Resiliency+ FRAMEWORK

A Guide for Civil Society to Thrive in Uncertain Times

CIVICUS

PARTNERSGLOBAL
Together for Democratic Change

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ABOUT **PARTNERS**GLOBAL

THE PARTNERSGLOBAL MODEL OF SUSTAINABLE IMPACT INVESTING

PartnersGlobal was created in 1989 to build the sustainable capacity of civil society in response to the enormous changes in Central and Eastern Europe after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 90's. Through the organization's work, citizen-led organizations could contribute positively to a process of change and conflict management in that region. **Partners**Global has been investing in local leaders, local organizations, and local solutions, cultivating a global network of change makers that work for peaceful and democratic change. Our approach to supporting local civil society leaders marries seed funding support with a process of organizational development. This sustainable impact investment model has yielded long-lasting results. Today, the **Partners** Network represents a rich diversity of 22 civil society organizations and functions as a global civil society platform whose members are among the most respected organizations in their home countries and regions. Network members have worked in over 50 countries amidst highly polarized political climates, weak civil society sectors, ethnic and social conflict, and post-war transitions.

PartnersGlobal and The **Partners** Network Centers have spent 30 years learning and adapting to the challenges of closing space. Through this, we have learned that even when a CSO can boast autonomy, financial viability, and programmatic excellence, it remains extremely vulnerable to a range of threats that can quite suddenly and violently destroy its future. In response, we have expanded our approach to organizational strengthening by incorporating an enhanced and nuanced set of strategies, tools, and tactics to increase organizational resiliency in the face of new threats posed by closing civic space. Now, more than ever, it is critical to share our successful experience with civil society organizations around the world.

ABOUT CIVICUS

CIVICUS is a global alliance of civil society organizations and individuals dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society for a more just, inclusive, and sustainable world.   The alliance works to protect fundamental civic freedoms by defending civic freedoms and democratic values; strengthening the power of people to organize, mobilize and take action; and empowering a more accountable, effective, and innovative civil society.   CIVICUS strives to promote excluded voices, especially from the Global South, and has a growing alliance of more than 4,000 members in more than 175 countries. These three strategic goals guide CIVICUS's work, reflecting the belief that people-powered and collective action is at the center of transformative change.

HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Drawing on over 20 years of experience, CIVICUS consistently builds assets and explores new ways to strengthen citizen action and civil society by:

- Building solidarity among civil society across borders and at scale
- Supporting civil society to connect with others
- Producing timely and world-class knowledge and analysis
- Advocating for open spaces and systemic change
- Amplifying underrepresented voices
- Promoting resourcing of diverse and resilient civil societies
- Innovating and incubating bold initiatives
- Promoting, modeling, and disseminating civil society best practices

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Resiliency+
Framework

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The primary audience of the **RESILIENCY+ FRAMEWORK** is local and national civil society organizations and leaders. The secondary audience is the donor community, which is simultaneously developing a parallel Resilient Funding Framework that must be integrated with Resiliency+ for continuity and growth across the sector. Additionally, other civil society actors such as activists, community-based organizations, social movements, and other informal structures may also find the framework useful to adapt and apply to their respective realities and needs.

The **RESILIENCY+ FRAMEWORK** is also a useful and necessary resource for international audiences to continue to learn and reflect on best practices and lessons learned from the application of the strategies, tools, and tactics.

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS
The main authors of the framework are Roselie Vasquez Yetter, Global Director for Civil Society and Alyson Lyons, Senior Advisor to Global Initiatives, both of PartnersGlobal.

THE CASE FOR RESILIENCY

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights:

"If space exists for civil society to engage, there is a greater likelihood that all rights will be better protected. Conversely, the closing of civil society space, and threats and reprisals against civil society, are early warning signs of instability."

Civic space is the cornerstone of a healthy society that champions democratic principles and ideals, and an essential component for the promotion and advancement of human rights and fulfillment of basic human needs. A dynamic and participatory civic space ensures that the interests, needs, and concerns of civil society are heard and protected. An open and free enabling environment is essential for a vibrant civil society to take root, hold government accountable, advocate for positive change, and deliver critical services to the population. Therefore, states are responsible for creating and maintaining that safe space in which **civil society**—defined by CIVICUS as **the arena outside of the family, the state, and the market which is created by individual and collective actions, organisations and institutions to advance shared interests**—can operate free from hindrance and insecurity.

Civic Space
The ability for civil society and individuals to organise, participate and communicate without hindrance, and in doing so, influence the political and social structures around them.
-CIVICUS

The international community has recognized the important role of civil society participation in maintaining open and free societies. Yet despite international efforts to formalize the inclusion of civil society in decision-making and other processes, the ability for civil society to operate has, in reality, been shrinking at a rapid pace. The past decade has been marred by closing civic space, with governments applying pressures and threats to deter civil society from operating or being perceived as legitimate actors to hold governments accountable.

This issue is not new. The work of civil society has always been difficult in authoritarian regimes. Today however, democratically elected governments around the world increasingly resort to practices that hinder the work of civil society actors, particularly those promoting democracy, human rights, transparency, and civic participation. From historical mistrust of civil society getting involved in issues considered exclusive to the political realm, to direct attempts from government officials to consolidate their power by silencing critical voices or opposing views, this new trend manifests itself in a range of ways. From Egypt to Ecuador and Mozambique to Myanmar, civil society faces ever-growing challenges not only to their work, but also their own existence.In short, **the restriction of civic space is now the norm rather than the exception.**

The Road to the Resiliency+ Framework

In 2016, **Partners**Global convened its annual **Partners** Network meeting to identify the common challenges across geographies to plan for collaborative action in 2017. The leading issue that emerged across all 22 Network Centers was **the impact of closing civic space on their ability to function freely and without threats to their operation or security.** The most troubling revelation was that this issue had as many drivers as countries assessed.

CIVICUS' findings within its Alliance and its *2017 State of Civil Society Report* (which identified several urgent trends that continue to emerge and threaten the space for civic participation) reinforced the outcomes of this meeting. Most critically perhaps, the report noted that just three percent of the world's population live in countries where civic space is fully open, with civic space being seriously constrained in over half of all United

Nations member states. This stark reality pushed **Partners**Global to action and through a strategic partnership with CIVICUS, embarked on the development of the **RESILIENCY+ FRAMEWORK**.

The **RESILIENCY+ FRAMEWORK** was designed through a process of co-creation with the participation of experts and CSO practitioners around the globe. The **RESILIENCY+ FRAMEWORK** draws upon research and insights from the latest academic and practitioner thinking on resiliency, complex operating environments and civic space threats, and civil society organizational models and capacities.

During the initial phase of data collection and assumption-testing, **Partners**Global interviewed more than 45 civil society leaders, network members, donor representatives, and academic experts across regions, sectors, and varying degrees of closing and opening civic space to identify the key elements for strengthening resiliency efforts. Some of these included activists from Hong Kong and Uganda, service provision-oriented NGOs based in Kosovo and Mexico, human rights groups from Ecuador and South Sudan, CSO coalition and network representatives from Serbia and India, and members of the donor community including foundations and international aid agencies. This participatory method of data collection was complemented by compiling and synthesizing existing knowledge and tools on CSO sustainability and resiliency.

Next, the resources were cross-referenced with recent analyses and examples of how CSOs can individually and collectively protect their role in society and truth-tested by convening internal feedback sessions and external focus groups with diverse stakeholders from various geographic, political, and security contexts (including in Albania, Kazakhstan, Senegal, and Serbia).

WHAT IS RESILIENCY?

The term "**resiliency**" (from Latin resilire = bounce off) has been used since the 1950s in natural science academic circles to describe the environment's ability to adapt and respond to threats and changes to various ecosystems. In the 1970s, psychology and education spheres adopted the term to describe the human capacity to withstand the shocks and trauma of crisis situations. More recently, resiliency has been creeping into international development and peacebuilding spaces as a component of sustainability where "sustainability aims to put the world back into balance, and resilience looks for ways to manage an imbalanced world." In other words, sustainability is the end goal, the perfect system, the vision that we seek to attain in a context that is conducive to operating under normal conditions. Resiliency is required in moving along the path towards sustainability and in facing changing dynamics in that environment. The essence therefore of "**resiliency**" is:

an ability to anticipate and adapt swiftly and purposefully to shocks or impacts in such a way as to not only survive, but also thrive in an uncertain environment.

The rise of resiliency within the international development discourse and its integration as a concept across a variety of agencies and pillars led to a virtual explosion of resiliency-focused frameworks that seek to support civil society. They evolved in the context of disaster and risk reduction, climate change policy, food security, environmental sustainability, and livelihoods, among other topics. However, **none to date look at organizational resiliency in civil society in the face of closing civic space**.

FROM ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCY
The idea of sustainability coincided with the emergence of organizational development for civil society organizations in the late 90s/early 2000s. The goal of traditional organizational

development was to capacitate CSOs to a level enabling them to be sustainable, or able to function beyond the project cycle with adequate human, material, and financial resources necessary to operate normally in **conditions that are conducive to civic participation.** Core capacities such as risk analysis, strategic planning, human-resource management, communications and business development, and establishing organizational and financial systems and protocols are key components to any traditional organizational development process.

This type of support remains critically important; however, traditional organizational development processes were not required to consider what the needs of CSOs may be if their operating environment continued to become increasingly inhospitable. The impacts of closing civic space demand rethinking traditional organizational development models geared towards sustainability and focusing not only on the idyllic end state of equilibrium, but what is necessary to navigate in the short-term the twists and turns on the road to reaching that end state. **Organizational resiliency enables civil society to adapt to the impacts of quickly changing external conditions in order to prepare and respond effectively.** Organizational resiliency requires looking at the entire system and understanding the interconnections, influences, and feedback loops between elements within that system in order to tackle issues more effectively from a preventive and responsive approach.

DEFINITIONS OF RESILIENCY

For the purpose of the **RESILIENCY+ FRAMEWORK**, "**resiliency**" is understood on four different levels — individual, organizational, sectoral, and systemic.

Individual Resiliency is a set of behaviors, thoughts, and actions that promote personal wellbeing and mental health of an individual, whether part of an organization or not. People are able to withstand, adapt to, and recover from stress and adversity— while maintaining or returning to a state of mental health and wellbeing— by using effective coping strategies.

Civic Space System

(government, private sector, citizens, media)

Sectoral

Organizational

Individual

Organizational Resiliency is the ability of an organization to have the adaptive capacity necessary to prepare and recover quickly from the impacts of a dynamic and quickly changing external environment.

Sectoral Resiliency is the ability for civil society organizations, other civic groupings, and individual activists to effectively communicate and collaborate as a whole to both manage, adapt to, and overcome challenges in a changing environment.

Systems Resiliency is the ability for the civil society sector to identify various complex elements that exist within their realm of operations (people, institutions, attitudes, etc.), as well as the interconnections and interactions between those elements that lead to certain feedback loops, events, and behaviors (i.e. manifestations of threats) in order to determine what strategies and interventions work best to adapt to impacts of interactions.
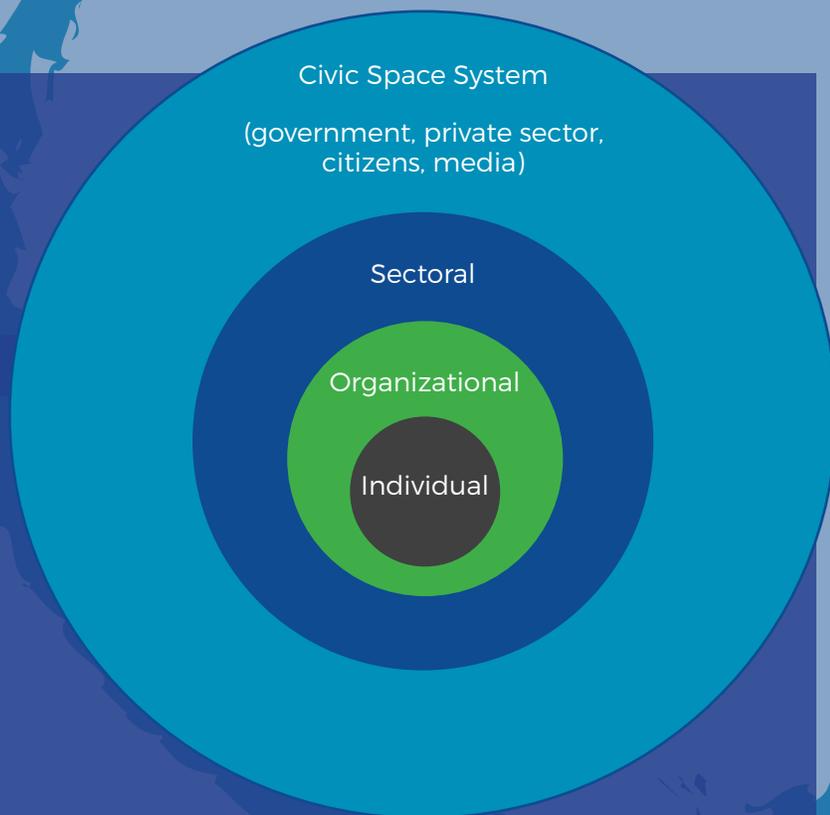
CIVIC SPACE IMPACTS ON CIVIL SOCIETY RESILIENCY

Civil society organizations (CSOs) fulfill many important roles, including fostering citizen participation, exercising accountability in governance, advocating for policy change, and delivering essential services to otherwise underrepresented and marginalized communities. Closing civic space manifests as impacts on civil society organizations' ability to function and operate in several ways. Throughout the research and interview process, the following set of civic space threats emerged consistently across geographic boundaries and civil society actors:

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS: Constraints that are intentionally placed on civil society actors, organizations, and the sector to render it difficult, and at times impossible, for civil society organizations to be able to receive funding necessary for their operations and functionality.

RESTRICTIVE AND POLITICIZED LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: Increased restrictions and politicization of the legal sphere occurs when measures used by governments constrain CSOs from their efforts to engage communities in the social and political development of their country.

HARASSMENT AND DIRECT ATTACKS: The potential for or existence of violence perpetrated on individuals or property of civil society leaders, staff, and organizations.

DIVISIVE NARRATIVES AND CONTROL OF MEDIA: Government tactics that control messaging and shape public perception of civil society with the goal of delegitimizing and undermining the sector.

FRAGMENTED AND ISOLATED CIVIL SOCIETY SECTOR: Government strategy to divide and conquer the civil society sector by singling out certain actors and/or organizations that represent political threats or whose work focuses on controversial topics.

STATE SURVEILLENCE: When governments harness technology to monitor movements, transactions, and other aspects of an organization's operations, thereby instilling a sense of paranoia and fear into the psychology of an organization's staff and partners.

EMERGING CONFLICT DYNAMICS: The presence of factors that put the overall stability and security of the state and its citizens at risk, and render it difficult for an organization to carry out normal daily functions and actions.

While this list of the most common threats validates and expands upon existing research of peer organizations and research institutes, it alone does not answer **WHY** or **WHEN** civil society is susceptible. What emerged from the research was an additional list of internal threats that when present, renders an organization vulnerable to the impacts of civic space threats. The list of vulnerabilities is as follows:

SUSTAINABILITY SOLUTIONS FOR RESILIENCY PROBLEMS: When an organization engages in problem solving and planning from a mentality of "normal operations in conditions that are conducive to civic participation" rather than acknowledging that the environmental conditions are increasingly hostile which requires adaptive capacity to adequately prepare for and respond to the shocks of the changes.

UNRESPONSIVE AND OUTDATED ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS: When an organization adopts a rigid structure and operating model that is unable to adapt quickly and ensure the organization's viability when civic space shocks pressure the organization to reduce or cease functioning.

LACK OF ADAPTIVE, INCLUSIVE AND INTER-GENERATIONAL LEADERSHIP: When the leadership structure is unable – or unwilling – to recognize the need to diversify, mobilize staff, make decisive changes, and reshape organizational norms and culture, thereby rendering them unable to respond effectively and swiftly to shifts in civic space.

WEAK ATTENTION TO STAFF WELL-BEING: When the mental, physical and emotional needs of staff are not an organizational priority, leading to inadequate resources and/or mechanisms for staff in times of need.

WEAK LEVERAGE OF NETWORKS: When an organization does not identify and harness the resources within its own networks of other civil society organizations, stakeholders, and/or constituents effectively to aid in the preparation and response to shifts in civic space.

CONVENTIONAL APPROACH TO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: When an organization that relies on long-standing fundraising strategies centered on projects and traditional donors is at risk of financial insecurity because it is unable – or unwilling – to think creatively about revenue diversification, building strategic non-traditional partnerships ,and exploring new avenues for income.

DISCONNECT WITH CONSTITUENTS: When an organization becomes more responsive to its donors than to the communities that it seeks to support or advocate on behalf of, resulting in a crisis of legitimacy and vulnerability to government attempts to undermine the organization during times of shifting civic space.

LIMITED ATTENTION TO ALL THINGS COMMUNICATIONS: When an organization does not invest sufficient time, energy, and resources into building a comprehensive and adaptive communications strategy that provides guidance on how to talk about the organization, its positive contributions to society, and its success at living up to its mission, both to internal and external audiences. The decreased attention or absence of a robust communications component can exacerbate the risks posed by the other vulnerabilities noted above.

The greater the extent of internal vulnerabilities, the more at risk an organization is in their increasingly hostile external environments (see graphic below). Therefore, in order to navigate civic space shocks, an organization must be adequately prepared and increase their level of resiliency.

Fragmented/
Isolated Civil
Society Sector

The
Surveillance
State

Harassment
& Direct
Attacks

Weak
Leverage
of Networks

Disconnect
with
Constituents

Limited
Attention
to All Things
Communications

Lack of
Adaptive, Inclusive,
Inter-Generational
Leadership

Financial
Constraints

Emerging
Conflict
Dynamics

Civil Society Organization

Sustainability
Solutions to
Resiliency
Problems

Conventional
Approach to
Business
Development

Unresponsive
& Outdated
Org Models

Weak Attention
to Staff
Wellbeing

Divisive
Narratives/
Control of
Media

Restrictive
& Politicized
Legal Environment

Object 1: A civil society organization with all internal threats present is highly vulnerable to an operating context facing numerous external civic space threats

Object 2: A civil society organization with half of the internal threats is less vulnerable to an operating context facing numerous external civic space threats

Fragmented/
Isolated Civil
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Legal Environment
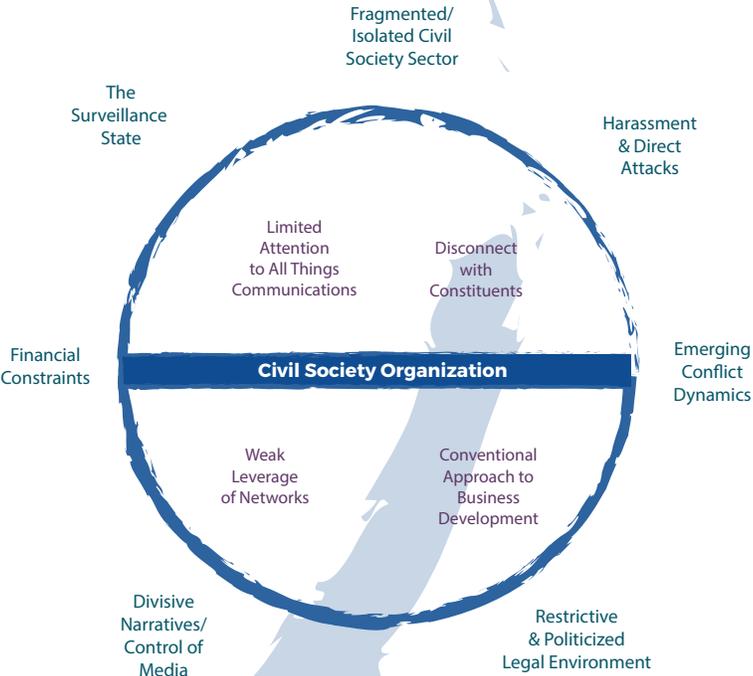
FACTORS OF RESILIENCY

How does an organization know when it is resilient? What are the overarching factors and more specific indicators that can be assessed to gauge an organization's level of resiliency in the face of closing civic space? Drawing upon previous studies and reports by McKinsey (organizational development), McManus (organizational resiliency in New Zealand); Lee, Vargo, and Seville (Developing a Tool to Measure and Compare Organizations' Resilience); the Balkan Civil Society Development Network (Monitoring Matrix on Enabling Environment for Civil Society); and others such as the indicators of closing space found in ICNL, CIVICUS, and Freedom House's monitors, seven core factors were identified that contribute to organizational resiliency in the face of shifting civic space. The factors are defined as follows:
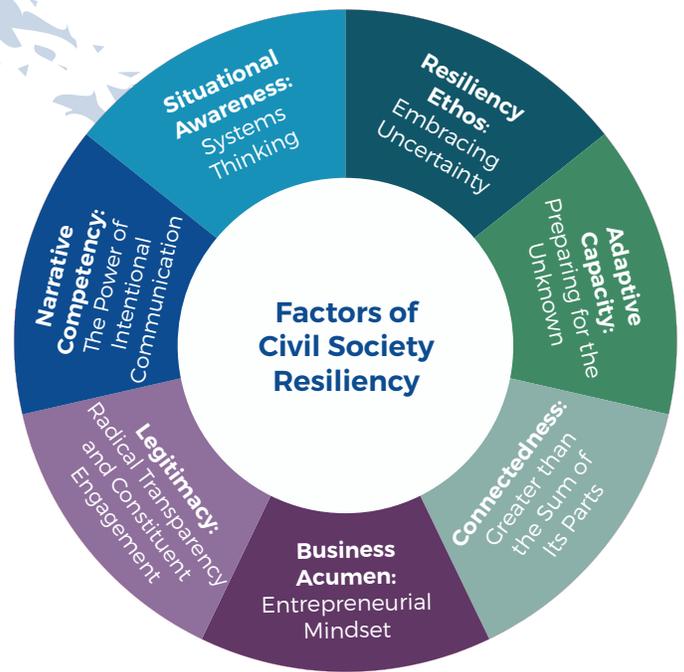
SITUATIONAL AWARENESS: SYSTEMS THINKING

Internally, organizations are complex systems. Simultaneously, they exist within even larger societal systems. Maintaining an awareness of the actors and dynamics at each of these levels and using that awareness to inform decision-making allows organizations to address threats and capitalize on opportunities.

RESILIENCE ETHOS: EMBRACING UNCERTAINTY

Resiliency is a set of skills, a dedicated process and, more importantly, a mindset that allow an organization to embrace uncertainty and endure and recover from setbacks.

Resilience requires a culture of creative planning, flexibility, continued learning, and self-care embedded across all levels. In this culture, resilience issues are key considerations in strategic planning and program implementation.

ADAPTIVE CAPACITY: PREPARING FOR THE UNKNOWN

The ability to act in anticipation of or in response to threats, vulnerabilities, or opportunities within changing civic space is essential to organizational resiliency. This adaptive capacity is built by cultivating innovation, creativity, strong leadership, clear communication, positive working relationships, and a shared organizational vision.

CONNECTEDNESS: GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

Strong organizations are purposefully and actively connected internally, with constituents, within the sector and across sectors. This allows them to proactively manage change and build communication pathways to inform decision-making and increase preparedness.

BUSINESS ACUMEN: ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET

To capitalize on new opportunities, create value, innovate, and effectively network, organizations must maintain an entrepreneurial mindset that enables access to diversified funding, strategic alliances, innovative service delivery, and quick recovery from civic space shocks.

LEGITIMACY: RADICAL TRANSPARENCY AND CONSTITUENT ENGAGEMENT

Legitimacy is needed to ensure both domestic and international public support in order to endure sudden or extended changes in the civic space. A culture and processes to ensure transparency and accountability to both donors and constituents are indispensable elements to build connections and trust, solidifying an organization's legitimacy in the space.

NARRATIVE COMPETENCY: THE POWER OF INTENTIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

To understand the power of intentional communications to better connect with the public and other stakeholders in the civic space. Engaging with public narratives requires a posture of curiosity to explore how others make meaning of complex issues and policies, to carefully identify narrative frames and tensions within society to communicate more effectively with those who think differently. Competency in this area implies self-reflection of an organization's existing cognitive biases, so that we do not communicate in a way that assumes the public makes meaning of our issues in the same way we do and we adapt our communications strategies accordingly.

The purpose of the **RESILIENCY+ FRAMEWORK** is to accompany CSOs on a journey of **identifying drivers of and threats to their viability (both internal and external) and develop a path forward, drawing upon various resources and peer-to-peer support to increase their resiliency in the face of dynamic civic spaces.**

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCY

The **RESILIENCY+ FRAMEWORK** adheres to a set of guiding principles that are essential to organizations that are experiencing changes to their civic space. These principles are informed by systems thinking, scenario planning, and adaptive planning and management concepts that shape the journey to resiliency. They are:

1. **ALWAYS LOOK AT THE ENTIRE SYSTEM & ANTICIPATE CHANGES.** An organization activates its adaptive qualities to prepare for and/or respond to present or emerging changes or threats by both regularly assessing the external environment and internal operational capacities and devising multiple strategies and tactics that apply to different possible scenarios.

2. **EMBRACE ADAPTATION AND ENCOURAGE ITERATIVE LEARNING.** Learning spurs creative problem-solving that can have a significant impact on an organization's ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Even when results are counter-productive, the lessons gleaned from that experience can be harnessed and utilized in thinking through new solutions.

3. **PRIORITIZE DO NO HARM.** Traditionally, the principles of Do No Harm have been applied to interventions and initiatives in any given context - namely, that an intervention will cause as little harm as possible on contextual dynamics - and various levels of beneficiaries of the intervention. In today's shifting political realities, it is critical that organizations apply a Do No Harm process internally at the organizational level so as to ensure the safety and security of staff and others working with or associated with the organization.

4. **HARNESS THE POWER OF CONNECTEDNESS.** We are only as great as the sum of our parts. Harnessing connectivity—both horizontally across organizations and networks within the sector and vertically with other partners, stakeholders, constituents, and citizens—and maintaining an inclusive environment remain critically important in realizing the full potential of civil society resiliency.

THE RESILIENCY+ PROCESS

The RESILIENCY+ PROCESS is a holistic, yet flexible approach to improving an organization's level of resiliency. The process is informed by the principles and methodological approaches of scenario planning, systems thinking, and adaptive planning and implementation. It includes two levels of analysis (internal and external), the development of a series of actions that reflect the outcomes of the analyses (collectively called the Resiliency+ Roadmap), and an iterative learning implementation process that imbeds frequent and intentional ongoing reflection, assessment of the environmental dynamics, and deliberation on the way forward. This integrated process (depicted in the graphic below) leads civil society organizations on a journey towards increased resiliency.

Analyze internal and external dynamics

Capture trends for scenario planning

Devise actions for resiliency priorities

Devise alternate actions for different scenarios

Evaluate impact on resiliency and generate lessons learned

Implement actions for resiliency priorities

PIT STOP

Internal vulnerabilities changed: Adapt course
Option A Option B

PIT STOP

No change. Stay the course.

PIT STOP

Implement actions for resiliency priorities

PITSTOP

No change. Stay the course.

PIT STOP

Internal vulnerabilities changed: Adapt course
Option A Option B

PIT STOP   PIT STOP

Implement actions for resiliency priorities

PITSTOP

Context changed: Adapt course
Option A Option B

PIT STOP

Context changed: Adapt course
Option A Option B

PIT STOP   PIT STOP

Evaluate impact on resiliency and generate lessons learned

SYSTEMS THINKING. Systems thinking is a way of viewing the world as a web of relationships. It focuses on interactions and linkages between elements within any given environment, combined comprising that environment's system. When employing a systems thinking mindset, one can move between viewing the big picture of the system and looking more intimately at the patterns that emerge between various elements within it that shape behaviors and reinforce feedback loops. This allows us to understand how the system functions, where interventions may help to restructure (or break apart) certain negative feedback loops, and what opportunities exist that can be leveraged more effectively to maximize positive patterns of behavior.

SCENARIO PLANNING. scenario planning recognizes that the environment is a complex system marked by intrinsic uncertainty that can be best understood from the perspective of multiple and plausible futures. The scenario methodology is designed to surface multiple perspectives about concerns and uncertainties in the environment and the range of possible outcomes of these concerns and uncertainties in order to help develop insights about the unfolding future nature of the environment. Additionally, the intention is to identify what is, or will become, inevitable—in other words, the predetermined elements of the future.

ADAPTIVE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION. At its core, adaptive planning and implementation is a proactive way to navigate uncertainties with a "learning by doing" mentality that views obstacles not as challenges to overcome, but rather as opportunities from which to learn. Different from conventional planning processes that tend to be linear and prescriptive in nature, adaptive planning prioritizes understanding one's own

environment, anticipating changes to that environment (and planning for those changes), and creating feedback loops to create intentional space for learning. One of the most critical aspects to adaptive planning in comparison with a more traditional approach is the intentionality of monitoring both progress in implementation AND changes in the environment throughout the entire process.

The following pages describe each aspect of the Resiliency Journey in greater detail. Civil society organizations will be matched with a **Resiliency+ Coaching Team** comprised of an international coaching expert and a local facilitator that will guide them through the RESILIENCY+ PROCESS, with both virtual and in-person engagement. Once the priorities are identified and a roadmap developed, the team will leverage the R+ RESOURCE CENTER to identify potential peer experts, best practices, tools, and/or frameworks to support the implementation of the roadmap to aid CSOs in increasing their resiliency against the impacts of changing civic space.

The R+ RESOURCE CENTER is a database of strategic partners, various toolkits and methodologies, and best practices and case studies that can be drawn upon to support a Resiliency+ Roadmap. The R+ Resource Center allows organizations to customize their roadmaps based on the varying levels of threat presence and on each organization's internal capacities. For example, through Phase One, a CSO could identify the presence of "divisive narratives and control of information" as an emerging civic space threat and "disconnect with constituents" as an internal vulnerability, The R+ RESOURCE CENTER may contain tools or strategies related to active listening or direct constituent engagement, and framing techniques to communicate positive narratives about the organization and/or civil society to the public that the organization is interested in learning more about or receive training in.

ASSESSING INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCY

As a first step in the **RESILIENCY+ FRAMEWORK** process, civil society organizations will learn about their own level of resiliency by taking the **Resilient Organization in Changing Civic Space (ROCCS) Self-Assessment.** The **ROCCS Self-Assessment** measures the capacity of an organization to withstand and thrive in closing civic space contexts and elicits a deeper understanding the internal capacities of the organization going through the R+ process. The assessment tool is comprised of 3 indicator groups for each resiliency factor, depicted in the graphic:

Organizational Resiliency Factors and Indices

Situational Awareness: Systems Thinking	Resilience Ethos: Embracing Uncertainty	Adaptive Capacity: Preparing for the Unknown	Connectedness: Greater than the Sum of Its Parts	Business Acumen: Entrepreneurial Mindset	Legitimacy: Radical Transparency & Constituent Engagement	Narrative Competency: The Power of Intentional Communications
External Threats Awareness	Institutionalizing Resiliency	Adaptive Leadership	Network Membership	Experimentation & Innovation	Prioritizing Accountability	Engaging with the Narrative
Internal Vulnerabilities Awareness	Practicing a Culture of Resiliency	Flexible Governance	Active Solidarity	Diversified Revenue Streams	Managing Public Image	Crisis Communications
Systems Awareness	Staff Readiness and Well-Being	Contingency Planning	Collaborating to Create Shared Value	Financial Preparedness	Credibility with Constituents	Adopting New Technologies

Each indicator group contains a series of questions and statements that when answered, generate a score contributing to an overall level of resilience for each factor (see sample questions in the graphic below). The process of filling out the assessment will depend on the size and preference of an organization committed to the RESILIENCY+ PROCESS.

ORGANIZATIONAL FACTOR / RESILIENCY ETHOS: EMBRACING UNCERTAINTY. Resiliency is a set of skills, a dedicated process and, more importantly, a mindset that allow an organization to embrace uncertainty and endure and recover from setbacks. Resilience requires a culture of creative planning, flexibility, continued learning, and self-care embedded across all levels. In this culture, resilience issues are key considerations in strategic planning and program implementation.

RESILIENCE INDEX	RESILIENCE MEASUREMENT
Practicing a Culture of Resiliency The informal customs, behaviors, and beliefs that demonstrate a value for resiliency in an organization's daily operations and decision-making.	**Our staff discusses organizational challenges that increase our exposure to threats.** 1 (never) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (always) I don't know **Individuals can openly discuss contentious changing space issues without repercussions.** 1 (never) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (always) I don't know
Managing Stressors The prioritization of the psychosocial and physical well-being of staff working in volatile or destabilizing conditions.	**Our organization periodically screens staff for psychosocial stress.** 1 (never) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (always) I don't know **Our organization trains staff on the potential psychological effects of their work.** 1 (never) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (always) I don't know **Our organization trains staff on the safety and security risks of their work.** 1 (never) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (always) I don't know

The results of the assessment offer insights to the **Resiliency+ Coaching Team** that enables them to identify any difference of perspectives within an organization and delve deeper to understand why they may exist. The results also help the Coaching Team facilitate the process of prioritizing resiliency factors, customizing a RESILIENCY+ ROADMAP specific to the needs of the organization.

UNDERSTANDING THE CIVIC SPACE ECOSYSTEM

After organizations learn more about their own internal resiliency capacities, it is crucial to shift to an external mindset and analyze their operating context. Next in the RESILIENCY+ PROCESS is an exercise in discovering what and who makes the wheels of the system turn. Drawing upon systems mapping and political economy analysis, the **Resiliency+ Coaching Team** will guide organizations through the creation of their "civic space ecosystem."

Systems mapping looks at the total sum of the parts of any given context and finds patterns and dynamic relationships that emerge and interact among various factors and actors that shape the way the context is structured.

Political Economy Analysis (PEA) examines the various power dynamics and economic and social forces that influence any given context.

Systems mapping and PEA are complementary to one another. After completing a systems mapping process, PEA can support exploring the dynamics within the defined system, the relationships, and incentives that are working among/between the actors. A PEA helps identify specific stakeholders and their networks, influences and interests, and other key characteristics of the system.

The civic space ecosystem is built around the question, "Which forces and capacities (and what are the dynamics among them) make civil society resilient and able to participate openly and freely in civic life?" Organizations begin to answer this question by exploring the civic space context and its factors related to history that shape the current norms and

behaviors, institutions and laws governing civic space, culture and values of a society, and other dimensions that impact and/or influence civic space (i.e socio-economic factors, communications and technology, and security). This draws heavily on the categories found within a political economy analysis, as well as the threats identified in the framework. They also identify which factors are enablers or inhibitors; structural, attitudinal, or transactional; and upstream cause or downstream effect. From this, feedback loops begin to emerge and take shape, contributing to a visual depiction of the civic space ecosystem, only after which leverage (or entry) points present themselves as potential options to consider when developing a RESILIENCY+ ROADMAP.
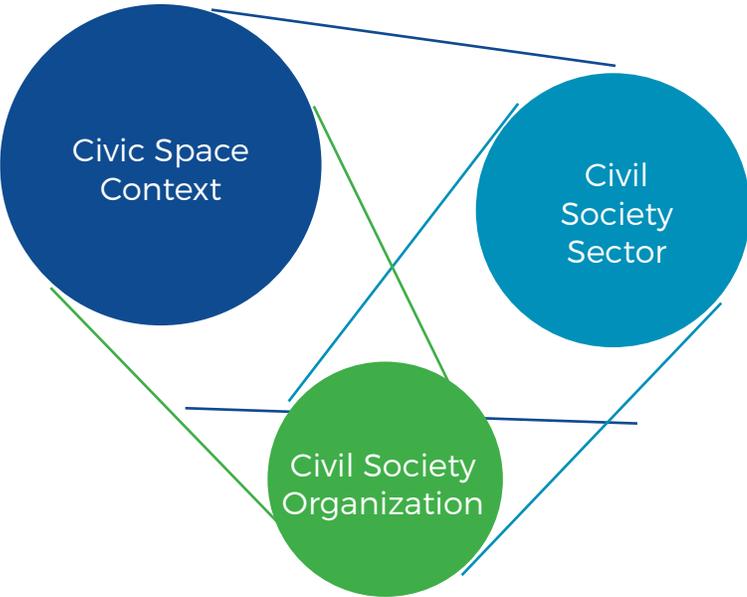
Once the current ecosystem analysis is complete, organizations engage in a process of scenario planning. Namely, they are asked which elements within the ecosystem are likely to shift in the futue? And what impacts would those shifts have on the civic space AND internally for the organization? The results of the ROCCS Self-Assessment are transferred to this exercise to capture the insights elicited about the internal organizational dynamics and level(s) of resiliency. At least two alternate scenarios should be devised alongside the current ecosystem. This step will prepare the organization to develop a RESILIENCY+ ROADMAP, described further in the next section.

JARGON ALERT!

ENABLER: A significant force in the environment that supports, encourages, or increases the health and effectiveness of the civic space ecosystem.

INHIBITOR: A significant force in the environment that undermines or prevents the health and effectiveness of the civic space ecosystem.

STRUCTURAL: Physical and social environment in which people live, both the natural and built environment along with political, social, and economic institutions.

ATTITUDINAL: Widely held beliefs, values, norms, and intergroup relations that affect how large groups of people think and behave.

TRANSACTIONAL: Process used by and interactions among key people as they deal with important social, political, and economic issues.

UPSTREAM CAUSE: A factor or set of factors that cause or lead to another factor or set of factors.

DOWNSTREAM EFFECT: Factors or set of factors that are the result or outcome of upstream causal factors.

A general rule of thumb for any ecosystem analysis process is the participation of key stakeholders and allies. However, the extent of external stakeholder participation in such an exercise will depend on sensitivity and risk levels based on the current operating context. To support this structural conversation between the coaching team and organization, the coaching team will be provided with a preliminary analysis of current trends in the country/environment in which the CSO is located. Different scenarios may warrant different approaches to this step. A couple of examples are found below (note these are not exhaustive):

| SCENARIO	PROCESS
Only one CSO going through R+ in Country X. Has key allies and constituents that are trusted.	Systems mapping is done only with staff of CSO and a select group of allies (i.e. a strategic partner, journalist, lawyer, and/or former legislative official) and constituents.
Several CSOs in country X are going through the R+ process and have a basic level of trust amongst them.	Systems mapping is done collectively with all CSOs. Consensus will need to be reached to determine if external stakeholders should participate and if so, who.
A couple of CSOs in country X are going through the R+ process, but do not have a strong relationship between them.	Systems mapping is done per organization, but maybe they agree to share the maps to both compare (make sure there are no gaps) and learn from each.

BUILDING A RESILIENCY+ ROADMAP

Equipped with a clear understanding of the current civic space ecosystem, as well as alternate scenarios and the potential impacts that those present to an organization, the next part of the journey is to devise a RESILIENCY+ ROADMAP. Different from a traditional planning process, the RESILIENCY+ ROADMAP focuses an organization's efforts to identify the most appropriate short term actions and benchmarks that prepare it for the current and potential impacts identified in the previous step. By the end of the process, organizations will be ready to put the roadmap into action. This process is as follows:

1. Brainstorm and prioritize quick, effective actions for each scenario to improve organizational resiliency. Organizations will look at the current ecosystem and the top most likely scenarios and think through potential short-term actions that the organization might want to consider taking to increase their ability to prepare for and adapt to potential impacts At this stage, organizations can reference the outcomes of ROCCS assessment that identify strengths and vulnerabilities of the organization, as the actions identified could build capacity of a weakness or leverage a strength to the organization's advantage.

2. Identify short-term milestones that capture the most immediate step in the actions. Milestones are the higher-level indicators or benchmarks of progress towards the end state of the entire action. The milestones will also be the point at which the org pauses for a Pitstop, described further in the next phase of the journey to resiliency. At this time, organizations may decide to refer to the Resiliency+ Resource Center for strategies, tactics, tools, or access to strategic partners and experts that may aid in reaching the milestones.

3. Devise mini-action plans to help reach milestone. Plans for the first milestone of the actions should include a timeframe for completion (should be short), who is the

POC/team responsible for tracking and/or implementing the milestone, and any external resources needed.

4. Determine the decision-making process for making any changes to the action plans. Given the sometimes unexpected and rapidly shifting nature of civic space, developing protocols for making quick decisions to review and if necessary, change, course is critical before implementation begins. It helps to manage stress and anxiety levels often experienced by members of a CSO when such civic space shifts negatively impact an organization's ability to operate or the personal safety of staff.

All the actions combined comprise a comprehensive RESILIENCY+ ROADMAP. This facilitated and collaborative process can range from two days to two weeks, depending on the number of priorities and complexity of the civic space environment. Ideally, the **Coaching Team** facilitates this phase in person, but it is also possible to do so via virtual platform. Throughout implementation of the RESILIENCY+ ROADMAP, the **Coaching Team** will provide ongoing mentorship, support, and guidance to the CSO undertaking the process. They will also serve as fellow "integrators," connecting the organization to one or more of the **Resiliency Resource Partners** with specific technical expertise in one or more of the priority areas to work directly with the CSO.

TAKING ACTION AND EXPLORING NEW ROUTES

With the roadmap complete, organizations may now begin to implement the actions, with the ongoing accompaniment and mentorship of the **Resiliency+ Coaching Team**. As mentioned earlier, the essence of organizational resiliency is an ability to anticipate and adapt swiftly to changing circumstances, in a manner that enables the organization to continue to function - and even thrive. The **RESILIENCY+ PROCESS**, therefore, intentionally includes iteration and adaptation through ongoing assessment and monitoring of the contextual and internal dynamics, evaluation of action plan progress and accomplishments, and learning what works well and what needs to change.

The points of iteration and adaptation in the **RESILIENCY+ ROADMAP** are called "pit stops." Pit stops occur relatively frequently after initial actions or steps in the roadmap are taken (approximately every 2-3 weeks), and gradually become farther apart.

Monitoring is critical to anticipating changes and reducing uncertainty or risks in a civic space environment and improves our understanding over time of the system in which civil society organizations operate. Capturing ongoing results of monitoring can be used to make minor tweaks (or major changes) to a plan as it is being implemented by including feedback loops to ensure that organizations have time to develop appropriate responses, or to alter plans or practices accordingly.

During a pit stop, the **Resiliency+ Coaching Team** asks a series of questions to both individual staff taking part in the roadmap process and the group as a whole. These questions facilitate critical thinking and often lead to new ideas. Examples of the questions are:

- What has been accomplished? What progress has been made against the agreed upon benchmarks?
- What changes, if any, occurred internally within the organization? Are there any new areas of resiliency that requires attention in order to address any emerging internal vulnerabilities?
- What changes, if any, occurred in the context and what are the impacts or consequences of those changes on the roadmap?
- What have you learned? What did you find challenging? What worked and what didn't work?
- What's next? How should we move forward? Possibly revisit some of the alternative options identified in the previous phase

Each organization's situation is unique, which is why the roadmap is so customized to suit their needs. Some actions may have little to no impact on increasing resiliency whereas others may have exponential multiplier effects not foreseen. Organizations going through the RESILIENCY+ PROCESS must embrace experimenting with new approaches and considering new information as it is received on an ongoing basis. Additionally, the risk of "controlled failures" needs to be accepted as part of the process, and not viewed as an indication of incompetence. Most importantly, capturing the learning via documentation and sharing within a broader civil society community will serve to inform the sector as a whole, therefore contributing to a movement towards resiliency in the face of global civic space changes.

The Six Universal Lessons of Do No Harm Applied to a Resiliency+ Process

Imbedded also within this step are the **Do No Harm principles and process**, ensuring that all interventions mitigate to the greatest extent possible any potential negative impacts on those directly (and indirectly) touched by the intervention itself. See below for how this is accomplished throughout the **RESILIENCY+ PROCESS,** utilizing the six universal lessons of Do No Harm developed by CDA Collaborative Learning Projects:

1. When an intervention of any kind enters a context, it becomes part of that context. A **RESILIENCY+ ROADMAP** is a combination of interventions that correlate with strengthening one or more organizational resiliency factors. Therefore, when the roadmap is being implemented by a CSO in a dynamic, shifting civil society environment, the roadmap becomes part of the environment.

2. All contexts are characterized by Dividers (factors that create division or tension) and Connectors (factors that unite groups together). Embedded within the second phase of the **RESILIENCY+ PROCESS** is the identification of contextual factors. CSOs will identify which factors are dividers and connectors and how that may/ may not influence one or more aspects of the Roadmap.

3. All interventions will interact with both Dividers and Connectors, making them better or worse. CSOs will revisit these classifications during the adaptation moments throughout implementation to determine whether interventions have any unintended impacts on the operating context and make any necessary changes.

4. **Interventions interact with Dividers and Connectors through their organizational actions and the behavior of staff.** Additionally as part of the adaptation moments, CSOs will reflect on how changes in their own staff behaviors and actions interact with the various dividers and connectors, assess whether these interactions have had any negative or positive unintended consequences/outcomes, and make any necessary changes.

5. **The details of an intervention are the source of its impacts.** When a **RESILIENCY+ ROADMAP** is being developed, the potential impacts of the intervention implementation plan will be discussed.

6. **There are always options.** In addition to thinking through the potential impacts of interventions, alternative plans are discussed to prepare for when something in the context changes or an intervention has an unintended consequence on the operating environment that requires an organization to shift course.

The typical **RESILIENCY+ PROCESS** lasts approximately 12-18 months from assessment to implementation of the roadmap. However, it is important to remember that *resiliency is fluid and change is constant.* The intentionality of your resiliency planning is what is important and critical to the viability of civil society in the face of closing civic space.

R+ RESOURCES

The next several pages includes a number of articles, blog posts, webinars, and podcasts related to one or more of the resiliency factors and sub-factors. They offer best practices, tips and tricks, toolkits and frameworks. These resources are all publicly available online. This curated information is not exhaustive and will be updated on a continuous basis.

ADAPTIVE CAPACITY: PREPARING FOR THE UNKNOWN

What happens when the environment that your organization operates within experiences a major shift that impacts the way in which everything within that environment behaves? How does your organization prepare for and react to such shifts? The ability to act in anticipation of or in response to threats, vulnerabilities, or opportunities within fluid contexts is essential.

We call this "Adaptive Capacity: Preparing for the Unknown." For a brief explanation of this resiliency factor, watch this video HERE. Below are the three subfactors of Adaptive Capacity and key resources for each.

Adaptive Leadership

Key to resiliency is the ability of an organization's leadership to mobilize people and systems to effectively tackle challenges presented by shifts in their environments.

Check out "The Theory Behind the Practice: A Brief Introduction to the Adaptive Leadership Framework" or watch an interview with one of the main authors of the Adaptive Leadership framework, Martin Linksy. Linksy argues adaptive leadership is not a position, but rather a behavior and mindset shift.

Simon Sinek, author of multiple best-selling books, including "Start With Why" and "Leaders Eat Last," shares his thoughts on how an organization can adapt to change rather than waiting for change to happen. He asks, "*Why is it that Netflix invented Netflix and not the movie and television industry? It's because the movie and television industry was too busy protecting the old business model and ignorant that the world was changing around them.*"

Bain and Company identifies the top common myths to change management and adaptive capacity and offers five guiding principles that can help leadership teams steer change more effectively in this **article**.

Check out our webinar with Natalie Boudoud, Co-Founder and Executive Coach at PEPIT Consulting, on **Adaptive Leadership for a Resilient Civil Society in Uncertain Times**. You can access the presentation **here**.

Flexible Governance
The second aspect of Adaptive Capacity is the ability of organizational structures and policies to adapt in relation to needs within changing external environments. This is enabled through shared governance and an environment of self-reflection.

The Liberating Structures **website** offers an approach to organizational governance and design that focuses on tiny shifts in the way we meet, plan, decide and relate to one another. This website provides a menu of thirty-three new ways to replace or complement conventional practices.

Deloitte offers insights on flexible governance structures in its report "**Unlocking the Flexible Organization: Organizational Design for an Uncertain Environment.**" It posits that today's global operating environment "*is too unpredictable to rely on organizational structures devised over a century ago,*" and that organizations should evolve their structures to "*unleash the latent power in networked teams.*"

We know that intergenerational collaboration is a key factor to organizational resiliency, and we need new models for shared leadership across generations. Try establishing a **Shadow Board of Directors** composed of young leaders within your organization. This **trend** is found mostly in the private sector, and has led to greater engagement, higher levels of work satisfaction and new successful initiatives.

Subfactor 3: Contingency Planning

The third element of Adaptive Capacity is the ability to anticipate potential future scenarios and create alternative plans of action that respond to those scenarios so your organization can act quickly and effectively when new situations arise.

In his blog "**Welcome to Peak Uncertainty**," Dave Algoso, founder of Open Co-Lab, offers a tool that helps us make sense of what steps to take the now, next, and later stages of a massive change to the environment.

Save the Children recently published a massive volume of tools and approaches to scenario and contingency planning titled "**The Future is Ours: Strategic Foresight Toolkit**." In it, you will find 12 different tools to help your organization plan for possible futures. For a webinar on the toolkit, watch **here**.

Transformative Scenario Planning is a specific approach within the scenario planning space developed by Adam Kahane from his experience in Apartheid South Africa. The intention of Transformative Scenario Planning "*is not just to adapt to the context but also to shape the future of it.*" For information on how to embark on a Transformative Scenario Planning process, read **here**.

RESILIENCY ETHOS: EMBRACING UNCERTAINTY

Resiliency is more than just contingency plans and something to be practiced at an executive leadership level. It is a way of being, a mindset, a skill set, and a dedicated process that allows an organization to embrace uncertainty and endure and recover from setbacks. Resiliency ethos requires an organization to foster a culture that not only prioritizes but also practices flexibility, continued learning, and self-care across all levels and structures. For a brief explanation of this resiliency factor, watch this video **HERE**.

Below are the three main subfactors of Resiliency Ethos and key resources for each.

Institutionalizing Resiliency

An organization becomes institutionally resilient through the existence of adaptive management practices that embed resiliency thinking in an organization's policies and procedures.

What do we mean by the term "adaptive management" and how is it different from other forms or approaches to managing teams? Bond, the civil society network for global change based in the UK, looked at this question in, **Adaptive Management – What it Means for CSOs**. Their research finds, "*to increase adaptive management practice, a greater focus is needed on creating the right institutional and funding conditions to enable and facilitate it, including more widespread acceptance of uncertainty and risk in programming.*"

For lessons and best practices on how adaptive management has worked for different programs, click **here**. How do we take some of the principles of adaptive management and apply or adapt them in times of crisis? "*It takes the nonprofit sector 1.5 times longer than the for-profit sector to recover from a recession*," finds the Nonprofit Finance Fund.

The Bridgespan Group offers **8 Steps for Managing in Tough Times** to help nonprofits weather economic uncertainty AND remain operational any time.

Practicing a Culture of Resiliency

The operational aspect of Resiliency Ethos needs to be met equally with a cultural one. The informal customs, behaviors, and beliefs that demonstrate a value for resiliency in an organization's daily operations and decision-making collectively generate an organizational culture of resiliency.

This **white paper** by PEPIT Consulting contains extensive research, best practices and case studies on resilience and establishes a business case for building resilient work cultures. It asks the questions, why is fostering a resilient culture important? What does that even look like? And how do you know it when you see it?

This **template** from USAID's Learning Lab is a good example of how all individuals within an organization can commit to practicing resiliency. It also serves as an accountability mechanism to revert back to.

We all have "mental blindspots" or blockages that can prevent us from making good decisions. Rooted in cognitive neuroscience and behavioral economics, these blind spots are called **cognitive biases** and are judgment errors that could lead to detrimental outcomes for an organization's ability to operate, generate trust, and avoid burnout. But there are some simple ways to address cognitive biases in the workplace. Learn more from **12 Mental Skills to Defeat Cognitive Biases**.

Staff Readiness and Well-Being

Prioritizing the psychosocial and physical well-being of staff working in fluid environments and on complex issues is key to maintaining a Resiliency Ethos. This becomes even more critical when a crisis or shock hits and an organization has to adapt quickly to maintain operability.

What do we know about burnout and how is it exacerbated in times of crisis? The World Health Organization classified **burnout syndrome** as an occupational phenomenon in 2019. With more and more **research**, burnout is not solely an issue of being tired or overworked – it impacts the **neural pathways** of the brain and makes it more difficult to remember things, cope with stress in rational ways, and can lead to seemingly disconnected health issues down the line. But in times of a crisis or rapid change, burnout can emerge as a result of what experts call "decision fatigue," forcing us to rapidly grapple with difficult decisions in an unsettlingly new context.

Fortunately, burnout is manageable with a combination of awareness of the symptoms and some simple actions or behavior changes. You can access resources **here** and **here** for more information on how to manage burnout in times of disruption. **Here** you'll find three things leaders can do to help protect their teams from burnout more generally.

This **case study** with Peace Brigades International Mexico (also in **Spanish**) describes how they integrated a psychosocial approach into their operations and management processes. The study demonstrates that even just through sensitization and awareness-raising alone, people are more willing to prioritize adequate self-care.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS: SYSTEMS THINKING

Internally, organizations are complex systems. Simultaneously, they exist within even larger societal systems. By maintaining an awareness of the actors and dynamics at each of these levels and using that awareness to inform decision-making, organizations can address threats and capitalize on opportunities.

We call this Situational Awareness. For a brief explanation of this resiliency factor, watch this video **HERE**. Below are the three main subfactors of Situational Awareness and key resources for each.

External Threats Awareness

An organization must understand the challenges posed by the complex and dynamic external environment to its ability to operate freely and without fear of repercussion. Threats to civil society organizations are always contextual and vary in their manifestation. In crisis moments, governments around the world take extraordinary measures to try to stabilize and control the situation. If not watched carefully, these measures could slide into abuses of power to suppress civic freedoms in different ways.

CIVICUS's **Civic Space Monitor** tracks and rates the conditions for civil society in up to 196 countries around the world.

ICNL's tool, the **Civic Freedom Monitor,** provides up-to-date information on legal issues affecting civil society and civic freedoms, including freedoms of association, expression, and peaceful assembly. The organization currently maintain reports on 54 countries and 8 multilateral organizations.

Freedom House's **Freedom in the World Report** focused this year on governance shifts taking place globally, naming the piece "A Leaderless Struggle for Democracy." It paints a grim picture and found that 2019 was the 14th consecutive year of decline in global freedom, based on its indicators of a democratic society.

And finally, the **Edelman Trust Barometer** captures the level of trust that societies have in four institutional pillars – government, business, civil society, and the media. Alarmingly, the 2020 barometer results reveal that despite a strong global economy and near full employment, none of the four societal institutions that the study measures is trusted. The report finds this lack of trust is due to people's fears about the future and their role in it.

Internal Vulnerabilities Awareness

In addition to being in tune with the external environmental dynamics, an organization must also have a strong understanding of both its internal weaknesses and strengths. This includes understanding the exacerbating effects external environmental impacts may have on the organization and whether those effects could be mitigated by internal strengths or even worsened by internal weaknesses.

For a quick overview of what an organizational assessment is, visit Reflect and Learn's **website** and this **Pocket Guide for Organizational Assessment,** a simple tool to use for rapid assessment.

Systems Awareness

Traditional analytical frameworks for assessing operational environments assume a level

of stability that cannot be counted on in today's world. We do not live in a static reality, but rather one that is constantly changing and experiencing shocks and impacts.These changes inform how the ecosystem operates, where its weaknesses and strengths are, and what dynamics shape the behavior of the ecosystem. Civil society organizations must inevitably interact with whatever shifting environment they find themselves in. A systems awareness-based analytical framework allows organizations to gain the most comprehensive understanding of their shifting environments and make the most informed decisions to adapt.

Peter Senge, author of The Fifth Discipline, Senior Lecturer at MIT and Founder of the Society for Organizational Learning, shares his perspectives on leadership and systems thinking with IBM in this **video**, in which he claims, "We live in webs of interdependence."

In his piece, "**The Systems Orientation: From Curiosity to Courage**," David Peter Stroh offers a clear and concise explanation of systems thinking with what is called the 5 Cs: curiosity, clarity, compassion, choice, and courage. He says that: "*The systems orientation is ultimately a way of being that points to alternative ways of thinking and acting.*"

USIP's Rule of Law Program thought about this question in their report **Systems Thinking for Peacebuilding and Rule of Law**, which contains a number of insights that could be applied well beyond this particular thematic focus.

How does systems thinking inform leadership? Read **here** to find out.

In this **document** from the OECD you will find a step by step approach to resilience systems analysis, a tool that helps field practitioners to:

- prepare for, and facilitate, a successful multi-stakeholder resilience analysis workshop
- design a roadmap to boost the resilience of communities and societies
- integrate the results of the analysis into their development and humanitarian programming

On this **website** you will find information about Systems Mapping, a visual mapping resource that looks at how variables interact over time and form patterns of behaviors across the system. And **here** is a tool to create your own systems maps, as well as a **series of videos** on how to do so.

BUSINESS ACUMEN:
ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET

As civil society organizations, we must be open to new ways of operating and fundraising. The "old" ways of doing things – reliance on certain streams of funding with familiar donors – is no longer a viable option if we are to both withstand the impacts of the current situation AND come out stronger. We must adopt an entrepreneurial mindset. We must capitalize on new opportunities, create value, and innovate. We need to more effectively network to access diversified funding, form strategic alliances, find innovative ways to deliver services, and recover swiftly from external shocks.

We call this Business Acumen. For a brief explanation of this resiliency factor, watch this video **HERE**. Below are the three main subfactors of Business Acumen and key resources for each.

Experimentation and Innovation
Experimentation and innovation refer to the ability of an organization to test new ideas and take risks so they will be better prepared to respond to crisis and change. By experimenting and innovating, an organization is better able to respond to emergent needs.

"Innovation is hard in the for-profit context; it's even harder for a nonprofit," writes Atta Tarki in this self-reflective piece titled, **How Failure Changed How I Think about Nonprofit Work**. Tarki writes: "*With that attitude, you will avoid the half-measures and compromises that so often hamstring innovation efforts. And unlike my failed efforts, do it right, or not at all.*"

Where have organizations applied this attitude successfully? In this **report**, the

International Civil Society Centre highlights a selection of case studies from civil society organizations that are employing three different forms of innovation: core innovation, adjacent innovation, and transformational innovation.

Diversified Revenue Streams

The process of generating income from multiple funding sources increases an organization's financial stability and reduces financial and operational risk in times of uncertainty.

Bridgespan offers a solid primer in the different types of funding models that non-profits adhere to in this **piece**. It clarifies, "*[w]hen a for-profit business finds a way to create value for a customer, it has generally found its source of revenue; the customer pays for the value...When a nonprofit finds a way to create value for a beneficiary, it has not identified its economic engine...A business model incorporates choices about the cost structure and value proposition to the beneficiary. A funding model, however, focuses only on the funding, not on the programs and services offered to the beneficiary.*"

One way to begin diversifying funding is through a business canvas. Check out this **comprehensive study** from Judith Sanderse to learn more! Then visit **Canvanizer.com** to create your own, customized business canvas to assist with building your funding plan!

Have you ever thought about creating a new revenue stream by offering consulting services? Jen Hughes, Renée Martin & Will von Geldern offer several strategies to consider when pursuing this path in **Scaling Nonprofit Impact Through Consulting**. They note, "*As much as possible, organizations should consult based on one or more of their core strengths, focusing on the proven methods and tools that make them uniquely effective in accomplishing their mission, rather than on pilot programs.*"

Financial Preparedness

Organizational resiliency hinges on an organization's ability to anticipate possible future events and develop financial strategies that can be implemented immediately to support ongoing operations in times of crisis.

Sea Change put together this **decision framework** for nonprofit leaders and board members who are faced with making tough choices.

The Nonprofit Finance Fund also hosted a two-part webinar series – **Part 1** and **Part 2** – on managing finances through times of uncertainty.

In **Sustainability to Survivability: 5 Nonprofit Finance Must-Do's in the Time of COVID**, Steve Zimmerman lays out five simple steps that organizations can take to maintain financial viability through crisis moments and come out strong.

CONNECTEDNESS: GREATER THAN THE SUM OF THE PARTS

Strong organizations are purposefully and actively connected internally with staff and board members and externally with constituents, within the sector and across sectors. This allows organizations to proactively manage change and build communication pathways to inform their decision-making and increase preparedness. We call this Connectedness. For a brief explanation of this resiliency factor, watch this video **HERE**.

Below are the three main subfactors of Connectedness and key resources for each.

Network Membership

The connections an organization purposefully and actively maintains with others in its sector and across sectors enables it to leverage resources and relationships in times of uncertainty and change. One African proverb says, "*If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.*"

In "**Making Sense of Nonprofit Collaboration**," authors Alex Neuhoff, Katie Smith Milway, Reilly Kiernan, and Josh Grehan explain four common forms of formal collaboration—associations, joint programs, shared support functions, and mergers. They go on to explore the positive trends in collaboration and barriers preventing funders and grantees from working together as effectively as possible to achieve their goals.

In this **video** from the Stanford Social Innovation Review, nonprofit leaders share the strategies and systems they've used to foster deeper and more meaningful connections with their constituents and how those approaches have helped their organizations grow and succeed.

In this **video**, Nick Martlew, Strategy Director at Digital Action and author of the Creative Coalitions handbook, explains how to build more powerful coalitions. Martlew advises: "*Scale impact – not your organization.*"

Active Solidarity

The collective strength of united organizations and other civil society actors allows them to effectively respond to challenges posed by rapidly changing external environments and shifts in civic spaces, such as restrictions on freedoms of speech or movement or organizational operations via increased regulations.

Have you ever wondered what the term "collective impact" really means and what is involved in this specific approach to cross-sector collaboration? Listen to this **podcast** from the Collective Impact Forum to learn more. The Forum also offers numerous resources including case studies, videos, **toolkits**, and **guides** to help you get started exploring and practicing collective impact in your organization.

One route to increase collective impact is for nonprofits to team up with social movements. In his article, "**Can NGOs and social movements be authentic allies?**", Michael Silberman argues: "*Genuine partnerships can be formed [between nonprofits and social movements], though there are always difficulties and dangers.*"

And in this **podcast**, Terry Gibson, author of "Making Aid Agencies Work," talks to Sarwar Bari of Pattan Development Organisation and Manu Gupta of Seeds India about the relationships between International NGOs (INGOs), local NGOs and communities, and the need for trust, listening and co-learning. Gupta reflects:

"The problem is that the current model of aid that the INGOs and the international system brings does not have the scope of institution building, for example, or for informal ways of engagement with the marginalized because there is no immediate quantifiable change that one can record as output of the investment."

In his article "**Strong Social Networks are Key to Turning Around Communities,**" Maurice A. Jones says that strong social networks at the community level have been found to be critical to organizations surviving in times of uncertainty. He writes, *"The key is to form the social and strategic ligaments that bind whole neighborhoods and help their centers of strength and energy work in concert...An improved school is linked to the new clinic; the youth program and the merchants' association work with police and the parks department; arts groups and economic development programs and housing associations find common cause."*

Collaborating to Create Shared Value

Collaborating to create shared value is the practice of working alongside diverse internal and external actors, including businesses, to create economic, social, and cultural value. Coined by Michael Porter and Mark Kramer in this 2011 article "**Creating Shared Value**" in the Harvard Business, the concept of shared value moves companies beyond corporate social responsibility to understanding that they increase their competitive advantage by including social and environmental considerations directly into business strategies – not as an addendum to them.

The idea of shared value is so important to NGOs because it presents opportunities for new, strategic partnerships with the private sector. In "**The Ecosystem of Shared Value**," Mark R. Kramer and Marc W. Pfitzer examine the principles of collective impact (noted above under Active Solidarity) to create an ecosystem based on shared value.

Today, the definition of shared value is expanding. The Accelerist's blog "**How to Accelerate Shared Value Partnerships in 2020**" notes three new facets of shared value:

- Going beyond organizational missions
- Fostering innovative ways to engage staff in new partnership opportunities
- Leveraging Sustainable Development Goals commitments to facilitate business and nonprofit partnerships.

If you've ever considered forging strategic partnerships with for-profit businesses, but don't know how or where to start, check out this article called "**Nonprofit-Corporate Partnerships: A New Framework**" by Tynesia Boyea-Robinson, which includes five principles for engaging businesses:

- Speak as partner, not supplicant
- Offer legitimate solutions to tough business challenges such as value propositions
- Focus on how you will address their needs first
- Know their numbers
- Know the industry, the business, and your own assets

You can also read Devex's piece "**7 Tips to Make NGO-Business Partnerships Work**" for more insights on this topic.

NARRATIVE COMPETENCY: THE POWER OF INTENTIONAL COMMUNICATION

Resilient civil society organizations understand the power of intentional communications to improve the level of understanding between themselves, the public and other actors in the civic space. To communicate more effectively with those who think differently, an organization must be willing to explore how others make meaning of complex issues and policies, and possess the ability to self-reflect on their own cognitive biases that they bring to the table. Only then will organizations be equipped to communicate freely without implicitly assuming the public understands its issues in the same way that peers in the civil society sector do.

We call this Narrative Competency. For a brief explanation of this resiliency factor, watch this video **HERE**. Below are the three main subfactors of Connectedness and key resources for each.

Engaging with the Narrative

Engaging with narratives involves analyzing the way in which public messaging is positively or negatively affecting an organization's mission and sector, and then designing strategies to shift the public's understanding and support for the organization's issues. This is not just a leadership skill needed among the organization's executive team and communications managers – it is a foundational building block that is beneficial to all civil society organizations, whether or not they have a dedicated communications capacity.

In the **Partners**Global **Engaging Narrative for Peace Guide**, narrative is defined as, "*a cognitive framework that resides at the level of our unconscious minds, that allows human beings to make meaning of the world.*" It's how we code information and make sense of what we are receiving.

Frames are "*the subconscious internal schemas our brains rely on to help us to make sense of the information we receive, interpreted by our own experiences.*" When we take in new information about a complex social or political issue for example, our brain must decide what information is important and what is not important. We do this by identifying patterns, creating categories, and relying on stereotypes.

A new report by Alice Sachrajda and Lena Baumgartner titled "**More Than Words**" synthesizes learning and insights from various efforts led by civil society change agents on narrative change, framing initiatives, and new approaches to strategic communications. It also explores the interconnected nature of attitudes to the issues civil society works on and sets out challenges and areas for future development.

The FrameWorks Institute, a nonprofit think tank that advances civil society's capacity to influence public discourse on social and scientific issues in positive ways, understands that when it comes to engaging the public in considering social problems as public issues, not merely private concerns, not all stories are created equal. They developed the **Wide Angle Lens** - a highly visual, multimedia learning module that explores the difference between episodic and thematic storytelling. This course fosters skills in a key aspect of strategic framing.

One important component of prepping a narrative is a careful review of the lexicon being used. Civil society organizations must understand their audiences and develop coherent messages that resonate effectively within their target groups. Too much insider-lexicon (or jargon) can thwart an organization's communications goals if its audiences can't

understand the meaning. Overseas Development Institute offers this excellent online "**Toolkit for Successful Communication**."

And Matt Golding, Director at Rubber Republic, focuses on **ways to translate feelings into language**. He notes, "*behavior is governed by feelings more than by thoughts... If we can identify a feeling our audience already have and amplify it so it doesn't become overshadowed by a related fear, we can create a confidence in people that positive change is possible.*"

Crisis Communications

Effective crisis communication requires the capacity to anticipate situations and deploy specialized messaging, outreach, and communication strategies to protect and defend an organization from the impacts of shifts in the external environment.

One of the first steps an organization should take to prepare for when a crisis hits is to have a crisis communications plan ready. Click **here** for a sample template that any organization can use to devise a crisis communications plan that suits their needs and contextual dynamics. This crisis communications template helps to:

- Define and assign a crisis team
- Outline roles and responsibilities of the crisis team
- Detail steps to take in a crisis event
- Indicate who to contact, resources that are available, and procedures to follow

Most nonprofits have little time to spend on preventive measures that will distract them from their daily work. In an effort to support the nonprofit community's preparedness efforts NPower analyzed numerous disaster preparedness resources and curated them to suit nonprofit realities in their report, **Communications, Protection and Readiness: A Nonprofit Guide to Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery**.

Crisis communications is also critically important for emergency fundraising. In times of uncertainty or rapid change, civil society may find themselves in need of quick injections of financial support. Wayne Murray, Strategy Director at Audience Fundraising and Communications, gives his **five pointers for writing an emergency appeal** that will keep people connected with your organization and help to raise funds in the short term.

Adopting New Technologies

Adopting and integrating new technologies into intentional communications plans and narrative strategies is a must in today's rapidly changing technological world. We communicate differently and through more modes and mediums than ever. By adopting new technologies, an organization will be more effective in reaching key audiences and shield its staff and its stakeholders from potential attacks in new media spaces. It is also critical to support and protect its technology operations infrastructure. Critical to the adoption of these tools and technologies is the digital literacy needed to navigate and communicate with accuracy and safety.

"**The Resilient Organization: A Guide to IT Disaster Recovery**" from TechSoup is an excellent resource for anyone working in civil society who carries out work online. No

prior expertise in IT is required! The guide is designed for those who have been tasked with moving their organization through the recovery process after a natural or man-made disaster or crisis has struck.

Additional tools from **Security In A Box** are also useful, as are some of the resources found at **The Center for Digital Resilience** and **PrepareCenter.org**.

In addition to civil society competency, in 2019 the Media Impact Forum published "**A holistic approach to operational and digital security**" by Rowan Reid of Internews. The piece highlights the need for philanthropies and funders to understand and support digital safety among their grantees and partners.

How we communicate with internal and external audiences is changing. Now is the time to harness the power of new technologies to support our work in this new reality. Below are several resources to help make this transition to new technologies easier.

Zarvana's **Virtual Productivity Toolkit** offers principles of remote work, virtual meeting best practices, and more.

Julia Sklar at National Geographic offers an explanation for and tips on how to avoid **Zoom fatigue**.

Jeanne Rewa and Daniel Hunter developed this **Leading Groups Online Guide** to leading virtual courses, meetings and events.

And Training for Change has **numerous resources** related to virtual facilitation, virtual room set up, and more.

LEGITIMACY: RADICAL TRANSPARENCY AND CONSTITUENT ENGAGEMENT

Legitimacy is needed within civil society organizations to ensure both domestic and international public support in order to endure sudden or extended changes in times of uncertainty. But what grants an organization legitimacy? At the heart of it lies trust – this involves establishing a social contract between an organization and its constituents on whose behalf it is working. Legitimacy requires being true to a mission through messages and actions.

We call this Legitimacy. For a brief explanation of this resiliency factor, watch this video **HERE**. Below are the three main subfactors of Legitimacy and key resources for each.

Dan Cardinali in his article titled "**The Adaptive Challenge of Restoring Trust in Civil Society**" makes a plea when he says, "*...civil society is not the 'other;' it's not some external institution that affects our lives from afar. Instead, civil society is us. It's how we associate and organize and interact with those around us. So when Americans tell pollsters that they don't trust civil society, they are saying, in effect, that they don't trust their fellow Americans, their neighbors.*"

Kristin M. Lord calls civil society to action in her piece "**Six Ways to Repair Declining Social Trust**" stating, "*Philanthropists, NGOs, and social investors have a role to play too. By developing and supporting initiatives that advance social trust, they can create building blocks that add up to greater trust. They can also support efforts to study what works. We know a lot about what erodes trust. We know too little about how to rebuild it.*"

Prioritizing Accountability
Civil society organization (CSO) accountability is the collective understanding of an organization's responsibility to its beneficiaries and ownership over its actions in order

to prevent the erosion of legitimacy. It's all about *"walking the walk."* But how does civil society prioritize this, especially at a time when external dynamics like a pandemic require us to shift focus to other more immediate needs? It is exactly in times like these when accountability is even more important.

Alnoor Ebrahim writes in his working paper titled "**The Many Faces of Nonprofit Accountability**" that there are four dimensions to nonprofit accountability – finances, governance, performance, and mission – and five types of accountability mechanisms used by nonprofits in practice – reports and disclosure statements, evaluations and performance assessments, industry self-regulation, participation, and adaptive learning.

Isabelle Büchner of Accountable Now and Laurence Prinz of Keystone Accountability help us to "debunk" the top myths around primary constituent (beneficiary) accountability in their piece called "**Resilient Roots: Debunking the Myths around Primary Constituent Accountability.**" They argue, *"primary constituent accountability is not only about transparency and evaluating effectiveness, it's also about meaningful dialogue with primary constituents and having the learning from this drive organisational decision-making."*

The Global Standard for CSO Accountability and Accountable Now joined forces to release this white paper titled "**Dynamic Accountability: Changing Approaches to CSO Accountability.**" In it, they define dynamic accountability as *"a systemic approach to CSO accountability that is grounded in processes of meaningful engagement with all stakeholders that are inclusive, participatory and continuously practiced."*

They also have several **webinars** in which you can learn more about dynamic accountability or check out the **12 Commitments for Dynamic Accountability Guidance Materials**, which offer several steps an organization can take to adopt a dynamic internal accountability approach.

One way to foster accountability is to create online feedback and complaint mechanisms. In the current Covid-19 crisis where face to face interviews are nearly impossible, shifting to an online mechanism enables a dynamic accountability approach. In "**12 Steps to a Great Online Feedback and Complaints Mechanism**," Ezgi Akarsu of Accountable Now proposes such a mechanism to strengthen skills to integrate stakeholder feedback in order to make improvements.

Another way to ensure organizational accountability is by instituting a learning and evaluative approach to adaptive management to ensure responsiveness to beneficiary needs. This paper called "**Making adaptive rigour work**" from ODI and partner organizations sets out three key elements of an 'adaptive rigour' approach:

- Strengthen the quality of monitoring, evaluation and learning data and systems.
- Ensure appropriate investment in monitoring, evaluation and learning across the program cycle.
- Strengthen capacities and incentives to ensure the effective use of evidence and learning as part of decision-making, leading ultimately to improved effectiveness.

Managing Public Image

The deliberate management of an organization's brand and reputation is critical to its ongoing credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of its beneficiaries and constituents. It also builds resistance to delegitimizing tactics. Communicating an organization's purpose, achievements, failures, and initiatives or adaptations undertaken as responses to constituent feedback all factor into managing its brand and image. As with any effort geared toward longevity and impact, the adage "consistency is key" holds up for nonprofit credibility.

But how does a civil society organization even begin to think about managing a brand? Especially in dyanmic environments? In their piece, "**The Role of Brand in the Nonprofit Sector**," Nathalie Kylander & Christopher Stone offer a framework called the Nonprofit Brand IDEA in which IDEA stands for brand integrity, brand democracy, brand ethics, and brand affinity.

Need support on how to utilize social media platforms to help elevate your brand and stay consistent? Check out Global Giving's **Social Media Toolkit** for an excellent overview of how to maximize your content and communicate effectively.

Being honest and self-reflective also fosters an atmosphere of learning and authenticity which further enhances credibility. Acknowledging that not everything a nonprofit does results in massive impact goes a long way in terms of building trust. Sarah Crass of World Vision shares what the organization is doing to shift culture around the idea and acceptance of failure for learning in this **webinar**.

Credibility with Constituents

Accountability and credibility often go hand in hand and are used interchangeably. However, whereas accountability is holding organizations responsible for "walking the walk", credibility is the foundation of trustworthiness and expertise upon which a durable relationship between an organization and its constituents is built. This reinforces an organization's position in the sector despite efforts to undermine civil society.

In the article "**From Input to Ownership: How Nonprofits can Engage with the People They Serve to Carry Out their Mission**," Matthew Forti and Willa Seldon of the Bridgespan Group investigate how several nonprofits are engaging their constituents, strengthening relationships, and combining local and technical knowledge to deliver better results.

Resilient Roots, an initiative coordinated by CIVICUS and funded by the Ford Foundation, tests whether organizations that are more accountable and responsive to their primary constituents are more resilient against external threats and dynamics. They've put together a **Resource Package** that contains case studies, learnings from pilot projects, and strategies for more effective constituent dialogue and engagement.

Accountable Now has a **webinar** that explores why it is important to engage stakeholders and beneficiaries in all aspects of program development.

Oxfam published a reflective piece called "**5 ways to build Civil Society's Legitimacy around the world**" by Saskia Brechenmacher and Thomas Carothers that talks about the importance of knowing who you are as an organization, what you do, how you work, with whom you work, and what impact you have.

CASE STUDIES:

CIVIL SOCIETY RESILIENCY
in the face of
CHANGING CIVIC SPACE

NON-TRADITIONAL AVENUES FOR FUNDING IN CHINA

Financial constraints can challenge an organization's resiliency by limiting its ability to support staff and project operations. An activist from Hong Kong developed a strategic response to funding restrictions in China by drawing upon his years of experience in human rights.

The activist got his start during the land justice movement in Hong Kong, which protested elite control of land wealth in Hong Kong and the rapid gentrification of rural neighborhoods. After working with farmers to secure more robust land rights, the activist joined students protesting the country's lack of free elections and became a key figure in the 2014 Umbrella Movement, which drew thousands of concerned citizens to Hong Kong in protest for democratic elections. Following his involvement in the Umbrella Movement, the activist has been working for two organizations, one focused on protecting activists in Hong Kong and the other centered on human rights in China. His China-based organization primarily works in policy advocacy, lobbying, and capacity building.

Despite the organization's active work on advocacy for human rights and civil rights in China, it faced difficulties getting registered or even publicly fundraising. These limitations led the organization to seek alternative routes to remain active. The organization registered in the United States with a field office in China, which allowed it to receive foreign funds from an increased number of donors. It also developed an innovative funding strategy that involved the participation of individual activists. Even though the organization could not publicly fundraise, individual activists were able to raise funds for the organization. The activist explained that individual activists trusted by both the organization and communities in China became the carriers of funds for the organization. Citizens and communities who supported the organization's mission were able to donate to the organization by transferring their money to the trusted activist, who then transferred the money to the organization. The organization was able to remain financially resilient against the closing space through these trusted connections, while building its mission and narrative in communities.
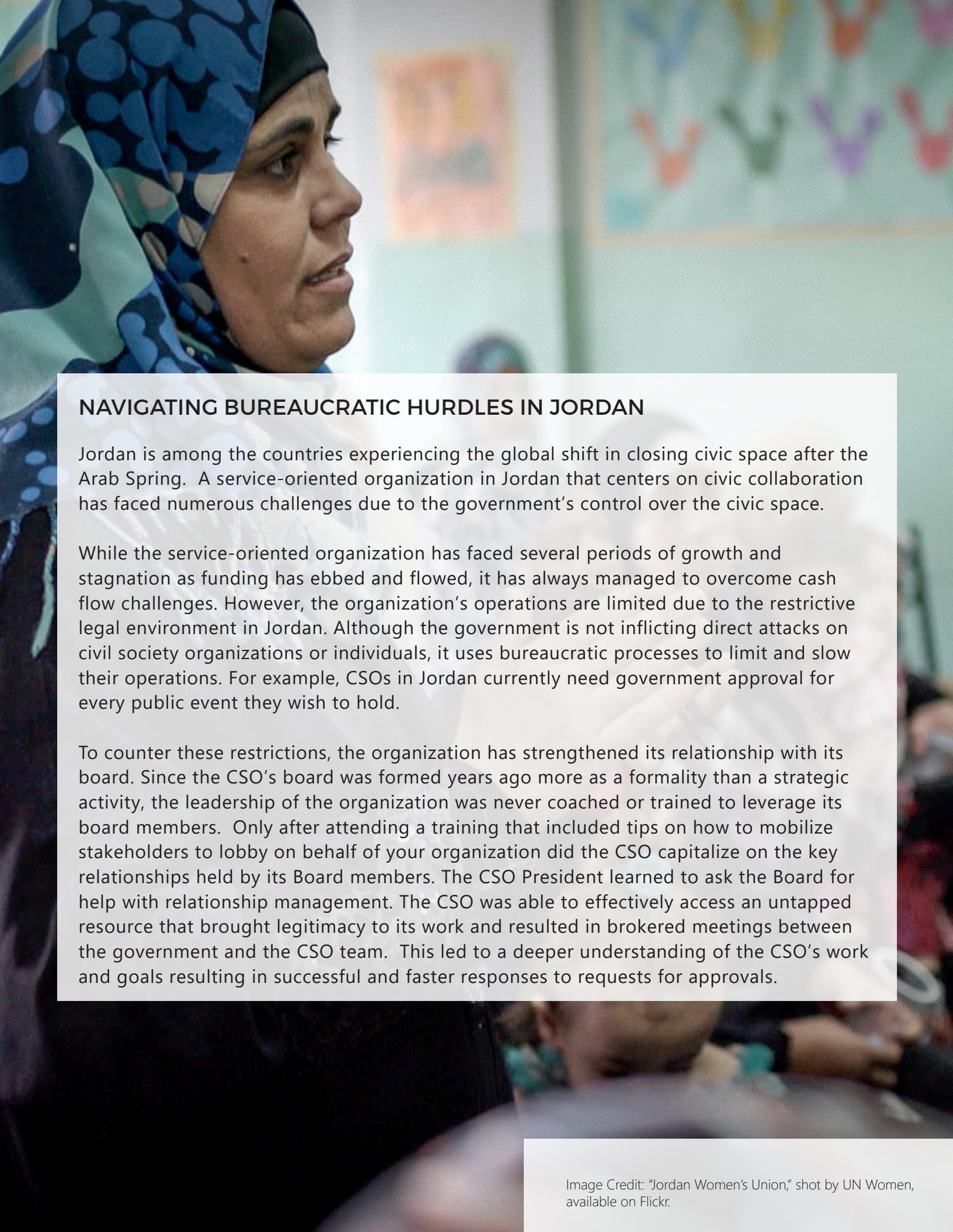
Image Credit: "Hong Kong's Umbrella Revolution," shot by Studio Incendo, available on Flickr.

NAVIGATING BUREAUCRATIC HURDLES IN JORDAN

Jordan is among the countries experiencing the global shift in closing civic space after the Arab Spring. A service-oriented organization in Jordan that centers on civic collaboration has faced numerous challenges due to the government's control over the civic space.

While the service-oriented organization has faced several periods of growth and stagnation as funding has ebbed and flowed, it has always managed to overcome cash flow challenges. However, the organization's operations are limited due to the restrictive legal environment in Jordan. Although the government is not inflicting direct attacks on civil society organizations or individuals, it uses bureaucratic processes to limit and slow their operations. For example, CSOs in Jordan currently need government approval for every public event they wish to hold.

To counter these restrictions, the organization has strengthened its relationship with its board. Since the CSO's board was formed years ago more as a formality than a strategic activity, the leadership of the organization was never coached or trained to leverage its board members. Only after attending a training that included tips on how to mobilize stakeholders to lobby on behalf of your organization did the CSO capitalize on the key relationships held by its Board members. The CSO President learned to ask the Board for help with relationship management. The CSO was able to effectively access an untapped resource that brought legitimacy to its work and resulted in brokered meetings between the government and the CSO team. This led to a deeper understanding of the CSO's work and goals resulting in successful and faster responses to requests for approvals.

RELOCATING TO REMAIN RESILIENT IN SUDAN

The absence of ensuring the civil liberties and freedoms of citizens poses a threat to all levels of resiliency due to the harm that can be directed towards those operating in the civil society sector. Participants in civil society can find that by protesting and advocating for their freedoms, their own lives are put at risk. Sudan is one of many countries where CSOs have encountered the threat of the disrespect of civil liberties from their government. Throughout the 20th century, CSOs in Sudan experienced the closing civic space caused by the government's ban of various organized groups, including political parties, NGOs, and media outlets. These restrictions continue to create challenges for CSOs in Sudan to operate and during the past decade, CSOs have found it especially difficult to publicly operate within the limited civic space. In 2013, 200 protesters were killed by government forces and in the following year the government detained activists in opposition. In addition to the disregard of individual rights and civil liberties, the government began to heavily disregard the civil rights of CSOs in the country. The government raided organizations that were deemed as part of the political opposition and closed CSOs that were politically active. This disrespect of civil liberties has further expanded into the online space. In May of 2015, several Sudanese activists expressing their opinions online were arrested by the Sudanese government, demonstrating that the government is limiting their suppression of civil society not only in the traditional civic space, but also activism expressed over the cyberspace.

The lack of acknowledgment towards the civil liberties and freedoms of CSOs in Sudan has threatened the resilience of organizations and the civil society sector by creating an atmosphere where the organizations in Sudan feel unsafe to operate. Many organizations that remained resilient against the government crackdowns left Sudan to reestablish themselves outside the conflict zones. The organizations that remain in Sudan face an additional risk of decreased funds because the Sudanese government recently established government-led organizations in the region to compete for the funding that non-government CSOs seek in Sudan. Therefore, the lack of free participation allowed by the government, with the additional component of competitive funding, is a critical threat for the livelihood of organizations in closed civic space areas. These restrictions are making some organizations relocate as the only method to continue their work for civil society and remain resilient against government threats.
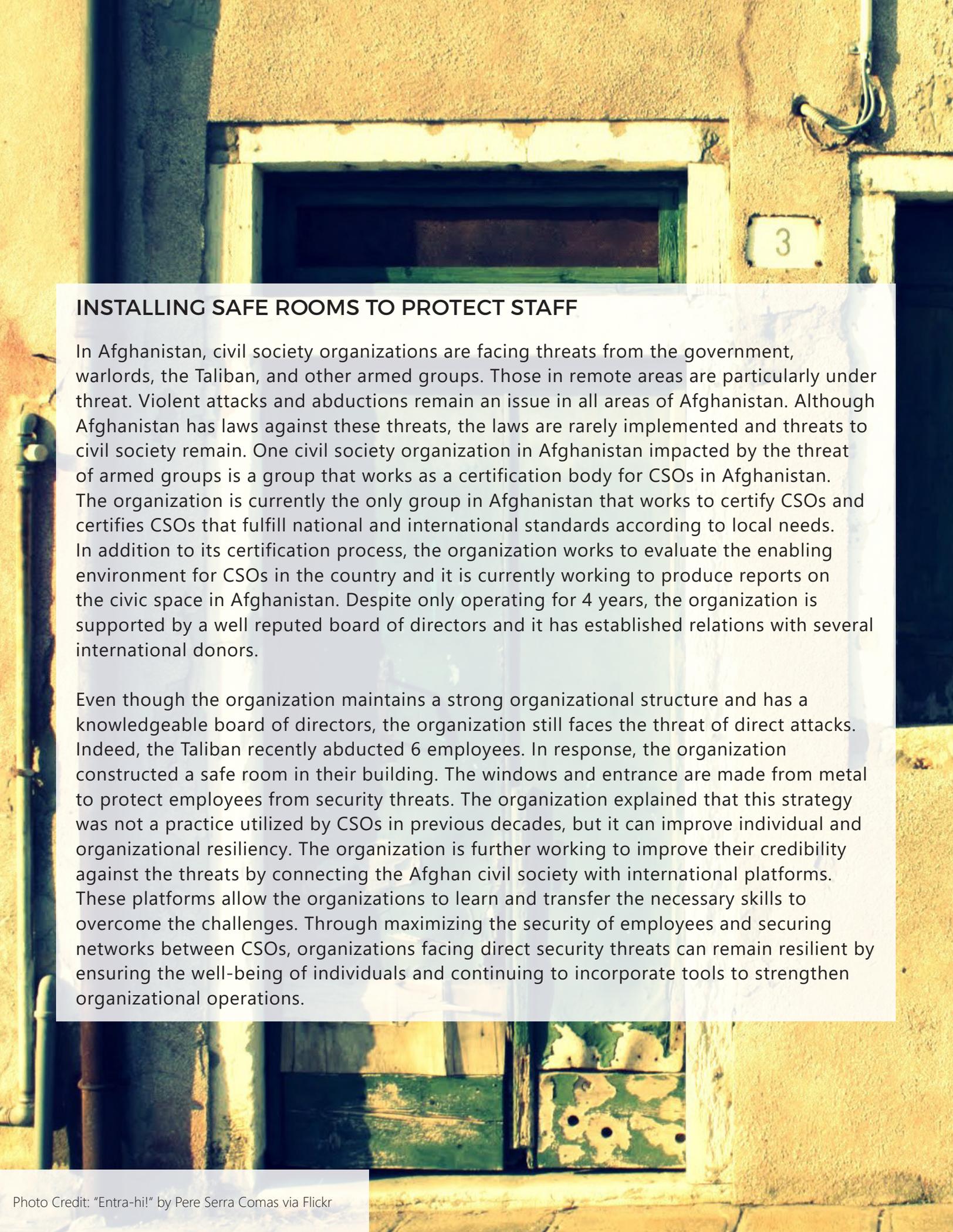
INSTALLING SAFE ROOMS TO PROTECT STAFF

In Afghanistan, civil society organizations are facing threats from the government, warlords, the Taliban, and other armed groups. Those in remote areas are particularly under threat. Violent attacks and abductions remain an issue in all areas of Afghanistan. Although Afghanistan has laws against these threats, the laws are rarely implemented and threats to civil society remain. One civil society organization in Afghanistan impacted by the threat of armed groups is a group that works as a certification body for CSOs in Afghanistan. The organization is currently the only group in Afghanistan that works to certify CSOs and certifies CSOs that fulfill national and international standards according to local needs. In addition to its certification process, the organization works to evaluate the enabling environment for CSOs in the country and it is currently working to produce reports on the civic space in Afghanistan. Despite only operating for 4 years, the organization is supported by a well reputed board of directors and it has established relations with several international donors.

Even though the organization maintains a strong organizational structure and has a knowledgeable board of directors, the organization still faces the threat of direct attacks. Indeed, the Taliban recently abducted 6 employees. In response, the organization constructed a safe room in their building. The windows and entrance are made from metal to protect employees from security threats. The organization explained that this strategy was not a practice utilized by CSOs in previous decades, but it can improve individual and organizational resiliency. The organization is further working to improve their credibility against the threats by connecting the Afghan civil society with international platforms. These platforms allow the organizations to learn and transfer the necessary skills to overcome the challenges. Through maximizing the security of employees and securing networks between CSOs, organizations facing direct security threats can remain resilient by ensuring the well-being of individuals and continuing to incorporate tools to strengthen organizational operations.
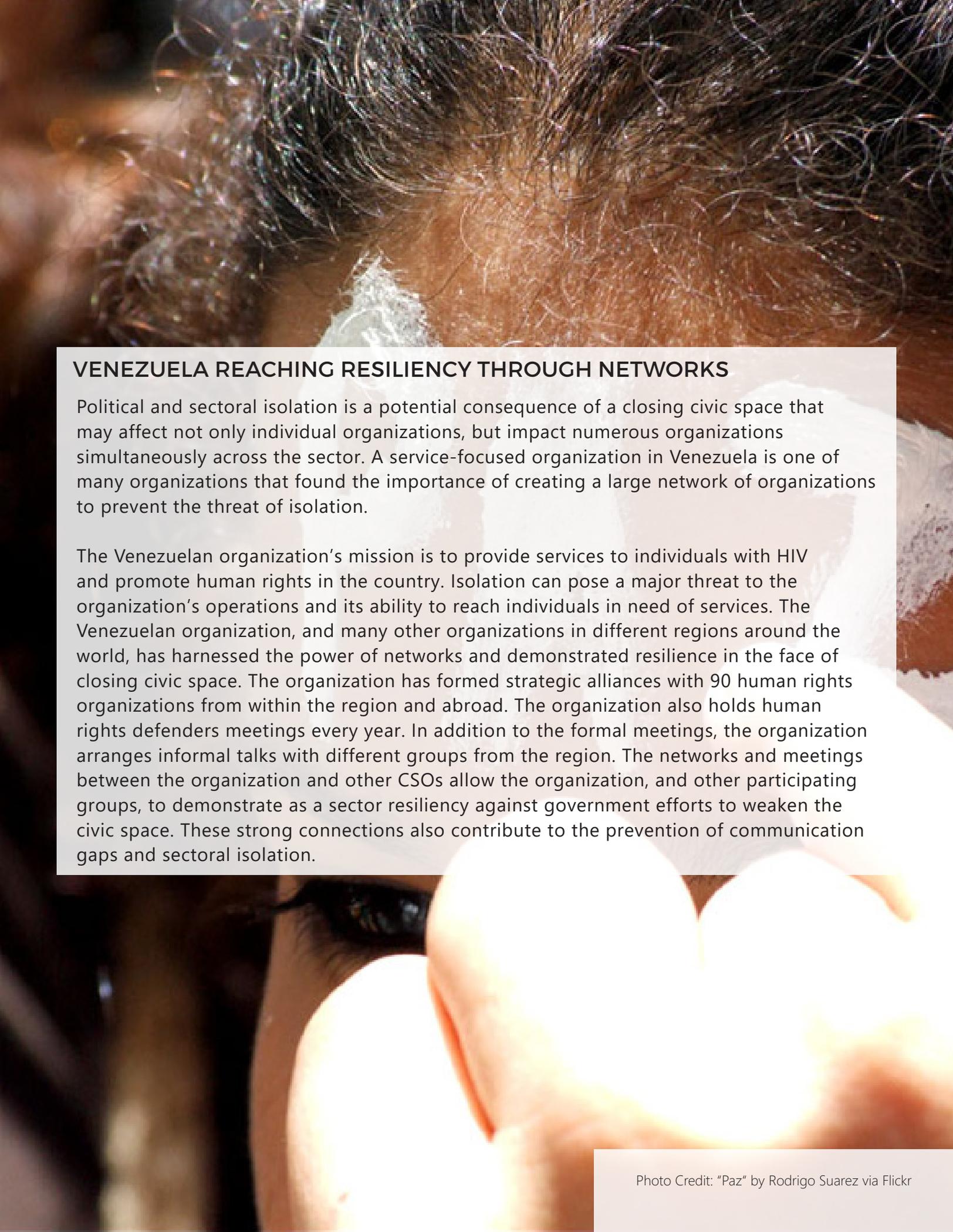
VENEZUELA REACHING RESILIENCY THROUGH NETWORKS

Political and sectoral isolation is a potential consequence of a closing civic space that may affect not only individual organizations, but impact numerous organizations simultaneously across the sector. A service-focused organization in Venezuela is one of many organizations that found the importance of creating a large network of organizations to prevent the threat of isolation.

The Venezuelan organization's mission is to provide services to individuals with HIV and promote human rights in the country. Isolation can pose a major threat to the organization's operations and its ability to reach individuals in need of services. The Venezuelan organization, and many other organizations in different regions around the world, has harnessed the power of networks and demonstrated resilience in the face of closing civic space. The organization has formed strategic alliances with 90 human rights organizations from within the region and abroad. The organization also holds human rights defenders meetings every year. In addition to the formal meetings, the organization arranges informal talks with different groups from the region. The networks and meetings between the organization and other CSOs allow the organization, and other participating groups, to demonstrate as a sector resiliency against government efforts to weaken the civic space. These strong connections also contribute to the prevention of communication gaps and sectoral isolation.
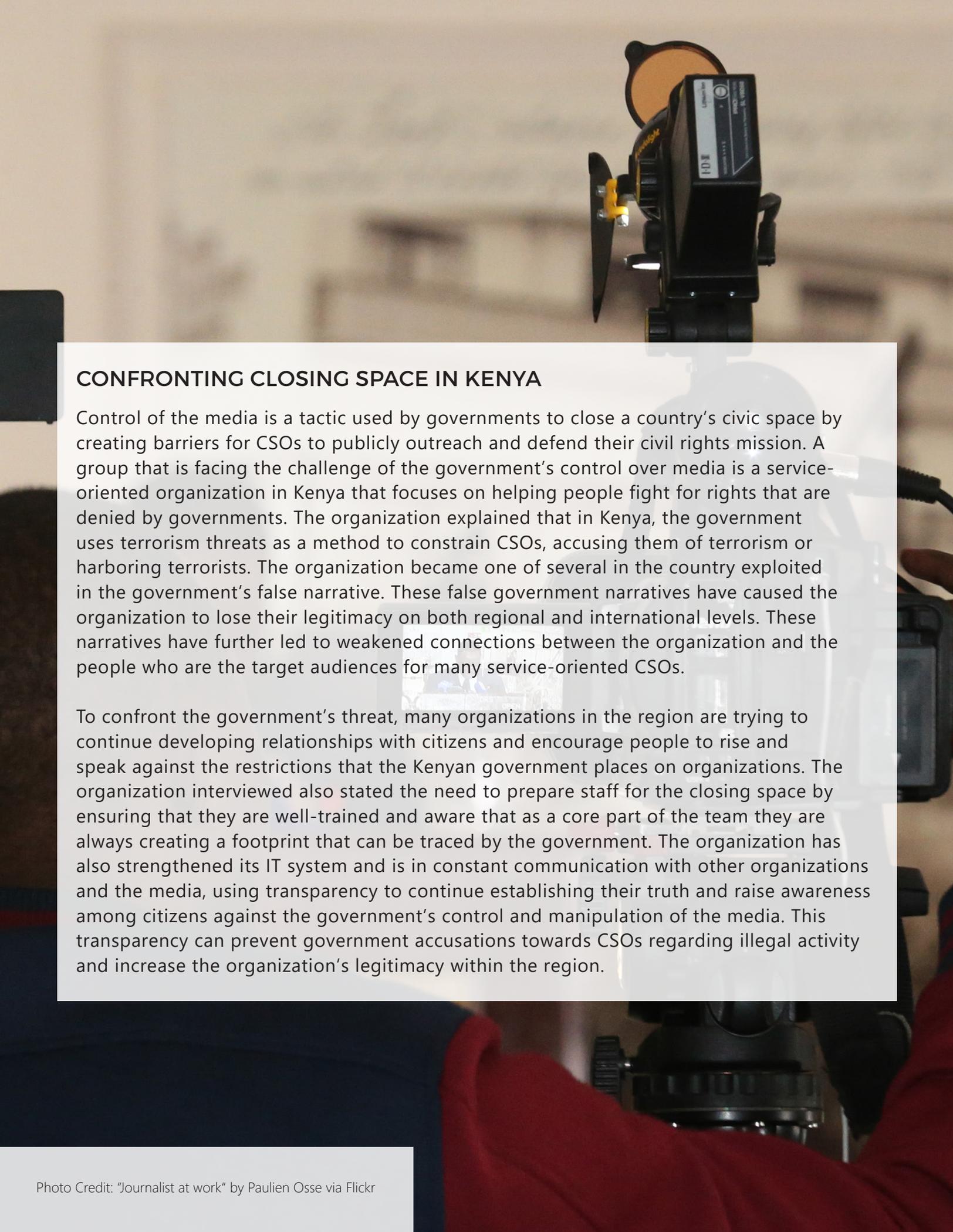
CONFRONTING CLOSING SPACE IN KENYA

Control of the media is a tactic used by governments to close a country's civic space by creating barriers for CSOs to publicly outreach and defend their civil rights mission. A group that is facing the challenge of the government's control over media is a service-oriented organization in Kenya that focuses on helping people fight for rights that are denied by governments. The organization explained that in Kenya, the government uses terrorism threats as a method to constrain CSOs, accusing them of terrorism or harboring terrorists. The organization became one of several in the country exploited in the government's false narrative. These false government narratives have caused the organization to lose their legitimacy on both regional and international levels. These narratives have further led to weakened connections between the organization and the people who are the target audiences for many service-oriented CSOs.

To confront the government's threat, many organizations in the region are trying to continue developing relationships with citizens and encourage people to rise and speak against the restrictions that the Kenyan government places on organizations. The organization interviewed also stated the need to prepare staff for the closing space by ensuring that they are well-trained and aware that as a core part of the team they are always creating a footprint that can be traced by the government. The organization has also strengthened its IT system and is in constant communication with other organizations and the media, using transparency to continue establishing their truth and raise awareness among citizens against the government's control and manipulation of the media. This transparency can prevent government accusations towards CSOs regarding illegal activity and increase the organization's legitimacy within the region.

IMPROVIING LEGITIMACY OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN RUSSIA

A group of organizations in Russia were facing strong public stigmatization in the early months of 2017. They decided that it would be in their collective best interest to communicate more clearly about their activities, the problems they address, how their work is linked to human rights, the role of human rights organizations, and the type of people that work in the human rights space. Many of these groups had been declared as "foreign agents" by the government. Some of them launched a web-documentary project that described their history and how they work.   Many clips traced the daily work of human rights advocacy practitioners, including internal discussions about their work and challenges. They showed mundane activities like riding subways home and buying groceries after a long day. The video was published on a project website and was promoted extensively using social media. The goal was to shift the public perception of what it meant to be a "human rights defender" and to reclaim the word "agent" as agent of good, representing the interests of citizens, not foreign powers. This use of narrative has now been expanded and similar projects are being developed to redefine the public understanding of some of the vulnerable groups being served by this CSO, including the LGBTI community.