ANTI-CORRUPTION TOOLKIT FOR CIVIC ACTIVISTS

Leveraging research, advocacy and
the media to push for effective reform

IRI INTERNATIONAL
REPUBLICAN
INSTITUTE
Advancing Democracy Worldwide

Anti-Corruption Toolkit for Civic Activists

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INTRODUCTION

Grand corruption increases poverty and social inequality, enables human rights violations and exacerbates economic underdevelopment. Widespread corruption also undermines faith in democracy, which can fuel authoritarianism and terrorist recruitment. Civil society and the international community have played an important role in exposing and advocating against public corruption, which often goes unpunished. In order to support these indigenous efforts, the International Republican Institute (IRI) has developed this Anti-Corruption Toolkit for Civic Activists.

Who Can Use This Toolkit?

This Toolkit is specifically built for civic activists, or any individuals attempting to advocate for social or political change through collective discussion, organization and action. Civic activists may be involved in collective action as members of civil society organizations (CSOs), which can operate either as grassroots groups sustained by volunteers or as professionalized groups powered by staff. This Toolkit is oriented toward the former — local community-based organizations that are beginning anti-corruption activities. This Toolkit is also aimed at journalists and others investigating corruption as part of independent media groups. It includes a compilation of tools, strategies and tips for civic actors to target, streamline and amplify their efforts to denounce corruption and promote meaningful reform.

How to Use This Toolkit

This Toolkit is a resource that you can use to develop an approach to combatting corruption that is tailored to your local context. Some sections will be more relevant than others for your work right now. For example, in some environments there is widespread information about corruption, but the challenge is marshalling the political will to respond to it — so the focus might be on the partnership-building, advocacy and communications components of Modules 2 and 3. In other settings, there is significant complacency or ignorance about corruption, so it might be important to start with hard-hitting exposés of corruption using the tools in Module 1 to galvanize public attention and spark interest in further civic action. Reflect on your local context, and what is most needed there, as you delve into various sections of the Toolkit.

Defining Grand Corruption

This Toolkit is specifically aimed at combatting grand corruption, defined by Transparency International as the abuse of high-level power by the few at the expense of the many, causing serious and widespread harm to individuals and society, while often going unpunished.[1] This type of corruption typically involves widespread bribery and embezzlement schemes or other large-scale siphoning of public funds by corrupt government leaders and officials, such as heads of states and ministers, for personal gain. At its extreme, it can manifest as "state capture," in which public institutions are fully coopted for the purpose of private interests and profit. Grand corruption stands in contrast with "petty" or localized corruption, such as service-delivery and small "facilitation" payments that individuals may be forced to pay to accelerate a government transaction.

Methodology

To inform the scope of the Toolkit, IRI conducted interviews with civil society representatives and anti-corruption activists in Iraq and the Maldives to determine their

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[1] "What is Grand Corruption and How Can We Stop It?" *Transparency International*, 21 Sept. 2016, transparency.org/news/feature/what_is_grand_corruption_and_how_can_we_stop_it.

level of preparedness to counter grand corruption and kleptocratic networks. IRI interviewed representatives from 14 CSOs in the Maldives and 10 CSOs in Iraq. Furthermore, IRI conducted desk research on anti-corruption issues in both countries, as well as ways in which civil society responded to instances of large-scale grand corruption. IRI also consulted experts on anti-corruption civic movements and incorporated their perspectives into the content and structure of this Toolkit.

Based on the needs and interests of local actors as identified by the interview findings, combined with desk research and expertise provided by an external consultant, IRI created the three modules outlined in this Toolkit as key areas for capacity building: (1) Research Methods and Security; (2) Advocacy, Collaboration and Setting Priorities; and (3) Communications and the Media.

MODULE 1: RESEARCH METHODS AND SECURITY

Researching grand corruption can be complex, entailing tracking various actors and subjects, and following convoluted pathways of assets and financial flows. However, this research is often a prerequisite for informed and targeted anti-corruption campaigns. This module is devoted to defining the research methods and tools that individuals or organizations can use to gain sufficient and accurate data regarding corruption to lay the groundwork for successful anti-corruption campaigns. The information collected can also potentially be submitted to domestic or foreign law-enforcement actors (where they are pro-reform and trustworthy) for possible legal or diplomatic action against alleged perpetrators, such as sanctions under the U.S. Global Magnitsky Act.

Defining Goals and Mitigating Risk

At the beginning of your research, it is important to clarify the strategic objectives behind it. Possible goals might be to: (1) document the human costs of corruption in order to galvanize public pressure for reform; (2) uncover the mechanics of corruption — who is involved in a corrupt network and how the network operates — in order to inform advocacy efforts; or (3) compile dossiers of corruption allegations to pass to trusted foreign law enforcement actors in order to support accountability efforts. Defining *why* you are doing corruption research can increase the efficiency and impact of your work.

It is also helpful to consider the risks of exposing corruption — not just to you personally, as discussed in the section on security below — but also to public attitudes toward issues of grand corruption. Greater awareness of corruption can end up increasing public cynicism, lowering voter turnout, breeding disillusionment with government and, at an extreme, fueling the rise of authoritarian populists. To mitigate those risks, consider focusing not just on the problems of corruption but also on effective responses to it, whether domestic or international. It can be powerful to highlight positive examples in which government officials are doing the right thing, which can be a source of hope for citizens. You can also create a clear pathway for citizens to take action against corruption after reading the exposé, which gives your audience a sense of agency.

Leveraging Local Insights

While this Toolkit focuses on high-level corruption, perspectives from grassroots communities can provide essential insights and are an important starting point. Citizens' experiences of local bribery and service delivery problems can reveal vertically integrated corruption schemes, which start from low-level bureaucrats and end up implicating senior officials. Community insights into how and why specific corruption

problems persist can be paired with more technical tools — as outlined below — for powerful and holistic investigations.

Identifying Corruption

A "red flag" of corruption can emerge in relation to a particular sector or individual. At the sector level, there may be unusual procurement practices — such as the government selecting a high bidder for a project who is not better qualified, which can raise suspicions of a kickback scheme. Or there may be systemic under-provision of services in that sector or a specific region, in spite of an adequate budget allotment.

At the individual level, an indicator of graft may be public officials experiencing a substantial increase in their personal assets. Therefore, it is important to follow the money or other forms of benefits to identify public officials who may have profited from corruption, as well as those who might be supplying or enabling the illicit payments. To that end, the following sources of information should be considered. Look for sudden increases in assets and purchases of luxury goods that exceed officials' estimated income, using:[2]

- Tax returns and financial disclosure forms
- Credit-card accounts and loan applications
- Employment records, including employee salaries and perks
- Travel, foreign bank accounts and overseas properties
- Real-estate records and home ownership
- School fees and other financial support of children

- Means of transport and vehicle ownership
- Expensive celebrations and parties

Once a potentially corrupt individual has been identified, your research should extend to persons with whom they have strong ties, including family members and business associates.

Developing an Investigative Theory

Theory gives direction to the investigation, but it is important to remain flexible. The first step should always be making an initial assessment of whether the alleged corrupt conduct appears to be criminal in nature. In some countries, an action will not necessarily be strictly illegal under local laws, but may still be corrupt and an improper use of public funds. The second step is identifying elements needed to prove that the corrupt act was committed. Finally, the third step is to try to anticipate possible gaps in evidence and legal challenges — and build your case to avoid them.

Choosing Investigative Methods

Determining which investigative tools to use depends on a variety of factors, including the nature of the alleged violations, the type of investigation conducted and the resources available. It is a normal progression to go from simple to complex, with information from initial steps, such as gathering open-source information, social media posts and metadata, analyzing government-maintained records, leading up to conducting interviews with human sources and witnesses, and the potential use of more advanced financial investigations.[3] Various methods, some noted below, should be mixed and used as appropriate.

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[2] "Best Practices in Investigating and Prosecuting Corruption: Using Financial Flow Tracking Techniques and Financial Intelligence." *Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Anticorruption and Transparency Working Group*, Sept. 2015, apec.org/Publications/2015/10/Best-Practices-in-Investigating-and-Prosecuting-Corruption.

[3] "Investigation and Prosecution of Corruption Offences: Materials for the Training Course." *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development*, 2012, oecd.org/corruption/acn/lawenforcement/TrainingManualcorruptionoffences2012EN.pdf.

Information and Evidence Gathering

Open Source

Gathering available open-source information is the first and most approachable step of the data collection process on corruption. The key to using open sources is to know where to look and which tools to use. Online search engines are powerful tools when searches are targeted using Boolean conjunctive queries and conducted in all relevant languages. However, search engines are not comprehensive in their results and not all websites are searchable. To ensure available open-source evidence is not overlooked, researchers should identify and search the following online sources directly:

- Local and international news publications

- Political opposition media and blogs

- Archived and historic websites (which can be accessed using free tools like Wayback Machine or CachedView)

- Subscription databases (LexisNexis, which contains news articles and criminal financial and litigation records; Bloomberg Law, which contains business, financial and litigation records)

- Leaked-information databases (Offshore Leaks, which contains information from the Paradise Papers, Panama Papers and Bahama Leaks; Luanda Leaks; Investiga Lava Jato)

*A **Boolean conjunctive query** expands or narrows search engine results based on the inclusion or exclusion of phrases or keywords. The most common search tools are OR, AND and NOT, which are used between words or phrases to target search results. More information on Boolean tools can be found at booleanblackbelt.com/2008/12/basic-boolean-search-operators-and-query-modifiers-explained/.*

- Deep-web investigations: The deep web comprises information that cannot be accessed through a conventional web search. Tor Browser is free software and an open network that allows both the individual browsing and the webpage hosts to remain anonymous. Tor is especially useful for journalists and activists in countries that impose restrictions on their citizens' internet access and freedom of expression.

Note that key information may be obtained by searching existing databases of leaked information (e.g., the Panama Papers as linked above), which are consolidated by civic activists and investigative journalists specifically to provide evidence of corruption or illicit financial flows, in order to hold their governments and officials accountable to the global public.

Research teams should ensure their research is saved and well documented, and continuously download and screenshot information so that it is preserved offline. Articles, blog posts and websites are often altered or deleted and may be forcibly removed by political elites.

__Bellingcat__ is a website founded by investigative journalists that publishes citizen investigations about war zones and criminal networks. It offers resources that go into great depth on digital forensic techniques including, for example, using satellite imagery to track infrastructure projects or how to track flight records to identify when individuals under investigation are leaving the country. More information and other useful tools can be found at bellingcat.com/category/resources/how-tos/.

Social Media Investigations

Online research into corruption is not complete without conducting searches of social media platforms. Much of the information housed in social media pages is not searchable through search engines such as Google, and thus direct searches within relevant platforms ensure that critical pieces of information or evidence of corruption are not missed. When monitoring social media websites, your team should be on the lookout for the following types of information related to corruption:

- **Direct allegations of corruption** — These may be found in comments on articles, posts on government social media pages meant for feedback, or posts by political groups or watchdog organizations on their social media pages.

- **Evidence of cronyism or nepotism** — These may include photographs or connections on Facebook, LinkedIn and other social media platforms that show relationships or networks of relationships between public officials and private businesspeople.

- **Signs of bribery** — These may include posts made by public officials showing off unusually high levels of wealth, such as photographs of expensive sports cars or lavish vacations.

Some social media sites may alert the subject of an investigation that their profiles are being monitored. Investigators and researchers should be aware of this risk and use anonymous accounts when possible. The investigation team should also be aware of the specific risks associated with each social media website. LinkedIn requires a login and alerts users when their profile has been viewed and by whom, while Twitter can be accessed without a login and does not alert subjects to specific views.

Beware of Online Disinformation

It is always important to ensure that information gathered is verified, preferably

> ⚡ **TIP**
>
> When combing through social media looking for critical pieces of information, do not focus only on written forms of information such as comments. Pay attention to any photographs, graphics, maps or other visual parts of social media posts. Social media images host a vast wealth of information and may be the only medium through which accusations or evidence of corruption are available.

by two independent sources, but this is especially true as it relates to information gathered online. It is easy for any actor to create and amplify content online, alleging, for instance, that a particular official is corrupt. Paid-for followers and fake accounts can then like, retweet or otherwise seem to validate the information, even if it is entirely manufactured. As such, stories or allegations from online sources should be seen as part of an investigation, rather than as evidence in and of themselves.

> *A **hoax** is false news delivered as truth, which lacks sources and cannot be verified. Hoaxes misrepresent reality, manipulate facts and are intentionally used to destroy credibility, achieve political agendas and influence public opinion.*

Government-Maintained Records

Depending on the jurisdiction in which your research team is operating, there are many potential sources of official and government-maintained data that can point to corruption. Information such as officials' asset-disclosure forms may be subject to access-to-information laws and, thus, are required to be available to the public. This data is usually housed in online databases or physical files at ministry offices or a combination of both. Researchers should be aware of local

Corruption Indicators in Records

If you know what to look for, government records can be indicators of corruption, and in certain cases may even provide direct evidence of improper behavior. For example, many nations collect and publish data regarding government procurement bids and contracts, including award amounts and vendor qualifications. By analyzing this information, you may identify irregular patterns in tenders or contract awards, including too-short bidding windows, contracts with single bidders or inflated vendor prices.

The Global Integrity Anti-Corruption Evidence (ACE) research program has compiled a supplementary list of red flags, which may be useful for your team to review as you are researching, and can be found at ace.globalintegrity.org/redflag/. These indicators, in isolation or combination, hint at possible kickbacks or under-the-table payments made to public officials by vendors in order to improperly win government contracts.

Another indicator of possible corruption that can be found in government-maintained records — specifically company registration records — is improper company ownership and conflicts of interests of public officials. For example, a public official in the national ministry of health may also be a shareholder in a private medical company that receives government contracts. In many cases, the company's true ownership may be intentionally concealed through multiple layers of parent companies, or by registering a proxy such as a spouse or sibling as the owner of or shareholder in the company. In some cases, government-maintained records can provide direct hard evidence of corruption. However, in most cases these records provide simple indicators of potential corruption, which can be used to direct and target additional research by your team.

record-keeping practices and the quality of available government data. They should also think critically about any gaps in government records, which can be due to a variety of reasons, including purposeful neglect and secrecy in order to obscure corruption. Records are also often missing due to periods of political instability or general government disorganization, and thus this cannot always be attributed to deliberate malfeasance.

Physical Records

Although many types of research into corruption can be done online, you may need to pull records that are only kept in physical files at government offices. Determine if this is true for your jurisdiction and identify the corresponding registrars and clerks through whom you can access relevant physical records. Team members should be carefully trained before visiting government offices, as the risks to in-person investigation can be high. Team members should remain as anonymous as possible during these inquiries, and limit information given to government employees regarding the nature of their record requests.

One risk with requesting government records is that those with friendships or relationships with the subject of your inquiry might be present and will alert the subject. Note that the higher the profile of a company, organization or individual whose records you are trying to access, the higher the risk and possibility your information request will be denied. In addition, prepare team members for the possibility that a government official will ask for a bribe or off-the-record payment in order to supply information.

Government Databases

In addition to physical offices, some governments now house the following types of information in publicly available online databases:

- Company registration and ownership records

- Procurement and government contracts

- Public and private financial information

- Civil and criminal litigation and case files

In some cases, government-maintained databases may only be accessed by government employees, accountants or legal professionals. In such circumstances, the team should reach out to the corresponding organization and those who may be able to access records for it. Note that professional record-pulling services are standard in many jurisdictions and are usually offered in exchange for payment. However, before hiring a third party to pull records, your team should attempt to access government databases directly. Many databases are publicly accessible and offer free or low-cost searches of stored information. Although gathering information via government databases is usually low risk, be aware that some government agencies may track website traffic and identify repeat visitors.

To mitigate the risk that your team is identified in relation to sensitive research, use a virtual private network (VPN) to disguise your Internet Protocol (IP) address, and be cautious when downloading files. In addition, researchers should be aware that databases may require a login, and thus their personal information, including name, email and address, may be recorded and connected to their inquiry. In these cases, determine whether the search is worth disclosure of your personal information and, if not, whether you might obtain the information via other means.

Interviews and In-Person Research

Depending on your team's capabilities, capacity and connections, you may decide it is appropriate to conduct inquiries on a subject through in-person interviews with individuals. When identifying potential interviewees, look for individuals who might have information about the alleged corruption. These sources may include:

- Neighbors

- Current or former business associates

- Low-level government employees such as port or customs officials

- High-level government employees such as ministers and elected politicians

When gathering information from interviewees, the team should aim to strike a balance between those who know the subject of the investigation well and those who may be willing to speak candidly. For example, when making inquiries into an individual's conduct, current coworkers, close friends and family members may refuse to provide information, and may alert the subject that they are being investigated. In contrast, former colleagues or those who have casually done business with a potentially corrupt individual may be willing and able to provide candid and pertinent information. In all cases, it is important to reflect on the motivation of the individual who is disclosing information and whether their interests are aligned with your own.

Validating Information

Before contacting sources, investigators should determine what questions they need to ask in order to round out the data they have already collected via other means. In some cases, sources may validate information already collected, while in other cases sources may provide information that is incongruous with other evidence gathered during the investigation. When information is contradictory, the following questions may help in determining its validity:

- How well does the interviewee know the subject?

- Can the information the interviewee is providing be found independently in another source?

- Is the interviewee directly privy to the event or person they are describing, or is the information secondhand?

- Is the interviewee engaging in speculation or conveying rumors?

- Is the interviewee politically motivated to provide negative or positive information? Are they trying to protect themselves from being implicated in corruption?

Information from interviewees can be highly valuable but should be verified from multiple sources.

Understanding Context

Political Economy Analysis (PEA)

What is a PEA?

According to the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), "Political economy analysis is concerned with the interaction of political and economic processes in a society; including the distribution of power and wealth between groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time."

Although a political economy analysis (PEA) can be conducted using many different methodologies, what all approaches have in common is that they explore the link between political factors, economic conditions and institutions, and specific countries' historical context. A PEA is focused on analyzing formal and informal factors affecting political will, as well as the ways in which an increase in transparency can be affected in the given country context.

Why Are PEAs Important and How Are They Useful?

Conducting a PEA will help you gain a deeper understanding of the local environment and map out the following:

- The interests and incentives facing different groups in society (and particularly political elites), and how these generate specific policy outcomes that may encourage or hinder development.

- The role that formal institutions (e.g., those responsible for rule of law, elections) and informal social, political and cultural norms play in shaping human

interaction and political and economic competition.

- The impact of values and ideas, including political ideologies, religion and cultural beliefs, on political behavior and public policy.

In this way, a PEA helps us understand how incentives, institutions and ideas shape political action and development outcomes in the country whose corruption issues we are analyzing.

What Fundamental Elements Characterize a PEA?

There are four fundamental crosscutting components of a PEA:

1. **Stakeholder analysis:** A PEA typically includes a mapping of key stakeholder groups and their relation and influence over the policy process, with a view toward identifying factors, incentives and actors that are likely to *support* or *oppose* the reform process. Incentives arising from the international community and aid-assistance practices can figure in this analysis. For example, one may list foreign-owned companies that may support more transparent procurement processes and reform.

2. **Analysis of the broad political context:** Factors shaping the major features of a political system, such as territorial integrity, history of state formation, sources of revenues, and social and economic structures, are important to consider, from both a historical and a contemporary perspective. For example, your team might want to analyze the local economy and which sectors, such as oil and gas, may have major political power.

3. **Analysis of formal and informal institutions:** Reforms that are not firmly rooted in local culture and institutions generally fail to trigger local ownership. A PEA usually looks at the dimensions of the political system that affect the quality of governance, including formal and

informal institutions and factors, nature and extent of political competition, distribution of powers between the various groups of society, etc.

4. **Identifying and managing risks:** Risk assessment is an essential part of a PEA of reforms, with a special emphasis given to the potential losers and winners of the reform process. Assessing the potential impact of reforms on various groups of society may be an important dimension of this exercise, as policy change may affect different socioeconomic groups differently and trigger tension, conflicts and resistance to change.

How Can Conducting a PEA Prepare Your Team for Successful Anti-Corruption Work?

■   Understanding how to generate political will — a PEA maps incentives and accompanying institutional structures

■   Identifying the potential "winners" and "losers" if anti-corruption reform is implemented — a PEA can be a road map toward who will be the pro-reform stakeholders and the spoilers during your advocacy campaign

■   Understanding drivers of corruption

■   Providing maps of the corruption-related issue

■   Informing your research design

What Are the Components of an Anti-Corruption PEA?

■   Structural analysis — economic, social structures, natural resources, geopolitical position

　　○   At the country level

　　○   At the level of the municipality

■   Institutional analysis — what institutions/laws are in place

　　○   National

　　○   Subnational – state and local

CORRUPTION-SPECIFIC PEAs

When completing a PEA in order to determine local factors that affect corruption and your campaign, your team may ask the following questions:

●   How is corruption defined legally in your country?

●   Where is corruption present — at which levels of government?

●   Is the general public resigned or actively fighting corruption?

●   What local conditions enable or limit opportunities for corruption (e.g., economic recessions, food scarcities, climate emergencies, violent conflict, regime change)?

●   Are existing local anti-corruption laws actually implemented in practice?

In order to answer the above questions, your team should complete political research, including looking at existing anti-corruption analysis tools such as the Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) created by Transparency International. The GCB surveys individuals globally in order to determine their agreement with statements such as "ordinary people can make a difference in the fight against corruption."

■   Identification of the issue or process to consider

■   Mapping weaknesses that underlie the problem/issue — what institutional factors enable this problem to occur?

■   Political economy drivers — why are things we observe the way they are?

Determine a Methodological Approach

Data-collection techniques could include: semi-structured and open-ended interviews with key informants, document analysis, institutional analysis and mapping, stakeholder analysis, mind maps, actor-network analysis, policy mapping and ranking, visioning, power analysis, historical timelines, Venn diagrams, social maps, preference ranking, strategy-flow diagrams, and cause-effect diagrams.[4]

Security Considerations

Assessing the Risks

Once you are ready to start the investigation, it is important to know the dangers you might face as you move forward. You need to assess the risks that may arise and mitigate those risks through an effective safety plan. Your team members should consider their holistic security, which includes digital and reputational risks as well as psychosocial welfare, rather than just physical and legal risks. A helpful resource on this is the *Holistic Security Manual*, created by the international nongovernmental organization (NGO) Tactical Technology Collective specifically for local civil society actors. At the start of your project, review the manual and discuss with your teammates how to develop a strong holistic security plan. Before embarking on any potentially dangerous investigations, thoroughly research the context and consult with trustworthy local contacts to assess risks and develop procedures to lower your risk if you decide to pursue the project.

When partnering with outside organizations, make sure to share your plans to mitigate risk so that your partners are also better protected and use best practices. For example, if an activist group is passing investigative materials to a media partner for dissemination, jointly consider the potential negative backlash to publicizing corruption and develop risk-mitigation strategies. These considerations should be explicitly discussed with all relevant team members.

Understanding the Legal Context

The first step in protecting yourself is researching all applicable laws, including laws regarding access to public information, private property, libel and slander, and the restrictions on content that many repressive countries tend to impose. For example, countries like Ethiopia consider the mere coverage of opposition groups to be an anti-state crime, and China imprisons writers who are critical of the central government or the Communist Party of China (CPC). Organizations like IRI may be able to assist with providing legal information.

Community groups and media organizations may face several forms of backlash. The most common form of attack after corruption is exposed is threatened or actual legal action. These lawsuits include civil and criminal litigation alleging libel, defamation or the release of classified information. This legal backlash may be baseless; however, it takes significant time and money to dismiss. As such, your team should complete a legal review of your story before publication in order to mitigate the risk of lawsuits that can cripple your team and impede your ability to achieve desired outcomes.

Digital Security

Digital security should be a central consideration for any activist or organization working on research related to corruption. Breaches in digital security can put sources, the integrity of research, or a campaign, organizations, individuals and associates at risk. We strongly recommend a comprehensive digital security audit that helps you understand your specific threat environment and calculate appropriate

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4 Moncrieffe, Joy and Cecilia Luttrell, "An Analytical Framework for Understanding the Political Economy of Sectors and Policy Arenas." *Overseas Development Institute,* 2005, odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/3898.pdf.

trade-offs around mitigating those threats — particularly if you live in a repressive environment with limited legal protections. A number of resources exist to help you conduct such an audit, including AccessNow's Digital Security Helpline. There are some simple steps you can take to improve your security right now.

Use Encrypted Messaging

Free, user-friendly encrypted messaging apps such as Signal can go a long way toward protecting both you and your sources. End-to-end encryption ensures that the only access point to the information included in the message is on the devices of the sender and the recipient. Signal also includes a number of other useful security features, including not storing metadata (which can encompass all information except the content of the message) and auto-deleting messages after a set time period. Other encrypted messaging apps include WhatsApp, Line and Telegram. However, Signal is considered the most reliable app for end-to-end encrypted communication, which means that communications can only be deciphered if someone has physical access to the devices of the communicating users. Even if a government tried to compel the developers of Signal to turn over information, they would be unable to do so; the application is configured in a way that does not collect information on what you are doing on the platform.

End-to-end encryption is also available for email and is advisable for those who rely on email for sensitive communication or file sharing. ProtonMail is the most popular encrypted email service.

For file sharing, the following services provide local encryption prior to upload: SpiderOak, Keybase Filesystem, Tresorit and Jungle Disk.

Turn on Multi-Factor Authentication

Multi-factor authentication is easy to use and easy to turn on for most services. In addition to requiring a password, multi-factor authentication will prompt another verification of identity if, for instance, you sign in from a new device or in a new location. This may take the form of an alert to your phone using an authenticator app, a text message or requiring a physical key. Multi-factor authentication is the easiest way to prevent bad actors from hijacking your accounts or accessing information and deters most attacks.

Store Files on the Cloud

Storing your files with a trusted cloud service provider is a far more secure option than storing documents on your personal computer or server. With security threats constantly evolving and becoming more sophisticated, cloud service providers offer much stronger protection compared to a personal hard drive or office server due to their abundant technical resources, expertise and technical staff working to defend against attacks on their networks. Cloud storage also provides an additional backstop against data loss if an individual device is compromised. Comprehensive office security systems such as G Suite and Microsoft 365 offer secure cloud storage, as do DropBox and Box.

Use a Password Manager

As hackers become more sophisticated, maintaining strong and up-to-date passwords that are not reused across different services is a must. But for researchers who use numerous online services and databases, this can become burdensome; memorizing a series of complex and ever-changing passwords is not feasible, and storing them on your computer or in your email makes them prone to fall into the hands of hackers. This problem can be solved by using an encrypted password manager, which can both generate and manage passwords for you. Free tools such as KeePassXC and LastPass provide highly secure, open-source software relying on encryption to protect your passwords from many potential avenues of attack.

Use a VPN

Any digital work done by the research team, including open-source research, communications, publications and data transfers, should be conducted using a **virtual**

private network (VPN), which masks the IP address of the user and makes it harder to identify the location and identity of an internet user. However, be aware that although using a VPN is a risk mitigator, it is not a guarantee of digital security, and VPN companies provide differing levels of security and services, such as encryption.

Don't Join Public Wi-Fi

Avoid the use of public Wi-Fi networks whenever possible. While public Wi-Fi is often free and readily available, public networks can easily be used by attackers to infiltrate your devices, monitor your online activities and distribute malware across unsecured public networks. Security on public Wi-Fi networks is often lax or even nonexistent, and can expose your device and data to attacks, leave your accounts vulnerable to hijacking and expose your online activities to malicious actors. If you must use public Wi-Fi, be sure to use a VPN, disable file sharing, and log out of accounts when not in use to protect against intruders and electronic surveillance as much as possible.

Protect Your Devices

Much of the above advice focuses on protecting your information and correspondence from electronic surveillance or hacking. However, it is also important to protect your physical devices, particularly smartphones, laptops, desktops and external hard drives.

Journalists and researchers are often in the habit of keeping a lot of sensitive material, including leaked documents, identities of their sources or unpublished drafts stored on their laptops, messaging apps or work portals. In light of that, governments are especially keen to obtain covert access to electronic devices and copy their contents. A particularly risky situation is going through a border crossing where electronic devices are subjected to regular security scrutiny and covert inspections are easier to conceal. For this reason, when traveling abroad it is highly recommended to leave your primary laptop

and smartphone at a safe location and carry "burner phones" and a cheap netbook that do not contain any sensitive data.

Encrypt Hard Drives

One of the most efficient methods of ensuring that your hard drive is fully encrypted beforehand is to activate the built-in encryption programs available on most Mac iOS and some Windows devices. Once encryption is activated, only those with the device's passphrase will be able to access its files and, if the device is stolen, its contents will be permanently inaccessible to the third party. If your laptop does not have this built-in feature, an open-source program called VeraCrypt can add an additional layer of encryption so that even if malign actors get access to your hard drive, your information is safely stored on a virtual encrypted disk.

Shield Your Screen from Prying Eyes

In addition to not opening sensitive files or messages in public spaces, privacy screens — films that you place over your laptop screen or phone — can limit the extent to which people can engage in over-the-shoulder spying.

Password-Protect Devices and Apps

Create a password for your devices that is hard to guess and will prevent unauthorized individuals from gaining access to the device.

Beware of Location Tracking

Most devices and many apps come with location-tracking features, which can be useful when you are trying to figure out directions or if you have misplaced your phone. However, location data can be easily hacked — particularly through applications, which often have security vulnerabilities. As such, turn your devices onto airplane mode or, even better, leave them behind when going to sensitive locations or meeting with sources.

The Role of Public Support

Civic activists speaking out on corruption can mitigate their security risks by proactively building public support for their work, which

can serve as an asset and safeguard as their work gains attention.[5] Another common mitigation strategy is building coalitions with other civic organizations, which facilitates the sharing of information and strategies regarding digital security threats.

OTHER USEFUL DIGITAL SAFETY RESOURCES

- **Citizen Lab's Security Planner**: This planner helps you create a personalized action plan to protect yourself on a variety of digital portals.

- **PEN America's Online Harassment Field Manual:** Learn how to prepare for online harassment, how to respond and what are the appropriate legal considerations in case you want to involve authorities.

- **Toolkit for Journalists Dealing with Hate Campaigns:** Created by a Finnish journalist, this guide details what you should do if you are a target of a hate campaign.

- **Access Now's Self-Doxing Guide:** This guide will show you how to search information about yourself that is already available on the internet, learn what your vulnerabilities are and take appropriate action.

Physical Security

Your team and media partners may face threats or acts of physical violence from offended parties. Domestic journalists and researchers covering corruption frequently face threats to their lives and freedom, and experience relatively high rates of retaliatory violence. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), nine in 10 work-related fatalities for journalists since 1992 involved local journalists covering news in their home countries, and more than 95 percent of journalists jailed worldwide are local reporters, photojournalists, bloggers and editors.[6] The need for thorough preparation and security planning is especially relevant for civic actors who face many of the same security risks as the domestic reporters with whom they are working, but many times without the same protections provided by more formal and well-established organizations. All the above forms of potential negative backlash, including physical attacks, should be understood and mitigated during the initial planning phase. Doing so can limit the dangers to your team and increase the likelihood that you will be able to achieve the impact you seek.

MODULE 2: ADVOCACY, COLLABORATION AND SETTING PRIORITIES

Advocacy Campaigns

The Importance of Advocacy

Civic activists and CSOs seeking to impact policy debates need to pursue strategic advocacy campaigns. Research and analysis alone will be fruitless if that expertise does

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[5] "Gaining Ground: A Framework for Developing Strategies and Tactics in Response to Governmental Attacks on NGOs." *International Network of Civil Liberties Organizations*, 2017, inclo.net/pdf/gaining-ground.pdf.

[6] "CPJ Journalist Security Guide." *Committee to Protect Journalists*, 2012, cpj.org/reports/2012/04/basic-preparedness.php#2.

not reach policymakers — which is where a tailored advocacy approach becomes crucial.

Advocacy can be done *for* those affected by a situation, *with* those affected and *by* those affected. Each approach may be valid based on the local situation; however, your team should prioritize involving those most impacted by corruption. Individuals in this group often have the most insight into the problem at hand and often already have ideas about how to address it. This includes ensuring that your team expands beyond elites, who often speak for disenfranchised groups without partnering with them directly, which can contribute to a breakdown of local trust and perceived legitimacy. Consider how your advocacy approach can apply the following principles.

Advocacy is a systematic and strategic approach to influencing governmental and institutional policy and practice change.

Accountability

Accountability in advocacy is about acknowledging and assuming responsibility for advocacy messages, decisions and actions. We are accountable to all those who are affected by the situation.

Legitimacy

Legitimacy in advocacy is about ensuring that the advocate has the authority to advocate. A legitimate advocate has a stake in the problem. They may be directly affected by the issue or have a genuine reason for advocating on behalf of someone else. Your power as an advocate may come from the people you (or your partners) can mobilize, the rigor of your research and recommendations and/or the international networks you can mobilize.

Participation

Participation in advocacy is about involving all the people interested in and/or affected

FORMS OF ADVOCACY

- Survey/opinion poll
- Policy research
- Networking
- Coalitions or networks
- Workshop
- Roundtable
- Conference
- Website
- Theater
- TV or radio drama
- Letter writing
- Pamphlets
- Flyers
- Poster campaign
- Newsletter
- Exposure tour
- Lobbying
- Petitions
- Public forum
- Press release
- Press conference
- Court cases
- March
- Strike

by the issue. It is about consultation and cooperation to make sure that everyone who wants to participate is given opportunities to be included throughout the advocacy process.

Representation

Representation in advocacy is about ensuring that, when advocacy is done on behalf of other people, the views of those people are accurately and fairly reflected at all stages. It is about communicating with those affected to ensure that they are aligned with advocacy

messages, decisions and actions taken on their behalf.

Defining Desired Outcomes

Based on the evidence your team has collected in Module 1, you can start formulating an advocacy approach. As a first step, your team should define the following variables using the questions outlined below:

1. *Demand:* What outcome will fix the problem you've identified? Does this outcome involve appropriate punishments for past or current perpetrators of corruption? Does it involve preventing future corruption?

2. *Decision-maker:* Who has the power to agree to your demands? Who has the power or capabilities to formally prosecute corrupt officials? Who can enact legislation to prevent corruption?

3. *Deadline:* When should these outcomes be achieved? When should the decision-makers be held accountable to deliver change?

Based on the above, your team can escalate pressure through a multi-step campaign. Usually, the first step is to notify the decision-maker of your demand and deadline, or how and by when you want them to act. After this initial step, if the decision-maker ignores the demands, your team's strategy needs to shift from direct communication to building outside pressure on the decision-maker. This

may involve media outreach, public protests or direct action to rally public support for your team's demands. Thus, it is key that your team defines the above three variables before mounting a communications or advocacy campaign, so that you can direct your outreach effectively in order to channel public opinion or outrage toward influencing major decision-makers who can enact change.

Planning an Advocacy Campaign

When planning advocacy campaigns, consider your team's strengths — such as the ability to mobilize lots of people within a particular region or demographic, or the ability to tell compelling stories about the impact of this corruption problem. Also consider your team's limitations in order to be as strategic and targeted as possible. Your team may be new to advocacy work, have limited resources or be unable to manage multiple campaigns simultaneously. Additionally, conducting an advocacy campaign can be a long-term process to produce change. Based on your strengths and limitations, hone your "demands" to focus on the one or two key changes that are your top priority. In doing so, take time to first analyze the problem you are addressing to gain a deeper understanding of where change may be most possible, transformational and lasting in the local environment.[7]

The following guidelines will help you plan your advocacy campaign and build out the

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ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES GENERALLY ACHIEVE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING

- Develop evidence for your argument or core message (e.g., research, policy analysis, attending conferences, engaging with experts and academics).

- Put your case to decision-makers directly (e.g., lobbying, meetings, events and roundtables).

- Build pressure or momentum for change (e.g., alliance or coalition building, media briefings and marches).

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[7] Ross, Jenny. "Advocacy: A Guide for Small and Diaspora NGOs." *The Peer Learning Programme for Small and Diaspora Organisations*, Oct. 2013, intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Advocacy_A-Guide-for-Small-and-Diaspora-Organisations-1.pdf.

timing and organization of the advocacy process.

Identify and Analyze the Problem

- What problem do you intend to address?

- Are you trying to expose a specific corrupt official or address grand corruption more systemically?

- What is the source of the problem? (Is the corruption the result of need — e.g., salaries are too low — or greed? Who is benefiting from the corrupt status quo?)

Identify Obstacles and Challenges

- What existing obstacles or challenges may cause your demand or proposal to be declined?

- How can you have access to target policymakers?

Determine Your Advocacy Objective(s)

- What advocacy goal or demand do you want to achieve?

- Is it possible to achieve it within fixed time constraints?

- Is there a reason to believe that your objective will address the problem you care about?

- Is this an issue where there is a plausible chance of success? (Are there constituencies that do or could be brought to care about the issue?)

- Can you form a strong coalition from different groups to address the problem?

Build Networks and Coalitions

- Are you trying to increase the power of constituencies that already support your position?

- Have you built coalitions with influential individuals and organizations to attain your objective?

- Who can you attract to join your cause or be your ally?

- How can you persuade them to be interested in your advocacy objective?

- How can you help urge decision-making processes to address the current obstacles and generate the momentum to push the process in the desired direction?

Determine Your Policy Advocacy Target

- Who are the decision-makers with real power to bring about the change that you seek?

- Who in particular could influence them?

Include Data and Research in Your Advocacy

- What kind of data really supports your analysis?

- How can you influence the policymaking process through producing convincing evidence to enrich the current debate?

Promote and Send Advocacy Messages

- How is your problem perceived by your target decision-makers and what potential solutions, if any, are they suggesting?

- What messages can you transmit to your target decision-makers to help them question their own position and act on your behalf?

- To what extent is your message accessible and relevant to both elite and grassroots target audiences?

Develop Relevant Presentations and Keep in Touch with Your Target Decision-Makers

- When in contact with the decision-maker, what will you tell him/her and how?

- When will you start your advocacy campaign?

- How will you guarantee that your presentation is compelling and convincing?

- Who will lead your campaign and be the external spokesman?

Lessons from Malaysia

Context: Historically, entrenched corruption in Malaysia has flourished as oversight institutions lack independence from the government. Inadequate protection for whistleblowers and a hostile attitude from the state toward civil society dissuade many groups from pursuing high-profile corruption cases. Furthermore, a lack of financial autonomy pulls NGOs toward work on less controversial donor priorities. Groups that do take on grand corruption often struggle to make these abstract issues salient to average citizens.

Turning point: 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) was an investment firm meant to benefit the Malaysian people. Instead, former Prime Minister Najib Razak misappropriated $3.5 billion from 1MDB — with the complicity of Goldman Sachs. In spite of attempts at a cover-up, intrepid journalists discovered the 1MDB scandal, aided by U.S. investigations. The Malaysian Bar Association called for investigations, and the scandal played a decisive role in ending the ruling coalition's 60-year grip on power in 2018. In July 2020, Razak was found guilty on seven corruption counts, sentenced to up to 12 years in prison and fined nearly $50 million. The sentence was stayed pending appeal.

Civic mobilization: The Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections, better known as Bersih, founded in 2006, consists of 84 NGOs cutting across ethnic, racial and religious lines. By relying on social media, the movement has been able to counter state-controlled media. While the coalition mainly focuses on free and fair elections, landmark rallies held in 2015 and 2016 called for cleaner government in the wake of the 1MDB scandal. The protests galvanized public opinion, garnered the attention of international press and helped lay the groundwork for the 2018 electoral defeat of Razak. Bersih's protests signaled to voters, as well as to incumbents and their political opponents, the intensity of public discontentment regarding corruption.

Research, advocacy and persistence: Transparency International-Malaysia pursues long-term campaigns and relies on close engagement with the government. A particular focus over the past decade has been political finance reform. After extensive research, TI-M submitted 22 recommendations to the Prime Minister's Office in 2011. This intervention was met with little enthusiasm. In 2013, the ruling coalition lost parliamentary seats. After weakening politically, the government became more open to considering reform, perhaps to bolster its image. Seismic change, however, occurred when the ruling coalition lost in 2018 and was replaced by a reformist government. TI-M's political finance recommendations have now been incorporated into government plans. The organization's approach of research, recommendations and waiting for political openings paid off — eventually.

Coalition advocacy: In 2015, the Governance, Integrity, Accountability and Transparency coalition, of which TI-M is a member, submitted recommendations on reforms to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), aimed at increasing its power and independence. A series of roundtable discussions, media interviews and public forums sought to build momentum, yet the campaign found little traction with the government — especially after the MACC chief commissioner was ousted, allegedly for attempting to indict Razak. Yet, in the run-up to the 2018 elections, the opposition incorporated some of the coalition's recommendations into their platform as they sought to distinguish themselves from the ruling party. The coalition's recommendations were then incorporated in 2019 into the National Anti-Corruption Plan, which includes

timelines for implementation. Progress has already been made toward the execution of recommendations on asset declaration and political financing.

Engaging external actors: In contexts of impunity, securing legal accountability for grand-corruption crimes in the home jurisdiction can be near impossible. A bold Malaysian NGO, SUARAM, pursued extraterritorial accountability in French courts for a corruption scandal involving the Scorpene submarine deal. In a 2002 procurement contract between the Malaysian Ministry of Defense and a French submarine maker, at the time called DCNS, kickbacks were allegedly awarded to high-ranking government officials, including a payment of $126 million to the prime minister's adviser, Abdul Razak Baginda. A translator for Baginda, who was also reportedly in a relationship with him, became privy to the kickbacks and she was later murdered, allegedly by the police. After a flawed trial in Malaysian courts, at which Baginda was acquitted, SUARAM filed a complaint with the French authorities in 2009. This action surfaced new information from the French company, revealing additional acts of corruption. Finally, in 2017, French prosecutors indicted Baginda, validating SUARAM's strategy.

Civic tech: Sinar Project focuses on the process and standards with which public infrastructure projects must comply to minimize corruption. It advocates for the release of public documents, ideally in open data formats — which can be particularly challenging given Malaysia lacks a Freedom of Information Act. Based on Sinar's engagement, the government adopted the Open Contracting Data Standard for procurement data. Sinar also developed a database of politically exposed persons, which is now used by journalists.

Assess Your Advocacy Campaign through an After-Action Review

- What indicators show you that your advocacy has achieved its objective?

- What have you learned and what would you do differently?

- Are changes sustainable?

- How can you deescalate and reconcile with decision-makers with whom you may have had tension?

- What will you do to improve the strategies used to undertake your advocacy campaign?

Building Strategic Relationships

Why Build Relationships?

Building strategic relationships with other stakeholders can extend your organization's reach, expand your research, enable the exchange of different ideas and pool resources in a complementary way. The networking process will increase your visibility and connect you with a larger number of active individuals.

Start by identifying the purpose of your relationship-building work: Is it to gain political power, research insights, or receive funding or societal support? Understanding your networking goals enables you to strategically cultivate relationships with the right individuals. Try to identify areas of commonality with other individuals or organizations with whom you are networking to lay a strong foundation for potential partnership.

One approach can be to get involved in any governance-themed local associations, gatherings on democracy and development or relevant professional associations. At such events, talk to people you know, introduce yourself to those you don't know and exchange contact information. When meeting others, try to introduce yourself in a memorable way, express curiosity about the

Example Case Study

In Indonesia, representatives from political parties, CSOs and business along with local elected officials, religious leaders and academics collaborated in a yearlong project to strengthen poverty-reduction legislation in their province. The effort began with stakeholder consultations to identify local issues of concern. Collaborators then held monthly meetings with local organizations and individuals to discuss concerns and possible solutions. Collaborators also met regularly with parliamentary leaders to identify relevant but currently overlooked concerns. Using this information, collaborators worked together to develop policy recommendations and jointly organized public hearings to raise awareness and garner support. Ultimately, 12 policy recommendations to reduce poverty in the province were presented to parliament and eight were enacted into law.

According to one collaborator, "This unique approach to public policy development has helped establish a more constructive relationship between civil society organizations and political parties. We each had relatively distinct roles during the process. The political party members had the skills to negotiate the task force's interests with parliamentary leaders. Meanwhile, civil society was better equipped to represent the interests of citizens in a more specialized manner within the task force. This cooperation contributed to our success and ensured our policy recommendations were enacted into law."

other person's passions and concerns, and discuss common points of interest. Follow up with a phone call or note, and maintain contact via regular in-person meetings, video chats, phone calls, LinkedIn or WhatsApp groups. Over time, these individual and organizational relationships can build toward a coalition of organizations working together to address grand corruption.

Different stakeholders from different organizations and sectors, such as the private sector, academia and media, have different priorities and approaches. Considering social problems from different perspectives can help coalitions think about their work in a new way. By providing an opportunity to share experiences, expertise and information, collaborative initiatives can also help coalitions develop new skills relevant to their work and gain a better understanding of the social problem they are addressing. For example, organizations attending a conference can report what they learned back to other stakeholders in the coalition who were unable to attend, making all of them more informed than they would be on their own.

Who Should Be Involved?
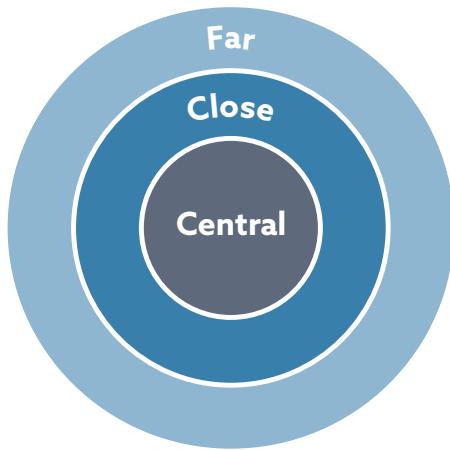
Once you determine collaboration is appropriate to help your organization address a social problem, you must then identify other stakeholders with whom to collaborate. A **stakeholder** is any person or group that has an interest in the problem/solution and should, therefore, be involved in the discussions.

One tool for identifying potential collaborators is **stakeholder mapping**. This technique helps you think strategically about who may have the highest (or lowest) level of positive or negative influence on a social problem. There are multiple ways to conduct stakeholder mapping. Here is a basic approach.

Together with people on your team and others, you may already be involved with thinking of all the different people/institutions involved in the issue. Depending on the time and resources available to your organization, you may also consult with other organizations or experts to solicit recommendations.

Draw three concentric circles in the center of a page. These circles will represent the closeness of an individual (or organization) to the problem (i.e., those that are extremely or

lightly affected by corruption). Label the three circles: central, close and far.

Working with your team, place the individuals/organizations previously identified in the list in the circle that best represents their proximity to the issue. Once all the individuals/institutions have been placed in a circle, discuss why they are placed where they are on the map.

When considering whether to collaborate, you need to consider whether your organization has enough in common with the stakeholder, such as similarity in vision or organizational structure. It's also important to include representatives not only from other NGOs, but also a cross section of people from the target community, as well as policymakers, experts such as academics and other obvious stakeholders. In addition, you want to ensure you involve people who have the time, energy and commitment to attend any meetings or activities needed to achieve the common goals. As you map out key stakeholders, you can draw from the PEA described in Module 1.

How to Reach Out to Potential Collaborators

Now that you have your stakeholder analysis and understand the wider political context, it is time to actually reach out to key stakeholders who might want to partner together in addressing grand corruption. In preparing for those conversations, consider the following three questions.

⚡ TIP

Stakeholder mapping is not only an effective tool to identify potential partners for a collaborative project. It can also improve your understanding of the general operating environment by mapping out the relative influence of stakeholders. This, in turn, can also help you allocate limited resources for their greatest impact by helping you target key stakeholders.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How close are they to the issue? Are they central, close or far?
- Why are they close to the issue? Be specific.
- How are the stakeholders within a circle and between the circles related?

Prior to reaching out to stakeholders, also consider what information you are willing and not willing to share because of this collaboration.

Working with Collaborators

Having a basic understanding of a stakeholder's mission, organizational structure and approach is important for determining whether they will be an appropriate collaboration partner and the roles and responsibilities that will be appropriate for them. It is also important for understanding their needs in collaborating. Ensuring each stakeholder can benefit from the collaboration helps minimize concerns regarding lack of credit.

Focus on the Big Picture

Successful collaborative initiatives result from partners working together to identify a shared vision and common goals. As most organizations work on sub-issues within a

larger social program, their specific approach to elements of the problem may differ; however, the end goal is the same. While you may not agree on everything (otherwise you would be the same organization), there will likely be larger common issues on which you can agree. Focus on the common goals, rather than small differences that can distract you from achieving your shared vision.

What do you seek to achieve?

Like vision and mission statements, a clear and concise message is best for communicating quickly and consistently to a variety of stakeholders.

What value can they provide you?

We collaborate when we do not have the resources necessary to effectively complete a task or address an issue. How do they fill this gap?

What value can you provide them?

This includes not only highlighting how collaboration supports their current mission, but also what, if any, ancillary benefits they can receive from collaborating, like improving their connections or learning skills from other collaborators.

Diversity

Diversity is key to innovation; differing perspectives and knowledge help develop more balanced and unique solutions. It is also important in broadening the impact of the collaborative activity, as well as in establishing a strong network of contacts for support. When considering a collaborative effort, recruit diverse groups of people, including other organizations in your sector, organizations in different but related sectors, beneficiary communities, and experts with common interests or focuses.

Build Trust

Trust is critical to effective communication and collaboration between different organizations and individuals. Without trust, coalition members will be wary of sharing information or engaging fully in solving the social problem. In addition to identifying common goals and interests, beginning all discussions by talking about values that both groups share — such as commitment to improving democracy or alleviating poverty — starts conversations at a place of positive shared agreement. In addition, people want to be included in processes that impact them. Establishing a decision-making process that all members support is another way to help foster trust. (See more on decision-making processes below.)

Establish a Leadership Team

While goals, issues and strategies should be developed in coordination with all collaborators, for practical purposes, it is important to identify a leadership team. This is the group responsible not only for administrative issues (including setting and hosting meetings, taking notes, etc.), but also acting as a single contact point for outside parties (such as other officials, potential funders, etc.).

Joint Strategy Development

Collaborators need to work together to develop a strategy that makes sense for everyone. The tactics you choose should be ones that all the organizations can endorse. If not, the tactics should be employed independently by individual collaborators. Having a strong organizational vision and mission is critical for identifying activities that align with donors. At the outset, it is also important to highlight your organization's expertise and past successes to foster compromise in strategy discussions.

Establish Plans and Procedures

Together, collaborators should determine the structure of the collaborative effort as well as basic rules for things such as communication and decision-making. It is important to develop and maintain consistent and effective lines of communication between collaborators. This not only helps in sharing information, but also in providing collaborators with a sense of belonging. This requires ensuring sufficient time and opportunities for differing opinions to be discussed and considered, which is critical. Time limits and structuring different methods for sharing information are strategies to enable representation of a diverse set of opinions. (See Appendix for sample plans and procedures.)

Action plans should also be made to accomplish the shared vision and goals and to evaluate or modify those plans as may be necessary. More formal collaborative efforts benefit from identifying medium- and long-term goals to address the problems identified, as well as benchmarks for collaborators to know when those goals have been achieved and a clear division of responsibilities as to who is responsible for monitoring the benchmarks.

Credit Sharing

Recognize that contributions vary. Each collaborator will have something different to offer. If stakeholders don't feel that collaborating is worthwhile and rewarding, they will quit. There are many ways to motivate stakeholders, such as including the most active and effective stakeholders in leadership activities; offering learning or capacity-building opportunities through interaction with experts in other sectors; or highlighting how collaborating furthers their own interests (such as expanding their circle of relationships or helping them achieve a campaign goal).

Advantages of Coalitions

- Take a collective approach when solving problems
- Combine available human expertise and financial resources
- Encourage partnerships and minimize unhealthy competition between CSOs for access to resources
- Build camaraderie through shared missions
- Mobilize larger groups of people with various interests
- Draw the attention of the media and influential people and enhance visibility
- Present a positive image of civil society collaboration
- Encourage information sharing and pooling of resources

Challenges of Coalitions

- Complicate organization and logistics
- Reputational risk if coalition members take actions with which not all members are comfortable
- Difficulty in getting individual credit for coalition achievements
- Potential conflicts in decision-making, power struggles or competition between coalition members
- Risk of the coalition persisting after it has met its objectives
- Coalitions can end up competing with member organizations for the same pool of resources and staff
- Infringe on privacy and independence of member organizations, including a loss of autonomy
- Encourage moderation, which can lead to diluted policy proposals

Developing Partnerships

Coalition Building with Civil Society Actors

As you start building relationships, consider whether to formalize organizational alliances through a coalition structure. Coalitions are alliances of groups pursuing a shared purpose. Building coalitions with other CSOs enables you to align your goals with other organizations with values similar to yours, and to jointly implement actions or projects. Coalitions should agree to a purpose, membership, structure, financial arrangements and a plan of implementation to fulfil their functions. By joining forces, coalitions of CSOs can achieve broader impact. For example, policy groups (which have technical expertise on anti-corruption efforts) can partner with community groups (which have the ability to mobilize grassroots stakeholders) to the benefit of both. Or NGOs working on anti-corruption efforts can partner with those working on health or education to make an impact on improved service delivery. In any scenario, a clear shared objective and good cooperation are necessary in order for a coalition to fulfill its desired goals.

Coalitions are typically formed for one or more of the following reasons:

■ To speak with one voice to address a common issue (e.g., policy advocacy)

■ To share resources and build each other's capacity (e.g., information, skills and best practices)

■ To share experiences and lend solidarity

■ To reduce duplication of activities across the field

When a diverse group of individuals or organizations comes together in support of the same cause, it accentuates the range of interests that support the cause, thus lending greater legitimacy to the proposed solution. Furthermore, by involving multiple stakeholders, each with their own networks of support, collaborative projects can broaden their impact beyond an individual organization's constituency.[8]

Example Case Study 2

Civil Society Anti-Corruption Coalitions: Transparency International

Transparency International (TI) is a good example of promoting a broad coalition-building approach to anti-corruption efforts. Since its foundation in 1993, the organization's strategy has been to build broad coalitions, bringing together stakeholders at both the global and national levels, to work together to fight corruption and promote integrity and accountability.[9] This approach has proven successful in raising awareness, advocating for change and lobbying governments to implement anti-corruption reforms.

At the country level, TI relies on the contribution of more than 90 national chapters, including 20 in Asia and the Pacific. Using a similar coalition-building approach to the one used at the global level, these national chapters bring together relevant players from government, civil society, business and the media to promote transparency and accountability in elections, public administration, procurement, business and a wide range of other areas.

The National Integrity System (NIS) assessment approach is an example of how TI's national chapters have managed to create momentum for multi-stakeholder

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8   Raynor, Jared. "What Makes an Effective Coalition? Evidence-Based Indicators of Success." *TCC Group*, Mar. 2011, pointk.org/resources/files/What_Makes_an_Effective_Coalition_by_TCC_Group.pdf.

9   "Mobilising Broad Anti-Corruption Coalitions." *U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre*, u4.no/publications/mobilising-broad-anti-corruption-coalitions.pdf.

mobilization at the country level. NIS country studies provide a framework that stakeholders can use to analyze both the extent and drivers of corruption in a given country, as well as the strength of national anti-corruption safeguards. This analysis is undertaken via a consultative approach, involving the key integrity actors in government, civil society, the business community and other relevant sectors to build momentum, political will and civic pressure for relevant reform initiatives. In many countries, due to its focus on wide consultation and debate, the NIS assessment has helped national chapters build their public profile and identify potential partners for advocacy campaigns and other follow-up activities.

Build a Positive Reputation

Reputation is key for building trust and support among stakeholders. Organizations that are either new or smaller face a challenge when engaging with key stakeholders because local officials may not be familiar with their work or may not understand it. By participating in a larger, collaborative initiative, you can not only develop contacts with key stakeholders, but let them see your organization in a positive light. From this initial contact, you can introduce them to the larger work that your organization does on its own.

Coalition-Building Tips

- **Define the shared goal:** Collaboration should have a clear purpose — whether a long-term strategic vision or a more tactical campaign objective.

- **Set up the coalition structure:** Begin by adhering to a set structure to streamline the decision-making process and determine important details such as the lifetime of the coalition, management body, membership and meeting logistics.

- **Set financial resources for coalition activities:** Deciding on a modest budget is essential for a coalition to ensure its

activities will be undertaken effectively. This also helps avoid internal competition over funds.

- **Build the right team:** Form your coalition team with dynamic individuals who are able to work jointly with like-minded individuals, but are also able to disagree with others in a professional manner.

- **Develop activities aligned with the team's goals:** Understand your coalition members' objectives, interests, strengths and weaknesses to identify some common goals and advantages of working together. The diversity of the coalition members should be reflected in the coalition's messaging and activities. Partners should focus on designing specific common activities that would help them reach their goals. Identifying both short- and long-term outcomes will help keep activities on track.

- **Meet with coalition members:** Convening members at the outset to establish a mission statement and plan of action is important to set parameters of progress within the coalition. Regular meetings help ensure adherence to the plan of action and ongoing measurement of progress.

- **Brainstorm solutions and make decisions as a group:** Invite the group to debate big-picture questions and come up with creative solutions. Identify what you are trying to achieve, how will you achieve it and with what resources. Take into consideration any challenges or advantages you may have in the community while working toward your goals.

- **Learn and adapt:** Regularly assess activities carried out by the coalition to measure their level of success and gaps that need to be addressed. Identifying areas of improvement can help improve the overall performance of the coalition. Adjust when necessary to maximize success.

How to Collaborate in a Coalition

Once several organizations/stakeholders agree on the problem that they want to address, they must then work together to:

- Determine a **clear objective** of the collaborative effort. The objective should be **s**pecific to the issues identified in the Problem Tree analysis, **m**easurable, **a**chievable with the resources you have, **r**elevant to the problem and **t**imebound (SMART).

- Establish clear **short-, medium- and long-term goals** needed to achieve the shared vision. When will you know that you have achieved your goals? At what point will you disband the coalition? Develop clear benchmarks for achieving these goals.

- Determine what you will **need to succeed**. This includes specific knowledge, skills and resources such as funding, equipment or venues. During this phase it is important to establish **roles and responsibilities** for collaborators based on their specific expertise.

- Establish a **core leadership group** to facilitate administrative tasks as well as outreach.

- Establish a process for **making decisions**. Processes should provide room for collaborators to negotiate and find ways to compromise, but also agree to disagree where necessary.

- Establish a process for **sharing information between collaborators**, including what type of information should be shared and what, if any, limitations there will be on using shared information.

- Develop a **communications plan** for conducting necessary outreach (government, media, public, etc.). Be sure to determine who is responsible for communicating and with whom they need to consult on the message.

- Ensure all collaborators receive **clear benefit** from being part of the coalition.

⚡ **TIP**

Setting goals from the beginning is important because your journey will not occur in a straight line. Not having a concrete goal can lead to people giving up when setbacks arise, whereas staying focused on the ultimate goal helps people to keep pursuing the objective. Setting goals is also important because you can show how far you have come toward your goal, which helps people stay motivated and engaged.

This will be easier to establish if collaborators take the time to identify in advance what they seek to gain from the partnership.

Decision-Making Processes

When working with different groups of people, within an organization or in a collaborative effort, special attention must be paid to the decision-making process. Involvement in decision-making fosters a sense of belonging and trust. However, it is not always possible or efficient for everyone in a group to be involved in every decision. At a minimum, stakeholders should agree on the processes for decision-making, and may consider following the different decision-making processes outlined below.

Unanimous: Requires that all stakeholders agree on a decision before it can be adopted.

Majority rule: The group votes on options and the option with the most votes wins.

Expert: The group delegates decision-making responsibility to an expert or small subgroup. An expert is someone who has experience, special knowledge or skills in a particular area.

Executive: The authority to make the final decision is given to the leader or coordinator of the coalition.

Consensus: Stakeholders agree to support a decision that may not have unanimous support, after an effort has been made

Lessons Learned from IRI's Coalition Building in Mexico

From 2016 to 2018, IRI's Mexico team supported three CSOs to organize coalitions that advocated for the passage of strengthened anti-corruption legislation and policy in the states of Nuevo León, Coahuila and Querétaro.

Fourteen months after this program closed, IRI returned to find out more about how the coalitions influenced these laws by confirming their successes and failures, exploring how they achieved results and determining what influence their work still has today.

IRI's evaluation found that this project was a success — in the case of two states in particular, Nuevo León and Coahuila, state anti-corruption laws contained direct inputs made possible by the work of these coalitions, resulting in laws that go above and beyond Mexico's federal requirements for such legislation.

Coalition achievements – Key observations

- The strategy of IRI-supported coalitions evolved over time, beginning with an emphasis on civic engagement but evolving into more direct advocacy. Coalitions leveraged information (as distinct from leveraging citizen actions) to influence decision-makers.

- The diverse skillsets of coalition members allowed them to be agile and respond effectively to a wide range of advocacy needs, including the development of legal inputs that assisted lawmakers in the legislation-development process. The coalitions positioned themselves as helpful and productive partners to the government, which in turn gave them access to lawmakers to conduct direct advocacy.

- The coalitions based in Nuevo León and Coahuila managed to influence the anti-corruption laws passed in their respective states. Several key anti-corruption concepts, including some that went beyond the standards set in the national law, were included in these laws based explicitly on coalition inputs.

- The coalitions in Nuevo León and Coahuila achieved sustainable influence as authoritative voices in the robust civic debate on anti-corruption issues and have adapted their mandate to a new anti-corruption context.

Coalition function – Tips for success

- Coalition rules and structure were important to their effectiveness. While members did not always agree on the specific policies for which they wanted to advocate, they agreed on processes to resolve conflict and the rules for participation. This structure allowed coalition members to reach consensus fairly and efficiently.

- This evaluation has questioned some of IRI's assumptions about member engagement within coalitions. Less engaged free riders were not actually a problem for the coalitions because reporting a larger group size made the coalitions look influential and important to decision-makers, which in turn made their advocacy efforts more effective.

- Contextual factors played a role in coalition success or failure as well. The state deadline for anti-corruption law development added urgency and political buy-in to coalition efforts. Furthermore, Nuevo León had the richest environment for coalition-based civic advocacy because a more elite subsection of civil society had connections and prior experience working collaboratively. This helped the Nuevo León coalition be the most influential of the three coalitions.

to address all issues at stake.[10] It requires stakeholders to define at the outset the number of supporters necessary to reach consensus. Stakeholders who oppose the proposed solution agree to be bound by a decision if that threshold of support is met.[11] Consensus building requires a facilitator to frame a proposal after listening carefully to everyone's interests. (More tips on consensus building can be found in the Appendix.)

Creating an Agenda for Reform

When working in a coalition, it is important to agree upon a shared set of priorities. This agenda focuses the coalition's activities, shapes engagement with decision-makers, and can draw in support from the wider public. Stakeholders can use the framework below to develop a shared and strategic agenda for reform.

COMMON CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPING A REFORM PLATFORM OR AGENDA

- Too many issues in the platform (a lack of prioritization), leading to loss of focus/effectiveness.

- Issues selected do not resonate with everyday people, leading to a lack of public engagement.

- Issues selected are overambitious given political realities, leading to stalled progress and hopelessness.

- Difficulty reaching consensus on the reform platform, leading to fissures within the coalition.

Recommended Steps for Developing a Reform Agenda

Step 1: Brainstorm problems of interest to the group

Pool together the top issues of interest to all coalition members. Consider potential points of overlap between various corruption problems and the underlying causes of those problems. In this process, consider two guiding questions:

→ What grand-corruption problems are causing the most <u>harm</u> to citizens in our country?

→ Where is there existing <u>momentum</u> to address particular grand-corruption problems?

Consider issues that already resonate with the public and with powerful organized constituencies (such as trade unions, business associations, religious institutions and student groups). What kinds of corruption problems have sparked public protest in the past? What kinds of grand corruption cause most harm to the daily lives of citizens? Are there other powerful constituencies — such as foreign donors or international financial institutions — that have expressed concern with particular aspects of grand corruption?

Consider issues that the government has already committed to but has not yet delivered on, such as those documented in the national anti-corruption strategy, the <u>Open Government Partnership National Action Plan</u>, or recommendations from multilateral bodies such as the <u>Financial Action Task Force</u>, <u>OECD Working Group on Bribery</u>, <u>UN Convention against Corruption</u> and the <u>Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative</u>. These commitments provide a useful starting point for pressuring the government to deliver.

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10 "A Short Guide to Consensus Building." *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*, web.mit.edu/publicdisputes/practice/cbh_ch1.html.

11 Burgess, Heidi and Brad Spangler. "Consensus Building." *Beyond Intractability*, Sept. 2003, beyondintractability.org/essay/consensus_building.

Step 2: Identify corresponding solutions
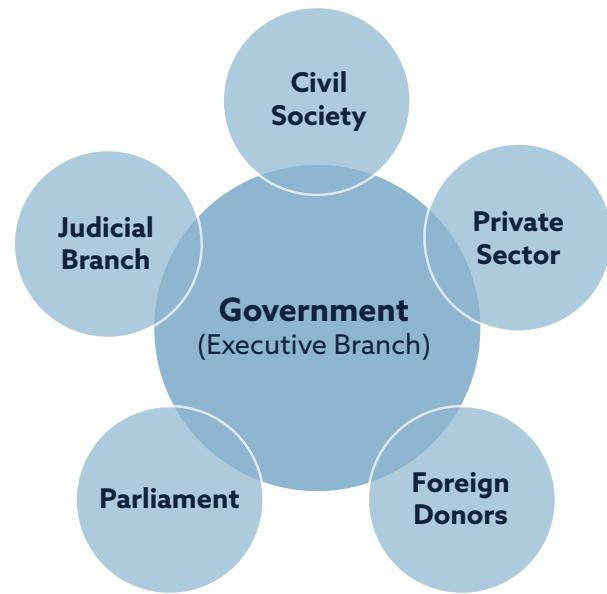
For identified problems, consider the underlying causes of corruption. For example, is there a lack of competition in public procurement due to deliberate collusion *or* because many businesses do not understand how to navigate the bidding process, so they do not apply? Has beneficial ownership legislation languished because members of parliament are on the take (a problem of incentives) *or* because they have not really focused on the issue (a problem of bandwidth)? Being clear about the nature of the problem will lay the groundwork for formulating a solution.

Understanding the causes of the problem can also illuminate a logical sequence for reforms. For instance, if the procurement process lacks competition because many businesses do not understand how to apply, the first demand may be to provide training on the process, before or in tandem with efforts to root out any deliberate collusion.

When considering what it would take to address the problem, identify who would need to act to address the problem and what they would need to do. This may involve shifting the incentives of corrupt actors (such as through increased anti-corruption law enforcement) or reducing opportunities for graft (such as by automating a process previously subject to human discretion). Your reform agenda will comprise solutions or partial solutions to corruption problems. Each reform proposal should have a clear decision-maker associated with it, which should be a person or number of people — not a vague institution or "the public."

In addressing the corruption problem, some steps will likely need to be taken by the government, while other complementary steps may need to be taken by other actors. For example, perhaps the identified problem is collusion in public procurement, which causes harm by wasting public resources, lowering the quality of goods procured and limiting the ability of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to compete. The solution might be reforming the procurement process so that it conforms with open-contracting principles — which would be your demand of the *government*. Ultimately, complementary steps would need to be taken by *civil society* for this reform to succeed, such as monitoring the disclosures made in the new procurement process and calling for accountability in the case of malfeasance. There may also need to be actions taken by the *private sector* to comply with new procurement reforms, or by *parliament* to exercise oversight of the process. For purposes of setting a reform agenda, focus on the action that government would need to take to set the reform process in motion, as represented in the diagram below.

Step 3: Prioritization

An effective reform agenda must be focused. If you have too many items on your list of demands, the government can pick and choose which ones it fulfills, which may mean that the most important items are left undone. A long list of demands also fractures the organizing energy of the coalition, dispersing advocacy across a range of topics. Finally, the public may struggle to understand and remember a large range of issues.

How many is too many? In some instances, the most compelling campaigns have just

One demand	Nine demands
In 2009, the successful CICAK campaign (which stood for Love Indonesia, Love Anti-Corruption Commission) focused exclusively on neutralizing attempts to undermine Indonesia's highly effective anti-corruption commission (the KPK).	In 2013, a coalition of Czech NGOs formed the Reconstruction of the State platform, which identified nine laws that would reduce corruption in the Czech Republic. It has succeeded in getting five out of nine laws passed so far.
Twelve demands	**One demand**
A nonpartisan organization in the United States — RepresentUS — has developed a platform of 12 anti-corruption reforms, which are grouped into three categories: stop political bribery, end secret money and fix broken elections. Working at the subnational level, the group has won passage of 114 laws/resolutions aligned with its platform in states and cities across the country.	In 2008, 44 CSOs in Brazil formed the Movement Against Electoral Corruption, with the rallying cry "Ficha Limpa" ("Clean Record"). It had one objective: prevent individuals with criminal backgrounds from running for elected office. It drafted legislation to restrict eligibility on that basis and, with the crucial support of the Catholic Church, the law passed in 2010.

one bold and important item on their reform agenda. In other instances, stakeholders agree upon a suite of reforms, under one unified banner. Above are several real-world examples.[12]

To prioritize across a range of demands, it can be helpful to consider several factors.[13] Good issues…

1) <u>… Result in a real improvement in people's lives, addressing an aspect of corruption that is causing real harm.</u> It helps to pick specific and measurable demands so that you know if it is resulting in real improvements in people's lives.

    Diagnosing the *harm* associated with corruption enables stakeholders to gauge whether it is a serious problem and, if so, what kinds of interventions would most

efficiently address the harm. A harms-based approach can also surface new creative solutions.[14]

For example, consider the problem of massive leakage in India's food-distribution system: In 2015, it was estimated that 40-50 percent of grains intended for the poor were pilfered off for sale on the open market. The underlying harm is a lack of food security for Indians below the poverty line, resulting in serious malnutrition. Targeting intervention toward addressing that harm means reframing the challenge from "How do we combat leakage in India's food distribution system?" to "How do we more effectively distribute food to India's poor, in light of the problem of leakage?" Reframing the problem in this

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12   The Indonesia and Brazil examples are drawn from Beyerle, Shaazkha. *Curtailing Corruption*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014. The Czech and U.S. examples are from "About Reconstruction of the State." *Rekonstukce Statu.* rekonstrukcestatu.cz/about-reconstruction-of-the-state and represent. us/anticorruption-act/.

13   Parts of this section are adapted from Bobo, Kimberley A., Jackie Kendall and Steve Max. *Organizing for Social Change 4th Edition.* Santa Ana: Forum Press, 2010.
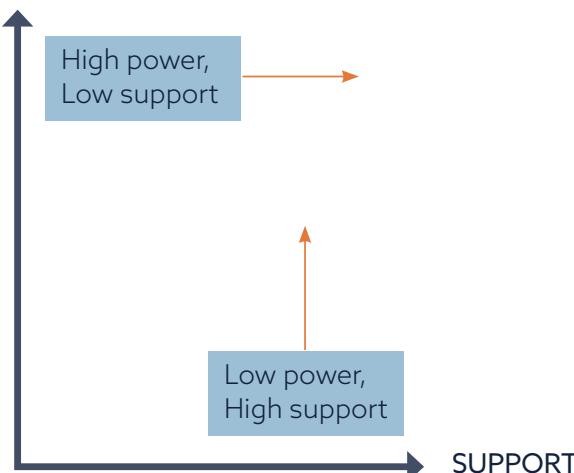
14   Detailed in Bellows, Abigail. "Winning the War on Corruption: The Six-Step Solution." *Kennedy School Review*, 2 May 2013, ksr.hkspublications. org/2013/05/02/winning-the-war-on-corruption-the-six-step-solution/.

way generates consideration of whether to transition the entire in-kind food distribution system to a cash-transfer system, opening up new possibilities for addressing the harm most efficiently.

2) <u>... Are winnable</u>. When assessing the forces supportive of the issue and the forces opposed to the issue, identify whether there is a plausible pathway toward achieving your aim. Draw on the PEA approach outlined in Module 1 to better understand the interests and roles of different stakeholders.

   For your campaign, the pathway to victory may be through building the *power* of those who already support the issue or building the *support* of those who are already powerful (as depicted to the right). For example, the Brazilian coalition referenced above targeted the Catholic Church (which was originally a "high power, low support" actor) and convinced it to join the campaign as an ally, shifting it right on the grid. Alternatively, a group of NGOs might start in the "low power, high support" quadrant but build sufficient public pressure and mobilization that they increase their power, shifting them upward on the grid. Either strategy or, more likely, a combination of both can produce a victory.

POWER

SUPPORT

Also consider what your victory will cost the other side. What kinds of losses would "*spoilers*" sustain if your reform prevails, and what kind of capital (financial, social, political) would they be willing to expend in order to block your progress? These are the costs that you will need to overcome in order to win. On fiercely contested corruption issues, there can even be risks to the physical, digital or reputational security of activists, which should be taken into account (as discussed in Module 1).

When assessing "winnability," it is important to balance realism with *boldness*. An inspiring vision can rally greater political support than expected and tilt the balance of power in favor of a people-driven movement. The key is to avoid picking an issue that is so large or the solution so remote that people get overwhelmed and cannot envision a pathway toward achieving their goal.

3) <u>... Widely resonant</u>: Do many people feel that this is a real problem and agree with your solution? Does a campaign around this issue or set of issues have the potential to attract new public support for your coalition and shift power relations? In addition to *breadth* of support, is this something that people feel *deeply* about — strongly enough to act on it? Related is whether the issue is easily *understood* by everyday people, which will increase their willingness to act on it.

4) <u>... Aligned with organizational resources, values and vision</u>: Does the pathway to "winnability" referenced above account for the coalition's actual organizational *resources*? If new resources would be needed to pursue it, is this an issue that would motivate constituents to contribute or where donor support is likely? If you pursue this issue, what will be the broader impact on your organization's health and political alliances? Will taking on this issue help you advance your mission or cause

"mission drift?" Is this a topic that will draw together your target audience or be divisive? The issue you chose will shape the kind of people who join your campaign and the organization you build for the longer term.

You may have other considerations to consider. Before a group starts to choose among issues, members should come to agreement on the criteria they will use to select the issue or set of issues. This will make the choice much easier and more soundly reasoned.

Step 4: Reach agreement

In formulating a joint position around reform priorities, it is important to ensure all stakeholders can comfortably share their views. Consider drawing on the resources on decision-making from earlier in this module. To mitigate the potential for conformist "groupthink," it can be helpful to delegate one member of the group to identify potential flaws in the dominant thrust of the discussion, or set aside a period of time to brainstorm together about potential "blind spots" in the prevailing opinion.

Who is in the room? When selecting issues, consider who is at the decision-making table. Are the constituents of member-based organizations and movements represented, or is it just elite staff members? Are representatives from grassroots and rural groups in the room, or only capital-based NGOs? If it is not feasible to get adequate representation in the final decision-making forum (especially given the need to keep the group size manageable), consider holding "listening forums" in advance with constituents so their viewpoints can be taken into account. This can also solicit "buy-in" from those who will be called upon later to mobilize around this reform agenda.

What's Next?

To deploy your agenda for reform, draw on other components of this Toolkit:

- Cultivate alliances with powerful actors, particularly leaders within government who might share your reform priorities, using strategies outlined in the *Building Strategic Relationships* section.

- Chart a campaign strategy for advancing your agenda, using strategies outlined in the *Advocacy Campaigns* section.

- Develop communications materials to get the message out on your agenda — both to targeted audiences as well as the public at large — using strategies outlined in the *Communications and the Media* module.

- Refine your understanding of the problems you have identified, and research how your reform solutions could be implemented, using the strategies outlined in the *Information and Evidence Gathering* section.

- Maintain and build your coalition in support of this reform agenda, using the techniques mentioned in the *Developing Partnerships* section.

Worksheet: Building Your Agenda for Reform

1: Brainstorm problems of interest to the group

→ What grand-corruption problems are causing the most harm to citizens in your country?

→ Where is there existing momentum to address particular grand-corruption problems?

2: Identify corresponding solutions

→ What are the underlying causes of this corruption problem?

→ To address this problem, who would need to act and what they would need to do?

3: Prioritization

Does the issue:

→ Address an aspect of corruption that is causing real harm in people's lives?

→ Have a realistic pathway to achieving success?

→   Resonate with everyday people?

→   Align with organizational resources, values and vision?

4. Reach agreement

→   Is there consensus among key stakeholders about pursuing this issue?

Lessons from Armenia

Context: In most of the nearly 30 years of its independence, Armenia contended with pervasive corruption. Politics, business interests and criminal activity were often fused together. The judiciary and public institutions were largely captured, while electoral corruption kept the status quo intact. Government-backed disinformation campaigns discredited civil society and anti-corruption activism.

Turning point: Armenia's trajectory changed dramatically in the Velvet Revolution of 2018, a youth-driven protest movement fueled by grievances about corruption, in which former journalist Nikol Pashinyan toppled the political establishment to be elected prime minister. While the revolution's mass protests were driven by informal networks via social media, organized civil society did play an important role in the years preceding it by informing the population about the scale and harmful effects of corruption.

Journalism: Since 2001, the online investigative journalism platform Hetq has provided credible information about government malfeasance — in an environment where mainstream media are often aligned with the state. Hetq's investigations have prompted activist campaigns, the return of diverted funds to local budgets, and investigations into corruption allegations. Another important media actor was the online TV program "Out of Your Pocket," launched in 2014 to highlight unnecessary expenditures and suspicious deals made by public officials. The program explains complex issues in an accessible way through animations and infographics.

Watchdogs: For several years, civil society groups have exposed corruption and educated the public, which contributed to the popular grievances that boiled over in the Velvet Revolution. For example, an exposé in 2017 by the Union of Informed Citizens revealed recordings of public school teachers and principals pressuring parents to vote for the ruling party, on the direction of party headquarters. The scandal was unprecedented and resulted in legislative changes to criminalize the abuse of administrative resources. When the new government took office in 2018, it committed to ending the politicization of public education.

Movements: Youth-driven activism — relying on a loose, horizontal structure rather than established NGOs — provided vital learning experiences for civic leaders. In particular, the #ElectricYerevan movement in 2015 was sparked by a proposed 17-percent hike in electricity rates, but grew to encompass broader frustration with corruption and mismanagement in the electricity utility. Sit-ins and protests expanded, eventually peaking at 20,000 demonstrators, with intensive use of social media. The movement was ultimately successful in reversing the price hike and prompting the sale of the electricity utility. In 2017, a smaller student movement known as Restart formed to address the quality of education and corruption in universities, which helped build the track record of activism and youth leadership that laid the groundwork for the Velvet Revolution.

MODULE 3: COMMUNICATIONS AND THE MEDIA

Developing a Communications Strategy

Outlining a Communications Plan

After defining your overall goals and building strategic relationships, your team is ready to develop a comprehensive communications plan that can help effectively disseminate your research and advocacy messages to the public. This plan should consider a multitude of factors, including:

1. Develop goals for your communications strategy that take into consideration the content of the collected data and the target audience, and select how, where and when to publicize it based on these set goals.

2. Think about what resources are available to you to implement a communications strategy and ensure your goals are in line with the available resources, or raise additional resources before proceeding.

3. Clarify the message that you would like to communicate to audiences. This message can be adapted slightly to different audiences, as long as it is still in line with the main message.

4. Gather detailed information regarding coverage and local understandings of corruption in order to understand the public's and other stakeholders' willingness to engage with the topic. Assessing the prevailing narrative on corruption, including recent corruption investigations or accusations as well as media mentions regarding corruption, will help your team communicate in your local environment.

5. Collect detailed information on domestic and international traditional and nontraditional key outreach platforms and groups. This information should include contact information, details regarding the relationships that exist within each outlet, between outlets, and between political allies and opponents, including any political bias toward individuals or political entities. Potential anti-corruption leaders who could help disseminate the message should also be identified.

6. Gather information on major public events at which there is citizen participation or political participation, such as forums, rallies, town-hall broadcasts, demonstrations, and regional conferences. Identify any events likely to receive media coverage or public interest, or spur thought leadership in which your team may be able to participate.

7. Engage civil society partners and think tanks working on anti-corruption efforts to align efforts, including cosponsoring events that would expand your reach.

8. Plan your own events where you can start publicizing evidence and advocacy messages through press conferences, panels, roundtables, etc., and determine whom to invite to these events. Consider which audiences are the best fit for which events, rather than inviting everyone on your contact list to all events, to ensure productive engagement and smart use of available resources.

Team Organization

In order to develop a comprehensive and effective communications strategy, define the appropriate roles for key leaders based on strengths and designate members to be in charge of public speaking, written communications, media-outlet networking, event planning and logistical setup. Each of the relevant leaders should contribute to drafting the team's communications strategy, which should include obtaining earned media (free media coverage gained through your outreach efforts) and other nontraditional ways of publicizing findings.

Understanding the Local Environment

While planning your team's communications, you should identify any potential obstacles to media work in your host environment. These obstacles are often a factor in countries where limitations constrict potential outreach due to a hostile or underdeveloped media environment. Local obstacles may be legal in nature, such as limitations on freedom of expression or stringent defamation laws. Other obstacles are political in nature and may include pressure from government ministries or public figures on media outlets not to publish corruption allegations. More generally, your team may face operational obstacles, such as difficulty in contacting media outlets or the challenge of communicating complex corruption information in an accessible way.

Based on the identified obstacles in your local context, consider ways to either overcome those challenges or navigate around them, and accordingly determine when and if to adapt and employ the following tactics:

- Self-publish your story and materials.

- Outreach using digital media rather than traditional media.

- Identify and partner with publications that are the most independent from and resilient to political pressure.

- Persist in the face of local unwillingness or hesitance to provide coverage.

- Appeal to the sense of truth or morality of individuals in the media, especially key decision-makers such as editors, to gain support for publication.

- Forge alliances with nontraditional outreach networks such as artists or musicians.

Media Options and Outreach

When developing a media outreach strategy, your team should be aware of the wide variety of outlets and organizations that work in the media sphere. "Traditional" media companies or organizations include:

💡 TIP: THE PRESS LIST

Your team should maintain a press list, or an updated list of media contacts. This list should include owners of media houses, publishers, broadcasters, editors and investigative journalists and reporters, particularly those with experience covering corruption. Determine if it is preferable to maintain physical cards or computer files with a record of each newspaper, radio station or other news service with which you communicate. Record the name and title of each person along with their telephone number and email address. Make sure to review and update this list of contacts regularly to reflect any change of positions, titles or contact information. Your team should also write down the last time members reached out to media contacts, what information was sent or discussed, and any upcoming deadlines for press events or media publications agreed upon.

- Print newspapers

- Online news websites, blogs and microblogs

- Social media platforms

- Private messaging applications

- Radio stations

- Television networks

- Investigative journalism publications

- Podcasts

The abovementioned media types may be further divided based on the language of the media sources and whether they have national coverage or only provide coverage of certain cities or regions within the country. If you have adequate resources, team members should ensure that media outlets that represent all major local languages are part of the outreach process. This may entail identifying regional or municipal media organizations, rather than solely working

"NONTRADITIONAL" MEDIA

Nontraditional modes of communication are indispensable tools for local civic activists. As members of civil society, your team members already understand their communities well and how people in their region typically receive information on political and social issues outside of traditional media outlets. Nontraditional communication outlets can include public theater, village meetings, satirical cartoons, or religious gatherings or groups. Have your team reflect on what modes of communication will most resonate with your target audience.

If your team is trying to influence or reach non-elites and members of the public, nontraditional outreach may be more effective, especially creative and artistic communication methods. Sometimes a political play or protest art can sway public opinion more than a densely written report full of data. Conversely, if your team is trying to influence upward and reach decision-makers, including government ministers, business elites or the diplomatic community, it should understand how these groups receive information. Are elites paying attention to nontraditional media, or are they more likely to consume traditional media such as newspapers? Ask these questions in order to determine the best way to reach your selected audience.

with national media outlets. However, if your team has limited resources, identify which language is the most relevant to your findings, and focus your outreach efforts and media strategy in that language.

Local Media

After identifying potential limits to the freedom of the press in your jurisdiction, it is essential to understand what types of local media have the most readership, credibility, outreach potential and popularity. Note that when revealing corruption scandals via local media sources, one should consider if the media outlet with the most readership is the most appropriate or effective outlet to get out your team's message and inform popular opinion. Weigh the pros and cons of different media outlets, including their local following, partisan or political leanings, popularity and credibility. In certain cases, the outlet with the largest distribution may be the best option to get your findings out to the largest amount of people. In other cases, a more independent outlet with a smaller distribution may be preferable. Keep in mind that a story may gain traction in larger media outlets even when first published on a microblog or by a relatively small newspaper.

Press Ownership and Affiliations

Before reaching out to media outlets, identify the ownership of each organization to determine if the outlet's leadership will help or hinder your team in publishing evidence of corruption. Consider factors such as state ownership, political leanings and affiliations of the outlet's owners, such as political party membership or public support. If a media outlet is identified as loyal or maintaining significant ties to any of the subjects of your investigation, reaching out with evidence of impropriety may cause backlash for your team, including intimidation, physical threats or attempts to destroy evidence.

International Media

Although engaging local media to publish your team's evidence is key to creating awareness of corruption issues within your jurisdiction, there are many benefits to also engaging with international media. International outlets often have wide distributions, are regarded as credible, are free of local press restrictions and have the power to influence the opinions of international actors. Your team should determine if, in addition to local media outreach, it would be

appropriate to use external communications networks, including foreign print, broadcast or online outlets, to reach the international public, international organizations, foreign governments and even local citizens who may get their information from non-local sources. However, keep in mind that although some international media outlets may be less constrained by local restrictions, their local staff, including journalists on the ground, may be subject to the same restrictions and risks as local news outlets.

Social Media

Your team should consider developing a strategy for digital outreach using social media and other innovative communications tools that can enable direct communication with civil society. Social media platforms may be especially useful in combatting corruption as these tools sometimes remain relatively unrestricted compared to tight political controls or censorship of traditional media. Social media platforms that can boost your communications strategy include:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- WhatsApp
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Tumblr
- WeChat

These platforms offer various outreach tools to raise awareness and visibility of your findings and story, including tools to publish information directly (via written posts, videos and photos), share posts or published materials by other groups or individuals and comment on posts to create public discussion. Through these tools, social media give power to public opinion and cultivate the kind of solidarity that is needed to fight corruption at high levels of government. When using social media in relation to corruption, your team should be aware of

> ⚡ **TIP**
>
> Your team should also consider **piggybacking off well-established and popular social media pages**. Work with traditional media outlets such as print newspapers, well-established organizations such as the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) or high-profile local activists to publish your findings via their social media pages. This technique will enable your story to reach a large number of people who are already following and reading the social media page and elevate your outreach.

three main types of social media campaigns it can employ:

- **Detecting and understanding corruption:** In addition to your team directly using social media research to identify high-level corruption by bureaucrats, it can use social media to crowdsource monitoring. For example, you may start a campaign that encourages citizens to use Twitter to collectively report on government services and detail poor service delivery at the local level. You can also use social media to track the market price of bribery through online tools, as has been implemented across India through IPaidABribe.com.

- **Mobilizing people to respond to corruption:** Social media can empower your team to aggregate and channel public discontent. For example, many old stories on corruption that were buried or ignored in previous years are now being brought back into the public consciousness and rebroadcast through rural areas on an hourly basis.

- **Exposing people to the possibility of an alternative future:** Social media campaigns also have the power to increase people's expectations of their government by highlighting examples of higher transparency and anti-corruption

🔍 **Case Study: Alexei Navalny Exposing Russian Corruption**

Alexei Navalny, a Russian civic activist, started publishing information regarding private and government corruption in Russia on his LiveJournal blog in 2008. He later expanded his publication and outreach strategy using the social media platforms YouTube and Twitter, and his posts regarding corruption have gained widespread attention. For example, in March 2017 he published a report detailing corruption schemes in which then-Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev had been involved, as well as a video on YouTube which gained more than 20 million hits within a month. These led to massive street protests from March to June 2017, and Navalny's popularity led him to run as an opposition party candidate against Vladimir Putin in the 2018 presidential election.

performance in comparable countries. This can help break through public resignation and spark citizen mobilization.

However, social media outreach is not always a sensible option, particularly in countries with limited internet penetration. Social media usage is often limited locally, where it may only be accessible to or used by young, urban or wealthy segments of the population. Think carefully about the goals of your campaign and whether social media outreach should be a priority. For example, consider if it is preferable to gain traction on social media by gathering signatures for an online petition, or if mobilizing citizens through in-person meetings is more important.

Preparing Information for Release

Press Releases

Send a press release to media outlets when you want a specific piece of news to appear as widely as possible. A press release should be written to emulate the news story that you hope will be published. Press releases are sent simultaneously to all relevant media contacts to deliver your story and ensure the highest potential for its publication in the news.

Send a press release when you believe that your collected data and evidence on corrupt individuals or organizations are sufficient to interest reporters in your story. Good reporters will also investigate your story themselves to supplement the press release with information from other sources. However, be aware that your press

release could prompt a reporter to find other information that your team chose not to include, so ensure that you have a strong case and are not misleading in your writing. In addition, make sure that when including evidence of corruption in your press release you do not reveal private or sensitive information related to human sources. You may determine to keep your sources anonymous, and refrain from specific descriptions of their job titles or relationships that could risk exposing their identity.

A good press release:

■ Includes a release date.

■ Contains a headline that quickly conveys the important part of your story.

■ Answers the questions who, what, where, when and why in the first paragraph.

■ Is written like a news story ready to be published.

■ May include quotations that the reporter can use that have been pre-confirmed as "on the record" with the source in question.

■ Includes only accurate and verifiable information.

■ Remains no longer than it needs to be (one page at most).

■ Ends with the name and contact information of your team's designated press contact.

In your press release, include the key parts of the story and make it clear why the story is significant. As needed, include specific pieces of evidence and data that make your story credible and interesting. However, do not include every detail your team has identified. Reporters can call you for more information if they are interested in publishing your story. Before you send out your team's press release, consider which questions reporters might ask and how you will answer them. Press releases should be approved by all relevant organization or coalition leaders before being sent out.

Writing a great press release is only half the journey. Getting it published is just as difficult. Knowing how to pitch to journalists (which usually involves reaching out to them by email about your press release) is also crucial to getting your story picked up by the media.

Make sure your email follows the proper press release structure:

■ *Headline*: A taste of what the article is about.

■ *Lead*: A brief overview of the story, including answers to the questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? With what effect?

■ *Body*: An explanation of the information provided earlier in the lead, starting from the most newsworthy information to other, less important background information.

■ *Dateline*: To confirm that you are providing the most up-to-date information.

■ *Organization information*: A short paragraph about your organization to help journalists understand the nature of your work and make writing about it easier.

■ *Media contact information*: Author or organization's contact information.

■ After including the key points above, paste the press release into the body of the email.

ALTERNATIVE: THE EXCLUSIVE

While press releases are simultaneously sent to as many media outlets as possible, a potentially powerful alternative outreach strategy can be to provide an "exclusive" to a single media outlet. This strategy allows your team to send a targeted pitch to the most strategic media outlet, offered as breaking information provided only to that organization for exclusive publication. This strategy can be especially powerful in small media markets into which your team is revealing new and unpublished investigative material, and may help your findings get more attention than a general press release.

The email to the press should be concise, preferably outlining key information in bullet points. Do not include the press release as an attachment in the email as journalists routinely receive large volumes of messages and it is very likely that they will not open the attachment you shared.

Press Conferences

Press conferences are an alternative media communications tool to press releases. They allow for greater flexibility of information delivery. A press conference is preferable to a traditional press release or written news editorial under the following conditions:

■ Your story is too complex, and all the facts cannot be transmitted in a press release alone.

■ Reporters would benefit from seeing photographs or meeting with relevant persons.

■ It is beneficial to inform all local news organizations at the same time.

■ Your team expects questions and has prepared answers.

■ You wish to gain additional attention by dramatizing the story.

If you can deliver the facts and evidence with a press release alone, then do not hold a press conference. After informing press outlets of your plan to hold a press conference, ensure that you do not give out information to reporters beforehand. Reporters are competitive and will ask for your story beforehand; however, your team should inform the media that all relevant information will be delivered at the press conference.

Conference Preparation

Choose a team member to manage the press conference, introduce the main speakers, ask for questions, close the press conference and thank the attendees. One or two days before the conference, notify the press with a press advisory. In this timeframe, a member of your team should call invited media members to remind them of the event and confirm their attendance.

During the press conference, limit the number of speakers and limit each speaker to approximately 10 minutes consisting of at most three main points. Ensure the speakers know how to communicate their talking points concisely. The longer someone speaks, the more likely the reporters will report something they said that is not what you wish to be the main takeaway. The entire press conference should be at most 30 minutes, with up to 15 additional minutes for audience questions.

If your press conference is unprofessionally conducted or does not communicate your story, reporters will be hesitant to report favorably and publish your story, or to attend any of your future media events. Thus, make sure your press conference is pleasant and productive for them to attend.

Print Articles

Your team may determine that neither a press release nor a press conference is ideal for communicating your story to the public. This may be due to a lack of staff or resources,

EVENT CHECKLIST

In order to ensure your press conference is conducted professionally, review the following checklist while organizing your event:

☐ Ensure speakers know to wear appropriate clothing, when to enter, where to sit or stand, and how to use the microphone.

☐ Put together visual materials such as backdrops, PowerPoints and signs.

☐ Make sure the press conference room is comfortable, quiet and well lit.

☐ Provide an area for photographers or cameras so reporters don't block others' view.

☐ Restrict entrance into the room to ensure it does not become overcrowded.

☐ Ask reporters to sign in so you know who attended.

☐ Hand out fact sheets or any materials before starting.

☐ Start the conference on time, tell attendees how long it will last, and end on time.

☐ Signal the speakers if they are going over time.

☐ Politely interrupt questioners who go on too long. ("Excuse me, sir/ma'am, what is your question?")

or due to security and safety reasons in your jurisdiction that limit your team from publicly presenting its findings. If a press conference or press release is not ideal for your team, you should directly choose and contact a specific news outlet or reporter that you believe will be ideal to write and publish your story. This may be a conventional journalist or an investigative reporter. Investigative reporters are highly skilled at exposing information of which the public is unaware and typically focus on groundbreaking research topics like anti-corruption efforts.

Reaching out to a reporter to write your story allows for significant media outreach while maintaining anonymity as needed. Your team will play the role of a source and will not act as the main communicator of a story. That responsibility will fall on the reporter and news organization where they work. Thus, your team needs to carefully consider who is the most interested, willing and capable of publishing your information. The media organization should attempt to maintain "whistleblower" protections for your team but note that it may face significant pressure from public officials to identify its sources after publishing your story.

Making Initial Contact

After identifying a potential partner in the media, call or email the reporter even if you have no connections or previous contact with them. Reporters use information from a variety of sources for their news articles and expect cold calls. When contacting a reporter, be aware that their time is limited and that they may be working against a deadline. When calling, ensure that you have condensed the basics of your story into a less than five-minute pitch. Ask the reporter if they have time; if they are busy, ask them when the best time would be to call them back so that you can have their full attention.

After an initial email or call, if a reporter is interested in your story, they will follow up with an immediate request for more information. Prepare written materials and files beforehand for delivery. When working

> ⚡ ▬
> **TIP**
>
> After your article is published, consider making copies to send to local or national legislators, such as city council members or government ministers, as well as local business or cultural leaders whose support could help in swaying public opinion.

with a journalist on your gathered information regarding local corruption make sure they know how the evidence you provide can be independently verified. Understand that it is a journalist's job to be objective and skeptical, and that they have the final say on how your story is conveyed to the public.

Reaching Decision-Makers

Writing a Policy Paper

Individuals and organizations involved in public debate may need to devote a lot of their efforts to effective policy writing in order to influence decision-makers. Policy writing is usually defined as the process through which government employees and NGOs produce written proposals ("policy products") addressed to lawmakers and policy professionals. The main focus of policymaking is the problem-solution relationship: identifying a problem, developing a comprehensive and effective argument supporting a specific solution, and persuading the target decision-maker to adopt the suggested solution. A policy product addressed to a policymaker usually identifies a specific policy problem, suggests potential solutions to it, assesses those solutions and makes a recommendation for the most feasible one on the basis of a persuasive argument, highlighting the main reasons for that choice.

Typical policy writing is different from academic writing. While the latter considers the creation of new knowledge an end in itself, policy writing considers it only necessary to inform and influence the behavior of political decision-makers. Policy writing aims to create positive change

through suggesting an alternative solution to a real, concrete problem, thus urging policymakers to take action based on facts and values rather than merely enriching an academic debate. Similarly, policy writing differs from opinion or editorial writing as it is not polemical, biased or emotional, and is expected to provide solutions rather than just criticizing the current situation.

Policy products should provide original, persuasive and feasible arguments based on facts and evidence. The tone should be professional, objective and accessible. A policy product also ought to be concise and not overloaded with unnecessary information, despite the fact that there is no standard length to observe. The format for a policy product varies from books to memos, briefs, position papers and reports.

Introducing Policy Issues

Issues that deserve to be addressed by policy writers should be relevant, precise and clearly definable. Such characteristics are essential to easily identify the right target audiences and the plausible solutions. The policy problem should also be addressed by at least one clear, feasible solution. If no solution is possible through policy, the problem should not be addressed through policy writing.

Knowing Your Audience

Policy writers need to get familiar with their target audience in order to be able to develop a professional policy product that considers the audience's knowledge of the issue. Identifying potential stakeholders can help you define your target audience. Try to understand the level of their knowledge of the issue and the degree of interest in it. While engaged in your interaction, avoid using too much technical terminology that may annoy the audience and prevent it from following you.

Collecting Evidence and Data

To help you address the policy problem, try to search for solid, reliable data. When you start to write, make sure to include only the information relevant and necessary to

ALTERNATIVE PUBLICATION OPTION: THE OP-ED

When to Write an Op-ed

One of your team's options is to write an opinion piece to send to a newspaper for print. Op-eds differ significantly from the standard option of working with a journalist to write a story regarding your findings. Not only will you and your team have direct control over the story that is published, but you must rely on the writing skills and persuasive power of your internal team to sway public opinion. Op-eds are similar to press conferences or press releases in that your name or organization's name will be directly linked to the story. Although op-eds allow writers to make a direct argument and possibly even call civil society or the government to action, they are sometimes regarded as more subjective (as opinion pieces) than news articles.

Op-ed Writing Rules

- The final article needs to be focused and should not exceed 750 words.

- Write for the average reader who is not deeply knowledgeable about your topic; avoid technical language.

- Keep both sentences and paragraphs short to make the article more approachable.

- Make sure to include sufficient evidence and facts to back up your claims of corruption.

developing a specific argument, and try to avoid overloading the audience with data. Use only authoritative, credible sources, and avoid unreliable information provided by biased sources as it will undermine your argument.

Determining and Arguing for Policy Recommendations

A policy paper must not only identify a problem; it must also identify a solution with evidence for how your recommendation will address the problem. Each policy option has its costs and benefits. Depending on your team's goals, select the policy that best ensures effectiveness. In order to effectively develop pertinent policy recommendations, it is crucial to formulate thorough, persuasive arguments. Decide on a type of policy argument depending on your research and the way you want to frame your argument.

Producing Policy Briefs

One of the most common forms of policy writing is the policy brief. Briefs may include several ingredients, ranging from identifying a policy problem to providing relevant information, formulating options to handle the problem and assess their potential results, and suggesting recommendations based on clear evidence.

Editing Process

After developing a draft of your policy product, you should undertake a review process prior to publication by authors and editors. Reviewers and editors will have to examine the draft in order to ensure that:

- The structure is clear and compelling.

- The information is accurate and reliable.

- The tone is rational and objective.

- The language is appropriate and consistent.

- All grammar, spelling and punctuation mistakes have been corrected.

Transmitting Policy Products

The last stage is to communicate your policy products to your target audience in the most effective way. There are diverse methods of distribution, and you should be strategic in making your choice. The most common methods include hard copies, digital distribution, distribution to media outlets and combining policy papers with other types of materials.

APPENDIX

SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA – Initial Collaboration Meeting

6:00 p.m. Welcome

> Speaker: Executive director of Organization Y

> Purpose: Introduction of common issue: Lack of transparency in health procurement in our city.

6:15 p.m. Introduction of groups

> Purpose: Each attendee will have five minutes to introduce their organization and why they are interested in this topic.

6:40 p.m. Issue identification

> Participants will write down the top three challenges posed by heath procurement on a Post-it. These will be put into a box and then a facilitator from Organization Y will read each Post-it aloud.

6:50 p.m. Group discussions – Shared vision

> Participants will be broken into smaller groups, each tasked with developing a shared vision based on the challenges introduced in the last session.

7:15 p.m. Sharing – Vision statements

7:25 p.m. Moderated discussion to define common goal

> Facilitator from Organization Y will walk through each of the prepared vision statements and facilitate a discussion to refine them into one shared vision.

7:50 p.m. Shared-vision vote

SAMPLE ACTION PLAN

OVERALL GROUP GOAL: Increase transparency in health-sector procurement in our municipality.	
GROUP OBJECTIVES:	

1. Raise awareness about the costs of the status quo and the need for increased procurement transparency in health.

2. Propose, advocate for and achieve adoption of open-contracting principles to increase transparency in procurement.

3. Monitor implementation of new health procurement practices in our municipality to see if they are properly applied.

Obj. #	Action	Strategy/Major Steps Needed (Include Timeline)	Defining Success (Outcomes, When?)	Partners	Resources

| 1 | Outreach Campaign | 1. Work with experts to develop materials on impacts of the status quo (how opacity in health procurement is costing lives and wasting money). 2. Publish case studies about how other municipalities have more transparency in their procurement and the benefits they derive. 3. Recruit doctors, patient groups and other allies to advance this message. 4. Conduct joint outreach via events, social media and print media. | 1. Increased public awareness of opacity in health procurement in our municipality, compared to others, as measured by a pre- and post-survey. 2. Acknowledgement from government procurement officials that health costs are higher and outcomes are lower in our city. 3. Partnerships built with three ally organizations to conduct joint outreach. | Organization Y – leader Municipal Federation of Physicians Sociology Faculty of Municipal University Patient Advocacy Group | • Administrative expertise (Organization Y) • Social credibility (patient group) • Academic analysis (University) • Relationships with media organizations (Organization Y) **Barriers** • Backlash from those who benefit from procurement corruption might make some fearful to participate. • Challenge of building momentum on social media. |

SAMPLE COMMUNICATION PLAN BETWEEN COLLABORATORS

Goal: Ensure all partners have access to information they need to improve their outputs and make informed decisions on lack of transparency in health procurement in our city.

Objective(s):

1. All decisions are communicated effectively to all partners.
2. All partners are aware of resources available to them from other partners.

Implementation Plan:

Tactic	Responsibility	Timeline
Objective 1		
Disseminate summary of all meetings; conference calls	Advocacy group focused on transparency in health procurement	Within one week of the meeting
Summary of core leadership outreach	Organization Y	Every quarter
Objective 2		
Partners consolidate list of resources they will share	Government procurement officials collect all summaries	Once a year

DEEP DIVE: Effective Consensus Building[15]

When to Use Consensus Building

As everyone's opinions must be heard and considered, consensus building takes longer than other decision-making processes. Thus, it is typically reserved for complex or broad-reaching issues for which you need to:

- Foster strong involvement in a program.
- Build trust and bridge stakeholder differences.
- Build new partnerships to bring more resources and expertise to develop solutions.

Consensus building is not appropriate if you need a quick solution or stakeholders are either so polarized that they cannot sit down together or are completely ambivalent to the problem. To be successful, consensus building should be carried out by a facilitator or moderator capable of guiding discussions and enforcing the process for making the decision. Facilitators or moderators may also help stakeholders brainstorm alternative solutions to the problem at hand. These alternatives then form the basis of the discussions on the ultimate decision.

Steps to Consensus Building

1. **Articulate the problem.** What is the challenge we are trying to address?

2. **Reflect.** Participants should be given a couple of minutes to think about the problem and write down their ideas.

3. **Discuss.** Participants take turns discussing the issues raised by each participant.

4. **Identify key Issues.** As a group, participants determine the key terms and issues. Lists can be narrowed down by having the facilitator read each item and participants voting on whether that item should remain on the list. **Weighted voting** can provide more nuanced decision-making. It can be structured through participants holding up one to three fingers

15   Adapted from "Internal Communication Toolkit." *Civicus.* civicus.org/view/media/CIVICUSInternalCommunicationToolkit.pdf.

depending on how important the item is to them *or* using stickers to place beside the items they deem most important.

5. **Test a proposal.** When the facilitator sees the group moving in a clear direction, they can ask everyone to indicate how they feel about the direction the discussion is going based on a scale of "fist to five":

    *   Fist: No support
    *   One finger: Very little agreement but will support the decision
    *   Two fingers: Little agreement
    *   Three fingers: Moderate agreement
    *   Four fingers: High agreement
    *   Five fingers: Complete agreement

    The facilitator asks each "fist" to specify the nature of their objection. This helps avoid people objecting simply because they don't feel well or don't like the person behind the proposal. If all the responses are threes to fives, consensus is likely reached.

6. **Final agreement.** Prior to finalizing the solution, one final attempt to satisfy the concerns of any remaining holdout(s) should be made. "This can be done by asking those who 'cannot live with' the final recommendation or decision to suggest a modification to the package or tentative agreement that would make it acceptable to them without making it less attractive to anyone who has already expressed support for it."[16] In this way, the consensus-building process can maximize "buy-in" and input from group members during decision-making and execution.

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[16] "A Short Guide to Consensus Building."