

# It Started with a Challenge: One Month, 1,000 Trees



Greenpop, a tree-planting programme plants thousands of seedlings every year at schools in the Cape Flats area of Cape Town, South Africa. (Courtesy of Greenpop)

Misha Teasdale logged a lot of air travel working in documentary films.

But the travel didn't square with his concern for the environment. Back at home in Cape Town, South Africa, he always recycled, rode his bike instead of hopping in his car and tried to be what he calls "a conscious consumer" — someone who considers the ethics behind the products he buys.

So a few years ago, after traveling 360,000 kilometers through 12 countries for a film, he calculated the environmental cost of the jet fuel. His calculations told him he'd have to plant around 600 trees. He rounded-up to 1,000 and recruited friends to give him two months of their time to help him plant. "I love convincing people to do things they generally wouldn't want to do," he said. Once they begin, they realize it's more fun and easier than they had thought.

Teasdale's idea started small, but with an effective plan for how to spread the word.

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al Reforest Fest to help return the Platbos Forest, Africa’s southernmost indigenous forest, to prosperity. (Courtesy of Jacques Smith)

In the first month, he and his partners worked to raise money and awareness for the project they called Greenpop. They sold cards with seeds at busy traffic intersections that said “Join the treevolution.” They got the word out with “reverse graffiti” projects (text and art created by cleaning dirty urban surfaces). They rode through rush-hour traffic on skateboards and scooters wearing superhero capes. They attracted the attention of companies as far away as Norway and the U.S., and global corporations such as DHL funded seedlings and provided employee volunteers.

In the second month, they planted trees, learning as they went. The first five trees — in Masiphumelele in the Western Cape — took four and a half hours to plant. By month’s end, they could plant 300 trees in five hours.

The project attracted so much interest that they had 800 trees beyond the initial goal of 1,000, and other groups were eager to get involved. It was supposed to be a short campaign, Teasdale said. “We were going to plant a thousand trees then go back to our day jobs.”

Instead, they moved forward with Greenpop. Corporate sponsors began paying for the trees and the planters’ expenses. In the five years since starting, Greenpop has planted more than 57,000 trees at schools, hospitals, community centers and other urban sites as well as in forests and on farms across South Africa, Zambia and Tanzania.

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stone, Zambia, highlighted during the Zambia Festival of Action 2015 (Courtesy of Marike Herselman)

Some companies working with Greenpop pledge to tie their production to tree plantings. For every so many products sold, companies pledge to plant a tree. Greenpop sends the GPS coordinates where trees are planted, so they can map them. Some companies display a certificate saying how many thousands of trees they have planted. “It’s a nice tangible thing for a company to be able to say,” Teasdale said.

Greenpop has become involved in reforestation efforts in Zambia and Tanzania and has “a database of projects across the continent,” according to Teasdale. This July, Greenpop will host its fifth annual Zambia Festival of Action. The event is modeled on large music festivals but focused on ecological education. “I want to change the culture around environmentalism,” said Teasdale. “It’s not just about trees, it’s about connecting people.”

Can Greenpop help you connect people in your country? How many trees could you and your network plant at a YALI event? You can find out how to get involved at Greenpop’s website.

The early stages of this world-changing project sometimes felt like struggling in the dirt to get the first of a thousand trees planted. What did Teasdale learn from those early setbacks?

“If you want to see your projects rise and do amazing things, it’s important to look at the most efficient ways of getting things done” and focus on those, said Teasdale. “It’s important to have reflective time that allows you to see where you had the most impact and where you didn’t have much impact. It’s very easy to have a hundred ideas, but it doesn’t mean those hundred ideas are going to be good for you or bring the right audience to you or be the most sustainable options for you.”

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# Is your election free and fair? Consider this ...

**By Stephen Kaufman**



*(Shutterstock)*

Your country's election or referendum is meaningless if you and your fellow voters don't believe it is legitimate. If you have good reasons to think your vote isn't being counted, the contest is rigged toward a certain party or candidate, or the process favors certain voters over others, why would you accept the outcome?

[The International Foundation for Electoral Systems](#), a nonprofit organization based in Washington, has worked in more than 135 countries since 1987 — including more than 20 countries in sub-Saharan Africa — to increase the legitimacy of electoral processes. It cites Article 21 from the [United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) for the basic framework and rights that

every election should follow:

“The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.”

This helps explain why there are [election monitors](#), laws that protect the voting rights of [women](#) and [minorities](#), and the need for [independent news coverage](#) throughout the process.

As you ask yourself the following questions, remember voting is only one part of a citizen’s responsibilities. Stay engaged, because elected officials need to be held accountable!



## Is your election secure?

- Is your polling place safe?
- Is your ballot secret?
- Do ballots remain in safe custody?



## Is your election accessible?

- Can you travel easily to your polling place?
- Are there accommodations for the elderly and disabled?
- Are the ballot and voting instructions in all appropriate languages?



## Is your election inclusive?

- Does voter registration require property ownership or literacy?
- Can women and ethnic/religious minorities vote?
- Is absentee voting permitted?



## Is your election transparent?

- Can you tell the difference among the platforms of candidates and parties?
- Are independent observers present?
- Where can you view the final vote tally?

*(State Dept. / Jamie McCann)*

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## [A Public Servant Campaigns to Serve](#)

Allison Silberberg is the mayor of  Alexandria, Virginia.

Drawing the line that connects wanting to change your community for the better and actually making that change is a difficult task. “Since I was a kid, I was taught about doing what we can for the public good, and I was really interested in public service,” said Allison Silberberg, formerly vice mayor and now the mayor of Alexandria, Virginia, a city of 150,000 just across the Potomac River from Washington.

Silberberg has worked in community leadership and public service for over 25 years, including eight

years on her city's Economic Opportunity Commission.

YALI Network members will know Silberberg from her YALI Network Online Course, "[Strengthening Public Sector Service](#)," in which she discusses topics such as being an effective public servant and establishing professional ethics. In the last year, Silberberg got to live those principles in both her campaign and her election. She started as mayor on January 1, 2016.

In the primary to determine who would run as her party's representative in the general election, Silberberg defeated two opponents, one of them the incumbent mayor, who had served four terms. Her victory came down to 300 votes. In November, she won the mayorship with 63 percent of the vote.

"It was a very old-fashioned, grass-roots campaign," she said. She is proud that her staff was entirely made up of volunteers. "We stood at farmers markets. I went to as many events as I could. People hosted me in their homes, which was lovely." She spent nearly every night of the campaign season at meet-and-greets. Not all of them were well attended, but Silberberg feels the face-to-face nature made a difference. "It might seem like small potatoes to be talking to 10 people or fewer," she said. "Well, all those people go out and they [tell other people]. They ask questions, and there's no one standing between me and the people. I have no idea what they're going to ask me. It was all very unrehearsed and real."

Among the issues that appear to have attracted voters was Silberberg's insistence that officials not be allowed to vote on proposed development projects if they had received campaign donations from the developers of those projects. She has promised that her first action as mayor will be to set up an ethics commission to advise the city council on such conflicts of interest.

Silberberg remembers, from when she was 7 years old, her mother asking her what she wanted to be when she grew up. "I was sitting there with my after-school snack and my dog at the kitchen table. I said, 'I think if someone needs glasses because they can't see at school or a coat because they're cold, it would be really great to be helpful to them.'"

In university, Silberberg was an intern for Massachusetts Senator Edward M. Kennedy. "He was very inspiring," Silberberg remembered. "There was a great sense of mission in his office every day when I arrived. And I thought, 'I want to have that sense of mission in my life!'"

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## **[The Promise of Ecotourism](#)**

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class of secondary-school students about environment conservation at Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in Isiolo County, Kenya. (Courtesy of KEEN)

*This guest blog post is by Jonathan Odongo, Founder & Executive Director, [Kenya Environmental Education Network](#).*

Tourism plays a major role in economic growth for countries with wildlife and scenic landscapes. In Kenya, tourism contributes significantly to economic growth, surpassed only by agriculture. Sadly, both tourism and agriculture are very vulnerable to climate change. If action is not taken in time, drought, floods, diseases and other climate change-related disasters will kill both sectors and ultimately Kenya's economy.

During our [Ecotourism and Field Studies](#) excursions, we witness firsthand the ravaging impacts of climate change: the melting snows of Mount Kenya; the dying Yala swamp; the receding Lake Victoria; increased prevalence of malaria; the rapidly declining populations of lions, Grévy's zebras and ostriches in the African savannah; and submerging islands along the coast, among other degraded lands and lost ecosystems.

The tourism sector is partly responsible for climate change because of the emission of greenhouse gases caused by the burning of fossil fuels during travel and the destruction of forests for luxurious tourist hotels that rely on unsustainable energy. Often tourism also generates waste that ends up in landfills and pollutes oceans with water-related tourist activities.

However, there is a solution: *Ecotourism*.

Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people.

Ecotourism offers a perfect opportunity to create environmental awareness, change people's attitudes toward the environment, educate and sensitize people about *environmental* issues like climate change, and inspire them to take action.



g in Isiolo County, Kenya, learn about protection of water catchment areas and the importance of forests. (Courtesy of KEEN)

Some of the lessons relevant to climate change mitigation and adaptation in the tourism sector we share with learners and clients in the field include:

1. *Energy conservation*: Adopting clean energy in tourist facilities — for example, solar, biogas and energy-saving stoves for cooking, lighting and warming bath water — and switching off lights when not in use help to mitigate climate change.
2. *Waste management*: Kitchens and restaurants generate a lot of waste. Such waste in landfills generates the greenhouse gases responsible for global warming. Organic waste can be converted to compost or used in biogas digesters to generate energy.
3. *Sustainable agriculture*: Kitchen gardens next to tourist facilities can absorb composted kitchen waste, supply vegetables and promote organic farming.
4. *Water conservation*: Closing taps when not in use and installation of press-only taps help minimize waste of water. Water harvesting and storage should be a priority.
5. *Protection and management of water catchment areas*: Using forests and wetlands, through tree

planting, reforestation and rehabilitation, helps ensure water availability as well as increases absorption and storage of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

6. *Poverty reduction*: To curb poverty-induced activities such as charcoal burning and deforestation, proceeds from tourism should be invested in community development.

7. *Respect for indigenous cultures*: Some traditional beliefs and practices such as totemism contribute toward protection of nature, for example indigenous tree species that play an important role in overall carbon sequestration.

8. *Sustainable land use practices*: Promote agroforestry and reliance on nonwood forest products such as honey, fruits, fibres, resins, gums and essential oils control loss of forest cover.

9. *Pollution*: Use of sustainable transport curbs emission of greenhouse gases during transportation of tourists.

These practices can be replicated at home, school and other areas. Ecotourism can therefore be a solution to climate change and a dozen other environmental challenges.

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## [#YALILearns: Air Conditioning, Aerosols and Agriculture](#)

Participants at the December 17 

#YALILearns event in Ibadan, Nigeria

(Courtesy of Okunlola Festus)

With [#YALIGoesGreen](#), more than 9,000 YALI Network members across Africa have committed to taking action on climate change and earned their certificate in the "[Understanding Climate Change](#)" course.

More than 300 members have told us about the climate events they've held in their respective countries. We want to share with you some of the great feedback we're getting about these #YALILearns events by taking a look at specific events over the next few weeks.

On December 17, Okunlola Festus and Ogunwole Omotola, two Network members in Ibadan, Nigeria, training with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, worked with GreenWealth Agripreneurs, the institute's agribusiness initiative, to invite institute participants to an event centered around the climate-change course.

Although they were unable to stream the course video, they used the transcript and [discussion guide](#) from the "Resources" tab of each lesson to design a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation on climate change science and solutions was followed by a wide-ranging discussion. "When the

participants discussed how they contribute to climate change, they were all shocked that by spraying things like perfume or deodorant, they were contributing to climate change,” Festus said. “The majority of them committed to using deodorants and perfumes without the harmful aerosols.”

They also discussed what roles they could take in their communities to curtail the unsafe dumping of hazardous waste. The topic of how excessive use of air conditioning harms the climate led to a [Facebook chat](#) on the topic following the event.

Festus said he would encourage YALI Network members planning an event to be ready to be open-minded and to incorporate the views of participants as the discussion evolves. “You have to allow every participant to be involved in the discussion — carry everyone along.”

If you want to hold a #YALILearns event of your own, look at the [#YALILearns](#) page to learn more about how to facilitate your event and choose a topic that will most benefit your audience. Local partners such as a university or civic group can be helpful in finding a venue for your event and helping you get the word out.

Make sure to take pictures at your event, then let us know how it went at the [#YALILearns](#) feedback page so we can share it with the Network!

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## **[YALI Network 2015: What a Year It's Been!](#)**

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2015 Mandela Washington Fellows at the Presidential Summit. (State Dept./D.A. Peterson)

Before the YALI Network says goodbye to 2015, let's cast a glance back to see the distance we've traveled in the last 12 months. Our voice grew louder and stronger, adding almost 100,000 members and making us over 200,000 strong.

Here are five YALI Network highlights from 2015 we're excited about:

**1) YALI Network Online Courses:** Some of the biggest news from the YALI Network's 2015 was the continued growth of the free [YALI Network Online Courses](#) and the launch of #YALILearns, the initiative that encourages Network members to share knowledge and learning in their communities and beyond. At the Mandela Washington Fellowship Town Hall, President Obama said, "Last year, I said we'd launch a new set of tools for our YALI Network. So today, we've got more than 30 online lessons available on everything from public speaking to how to write a business plan, mentoring, new ways to network across Africa, around the world, new training sessions, meetings with experts on how to launch a startup. And we're launching three new online Mandela Washington Fellowship Institute courses so that all members of the YALI Network can access some of the great ideas that you've been sharing." This year, 25,000 YALI Network members earned more than 50,000 certificates by completing online courses.

**2) #Africa4Her:** In March, more than a thousand YALI Network members from 47 countries pledged to work to increase girls' opportunities in the classroom and women's opportunities in the workplace, while countless others pledged through Twitter using #Africa4Girls, including first lady Michelle Obama.

*People around the world are taking action to [#LetGirlsLearn](#). Pledge to invest in women and girls*

with [#Africa4Her](#) → <http://t.co/DDUnhnTfAq>

— The First Lady (@FLOTUS) [March 16, 2015](#)

**3) #YALIGoesGreen:** The end of 2015 saw the launch of [#YALIGoesGreen](#), in which YALI Network members committed to taking action on climate change. More than 9,000 people took the first step and earned their certificate in “[Understanding Climate Change](#).” Then 300 more network members shared highlights from events in their countries to support efforts to address climate change, thereby earning a #YALIGoesGreen Green Champion certificate.

**4) #YALIVotes:** In a year of landmark elections in Nigeria and Burkina Faso, the YALI Network reached out to its members in nations with upcoming votes to find out how they planned to inspire their communities to ensure free, peaceful and fair elections.

With citizens of several countries — including Benin, Niger and Uganda — heading to the polls, we’ll be encouraging Network members to post to Facebook and Twitter to share why they think voting and civic engagement are important, using the [#YALIVotes](#) hashtag.



YALI Network members at a #YALILearns session on fundraising in Abuja, Nigeria. (Courtesy photo)

**5)** This year we introduced [YALI Network Face2Face](#), a place for YALI Network members around Africa to share ideas and plan in-person meetups. So far, more than 4,000 of you have attended Face2Face events, with many more to come in the next year.

YALI Network members also shared their own experiences and insights on social media and through the YALI Network blog. These included [an activist from Burkina Faso describing her country's struggle toward more open elections](#), the president of the African Green Movement explaining smart agriculture and how something as simple as banana stems can be used to mitigate the effects of climate change, [a poet from South Africa sharing her pledge for #Africa4Her](#), a young scientist from [Uganda checking in from the historic COP21 climate summit in Paris](#), and more.

We look forward to more robust engagement from the YALI Network in 2016 as our growing numbers increase our reach and our ability to foster positive change.

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## [A Young African Leader's Perspective on COP 21](#)

Peace visits COP21 exhibitions in Paris. (Photo courtesy Peace Sasha Musonge.) 

*Peace Sasha Musonge is a 2015 Mandela Washington Fellow who attended the historic COP21 summit on climate change in Paris. During her Ph.D. study in biosciences, she has also attended the 2015 World Bank Group Youth Summit on climate change in Washington and debated the effects of climate change on the African continent on [Voice of America's Straight Talk Africa](#).*

In spite of the terror attacks that took place in Paris, I was not deterred from attending COP21. I went to Paris very charged and engaged since these were to be historic climate talks. Before the talks, INDCs were submitted by different member countries, showing a bottom-up and participatory approach. That meant that countries who pollute the most would map out a way to support the developing countries from continents such as Africa.

Arriving at Le Bourget in Paris at the start of the conference, I found a lot of liveliness and optimism in the Blue Zone, where country delegates, diplomats and scientists held discussions till late into the night. I met with some of the chief negotiators from East and Central Africa and got their view on the progress of the talks. Most of the negotiators were very optimistic that the outcome would favor climate adaptation in many African countries.

Peace Musonge stands outside a  conference room at COP 21 named for environmentalist Wangari Maathai (Photo courtesy of Peace Musonge.)

As a young civic leader, I believe some of the most exciting engagement took place in the Green Zone here at COP21. I saw a lot of creativity and positive energy, especially from the youth groups in the Green Zone, where nongovernmental stakeholders, academics, civic organizations and business

communities highlighted their climate change-based activities.

During the past two weeks, I networked with passionate climate activists from different parts of the globe, from young children to adults. What struck me the most was the strong representation of high school and university groups, for example, the China Youth Climate Action Network. It was comforting to know that young Chinese students are taking climate activism seriously.

One of the biggest side events at COP21 was the Global Landscapes Forum, with many sub-Saharan youth in attendance. They showcased amazing landscapes initiatives. One young graduate started a fruit-tree-planting initiative to combat climate change and youth unemployment. During the Africa Land of Business event, I was able to network with fellow African climate activists. The discussion focused on the Mayombe forest — which is known as the Amazon of Africa and spans four countries (Angola, Congo, DRC and Gabon). I had the privilege of sharing my current research on “south-to-south” cooperation to combat climate change with the Angolan environment minister. We discussed the opportunities for future collaboration between indigenous communities, like the Mayombe forest inhabitants and communities in the Amazon in South America, who are both fighting for their rights.

The passion and drive reflected in the civic society arena demonstrated to me that communities are willing to combat climate change, and I hope that the different governments live up to the promises they have stipulated in their INDCs, especially when it comes to funding Africa’s climate adaptation and mitigation strategies.

I believe we should stop pointing fingers, since climate change has not been caused by a single factor, but by many different ones. As Africans, we should work collectively and strengthen and improve our climate and weather centers, especially in Dakar, Khartoum and Cape Town. As young people who make up over 80 percent of Africa’s population, we are the generation who will face the effects of climate change in the coming years. We need to work in unity with both the public and private sector to promote green lifestyles and to leapfrog older technologies, as we did with the mobile phone revolution.

Act locally and think globally. Let’s keep going green, and see you in Marrakech for COP22 in 2016!

*The views and opinions expressed here belong to the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the YALI Network or the U.S. government.*

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## **What Climate Change Means for African Women**



*According to the U.N., women in sub-Saharan Africa spend an average of 40 billion hours a year collecting water. (© AP Images)*

In Tanzania, because of drought, a girl must walk farther for water than her mother did years before. The extra time means she can't go to school.

In Mozambique, flooding leaves standing water in which mosquitoes breed. A malaria outbreak follows, in a place where the disease had not been seen before. A mother is more vulnerable to the sickness at the same time she must care for her sick family.



*Women in Sesheke, Zambia, receive mosquito nets to prevent the spread of malaria. (© AP Images)*

These aren't imagined scenarios. They're outcomes of weather patterns associated with climate change. And the U.N. and the World Health Organization say those changes impact women more than men, especially in developing countries.

"The impact of climate change on women is huge," Priscilla Achakpa, executive director of the Women Environmental Programme, told *Vogue Magazine* of her home country of Nigeria. "The men are forced to migrate and they leave the women, who are now the caregivers because they find they cannot leave the children."

Women "are among the most vulnerable to climate change," concludes a U.N. Population Fund report, "partly because in many countries they make up the larger share of the agricultural workforce and partly because they tend to have access to fewer income-earning opportunities."

"In Kenya, where I work," said environmentalist and 2015 Mandela Washington Fellow Asha Shaaban, "women walk up to 10 kilometers in search of water. This is time taken that could be used for other things. They could use that time to take care of children or bring income to the household."

When combined with economic and social discrimination, climate change threatens women's rights to education, information, water, food, health care and freedom from violence, says Eleanor Blomstrom of the Women's Environment and Development Organization.

Blomstrom stresses the importance of involving women in the response to climate change — "from the local project level to the international policy level and everywhere in between. "At COP21 in Paris," she said, "the Women and Gender Constituency is showcasing solutions that are sustainable, women-led, safe, promote women's participation and do not increase potential for conflict."

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## [Leadership and Sharing with #YALILearns](#)



*Participants in a YALI Learns event on leadership training and land law in Mampong, Kumasi, Ghana (Courtesy of Oxford Bonsu)*

Communities thrive on sharing and learning. #YALILearns is a Networkwide initiative that offers you the opportunity to build networks in your community with events organized by you or your fellow Network members and tailored to the topics that will make positive change where you live.

In Ghana, Oxford Bonsu, an active YALI Network member, used the YALI Network Online Course "[Community Organizing for Action](#)" as the basis for an event that brought together 45 chiefs of the Ashanti region to discuss laws of land use in their region and to explore ways their lands could be used as equity for business investment.

"I was humbled," Bonsu wrote on the YALI Network Face2Face page, "when one of the chiefs present pronounced the workshop unprecedented in the history of the traditional council."



*Event organizer Joyce Ikpaahindi (left) with 2015 YALI Fellows Fatu Ogwuche and Benjamin Dankaka.(Courtesy Joyce Ikpaahindi)*

Joyce Ikpaahindi, a YALI Network member in Nigeria, saw the need to develop in her community a stronger sense of how to engage effectively in public service to bring about change. She designed an event around the YALI Network Online Course “[Strengthening Public Sector Service](#).”

“To set up my event,” Ikpaahindi said, “I first needed to find a suitable space to accommodate 21 people. My department at the Federal Ministry of Works was willing to provide the space and equipment needed to host the event.”

Ikpaahindi also enlisted the support of two 2015 Mandela Washington Fellows, Fatu Ogwuche and Benjamin Dankaka, who shared their experiences on the Fellowship program and also their leadership experience in the Nigerian public sector. “Real-life examples and experiences shared by the Fellows proved to be quite popular with the participants,” she said. “A good #YALILearns event should be as practical, engaging and hands-on as possible.”

Both Ikpaahindi and Bonsu created their events by combining a relevant [YALI Network Online Course](#) with additional discussions and presentations from community leaders. The particulars of the program are up to you, since you know your community best — as long as you bring people together, share ideas and take away a resolve to create positive change.

If you want to hold a #YALILearns event of your own, look at the [#YALILearns](#) page to learn more about how to facilitate your event and choose a topic that will most benefit your audience. A local partner such as a university or civic group can be useful in finding a venue for your event and helping you get the word out.

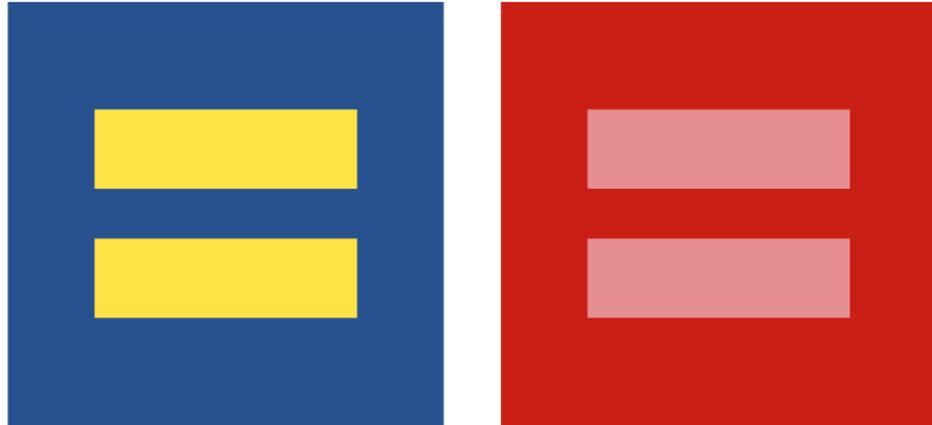
During your event, make sure to take pictures, and then let us know how it went at the [#YALILearns feedback](#) page so that we can share your success with the Network.

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## [Amplifying Your Campaign Online](#)



Throughout the day of March 26, 2013, the marketing team at Human Rights Campaign (HRC) saw some startling numbers: a 600 percent increase in Web traffic, with 700,000 unique visitors in a 12-hour period, 86 percent of whom were new to the site. On Facebook, millions of users — including members of Congress and celebrities — had changed their profile images to a special red version of the HRC logo in what Facebook would later call the most successful viral campaign in their history.



HRC is the largest organization in the U.S. working toward LGBT equality, and March 26 was the day the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments in the case that would make same-sex marriage legal throughout the country.

The campaign HRC mounted in the lead-up to that day is a case study in how to amplify a message and make a big impact. Maureen McCarty is the deputy director of marketing for HRC and was one of the people who designed the campaign. Here's what McCarty says a campaign must be to achieve success:

### **Opportunistic**

"We really emphasize, as a marketing team, rapid response," McCarty said. "During the marriage-equality movement, HRC was frequently first out the door alerting members and supporters about important breaking news and positioning ourselves as thought leaders." Being opportunistic, she said, means tracking your field closely and being prepared to respond immediately when news breaks.

### **Planned**

"When we launched our Equality Act," McCarty said, "about two months in advance we started with an extensive editorial calendar that outlined day by day the digital content that we were rolling out to get our audience excited around a particular hashtag and around the launch." McCarty points out that being opportunistic and being well-planned have to work in tandem. "Planning helps us to get ahead of the story, but we also have to adjust to where our audience is. As much as we emphasize an editorial calendar, we need to be flexible if there's news that day."

### **Innovative**

Online, innovation means finding ways to reach people where they're meeting. "HRC is on nearly every social media platform that's out there," said McCarty. "We make sure we're at the forefront of

the digital frontier and that we're putting out content on these platforms that is tailored to their audience and is really responding to what that audience is looking for."

### **Authentic**

Authenticity means having a recognizable and credible voice. "A key to our strategy is bringing in influencers and validators to speak on behalf of our cause and to help reach out to an even broader network of people."

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