DEFENDING
CIVIL SOCIETY

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Tips for Engaging in NGO Law Reforms

Co-authored by
International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL)
& World Movement for Democracy Secretariat
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WORLD MOVEMENT *for* DEMOCRACY
Confronting the Challenges to Democracy in the 21st Century

INTRODUCTION

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and the late Czech President, Vaclav Havel, among others, wrote in their joint letter(http://www.wmd.org/documents/DCS/EPGletterJan09.pdf) endorsing the *Defending Civil Society* report (http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/media/defending-civil-society-reports/Defending%20Civil%20Society%20-%20English.pdf) in 2009, "[d]emocracy will not flourish unless citizens can freely engage in politics and social change, and for many years civil society groups have been providing citizens with the means to do so peacefully."

Today, many governments around the world increasingly use restrictive legal measures to constrain civil society groups and prevent them from facilitating meaningful citizen participation in areas of political and social development. To respond to this regressive trend, governments, civil society organizations, and the international community have engaged in both successful and unsuccessful advocacy efforts to reform restrictive legal measures and to prevent new ones from being enacted.

As part of these efforts, the World Movement for Democracy and the International Center for Not-for Profit Law (ICNL) launched the Defending Civil Society project in 2007. The project responds to requests for assistance from activists engaged in advocacy, documents the important lessons learned, compiles practical information on the issues, and identifies the tools that have been used for effective reform strategies.

Most civil society representatives recognize that properly written laws governing civil society organizations (CSOs) are fundamental for the protection of freedom of association, expression and assembly, and necessary for the development of civil society. At the same time, law can be and often is used to constrain legal space and undermine the protection of fundamental freedoms. This sometimes makes civil society activists wary of legal reform initiatives that may result in the introduction of restrictions and limitations on civic space. Instead, the laws governing civil society should "facilitate" and "enable," rather than "control" civil society. It is therefore in the interest of civil society to participate actively in the development of the legal frameworks.

To help in this regard, this Toolkit compiles the experiences of those who have engaged in legal reform initiatives in over dozens countries worldwide. To ensure it is as relevant and practical as possible, the World Movement and ICNL asked hundreds of civil society representatives in over 40 countries to share their knowledge, experiences, and information.

Advocacy strategies and tactics vary across different political contexts (authoritarian regimes, transitional democracies, consolidating democracies), so the suggestions contained in this Toolkit should be considered carefully within the context of your own country. The idea behind the Toolkit is that sharing practical experiences and lessons learned helps build the capacity of those who seek to reform the laws governing civil society.

We hope this Toolkit will thus provide the tips, tools, and strategies that organizations and activists around the world can consider as they plan their efforts to reform legal frameworks for civil society.

Produced in several languages, this Toolkit includes the following chapters:

- Understanding and Assessing Restrictive Environments
- Engaging Civil Society
- Engaging Diplomatic & Donor Communities
- Engaging the Media
- Building Dialogue with Government, Parliamentarians, and Other Stakeholders
- Surviving in a Severely Restrictive Environment

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Before beginning a legal reform initiative, you should:

➢ **Consider how open the political space is within your country**. This is a key factor for determining the potential success of engaging in a reform initiative. Reform goals must be set with an awareness of political opportunities and boundaries. That said, even where political space is severely restricted, progress toward reform is possible in several concrete ways, such as building civil society's capacity for analyzing the local legal framework, deepening its awareness of how freedom of assembly and association is under threat, or uniting civic groups in challenging a law that negatively affects civil society generally.

➢ **Understand and accept the risks involved.** Even when seeking to avoid confrontation, it is still important to be critical of the government when monitoring the political process and engaging in reform advocacy. While you may find it necessary to compromise on particular provisions, you should guard against compromising your fundamental democratic principles.

➢ **Be ready for a long battle.** It is not unusual for the reform process to take several years or more. In the process of amending an existing law or developing a new one, there are often numerous drafts, and the political climate and actors may change frequently and sometimes unexpectedly. It is important, therefore, for those who are involved in legal reform efforts to maintain their focus in the face of such political change.

CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING & ASSESSING RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

A fundamental starting point for the reform of the legal and regulatory environment affecting civil society is a sound legal analysis of the regulatory strengths and weaknesses of that environment. A sound assessment helps determine a reform strategy and provide the basis for its implementation. This section provides practical insight into two key aspects of the assessment: the design phase and the implementation phase.

Design Phase

Before undertaking an assessment, it is **critical to define the assessment needs and to design the assessment process**. This section is intended to provide a list of the threshold issues to be addressed prior to undertaking the assessment itself.

➢ **Identify the nature of the threat, or opportunity, in order to define the scope of the assessment.** The answers to the following questions will help determine the scope of the assessment itself: What is at issue? Is it the release of a government-prepared draft law that, if enacted, would constrain civic space? Is it the implementation of an existing law in a way that threatens civil society? Is it harassment of civil society organizations (CSOs) or CSO activists through various forms of extra-legal or illegal government (or third party) actions? Are there concerns about the adequacy of the existing legal framework as a whole? Or is it some combination of the foregoing? In addition, should the assessment address the legal environment for the entire sector or focus on designated sub-sectors, such as human rights defenders or social service providers?

➢ In some cases, there may be value in conducting a fully comprehensive assessment, which examines the overall framework for civil society. In other cases, the assessment may be more targeted. But at the outset, it is **useful for key stakeholders to reach consensus on the scope of the assessment**.

> *EXAMPLE from CAMBODIA*
> *In **Cambodia**, the Government released a draft Law on Associations and NGOs in December 2010, which became the focus of advocacy efforts throughout 2011. Needs on the ground demanded an assessment of the specific draft law and the extent to which it was consistent or inconsistent with international norms, good regulatory practices, and the local legal environment.*

> *EXAMPLE from MALAWI*
> *In **Malawi**, concerns emerged throughout 2011 about the legal and regulatory environment. This was not due to a specific draft law, but rather because of a variety of circumstances, including hostile government rhetoric relating to civil society; revisions made to generally applicable laws, such as the Police Act, which may affect CSOs; and extra-legal or illegal harassment carried out against civic activists. Needs on the ground called for an assessment of the overall operating environment for civil society.*

➢ **Consider the principal purpose(s) and target audience(s) of the assessment.** Is the principal purpose of the assessment to: (1) prepare information for local CSOs to inform an advocacy campaign, (2) provide an analysis that will be shared with the host government, (3) mobilize the international diplomatic community, (4) engage donors, or (5) achieve some other objective? It is important to consider who will be reading the assessment and how it will be used.

- ➢ **Engage in Broader Stakeholder Mapping.** What institutions and individuals have an interest in the process and outcomes of the assessment? Stakeholders include civil society, the government, legislators, philanthropists, the business community, the media, the international diplomatic community, the international donor community, and others. Based on this mapping, consider who is best positioned to lead the assessment process. Consider also whether to form an advisory group, working group, or other collective body to steer the assessment process and build broader ownership over the process.

- ➢ **Involving decision-makers in components of the assessment process can be very helpful**, where feasible. By having decision-makers participate in identifying the problem(s), they then become vested in helping to solve the problem(s).

- ➢ **Link the assessment to the anticipated advocacy strategy.** The design of the assessment should take into account the anticipated advocacy strategy. For example, if the advocacy strategy calls for the engagement of various stakeholders, it is important that that they be engaged as early as possible in the assessment process so they have ownership over the assessment's findings and the advocacy initiatives that flow from these findings.

- ➢ **Plan methodologies to collect information and data.** Naturally, questions will arise concerning the most effective ways to secure quality information through the assessment. Depending on the circumstances and resources available, options might include: (1) conducting interviews, focus groups, workshops, and other sessions with stakeholders, (2) conducting surveys and polls to provide data on issues of concern, (3) commissioning a local expert to prepare an analysis under domestic law, and (4) engaging international experts to prepare an analysis under international law.

*In **Venezuela**, a national legal expert conducted a constitutional analysis of proposed draft legislation affecting the sector, which helped strengthen advocacy efforts.*

EXAMPLE from CAMBODIA
*It is often useful to aggregate local expertise with international knowledge. In efforts to respond to **Cambodia**'s draft law on Associations and NGOs in 2010-2011, a group of international experts shared its analysis, based on a comparison of the draft law to international standards, with local partners who were experts on the domestic legal environment.*

Implementation Phase: Substance of the Assessment

In conducting the assessment, one can rely on a number of tools designed to elicit information relating to the legal environment for civil society.

➢ Rely on a checklist to assess whether CSO legislation meets generally accepted international practices.

   Sample Checklist. (http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/ChecklistforCSOLaws.pdf)

➢ Consult various research methodologies available for information-gathering and identify a methodology suitable for your assessment.

   CIVICUS Civil Society Index.
   CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) (https://www.civicus.org/csi/) is a participatory needs assessment and action planning tool for civil society around the world.

   World Bank ARVIN FRAMEWORK
   The World Bank ARVIN Framework: A Way to Assess the Enabling Environment for Civic Engagement
   (http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/EXTPCEN G/0,,contentMDK:20529003~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:410306,00.html) is an analytical tool to assess the legal and regulatory, political and governmental, socio-cultural and economic factors affecting civic engagement across five dimensions: Association, Resources, Voice, Information, and Negotiation.

   USAID NGO SUSTAINABILITY INDEX
   The annual NGO Sustainability Index assesses the strength and continued viability of a region's NGO sectors based on seven dimensions of the NGO environment: legal environment, organizational capacity, financial viability, advocacy, public image, service provision, and NGO infrastructure. Fourteen editions of the Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia are available. In 2009, the Index was expanded to Sub-Saharan Africa.
   - ✓ *USAID NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia (http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex/)*
   - ✓ *USAID NGO Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa (http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/technical_areas/civi l_society/angosi/).*

➢ Once the assessment report is complete, consideration may be given to its publication and use. A well-designed and well-implemented assessment provides a firm basis for engaging civil

society, the international diplomatic community, and the media, as well as for building dialogue with government, parliamentarians, and other stakeholders.

CHAPTER 2: ENGAGING CIVIL SOCIETY

Efforts to reform laws that limit the space within which civil society organizations carry out their work will likely be more effective if those leading the efforts are able to enlist the support of active civil society within and outside their country.

Engaging Local Civil Society

How do we know when to mobilize local civil society?

➢ **Mobilization should be preceded by periodic analyses of the situation**. Ongoing monitoring and analysis can serve as an early warning system of emerging threats and can contribute to effective mobilization for public action when urgent threats or restrictions arise.

➢ **Opportunities for strong mobilization emerge when overall political reforms are taking place**, such as the development of a new constitution.

> *EXAMPLE from KENYA*
> **Kenya***'s new Constitution, adopted in 2010, presented civil society groups with a unique opportunity to mobilize to ensure its meaningful implementation and to advocate for a more progressive legal framework for civil society. Because the new Constitution more clearly protects Kenyan citizens' rights and freedoms, it provides a stronger, more legitimate basis upon which to argue for reform of laws that limit civil society activities. The* civil society's draft law *(http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/Kenya-Draft_PBO_BILL_March_2012.pdf) that emerged from the civil society-led reform initiative references the Constitution and articulates the constitutionality of the draft law.*
>
> *VIDEO MESSAGE from KENYA (http://vimeo.com/39003560)*

➢ Civil society groups often mobilize in response to proposed laws that would constrain civil society. However, **it is better to mobilize civil society, both nationally and internationally, *before* a draft law is produced by the government**. This helps civil society engage in dialogue with government officials on an equal footing. Responding to a government's draft law *after* it is written might give the government the upper hand or make the government resist efforts to change it.

➢ It is may be **more effective for civil society groups to collectively develop a draft law of their own *before* the government drafts its own**.

➢ When facing immediate threats, it is important to mobilize civil society and build a broad coalition across sectors, even though existing coalitions may already be strong. **A coalition or alliance of diverse sectors enables civil society to speak more loudly and persuasively.**

How can local analyses of legal frameworks or proposed laws be used to help mobilize local civil society?

➢ **It is critically important to explain the impact of current and/or proposed laws affecting civil society in a clear and understandable way.** The vast majority of CSOs are not necessarily well-informed about the legal framework and its implications. Enabling legislation should be built upon the principles of fundamental freedoms of assembly, association, and expression, and a

deeper understanding of these fundamental principles can help mobilize broad civil society groups.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES (http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/DCSprinciples.pdf)

EXAMPLE from VENEZUELA
*In **Venezuela**, a human rights-based analysis gave strength to public arguments when civil society was facing restrictions. The analysis used the Constitution as the standard on these issues. Many countries' constitutions enshrine fundamental freedoms, such as the freedom of assembly, association, and expression, which creates a sound, ethical basis for bringing diverse sectors of society together for joint efforts to promote legal reforms, even in a politically polarized context.*

EXAMPLE from UKRAINE
*In **Ukraine**, a coalition of NGOs that monitored and participated in the process of drafting a new NGO law put together various platforms and fora to share their analyses and to communicate with stakeholders. These platforms created a deeper understanding of the issues and mobilized support. For example, the coalition used a three-minute video (http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=jKTun2U6jzk) to explain its analysis of the current legal framework and present its reasons for reforming it.*

➢ In addition to analyzing legal frameworks, **a needs assessment for legal reform helps justify civil society proposals and initiatives** and increases the likelihood that the proposals will receive broader support from other CSOs, decision makers, and the public at large.

EXAMPLE from CAMBODIA
*As the Government of **Cambodia** expressed its intention to introduce an NGO law in 2005, civil society groups generated a debate over whether such a legal framework for the civil society sector was needed at all. The Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights (LICADHO) published a briefing paper (http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/DCSprinciples.pdf) assessing what an NGO law would mean to Cambodian civil society and what kind of legal framework might be needed in the country by highlighting the experiences of other Asian countries.*

See more about a needs assessment in Chapter 1.

➢ **Ensuring many CSOs participate in analyzing a law or draft law helps mobilize and unite them and increases the legitimacy of the process.**

EXAMPLE from SIERRA LEONE
*In **Sierra Leone**, a civil society group published a small booklet (http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/Sierra_Leone-Why_NGOs_should_be_Aware.pdf) outlining the fundamental freedom of association, based on the World Movement for Democracy's Defending Civil Society report (http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/media/defending-civil-society-reports/Defending%20Civil%20Society%20-%20English.pdf), and highlighting relevant key points in the government's draft NGO Policy and Regulations. The group used this booklet to conduct consultations and discussions in various parts of the country. The group also provided opportunities for other groups to educate themselves about the draft and analyze the NGO Policy.*

> **It is important to involve both legal experts and non-legal experts**, such as NGO managers, journalists, student activists, etc., in the process of analysis to ensure that a substantial portion of the civil society community identifies the core issues/concerns with the legal framework.

> *EXAMPLE from ECUADOR*
> *In responding to the **Ecuadorian** government's draft regulations for CSOs in December 2010, civil society groups invited leaders from different sectors (business, academia, think tanks, etc.) to participate in meetings to analyze the legal framework of the draft (http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/Ecuador0809.pdf). The meetings resulted in the release of a "Manifesto"(http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/Ecuador-ManifiestoColectivo2011.pdf) that outlines the fundamental principles that the groups agreed on. The "Manifesto" later became an important document for civil society advocacy. The Decree No. 982 and the proposed new regulations of CSOs did not protect the rights set out in the Constitution and in international agreements, and this made it easier for civil society to advocate for better regulations. The main message of the "Manifesto" was not only to defend civil society, but to defend Ecuadorian democracy and the Constitution itself. This is an example of how "demanding improved regulations" leads to "promoting the public good."*

> **Prepare a brief summary of the analysis** in addition to the in-depth analysis. Something like a "fact sheet" can be easily circulated to the larger community and read by many citizens. Such summaries can also be used for media advocacy (being read over radio programs, etc.).

> *EXAMPLE from UKRAINE*
> *A pamphlet (http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/Ukraine-SupportingNewLawonNGOs.pdf) for a **Ukrainian** campaign compared the registration of business entities to the registration of NGOs and highlighted how the registration process for NGOs was much more complicated than that of business entities.*

> *EXAMPLE from EGYPT (Sample Excutive Summary) (http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/ICNL-CommentsonEgyptDraftLaw.pdf)*

> *EXAMPLE from INDIA (Sample Factsheet) (http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/India-FCR2010.pdf)*

How can we build an effective coalition of civil society groups?

> Before building a coalition for advocacy, it is important to **assess the strengths and weaknesses of CSOs and existing umbrella organizations** in terms of their effectiveness and their capacity to represent diverse interests in civil society.

> **A strong coalition provides a united front on an issue by including various sectors of CSOs** ranging, for instance, from human rights, development, and environmental groups to health service associations and education development organizations. It is important to note, however, that bringing various civil society groups together to unite on a single issue at the national level is a serious challenge.

> *EXAMPLE from AZERBAIJAN*
> *In responding to the draft Amendments to the Law on Non-Governmental Organizations in June 2009, civil society groups in **Azerbaijan** engaged a diverse cross-section of stakeholders,*

particularly within civil society in the country, as well as around the world. The size and diversity of the coalition conferred legitimacy on the members' legal reform goals and gained international attention. Over 80 percent of the NGO coalition's recommendations were incorporated into the final law (although several restrictive provisions were kept by the government).

EXAMPLE from CAMBODIA
In 2011, over 440 local and 40 international CSOs (http://www.ccc-cambodia.org/downloads/ngolaw/statements/List%20NGOs%20Endorsed%203rd%20NGO%20Law%20JS%20update%20on%2014_10_11.pdf) signed joint statements (http://www.sithi.org/admin/upload/media/%5b2011-04-17%5dNGO/12-04-11%20CSO%20Joint%20Statement%20Eng%20FINAL.pdf) calling on the Government of Cambodia to improve the draft Law of Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations. The groups that signed the statement represented a wide range of interests and included human rights groups, democracy advocates, service-delivery organizations, humanitarian groups, and foundations. This effectively built strong momentum for civil society advocacy, allowing the organizations to mobilize international pressure and urge the government to continue revising the draft law.

➢ **A newly established and broader coalition can sometimes be more effective** than existing umbrella groups because it can involve new organizations, grassroots groups, students, and other individuals who are not associated with the existing/traditional coalition or umbrella groups.

➢ **It is crucial to have a dedicated core leadership in a coalition**. It provides expertise, facilitates the process, builds institutional memory, provides members with necessary information, and ensures that the coalition remains focused.

VIDEO MESSAGE from KENYA (http://vimeo.com/39003610)

➢ **Strong and credible groups should be at the core of the coalition.** Credibility and trust are not something that a coalition can build overnight. It must have the strength to stand for its principles and have a network with extensive reach, especially at the local level.

➢ **The coalition should have political power.** This power can stem from their connections with government officials or MPs, or their ability to mobilize large numbers of people at the grassroots level.

➢ It is sometimes **more effective to start building a coalition with a small team of highly respected CSO leaders** on the given issues and then connect those core leaders with representatives of other national and regional networks. As the coalition becomes more active and dynamic, others are often attracted to join it.

EXAMPLE from KENYA
In Kenya, the CSO Reference Group, composed of individuals and organizations seeking to improve the NGO law, is largely self-financed. This demonstrates that the Group is only interested in improving the law and is not driven by political or economic self-interest as it engages in this reform process. This has given credibility to the CSO-driven process. The Group has gradually expanded by approaching trusted friends and colleagues with whom its members have worked for a number of years on similar issues.

- ➢ **Coalition-building is a process involving flexible development and organic growth**. The process may require multiple layers in approach and leadership. Rotating hosts and locations of the coalition's meetings, for example, is one way to share responsibilities and to develop diverse leadership.

- ➢ **Developing and sustaining an effective coalition requires adequate resources**.

- ➢ A broad coalition is not always the answer. **Strategies should be evaluated according to their anticipated impact.** This should inform the ways in which collaboration/coordination among civil society groups should be arranged.

- ➢ **An independent evaluation is extremely helpful** in understanding how advocacy work has impacted different sectors of society. This is of particular importance in societies that are highly politically polarized.

  > *EXAMPLE from VENEZUELA*
  > *In **Venezuela**, the organizer of an awareness-raising campaign (http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/Venezuela-Desplegable_Asamblea_05_07.pdf) to prevent the risks of the proposed constitutional reform contracted an independent research company to evaluate the response to the campaign. The company contacted pro-government supporters, opposition supporters, older people, younger people, men and women. Reviewing the responses from a wide spectrum of society helped the organizers of the campaign understand which messages were most influential.*

- ➢ *BE AWARE OF RISKS!!!* There is a risk that **managing a coalition effectively becomes difficult if it is too broad**. This is why it is important for a coalition to have a clear message that articulates its issues and mission to other groups so they can understand why they should be part of the coalition's efforts.

How do I know whether formal or informal coalitions would best represent the interests of civil society?

- ➢ It is sometimes advisable to use a formal mechanism, such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), to establish the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of a coalition's members and partners. Such **formal agreements help ensure clarity and mutual accountability among members and partners**.

- ➢ **If seeking an official dialogue with a government, a formal coalition may be appropriate.**

- ➢ **If the purpose of a coalition is to mobilize, advocate, and generate public awareness, an informal coalition or a network can serve as a good forum** for pooling ideas, coordinating advocacy efforts, and developing common strategies.

- ➢ Regardless of the formality, or informality, of a coalition, **it should have a clear understanding of shared responsibilities and the division of labor among its members.**

How do I know which sectors of civil society can be the most influential? What is the best strategic division of labor?

- ➢ **Don't focus solely on democracy and human rights groups.** Rather, engage all sectors of civil society, if possible, even though some may choose not to participate. It is important to include

groups with grassroots connections to ensure that ordinary people's voices and concerns are reflected in the advocacy efforts. By bringing in diverse groups, one can prevent the issue from being perceived as political or ideologically-driven.

➢ **Membership-based organizations, such as labor unions, professional associations, faith-based organizations, and youth and student bodies can be very influential**.

> *EXAMPLE from VENEZUELA*
> *In **Venezuela**, students have been very effective in distributing information materials in Caracas and other parts of the country, while professors have been helpful in providing legal analyses. Trade union leaders have been crucial for creating bridges among people.*

> *EXAMPLE from NEPAL*
> *In November 2005, the Government of **Nepal** introduced a Code of Conduct for Social Organizations that would grant a council of government appointees the power to dissolve or suspend civil society organizations and to take over the administration of those organizations. The NGO Federation of Nepal, representing 2,600 NGO members, along with the Association of International NGOs, representing 50 international NGO members working in Nepal, expressed serious concerns about the Code of Conduct. With a strong statement from the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders, affirming that the Code would contradict the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, the local collective advocacy effort led to the Nepal Supreme Court's decision to suspend the implementation of the Code and the eventual annulment of the ordinance introducing it.*

➢ It is important to **understand the specific strengths that different groups have**.

How do we build consensus while respecting diversity?

➢ Understand that **by nature, civil society is diverse in its political ideas and approaches.**

➢ **Human rights and fundamental democratic principles must be the common ground** for building a civil society coalition, even as each actor keeps its own identity.

➢ Note that **escalated polarization among civil society actors is sometimes encouraged by those in power or by the political opposition,** and it creates mistrust and lack of communication and collaboration within civil society.

➢ **A loose coalition or alliance, such as one called "*aliados coyunturales*"(a Spanish word for "circumstantial allies"), can recognize the diversity in specific activities and approaches while agreeing on overarching goals.** This provides space for different members of the coalition to play different roles. Some carry out research and education, while others conduct media engagement and advocacy. Many coalitions fail because they often try to impose unanimous agreement on everything. It is more effective when coalition members agree on issues and their goals rather than on every single activity and strategy.

➢ **Creating opportunities for open dialogue and knowledge-sharing is crucial** when building consensus. Through open discussion, different groups can find common ground despite having different opinions on details.

> *EXAMPLE from CAMBODIA*

*The joint statement (http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/Cambodia-JointStatement-August2011.pdf) on **Cambodia**'s draft Law on Association and NGOs was signed by over 700 groups. It was a product of building consensus around the highest common concerns among the civil society groups domestically and internationally. An informal coalition came together and identified several main points and recommendations that key coalition members could all agree on; those main points became the core of the joint statement and advocacy efforts.*

➢ **Use discussion of an NGO law as an opportunity to bring different groups together.** NGO laws affect all civil society groups, regardless of their political ideologies or areas of work.

Is it necessary or helpful to reach out to civil society actors beyond the capital city, and, if so, what are the best means for doing so?

➢ Ideally, CSOs should **reach out to actors beyond major cities**.

➢ Understanding that reaching out to groups in rural areas is expensive and time-consuming, **outreach efforts should be done through existing networks** and through groups that already have contacts in other parts of the country.

➢ **Video conferencing can be an effective tool** for reaching out to and engaging civil society groups in rural areas.

When are advocacy campaigns important, and how can we best organize them?

➢ Civil society groups should **respond to the government's attempt to restrict civil society space with strategic, long-term thinking**. **Deliberate and careful planning is important for a campaign** and it must take into account the strengths and weaknesses of the groups working on it.

➢ **Organize a core group that is well-resourced and can sustain the campaign** while engaging with members from the broader civil society community.

➢ **Evidence-based advocacy with an empirical approach and quantitative data is extremely important**.

   EXAMPLE from UKRAINE
   *The **Ukrainian** campaign for a new enabling NGO law used a brief pamphlet (http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/Ukraine-SupportingNewLawonNGOs.pdf) with information based on research comparing the current law on donations and the new proposed draft law.*

➢ **Use the process of analyzing the law as an advocacy opportunity to reach out to as many stakeholders as possible.**

   EXAMPLE from ECUADOR
   *In **Ecuador**, the process of collecting 25,000 signatures, which is required by the Constitution to present a draft law to the National Assembly, is being used as a civil society advocacy campaign.*

How can we respond when the government backs a civil society advocacy campaign led by Government-Organized Non-Governmental Organizations (GONGOs))?

➢ CSOs can mobilize the sector and public around **a participatory and well-informed process with professional drafting and legal advice that leads to a confident and well-argued position**.

➢ **GONGOs can be helpful in addressing issues affecting all of civil society.** Educate these government-backed organizations and deepen their understanding of how the law would affect them, too.

> *EXAMPLE from VENEZUELA*
> *In 2006 in **Venezuela**, when some government-friendly organizations realized how the draft Law of International Cooperation would hinder their activities, as well as those of other NGOs, they advocated against it.*

➢ **Reaching out to members of GONGOs** can sometimes help them understand that they are being used for political gains or for electoral purposes. Rights-based dialogues can bring GONGOs into a broad coalition.

➢ If GONGOs' efforts are negatively affecting the sector, exposing their links with the government might help discredit their efforts.

➢ Try not to compete with GONGOs, since they have more resources. Instead, **work with people at the grassroots level, building legitimacy and public support for the reform efforts.**

How can we help make the complex issues of legal frameworks accessible and understandable to different social sectors and the broader public?

➢ **Start with and focus on fundamental principles**.

➢ **Provide examples of the major challenges of existing legislation** and indicate how changes could be made to transform civil society.

➢ **Discuss the impact of a legal framework, not only in terms of civil society activities, but also in terms of society as a whole**, including, in particular, the most vulnerable people.

> *EXAMPLE from TUNISIA*
> *In 2011 in post-revolution **Tunisia**, civil society organizations actively participated in the development of a new Law on Association and Non-Governmental Organizations. During the process, some CSOs emphasized the important role that a new law could play in addressing social and economic challenges, such as the underdeveloped rural areas and a high unemployment rate, facing the country. With an enabling legal framework, CSOs in Tunisia can effectively help facilitate and contribute to the development of the transitional countries.*

➢ **The issue should be depoliticized or not be based on political ideologies**.

Engaging International Civil Society

What can international civil society do to support reform of the legal framework for civil society in my country? How do I get international civil society actors to focus on my country in the face of competing priorities?

➢ **International NGOs are important allies** in advocacy campaigns to dismantle restrictive practices, not only because of their experience, but also because of their ability to help mobilize voices around the world.

> *EXAMPLE from VENEZUELA*
> *International advocacy, working both locally and internationally, successfully prevented the draft International Cooperation Law in **Venezuela** from being passed in 2006. Over 20 letters from local groups, international NGOs, international networks, and the diplomatic community were sent to the president of the National Assembly, and two were sent to the President of the country. Newspaper articles appeared in many countries abroad, particularly in Brazil. This combination of factors has contributed to preventing the draft law from being approved to date (although other restrictive legal measures have been passed).*

➢ **International voices are crucial in countries in which donors have significant influence over the government.**

➢ **International groups can serve as messengers between local groups and the greater international community.** International civil society groups, which often have greater access to the international and diplomatic communities, can ensure that concerns of local groups are effectively communicated. Local groups often do not know what has been discussed through diplomatic channels, and may feel that they get only a small slice of information for their advocacy.

> *VIDEO MESSAGE from VIETNAM (http://vimeo.com/23965773)*

➢ The role of international NGOs is critical in **providing local CSOs with knowledge of best practices and expert advice**.

➢ **Work with international civil society groups both locally and in the international arena.**

➢ **Mobilize locally first, then seek international support.** Aiming exclusively at the mobilization of international civil society can be counterproductive. A strong local mobilization provides international partners with the appropriate arguments and facts for a sound international response.

➢ **Informative meetings with members of the diplomatic community and international NGO offices locally are effective tools** that cultivate international interest in, and responses to, the issues.

➢ **Take international human rights systems into account** to recruit international allies.

➢ **International NGOs operating in the country and foreign funding to local NGOs are often the target of an NGO law and/or regulation.** Therefore, engage international NGOs and highlight the potential impact on them.

➢ If international groups decide to engage in local efforts to reform a legal framework, it is important to **develop multi-year engagement plans**. Legal reform is a long-term process.

> **Sharing lessons learned helps build supportive relationships** among civil society groups, regionally and internationally.

Voices from Actors in Civil Society
Leading Actors in mobilizing civil society share their insights via video messages.

 Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, (South Africa) Nobel laureate (http://vimeo.com/28425627)

VIDEO MESSAGE from Nobel Laureate DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI (Burma) (http://vimeo.com/28425170)

Tolekan Ismailova (Kyrgyzstan), Director, Citizens Against Corruption (http://vimeo.com/19270324)

Antoine Bernard (France), Executive Director, International Federation of Human Rights (http://vimeo.com/21711439)

CHAPTER 3: ENGAGING THE DIPLOMATIC & DONOR COMMUNITIES

In addition to mobilizing local and international civil society, leaders of legal reform efforts should consider the advantages of seeking out support from the diplomatic and donor communities. Although diplomats often must represent their own governments' competing interests, and are thus often constrained in what they can do to assist legal reform efforts in particular countries, they may nonetheless be willing and able to use their formal and informal contacts in other governments and their participation in inter-governmental fora to discourage bad laws and measures from being passed and to encourage positive reform of legal environments.

What can diplomats and donors do to support local reform efforts or to prevent restrictive laws and regulations from being enacted in my country?

➢ **Diplomats and donors often have much more direct access to government officials in the countries in question**, including heads of state, than local civil society groups. They can thus **serve as messengers for local civil society groups**. This is particularly true in very restrictive or authoritarian contexts.

> *EXAMPLE from NICARAGUA*
> *When the Government of **Nicaragua** attempted to introduce a "Manual on International Cooperation" in 2009, civil society groups and international legal experts shared concerns and information with a western government that was at the time serving as a convener of donors in Nicaragua. This western government, through its diplomatic mission in the country, played a critical role in conveying key concerns about the Manual and persuading the Nicaraguan government not to implement it.*

> *EXAMPLE from CAMBODIA*
> *In December 2010, the Government of **Cambodia** introduced a draft Law on Associations and NGOs, which included a number of restrictive measures, such as mandatory registration and a ban on informal associations. On January 7, 2011, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton sent a letter to Cambodian Minister of Foreign Affairs Hor Nanhong, expressing concerns over those restrictive measures and urging adequate consultation with stakeholders—and with NGOs in particular. This high-level intervention, along with engagement from the European Union and other countries, put the Cambodian Government in a position in which it had to react to the international pressure. After presenting four different versions of the draft law over the course of a year, the Cambodian Prime Minister publicly stated in December 2011 that consultations on the draft law could be extended until 2014.*

➢ **Members of the diplomatic community are often in a better position than civil society groups to bring together different stakeholders and officials and to open space for dialogue among them, particularly between government and civil society.**

> *EXAMPLE from GEORGIA*
> *A group of civil society organizations in **Georgia** working on reforms of the electoral law often ask members of the diplomatic community to organize multi-stakeholder meetings during which NGOs share their recommendations.*

➢ The diplomatic community can provide support—though not necessarily financial support—by attending discussions, making public statements in support of local groups' advocacy campaigns, and monitoring the legislative process and the implementation of an enacted law. Urge the

diplomats and donors that **financial support should be complemented by such political support.**

➢ **Acknowledge that different approaches should be respected given the diversity in the diplomatic community.** Some countries are more comfortable making their positions known to the public, while others feel that they can be more effective through quiet diplomacy.

➢ **Think outside the box** in terms of the areas in which the diplomatic community can be engaged. Rather than solely engaging on issues directly related to NGO laws, the diplomatic community can also protect civil society space and otherwise promote enabling legal environments for civil society in indirect ways.

> *BILATERIAL TRADE AGREEMENTS*
> ***Bilateral Investment Treaties*** *("BITs")(http://www.icnl.org/news/2009/03-20.html) and **bilateral economic/trade agreements**, while not traditionally oriented to NGOs, can be used to protect civil society space and encourage reforms in legislative measures affecting civil society groups. For example, when a government interferes with transfers of international funds, denies registration or re-registration of civil society groups, or seizes assets of civil society groups, one can challenge the government by claiming a breach of BITs or economic trade agreements that guarantee free transfer of capital, fair and equitable treatment, and the full protection and security of assets.*

> *LINKING WITH DEVELOPMENT AID*
> *In 2009, Sweden, Mali, Canada, and international civil society groups established a multi-stakeholders **Task Team on Civil Society Organization Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment** in an effort to generate a discussion in the donor community on enabling CSO environments in the context of aid effectiveness. The Task Team produced "Key Messages"(http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/final_key_messages_from_the_task_team.pdf) for the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to highlight the important role of civil society groups as development actors and to urge donors and donor recipient countries to "provide, promote, and monitor an enabling environment for CSOs that maximizes their contribution to development."*

How do I know when to engage with the international diplomatic and donor communities?

➢ Local civil society groups should **develop and maintain continuous working relationships with the international donor and diplomatic communities**. This can help **build trust**. The international donor and diplomatic communities may not respond to local groups' requests for political support if they are not familiar with them.

What type of information is most useful to diplomats and donors?

➢ **Make the information "short and sweet."** Those in the international donor and diplomatic communities often have little time to read long reports. To get their immediate attention, prepare a short and concise message that refers to international standards and norms when relevant.

> *Sample Message*
> Responding to the rapid development of a new proposed law on assembly in a country, a group of officials in the diplomatic and donor communities sent out a call for diplomatic

action (*http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/Call for Action - Proposed Legislative Amendments Restricting Freedom of Assembly.pdf*) with short, but concise information.

➢ **Highlight "'Right to Associate' is Under Threat!" instead of saying "A New NGO Policy is Restrictive."** Rights to association and assembly are the terms being used in international law, and are generally well understood by the diplomatic community.

➢ **Evidence-based documentation gives diplomats and their governments solid ground on which to base their public or private positions.**

➢ **Inform the diplomatic community clearly of what you want them to do.**

> *EXAMPLE from EGYPT*
> *In January 2012, **Egypt**'s Ministry of Social Justice and Solidarity, responsible for registering NGOs, announced a draft Law on Associations and Foundations and called for the public's input. Egyptian human rights organizations unanimously agreed not to engage in efforts to provide input into the Minister's draft, but collectively called on the international community to oppose it or not engage with the consultation process. This single-voice position was useful for members of the diplomatic community as they sought to determine appropriate actions. The Ministry withdrew the draft and asked the General Federation of NGOs, headed by a former prime minister, to prepare a new draft.*

How can I minimize the risks of involving the diplomatic or donor community in my country?

➢ **Make sure that the diplomatic efforts do not overshadow local efforts.** Often the government pushes back against direct or open diplomatic involvement in domestic legal issues. Therefore, it is important not to rely exclusively on diplomatic efforts but to build a domestically owned reform strategy.

Voices from Actors in Engaging the Diplomatic Community
Leading Actors in advocating freedom of association in the diplomatic and international communities share their insights via video messages.

Maina Kiai (Kenya), UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of assembly and of association (http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/AssemblyAssociation/Pages/Videos.aspx)

Rafendi Djamin (Indonesia), Indonesian Representative and former Chairman, ASEAN Inter-Governmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) (http://vimeo.com/25201980)

CHAPTER 4: ENGAGING THE MEDIA

Engaging the media is an important component in advocacy efforts. For instance, advocates can use local and international media for "naming and shaming" governments to pressure them to respond to reform initiatives because governments are often sensitive to what is reported about them. Through local and international media, one can also mobilize support by generating public debate. Knowing the potential power of the media, how can we best engage it to maximize the impact of advocacy?

Engaging Local Media

How do we know when to engage local media to generate public debate or support?

➢ **Consult and share the information about the reform initiative with other civil society groups before reaching out to the media.** It is important to build some core messages from the civil society sector before presenting them to the media.

➢ **Maintain contact details of journalists and keep them up to date.** If you do not have journalist contacts handy, you can consider using a public relations firm, which can disseminate your press releases and information to relevant journalists and news agencies based on your needs.

➢ **Know which newspapers and media channels the relevant policy makers read.**

> *EXAMPLE from INDONESIA*
> *President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of **Indonesia** reads two national daily newspapers, Jurnas (www.jurnas.com) and Kompas (www.kompas.com) everyday, as well as the English-daily Jakarta Post (www.thejakartapost.com). Because he is concerned about Indonesia's international image, the Indonesian Foreign Minister also pays attention to the Jakarta Post, which is widely read by foreigners in Indonesia.*

> *EXAMPLE from UKRAINE*
> *Ukrainska Pravda (www.pravda.com.ua) is an important media channel for politicians, policy makers, intellectuals, and civil society leaders in Ukraine.*

➢ **Educate the media with the right information before it reports false information on its own.** Early engagement with the media prevents the government, diplomats, and donors from being misinformed about civil society concerns and positions.

➢ **Be aware of risk!** Media sometimes twists your information and messages.

➢ **Do not focus your advocacy strategies solely on media.** To get coverage in the national media, you sometimes need a strong and catchy political opinion. However, you might consider avoiding extreme positions, which can be counter-productive on your advocacy efforts.

How do we make the issues interesting to the local media's readers and listeners?

➢ **Use concrete information, such as statistics and facts.**

➢ **Relate your message to daily life.** If the people don't see the relevancy of the reform initiative to their own concerns, then it will be very hard to get their support. Package the message in "human" terms and connect with the target audience emotionally.

➤ In countries sensitive about their international image, **linking the issues to constitutional rights and international law** would be helpful.

> EXAMPLE from Uganda
> *A Ugandan civil society group published an opinion article (http://mobile.monitor.co.ug/Oped/-/691272/1161406/-/format/xhtml/-/13heq14z/-/index.html) responding to the incident in which the police clashed with protesters. Through this article, the human rights group directly addressed the President of the country, referring to provisions in the Constitution and highlighting the State's responsibility to guarantee and protect fundamental rights.*

➤ **Personal stories are powerful.** Tell stories about how people have been affected by the law, etc. Again, make a connection between the law reform issue and human impact.

How can we package our message in a press release so it is "reader-friendly"?

➤ **The press release should be short, concise, and precise, with two to three main ideas and arguments.** It should be no more than 900 words. The first paragraph should be a synthesis of the issues. And the text must be legible (12 pt. font, for example) if the document will be printed as a brochure.

> *EXAMPLE from NICARAGUA (Sample Press Release in Spanish) (www.cinco.org.ni/noticia/72)*

➤ **Provide the media with "ready-to-print" materials.** Many reporters or journalists do not have the time to do research and write articles with in-depth information. Therefore, provide the materials and information that journalists would need to publish efficiently.

➤ Messages **that link to constitutional rights of assembly and association** will capture the media's attention.

Who from my "movement" should speak to the local media? What should be considered in choosing an effective spokesperson?

➤ A spokesperson should **be knowledgeable and be able to translate complex issues into simple terms**.

➤ A spokesperson **should be able to interact with journalists and media and use the limited media time/space available efficiently and effectively**. The spokesperson must be able to respond to unexpected questions without becoming flustered or losing the gist of the main message.

➤ A spokesperson **can be a victim or celebrity who can bring human stories to the issues**.

➤ **Do not engage in excessive exposure of victims.** When victims become too public and become the center of public/media attention, the general public might get annoyed and lose their sympathy for the cause.

How can we get the local media to understand that creating and/or protecting civil society space is in their interest?

➢ **Understand that media are usually business entities.** Editors often decide what topics or issues the media covers with an eye to generating profits.

➢ **Invite the media to workshops, discussions, and other activities, and keep them involved over the course of your advocacy efforts.** In this way, the media becomes more aware of the issues of concern.

➢ Cultivate relationships with journalists by **being at their disposal and providing them with updated information on a regular basis.**

➢ **Make your information easily available** to the media. Create a "press room" on your organization's Web site, where you can make all related information and materials available. This would make for an easy one-stop place for journalists to learn about your initiatives and issues.

Engaging International Media

Why do international media matter in my advocacy efforts?

➢ **International media can provide international outlets** for advocacy activists.

➢ Engaging international media matters in advocacy efforts because **it draws the attention of various governments to your cause, which can lead to responses from their embassies**.

➢ **International media can be particularly effective in countries in which the governments are sensitive about their international image.**

How do we know when to engage the international media?

➢ **Keep international media informed of your efforts and share information with them on a regular basis**. Develop regular contact with international media; don't approach them only when you need them.

➢ **Link the reform advocacy to the anniversary or commemoration of a particular event relevant to the issue.**

➢ **International media pay attention to issues that meet the following criteria: conflict, collective impact, practicality, and transcendence.**

Using New Media and Other Communication Tools

How can we use new media and other technologies in our advocacy efforts?

➢ **Create a specific Web site for your campaign where you can post updates, media materials, and various resources**, such as the text of current and draft laws, analyses of those laws, and comparative research materials.

   EXAMPLE from UKRAINE

*A Web site for a **Ukrainian** civil society coalition (http://gromzakon.org.ua/) supporting an enabling NGO law serves as a resource center. It includes all the information that relates to the current and draft law, as well as video interviews and presentations on the draft law. The coalition also uses an email list to share updates.*

EXAMPLE from MALAYSIA
*A Web site section of a movement in **Malaysia** (http://bersih.org/?page_id=4325) calling for electoral law reforms posts "ready-to-print" brochures for anyone who is interested in joining the movement or disseminating the information to others.*

➢ **Use social networking tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, to generate interest and share new information.** Since international media today follow information on social networking sites, their use becomes an important way to communicate.

EXAMPLE from CAMBODIA
*A Facebook group for a campaign against **Cambodia**'s proposed NGO Law is one of the communication tools that Cambodian civil society groups use to share updates and generate debates.*

➢ **Use international media blog spaces to internationalize your campaign.**

EXAMPLE from CAMBODIA
***Cambodia**'s civil society groups effectively use the space created by international media, such as UK's Guardian (http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/may/09/western-donors-stand-cambodian-goverment), to disseminate local voices.*

➢ **Use videos and cartoons** to relate political issues to people's everyday lives.

EXAMPLE from KENYA
*A **Kenyan** human rights activist used a film(http://vimeo.com/13242621) and TV program to stimulate discussions of fundamental freedoms enshrined in Kenya's new Constitution among people in different communities.*

EXAMPLE from VENEZUELA
*A civil society group in **Venezuela** generated a debate on a constitutional amendment using a video(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBHO1nrFWxE).*

➢ Check out these publications to **learn more about the use of new media**.

Strategizing Online Activism: A Toolkit
(http://www.violenceisnotourculture.org/files/Strategising%20Online%20Activism.pdf)

DigiActive Introduction to Facebook Activism
(https://www.aswat.com/files/digiactive_facebook_EN.pdf)

DigiActive Guide to Twitter Activism(http://www.slideshare.net/DigiActive/digiactive-guide-introduction-twitter-for-activism)

Blog for a Cause! The Global Voices Guide to Blog Advocacy
(http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/projects/guide-blog-for-a-cause/)

➢ **Be aware of risks** connected to use of new media and digital information. Learn how to **protect your information**. See a list of tools on digital security.

Voices from Actors in Engaging the Media
Leading Actors in engaging the media in reform efforts share their insights via video messages.

Kavi Chongkittavorn (Thailand), Editor, the Nation Multimedia Group (http://vimeo.com/32868013)

Premesh Chandran (Malaysia), Co-Founder, Malaysiakini (http://vimeo.com/23874319)

CHAPTER 5: BUILDING DIALOGUE WITH GOVERNMENT, PARLIAMENTARIANS, & OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Governments and parliaments are ultimately responsible for developing and reforming legal frameworks for civil society. Therefore, it is important for advocacy efforts to ensure that the government and parliament in a country understand and address advocates' concerns in the drafting or amending of legal provisions while accommodating government interests. To do so, organizations working for reforms should communicate and negotiate effectively with government officials and parliamentarians to develop mutual understanding. This chapter brings together information about how to engage and build dialogue with governments and parliaments to influence their legal reform processes.

Dialogue with Government

How do we prepare for dialogue with government officials?

➢ **Conduct political mapping and keep the map updated.** Always be aware of the following: Who has the power to act and change? Who has influence? What kind of information impresses people in power? What kind of information motivates influential people to help?

➢ **Engage government officials, especially key reform supporters, on a regular basis.** This helps to prepare for any surprises. However, **be aware that government officials and political leaders change positions. Do not assume that the interests of other and/or new leaders and officials from the same agencies and political parties will be the same.**

> *EXAMPLE from UKRAINE*
> *Following up on the Council of Europe's 2008 recommendations that **Ukraine**'s law on NGOs be reformed and made consistent with European standards and practices, then-Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko submitted a new draft law to the Parliament. However, the draft law was opposed in the Parliament by members of her own political party.*

➢ **Study government's plans**. For example, review legislative calendars for parliament. Also, examining past trends in legal reforms provides valuable insight. These exercises will help you understand the government's interests and identify possible incentives for reforms.

➢ **Study government's statements and announcements** because they usually provide insight into what the government's motives and intentions are.

➢ **Be alert to a political decision that may reveal an opening for reforming the law that governs civil society.**

➢ **Be prepared as you begin your campaign because opportunities come at short notice.** (Sometimes, a draft law may be sent to you for review or comment at 5 pm and you are asked to provide feedback by 9 am the next morning.)

➢ It is important **to understand which offices and parliamentary committees are involved in the process of drafting and introducing a bill.** In addition to relevant ministries and parliamentary committees, it is sometimes vital to reach out to the executive branch offices as well, such as the office of planning and budget, for example, because they might be charged to examine all the issues surrounding the bill, including budget and financial considerations.

➢ **Prepare recommendations to reform the existing NGO law based on consultative research.** This research should include expert recommendations that are supported by a broad group of NGOs. This helps build constructive dialogue with the government, which often sees NGOs as its critics and opponents.

➢ **Develop an alternative law and use it as a basis for dialogue.** Even where the government has developed a draft law, there may be strategic value in civic groups developing an alternative draft law for consideration. This is particularly true where the government draft is fundamentally flawed.

> *EXAMPLE from KENYA*
> *After a series of consultations with hundreds of civil society groups throughout the country, a civil society coalition in **Kenya** drafted a Public Benefit Organizations (PBO) Bill(http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/Kenya-Draft_PBO_BILL_March_2012.pdf) in 2011. Through the drafting process, the coalition shared the draft Bill with the NGO Coordination Board, which is the government agency responsible for registering NGOs, the Kenya Law Reform Commission (KLRC), and various Members of Parliament. With the draft Bill, the coalition was able to explore possibilities of a joint retreat with the KLRC for technical review. Although the joint retreat did not happen, the discussion exploring such possibilities helped facilitate information sharing with the KLRC. The draft PBO Bill was eventually accepted by the Parliamentary Committee on Legal Affairs in December 2011, and was submitted to the full Parliament.*
>
> *EXAMPLE from AZERBAIJAN*
> ***Azerbaijan**'s Law on Grants was drafted by civil society groups working with international experts, and was adopted by the Government in 1998 largely because the Government did not have a draft of its own.*

➢ **Keep monitoring the text of a draft law as the government and the Parliament change the text through their discussions.** Even if you are part of a working group that develops and finalizes the draft law, the text of the supposedly final draft can change as it goes through government agencies and parliamentary discussions.

➢ **Monitor and document issues arising from the implementation of the law.**

➢ **Be aware of the government's potential limitations.** The government might have limited ability to absorb your research, findings, and recommendations. Institutional problems, such as international issues or party politics, may limit the ability of government bodies to incorporate recommendations from civil society organizations.

➢ It is **unwise to have all your eggs in one basket.** Make sure to work with multiple agencies and officials within the government because they operate from their own perspectives and within their own institutional limitations.

> *VIDEO MESSAGE from KENYA (http://vimeo.com/39010315)*

How do we know when to approach the government?
➢ **Periods of political transition present an opportunity** for civil society groups to become more involved in forming new constitutions and reorganizing government systems and structures.

➢ **Potentially meaningful dialogue might emerge from new, politically progressive appointments to office.** When such appointments take place in more than one section of the government, there is the potential for a movement on the part of government to support a freer civil society.

➢ **Windows of opportunity to engage government open up when the government signs international agreements.** Such agreements are a very public statement that the government will pursue a specific set of objectives.

➢ **Invite government officials to work in partnership at the launch of a project**. Informing the government of planned activities and identifying possible areas for cooperation ahead of time will increase the likelihood of partnership.

➢ **Engage with the government whenever opportunities are created.** Many governments invite civil society representatives to consult on their draft NGO laws. Sometimes, external players also open a window of opportunity for legal reforms of which civil society can use to its advantage.

> *EXAMPLE from LIBERIA*
> *In **Liberia**, the development of the NGO Policy was initiated in 2006 by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs with the support of UNDP. The CSOs rejected the first draft of the Policy as too restrictive. They demanded to be included in the process of developing the Policy, since it would affect groups like themselves. Responding to the strong demand from the CSOs, the Government opened up the process of reviewing and revising the Policy and invited the CSOs to participate and provide their input. After the CSOs were satisfied with the draft, the revised NGO Policy was finally adopted by the Government in 2008.*
>
> *EXAMPLE from MACEDONIA*
> *After **Macedonia** became a candidate to join the European Union in 2005, the Macedonian Government identified the 1998 CSO law as a priority for review and harmonization with EU regulations. This opened the space for CSOs and others to speak to government's interests and to advocate more effectively on behalf of developing an enabling legal framework for civil society. With input from CSOs, the new Law on Associations and Foundations was enacted in April 2010. (Read more: European Center for Not-for-Profit Law, "Elements for Successful CSO Law Reform Initiatives."*
> *(http://ecnl.org/dindocuments/353_ECNL%20Successful%20CSO%20Law%20Reforms%2020 11%20Final%20May%202011.pdf))*
>
> *EXAMPLE from SERBIA*
> *As in Macedonia, many of the reforms pertinent to civil society groups were a part of international commitments made by the **Serbian** Government. This helped catalyze the process of reform. When Serbia joined the Council of Europe in 2003, it was required to ratify the European Convention on Human Rights and to commit to drafting a new law on association that would comply with the Convention. The law was eventually enacted in 2009.*
>
> *EXAMPLE from UKRAINE*
> *Civil society groups in **Ukraine** also engaged the government to push for reforms when the Council of Europe concluded that the current Ukrainian NGO law did not meet EU standards. The Parliamentary Committee members and civil society groups established a joint working group on drafting a new NGO law while working with the President's Office. (See the Council*

of Europe's Action Plan for Ukraine: 2008-2011.
*(*https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1317485&Site=CM *))*

➢ **Political timelines are good indicators of when to engage the government. Engaging with the government right after an election might be opportune** because this is the period when politicians are most apt to implement measures and develop political agendas. Also, **consider the budget planning cycle** because the process of amending a law might have budgetary implications. In some cases, it has been effective to put the NGO law issue on the agendas of political parties before elections take place. But in other political contexts, dialogue can become fractious and heated during the election period.

> *EXAMPLE from ESTONIA*
> **Estonia***'s Civil Society Manifesto (http://www.ngo.ee/arhiiv/www.ngo.ee/28222.html) was signed by all political parties before the elections in 2007. After the elections, the party that came into power pushed the NGO agenda forward according to the principles outlined in the Manifesto.*

➢ **Engage with a judicial mechanism, and use public litigation to challenge repressive policies.**

> *EXAMPLE from UGANDA*
> *The constitutional framework can be used effectively to challenge certain legislation. Human right groups in **Uganda** brought a case challenging the prison conditions in the country to the Constitutional Court, citing Article 15 of the Constitution, which allows anyone to bring a violation of human rights case to court.*
> *Important lessons:*
> - *A constitutional petition requires thorough research on evidence, and completing a petition is a time-consuming process. In the successful Ugandan case on prison conditions, it took three law firms to complete the petition. The petitioners also need to be aware of the costs involved in the process.*
> - *Unfortunately, a Constitutional Court's ruling in one's favor does not translate into immediate changes. The ruling needs to be followed by administrative policies that enforce the ruling. Therefore, civil society groups need to monitor the administrative decisions that are made after the court ruling closely.*
> - *It might be difficult to challenge the constitutionality of a law if the law has not been fully implemented or if there is no specific, hard evidence that the Constitution has been violated.*

> *VIDEO MESSAGE from RUSSIA(http://vimeo.com/17130883)*

What are the key messages that I should deliver? How can we best package those messages?

➢ **Develop a message that speaks to the needs of the society and that shows how changing the legal framework will affect those needs.** An effective message should highlight how the legal framework for CSOs is linked to the development and prosperity of the country. It should include examples of how civil society's work contributes to the government's goal of social development and delivery of social services. This helps prevent the reform initiative from being politicized.

> *EXAMPLE from IRAQ*
> *During their advocacy efforts that led to the successful passage of the progressive Law 12 of 2010 in **Iraq**, civil society groups highlighted how a strong civil society sector could*

contribute to rebuilding the country and attracting foreign funding to support local development. (Read more: European Center for Not-for-Profit Law "Elements for Successful CSO Law Reform Initiatives" http://ecnl.org/dindocuments/353_ECNL%20Successful%20CSO%20Law%20Reforms%20201 1%20Final%20May%202011.pdf)

➢ **Try to link advocacy efforts to government priorities**.

EXAMPLE from Kenya
Kenya*'s draft Public Benefit Organizations (PBO) Bill (http://www.wmd.org/sites/default/files/Kenya-Draft_PBO_BILL_March_2012.pdf) refers back to the implementation of the country's new 2010 Constitution, which is one of the government's top priorities.*

➢ **Offer examples from other countries at a similar level of development.** Sometimes it might be helpful to demonstrate that similar, restrictive legal measures are used in "less developed" countries (that is, countries that politicians consider less developed than their own). These messages might encourage the government to undertake progressive initiatives.

EXAMPLE from AZERBAIJAN
Until 2009, there was no legal provision on volunteers in **Azerbaijan***. In the interest of promoting and protecting volunteers working with NGOs, a key message to the government was that this lack of legislation governing volunteerism in the country was an impediment to the development of civil society and that volunteerism is regulated and protected in all "developed" countries; therefore, inaction would leave Azerbaijan behind. As a result, in 2009, the Parliament of Azerbaijan adopted the Law on Voluntary Activities. The new law was considered an improvement in the regulatory environment for volunteers in Azerbaijan.*

➢ Messages should be non-partisan. A message should **link concerns with the current and/or proposed law to** the importance of strengthening democratic institutions and the democratic role of the state.

  ➢ **Cite international and regional documents, norms, and standards**, such as the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, European Convention on Human Rights (http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/005.htm), Council of Europe Recommendations, Inter-American Democratic Charter (http://www.oas.org/charter/docs/resolution1_en_p4.htm); African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (http://www.africa-union.org/Official_documents/Treaties_%20Conventions_%20Protocols/Banjul%20Charter.pdf)and African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Documents/Treaties/text/Charter%20on%20Democracy.pdf), among others.

➢ **Show that the NGO community and the general public support more enabling legal measures for civil society groups.**

How do we deliver our messages and develop meaningful engagement with the government?

➢ To be effective, **the same message should be delivered to the government through different channels, which can include**:

- Submission of analyses of the existing situation with a comparative overview of experience in other countries, particularly in those that are seen by the government as "best models" or "competitors."
- Roundtable discussions with experts and immediate decision-makers from state bodies.
- Tête-à-tête meetings with high-level officials, such as ministers; heads of diplomatic missions, such as ambassadors; and heads of international organizations, during which issues can be raised and follow-up is promised.
- Publishing articles in leading newspapers and e-media.

➢ **Study tours can be a useful tool** not only to demonstrate how other countries have managed to reform civil society law successfully, but also to build good personal relationships with key figures from the government.

➢ **Establish an organizing committee or a working group made up of key actors, including government officials, civil society actors, and other stakeholders when possible.** This can help to ensure that the advocacy process is a joint project, rather than a single organization's effort. A working group made up of different actors can be led by a government office, parliamentary committee, or civil society organization.

> *EXAMPLE from MEXICO*
> *In **Mexico**, several NGO leaders and academics established a working group to develop strategies for improving the fiscal laws and policies affecting the NGO community. The working group membership eventually expanded and included representatives from the tax authorities, the Tax Administration Serve (Servicio de Administracion Tributaria – SAT), and the Treasury (Ministerio de Hacienda).*

Who in my "movement" should engage in these dialogues?

➢ **The message-bearer should be independent, respected, and someone who can articulate the issue well.**

➢ **Choose someone who can represent the movement and its constituency as well as maintain independent of the government in negotiating and discussing issues effectively with government officials.**

➢ **Choose individuals with a good image among decision makers,** and each of your representatives should have a clearly defined role.

➢ **Do not assemble a big group** just for the sake of having a big group.

➢ **The movement's representatives can include experts** to speak on technical aspects of reforms, but not on behalf of NGOs.

➢ **Consider inviting foreign experts and officials to speak on your behalf**. They may have a less politicized view of the situation than local NGOs or government experts.

➢ **Keep the discussion focused so that people do not "steal" time** by trying to address their own issues at meetings instead of promoting reforms in NGO law. Speakers may seek to shift the conversation to other topics that may be unrelated to your movement's goals or current focus.

How do we know if and when to break off dialogue with the government?

- ➢ If you have been advocating a certain message for a long period of time without much success, it may be time to assess it and change the way it is presented. **You do not necessarily need to break off dialogue. Instead, seek to re-engage the government through a different approach.**

- ➢ **Take gradual steps and use incremental processes** in engaging the government.

- ➢ **Use an "insider-outsider" strategy** that maintains communications with government through umbrella groups while human rights groups from your coalition challenge the law through legal remedies.

Dialogue with Parliamentarians

How should we prepare for engaging in dialogue with parliamentarians?

- ➢ **Ensure that parliamentarians understand the issues and concerns.**

- ➢ **Stay out of political party-oriented debates and ensure that the discussion remains a multi-party dialogue.** It is more effective to work with members of parliament (MPs) from different parties so the issue is not perceived to be partisan. If all of your supporters are from the opposition party, the ruling party may respond quickly and negatively.

- ➢ **Conduct political mapping** to:
  - o Identify active MPs who are normally open to working with CSOs;
  - o Identify MPs particularly affected by a cause (i.e. women's rights, persons with disabilities, the environment, etc.) and let them know how restrictions on civil society can affect work on such causes;
  - o Identify issues on the legislative agenda related to the NGO law; and
  - o Identify which parliamentary committee normally discusses draft laws in detail and identify MPs within that committee.

- ➢ **Understand the mechanism and timing for the adoption of laws.**

  EXAMPLE from BULGARIA
  *In **Bulgaria**, the end of the year is a bad time for NGO law reform initiatives because that is when the Parliament discusses the budget and tax laws.*

- ➢ **Try to identify key messengers (or "champions") within the Parliament** and form a working group to discuss the draft.

  EXAMPLE from IRAQ
  *In **Iraq**, Ms. Ala Talabani, MP, head of the Council of Representative's Civil Society Affairs Committee, played a key role in helping channel CSO input and guided the CSO involvement in the process of drafting a new law for CSOs (Law 12 of 2010). She mobilized MPs and worked closely with civil society leaders in responding to the Government's draft law and developing an alternative draft. The Law was adopted in the Council of Representatives based on the alternative draft. (Read more: European Center for Not-for-Profit Law "Elements for Successful CSO Law Reform Initiatives." http://ecnl.org/dindocuments/353_ECNL%20Successful%20CSO%20Law%20Reforms%20201 1%20Final%20May%202011.pdf))*

➢ **Understand what resources your organization can offer** to facilitate the involvement of parliamentarians. For example, the prospect of involvement in future projects in the country and a possibility of a study trip abroad, etc., can help with dialogue.

When and how do we approach parliamentarians?

➢ **Engaging parliamentarians *BEFORE* a bill is introduced to the Parliament is critical.** Working with key parliamentarians in the process of drafting the bill helps not only to elevate the level of their knowledge about the issue and the substance of the draft bill, but also creates a shared sense of ownership over the entire process.

➢ When the level of knowledge among MPs about the draft law or amendment is low, you should **educate them on potential consequences of the draft and encourage them to engage in revising it.**

➢ **When certain parliamentary commissions develop and approve their new agendas,** you can provide input and seek opportunities to advocate for a reform-based agenda.

➢ Opportunities to engage with certain MPs might arise **when you hear or read in the media that they are taking initiatives in the areas of your interest.**

➢ **Reach out to MPs with experience in initiating, amending, or drafting laws.** Some MPs do not have experience doing this even though they are interested in the issues to be addressed.

➢ In many countries, **providing a printed copy of your materials** is important.

➢ **Serve as a resource to MPs and the Government**. When an MP or government official is interested in building his or her positive image, you can offer some creative, progressive ideas and thus "bind" him or her to your expertise and resources.

➢ **Provide legislators with an incentive to participate in your projects**, pointing out the possibility of being recognized for their contribution to good governance.

Dialogue with Other Stakeholders

Who are the other stakeholders (global/regional bodies, the private sector, etc.) we should engage and why?

➢ While many legal reform initiatives tend to be organized by capital-based NGOs and/or legal experts, it is important to recognize that **community-based organizations and grassroots organizations** have important roles to play in those initiatives. Community-based groups and grassroots organizations are also beneficiaries of laws affecting civil society groups. Working with these organizations, the reform initiatives should raise awareness of such issues throughout the country and build a broad consensus in civil society sector at large.

➢ **Local authorities** can be very important, especially when provisions in a law affect their functions. For example, in some countries, local authorities provide financial support to NGO projects and the NGO law sometimes includes provisions regarding public funding.

➢ **Police and law enforcement offices** should be contacted and consulted as you engage in legal reform initiatives. Their interpretation of the law affects its implementation, and it is crucial, therefore, that they interpret the legal measures appropriately.

➢ **Business associations** are potential allies.

> *EXAMPLE from BULGARIA*
> *In **Bulgaria**, NGOs make efforts to involve business associations in the issue of taxation of donors. In 2008, the government attempted to eliminate all tax benefits for donors, and introduced a flat tax of 10% on corporate profits. A group of NGOs joined the leaders from the business community, and their efforts successfully stopped the government's initiative.*

➢ **University students** can be important advocates.

> *EXAMPLE from VENEZUELA*
> *University students in **Venezuela** played an important role in distributing information materials not only in the capital city, but also throughout the country, using their university networks and student unions. Students are traditionally seen as non-partisan, and this helps the effort to reach out to different sectors of a politically divided society.*

> *VIDEO MESSAGE from THE GAMBIA(http://vimeo.com/23813025)*

➢ **Academics, such as scholars and professors,** can not only provide analyses of existing legal frameworks and develop alternative drafts, but also help sustain the reform's impact by developing curricula on CSO laws for law schools.

➢ **Beneficiaries of civil society activities** should be encouraged to participate in discussions of legal measures that govern civil society activities. Legal reform efforts should reach out to teachers and students who benefit from civil society groups' education-related projects, parents whose children receive health services from civil society organizations, and farmers who might be affected by a particular policy that civil society groups advocate. This helps build legitimacy into the advocacy efforts.

> *VIDEO MESSAGE from KENYA (http://vimeo.com/39003754)*

CHAPTER 6: SURVIVING IN A SEVERELY RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

While pushing for legal reforms, CSOs that work in restrictive environments often face immediate challenges to their existence and operation. Here are some coping mechanisms such organizations can consider:

➢ **Work as an informal association** if the law allows.
➢ If registering as a society or NGO is difficult, **register as a for-profit or non-profit company** instead. Many human rights and advocacy organizations decide to register themselves as civil companies to legalize their existence and receive funds.
➢ If registering as a society or NGO is difficult in your own country, **consider registering in a neighboring country**. By registering your organization in a neighboring country, you would be able to operate and carry out activities while ensuring that you are still close to your information sources and the beneficiaries of your work.
➢ **Organize your activities under the umbrella of an existing registered NGO or faith-based organization** if you cannot register your own group.
➢ **Seek legal assistance in registering.** There are some legal clinics that help NGOs with the registration process. Such legal clinics may be able to help navigate not only the administratively overwhelming registration process, but also the politically sensitive aspects of the registration.
➢ **Seek emergency support** from the international community and NGOs.

> *Lifeline: Embattled NGO Assistance Fund*
> **Lifeline: Embattled NGO Assistance Fund***(http://www.freedomhouse.org/program/lifeline-embattled-ngo-assistance-fund) – Freedom House has launched an international consortium to support NGOs that come under threat around the world. This Fund helps NGOs withstand crackdowns and pressure and resume their work to defend citizens' rights and freedoms by providing emergency assistance and speaking out on their behalf.*
>
> *Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Trust*
> **Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Trust** *(http://sahrdt.org/) – The Trust provides humanitarian assistance to human rights defenders in danger and their families. Their support includes emergency financial support, medical treatment, temporary re-location, and psychological and legal counseling.*
>
> *Front Lne Defenders*
> **Front Line Defenders** *(http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/emergency) – Front Line provides 24-hour support to human rights defenders at immediate risk. If there is a crisis, you can contact Front Line at any hour on their emergency hotline.*

RESOURCES: OTHER USEFUL TOOLS, HANDBOOKS & MANNUALS

1. ENGAGING CIVIL SOCIETY

Advocacy Toolkit: Guidance on how to advocate for a more enabling environment for civil society in your context
De Toma, Constanza, Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness: 2012.
This Toolkit provides guidance and tools that civil society organizations around the world can use to advocate for a more enabling environment for civil society in various contexts. It outlines seven steps to plan and implement advocacy work.
English (http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/120110-of-advocacy_toolkit-en-web-2.pdf)
French (http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/120109-of-advocacy_toolkit-fr-web-2.pdf)
Spanish (http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/120109-of-advocacy-toolkit-es-web-2.pdf)

2. ENGAGING DIPLOMATIC & DONOR COMMUNITIES

What Protection Can EU and Norwegian Diplomatic Missions Offer?
Collier, Chris. Front Line Defenders: 2008. Dublin, Ireland.
The handbook details the ways, in which the European Union and Norway have committed themselves to supporting and protecting human rights defenders. It also makes suggestions to human rights defenders (HRDs) regarding how they might use these guidelines as tools to improve their security. The handbook concludes with key contacts in the EU and a list of Norwegian embassy locations.
English
(http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/droi/dv/droi_20100125_3flhb_/droi_20100125_3flhb_en.pdf)

Diplomat's Handbook for Democracy Development Support
Council for a Community of Democracies: 2011.
This resource presents various case studies examining how diplomatic missions have supported requests from civil society in the past, and how such support has been received and applied.
Web site (http://www.diplomatshandbook.org/)
English (http://www.diplomatshandbook.org/pdf/Diplomats_Handbook.pdf)
Spanish (http://www.diplomatshandbook.org/pdf/Diplomats_Handbook_Spanish.pdf)

3. ENGAGING THE MEDIA

Writing Manual for Commercial Diplomats
Connell, Eve. The International Commercial Diplomacy Project.
This manual includes resources for writing and presenting policy papers, advocacy letters, memoranda, briefing papers and reports, press releases, op-eds, emails, and public testimonies. The resource also covers topics such as how to prepare for negotiations or work with interpreters.
English (http://www.commercialdiplomacy.org/pdf/manual/writing_manual.pdf)

Visualizing Information Advocacy
Tactical Technology Collective.
This manual highlights methods that NGOs and advocates can use to strengthen the way their campaigns and projects communicate with their audience. The manual introduces concepts, promotes good practice in information design, and demonstrates how visual graphics can become a powerful tool for advocacy, outreach, research, organization, and education.

English (http://archive.tacticaltech.org/infodesign)
Russian (http://archive.tacticaltech.org/files/tacticaltech/Infodesign_russian.pdf)

Maps for Advocacy: How to use mapping skills for campaigning
Tactical Technology Collective: 2010. United Kingdom.
This guide gives many case studies examining how online maps have been used for activism (e.g., tracking press freedom, wiki-style environmental collaborations).
English (http://tacticaltech.org/mapsforadvocacy)

Media Tips: 36 tips to increase your media coverage
Aswat.
This resource offers 36 tips to increase an organization's media coverage. It includes topics such as developing a mailing list, formatting letters, and catching and holding the attention of both allies and the opposition.
Arabic (http://aswat.com/ar/content/36-%D9%86%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%AD%D8%A9-
%D9%84%D9%83%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D9%85%D9%86-
%D8%AD%D8%AC%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%BA%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%A9-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9-0)
English (http://aswat.com/en/content/media-tips-36-tips-increase-your-media-coverage)

4.   NEW MEDIA

Tools for communicating your cause: A guide for Improving Digital Security.
Tactical Technology Collective: 2009. United Kingdom.
This resource focuses on the process of making and distributing an organization's media. It covers strategies for making effective print media, images, audio, Internet resources, and videos. Each section includes information, references, links and case studies. "Message in-a-box" also provides open source software tools and video and text 'how-to' guides. There is also a resource discussing how to blog anonymously.
English (http://www.messageinabox.tacticaltech.org/)

Mobiles for Advocacy
Tactical Technology Collective: 2009. United Kingdom.
Mobiles for Advocacy is a guide on how to use cell phones to enact social change, to create a mobile network in their region, and to use mobile phones to communicate, meet with supporters, and gain followers and information.
English (http://mobiles.tacticaltech.org)

DigiActive Introduction to Facebook Activism
Schultz, Dan. DigiActive: 2008.
The resource offers a brief introduction on how to use Facebook in campaigning, and it includes real life examples of Facebook campaigns from around the world (including Egypt and Burma).
English (https://www.aswat.com/files/digiactive_facebook_EN.pdf)

DigiActive Guide to Twitter Activism
Jungherr, Andreas. DigiActive: 2009.
DigiActive created this guide on how Twitter can be used as a tool for activism. The resource offers a comprehensive Toolkit on using Twitter as part of an organization's overall strategy.
English (http://www.slideshare.net/DigiActive/digiactive-guide-introduction-twitter-for-activism)

Blog for a Cause! The Global Voices Guide to Blog Advocacy
Joyce, Mary. Global Voices Advocacy: 2008.
This manual illustrates ways to circumvent internet filtering, blog anonymously, and effectively use Internet tools in campaigns. The guide discusses how activists can use blogs and the Internet as part of their efforts.
Arabic (http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/wp-content/plugins/download-monitor/download.php?id=9)
Chinese (http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/wp-content/plugins/download-monitor/download.php?id=13)
English (http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/projects/guide-blog-for-a-cause/)
French (http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/wp-content/plugins/download-monitor/download.php?id=8)
Spanish (http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/wp-content/plugins/download-monitor/download.php?id=6)

NGO-In-A-Box: The Audio/Video Edition
NGO In A Box: Breakdown Press.
This Toolkit includes information on audio and video editing and production, streaming audio and video players, CD/DVD burning, online distribution, podcasts, web publishing, micro radio and TV use, and digital distribution strategies.
English (http://av.ngoinabox.org/?q=node/47)
Portuguese (http://pt.av.ngoinabox.org/)

Message In-A-Box
Tactical Technology Collective.
This Web site discusses strategies for making media, print, images, audio, Internet, video, and mobiles. Each section includes information, references, links and case studies showing the effective use of media. It covers topics such as marketing tools and tips, video security, advocacy videos without a camera, printing strategies, information-sharing via mobile phones, and blogging.
Web site (http://messageinabox.tacticaltech.org/)

10 Tactics Project
Tactical Technology Collective: 2009. London, UK.
This 50-minute video discusses how to create informational campaigns and frame messages effectively. It includes interviews with people who have run successful campaigns and tips for creating a tactics party, and the video can be viewed with subtitles in over 20 languages.
Video (http://www.informationactivism.org/en/about)

5. *BUILDING DIALOGUE WITH GOVERNMENT, PARLIAMENTARIANS, & OTHER STAKEHOLDERS*

Political-Process Monitoring: Activists Tools and Techniques
Pompi, Kourtney; Kohlmoos, Lacey, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs: 2011.
This introductory guide to "political process monitoring" provides case studies, program design frameworks, implementation suggestions, and tools and templates for civil society groups and practitioners.
English (http://www.ndi.org/political-process_monitoring_guide)

Tools for Activists: The Letter Writing Campaign
Women Living Under Muslim Law: 2009. London, United Kingdom.

This guide details why writing letters can be a crucial way to get your message out and how to formulate an effective letter-writing action plan.
English (http://www.wluml.org/sites/wluml.org/files/WLUML%20Tools%20for%20Activists_The%20letter%20writing%20campaign_2009_0.pdf)

Building Civil Societies: A Guide for Social and Political Action
Hoodfar, Hooma; Pazira, Nelofer. Women Living Under Muslim Law: 2000. London, United Kingdom. The guide reviews various methods used by social activists around the world, outlines basic principles for preparing and publicizing various forms of solidarity action, and evaluates the limitations and effectiveness of each method. The guide also explains how to compose letters to members of the government or parliament, prepare and run a petition, signature, and postcard campaign, work with mass media, and lobby for an issue.
English (http://www.wluml.org/sites/wluml.org/files/import/english/pubs/pdf/build-civil-soc.pdf)
Urdu (http://www.wluml-pic.org/shop/product.php?code=rt05/urdu)

The One-Hour Activist
Kush, Christopher. Jossey-Bass: 2000.
This guide describes 15 grassroots actions that persuade lawmakers and candidates. Each action is designed to grab the attention of government representatives and build relationships with them. The guide also includes insider advice from elected officials, professional organizers, lobbyists, and journalists.
English (http://www.soapboxconsulting.com/)

6.   SURVIVING IN A SEVERELY RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Protection Manual for Human Rights Defenders
Eguren, Enrique. Front Line Defenders: 2010. London, UK.
The manual provides practical information on safety and security, such as how to assess risk and what to do after one is attacked. It also talks about maintaining personal security, specifically in areas of armed conflict.
Arabic (http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/files/en/Protection%20Manual%20for%20Human%20Rights%20Defenders%20Arabic.pdf
English (http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/files/en/2312_Protection%20Manual%20for%20Human%20Rights%20Defenders.pdf)
Farsi http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/files/en/Protection%20Manual%20Farsi.pdf)
French (http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/files/en/Protection%20Manual%20for%20Human%20Rights%20Defenders%20French.pdf)
Indonesian (http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/files/en/Soft%20Copy%20Manual%20para%20pembela%20HAM%20Edisi%20Indonesia.pdf)
Portuguese (http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/files/en/Protection%20Manual%20for%20Human%20Rights%20Defenders%20Portuguese.pdf)
Russian (http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/files/ru/Protection_Manual_for_Human_Rights_Defenders_Russian.pdf)

Spanish
(http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/files/en/Protection%20Manual%20for%20Human%20Rights%20Defenders%20Spanish.pdf)

The Front Line Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Online Manual
Front Line Defenders: 2006. London, England.
This manual examines how economic, social and cultural rights may be usefully, effectively and practically translated to the benefit of everyone. This publication examines how human rights workers can defend their social and economic rights.
English (http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/book/export/html/12784)

The Human Rights Defenders Briefing Papers
International Service for Human Rights. 2009. Switzerland.
This series of briefing papers provides practical information on rights relevant to the work of human rights defenders, such as the right to freedom of assembly, access to funding, and access to information, among others.
English (http://www.ishr.ch/briefing-papers)

New Tactics in Human Rights: A Resource for Practitioners
Goldstone, Justice; Johnson, Douglas. New Tactics: 2004. Minneapolis, Minnesota.
This resource focuses on "Prevention, Intervention, Restoration, & Building Human Rights Culture," and includes a section on how to contact people and organizations who can help prevent and respond to abuse of human rights and to threats to activists.
Arabic (http://www.newtactics.org/ar/tools/new-tactics-human-rights-resource-practitioners)
Bengali (http://www.newtactics.org/bn/tools/new-tactics-human-rights-resource-practitioners)
Croatian(http://www.newtactics.org/hr/tools/new-tactics-human-rights-resource-practitioners)
English (http://www.newtactics.org/ToolsforAction/TheNewTacticsWorkbook/Readerordownloadfile)
Farsi (http://www.newtactics.org/fa/tools/new-tactics-human-rights-resource-practitioners)
French (http://www.newtactics.org/fr/tools/new-tactics-human-rights-resource-practitioners-french)
Hebrew (http://www.newtactics.org/he/tools/new-tactics-human-rights-resource-practitioners-hebrew)
Indonesian (http://www.newtactics.org/id/tools/new-tactics-human-rights-resource-practitioners)
Mayan (http://www.newtactics.org/myn/tools/new-tactics-human-rights-resource-practitioners)
Mongolian (http://www.newtactics.org/mn/tools/new-tactics-human-rights-resource-practitioners)
Polish (http://www.newtactics.org/pl/tools/new-tactics-human-rights-resource-practitioners)
Russian (http://www.newtactics.org/ru/tools/new-tactics-human-rights-resource-practitioners)
Swahili (http://www.newtactics.org/sw/tools/new-tactics-human-rights-resource-practitioners)
Turkish (http://www.newtactics.org/tr/tools/new-tactics-human-rights-resource-practitioners)
Ukrainian (http://www.newtactics.org/uk/tools/new-tactics-human-rights-resource-practitioners)
Uzbek (http://www.newtactics.org/uz/tools/new-tactics-human-rights-resource-practitioners)

The Albert Einstein Institute Guide on "Self-Liberation: A Guide to Strategic Planning for Action to End a Dictatorship or Other Oppression"
Sharp, Gene; Raqib, Jamila. Albert Einstein Institute: 2009. Boston, U.S.A..
This is a strategic planning guide designed to assist people who seek to build strong civil society and democracy and to respond to oppression.
English (http://www.aeinstein.org/selfLiberation.html)

Women's Human Rights Defenders' Security Strategies: Insiste, Persiste, Resiste, Existe
Barry, Jane; Nainar, Vahida. Urgent Action Fund for Human Rights: 2008. Ottawa, Canada.

This guide uses personal stories and quotations to present various perspectives on how being a human rights defender can affect one's family, and on ways to both deal with the consequences and to protect oneself from harm. The guide also discusses how women can network with international organizations.
Arabic (http://www.kvinnatillkvinna.se/sites/default/files/Insiste%20Persiste%20Resiste%20Existe%20Arabiska.pdf)
Bosnian (http://www.kvinnatillkvinna.se/sites/default/files/BOSNIAN-Insiste-Persiste-Resiste-Existe-webversion-final_0.pdf)
English (http://www.urgentactionfund.org/assets/files/Resiste/Resiste-Final-Web.pdf)
French (http://www.kvinnatillkvinna.se/sites/default/files/FINAL_WEB_French_Insiste_Persiste_0.pdf)
Russian (http://www.kvinnatillkvinna.se/sites/default/files/Insiste_Ryska.pdf)
Spanish (http://www.urgentactionfund.org/assets/files/Resiste/FINAL%20SPANISH%20Insiste%20Persiste%20Resiste%20Existe.pdf)

Defending Human Rights: A Resource Book for Human Rights Defenders
Protecting Human Rights in the East and Horn of Africa: 2007. Uganda.
The book provides a brief overview of the most pressing human rights issues in several African countries, and then posits ways to address these problems without putting activists or human rights defenders at risk. The guide also refers to the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and the role of national law.
English (http://www.defenddefenders.org/documents/Defending%20Human%20Rights%20-%20A%20Resource%20Book.pdf)

New Protection Manual for Human Rights Defenders 3rd Edition
Fernández, Enrique; Caraj, Marie. Protection International: 2009. Belgium.
This new manual provides human rights defenders with additional knowledge and some tools that may be useful for improving their understanding of security and protection. The manual seeks to support training on security and protection and to help defenders undertake their own risk assessments and define security rules and procedures which suit their particular situations.
English (http://www.protectionline.org/New-Protection-Manual-for-Human.html)
French (http://www.protectionline.org/Nouveau-Manuel-de-protection-pour.html)
Portuguese (http://www.protectionline.org/IMG/pdf/NPMfHRD_portuguese.pdf)
Spanish (http://www.protectionline.org/Nuevo-Manual-de-Proteccion-para.html)

7.   DIGITAL SECURITY

A Guide to Anonymous Blogging with Wordpress and Tor
Zuckerman, Ethan. Global Voices Advocacy: 2007
This guide is built to help activists and the public in general express their political or personal opinions online safely and securely. It is a technical guide for blogging that discusses methods to ensure that writing cannot be traced and remains anonymous. This guide has been used by human rights activists in dozens of nations, aid workers in repressive countries, as well as whistleblowers within companies and governments.
Arabic (http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/projects/guide/%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%aa%d8%af%d9%88%d9%8a%d9%86-%d8%a8%d8%a7%d8%b3%d9%85-%d9%85%d8%ac%d9%87%d9%88%d9%84-%d9%85%d8%b9-%d9%88%d9%88%d8%b1%d8%af%d8%a8%d8%b1%d8%b3-%d9%88-%d8%aa%d9%88%d8%b1/)
Chinese (http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/projects/guide/anonymous-blogging-guide-now-available-in-chinese/)

English (http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/projects/guide/)
Farsi (http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/projects/guide/%d8%a8%d9%87-
%da%a9%d9%85%da%a9-%d8%aa%d9%8f%d8%b1-%d9%88-
%d9%88%d8%b1%d8%af%d9%be%d8%b1%d8%b3%d8%8c-
%d9%86%d8%a7%d8%b4%d9%86%d8%a7%d8%b3-%d9%88%d8%a8%d9%84%d8%a7%da%af-
%d8%a8%d9%86%d9%88db%8c%d8%b3/)
French (http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/projects/guide/guide-fr/)
Italian (http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/projects/guide/scrivere-un-blog-anonimo-con-
wordpress-e-tor/)
Portugese (http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/projects/guide/blogar-no-anonimato-com-
wordpress-tor/)

A Practical Guide to Protecting Your Identity and Security Online and When Using Mobile Phones: For Citizens in the Middle East and North Africa
Access: Mobilizing for global digital freedom. 2011
This guide is written for citizens in the Middle East and North Africa who want to use technology safely to communicate, organize, and share information while protecting their privacy and security. It is written for a wide audience with average computer literacy who would like to know what steps they can take to be safer online and when using mobile devices. This guide has tips and tools for reducing surveillance and monitoring, protecting privacy, and dealing with censorship.
Arabic (http://docs.google.com/viewer?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.accessnow.org%2Fpage%2F-
%2Fdocs%2F-
%2520%2520%2520%D8%AF%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%84%2520%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84%D9%8A%2520
%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A2%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86%2520%D8%A3%D8%AB%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A1
%2520%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%AC%D8%AF%2520%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89%
2520%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%86%D8%AA%2520%D9%85%D8%A7%D
8%B1%D8%B3%25202011%2520%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%A9%2520%D8%A7%
D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-1.pdf)
English (https://www.accessnow.org/pages/protecting-your-security-online)

Digital Security and Privacy for Human Rights Defenders
Frontline Defenders: 2009. London, England.
The guide explains the different risks for computers and the Internet, and offers ideas for how to address these. It also explores these issues theoretically in terms of universal freedoms. Topics covered include security awareness, threat assessment, and information backup.
English (http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/esecman)
Spanish (http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/files/en/esecman.es_.pdf)
Vietnamese (http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/files/esecman.vi_.pdf)

Guia de Seguridad en Redes Sociales
ESET.
This guide explains the different security threats that can occur with the use of online networking sites such as Facebook and Linkedin, and offers guidance for how to protect oneself from such threats.
Spanish (http://www.eset-la.com/pdf/documento_redes_sociales_baja.pdf)

How to Communicate Securely in Repressive Environments
Patrick Meier. 2009.
This is a short guide that outlines security measures for cell phones, cameras, laptops, flash drives, and other software.
English (http://irevolution.net/2009/06/15/digital-security/)

Survival in the Digital Age
Tactical Technology Collective: 2010. United Kingdom.
This is a series of animated videos about Internet security and how to protect your computer, mobile phone, and other digital devices.
[The trailer is available in Arabic, Burmese, English, French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish; however, the series is only available in English.]
Trailer (Video) (www.onorobot.org)

Everyone's Guide to By-Passing Internet Censorship
The Citizen Lab, University of Toronto: 2007. Montreal, Canada.
This guide is meant to introduce non-technical users to Internet censorship circumvention technologies, and to the tools, methods, and strategies that can be used to bypass Internet content filtering.
Burmese (http://citizenlab.org/guides/everyones-guide-burmese.pdf)
English (http://citizenlab.org/guides/everyones-guide-english.pdf)
Russian (http://citizenlab.org/guides/everyones-guide-russian.pdf)

Techniques for Avoiding Surveillance and the Censor
RFA Unplugged: 2011.
The guide presents ways to protect free speech online in authoritarian countries. The guide focuses on six main points: understanding risk assessment, being ware of malware (viruses and spyware), choosing the least risky communication channels, preventing surveillance and censorship of your page, being careful of what and where you publish, and using tors.
English (http://www.rfaunplugged.org/2011/02/07/cyber-self-defence-techniques-for-avoiding-surveillance-and-the-censor/)

How to Use Facebook if You Are a Repressive Regime
Meier, Patrick. Irevolution: 2011.
This guide describes how repressive regimes use Facebook for their benefit. It discusses the risks of being on Facebook and how to minimize them.
English (http://irevolution.net/2011/02/10/facebook-for-repressive-regimes/)

New: Circumvention Tool Usage Report
Roberts, Hal; Zuckerman, Ethan; York, Jillian; Faris, Robert; and Palfrey, John. Harvard University: 2010.
This report suggests tools on how to bypass Internet filters to access content that is otherwise blocked by governments.
English (http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/node/6421)

Security In-A-Box: Tools and Tactics for Your Digital Security.
NGO-In-A-Box. Tactical Technology Collective. Frontline Defenders.
This Toolkit includes information about how to protect yourself from digital threats, avoid the potential of physical threats, create and maintain a password, recover from information loss, destroy sensitive information, and keep Internet communication private and anonymous.
Arabic (https://security.ngoinabox.org/ar/download)
English (https://security.ngoinabox.org/en/download)
French (https://security.ngoinabox.org/fr/welcome)
Russian (https://security.ngoinabox.org/ru/welcome)
Spanish (https://security.ngoinabox.org/es/welcome)
Vietnamese (https://security.ngoinabox.org/vi/welcome)

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