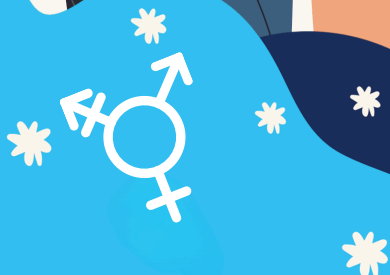




# SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENTS AND STRATEGIC RESPONSES

COMPLETE TOOLKIT



Resources for partners to anticipate, respond to and mitigate the impact of anti-rights narratives on sexual and reproductive health and rights and our work in region of Asia and the Pacific.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

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Disclaimer- this is a living document to be adapted as new threats and/or opportunities emerge.





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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

**ANC** Antenatal Care

**ASEAN** Association of Southeast Asian Nations

**CEDAW** The Convention on the Elimination of All  
Forms of Discrimination Against Women

**CSE** Comprehensive Sexuality Education

**CSO** Civil society organisation

**DHS** The Demographic and Health Survey

**FBO** Faith-based organisation

**GBV** Gender based violence

**ICPD PoA** The International Conference on  
Population and Development Programme of Action

**IPV** Intimate partner violence

**LGBTQIA+** Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender,  
intersex, queer, asexual, and others

**MMR** Maternal mortality ratio

**NGO** Non-governmental organisation

**R&D** Research and development

**SDGs** Sustainable Development Goals

**SOGIESC** Sexual orientation, gender identity and  
expression, and sex characteristics

**SRHR** Sexual and reproductive health and rights

**TFR** Total fertility rate

**UHC** Universal Health Coverage

**UNDP** United Nations Development Programme

**UNFPA** United Nations Population Fund

**WASH** Water, sanitation and hygiene

## WHY DO WE NEED A TOOLKIT?

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) advocates and defenders, and those with aligned motivations, consistently work in poorly funded, hostile, or opposing environments, with policy makers picking and choosing issues that support their agenda - funding one 'priority' at the sake of another. Sexual and reproductive health and rights advocates need access to utilitarian tools and guidance on how to sustain their movement and strategise responses, now more than ever before.

## WHY NOW?

Collaboration is powerful.

Authoritarian and patriarchal forces have always been present, however more recently with the rise of conservatism and right-wing populism, these have coalesced to make further progress in “dismantl[ing] existing systems and institutions intended to protect women’s rights, while actively constructing others in their place.”. With this, global consensus around SRHR and more broadly gender and social justice is weakening.

Through the defunding and dismantling of supportive donor mechanisms and frameworks, this global deterioration of progress on SRHR is taking the shape of a coordinated and well-funded backlash against gender equality, diversity and social justice with particular implications for our region. Donor aid for SRHR work (including research) is being politicised, and reflects an alarming, yet tacit, acceptance of anti-rights-based rhetoric.

Emerging and anti-rights actors include individuals and institutions affiliated with religious fundamentalisms, nationalisms or ultra-nationalisms, white supremacy, ultra-conservatism, and other oppressive ideologies and movements. Galvanising these movements are key non-state actors in international spaces including the World Congress of Families, Family Watch International, youth-focussed World Youth Alliance or Spain-registered CitizenGo, among others. Despite their strong presence in the global north, the impact and messages spread through transnational forces are being felt across the global south.

## WHO IS IT FOR?

This Toolkit is designed to guide and equip SRHR defenders and advocates to use either themselves, or in small group settings.

It provides modalities and approaches and suggestions on how to assess, address, and act on these increasing threats through strategic foresight and evidence-based advocacy, to strengthen the SRHR movements, and support the fulfilment of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD PoA) across the region.

It is not intended to be a prescriptive definitive guide answering all information needs, but a living document to be built upon and further iterations generated as agendas shift and knowledge is gained.

## HOW DO WE USE IT?

This **Toolkit** is designed to be applied as a cohesive guidance document complete with workable tools to assist individuals and groups working in SRHR at both national and regional level to anticipate, respond to and mitigate the impact of anti-rights narratives on SRHR in Asia and the Pacific.

The Toolkit contains two modules with imbedded chapters, namely, Sustainable Movements (which is guidance on how to monitor and analyse trends as well as protect our own) and Strategic Response (which is created to capacitate SRHR defenders in legitimate message making, identification of opponents, and engagement of intersectional allies). Depending on the need, the Toolkit may be applied as a whole or with only particular chapters accessed. The Modules may also be used by more senior advocates to capacitate emerging leaders and nascent networks.

The Rights Repository is a virtual portal of references, resources, guidance, documents, articles, and materials to be accessed and added by SRHR defenders and allies, to contribute to the body of knowledge working to anticipate, respond to, and mitigate the impact of anti-gender narratives on SRHR in the Asia Pacific.



## UNDERSTANDING THE TOOLKIT'S FLOW

This Toolkit is organised into two interconnected modules that support SRHR advocates to anticipate threats, protect their people, and respond with clarity and strategy.

- **Module One** focuses on understanding the environment in which SRHR work takes place. It equips advocates to recognise emerging risks, anticipate shifts in political and social landscapes, and put in place practices that safeguard staff, partners, and communities.
- **Module Two** builds offers practical tools for shaping strategic responses, strengthening narratives, and engaging allies in ways that are grounded in evidence and aligned with the realities identified in Module One.

Scenario planning in Module One helps advocates explore the different futures in which their work may unfold. These insights guide the message-making, coalition-building and policy engagement approaches introduced in Module Two.

The risk assessment and safety planning components of Module One ensure that the strategic actions proposed in Module Two remain realistic, ethical, and safe for teams working in diverse and sometimes hostile contexts.

# MODULE ONE - SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENTS

Working as an SRHR and social justice advocate is an inherently demanding and emotionally exhausting endeavour. Workplace anxiety and burnout can occur as a consequence of lack of staff regeneration, constant vigilance, impact of smear campaigns, employment precarity, and funding insecurity.

This condition is exacerbated when activism attracts attention or targeting from hostile entities or powerful groups who utilise social media, mainstream media- the burden becomes even heavier. It is critical that SRHR advocates can anticipate and track the impact of emerging anti-rights phenomena, and put in place mechanisms to protect SRHR defenders in order to sustain the movement and ensure resilience.

## CHAPTER 1: ANALYSE, ADAPT, ASSESS, ACT - HOW TO ANTICIPATE AND TRACK IMPACT OF ANTI-RIGHTS MOVEMENT NARRATIVES ON SRHR

Scenario planning is a structured way to imagine different possible futures and prepare for them in advance. Scenario planning can provide strategic foresight for advocates to anticipate change and plan responses. It involves in depth analysis of influencing variables and possible outcomes of combinations of these and guidance on ways through and forward.

Scenario planning is especially critical for SRHR advocates and those working on aligned issues to anticipate and respond to the anti-rights movement, which is manifesting in ways that negatively impact our work. For instance, sudden or increasingly punitive policy changes, funding cuts, increased surveillance or harassment, and community backlash or threats. These changes can occur swiftly and without warning.

### THE SCENARIO PLANNING TOOL

The scenario planning tool can help SRHR advocates make anticipatory, strategic, and calmer decisions under pressure, protect staff, partners, and beneficiaries, and maintain operations and values without reacting blindly. The scenario planning tool offers strategic foresight through eight possible future stories ("scenarios") for SRHR in the Asia-Pacific region and helps you plan your work across all of them.

#### It is designed to help you:

- See how politics, religion, media, funding, law and civic space might change in the next 5–10 years.
- Decide what actions will keep communities safe and rights strong, even if the future is more restrictive than today.

The purpose is not to predict exactly what will happen. The purpose is to stress-test strategies, to be better prepared for more than one future.

This tool is for SRHR advocates working in low-resource, high-risk or fast-changing contexts who want a simple, non-technical way to think about futures.



## It can be used by a wide range of actors including:



Community-based organisations, movements and networks working on SRHR, gender equality, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual + (LGBTQIA+) rights, HIV, youth rights, disability justice, climate justice and related issues.



National Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), coalitions and platforms that want to sharpen analysis and advocacy plans without any software.



Facilitators from development partners, United Nations (UN) agencies, donors or regional networks who support grassroots partners and want a paper-based way to explore futures together.

## Key concepts

Keep this list of terms with the worksheets (see Annex 4 for all related Worksheets), so first-time users can follow without technical language.

**Scenario** – A short future story about how power, law, religion, media, funding, and civic space might look in 5–10 years. The eight scenarios (A–H) are not predictions; they are pictures to think with.

**Descriptor** – One large part of the system that affects SRHR, such as laws, civil society space, information and media environment, funding balance, or pro-gender state capacity. In the full model, each descriptor can be more enabling or more hostile to rights.

**Lever** – A descriptor you can actually influence. Working on these ‘levers of change’ early can shape the future (for example, by shifting narratives, protecting civic space, or improving funding for rights-based work).

**No-regret actions** – Actions that help in more than one scenario. You would still be glad you did them if the future becomes more restrictive, stays mixed, or improves.

## THE 11 LEVERS OF CHANGE (DESCRIPTORS YOU CAN INFLUENCE)

1. Political capture – How much anti-rights actors control the government and courts?
2. Religious influence – How much conservative religious leaders shape policy and morality?
3. Traditional values narratives – How "family, culture and nation" are used either to support or attack SRHR and LGBTQIA +rights?
4. Framing of SRHR and LGBTQIA+– Whether issues are talked about as health and equality, technical services, "gender ideology", or a "threat".
5. Law – How enabling or restrictive laws and policies are for the fulfilment of SRHR and LGBTQIA+ rights.
6. NGO/foreign-agent laws – How rules on NGOs and foreign funding are used to support or punish SRHR work.
7. Information environment – How independent media and information spaces are, and how strong disinformation is?
8. Media and platform control – Who controls big media outlets and digital platforms?
9. Civil society space – How safe it is to organise, advocate and receive funding.
10. Funding balance – Whether money mainly supports SRHR and feminist movements or anti-rights actors.
11. Pro-gender state capacity – How strong and coordinated the state's capacity is to advance gender equality, SRHR and LGBTQIA+ rights.

**All related scenario planning tools and worksheets are affixed as Annexes at the back of the Toolkit.**

### EIGHT SCENARIOS

**Eight different scenarios** have been created, and can be found in **Annex 1**. Each scenario is a short story about how power, law, religion, media, funding, and civic space might look in the future. Together, they cover:



- More enabling futures – rights are better protected and movements can grow (for example, "Rights-Forward SRHR Governance", "Regional Human-Rights Architecture").
- Messy middle futures – there is constant push and pull and outcomes depend heavily on advocacy ("Contested Drift", "Climate-Resilient SRHR Systems").
- Restrictive futures – authoritarianism, conservative religion, digital hate or inequality make SRHR work much harder ("Authoritarian Backlash", "Pronatalist Familism", "Digital Echo-Chamber Populism", "Urban Inequality, Migrant Margins").

The eight scenario cards give plain-language snapshots of what SRHR work might feel like on the ground in each future. (For an example of implementation of the **scenario planning tool** refer to **Annex 5** which shows how a hypothetical coalition may apply the Tool).

## HOW TO USE THE SCENARIO PLANNING TOOL

You can choose:

- A) a light version (30–45 minutes) or
- B) a deeper version (60–90 minutes)

Supplies needed: paper and pens

- 1. The Scenario cards can be found in Annex 1**
- 2. A quick reference guide to descriptors can be found in Annex 2**
- 3. Examples of realistic actions for each lever can be found in Annex 3**
- 4. The worksheets can be found in Annex 4**
- 5. Hypothetical example can be found in Annex 5**

### A. LIGHT VERSION (30-45 MINUTES)

Use this when there is very limited time or when working with first-time groups

#### **.Step 1 – Choose 2–3 key futures**

- Read the eight scenario cards (Annex 1).
- Use Worksheet 1 to choose 2–3 scenarios that feel most important:
- One that feels closest to now.
- One that feels most worrying or risky.
- Optional: one that feels hopeful or "aspirational".

**Key questions to ask:**

- Which of these eight scenarios feels like where we are today?
- Which one worries us most?
- What would it take for the aspirational one to happen?

**Step 2 – Describe what your work looks like in those futures**

For each chosen scenario, use Worksheet 2 to write in simple bullets:

- What SRHR work will look like in this future (3–5 points).
- Main risks for your work (2–3 points).
- Main openings or opportunities (2–3 points).

**Key questions to ask:**

- Can we still hold public meetings or protests in this scenario?
- Where is SRHR talked about as health/equality vs. as a "threat"?
- Which groups are most in danger?

**Step 3 – Pull out "no-regrets" actions- actions that we are confident with and will follow through**

Looking across your scenarios, use Worksheet 4 to identify:

- Actions that show up in two or more scenarios (your no-regrets actions).
- Actions you should stop (only make sense in a best-case scenario).
- Actions you should start or scale up now.

These "no-regrets" actions are your top priorities for the next 2–3 years.

**B) DEEPER VERSION (60-90 MINUTES)**

Use this when you have more time and mental space for discussion.

**Step 1 – Choose two–three futures (same as Light version above).****Step 2 – Describe work, risks and openings (same as Light version above).****Step 3 – Pick three–four levers you can influence**

Introduce the idea that some parts of the system are "levers" that you can pull to shift the future.

- From the short "lever list" (see Annex 2 for Descriptors and Quick Reference Guide), choose 3–4 levers such as law, civil society space, funding, narratives or media that your organisation or coalition might realistically influence in the next 2–3 years.
- Use Worksheet 3 to note why each lever matters in your chosen scenarios.

**Key questions to ask:**

- Which levers do we already have influence over (even small)?
- Which levers, if we pulled them, would shift the most across scenarios?
- Where do we have trusted partners or allies?

**Step 4 – Turn levers into concrete actions**

For each chosen lever, use Worksheet 4 to list 2–3 realistic actions you could take in the next 2–3 years.

- You can draw ideas from the example actions in Annex 3.
- Pick the 1–2 actions that fit your coalition's size and risk level. You don't need to do them all.

### **Key questions to ask:**

- Is this action safe for our team and the communities we work with?
- Do we have the resources or partnerships to do this?
- What would change if we did this?

### **Step 5 – Identify no-regrets priorities**

Use Worksheet 5 to pull out:

- Actions that appear in at least two scenarios (your no-regrets actions).
- What to stop, start and scale up.
- Which partners, donors or regional bodies need to see these insights so they influence real decisions?

### **Box 1: Running a 60-minute scenario session (at a glance)**

#### **Content:**

- 0–10 min: Introduce purpose; skim 8 scenario cards (Annex 1)
- 10–25 min: In small groups, fill in Worksheet 1 (choose 2–3 scenarios)
- 25–40 min: Fill in Worksheet 2 for ONE key scenario (closest to now or most worrying)
- 40–55 min: Use Worksheet 5 to identify 2–3 no-regrets actions
- 55–60 min: Quick report back: one key risk and one “no-regrets” action per group

## **TIPS FOR FIRST-TIME USERS AND LOW-INCOME SETTINGS**

These tips are for facilitators and groups using the tool for the first time, especially in low-income and high-risk contexts.

### **Start small**

- Use only 2–3 scenarios in your first session.
- Skip technical language; use local examples and words people already use for power, law, religion and media.

### **Use stories, not jargon**

- Ask "What would everyday work look like in this future?" rather than "What is the descriptor variant?"
- Let participants describe what they see and feel, then connect it back to simple levers.

### **Stay grounded in lived experience**

- Keep asking "What would this mean for our communities and daily work?" to avoid staying at an abstract level.

### **Focus on safety and realism**

- Choose actions that match your risk level and resources; do not encourage people to take unsafe steps just because a scenario is extreme.
- Use the "no-regrets" idea to prioritise actions that build safety, solidarity and power for groups already pushed to the margins.

### **Work in small groups**

- Small, trusted groups often feel safer discussing sensitive topics.
- You can anonymise country names or actors in notes if needed.

### **Take it in rounds**

- It is normal if the first attempt feels rough.
- You can revisit the same scenarios later and refine your thinking as contexts change.

#### **Box 2: Using this tool safely**

- Do not write real names of individuals or very small organisations in worksheets that might be shared.
- If scenarios feel too sensitive, use "Country A / Sub-region X" instead of your real country name.
- Agree as a group whether workshop outputs stay internal or can be shared externally.
- Stop or slow down if participants seem distressed or unsafe; not all scenarios need to be explored in one sitting.

## **WHY LEVERS AND DESCRIPTORS STILL MATTER IN A SIMPLE TOOL**

Even without software or diagrams, levers and descriptors help make this tool practical and strategic.

They:

- Turn vague fears into clear questions. Instead of "things might get worse", you ask "Will civil society space shrink?" and "Will funding shift to anti-rights groups?".
- Create a shared language across coalitions. Groups can compare contexts across countries or regions ("we are in a mixed-middle scenario with toxic media but some civic space").

- Move from description to action. Once you know which levers matter most in your chosen scenarios, it is easier to select a few realistic actions that strengthen rights across several futures.

In this simple Toolkit, you do not need to see any grids or software outputs. The scenario stories, short lever list, and the worksheets together give enough structure for first-time users to:

1. Picture different futures.
2. Name the levers that matter most in their context.
3. Agree on a small set of no-regrets actions to prioritise now.

The above scenario planning tool is just one of the many available to help SRHR advocates anticipate hostile threats and prepare for emerging situations. Working through this Toolkit provides advocates with other approaches and guidance for anticipating, addressing and mitigating the impacts of the anti-gender movement.

For those with more sophisticated technological skills, free online software such as [ScenarioWizard](#) can be downloaded and accessed by advocates to help them think strategically about future risks and opportunities for SRHR in our region. An accessible mode has been designed specifically for SRHR advocates to work through different scenarios and refine variables using descriptors to imagine alternative outcomes. Applying the same model as the paper-based, the virtual model has eight predefined scenarios that may reflect our working environment at any one time. Please refer to Annex 6 for brief guidance on how to use the [ScenarioWizard](#) software.

After conducting the analysis, adaptation, and assessment, it may be time to act. Suggestions on how to move forward with the scenario identified and some possibilities available to SRHR advocates are listed in Annex 7.

## **CHAPTER 2: PROTECTING OUR PEOPLE- HOW TO ENSURE STAFF WELL-BEING, FOSTER REGENERATIVE ACTIVISM AND SELF-PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN ALL CONTEXTS, INCLUDING HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS**

It is important for organisations to implement strategies and mechanisms to ensure staff well-being and resilience to sustain the movement in the face of any scenario or reality. Recognising the signs early is critical for mitigating long-term harm and taking corrective action. Incorporating strategies such as self-care, becoming connected and centered in our broader social ecosystem, and acknowledgment of successes, however, small creates positive reinforcement that fuels continued action.

This is particularly heightened when the sustainability of the movement and of those working with us are under threat. Threats can manifest in a constellation of ways - through interference with travel (withholding visas, questioning identity documents), writing or associating with others, blackmail, being targeted with protracted administrative measures – such as requirements to provide extensive financial information, difficulties in registering or re-registering organisations, or attacks on our physical being, livelihood or property.

Therefore, it is important for SRHR advocates to put into place institutional security mechanisms and capacitate staff on well-being and the creation of individual safety plans (including digital security frameworks and tips on platform-specific risks) and assess potential risks.

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Therefore, it is important for SRHR advocates to put into place institutional security mechanisms and capacitate staff on well-being and the creation of individual safety plans (including digital security frameworks and tips on platform-specific risks) and assess potential risks.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

The assessment of risk will be based on context and your understanding of the context. Identifying emerging threats is prerequisite for designing and implementing effective security measures at the organisational level.

Risk assessment is a complementary supportive activity that organisations can do alongside scenario planning. The risk formula below is an institutional assessment tool that can guide advocates through:

- the consideration of risk– the possibility of events that result in harm,
- understanding of threat – declaration or indication of an intention to inflict damage, punish or hurt (recent or immediate),
- conceptualising vulnerability– any factor which makes it more likely for harm to materialise or result in greater damage

And framing these in the context of organisational capacities - any resource (including abilities and contacts) to mitigate the impact of the threat (this can be capacities existing and capacities can be reasonably acquired).



The risk formula helps NGOs move from fear or assumptions to structured anticipation through a simple process:

1. Identify the threat;
2. Assess how likely it is;
3. Assess how damaging it would be;
4. Decide what must be done now. This also helps justify decisions to management, donors and security advisors.

Consider the following step by step illustration of how to use the risk formula at the organisational level.

Likelihood: How probable is the threat?

Impact: How severely would it affect:

- Staff safety
- Beneficiaries
- Operations
- Reputation
- Funding

To assess the risk we can apply a 1–5 scale for each possibility.

**Example 1: Field Operations in a politically sensitive or hostile environment**  
**Scenario 1: An NGO plans to start an HIV outreach program in an increasingly hostile political area.**

**Step 1: Identify the Risk**

Risk Identified:

Field staff may be harassed or detained by local authorities during activities.

**Step 2: Score Likelihood (1–5)**

**Consider:**

- **Has this happened before?**
- **Are other NGOs facing similar issues?**
- **Is the political situation worsening?**

Assessment:

- a) Protests are recent
- b) Authorities are suspicious of NGOs
- c) No detentions yet, but harassment reported

Likelihood = 3 (Possible)

**Step 3: Score Impact (1–5)**

If this happens:

- Field staff security is threatened
- Activities may be suspended
- Legal costs and reputational damage
- Donors may raise concerns or retreat

Impact = 5 (Severe)

## Step 4 & 5: Risk Calculation and Interpretation

Risk =  $3 \times 5 = 15$

Score = 15 → High risk

### Risk Score Meaning

**1–5: Low – Acceptable**

**6–12: Medium – Monitor**

**13–25: High – Action required**

## Step 6: Decide on Risk Response

SRHR advocates don't just calculate risk - response is also critical. Risk mitigation actions to respond to this threat could include: conducting security briefings for staff, registering activities formally with authorities, using local partners for outreach, adjusting schedules and locations and establishing emergency legal contacts. It would also be beneficial to share updates with colleagues and allies working in the area.

### **After mitigation:**

- Likelihood might drop from 3 → 2
- New risk score =  $2 \times 5 = 10$  (Medium)

Risk is now more manageable.



Let's consider a predicament that SRHR NGOs and their staff particularly those working with marginalised or inadequately served communities often face - that of digital security breaches.

## **Example 2: Digital and data protection risk**

### **Scenario 2: The NGO stores beneficiary data (names, locations, medical info) on shared laptops.**

**1 - Risk Identified:** Unauthorised access or data breach

#### **2 - Likelihood and Assessment:**

- Laptops used in the field
- Weak passwords
- No encryption

**Likelihood = 4 (Likely)**

#### **3 - Impact**

- Beneficiaries could be targeted
- Loss of trust in the NGO
- Possible legal consequences
- Funding risk

**Impact = 5 (Severe)**

#### **4 & 5 - Risk Calculation & Interpretation**

Risk =  $4 \times 5 = 20$  → Very High

#### **6 - Risk Response**

- Encrypt devices
- Use strong passwords and MFA
- Limit data collected
- Train staff on digital security

#### **After mitigation steps:**

**Likelihood reduced to 2**

**New risk =  $2 \times 5 = 10$**

Another example is related to the precarity of funding sources and continuity. This is being experienced especially during the rise of the anti-rights movements and donor issue redirection.

### **Example 3: Programmatic risk (Funding and continuity)**

**Scenario 3: A donor funds 70% of one program, and the grant ends in 12 months.**

**Step 1: Risk Identified:** Program closure due to funding loss

#### **Likelihood**

- Donor has shifting priorities
- No confirmation of renewal

**Likelihood = 3**

#### **Impact**

- Services stop
- Staff layoffs
- Reputational damage in the community

**Impact = 4**

#### **Risk Score**

Risk = 3 × 4 = 12 → Medium

#### **Anticipation Actions**

- Start fundraising early
- Diversify funding sources including with philanthropy
- Build partnerships
- Prepare a scale-down plan

And so on. SRHR advocates should take time to conduct risk assessment and scenario planning in tandem as part of ongoing internal capacity building work.

Understanding risk enables advocates to design safety strategies and prepare for the political narrative and narrative challenges in Module 2.



## SAFETY AND SECURITY

There are 3 types of approaches to institutional safety and security.

**Acceptance Strategy:** the most labour intensive yet sustainable strategy, which involves negotiating with all actors to gain support for the organisation's presence and work;

**Protection Strategy:** an approach which emphasises security procedures and protective elements in order to reduce vulnerabilities; and

**Deterrence Strategy:** an approach which relies on counter- threats for protection and naming and blaming perpetrators.

It is recommended that SRHR organisations adopt one of these modalities (or a combination) and develop an institutional safety plan (see the Global Action for Trans Equality *There are 3 types of approaches to institutional safety and security.*)

The elements of each strategy - acceptance, protection and deterrence- can be mobilised to address different threats and different times.

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Legal literacy for SRHR advocates is a vital part of the work, especially in the current climate. Yet for many advocates employing an accredited lawyer is fiscally unfeasible.

Legal aid protects those who do not have the means to defend their rights in the criminal justice system: the detained, arrested or imprisoned; those suspected, accused of, or charged with a criminal offence; and victims and witnesses. Legal aid is instrumental for understanding the justice system, and help to reduce number of wrongful convictions, the incidence of bribery and justice mismanagement, and access to legal information on avenues for recourse such as alternative dispute resolution mechanisms as well as restorative justice processes.

Most countries in the region have established legal aid providers and offer additional institutional capacity building through paralegal training. For instance, A4ID Foundation based in New Delhi, the Humanitarian Legal Assistance Foundation in Metro Manila, the Vietnamese Community Legal Aid Office and Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Masyarakat in Indonesia are examples of legal aid providers supporting SRHR organisations in the region.

Global mechanisms that support reporting of human rights violations can also be accessed (see United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner [https://www.ohchr.org/en/reporting\\_violations](https://www.ohchr.org/en/reporting_violations)). Mechanisms for reporting SOGIESC violations also exist (see Out Right International <https://outrightinternational.org>) as well as organisations that support civil society and human rights defenders such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.



## MODULE TWO- STRATEGIC RESPONSE

The anti-rights movement is not simply about gender and/or sexuality or an attack on the SRHR of all, it is also a strategy to “launder and legitimise” authoritarian goals. Authoritarians and populist movements disseminate messages that capitalise on strategies that invoke hate or fear. These movements and pronatalist politics weaponise concepts of gender and sexuality and intertwine these with conservative religious constructs, ‘family values’ and/or binary notions of the self and the body.

This Module encourages advocates to consider the ways in which political and cultural actors and players may manipulate, manufacture, deepen anti-gender narratives and exploit divisions to further agendas and platforms, and provide frameworks to better understand actors at play and opportunities for strategising response.

### CHAPTER 1: MESSAGE MAKING - HOW TO UNDERSTAND MEANING AND IDENTIFY ADVOCACY ENTRY POINTS

Anti-gender movements consist of disparate actors and groups that invest time and money into efforts to negate or contest SRHR principles and frame discussions around sexuality and gender identity and gender more broadly as dangerous and threats to humanity. These movements mobilise concepts of national identity, nationhood and citizenship, and often employ ‘evidence’ gleaned from shifts in political demography to validate racial or ethnic panic. These groups selectively pick and choose elements that align with the local context and elicit public support.

Authoritarian populists leverage the issues of ‘gender’ and SRHR to justify and promote heteronormative views on gender and sexuality. Those in opposition to these increasingly rigid, binary, and narrow biomedical understandings of SRHR are viewed as threats to be scapegoated or eradicated. Through this, the movement replaces human rights-based frameworks and narratives with protection narratives- implementing policies and regulations to protect the sacredness of the home, the ‘family unit’ or the ‘children’.

# 6

## MESSAGING STRATEGIES THAT LEVERAGE GENDER TO DISMANTLE THE SRHR MOVEMENT

**CONSTRUCT A  
THREAT**

**NORMALISE  
AUTHORITARIAN  
IDEA**

**CHANGE  
CULTURE**

**COALITION  
BUILDING**

**"US"  
VERSES  
"THEM"**

**GENERATE A  
MORAL  
PANIC**

This further creates a permissive structure that allows conservative donors, leaders and policymakers to make decisions and implement policies that disempower and diminish bodily autonomy. Innocuously, this plays out in relation to 'evidence gathering' and what and how data related to SRHR is both collected and disseminated. As funding cuts impact our ability to provide services, so too has this impacted our capacity to conduct research and access up-to-date statistics and information needed to inform our advocacy. Disinformation and misinformation become commonplace.

How can advocates working on SRHR identify and counter these movements? Strategies to counter anti-gender movement messaging should be grounded in evidence from legitimate information sources and datasets. As recognised, not only has our capacity to provide SRH services been impacted by the rise of the anti-gender movement, but so has our access to up-to-date and accurate data. Funding for national health surveys such as the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) program has been slashed. Research grants and opportunities promoting SRHR and data collection are disappearing or have been stopped altogether.

When strategising response, by acknowledging where bias happens, advocates can inform their arguments and discussion points via sources such as official government databases that store health and disaggregated data or population census, databases of international cooperation agencies such as the Human Development Index, UN reports on progress on the SDGs , reports by agencies such as UNFPA, UN Women, UNDP WHO , or any other multilateral agency; through publications, research, and studies by non-governmental organisations belonging to the international cooperation network; credible academia and verifiable media.

There are many strategies that SRHR advocates can apply to tailor their messages to support their advocacy points and sociocultural contexts. Although our core intentions are the same, our messages should be framed for the audience who it is directed to. Consider the following communication approaches when creating and drafting messages, as various ways to frame SRHR that may resonate with the reader:



1. Reframe SRHR as dignity, equality and family well-being, not "Western ideology"
2. Key Message: Reframe SRHR as a matter of dignity and family well-being rooted methods of community healthcare that have existed for centuries, albeit using various methods, language and practices. Link SRHR to development, security, and resilience, appealing to government interests
3. Key Message: Link SRHR explicitly to development justice, economic security, demographic stability, and climate resilience, showing how contraception, safe abortion, and CSE are smart investments in public systems, labour markets, and disaster-ready communities.
4. Engage faith leaders through values language (care, compassion, community protection)
5. Key Message: Engage religious and traditional leaders through shared values of care, compassion, justice, and community protection, while recognising how religion often intertwines with ethnonationalism and race and working with allies to emphasise or reclaim faith narratives for SRHR.
6. Mobilise youth and feminist actors (around bodily autonomy and justice)
7. Key Message: Mobilise youth and feminist movements around bodily autonomy, pleasure, and justice, while acknowledging ambivalent youth trends and equipping young organisers to strategically and safely challenge interpersonal or structural repression.
8. Position donors and international partners as accountability catalysts
9. Key Message: Donors and international partners are accountability and systems-strengthening catalysts- supporting public services, commodities and civic space in the face of foreign-agent laws and conservative capture of institutions- rather than agenda-setters or saviours.
10. Make development justice and economic insecurity explicit
11. Key Message: "SRHR struggles are inseparable from debt, austerity, housing, precarious work, food insecurity and unpaid care; addressing these protects reproductive autonomy."
12. Centre public systems, commodities and implementation gaps
13. Key Message: "The main barriers are failing public health systems, privatisation, stock-outs and bureaucratic gatekeeping, even where laws are progressive; narratives must target systems and supply chains, not only individual attitudes."
14. Name civic-space tools like foreign-agent laws and ethnonationalism
15. Key Message: "Opposition is often expressed through conservative bureaucracies, foreign-agent-style laws, and ethnoreligious nationalism that weaponises fertility and 'family values', not just NGOs branded 'anti-gender'.

When creating a narrative it is also important to ground messages in human rights and community values. Messaging should be anchored in five principles. These are:

### **1.Dignity and Bodily Autonomy**

Core principle: Every person has the right to decide what happens to their own body, health, and future.

Why it resonates: Grounded in shared human values (dignity, respect, equality, family well-being) rather than “Western” “rights” language that is vulnerable to backlash from conservative bureaucracies, politicised religious actors, and nationalist projects that twists SRHR as an anti-rights lever.

Examples of framing:

"All parents deserve to safeguard their children’s health and futures"

"Communities thrive when all families can plan and decide what's best for themselves"

"Women deserve care and choices that respect their experiences, values and needs"

### **2.Accountability and Rule of Law**

Core principle: Governments and institutions must be transparent, respond to communities, and uphold laws and international commitments.

Why it resonates: Links SRHR rollbacks to corruption, governance failure, and authoritarian risk—concerns that extend beyond gender.

Examples of framing:

"When governments hide what they're doing in health systems, everyone loses trust"

"Countries that invest in women's health grow stronger, more stable economies"

"Transparent, inclusive policy-making builds democracies that serve all families"

### **3.Equity and Justice**

Core principle: Resources, information, and services must reach those most left behind—poor, rural, minority, and other marginalised communities.

Why it resonates: Fulfilment of SRHR prevents and reduces poverty, inequality, and injustice which is recognised by the broader public and policymakers.

Examples of framing:

"Fair, equitable health systems mean every parent, child, and worker has access"

"When rich families get care, and poor families don't, everyone suffers from preventable illness"

"Building systems where no one is left behind strengthens our entire nation"

#### **4. Community Ownership and Resilience**

Core principle: Communities—not external actors—must lead decisions about their own health, norms, and futures. Resilience comes from local knowledge and solidarity.

Why it resonates: Counteracts the inaccurate anti-rights framing of SRHR as a "foreign imposition" by repositioning it as community-rooted.

Examples of framing:

"Our communities know what our families need. Together, we decide."

"When we listen to women, and young people, , we make stronger choices"

"Traditional values include caring for others. That's what reproductive health is about."

"People from our communities work as healthcare providers, they provide models of care that build trust, safety and strength."

#### **5. Integration: Health, Climate, Gender, and Development**

Core principle: SRHR is inseparable from education, climate resilience, economic opportunities, and peace.

Why it resonates: Broadens constituency, links gender rollbacks to authoritarian risk, and environmental crisis.

Examples of framing:

" Communities with reproductive healthcare access are more likely to be ready for climate change risks and impacts "

"When young women can access SRHR they are more likely to finish school and decide their futures, and this support entire economies to grow"

"Safe, healthy families build peaceful, stable nations"

Community voices underline that SRHR in the Asia–Pacific is impacted by collapsing health systems, climate shocks, economic crises, and migration, not as an isolated "health issue". In Sri Lanka, for example, austerity and debt conditionalities have eroded public health, pushing people toward exploitative private care, while in the Pacific, climate disasters and unsafe water and sanitation make SRHR inseparable from climate and WASH.

#### **Additional examples of framing:**

"When health, education and social protection budgets are cut, women and young people pay first through unsafe abortions, GBV, pelvic pain and missed educational and employment opportunities. Protecting SRHR means protecting public services."

"In the Pacific, the climate crisis and SRHR are inseparable: rising sea levels, disrupted water systems, cyclones and displacement hit women, girls and gender-diverse people hardest. Climate justice must include reproductive justice."

## **Public systems, commodities and the care economy**

Core principle: Reproductive agency depends on affordable, accessible public health systems, stable SRHR commodity supply chains, and recognition of care work.

Why it matters: Without functioning public systems and secure supply chains, rights remain theoretical, and stigma and exploitation flourish.

### **Examples of framing:**

“Rights on paper mean little if clinics are empty or medicines are unaffordable. Strong public systems and fair procurement are the backbone of SRHR.”

“Quality and safe maternal healthcare supports all parents, families and communities.”

When developing narratives, it is important to use data expressed in relative values such as percentages, as these are easier for non-SRHR actors to interpret and comprehend. It is useful to use local data sets and evidence where available, as well as those other credible sources such as donor-collated monitoring and evaluation information or reports from reliable sources. Legal documents, regulatory articles and sections from national instruments such as constitutions and National Strategic Plans on health or gender or education (and ancillary documents created by affiliated government ministries), religious tenets, and traditional or cultural frameworks may also be applied, albeit with care to check references and bias.

Qualitative data and deidentified personal narratives can also be used. Nevertheless, ethics and personal safety for everyone involved should be paramount. Where knowledge gaps exist, advocates may also conduct community-based participatory research or rapid assessments and amplify personal stories and lived experiences (deidentified) that promote intersectional and inclusive human rights values.

Early anticipation of oppositional movements and mobilisations is critical. Organisations can set up monitoring dashboards. Pre-approved message templates, and adaptable messaging formats can be created that can be shared quickly during misinformation waves and simple tracking sheets that can note patterns, actors, platforms, and timelines can be developed. Advocates can also explore natural language processing techniques such as word clouds, topic modelling, google alerts with keywords and summary of coverage.

UNDP has relevant resources, such as [The Gender Social Media Monitoring Tool](#) which is an example of a framework to capture data on public opinion and trends. However, such activities can be triggering and distressing, therefore organisational-level strategies to prevent compassion fatigue, address the risk of staff burnout and enact safety plans are also critical.

Clear and evidence-based messaging is strengthened when paired with strategic alliances and an understanding of the policy process as explored in the next section.

## MOOT MATRIX- MOCK DEBATES

The “Moot Matrix” is a simple tool that helps SRHR advocates practice responding to anti-rights narratives in a structured and low-risk way. It uses mock debates to surface the underlying assumptions, values, and tactics that anti-rights actors rely on, while strengthening the clarity and confidence of one’s own messages. By rehearsing these exchanges in advance, advocates can refine their arguments, anticipate common lines of attack, and build more resilient and strategic communication approaches.

It is critical to support these with credible, verified, and unbiased evidence, see the examples below:

Point of Discussion	Point	Counter Point	Evidence/Indicators
Comprehensive Sex Education and SRHR for youth	Provision of comprehensive sex education and access to services to adolescents and young people promotes promiscuity	Provision of comprehensive sex education can help young people make informed decisions on healthy, responsible behaviors and mutually protective relationships and is demonstrated to have a beneficial impact on reducing undesirable sexual health outcomes.	SDGs (especially 3.7 and 5.6) Adolescent fertility rates HIV incidence among youth STI incidence among youth Qualitative and rights-based narrative
Safe abortion access	Abortion is foeticide and a sin	Unintended pregnancy indirectly contributes to rates of stunting and poor health outcomes	Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) Antenatal care coverage Obstetric fistula incidence Stunting rates Qualitative and rights-based narrative

Gender Affirming Care	There are only 2 genders, that of biological man and biological woman	Healthcare should be neutral; most cultures have historically recognised more than 2 genders	SDGs (especially 3.7 and 5.6) Qualitative and rights-based narrative
Access to Contraception	Contraception should be restricted to those in legally binding or married relationships, and of age	Every individual should have access to equitable and affordable healthcare, irrespective of marital status	SDGs (especially 3.7 and 5.6) Skilled birth attendance Proportion of family planning demand met with modern contraceptives Contraceptive Prevalence Rate MMR Total Fertility Rate (TFR) Qualitative and rights-based narrative
Gender based violence	Women should not leave the house at night without the protection of men	Every individual has the right to live free from violence	GBV rates IPV rates MMR Qualitative and rights-based narrative

## CHAPTER 2: STRENGTH IN NUMBERS: HOW TO ENGAGE INTERSECTIONAL ALLIES AND IDENTIFY OPPOSING FORCES

Authoritarian actors and transnational anti-gender movements weaponise ‘gender’ through ideological platforms such as pro-natalism, anti-gender affirming care, and others and conceptualise those working in the gender rights movement as ‘threats’ to that deemed virtuous and worthy—conservative understandings of nationhood, citizenship, traditional values, and the familial unit. These groups instigate gender-related anxieties that play out into policy and impact the capacity of SRHR advocates to do their work. They can turn hitherto supportive bodies against us.

Although methodologies and intentions are similar, transnational anti-gender movements can be divided into categories: established actors such as faith-based or religious groups and right-wing institutions, nascent and emerging actors who produce and promote anti-feminist or anti-LGBTQIA+ with the purpose of ‘dismantling gender ideology,’ and lastly ‘gatekeepers’ for instance traditional academics, politicians, corporations, and media outlets.

Anti-gender movements are increasingly valorised and leveraged by conservative groups, charismatic and religious authorities, the private sector, pharmaceutical companies, digital and print media in the Asia Pacific region. Therefore, it is critical to understand our allies, in what ways we align, as well as the opposing forces at both the individual and structural levels.

## CONDUCTING A STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

There are many tools and frameworks for identifying allies and opposition, as well as their spheres of influence (below is a step-by-step explanation of how to conduct one). There is also much guidance on who and how to engage and facilitate proactive connections and coalitions, including allyship with nascent and established CSOs. Conducting a stakeholder analysis can be instrumental into mapping out allies and opponents but also guides advocates on the need to be cognizant of why engaging intersectional allies is critical at this juncture and how identification of areas of symmetry and alignment is important.

## HOW TO CONDUCT STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

For each stakeholder, complete this information adding rows as more stakeholders are identified:

Stakeholder Name	Level (Local/ National/Regional/ Global)	Influence (1-5)	Position (Pro/Neutral/Anti)	Key Resources/Power	Key Relationships
Example: Ministry of Health	National	5	Pro	Policy authority, budget, and facilities	Receives donor funding, influenced by religious groups

Sphere of Influence Rating Scale: 1 = Minimal influence on SRHR outcomes; 2 = Some influence; 3 = Moderate influence; 4 = High influence; 5 = Very high influence / Critical actor

After establishing the stakeholders and their sphere of influence, advocates should analyse the identified stakeholders stance on the issues they are working on, creating a visual map of level of influence and stance; for instance Green = Pro-SRHR, Yellow = Neutral and Red = Anti-SRHR. Relationships and interconnectedness can also be depicted by drawing lines and arrows:

Solid lines = Alliances/partnerships

- Dotted lines = Conflicts/opposition
- Arrows = Direction of influence (who influences whom)
- \$ signs = Funding relationships
- Thick vs thin lines = Strength of relationship

Actors can be grouped together, for example government, civil society, philanthropy, donors, faith-based organisations and so on. Once categorised, advocates can further analyse strategic entry points:

- Persuadable actors — Neutral stakeholders who could become supportive
- Relationships to strengthen — Existing alliances that could be deeper
- Accessible power holders — Influential actors you have access to
- Unexpected allies — Potential partners outside usual networks
- Opposition weak points — Vulnerabilities in anti-SRHR networks

This is just one example of many ways to collect evidence on stakeholders to strategise a response.

## SYMMETRY SNAPSHOT

In addition to identifying the key players influencing our work and/or those elemental in the anti-gender movement, it is critical to identify intersectional allies for strength in numbers. These actors all work in health and social justice adjacent activities, and are implicated by the anti-gender movement, including, but not limited to:

Working area	Thematic Alignment and Entry Point
Health equity	Harm reduction, SOGIESC inclusion, HIV, tuberculosis, nutrition and stunting, pandemic preparedness, gender affirming care, mental health, UHC
Climate change and environment	Disaster risk preparedness, WASH
Budget advocacy	UHC advocates, funding watchdogs
Disability inclusion	Persons with disabilities, people affected by leprosy
Conflict, internally displaced persons, and diaspora	Migrant rights, refugee advocates, asylum seekers
Social justice movements	Feminist spaces, debt justice, labour rights, sex workers
Policy and the law	Prison reform, death penalty abolitionists

Marginalised groups	Women and gender diverse people who use drugs, religious or ethnic minorities, elders and the ageing, young people, people deprived of liberty
Academics and researchers	Evidence building, data gathering, resource access
Media	Public opinion, evidence building
Philanthropy	Funding access, policy influence

## ACTOR AND AGENCY CHART

Stakeholder mapping may also involve more nuanced analysis, with assessment of individuals at the government level, (or those in other forms of strategic power) that may come and go as leadership changes as does political will. Advocates can conduct an assessment of individuals at the policy level and assess their stance or platform related to the issue or issues at hand. This work should be done in-house and for internal reference only. See below example, applying a Likert scale of 1-4 (1 for strong opponent to 4 for strong ally).

Post	Actor	Profile	Issue	1	2	3	4
Minister for Education	Naomi Fuentes	Doctor, from the outer provinces, Catholic	Comprehensive sex education		X		
			Increased funding for sexual and reproductive health research			X	
			Migration				X
Minister for Poverty Alleviation	Xi Jung	Conservative party, human rights advocate	Comprehensive sex education		X		
			Increased funding for SRHR research			X	
			Legal gender recognition	X			

## UNDERSTANDING THE POLICY CYCLE

Understanding how policy is made, negotiated, and implemented is essential for SRHR advocates working in fast-changing or restrictive environments. Policy change rarely happens in a straight line. It is shaped by political cycles, institutional mandates, informal networks, public narratives and the influence of both supportive and anti-rights actors. When advocates understand these dynamics, they can identify the correct entry points, anticipate resistance, and choose strategies that match the moment.

The policy process is not the same in every country; however, most systems follow a similar pattern wherein issues are placed on the agenda, proposals are developed, decisions are made, and policies are implemented or blocked. Anti-rights actors intervene at each stage, often using procedural delays, moral panic, or selective evidence to stall progress. This chapter helps SRHR advocates recognise these patterns and identify where their influence is strongest.

### Policy Cycle stages and descriptions

#### Agenda Setting

Issues gain visibility and attract political attention. This may occur through public pressure, media narratives, donor priorities or shifts in government leadership. Anti-rights actors often intervene early by reframing SRHR as a “threat” or “moral issue”. Recognising the agenda-setting stage helps advocates act early.

#### Policy Formulation

Government agencies, technical working groups or parliamentary committees begin drafting proposals, strategies or legislation. This is where evidence, rights-based language, and inclusive definitions can be inserted. It is also where anti-rights actors attempt to narrow scope, remove SRHR language or introduce restrictive concepts.

#### Decision-making

Drafts move through approval processes, such as cabinet reviews, parliamentary debates, budget negotiations or ministerial sign-off. Advocates can support champions, mobilise allies, and provide rapid responses to misinformation.

#### Implementation of Public Policy

Policies are translated into programmes, budgets, guidelines and services. Advocates can monitor implementation, identify gaps and support communities to claim their rights.

#### Assessment and Adjustment of Public Policy

Civil society, communities and oversight bodies track whether commitments are being met. This includes monitoring budgets, service delivery, data quality and rights violations. This stage often reopens the space for both progress and backlash. Advocates can use lessons learned to strengthen future cycles and ensure that SRHR remains central to policy discussions.

Understanding the policy process allows SRHR advocates to connect their message making, coalition-building and scenario planning to real decision-making spaces, ensuring that strategic responses are grounded in how power operates.

## UNDERSTANDING THE POLICY PROCESS

**Stage=** It refers to the moment of the process. It is important to follow the course of the construction process, from the preliminary formulation of the policy to its assessment and adjustment after it has come into operation.

**Area of government=** Determine which area or areas intervene and participate in each stage.

**Level of government=** Determine which levels of the hierarchical structure participate at each stage.

**Activity=** Describe the activities developed by the different areas at each stage of the process.

We can understand the policy process by imagining the stages involved in abortion policy, for instance. For illustration review the simplified illustration below and then attempt an analysis on another SRHR topic within your organisation.

Stage	Area of Government Involved	Level of Government Involved	Activity
Agenda Setting- Abortion is framed as a public policy issue that requires government action	Ministry of Health Ministry of Justice Parliamentary health and human rights committees Government communications offices	National government National parliament	Publication of data on maternal mortality from unsafe abortion High-profile cases of women harmed or prosecuted Advocacy campaigns by women's rights and health NGOs Public debates, media coverage, and framing battles ("health" vs. "morality")
Policy Formulation- Legal and policy options for abortion access are developed	Ministry of Justice (legal reform) Ministry of Health (clinical standards) Ministry of Finance (costs, insurance coverage) Law reform commissions or expert panels	National ministries Executive technical bodies	Drafting amendments to the criminal code or health law Defining legal grounds, gestational limits, and consent rules Establishing provider requirements and service delivery models Consulting medical associations, NGOs, and sometimes religious bodies

Decision-Making/Adoption- The abortion reform is formally approved	Parliament Cabinet or executive leadership President or head of state	National legislature National executive	Parliamentary debate and voting Introduction of amendments (e.g., waiting periods, parental consent) Political negotiation and party discipline Final approval and promulgation
Implementation of public policy- Legal abortion services are made available in practice	Ministry of Health Public and private health facilities Medical licensing boards Regional health authorities	National Sub-national (regional, provincial, local)	Issuing clinical guidelines and protocols Training healthcare providers Ensuring availability of abortion medications and equipment Managing conscientious objection Establishing referral systems
Assessment and adjustment of public policy- The impact of the abortion policy is reviewed	Ministry of Health monitoring units National human rights institutions Courts and constitutional tribunals Parliamentary oversight committees	National Judicial Sometimes international human rights bodies	Monitoring access and service quality Reviewing disparities by region or population Litigation challenging barriers or restrictions Revising regulations or guidelines based on evidence

## WORKING WITH FAITH

Religious leaders, charismatic authorities and faith-based communities and networks hold a meaningful place in the Asia Pacific region. These individuals and groups shape community minds and influence public opinion, and are often the first to mobilise humanitarian efforts and provide health and social support in moments of crises (such as pandemics, natural disasters, climate change) and to “those in need”. Faith-based leaders and groups often have established and broad connections above the local level, interacting with international agencies and donors and philanthropy.



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

As religious representatives often hold strong moral authority and are seen as credible leaders in our region, SRHR advocates must understand religious dynamics, identify faith assets, and determine where values converge and where partnerships are possible. Advocates should work to understand areas of philosophical discord or dissonance; however, these should not be viewed as unmoveable obstacles to finding common ground.

Although not all points will converge, there are nevertheless success stories from the region of mutually beneficial and sustainable partnerships existing between faith actors and SRHR advocates. There are also a number of tools available for advocates to establish where (or if) partnership is possible (see [https://jliflc.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Toolkit\\_Engaging\\_with\\_religious\\_leaders\\_and\\_faith\\_communities.pdf](https://jliflc.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Toolkit_Engaging_with_religious_leaders_and_faith_communities.pdf)) and evidence from the ground on success stories, however a cursory assessment can also be conducted to support decision making in low-resource areas framed around the following tests of suitability:

### **Discuss and reflect upon the following in your working area:**

- How influential is faith in our community and what role does religion play in impacting SRHR advocacy and service delivery?
- Does an aspect of our work involve behaviour change or changes based on beliefs? If so, FBOs are uniquely positioned to drive this given their authority and influence on underlying beliefs and values.
- Does an aspect of our work involve service delivery providing health services? If so it is beneficial to mobilise what is already established, which may be a faith network.
- Is it appropriate for our organisation to engage? In some countries, working with religious organisations is expected, in others, it would be deemed inappropriate.
- Would working through an intermediary be more appropriate and/or safer? If so, which intermediary?

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# ANNEXES- SCENARIO PLANNING- GUIDANCE AND TEMPLATES

## ANNEX 1: EIGHT SCENARIOS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

### **Scenario A: Rights-Forward SRHR Governance**

Character: Best-case across most levers.

What it means: Anti-rights capture stays mostly outside the state while plural religious fields and rights-compatible traditions support a strong health-and-equality framing of SRHR and LGBTQIA+. Law is expansionary, civic space is broad, foreign-agent tools are absent, and funding and pro-gender state capacity are aligned enough to entrench gains. Even though the information environment faces occasional disinformation spikes and funding constraints are minor, the overall picture is one of entrenched rights progress.

Strategic focus: Legal gains, implementation, regional leadership, and movement strengthening in a stable enabling environment.

Use this scenario when: You want a "aspirational" future to explore what proactive, rights-expanding strategies might look like; or to stress-test whether your safeguarding and sustainability plans are robust enough.

### **Scenario B: Contested Drift / Current Trajectory**

Character: Mixed middle politics, constant tug-of-war.

What it means: Most descriptors sit in a mixed middle: partial capture, plural but contested religion, occasional "gender ideology" talk, and a patchwork legal regime that delivers some SRHR gains and some setbacks. Foreign-agent rules, information and media environments, civic space, funding balance and pro-gender capacity are all constrained but workable. Outcomes depend heavily on advocacy, elections and crises. The system oscillates rather than moving in a clear direction.

Strategic focus: Defending contested gains, playing the long game, maintaining coalitions across political cycles, and preparing for shifts.

Use this scenario when: You want to map "where we probably are now if nothing big changes" and test what sustained, resilient SRHR work looks like in a messy, unstable middle.

### **Scenario C: Authoritarian Backlash**

Character: Hard authoritarian tilt with entrenched capture, hostile law and space.

What it means: Anti-rights actors control the state and align with dominant conservative religious institutions and hostile traditional-values narratives, framing SRHR and LGBTQIA+ as an existential threat. Law is regressive or criminalising, civic space is hostile or under surveillance, foreign-agent laws are used as lawfare, information and media are captured, funding heavily favours anti-rights actors, and pro-gender capacity is largely oriented against rights. SRHR work is still possible but heavily constrained; the strategic focus shifts to survival, damage limitation, and building resilience.

Strategic focus: Underground networks, regional and diaspora advocacy, documenting harms, and preserving capacity for future openings.

Use this scenario when: You want to stress-test your plans against the worst case you fear, or to develop contingency strategies for rapid democratic backsliding.

### Scenario D: Climate-Resilient SRHR Systems

Character: Mixed middle politics with explicitly stronger pro-gender state integration into climate and resilience agendas.

What it means: Formal politics, law, civic space and funding remain in the mixed middle (similar to B), but pro-gender state capacity is slightly stronger and explicitly integrates SRHR into climate adaptation, disaster response and resilience frameworks. Climate windows and resilience investments create opportunities to stabilise access to SRHR and build coalitions around SRHR as part of the crisis response. The scenario assumes that environmental crises can be leveraged as entry points for rights-based adaptation. Strategic focus: Linking SRHR to climate justice and resilience; using environmental crises as openings for rights advocacy; building pro-gender capacity in health and adaptation sectors.

Use this scenario when: Your coalition is focused on climate adaptation and disaster response, or when you want to explore how global climate commitments (SDGs, Paris Agreement) can anchor SRHR work.

### Scenario E: Pronatalist Familism & "Respectable" SRHR

Character: Consistently restrictive, faith-driven, and pro-natalist.

What it means: Conservative religious influence and traditional-values narratives are strong across the board, and SRHR is framed through demographic anxiety and "respectable family" norms. Law, civic space, information, media, foreign-agent tools and funding are all tilted against comprehensive, rights-based SRHR. Support exists only for maternal health and infertility services for married, heterosexual families; abortion, comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), LGBTQIA+ inclusion and unmarried people's rights are excluded or stigmatised. The regime is consistently hostile but presents itself as "pro-life" and "pro-family" rather than explicitly authoritarian.

Strategic focus: Survival of underground and regional advocacy; defending legal wins on contraception and maternal health; building alliances with reproductive justice and intersectional movements; documenting harms.

Use this scenario when: You are working in a context where religious influence is consolidating but state institutions are not fully captured; or when you want to understand how "soft" pronatalism differs from hard authoritarianism.



### **Scenario F: Digital Echo-Chamber Populism**

Character: Formal politics and law resemble the mixed middle, but toxic information and media environments.

What it means: Formal politics and law sit around mixed (V2), and capture is only partial, but traditional-values narratives and framing are hostile, and the information and media environment is polarised, platform-driven and prone to disinformation spirals. Civil society space and funding are under sustained pressure, with online harassment, echo chambers, and algorithmic amplification of anti-rights content undermining trust and shrinking the room for SRHR advocacy, even without full authoritarian closure. Pro-gender capacity exists but is constrained.

Strategic focus: Digital resilience, narrative counter-campaigns, platform advocacy, media literacy, and offline organising that is less vulnerable to online capture  
Use this scenario when: You are working in a context where anti-rights populism is rising, but institutions are not yet fully captured; or when you want to explore how digital repression differs from state censorship.

### **Scenario G: Urban Inequality & Migrant Margins**

Character: Formally mixed law and civic space, but sharp exclusions by geography and status.

What it means: Anti-rights capture, religion and formal law sit around the mixed middle, but traditional-values narratives are hostile and targeted at outsiders (migrants, informal workers, queer people, religious minorities). Information environments are polarised with disinformation targeting vulnerable groups. Civic space and law are officially workable, yet marginalised communities experience much more constrained access and advocacy space than better-off urban residents. Information and funding biases mean digital access, data protection and resource flows disadvantage people living in poverty, informal settlements and migrant contexts. Pro-gender capacity exists but is concentrated in elite institutions.

**Strategic focus:** Intersectional organising; centring migrant and urban poor communities; documenting and challenging within-country inequality; building decentralised and participatory advocacy.

Use this scenario when: Your coalition works on urban poverty, migration or disability justice; or when you want to understand how formal "mixed" regimes can coexist with sharp exclusions.

### **Scenario H: Regional Human-Rights Architecture**

Character: National politics remain mixed, but regional bodies anchor rights and pro-gender capacity.

What it means: Domestic politics and religion remain mixed, and national law and civic space are uneven. But regional bodies, jurisprudence, and norm cascades anchor a rights-based framing of SRHR and LGBTQIA+ and support stronger pro-gender capacity within the state. Foreign-agent laws are limited or not used, information and media are relatively enabling, and funding leans pro-rights. The scenario assumes that regional human-rights mechanisms (CEDAW, ICPD review, regional courts, UN bodies) create external pressure and openings even when national politics are contested.

Strategic focus: Regional advocacy and leverage; using international mechanisms for norm-setting and accountability; building transnational

coalitions; regional movement strengthening.

Use this scenario when: You work with regional bodies or networks, or when you want to explore how transnational pressure and solidarity can shape national SRHR politics.

Table 1. Quick Comparison: Eight Scenarios at a Glance

Scenario	Character	Best For
A – Rights-Forward	Best-case; enabling across the board	Aspirational strategies; stress-testing sustainability
B – Contested Drift	Mixed middle; constant push-pull	Current reality mapping; resilience planning
C – Authoritarian Backlash	Hard tilt; survival mode	Worst-case prep; contingency planning
D – Climate-Resilient	Mixed middle + pro-gender climate focus	Climate-linked advocacy; resilience opportunities
E – Pronatalist Familism	Consistently restrictive; "respectable" framing	Religious influence contexts; soft vs. hard backlash
F – Digital Echo-Chamber	Mixed politics; toxic digital environment	Rising online harm; platform dynamics
G – Urban Inequality	Formal mixed but sharp exclusions	Migrant/poor communities; intersectional work
H – Regional Architecture	National mixed; regional supports	Regional/transnational advocacy; international leverage

## ANNEX 2: DESCRIPTORS AND QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

This annex gives a one-page "cheat sheet" for each of the 11 levers. Use it to:  
Spot what's happening in your context today.  
Understand what pushes a lever toward more enabling or more hostile.  
Start a group conversation: "Where do we see ourselves on this lever?"

### **Lever 1: Political Capture**

Guiding question: How much do anti-rights actors control government and courts?

Most enabling (V1): Anti-rights groups lobby and campaign, but don't run key ministries or parliament. Rights-focused officials hold real power.

Most hostile (V4): Anti-rights allies dominate executive, legislature, courts and oversight bodies. They use law enforcement to attack rights defenders.

Watch for: Elections that shift power; who holds key ministries; whether courts block or enable SRHR cases.

### **Lever 2: Religious Institutional Influence**

Guiding question: How central are conservative religious leaders in shaping policy and morality?

Most enabling (V1): Secular or plural moral authorities. Conservative religious leaders have limited say in policy.

Most hostile (V4): Cross-faith conservative coalitions drive anti-rights agendas at national and regional levels. Religious law shapes state law.

Watch for: Religious leaders entering politics; coalitions forming across faiths; religious rhetoric in policy; which faith voices are amplified in media.

### **Lever 3: Traditional Values Narratives**

Guiding question: Are "family, culture and nation" framed to support or attack SRHR and LGBTQIA+ rights?

Most enabling (V1): Tradition and culture are presented as consistent with equality and dignity. Local values support inclusive policies.

Most hostile (V4): Traditional values fused with sovereignty and anti-colonial rhetoric; SRHR framed as "Western gender ideology" against the nation.

Watch for: How politicians use "culture" and "family" in speeches; whether SRHR is framed as foreign or as a local health/rights issue; decolonial language used for or against rights.

### **Lever 4: Framing of SRHR & LGBTQIA+**

Guiding question: How are SRHR and LGBTQIA+ issues mainly talked about in public?

Most enabling (V1): Media and politicians link SRHR to health, rights, and inclusion. ICPD, CEDAW, SDGs are mentioned.

Most hostile (V4): SRHR/LGBTQIA+ portrayed as a threat to civilisation, nation or faith. Used to justify repression.

Watch for: Whether SRHR is discussed as health/rights or as ideology; whether politicians use "gender ideology" language; how media covers SRHR debates.

### **Lever 5: Law**

Guiding question: How enabling or restrictive are current laws and policies on SRHR and LGBTQIA+ rights?

Most enabling (V1): Recent decriminalisation and anti-discrimination laws; strong court protection; CSE and contraception widely supported.

Most hostile (V4): Criminalisation of same-sex relations, abortion, and gender expression. Strong enforcement and chilling effects on activists.

Watch for: Recent legal changes; what's being prosecuted; whether laws target activists; whether courts protect or limit SRHR.

### **Lever 6: NGO / Foreign-Agent Laws**

Guiding question: How much are NGO and foreign-funding rules used to control or punish SRHR work?

Most enabling (V1): NGO law neutral; foreign grants allowed; SRHR/LGBTQIA+ groups not singled out.

Most hostile (V4): Broad "foreign agent" or "extremist" framing. Many NGOs labelled as threats; many close or go underground.

Watch for: New NGO laws; whether SRHR groups are targeted; which organisations get prosecuted; funding restrictions.

### **Lever 7: Information Environment**

Guiding question: How independent or captured is the information space for SRHR debates?

Most enabling (V1): Competing outlets, fact-checking, diverse voices including feminist and LGBTQIA+.

Most hostile (V4): Most media aligned with government or dominant bloc. Censorship of SRHR/LGBTQIA+ topics.

Watch for: Whether independent outlets survive; how much disinformation appears; who can speak publicly on SRHR; whether journalists face harassment.

### **Lever 8: Media & Platform Control**

Guiding question: Who controls big media outlets and digital platforms that shape SRHR narratives?

Most enabling (V1): Mix of independent, community and commercial outlets. Platforms moderately regulated but not heavily politicised.

Most hostile (V4): State or dominant bloc controls major media and exerts strong influence over platforms (takedowns, access rules, bans).

Watch for: Media ownership patterns; whether platforms amplify anti-rights content; algorithmic bias; content takedowns targeting SRHR advocates.

### **Lever 9: Civil Society Space**

Guiding question: How safe is it to organise, advocate and receive funding for SRHR work?

Most enabling (V1): NGOs can register and operate freely; protests and advocacy broadly tolerated.

Most hostile (V4): Raids, arrests, widespread fear. Most SRHR work goes underground or abroad.

Watch for: Whether NGOs can register; attacks on activists; whether protests are allowed; surveillance of organisations; smear campaigns.

### **Lever 10: Funding Balance**

Guiding question: Does money mainly support SRHR and feminist movements or anti-rights actors?

Most enabling (V1): Feminist, LGBTQIA+ and SRHR orgs are relatively stable. Anti-rights groups are active but not dominant.

Most hostile (V4): Severe cuts to SRHR/LGBTQIA+ groups; anti-rights work mainstreamed into state budgets.

Watch for: Funding cuts to SRHR groups; new funding for anti-rights initiatives; donor priorities shifting; government funding for "family" agendas.

### **Lever 11: Pro-Gender State Capacity**

Guiding question: How strong and coordinated is the state's capacity to advance gender equality, SRHR and LGBTQIA+ rights?

Most enabling (V1): Dedicated units in health, education, justice; coordinated across agencies; officials committed to rights.

Most hostile (V4): State capacity oriented against rights; no dedicated pro-gender units; or they exist but are powerless.

Watch for: Whether there are dedicated gender/SRHR units in government; whether they have real power; if officials champion rights or attack them; and coordination between agencies.

## **ANNEX 3: EXAMPLE REALISTIC ACTIONS FOR EACH LEVER**

For each lever you choose to work on, here are 2–3 realistic example actions. Pick the 1–2 actions that fit your coalition's size and risk level. You don't need to do them all.

### **Lever 1: Political Capture**

Build election-monitoring alliances with democracy and human rights groups to document anti-rights rhetoric and track who's elected.

Create alliances with pro-gender officials (where they exist) to identify windows for SRHR wins inside government.

Document anti-rights networks and share findings with regional and international human rights bodies.

### **Lever 2: Religious Influence**

Co-create message guides with faith leaders, youth, and disability groups to anchor SRHR in the language of health, dignity and local values (not Western imports).

Connect with progressive faith voices who support SRHR; amplify their counter-narratives.

Map religious institutions and their positions on SRHR; identify which voices are most trusted in your communities.

### **Lever 3: Traditional Values Narratives**

Invest in narrative training for SRHR spokespeople to reframe SRHR as rooted in local culture, dignity and community care, not Western ideology.

Partner with journalists and content creators on sustained health-rights storytelling (not just one-off campaigns).

Document and amplify local decolonial narratives that connect SRHR to anti-colonial resistance and community sovereignty.

### **Lever 4: Framing of SRHR & LGBTQIA+**

Co-create a message guide linking SRHR to health, equality and community

test it with trusted communities.

Train SRHR spokespeople and community leaders to speak about SRHR in accessible language at local forums.

Support journalists and content creators to cover SRHR as a health and rights issue, not as controversy or ideology.

### **Lever 5: SRHR & LGBTQIA+ Law**

Track changes to laws and enforcement; document how laws are used for or against SRHR work.

Build legal defence networks (pro-bono lawyers, solidarity funds) for people prosecuted under hostile laws.

Work with reformist officials to identify windows for law reform or protective administrative guidance.

### **Lever 6: NGO / Foreign-Agent Laws**

Create CSO coalitions and alliances to collectively resist and expose misuse of NGO laws.

Build emergency support funds (domestic and international solidarity funding) for SRHR groups facing restrictions.

Document and publicly expose selective use of NGO/foreign-agent laws against SRHR organisations.

### **Lever 7: Information Environment**

Build CSO media monitoring teams to track disinformation and fact-check anti-SRHR claims.

Support independent outlets and journalists who cover SRHR fairly; provide security and funding where needed.

Create counter-narratives and factsheets to challenge disinformation; distribute via trusted community channels.

### **Lever 8: Media & Platform Control**

Engage with platforms on content moderation policies affecting SRHR; document algorithmic bias against SRHR content.

Support independent journalists and outlets covering SRHR; help them stay secure and resourced.

Build offline organising strategies less vulnerable to online capture (door-to-door, small groups, trusted networks).

### **Lever 9: Civil Society Space**

Build coalitions of CSOs to collectively advocate for enabling NGO laws and protest rights.

Create security protocols and mutual aid networks for SRHR groups facing harassment or closure.

Document and report attacks on civil society to regional and international bodies; build solidarity networks.

### **Lever 10: Funding Balance**

Advocate with donors to maintain or increase funding for SRHR and feminist organisations.

Create pooled or rapid-response funding mechanisms to support SRHR groups during crises or closures.

Encourage donors to fund capacity-building (not just projects) so organisations survive political shifts.

### **Lever 11: Pro-Gender State Capacity**

Provide technical support and training to pro-gender government units (health, education, justice) to strengthen their capacity.

Form task forces or joint working groups with government agencies on specific SRHR issues (CSE, reproductive health, LGBTQIA+ inclusion).

Document and amplify pro-gender government wins to build political will for further reform.

## **ANNEX 4: WORKSHEETS**

### **Worksheet 1: Choose Your Key Scenarios**

Step 1 – Read the eight scenario cards (Annex 1). Then answer:

Which scenario feels closest to where you are now?

Scenario: \_\_\_\_\_ Why: \_\_\_\_\_

Which scenario worries you most? (What risk do you want to prepare for?)

Scenario: \_\_\_\_\_ Why: \_\_\_\_\_

Which scenario feels most hopeful to you? (What would you like to see happen?)

Scenario: \_\_\_\_\_ Why: \_\_\_\_\_

You have now chosen your 2–3 key scenarios to work with for the rest of this exercise.

### **Worksheet 2: What Does Your Work Look Like in Each Scenario?**

For each of your 2–3 chosen scenarios, fill in:

Scenario: \_\_\_\_\_

What SRHR work looks like in this future:

Main risks for your work:

Main openings or opportunities:

### **Worksheet 3: Pick 3–4 Levers You Can Influence**

In the Deeper version, use this to choose which levers to focus on.

From the 11 levers in Section 5, choose 3–4 that your organisation or coalition might realistically influence in the next 2–3 years. For each, note:

**Lever 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

Why this matters in your scenarios:

How your coalition could influence it:

Who are your allies on this lever?

**Lever 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

Why this matters in your scenarios:

How your coalition could influence it:

Who are your allies on this lever?

**Lever 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

Why this matters in your scenarios:  
How your coalition could influence it:  
Who are your allies on this lever?

**Lever 4:** \_\_\_\_\_

Why this matters in your scenarios:  
How your coalition could influence it:  
Who are your allies on this lever?

**Worksheet 4: Turn Levers into Concrete Actions**

For each lever, list 2–3 realistic actions you could take in the next 2–3 years. Pick the 1–2 actions that fit your coalition's size and risk level. (You can find example actions in Annex 3.)

**Lever 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

Action 1:  
Action 2:

**Lever 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

Action 1:  
Action 2:

**Lever 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

Action 1:  
Action 2:

**Lever 4:** \_\_\_\_\_

Action 1:  
Action 2:

**Worksheet 5: No-Regrets Priorities**

Looking across all the actions you listed in Worksheet 4, identify:

**No-regrets actions (appear in 2+ scenarios; do them now)**

Action: \_\_\_\_\_ Scenarios where it matters: \_\_\_\_\_  
Action: \_\_\_\_\_ Scenarios where it matters: \_\_\_\_\_  
Action: \_\_\_\_\_ Scenarios where it matters: \_\_\_\_\_

**Actions to stop (only work in best-case)**

Action: \_\_\_\_\_ Why to stop: \_\_\_\_\_

**Actions to start or scale up now**

Action: \_\_\_\_\_ Why now: \_\_\_\_\_  
Action: \_\_\_\_\_ Why now: \_\_\_\_\_

**Key partners, donors or regional bodies who need to see these insights**

Partner/Donor: \_\_\_\_\_ What they need to know: \_\_\_\_\_  
Partner/Donor: \_\_\_\_\_ What they need to know: \_\_\_\_\_

## Worksheet 6: Tracking Changes Over Time (Optional)

Come back to this worksheet in 6–12 months to track how contexts and scenarios shift.

Lever	Where we saw it 6 months ago	Where we see it now	Changed? How?
Political capture			
Religious influence			
Civil society space			
Information environment			
SRHR law			
<i>[Add others as needed]</i>			

### ANNEX 5: WORKED EXAMPLE - HOW A HYPOTHETICAL COALITION USED THIS TOOL

**Context:** A regional SRHR coalition in Southeast Asia with members in 4 countries, focusing on youth SRHR and LGBTQIA+ rights. ~20 staff across the region, small annual budget, working in contexts with mixed governance and rising religious backlash.

#### Step 1: Choose Key Scenarios

"Where are we now?" → Scenario B (Contested Drift) + Scenario F (Digital Echo-Chamber Populism)

"We see mixed politics, but increasingly polarised digital space and online harassment of our activists."

"What worries us?" → Scenario C (Authoritarian Backlash)

"We fear rapid tightening of civic space and foreign-agent laws used against us."

"What's our hope?" → Scenario H (Regional Human-Rights Architecture)

"We want to leverage CEDAW reviews and ASEAN mechanisms to push countries forward."

#### Step 2: Described Work in Each Scenario

##### Scenario B (Contested Drift) – Where we are now

What SRHR work looks like:

Public campaigns and CSO advocacy still possible, but face political headwinds.

Youth SRHR organisations can operate but face budget cuts and donor restrictions.  
LGBTQIA+ visibility mixed: some pride events happen, but increasingly attacked online.

**Main risks:**

Funding shrinks as donors pull out of "risky" contexts.  
Online mobs attack activists; staff trauma and burnout.

**Openings:**

Progressive politicians and media allies still exist; we can work with them.  
Youth movements remain energised; they connect SRHR to climate and democracy.

**Scenario C (Authoritarian Backlash) – Worst case we fear**

What SRHR work looks like:  
Public advocacy becomes dangerous; work goes underground or regional.  
Foreign-agent laws used to close offices; staff leave or go into exile.  
LGBTQIA+ activists face arrest and criminalisation.

**Main risks:**

Whole organisations shut down; staff safety compromised.  
Knowledge and networks lost when people flee.

**Openings:**

Regional and diaspora networks become more important; international allies step up.  
Documentation of harms matters for future accountability.

**Scenario H (Regional Human-Rights Architecture) – Our aspiration**

What SRHR work looks like:  
CEDAW reviews and regional courts create pressure on countries.  
Coalition can shift focus from national lobbying to regional leverage.  
International solidarity and funding remains stable.

**Main risks:**

Takes years to shift; easy to get demoralised.

**Openings:**

Regional mechanisms work; countries respond to peer pressure and international scrutiny.  
Youth leadership moves across borders; transnational organising strengthens.

**Step 3: Picked 4 Key Levers**

The coalition chose:

Lever 4: Framing of SRHR & LGBTQIA+ – "We're losing the narrative to 'gender ideology' talk."

Lever 7: Information Environment –

"Disinformation and online mobs are our

biggest threat right now."

Lever 9: Civil Society Space – "We need to defend the space we have and prepare for closure."

Lever 11: Pro-Gender State Capacity – "We have allies in health ministries; we can strengthen them."

## **Step 4: Turned Levers into Actions**

### **Lever 4: Framing**

Action 1: Co-create a regional "youth SRHR framing guide" with youth leaders, faith voices, and health advocates; test it and train spokespeople.

Action 2: Train 10 youth activists to speak about SRHR as health, equality, and community care in local-language media.

### **Lever 7: Information**

Action 1: Build a CSO media monitoring team (2–3 regional coordinators) to track anti-SRHR disinformation and fact-check.

Action 2: Create 1-page fact sheets in local languages countering key myths (e.g., "CSE is not Western ideology"; "LGBTQIA+ inclusion strengthens health systems").

### **Lever 9: Civil Society Space**

Action 1: Create an emergency legal defence fund for SRHR activists; connect with regional lawyers.

Action 2: Build security protocols and mutual aid networks across 4 countries.

### **Lever 11: Pro-Gender State Capacity**

Action 1: Form task forces with health ministry officials in 2–3 countries to co-design youth-friendly SRHR services and policies.

## **Step 5: No-Regrets Priorities**

Actions that work in B, C AND H (no-regrets):

Media monitoring and counter-disinformation (protects space in B, survival skill in C, foundation for regional narrative in H).

Emergency legal defence fund and security protocols (critical in C, builds resilience in B, supports transnational solidarity in H).

Framing work with faith voices and youth (defends against "gender ideology" in B and C; positions youth as regional leaders in H).

### **Actions to start NOW:**

Media monitoring (can be done with limited resources; immediate impact on defending narrative).

Emergency legal fund (builds trust with activists; shows commitment to safety).

### **Actions to stop:**

Large-scale public campaigns in countries moving toward C (too risky; shift to regional and underground).

Who needs to hear this:

Regional donors: "We need flexible, multi-year funding for narrative and security work."

CEDAW review delegations: "SRHR space is shrinking; international support matters."

Health ministry allies: "Task forces on youth SRHR services can shift the narrative."

## 6 Months Later: They Checked Progress

Lever	6 months ago (B/F)	Now	Changed?
Framing	"Gender ideology" language rising	Same, but we have factsheets and trained spokespeople in 2 countries	Slight win: youth voice more visible
Info environment	Heavy disinformation; online mobs attacking activists	Same; but we now track it and fact-check	Better: CSOs share monitoring data; less duplication
Civil society space	Mixed but workable; some foreign-agent talk	One country tightening NGO rules; another holds CEDAW review	Mixed: space tightening in one place; opening in another via CEDAW
Pro-gender capacity	Some health ministry allies	Same allies + new education ministry contact	Wins: health task force produced youth-SRHR policy brief; education exploring CSE pilots

Conclusion: They shifted focus slightly toward CEDAW advocacy and emergency preparedness while scaling framing and capacity-building work. They stayed flexible and adjusted as context changed.

## KEY TERMS FOR SCENARIO MAPPING

(One-Page Standalone Handout)

**Scenario** – A short future story about how power, law, religion, media, funding and civic space might look in 5–10 years. The eight scenarios (A–H) are not predictions; they are pictures to think with.

**Descriptor** – One big part of the system that affects SRHR: political capture, religious influence, traditional values narratives, framing of SRHR, SRHR law, NGO laws, information environment, media control, civil society space, funding balance, or pro-gender state capacity.

**Lever** – A descriptor you can actually influence and work on. Pulling on key levers early can change how the future turns out.

**Variants (V1–V4)** – The level of a descriptor in a scenario, from most enabling for SRHR (V1) to most hostile or restrictive (V4).

**No-regrets actions** – Actions that help in more than one scenario. You would still be glad you did them if the future becomes more restrictive, stays mixed, or improves.

**Upstream** – Early or foundational. Upstream levers (like narratives or funding patterns) shape later outcomes (like whether laws pass or space closes).

## The 11 Levers at a Glance

Political capture – How much anti-rights actors control government and courts.

Religious influence – How much conservative religious leaders shape policy and morality.

Traditional values narratives – How "family, culture and nation" are framed for or against SRHR and LGBTQIA+ rights.

Framing of SRHR & LGBTQIA+ – Whether SRHR is talked about as health/equality, services, "ideology" or a "threat".

SRHR & LGBTQIA+ law – How enabling or restrictive laws and policies are.

NGO / foreign-agent laws – How rules on NGOs and foreign funding are used.

Information environment – How independent media and information spaces are.

Media & platform control – Who controls big media outlets and digital platforms.

Civil society space – How safe it is to organise, advocate and receive funding.

Funding balance – Whether money supports SRHR movements or anti-rights actors.

Pro-gender state capacity – How strong the state's gender equality and SRHR capacity is.

## Quick Questions to Ask in Workshops

"Which scenario feels closest to where we are now?"

"Which one worries us most?"

"What would help us move toward the hopeful one?"

"Which levers do we already touch? Which could we influence?"

"What actions would still help us even if the worst happens?"

## ANNEX 6- HOW TO USE SCENARIO WIZARD

ScenarioWizard a free online software that can be downloaded (Windows Operations System only) and accessed by advocates to help them with Scenario planning and strategic foresight. An accessible mode has been designed specifically for SRHR advocates to work through different scenarios and refine variables using descriptors to imagine alternative outcomes. The model developed has eight predefined scenarios that may reflect our working environment at any one time.

### **EIGHT PREDEFINED FUTURE SCENARIOS**

- A – Rights-Forward SRHR Governance (best-case, rights-expanding).
- B – Contested Drift / Current Trajectory (mixed middle, ongoing tug-of-war).
- C – Authoritarian Backlash (hard authoritarian tilt, survival mode).
- D – Climate-Resilient SRHR Systems (climate and crises as central drivers).
- E – Pronatalist Familism & “Respectable” SRHR (faith-driven, pro-natalist restriction).
- F – Digital Echo-Chamber Populism (mis/ distoxic information and platform dynamics).
- G – Urban Inequality & Migrant Margins (formal mixes, sharp within-country exclusions).

## H – Regional Human-Rights Architecture (mixed domestic politics, strong regional norms)

This specific tool translates a cross-impact model into simple steps so non-specialists can code and analyse their context, adapt for different futures and decide how to anticipate strategically about future risks and opportunities for our colleagues, community and our work. To shepherd this process, eleven modifying variables were also developed showing how politics, narratives, media, law, funding and state capacity could line up over the next 10-5 years.

### **These 11 Descriptors/Levers are:**

1. Anti-rights political capture
2. Religious institutional influence
3. Traditional values narratives
4. Framing of SRHR & LGBTQIA+
5. SRHR & LGBTQIA+ law
6. Foreign-agent / NGO laws
7. Information environment
8. Media & platform leverage
9. Civil society space
10. Funding balance – anti vs pro-rights
11. Pro-gender state capacity

There are a number of guiding questions for application of the Tool which were designed to be parameters for the ScenarioWizard software, however can also be used by SRHR advocates as a paper-based activity and entry point for breaking down possibilities and re-imagining futures.

SRHR advocates can use the questions to co-create scenarios and view threats and opportunities, as well as consider what resource may be needed to respond to such scenario. Such scenarios could helpfully be shared with peers working in your area so that they may also analyse, adapt, assess and act, if safe to do so:

### **1. ANTI-RIGHTS POLITICAL CAPTURE**

Guiding question:

How far have anti-rights actors moved from lobbying into actually controlling the state – ministries, parliament, local governments and oversight bodies?

- V1 – Mostly outside the government.
- V2 – Some key ministries or local governments in anti-rights hands.
- V3 – Ruling coalition runs on anti-gender platforms and turns them into law.
- V4 – Entrenched control, including courts and commissions.

### **2. RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONAL INFLUENCE**

Guiding question:

How central are organised religious authorities and networks in shaping public morality, voter behaviour and state decisions, and are they plural or dominated by conservative actors?

- V1 – Limited or declining sway; secular/plural authorities dominant.
- V2 – Active but plural field; mixed religious voices.
- V3 – Dominant conservative institutions with strong policy influence.
- V4 – Cross-faith conservative coalitions closely aligned with state power.

### 3. TRADITIONAL VALUES NARRATIVES

Guiding question:

How salient are “traditional values”, family, nation and culture in politics, and are they framed as compatible with rights or used against SRHR and LGBTQIA+ equality?

- V1 – Tradition is mostly framed as compatible with rights.
- V2 – Traditional values appear episodically but are not constant drivers.
- V3 – Central and explicitly opposed to SRHR/LGBTQIA+.
- V4 – Fused with sovereignty/anti-colonial rhetoric against “Western gender ideology”.

### 4. FRAMING OF SRHR & LGBTQIA+

Guiding question:

How are SRHR and LGBTQIA+ issues mainly talked about in public and elite discourse – as health and equality, technical services, “gender ideology”, or existential threat?

- V1 – Framed as health, equality, democracy and human rights.
- V2 – Mostly technocratic/service-delivery, low-salience.
- V3 – Regular “gender ideology”, Western imposition, moral panic language.
- V4 – Cast as an existential threat to civilisation, faith or nation.

### 5. SRHR & LGBTQIA+ LAW

Guiding question:

How enabling or restrictive are current laws and policies on SRHR and LGBTQIA+ rights overall – from contraception and abortion to CSE, SOGIESC recognition and anti-discrimination?

- V1 – Expansionary, progressive protections with recent wins.
- V2 – Mixed regime: some gains plus new limits or patchwork protections.
- V3 – Regressive restrictions or partial criminalisation, recent rollbacks.
- V4 – Broad criminalisation with strong enforcement and chilling effects.

### 6. FOREIGN-AGENT / NGO LAWS

Guiding question:

To what extent do foreign-funding, foreign-agent or sovereignty laws exist and get used to label, restrict or criminalise SRHR, feminist, LGBTQIA+ and human-rights organisations?

- V1 – No foreign-agent law, or not used against rights NGOs.
- V2 – Law exists; occasionally or selectively enforced.
- V3 – Law actively used to warn, defund or deregister SRHR/LGBTQIA+ NGOs.
- V4 – Blanket enforcement; most international funding cut off and groups forced underground.

## 7. INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

Guiding question:

How independent or captured is the information environment for SRHR and LGBTQIA+ debates, and how frequent and organised are disinformation and propaganda campaigns?

- V1 – Independent media and fact-checking thrive; plural outlets.
- V2 – Mixed environment; some independent spaces, some partisan or sensationalist.
- V3 – Systematic partisan disinformation and organised anti-rights campaigns.
- V4 – Highly captured information space; independent voices censored or prosecuted.

## 8. MEDIA & PLATFORM LEVERAGE

Guiding question:

How much leverage do states, parties or religious actors have over major media and digital platforms – in terms of ownership, content rules and amplification of narratives?

- V1 – Plural media; limited party/religious capture; platforms not heavily politicised.
- V2 – Growing concentration and some friendly outlets to the government or dominant blocs.
- V3 – Politicised platform leverage; major outlets routinely amplify anti-rights narratives.
- V4 – High state or bloc capture; strong influence over platforms and content takedowns.

## 9. PROGRESSIVE RIGHTS BASED CIVIL SOCIETY SPACE

Guiding question:

How safe and open is it to organise, advocate and receive funding for SRHR and LGBTQIA+ work – in terms of laws, surveillance, harassment and practical obstacles?

- V1 – Broad space; NGOs can register, organise and receive funding openly.
- V2 – Constrained; bureaucracy, smear campaigns and some threats, but most groups still operate.
- V3 – Shrinking; regular surveillance, legal harassment, closures and self-censorship.
- V4 – Hostile; raids, prosecutions, underground organising only.

## 10. FUNDING BALANCE (ANTI VS PRO-RIGHTS)

Guiding question:

Where does the money go – are anti-rights actors or SRHR/feminist/LGBTQIA+ actors better resourced, and how stable are those funding streams?

- V1 – Rough parity or pro-rights tilt; diverse donors support SRHR/LGBTQIA+.
- V2 – Mixed, fragmented funding; both sides are active but competitive and short-term.

- V3 – Funding skewed to anti-rights; SRHR/LGBTQIA+ groups face cuts or exclusion.
- V4 – Severe cuts for SRHR/LGBTQIA+; anti-rights work mainstreamed into state budgets.

## 11. PRO-GENDER STATE CAPACITY

Guiding question:

How strong and coordinated is the state's capacity and will to defend and advance gender equality, SRHR and LGBTQIA+ rights across ministries and over time?

- V1 – Integrated cross-government strategy; real budgets and influence.
- V2 – Emerging coordination; some SRHR integration, but silos still strong.
- V3 – Highly siloed; gender/SRHR treated as niche or symbolic.
- V4 – Security structures oriented against rights; state capacity organised to restrict, not advance, SRHR.

**For more information and guide to use the Scenario Wizard, please read: [Using ScenarioWizard: A Practical Guide for First-Time Users.](#)**

## ANNEX 7- NEXT STEPS

Below are suggestions on how to move forward with the scenario identified and possibilities available to us and our community.

### 1. ANTI-RIGHTS POLITICAL CAPTURE

How far anti-rights actors have moved from lobbying into actually controlling the state – ministries, parliament and oversight bodies.

#### Example actions

- Work with democracy-defence groups on election monitoring, civic education and rule-of-law campaigns.
- Build broad coalitions (labour, youth, disability, climate, women's movements) around defending constitutional checks and balances.
- Track and publicise appointments and appointment procedures for key institutions (courts, commissions), using legal analysis and media briefings.
- Support partners to engage in party manifestos and internal party debates on SRHR, equality and human rights.

### 2. RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONAL INFLUENCE

How central organised religious authorities are in shaping public morality and state decisions, and whether the field is plural or dominated by conservative actors.

#### Example actions

- Map the faith landscape: which institutions are influential on SRHR, which are potential allies, which are firmly opposed.

- Support “faith for rights” alliances that connect progressive religious leaders with feminist and LGBTQIA+ groups.
- Co-develop theological or values-based briefs on SRHR (e.g. compassion, dignity, care) with sympathetic faith actors.
- Offer closed-door dialogues with religious leaders on evidence, lived realities and stigma reduction.

### 3. TRADITIONAL VALUES NARRATIVES

How “family”, “culture”, “tradition” and “nation” are used in politics – as rights-compatible stories, or against SRHR and LGBTQIA+ equality.

#### Example actions

- Co-create storytelling projects that link SRHR to local concepts of care, solidarity, justice and community.
- Document positive local traditions that have protected bodily autonomy or diversity, and use them in advocacy.
- Support artists, writers, and influencers in reclaiming cultural symbols from anti-rights campaigns.
- Run listening circles with communities to surface their own value stories, then echo those in policy messages.

### 4. FRAMING OF SRHR & LGBTQIA+

How SRHR and LGBTQIA+ are mainly talked about – as health and equality, technical services, “gender ideology”, or existential threat.

#### Example actions

- Develop a message guide with youth, disability, women’s and LGBTQIA+ groups that anchors SRHR in health, equality and democracy.
- Provide media and narrative training for spokespeople, community leaders and survivors willing to speak publicly.
- Partner with journalists and content creators for sustained health-rights storytelling (not just one-off campaigns).
- Track and respond to “gender ideology” narratives with prepared talking points and myth-busting explainers

### 5. LAW

How enabling or restrictive current laws and policies are across contraception, abortion, CSE, SOGIESC recognition and anti-discrimination.

#### Example actions

- Maintain a simple legal scorecard that tracks key SRHR and LGBTQIA+ provisions and proposed bills.
- Support strategic litigation or amicus briefs in cases with system-wide implications.
- Draft model laws or amendments and share them with reform-minded officials and parliamentarians.

- Build legal literacy among communities and frontline workers so they know existing rights and restrictions.

## 6. FOREIGN-AGENT / NGO LAWS

How far foreign-funding or foreign-agent rules are used to label, restrict or criminalise SRHR, feminist, LGBTQIA+ and human-rights organisations.

### Example actions

- Work with legal experts to produce plain-language guides on compliance and risk mitigation under NGO laws.
- Join or form CSO coalitions to advocate for fair NGO regulation and to resist “foreign-agent” labelling.
- Develop contingency plans for funding disruptions (e.g. fiscal sponsorship, pooled funds, regional intermediaries).
- Document and share case studies of how foreign-agent laws harm health and rights, for use with donors and UN mechanisms.

## 7. INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

How independent or captured the information space is, and how frequent and organised disinformation and propaganda campaigns are.

### Example actions

- Partner with fact-checkers or media watchdogs to monitor disinformation on SRHR and LGBTQIA+ issues.
- Train staff and volunteers in basic digital hygiene (secure messaging, phishing awareness, data protection).
- Build relationships with independent journalists and editors by offering briefings and human-centred stories.
- Develop rapid-response protocols for responding to disinformation spikes (prepared FAQs, spokespeople, and ally amplification).

## 8. MEDIA & PLATFORM LEVERAGE

How much control or influence states, parties or religious actors have over major media outlets and digital platforms.

### Example actions

- Map key media owners, editors and platform actors to understand who shapes content.
- Build media coalitions around ethical reporting on SRHR and LGBTQIA+ issues.
- Advocate with regulators and platforms for transparent content rules and protection of health and rights information.
- Support community media, podcasts and alternative channels that give a voice to marginalised groups.

## 9. CIVIL SOCIETY SPACE

How safe and open it is to organise, advocate and receive funding for SRHR and LGBTQIA+ work.

### Example actions

- Form or strengthen national CSO coalitions to defend enabling laws on association, assembly and expression.
- Provide or link partners to legal support and solidarity during smear campaigns, raids or deregistration threats.
- Invest in security planning (risk assessments, secure offices, staff safety protocols) for high-risk groups.
- Coordinate quiet diplomacy with donors and embassies when civic space is under threat.

## 10. FUNDING BALANCE - ANTI VS PRO-RIGHTS

Whether anti-rights actors or SRHR/feminist/LGBTQIA+ actors are better resourced, and how stable those funding streams are.

### Example actions

- Advocate with donors for longer-term, flexible funding to feminist and LGBTQIA+ movements (not just short projects).
- Create or join pooled funds or regranting mechanisms to quickly move small grants to frontline groups.
- Support organisations to strengthen basic financial management and fundraising skills.
- Track and publicise major funding flows to anti-rights actors to make imbalances visible.

## 11. PRO-GENDER STATE CAPACITY

How strong and coordinated the state's capacity and will are to defend and advance gender equality, SRHR and LGBTQIA+ rights across ministries.

### Example actions

- Build trusted relationships with pro-gender officials in health, education, justice, finance and planning.
- Offer technical assistance (evidence reviews, draft policies, training) to gender units and SRHR champions.
- Advocate for formal coordination mechanisms (inter-ministerial committees, joint taskforces) with clear mandates and budgets.
- Support peer-learning spaces between countries or sub-national units with stronger pro-gender capacity and those starting from behind.

**Sustainable Movements and Strategic Responses**  
Resources for partners to anticipate, respond to and mitigate the impact of anti-rights narratives on sexual and reproductive health and rights and our work in Asia and the Pacific.

2026| Complete Toolkit

