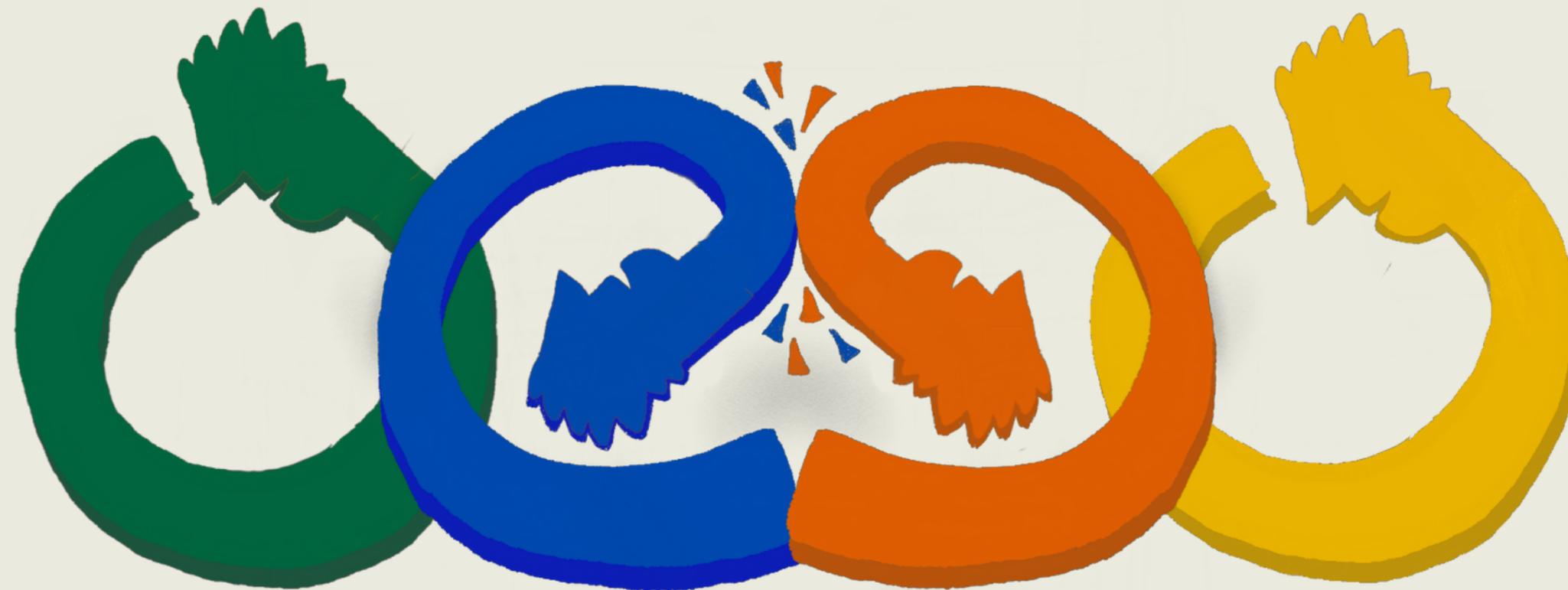


RESIST & REBOOT



A Playbook for Solidarity in Digital Rights Work

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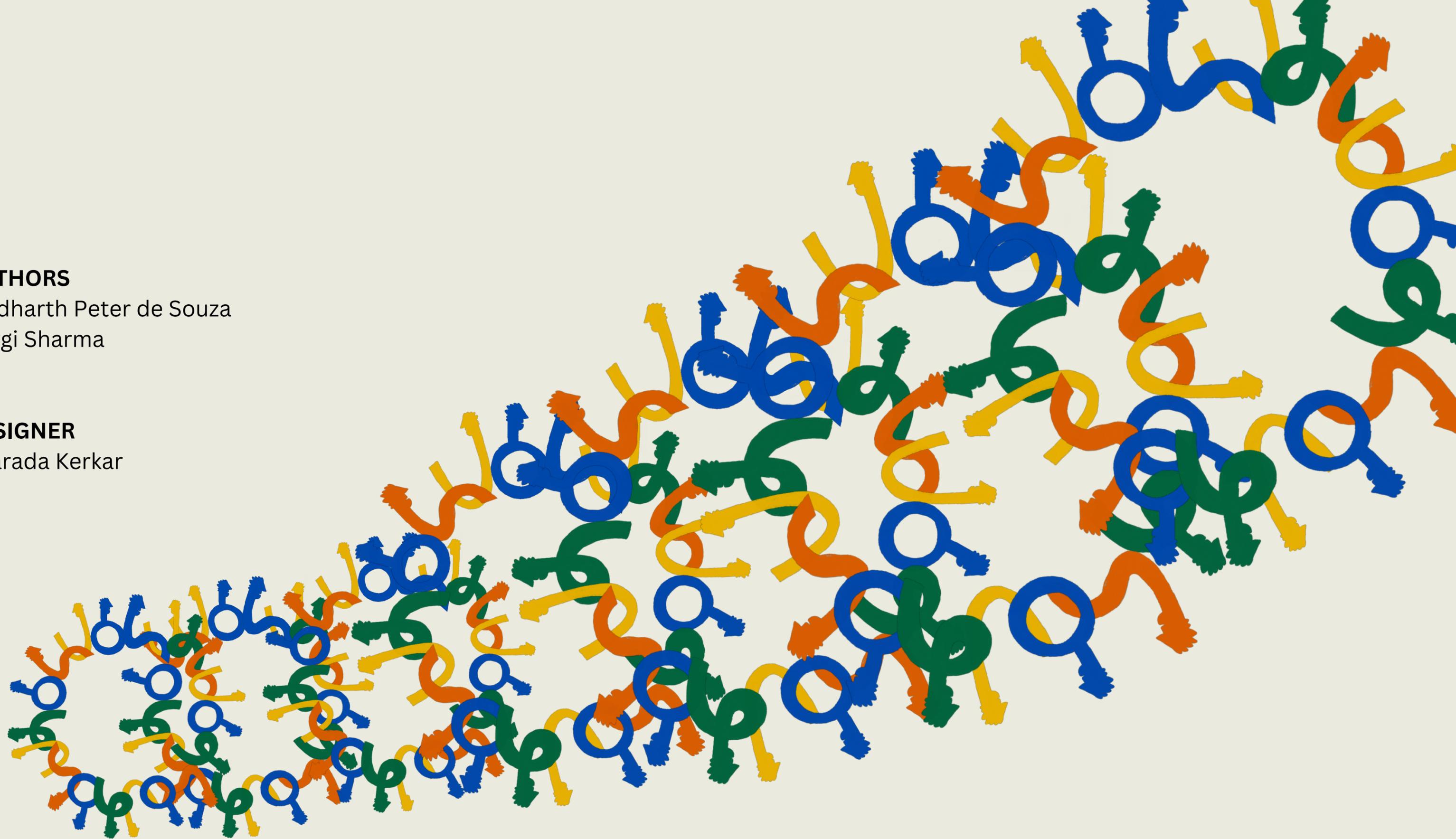


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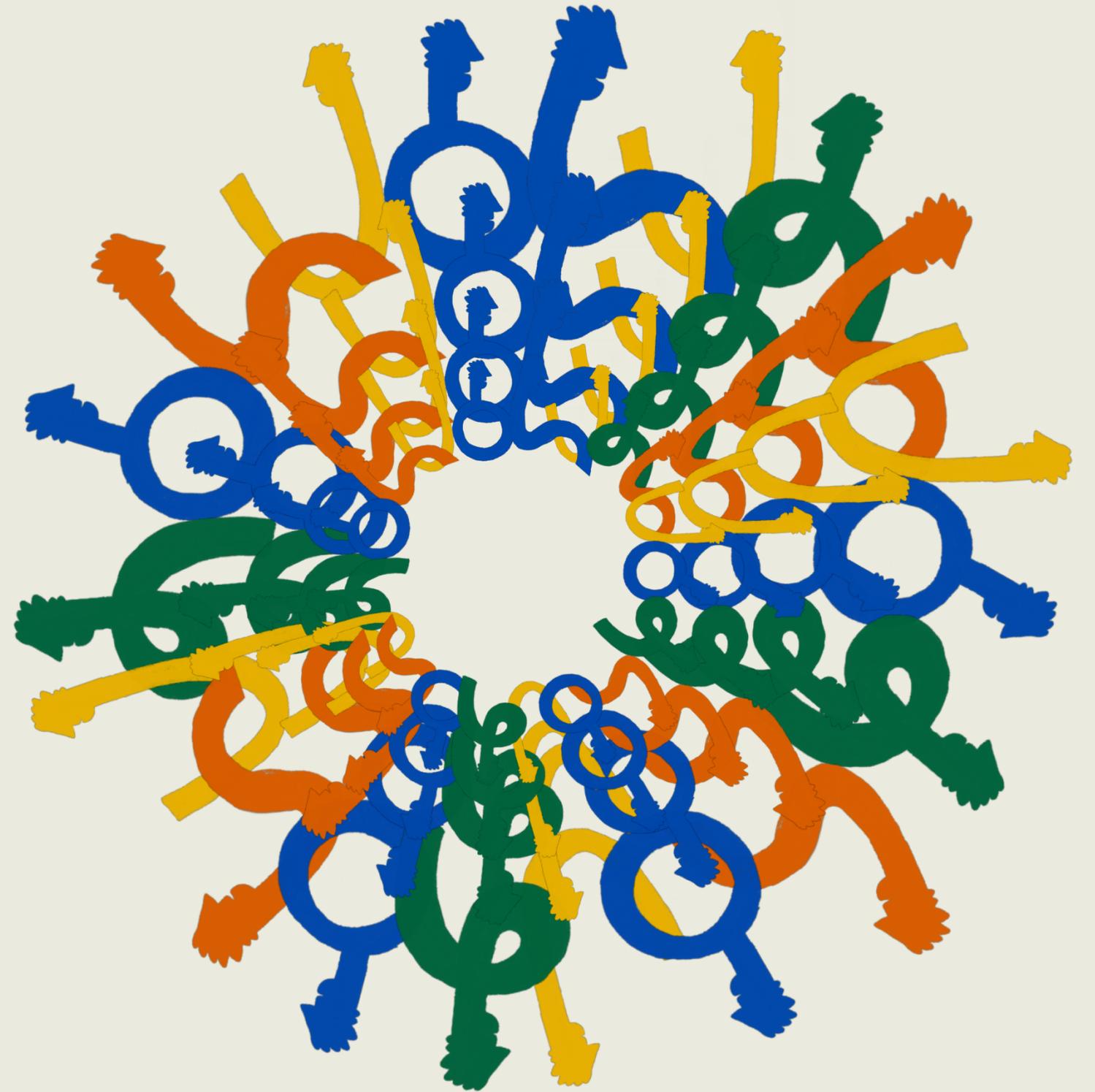
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INTRODUCTION

This playbook was born out of a podcast series from the Global Data Justice Project produced and hosted from March to October 2021. There were three main motivations to work on this project: one, most of the conversations surrounding technology and human rights focus on top-down solutions, quite often ignoring the lived experiences and expertise of grassroots organisations, social movements, and communities. This results in more importance being given to technical training covering data technologies rather than an analysis of their encroachment into people's lives. We wanted to prioritise the human element of data justice, which leads to the second aspect - that there is still a dearth of conversations surrounding digital technologies and data in the 'mainstream' that centre social justice instead of seeing it as an add-on. We wanted to talk with civil society actors, the core of whose work is social justice, and discuss how they view and engage with life worlds around data. Three, we came into this project with the awareness that social change doesn't happen in a vacuum nor does it happen as a result of a single individual or group's efforts, and therefore we were interested to explore the value that the collective brings to the governing of data.





SOLIDARITY

Our conversations with the podcast speakers had one recurring theme: solidarity. Speakers highlighted that not only is grassroots or community-led change essential for moving technology in the direction of social justice, but that no one person or group can create or lead sustainable change. Civil society organisations can work in tandem with other groups and general population - at the local, national, and international levels - to strengthen digital governance. A key tenet of this coalition-building in solidarity.

The conversations revealed the following primary contours of the concept of solidarity: an awareness of shared struggles, interests, and objectives; an acknowledgement of the need to create broad alliances with those having shared goals; and a need for some shared values.

Speakers conveyed that a sense of unity underpins network- / movement- / coalition-building. Classes of people and organisations come together recognising: 1. the inherent and intrinsic equality of all human beings and 2. their struggles and liberation are tied together due to shared root causes of the issue they are addressing.

In our conversations, it was apparent that successful coalitions are broad and centre the concerns of those most marginalised and silenced. They can be vertical (civil society organisations connecting with local populations to further a common cause) or horizontal (civil society organisations recognising common goals and creating a shared strategy). However, in both these cases, sustainable and equitable campaigns require justice at the centre of the struggle rather than as something that is peripheral. Such campaigns recognise that those who are the most impacted by a problem are the best positioned to respond to it but may not have the resources to do so. In practice, this means centring and prioritising the voices and concerns of Indigenous and other racialised peoples, women and girls, LGBTQIA+ people, disabled people, working class and rural populations, and forced and voluntary migrants. Doing so requires challenging and addressing the root causes of injustice, including colonialism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, capitalism, ableism, casteism, classism, and authoritarianism.





Solidarity in the context of digital rights also requires us to recognise the fact that digital technologies have the capacity to and have been observed to compound offline injustices and oppressions while creating new hierarchies and harms of their own. Unchecked, the deployment of many existing and proposed technological interventions will create unfairness and inequities and the unwillingness to acknowledge injustice, which amounts to complicity.

Thus, the podcast speakers suggest that bottom-up, broad-based, cross-class resistance and interventions - before, during, and after the harm occurs - are imperative to advancing technology in the direction of social justice.

The podcast speakers also shared the challenges of creating coalitions and sustaining solidarity. Here is a snapshot of some of the challenges faced by civil society actors across a range of geographies and political realities. Civil society organisations (CSOs) working in the digital rights sphere often work at the intersection of data justice and other social issues. The challenges associated with working on issues like decolonisation, feminism, open democracy, anti-corruption, transparency, and the like transfer to digital rights work and may further complicate the standing of the CSO.

For example, many groups who work at the intersection of data rights and sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) rights might face isolation in data governance spaces, and their work might be put in silos. Those who centre gender justice in their work and use that as a primary way to approach data governance might notice that their voices are being invited only to speak on gender-related issues and maybe not on data protection or privacy. We must note that this silo-isation is externally imposed in spaces where data governance is seen as a standalone or neutral issue, not complicated or problematised by other social structures. This is where the centrality of social justice in all policy-making becomes relevant in order to address the intersectional nature of different claims in digital rights work.

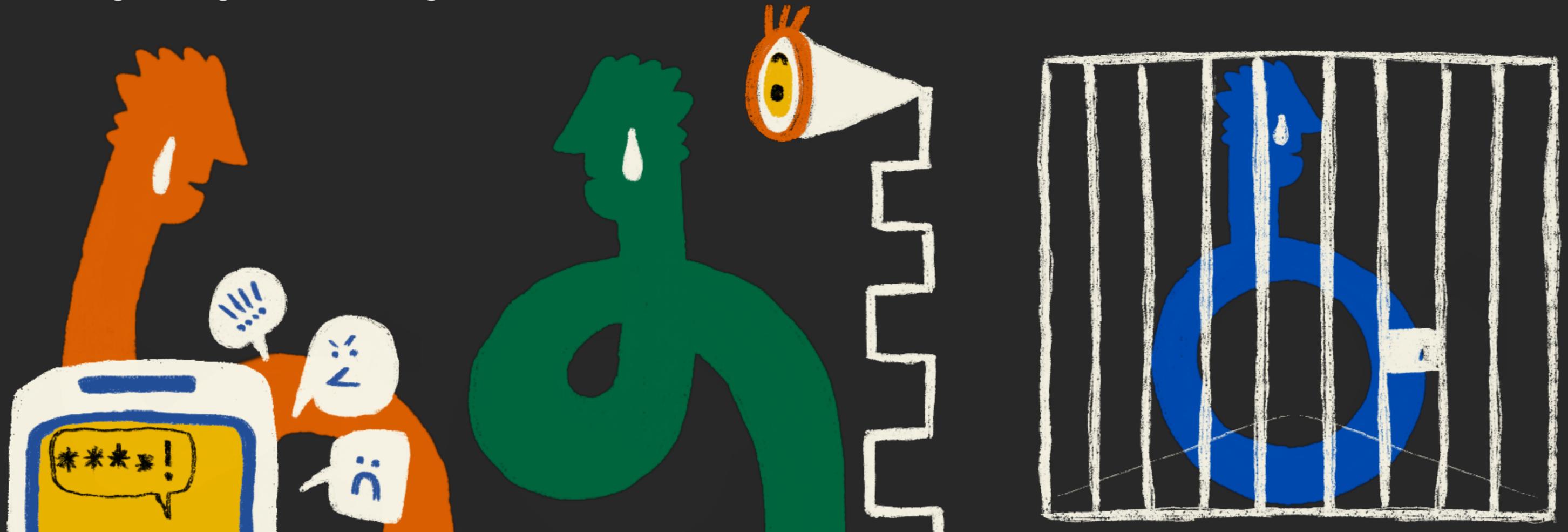




CSOs may also be subject to state and private surveillance intended to monitor their private communications and create a chilling effect on their advocacy and activism. The recent Pegasus revelations have shown that many states have been covertly installing spyware in activists' and journalists' mobile phones and computers to keep tabs on their work. State surveillance of private action is not a rare or isolated incidence. Readers of this toolkit may have personal experience with being targeted or singled out because of their work. CSOs often take precautionary steps to ensure they are not being monitored because of their work. Journalists, activists, and lawyers have been at the forefront of the fight against government surveillance of civil society actors and detractors.

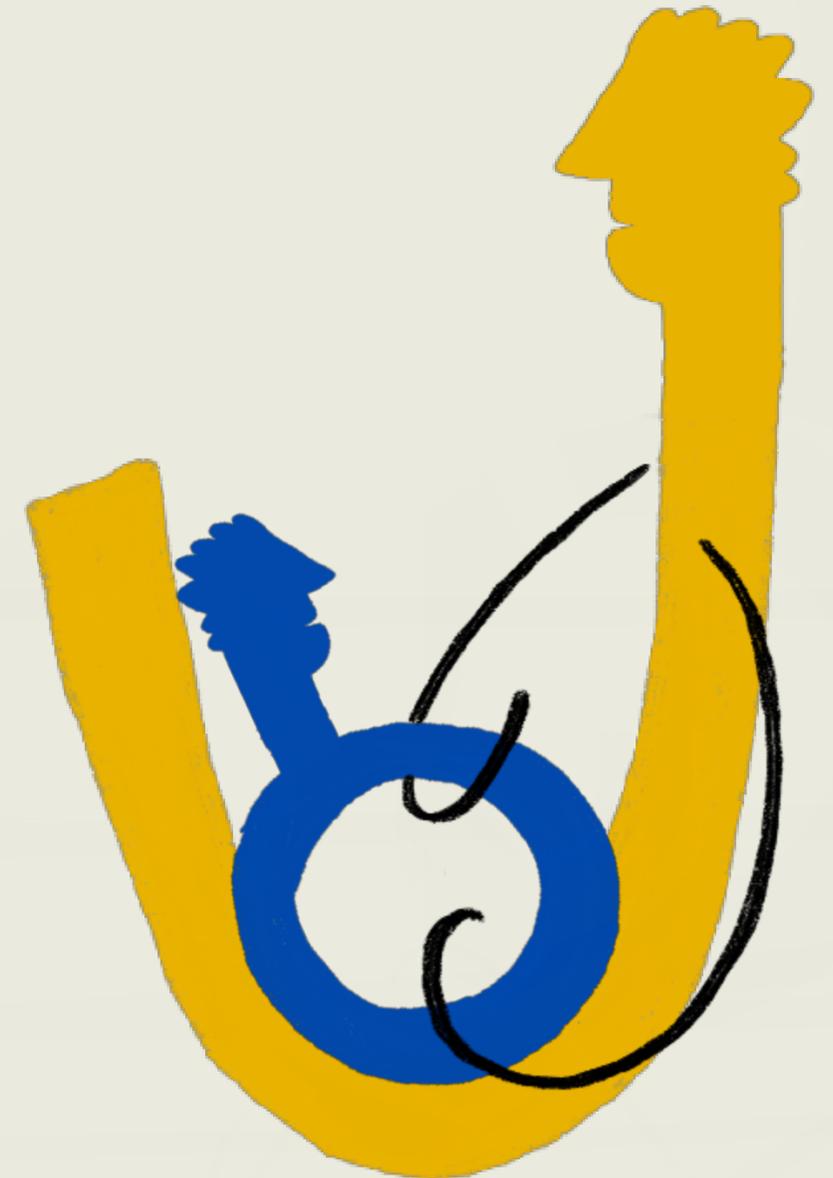
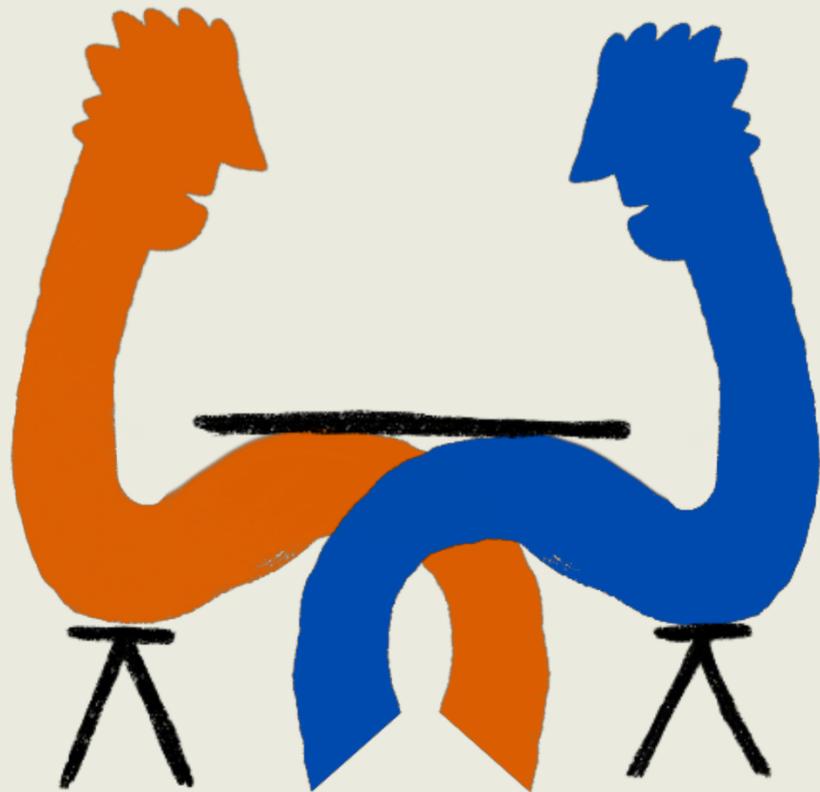
Visit the [Electronic Frontier Foundation's website](#) to learn more about Surveillance Self-Defense (SSD).

Being a human rights defender or a civil society actor is one of the most dangerous jobs in the world. Human rights defenders face targeted harassment, threats, and violence across the globe. Several state and private actors suppress human rights defenders and journalists because they record abuses, protect human rights, and speak truth to power. The safety of human rights defenders (HRDs) and journalists is a serious issue and one that persists in almost every country in the world. In the digital rights space, HRDs face a lack of safety in three main ways: 1. through state and private surveillance of their actions; 2. threats while reporting on data breaches, unsafe data practices, and mass data collection and manipulation (e.g., reporting on the Cambridge Analytica scandal or mandatory Aadhaar registration); and 3. lack of protection in online spaces (this takes the form of targeted harassment by public figures, trolling, doxxing, and astroturfing).



SOLIDARITY MAKING

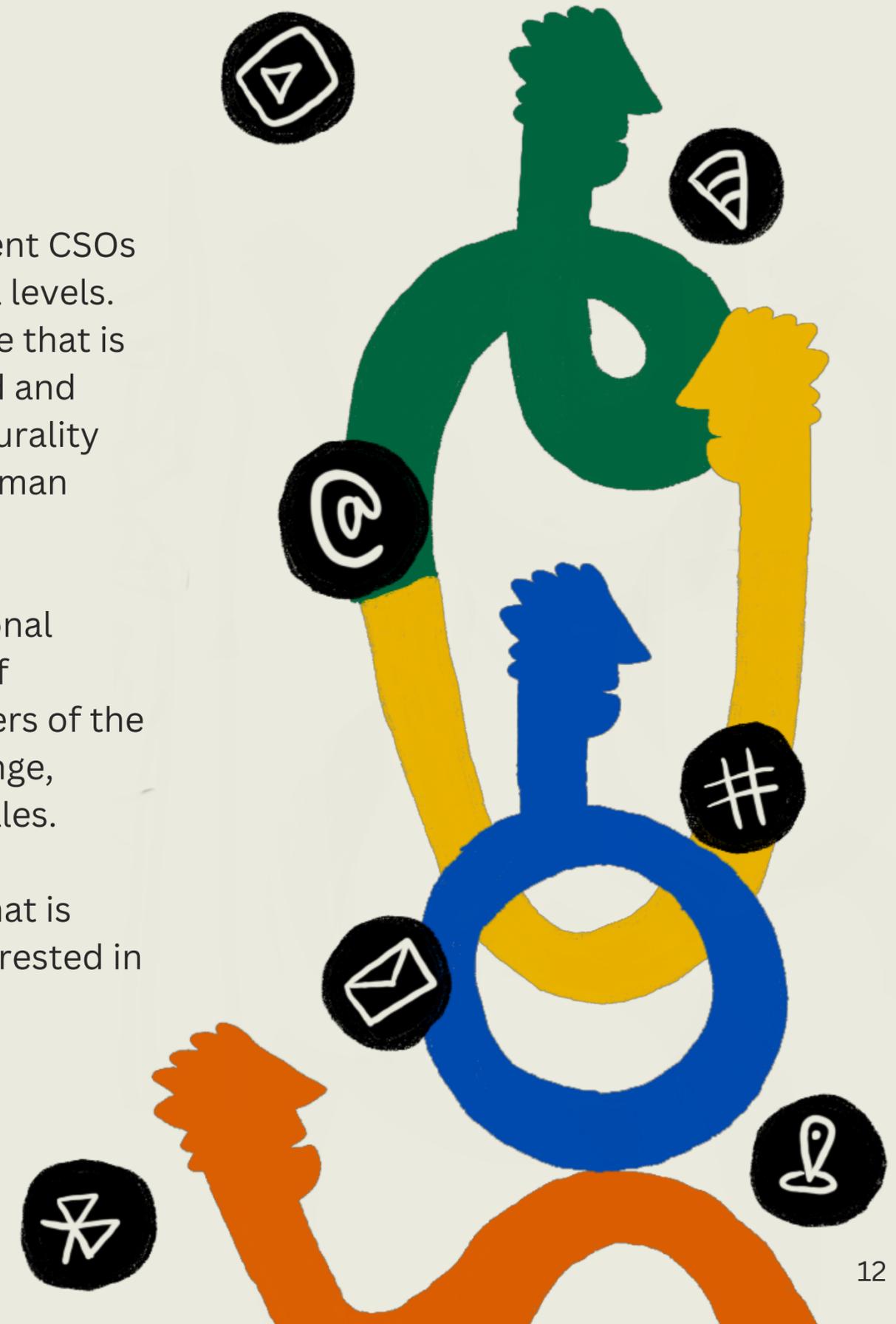
In this playbook, we want to explore how solidarity can be practised. We use the term ‘solidarity making’- where solidarity is not just a feeling or a symbolic form of expression but is instead an action that can include different angles, from **creating partnerships, co-designing outcomes, providing support** and sanctuary to those facing threats or pressures, or through creating space for people to find communities to challenge injustice.



We land on the idea of solidarity because of the centrality it has in terms how different CSOs view, interpret, and operationalise their work at the local, national, and international levels. Solidarity emerges as a need and an ambition, an ideal that is aspired to, but also one that is urgently needed in order to fulfil digital rights, and ensure that they be implemented and sustained. It can be seen as a commitment to coalition building, a commitment to plurality and respect of difference and a commitment to recognising that digital rights are human rights.

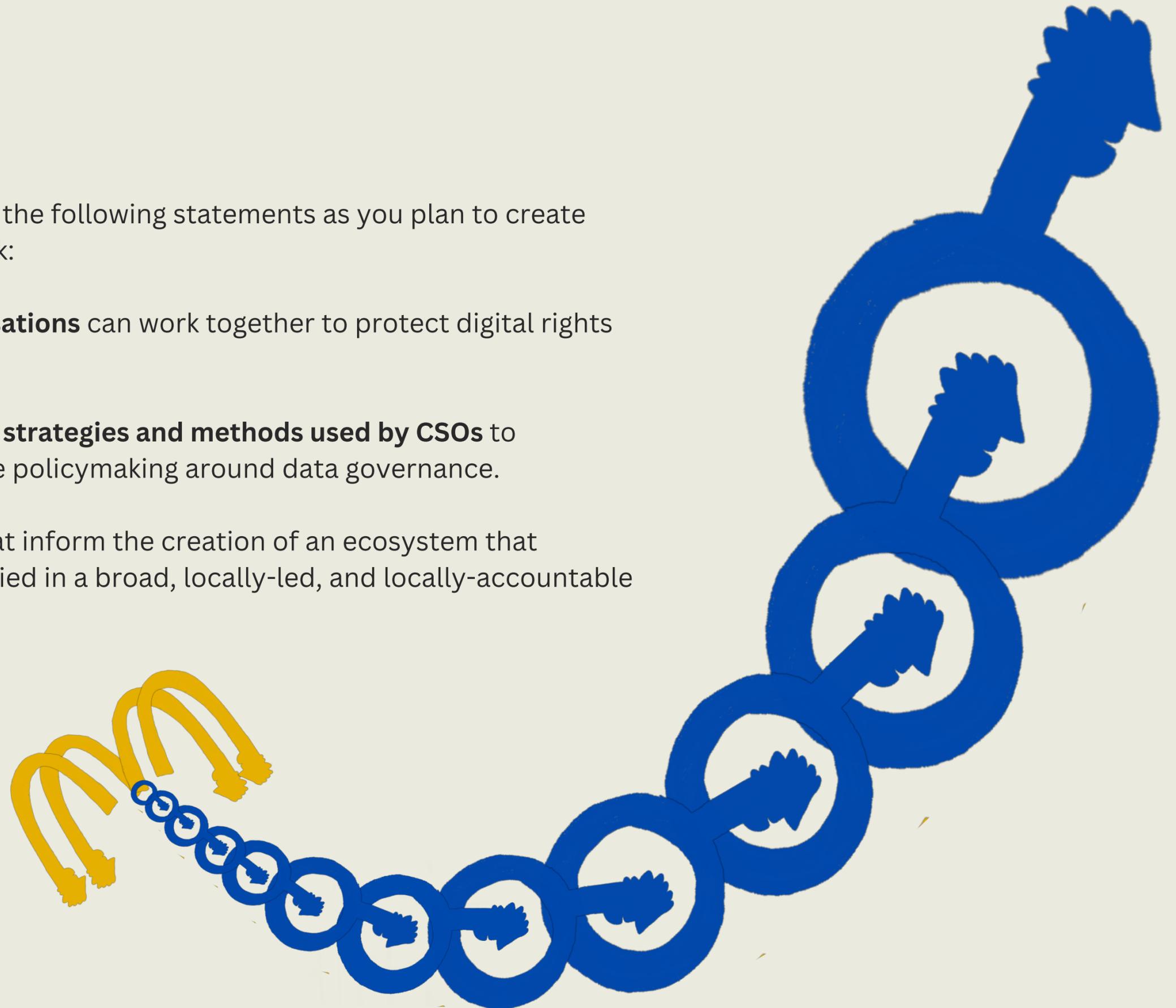
In our conversations we learn from people around the world with different professional backgrounds to try to paint a fuller, more vibrant picture of how to build practices of solidarity. We hope that these approaches offer readers of this playbook, and listeners of the podcast, insights into how groups around the world design movements to effect change, advance inclusive, equitable solutions, and deliver results at different levels and scales.

In offering to expand these notions of solidarity, we would like to build a playbook that is useful for CSOs working both within digital rights, and in adjacent areas who are interested in questions of the digital.



The playbook seeks to help you reflect on the following statements as you plan to create alliances to further your digital rights work:

- **Communities and civil society organisations** can work together to protect digital rights and uplift shared interests.
- Values of solidarity can determine the **strategies and methods used by CSOs** to participate in, influence, and challenge policymaking around data governance.
- **The community-building practices** that inform the creation of an ecosystem that safeguards digital rights can be identified in a broad, locally-led, and locally-accountable process.



HOW TO USE THIS PLAYBOOK

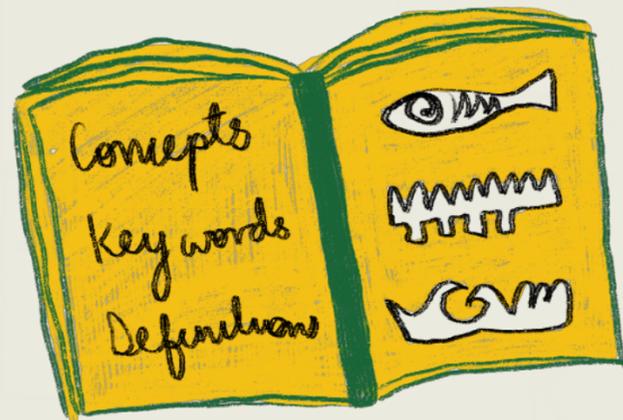
This playbook is designed to be a resource that can be used by individuals or groups who are researchers, activists and campaigners and are interested in building projects around digital rights.

It includes theory which explains concepts around digital rights, it brings together case studies from different parts of the world on projects implemented by groups, and it also provides steps which can provide an impetus towards taking action.



Case studies

Case studies provide illustrations of how digital rights projects have been implemented globally.



Theory

We will introduce definitions of key terms, as well as concepts that occur frequently in discussions on digital rights.

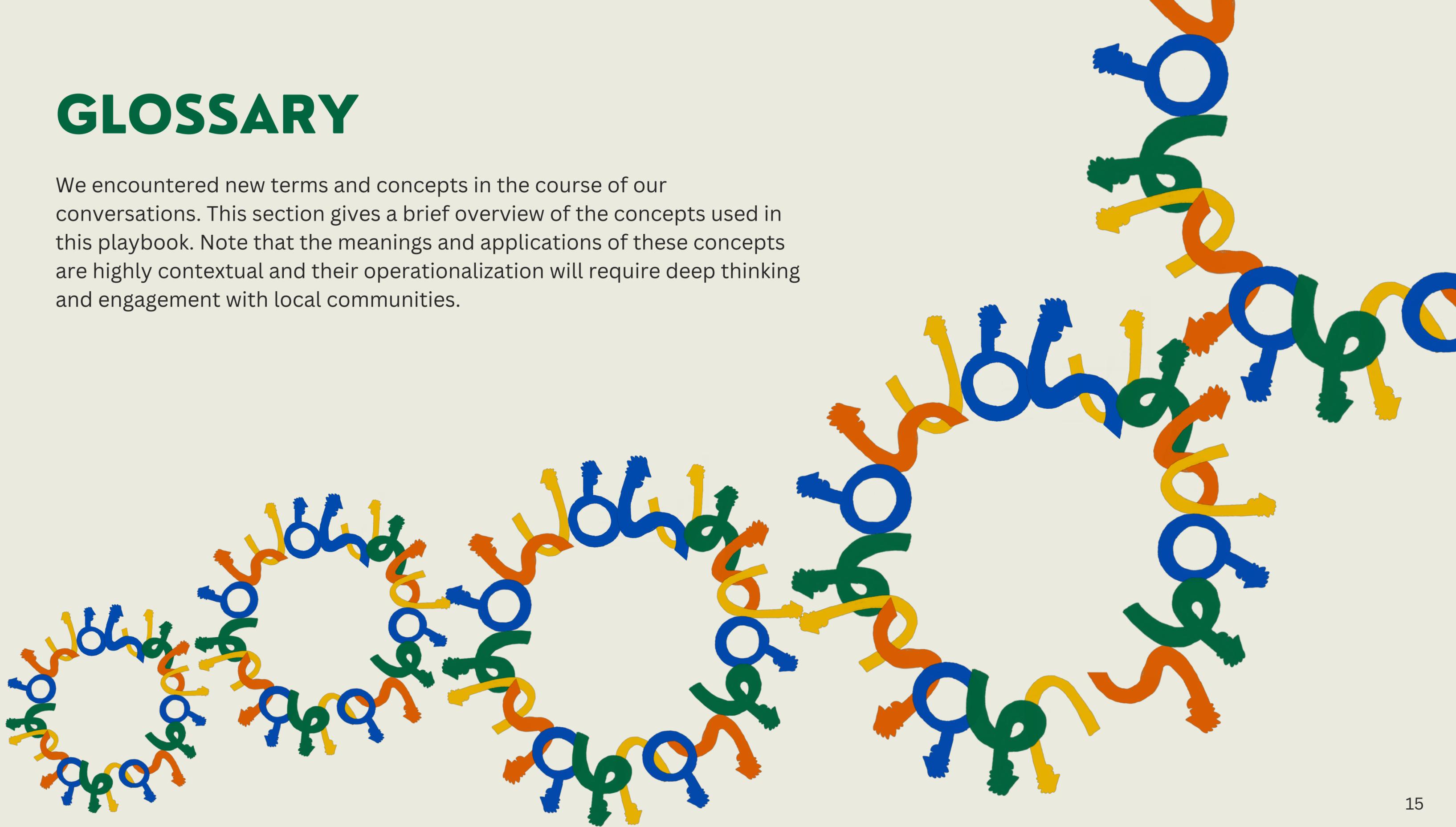


Action steps

Action steps are aimed to provide easy-to-implement tool to kickstart a digital rights project.

GLOSSARY

We encountered new terms and concepts in the course of our conversations. This section gives a brief overview of the concepts used in this playbook. Note that the meanings and applications of these concepts are highly contextual and their operationalization will require deep thinking and engagement with local communities.



DIGITAL RIGHTS

Digital rights are those human rights that can be applied and manifest in a digital sphere. They might be in relation to the right to life, the right to freedom of expression, the right to work in fair and dignified places of work, and can be read into existing natural and constitutional rights.



DIGITAL LITERACY

Digital literacy is the practice where people are introduced not just to the ways in which technology works, but also to how it can impact their lives in known and familiar contexts.



DATA COLONIALISM

The concept of data colonialism acknowledges that new technologies reproduce colonial relations in terms of organisation of capital and relations where technologies and data are extracted in the South and controlled in the North.



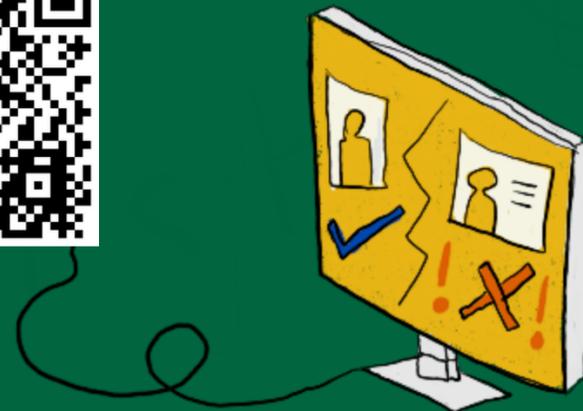
DECOLONISING DIGITAL RIGHTS

Decolonising digital rights is the process of recognising, unpacking, and addressing how systems and configurations around technology connect to oppressions and domination that often have historical roots.



NON-ALIGNED TECHNOLOGY

Non-aligned technology emerges from a movement which asks for a purposeful engagement with digital technologies. It emphasises the need for communities to be able to determine their interfaces with technology and the governance around it. It posits that data extraction is illegal and that there must be ways to say no to the use of such platforms. Doing so also allows for alternative spaces and ways to engage with data and technology.



RACIAL JUSTICE

Racial justice in the technology sphere ensures that offline biases are not carried over to the digital realm, intensified by datafication, or that novel forms of oppression are not created due to the deployment of technological tools. Similarly, caste justice in the technology sphere ensures that there is no replication of or creation of new caste-based hierarchies in the digital realm. All concepts of affinity-based justice also anticipate equal opportunity in employment in the technology sector.



FEMINIST DATA

Feminist data examines who is represented and by whom, whose interests are considered, and how to take up questions of power and justice in thinking about data and technology.



FEMINIST INTERNET

Feminist internet enables meaningful, open, accessible and acceptable engagements within internet spaces.



LANGUAGE JUSTICE

Language justice ensures that the operating systems, websites, and other technology offerings are available in the language of choice for the user. Internet access is then not limited only to the speakers of dominant languages.



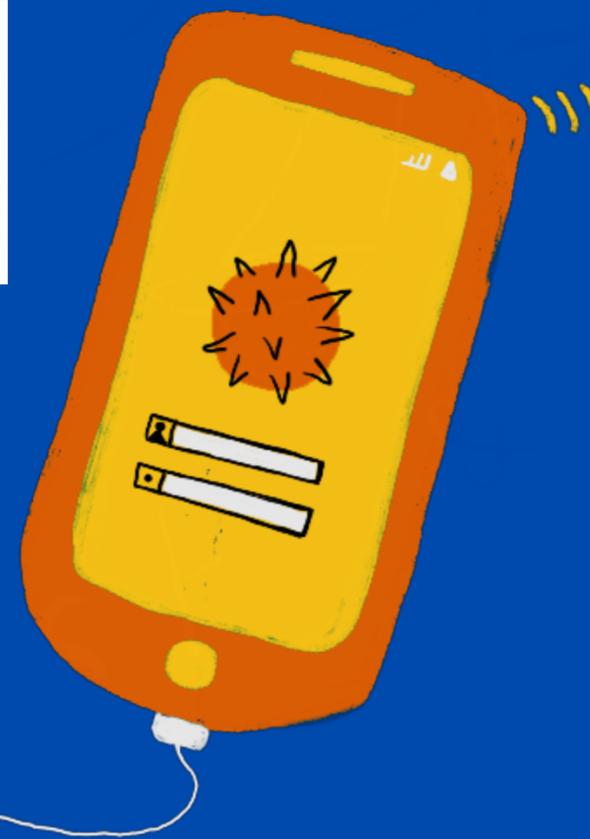
STATE SURVEILLANCE

Governments and local authorities routinely monitor residents and collect data on their activities. This data collection may be done with consent (sharing biometrics to receive a national ID) or without (phone-tapping and the recent Pegasus scandal). State surveillance may be voluntary (downloading the COVID-19 contact tracing app) or coerced (refugees having to share their biometric and other personal data to apply for asylum).



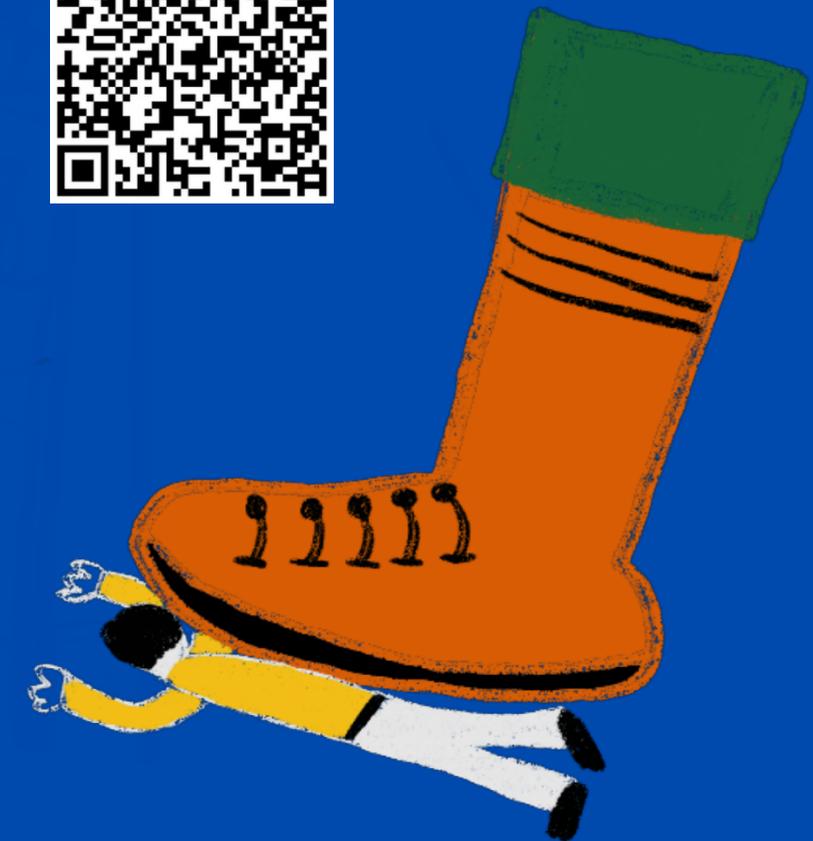
PANDEMIC TECHNOLOGY

Pandemic technology indicates the proliferation in the deployment of technological interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic. This development has been characterised by market-making and techno-solutionism.



AUTHORITARIANISM

State surveillance, the deployment of pandemic technology, and lack of regulation may amplify and bolster authoritarianism.



SNAPSHOT OF A CIVIL SOCIETY ECOSYSTEM

The podcast series includes 10 episodes with organisers/ representatives from the following organisations. In our snapshot below, we profile some of the key themes that emerged in the different conversations before introducing the different episodes.



Tactical Tech: awareness raising, public education, data protection



Non-Aligned Technology Movement: coalition-building, data colonialism, epistemic research



Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice: European solidarity, coalition-building, policy advocacy



Body & Data: awareness raising, public education, research, legal awareness, storytelling



Tierra Común: coalition-building, archiving



European Digital Rights: European solidarity, coalition-building, legal advocacy



My Data Rights Africa: coalition-building, local collaborations, storytelling



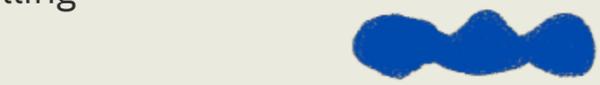
Data Privacy Brasil: research, legal advocacy, coalition-building, awareness raising, storytelling



EngageMedia: digital rights, storytelling, awareness



Internet Freedom Foundation: legal advocacy, strategic litigation, awareness raising, research



Digital Rights Watch Australia: awareness raising, coalition-building, local collaborations, policy advocacy



Whose Knowledge?: epistemic research, archiving, awareness raising, coalition-building, storytelling

PODCAST SERIES

In the first episode, **Artefacts, Objects and Exhibitions**, we spoke to Muhammad Radwan of Tactical Tech, a Berlin-based international NGO that engages with citizens and civil society organisations to explore the impacts of technology on society.

Muhammad shares how civil society actors can make technology a public conversation by using artefacts, objects, and exhibitions. We explore how CSOs can use these interventions to assist people in understanding the impacts of data and technology in their daily lives.

Muhammad also talks about Tactical Tech's misinformation edition of the Glass Room project, the self-learning installation on data and privacy, how Tactical Tech collaborates globally, and how it encourages and supports organising around digital rights issues worldwide.

“Digital rights from the ground are a way to focus more on collective action that uses the power of networks to build social movements, as well as participating in the shaping of the public space online and the policies that govern the internet.”



EPISODE 1





"Given how digitalisation and digitisation are impacting different groups of people including children, women, gender diverse people, labourers, refugees, sex workers, people with disabilities, and health workers, among others, it is imperative that the work on digital rights be intersectional, connecting different social justice movements."

In the second episode, **Bodies, Autonomy, and Storytelling**, we talk to Shubha Kayastha, the Co-Founder of Body & Data, a Nepal-based organisation that works to provide an understanding of digital rights among women, queer people, and disabled people. Body & Data builds a just and safe digital space through knowledge building, information dissemination, and movement building. Shubha highlights the importance of storytelling in building communities and collectives around digital rights and shares how understandings of digital rights can be built in contextually relevant ways, as Body & Data is doing in Nepal. Shubha unpacks the challenges of working at the interface of gender and technology, particularly the implications that this has both within the digital rights field and beyond. The episode also discusses what it means to be a woman and a representative of a gender-oriented group in the technology space, which tends to be both male-centric and male-focused.

EPISODE 2



In the third episode, **Data Colonialism and Non-Aligned Technology**, we speak to Ulises A. Mejias, Professor of Communication Studies and the director of the Institute for Global Engagement at SUNY Oswego. Ulises co-founded the Non-Aligned Technologies Movement and the network Tierra Común together with Nick Couldry. Ulises discusses why and how they developed the concept of data colonialism, and talks about their book *The Costs of Connection: How Data is Colonizing Human Life and Appropriating it for Capitalism*. Ulises also shares his work in Tierra Común, which unites activists, journalists, human rights defenders, academics, and citizens who seek to decolonise data. Ulises shares what it is like to bridge Northern and Southern experiences and knowledge in his work. The episode also discusses the implications of being a Global South academic in Global North institutions studying global issues.

"Digital rights, like any other rights, do not emerge from a place of stability and complacency. Injustice and exploitation often make it necessary for us to forge new forms of solidarity and to practice new forms of resistance and refusal that those in power are forced to recognise as emerging rights."



EPISODE 3

“Just as we recognise the material harm caused by digitalisation, so must our digital rights work and our solidarity-building praxis also be effective in material ways. We need to build the conditions for digital rights activism to centre communities most affected by these harms.”

In **Decolonisation, Global Solidarity, and Coalition-Building**, we speak to Sarah Chander, a Senior Policy Advisor at EDRI- European Digital Rights, an association of civil and human rights organisations across Europe, and cofounder of Equinox. Sarah discusses how questions of racial justice intersect with questions of digital rights. She dissects how digital rights are human rights and argues that we need to centre this framing when thinking about the implications of digital technologies in our lives. Sarah addresses the myth of universality in technology policy since digital technologies exacerbate existing forms of oppression. She highlights the need to decolonise digital rights such that we can acknowledge that oppressions in the form of racism, sexism, ableism, classism, homophobia, or transphobia have roots in coloniality. Sarah also highlights the importance of solidarity-making and coalition building - across different communities and organisations - both as a strategy and an imperative to understand, share and examine how to develop a global understanding of justice in a digital sphere. Sarah’s work in Decolonising Digital Rights is part of a process initiated by Nani Jansen Reventlow, and Sarah works on the process alongside Laurence Meyer. A blog post on their work is available [here](#), and more on the project is available on the [Digital Freedom Fund](#).

EPISODE 4



In **Feminist Methodologies, Knowledge Creation, and Storytelling**, we talk to Chenai Chair of the Mozilla Foundation about creating a data justice community in Southern Africa. In this episode, Chenai discusses how the work at the intersection of feminism, data, and storytelling involves building and creating more open, safe, and reflexive spaces for people and communities and how solidarity is essential to build more inclusive conversations around data and technology.

She discusses the challenges of being deliberate in this approach such that it centres and ensures that people from marginalised groups are included and influential in making and shaping policy. Chenai talked about her work on building Afro Feminist Futures, her conceptualisations of feminist data, and how it connects with work on data justice and data feminism. Chenai shared her project on feminist methodologies and her work on Afro feminist futures as additional resources to this conversation.

“Digital rights from the ground are a way to focus more on collective action that uses the power of networks to build social movements, as well as participating in the shaping of the public space online and the policies that govern the internet.”



EPISODE 5





“Technology is an instrument of power and has a foundational relationship with constitutional rights in India. This makes digital rights a domain that offers tremendous opportunities to advance conceptions for both individual liberty and social welfare.”

In the **Litigation, Campaigns, and Digital Rights** , we spoke with Apar Gupta, the Executive Director of the Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF) in India. Apar discusses the origins of the organisation as an entity that grew out of the Save the Internet campaign as well as the kind of work that they do from strategic litigation to public campaigns. He also talks about how their work has changed on account of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this episode Apar discusses projects conducted by IFF including Project Panoptic and the Zombie Tracker, and the ways in which the projects were conceptualised and designed. Apar speaks of the importance of building through collaboration, and how working in the digital rights space requires diverse expertise.



EPISODE 6



In the episode titled **Pandemic Politics, Human Rights, and Disinformation** with Vino Lucero, the Project and Communications Coordinator at EngageMedia in Manila, The Philippines, we spoke about journalistic freedom, the technological response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the general state of human rights in The Philippines. This conversation particularly focuses on two emerging issues surrounding the technological response to this pandemic: 1. privacy and data protection, and 2. proliferation of misinformation and disinformation online and in other media. Vino shares examples of improper data practices, inappropriate deployment of technology, and the overlaps between his work as a journalist and a human rights activist.

“If you talk about issues like digital rights and connect it with the things people experience daily, it is much more realistic for them to understand, and then they appreciate that more and can take action. For instance, we speak with students about maintaining digital hygiene in their online classes.”



EPISODE 7

“Digital rights are in constant flux and demand solidarity and cooperation among organisations. The reason that Brazilian activism is strong is because of the ways we work together, coordinate efforts and take advantage of different capabilities among diverse organisations.

Changing institutions and injustice practices demands collective action and a different mindset. Civil society organisations are not simply competing against each other; they are building solidarity and supporting each other, which demands strong governance approaches that are not individualistic and market-based. Our Coalition started with 12 NGOs and now has 55. The challenges are massive but we believe we can overcome them together, with the support of donors.”

We discussed aspects of **Collective Digital Rights, Coalition Building, and Class Actions** with Rafael Zanatta, a lawyer and activist and the co-founder of Data Privacy Brasil, focusing on being a part of the digital rights community in Brazil and the ways in which he and his organisation work towards building a collective understanding of rights through strategizing and engaging with grassroots organisations. Rafael talks about the emergence of an awareness around digital rights in Brazil from initial discussions on the rights of content creators and the role of culture in digital spaces, to the framing of Marco Civil to safeguard internet rights, as well as the challenges of defending Marco Civil with a change in governments. In our discussion, Rafael also spoke of the diversity of expertise that grassroots organisations within this space bring together from storytelling and advocacy, policy, and building normative arguments, and then others who engage in data activism, who use technology and automation in favour of civil society work, shaping technology as a strategy of resistance.

EPISODE 8



Lucie Krahulcova of Digital Rights Watch Australia talks about digital rights campaigning during the pandemic. Lucie shares how her organisation has built a digital rights community at the local level and why focusing on locally-initiated change is the most strategic option for them. Similar to our discussion with Tactical Tech, Digital Rights Watch Australia focuses on connecting with people in their local community and increasing awareness of digital rights.

Lucie discusses the Digital Rights Cities project to incorporate digital rights principles into local governance, the work they are doing on policing in times of COVID-19 as well as their work on rebalancing the digital economy. We also talk about the recent Big Tech v. Big Journalism row in Australia and Lucie updates us on the review of the Australian privacy law. Listen now to learn how Digital Rights Watch Australia is connecting to a range of community members despite on-and-off lockdowns, and how their work is an excellent example of grassroots digital rights action. This episode covers the themes of **Local Digital Governance, Grassroots Campaigning, and Policy Interventions.**

“There is a lot of change you could achieve at the local level. Depending on where you are in the world and how your specific area of the world is divided, the people in your city council, town council or regional councils aren't as used to hearing digital rights arguments. Often, they have a lot more freedom in certain ways to affect the sort of systems and governance frameworks around them.”



EPISODE 9

Finally, in the episode titled **Epistemic Justice, Decolonisation, and Solidarity** we talk with Anasuya Sengupta, the Co-Director and co-founder of Whose Knowledge?

Anasuya discusses the genesis of Whose Knowledge? as a project and campaign aimed to centre knowledge of the world's marginalised communities (the minoritised majority) away from conversations that are currently driven and dominated by Silicon Valley. Anasuya uses examples of projects such as Decolonising the Internet, resources like Our Stories, Our Knowledge, and a fund called Numun Fund, to discuss the importance of acknowledging the power dynamics that underlie the internet as a space, and emphasises the need to be able to reimagine and rebuild it as an epistemically just space. She argues how we need a decolonisation process that moves beyond being a metaphor to something that is materialised through building solidarity and trust. This can be achieved by instituting a centring practice as a method wherein one acknowledges that we are not a single-issue people, and that it is therefore important to embrace the intersectional experiences that people have.

“Our lives are embedded in and thus heavily impacted by the digital, even/especially if we're not all digitally connected in the same ways. The binary "offline" vs. "online" is no longer valid, if it ever was. This means that our practices of solidarity also have to be equally interconnected and embodied across our different worlds and experiences. We can't achieve digital rights and justice without solidarity in action: it's where intention meets honesty.”



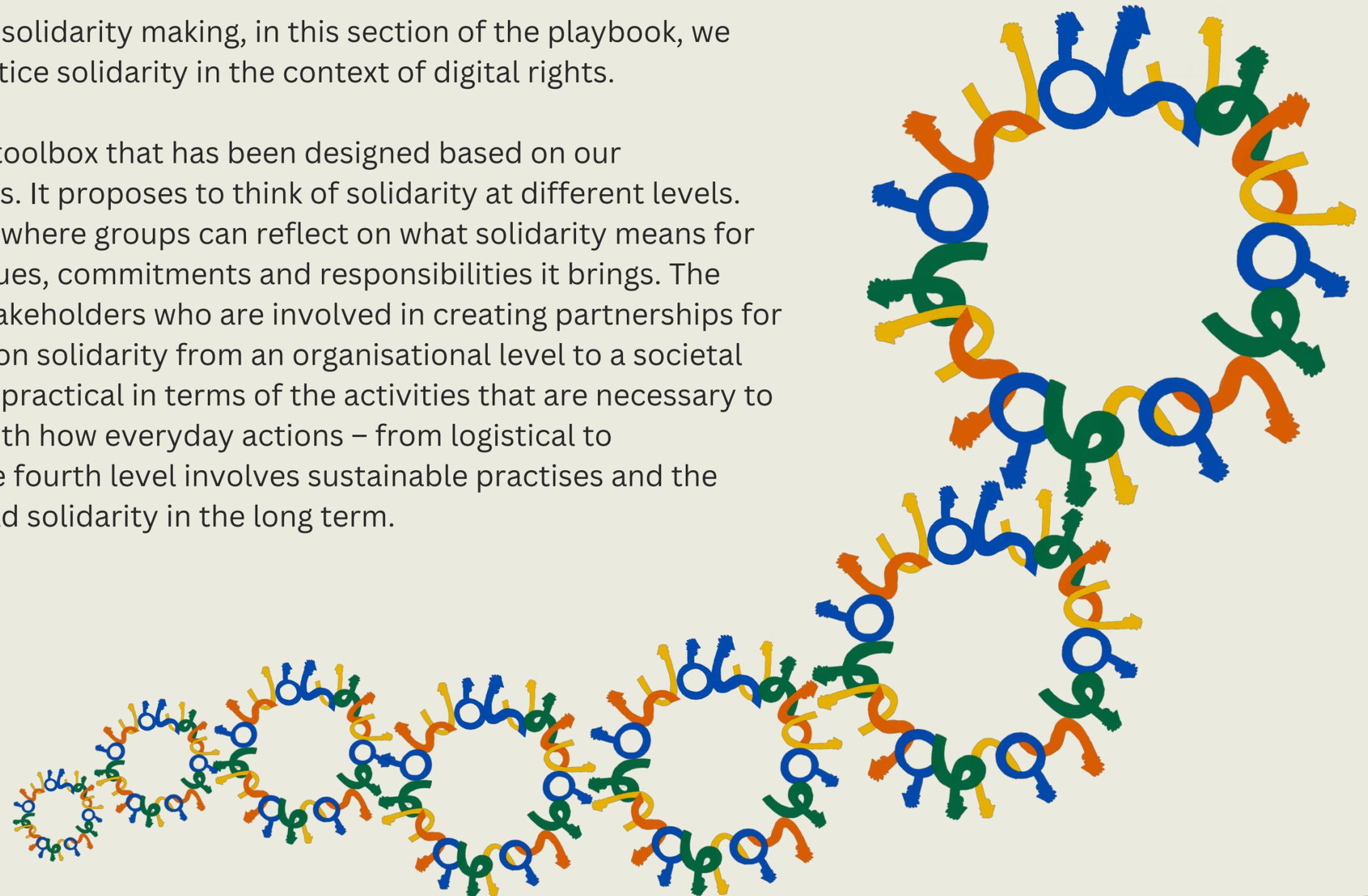
EPISODE 10



THE DIGITAL RIGHTS SOLIDARITY CANVAS

Continuing our earlier conversation on solidarity making, in this section of the playbook, we unpack the ways in which one can practice solidarity in the context of digital rights.

The digital rights solidarity canvas is a toolbox that has been designed based on our conversations during the podcast series. It proposes to think of solidarity at different levels. This includes firstly at an internal level where groups can reflect on what solidarity means for them as a collective in terms of the values, commitments and responsibilities it brings. The second level is relational in terms of stakeholders who are involved in creating partnerships for solidarity. This moves our perspective on solidarity from an organisational level to a societal and community level. The third level is practical in terms of the activities that are necessary to practice solidarity, and is concerned with how everyday actions – from logistical to organisational – can create change. The fourth level involves sustainable practises and the development of tools necessary to build solidarity in the long term.



SOLIDARITY CANVAS

What does solidarity mean to you in your digital rights work?

What are important values that are crucial to you?

What kind of commitments can you expect from your collective?

How do you practice responsibility and how would you allocate it?

Who are important stakeholders and collaborators that will secure digital rights?

What kinds of institutions are important to engage with to build solidarity?

Which communities would you connect with, and how do they strengthen your goals?

What role do individuals play, and how can they both express as well as find solidarity through your work?

What are the activities needed to build solidarity amongst digital rights activists?

How can you build shared understandings and emphasis with your community ?

How do you build accountability in your group?

How could you use storytelling to engineer new audiences?

How can you build solidarity sustainably for the digital rights ecosystem?

What are the everyday challenges of practicing solidarity?

What are the resources required to practice solidarity sustainably?

WHAT DOES SOLIDARITY MEAN TO YOU?

EXERCISE

Take some time to reflect on the idea of solidarity in general, and how it relates to your digital rights work in particular.

How to do this exercise:

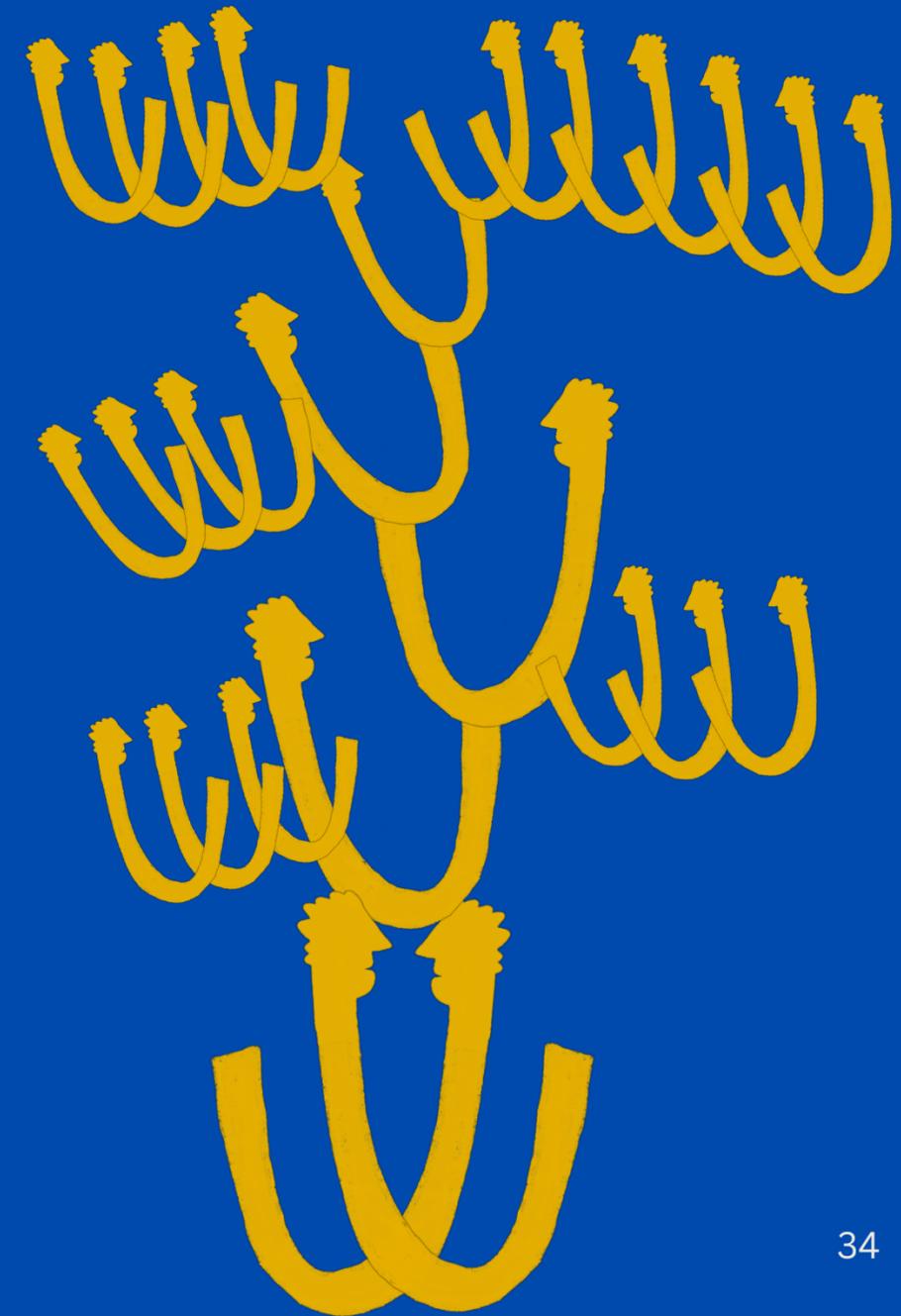
- Arrange a 30-minute undisturbed block of time for your team members. The first part of this exercise can be done asynchronously. Set aside 20 minutes of quiet time for participants to read the previous section and reflect on the concept of solidarity. Participants also have the opportunity to journal how local and international solidarity is visible and can be operationalised in the digital rights sphere.
- For the last ten minutes, participants are invited to synthesise their thoughts in 100-300 words, which can be shared in advance with the rest of the team in preparation for the second part of this exercise that follows.
- For the second part of this exercise, arrange a 1.5-2 hours-long meeting with your team, preferably a few days after the first part so that the participants have had the time to absorb and reflect on their teammates' interpretation of solidarity.



WHO ARE THE IMPORTANT STAKEHOLDERS AND COLLABORATORS?

In our conversations at Resist and Reboot, we had the opportunity to speak to individuals and groups who are contributing through advocacy, storytelling, research, policy, and litigation towards making and shaping how understandings of data governance take place at different spaces in society.

Through these conversations, we have come to understand the importance of delving into different conceptions around what digital rights mean, particularly at various intersections, e.g. of gender, race, sexuality, caste or colonialism, as well as the importance of understanding the concept in the vernacular. These conversations are also deeply embedded in many heterogeneous worlds; worlds where political, social and epistemic realities are different, which implies that in connecting to these distinct realities and taking account of the diversity in people, place and contexts, we have the potential to ground our conversations and make our solidarity more effective. In next section, we introduce how this could be operationalised through a couple of activities.



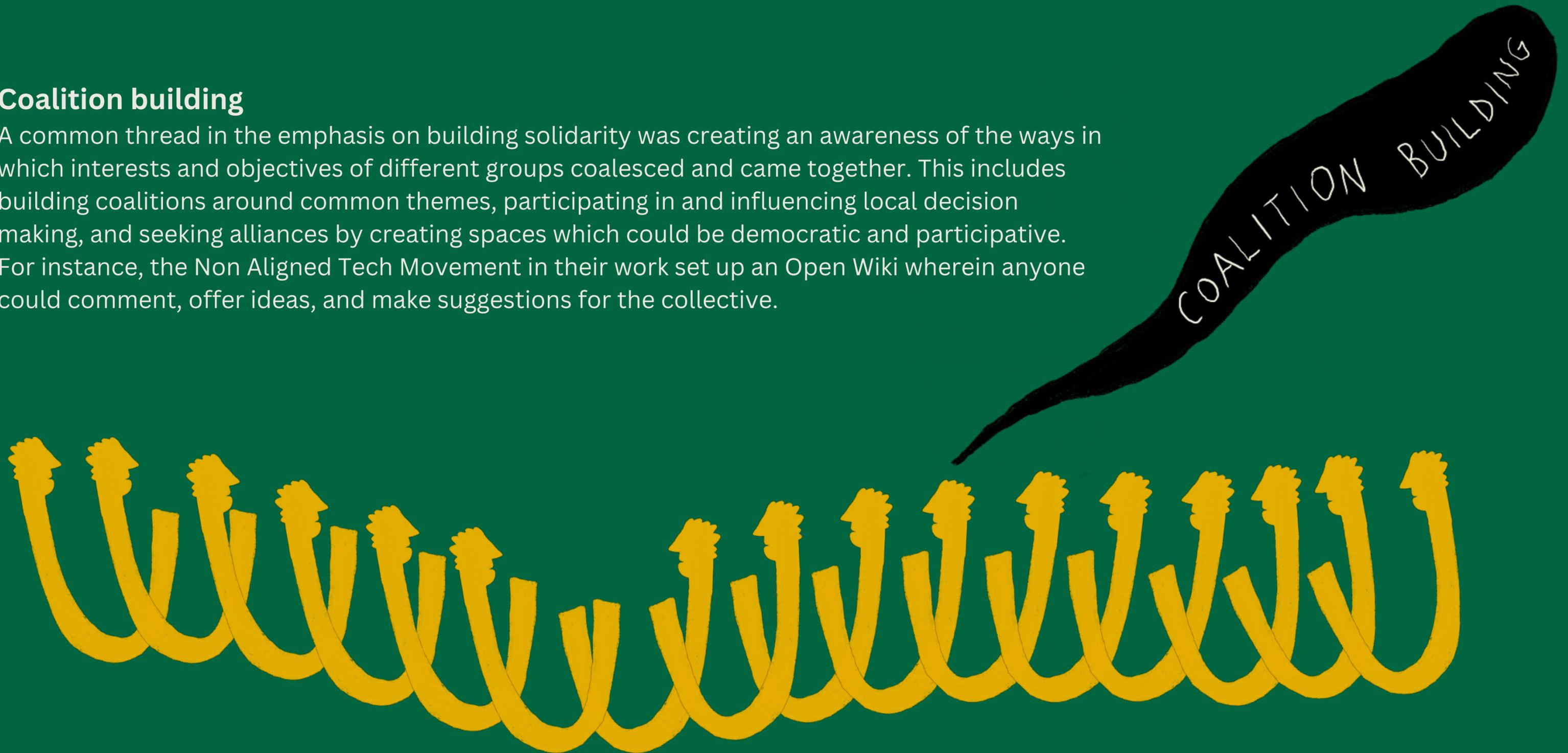
COMMUNITY PRACTICES

Many of the organisations and individuals we spoke to employed a range of methods that influenced the development of an ecosystem centred around safeguarding digital rights.



Coalition building

A common thread in the emphasis on building solidarity was creating an awareness of the ways in which interests and objectives of different groups coalesced and came together. This includes building coalitions around common themes, participating in and influencing local decision making, and seeking alliances by creating spaces which could be democratic and participative. For instance, the Non Aligned Tech Movement in their work set up an Open Wiki wherein anyone could comment, offer ideas, and make suggestions for the collective.



Use of Local partnerships

It might be useful to map out the NGOs, civil society organisations, and other movements in your local context and consider whether there is an opportunity to create partnerships with them. It may also be useful to list the shared values that could help the development and maintenance of this partnership. Local partnerships are useful for building grounded ideas of your work. In its work, 'Digital Rights Watch, Australia' looks at cities as an important site for building conversations around digital rights rather than at a national or transnational level, as they are able to intervene in more contextual ways.



Use of experts

The use of expertise is often a contentious and complex one. In thinking about community practises an important component is to think through who your experts could be. Set aside some time in your next strategy meeting to unpack notions of expertise. Be ready to embrace any discomfort if it arises. Reflect on how your organisation can be more 'bottom-up' and how you will track that. What kind of knowledge and experience are you privileging over others? Does your knowledge creation have a broad base? Are you inviting individuals and communities with lived experience who may not have technical expertise? Are your advisory groups homogeneous?



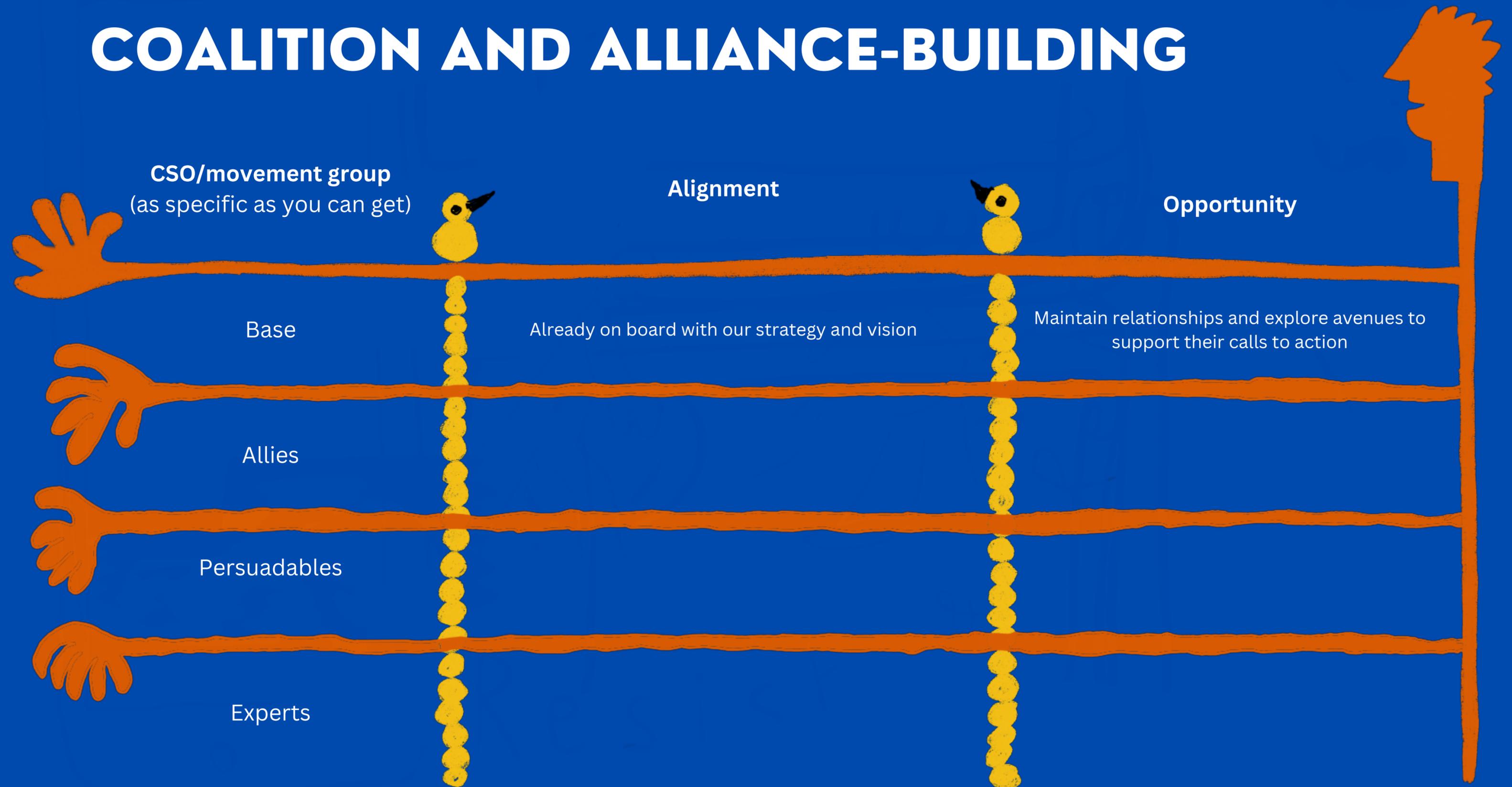
COALITION AND ALLIANCE-BUILDING

Civil Society organisations also create coalitions and alliances to create an alternative to the dominant extractive and colonial technological practices. CSOs play a crucial role in archiving and preserving knowledges that may not serve the status quo.

For example, Whose Knowledge? aims to centre the world's 'minoritised majority' in knowledge-creation for re-imagining and re-designing the internet. To create an internet for all, Whose Knowledge? works with women, people of colour, LGBTQIA+ people, Indigenous Peoples and others from the so-called Global South. On the next page is a checklist for mapping a network of the CSOs / movements where there is alignment or opportunity to build a connection.



COALITION AND ALLIANCE-BUILDING



WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES THAT CAN HELP BUILD SOLIDARITY ?

An important component of building solidarity is to engage with practice. We focus on themes that relate to building a shared emphasis of work, outlining the implications of accountability, and finally the value of storytelling for the wider community.



Emphasis

Many organisations seek to build a local and embedded focus, wherein they translate global issues into a local context so that they resonate with everyday reality and practices. This approach involves engaging with local actors who may not self-identify as digital rights advocates, but who have a standing and can speak to larger questions of social justice.

In order to build solidarity, a key component is to determine the context within which your intervention will take place. This entails examining the region, area, priorities, and challenges that emerge in order to ensure that solidarity develop as a praxis.

Accountability

In our conversations, we spoke to different organisations about the importance of developing accountability frameworks where not only was funding and project design transparent and clear in terms of what principles guide it, but also that there was an opportunity to be open to critique from supporters of the organisations.

In this exercise we break down the idea of accountability as a practice that requires us to engage deeply with different stakeholders.





Storytelling & communication

Storytelling is used as a technique to strengthen the ways in which organisations can communicate government policy, for instance, through data collection, infographics, and social media outreach. In order to build a storytelling approach, the following questions are important to consider:

- Who is our audience?
Communication targeting policymakers may be quite different than communication intended for the general public
- What is your positionality?
- Does your organisation espouse neutrality? How do you toe the line between inclusiveness and neutrality? Does your local community support your stance?
- Who does your story represent?
- How are you inspiring local actors to be more equitable? Who are you excluding? Why?
- How do you motivate the local community to broaden their understanding?

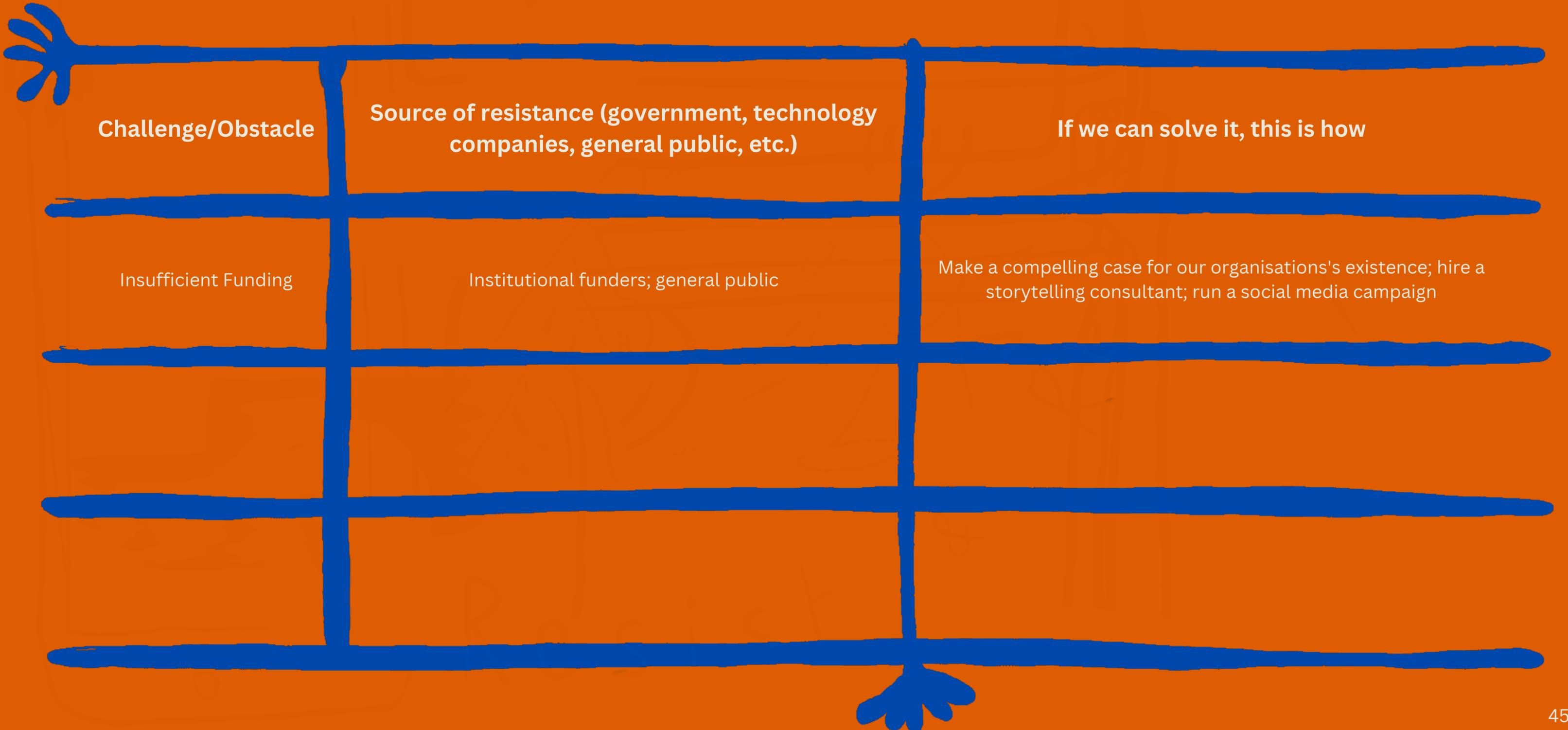
HOW TO MAKE SOLIDARITY MORE SUSTAINABLE?

In addressing the question of sustainability, we first argue that it is important to think through the challenges that CSOs face, and how these challenges affect their work in the digital rights space. In this sense we would like to do a needs assessment of the problem before looking for a solution.

How to do this exercise: Arrange a 45-minute meeting with your team, longer if you have a bigger group, but preferably under two hours. Try to schedule at least 7-10 minutes of speaking time per person. This will ensure that everyone is heard and has the opportunity to convey the nuance of their points. Let this be a space of learning and openness. Set aside 15 minutes of quiet time for participants to read the previous section and jot down their points for this table. The facilitator can make a table similar to the one below on a flip chart or on a digital whiteboard.



HOW TO MAKE SOLIDARITY MORE SUSTAINABLE?



Challenge/Obstacle	Source of resistance (government, technology companies, general public, etc.)	If we can solve it, this is how
Insufficient Funding	Institutional funders; general public	Make a compelling case for our organisations's existence; hire a storytelling consultant; run a social media campaign

MAKING SOLIDARITY SUSTAINABLE

Centring justice

If you are a young organisation or restructuring your organisation, it is important to plan how you can centre justice and equity, be intersectional, and have your practice reflect your values. It may also be useful to list the constituencies you would consult as you lay the groundwork of your next project.

If you are an older organisation, reflect on how you can capitalise on your existing roots within the community and provide support to new organisations / activists.



Sharing leadership

If you are in a position of leadership in a civil society organisation, including any governance position, the Board of Directors, or Board of Trustees, reflect on how you can enable the organisation to be flexible as it responds to emerging needs and ensure that the organisation is quick to pivot to new strategies. Also examine how you can bring on new voices to ensure there are new conversations, and new tables that are leading organisations.

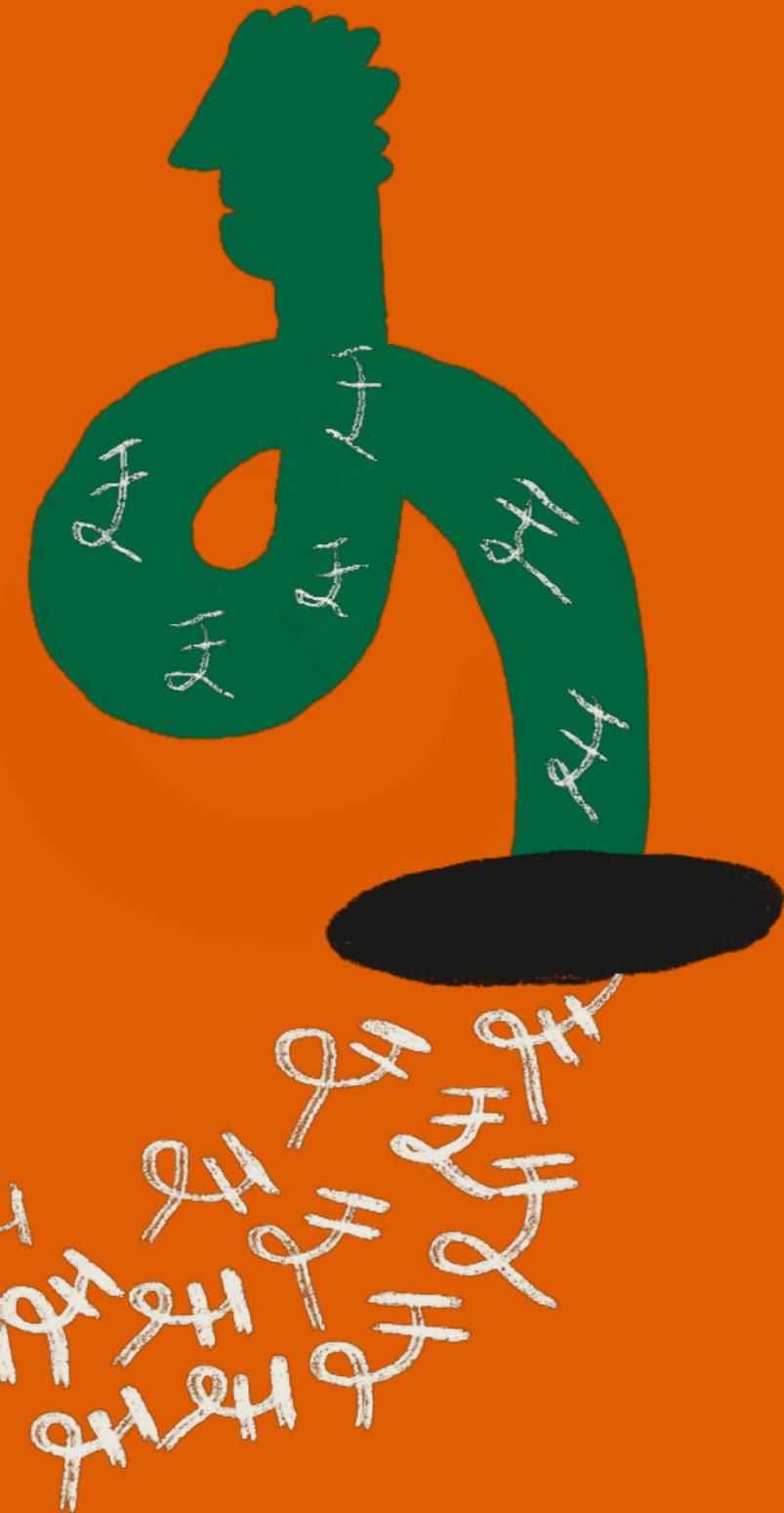


Craft a funding mission

Funding is often a big roadblock for digital rights work, not just because it is short term and often precarious, but also because there are conflicts in terms of the priorities of funders and the impacts of digital rights work. Here are some questions to get you started.

- What is your mission?
- How can grants support your mission?
- What are your redlines on funding?
- What are alternative funding models you can pursue?

Organisations are trying to reimagine grant making; for instance, the Numun Fund is specifically looking at how to support projects that work on human rights and social justice, but through building feminist resilience and networks.



Building research communities

Civil society organisations also collect data and conduct research on the impact of digital technologies in peoples' lives. For example, My Data Rights conducted a feminist review of AI, privacy, and data protection to enhance digital rights in South Africa. Similarly, groups like the Internet Freedom Foundation in India, Body & Data in Nepal, and Data Privacy Brasil conduct research to map the state of laws and regulations surrounding data governance and social justice issues. This research forms the basis of advocacy campaigns and strategic litigation. For example, the Internet Freedom Foundation has provided legal assistance to other CSOs, helped climate justice group Fridays for Future India to protect its website from threats of action under anti-terrorism laws, and has supported numerous journalists and journalist bodies in litigation relating to the internet blockade in Jammu & Kashmir.



Awareness-raising and mobilisation

Tactical Tech, a Berlin-based CSO, creates tools and live exhibitions to engage community members in debates surrounding data governance. Their core strategy is to meet people where they are, present challenges surrounding data collection and usage, equip them to ask questions, and support them in creating resistance to the harmful status quo practices. Through their global network, Tactical Tech partners with local organisations to highlight data practices prevalent in the local community. This practice creates space for place-based articulations while supporting local organisations with conceptual tools. Their Data Detox Kit, for example, helps people ask questions and develop solutions surrounding data collection from their online activities. The result: communities are able to articulate their concerns and prioritise the issues that affect them. In our experience, this tailor-made resistance is best equipped to strengthen the collective conscience surrounding data governance issues. Those closest to the problem are the best placed to form a resistance to it and propose the most inclusive and equitable solutions.



MAKING SOLIDARITY SUSTAINABLE

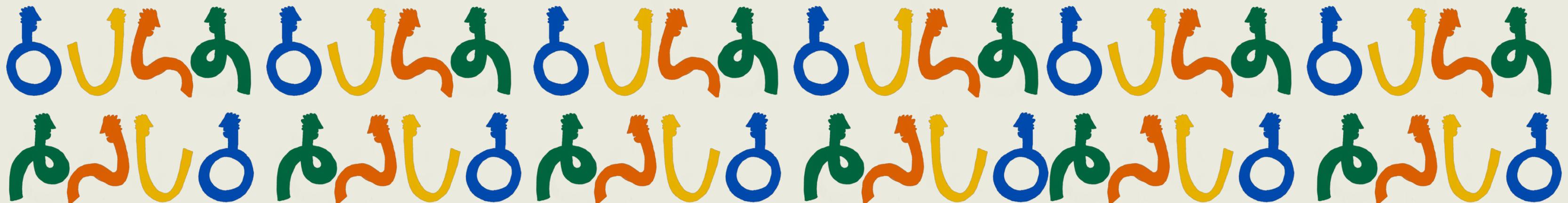
Strategy	How to operationalise?	Timeline	Staff member responsible for the project
Strategic litigation	Narrow down the three possible avenues to one (confidential)	FY22 Q3 - FY23 Q4	Head of Legal (advised by Head of Projects)
Mobilisation	Follow up with the local democracy and transparency consortium	FY21 Q4	Senior Campaigns Consultant (supported by Communications Associate)
Storytelling			
Research			
Advocacy			
Awareness-raising			
Coalition-building			

CONCLUSION

Building solidarity is an ongoing and continuous process that manifests both internally as individuals create their own organisations, as well as externally, as they find coalitions and communities.

In this playbook, we reflect on why solidarity emerges as an important consideration in digital rights work through the various conversations from the podcast, which reflect on solidarity as a practice, as symbolism, and as an aspiration. We wish to place the importance of solidarity front and centre as digital rights and data governance frameworks are developed across different sectors and contexts, and at the same time, seek to operationalise this notion through exercises and activities.

We hope that the playbook is a document that can be shaped by its reader, and that through its use, new ideas of how to practice solidarity can continue to emerge.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This playbook is an outcome of a series of very rich and thought-provoking conversations with digital rights activists around the world. We are very grateful to our speakers for their knowledge and insights, as well as their generosity in spending time with us during the series.

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