

# 2020-2024 Strategic Plan

*Updated by IFEX Council on 11 November 2022*

This Strategic Plan guides IFEX's collective scope, priorities and approach over the period 2020-2024 in promoting and defending the right to freedom of expression and information (FoE&I). It builds on IFEX's work over the past 27 years and responds to the unfolding contexts and needs of IFEX members.



**ifex**

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# INFORMED BY THE CONTEXT, DRIVEN BY IFEX MEMBERS

IFEX's strategic direction was determined by members and supported by IFEX's partners and allies through various consultation processes that explored IFEX's ongoing work and approaches, current contexts, future trends, and priority needs to drive impact.

**RESEARCH:** The 2020-2024 Strategic Plan development process began in late 2018 with research into key areas of enquiry. This research included independent evaluations of IFEX's ongoing member support mechanisms and IFEX's increasing voice and visibility, as well as a Think Big Tank exploring best practices for network management, engagement and operations.

**PRIORITY-SETTING, LED BY MEMBERS:** Building on the results of this research in 2019, all members were invited to participate in a network-wide questionnaire and consultation sessions. An independent evaluation among members, partners, allies, donors and staff assessed IFEX's past work, strengths and weaknesses, and informed our future direction, including opportunities and threats. The consultations held at the April 2019 Strategy Conference explored current and future contexts, drivers of change and IFEX's priorities over the next five years. The resulting priorities for IFEX's strategic direction were refined and further developed through a series of subsequent consultations with members throughout the Summer of 2019.

**MEMBER-INFORMED STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT:** The IFEX Council and IFEX staff members worked with the direction provided by members to craft and refine the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, with final review and approval of the plan in October 2019.

## CROSS-CUTTING THEMES & DEFINITIONS

A number of critical themes cross-cut the Strategic Plan reflecting IFEX's values, approach, and shifting contexts. This includes IFEX's commitment to meaningfully integrate equity and inclusion into its work, from operations and internal functions, to programming, content, and member support.

IFEX is also dedicated to respecting diverse experiences and perspectives stemming from intersecting identities and differing contexts. IFEX is committed to freedom of expression and information both online and offline, and considers and integrates a digital lens throughout all aspects of its work.

The following terms used throughout the IFEX 2020-2024 Strategic Plan are intended to be understood as follows.

**INTERSECTIONAL IDENTITIES:** IFEX recognises that a person's experiences and perspectives of FOE&I issues differ based on their identities (eg. gender identity, race, class, sexuality, language, abilities, age, and nationality among others). These identities are multiple and relational, forming unique intersecting identities. We strive to integrate and respect these nuances in our approach and communications in order to be equitable and inclusive in our work and relationships.

**EQUITY AND INCLUSION:** IFEX's approaches strive to ensure equity and inclusion of diverse perspectives and voices, and accountability for identity-based FoE&I violations. Our values push us to include the reflection and integration of different social, political, economic, environmental, and cultural contexts, as well as the intersectional identities that exist within them (including gender and sexual identities).

**ALLIES:** IFEX is dedicated to deepening strategic connections with allies, namely groups and/ or individuals who are committed to FOE&I and human rights. These may be existing allies with whom we already work or potential allies who could promote IFEX's messages and expand IFEX's impact.

**ENGAGE:** Working with stakeholders (e.g. members, allies) on a number of levels, which may include: collaborating with, consulting, facilitating a platform for, providing support to, learning from, and/or considering perspectives and experiences of these stakeholders in IFEX's work.

### ***Please note how IFEX is used in the plan:***

"IFEX" or "IFEX Network" refers to the members and the IFEX Secretariat together

"IFEX Members" refers to the organisations that are members of IFEX

"IFEX Secretariat" refers to the staff that work for IFEX

# OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

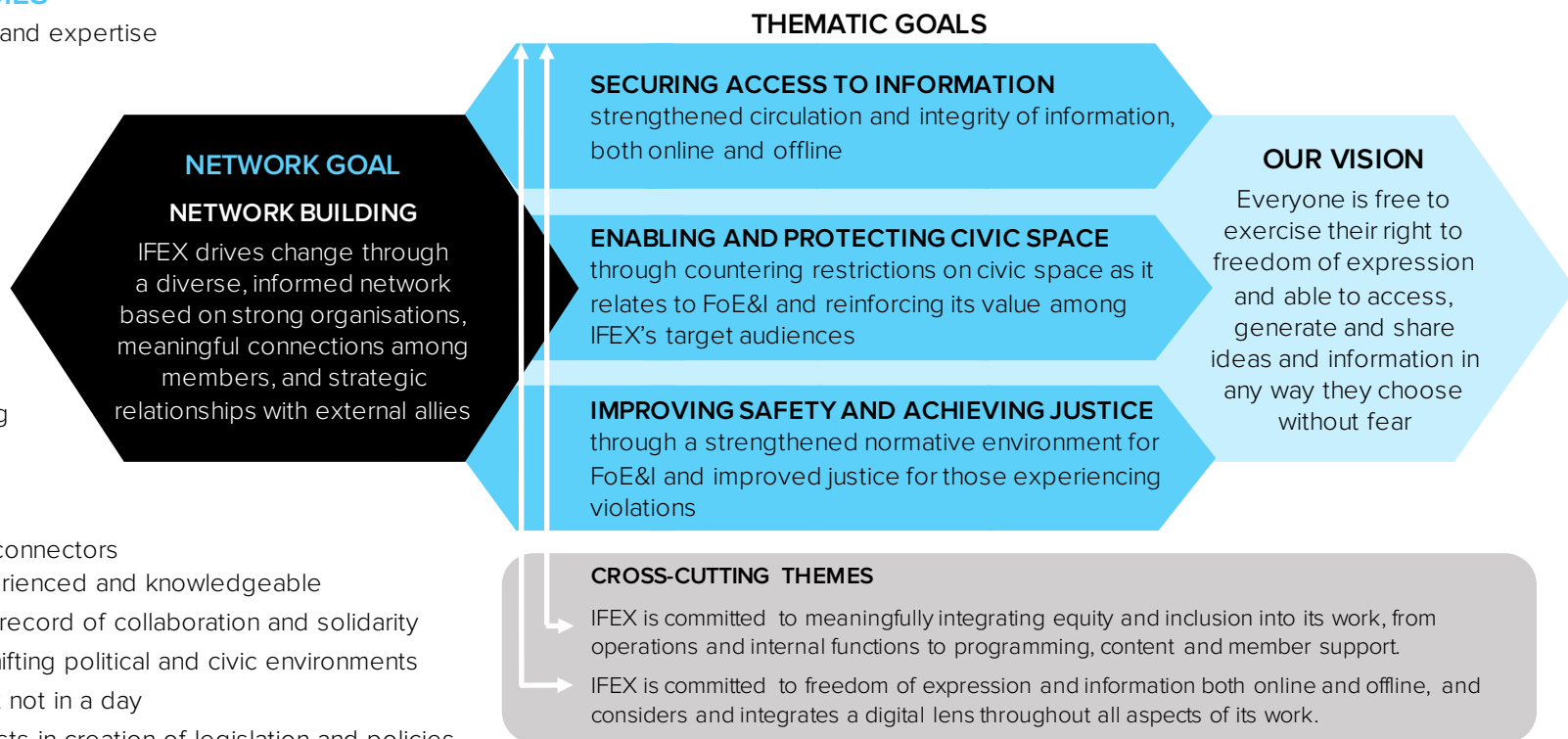
IFEX's 2020-2024 Theory of Change details the contextual challenges that IFEX will work within and respond to, the assumptions inherent in IFEX's strategic priorities, and the logical progression from IFEX's day-to-day work to reaching our vision. It should be noted that IFEX's Network Goal fundamentally supports the three Thematic Goals as a key driver of change.

## CONTEXTUAL CHALLENGES

- Distrust of and attacks on media, NGOs and institutions
- Surveillance of citizens by states and corporations
- Use of technology to control public narrative
- Climate crisis affecting global stability putting human rights at risk
- Increased infiltration and use of big data
- Declining effectiveness of multilateral democratic institutions (e.g. UN, ICC, etc.)
- Rise of corporate interests in creation of legislation and policies
- Growing restrictions on civil society impacting the most marginalised
- Rise in protest movements for change (climate, LGBTQI+, reproductive choice, etc.)
- National security excuse for censorship, surveillance, internet shut-downs, etc.

## TACTICS & STRATEGIES

- Exchanging experience and expertise
- Regranting
- Convening
- Collaborating
- Strategising
- Campaigning
- Advocating
- Lobbying
- Building IFEX's voice, visibility and leverage
- Responding to emerging and longstanding issues



## ASSUMPTIONS

- Networks are powerful connectors
- IFEX members are experienced and knowledgeable
- IFEX has a proven track record of collaboration and solidarity
- We are responsive in shifting political and civic environments
- Change can happen, but not in a day
- Rise of corporate interests in creation of legislation and policies
- Conventional tactics in addressing abuses need to be rethought
- Diversity enriches our credibility and approach

## OUR NETWORK

IFEX is the leading global network of organisations that defends and promotes the right to freedom of expression and information.

## OUR VISION

Everyone is free to exercise their right to freedom of expression and able to access, generate and share ideas and information in any way they choose without

## OUR MISSION

**To promote and defend freedom of expression and information and protection of civil society and civic space, we harness the expertise and diversity of the network in order to:**

- Engage people in claiming the right - particularly those with marginalised access;
- Challenge those who violate the right - particularly duty-bearers with the obligation to protect rights;
- Foster a broader and deeper understanding of the right to elevate its value in society; and
- Contribute to an environment where more people can fully exercise the right.

**As a network, we do this by:**

- Mobilising the power of collaboration and solidarity within and outside of the network to increase our impact;
- Leveraging opportunities in shifting political and social contexts;
- Strengthening the capacity of the network;
- Convening creative and innovative spaces for debate and action;
- Acknowledging and highlighting that groups and individuals with certain intersecting identities experience issues differently;
- Including considerations of gender and other forms of identity in our approach, reducing discrimination where possible;
- Considering impacts both online and offline.

## NETWORK GOAL: NETWORK BUILDING

Strengthened capacity of the IFEX network to promote and defend the right to FoE&I

OBJECTIVE		OBJECTIVE		OBJECTIVE	
1.1 Enhanced member organisational capacity		1.2 Enhanced connections between IFEX members		1.3 Connections with allies outside the IFEX network are strengthened and diversified	
STRATEGY STATEMENT		STRATEGY STATEMENT		STRATEGY STATEMENT	
IFEX will engage members in opportunities that are aimed at strengthening members' organisational aims, in line with the Strategic Plan, while working with members to apply a diversity, equity and inclusion lens.		IFEX will provide opportunities for members to identify and exchange experiences and knowledge that result in meaningful and respectful collaborations that promote strengthening aims, and that maintain and build network solidarity in support of the Strategic Plan.		IFEX will take an inclusive approach to expanding alliances to engage new and diverse allies such as civil society organizations and movements, international bodies, states, technology actors, academic institutions and other strategic partners that can be leveraged in support of the Strategic Plan	
INDICATOR	INDICATIVE TARGET	INDICATOR	INDICATIVE TARGET	INDICATOR	INDICATIVE TARGET
a) Level of member satisfaction with IFEX-facilitated initiatives to enhance organisational capacity in support of IFEX Strategic Plan	i) At least 75% of members report a positive level of satisfaction by end 2024 with IFEX-facilitated initiatives that enhance organisational capacity	a) # of exchanges facilitated/supported by IFEX	i) 100 exchanges facilitated/ supported by IFEX by end 2024 ii) At least 30% of exchanges provide opportunities for building connections among members with different areas of geographic focus	a) # of allies engaged by IFEX who can contribute to IFEX's goals, disaggregated by thematic goal area, region, and type of ally	i) 90 allies engaged by end 2024 disaggregated by thematic goal area, region, and type of ally
b) # of initiatives delivered that are aimed at strengthening members' organisational aims, disaggregated by those that incorporate elements of equity and/or inclusion	i) 250 initiatives delivered by end 2024 that are aimed at strengthening members' organisational aims, with at least 40% incorporating an element of equity and/or inclusion	b) Level of member satisfaction with the connections that they have made with other IFEX members	i) At least 90% of members report that IFEX-facilitated exchanges are respectful ii) At least 75% of members report increased connection with other members	b) Descriptions / examples of collaborations with allies outside the IFEX network	i) 20 examples of collaborations by end 2024

## THEMATIC GOAL: ACCESS TO INFORMATION

### Strengthened freedom and integrity of information

OBJECTIVE		OBJECTIVE	
<b>2.1</b> The circulation of information is promoted and defended		<b>2.2</b> Greater action to secure the accuracy and reliability of information	
STRATEGY STATEMENT		STRATEGY STATEMENT	
IFEX will support members working on initiatives to promote and defend the circulation of information and counter barriers to access, including supporting the creation and robust implementation of ATI laws, countering laws that suppress the circulation of information, tracking and fighting against internet shutdowns, and advocating for better content moderation practices. IFEX will promote an inclusive approach that engages and seeks to reduce discrimination against groups disproportionately affected by obstacles to the circulation of information.		IFEX will leverage opportunities to counter the threats to information integrity through work that aims to strengthen the accuracy and reliability of information, as opposed to how it is accessed or how it circulates. IFEX will promote an inclusive approach that engages and seeks to reduce discrimination against groups disproportionately affected by obstacles to the circulation of information.	
INDICATOR	INDICATIVE TARGET	INDICATOR	INDICATIVE TARGET
<b>a)</b> # of initiatives supported that promote and defend the circulation of information, disaggregated by those that incorporate elements of equity, and/or inclusion	<b>i)</b> 50 initiatives supported; 40% of which incorporate elements of equity, and/or inclusion	<b>a)</b> # of instances of using the IFEX platform to promote and defend accuracy and reliability of information among target audiences	<b>i)</b> 40 instances of using the IFEX platform to promote and defend accuracy and reliability of information among target audiences
		<b>b)</b> # of initiatives that IFEX supports to address the threats to information integrity; disaggregated by the incorporation of elements of equity and/or inclusion	<b>i)</b> 20 initiatives address the threats to information integrity by end 2024, 40% of which incorporate elements of equity and/or inclusion

## THEMATIC GOAL: CIVIC SPACE

Civil society enabled and civic space protected as it relates to FoE&I

OBJECTIVE		OBJECTIVE	
<p><b>3.1</b> Increased network push back against efforts and issues that diminish and/or restrict civic space as it relates to FoE&amp;I</p>		<p><b>3.2</b> Value of civic space as it relates to FoE&amp;I acknowledged and reinforced among IFEX’s target audience of members, allies, and other engaged individuals</p>	
STRATEGY STATEMENT		STRATEGY STATEMENT	
<p>IFEX will bolster initiatives that respond to issues impacting and limiting civic space (both online and offline), particularly through campaigns and advocacy efforts. In advancing this objective, IFEX will engage members and relevant stakeholders, including groups disproportionately impacted by the closure of</p>		<p>IFEX will use its platform to reinforce the perspectives and positions of groups disproportionately impacted by the closure of civic space, including as a result of intersecting identities. IFEX will also reinforce the critical role of civic space &amp; CSOs in exercising the right to FoE&amp;I (both online and offline).</p>	
INDICATOR	INDICATIVE TARGET	INDICATOR	INDICATIVE TARGET
<p><b>a)</b> # of initiatives that address issues and/or push back against efforts to diminish and/or restrict civic space as it relates to FoE&amp;I, disaggregated by those that incorporate elements of equity and/or inclusion</p>	<p><b>i)</b> 100 initiatives undertaken by end-2024 address issues and/or push back against efforts to diminish and/ or restrict civic space as it relates to FoE&amp;I, of which at least 40% incorporate elements of equity and/or inclusion</p>	<p><b>a)</b> # of instances where IFEX uses its platform to reinforce the value of civic space &amp; CSOs in the exercise of the right to FoE&amp;I, disaggregated by those that incorporate elements of equity and/or inclusion</p>	<p><b>i)</b> At least 250 instances of IFEX using its platform (e.g., original content, statements, Twitter threads, meetings with stakeholders, presentations at events) to reinforce the value and critical role of civic space &amp; CSOs in the exercise of the right to FoE&amp;I by end-2024, of which at least 40% incorporate elements of equity and/or inclusion</p>
		<p><b>b)</b> Examples of members, allies, and other engaged individuals and actors reporting that IFEX has contributed to reinforcement of the value of CSOs and civic space as it relates to FoE&amp;I</p>	<p><b>i)</b> At least 25 examples of members, allies, and other engaged individuals and actors reporting by end-2024 that IFEX has contributed to reinforcement of the value of CSOs and civic space as it relates to FoE&amp;I</p>

# THEMATIC GOAL: SAFETY AND JUSTICE

A safer environment for those exercising their right to FoE&I

OBJECTIVE		OBJECTIVE	
<b>4.1</b> Strengthened normative environment and protection practices for the safety of those exercising their right to FoE&I		<b>4.2</b> Improved justice for those experiencing FoE&I violations	
STRATEGY STATEMENT		STRATEGY STATEMENT	
IFEX will promote and foster an environment that reflects international standards for safety as they relate to FoE&I, and will facilitate network engagement in the development and implementation of protection practices, addressing both online and offline aspects of safety.		IFEX will leverage, engage with and strengthen justice standards and practices (including alternative mechanisms) for and with those experiencing FoE&I violations, particularly groups disproportionately impacted by these violations (including due to their intersecting identities).	
INDICATOR	INDICATIVE TARGET	INDICATOR	INDICATIVE TARGET
<b>a)</b> % of members that IFEX supported in this area reporting a strengthened normative environment and protection practices for the safety of those exercising their right to FoE&I in their context	<b>i)</b> At least 25% of members that IFEX supported in this area, report a strengthened normative environment and protection practices for the safety of those exercising their right to FoE&I in their context by end 2024	<b>a)</b> # of cases that have been resolved and/or achieved significant progress, disaggregated by groups affected	<b>i)</b> 10 cases have been resolved and/or achieved significant progress by end 2024
<b>b)</b> # of initiatives supported towards a strengthened normative environment and protection practices, disaggregated by those that incorporate elements of equity and/or inclusion	<b>i)</b> 160 initiatives supported; of which at least 40% incorporate elements of equity and/or inclusion	<b>b)</b> # of initiatives supported to improve justice for those experiencing FoE&I violations, disaggregated by those that incorporate elements of equity and/or inclusion	<b>i)</b> 80 initiatives supported; of which at least 40% incorporate elements of equity and/or inclusion