

# GUIDE BOOK

PEOPLE POWER ACADEMY '23



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**A SOCIAL MOVEMENT  
THAT ONLY MOVES PEOPLE  
IS MERELY A REVOLT.  
A MOVEMENT THAT  
CHANGES BOTH PEOPLE  
AND INSTITUTIONS IS A  
REVOLUTION.**

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MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.



Panelists addressed pressing issues and thematic trends in civic movements in the CANVAS 2023 People Power Academy. Across four sessions, renowned activists analyzed responses to declines in democracy in their corners of the world, and policy experts provided specific strategies and tactics to build successful social movements, offering distinct lessons and roadmaps for future activists.

■ **FREEDOM FELLOWS** ■



## SESSION I CHALLENGING AUTOCRATS

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Featured civic engagement expert Pedro Telles speaking about the rise of strongman and former president Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, and how the engaging of the politically neutral was crucial to his eventual defeat in his reelection campaign. Georgian Law student Giorgi Ekaladze discussed the cultural and political complexities underlying his native country, caught between a popular bid to join the EU and substantial Russian influence and physical occupation. Dominika Lasota, a Polish activist with the Fridays for Future climate movement, followed this with a discussion on severing the lifelines that bolster authoritarians, focusing on the fossil fuels that are supporting Putin's current war in Ukraine.



## SESSION II TRANSITION TOWARDS DEMOCRACY & POWER SHIFTS

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Answered the central questions of what follows revolutionary movements, and whether democratic victory can be protected and enshrined for posterity. Bella Cuomo, Director of CANVAS U.S., explained common pitfalls that occur during transitions, and how the momentum of change can quickly decelerate. Ahmed Samih Farig, an Egyptian human rights activist, stressed the need to rewrite social contracts and the rules of the game and clarify how participants from diverse backgrounds can pursue one common goal. Finally, an activist from Myanmar discussed how underlying distrust and divisions within pro-democracy forces can hinder necessary alliance-building.



## SESSION III REBELLIOUS WOMEN

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Was a celebration of women's role in democratic movements, featuring three activists who are exemplary in their work. Iranian activist Anahita Amadi provided a snapshot of the current turmoil in her native country and inspirational local stories of women freeing themselves from government oppression. 21-year-old Somaya Faruqi, named one of the United Nations' Education Cannot Wait Global Champions, introduced her initiatives to support women's education in Afghanistan under Taliban rule. Lastly, Nika Kovac recounted her non-governmental organization's successful feminist voting campaign to oust Slovenia's authoritarian government.



## SESSION IV FUNDRAISING

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Focused on the financial capital that keeps movements afloat. Representative from the donor community described the logistics behind grants, informing applicants on the importance of defining why their campaigns matter and how action fits with strategy. Bryan M. Sims from Humanity United, a philanthropic foundation committed to addressing the root causes of violent conflict, supplemented this with discussions on financial sustainability and supporting broader activist ecosystems. To finish the session, a Myanmar activist working with the Blood Money Campaign gave firsthand insight into the efforts behind restricting the cash flow to those ill-suited for power.



## SESSION I:

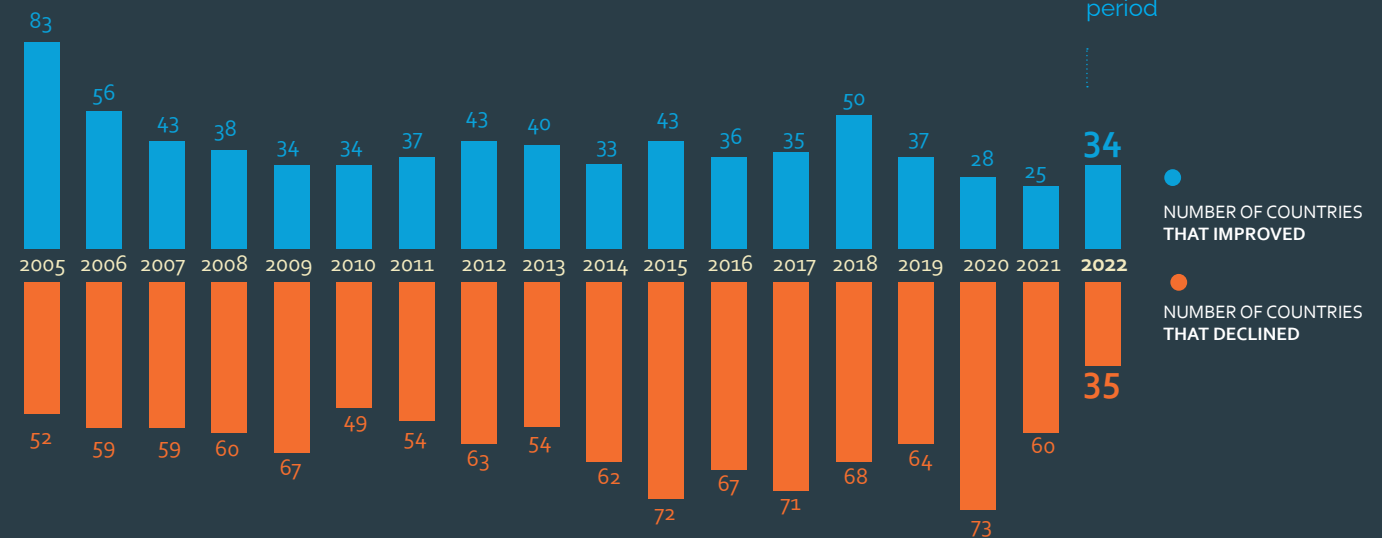
# CHALLENGING AUTOCRATS

## GLOBAL TRENDS OF DEMOCRACY DECAY

The last few decades have been marked by global democratic erosion. In Latin America, the rise of democratization in the 1980s gave way to a return of populism and backsliding soon after. In Central and Eastern Europe, there were large drops in the levels of democracy, with the most notable declines in Hungary and Poland in the early 2010s. Meanwhile, Sub-Saharan Africa's rapid democratic expansion in the early 1990s largely stalled or reverted by the end of the decade. While 2022 may have marked the smallest number of declining countries since the negative pattern began, activists and leaders must continue to pursue nonviolent resistance to counter the troubling trends of democratic decay. While examining trends of democratic decay, three prominent types of democratic backsliding emerged.



### 17 YEARS OF GLOBAL DECLINE



(From Freedom in the World 2022: The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule)

## THREE PROMINENT TYPES OF DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING HAVE EMERGED

### Grievance Fueled Illiberalism:

In this strand of backsliding, leaders mobilize widely held frustrations of the public to justify the destruction of democratic norms and institutions. The strategies of many populist leaders fall into this category, such as Hungary's Viktor Orbán or Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro. These leaders appealed to grievances regarding perceived economic mishandlings and corruption scandals, then associated the grievances with others in the governing class, while distancing themselves from the root causes of the issues, tightening their hold on power.

### Opportunistic Authoritarianism:

Leaders interested in advancing their own financial situations and power dynamics undercut mechanisms of accountability when faced with threats to their power. For instance, Benin's Patrice Talon appointed his personal lawyer as President of the

Constitutional Court. Talon has prevented the court from hearing any cases brought against him by any individual or non-governmental organization. Meanwhile, Talon's greatest potential political rivals have all been prevented from running for office because of trumped-up charges by the court, including accusations of drug trafficking and violations of campaign finance laws. Talon used a previously established medium of accountability, the court system, to entrench his own position of power.

### Entrenched-Interest Revanchism:

This third strand of backsliding takes place when an interest group displaced by a democratic transition uses undemocratic means to reassert themselves in a position of power. Oftentimes, the culprits are militaries that formerly controlled the country's politics. One such example is the recent refusal of the Sudanese military to comply with a previously agreed transfer of power to a civilian government and the subsequent installment of a military dictatorship prior to the outbreak of civil war in the country in 2023.



### OLD VS NEW TOOLBOX: THE EVOLUTION OF DICTATORS TOOLS:

In the past, autocrats perceived other leaders as the greatest risk to their power. To protect themselves, they employed tactics that reduced the ability of competitors to garner loyal followings, such as rotating elites through positions of power, overpaying security services, and physical surveillance of their populace. However, the way in which autocrats rule is changing alongside developments in global dynamics. As popular demand for accountable governance rises through new mechanisms, such as social media forums, public dissidence poses a greater threat to autocrats than ever before. Protests and mass movements are increasing in number, forcing dictators to find ways to limit cognitive mobilization among the public. In other words, autocrats are adjusting, finding new mechanisms of oppression, and learning from each other. In recent years, autocrats have landed on a three-pronged approach to limit civil liberties and thus hinder citizens' ability to organize against the state.

#### 1. LAWFARE

#### 2. SOVEREIGNTY CLAIMS

#### 3. TECHNOLOGY





## LAWFARE

The first of these strategies is through institutional means. Autocrats are using lawfare to enhance executive power, thereby avoiding accountability and increasing their freedom to restrict civil liberty. For instance, an autocrat may hollow out regulatory agencies to protect themselves, changing practices and cultures from within, without altering a formal law on the books.

Leaders also formally change laws within their prescribed abilities to limit the freedom of civilians as well as the scope of action of civic activists. In various states in the United States, legislatures passed anti-protest bills in response to the Black Lives Matter movement, revoking various civil liberties for those convicted of unlawful assembly.

## SOVEREIGNTY CLAIMS

The second prong of their approach is the manipulation of foreign relations. Autocrats utilize claims of sovereignty to deflect foreign criticisms or interference. In 2009, the Ethiopian government prohibited any organization receiving more than ten percent of its funding from foreign sources from working on any social issues, ranging from human rights to democratization processes. Politicians claimed that the proclamation protected associations' right to freedom of association. By asserting that foreign intervention threatens Ethiopia's sovereignty, the government was able to limit political liberties and mobilization within the country.



## TECHNOLOGY

The final, and perhaps most prevalent new tool for autocratic oppression is technology. While the rise of media may enable the spread of ideas and greater mobilization of the public, it can also be manipulated for the autocrats' benefit. In Brazil, Bolsonaro focused much of his attention on attracting support through social media. During his campaign, a shocking forty-two percent of rightwing political messaging on WhatsApp contained fraudulent information benefiting Bolsonaro. Propaganda is no new tool, but social media allows for it to spread faster than ever. In addition to false messaging and fake news, autocrats are using another historical tool of suppression through new means: censorship. This tactic may be successful through taxing social media or monitoring internet activity. Meanwhile, recent developments in technological fields have changed the way in which autocrats can surveil their people. Artificial Intelligence allows for the monitoring and tracking of civilians in less intrusive and less obvious ways while allowing rulers to cast a wider net using fewer resources.

## NEW BRAND OF MOVEMENTS



As autocrats strengthen their hold on power around the world, mass movements pose the greatest contemporary threat to autocrats. This new breed of leaderless, bottom-up social movements can be especially dangerous to illiberal agendas. These movements have spontaneous triggers, such as an incident of exposed corruption, or the poor management of natural disaster responses. They are highly decentralized in their tactics and ownership is spread rapidly through communities, gaining traction on social media. Lacking core, visible leaders, their aims are determined through alternative structures such as online forums and open-air assemblies. In the words of American

civil rights leader Ella Baker, “Strong people don’t need strong leaders.” This new breed of social movement is spreading across the globe, from the Yellow Vests in France to the 2022 Sri Lankan protests. In another instance, Georgia held mass leaderless protests calling for a swap to fully proportional parliamentary elections. When Georgian opposition leaders tried to speak on behalf of the movement, they were rejected by the people; instead, representatives from each party were allowed to speak conditional upon their support of the movement’s ideals. The protestors insisted, “In the past, people would follow politicians, but now politicians follow people”.



### Advantages

Leaderless protests are highly inclusive, reaching people from all backgrounds and ages. The absence of an official hierarchy often draws many first-time protestors, bolstering the movement. Furthermore, without a specific leader to defame or remove, the movements become very hard to repress.

### Challenges

While horizontal movements often boast large numbers, they can be less effective if their aims are not clear. Autocrats can dismiss the movements as failing to provide explicit demands or tangible solutions. Moreover, instances of violence among protestors may disrupt their efforts. Without a leader, individual violent protestors are more difficult to control. Similarly, these movements may be susceptible to legitimacy-sapping violence, where the opposition infiltrates protests with acts of violence in support of the movement to discredit the protests.



The efficacy of horizontal movements is not just theoretical. In our recent CANVAS Academy session, Challenging Autocrats, we had the privilege of hosting three activists, from Brazil, Georgia, and the Fridays for Future climate movement, who have each experienced successes in their respective actions.

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# STRONG PEOPLE DON'T NEED STRONG LEADERS.



## 1 THE FALL OF BOLSONARO - “BRAZIL IS BACK”

In the words of Lula da Silva, “Brazil is Back.” After being forced into a run-off in the 2022 elections, Lula defeated incumbent Jair Bolsonaro in a 50.9 percent to 41.9 percent victory. This victory was no small feat, especially considering Bolsonaro's unprecedented use of public money to pursue reelection and support from key economic groups who benefited from his regressive economic policies. Nonetheless, Lula's victory was the work of countless individuals working tirelessly to ensure a democratic future for the country. Many movements, organizations, and funders who historically had remained apolitical, took extraordinary risks to back Lula. Former President Fernando Hen-



### Brazil election result

Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva narrowly defeated President Jair Bolsonaro, marking a stunning comeback for the former president



rique Cardoso echoed the victor's sentiment, claiming “Democracy has won, Brazil has won!” However, Lula's victory was marred by lingering support from many Brazilians for Bolsonaro. After the election, an infamous attack on the Brazilian congressional building paralleled the US January 6th insurrection, and plans were uncovered for a bombing at Lula's inauguration. Moreover, lasting influence of ‘Bolsonarismo’ remains, as his party accumulated 2 million more votes in Congressional elections than in 2018. Bolsonaro's defeat is an important step, but not the final step, towards a truly democratic future for Brazil.





## 2 GEORGIA: KEEPING AUTOCRATS ON THE DEFENSE



In the aftermath of the 2020 election scandals, a leaderless movement, spearheaded by an amalgam of youth activist groups, erupted in Georgia and demanded a transition to a fully proportional parliamentary system. The energy brought by the youth propelled the movement into constant action, keeping those in power on the back foot. For example, after protestors repeatedly locked state buildings with padlocks and chains, the government erected a protective wall around parliament; however, this quickly backfired as the barrier became a canvas for condemning inscriptions and a sym-

bol of a government that hides from its people, further spurning the public. Georgian youths' persistence has proved effective. Despite the Georgian Dream party's reluctance to follow through on its promise for a proportional parliamentary system, activists have had successes in their movements. Protestors were recently successful in affecting the decision of the government to rescind their controversial "foreign agents" bill and, in line with the movement's pro-Western attitude, Georgia is implementing the necessary recommendations to obtain EU candidate status.

## 3 FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT

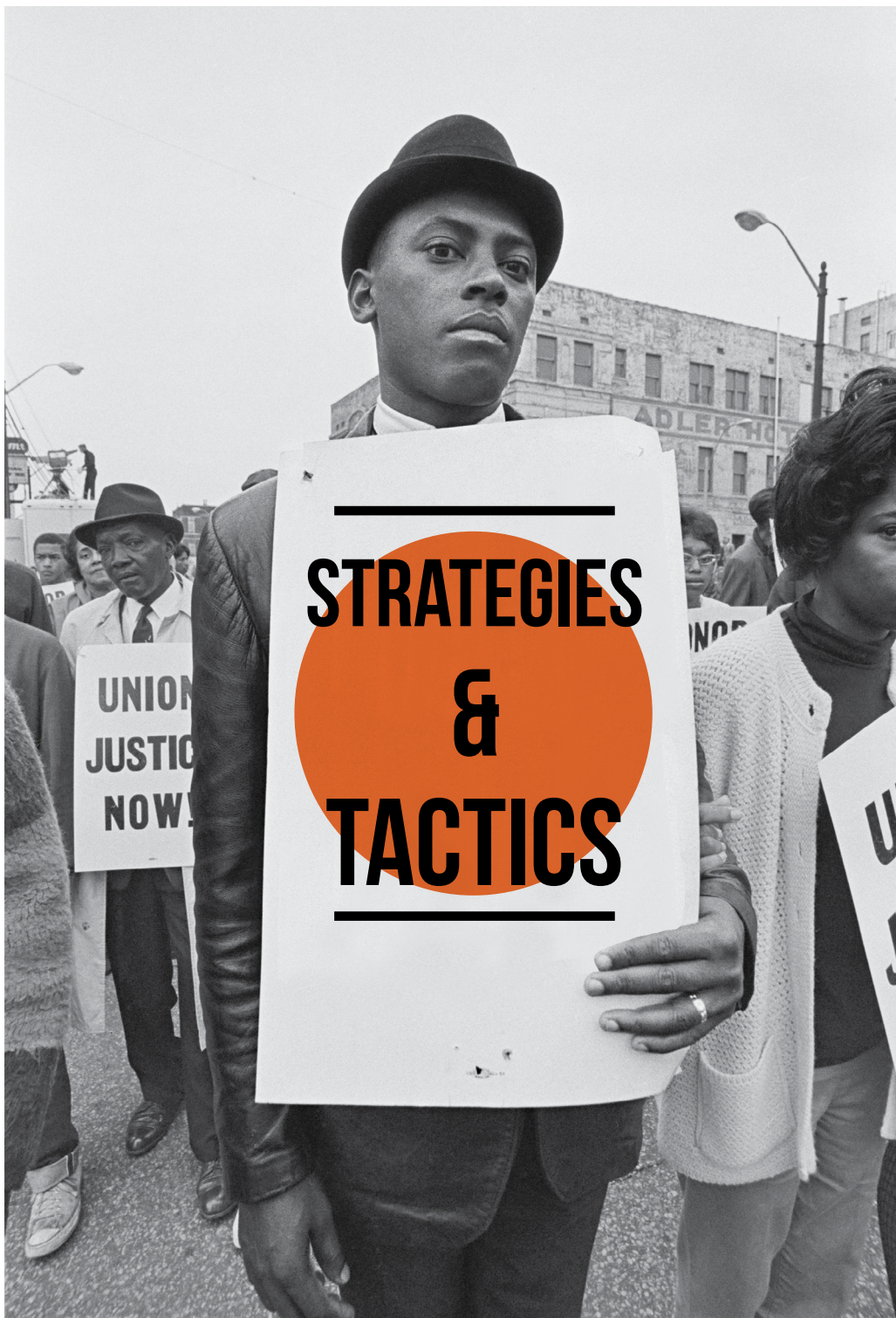


## STOP FINANCING WAR

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, the war became an immediate crisis demanding the world's attention. Fridays for Future, a global climate movement, faced a new environment to wage battle against harmful climate practices. The movement needed to adapt, and so it did. Fridays for Future launched a new campaign, dubbed "Stop Financing War," that advocated for an embargo on Russian oil and gas. By discouraging fossil fuel usage,

a major contributor to the climate crisis, one can limit funding for Putin's war in Ukraine because the Russian economy is so reliant on oil revenue streams coming in from around the globe. By connecting climate change to another major issue, the movement successfully augmented support and catalyzed an innovative brand of activism. What first appeared to be unrelated to climate issues was harnessed to the organization's advantage.



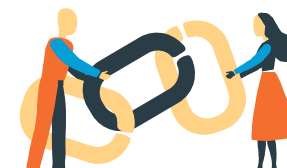


## BUILDING THE MOVEMENT

Activists and volunteers are the field power of nonviolent movements; they are the warriors that ultimately win the war.

### 1. LINKING CAUSES

As demonstrated through the global climate change turned "dictators oil divestment" movement, linking movements can advance each individual cause — bolstering support and increasing the pressure on those in charge. This tactic was also integral to the Yellow Vests protests across France, where an online petition calling for a cut in fuel prices linked with an event calling for road blockades to protest rising expenses for car owners—culminating in a widespread and effective campaign. Powerful partnerships can be found to compound success.



### 2. LINKING INDIVIDUALS

Effective movements form broad coalitions of individuals - forging crucial, unexpected alliances. In Brazil, key politicians and parties from across the political spectrum banded together to oust Bolsonaro. Meanwhile, three separate movements - Dare, Shame, and Change - united in Georgia to flood the streets in mass protests against the dismantling of a fellow activist's tent by government forces. As divisions fade, movements grow.

### 3. APPEAL TO THE YOUTH

The youth are powerful allies who can bring fresh perspectives, original ideas, and new energy. Countless examples demonstrate their enthusiasm, resilience, and ingenuity. University students in Georgia comprised most of the protestors in Tbilisi manifesting against both the "foreign agents" bill and the lack of a proportional parliamentary system, while Fridays for Future is entirely youth led and organized. Moreover, young voters played a key role in the defeat of Bolsonaro at the polls in Brazil. They are the future and remain integral to mass movements.



## STRATEGIES OF THE MOVEMENT

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### FACT CHECKING, GENERALLY SPEAKING, IS INEFFICIENT

While fact checking autocrats can be beneficial, it results in a slower, more defensive movement. Moreover, studies show it may be difficult to correct the beliefs of individuals after exposure to false information. Instead, movements should put out headlines as loud and attractive as those put forth by opponents. Activists must lead - take control of the narrative itself through positive reinforcement of facts.

2

### PRIMING NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Rather than appealing to opponents or mobilizing those already on their side, movements must prime negative characteristics of the authoritarian leader among neutral audiences. Dilemma actions, such as OTPOR's Coin for Change in Serbia, do exactly that. Dilemma actions put opponents in situations where they must either grant the demand or act in a way that damages their image in the eyes of the public. Furthermore, negative characteristics can be primed with laughtivism. Humor is an effective tool in attracting the media as well as enticing neutrals to participate in the fun. Find common ground with others and unite behind a shared critique.

3

### KEEP AUTOCRATS ON THE DEFENSE

Similar to how dilemma actions elicit mistakes from autocrats, persistence does also. Continued support for a movement is key as it can take significant time to see change. However, continued persistence increases the chances that the opposition will make a mistake in response to an action, an opportunity to publicize the goals and aspirations of a movement while decreasing support for the opposition. In short, don't lose heart, and don't slow down; it may take time before a movement sees results.

## FORGING AN EFFECTIVE LONG-TERM MOVEMENT

### CLEAR DEMANDS

To maintain the support of activists and ensure effective results, it is crucial that clear goals are conveyed even amidst leaderless movements. For example, Fridays for Future precisely outlines its goals and demands on its website, including adherence to the Paris Agreement goal of a maximum global temperature rise of 1.5 degrees Celsius. Clear demands breed decisive success.



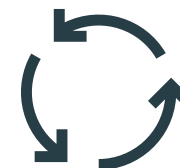
### TWO-PRONG APPROACH

Effective movements often require a two-pronged approach: political and social. While Brazil's mass movements forged a path for Bolsonaro's defeat, the return of popular political figure, Lula da Silva, played a vital role in challenging him at the polls. Similarly, while Fridays for Future is best known for holding strikes across the globe, activists create petitions, actions, and campaigns, directly confronting major politicians with their demands in the public eye. Lasting change lies at the intersection of political and social movements.



### THE FIGHT IS CONTINUAL

A fight is not over after a change in power, it is continual. One has to break down the influencing factors that led to previous autocratic rule. While the people of Brazil succeeded in bringing down Bolsonaro, Lula is faced with the pressing issues of a stagnant economy and polarization. After Sudan's President Omar Al-Bashir was overthrown, a military coup quickly reversed the country's steps towards democracy. Achieving change and winning an election is not enough. The fight must continue to ensure a successful transition towards democracy while creating mechanisms that ensure lasting democratic change.



## ADDITIONAL READINGS:

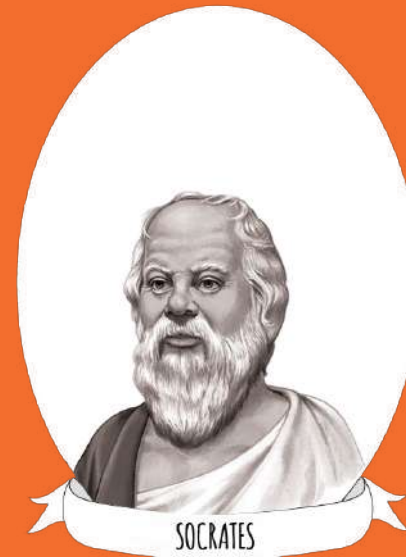
1. CANVAS - Handbook for Working with Activists
2. CANVAS - 50 Crucial Points
3. CANVAS - Dilemma Actions Boost Nonviolent Campaign Success
4. Srdja Popovic and Sophia McClenen: Pranksters vs. Autocrats
5. Lüders et al.: Bottom-up Populism
6. Freedom House - Understanding Democratic Decline
7. Carnegie Endowment - Responding to Democratic Backsliding
8. Foreign Policy - Benin's King of Cotton Makes it Democracy a Sham
9. Majken Sørensen and Brian Martin: Dilemma Actions
10. Democracy without Borders - Global Democracies Slowing Decline
11. Center for New American Security - Digital Dictators
12. Democratic Backsliding in Africa? Autocratization, Resilience and Contention
13. WhatsApp fake news during Brazil election
14. How Relative Deprivation and Populist Attitudes Mobilize Leaderless Anti-Government Protests
15. 'Supreme power of people': Sri Lanka marks 100 days of protests
16. TopChubashov Center - Symbolism and Creativity in Georgian Protests
17. Becoming Yellow Vests: The Politicization of Ordinary Citizens (France 2018-2020)
18. The Diplomat - Sri Lanka's Leaderless Protests
19. Large Protests Against Brazil's Frontrunner: Jair Bolsonaro
20. Georgia Drops "Foreign Agents" Bill after Protests
21. Fact-checking Reduces the Propagation of False News in Social Networks
22. OTPOR: Coin for Change



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**DEMOCRACY IS ONLY AS GOOD AS THE EDUCATION THAT SURROUNDS IT.**







## SESSION II:

# TRANSITION TOWARDS DEMOCRACY AND POWER SHIFTS

## PROCEEDING POST-VICTORY

Though there is a substantial amount of focus on the actions of a non-violent movement during a revolution, equally important is how these movements choose to act and move forward after victory. The transition to democracy after a successful non-violent revolution is a delicate situation that has the potential to bring about desired change or eliminate previous gains. Whether these revolutionary victories last depends on the actions of the activists and how they respond to shifting landscapes during a transition. In the Spring of 2023, CANVAS published its "Movements in Transition" research paper, with the goal of creating a framework for activists to navigate this complex post-revolution environ-

ment, make necessary reforms, and prevent democratic backsliding. It is "a practical training curriculum on how a movement can successfully shift from playing a role of resistance to a role of reform and rebuild during the post-revolution transition.

This section seeks to provide lessons from CANVAS's People Power Academy's session "Transition Towards Democracy and Power Shifts", "Movements in Transition", interviews from activists and key stakeholders, and some examples from democratic transitions, to trace core themes of successful democratic transitions and pitfalls that can harm a movement's goals.

## THEMES OF SUCCESSFUL DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS

### FRAMING



Framing how problems are identified and prioritized to the public, and the subsequent presentation of viable options are especially crucial during democratic transitions. Social movements have the ability to bring certain issues to the spotlight and emphasize certain values in society. Specifically, framing democracy as not only the establishment of free and fair elections but also as a system that allows for more opportunities for civil and social rights to be protected will increase public support throughout a transition. It is important to recognize how democratic processes often take more time than autocratic government shifts and present this

accurately to the people. The greater population's involvement in democratic practices is a vital condition to be successful in what can be a lengthy transition period, and involvement can be augmented through an accurate presentation of what a transition looks like.

**SOCIAL MOVEMENTS HAVE THE ABILITY TO BRING CERTAIN ISSUES TO THE SPOTLIGHT AND EMPHASIZE CERTAIN VALUES IN SOCIETY.**



When instituting democratic processes in a government, agenda-setting will allow for an easier implementation of what will already be a difficult process. When broken down into manageable components, democratic transitions also allow for a greater ease in understanding democratic principles. Oppositionists will often counter democratic transitions with complicated negotiating procedures, the manufacturing of enemies, or distracting activists. Agenda-setting allows for a transition to nullify oppositionist maneuvers and focus on enacting change.

## STRATEGY, SPECIAL BODIES AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS



Specific transitional processes can be helpful in ensuring smooth reform. One process is the formation of caretaker governments created through negotiations, not elections, that run the country until free and fair elections can take place. Therefore, their executive power should be narrow, well defined, and short lived. Under the order of caretaker governments, creating the conditions to hold free and fair elections is mandatory to transition to an elected government. Ahmed Samih Farig presented the argument that elections in Egypt after the fall of Mohammed Mor-

si may have happened too quickly. There needed to be a new social contract and required conditions in the country for free and fair elections to take place to prevent an imminent return to previous systems of power. Not only is there often a need for new constitutions, but social movements should attempt to be involved in a constitutional convention process. If this is not possible, they should build alliances with people who are involved in the process to have their interests represented. When a new constitution is being created, it is important for social movements to educate themselves and the public about what reforms, rights,

and provisions should be included. This will help make sure that succeeding governments do not fail to implement meaningful change and for revolutionary demands to not go unheard.

In transition processes, there is a need to provide justice to those who have been wronged. Truth commissions investigate the systematic ways that a former regime violated human rights and identifies individuals responsible. Violations should not be swept under the rug but rather recognized in a way where they do not go forgotten, and still respect the sensitivity of the subject. Peace-building forums or conflict-resolution sessions between larger groups still in tension can prevent future polarization or conflict while providing justice to those wronged.

## ECONOMIC REORGANIZATION

Vigilance against corruption and clear regulation of nationalization/privatization enhance transitions.

In a post-revolution society, there is a danger of civil organizations becoming over-dependent on foreign aid, creating a loss of autonomy and the possibility of a financial vacuum when aid dries up. It is important to deviate from dependency on foreign aid quickly. One such mechanism is to establish state-owned enterprises (SOEs). SOEs provide opportunities when government investment is needed, or when the private sector is monopolized.

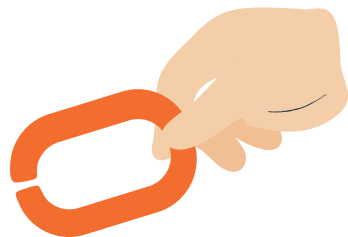
However, SOEs should not be left unchecked since they can become hotbeds for corruption, clientelism, and inefficiency. Monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms are needed to ensure the continued reliability of SOEs.

In many transitions, there is a necessity for either the nationalization or privatization of industries and property rights. This is also something that should be clearly addressed and regulated early in transition processes, to minimize corruption and maximize financial gains.





## NEGOTIATION AND COALITION BUILDING



Negotiation and coalition building are obligatory in a post-revolutionary society. However, they are frequently the most difficult actions for activists to approach successfully. Movements may need to form coalitions with forces that have historically been on the opposite side of a cause. Lack of a presence in meaningful coalitions is likely to mean that elite personalities will continue to dominate the political scene and democratic transition will become untenable. Participation in negotiations and coalition building can take multiple forms.

**1. Conditional alliances with political parties:** Social movements may support a particular candidate or party because of their pursuit of a movement's desired reforms.

**2. Forming parties from the movement:** Activists may make the transition to politicians and participate in the democratic process. Often existing political parties do not represent the interests of activists, forcing activists to enter the political realm independently.

**3. Placing movement members in key government positions:** Movement participants are often well positioned to take key roles in government because of the skills and knowledge they accumulated during revolutionary processes. Activists in the government are also a way to have a movement's position well represented in governmental decision making.

**4. Creating alliances with other social movements to pressure parties and the government:** Horizontal coalition-building can continue post-revolution. Many other activist groups could have common interests in areas of reform and have a desire to have shared interests represented in government.

Finding a balance is key to creating meaningful change. Approaching government transition with an all or nothing approach often results in poor outcomes for democracies.

## MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY



Accountability processes are obligatory to ensure that the demands that drove a revolution are actually enacted to create long lasting change. Accountability and monitoring in transitional processes are not only applicable during an election. They are also necessary after an election to ensure the creation of laws that protect human rights, guard against corruption, and secure the freedom of civil society, allowing all transition processes to be properly implement-

ed. Elected officials can often fail to implement changes with no incentives or accountability mechanisms. Transparent information sharing mechanisms between the government and civil society are a byproduct of monitoring and accountability. Watchdogs serve the purpose of neutral monitors to keep civilians informed as to the concrete actions governments take. Specific actions of various watchdog organizations include the likes of election monitoring,

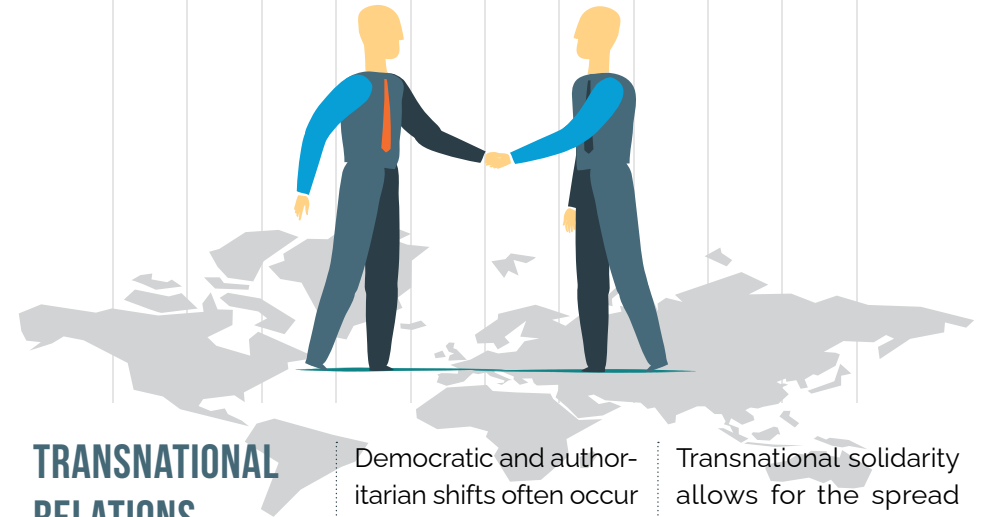
investigative journalism, and financial accounting. The activists from Myanmar who participated in the session argued that there is a great need for watchdogs in Myanmar given the prominence of the army in civil society and grave human rights violations they committed against their own people. The army's presence in society creates a dynamic in which monitoring is vital to prevent the repeat of any crimes in a post revolution world.



## CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Engaging citizens with broader social concerns will result in better accountability mechanisms and higher standards for government officials.

Civic participation encourages citizens to be more community-minded and involved with issues that concern the democratization process. Rather than rushing into a new election, fostering a wide civil society in which citizens are concerned with the direction of the government would create a better foundation on which to have elections. Civic participation can encourage a better quality of democracy. Engaging citizens with broader social concerns will result in better accountability mechanisms and higher standards for government officials. Civic communities also foster dynamics in which citizens benefit from other citizens' participation. Involvement in organizations creates dynamics between members upon which trust is built. Finally, civic communities can also act as independent information channels in which involvement creates ways for ideas to be shared. Participation in civic organizations can take two separate forms, either overtly political or non-political. It is important for organizations not to depoliticize people by allowing for alternative output mechanisms that align with appetite for political action. Regardless of the form of civic organization, any independent civil society sector is better than none.



## TRANSNATIONAL RELATIONS

Transnational solidarity allows for the spread and acceptance of democratic principles across regions.

Democratic and authoritarian shifts often occur in waves in neighboring countries as leaders learn from each other. There is a demonstrated "contagion effect", when one country makes the transition toward democracy other neighboring countries are more likely to follow. The inverse is also true. The "dictator learning curve" indicates that countries experiencing democratic backsliding are likely to have a negative effect on the democratic situation in neighboring countries.

Transnational solidarity allows for the spread and acceptance of democratic principles across regions. Meanwhile, activists can help neighboring movements through the sharing of information and transitional tactics. Involvement in transnational and supranational treaties and organizations can benefit transitions with comprehensive human rights principles and influxes of aid.



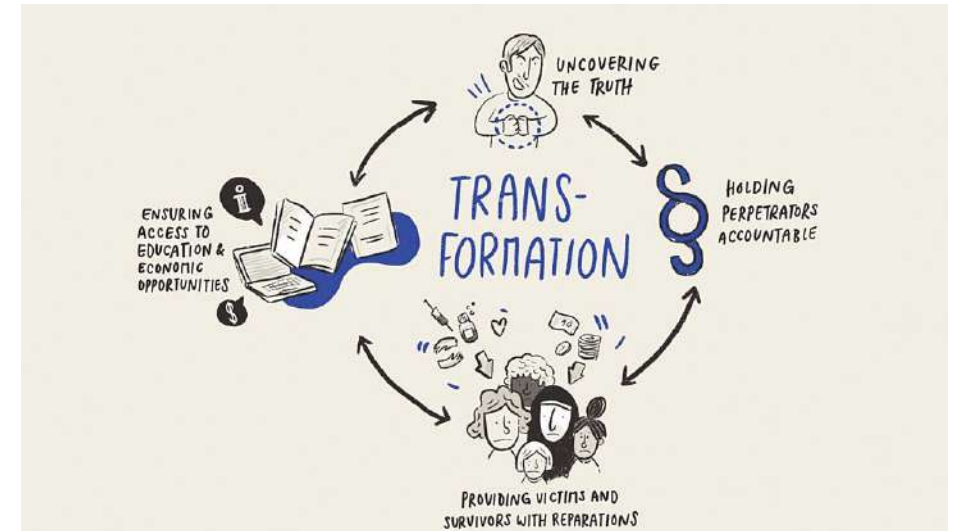
## COMMON PITFALLS OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

### RELIANCE ON TACTICS OF RESISTANCE

Throughout the transition to democracy, communities and populations who wish to implement change require the adaptation of new structural elements. Previously successful actions and strategies no longer function properly in transition periods. One of the biggest pitfalls of a transition to democracy is the failure to shift tactics, and continued reliance on previous structures. Reliance on previous resistance mechanisms creates negotiating deadlocks and threatens economic collapse. In a transition society, a narrow mindset is damaging. Exposure to various experts and outside councils can provide meaningful bases upon which to build new transitional infrastructure. New civil society organizations can allow activists to learn the necessary skills for building democracies and build the structural systems needed to have meaningful negotiations that result in functional democratic systems.

### INDEPENDENT AUTHORITARIAN ACTORS

On a local level, independent actors will often attempt to regain power or rise to power during democratic transitions. When power vacuums are created with the removal of an influential, autocratic leader, a complicated, ineffective, or even violent dynamic can be imposed. Having mechanisms in place can prevent that and fill power vacuums with well-defined, limited governmental roles. Authoritarian actors on the world stage can greatly complicate transitions to democracy. Isabella Cuomo highlighted the issue that they can pose, thwarting pro-democratic movements through the backing of oppositionists. Seeking to act on behalf of their own interests in the country, they are driven by the financial rewards of unfettered access to natural resources.



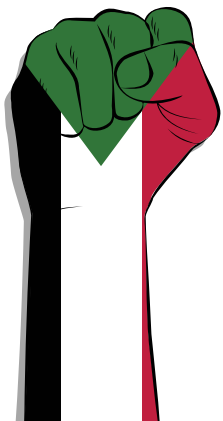
### TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE FAILURES:



Transitional justice is an important step in addressing previous human rights offenses and rebuilding trust between communities. Justice must happen on the local, national, and international levels and include the presence of community members from tribal leaders to politicians. Justice can take many forms such as reparations, peace-building forums, and monument building for victims. Transitional justice processes are designed to build a collective memory, while failure to do so results in even more fissures within society and difficulty in building a well-regarded government. Lastly, the justice process does not end when the trials do, it is about building the injustices into a national collective memory and grappling with violence so that it never happens again.



## FAILED DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION IN SUDAN



After independence in 1956, Sudan adopted a democratically elected parliamentary government. In 1989, Colonel Omar al-Bashir of the Sudanese military led a coup against the democratically elected government, transforming Sudan into a one-party state, concentrating power in the hands of the military. Bashir's rule saw the repression of political parties, the consolidation of judicial and legislative power into the presidency, and ethnic conflict that led to the International Criminal Court issuing two arrest warrants for Bashir on counts of genocide for his actions in Darfur.



After almost 30 years of Bashir's repressive rule, plagued by conflict in Darfur and civil war, protests arose across Sudan in December 2018 after the government announced they would triple the price of basic food essentials amidst major fuel shortage and inflation of 70 percent. These protests were met with violent repression from the military, which resulted in the arrest of over 800 protesters and opposition figures and 40 deaths.



April 11, 2019, saw the successful toppling of Bashir as a result of civilian protests. Fissures within the military in Sudan eventually resulted in some support for civilian protestors. As a result, the military was in control and announced a two-year transitory government comprised of civilian and military leaders with the intention of holding democratic elections in 2 years. This period represented a moment of hope for Sudan, where many thought that there would be drastic changes from their non-democratic past. The democratic transitional government failed once again with a military coup on October 25, 2021, led by Abdel Fatah al-Burhan.



Sudan has been led by General Burhan since 2021. In April of 2023, General Mohamed Hamdan Daga-lo, leader of the Rapid Support Forces waged an assault upon the military, plunging the country into yet another civil war. Fighting has been fierce with nearly two million internally displaced people and over half a million Sudanese seeking refuge abroad. Military leaders' actions have taken the country even further away from democratic rule, subjecting civilians of Sudan to some of the worst economic conditions in the world.

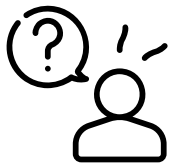
## PITFALLS FROM THE SUDANESE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION OF 2019



There are many factors that led to the failure to implement democracy in Sudan. Primarily, agreements for transitioning towards democracy in Sudan were brokered between many different groups, most of which were neighborhood councils, all with different goals. The Sudanese transitional government struggled to facilitate consensus between all these different groups to create a united front when bargaining with the military. Failure in discussions sowed a lot of tension and distrust in the process within the civilian pro-democracy side of the transition, putting undue pressure on transitory leaders.



Secondarily, in its 30 years of rule, the Sudanese military created companies and power structures that ensured they had complete control over major domestic industries and the country's economy. During the transition period, there was a lot of fear about Sudan's already crippled economic condition. Sudan's economy was dominated by military interests. The Sudanese military and security forces had a sprawling monopoly over the country's economy, a system that needed to be tackled in the democratic transition. However, the transitional government failed to establish control over



key economic industries, stymying cash flows to the government and limiting services to the people. The government also failed to ease the fears of the general population about the economic future of Sudan, sowing distrust in the transitional government. Distrust of a system designed to transition towards a democratic government undermines the effectiveness of the transition itself. Failures to assuage the public create gaps within what was designed to be a closed system for anti-democratic forces to take hold.

## ADDITIONAL READINGS:

1. CANVAS – Movements in Transition
2. The Role of Youth in Democratic Transition
3. Protest to Policy - A Framework for Supporting Democratic Transitions
4. Beyond Political Transitions: Promoting Peaceful Democratic Openings Through Strategic Foresight
5. Judiciaries Worldwide - Transitional Justice
6. The Justice Balance - When Transitional Justice Improves Human Rights and Democracy
7. World Politics Review - The Challenges Facing Transitional Justice
8. Ted Talk - Justice and Reconciliation after Periods of Mass Violence
9. Democratic Erosion - The Power Vacuum in Regime Transition
10. Council on Foreign Relations - Political and Economic Lessons from Democratic Transitions
11. V-Dem Institute - Civil Society and Post-Independence Democracy Levels
12. Carlo Alberto - Civil Society Weakness in Post-Communist Europe: A Preliminary Assessment
13. Stanford CISAC - The Limits of Democratization: Weak Institutions and Democratic Transitions
14. Carnegie Endowment - What happens when Democracies become perniciously Polarized?
15. Middle East Initiative - After Repression: How Polarization Derails Democratic Transitions
16. After Repression: How Polarization Derails Democratic Transition
17. Washington Post - What is behind the fighting in Sudan, and what is at stake?
18. The Tahrir Institute – Efforts Toward Restoring Constitutional Order and Democratic Transition in Sudan
19. CMI - Sudan December 2018 Riots: Is the Regime Crumbling?
20. Chatham House - A Critical Juncture for Sudan's Democratic Transition
21. The Sentry - A strategy for Revitalizing Sudan's Democratic Transition



SCAN QR CODE FOR LINKS



## SESSION III: REBELLIOUS WOMEN



### THE POWER OF WOMEN IN MOVEMENTS

As countries across the globe continue to reckon with gender inequalities, women are moving toward the forefront of movements while assuming an indispensable role in the success of movements. Women are underrepresented in positions of power, and it is men who still make headlines and are credited with the success of movements. Often, this falls within a broader phenomenon – the failure to

recognize the contributions of women and the latent power of female resistance. Women are one of the key players in the success of democratic movements and the creation of sustainable peace. Not only do they tend to capitalize on inventive strategies, but their participation signifies a mass consensus against the historical status quo.



### LEGITIMATIZING GROWING MOVEMENTS

Women's participation in growing movements helps confer legitimacy to the movements themselves. Since discounting the resounding will of a movement is more difficult with greater numbers involved, the voices of half the population are crucial. Meanwhile, the exclusion of women is a sign of unjust power relations and structures of domination. On the other hand, soliciting female participation is a signal of a commitment to democratic values, such as inclusivity, equal rights, and the importance of diversity in enriching discourse. Because of their ability to engage other groups that have been marginalized and targeted, women are poised to build unparalleled unity.

Iran's latest political upheaval, led by women, attracted diverse members of the working class to support a broader common goal. Oil workers recognized the regime's utilization of tools for the depredation and oppression of not only women but also themselves. On February 14, twenty trade unions and women focused civil organizations issued a joint charter of demands. This establishment of solidarity not only grows the visibility of a movement but ensures that mass interests are considered. When movements are led by those who intimately know its unjust power structures, they will be best suited to destabilize them and reinvent society to be more equal.



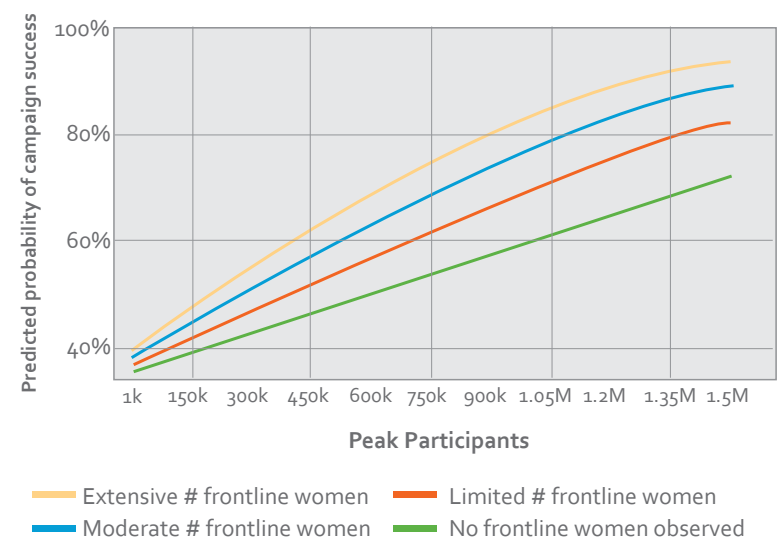
Furthermore, analyses of movements from 1945 to 2014 done by One Earth Future show that women's frontline participation is highly correlated with successful resistance campaigns. One potential explanation is that movements featuring significant numbers of women tend to remain non-violent. Non-violent movements, as we have seen, are far more successful than their violent counterparts, for reasons such as winning over elites, the strength of the system's pillars of support, and perception by international allies. The very prejudices often used to relegate women to subordination - such as associations with domesticity, weak-

ness, and inherent inferiority, - can facilitate the success of women-led initiatives. This paradox can bolster a movement by broadening the scope of potential strategies and enabling under-the-radar activity. A strong historical record backs this claim, with Argentina as a striking example: the military junta that ruled from 1976 to 1983 underestimated the group that came to be known as Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo. Protesting the disappearance of their children, suspected to be among the 30,000 dissidents kidnapped and tortured by the junta, Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo assembled every Thursday in front of prominent government spaces. They

demanded that the perpetrators of violence be held accountable for the disappearances of their children while pushing for a formal inquiry into the whereabouts of their children. The mothers were still targeted for subversive behavior, while their willpower was overlooked by a culture that exclusively viewed women as domestic creatures, rather than actors that could enact meaningful change. After the triumphant reintroduction of a democratic government in 1983, the women continued to be involved in ensuring the juntas were held accountable for their crimes against humanity. In another example, women in Chile made an impact through their own means.

They created arpilleras, patchwork pictures, depicting life under military dictator Pinochet. Making headlines in the international community, these contributions captured the terror of the country, immortalizing it for collective memory. In a regime that practiced censorship and promoted ignorance, these works of art refused to let the truth about authoritarianism go untold. Women have the ability to approach movements in refreshing and unique ways that can be the difference between success and failure. At CANVAS's People Power session "Rebellious Women", three current female activists highlighted their movements.

EFFECT OF WOMEN'S FRONTLINE PARTICIPATION ON THE PREDICTED PROBABILITY OF CAMPAIGN SUCCESS AS A FUNCTION OF PEAK PARTICIPATION, 1945-2014



”  
**NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL  
GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL,  
COMMITTED, CITIZENS  
CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.  
INDEED, IT IS THE ONLY  
THING THAT EVER HAS.**

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MARGARET MEAD

## **EMPOWERING WOMEN'S VOTE**



Nika Kovac's anti-authoritarian tactics, signature earrings, and grassroots organizing led to significant impact.

In Slovenia, civil society recently utilized unconventional strategies to drive change, echoing the creativity of predecessors of feminist leadership in the country. In Nika Kovac's coordination of the Go Out and Vote campaign, she decided to focus on maintaining a strong anti-authoritarian presentation of political issues. Traveling to villages across the country, her team met with concerned citizens to listen to their stories and the concerns that united them. To increase awareness of the conservative ruling party's harmful policies and the upcoming election, her 8 March Institute awarded signature earrings to everyone who sent out ten messages urging others to cast a ballot. Creating a sense of belonging and community, Kovac saw this as a fun tactic to encourage civic engagement. In the 2022 elections, over 1.7 million people voted – a 70 percent turnout compared with 52.6 percent in 2018. After unseating right-wing Prime Minister Janez Janša and bringing the Freedom Movement to power, the feminist organization then brought signatures to revoke the ex-leader's abusive laws to the National Assembly. Kovac was able to achieve a major impact with limited resources through self-organizing a creative civil community built upon unconventional methods.

One tool that Kovac and her team have adopted is the use of real life, live testimony to bring issues to the forefront of activists' minds. Inviting people who have first-hand experience with an issue to tell their story removes a layer of deniability for activists and instigates greater involvement. Other tactics are more light-hearted. At one protest, her organization marched around the national assembly holding house plants with the purpose of arguing that the house plants will be the only nature Slovenia has with current climate policy. These unconventional methods are emblematic of Kovac's approach, an approach which balances creative actions and substantive movements.

## BUILDING JOINT MOVEMENTS IN IRAN



Iranian women recognized that the draconian enforcement of the dress code was a method of control over the people

In other parts of the world, women face gender-based injustices, such as demands of their bodies, and lack of rights and freedoms. They must battle the barriers imposed upon them creatively, often connecting social, political, and economic grievances. This familiarity with repression equips them with the know-how for resistance and can provide the indignation that ignites a movement. Iran is one contemporary example. Protests over compulsory hijab laws and Mahsa Amini's death at the hands of the morality police evolved into a much broader condemnation of the Iranian regime, the most formidable challenge to the government since the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Iranian women recognized that the draconian enforcement of the dress code was a method of control over the people, escalating far beyond adherence to religious principles.

In concert with other forms of tyranny, there is a crucial lesson here: the ruling party's word cannot always be taken at face value, and it is important to evaluate its justifications against the larger backdrop of its conduct. Criminalizing women's improper dress fell within a pattern of the Iranian regime stifling civic sovereignty. Activist Anahita Amadi presented the argument that the current protests in Iran started out because of the death of Amini but are actually a continuation of outrage over a history of suppressive government. For instance, aspiring electoral candidates are meticulously vetted by the Guardian Council, filtering out individuals who advocate reform. After eleven consecutive weeks of protests sparked by Amini's death, the protests have proven to be a potent force, achieving a hiatus of morality police patrolling. Even as detainments by the police force resumed, women continued to choose freedom over fear, defending themselves against officers and even publicly removing and burning their hijabs. The "Jina Revolution" – which gets its title from Mahsa Amini's legal name – exemplifies the capabilities of an uprising led by fierce women.



## GIRLS EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Teenage activist Somaya Faruqi is one example of women working creatively with the tools at their disposal to fight for justice.

In Afghanistan, women and young girls are using the methods at their disposal to push back against the Taliban's massive crackdown against their human rights. Having banned women from public spaces and from working for non-governmental organizations, the UN reports that the Taliban's laws amount to gender apartheid. The subject of education has become particularly important, with the government's prohibition of girls pursuing an education beyond grade 6.

Teenage activist Somaya Faruqi is one example of women working creatively with the tools at their disposal to fight for justice. By offering flash drives preloaded with lessons, girls are given the avenue to learn outside of formal classrooms. Faruqi and her team have thus been able to undermine some of the harmful consequences of the Taliban's restrictions. Other women are resisting by turning to online courses through universities abroad. Since the Taliban is primarily concerned with keeping women out of public life, such initiatives create alternative approaches to learning. Although there is the danger of reprisal from Taliban officials and greater suppression of women in Afghan society, they are acts of defiance until a more long-lasting solution materializes.



## YOUNG PEOPLE



Youth, an often similarly underestimated demographic in civic society, have an extensive history of successful social movements. Youths have always had an impassioned engagement with the surrounding world. Members of Generation Z, those who are born after 1997, are getting noticed for being involved in a broad spectrum of social and political causes. One international example is climate change

protests – as the people who will inherit the damages done to the planet, young people have taken the reins in demanding legislation to cut fossil fuel use and slow the trends of global warming. At just 16 years old, Greta Thunberg became the face of this movement and has continued to exert pressure on the adults in command. In another example, youth in Georgia were heavily involved in pro-

tests against the controversial “foreign agents” bill. Taking the lead where the weakened opposition could not, students accused the ruling party of imitating Russian legislation that restricts civil society and free media, culminating in the legislature eventually dropping plans to proceed with the bill. By engaging this Internet-savvy, politically conscious demographic, movements can use technology to drive change. Technology can grow the scope of a movement by spreading its message through quicker channels. Gen Z is also the generation that is most likely to boycott a product, company, entity, etc. because of a conflict in values. Given that the business sector can often function as a pillar of support to injustice, this act of non-cooperation in choosing economic alternatives is crucial.

## MENTAL HEALTH IN MOVEMENTS:

An underlooked component of a movement’s success involves the well-being of its participants. Mental health has become an increasingly significant term encompassing the balance advocates face between prioritizing their well-being and their ability to continue meaningful work. The nature of advocacy, including high stress levels, long hours, and frequent exposure to criticism, causes greater instances of mental health issues. In recent years, a variety of platforms have gained traction to combat these struggles, from basic therapy and support groups to independent meditation and journaling. Below is a list of resources tailored to support activists and victims in obtaining mental health support:

Psychology Today

**Psychology Today:** Allows for searching for both therapists and local support groups in 21 countries. Also includes filters to specify the desired type of therapy with options for trauma focused feminist therapy.

*A Priority for Self:* A study from the University of Helsinki found that individual therapy sessions proved to be more effective for former Iranian Political Prisoners when compared to support groups.

**Jiyan Foundation:** Is an organization focused on survivors of human rights abuses; activists can find a plethora of resources here. From legal advice to meditation gardens, the support offered is wide-ranging. There are locations in Iraq, Syria, Germany, and the United States.

*Working Together:* Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a practice of shifting thought patterns through group meetings. While its effectiveness depends heavily on the group’s context, some studies have found CBT decreases rates of PTSD from 61-82.4 percent in participants.







**Mental Health and Human Rights Info:** Includes publications tailored to human rights abuses, with resources regarding gender-based violence and trauma. The website also has specific manuals for these topics.



**Johns Hopkins Global Mental Health Department:** With ongoing projects in Iraq, Thailand, Zambia, Ethiopia, Ukraine, and Myanmar, their Common Elements Treatment Approach is designed for low resource countries and focuses on demographics facing mental health struggles from political turmoil. Its community-based approach allows for addressing multiple mental health issues at once in a sustainable model.



**International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims:** Operates at the intersection of medicine and law. Tailored for political prisoners, this organization has 160 member centers in 76 countries to provide resources for psychological symptoms to 60,000 survivors annually.

## UNDERREPRESENTED POPULATIONS AND ENSURING LONGEVITY

Women's participation in activism provides a greater sense of legitimacy to movements and the unity needed to ignite change representative of the collective's beliefs. As previously mentioned, there is an advantage to using under the radar, and unconventional tactics. Slovenia's election participation campaign and Iranian protests against compulsory hijab laws utilized these tactics and found success in their goals of upping voter turnout and suppressing policing, respectively. Meanwhile, the efforts of Somaya Faruqi seek to skirt the Taliban's oppressive restrictions and ensure women's right to education through digital networks of schooling. Young protestors and activists are another underestimated but formidable force to create lasting change through activism, especially in regard to current climate change and free media movements. Finally, mental health resources for activists can ensure longevity of movements, by providing leaders with safeguards against the mental strain and trauma many social movements can induce upon activists.

## ADDITIONAL READINGS:

1. USIP - Women in Nonviolent Movements
2. One Earth Future - Women's Participation and the Fate of Nonviolent Movements
3. Oxfam - Women's Leadership and Participation
4. Gen Z: How Young People are Changing Activism
5. Jacobin - The Revolt in Iran is Rallying its Diverse Working Class
6. Learning for Justice - Madres de Plaza de Mayo
7. Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War"
8. The Chilean Arpilleras: Changing National Politics through Tapestry Work
9. Open Democracy - I led the Campaign that helped Unseat Slovenia's Right-Wing Prime Minister
10. The Guardian - Nearly 80 Primary School Girls believed Poisoned in Afghanistan
11. NPR - The Taliban ended College for Women. Here's how Afghan Women are defying the ban.
12. Gen Z: How Young People are Changing Activism
13. Mental Health and Human Rights Info - Women Exposed to Sexual Violence



SCAN QR CODE FOR LINKS



## SESSION IV: FUNDRAISING

### CHALLENGES TO FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is one of the biggest challenges that any movement faces. Complex bureaucratic processes and grant applications required to obtain funds pose a massive roadblock to activists. Oppressive regimes try to add to this challenge by restricting access to foreign aid, freezing bank accounts, and creating new laws to prevent previous workarounds. In Myanmar, the central bank is operated by the military regime, giving the military full power to freeze civilian accounts at any moment. It was reported in May of 2023 that the government froze over 700 bank accounts thought to be supporting anti-junta activity.



Large money transfers, significant repeated transactions, and international transfers were some issues that led to accounts being frozen, posing grave issues for civil activists. Georgia's "foreign agents" bill, if passed, would have severely limited civil society organizations within the country as there is a large reliance on international aid in civic movements. We have seen similar laws in other countries as well including Russia and Ethiopia. In this section, we will look at the alternative ways that activists can fundraise, avoid government efforts to prevent the flow of funds, and even limit their own government's cash flows.

### HOW TO FIND PARTNERS FOR YOUR CAUSE

There are many audiences one can approach when fundraising and searching for non-financial donations. Family and friends, the local community and businesses, political parties, NGOs, and the international community are all viable options. Fundraising and finding donors is a complicated process and varies a lot based on the activists' location and access to resources. One free resource that should be used when searching for donors is other activists. Connecting with other movements and their leaders about their fundraising process, where they have received donations from, issues that came up with those donations, how they have managed legal barriers to fundraising, and how they have built long-term relationships with donors, is vital. Additionally, consistently asking at every stage if there are other organizations

or people that are valuable to connect with can create more meaningful relationships. Since resources can come in a variety of other forms besides money, connecting with people with helpful skills can create meaningful, nonfinancial support; someone with activism experience could become a valued advisor; an interested professional could become a grant-writer; a lawyer or graphic designer could both be important relationships to have. People like to be in the loop and support winners – even if they aren't donors yet. Keeping contacts updated on movements' progress and successes and inviting potential supporters to celebrate will result in greater support later. If it is safe to do so and with their consent, publicizing current donors and noting how their contributions supported success will encourage them to give even more.





## LARGE-SCALE DONOR ORGANIZATIONS

Being aware of the language used while talking to donors is a necessity for achieving meaningful financial support.

When looking at large-scale funding and grants, instead of going directly to large donor organizations, it can be more effective for smaller, new movements to go to their partner organizations that have received large-scale funding and are now in charge of distributing it. Partner directories of big donor organizations can be found on their websites. Also, organizations like USAID periodically announce new grants and initiatives. Keeping track of these initiatives is essential as they might match with needs or goals. When applying for USAID or other governmental grants, integrated strategy reports can help align your goals with the cause of the organization giving support (to find an example of an integrated strategy report, please visit the additional reading section).

Another way to search for donors is by looking at organizations that fall under the umbrella of a larger philanthropic group. For example, Humanity United is part of the Omidyar group, which houses different

initiatives and funds. Starting at one organization and seeing who they are connected to could lead to new connections.

Being aware of the language used while talking to donors is a necessity for achieving meaningful financial support. Adjusting language to conform to donors' calls for proposals and being aware of restrictions is going to help foster more support. For example, using softer language will help movements adhere to donors' principles.

When searching for partners, it is vital to consider how connections with donors will impact the perception and integrity of a movement. Depending on the case, outside funding can add to the legitimacy of a movement or make people question the authenticity and motives of a movement as well as bring lengthy bureaucratic processes and questionable influences that can disrupt a movement's success. An overreliance on international aid can add to the perception that a movement is not sustainable.

Starting at one organization and seeing who they are connected to could lead to new connections.

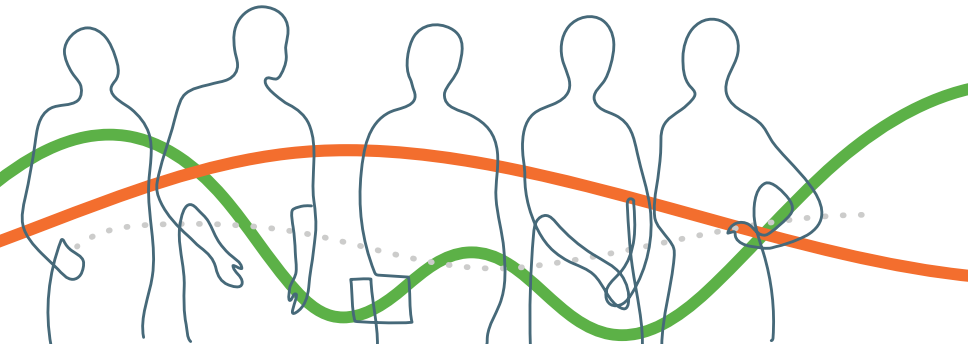




## HOW TO EMPLOY FUNDING TO MATCH MOVEMENT MOMENTUM

When fundraising, recognizing the stage a movement is currently at allows for an understanding of the most effective ways to use resources and create success. Philanthropic efforts become the most successful, effectively supporting social movements by recognizing the different cycles, energy levels, and phases that movements go through.

Recognizing movement cycles also allows for pin-pointing specific initiatives that donors could support – this is especially important as being specific about where donor funds go will help make people more likely to support a cause.



### 1. TRIGGER EVENTS AND GROWTH

High energy moments come from trigger events that significantly boost the support, with many people joining the movement. This offers the opportunity to have more activists involved in nonviolent struggle. Training and workshops are important in this crucial moment, because it is essential to learn about nonviolent discipline, de-escalation, organizing, security, fundraising strategies, just to mention a few topics. These trainings provide people with necessary knowledge and skills to be more effective which help grow movements.

### 2. MANAGING LOW- ENERGY PERIODS

It's also natural for movements to go through low energy, downturn periods as opponents adapt or support for the movement wanes. Instead of being demotivated, creating effective organizational infrastructure to have more trained and involved people will help grow the movement until the next trigger event. Using these moments will absorb new people from the last trigger event into the movement's restructured infrastructure. Updating the public about a movement's actions and goals over time is key to growing the movement's numbers and support.

Obtaining donor support beyond the trigger phase will be driven by activists' continued efforts and recruitment. The ability to rely on strong infrastructure and continued drive will display activists' strong commitment that will incentivize long-term donor involvement extending beyond a trigger event.



# OBTAINING IN-KIND SUPPORT



## ASK YOURSELF:

What do we need right now?

Are there smaller tasks that would make people feel better about supporting us immediately?

The formal process of applying for monetary aid can be slow and challenging. However, fundraising and requests for help can be more than just a financial request. The Academy's panelists stated that in-kind support, meaning non-monetary assistance, is often a better way to see quick, tangible changes in a movement. There

does not always have to be an end-all-be-all proposal. In many situations, smaller asks are more feasible and can significantly impact a movement in the now. Many resources are needed to allow a movement to function and be successful. The representatives in the session urged activists to ask themselves: What do we need right now?

Are there smaller tasks that would make people feel better about supporting us immediately? After considering these questions, it will likely be clear that money is not the only answer. Goods and services are essential for a movement, especially in the early stages, where it can help it lift off the ground. In order to gain local support, it is important to communicate clearly what matters most and demonstrate that to the people by addressing the real issues. Another effective way of support is providing training and skills building workshops. Trainings have shown to be more consistent in creating successful nonviolent campaigns compared to other forms of assistance. On a larger scale, philanthropic and large government organizations can also provide networks to movements to educate others about their work and obtain in-kind support in that way.

Through connecting activists, organizations can foster the necessary networks eventually needed to obtain funding, while providing other forms of goods and services in a timely manner.

Financial contributions undoubtedly play a significant role, however it is essential to recognize the numerous other resources needed for a movement to be successful and the ways supporters can contribute.



Providing trainings and skills building workshops is an effective way of supporting movements



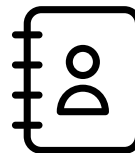


## HOW IN-KIND SUPPORT CAN PROMPTLY IMPACT A MOVEMENT



Support is often not about the big financial proposals, but rather what can be provided immediately. By embracing non-monetary support, movements can obtain tangible change promptly through a diversity of essential contributions. Using graphic artists and visual storytelling can be a potent tool for conveying a movement's message. Putting a movement in contact with graphic artists is a fantastic way to advance the movement while financial requests are in the lengthy approval process. Although a seemingly small service, the help of a graphic artist's unique talents is essential. Creating compelling visuals, infographics, and campaign materials can help enhance the movement's visibility and engage a broader audience.

Further, putting movements in contact with tech-savvy individuals can also be useful for success. These new contacts can ensure the smooth operations of websites, online platforms, and communication channels, making it easier for activists to reach a wider audience. In-kind support can not only increase the visibility of a movement but can also provide training and mentorship programs for specialized skills to ensure the longevity of a movement.



Providing new contacts and expanding networks is another significant form of in-kind support.

Legal support is extremely valuable for movements and activists. Legal support in all forms can help movements navigate legal procedures and ensure they can focus on their campaigns.

Psychological support is an under-appreciated in-kind contribution as mental health is paramount to a movement's success. Movements can be emotionally taxing, especially when facing fierce adversity. Connecting activists with psychological professionals or offering encouragement, appreciation, and solidarity is another form of in-kind support. Aiding the morale of participants is extremely important to their well-being and success.

Providing new contacts and expanding networks is another significant form of in-kind support. Putting activists in contact with new individuals and resources is a great way to diversify and propel the movement forward. Matchmaking ranges from connecting activists to other activists, policymakers, civilians, medical professionals, and other forms of supporters. This can be done by facilitating meetings, online conversations or even organizing events to facilitate connections. Access to policymakers can potentially bridge the gap between their movement and those in positions of authority. Creating these dialogues with people who share similar visions can help amplify the movement's voice, influence decisions, and promote positive change.

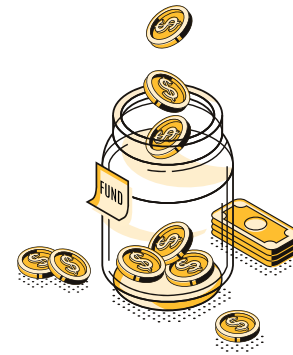
Aside from contributing services or putting movements in contact with potential new members, operating in safe physical or digital environments is vital. Supporters can contribute by offering meeting places or hosting events, ensuring activists have a secure space to strategize, collaborate, and plan actions. Supporters with experience or contacts in digital security can protect a movement's digital spaces from potential online threats, safeguarding sensitive information and the identities of its members.





## CROWDFUNDING AS AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD

Crowdfunding is a great way to get access to large amounts of money without working through restrictive bureaucratic processes. Crowdfunding involves raising money through small donations from a large amount of people. It is a relatively recent phenomenon that has been expanding over the last few years and has served as a useful tool for many activists. In Taiwan, the platform FlyingV was used to raise funds for the Sunflower Student Movement that criticized the ruling party for agreeing to The Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement with China. The movement ran newspaper advertisements in high profile papers, such as the New York Times and Apple Daily. The group was able to lead a crowdfunding campaign that raised what amounted to 230,000 USD in just three hours to publish the advertisements in the papers. The success of the Sunflower Student Movement highlights the attractive nature of crowdfunding for donors because

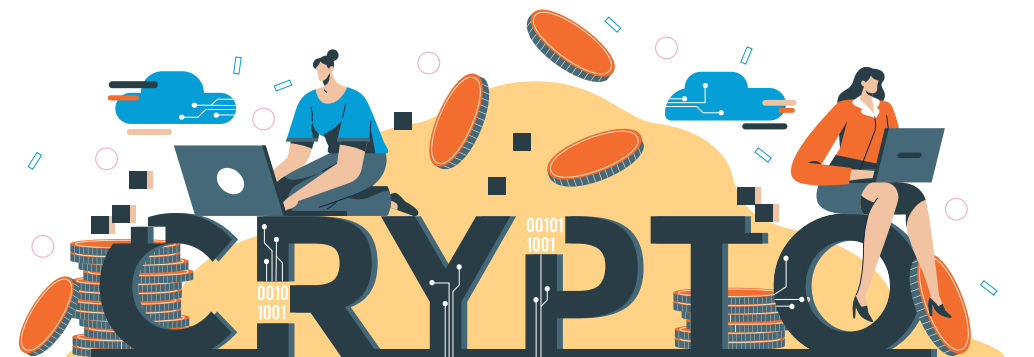


RosPil was largely effective because it allowed people to feel like their funds were going directly to something that was making a change

they can play an important role in social change from anywhere in the world.

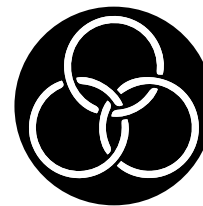
Russian oppositionist Alexei Navalny's accountability campaign started in 2010 with RosPil, an effort to fund lawyers who were fighting corruption in Russia. RosPil was largely effective because it allowed people to feel like their funds were going directly to something that was making a change over the internet yet in a way that was transparent and engaged people power. Navalny's strategy was successful because of the large number of followers he had and his authority as an anti-corruption voice in Russia. He connected with prominent opposition leaders with large followings to promote the campaign and ensured that he was transparent about the funds to gain trust from small donors. Navalny's successful political crowdfunding campaign built upon the bedrocks of good crowdfunding: the trust of donors, strong advertising campaigns, and transparent platforms.





## CRYPTOCURRENCY AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PEER-TO-PEER SYSTEMS

Many believe that using cryptocurrency is a safe and effective way of protecting activists while getting and using the necessary funds to bolster a movement. As societies move away from cash-based systems, electronic payments can tell full stories about people, what they are doing, where they are going, and where they have been. The online nature of payments creates a system that is a huge threat to activists and a roadblock for receiving and using funds in a movement because of privacy issues. Using a peer-to-peer electronic cash system, a system without a third-party router such as a cryptocurrency, takes away the need for banks and governments' regulation and oversight. Cryptocurrency can be confusing and is not widely used in most of the places where activists are operating; only one percent of the world uses cryptocurrency right now. The Human Rights Foundation provides easily accessible introductions into



Blockchain Commons is a non-profit organization that is teaching activists how to strategically use cryptocurrency to receive donations, manage their finances, and work around hindering conversion rates.



CoinSwap is another service that allows for a transaction between two individuals to be untraceable; finding ways to work around government surveillance of cryptocurrency ensures it is safe for activists to use.

cryptocurrency, such as the Bitcoin Development Fund that finances trainings to help get activists acquainted with cryptocurrency. Blockchain Commons is a non-profit organization that is teaching activists how to strategically use cryptocurrency to receive donations, manage their finances, and work around hindering conversion rates. CoinSwap is another service that allows for a transaction between two individuals to be untraceable; finding ways to work around government surveillance of cryptocurrency ensures it is safe for activists to use. Cryptocurrency is not without its downsides. The technology is relatively new and is being updated constantly potentially creating issues for moving money when necessary. Holding cryptocurrencies for a long time can also prove to be risky. The volatile nature of cryptocurrencies means that value can be lost very quickly.

In Venezuela where dictator Nicolás Maduro's economy has crashed and burned with inflation nearing one million percent, people have been forced to spend their life savings on basic goods and services. Bitcoin has allowed people to find greater value in their money. The peer-to-peer nature has prevented Maduro from monitoring transactions and stealing from crypto entering the country, allowing people to move funds. Crypto has also become one of the mechanisms by which immigrants send funds back home. Peer-to-peer sites have become a safer way to send remittances than informal money transfer agents who operate in the local currency. In Eritrea, there was a tightening of the informal remittances system. Bitcoin similarly created an alternative system for money to be sent into the country with protection from government surveillance, and the level of privacy desired by activists.



## LIMITING AUTOCRATS FUNDING



While funding one's own movement is vital, the ability to limit the cash-flows of an opposition is also a very powerful tool. The military in power in Myanmar held very close relationships with international oil companies, keen on profiting from the country's vast natural resources. Myanmar activist highlighted the work that they had done with the Blood Money Campaign. International conglomerates such as TotalEnergies, Chevron, and Petronas were the target of the campaign. Comprised of activists from Myanmar as well as supporters around the world, the campaign pressured the companies, rather than the government, to disinvest from the country and stop financially supporting the junta. Staging protests in front of branches and offices of international businesses doing work in the country, activists used red images as a "shock"

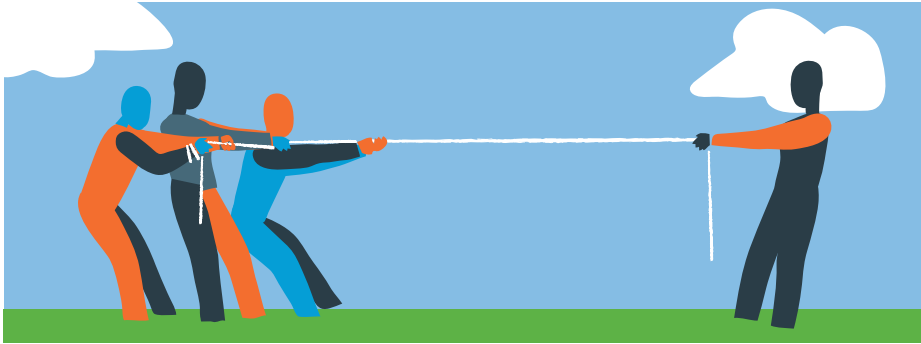
effect to show the blood these companies have on their hands for bankrolling crimes against the Burmese people. The primary goal was to remove international oil companies from doing business in Myanmar, then shift to other sectors giving support to the junta. As of 2022, both Chevron and TotalEnergies have left the country. Beyond advocacy, the campaign staged boycotts of the companies bankrolling the junta. It can be difficult to directly target a large oil company with a boycott, however it is possible to target related businesses. Café Amazon is a popular chain of cafes across Thailand that happens to have the same owner as PTT, the largest oil company in Thailand that has extensive business in Myanmar. The boycott of the cafes was very successful as PTT has suspended operations in Myanmar.

## ADDITIONAL READINGS:

1. USAID - Partner Directory
2. USAID - 2023 Summit for Democracy New Initiatives
3. Stanford Social Innovation Review - Five Ways Funders can Support Social Movements
4. Crisis Group - Crowdfunding a War: The Money Behind Myanmar's Resistance
5. Hong Kong Activists Crowdfund for Anti-Extradition Bill Voice at G20
6. Social Movements and Philanthropy: How Foundations Can Support Movement Building
7. Design's Role in Shaping Social Movements
8. An Activist's Guide to Online Safety and Privacy
9. Myanmar Shuttters 700 Mobile Bank Accounts Suspected of Funding Anti-Junta Forces
10. Crisis Group - Crowdfunding a War: The Money behind Myanmar's Resistance
11. Carnegie Moscow - The Navalny Effect: RosPil.net
12. Human Rights Foundation - Why Bitcoin Matters for Freedom
13. United States Department of State - Integrated Country Strategy Report: Burma
14. Omidyar Group: Foundations
15. USIP - Five Things You Need to Know About Foreign Funding for Social Movements
16. Human Rights Foundation - The Bitcoin Development Fund
17. Coin Desk - Crypto's One Unassailable Use Case: Helping Human Rights Activists
18. FeeStories - How Bitcoin Could Smash Socialism in Venezuela
19. Freeman Law - Myanmar and Cryptocurrency



SCAN QR CODE FOR LINKS



## CONCLUSION:

Amid decades of long democratic backsliding and consolidation of power among autocrats, there is hope. A new brand of mass mobilization - leaderless movements - is posing greater challenges to autocracy as people unite behind common grievances against regimes. In a world that is changing faster and more radically than ever before, innovative approaches to foster democratic movements are desperately needed.

Pedro Telles, Georgi Ekaladze, and Dominika Lasota showed us how contemporary and leaderless movements can succeed in using tools at their disposal. Isabella Cuomo, Ahmed Samih Farig, and an activist from Myanmar spoke about the hardest part of a change: making it last. Activists must prepare for the transition while the movement is still underway and be ready to overcome barriers once they have undergone a successful nonviolent change.

Demonstrating the central role of women in movements, Anahita Amadi, So-maya Faruqi, and Nika Kovac outlined the ways in which women can create more inclusive and successful movements that are able to emphasize tactics of nonviolent resistance that lead to lasting change.

Lastly, no campaign can be done without successful fundraising tactics, as outlined by, Bryan Sims, a representative from the donor community and an activist from Myanmar.

By studying these topics, and learning from the successes and failures of others, we can better equip ourselves to grow the movement and overcome obstacles on our way to meaningful change.

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“IT IS EVERY MAN’S  
OBLIGATION TO PUT  
BACK INTO THE  
WORLD AT LEAST THE  
EQUIVALENT OF WHAT  
HE TAKES OUT OF IT.

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ALBERT EINSTEIN

