In 2011, we released the Creator Playbook – the one stop shop for best practices to build a loyal and engaged audience on YouTube. Since then, we’ve been working hard to tailor these strategies to the unique needs of our different content creators. Whether you’re a nonprofit organization trying to drive social awareness, or a musician looking to engage further with your fans through live streaming, we recognize that you all have different needs. To help, we’ve created a new set of resources called Playbook Guides.

Playbook Guides are intended to provide specific examples and strategies to build audiences around your content type. As with the YouTube Creator Playbook, these techniques are meant as best practices and not a set of rules or guaranteed tricks to make your videos successful. The start of any successful channel and the ability to grow an audience always starts with making great content! Playbook Guides are now available in the following categories: Sports, Music, Education, Media Companies, and Nonprofits.

These Playbook Guides are specifically designed to be used in conjunction with the Creator Playbook, which is the main resource for site-wide best practices. The latest version can always be found here:

[YouTube.com/Playbook](http://YouTube.com/Playbook)

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**Playbook Guide Structure:**

- **Category Landscape:** This section is intended to give you a broad overview of the category on YouTube.

- **Category Strategies and Optimizations:** This section will feature frequently asked questions and concerns from partners in this category or vertical. We’ll dive into solutions to these problems by introducing tailored optimization strategies and examples from partners.

- **Further Reading and Resources:** This section will provide a comprehensive list of resources for partners in this category or vertical. Note: Throughout this Guide, we’ve italicized YouTube tools/features specific to nonprofits that will be defined later in the Further Reading and Resources section.
# Table of Contents

## Nonprofit Channels

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Category Overview
Category Overview

Introduction

Welcome to YouTube! As a cause, non-profit or NGO, your definition of success might be different than say, Justin Bieber’s, but you’ll be using video in a similar manner to engage and educate people across the world. It’s our goal to help you gain an audience for your content and turn those view counts into charitable donations, volunteerism, community, changes in legislation, and so on. A few things to think about:

1. For many causes, video will be a new but essential format for your storytelling. Embrace the medium and start communicating! With over 800 million people worldwide on YouTube, it’s a global living room like no other. YouTube is also the world’s 2nd largest search engine (after Google) – people are looking for you and your cause every day. What will you show them?

2. Although YouTube contains many humorous or entertaining videos, our community embraces educational and inspirational material with equal vigor. Don’t worry about being “viral,” just focus on creating great content and interacting with the community.

3. Don’t just “make videos.” Have a video strategy. Interacting with your viewers and having a clear call to action are as important as capturing good footage. Try to address these questions before you pick up the camera.

4. We want to hear from you. Tell us what’s working and what you want to see next. Email us: nonprofits@youtube.com.
Category Overview

What’s Working

Thanks to the support of conscientious YouTube creators and the global reach of YouTube, we have a multitude of success stories from nonprofits who have used the platform both to fundraise and to raise awareness for their causes.

Here are a few:

- The American Foundation for Equal Rights used their YouTube channel to live-stream “8,” a play about the Prop 8 trial in California on marriage equality. The initiative raised more than $2 million dollars and drove a news cycle of approximately 300 articles.

- Project for Awesome, a YouTube community effort to raise money for nonprofits, has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars since its launch in 2007.

- The Trevor Project’s ‘It Gets Better’ campaign inspired over 50,000 user-generated content (UGC) videos amounting to over 50 million views. The videos include everyone from high school students and senior citizens to President Obama and Lady Gaga. Calls to the Trevor Project suicide hotline have increased over 50% and more than $100,000 has been raised since 2010 to help LGBT youth.

- Mark Horvath started InvisiblePeopleTV to share first-person stories of homelessness using only a simple handheld camera. His channel has nearly 13,000 subscribers and three million views.

- charity: water posted over 240 personalized thank-you videos for their donors and campaigners, effectively making the audience the stars of the videos and creating a life cycle of donors that were publicly acknowledged and highlighted.

- YouTube comedian Kevin Wu (aka KevJumba) used his YouTube channel to raise money to build a school in Kenya called the Jumba Lenana Academy. He created the channel, JumbaFund, which donates 100% of ad revenue to the school. The channel has over 54 million views and 831,000 subscribers.
Category Overview

Category Trends

• The YouTube Nonprofit Program is currently available in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia.

• Nonprofits and Activism is among the fastest growing categories on YouTube.

• Nonprofits yield more than Four Billion Video Views on YouTube. That’s one view for every two people on the planet!

• 17,000+ organizations are included in the YouTube Nonprofit Program. You can apply here: youtube.com/nonprofits.

• 271 nonprofit partners have more than one million views.

• 31 nonprofit partners have over 10 million views, as of November 2011.
Activate Your Cause
Activate Your Cause

How do I build awareness around my cause, reach supporters, and recruit volunteers?

Video is a powerful tool to extend the reach and impact of your organization. A nonprofit YouTube channel can help you deliver your message to the world’s largest online video community and second-largest search engine. In this section, learn how to leverage branding and platform features unique to nonprofits to help your team reach an audience of supporters. Branding on YouTube consists of everything from the banner and avatar on your channel to the thumbnails and metadata that surround your videos.

Metadata for Nonprofits

- **Titles** should be provocative and compelling. Arrange with the keywords first and the branding last.

- **Descriptions** should accurately reflect the message and content of the video. Include a standard tagline in all video descriptions to highlight your mission. Offer helpful links such as information about your cause/organization, how viewers can get involved, and where to donate. Don’t hesitate to include a call-to-action to subscribe, share, or ‘like’ the video as a form of support.

- **Tags** should be plentiful and reflect a range of common and specific keywords. Save time by creating a set of standard tags that can be applied to all of your videos. Update your video tags to reflect new search trends related to current events or global initiatives relevant to your cause.

**Metadata Titles**

- /UnculturedProject

Nerdfighters in Bangladesh - Project for Awesome
Activate Your Cause

Metadata Descriptions

• /UnculturedProject

Uploaded on Dec 18, 2010
This is the story of the Dharmarajika Monastery in Dhaka, Bangladesh. It was formed in the 1960s by a respected Buddhist Venerable. During the Bangladesh War of Liberation which killed over 3 million people, the Buddhist Venerable setup an orphanage for children who lost parents during the war.

Since then, the orphanage has turned into a hostel for both children without parents and those from poor families. No children are adopted - rather the Dharmarajika Orphanage serves as a dormitory giving kids a place to stay, food to eat, and a free education. Those staying in the hostel are allowed to continue to be residents if they want to pursue higher education after graduation.

The monastery is trying to sustain this hostel through several income generating initiatives. They also charge tuition for their school for families in the surrounding community who are able to afford it. But, unfortunately, it's never enough to do everything and there are often shortfalls. This is where the YouTube community was able to step in.

The Uncultured Project project is not a charity or organization. It's just something I do as an individual with the support of the YouTube Community.

This was funded by donations to: http://uncultured.com/donations

Support by Subscribing. Please help this become the most subscribed channel on the issue of global poverty.

This isn't charity, this is an experiment in community. Find out more at:

http://youtube.com/UP
http://uncultured.com

Metadata Descriptions

Calls to Action

By utilizing best practices in the Calls to Action (CTAs) and Annotations sections of the Creator Playbook, you can build awareness and successfully mobilize audiences on YouTube to join your movement. Verbal CTAs in your videos can be highly effective when they come from celebrity spokespersons or compelling subjects (more about this on Page 14).

In lieu of verbal CTAs, you can use CTAs in Annotations and/or Call to Action Overlays. Nonprofit partners are enabled to use external links in Annotations and CTA Overlays, which can be great vehicles to drive campaigns.
Activate Your Cause

**Call to Action Overlays** can be used to raise donations, drive viewers to a website or petition, enlist volunteers, promote a fundraising event, and so much more!

- [charitywater](#)

**Annotations** can be used for a variety of fundraising efforts: provide additional context to your cause, solicit support, drive subscriptions, procure signatures or donations, and reach out via social media. Nonprofits can include links to external websites (external annotations) relevant to their causes. New: Nonprofits can link to projects on external fundraising websites. See our full list of approved crowdfunding sites on Page 23.

- [AmericanEqualRights](#)
Activate Your Cause

**Google Wallet “Donate” Button**
Another feature that nonprofit partners can use is a Google Wallet “Donate” button. Once you sign up as a nonprofit, go to your Google Wallet Options, enter your ID and Merchant Key, and choose donation amounts. When you’ve filled in the information, the button will appear on your public profile and on your video pages. You can find the Google Wallet options in the upper right-hand corner of “My Channel” and click on the “Add Donation Module” button. The button appears on both your channel page and the watch video pages.

**Support art21.org**

Choose amount

Donate

Visit YouTube Nonprofit Program

• /Art21Org
Activate Your Cause

YouTube’s homepage and Channels layouts make it easier for viewers to subscribe to nonprofit channels. Here are some pointers to help you make the biggest impact with the channel branding features.

Channel Branding

• Add your organization’s Google Wallet button to the Channel page (as discussed above).

• Create a relevant, short text description of your cause and organization. This will have prominent placement around YouTube that will help to drive new subscriptions.

• Select a compelling avatar for your organization. Avatars are just as important as the video thumbnail images you choose for your videos. They should be eye-catching, bright, close-up, and high resolution.

• Select an impactful trailer video to feature on your channel that gives viewers a strong first impression of your organization.

Successful Channel Branding

• /SesameStreet
Storytelling for Causes
Storytelling for Causes

How can I use video to sustain and engage an audience of potential supporters, volunteers and activists around my cause?

“Content is King” cannot be reinforced enough on YouTube. The goal should not be to create a one-off viral video that lands you millions of views and short-lived buzz. Rather, identify your goals and the audience you want to target in order to build a sustainable channel with great content that keeps viewers coming back for more.

Regular Programming

Just as it is important for nonprofits to maintain a consistent fundraising schedule, the same rule applies to how you program content on YouTube. Stick to a regular schedule, and consistently produce and program content that is both timely and relevant. Making video a regular part of your fundraising initiatives and scheduling content around tent-pole events can help extend the impact of your campaign. To stay relevant on YouTube, it is essential to upload videos consistently and refresh your channel’s programming on a regular basis.

Serial Content

Maintain a regular schedule by releasing a series of videos around a particular issue related to your cause. The examples shown are from nonprofits who created regular thematic content, then organized the videos into featured playlists on their channels. If you create a playlist, be sure to include the release schedule in the description along with the overall message conveyed in the videos.

Serial Content

- /RANVideo – “Greenwash of the Week” series

Serial Content

- /OxfamGreatBritain – “The Green Granny” series
Storytelling for Causes

Tent-poles and Current Events

Aligning your video fundraising and outreach efforts with larger tent-pole initiatives or cultural events relevant to your campaign will maximize exposure to your cause. Packaging and producing content around tent-pole events (e.g. World AIDS Day, Earth Day, World Refugee Day) can help you build momentum from search trends, audience interest, and promotional opportunities. Also, seize opportunities to respond to current events that impact your mission. You can do so by posting videos that explain your position to timely and relevant news. Tip: YouTube Trends is a good resource to help you discover the latest video trends and insights.

- /TheONECampaign – World AIDS Day event
- /MalariaNoMore – World Malaria Day
Storytelling for Causes

Celebrities and personalities can help drive the success of your videos on YouTube. If you have access to well-known figures, companies, or other entities affiliated with your cause, consider how to get them involved. Celebrities represent a real opportunity to leverage their star power and build awareness around your cause. Make sure you include their names in video metadata so that audiences can follow and find content about the celebrities that they care about. Remember, it’s important to remain authentic and run a video campaign that genuinely reflects your organization’s sensibility. It also helps to feature subjects who can attest to the importance and impact of your work. The best spokesperson doesn’t always have to be a celebrity, it can be the people you are trying to help.

Real Stories from Real People

- **/Witness** – empowers people to share their personal stories of abuse on video.

- **/InvisiblePeopleTV** – features videos of individual homeless people sharing their stories.
Storytelling for Causes

Celebrity Involvement and Endorsement


- /TheONECampaign – Celebrities join forces and create a provocative campaign video to raise awareness about famine and the food crisis.

- /DefineAmerican – Stephen Colbert, Russell Simmons, and other celebrities create videos to shed light on issues with the U.S. immigration system.
Storytelling for Causes

Involve Your Audience

YouTube is an interactive worldwide community, and there are a number of creative ways to inform your audience, mobilize participation, and raise awareness about your organization. Keep these fundamental best practices in mind as you dream up the next video campaign for your cause.

Create a standard call to action video that conveys a clear message about your organization.

• Be concise and catchy, especially in the first few moments of the video.

• Acknowledge the audience and offer a clear call to action for support (share video, subscribe, get involved, spread the word, donate, etc.).

• Create conversation and dialogue about your work. Ask questions and solicit responses from viewers.

• Be sure to select the right person or subject to tell your story. Consider tapping a YouTube personality to be your spokesperson.

Create an interactive video petition to involve, engage and mobilize your audience

• Urge the community to respond to your video by creating one of their own.

• Provide examples and a suggested script.

• Feature video responses from the community in a playlist on your channel.

• Create a compilation video with the video responses to amplify your message.

Call to Action Video

• /MalariaNoMore – Seriously, Serious PSA

SOME PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS BY CELEBRITIES ARE KIND OF A JOKE.

Seriously, Serious PSA (featuring B.J. Novak & Friends)
Storytelling for Causes

Collaborative Video Petition

- /ItGetsBetterProject – Generated more than 50,000 UGC videos from celebrities, activists, politicians, and media personalities – amassing over 50 million views.

- /iJustine – iJustine “charity water – PLEASE HELP!!” generated 72 video responses from community members holding up dirty glasses of water.

Make a response video this one holding up a dirty glass of water. You can also email it to me: charitywater@ijustine.com
Storytelling for Causes

- **/PinkGloveDance** – Original video generated more than 13 million views, inspired a huge outpouring of video responses, and a competition.

If you want to be really creative about how you get your message across, try using Annotations to create an interactive, “choose-your-own-adventure” style video. This video for the “Drop the Weapons” campaign lets the viewer decide what to do in a series of life or death decisions. It’s intended to educate kids about the consequences of making the wrong decisions.

**Interactive Video with Annotations**

- **/ADifferentEnding** – “Choose A Different Ending: start”
Campaigning on a Shoestring
Campaigning on a Shoestring

How can I pull off a video campaign with limited staff, budget, and production resources?

Don’t have the bandwidth? Don’t worry. There are several ways to tell your story and stay relevant on YouTube, even with limited time and resources. Making a video can be as simple as turning on the camera and giving a quick status update about your campaign. You can also flip on your webcam and spend a couple of minutes thanking your supporters on YouTube.

Be sure to tap into the existing YouTube community and participate in the nonprofit community forum to develop relationships that can potentially lead to collaboration and cross-promotional opportunities.

Cross-promotion and Collaboration

- Make a call-out video asking the community for help creating videos for your cause.
- Reach out to specific YouTube creators with a big presence on YouTube. Some would be eager to help make a video for a good cause. (See iJustine/charity: water example on Page 17).
- Find organizations working toward similar goals. Share resources and work together on videos that will benefit you both.

There are lighter forms of collaboration and cross promotion on YouTube. It can be as simple as ‘favoriting’ a video or shouting out another channel with a video annotation. You can elect to share activities from your Channel feed such as subscribing, ‘liking,’ ‘favoriting’ or commenting on a video, all of which will be visible to your subscribers once you enable these actions in your account sharing settings. Note: creating playlists and uploading videos are actions that are always visible to subscribers from your feed.

Here are some ideas to help you curate content and promote others in the process:

- Feature other YouTube videos on your channel related to your cause.
- Promote other channels in your “Other Channels” module and reach out to others to return the favor.
- Find videos from the broader community rallying around similar causes and organize them into topical playlists. Curating videos into playlists is a good way to add value for your audience and build credibility as an expert in your field.
- Stay active on your channel feed: ‘like,’ ‘favorite,’ and comment on videos relevant to your channel and your audience. Add relevant videos to playlists.
Campaigning on a Shoestring

Project for Awesome (#P4A) is an annual charity project founded by popular YouTube stars, the VlogBrothers, and organized by the YouTube community. It’s the perfect opportunity to collaborate with a YouTube creator to promote your cause. Every December, YouTube creators make videos for charities of their choosing and then spend two days viewing, commenting and favoriting the videos to help make them more visible on the platform. Last year, the event generated more than 1,200 videos for over 750 charities, over 4.2 million video views, and over one million video comments.

Cross Promotion and Collaboration

• 2011 Project for Awesome – various videos
Campaigning on a Shoestring

To amplify your message, it’s not only important to ‘broadcast yourself’ on YouTube, but also to use every outlet available to reach potential supporters. Leverage networks outside of YouTube to promote your videos. Target your outreach and create a list of blogs, websites, and key influencers. Provide them with links to your video embed codes. Embed, embed, embed in your newsletter, emails, website, and blog. Urge supporters to do the same. Share video links on Google+, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr, Chill, etc. Ask followers to +1, reblog, share, or retweet your videos as well. Engage with your supporters on YouTube and social media, especially in the first few hours after you upload a new video.

Embed

- /AGirlStory.org uses multiple video embeds as a form of active storytelling.

Social Media Outreach and Engagement

- /InvisiblePeopleTV – A homeless woman helps manage the Twitter and Facebook accounts.
Further Reading & Resources
Further Reading & Resources

Playbook Sections

- Calls to Action
- Tent-pole Programming
- Cross-promotion and Collaboration
- Metadata
- Annotations
- Blog Outreach and Other Social Media

Channels to Explore

- **MalariaNoMore**: Dedicated to bringing malaria deaths in Africa near zero by 2015. Features great use of CTA overlays and video annotations. goo.gl/zKpsO
- **AmericanEqualRights**: Dedicated to marriage equality in the U.S. regardless of gender or sexual orientation. Features excellent branding, video annotations, CTA overlays, donate buttons and live streaming. goo.gl/nBeWp
- **Charitywater and CharityWaterThanks**: Dedicated to bringing clean and safe drinking water to people in developing nations. They make use of strong community involvement by reaching out, responding and engaging their audience. goo.gl/j5lww and goo.gl/gEAm8
- **AmericanHeartAssoc**: Encourages better cardiac care and awareness to prevent and reduce the number of deaths and disabilities due to cardiovascular disease and stroke. Good channel image map, avatar, branding, annotations, CTA overlays, and donate buttons. goo.gl/Fvzrh
- **LazarexCF**: Dedicated to providing financial support for families and cancer patients going through clinical trials. Successful channel image map, avatar, branding, and thumbnails. goo.gl/NtE9k
- **HSUS**: World’s number one animal advocacy organization supporting protection laws, animal rescue and preventative measures against animal cruelty. Successful channel image map, avatar, branding, CTA overlays, custom thumbnails, and donate buttons. goo.gl/B88xr
- **TheGeekGroup**: Educational organization devoted to spreading their wealth of knowledge in science and engineering. goo.gl/iZilM
- **InvisiblePeopleTV**: Mark Horvath, once homeless himself, documents the lives of homeless people on streets and in tent cities to give a face and voice to homelessness. goo.gl/W028q
- **AnaheimBallet**: Breaks the barriers to entry in the ballet world by publicly posting performances and behind-the-scenes videos for a better connection with viewers and immediate audience feedback. goo.gl/eQOlq
- **BaySaver**: Leader in protecting, preserving and restoring the San Francisco Bay since 1961. Makes use of CTA overlays, and video annotations. goo.gl/DVR6i
- **TrevorProjectMedia**: Promotes the acceptance of LGBTQ youth, prevents suicide attempts, and supports young individuals facing discrimination. Excellent channel branding, CTA overlays, custom thumbnails, video annotations, and collaborations. goo.gl/E2oxA
- **Art21Org**: Uses digital media to introduce, teach, and share contemporary art with all ages, ethnicities, and backgrounds. Great channel branding, custom banners, thumbnails, video annotations, and donate buttons. goo.gl/Dpyv3
- **RANVideo**: Dedicated to educating, promoting, and raising awareness for environmental protection to create a sustainable world. Features serial playlists, CTA overlays and video annotations. goo.gl/yXqWj
Further Reading & Resources

YouTube Tools / Features for Nonprofits

• **Donate button:** A donation button available on your channel and video watch page that viewers can use to contribute to your cause.
  - goo.gl/R5mLx

• **Channel branding:** Background and banner image to promote your organization's brand.
  - goo.gl/INR6l

• **Video annotations:** A tool to add interactive commentary to your videos.
  - goo.gl/6YuDH

• **Live streaming:** Stream live events and programs directly from a nonprofit YouTube channel.
  - goo.gl/6ypFf and goo.gl/R2Nje

• **Call to action overlays:** Text overlay at the bottom of your videos to drive traffic to your website, petition, or other relevant site.
  - goo.gl/jDnwe

• **Community forum:** Support forum for nonprofits where you can submit questions, tips and best practices regarding your YouTube channel.
  - goo.gl/oxesn

• **External annotations:** Link to your website or other relevant sites. When a user clicks on an external annotation, they are brought directly to your site.
  - goo.gl/DHWI8

  - goo.gl/bQaaa

• **Nonprofit support queue:** Email nonprofits@youtube.com for technical and account questions.

• **YouTube Nonprofits Google Group:** Sign up and opt into emails.
  - goo.gl/9yFvj
Further Reading & Resources

Example Links

Activate Your Cause

10  Uncultured Project: “Nerdfighters in Bangladesh…”  goo.gl/5CnVn
12  CharityWater  goo.gl/nZ4NV
12  AmericanEqualRights  goo.gl/2xldN

Storytelling for Causes

16  Oxfam: “The Green Granny” series  goo.gl/u3PQN
16  RANVideo: “Greenwash of the Week” series  goo.gl/3Z7nI
17  MalariaNoMore: “World Malaria Day with SG Ban Ki-Moon…”  goo.gl/0bcqv
17  TheOneCampaign: “An exclusive World AIDS Day event…”  goo.gl/S0R6L
17  Witness  goo.gl/1dVK4
18  InvisiblePeopleTV  goo.gl/U0OD5
19  DefineAmerican: “Stephen Colbert Defines American”  goo.gl/M6bwT
19  TheOneCampaign: “The F Word: Famine is the Real Obscenity”  goo.gl/Wh73Z
20  MalariaNoMore: “Seriously, Serious PSA…”  goo.gl/cnUR7
21  ItGetsBetterProject: “It Gets Better: Dan and Terry”  goo.gl/UfAea
21  iJustine: “charity water – PLEASE HELP!!”  goo.gl/awQ8D
22  PinkGloveDance: “Pink Glove Dance: The Competition”  goo.gl/BSbkp
22  ADifferentEnding: “Choose A Different Ending: start”  goo.gl/Z3pkd

Campaigning on a Shoestring

25  Project4Awesome  goo.gl/nbHkg
26  AGirlStory.org  goo.gl/dgUFY
26  InvisiblePeople.tv  goo.gl/DlncJ
Further Reading & Resources

Program Requirements

• Organizations applying for the YouTube Nonprofit Program must meet the following criteria.

• U.S. organizations must have current 501(c)(3) status, as assigned by the Internal Revenue Service, to be considered for the YouTube Nonprofit Program.

• The following organizations are not eligible for the YouTube Nonprofit Program:

• Programs requiring membership and/or providing benefit solely to members, such as clubs, sports teams, alumni, networking and other membership organizations.

• Religious groups using the website for proselytizing, as well as organizations that use religion or sexual orientation as a factor in hiring or populations served.

• Groups serving a primarily political function such as lobbying, think tanks and special interests.

• Commercial organizations, credit-counseling services, donation middleman services, fee-based organizations, universities, and nonprofit portals.

• Google reserves the right to award or deny the application of any organization. Selections are made at Google’s sole discretion, and decisions regarding award recipients are final.

• For full guidelines, please see the Google for Nonprofits site.

Read more about the YouTube Nonprofit Program here: www.youtube.com/nonprofits.
Thank you!