

## MODULE TWELVE

### Building and Maintaining Coalitions to Influence Security Sector Reform



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### A Women's Guide to Security Sector Reform Training Curriculum



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## Acknowledgements

Over the last decade, Inclusive Security and DCAF have conducted dozens of training workshops with women and men in countries undergoing security sector reform processes. We wish to thank all those who have participated in these trainings, sharing their stories, their wisdom and their experience, and helped us in turn to develop the training approaches reflected in this curriculum.

We extend particular appreciation to the authors of our *A Women's Guide to Security Sector Reform*, which served as the key background resource for this curriculum, Megan Bastick and Tobie Whitman, and the Advisory Council for that Guide: Ruth Gibson Caesar, Wazhma Frogh, Alaa Murabit, Jessica Nkuuhe, Bandana Rana and Sonja Stojanovic.

Kathrin Quesada, Megan Bastick, Heather Huhtanen, Carrie O'Neill and Kristin Valasek were the primary authors of this curriculum. Jacqueline O'Neill and Daniel de Torres helped shape the original outline and provided substantive input. Input was also received from Michelle Barsa, Anna Kadar, Alice Kielmann, Caroline Pradier, Lorraine Serrano, and Nanako Tamaru. Mylène Socquet-Juglard and Marta Ghittoni assisted with final stages of publication.

Editing by Rachel Isaacs. Graphic design by Stephanie Pierce-Conway.

## DCAF

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DCAF's Gender and Security Division works through research, technical advice and regional projects to support the development of security sectors that meet the needs of men, women, boys and girls; and promote the full participation of men and women in security sector institutions and security sector reform processes.

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## Inclusive Security

Inclusive Security is transforming decision making about war and peace. We're convinced that a more secure world is possible if policymakers and conflict-affected populations work together. Women's meaningful participation, in particular, can make the difference between failure and success. Since 1999, Inclusive Security has equipped decision makers with knowledge, tools, and connections that strengthen their ability to develop inclusive policies and approaches. We have also bolstered the skills and influence of women leaders around the world. Together with these allies, we're making inclusion the rule, not the exception.

Visit us at: [inclusivesecurity.org](http://inclusivesecurity.org). Contact us at: [info@inclusivesecurity.org](mailto:info@inclusivesecurity.org).

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ISBN: 92-9222-438-7

Cite as: Inclusive Security and DCAF. *A Women's Guide to Security Sector Reform: Training Curriculum*. Washington, D.C.: Inclusive Security and DCAF, 2017.

# MODULE OVERVIEW:

## Building and Maintaining Coalitions to Influence Security Sector Reform

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### Learning Objectives

- Participants are able to explain what coalitions are and why they are important to influencing security sector reform and security institutions.
  - Participants are able to identify the benefits and challenges of building an effective coalition to influence security sector reform and security institutions.
  - Participants are able to identify strategies to address coalition strengths and weaknesses.
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### Background Resources for Trainers

- Barnes, Karen and Peter Albrecht. "Civil Society Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender." In *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit*, edited by Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek. Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW, 2008. [www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Civil-Society-Oversight-of-the-Security-Sector-and-Gender-Tool-9](http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Civil-Society-Oversight-of-the-Security-Sector-and-Gender-Tool-9)
- Bastick, Megan, and Tobie Whitman. *A Women's Guide to Security Sector Reform*. Washington: Inclusive Security and DCAF, 2013. [www.dcaf.ch/Publications/A-Women-s-Guide-to-Security-Sector-Reform](http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/A-Women-s-Guide-to-Security-Sector-Reform)
- DCAF. *Gender and Security Sector Reform: Examples from the Ground*. Geneva: DCAF, 2011. [www.poa-iss.org/kit/Gender-SSR-E.pdf](http://www.poa-iss.org/kit/Gender-SSR-E.pdf)
- Inclusive Security. *Inclusive Security: A Curriculum for Women Waging Peace*. Washington: Inclusive Security, 2009. [www.inclusivesecurity.org/training-resources/](http://www.inclusivesecurity.org/training-resources/)
- O'Neil, Carrie and Nanako Tamaru. *Advocacy for Inclusive Security Curriculum*. Washington: Inclusive Security, 2017. [www.inclusivesecurity.org/training-resources/](http://www.inclusivesecurity.org/training-resources/)

Time	Description
<b>5 minutes</b>	<b>12.1 Introduction to the Module</b> 12.1.1 Facilitator Talking Points
<b>80 minutes</b>	<b>12.2 Building and Maintaining a Coalition</b> 12.2.1 Facilitator Talking Points: Coalition Building to Influence SSR and Security Institutions 12.2.2 Discussion: Strengths and Weaknesses of Coalitions 12.2.3 Activity: Meeting the Challenges of Building a Coalition
<b>30 minutes</b>	<b>12.3 How Can We Set Our Coalition Up for Success?</b> 12.3.1 Facilitator Talking Points: Best Practices for Running a Coalition
<b>5 minutes</b>	<b>12.4 Wrap Up</b> 12.4.1 Facilitator Talking Points: Points to Take Away
	<b>Adapting the Module</b> <b>Assessment Questions</b>
<b>Total Time: 2 hours</b>	

## 12.1 Introduction to the Module



### 12.1.1 Facilitator Talking Points

#### Background for Facilitator

This section introduces the purpose and learning objectives of this module.

There are many different platforms for effective advocacy, from formal coalitions to informal networks. This module focuses on creating coalitions, but for more information about other platforms and more in-depth activities about building and maintaining coalitions, see Inclusive Security's "Advocacy for Inclusive Security Curriculum."

Be prepared to share examples of successful coalitions and the challenges involved in building coalitions throughout this module.

#### Materials Needed

None

#### Learning Objectives

Participants are able to identify the purpose and learning objectives of this module.

**Time** 5 minutes

#### Facilitator Talking Points

- Advocacy cannot be done alone; it requires building and strengthening relationships and partnerships among and within communities and with other civil society groups and government institutions. How you engage and work with allies can take many different shapes; these partnerships can range from more formal coalitions to informal networks. Working collectively can broaden your support base, diversify the perspectives and voices working on your issue, and bring new skills and experiences to your work. Mobilization is about growing the number of people who support your cause, which will strengthen your advocacy and give weight to your recommendations.
- In Module 10 we discussed what skills and tools you need to become involved in security sector reform. In Module 11 we focused on researching and monitoring the security sector. In this module, we will examine how coalitions can come together to influence security sector reform and security sector institutions. We will also look at some of the benefits and challenges of building coalitions.
- After this module, you will be able to:
  - Explain what coalitions are and why they are important to influencing security sector reform and security institutions.
  - Identify the benefits and challenges of building an effective coalition to influence security sector reform and security institutions.
  - Identify strategies to address coalition strengths and weaknesses.



## 12.2 Building and Maintaining a Coalition



### 12.2.1 Facilitator Talking Points: Coalition Building to Influence SSR and Security Institutions

#### Background for Facilitator

This activity introduces and explores different examples of coalitions. It might be useful to display and refer to the stakeholder maps completed in Module 10.

#### Materials Needed

Flipchart; presentation slides

#### Learning Objectives

Participants are able to define “coalition” and recall their own experiences working collectively.

**Time** 20 minutes

#### Facilitator Talking Points

- A coalition is an alliance, usually a temporary one, of people, factions, parties, or nations. The word coalition comes from Latin meaning “to grow together.” Other terms for coalitions include networks, associations, or working groups.
- Coalitions can be exclusively between civil society organizations, but they can also include a range of actors, such as representatives of political parties, professional associations (e.g., women’s police associations), research and think tank institutions, academia (i.e., universities, schools, and colleges), faith-based organizations, student groups, institutions or individuals involved in the provision or oversight of the security sector (e.g., ombuds institutions or a ministry for women/gender), and international actors.
- There is a wide range of institutions, groups, and individuals who might come together and form a coalition around a shared security problem. Creating such an entity might include working with unlikely or unfamiliar partners—for example, to advocate for women’s inclusion in policymaking, you might meet with women from the military, police, or parliament to discuss security issues, and create a common agenda.
- One example of this kind of cross-sector coalition comes from Nicaragua. In the early 1990s, the Women’s and Children’s Police Stations were first established in Nicaragua thanks to a collaborative effort from the National Police, the Nicaraguan Women’s Institute, and the NGO Women’s Network. In 2008, a similar coalition formed to raise awareness about family violence, helping victims of domestic abuse identify themselves as crime victims and denounce perpetrators. Members of this coalition included civil society, educational institutions and the National Police. Their “break the silence” campaign included 1,400 different awareness-raising media and educational activities that encouraged women to speak out against abuse. Such a large-scale campaign would not have been possible if only one organization had been involved. *For more information on this Nicaraguan example, see page 11 of DCAF’s “Gender and Security Sector Reform: Examples from the Ground.”*
- Another example comes from the United Kingdom. Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) is a network of civil society actors focusing on women, peace, and security. GAPS has played an important role in shaping national discussions on UNSCR 1325. In addition to providing input on the country’s national action plan on UNSCR 1325, GAPS helped establish an Associate Parliamentary Group on UNSCR 1325 along with parliamentarians and the Cross-Whitehall Group on UNSCR 1325. This coalition is one of the few in the UK that includes civil society and civil servants working alongside parliamentarians. *For more information on this UK example, see page 14 of DCAF’s “Civil Society Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender.” You might instead choose to use different examples from this or the other publications listed above.*
- What experiences do you have with coalitions and/or collective action? *Have participants share in pairs before you move on.*



## 12.2.2 Discussion: Strengths and Weaknesses of Coalitions

### Background for Facilitator

In this activity, participants will brainstorm the benefits and challenges of coalition building based on their personal experiences.

#### Materials Needed

Flipchart; presentation slides

#### Learning Objectives

Participants are able to identify the benefits and challenges associated with building coalitions.

**Time** 30 minutes

### Facilitator Talking Points

- Has anyone participated in a coalition? Or observed a coalition in action? *Ask for a show of hands.*
- Based on your experiences, what are the benefits of working in a coalition? *Record responses on a flipchart and draw out the following points:*
  - **Stronger together:** Coalitions are a pragmatic way to advance an agenda or goal. No single organization is as effective or powerful as a group of organizations and individuals speaking with one voice. Coalitions increase the resources available for a cause and bring people from different backgrounds together to work towards a common goal.
  - **Increased credibility:** A coalition can help increase the credibility of your advocacy and strengthen the force of your message. This is particularly useful when engaging on national-level issues, such as advocating for change in a national security policy. Often, the more diverse the coalition, the broader its reach and the stronger its potential impact.
  - **Protection:** Working in a coalition can also help protect individual organizations from being exposed and becoming targets of political pressure or abuse.
  - **Reach more people:** Having more individuals and organizations involved in your cause increases your ability to reach more people. Larger initiatives often attract media attention, which can enhance your public profile.
  - **Increased access to resources and information:** Through a coalition's expanded web of colleagues and friends, there are more partnership opportunities, increased access to resources and information, and greater collective expertise to draw upon. For example, networking with civil society organizations from other countries with SSR experience can help you build your own capacities.
  - **Diversified experience and expertise:** Diverse membership can bring a wealth of experience, skills, and ideas to your cause. For example, if your organization does not have experience providing gender training to the police, maybe another coalition member does and can coordinate with you. Or if your organization doesn't work on disability rights issues, a coalition member working in this area can brief you on the security and justice needs of disabled people.
- *What are some of the challenges of working in a coalition? Record responses on a flipchart and draw out the following points:*
  - **Slow process:** Different individuals and organizations have varying styles of decision making, points of view, and priorities, so coming to an agreement may take time.
  - **Competing agendas and personalities:** While overlapping goals can bring different organizations together in a coalition, there can still be competing agendas and personalities.

- **Increased coordination:** The more individuals and organizations you have in a coalition, the harder it is to coordinate dates, times, and locations that work for everyone (e.g., a civil society organization working with victims of police abuse may not feel comfortable meeting in a conference room at the local police station).
- **Delayed action:** Building a coalition takes time—rules and regulations and joint statements need to be drafted, an action plan needs to be developed, etc. This may divert resources and focus from the overall goal of the coalition.
- **Trust is critical:** Lack of trust and/or transparency between coalition members can make it difficult for organizations to work together.



### 12.2.3 Activity: Meeting the Challenges of Building a Coalition

#### Background for Facilitator

Participants will brainstorm ways to address common challenges of coalition building.

#### Instructions

Split the participants into groups of two or three people and have them:

- Identify one potential coalition partner that represents a different type of organization or group—for example, a church group, or a group of female policewomen.
- Identify one potential challenge that might arise from working with this partner.
- Come up with one strategy to overcome this challenge. (10 minutes)

Invite some of the groups to share their challenges and strategies. (15 minutes)

#### Materials Needed

Flipchart

#### Learning Objectives

Participants are able to identify strategies to address coalition strengths and weaknesses.

**Time** 30 minutes

#### Debrief

#### Facilitator Instructions

Close by highlighting that building a successful coalition is time-intensive. But, challenges and difficult issues are not necessarily negative; addressing complicated and contentious issues can result in a stronger, more cohesive coalition! (5 minutes)



## 12.3 How Can We Set Our Coalition Up for Success?



### 12.3.1 Facilitator Talking Points: Best Practices for Running a Coalition

#### Background for Facilitator

This section explores the policies and best practices that can assist participants who are organizing and running a coalition. Depending on participants' experience and prior knowledge of coalitions, you can discuss each best practice or prioritize depending on level of interest, relevance, etc. All of the policies/best practices are listed in the Best Practices for Organizing and Maintaining a Coalition handout (see annex).

Distribute the handout prior to the presentation.

#### Materials Needed

Video clip; Best Practices for Organizing and Maintaining a Coalition handout

#### Learning Objectives

Participants are able to describe the best practices for running a coalition.

**Time** 30 minutes

#### Facilitator Talking Points

- *Show short video clip, "Building a Successful Coalition" (1.54min) [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zEuZriTygrE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zEuZriTygrE).*
- Making sure a coalition runs smoothly can require a lot of investment. Coalition members need to cooperate and collaborate on implementing an advocacy strategy and must agree on goals and tactics.
- The "principles for effective partnering" are one benchmark for maintaining healthy and strong relationships. These principles should serve as a baseline for how coalition members interact with one another.
- The principles for effective partnering are:
  - Equity (among partners) helps create respect
  - Transparency helps create trust
  - Mutual benefit helps sustain your partnerships and your advocacy objectives
- Coalitions also need clear policies and rules to help guide their actions and decision making. Let's review some important considerations for building and managing an effective coalition.
- **Clear coalition structure and roles:** What will the leadership structure look like and how will those roles be determined?
  - Many coalitions have a steering committee to manage and facilitate their advocacy planning and strategy decisions, ensure communication and consultation among members, resolve internal conflicts, conduct outreach.
  - Organizing specialized sub-groups (e.g., "committees" or "task forces") within the coalition will help to delegate and manage the work. Each sub-group should have a defined role (e.g., publicity/outreach, lobbying, fundraising, event planning) and a leadership structure (e.g., chairperson, secretary). All members should be on at least one committee.
- **Decision making and conflict resolution:** How will decisions be made (e.g., by vote or consensus)? Who will participate in decision making (e.g., only the steering committee, or all members)? Will there be different decision-making processes for different types of issues (e.g., certain issues are decided by the full membership, while all other issues are decided by the steering committee with full and open communication with membership)?

- **Membership:**
  - **Diversity and broad reach:** Coalitions are more successful when their members represent a broad range of actors and interests. How can you ensure diversity within your coalition? Seek out organizations that you might not already work with.
  - **Membership requirements:** If someone new wants to join your coalition, how will you determine if they're eligible?
  - **Membership code of conduct:** How will you determine if a member is not doing their part? A code of conduct will help to set clear expectations for all members and creates a mechanism for accountability.
- **Reliable communication system:**
  - **Internal communication:** What will the leadership share with members regarding news and updates? And how will this communication happen? Think about what this may mean for building trust among members. Issues like financial transparency may help strengthen internal cohesion.
  - **External communication:** How will you engage with outside actors, like the media, government officials, other organizations, etc.? Will there be specific representatives authorized to speak on behalf of the coalition? Coalitions may consider rotating spokespeople to create visibility for different members of the coalition.
- **Sharing credit:** How will coalition members share in the public benefits that result from their coordinated efforts? Members can get distracted by who receives the publicity, credit, or blame for their work. Agree early on the procedures that will allow all members to participate. You can't plan ahead for all contingencies, but this type of forward thinking may help if/when crisis hits.
- **Consensus on shared values, short- and long-term goals:** It is really important that you do this strategic planning as a group. It may be difficult and time consuming, but the more consensus is achieved, the more effective your advocacy efforts will be.
- **Trust among members:** You are working together for a reason, so be sure to focus on building trusting relationships among coalition members.
  - **Don't avoid difficult subjects!** Don't be afraid to deal with internal conflict. These issues must be discussed openly or tensions may threaten to tear apart your coalition. If the issues are too contentious, you may consider involving an outside mediator or facilitator.
  - **Be flexible!** Assess your progress periodically and be prepared to make changes. This may include examining decision making structures, the effectiveness of the coalition, communication strategies, etc. Ongoing conversations with members will help you keep abreast of any developing issues and may mitigate members' negative feelings of marginalization or misunderstanding.
- Can you think of anything else that is important?
- In engaging with security sector reform, it can be useful to:
  - Develop specialized knowledge on how the security sector operates and ensure your coalition includes members with extensive knowledge of policy-making processes and gender who can offer strategic guidance.
  - Seek out opportunities to strengthen capacities within the coalition. For example, through joint training and team building opportunities.

## 12.4 Wrap Up



### 12.4.1 Facilitator Talking Points: Points to Take Away

#### Background for Facilitator

This section highlights the main points of the module.

#### Facilitator Talking Points

- No single organization is as effective as a group of organizations and individuals. Coalitions increase the resources available for a cause and bring people together from different backgrounds to work towards a common goal.
- Your coalition can reach beyond other women's groups or CSOs. For example, you could engage with women from the military, police, or parliament to discuss security issues, create a common agenda, and strategize on steps to ensure women's perspectives are included in security policymaking.
- Building a coalition that includes security sector actors can be a challenge because of the secrecy around security issues and a lack of confidence between civil society and security institutions. However, successful coalitions have been shown to have far reaching and powerful impacts.
- For a successful coalition, you need to build trusting relationships among all coalition members and agree on a common set of principles and norms, including transparency, equity, and mutual benefits.

#### Materials Needed

None

#### Learning Objectives

Participants will understand the main points of this module.

**Time** 5 minutes

# Adapting the Module

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## Less Time



### **12.2.1 Facilitator Talking Points:** Coalition Building to Influence SSR and Security Institutions (SAVE 10 MINUTES)

Replace discussion in pairs with a short plenary discussion.



### **12.2.2 Discussion:** Strengths and Weaknesses of Coalitions (SAVE 10 MINUTES)

Discussion time can be shortened.



### **12.2.3 Activity:** Meeting the Challenges of Building a Coalition (SAVE 15 MINUTES)

Replace discussion in pairs with a short plenary discussion.

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## More Time



### **12.3.1 Facilitator Talking Points:** Best Practices for Running a Coalition (ADD 1 HOUR)

After delivering the Facilitator Talking Points, you can use a role play to apply the skills and knowledge contained in this module.

Develop a role play, wherein participants represent different types of groups meeting for the first time as a coalition to discuss influencing an SSR process. Participants might include a representative of a women's association within the security sector. You can use Tool 9 of Inclusive Security and DCAF's "A Women's Guide to Security Sector Reform" ([www.dcaf.ch/Publications/A-Women-s-Guide-to-Security-Sector-Reform](http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/A-Women-s-Guide-to-Security-Sector-Reform)) as an agenda. The background information you give each participant about their organizations' interests and concerns can create challenges in the meeting. For example, if a participant is very concerned with anonymity for security reasons, they would refuse to introduce themselves, perhaps prompting protest from the other coalition members.

Allow 15 minutes for set-up and for participants to prepare for their roles.

Don't let the meeting go on too long. Stop the role play after approximately 15 minutes and debrief with participants as to what challenges arose and how the meeting could have better prevented or addressed them.

## Assessment Questions (Blank)

### Q.12.1 A coalition is: (select one)

- a. Always a group of likeminded CSOs.
- b. A group that has funding from an international donor.
- c. An alliance working towards the same goal.
- d. A group of people appointed by the government to study a particular issue.

### Q.12.2 A successful coalition cannot function without: (select one)

- a. Office space.
- b. Government approval.
- c. A president to make all the important decisions.
- d. Effective organization of its members.

## Assessment Questions (Answer Key)

### Q.12.1 A coalition is: (select one)

- a. Always a group of likeminded CSOs.
- b. A group that has funding from an international donor.
- c. An alliance working towards the same goal.
- d. A group of people appointed by the government to study a particular issue.

### Q.12.2 A successful coalition cannot function without: (select one)

- a. Office space.
- b. Government approval.
- c. A president to make all the important decisions.
- d. Effective organization of its members.

## ANNEX



# Best Practices For Organizing And Maintaining A Coalition

## **Policies/rules to establish:**

- Leadership structure and roles: What will the leadership structure look like and how will those roles be determined?
- Decision-making processes: How will decisions be made (e.g., by vote or consensus)? Who will participate in decision making (e.g., only the steering committee or all members)? Will there be different decision-making processes for different types of issues (e.g., certain issues are decided by the full membership, while all other issues are decided by the steering committee with full and open communication with membership)?
- Membership requirements: If someone new wants to join your coalition, how will you determine if they're eligible?
- Membership code of conduct: How will you determine if a member is not doing their part?
- Internal communication: What will the leadership share with members regarding news and updates? And how will this communication happen?
- External communication: How will you engage with outside actors, like the media, government officials, other organizations, etc.? Will there be specific representatives authorized to speak on behalf of the coalition?
- Sharing credit: How will coalition members share in the public benefits that result from their coordinated efforts?

## **Two important considerations for more structured coalitions:**

- Consensus on shared values, short- and long- term goals: Consider conducting strategic planning as a group. It may be difficult and time consuming, but the more consensus is achieved, the more effective your advocacy efforts will be.
- Coalition structures: Organizing specialized sub-groups (such as 'committees' or 'task forces') within the coalition will help to delegate and manage the work. Each sub-group should have a defined role (e.g., publicity/outreach, lobbying, fundraising, event planning) and a leadership structure (e.g., chairperson, secretary). All members should be involved in at least one committee.

## **A few last, and important best practices:**

- Don't avoid difficult subjects! Don't be afraid to deal with internal conflict. These issues must be discussed openly or tensions may threaten to tear apart your coalition. You may even consider involving an outside mediator or facilitator.
- Be flexible! Assess your progress periodically and be prepared to make changes. This may include examining decision making structures, the effectiveness of the coalition, communication strategies, etc. Ongoing conversations with members will help you keep abreast of any developing issues and may mitigate members' negative feelings of marginalization or misunderstanding.

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