continue reaching their audiences, even as internet penetration and social media use increase globally and it becomes more challenging to reach people offline. This mapping exercise can be completed by community service organizations, HIV program staff, or trained consultants. Sites identified through the mapping are entered into a secure Google sheet or Excel document that includes information about each site to guide and prioritize subsequent online HIV outreach. Mapping is used in combination with other data collection and engagement approaches to help an HIV program plan an online outreach program that meets the needs and preferences of their audiences. Many of the online spaces where audiences can be reached are not intended for HIV outreach, and therefore HIV programs should engage with respect of these spaces and avoid being intrusive.

See how this approach fits in a program planning cycle for HIV programs in FHI 360’s [Going Online Vision](#) and contact us for more information at GoingOnline@fhi360.org.



A community member searches for groups and pages for LGBT audiences in Cambodia on Facebook

Purpose

- List online places (called “sites”) where an HIV outreach program can find populations at risk for HIV, best suited for social network and influencer-based outreach.
- Plan and prioritize subsequent outreach by characterizing sites by number of users, type of users, frequency of posts/activity, and type of content posted.
- Better understand online audience size by comparing the site membership/number of users.

Data security and confidentiality

Mapping should be implemented with engagement of community members. Most mapping results contain publicly available data, but they should not be made accessible to anyone who may do harm. Password protect all mapping results and take caution when sharing results, especially where the populations that can be reached through mapping results are stigmatized or criminalized.

Illustrative implementation steps

- **Adapt:** A mapping tool based on the guidance provided in the annex can be adapted to your program context. Decide which populations should be mapped, the types of sites that should be mapped, and the characteristics collected per site.
- **Plan:** Present the activity with community and other stakeholders. Reach consensus that the activity is useful, safe, and relevant to the context, then devise a strategy to select people for the mapping team who know how the population uses social media. The mapping team should clearly define the populations for which the mapping will be focused and list search terms that can be used to find relevant sites. These terms can include formal, informal, and slang terms used by audiences.
- **Search and characterize sites:** People participating in the mapping exercise list the sites they already know and search for additional sites using the search terms provided. Participants can use an Excel or Google sheet to enter details of each site (see sample tables in the annex). The team can be split between mappers and a recorder, where mappers find and screenshot each site and send via WhatsApp to a single data recorder who can enter details into the spreadsheet and remove duplicate entries. It may take 1 hour to find and record sites already known by the mapping team, and 3 hours or more (per population) to find new sites. Duration depends on the number of populations and types of sites, including:
 - a) Facebook groups and pages found through simple Facebook search. The team may also view members of known groups, checking their public profile details to view the other groups and pages they follow. Secret groups can only be identified by existing members.
 - b) Influencers are popular people on social media who typically have more than 10,000 followers or who have exclusive access to a large group of the audience. Influencers may

QUOTE

“Using this mapping method, we better understand the size of the population that was difficult to reach physically. It means we can expand our strategy to better engage this population with information and referral to HIV testing facilities.”

Lingga Permana, Senior Technical Officer, FHI 360 Indonesia

be an admin or moderator of a closed Facebook group (gatekeeper). Influencers operate on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Blued (among others). Influencers can be identified through the mappers' own knowledge and after following or friending their account, the social media platform usually recommends other similar or "suggested" profiles. This process may take additional time.

- c) WhatsApp and other group chats can be included based on the mappers' knowledge of such groups or can be found by looking for groups that are advertised on the wall/discussion board of related Facebook groups and pages. Include a link to the group chat or the admin's contact number for later follow-up.

- **Validate and secure:** Combine the results of the mapping team and remove duplicates. Conduct an audit by repeating steps 3a-c to ensure major sites were found and mapped. (Note: there is no way to be certain that all sites are mapped, so set a time limit for the activity and stop data collection when finding new sites becomes challenging.) Password-protect the final Excel file or restrict access to the Google sheets file. Delete all other records of the mapping results such as temporary data collection tools or paper notes.
- **Review, prioritize, and use:** Review the list of sites with the community, decide which variables should be used to prioritize the list for online outreach, and provide the list through a secure manner to online HIV outreach programs and outreach workers so they may begin to communicate with audiences that can be found on those sites, including by engaging influencers and the moderators of any closed groups.

OUTPUTS

Outputs from this exercise include online "sites" relevant for finding people at risk for HIV. See the tables in the annex with guidance for developing an Excel tracker tool to collect and characterize each of these outputs. Sites and sample information about each to include, are:

- Facebook groups and pages with name, hyperlink, number of members/followers, activity, and type of content
- WhatsApp and other group chats with group name, admin details, number of members, type of content
- Social media influencers with number of followers, typology of followers, and type of content

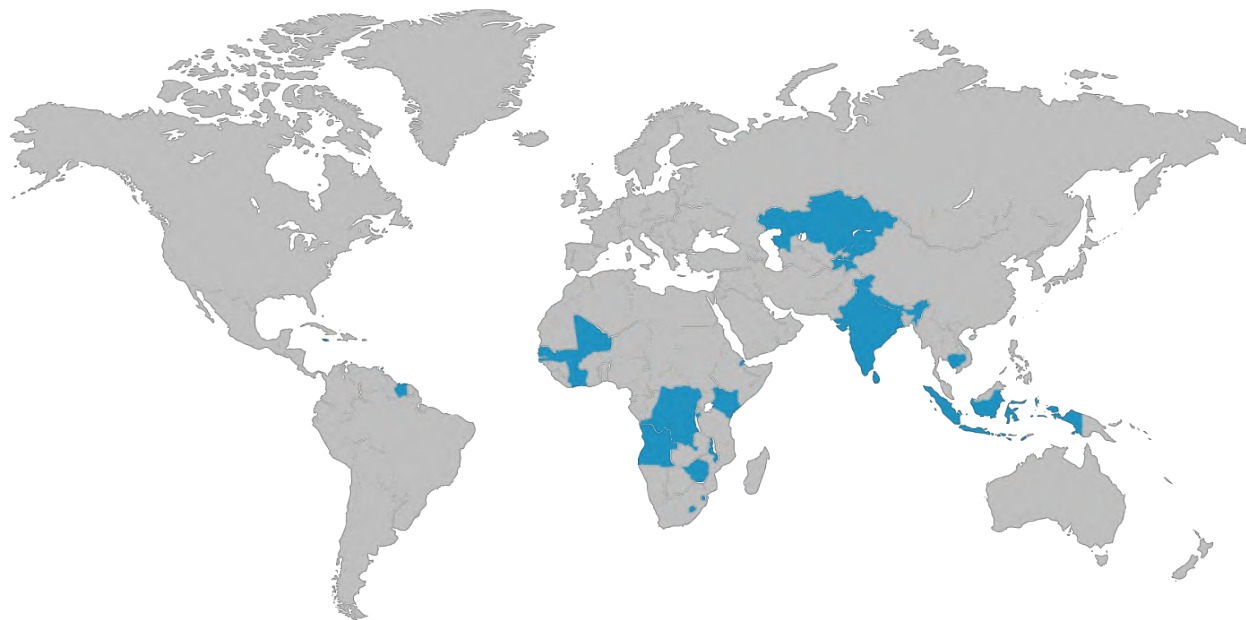
BUDGETING

Costs for implementing this mapping exercise include time of a field coordinator and mapping team, and potentially costs to facilitate a group discussion with community organizations. From planning through implementation, the activity need not take longer than a month and can take as few as six hours.

Learn more about budget inputs for social media mapping in: [Going Online: A budgeting and programming aid for HIV programs](#)

Results

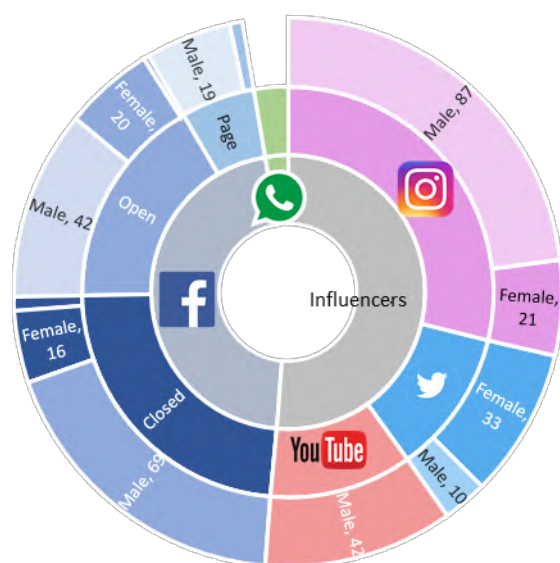
Figure 1: Countries where social media mapping has been implemented



GLOBAL IMPLEMENTATION

The social media mapping approach was implemented in the **Caribbean** (Barbados, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad & Tobago), **Africa** (Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, and Senegal), **Central Asia** (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan), and **Asia** (Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Nepal, and Sri Lanka).

Figure 1: Categorization of social media mapping results in Jakarta



INDONESIA CASE STUDY

Rida is an outreach worker in Jakarta. She helped map Facebook groups and pages where young women at risk for HIV could be reached. The chart to the left shows the overall number of mapped Facebook groups and pages, influencers, and WhatsApp group chats useful for reaching at-risk male or female audiences (results are combined across all community participants of the mapping exercise). She now conducts online outreach on those sites under the [“Update Status”](#) social media campaign. Update Status is a social-media-friendly HIV testing platform available at updateststus.id where clients can assess their HIV risk and book appointments for HIV services in Jakarta.

Annex 1: Social media mapping data collection tools

Instructions: Copy the following tables into a new Excel document and add a new row for each new site being mapped in the exercise. Sheet one can be used for social media groups and pages, sheet two for social media influencers, and sheet three for group chats. Save the Excel file with [password protection](#) and limit access to essential staff only.

Excel sheet 1. Social media pages and groups

Name	Link	Platform	Type	# Followers	Geographic scope	Content/purpose	Activity	Comments
Copy and paste the name of the group/page	Copy and paste the link to the group/page	Select one option: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook Instagram Twitter Other 	Select one option: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secret group Closed group Open group Page Other 	Number of group members or page likes	Indicate if the page is regional, national, or specific not a certain city or other sub-national unit	Describe the type of content posted on the group/page?	How many posts were made in the last 30 days?	Additional comments related to this group/page

Excel sheet 2. Social media influencers

Name	Username	Platform	Link	# Followers	Typology of followers	Content/purpose	Activity/Engagement	Comments
Influencer's name or nickname	Username or handle used by the influencer	Select one option: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook Instagram WhatsApp Twitter Snapchat TikTok Other (specify) 	Copy and paste the link to the influencer's profile	Number of followers of the influencer	Characterize the type(s) of followers. For instance, "mainly MSM but also general youth" (can be based on content and followers engaging on posts)	Describe the type of content posted by the influencer	How many posts were made in the last 30 days? Review content and assess if influencer is highly engaged or less engaged with followers	Additional comments related to this group

Notes: Use a new row for each influencer. If an influencer uses multiple platforms, add details in the comments or add as a new row. Some of the data elements that can be collected are subjective and based on the community mappers' assessment of the influencer compared to other influencers (such as typology of followers, content/purpose, and activity/engagement).

Excel sheet 3. Group chats on messenger applications

Name of group	Admin contact info	Platform	# Members	Typology of followers	Content/ purpose	Engagement	Comments
Group chat name	Name/ nickname and phone number of group administrator	Select one option: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook • Instagram • WhatsApp • Other (specify) 	Number of members of this group chat	Characterize the type(s) of members, if known.	Describe the purpose of the group chat	How many posts were made in the last 30 days?	Additional comments related to this group

Note: Only fill the details you can determine without joining the group (e.g., perhaps only the phone number, admin name, name of group chat, platform). You may also guess the content of the group chat (e.g., if you saw the group chat posted on another Facebook page then in that announcement it may describe the purpose of the group and who should join).

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