# MAKE IT NEW:

**Using Media to Advance Advocacy**



## GIJTR
Global Initiative for Justice
Truth & Reconciliation

# ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE

The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC) is a global network of museums, historic sites and grassroots initiatives dedicated to building a more just and peaceful future through engaging communities in remembering struggles for human rights and addressing their modern repercussions. Founded in 1999, the ICSC now includes more than 300 Sites of Conscience members in 65 countries. The ICSC supports these members through grants, networking and training.

International Coalition of
**SITES** *of* **CONSCIENCE**

www.sitesofconscience.org

**Cover photo credit:** Justin Essah

# ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

Published in August 2021, this toolkit aims to support civil society generally, while explicitly accommodating the needs and contexts of the local partners that work with the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation. In this sense, it pays particular attention to creating and sharing advocacy campaigns that amplify the voices of survivors and address the holistic needs of communities emerging from conflict. This toolkit also offers suggestions for navigating complications that are common in post-conflict settings, including security concerns and taboos around discussing painful histories. Intended as a concise guide, it provides general advice on developing, implementing, and launching advocacy campaigns. The toolkit is made available alongside a range of images that were designed in partnership with Amplifier, a non-profit design lab that builds art and media experiments to amplify the most important movements of our times. Those images, as well as further resources, are included at the end of this toolkit, and GIJTR partners are encouraged to reach out to coalition@sitesofconscience.org for additional support.

Learn more about GIJTR at www.gijtr.org

# ABOUT THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR JUSTICE, TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION (GIJTR)



A plaque at a memorialization site sponsored by ICSC founding member Liberation War Museum in Bangladesh

Around the world, there is an increasing call for justice, truth, and reconciliation in countries where legacies of gross human rights violations cast a shadow on transitions from repressive regimes to participatory and democratic forms of governance. To meet this need, the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC) launched the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation (GIJTR) in August 2014. The goal of the GIJTR is to address new challenges in countries in conflict or transition struggling with legacies of or ongoing gross human rights abuses. Since its founding seven years ago, GIJTR has Engaged with people from 60 countries, worked with over 560 CSOs, and has supported over 240 community-driven projects as well as the collection of more than 5,000 narratives of human rights violations.

ICSC leads a Consortium of nine organizational partners: American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (USA); Asia Justice and Rights (Indonesia); Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (South Africa); Documentation Center of Cambodia (Cambodia); Due Process of Law Foundation (USA); Humanitarian Law Center (Serbia); Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala (Guatemala); and Public International Law & Policy Group (USA). In addition to leveraging the expertise of the Consortium members, ICSC taps into the knowledge and longstanding community connections of its 300 member organizations in 65 countries in order to strengthen and broaden the Consortium's work.

GIJTR partners, along with members of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, develop and implement a range of rapid response and high-impact program activities, utilizing both restorative and retributive approaches to justice and accountability for gross human rights violations. The expertise of the organizations under the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation includes:

- Truth-telling, reconciliation, memorialization, and other forms of historical memory;

- Documenting human rights abuses for transitional justice purposes;

- Forensic analysis and other efforts related to missing and disappeared persons;

- Victims' advocacy such as improving access to justice, psychosocial support, and trauma mitigation activities;

- Providing technical assistance to and building the capacity of civil society activists and organizations to promote and engage on transitional justice processes;

- Reparative justice initiatives; and

- Ensuring gender justice in all of these processes.

To date, GIJTR has led civil society actors in countries such as Gambia and Guinea in the development and implementation of documentation and truth-telling projects, undertaken assesssments of the memorialization and psycho-social support capacities of local organizations in Sri Lanka, South Sudan and other contexts, and launched six transitional justice "academies" to provide activists and non-traditional actors with training, support, and opportunities to participate in the design and implementation of community-driven transitional justice approaches. Through innovative projects in Colombia, Bangladesh and East Africa, GIJTR has worked with civil society actors in places of active conflict on documentation and assesssment initiatives, laying the foundation for future truth, justice and reconciliation processes that are centered on victims' needs and civic participation. GIJTR has also developed and globally disseminated over a dozen toolkits, sharing practical lessons from the field as well as models for local organizations interested in undertaking similar truth, justice and reconciliation projects in other contexts.

Given the diversity of experience and skills within the Consortium and amongst ICSC network members, the program offers post-conflict countries and countries emerging from repressive regimes a unique opportunity to address transitional justice needs in a timely manner, while promoting local participation and building the capacity of community partners.



Participants of the "Testimonials of El Castillo Dolls" truth-telling initiative in Colombia, 2018.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Advocacy and Social Change

Advocacy initiatives are powerful weapons to combat systemic violence and abuse and fight for truth, justice, and accountability. Grassroots advocacy initiatives aim to change or influence a political, economic, or social system. Depending on the type of advocacy initiative and its objectives, organizers can enact different tactics, strategies, and mobilization efforts. Some advocacy initiatives aim to raise public awareness and inform the public about a social problem while other initiatives may focus on a legislative agenda and enacting specific policies on a local or national level.



Tahrir Square during the Arab revolution in Egypt. Image credit: Giusi Cosentino

Advocacy initiatives work against legacies of human rights violations and help build towards a peaceful future because – above all else – they break the silence surrounding abuses and systemic oppression while simultaneously giving voice to and creating space for victims. Silence and invisibility are two forces that oppressive regimes use to enable gross human rights violations and cultures of impunity. States can enforce silence by intimidating and repressing voices of dissent, which can occur implicitly and explicitly. By refusing to engage in truth-telling and reconciliation processes, states simultaneously foster invisibility by further marginalizing and ignoring the victims of conflict and violations.

From the civil rights movement in the United States and the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa to the Arab Spring uprisings, activists have used advocacy campaigns to forge concrete and, in some cases, sweeping social change by highlighting injustices, elevating the experiences of victims, and demanding accountability. Such effective advocacy involves mobilizing both hearts and minds, educating allies and new audiences, as well as developing

strategic chronological short-term and long-term goals, and and incoporating intergenerational planning.

While the examples above had world-wide mobilization, lessons drawn from them can be replicated on smaller scales within local communities. In fact, broad, national, or international social movements are often fueled by smaller, community-based activism and advocacy efforts. The 1963 March on Washington, in which Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his famous "I Have a Dream Speech," would never have happened without the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955, the Brown v. Board of Education ruling, which outlawed segregation in American schools (1954), or the courage of Recy Taylor, an African American woman who, in 1944, ignited public outrage in the Black community when she spoke about her experience being raped by six white men. Each of these actions were sparked and supported by local activists and civil society organizations – like those who work closely with the ICSC and GIJTR. This toolkit aims to share essential planning steps and questions to consider as civil society groups develop a digital and/or physical advocacy initiative. Many campaigns have a digital media component as well as physical component and this toolkit aims to incorporate planning for both.

Media is an essential component for all advocacy initiatives. **From the iconic "I am a Man" images from the 1968 sanitation workers on strike in Memphis, United States to photos of Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, Argentina,** powerful images help engrain different fights for social justice into cultural narratives. In a global media environment where numbness is prevalent, powerful media humanizes survivors of oppression to communities who are unfamiliar with their stories. Effective media can mobilize people, enable coalition-building and facilitate partnerships – all of which are vital components of a grassroots advocacy campaign.

There are multiple factors that make grassroots advocacy initiatives particularly effective today – the prevalence of social media the most prevalent. According to a 2020 "Digital State of the Union" report by Hootsuite, 5.2 billion people have phones globally; 4.5 billion people are connected to the internet; and 3.8 billion people (roughly half of the world's 7.7 billion populace) are active social media users. While activists can use platforms – including Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok and Whatsapp – to forefront their own narratives and share their experiences directly, activists' efforts can also be discredited and marginalized by these very same platforms. Content regulation rules are often enforced arbitrarily or reinforce systems of oppression. Censorship, misinformation and disinformation campaigns, advertising, shadow banning, and deep fakes are prevalent across all social media platforms and impact the efficacy of advocacy efforts. The efficacy, security, and


Sanitation workers strike in Memphis, TN in 1968.
Image credit: Richard L. Copley

safety of all activists and organizers digitally and physically must be a priority for every movement and advocacy initiative.

In addition, the increasing accessibility of the internet and social media[1] means that global communications are becoming more local. Advocacy campaigns that may have stayed local or regional are now often able to reach and influence allies in other countries and contexts. This cross-proliferation of global communication creates an array of potentially beneficial partnerships. Whether these partnerships are with other activist groups, financial supports, or networks of solidarity, these relationships can offer a holistic range of movement-building and capacity-building skills to sustain and scale local civil society initiatives.

Global coalition and partnership-building also create a global language around human rights, inserting and normalizing concepts related to truth and justice into the lives of everyday people and mobilizing resources against repressive states and politicians.

There are several examples of local movement-building going global, most notably #BlackLivesMatter. Founded in 2013, Black Lives Matter (BLM) is an "international activist movement, originating in the African-American community, that campaigns against violence and systemic racism toward Black people."[2] It is also one of the most successful advocacy campaigns that grew on social media and galvanized millions in North America and across the globe in confronting systemic racism.

The hashtag #BlackLivesMatter was first used on social media as a response to the 2013 acquittal of George Zimmerman in the murder of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. Martin, an unarmed African American teenager with no criminal record, was shot and killed by Zimmerman. This event, and Zimmerman's subsequent


Mothers of those disappeared in Argentina began protesting for the safe return of their loved ones in April 1977 – many remain still today. Image credit: Wiki Commons

acquittal, sparked national outrage calling for an end to the violent anti-Blackness present in the United States' criminal justice system and societal systems at large.

From what started by a social media presence, the #BlackLivesMatter movement grew, especially following the 2014 murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri and the killing of Eric Garner the same year in New York, NY. Throughout the United States, the movement was championed by local civil society organizations in their own way, adapting shared values to their own contexts. Local organizations organized street demonstrations and other direct actions – such as "die-ins," political and legislative campaigning, economic boycotts, rallies, and public art ranging from murals to performances.  In 2020 the movement grew into an international racial uprising and "global reckoning" with racism after the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin.[3]

#BlackLivesMatter catalyzed and continues to activate communities around the globe to protest systemic injustices happening in their own communities. Through 2020 the United States saw a rise in BLM protests, and activists in numerous countries, including Brazil, Russia, China, and Palestine, took to the streets coordinating large-scale street demonstrations as well.

Several other movements, organizations, and activists have emerged globally, spawning from the BLM movement, including the Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation (BLMGN), whose mission is to further



Peaceful protestors at the #BlackLivesMatter demonstration in Salzburg, Austria. Image Credit: Simone Fischer

the work of activists and organizers within the broader movement. As one example, in 2021, the BLMGN Foundation publicly pledged its support to Palestinians in the wake of a resurgence of mass violence against Palestinians in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This movement, which began online, translated to massive international mobilization, influenced public education, changed legislation, and changed oppressive practices while building global solidarity against violence targeting civilians, and giving voice to marginalized populations.



A Black Lives Matter die-in over rail tracks, protesting alleged police brutality in Saint Paul, Minnesota on September 20, 2015. Image credit: Wiki Commons

## Media, Advocacy and Transitional Justice

Advocacy and media engagement can also play an important role in countries undergoing transitional justice processes. In addition to shining a light on prominent perpetrators and issues of accountability, if a country is home to a relatively free media – albeit a big "if" in many post-conflict settings – media can also provide and promote platforms for victims and survivors, humanizing stigmatized people and showing the diversity and depth of their stories. At its best, media can be a conduit of communication, making cumbersome political and legal process more accessible. The most cited instance of this is in South Africa, whose truth commission was widely covered by the press. "Unlike many other truth commissions," noted Alex Boraine, Deputy Chairman of the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), "this one was center stage, and the media coverage, particularly radio, enabled the poor, the illiterate, and people living in rural areas to participate in its work so that it was truly a national experience rather than restricted to a small handful of selected commissioners."[4]

Whether media outlets are supportive, divisive, or partisan – as they were, quite notably in Peru and the former Yugoslavia[5] – advocacy campaigns are stronger when they include a media outreach strategy. As explored further in this toolkit, this relationship can take many forms, from training journalists in transitional justice concepts so that they can cover the proceedings effectively, to providing guidelines for journalists to talk with survivors, or countering unilateral media coverage. Ultimately, one of the primary goals of an advocacy campaign in a conflict or post-conflict setting is to create democratic spaces where marginalized people are allowed to speak, be heard and respected by the rest of civil society and key stakeholders. Ideally, advocates, activists and media can work together to make this happen, as was the case in Ukraine, where many have credited initial tweets by activists *and* journalists as a primary catalyst that drove hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians into the streets during the 2014 Euromaidan protests.[6]

## How To Use This Toolkit

While this toolkit can be helpful to civil society organizations generally, it was explicitly written to accommodate the needs and contexts of the local partners that work with the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation. In this sense, it pays particular attention to creating and sharing advocacy campaigns that amplify the voices of survivors, address the holistic needs of communities emerging from conflict, and offer suggestions for navigating complications that are common in post-conflict settings, including security concerns and taboos around discussing painful histories. Intended as a concise guide, it provides general advice on developing, implementing, and launching advocacy campaigns. Further resources are included at the end of this toolkit, and GIJTR partners are encouraged to reach out to coalition@sitesofconscience.org for additional support.

Finally, this toolkit is made available alongside a range of images that were designed in partnership with Amplifier, a non-profit design lab that builds art and media experiments to amplify the most important movements of our times. Amplifier aims to build media campaigns that shift culture and change the national, regional, and international narratives rooted in equality, dignity, diversity, truth, and beauty. These images – which can be used to advocate for a range of truth and justice initiatives – can be downloaded as posters, stickers, buttons and GIFs by visiting www.gijtr.org.

# BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

**Security**

Before you begin to design and implement an advocacy campaign, there are several factors to consider. The first of these should always be security – of activists as well as those assisting them, including victims, witnesses, interpreters, etc. It is helpful to think through security concerns in three dimensions: physical, digital, and psycho-social; precautions to address these potential safety concerns can overlap into all three of these dimensions. Often, security concerns will largely be determined by the political and cultural climate for activism within a particular country. While it is impossible to go over all contexts in this toolkit, here are a few steps that can be taken to mediate some common security issues.

Even in the best of circumstances, advocacy comes with risk. In some contexts, arranging any public advocacy campaign, such as a protest or a public event, may pose too many risks to the organizers and participants. In these cases – and examples will follow later in the toolkit – "underground" or digital campaigns may be more advisable. If an in-person campaign is possible, however, taking certain precautions, and sharing them with your fellow advocates, can alleviate those risks, including:

## Physical Safety Needs, Preparations and Concerns

### Know Your International Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, details thirty fundamental human rights that are to be universally protected, including many related to advocacy, such as the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association; the right to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal; and the freedom to not be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Although it is not legally binding, the rights and protections outlined in the Declaration have shaped numerous international treaties on human rights as well as influenced many national constitutions and legal frameworks. They are also the basis for international human rights law, including international UN human rights treaties, which are monitored by committees composed of independent experts dedicated to assesssing their implementation. Committees include the "Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women," the "Committee on the Rights of the Child," and the "Committee on Enforced Disappearances," among others. While not all countries – even those who ratify certain treaties – abide by the standards set in them, it is helpful to familiarize yourself with these documents. Not only can they empower activists on personal levels, but they have significant heft in international politics, one even the most oppressive governments cannot avoid entirely. Visit this website to see which countries have ratified particular treaties.

## Know Your Local Rights: What are your constitutional rights in your country and in your municipality?

Every country has different constitutions or legal frameworks that delineate and protect civil society's advocacy rights. It is important to know what rights are legally protected in your context while also acknowledging that on the ground, actual enforcement and implementation of these rights differ. Dispersing this information to your community ahead of a campaign – through social media or infographics – can be useful.

While this is specific to the United States context, the American Civil Liberties Union advises the following for protestors' rights:

- Your rights are strongest in what are known as "traditional public forums," such as streets, sidewalks, and parks. You may have the right to speak out on other public property, like plazas in front of government buildings, as long as you are not blocking access to the government building or interfering with other purposes the property was designed for.

- Private property owners can set rules for speech on their property. The government may not restrict your speech if it is taking place on your own property or with the consent of the property owner.

- Counter protesters also have free speech rights. Police must treat protesters and counter protesters equally. Police are permitted to keep antagonistic groups separated but should allow them to be within sight and sound of one another.

**Do your homework:** Whether organizing a protest rally, creating and documenting a public archive to record human rights violations, or installing a public art exhibit, get the appropriate permits and permissions from the local authorities. Also, if applicable, access the setting by scoping out safe and easy exits, and the level of police presence.

**Pack a bag:** If you are attending an in-person advocacy event, bring water and stay hydrated. Bring high-protein snacks such as mixed nuts or energy bars. If you take medicine daily, bring a small supply.

**De-escalate:** Even a peaceful protest or event can become violent so it is important to stay vigilant. If agitation does occur, it is suggested that you leave the area right away. Advocacy can be emotionally taxing, and folks can be volatile

if they are being re-traumatized – triggering irrational or violent behavior. If you choose or are forced to stay, do your best to de-escalate the situation with your body language: keep your hands visible, lower your volume if you're speaking.

**Simultaneously, prepare for escalation:** Tear gas and chemicals can be used by police and law enforcement against protestors (even though tear gas is a chemical agent and thus, forbidden under the Geneva Convention.) While the likelihood of this will depend on the context, prepare for this (even if you think it is unlikely). Do not wear contact lenses, do not rub your eyes, and only use water to clean your eyes if you are exposed to tear gas. Shower as soon as you are able. Most importantly, in all circumstances, do your best to stay calm and not panic.

## Digital Safety Needs, Preparations and Concerns

**Turn off location sharing:** If you normally share your location through GPS with friends or family using a smartphone, coordinate a time and place to meet instead when you are going to attend a protest or advocacy event. Do not post your location on social media. This data can be used for surveillance and tracking. You also may need your phone to make emergency calls; turning off location services can also save battery.

**Be careful about live-streaming:** While live-streaming (and otherwise documenting) an event can be incredibly powerful to advance an advocacy campaign, it can also be dangerous for participants and attendees. Both for your own safety and the safety of the people around you, film the stage or the speakers that are aware and willing of potential consequences for public speaking, if any. Film from the back of crowds to help anonymize and protect activists so their faces are not recognizable.

- WITNESS, an international organization committed to using video to advance human rights advocacy, issued Tips for Livestreaming Protests.

- To ensure attendees' safety in particularly sensitive contexts, document, film, record, and take photos of the action but do not post them on a public social media platform until you have actively confirmed consent with everyone identifiable in the images.

**Secure your phone (and have a backup plan):** During an in-person event, such as a protest or a vigil, if you have a phone, password protect it. If you have a

phone with face or fingerprint recognition, disable those features. This will help protect your privacy in case your phone is seized by law enforcement agencies. It is also advisable to remember, or write on your body, the phone number of an aid agency or a close confidant who can assist you if your phone is taken or lost. If you are in a remote area, it is a good idea to bring a satellite phone for emergencies.

**Use encrypted messaging platforms – especially For planning sensitive details of an action or event:** Many messaging apps have loose privacy regulations or can easily be monitored, hacked, and otherwise infiltrated. Using end-to-end encrypted messaging for your most sensitive details as you plan an advocacy event can help protect your safety and the safety of your collaborators.

**If you believe your rights have been violated,** the American Civil Liberties Union suggests that you write down everything you remember. Though this advice comes from an American organization, it is widely applicable in other contexts. If the incident involved a law enforcement/ police officer, try to write down the officers' badge and patrol car numbers and the agency they work for. Get contact information for witnesses and take photographs of any injuries. Share this documentation through an encrypted platform with trusted friend.

## Psycho-social Safety Needs, Preparations and Concerns:

When you may be in a stressful circumstance, first observe your surroundings and assess what the potential imminent threats are. Before an in-person event, think through how you will resolve or mitigate these threats to prevent harm and prevent violence if they occur. During the event, if a threat does manifest, be sure to continue breathing while you respond and be sure to get yourself and others out of harm.

**Holistic Debrief:** After any in-person events, or any online stressors, check in with yourself and your team. Schedule time for debriefs and reflection. Active reflection is an essential component of processing after an advocacy event. What components of planning were successful? What components of the initiative need to be improved for future advocacy?

**Have a buddy (or two):** It is best to attend advocacy events with at least one other person, and to make a plan if you are separated. This is a component of physical safety as well. It is also important to tell at least one person who is not attending the event your whereabouts in case of an emergency.

**Decompress:** Advocacy can be mentally and physically challenging. It is especially essential in conflict and post-conflict settings to create space to decompress to ensure activists and organizers are not at risk of burn-out and hopelessness.

## Helpful Resources:

**Safety During Protest Flyer**  (Amnesty International)
https://www.amnestyusa.org/pdfs/SafeyDuringProtest_F.pdf

**Safety Tips** (Greenpeace)
https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/toolkits/protest-safety-tips-from-greenpeace/

**Tips for Protesting Peacefully and Safely** (Human Rights Campaign)
https://www.hrc.org/news/tips-for-protesting-peacefully-and-safely

**A Guide for Protesting Safely that is Specific to the Pandemic and Pandemic Safety Concerns** (Frontline Medics)
https://www.instagram.com/p/CA5b2Dkg9VI/

# BASICS STEPS TO CREATING AN ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

**A Campaign in Eight Steps**

## 1. Define Your Campaign Goals

In an advocacy campaign, it is important to set clear goals. What does your campaign want to achieve? Be as specific as possible. Do not just say, "I want to spread the word about transitional justice." Say instead, "We want citizens to understand the vital role of survivors in transitional justice processes." Or, "We want to inform survivors about transitional justice processes and enable them to get involved."

### Create a Statement

Define the issue – for yourself, first, so you can more effectively convey it to others. What is the problem and what is the solution? Be as clear and concise as possible, inject action words: "Survivors of atrocities deserve to have their stories told; we must give them platforms."



In Ireland, advocates centered their successful campaign to end the 8th Amendment of the Constitution of Ireland, which prohibited abortion, around one simple verb: REPEAL.

## Define Objectives

Objectives are goals refined – and they must be multi-pronged and multi-faceted. An advocacy initiative can have multiple objectives, but it is also helpful to keep in mind the potential variability and influence of other social factors and institutions.

The following acronym **SMART** may be helpful. All objectives should be:



- **S** Specific
- **M** Measurable
- **A** Achievable
- **R** Realistic
- **T** Time-based

SMART goals can be qualitative and quantitative. A SMART objective might be: "1000 people in this specific neighborhood should see this documentary screening or history exhibition within the first month it is open." Another example may be: "I want 100 residents of a given town who have previously not been engaged on a given issue to sign a petition and show up to one town hall on the given issue".

## 2. Research

In addition to prioritizing security and sensitivity if your campaign will work with survivors, it is important to compare your advocacy campaign with others that have come before it. What will yours do and say that is new? In other words, what has been done to date? What can you do differently? In addition, ask yourself, what is needed in practical terms to achieve my goals and objectives? (Permits, a designer, a translator...)

Further, what are the latest developments on these issues and coverage of

them? What backlash might I anticipate? Look into the subject's background, past news and media coverage, previous efforts and campaigns, and overall context. Stay abreast of current developments. Reaching out to GIJTR staff and members of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience here would be advisable as they may be able to share work and lessons learned by members in similar contexts.

## 3. Stakeholders and Target Audiences

An essential component of digital advocacy is activating, strengthening, and growing the community of supporters who are willing to mobilize to change the status quo. To make change, we need to increase the number of active supporters. This means the campaign must reach beyond the groups of people who already support your cause.

In any campaign, it is important to state specific goals in terms of target audiences – a campaign does not have to appeal to everyone and yet it can still be effective. Generally, it can be helpful to focus on two target audiences:

**Decision-makers:** These are the stakeholders that can effectively make change – politicians, health ministers, funding agencies, etc. In many situations, they will be your primary audience.

**Influencers:** These stakeholders are also crucial for carrying your message forward to new spheres. They can include journalists, faith-based groups, other victims' organizations, entertainment personalities and academics.

Many advocacy initiatives use a tool, called the Spectrum of Allies depicted in the graph on the next page, to map how key stakeholders align with their large goals. The Spectrum of Allies allows organizers to define who is most and least supportive of the goal before starting any advocacy initiative. This allows for organizers to think strategically about who and how they hope to impact with their advocacy, as they can list how groups identify with the cause (perhaps specific unions, for example, are passive allies, whereas a certain school is a passive opponent to the change that you wish to implement). Often, a campaign's objectives become even more specific to target specific stakeholders and move certain demographics or stakeholders towards the left

of the Spectrum of Allies graph. As 350.Org writes, "In most social-change campaigns it is not necessary to win the opponent to your point of view. It is only necessary to move the central pie wedges one step in your direction."
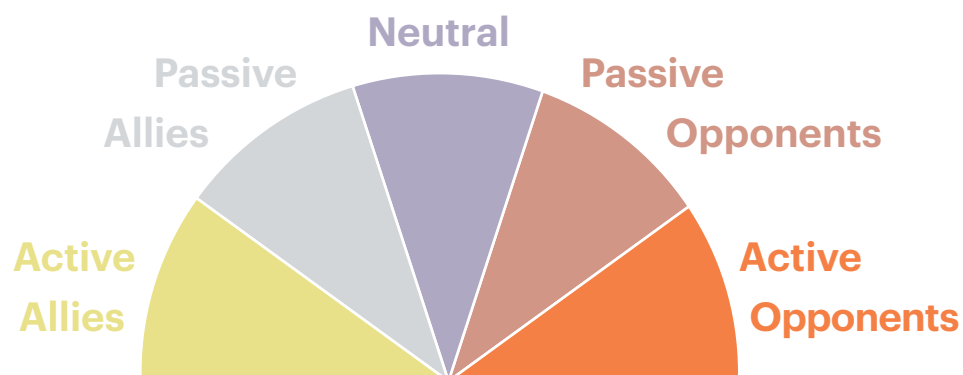


"Spectrum of Allies" by Howard Clark, Javier Gárate, Joanne Sheehan, and Dorie Wilsnack, from "Handbook for Nonviolent Campaigns," 2014.

After you have identified specific people in your target groups – and especially if they include broader groups such as survivors, students, or youth – it can be helpful to consider how demographic factors may shape your campaign audiences and broader methodologies.

- **Demographics:** How do race, gender, ethnicity, age, education, and religion factor in this context?

- **Geography:** Is your audience local, national, international, remote, urban, and/or rural?

- **Attitudes:** How does this group generally perceive this issue? Are they inclined to be sympathetic? Or will they need coaxing?  How proactive they are? What would it take to get them to take action?

- **Media habits:** What media do they have access to, use and like?

- **Culture:** What is their cultural background, what languages do they speak or read? Might they be illiterate?

## 3.1  Partnerships and Allies

It is never too early to think about partnerships and allies in advocacy movements, and they can become key stakeholders to advance your movement. Early in the design process, do not be afraid to reach out to like-minded individuals who can partner on any initiative. This not only can increase your outreach potential, but also builds a sense of belonging among activists and those working to advance social justice. Partners can also provide essential logistical support.

For instance, if you are organizing a documentation campaign in which you will collect survivors' stories after a conflict, it may help to befriend community leaders, including religious leaders, who are trusted members of their community and may be able to provide safe spaces to speak with survivors or do outreach to invite communities who may be skeptical or hesitant to otherwise be involved.

Remember that partnering with allies does not mean you cannot focus on specific issues that matter to you. Networks – big and small – recognize that while all members care about the larger state of human rights, there are varying concerns and needs throughout the country. Two groups who represent different ethnic or religious groups may collaborate on a joint project. While they each may spend the majority of their resources on their own causes, they can work together to facilitate information sharing and efficiency. Widespread coalition-building, even among groups who may not have anything in common at the surface, can build trust, empathy and, often, credibility. Working as a team – across religious or regional divides – can say a lot. It is performing an act of peace itself and with that comes credibility, respect, and authority, increasing the potential successes of an advocacy initiative.

Identifying key stakeholders, alliances, partnerships and external target audiences also requires looking internally to assesss who you are collaborating and working with.

To enact social change, advocacy initiatives need different types of

people, each with a diverse array of expertise and skills. If someone wants to be involved in your initiative, there is a role for them where they can best use their passion to advance the movement

This is best illustrated by The Social Change Ecosystem Map, a graphic and guide from the Building Movement Project that can help individuals, networks and communities find their place in advocacy campaigns. Healers, storytellers, artists, frontline responders, and builders are just some of the archetypes the Building Movement Project has defined to help imagine where your team's strengths are and where you may need to develop partnerships and allies.

### 3.2 Working with Survivors

One of the primary goals of the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation is to elevate and raise the voices of survivors, to ensure that their experiences are shared and that they have an active role in shaping a more peaceful and just future. Sharing survivors' stories is an essential component of peacebuilding because their experiences are so often silenced, stigmatized, and then forgotten – which then halts any collective cultural processing of the conflict as communities aspire to build peaceful futures. As activists – many of whom are survivors themselves – it is important to approach advocacy work in this setting with great care. When working with survivors, the goal is not to pity them, but rather, treat them with dignity, as human beings. Ideally – as we will see in some of our examples – advocacy can play an essential role in helping survivors to heal as well.

Whether a video campaign, a photo essay, an art exhibit or protest, advocacy campaigns often focus on sharing survivors' stories. It is important to remember, however, that while survivors are often – ultimately – empowered by their stories, it can be daunting to berak stigmas, especially in conflict and post-conflict settings. When

## The Social Change Ecosystem Map



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interviewing or capturing a survivor's story, remember to show respect for their story, for their bravery in speaking out, and their humanity, given they are so much more than any one experience.

**Here are some best practices to consider before collecting survivors' stories:**

- **Be clear about your goals and how their story will be used:**
Be as transparent and clear about your intended use of the survivor's story and your goals for the advocacy campaign. Also, the survivors participating or being interviewed will feel more comfortable knowing where you come from and that you understand their problem, so be sure to have a solid understanding of the context. It is okay to acknowledge that something is a very sensitive issue, and it is also all right to talk about yourself and your personal experiences with the topic, as long as you do so in a respectful manner. In fact, doing so often helps build trust and gives the survivor a sense of control, which conflict may have stripped from them.

- **Plan to ensure survivors' security before, during, and after advocacy initiatives:**
Whether it is an interview or just attendance at an advocacy event, think through these questions before working directly with survivors:

  – How will you anonymize stories if a survivor wants their story to be shared anonymously?

  – If it is a small, close-knit community, will an individual's story still be identifiable? Is there a means to design the advocacy initiative so that stories are shown en masse or through more anonymous depictions to help further anonymize and protect survivors?

  – Could survivors be personally threatened or at risk of violence by speaking out and sharing their experiences in an advocacy context? If so, what advocacy methodologies (perhaps through art initiatives) could be used that reduce their personal risk?

    ° Changing names, blurring photos, and leaving out key identifiable details, like last names or specific street addresses, are some tactics that can be employed to protect a survivor's anonymity. Voices can also be changed if the project involves audio or video recording.



A GIJTR self-care workshop for journalists and activists in Conakry, Guinea in May 2017.

- **Obtain their consent and ensure their confidentiality:**
Be as upfront as you can about 1) what you will be asking (provide the questions ahead of time if you can) 2) the ramifications and risks of participation. Who will this advocacy campaign be seen or heard by? Will it be on the internet? What are the ultimate goals of the campaign?

  – Let survivors (and all participants) know that an advocacy campaign may be seen widely, that stories may be edited, and for what reason. Let them also know about options to protect themselves – for instance, let them know that interviews and profiles can be anonymized or that identifying details can be changed, that photographs showing faces are never obligatory.

  – Ensure all survivors have a chance to review the material before it is publicized, and make changes or redactions if requested. Build in time within your advocacy campaign timeline for survivors to review their own stories before any material becomes public.

- **Create a safe space:**
  Creating a comfortable, safe environment can help put survivors at ease and make interviews and activities more productive. Here are some factors to consider in this regard:

  – The gender of the facilitator or interviewer can often be very important, particularly when working with victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Women often prefer to work with women in these settings. It is always okay to ask their preference.

  – Ensure that the setting is a physically and emotionally safe place, far away from the scene of atrocity – unless otherwise approved. If you're videoing or recording, make sure the equipment is as unobtrusive as possible.

  – Be conscious of language. Do they want to be called by their first name? By their last name? Do they embrace the term survivor or victim? Or do neither feel right to them? Ask them what they are comfortable with.

  – Let them know they can bring a support person.

- **Choose your words carefully**
  During the interview or activity, avoid beginning with or foregrounding any traumatizing event. Build up to it. Ask them innocuous questions about their life now. Where do they live? Do they have children? Where they work? What have they been doing since the incident? What has that time been like for them? Avoid questions that assign blame or that might shame or hurt them, in any way. Never say things like, "Didn't you guess there might be trouble?" When we do approach a traumatic event, ask open ended questions about the incident, such as, "What happened?" "Can you tell me about that day?" or "As much as you're comfortable with, can you describe what happened to you, or to your son." Give non-verbal cues that are encouraging and positive. Unless absolutely necessary, and only if you have received their consent beforehand,

do not seek details. Be careful not to push them for a soundbite. Let them shape their story.

- **Follow Up**
  As much as you can, try to conclude the interview or activity in a peaceful, positive manner. Offer the chance for them to provide closure by asking, "Is there anything else you would like to share? Is there anything I missed?" Then, give them an outline of the next steps – what is the activity's timeframe? When will they get to look at the piece (or interview or video) and review it if they would like to? When, after that, will it appear?

  – Offer referrals or publicly accessible and culturally relevant information for mental health services, psycho-social counselling, other medical assistance, and community support services.

  – Finally, check in with them shortly afterward or, if that's not possible, with a group they belong to. Let them know this was not an impersonal experience.

## 4. Craft a Message

More than a stated goal, your message needs to convince people, pull them in, and make them act. There may be several messages, but they should all lead to the same goal. An effective message should always be accurate and:

- Be simple and explain the cause clearly, without ambiguities.
- Emphasize the critical importance of the cause.
- Tell people something new, something they had not thought about.
- Be engaging, interesting, perhaps even shocking.
- Articulate the need to take action and provide a solution.

The message needs to be effective – that is, it needs to propel its audience to act. To provide an example, Oxfam International once designed a media

"Distribute Power," a poster from the RESET campaign by Imperative 21, which aims to raise awareness around the necessity of, and opportunity for, economic system change.

message about poverty and education that stated, "Basic education helps break the cycle of poverty," but focus groups said this did not inspire them to act. Instead, the focus group preferred, "Education is every child's right."

There is a potential risk of echo chambers on social media. An echo chamber is an environment in which a person encounters only beliefs or opinions that already align with their own. While it is powerful to catalyze passive allies into active allies, a campaign's messages must also reach beyond current supporters.

**DON'T FORGET: CREATE A CALL TO ACTION**

Always remember to clearly state what action you want people to take. Awareness alone will not create change. You must compel people to do something, and provide options for different levels of engagement.

## 5. Know your Resources and Budget

There are many ways to conduct an advocacy campaign within any range of budgets. Be realistic and creative about your funds. What funding do you have? Are there any limitations for how or when that funding can be used?

What will you need to move your campaign forward? What are the required expenses for these needs?

- Will you need to search for volunteers? Do you need to hire someone with a specific skill set?

- Think about the resources that you may have access to already. Is there someone who is a filmmaker in your organization already?

- Do you need funding to produce and stream a radio program? Or for printing posters? Or might a cheaper, digital advocacy campaign be better?

Investigate your resources and reach out for partnerships when necessary. There may be unlikely allies who are willing to donate supplies, talents, or other resources, even if they are unable to commit to showing up in-person or planning an action directly.

## 6. Plan Strategic Media

Conveying your message through media is essential to achieving an advocacy campaign's larger goals. Be intentional and strategic to advance your objectives: what media coverage will help achieve your goal most effectively? Is your goal to inspire people to act, convince or educate people about a problem, or even entertain them through narratives that are otherwise repressed?

While this Content Marketing Matrix from Smart Insights was created with for-profit marketing teams in mind, using a similar framework can help grassroots advocacy initiatives plan for engaging and interactive media. The diversity of potential media content can push organizers and activists to think through how formats and media distribution mechanisms can help engage diverse audiences, depending on the campaign's goals.

EMOTIONAL

ENTERTAIN — INSPIRE

- Virals
- Quizzes
- Competitions
- Widgets
- Celebrity Endorsements
- Games
- Branded Videos
- Community Forums
- Celebrity
- Articles
- eBooks
- eNews
- Events
- Ratings
- Infographics
- Press Releases
- Demo Videos
- Product Features
- Case Studies
- Guides
- Trend Reports
- Reports and Whitepapers
- Interactive Demos
- Checklist
- Data Sheet & Price Guide
- Webinars
- Calculations

EDUCATE — CONVINCE

RATIONAL

AWARENESS ———→ PURCHASE

Some questions to consider are:

- Which media formats do your participant communities have access to?
- Which media formats and platforms do your target audience/s use and follow the most?
- Which media format can best convey your message?
- Which media format will be most likely to encourage people to act and engage with the initiative?
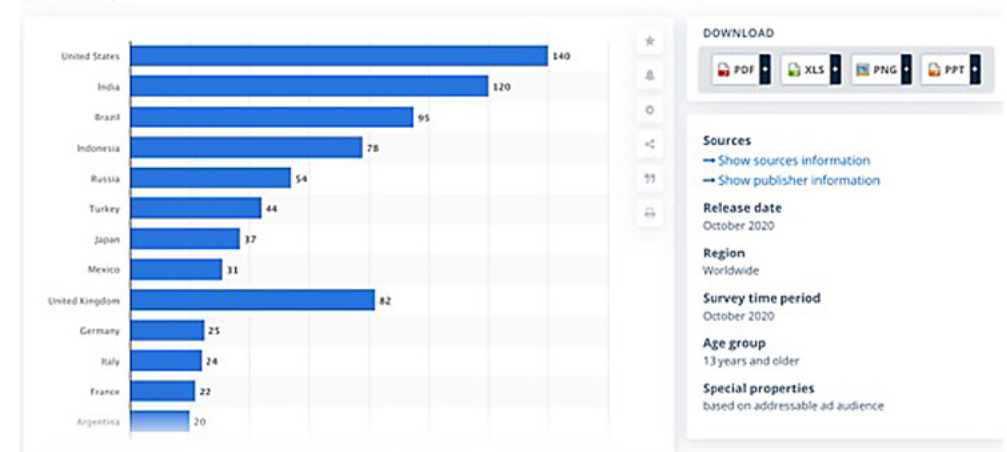- Which media format is most popular in your geographic region?

## DON'T FORGET: FORMATS, TACTICS AND DISTRIBUTION

Often, you will utilize a few different media formats: a video documentary might be published in multiple ways – a public screening followed by a post on YouTube, shorter clips on Instagram and subsequent full screenings in schools or other venues. Likewise, social media is a great way to increase support for protests or advertise a public exhibit; or a public exhibit might have an in-person survivor panel discussion when opening. If your audience is rural or illiterate, radio may be the better option, followed up with some graphic poster campaigns.



Internet › Social Media & User-Generated Content

**Leading countries based on Instagram audience size as of October 2020** (in millions)

| Country | Audience |
| --- | --- |
| United States | 140 |
| India | 120 |
| Brazil | 95 |
| Indonesia | 78 |
| Russia | 54 |
| Turkey | 44 |
| Japan | 37 |
| Mexico | 31 |
| United Kingdom | 82 |
| Germany | 25 |
| Italy | 24 |
| France | 22 |
| Argentina | 20 |

DOWNLOAD: PDF, XLS, PNG, PPT

Sources
→ Show sources information
→ Show publisher information

Release date
October 2020

Region
Worldwide

Survey time period
October 2020

Age group
13 years and older

Special properties
based on addressable ad audience

© Statista 2020

Consider which distribution strategies work best for each of your target audiences. Perhaps content published on Instagram will reach students in the United States the most effectively, but the same strategy may not work with students in a different context. Partnering directly with a school or another CSO to share each other's events online may be an effective mechanism to grow your audience and generate engagement and excitement.

**Press Tips**

Whether placing an article, pitching and article, or just garnering attention for a campaign – digital or otherwise – reaching out to the media is crucial to expanding your impact. Here are a few simple tips to consider:

1. **Take the time.** Research the journalists who care about the topic and, ideally, have written about it before. Sending ten targeted, personalized queries or announcements to ten invested journalists will likely yield better results than sending 100 queries to a general media list. If you cannot find their email, tag or private message them on social media.

2. **Inform the writer or editor about your audiences** and how the topic will appeal to a range of groups.

3. **Find your human angle.** Lead with it. Nothing draws someone in like a story.

4. **Emphasize what's new about your campaign,** and why it needs attention now.

5. **Never give up.** Journalists are busy. If they don't respond the first time, follow up in a week or so.

## 7. Timeline

Timing is crucial. Ideally, an advocacy campaign should be planned when its implementation will make the greatest strategic impact – around a specific event – a hearing or trial, for instance. There are also <u>UN International days</u> or social media days that might coincide. It is also important to build stages of a campaign so that it can escalate over time – perhaps you have a debut media and then follow up with a shorter series. It helps to be as specific as possible in your planning:

**Make an internal timeline to plan, produce, and publish media in alignment with the campaign's goals.**

- When will your media be released?

- Which messages and media are to be sent out and when?
  *For example, will you aim to send 100 unique email advocacy letters to elected officials? Or aim to send 500 text messages to new voters sharing information on how to register to vote over a six-month period?*

- Allow for a progressive build-up through different stages of the whole campaign. If you are planning several stages of an advocacy campaign, create distinct media plans for each stage and diverse distribution mechanisms.

- Communicate within your movement and coalition before relaying public message; let your allies know when you are planning the next stage of your campaign so that they are prepared to amplify your message. Relate important events to your media team so the media component of the campaign is responsive and reflective of the most current events.

- Make your timeline realistic and achievable (build in more time than anticipated).

## 8. Measuring and Documenting Impact

Finally, the fact that people consume, view, or visit your advocacy campaign does not mean they will be impacted by it – or moved to act and engage because of it. Do not despair! But do plan for this possibility by creating indicators that not only track views or audience size, but also track action. As an

example, do not only create and advertise a photo-memorialization campaign, but also track how many people view it and perhaps ask them to complete a short survey about its effect, and whether or not they learned anything new from the experience. You may also track coverage of an issue by the media more generally: "There was a 200% increase in monthly coverage about domestic violence in selected major newspapers." One way of tracking media coverage is by setting up an automated Google News Alert for your town, your local news outlets and keywords describing your advocacy initiative. Other metrics to track for a digital campaign are the frequency of a campaign's hashtag use, the audience size (the number of followers a given account or campaign has), and audience engagement (the number of comments, or "shares" posts have). Using social media platforms free analytics (on Facebook and Twitter), you can see where your followers are geographically, and other demographic information – like their age and gender breakdown – and the amount of digital engagement each post has.

For in-person advocacy initiatives, how many people are attending? How are they engaging with the event? What are they learning? Surveys, brief questionnaires, or follow-up events are great methods to evaluate the successes and challenges to an advocacy initiative.

If you are looking for inspiration, visit Beautiful Trouble's Toolbox, where they share stories from international advocacy actions and campaigns and emphasize what worked or did not work, and why. Consider the examples later in this toolkit.

**DON'T FORGET: Document impact information to learn and determine where to improve and what to continue for future campaigns, and what was effective in making tangible societal change. These data points documenting impact and efficacy may also be effective for potential fundraising opportunities to further advocacy initiatives.**

# SOCIAL MEDIA AND ADVOCACY

From #MeToo to #BlackLivesMatter, social media and advocacy often go hand in hand; many advocacy initiatives begin digitally on social media platforms or blogs before growing into physical actions and in-person advocacy events. Sometimes viral advocacy initiatives grow organically from social media posts that resonate with diverse geographic communities who have experienced similar systemic injustices, or a campaign can be more systemically organized and specific to one issue. When used effectively, social media can amplify advocacy efforts by providing a primary or secondary platform to document human rights violations, support the stories of victims and survivors, and raise awareness of injustices, perpetrators, and issues of accountability.

Social media offers a space outside traditional media or corporate-backed media outlets, which do not always amplify the voices of the marginalized through reliable, consistent, nor equitable coverage. These platforms can be effective tools to give everyday citizens and activists the power to create change in their communities. In both theory and practice – social media has a personal, user-generated quality that suits the needs of civil society organizations and the GIJTR well.

However, social media platforms also can be a liability to advocacy campaigns, and hamper their success. From hundreds of 'bots' or fake accounts, to censorship and the arbitrary and irregular enforcement of content guidelines, social media can be as much a tool to encourage wide-spread violence as it can be a tool for grassroots advocacy towards peace, justice and accountability. Freedom House issued a 2019 Freedom on the Net Report, "The Crisis of Social Media", in which they warn, "What was once a liberating technology has become a conduit for surveillance and electoral manipulation." For a specific case study, read how Facebook was used to incite and encourage violence in Myanmar.

The debate on social media platforms' benefits or detriments is immense. However, these platforms are essential for global communication and the diverse facets of this debate cannot all be addressed in this toolkit. We encourage you to visit the links in the Resources section for more information, and to consider the following.

## Social Media 101

According to Community Toolbox, a public resource from the University of Kansas, digital advocacy is defined as the "use of digital technology to contact, inform, and mobilize a group of concerned people around an issue or cause." The purpose of digital activism is to use technology as a tool to break down geological barriers and raise awareness of the human rights violations happening in the world today.

Globally, the most popular social networks worldwide as of April 2021 according to Statista are Facebook, YouTube, Whatsapp, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, WeChat and TikTok. All of these platforms (and others) can be used to support digital advocacy initiatives. As noted earlier, the popularity of these can vary greatly

**Most popular social networks worldwide as of April 2021, ranked by number of active users**
*(in millions)*

Search: [          ]     Records: 25 ▼

| Characteristic | Number of active users in millions |
|---|---|
| Facebook | 2,797 |
| YouTube | 2,291 |
| WhatsApp | 2,000 |
| Facebook Messenger* | 1,300 |
| Instagram | 1,287 |
| Weixin / WeChat | 1,225 |
| TikTok | 732 |
| Douyin | 600 |
| QQ | 595 |
| Telegram | 550 |
| Snapchat | 528 |
| Sina Weibo | 521 |
| Kuaishou | 481 |
| Pinterest | 459 |
| Reddit* | 430 |

*© Statista 2020*

by region, so you are encouraged to research which channels will be most effective for you to reach your target audiences.

There are several free software platforms and digital tools that can help you create graphics to better implement digital advocacy campaigns. ICSC does not endorse nor support any of these platforms. Please note that you should investigate the security, data rights, and privacy regulations for each of these applications, depending on your context and individual safety risks.

- Canva: graphic design software made with different social media templates and sizing proportions for different platforms so that your graphic can fit any platform
- Animoto and OpenShot: video editing tools
- PiktoChart and Easelly: tools for making graphics and visualizing data
- DesignWizard and Inkscape: web-based graphic design and photo-editing software
- Headliner: an application that can help you turn audio content – like the clip of an interview, podcast or other soundbite – into a visual social media graphic
- See the Community Toolbox's Using Social Media for Digital Advocacy to help create pages and accounts for your advocacy campaign, including creating a blog or basic website.

We encourage creativity in your use of social media and technology to try new strategies to maximize your advocacy campaigns and engage your audiences in efforts for truth, justice, and accountability. Some groups have used QR codes for advocacy initiatives, asking the public at an event to scan the code with their personal phones to sign an online petition or other call to action, like emailing their elected officials. These QR codes can be on stickers, posters, or other visual materials to embed tangible engagement into what may otherwise be passive consumption of a poster.

## SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

Include a call to act in every post: *What do you want your followers to do?* If you want them to call their local politicians, say that. If you want them to vote in a local election, let them know when and how.

### Keep your posts simple but engaging

- Use active words: learn more, visit here, click here
- Ask questions in your posts. It is helpful to engage your digital audiences and open up dialogue to involve more users and make otherwise stagnant posts interactive.

### Express yourself

- Don't be afraid to use your own voice and approach
- Create your own hashtags. Be consistent with the hashtag that you use so that the hashtag becomes synonymous with your advocacy and users can find other related content.

### Branch out

- Respond to your users
- Use hashtags
- Repost
- Build social media relatioships by tagging others

### Be professional

- Make sure your social profiles are complete and up to date
- Keep track of your social media trands and analyze your audience (many platforms have analytics built in)
- Do not buy followers and fans
- Give credit where credit is due

A protester at a #MeToo rally. Image credit: Wiki Commons

Overall, these platforms provide an interactive space where users can share information instantaneously and engage with other content, such as video and online discussion. While the possible uses are numerous, here are a few primary ways social media can be particularly useful for social justice advocacy.

- **Virtual Community-Building:** Social Media campaigns like #MeToo have been effectively used to provide platforms for survivors of sexual violence and harassment to connect with others and share their stories collectively. This is imperative because often these survivors face external shame or discrimination if they share their stories in person, but find allies and networks of solidarity support online.  For instance, Twitter has been used as a tool for feminist social movements, particularly as a platform to share

experiences with sexual assault. For more information on #MeToo and its implications building space for survivors of sexual assault to create community and share their experiences, visit here for a general overview, and here for a global, comparative look at the movement.

- **Documentation:** Another example of utilizing social media for advocacy is by sharing images and videos on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Organizations such as WITNESS aims to equip citizen witnesses of human right violations with the skills to use video as evidence – so that there is documented proof of perpetrators in these offenses. Social media and other digital platforms can be a highly effective way to archive and preserve so that human rights violations cannot be "denied or forgotten over time."

    – Again, review digital security protocols as any content uploaded to social media platforms may be at risk of visual manipulation through photo or video-editing or re-purposed for slander from disinformation and misinformation campaigns.

- **Education and Public Awareness:** According to the Pew Research Center, from July 2013 to May 2018, the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter was used nearly 30 million times on Twitter, which is an average of 17,002 times per day. While there are legitimate concerns that use of a hashtag, or the sharing of a graphic, does not translate to actual engagement to combat the systemic Anti-Black racism, the hashtag was also used to tag articles and educational resources, like teaching curriculums for children and books for kids of all ages. These resources are helpful to equip the public with tools to understand systemic oppression, and then work to combat that racism.

- **Mobilization – From Digital into the Physical:** Finally, for social justice movements, social media platforms, as well as communications apps like Whatsapp, Signal, and Telegram can be extremely useful in spreading the word about in-person activities and building momentum for rallies, speeches, or other events. On platforms that are not encrypted assume even private messages may become public. Signal is encrypted and is often considered the most secure platform to protect users' privacy.

Generally, social media platforms can break down geological barriers, is less expensive than other means of traditional media, and can be accessed by a large portion of the population. For a study of how social media influenced the Arab Spring, click here.

# ADVOCACY EXAMPLES AROUND THE WORLD

Since its founding in 1999, the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC) has supported its members in creating groundbreaking advocacy campaigns that shine a light on past and present injustices and inspire their audiences to take action to protect the future. What follows are just a few examples of the remarkable work by Sites of Conscience and others that can be easily adapted and replicated in other contexts.

## Raising Awareness

### MARKING THEIR MEMORY

To mark the 43rd anniversary of the Lebanese Civil War, during which 17, 415 persons disappeared. In commemoration, Coalition member Act for the Disappeared launched an advocacy campaign on the issue of the disappeared, and the importance of memory in the face of atrocities. For this, they installed three-dimensional figures representing the disappeared in 35 different places in Beirut and the suburbs where people were kidnapped. Each figure bears the simple, succinct, powerful message: "People were abducted here. Here or there, it is time to know what happened to them." During the campaign, an accompanying bus tour stopped in several neighborhoods, and residents were invited to embark and view a map of memorials and places related to the war, as well as view information and testimonies.

For more information, visit:
http://www.actforthedisappeared.com

### MAPPING MENA

Throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), ongoing conflict and repressive regimes have made it extremely difficult for many communities to account for injustices committed by state and non-state actors.

To ensure that the experiences of victims are not lost, ICSC – in partnership with 14 Sites of Conscience members in 8 countries – developed an advocacy campaign to create and build an interactive digital map which documents and shares the stories and history of human rights abuses at sites across MENA. Alongside the map, participating member Sites conducted smaller, individual advocacy campaigns – including social media campaigns, workshops, and photo competitions – to raise awareness of this issue in their specific country and contexts.

The site is available in Arabic and English at: www.mappingmena.org.

**BRINGING STORIES HOME**

To raise awareness about the human rights abuses that occurred under the Yahya Jammeh dictatorship, as well as to educate communities about the transitional justice processes in the Gambia, the African Network against Extrajudicial Killings and Enforced Disappearances (ANEKED), a Sites of Conscience member, created a mobile exhibit entitled "The Duty to Remember" that shared the stories of victims through photos, personal items lent by victims' families, and quotes from ANEKED's summary digests that analyze the truth commission hearings. Supported by the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation, the project not only showcased a diversity of voices, which can often get lost post-conflict, but also humanized the truth and justice process in the country, which can sometimes feel abstract to people. In addition, victims, community members, international embassy representatives, TRRC representatives, members of civil society and the press attended the



Photo credit: Jason Florio. Courtesy of ANEKED.

opening event on February 21, 2021 at the National Centre for Arts & Culture, hosted by another Sites of Conscience member in Banjul. In October 2021, ANEKED opened a new permanent home for "The Duty to Remember" in Banjul – Memory House.

## Sharing the Stories of Survivors

**EVERYDAY MEMORIES**

To remember those lost to violence in Afghanistan, the Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization (AHRDO), a Sites of Conscience member in Kabul, began the "Memory Box Project" which centered victims' experiences of the conflict by sharing their memories, through a grant from the Coalition. Working specifically with family members of those killed, AHRDO supported survivors in creating memory boxes in honor of their loved ones. Similar to "The Duty to Remember", these intimate displays included personal, everyday items – such as scarves, photos, and poems – that belonged to the deceased and had been preserved by their family. The memory boxes were then exhibited in multiple settings, highlighting the humanity of those lost and the need for a peaceful and just future. Advocacy projects that highlight victims of conflict can be particularly effective in repressive settings, where more overt political messages can be twisted or the organizers may be targeted by those in power. The display was showcased in The New York Times in 2019.

## WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF CONFLICT

The Herstories Project, a Sites of Conscience member in Sri Lanka, is an auto-ethnographic project, that has collected 285 personal narratives of mothers



Photo credit: The Herstories Archive

from the north, south and east of Sri Lanka. The project is based on the idea that in war and peace, women's stories of resilience, courage, and hope are marginalized or left out of history. The project bears witness to these narratives that are at risk of being lost to mitigate the dangers of a single, unified narrative in post-war Sri Lanka. The stories were collected and told in women's own words through hand-written letters, photo-essays, short video interviews all incorporated into one website: http://theherstoryarchive.org. These stories can be used to spark dialogue and create change to influence how the Sri Lankan conflict is taught in schools, identify what gendered components of the conflict still have not been addressed, and increase public cultural awareness of the nuances of the Sri Lankan conflict.



### NEVER FORGOTTEN

The "Empty Chair Project," created by artist Giligo Ja, in collaboration with Voices of Women Media, a Sites of Conscience member in Nepal, preserves and honors the memory of those killed in Nepal's civil war (1996-2006). The conflict killed over 17,000 and "disappeared" approximately 1,300 more. To support accountability and justice efforts in the country, Giligo amplified these stories by staging "family reunions" between those killed and those still missing them. She took portraits of people who lost family members alongside projections of old family

photographs that include their loved one. As Giligo puts it, "The passage of time, of existing and not existing, is layered within a single image." Launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, the project was exhibited virtually through social media platforms and was a winner in the PX3 State of the World 2020 photo competition.



Hashtags included in the campaign were: #wherearethey #wherearetheynow #memorymatters #dayofdisappeared #justicenow

### SURVIVORS STANDING UP

For countries either in conflict or emerging from it, the press can play a central role in sharing the stories of survivors, and thereby creating more empathy and understanding around human rights violations. One approach victims' organizations may take is to initiate a partnership with a local, national or international journalist or photographer to create a profile of survivors, like this one that memorializes the stadium massacre that took place in Conakry, Guinea on September 28, 2009. Published in Al Jazeera on the 7th anniversary of the atrocity, this series memorializes the brutal government assault on a pro-democracy rally where 156 people were killed and





Photo credit: Tommy Trenchard, Al Jazeera

dozens of women were sexually assaulted. The photo-essay describes the massacre, provides a brief history of human rights violations in Guinea, and provides links to references, like a report by Human Rights Watch on the attack. The photos accompanying the piece are of survivors themselves revisiting the stadium. To protect their anonymity, many are photographed with their backs facing the camera.
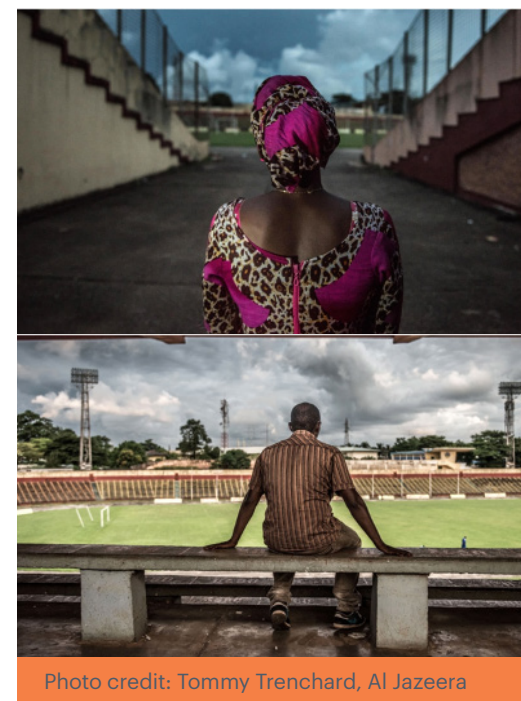
## HUMANS OF NEW YORK

Started by photographer Brandon Stanton in 2010, "Humans of New York" gained widespread popularity over social media, using Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. While the project first shared the stories of people Stanton encountered on the sidewalk, he pivoted the project to share the stories of everyday survivors from dozens of settings, from Iraq and Mexico to Uganda and Ukraine. While the impact on its viewers is often powerful, the format is simple: a collection of photographs, alongside someone's story – told in their own words. To highlight social justice causes, Stanton has partnered with entities such as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to amplify the voices of migrants, in this case. The format is easily adaptable in that is relatively inexpensive, and easily implemented for many. This format is also flexible medium in high-risk security situations because a survivor's face (or other identifying features) does not necessarily need to be shown. The series has been the subject of two books: *Humans of New York* and *Humans of New York: Stories*.



*Image via Instagram.*

# Creating Dialogue

## CHANNELS OF TRUST

The conflict in Colombia claimed the lives of over 200,000 people between 1958-2013. To help those affected, and begin to bridge historic divides in the country, the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation (GIJTR) is advising the Colombian Truth Commission, which formally began on November 29, 2018, on the best tools for collecting, documenting and sharing the stories of the conflict's survivors – an integral step to ensuring lasting peace in the country. As part of this, the GIJTR supported seven truth-telling advocacy projects in marginalized communities, including murals, video documentaries and craft-related projects. These projects were particularly effective in creating dialogue around the conflict, which is often shrouded in silence and taboos. One, in the Wayúu territory, was centered around mochila bags, which are a hallmark of the territory, usually knitted by women in the community. In this case, mass killings and family members of the disappeared created bags to represent their missing family member. As family members knitted, they spoke about the missing person – sharing stories about them and recording their feelings on the conflict. Once completed, families would place cards with pictures and texts inside the knitted bags, and then put them all in a larger mochila bag representing their territory, called the mochila of truth. The mochila of truth, containing numerous personal mochilas and a tape recorder, was then carried from village to village as a traveling interactive multimedia exhibition, asking community members to share and record their own personal

experiences of the conflict. Similarly, another group created traditional dolls that resembled a missing family member. Family members would record their own memories so that when the dolls were exhibited, they were shown with the recording. This proved very effective in combatting insensitivity to the conflict, which can be a challenge in Colombia and in many places. When a person is involved in the creation of a physical object, they are more invested emotionally in it. That powerful energy translates into communities – at exhibitions, these objects served as catalysts for truth-telling among other community members.

For more information, visit here.

### DOCUMENTING THE PAST TODAY

Engaging communities in dialogue can help rebuild trust after conflict so differences can begin to be bridged. The Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina (YIHR) hosted ten memory walking tour programs in small towns through the country as part of their recent advocacy project supported by ICSC. The program trained young participants – mostly high school students – to conduct research on local monuments and their relevance to themselves and their communities today. Participants then created videos about the monuments in which they interviewed local residents about enduring social issues. An intergenerational project like this could be exhibited at a school, library, or community center, and published on social media simultaneously. It could also be adapted for a radio or podcast program.

### WALLS THAT TALK

Throughout the world, murals have been used to raise awareness about social justice issues, keep memories alive, and bring people together – both actively, in the making of the mural and in sparking dialogue and engagement with it, or more passively, by installing and influencing a piece of the streetscape. From Colombia and New York to Nepal and Bangladesh, Sites of Conscience and similar organizations have brought together survivors – family members of the disappeared, for example – to create these public artworks, providing them opportunities to heal and to own their narratives as they depict it for their communities to see.


The National Network of Families of the Disappeared and Missing in Nepal


Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation, Colombia

Art methodologies provide an alternate language for survivors to capture the trauma of their experiences and creatively engage with the past while envisioning a new future. In more repressive settings, or contexts where speaking about past atrocities is still taboo or discouraged, art projects can also be a more discreet way to implement an advocacy campaign without triggering as much suspicion or threat from authorities while still influencing community members on a more subconscious level. Art can allow survivors and community members to process the situation in their own time, space, and through their own creative depictions which can often be productive and powerful.

As Amplifier states, "Art has the ability to wake people up – through collective expression we can evoke emotion, tell stories, inspire, and motivate. Channeled as a vehicle for social issues, art can become a catalyst for meaningful change." While this is their ethos for all campaigns, Amplifier's Honor The Treaties campaign made in collaboration with dozens of leaders from treaty rights organizations from 2010 – 2015 was dedicated to amplifying the voices of Indigenous communities through art and social advocacy. It funded collaborations between Native artists and Native advocacy groups so that their messages can captivate a larger audience in their efforts to protect the integrity of their land, water, and traditions.

A mural on Melrose Avenue in South Dakota. The mural reads "The Black Hills are not for sale!" a common rallying cry for treaty rights on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Photo by Juan Luis Garcia

## Conclusion:

Advocacy can look, sound, and manifest in over a thousand different ways. This toolkit is just the start of your advocacy and movement-building.

Since 2014, GIJTR has been working closely with partners and civil society groups around the world to build capacities and lay the groundwork for community-wide participation in both formal and community-based transitional justice processes. We hope this toolkit is helpful in these processes to advocate for truth, justice and accountability. Download the images from Amplifier created for this campaign here. GIJTR partners are encouraged to reach out to coalition@sitesofconscience.org for additional support.

# RESOURCES

**Media, Advocacy and Transitional Justice:**

Building a Learning Community: Lessons for Holistic and Sustainable Approach to Transitional Justice, Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation

Creating an Advocacy Campaign: A Toolkit for Memory Practitioners, Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation

From Memory to Action: A Toolkit for Memorialization in Post-Conflict Societies, The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience

Media and Transitional Justice: A Dream of Symbiosis in a Troubled Relationship, International Center for Transitional Justice.

Pathways of Innovation: Civil Society Advancing Transitional Justice, Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation

**Freedom of Speech and Expression:**

International Human Rights Law, The United Nations

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The United Nations

Freedom House' 2019 Freedom on the Net Report: The Crisis of Social Media

**Security and Advocacy:**

Front Line Defenders, specifically Protection Handbook for Human Rights Defenders

Protection of Victims and Witnesses, Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, United Nations

[Protest Safety Tips from Greenpeace](#), Greenpeace

Flyer: [Safety During Protest](#), Amnesty International

[Tips for Protesting Peacefully and Safely,](#) Human Rights Watch

[Protest Safety Guide](#), Across Frontlines

Frontline Medics has an Instagram guide available [here](#) for protesting safety that is specific to the Covid-19 pandemic safety concerns.

American Civil Liberties Union, [Protestors' Rights](#)

## Creating Advocacy Campaigns:

[Beautiful Trouble's Toolbox](#): Examples, case studies and stories from an international group of artist-activists that have worked with grassroots initiatives, using diverse methodologies.

[How to Organize a Protest or March,](#) ihollaback.org

Stakeholders and Target Audience Planning: [Spectrum of Allies](#) from 350.Org.

[The Social Change Ecosystem Map](#), a guide from the Building Movement Project.

[Social Advocacy Toolkit,](#) Socialbrite.org

[Social Media Toolkits,](#) American Library Association

[198 Methods of Nonviolent Action,](#) The Albert Einstein Institution

## Social Media, Audiences and Marketing:

[Digital 2020: A Comprehensive Look at the State of the Internet, Mobile Devises, Social Media and E-Commerce,](#) Hootsuite

[Use Your Social Network as a Tool for Social Justice](#) by Raina Brands and Aneeta Rattan, Harvard Business Review

WITNESS' [Tips for Livestreaming Protests](#).

## Practical Approaches to Advocacy, Art and Social Justice:

[Body Mapping For Advocacy,](#) Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation

[Creating Channels of Trust: Community Truth-Telling in Outlying Regions in Colombia](#), Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation

**REFERENCES**

[1]  Citing the 2020 Hootsuite report, [John Koetsier noted in Forbes Magazine](#) that "social media use is outpacing population growth almost nine to one. While the overall popular grew by 82 million people, or just over 1%, active social media users grew by 321 million people: 9.2%."

[2]  (2015) Black Lives Matter BLM. United States. [Web Archive] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/lcwaN0016241/.

[3]  https://www.cbsnews.com/news/george-floyd-black-lives-matter-impact/

[4]  https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Briefing-Media-T.J.-2016.pdf, page 11

[5]  https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Briefing-Media-T.J.-2016.pdf, pages 13-17

[6]  https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/01/02/social-networks-and-social-media-in-ukrainian-euromaidan-protests-2/

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