



PEOPLE POWER 2020/2021

WHY POSITIVE NARRATIVES ARE CRITICAL TO PEOPLE POWER

WHAT ARE THEY?

Positive narratives are much more than a success story!

They are a tool to re-shape the way we share with the world the critical work and real stories of human rights defenders, activists, artists, researchers, academics, policy-influencers, organised and less organised civil society (from community and grassroots movements to everyday citizens). Positive narratives acknowledge the problems we face but do not get stuck in them. Instead, they focus on the hope and possibilities for change, highlighting the agency of civil society and the transformational potential of **#peoplepower**.



WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

Civil society is doing extraordinary work in the frontlines, bringing about positive change all around the world. People need to know more about this (not only about the challenges) to get inspired and jump on board to support our work!



2

Unfortunately, mainstream narratives are too often shaped by those in power to galvanise different types of attacks on fundamental freedoms and civic space. Smear campaigns against civil society have become more common and we have to counter them using the tools, strategies and tactics that are proving effective in creating positive narratives about positive social work.

May the force of **#peoplepower** be with you!



STEPS FOR BUILDING SUCCESSFUL POSITIVE NARRATIVES:

STEP 4: Weather the storm! If it gets hard, do not lose hope. No matter the aggression, repression or smear campaign, people power can't be ignored.

STEP 3: Co-design the narrative and the change you aspire to!

STEP 2: Find context-appropriate ways to include, consult, engage, create networks and build capacities.

STEP 1: Build community trust! In the era of **#fakenews**, shrinking **#civicspace** and institutionalised fear, people must trust you, what you claim, what you do.

TOOLS YOU CAN USE TO BUILD AND PROMOTE POSITIVE NARRATIVES:

1 Systematic data collection and multidisciplinary research carried out by diverse civil society actors

- > Provide non-refutable facts and arguments for advocacy and policy-making **#credibility**
- > Make it clear and easy for everyone to see why our causes matter **#dataforaction**

2

Art and storytelling (interviews, theater, radio shows, etc.)

- > They have the power of communicating directly to people's heart, contributing a virtuous spiral of inspiration, participation, hope, **#peoplepower** and change
- > They open up spaces and amplify voices that have been excluded or silenced by fear of terrorism, violence and repression

Do not underestimate the importance of inspiration and hope to help people take the first step and know that things can be better if we come together!

3 Campaigns on media and social networks

- > To put complex issues in the spotlight
- > Because they are cost-accessible, allow for dialogue, coordination, network creation and reach a lot of potential allies



+ POSITIVE NARRATIVES = + PEOPLE POWER