

CAN SOCIAL LISTENING AND SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING BENEFIT YOUR SBC ACTIVITIES?

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Social media has increasingly become one of the most popular places for individuals to express their views and engage in conversations about what they see, hear, and believe. There are currently 3.4 billion social media users, a figure projected to [increase to 4.4 billion by 2025](#).

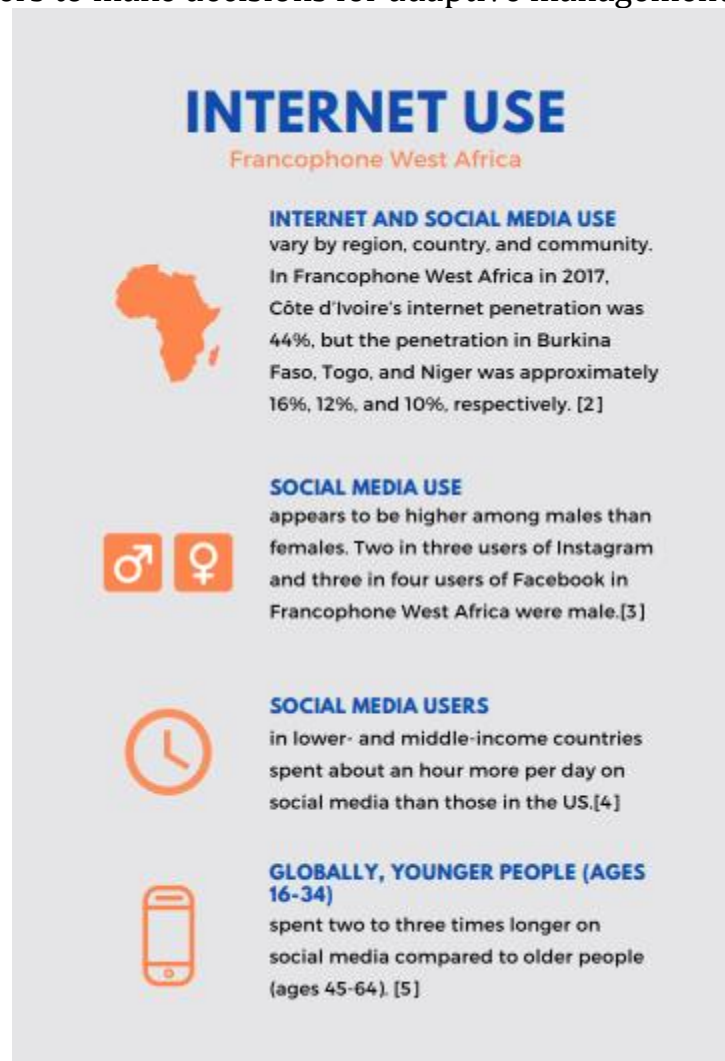
This growing popularity means that social media can also be an important resource for gathering information about reproductive health and voluntary family planning.

What are Social Listening and Social Media Monitoring?

Social listening and social media monitoring enable programs to look at what is being said on social media, to analyze the content and sentiment behind the messages, including misinformation, and to use this information for program design and adaptive management.

Social listening is the process of tracking the number of mentions and conversation content related to a topic, program, or brand across social media platforms, blogs, news outlets, and other online sources. For social and behavior change (SBC) projects, social listening can be an important tool to understand user beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

Social media monitoring is related to social listening and can be used to track a target audience's engagement with and reactions to shared messages related to a particular campaign, program, or product. Monitoring online engagement allows program managers to make decisions for adaptive management.



The Breakthrough RESEARCH project is using social listening to monitor and evaluate the Merci Mon Héros (MMH) SBC program in Francophone West

Africa. Breakthrough ACTION, its sister project, is implementing the MMH mass and social media campaign in nine countries in the region.

How Can Social Listening and Social Media Monitoring Benefit Your SBC Activities?

These two approaches can be used to gather and analyze information to help you understand:

- Knowledge and attitudes toward key reproductive health and voluntary family planning topics
- Engagement with your SBC campaign content
- How knowledge and attitudes regarding key reproductive health and voluntary family planning topics change over time

For example, the Breakthrough RESEARCH project is using social listening to monitor and evaluate the **Merci Mon Héros (MMH)** SBC program in Francophone West Africa.

Breakthrough ACTION, the sister project to Breakthrough RESEARCH, is implementing the MMH mass and social media campaign in nine Francophone West African countries with the following aims:

1. Encouraging young people to talk about voluntary family planning and reproductive health
2. Encouraging adults to reconsider restrictive social and gender norms in order to talk about voluntary family planning and reproductive health with young people
3. Stimulating discussion between young people and adults to identify, address and shift restrictive social norms, and remove the shame and taboos that prevent young people from accessing voluntary family planning and reproductive health care and information

How Social Listening and Social Media Monitoring Helped Improve SBC Program Implementation: Breakthrough RESEARCH and its resource partner **M&C Saatchi** applied social listening and social media monitoring to

MMH. The partners helped to identify and validate themes, such as the role of gender and partner communication, to incorporate into new campaign videos. One finding from the 24,023 MMH organic engagements (engagements not brought about by paid promotion) in the first study period indicated the campaign was reaching youth and younger adults (ages 18 to 34), but not the older adults who are a critical audience for stimulating intergenerational communication. In response, youth leaders created additional online content specifically oriented toward older adults. The social media monitoring reports also led Breakthrough ACTION to make campaign improvements, such as shortening the length of videos (from 4 to 2.5 minutes) and placing key messages at the beginning of the video to capture the audience's attention. In sum, social listening and social media monitoring can be useful methods for learning more about how your audience perceives your SBC program. As the number of individuals around the world who use social media continue to grow, data gathered from social media will be increasingly relevant. For more information about why and how to conduct social listening for SBC projects in Francophone West Africa, see Breakthrough RESEARCH's [social listening brief](#).

If this article interested you, you might also like this recent post [Is Better Measurement The Key To Increased Investment In Social And Behavior Change For Voluntary Family Planning In Francophone West Africa?](#)