UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

CIVIC SPACE AND EFFECTS OF SHRINKING SPACE ON WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN EAST AFRICA

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CSO	Civil Society Organisations
EARO	East African Regional Office
HRD	Human Rights Defenders
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organizations
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
WHRD	Women Human Rights Defenders
SOGI	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

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BACKGROUND

In February 2017, OHCHR- East Africa Regional Office (EARO) under the lead of its Regional Gender Advisor convened a workshop for cross-sectoral group of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD) in East Africa to discuss among others, engagement with the international and regional human rights mechanisms. Among the recommendations from the meeting was for OHCHR to support the network of WHRDs which comprised of members from Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda. OHCHR-EARO has acted as the Secretariat of the Network and has facilitated cooperation and information sharing between the members of the network. A second meeting of the network was held in December 2017 with a focus on sharing of experiences and lessons learned in working on women rights at the national level. The Network is part of OHCHR East Africa Regional Office (EARO)'s long term project on strengthening the capacity of WHRDs to engage in human rights work and OHCHR-EARO's overall work on widening civic space. The Network is supported by OHCHR resources and complemented by Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (RTPC) funds. It is one of a number of examples of effective linkage between RPTC resources and other sources of funds to support the work of women's rights and gender equality in East Africa.

On 29-30 November, OHCHR-EARO convened a two day meeting for the WHRD Network to discuss ways and strategies in which we could collectively address the challenge of the closing civic space in the country and the threats facing WHRDs. The workshop also focussed on the critical gaps in the safety of WHRDs in the region and available remedies at the global and regional level to safeguard against undue restrictions on the work of civil society. This report is extracts of some of the contributions made by participants. The report also provides an overview of the recent context of closing space in the region as well as of the key progress and challenges in WHRDs response.

CONTEXT

Over the last few years, governments in East Africa as elsewhere have used security policies, including counter-terrorism strategies to restrict public freedoms and the role of civil society. This has led to the targeting of human rights defenders, such as journalists and activists for threats and attacks by authorities. The situation is even worse for Women Human Rights Defenders. In restrictive and even open civic space environments, women human rights defenders, as other minority groups such as the LGBTI community, tend to suffer additional layers of difficulties based on their gender as a result of patriarchal norms. How civic space violations are experienced is also based on gender. There have been several arrests and detentions of HRDs for engaging in human rights work including women human rights defenders. For example, in March 2018, a WHRD working on sexual and reproductive health and rights and her mother were arrested for working on the reproductive rights of adolescents. For WHRDs global developments and pushbacks on human rights through anti-gender discourse has further complicated their work. With the age of technology and with restrictions on the physical integrity of CSOs and HRDs, increased numbers of CSOs and HRDs have resorted to new digital communication platforms. But these new spaces have also not been spared by the State which has imposed onerous laws to govern the online space.

DAY ONE

Session One

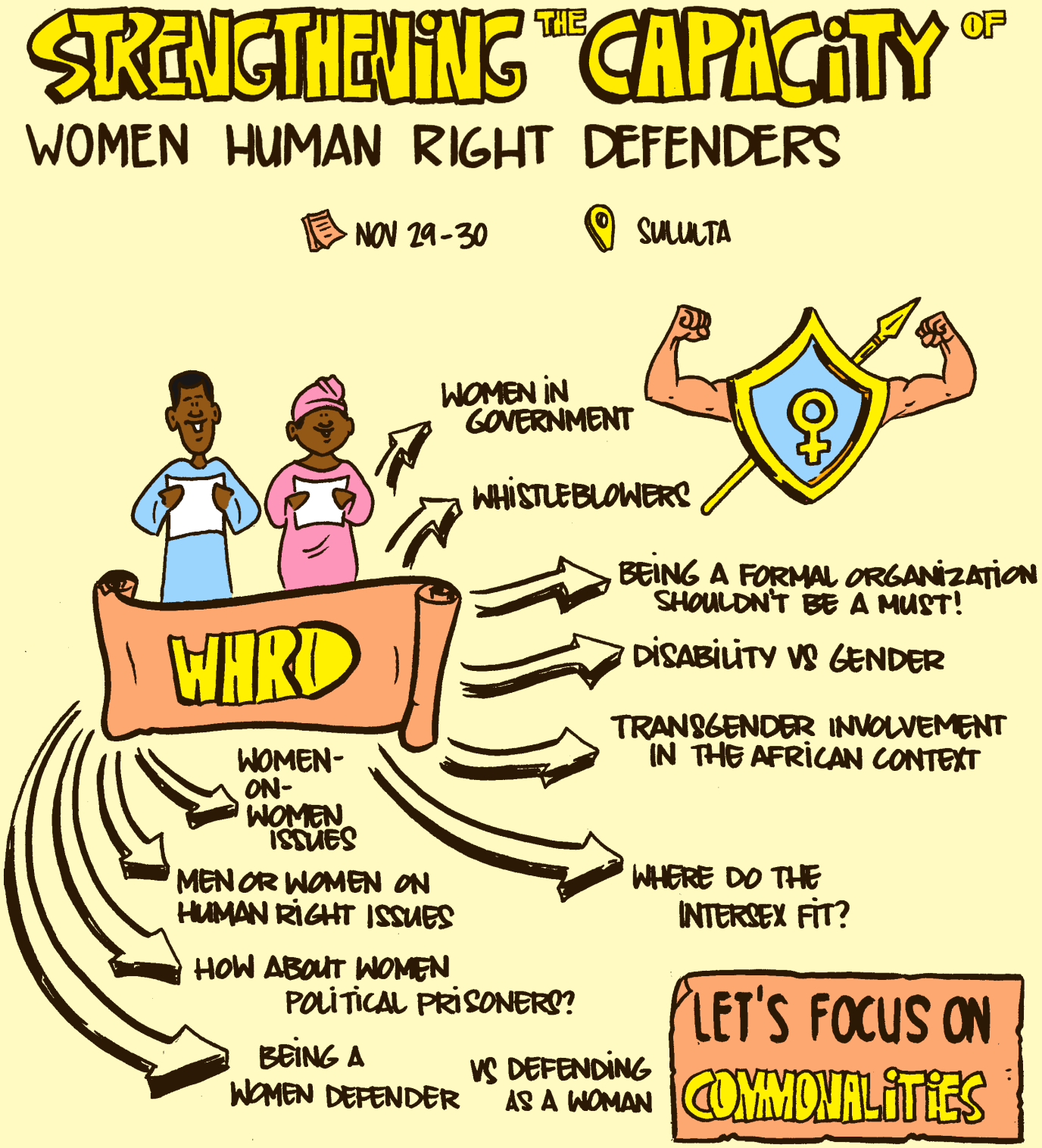
Introduction to the concept of Human Rights Defenders (HRD)/Women Human Rights Defender. The session was led by Hannah Forster, African Center for Democracy and Human Rights (ACDHRS)

Reflection questions:
What is an HRD in your context? Who has been left out in this definition of HRDs/ WHRDs and needs to be included?

In order to generate a common understanding on key terminologies, participants shared their views on their understanding of HRD/WHRDs; challenges affecting their work and views of on addressing some of the challenges identified. Inclusion of related issues of identify such as LGBT.

Some of the views shared by participants on their understanding of the definition of WHRDs:

- A WHRD could be a woman or a man working to promote and protect the rights of women.
- In most situations women do not consider themselves as human rights defenders especially if they are not in organized platforms
- There are allies at the government level who are very passionate about promoting and protecting rights of WHRDs and they should be included in the definition of WHRDs (Participant, WHRD).


STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF
WOMEN HUMAN RIGHT DEFENDERS
NOV 29-30
SULULTA
WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT
WHISTLEBLOWERS
BEING A FORMAL ORGANIZATION SHOULDN'T BE A MUST!
DISABILITY VS GENDER
TRANSGENDER INVOLVEMENT IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT
WHERE DO THE INTERSEX FIT?
WHRD
WOMEN-ON-WOMEN ISSUES
MEN OR WOMEN ON HUMAN RIGHT ISSUES
HOW ABOUT WOMEN POLITICAL PRISONERS?
BEING A WOMEN DEFENDER
VS DEFENDING AS A WOMAN
LET'S FOCUS ON COMMONALITIES

Participants also highlighted some of the challenges faced by WHRDs.

Gender based discrimination and gender stereotypes breed by patriarchal structures

Working on women's issues is already a challenge because it seeks to address or directly tackle issues of patriarchy. For example, there are gender stereotypes and issues of power which WHRDs continue to get confronted with in the cause of their work.There are a number of challenges of discrimination and religious factors which affect women.

Lack of legal protection for WHRDs

WHRDs continue to face attacks and there is no holistic legal protection for WHRDs In comparison to HRDs more broadly, the situation is very different for WHRDs , some WHRDs have been in exile while others are sent to jail

Challenges faced by WHRDs in defending women's rights and rights of marginalized groups

Defending women's human rights is a difficult area of work, and when women engage on these issues they face challenges for example, women who are working on LGBTI issues are targeted; it is not clear whether they are targeted because they are women or because they are working on LGBTI issues

There are salient human rights issues such as discrimination related to identity which makes it challenging to advance rights of LGBTI

A transgender may be male or female, it may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. This includes their personal sense of their body and various means of gender expression. it is important they are included in discussions around safety of WHRDs.

Not all WHRDs work for CSOs, there are also WHRDs working in government entities. They can play a critical role in defending rights of women.

Women rarely identify themselves as WHRDs if they are not in organized groups or spaces.

Religion

Physical Abuse and Sexual Violence

Discriminiation

Lack of Legal Protection

Patriarchy

Key human rights concerns and challenges affecting WHRDs

- WHRDs have multi-layered identifies depending on what they are working on such as transgender/ intersex or broader LGBTI issues. The HRDs/WHRDs have a lot in common, society often finds it difficult to accept what role the WHRDs play in societies and as such they face the same challenges as the minority groups they are representing; some of these challenges include discrimination and stigmatization.

- The more we try to separate the differences, the more challenges we get. We need to address commonalities (the commonalities are that we are all WHRDs, be they intersex/transgender or persons with disabilities or other groups whose rights we all seek to protect and promote.

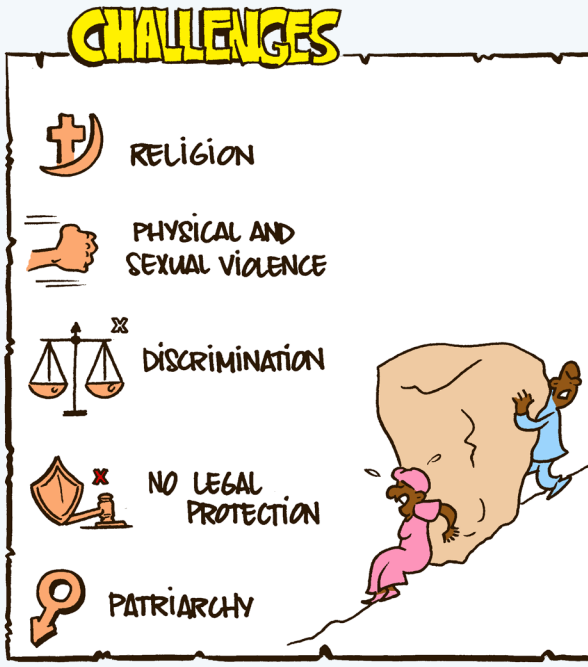
- We are WHRDs and we need to address the issues of WHRDs, we need to focus on the issues affecting WHRDs working on a diverse range of issues affecting marginalized and discriminated groups; as HRDs or WHRD we need to address these issues in a holistic manner.

- We have some historical WHRDs who tend to dominate and take most of the spaces, actively prevent young WHRDs from contributing, thus posing a generational challenge. We need to build the capacity of young emerging WHRDs.

- WHRDs are subject to risks which take the form of different types of violence which include; exclusion and rape

Strengthen Engagement with human rights mechanism

In the next WHRDs meeting we should engage more with the African Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders..



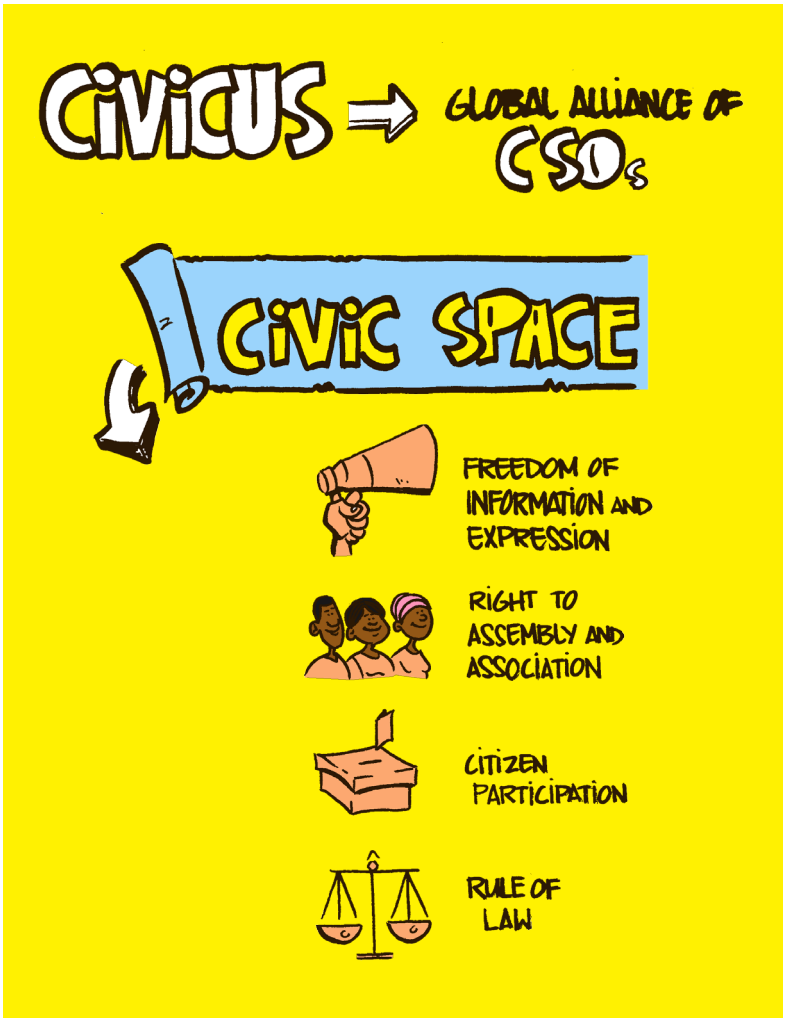
Session Two

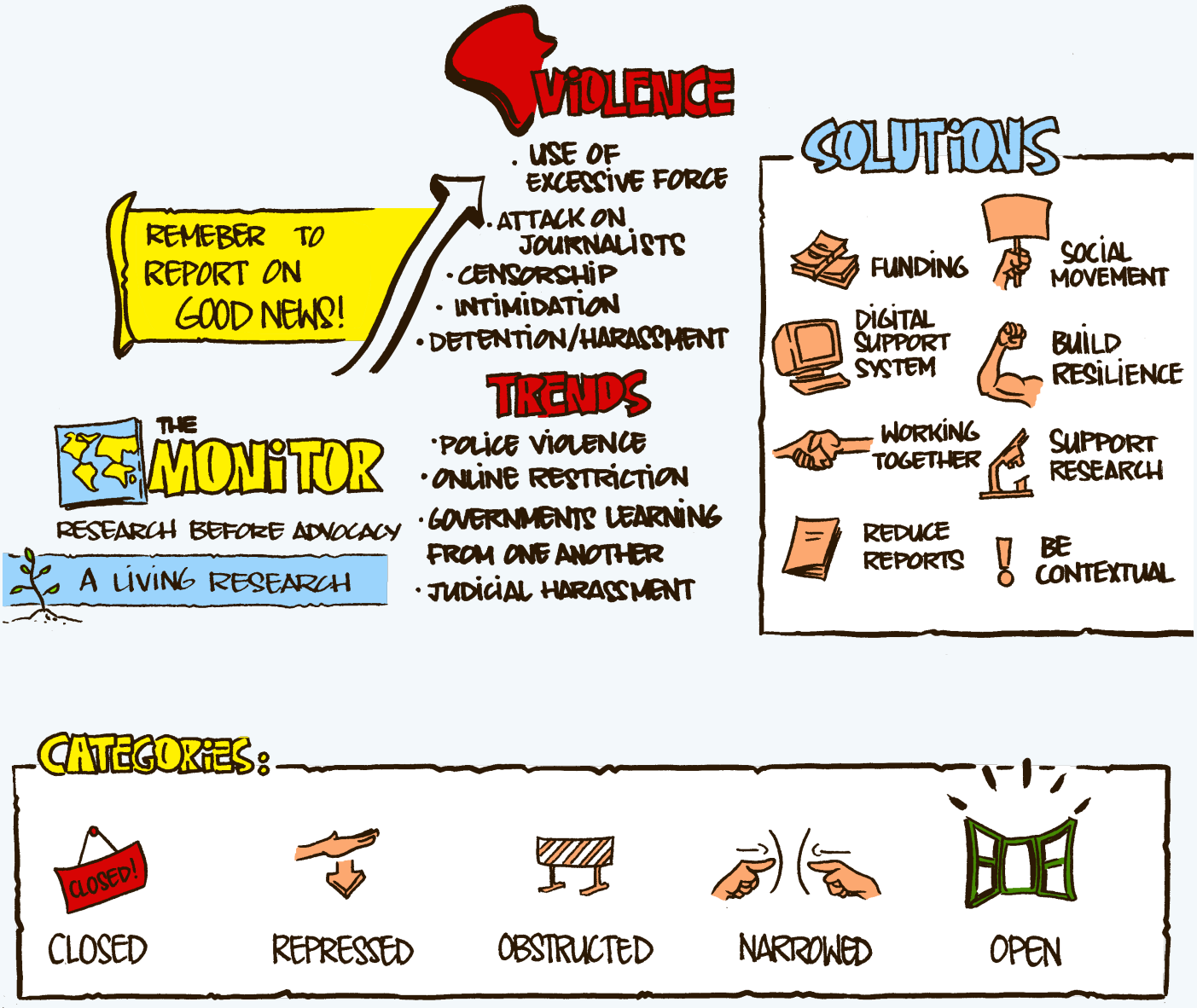
State of Civic Space in Africa and in East African Region - The session was led by Teldah Mawarire, **CIVICUS**

CIVICUS Definition of Civic Space:

- Right to freedom of information and expression
- Rights of Assembly and association
- Citizen's participation (free fair elections, citizen's engagement)
- Rule of Law

Key parameters undermining work on civic space relates to challenges arising from measurement of civic space. CIVICUS with the support of the United Nations is trying to collect information and research to provide evidence of shrinking civic space to inform evidenced based advocacy. CIVICUS has designed a methodology to measure public freedoms which is based on information monitored by CSO using the markers: Closed, Repressed, Obstructed, Narrowed and Open.




VIOLENCE
· USE OF EXCESSIVE FORCE
· ATTACK ON JOURNALISTS
· CENSORSHIP
· INTIMIDATION
· DETENTION/HARASSMENT
REMEBER TO REPORT ON GOOD NEWS!
TRENDS
· POLICE VIOLENCE
· ONLINE RESTRICTION
· GOVERNMENTS LEARNING FROM ONE ANOTHER
· JUDICIAL HARASSMENT
THE MONITOR
RESEARCH BEFORE ADVOCACY
A LIVING RESEARCH
SOLUTIONS
FUNDING
SOCIAL MOVEMENT
DIGITAL SUPPORT SYSTEM
BUILD RESILIENCE
WORKING TOGETHER
SUPPORT RESEARCH
REDUCE REPORTS
BE CONTEXTUAL
CATEGORIES:
CLOSED!
CLOSED
REPRESSED
OBSTRUCTED
NARROWED
OPEN

Voices of WHRDs and reactions to changing trends regarding civic space:

- There is need for people in civil society to look at the role of civil society. Maybe civil society has not transitioned **(Participant, WHRD)**.
- We need to think of the methods and strategies we are using as civil society. The language used by CSOs in reports sometimes is also negative and confrontational
- We need to change our governance structures within civil society. Why INGOs have a better footing with governments, is it because they have better systems, what are the INGOs doing that we cannot do? Local civil society organizations need to do more.
- Are civil society organisations contributing to closing of their own space? How can we become more collaborative in working as a consortium with other NGOs?
- It is critical to understand the trends and patterns, for example countries' in the East African Community block conduct elections after every four years. Every time a President is elected, government priorities changes. As civil society, we need to work in new ways; we need to begin meeting political leadership informally and engage with the people in authority to advocate on our issues.

Emerging Concerns

- Intelligence gathering may include early warning mechanism; we need to identify weak links within our organizations. Everyone in the organization needs to understand what you do in order to put the necessary safeguards in place
- There are things which CSOs are doing which may close their own space, for example lack of systems and focusing on accountability to only donors. We should be accountable to the society, donors as well as to governments.
- There is corruption in the civil society sector; this is currently affecting the closure of civic space. We as civil society need to walk the talk.

.In Tanzania, we have changed the strategy to engage with the government. We have civil society forums where we engage with the Government. As such we should know as we work with government; when to disengage, when to engage and when to address issues. We have started to engage with the government and are meeting with different line Ministries on a one on one basis.

STATE OF
CIVIC SPACE IN
EAST AFRICA
ENGAGE GOVERNMENT
POLITICAL ACTIVISM PLAYS A ROLE!
SUSTAINED ADVOCACY IS ESSENTIAL!
EARLY WARNING SYSTEM
• FORCASTING VIOLENCE
INNOVATION IN PROTEST
• NEED TO UNDERSTAND PATTERNS OF VIOLENCE
BE SURE TO WALK THE TALK!
SHRINKING SPACE FOR CSOS
• SMART RESTRICTIVE LAWS
BE STRATEGIC
• DON'T BE CONFRONTETIONAL
• IDENTIFY STRATEGIC ENTRY POINTS
IDENTIFY INTELLIGENCE VULNERABILITIES
BE FINANCIALLY ACCOUNTABLE
MECHANISMS TO DEAL WITH CORRUPTION

Brainstorming session and Individual exercise:

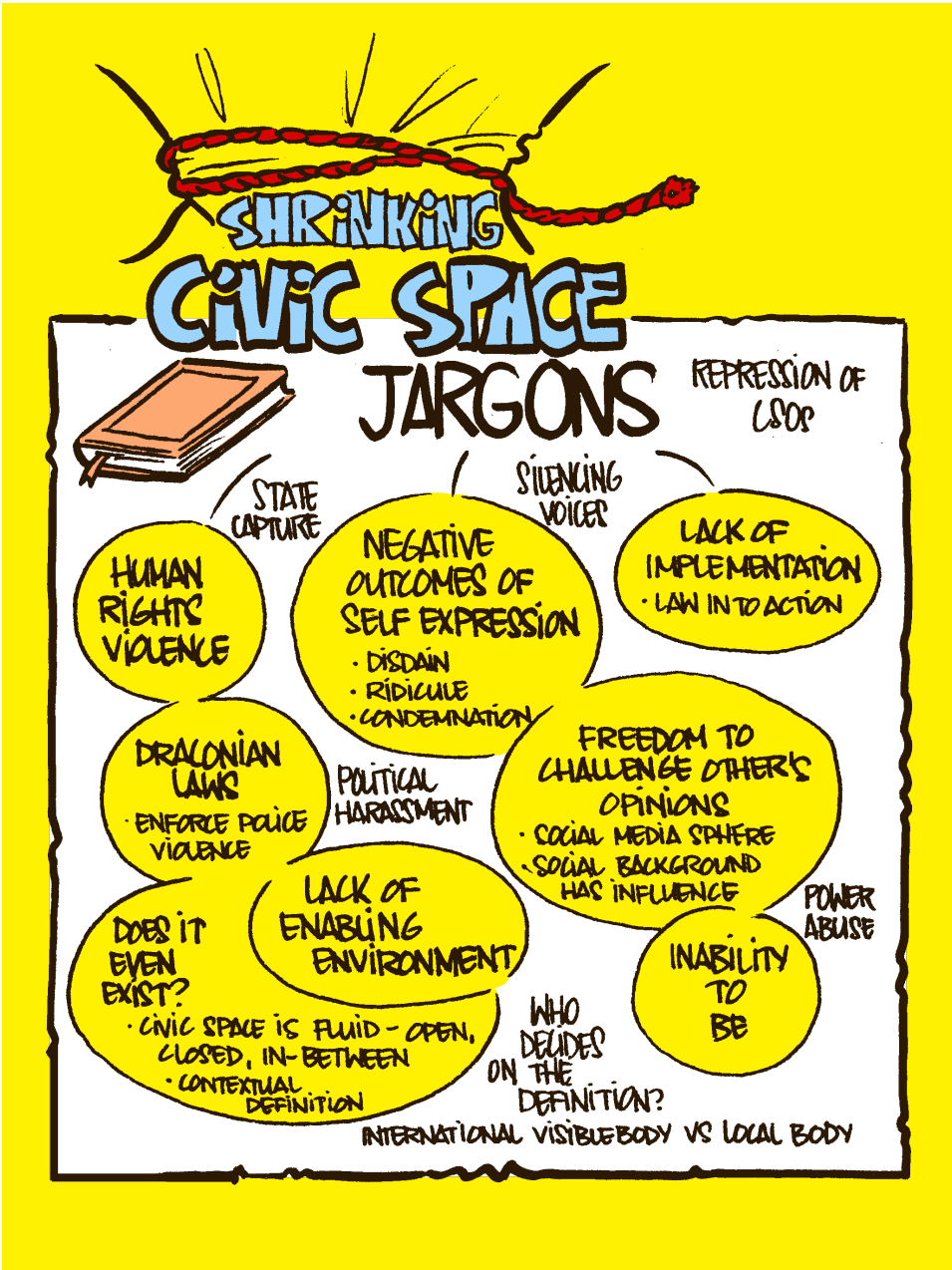
Breaking down Civic Space Jargon. In your context, what is shrinking civic space?

Meaning of shrinking space

The notion of shrinking space is subjective with different meanings and interpretations depending on the context and views of the individual. To some it is about closing of space, to some it is limited engagement, or obstructed action. How do we interrogate further? Does the space exist?

Participant's conceptualization of 'shrinking civic space' in their contexts

- Shrinking space is a violation of human rights.
- Decreasing working environment.
- Denial/ suppression of public freedoms, undue restrictions
- Inability to express oneself without ridicule, disdain and condemnation: Individual self-agency.
- Freedom to challenge and express differences of opinion
- Silencing of voices and state capture and limiting citizens engagement
- Intimidation of human rights defenders
- Freedom to challenge and express differences of opinion



Highlights and Comments on the need for WHRDs to do their business differently to address emerging challenges of shrinking space

Funding

- WHRDs need to break the silos oo resource mobilization; prioritization of programmes to meet donor agenda.
- Donor changing priorities is a due to shrinking donor funding.

Building stronger coalitions and consortiums

- There is a need for WHRDs organizations to strengthen collaboration, networking with other agencies. There are certain expectations that need to work in consortiums, , there is need for INGOs to strengthen capacity of smaller organizations, building donor trust is difficult for grass root organizations

Challenging CSOs and governments to listen more to early warnings

- CSOs should avoid engaging in political discussions but seek to work with all constituents including opposition parties.

Strengthening engagement with government

How do we create channels where we can share information with governments on our work? How do we involve them in these conversations?

- As WHRDs organizations we should choose our battles, let us try to avoid aggression, we need to be assertive.
- There is need to engagement with government, political parties before they are elected in power.
- Conversation for solutions in communities in collaboration with the government/ state: There should be open space for conversation.

Role of NHRIs is critical; they are required to support CSOs

- The role of NHRIs is critical. However, most NHRIs are underfunded, this affects their work.

Lack of enabling environment

- If the space does not exist, we need to claim and demand for its existence for rights to be realized.
- There are diverse ranges of spaces; business, human rights and different levels of space.

Group work:
Analysis of human rights context, Root causes of shrinking space and paradigm shift

Group One

Human Rights context

- Enforced disappearences
- Closed space for CSOs
- Compromised independence of NHRI
- Culture

Root causes of shrinking space

- Regressive laws which are inconsistent with ratified human rights instruments
- Fear of prosecution and reprisal by CSOs
- Limited financial resources
- Funding Restrictions
- Fear of being exposed by CSOs
- Failure to walk the talk, poor accountability by CSOs
- Boot licking by CSOs in exchange with favours e.g appointment in goverment positions.
- Limited understanding among communities on their rights and responsibilities
- Limited CSO capacity

Paradigm shift:
Suggestions on how WHRDs can do business differently

- Engage with decision makers
- Building coalitions and stronger networks
- Human capacity development of NGO personnel
- Establishing and strengthening self-accountability mechanism
- Deliberate efforts to align NGO programming with goverment development priorities vis-avis meeting donor priorities.
- CSOs should seek for alternative funding / resource mobilisation to ensure sustainability
- There is need to empower beneficiaries

Group work:
Analysis of human rights context, Root causes of shrinking space and paradigm shift

Group Two

Human Rights context

Root causes of shrinking space

- Regressive laws which are incompatible with state party treaty obligations
- Fear of criticism/reprisal
- Authoritatarian regimes and use of excessive force
- Limited knowledge, WHRDs empowerment strategies
- Inferiority complex among some CSOs which affects their bargaining power in negotiations
- Patriarchy and use of socialisation process to reinforce negative cultural values and stereotypes

Paradigm shift:
Suggestions on how WHRDs can do business differently

- There is need for concerted efforts to empower CSOs/WHRDs
- Engage the Goverment
- Engage strategically with regional bodies to apply presure on Governments in respective countries ef East African Community, African Union.
- There is need for CSOs to have a unified front for engagement

Group Three

- Closed , obstructed, narrowed civic space

- Poor domestication of ratified international and regional treaties
- Regressive domestic legal regimes
- Government use of restrictive laws as a tool to gag CSOs
- Poor enforcement of laws
- Limited political will
- Funding challenges and heavy reliance by goverment and over reliance on donor funding to implement its human rights obligations e.g Kenya health sector financing is dependent on donor funding.
- Changing donor priorities in trade and investments as opposed to donations
- Religious and cultural factors which shapes societal norms and behaviour
- Shifting dynamics of donor interests
- Dictatorial tendencies by goverment

- CSOs should not fight governments but rather should devise new strategies of engagement
- WHRDs should build stronger networks and alliances
- Align strategic plans with government priorities
- Ensure active and meaningful engament of communities in law making process and advocating for ammendments on restrictive provisions.
- WHRDs should agree on a common agenda
- More community engagement in advocacy work
- Improve use of technology in advancing work of civil society
- Civic education targeting communities , religious and cultural leaders
- Developing clear strategic plans

Session Three

Effects of Shrinking Space on Women Human Rights Defenders

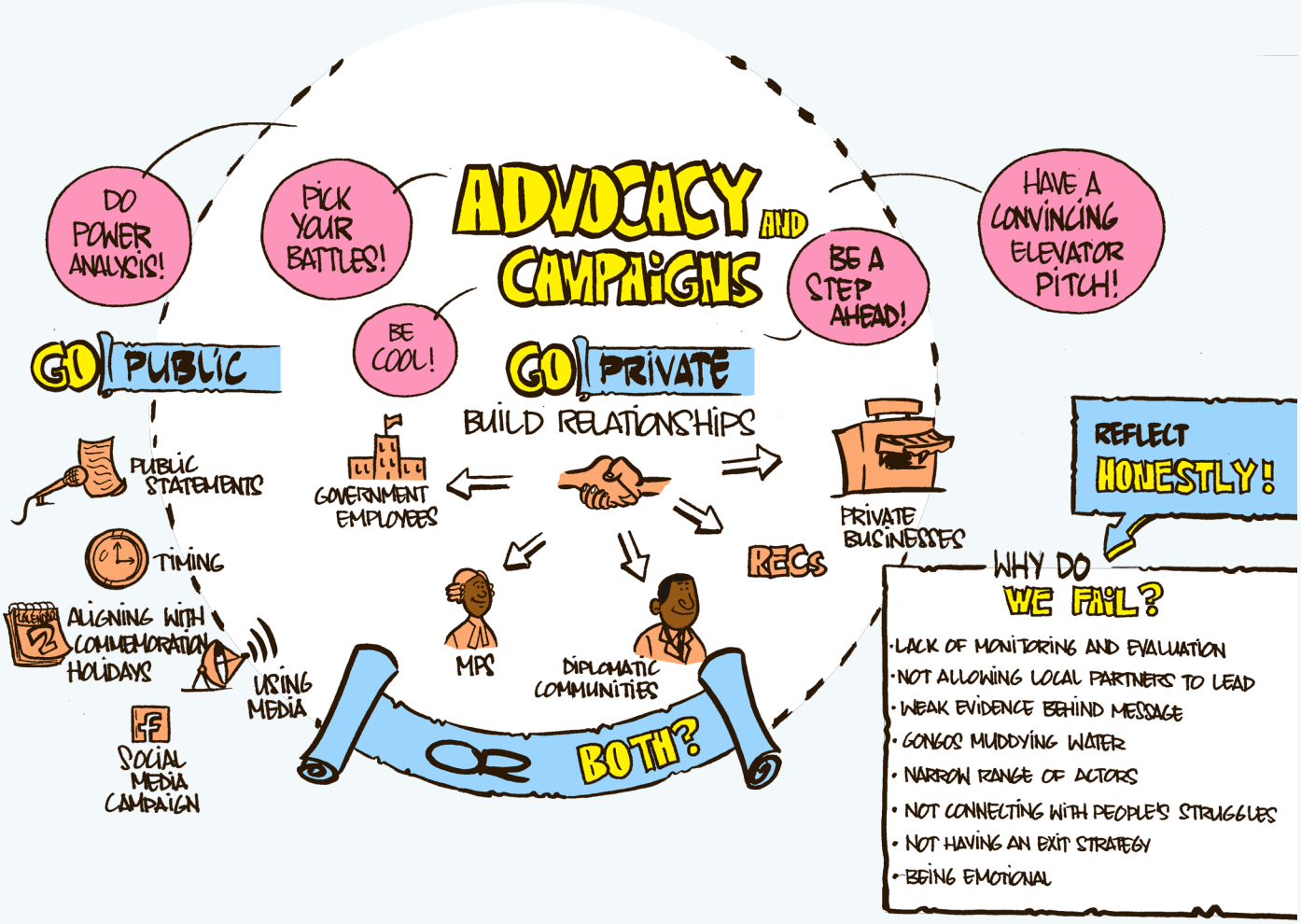
When civic space shrinks, most women human rights defenders tend to pull out.

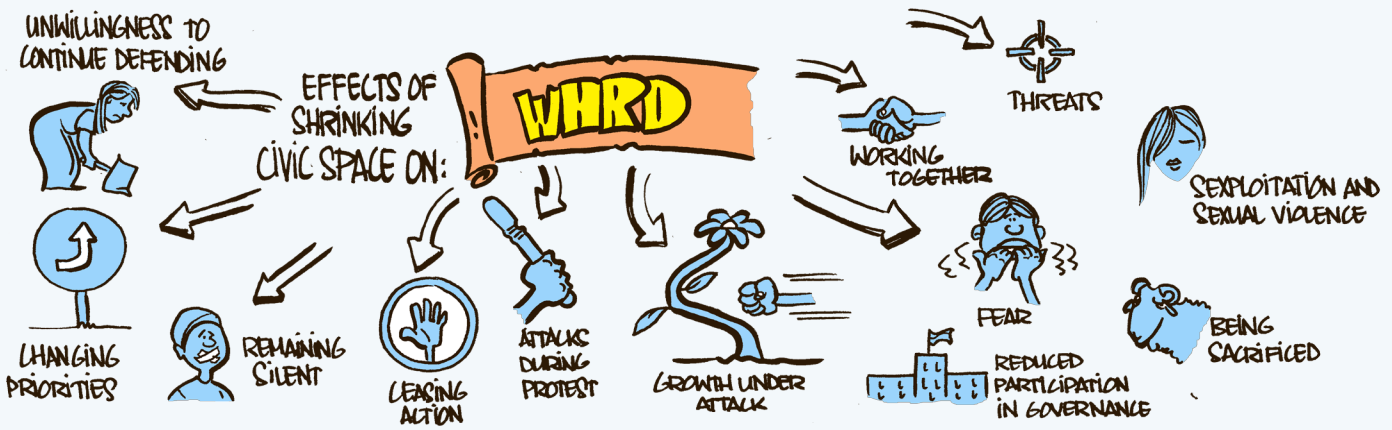
In Kenya, groups have started to form, depending on the cause that you are focused on, and they have grownvery strong. What started of one issue pressure group formed by young university students to demand justice for a murdered student 'Justice for Sharon' by a University Professor has increasingly become a pressure group for young people demanding protection for students from violence in university campuses.

The effect of shrinking space often results in increased attacks on WHRDs and creates fear among WHRDs working on women's rights. In Tanzania, WHRDs have been arrested, harassed and intimidated for working on sexual and reproductive health related issues. There is very little protection for WHRDs in this environment.

What is the effectiveness of WHRDs?

- There has been global advocacy for global funding under PEFAR to mobilize resources for organizations, the groups have grown over time; these capacities have been strengthened on financial management and accountability.
- In Kenya and Uganda, efforts have been made to strengthen individual fundraising. Engaging with corporate entities, advocating for funding to ensure organizations are able to secure their own office space
- In Kenya, Grace Agenda which advocates for survivors of sexual violence during elections in Kenya is runby volunteers because there is a passion for justice for women and girls.
- One of the effects is that it is easier to compromise especially if the shrinking of space is a direct result of government policies as they are not on equally footing in terms of bargaining.
- Advocacy is a continuous process. If we want to transform our societies, WHRDs need to be organized, well informed and committed.
- Participants explained WHRDs have received emails informing saying 'I know where you live, I know where your children go to school' and that as a WHRDs you tend to surrender because you do not have a choice. Sometimes giving in and giving up is dangerous. If you stop, they will stillfollow. Sometimes you fight witha large number of people, sometimes you are left alone.
- In Guinea women mobilized and went to the stadium to protest against a decision made by the government and while protesting they were all subjected to rape by the military personnel. The violations are still pending before court. Some of the suriviours were able to identify alleged perpetrators but they have not been able to access justice. The women aresimply making demands for government to be more accountable. These are practical challenges that WHRDs continue to face.


ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNS
DO POWER ANALYSIS!
PICK YOUR BATTLES!
BE COOL!
BE A STEP AHEAD!
HAVE A CONVINCING ELEVATOR PITCH!
GO PUBLIC
PUBLIC STATEMENTS
TIMING
ALIGNING WITH COMMEMORATION HOLIDAYS
USING MEDIA
SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN
GO PRIVATE
BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES
PRIVATE BUSINESSES
MPS
DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITIES
REGS
OR BOTH?
REFLECT HONESTLY!
WHY DO WE FAIL?
·LACK OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION
·NOT ALLOWING LOCAL PARTNERS TO LEAD
·WEAK EVIDENCE BEHIND MESSAGE
·GONGOS MUDDYING WATER
·NARROW RANGE OF ACTORS
·NOT CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE'S STRUGGLES
·NOT HAVING AN EXIT STRATEGY
·BEING EMOTIONAL


EFFECTS OF SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE ON:
WHRD
UNWILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE DEFENDING
CHANGING PRIORITIES
REMAINING SILENT
CEASING ACTION
ATTACKS DURING PROTEST
GROWTH UNDER ATTACK
REDUCED PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE
FEAR
BEING SACRIFICED
SEXPLOITATION AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE
WORKING TOGETHER
THREATS

DAY TWO

Session Four

Advocacy and campaigns

Two dimensions of advocacy: Public and Private Advocacy

Key considerations to inform your public advocacy

- Timing
- Solidarity mission as an advocacy strategy
- Private advocacy

Private Advocacy

Sometimes there is need to engage in private advocacy with governments over sensitive issues which the government. There have been some successes of private engagement with key government officials in The Gambia and Tanzania.

Examples of good practices stemming from private advocacy

First undertake a mapping of relevant stakeholders, who are the power holders, this mapping should enable us engage in advocacy actions.

Emerging concerns regarding private advocacy

Private advocacy may not be easy to make because some officials do not feel safe in their spaces and this may require meeting in a private setting or in a hotel. The power analysis is critical because it enables WHRDs to make an analysis of who their enemies are, who are the likely allies, WHRDs also need to find out reasons why there is resistance. In Kenya for example, Grace Agenda was advocating for reparations but was had done research to realize that the stakeholders who were expected to take action did not understand the term reparations.

Lessons learnt from unsuccessful initiatives

It is critical to document unsuccessful initiatives to be able to do things differently, it is always critical as WHRDs reflect on what has gone wrong and to analye possible causes for failing of an advocacy campaign.

Monitor and evaluate

Assess the process of the campaign to monitor and advocate the effect of the campaign. Because you are so focused on the campaign, you may not be conscious of the unforeseen negative effects. You need to stop and re-tweak the message to ensure that you achieve your goal.

Avoid weak evidence based message. This can affect the credibility of the advocacy and campaign because the evidence is weak. It is critical to use facts and figures

Experience sharing on lessons learnt from public advocacy

- Research is critical to inform evidence based advocacy strategies.
- Defend Defenders has focused on creating spaces for local and national voices to be heard by creating spaces for local NGOs to take the lead in advocating issues which affect them. Based on this experience, it was highlighted that INGOs need to find out at what point they need to come in to address local issues.
- It was also noted that, in situations where individual organizations are not able to come on board, Defend Defenders sometimes takes the lead depending on the circumstances. In a few instances, there has been a backlash.
- In Tanzania, one participant shared their experiences how they were challenged by a government to provide data and evidence to substantiate their claim. The Minister urged the NGO not to act on emotions, it is from his encounter that the NGO realized that, there is need to gather facts clearly to inform advocacy campaigns.
- When a crisis strikes, sometimes CSOs rush to send out press statements when the information is only partially verified or known. A key lesson learnt is that, CSOs should gather factual information before taking action.
- Key lessons learnt about advocacy campaigns included the need for proper preparation. WHRDs shared their experiences and highlighted the need for proper preparation, agreement on strategy for engagement with counter parts to ensure that, there is consensus on key points to be spoken
- It was recommended that, WHRDs need to undertake a risk analysis to understand the context, identify other players to be able to determine when to act and when not to act. WHRDs were advised to make sound judgment before taking action.

Session Five

Building Network Resilience: Preparing for the future.

Group exercise: Building a campaign

- Set a clear goal of your campaign.
- Develop a campaign strategy.
- Targets: You need to do a power mapping (friends, allies, potential groups who may hinder your campaign), this can happen simultaneously.
- Message (less jargon, what sort of social media are you using, what makes your message unique), try and test the message e.g. if a social media campaign stops and pretest, monitor and evaluate your campaign.
- Work in a coalition, after doing the power map you need to have an action on the campaign.
- Most CSOs are often seen as anti-government, you need to find strategic allies.

Building trust with other CSOs as a resilience mechanism

It is important to build working relationship with other CSOs. Knowing the objective of your organization, you need to weigh and measure strategies of including other organizations in your own work. Identify organizations working on similar issues and those who are not with the same area of work and build networks.

Building Network Resilience

How do you build resilience with other stakeholders? How do you win over support from other stakeholders?

There are many ways to make organizations resilient against attacks. Below are some of the illustrative examples on building networks to strengthen resilience against attacks.

Social Activists

It is critical to involve other vocal persons from the NGOS to strengthen engagement with other social movement activists.

Building resilience with lawyers

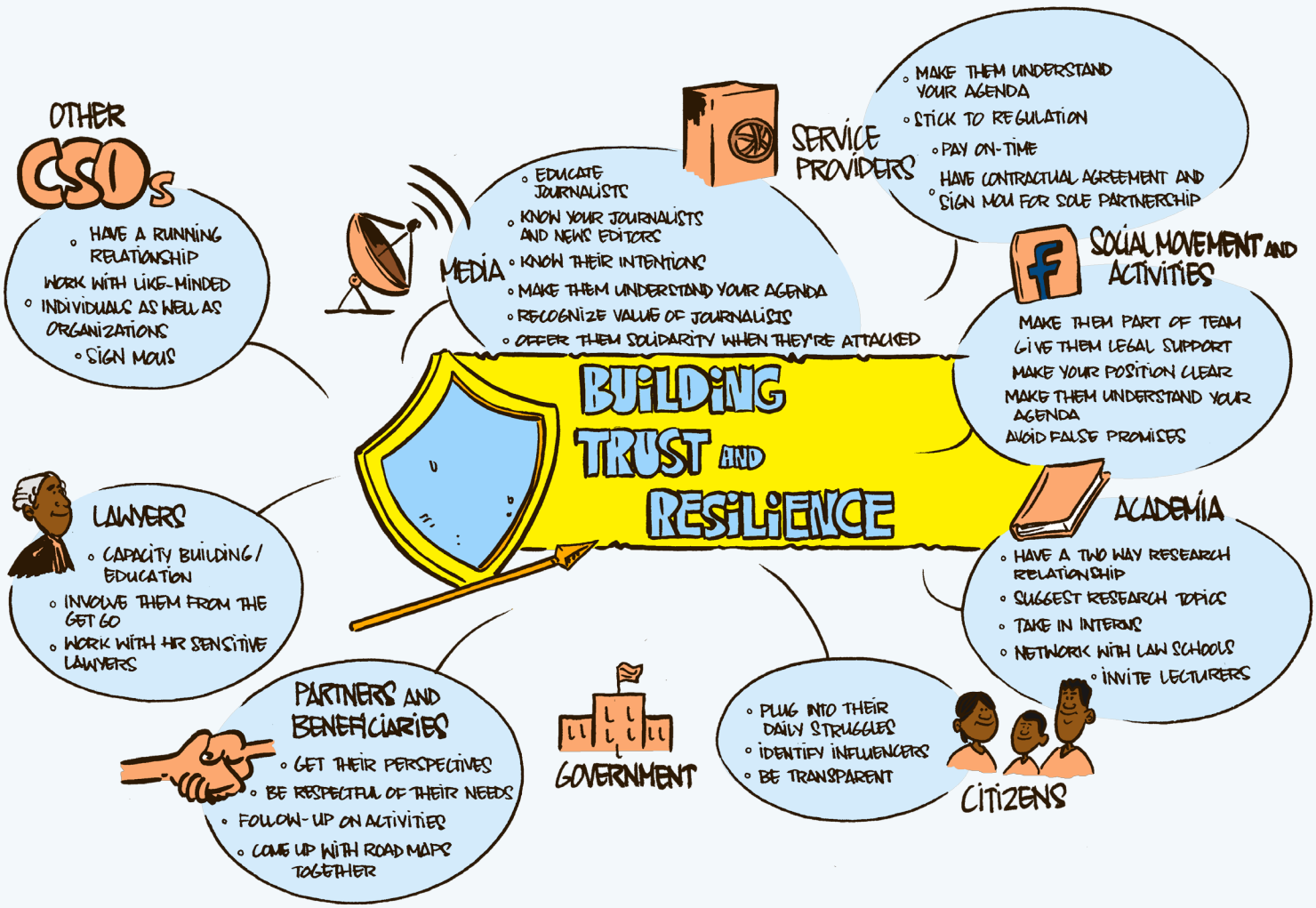
Building resilience with lawyers who understand your work to be able to have the capacity to engaged. Most countries

Service Providers

There is need to ensure that service providers participate in organizational activities; some of the good practices include signing a Memorandum of Understanding with service providers. **Good practice:** Defend Defenders provides emergency services, in order to ensure timely delivery of services, the organization negotiated with service providers to provide services and they are paid later based on agreed timeline.

Building Resilience with the Media

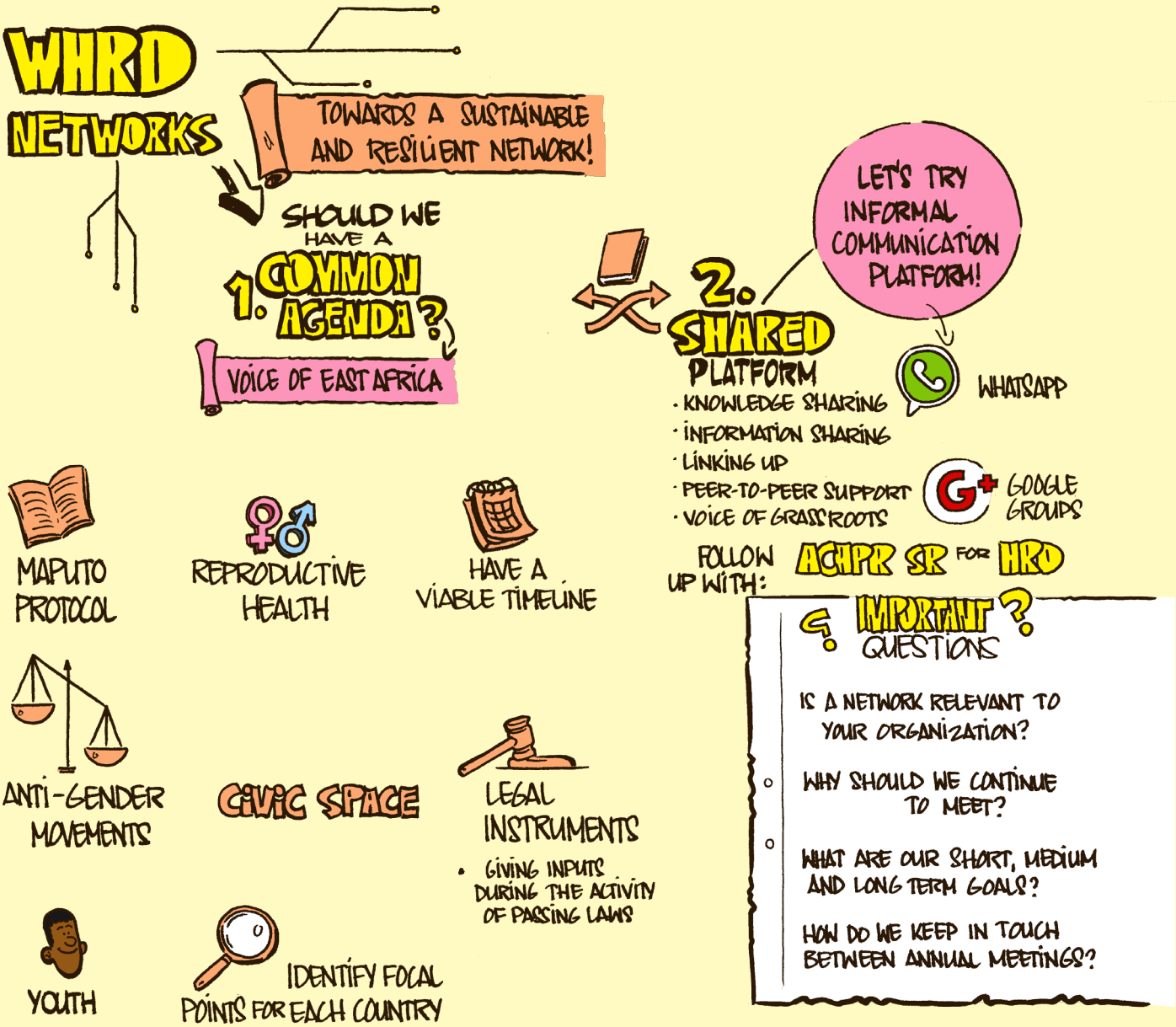
Building trust with the media is critical because it enables the media to have a good understanding of your organizational work thus creating an impetus for effective reporting. CSOs should demonstrate solidarity with the media professionals when they are under attack.


BUILDING TRUST AND RESILIENCE
OTHER CSOs
HAVE A RUNNING RELATIONSHIP
WORK WITH LIKE-MINDED INDIVIDUALS AS WELL AS ORGANIZATIONS
SIGN MOUS
MEDIA
EDUCATE JOURNALISTS
KNOW YOUR JOURNALISTS AND NEWS EDITORS
KNOW THEIR INTENTIONS
MAKE THEM UNDERSTAND YOUR AGENDA
RECOGNIZE VALUE OF JOURNALISTS
OFFER THEM SOLIDARITY WHEN THEY'RE ATTACKED
SERVICE PROVIDERS
MAKE THEM UNDERSTAND YOUR AGENDA
STICK TO REGULATION
PAY ON-TIME
HAVE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT AND SIGN MOU FOR SOLE PARTNERSHIP
SOCIAL MOVEMENT AND ACTIVITIES
MAKE THEM PART OF TEAM
GIVE THEM LEGAL SUPPORT
MAKE YOUR POSITION CLEAR
MAKE THEM UNDERSTAND YOUR AGENDA
AVOID FALSE PROMISES
LAWYERS
CAPACITY BUILDING/ EDUCATION
INVOLVE THEM FROM THE GET GO
WORK WITH HR SENSITIVE LAWYERS
ACADEMIA
HAVE A TWO WAY RESEARCH RELATIONSHIP
SUGGEST RESEARCH TOPICS
TAKE IN INTERNS
NETWORK WITH LAW SCHOOLS
INVITE LECTURERS
PARTNERS AND BENEFICIARIES
GET THEIR PERSPECTIVES
BE RESPECTFUL OF THEIR NEEDS
FOLLOW-UP ON ACTIVITIES
COME UP WITH ROAD MAPS TOGETHER
GOVERNMENT
PLUG INTO THEIR DAILY STRUGGLES
IDENTIFY INFLUENCERS
BE TRANSPARENT
CITIZENS

Session Six

Taking stock of WHRDs Network

- There is need to engage with young WHRDs so that they are included in the network.
- WHRDs agree on a common advocacy strategy and advocacy on the Maputo protocol.
- The WHRDs agreed to identify a platform for sharing of information to ensure that there is constant engagement; information sharing on call for proposals or any emerging issues.
- It was also noted that, most countries in East Africa are soon approaching election period, members highlighted that, the network might want to focus on WHRDs participation in election process.
- It was agreed that the network should build on ongoing initiatives identified by group, and agree on strategies of strengthening capacity of WHRDs to utilize the international and regional instruments to advance its agenda.
- OHCHR committed to support the network by providing information on the platform on emerging issues including and other key events which are of relevance to the work of WHRDs.
- Given the timeframe and frequency of communication; WHRDs agreed to develop a clear strategy on continued engagement with OHCHR and to periodically use the platform to share best practices and lessons learnt.
- It was recommended that in order to strengthen coordination, WHRDs network should appoint country focal points. The members requested to consult with their executive directors at country level and agree on the best way forward.


WHRD NETWORKS
TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT NETWORK!
SHOULD WE HAVE A
1. COMMON AGENDA?
VOICE OF EAST AFRICA
2. SHARED PLATFORM
LET'S TRY INFORMAL COMMUNICATION PLATFORM!
WHATSAPP
· KNOWLEDGE SHARING
· INFORMATION SHARING
· LINKING UP
· PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT
· VOICE OF GRASSROOTS
GOOGLE GROUPS
FOLLOW UP WITH: ACHPR SR FOR HRD
MAPUTO PROTOCOL
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH
HAVE A VIABLE TIMELINE
ANTI-GENDER MOVEMENTS
CIVIC SPACE
LEGAL INSTRUMENTS
• GIVING INPUTS DURING THE ACTIVITY OF PASSING LAWS
YOUTH
IDENTIFY FOCAL POINTS FOR EACH COUNTRY
5 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS
IS A NETWORK RELEVANT TO YOUR ORGANIZATION?
WHY SHOULD WE CONTINUE TO MEET?
WHAT ARE OUR SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG TERM GOALS?
HOW DO WE KEEP IN TOUCH BETWEEN ANNUAL MEETINGS?

Session Seven

Reflections on the importance of Women Human Rights Defenders Network

What is the relevance of the WHRD network to your work as WHRDs? Why should we continue to meet and to achieve?

- The WHRDs recognized the fact that they are working on diverse range of thematic human rights issues which affect WHRDs and unanimously agreed that, the current network is a necessity and offers opportunities for WHRDs to share, learn and advance women's human rights defenders' issues.

- WHRDs network agreed to as a group review a report on the study on the situation of women human rights defenders in Africa to prioritize three key issues to inform our joint action

Action points and way forward

- OHCHR to develop a google group and a WhatsApp group for information sharing, peer to peer learning.

- It was agreed that all WHRDs should review the report on the study on the situation of WHRDs and identify key issues for discussion in the next meeting and to inform further engagement with the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders in Africa for technical guidance and advice.

- All documents used in the workshop will be uploaded and in a generic list to be created by OHCHR.

- Participants attending the WHRDs forum who are not in decision making process should consult their organizational leadership whether or not to be part of focal points for the WHRDs at country level.

- WHRDs to support the roll out of African Union Gender strategy.

- WHRDs were urged to share information on cases of threats, killings and harassment made against WHRDs to inform OHCHR reporting on SDG Goal 16 indicator 16.10.

Participants' feedback on the workshop

"This network is useful to my work, first increases my knowledge on how to defend women human rights through discussions, and the experience sharing from my colleagues as a women's rights activist. Also, I get more confidence when I deal with the challenges I face when protecting women's rights."
Sophia Donald, SAWAU

"The most recent training I attended supported by the OHCHR-EARO in Addis Ababa has to have been the most affirming and inspiring.

Not that the subject matter and facilitators were any less inspiring or informative than the previous, but that this one got to my core! it made me take a closer look at ,myself and the Cause, WHY I exist as a Woman, Human Rights Defender and if my input, If any was valuable to the work and people I serve! The process of recognizing and acknowledging failures inspired me to forge ahead with a "better" plan and strategy!

Further the "office" has been very responsive to my requests for help and guidance, by continually supplying me with information and connections where the voice of sexual violence survivors are heard and met.

The exposure also provided a networking and learning platform with other organizations that was strengthened beyond the training to develop precious relationships!

I must appreciate OHCHR in Nairobi which has ceaselessly endeavored to put Sexual Violence on the Map of Kenya as a gross Human rights violation, while regularly building my capacity and supported our Voice for inclusion on the table of discussion.

Our survivors are just that much more empowered and vocal by extension of my attending the forums. I endeavor to disseminate much of my learning to them. The information has further EMBOLDEND me to engage with my government and we are much better for it! No longer do we wallow in hopelessness looking to "bigger" NGO`s to speak for us, but we are empowered to Self Agency!

We bring hope to those unable speak as we do, our aspirations have listening ears, and this world is just much more attentive to the plight of Survivors who are Human Rights defenders for the Cause of Justice!

We graciously acknowledge the support of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and East Africa Regional Office and look forward to growth to greater heights." ***Jacqueline Mutere, GRACE AGENDA***

"Thank you for the opportunity to meet and network with other WHRDs. The network is useful to me in that it provides a platform to WHRDs to;

Network

It is not often that we meet as WHRDs, in fact we seldom meet especially with our regional colleagues. This platform gives us the opportunity to network, know each other and know what our colleagues do.

Peer learning and review

We learn from each other, thebest lessons and exchange ideas on how we do things. The platform also gives an opportunity for members to give feedback to fellow WHRDs on alternative ways to carry out their work.

Learn new ideas

Every meeting I have attended, I have always left with something new. The presentation by CIVICUS and the capturing the discussion in pictorials was epic. I also got to meet these new people sharing new ideas. It was awesome!

Create partnerships with other WHRDs from other regions

This platform provides an opportunity for members to create partnerships. We get to learn the work that other WHRDs do and this is an entry point for regional engagement.

Build capacity of WHRDs.

There is a lot that I learn from this platform that is not in any text book or that cannot be taught in class. The mix in participants brings with it a very rich and diverse gene of knowledge. The lessons learnt from other WHRDs are life long and gives me the impetus to soldier on."

Jackline Kawere