

GLOBAL SCHOOL FOR ACTIVISTS

### DEFENDING DEMOCRACY LESSONS FROM FRONTLINE ACTIVISM

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Charlottesville, USA

26-28 April, 2024



#### LEARNING FROM FRONTLINE

Understanding
global autocracy and varying
nonviolent resistance tactics

April 27th

#### TECHNOLOGY AND DISIN-FORMATION

Navigating cyber risks and being equipped against propaganda

## April 28th

#### MOVEMENTS IN TRANSITION

What Activists
need to be aware of
and how to stay engaged in the transitions process

The 2024 CANVAS People Power Academy presents an exciting opportunity for discourse and education about strategies for social change and movements around the globe. Each day will have keynote speakers, presentations from activists about their campaigns, panel discussions, study groups, and engaging workshops, promising to be an interactive way for attendees to learn new perspectives and lessons to apply to their own causes. People Power Academy is a dynamic platform for individuals and activists seeking to challenge autocracy and address critical issues like countering propaganda, cybersecurity, and the transition process' promises and pitfalls. We will explore obstacles and lessons learned in the domains of creativity, branding, security, and the use of technology by both movements and autocrats. Attendees can look forward to gaining knowledge about creative tactics, effective campaign strategies, and the opportunity to engage with like-minded individuals. Great networking opportunities will offer a unique chance to forge meaningful connections, exchange insights, and collaborate with other activists.

We hope to see you in April for a shared exploration into some of the most significant challenges of our time and the ways we can overcome them!

\*Online streaming will be available for participants who aren't able to attend the event in person.



April 26th | 2024

#### LEARNING FROM FRONTLINE



Understanding global autocracy and varying nonviolent resistance tactics

When organizing and participating in a nonviolent movement, it is critical to understand the inner workings of autocratic oppositions.

How do autocratic leaders concentrate their powers?

How have activists been able to adapt to overcome challenges?

Autocratic threats to human rights and democracy may be difficult to oppose, but possible to resist and overcome. Mobilizing a successful movement takes not just passion, but knowledge of nonviolent tactics and strategies as well.

On this first day, we will discuss the methods used by autocratic governments to hold their power and authority. It is vital for civil society to comprehend how autocrats maintain control and to learn about different nonviolent resistance tactics and how effective they can be. Creative activism and dilemma actions can break fear, encourage participation and increase visibility of the cause. All this will be discussed, as well as personal experience of activists through several case studies where activists employed these techniques.



April 27th | 2024

#### TECHNOLOGY AND DISINFORMATION

Navigating cyber risks and being equipped against propaganda

In a world that is increasingly online, maintaining digital security is essential for activists' safety. Social engineering attacks are becoming more sophisticated in finding a way to illegally access valuable information. While the internet and social media have served as a helpful tool to activists, the misuse of Al and the rise of mass surveillance are posing a huge challenge to activists, even reinforcing repression. That is why it's important to learn and employ new practices to protected privacy, while also utilizing digital tools for activism Movements can often become the target of threatening campaigns. Disinformation can serve to greatly undermine their cause and legitimacy. Understanding propaganda within information warfare can allow activists to formulate their own competing narrative to preserve or build popular support.

In this session, we will discuss how to approach the world of disinformation and what practices can be useful, as well as what technologies can be vital to protect activists. Experts will provide insights into new digital security measures, while activists will share their experiences fighting disinformation and promoting their message.



April 28th | 2024

### MOVEMENTS IN TRANSITION



What Activists need to be aware of and how to stay engaged in the transitions process

Achieving success in a nonviolent struggle marks the beginning of a new stage - transition. Once change has been realized, it is important for movements to uphold their values during this period. Numerous aspects are crucial to the final outcome, such as holding people in power accountable and ensuring that the entire society benefits from the change. Activists should not hesitate to get involved in institutional reform and to continue to advocate from within, in order to establish strong and independent tools of democracy. In all circumstances, maintaining stability throughout the process includes continued organizing and clear messaging in this fragile stage.

On this day, we will discuss the transition process and how activists can prepare for it.

Based on case studies, we delve into promises and pitfalls of transitions and negotiations.

Moreover, CANVAS' recent research and new curriculum 'Movements in Transition' will be presented, which entails important findings and new strategies to sustain change.

# PEOPLE POWER ACADEMY