



Pro-Democracy Toolkit





About the Authors

As students in the MA in Human Rights Practice Program at the University of Arizona we study cutting-edge human rights issues through participation with human rights practitioners from around the globe. Our curriculum includes in-depth analyses of current human rights crises with input from actors on the ground, community-engaged projects, and incorporation of fellow students' current human rights work. We seek to develop meaningful projects, such as this toolkit, that support the human rights work of NGOs, activists, and government officials.

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About this Toolkit

In this toolkit we will attempt to memorialize common strategies used in effective pro-democracy movements, with a particular focus on highlights from recent pro-democracy movements in Africa.

The goal of this manual is to highlight the commonalities in process and practice used by diverse groups who have been successful in mobilizing communities to organize, collaborate, develop, and engage in pro-democracy activities. These initial movement building strategies can be adapted and used by motivated citizens who wish to replicate peaceful but strategic activities to advance democratic ideals and structures that protect human rights around the globe.





Democracy & Human Rights

“Democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives.”

2005 UN World Summit





“The majority of States in the world today describe themselves as democratic. However, democracy is a dynamic social and political system whose ideal functioning is never fully “achieved”. Democratization, furthermore, is neither linear nor irreversible and thus both state institutions and citizens must monitor and maintain oversight of this process. Accordingly, all countries, as well as the international community itself, could benefit from continued strengthening of, and support to, their democratic processes. In the twenty-first century, we continue to be confronted with the triple challenge of building or restoring democracies, preserving democracies, as well as improving the quality of democracies. Key challenges for the UN in this context are: how to more effectively promote universally recognized democratic principles, institutions and practices; how to respond, in a consistent and predictable manner, to ruptures with democracy, as triggered by coups d’état or other unconstitutional transfers of power; and how to respond to, or even help to prevent, the slow and gradual erosion in the quality of democracy and the weakening of democratic freedoms, practices and institutions which sometimes occur.”

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide consists of several hexagons of varying sizes and colors (teal, blue, and dark blue). Some hexagons contain white icons: a lightbulb, a thumbs-up, a smartphone, a magnifying glass, and a gear. There is also a network-like icon with a central node and radiating lines. The hexagons are arranged in a cluster, with some overlapping.

Facilitating a Culture of Democracy & Freedom

On the following pages we will share tips and steps to consider in developing pro-democracy movements and protest

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1

Goals

Considerations in recognizing motivators and developing strategic goals



SMART GOALS

- ◇ Specific
- ◇ Measurable
- ◇ Attainable/Achievable
- ◇ Relevant/Realistic
- ◇ Time-based/time measured



Goals

- ◇ Use the SMART goals guide to set measurable goals
- ◇ Define your long term goal(s) first
- ◇ Your big picture goals will help develop your mission and motivations. From there you can work on identifying short-term goals that work towards these long-term targets.
 - Example of a long-term goal: Establishing or reinvigorating a culture of democracy with motivated and informed community members
 - Example of a short-term goal that may help you get there: Educating community members on the importance of registering to vote and how their vote affects local or national political outcomes



How they did it. Examples from Successful Movements


Le Balai Citoyen in Burkina Faso

Short-term goals: unite base of support, create local clubs and civic engaged citizens in small towns and neighborhoods.

“With this goal in mind, we try to unite our base, because there are a lot of different social movements scattered around Burkina Faso. Our advantage is that the Balai Citoyen is already pretty famous because it was founded by well-known musicians. We are a political movement, but we don’t want to come to power or access any political office.”

“We created local clubs. Any group of ten ‘Civic Sweepers’ can create its club in its own town or neighborhood. Then each region forms a coordination, and we manage the national coordination here in Ouagadougou. There are also clubs abroad, that we call our embassies: Paris, New York and Montreal are very dynamic. We recently opened one in Abidjan.”

Long-term goal: build a civic strength that can pressure the authorities to work towards the people’s interests



Voices from Africa on long term goals

“...we want to create spaces of expression and action with the objective of changing our country. We reject the path of violence, as well as the path of power. We are not here to be known, nor to get a job or earn money. We want to be the alternative for Congo, a group of engaged people that accept the challenge of telling the truth and speak for ourselves. “

- MICHELINE MWENDIKE
DR Congo

“there’s no point in changing the conductor if you keep playing the same symphony”. Indeed “Y’en a marre” was the war cry of the collective, but the larger task it has taken on is to advocate for the NTS or the *Nouveau Type de Sénégalais* (New Kind of Senegalese)”



2

People

Tips to consider when defining who will be involved in your movement



Who are your people?

◇ Who are the communities / people you hope to mobilize or engage?

- Are you from that community?
 - If not, who can you connect with who is a member of the community to involve in helping you connect?

◇ Is there a Collective Identity?

- “Shared definitions of a group that derives from members’ common interests and solidarity”
 - This implies that these members have a sense of demarcation from other groups/individuals
 - Example: those who identify as a minority within a social justice inequality or human rights inequality

◇ Generational Participation

- Involving younger generations is critical as they are simultaneously being educated about the protest atmosphere; educated on the agenda as to why a protest is taking place and its importance to the collective identity
- Younger generations have the power to disrupt the status quo

Who are your people?

Do you have **major influencers** within your collective identity?

■ Social Media / Internet presence

- Those advertising the protest- publicizing important dates, stories, information and activity status
- Example: Sofia Denise Sow, a participant in the Y'en a marre movement, uploaded music videos, interviews, video clips, and social media posts about protest times & dates

■ Artists

- Active artists have a powerful strategies and gateways for leading a movement or protest
 - Musicians- music, sound and lyrics hold a strong message for the movement. It is another tactical way of spreading the collective identities needs, wants and rights
 - Various Artists- various forms of artwork also have the power to radiate messages
 - Literature & Journalists- poetry, storytelling and documenting play key roles in historically implementing the protest / movement

■ Public Speakers

- Individuals / groups that can hold conferences, debates, meetings and interviews with other important key players
 - This always the collective identity to be represented and announce their presence, goals, reasonings and needs



How they did it. Examples from Successful Movements

Le Balai Citoyen

“My colleague the reggae singer Sams’k le Jah and myself have been meeting people, hosting debates and conferences, visiting universities, outside of the capital, meeting students and sparking political debate. We organized politically engaged concerts. Little by little, it started to rise; there is now a political awareness within the youth. We got the idea to transform all these various disorganized actions we were taking into a more formal framework, a structure like the Balai Citoyen”



Pro-Democracy Activities

You can pull from these ideas when considering your larger goals and how you will implement them.





3

Civic Education

Utilizing education as an incentive and strategy to achieve your goals




Civic Education

An important tool used in any pro-democracy movement is educating citizens.

Education is the foundation for informed action.


Education includes:

- Ensuring citizens understand the power of their vote
- Ensuring citizens understand the roles of leaders and the ways laws are passed
- Ensuring citizens understand their rights under the constitution, including their rights to basic living conditions
- Ensuring that citizens have a clear understanding of the ways their government has failed them
- Ensuring citizens have a clear understanding of what actions they can take
- Ensuring citizens have a clear understanding of how to protect themselves.



Educating activists on non-violent civic engagement


Under the framework of education, the movements chose to teach non-violent resistance as the overarching framework. The belief that non-violence is more effective than violence was rooted in the personal experience of many of the activists. For many, these acts of peace were important in distinguishing their pro-democracy movements with violent terrorist movements.



How they did it. Examples from successful movements

1. Non-Violent Civic Engagement in Y'en Marre
1. Education through communal dialogue in Cameroon
1. Decolonizing Education in South Africa to achieve liberation

Examples of non-violent civic education

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide consists of several hexagons of varying shades of blue and cyan. Some hexagons contain icons: a lightbulb, a thumbs-up, a smartphone, a magnifying glass, and a gear. There is also a network-like icon with a central node and radiating lines.

Many of the movements used popular music as a form of education and non-violent protest, seen most predominantly in Y'en Marre who focused on creating a vision for a new Senegal and educating people on the power of their vote. Daas Fanaaal & "Sell your card, sell your dignity" (As seen in the video in the next slide)

Y'en A Marre





Example of education through dialogue

In Cameroon, in the Stand Up for Cameroon movement, a strategy they used to engage and educate the public meant hosting national dialogues that enabled people to confront their political history - their colonial history, their history of traditional governance, and the political culture that developed under a dictator. In acknowledging and studying the past, leaders such as Kah Walla believe the process will help them create new institutions, such as a new democratic constitution.

Cameroon also presented clear strategies to educate the public on their goals (see next slide).



Stand Up for Cameroon

“The purpose of politics is to transform society in order to increase the well-being of the people.

The responsibility of leaders is to find ways and ways to improve the living conditions of people in a concrete way.

The work of the elected representatives is to provide concrete answers to the problems of the people.

As citizens, we must not settle for the crumbs, favors or "donations" from those who are in responsibility.”

by Franck Essi, August 16, 2019



TRANSITION POLITIQUE 4 POLITICAL TRANSITION

ETAPES STEPS

DÉPART DU REGIME BIYA

All the actors come together to demand it
The people manifest, without violence, to demand it until we obtain it

1



DEPARTURE OF BIYA REGIME

All the actors come together to demand it
The people manifest, without violence, to demand it until we obtain it

DIALOGUE NATIONAL

To reconcile the people and rebuild the nation. Discuss colonial heritage: the war of independence and the anglophone question, national reconciliation, the nature of the state and its relation to the citizen, the form of state



2

NATIONAL DIALOGUE

To reconcile the people and rebuild the nation. Discuss colonial heritage: the war of independence and the anglophone question, national reconciliation, the nature of the state and its relation to the citizen, the form of state

RÉFORME DES INSTITUTIONS

To reinstate equilibrium between the three powers, rewrite the constitution and reform the electoral system

3



INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

To reinstate equilibrium between the three powers, rewrite the constitution and reform the electoral system

TENUE DES ELECTIONS

On the basis of the new constitution and the new electoral system



4

HOLDING OF ELECTIONS

On the basis of the new constitution and the new electoral system


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Decolonized education to achieve liberation

In South Africa, students and educators are focused on decolonizing education under the “Fees Must Fall” movement and its aftermath. Students believe education is the “sharpest, most effective tool” to achieve liberation.

“Decolonization of knowledge is crucial in order to rewrite histories, reassert the dignity of the oppressed and refocus the knowledge production and worldviews for the sake of the present and the future of the country and its people, as well as the rest of the African continent.”

“Decolonization of knowledge implies the end of reliance on imposed knowledge, theories and interpretations, and theorizing based on one’s own past and present experiences and interpretation of the world.”

Engage youth culture



Youth culture is vibrant and active.

AMPLIFY THEIR VOICES

Use music, videos, social media, art, slam poetry and rallies to educate, inspire and activate.

Use hashtags to connect your movement to other Pro-democracy movements. See: #feesmustfall, #YenAMarre, #BalaiCitoyen



Think outside the Box

Images are powerful. Color is powerful. Music is powerful. Disruption and resistance can take many forms.



1. [Black on Fridays](#): Cameroon activists wear black on Fridays to resist the current dictators.
2. In [Burkina Faso](#), Activists made a mini documentary series capturing human rights violations and the non-violent activist movement.
3. In [Senegal](#), activists hosted free concerts and voting registration parties and used mass texts to get the word out.
4. In [South Africa](#) a student “smeared in fake blood pretends to be dead as commentary on the university killing the future of Poor South Africans who cannot afford their fees” (Photo)



Hold power accountable



- In every movement we looked at, there was one common theme of holding leaders accountable, regardless of what changes happen, pro-democracy movements remain engaged in the political process and hold new leaders responsible to their promises.
- Burkina Faso: “We are a political movement, but we don’t want to come to power or access any political office. We intend to represent a civic strength that can pressure the authorities to get them to work towards the people’s interests.” - Smockey



Use your voice to educate the international community



- Activists in DRC: Requested US and International partners put sanctions on president, stop supporting government, work with civilians to protect fair elections
- Activists in Cameroon: Called on international parties to investigate mass killings and increase pressure for fair elections.






4

Barriers

Anticipating and navigating barriers

Barriers



- ◇ What and who might try to interfere with your progress, silence your voice?
 - Law enforcement
 - Excessive force and/or use of unnecessary weapons
 - Accuse of civil disobedience
 - Attempts to arrest / interrogate
 - Potential implementation of fear or intimidation
 - Opposite political parties / individuals
 - There could possibly be other parties or collective identities that oppose your protest and could potentially attempt to interfere or silence your actions by counteracting your productivity
 - Bystanders
 - Media Coverage
 - News and media personnel could potentially disrupt your protest by asking questions or wanting to interview
- 

Navigating Barriers

What to do if barriers occur

- Law enforcement
 - If stopped- stay calm, keep hands visible and cooperate
 - If interrogated- know your rights & if you choose to remain silent
 - In order to prevent escalated tension, the scene of the protest is not the proper atmosphere to challenge misconduct
 - If you feel your rights are being violated, it is advised not to get physical with an officer or threaten an officer. Instead, cooperate with law enforcement but pay attention and record every little detail so you can file a complaint later.
- Opposing parties
 - Your voice is your tool- getting physical can potentially escalate to civil disobedience which will lead to the involvement of law enforcement

Navigating Barriers



The following PDFs give general guidelines about your rights, which you should know and consider when participating in a protest.

https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_pdf_file/kyr_protests.pdf

<http://www.susanschorn.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ProtestSafetyTrainingGuide.pdf>



SAFETY DURING PROTEST

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



WHAT TO DO

+ Plan ahead: For essential needs, care and supplies. Know what to expect. Know how to get assistance. Plan for how to re-contact your buddies if separated

+ Be calm and focused: when things get most intense, react to danger or warning signs sooner, not later

+ Watch for signs of physical and mental problems in yourself and others. Cool down others who exhibit panic behavior

+ Document: film or write down police actions, brutality, and injuries

WHAT NOT TO DO

+ Don't put vaseline, mineral oil, oil-based sunscreen or moisturizers on skin as they can trap chemicals

+ Don't wear contact lenses, which can trap irritating chemicals underneath

+ Don't wear things which can easily be grabbed (i.e. jewelry, ties, loose hair)

+ Don't go alone, if you can help it – go with an affinity group or some friends who know you well

+ Don't forget to eat food and drink lots of water

WHAT TO BRING

+ Water in a plastic bottle with squirt top, to drink and to wash off your skin or eyes

+ Energy snacks

+ Identification and/or emergency contact information

+ Enough money for pay-phone, food, transportation

+ Watch, paper, pen for accurate documentation of events

+ Inhaler, epipen, insulin & several days of prescription medication

+ Menstrual pads. Avoid using tampons – if you're arrested you may not have a chance to change

+ Basic First Aid Kit

+ Wet Wipes and tissues

WHAT TO WEAR

+ Shatter resistant Swimming Goggles and a N95 Facemask

+ Comfortable, protective shoes that you can run in

+ Clothing covering all your skin to protect from sun and pepper spray exposure

+ Shatter-resistant eye protection (i.e. sunglasses, swim goggles, or gas mask)

+ Bandana to cover nose and mouth soaked in water, lemon juice or vinegar, if can aid in breathing during chemical exposure

+ Fresh clothes in plastic bag (in case yours get contaminated by chemical weapons)

+ A hat to protect you from the sun and from chemical weapons

DEALING WITH TEARGAS

+ Avoid use of oils & lotions because they can trap the chemicals and thereby prolong exposure

+ Gas masks provide the best facial protection, if properly fitted and sealed. Alternatively, goggles, respirators, or a wet bandana over the nose & mouth will help

+ STAY CALM. Panicking increases the irritation. Breathe slowly and remember it is only temporary

+ Blow your nose, rinse your mouth, cough & spit. Try not to swallow

+ Wearing contacts: you must remove the lenses or get someone to remove them for you, with CLEAN, uncontaminated fingers. Destroy the lenses after exposure

+ DO NOT RUB IT IN

+ Use an eye flush using a solution of half liquid antacid and half water. This only applies to aluminum hydroxide or magnesium hydroxide

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

+ Freedom of Expression and Assembly: Everyone has the right to carry their opinion to the streets.

+ Protection of the Right to Freedom of Assembly: Law enforcement must facilitate and not restrict a peaceful public assembly.

+ Freedom from excessive use of force: In the policing of non-violent protests, police must avoid the use of force.

+ Right to Medical Assistance: If you are injured, you have a right to medical assistance without delay.

+ Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest and Detention: If you are arrested you have a right to be told of the reason for your arrest; you also have the right promptly after your arrest to have access to a lawyer and to your family.

+ Right to Complain: If your rights have been violated you have a right to file a complaint and to be provided information on how to do so.

This easy to use reference sheet gives simple tips for those participating in a protest. Following such guidelines will help prevent a violent atmosphere and a safe way to practice and demonstrate the collective identities productivity and actions.





Review

1. Have a clear mission & set SMART goals

2. Focus on civic education

3. Engage youth culture

4. Think outside the box

5. Hold power accountable

6. Engage the international community

7. Connect with other movements

8. Anticipate & navigate barriers

CONNECT



In this toolkit we encourage engagement with other leaders working on social movements. Connect your work to the larger work of others who share your values. Look for mentors and allies.

- [Y'en a Marre:](#)
- [Le Balai Citoyen](#)
- [Ground Up South Africa](#)
- [Stand Up for Cameroon](#)
- [LUCHA RDC](#)

