OPEN INTERNET FOR DEMOCRACY

ADVOCACY PLAYBOOK

Strategies and Resources for Global Open Internet Advocacy

Open Internet for Democracy Advocacy Playbook

Updated: September 2021

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Authors & Acknowledgments

This Playbook has been designed to be a living document, and the Open Internet for Democracy Initiative welcomes suggestions and contributions from the community. If you'd like to recommend a resource for inclusion in the Playbook, or notice a correction that needs to be made, please email: info@openinternet.global

Overview

DIGITAL RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

Today, various forms of democratic and civic engagement such as political organizing, sharing news and information, expressing opinions, and—in places with the necessary infrastructure—even aspects of the voting process are heavily reliant on various forms of digital tools and communications platforms. At the beginning of 2021, nearly 60% of the global population was online, which was a 7.3% increase (316 million people) from January 2020.[1]

The role of the internet in the social, political, and economic lives of people around the world will only increase as more people come online. When the internet is used to broaden access to information, support freedom of expression, and foster civic engagement, it can help fulfill the promise of democracy to empower citizens.

However, the internet's potential to advance democratic values is being subverted by powerful forces. Authoritarian regimes and their allies have created new forms of censorship and surveillance, distorting the open nature of the internet to spread disinformation and limit democratic engagement. It's working. According to Freedom House's 2021 Freedom on the Net report, "75% of internet users live in countries where individuals were arrested or imprisoned for posting content on political, social, or religious issues." Preserving and advancing an open internet depends on the active engagement of those who value democracy and human rights.

Democracy online is at stake. Given the gravity of the threat, it is vital to build broad and diverse coalitions to advocate for an internet that fosters democracy rather than being a force for repression, division, hatred, and manipulation.

The growth in global connectivity presents both opportunities and challenges to democracy. With more freedom of expression online, often comes the rise of disinformation and harassment. With more reliance on the internet to conduct business, comes the magnified losses caused by internet disruptions. With increased political engagement online, comes the heightened risk of surveillance and censorship. How do we keep the internet open and democratic while balancing the risks? How do we bring diverse stakeholders to the table and make their voices heard? Although there is no single answer, constructive solutions emerge when global best practices intersect with local knowledge.

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[1] DataReportal (2021), "*Digital 2021 Global Digital Overview*," retrieved from https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-global-overview-report?utm_source=Reports&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=Digital_2021&utm_content=Dual_Report_Promo_Slide

ABOUT THIS PLAYBOOK

This Playbook serves as a companion piece to the Democratic Principles for an Open Internet, which is a framework for understanding what principles must be upheld in order for the internet to foster democracy. Developed by the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), and the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), the Principles were adapted from the Internet Rights and Principles Coalition's (IRPC) Charter of Human Rights and Principles for the Internet, and created to help citizens and reformers navigate the challenges of advancing democracy and open markets in the digital age.

This Playbook provides practical strategies on how to advocate for these principles using best practices. It also provides tips on developing global peer networks of reformers.

The initial draft of this Playbook was originally developed by the 2018 Open Internet for Democracy Leaders—digital rights advocates from six countries. Their experiences demonstrate the efforts made and the determination it takes to preserve a free and open internet which supports inclusivity, civic participation, and economic opportunity despite poorly crafted or repressive laws and regulations, poor or lacking internet infrastructure, as well as limited political will to proactively address these shortcomings in line with global best practices. Given the rapidly evolving nature of threats to the digital rights space, the Playbook will be periodically updated to reflect new resources and trends, as well as adding in new "Plays" as appropriate.

The Playbook includes ideas and recommendations for the advocates of digital freedoms, focusing on tailored approaches to advocacy that apply across diverse local contexts. These priorities include the need for inclusivity and multi-stakeholder strategies in advocacy efforts, preserving freedom of expression, and linking the human rights and economic impact of internet disruptions and restrictions. These experiences and practical advice come straight from global peers to you, a digital rights advocate, wherever you are in your journey.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAYBOOK

This Playbook is divided into two parts. **Part 1** focuses on the general advocacy process and how to get started. This section outlines key processes and provides guidance on how to conduct a situational analysis and a stakeholder mapping exercise, as well as how to understand the local context and identify the major stakeholders that can serve as allies for your advocacy strategy. Conducting a situational analysis and stakeholder mapping will help you ensure your plan of action is both appropriate and effective for the local environment.

Part 2 of the Playbook provides a variety of advocacy scenarios, which outline a number of approaches and actions you can take to advance the particular issue you are working on.

This guide is not meant to provide an exhaustive list of various advocacy approaches for protecting an inclusive, democratic, and open internet. However, it has been designed to serve both as a starting point for activists who may not know how to begin the advocacy process, as well as a reference manual for experienced advocates seeking best practices, resources, or suggestions regarding a particular approach.

PART 1

GETTING STARTED

Understand the Context

DETERMINE WHAT YOU STAND FOR

Before you can begin looking at the context in which you are operating, it is important to first take a step back and outline what your goals are, why they matter in the larger picture, and how you will communicate with them. This will help you to better assess how to engage on specific policy issues and to create a more effective coalition.

CONDUCT A SITUATIONAL & POWER ANALYSIS

A situational analysis should be the first step in any advocacy process, and is particularly important when you are operating in new conditions that you are not as familiar with. When initiating digital rights advocacy, the strategies and intended outcomes will vary depending on the local context. In order to identify what is appropriate for your own situation, you must analyze the political, social, cultural, and economic landscape, and recognize both opportunities and constraints. Without taking the time to assess the current local environment, your advocacy campaign will not be successful. It is also important to note that before undertaking any advocacy campaign, you must understand both your own personal safety and security when advocating for digital rights, as well as the risks and threats to those with or for whom you may be working.

To conduct a **situational analysis**, first assess the resources you have available in order to conduct the analysis, including personnel, budget, research capacity, and community support. In addition, in order to avoid potential duplication of efforts, find out who else is conducting work in your target area to determine whether they might have recently conducted a similar analysis that you can use in your own research. Once you've assessed your capacities and available resources, determine your data collection methods, which might include desk research, roundtable meetings, anonymous questionnaires, and interviews with various stakeholders.

The analysis itself will include an evaluation of the social, political, economic, and cultural context for the specific issue area you are focusing on, taking into account both gender and language demographics. While circumstances may not allow for completing the entire analysis before you begin your advocacy initiative, keep in mind that this research is designed to ensure your planned action accurately reflects circumstances on the ground. Incorrect assumptions or assertions may impact the credibility of your campaign, or slow down its progress. Regardless, circumstances are constantly changing, so if your advocacy campaign lasts more than two to three months, be sure to update your analysis in order

ensure your campaign continues to remain practical and relevant **(*see Annex 1 for a Sample Situational Analysis Checklist)*.**

A **power analysis** is an important exercise to map out the various players that you will look towards for support and who is in opposition to you. By mapping out the layers of influence and the various connections between key actors, you can create an influence strategy as part of your broader campaign to exert pressure on the particular individuals who have the power to make the changes to influence the outcome that you are seeking. A wonderful resource and step-by-step guide on how to map out a power analysis can be found on the [Beautiful Rising toolkit website](#).

MAP THE STAKEHOLDERS

After completing a situational analysis, it is important to create a stakeholder map by outlining the network of in-country and regional groups and individuals in the open internet community. This map will be useful in building valuable relationships to engage relevant stakeholders in your advocacy effort to develop joint efforts when possible, as well as to identify those who will be working against you. In the mapping of the ecosystem players, it is also important to consider what resources are available, what communication channels should be used, the timeline, and how to measure success **(*see Annex 2 for an example of a Stakeholder Map)*.**[2]

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[2] For other examples, please see: http://www.tools4dev.org/resources/stakeholder-analysis-matrix-template/ and https://tmt.newtactics.org/

Build Your Coalition

After you have a clearer picture of what the goals of your efforts are, as well as the landscape that you will be operating in, you can start to reach out to individuals and organizations to build your coalition. A strong coalition built on clarity of purpose and roles is essential, so think carefully when engaging.

DETERMINE WHO SHOULD BE IN YOUR COALITION

Have a diversity of groups, but with a unified purpose. For example, internet-related advocacy initiatives, like the #KeepItOn Coalition, include an assortment of groups who have not worked together before and some who have. A coalition may be better positioned to achieve results by combining resources, networks, and expertise from a diverse set of members.

Determine the skill-sets and networks you will need to succeed. What skills and networks do the coalition members bring (e.g., advocacy, technical expertise, legal knowledge)? What skills are you missing and how can you obtain them?
- Consider who has experience in advocacy versus who needs training.
- Think about including more tactically assertive vanguard groups that have large email lists, that can mobilize supporters, and that don't mind playing the role of the thorn in the side of policy makers or adversarial groups.
- Engage with policy experts that have political connections, or policy makers themselves who are open to receiving public input during the development and implementation of laws and frameworks. This will help ensure that you have access to the people who make the decisions.
- Identify what types of networks your coalition members bring and how that might support or amplify the advocacy campaign you are working on.

Include marginalized or vulnerable groups in the discussions and ensure that relevant information is accessible to them, especially when the issue directly impacts these groups.
- When working to gain the support of the majority, be sure to take steps to ensure you are not excluding vulnerable communities and minority voices. An open internet is about building a democracy, and no true democracy can be built while excluding minority or vulnerable communities from the picture.
- Reach out to the association leaders of groups that may be disproportionately impacted by the new policy, such as those for persons with disabilities, senior citizens, women, indigenous communities, etc. Collaborate with these communities, as well as with other local, regional, and/or international groups working on these issues, to create content that specifically addresses their needs. For example, a

video with subtitles or translations can be more helpful than just plain text materials. The content and the medium should depend on your target audience. You can engage the local artists and the tech community to help you develop a variety of content for various audiences.

Coordinate with legal experts, when applicable. Identify lawyers and subject matter experts who can provide pro-bono advice about the legality of the policy in question, and whether it violates any existing national laws or international conventions.

Engage with technical experts and reach out to the civic tech community. They may be willing to provide you with technical expertise, amplify your message, and offer protection online. However, you may first need to help community members understand why their involvement is important. You can mobilize them in different ways, such as: assisting you to protect your online accounts and content, setting up online platforms for outreach or forums, and tracking analytics for your campaign. They could also be best placed to provide support in case there is an internet disruption.

FOSTER ENGAGEMENT AND CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Conduct roundtable discussions, hold focus groups, and/or workshops to raise awareness and engage different types of stakeholders in your coalition. The results of these roundtable discussions and workshops can help you build inclusive and participatory support for this policy.

Provide stakeholders with printed or online materials to raise awareness and make them understand the issue and why they should care. Remember to include a call to action and provide information on how they can get involved, such as calling a hotline, joining online platforms or groups, signing up for a mailing list, or participating in public town hall meetings.

Create clear asks for the coalition, tying into your core messages.

ESTABLISH COMMUNICATION STANDARDS WITH COALITION MEMBERS

Once you have assessed and then met with various coalition members, be sure to **create clear channels for communication** between all members. Create standards of communication, e.g. weekly updates on the state of play of the movement as a whole or a policy-focused group providing the latest updates on a piece of legislation.
- Also consider if providing sub-channels of communication would be useful to discuss more focused tasks based on the specializations of various members of the group.

Deploy Effective Tactics

Any successful advocacy campaign uses a variety of tactics to achieve its aim. Assess what you think would work best in your particular socio-political context. If people are afraid to speak out or gather publicly due to past crackdowns, structure your tactics to more online actions. If you are dealing with internet shutdowns, focus your tactics towards offline measures that will gain the attention of traditional media, like newspapers, radio, and TV. However, be sure to always have a mixture of both offline and online tactics so that you can engage as many people as you can with your advocacy efforts.

TYPES OF TACTICS

A good place to start is by looking through this list of [198 non-violent action tactics](#).[3] These include tactics of protest and persuasion, social noncooperation, economic boycotts, political noncooperation, and nonviolent intervention. Use more tested methods, but also don't be afraid to get creative with your tactics, as those will surely draw more attention. Also be sure to check out the resources available on the movement toolkit website [Beautiful Rising](#), where they provide rich materials including ones relating to [tactics](#), as well as principles and methodologies for building action-oriented campaigns.

Work closely with your coalition and their networks when selecting each advocacy tactic. See what they may have done before and what worked or what did not. Try to determine if they have any unique connections that would be useful for a specific tactic, e.g. one of their network partners has an office building right next to the headquarters of the government office that determines internet policy, making it a great protest location. Remember, the same tactic may not be effective for every country or situation.

TIMING YOUR TACTICS

Be sure to tie your tactics to particular moments and decision points that will surely gain more attention in the media and with policymakers. Map out when certain leaders will meet, or when specific policies will be discussed, or other moments that are key to your main goals. Then, plan tactics for each moment. Work with your coalition to assign specific roles for each organization that align with its strengths, but have tactics at the ready to respond to unplanned events that would otherwise catch you off guard.

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[3] The full description of these tactics can be found in Gene Sharp's *Dictionary of Power and Struggle*, Oxford University Press, 2011.

Invest in Communications

One of the most effective tactics that an advocacy campaign can use to garner support is having a detailed and well thought-out communications strategy.

ISSUE FRAMING

Before you can start talking about your issue, you need to think about the most impactful part or parts of the issue that will resonate with your target audience. This is often called framing. If, for example, you are focusing on protecting the digital rights of eco-activists in Brazil, you will want your messages to contain information about the vital nature of their environmental work, since you will most likely be targeting civil society groups and governmental agencies who work on environmental issues.

Some key things to keep in mind as you work on issue framing:
- Clearly identify the problem and keep it simple.
- Identify what or who is contributing to the problem, and what or who can contribute to the solution.
- Give the audience a clear plan of action to overcome the problem.
- Tap into the emotions and values that the problem raises to more effectively engage with your audience.

For a more comprehensive guide to issue framing, check out the guidance from the Community Toolbox.

CREATE A CENTRAL CAMPAIGN WEBSITE

As part of the campaign process, you may need to provide resources for the public to learn more about what you are advocating for and why, and outline specific actions they can take to help you in your goal. Rather than each and every member of your coalition putting information about the campaign on their websites or out to their mailing lists, it is a much more useful method to create a central campaign website in partnership with your coalition. This will serve to drive traffic towards a singular website where you can better track engagement, emails, and also better control the information that is presented. Be sure that all of your coalition members link to the central campaign website on their individual pages to further drive traffic. Some examples to draw from are FASTAfrica or battleforthenet.com, two campaigns about internet freedom and digital rights issues.

CONDUCT A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Build an audience
- Identify the most common social media platforms in your country (e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp). Create a group for people to continuously discuss the topic. You can make it private or public.
- Create a hashtag for your advocacy initiative so that people can easily use it when they share or talk about the issue.

Monitor and uphold the quality of the content
- Post content, updates, and news on your online platform consistently to continue engaging your audience.
- Remember that technical terms are difficult for many people to understand. If the policy is complex, try to provide real-life examples that readers may be able to more easily relate to. Show them how the policy would affect their daily lives.
- Verify your sources before you post or repost content. Ensure that your information comes from legitimate sources to avoid perpetuating misleading or false content.

ENGAGE MEDIA

For all the aforementioned forms of interventions, it is fundamental to have active media involvement with newspapers, TV stations, and radio.

Develop a media list (emails of individual journalists, news report emails, independent writers, television and radio show producers, media rights organisations, etc.)
- Regularly engage with these individuals via Twitter, email, and in person and share summaries of developments with them (e.g. comments on a policy change, open letter, etc.)

Respond to media queries with the help of someone on your team.

Write opinion pieces and conduct interviews that can be published in various media.

Always keep in mind, not all states or media will be open to the nature of content or issues you are advocating for. As such, ensure that you **utilize digital security good practices** especially when engaging with sources who may be victimized for the content they share.

PART 2

ADVOCACY APPROACHES

HOW TO Respond to Government Policy

> **Relevant [Democratic Principles for an Open Internet](#)**
>
> All Principles

INTRODUCTION

From legislation affecting the use of social media to data protection and privacy policies, there are many government policies and actions that have important consequences for users in the digital space. Even the most open governments can enact laws that create obstacles for an open and democratic internet. Engaged citizens and civil society have an important role in advocating for digital rights, informing, and educating policymakers, and shaping the implementation of these policies to ensure a democratic digital space. There are many effective strategies to respond to an overly restrictive government policy—proposed or implemented.

EXAMPLE SCENARIO

Imagine you are a communication specialist at a small non-governmental organization (NGO). Your government has recently enacted a law requiring all organizations to pay a fee for maintaining social media accounts. If the law goes into effect, your NGO will struggle to pay the required fees and will likely have to remove its social media accounts. The law was enacted without any political debate or consultations with civil society; however, some members of the government have privately expressed concern. You are worried about how this new law will impact your NGO's ability to effectively provide services and communicate with its supporters. What might you do?

APPROACH

The process of introducing or changing a policy might include coalition building, campaigning, and negotiating with the government to draft new legislation or amend the existing one. To effectively advocate in response to both established and proposed government policies, it is necessary to set the foundation by identifying your strategic resources. As an advocate, you need to mobilize and organize your allies, conduct evidence-based research to develop a strong counter-argument, and implement a comprehensive outreach strategy to build public support and awareness for your effort.

POTENTIAL TACTICS

After analyzing all of your background information—situational analysis, power map, strengths of your coalition, and tactics—decide which of the actions below would have the most impact based on your situation.

TACTIC 1: DEVELOP A POLICY POSITION

Produce a [policy memo](#), or conduct detailed research that evaluates how the policy conflicts with the global digital rights standards, and/or the national constitution

- Before developing a policy memo, research existing government policies, strategies, and/or national plans to ensure your agenda reflects current practices.
- Review existing legal policies or case law to determine if a precedent has been established for the issue you are concerned about. Columbia University's Global Freedom of Expression database contains information and analysis on key case law decisions related to freedom of expression issues from 1964 to the present day.
- Once you establish a position on certain policy issues, start writing a document, either a petition or a proposal, whatever form is acceptable to the policy making or implementing bodies (e.g., a parliament or supreme court). This document can be signed as a consortium of various organizations that you have consulted and allied with. You can share this document online or submit it directly to the intended parties.
- Consider adverse effects of the policy in question. Conduct research and prepare a case study to show how the policy may have a negative impact on different sectors in society if implemented. This may include economic loss or further marginalization of certain groups.

TACTIC 2: ADVOCATE WITH GOVERNMENT ACTORS

Identify your strongest allies within the government
- Conduct research or use your network to identify which government agencies or individuals within those agencies, are working on issues related to the proposed policy, or are generally engaged with digital rights issues. Once you identify those allies, try to work together to reach a common understanding of your objectives, and the role they can play to advance your objectives. Demonstrating your coalition has broad political support can make it appear more credible to the public.
- Solicit specific public commitments from elected officials and publicize them online. Be sure to check in with them regularly to help them meet those goals, and try to understand what actually goes into the process of meeting those goals. Then be sure to hold them accountable during the next campaign season.

Write open letters to the relevant government agencies
- As an organization, individual, or an institution, writing an open, public letter addressed to a target individual or institution will let the government—as well as the general public—know your stance. Distribute the letter to relevant groups, media, digital influencers, and bloggers. **TIP: Add a call to action to the open letter for various groups to join you in your advocacy efforts**.
- Wondering what an open letter looks like? Here are some examples, one from Article 19, an international organization working on freedom of expression issues, and the other from a coalition of digital rights organizations sent to leaders during the 2018 G20 summit

Submit recommendations to the government on a policy either online or offline.
- Help policymakers develop expertise around the issue you are concerned with. Provide a detailed analysis of the impact of the policy, particularly if there is a social or economic impact on the elected official's constituents.

Form a public interest litigation in the High Court in cases where the law is in conflict with the constitution.
- Strategic collaboration could also be pursued. See Catalysts For Collaboration for ideas.

Develop a personal story
- A personal story can move a politician to take action beyond the data and reports associated with a proposed policy.

HOW TO Push Back Against Internet Disruptions

Relevant **[Democratic Principles for an Open Internet](#)**
Principle 1   Freedom of Expression
Principle 2   Freedom of Assembly and Association
Principle 3   Accessibility
Principle 5   Personal Safety & Security
Principle 7   Network Equality

INTRODUCTION

Tactics used by anti-democratic actors to restrict access to the internet through shutdowns or blackouts lead to loss of access to critical online services, shuttering of independent and alternative media sources, and the removal of dissenting voices from political commentary or participation. Additionally, according to the [Global Network Initiative](#) (GNI), "the economic impact of shutdowns has shown that conservatively, high-connectivity countries can lose 1.9% of their daily gross domestic product (GDP) when a shutdown is mandated."[4]

An internet shutdown is defined as "an intentional disruption of internet or electronic communications rendering them inaccessible or effectively unusable, for a specific population or within a location, often to exert control over the flow of information."[5] This definition includes full network shutdowns, bandwidth throttling, and service-based blocking of two-way communication platforms, such as social media, messaging apps, or email.

EXAMPLE SCENARIO

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[4] https://globalnetworkinitiative.org/%E2%80%8Bnew-report-reveals-the-economic-costs-of-internet-shutdowns/
[5]
https://www.accessnow.org/cms/assets/uploads/2018/06/Read-Me_-How-to-view-the-Access-Now-Internet-Shutdown-Tracker-Jun-2018.pdf

Imagine you are a local entrepreneur and your government has implemented an internet blackout in your province. As the weeks go by and you still do not have internet, you are starting to lose contracts and cannot conduct important transactions, leading to loss in revenue. In addition, the regional business association that you are a part of is having a difficult time raising awareness about this issue due to the inability to access and communicate on social media. What might you do?

APPROACH

When conducting advocacy in response to internet disruptions, you are likely to require a strong base of evidence to use for your campaign. Building coalitions with national, regional, and global networks helps raise awareness about internet disruptions. Identify alternative methods for getting online when disruptions occur, and identify your allies in the business and government sectors who may be able to apply the pressure required to end the disruption.

POTENTIAL TACTICS

TACTIC 1: DOCUMENT DISRUPTIONS

Track and monitor network outages, slowdowns, and social media platform restrictions
- Monitor internet outages and network uptime using the most efficient tools that provide real-time feedback on whether or not there has been a network disruption in your area. Use tools such as: OONI, NetBlocks, and IODA (mentioned in 'resources' below).
- In the short term, send out a press release, especially to local and international media organizations tracking internet shutdowns, expressing concern around the shutdowns. In the long term, publish a quarterly or semi-annual report on the state of these disruptions, as this longitudinal data will strengthen your case.
- Educate your community on how to measure network performance. Are sites blocked intentionally or are they simply having an internal issue? What is the speed of one website versus the speed of another?
- Write news stories, articles, and blog posts with as much evidence as possible (for example, interviews with locals affected, pictures, and videos, plus the data collected on network performance) to publish on relevant online multimedia platforms.
- Establish mechanisms that citizens can use for reporting disruptions. Set up a phone hotline or a social media group where users can easily report issues and instances

of site blocking, as well as share their personal experiences. Use all possible channels to raise awareness about your platform.

TACTIC 2: BUILD MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COALITIONS TO CONDUCT ADVOCACY

Meet with government stakeholders who you identified in your power mapping exercise and hold discussions on following due processes of transparency and human rights. Use economic and social arguments—not just the human rights angle—to pressure the involved parties to keep the internet open. Include personal stories when possible, especially if the affected individual is a constituent of the government officials you are meeting with.

Refer to national plans and policies which are in line with your advocacy position such as national broadband policies, social inclusion frameworks, universal access policies, and even education or environmental policies.

Shape multi-stakeholder advocacy approaches to continuously call on governments to uphold online rights and desist from internet access censorship. Advocacy should be carried out often, not just when there is a shutdown.

Engage with development and financial investment agencies who may consider conducting country-specific shutdown assessments before giving more grants and aid packages to your country if your government does not comply with international human rights laws and/or digital rights laws (if they are in place).

Engage with private businesses, business associations, **or chambers of commerce** where possible who may be directly impacted by the internet shutdown. Private sector organizations and small and medium sized businesses may be willing to become a key ally in the advocacy effort.

Organize and invite these organizations to roundtable discussions, meetings, or capacity-building sessions in order to crowdsource effective strategies and approaches for pushing back against a shutdown. Frame these sessions in such a way so that positions can be easily shared via the media, and so that you are building upon previous documentation.

Meet with lawyers and legal advocacy groups to find ways of making a case in the courts against a shutdown or disruption with the aim of getting the government to remove internet restrictions.

TACTIC 3: CREATE RESILIENCE AGAINST DISRUPTIONS

Use circumvention tools, proxies, and by-passes when necessary in order to evade censorship and to stay connected.
- If you have the funds, consider using an interactive voice response (IVR) tool such as Viamo or Twilio if you need to get messages out to a wider audience. This allows you

to use the mobile network to distribute pre-recorded messages that citizens can access if the internet is off. IVR tools often allow you to record messages in multiple languages if needed.
- In many network disruption instances, the popularity of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) has grown, allowing people to connect to the internet via other access points. However, users should understand the pros and cons of using VPNs (particularly those that are free of charge). The EFF provides a guide to choosing the right VPN for your situation.

Conduct trainings on the use of circumvention tools. Many of these tools are difficult for first-time users to navigate. Consider engaging with a member of the technical community to help deliver short trainings, or be available to provide technical support to those who wish to use these tools.

Translate circumvention guides into local languages and distribute them within affected communities. Look at Localization Lab as a service that could help translate these guides, if assistance is needed.

Consult with members of the technical community (both nationally and globally).
- Solicit recommendations for possible tools or infrastructure solutions that can help mitigate the impact of shutdowns.
- Provide a venue for the tech community to interact with digital rights advocates and activists, either through meetings, online groups, or regular meetups.

TACTIC 4: DEVELOP AN OUTREACH STRATEGY

Write an open letter urging government leaders to restore network connectivity. In your letter or document, explain in detail the rationale and the impact on the economy, emergency services, and social welfare. Highlight the impact not only on the government but also related sectors. For example: national banks rely heavily on the internet for financial transactions. However, in the case of an internet shutdown, financial services can come to a grinding halt, with a widespread detrimental impact.

Create social media groups, platforms, or email lists where your coalition can continuously discuss, share updates, and exchange information. But don't reinvent the wheel if you don't have to: use the existing networks of your coalition members, with their approval. Remember to share updates with your media contacts, too.

Create awareness campaigns and provide timely facts on the socio-economic impact of a government-ordered internet shutdown. Use social media and mobile apps to drive your campaign messages to wider audiences. Create an advocacy campaign kit (such as this one created for Cybersecurity Awareness Month) that can amplify the message and appeal to different demographic groups.

ADDITIONAL TOOLS & RESOURCES

Detecting and Tracking Disruptions
- Open Observatory of Network Interference (OONI): A free software, global observation network for detecting censorship, surveillance, and traffic manipulation on the internet .
- Netblocks: a civil society group working at the intersection of digital rights, cyber-security and internet governance. Independent and non-partisan, NetBlocks strives for an open and inclusive digital future for all.
- Internet Outage Detection and Analysis (IODA): An operational prototype system that monitors the internet in near-real time, developed by the Center for Applied Internet Data Analysis (CAIDA).

Shutdown resources
- AccessNow's #KeepItOn Framework: a pamphlet highlighting current numbers, resources, and tips to get involved in ending shutdowns.
- AccessNow's Digital Security Helpline: a 24/7 resource for individuals and organizations who are at risk online.
- QZ internet shutdown guide: a step by step guide on tips and tools to get online even if the internet is shut down.
- Crowdmap shutdowns using Ushahidi, a powerful crowdsourcing tool.

Shutdown Cost Calculators
- Framework for calculating the Economic Impact of Internet Shutdowns in Sub-Saharan Africa, a report by the Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA).
- The Cost of Shutdown Tool (COST): NetBlocks' data-driven online tool that enables users to quickly and easily estimate the cost of internet disruptions in real-time.

HOW TO Build Digital Resilience of Marginalized Communities

Relevant Democratic Principles for an Open Internet

Principle 1   Freedom of Expression
Principle 2   Freedom of Assembly and Association
Principle 3   Accessibility
Principle 5   Personal Safety & Security
Principle 6   Inclusion

INTRODUCTION

Marginalized and vulnerable communities often include those who are socially excluded for reasons such as ethnicity, race, gender, physical or mental disabilities, economic status, sexual orientation, religious affinity, etc. In many cases, members of these communities are subject to violence because they are not recognized by the state or societies, and do not benefit from specific protections. Their voices are a reminder of inequality and justice. The online world can be a real opportunity for marginalized communities to exercise their rights and must be protected.

However, in the online world, there is still a general lack of understanding and knowledge of vulnerable communities in relation to how their rights are being hindered and how to ensure corresponding protections. Addressing this lack of understanding is vital to mitigating attacks against marginalized populations. Building digital resilience is made possible through persistent awareness raising of existing inequalities and risks, and then pursuing the potential paths for organization and resistance.

EXAMPLE SCENARIO

A first-time female candidate for parliament frequently uses social media for political participation and dissemination of information. Her online presence is particularly important as she uses her website and different social media channels as her primary

methods for engaging potential voters. The race is very close. Just days before the general election, someone hacks her account and publishes inappropriate content that threatens to damage her reputation. How can she protect her voice online and ensure she is prepared if such a scenario happens again?

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APPROACH

</div>

Addressing attacks against marginalized or vulnerable communities necessitates working with groups that are constantly facing threats in the digital sphere. When undertaking this work, it is important to determine if your audience is a target of online smear or disinformation campaigns. Do they face the threats of their devices being forcefully confiscated? Have they been victims of online censorship? Do they face challenges while interacting with technology because of their disabilities? This section touches upon some of the activities that you can do with any marginalized group in your community.

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POTENTIAL TACTICS

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TACTIC 1: IMPROVE DIGITAL SECURITY SKILLS OF VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Organize digital security training sessions for community leaders. Make sure to understand local context and appropriate digital risk strategy for the target community. Reach out to local tech communities or international organizations that deliver trainings. Beyond digital skills, consider integration of physical self-defense strategies and psychosocial support mechanisms by specialists to provide a more comprehensive and holistic training. Tactical Tech has an excellent guide on holistic security for well-being, as well as a holistic, feminist digital security training guide.
- Organize the sessions for a small group (up to 10-12 people). Sessions for a small group not only allow each participant to feel a sense of belonging and empathy with others, but also to learn from best practices of their peers.
- Before the session, conduct an assessment on what devices the participants use, the types of data they access and store, and their skill level.
- In these trainings, make sure that the language is understood by the trainees. If you are seeking a professional trainer, make sure they are tolerant of all these minorities and will not use insensitive language, or speak in a manner that leads trainees to feel they are being talked down to.
- Look for digital security tools that have been translated into local languages. The Localization Lab is a great resource for this, and the Electronic Frontier Foundation's Surveillance Self-Defense guides are available in multiple languages.

Develop individual risk assessments and mitigation plans. This is suited towards individuals who are not comfortable talking about their threats in front of the larger

audience, or whose needs are such that they are more likely to benefit from the one-on-one attention of experts. A good place to start is [Security Planner](#) or Security First's [Umbrella app](#) (Android).

TACTIC 2: GATHER EVIDENCE OF ABUSE

Document online abuse. Be sure to record instances of abuse you see across different platforms. This type of evidence may be important if you decide to take legal action. [Glitch has developed a template](#) to guide you in the collection of this information.

Use an app or online platform that allows groups to report acts of intimidation or violence directed at them. This could also be an online form embedded on your organization's website or social media page.
- Consider whether a smartphone app or technology tool is appropriate for the community that you work with. Many people do not have access to the internet.
- Research existing apps/technology that may be appropriate, no need to reinvent the wheel.
- If you build an app, consult with your intended users' community through the entire process. Consider incorporating human-centered design principles, such as those outlined in the [Co/Act Toolkit](#).
- Make sure to explain how you will keep sensitive personal data safe, and protect identities as needed. This is very important when working with marginalized communities, as they may not want to participate unless you can assure them that their data will be safe.

Start **monitoring news websites**. One tool you can use for clipping, organizing, and saving stories is [Zotero](#), a free, open source program that also allows you to save snapshots of webpages for documentation purposes in case they are later deleted.

Observe the websites and social media accounts of marginalized groups. It's easy to notice when Facebook or WhatsApp sites go down, but it often goes unnoticed when sites run by or about minority groups (e.g. LGBTQI+, religious, ethnic groups) are blocked. Find the leaders of the technical community and work with the group to adopt standards and measures to track potential site blocks and to make the internet easily accessible to marginalized groups. Similar to tracking internet disruptions, tools such as [OONI Probe](#) allow you to track the availability of individual websites.

Disseminate findings on the threats faced by these groups in online communities and platforms among the wider community, including media, local, national and regional civil society, academics, technology groups, and government.

TACTIC 3: BUILD A DIGITAL RESILIENCE COMMUNITY

Work with the technical community to push the government to undertake policy measures that would make the internet more inclusive for marginalized groups. Conversely, **work with the government** to encourage them to ensure their websites and other government portals adhere to globally recognized accessibility standards such as those developed by the [W3C Web Accessibility Initiative](#).

Conduct focus group discussions, key stakeholder interviews or surveys to share information and best practices - especially as new threats emerge.

ADDITIONAL TOOLS & RESOURCES

Training Materials
- [The Engine Room](#) provides a set of instructions, considerations, and tools for organizational security, as well as a [short guide](#) for leading training sessions.
- [Staying Safe Online and Using Social Media](#) is a course from Advocacy Assembly, a free online training platform for activists and journalists, on how to protect personal information and bypass censorship online
- [Cyber Harassment: Concepts and Prevention](#) is a course from Advocacy Assembly on how to use tools to run safer campaigns and to protect oneself from cyber harassment

General Resources
- [Cybersecurity for Journalists and News Media](#) is a step-by-step guide on how to operate more securely in the digital world from We Live Security
- [Security in a Box](#) is a crowdsourced guide from Tactical Tech and Front Line Defenders with well thought out tactics and a community toolkit focusing on various marginalized groups
- [Cyborgfeminist Security Toolkit](#) a Spanish language feminist guide to cybersecurity from Paraguayan civic tech and digital security group TEDIC
- [Surveillance Self-Defense](#) is a collection of guides, scenarios, toolkits, and anything else you might need from one of the leading nonprofits in surveillance and privacy defence, the Electronic Frontier Foundation
- [Security Planner](#) is an interactive guide to get you the tools you need based on your scenario.

HOW TO Improve Digital Rights Literacy

> **Relevant [Democratic Principles for an Open Internet](#)**
>
> All Principles

INTRODUCTION

Digital rights literacy is vital for a citizen to effectively participate in discussions and debates for policy development and policy change, understand how human rights apply online, and be aware when they are violated.

SCENARIO

Imagine that you work for a civil society organization in a rural community where access to the internet has been realized only in the last few months. As more households come online, the community is abuzz with conversations on who should be using the internet and what they should be using it for. Many community members do not realize what happens to the information they share online and who can see it. How do you help educate the community about what they should be aware of?

APPROACH

Building digital rights literacy in a community requires a multi-pronged and ongoing approach. It involves more than just learning computer skills and how to navigate the online space, but also how to recognize when the human rights standards in place offline are not being equally applied online. Inability to recognize violations of these rights can lead to governments putting restrictions on the online space with little to no resistance simply because citizens are unaware of what is being done.

POTENTIAL TACTICS

TACTIC 1: CONDUCT TRAININGS & RAISE AWARENESS

Train school or university teachers
- By improving the digital skills of those who already work with youth, you are improving the chances of reaching users as they begin to participate in online communities. Capacity-building for community leaders and teachers also helps amplify your long-term advocacy efforts, as you would have a larger network of advocates and trainers.

Hold meet-ups with your target audience or community
- This could involve a lecture on digital rights and an open forum where the audience can ask questions and share their ideas on how digital rights are or are not being applied in the online space.
- Consider non-traditional venues, such as holding tea or coffee events with members of your community.

Build an online course or learning platform
- For the awareness effort to scale up, it's good to optimize the use of digital technology. Online courses are helpful for your audience to review the content you shared with them, and they also allow participants to share courses with their peers and to spread the word. Putting your training course or informational material online will also save you some resources like venue and travel costs. You can record the face-to-face trainings you have conducted and include it on the online platform.
- Consider making the course multilingual, especially if you are working in a location with multiple language groups.

TACTIC 2: SHARE KNOWLEDGE

Create accessible and inclusive content that takes into account your target audience. Consider different forms of content like videos, podcasts, images, art, audio, and text. Ensure that your content takes into account the needs of persons with disabilities, and incorporates inclusive language.

Create methods for continuous engagement, such as a Facebook, WhatsApp, email group, etc. This will enable participants to continue to discuss, report, and exchange relevant information on digital rights issues.

Post relevant and engaging content on digital rights for your online community.
Optimize your social media profile by posting information relevant for the target audience on a regular basis. This could increase your visibility and engagement, allowing your audience to share your content and spread the word.

ADDITIONAL TOOLS & RESOURCES

Training Materials:
- [Multimedia training kit on human rights and the internet](#).
- The Democratic Principles for an Open Internet ([document](#)) ([videos](#)).
- International Frameworks and Conventions on human rights in the digital space.
  - Example: [African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms](#)
- [Shaping the Internet —History and Futures](#) (Internet Society) examines what has led to the current state of the internet, and where that might lead.

Training Platforms:
- Use open source learning platforms such as [Moodle](#) or [Open edX](#), which offer cloud-hosted versions of their platforms (potentially with a cost), or the ability to customize and download a self-hosted version (requires more technical knowledge and resources).

HOW TO Engage in Policy Discussions on Internet Governance

Relevant [Democratic Principles for an Open Internet](#)
Principle 9   Governance

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations defines [internet governance](#) as "the development and application by governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the internet."

Engagement with internet governance structures provide a unique opportunity for digital rights advocates to shape international norms and standards surrounding the development of the internet. Given the internet's global nature, these international norms and standards can directly impact internet use at a local level. A multistakeholder approach, such as one that includes representatives from civil society, independent media, and local business communities—particularly across the Global South—can also provide unique perspectives on the state of internet freedom and digital rights in their own local context in such policy conversations. These perspectives are essential to ensuring that norms, standards, and policies on internet governance are developed in an inclusive way. Moreover, actively engaging in policy conversations on internet governance allows diverse stakeholder groups working on similar issues to connect with one another and to identify and prioritize key public policy issues that are essential to protecting internet freedom on local, regional, and global levels.

SCENARIO

Imagine you are a democratic or economic reformer who would like to connect with regional or global actors to build a coalition to defend the integrity, interoperability, or other [critical properties](#) of the internet. You may have also heard about internet governance and would like to contribute to dialogues around norms and standards within the digital policy space. How can you have your voice heard in policy conversations that

focus on norms, standards, and the technical underpinnings of the internet? Which conferences or events should you engage in based on your interests, and what steps should you take to get involved?

APPROACH

The process of becoming actively engaged in policy conversations focused on internet governance varies. For instance, you may begin by becoming a frequent participant in local or regional conversations focused on internet freedom, governance, and digital rights. Another option may be to participate in an educational course or workshop on internet governance or a particular digital rights issue. Participating in policy conversations on internet governance allows you to interact with a diverse set of participants and learn about an array of opportunities and platforms to engage in. You may also consider exploring different types of technical working groups that are embedded within conferences such as the United Nations Internet Governance Forum (UN IGF). Upon selecting a technical working group that interests you, participate by sharing your ideas and working with other stakeholders to draft key policy recommendations or considerations.

POTENTIAL TACTICS

TACTIC 1: BUILD YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Participate in an educational course or capacity building workshop on internet governance
- Register to attend a School on Internet Governance. The schools on internet governance are located around the globe and provide in-depth training on a variety of internet governance topics. A comprehensive list of the schools of internet governance can be found in this resource, developed by the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD).
- Consider taking a four week course offered by the Internet Society on internet governance. The course is available in English, French, and Spanish. ICANN also offers courses focused on the technical elements of internet governance.

Conduct desk research on key policy issues that impact internet governance
- By familiarizing yourself with topics and policy debates that impact the development of an open and inclusive internet, you will build your capacity to contribute in policy conversations on a wide range of internet governance topics. Helpful resources may include an overview of internet governance resources

developed by GFMD, an [introduction](#) to internet governance developed by Diplo, or research produced by organizations such as the [Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA)](#), [Paradigm Initiative](#), [TEDIC](#), [Access Now](#), or [Article 19](#).

Join newsletters and mailing lists that highlight timely policy issues impacting internet governance
- Sign up to receive newsletters such as the [Geneva Digital Watch](#) newsletter developed by the Geneva Internet Platform and the Diplo Foundation, or the [Internet Freedom Festival newsletter](#).
- Sign up to be part of mailing lists from a number of working groups as part of the UN IGF such as the [Best Practice Forum on Gender and Digital Rights](#), the [Best Practice Forum on Cybersecurity](#), or any of 22 [Dynamic Coalitions](#) (DC) such as the [DC on Internet Rights and Principles (IRPC)](#), the [DC on the Sustainability of Journalism and News Media](#), or [the Youth Coalition on Internet Governance (YCIG)](#).

TACTIC 2: PARTICIPATE IN A CONFERENCE OR EVENT ON INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Identify and participate in a <u>local or regional </u>conversation on internet governance
- According to the [UN IGF](#), "more than 85 countries and 17 regions on four different continents" have organized National, Sub-regional, or regional IGF initiatives (NRIs). Information on the latest regional initiatives and events can be [found here.](#) National NRIs are also listed on the UN IGF main website listed by region. ([Africa](#), [Asia-Pacific](#), [Eastern Europe](#), [Latin America and the Caribbean](#), as well as [Western European and Others](#)). If a national or regional IGF initiative does not exist where you are located, you can follow [this NRI toolkit](#) to organize an initiative.
  - The Internet Society frequently updates [a list](#) of national, regional, or international events focused on internet governance. Examples include the [Asia Internet Symposium](#), the [Africa Internet Summit](#), the [Europe Regional Internet and Development Dialogue](#), or the [LACNIC Technical Forum](#) in Latin America.
  - If you are based in Africa, consider participating in annual events such as the [Forum on Internet Freedom in Africa](#) and the [Digital Rights Inclusion Forum](#).

Identify and participate in an <u>international</u> conference focused on internet governance
- Examples of international annual conferences include the [United Nations Internet Governance Forum (UN IGF)](#), the [World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum](#), [RightsCon](#), [Mozfest](#), or [the Internet Freedom Festival](#). In some cases,

international organizations may provide financial support for select digital rights advocates to participate in these forums such as the Internet Society Foundation's IGF [funding programme](#).

TACTIC 3: MAP AND JOIN TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS FOCUSED ON INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Conduct research on internet governance technical working groups
- Research the role of each working group and understand which groups are open to the public before participating. Forums such as the UN IGF also typically organize "[Newcomers sessions and meetings](#)" to build your understanding of various ways to get involved.
- Join a technical working group such as a UN IGF [Best Practice Forum](#) or [Dynamic Coalition](#), or consider being part of the [UN IGF Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (MAG)](#), which serves as the steering committee for the content of the annual UN IGF meeting.
- Participate in a meeting or session led by the [International Telecommunication Union (ITU)](#). A helpful resource on the focus areas of the ITU and a list of ITU events developed by Global Partners Digital can be [found here](#).
- Participate in a meeting facilitated by [The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)](#).

TACTIC 4: CONTRIBUTE TO POLICY CONVERSATIONS, REPORTS, OR PAPERS ON INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Submit a session proposal on a particular internet governance topic that interests you and share your perspectives with other digital rights advocates from around the globe
- Each conference provides guidance on session proposals such as RightsCon's [guide](#) for a successful proposal, or the UN IGF's [guide](#) on the main topics that will be covered in the annual conference. Regional events such as [The European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG)](#) also offer [specific guidance](#) on how to propose and organize a session.
  - If you're unfamiliar with writing session proposals, consider collaborating with another digital rights advocate to co-write the proposal.
  - If you are hosting a session during a conference online, check out [this blog](#) by Access Now on designing participatory online sessions. [This resource](#) also outlines helpful tips on maximizing virtual participation in meetings and events.

Participate in [The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) Academy](#) and Leadership Program
- The Academy and Leadership Program provides resources and guidance on how to participate in the internet governance policy process, especially as it relates to ICANN policy fora. ICANN also produces [beginner's guides](#) on how to engage in policy dialogue on ICANN topics.

Participate in public-comment/feedback periods on draft policies or working papers
- Contribute to calls for input from the UN Special Rapporteur Reports focused on digital rights or internet governance that are shared with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). A helpful resource on how to engage with UN Special Rapporteurs produced by the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) can be [found here.](#)
- Participate in the public comment periods towards [draft policy papers produced by ICANN.](#)

ADDITIONAL TOOLS & RESOURCES

Materials on how to engage in internet governance policy fora:

- [Media Development in the Digital Age: Five Ways to Engage in Internet Governance](#) (Center for International Media Assistance)
- [How to get involved](#) (European Dialogue on Internet Governance)
- [ISOC Internet Governance Event Toolkit: Bringing the discussions to the people](#) (Internet Society)
- [Digital Rights at a Crossroads: Recommendations for Advancing Human Rights and Social Justice Post-2020](#) (Global Partners Digital)

ANNEX 1: Sample Situational Analysis Checklist

Note: the following questions are intended to provide a starting point for conducting a situational analysis, which can help guide how you direct your resources for your advocacy effort. Not all questions will be applicable for every situation, nor will every relevant question for each type of initiative be included below. Be sure to conduct a power and stakeholder analysis to help guide the questions you need to answer for your situational analysis.

1. **Country Context**
   a. How open or closed is the internet in your local context? Is it partially open? Is it closed? *(see Freedom House's [Freedom on the Net](#) reports)*
   b. Are there any warning signs that the internet in your country is closing? *(see the [Democratic Principles for an Open Internet](#) for a guide to warning signs)*

2. **Accessibility**
   a. How many people in your country have access to the internet? How does this compare to similar-sized countries?
   b. Which groups (e.g. minority groups, rural communities, students) have access to the internet? Which do not? Why?

3. **Affordability**
   a. How affordable is the internet? Does the cost of the internet prevent certain groups from gaining access? Is there a price difference between mobile internet or computer/landline-based internet? *(see the [Alliance for Affordable Internet's 2020 report](#))*

4. **Freedom of Expression**
   a. Is freedom of expression and access to information online upheld? *(see the [Democratic Principles for an Open Internet](#), the [World Bank's GovData360 Database](#))*
   b. How many journalists or civil society members have been attacked, arrested, or killed as a response to what they posted online? *(see the [Committee to Protect Journalists](#) or [Reporters without Borders barometer](#) for more details)*
   c. Do the telecommunications companies in your country implement policies that infringe upon freedom of expression and privacy? (*see the [Ranking Digital Rights Corporate Accountability Index](#), which ranks the world's largest internet, mobile, and telecommunications companies based on that criteria*)

5. **Availability**
   a. How many internet shutdowns or network disruptions has the country had? What about specific cities or regions of the country?
   b. Are specific websites blocked within the country?
   c. Are specific groups targeted with internet disruptions/shutdowns? If yes, who is targeted and why?

6. **Legal Frameworks**
   a. What are the current national legal frameworks in place that govern the internet? (e.g. current policies, regulations, or potential bills in place, or lack thereof)
   b. What are the current International/regional frameworks in place that support digital rights that you can draw upon? *(ex: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR), etc.)*
   c. What treaties have been ratified by your country in relation to digital rights, human rights conventions, and international or regional agreements and/or affiliations?

Annex 2: Stakeholder Map Template

Group (Allies, Neutral, or Opponents)	Stakeholder (Name & Location)	Interest in the issue	Resources	Capacity to mobilize resources	Position on the issue