THE HIGHLIGHTS OF SPEAK! 2019
SPEAK! 2019 BY THE NUMBERS

24 hours of global action

179 events registered in 55 countries, organised by 150+ organisations

Event attendance of almost 11,000 people

Social media reach of over 2.1 million with 85% positive sentiment

Organiser surveys completed for 77 events (almost double the number from 2018)

67% of the surveys included Net Promoter Score, with average of 57 (“excellent”)

39 Champion organisations from 25 countries

4 global team members + 1 Enabler organisation
The third year of SPEAK! was an overwhelming success!

Once again, the campaign showed just how critical and powerful it is for people and communities to come together and ‘speak with’ one another. Across the globe, SPEAK! events helped to resolve conflicts, create connections and build understanding.

Image credit: Asociación Conciencia (Argentina); AIFJL (Togo); ATADES (Spain)
These are the highlights of SPEAK! 2019...
Collaborating with the Netherlands:
For the third consecutive year, the government of the Netherlands lent their support to the SPEAK! campaign. In Malaysia, the Dutch Embassy brought together 20 teenage girls from diverse backgrounds to advocate for their human rights and share their experiences with Ambassador Aart Jacobi. Issues raised included the participation of girls in sports, access to sexual education, and domestic violence.

Bringing peace to Yemen:
The Yemen Peace Mediators, which began as a SPEAK! 2018 initiative, have continued their remarkable work. They played a critical role in the initial implementation of the UN Stockholm Accord in May, after 4 months of delays. Then, they helped set the foundations for direct Saudi-Houthi talks — including high-level advocacy with the UK, US, Swedish, Italian and Germany governments. Finally, they engaged citizens across the world in a global hunger strike (#FastActionForYemen) to increase pressure on key Saudi, UAE and Houthi representatives to make peace.
Moving from adversaries to allies:

In the DRC, Curtis Business used the letter of support from the SPEAK! team to mobilise local authorities, who have previously sought to shut down their events. The dialogue on ‘addressing the conflict between local Pygmy and Bantu communities’ was a great success, and future collaborations with authorities are now being planned. In addition, Curtis took steps to overcome the restrictions of gender and language. The dialogue had a higher attendance rate for women than any of their previous events, and the presence of translators enabled participants to express themselves in their local tongue.
#2: OVERCOMING RESTRICTIONS

Finding a Plan B:

Even in Tanzania, where the government canceled a SPEAK! event just before it was due to start, **dialogue still occurred**. Event organizers, CHAYODE, quickly reached out to SPEAK! Enabler, Kinara for Youth Evolution. Together, they devised a new topic – the low uptake of community health insurance – which spoke to the interests of local authorities and the broader community, and the event went ahead. **Following the dialogue, several participants formed a committee.** They met with the Medical Officer from the local ward to express concerns raised at the event about the community health fund. They secured a commitment to address these concerns and agreed to work collaboratively to encourage more local citizens to join the fund.
Uniting across borders and boxes:

For the first time in 2019, we selected a group of 41 “Champion” organisations to help organise and support events in their local communities. They came from different countries, spoke different languages, and worked on a range of issues in diverse contexts with varying levels of resources. To help the Champions get to know each other and equip them with key skills, we created a Facebook group, three language-specific chats, and ran six training webinars. The result was a strong sense of community and connectedness between the Champions, which led to a number of direct collaborations. In Latin America, three Champion organisations from Mexico and Brazil joined forces, and what was originally a small local event became a large festival co-organised by prominent CSOs from the two countries.
Overcoming divisions in the Middle East:

We believe in the power of dialogue to bring people together across lines of division. Nowhere is this more needed than in parts of the Middle East. In 2019, SPEAK! Champion, the Palestinian Center for Communication and Development Strategies (PCCDS), organised an event for secular and religious feminists. Just the act of inviting the parties to attend – accompanied by a letter of support from the SPEAK! team – created a small bridge of hope after years of non-communication. At the event, participants had the space to listen deeply to one another, engage in real conversation, and find points of convergence. By the end, all parties pledged to work with their respective communities to reduce verbal attacks and increase understanding and acceptance. PCCDS has since received multiple invitations to run more events that “spread and share the word about reducing social divisions”.

#3: BUILDING BRIDGES
#4: USING DATA TO DRIVE CHANGE

Improving measurement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

The 2018 collaboration between CIVICUS’ DataShift initiative and the SPEAK! campaign yielded responses from almost 600 citizens about the state of responsive and inclusive decision-making in 22 countries across Latin America, Africa, Europe and Asia. This data shed new light on the progress towards achieving SDG 16.7.2, (which aims to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels), and was showcased at the 2019 Ulaanbatar Democracy Forum organised by the UNDP Oslo Governance Center. Critically, it also enabled the UNDP to advocate for SDG 16.7.2 to be upgraded to tier II status, which is one step closer to an internationally agreed methodology for measuring the goal.
Making local communities more inclusive:

To further test and build on our learnings, the DataShift - SPEAK! team supported community workshops in Cameroon, Chile, El Salvador, Tanzania and South Africa. Beyond collecting additional data, the workshops actually helped communities to achieve key elements of SDG16.7.2. In part, this was due to the requirement that participants interview a partner they hadn't previously met. This sparked a number of discussions and actions to make communities more inclusive. For example, in South Africa, a businessman interviewed a young female sportsperson whose team wasn’t able to access public playing fields. After the workshop, the businessman raised the issue at the community governance board meeting, and the team was given access.
Offering world-changing resources:

To ensure all organisations participating in SPEAK! 2019 were equipped for success, we created a suite of digital tools, available via the website in English, French & Spanish from the day the campaign was launched. These included:

- an **event organising toolkit**, with advice on how to run an amazing SPEAK! event;
- a simple yet powerful **conversation guide**, based on the topic of “tolerance”;
- a **template press release** to help secure media coverage, where appropriate;
- campaign **logos** for inclusion on event materials (e.g. posters, flyers, banners);
- a **social media guide** for online engagement before, during and after an event; and
- a **data guide** to help organisers analyse participant surveys and complete their own.
In Venezuela, Fundación Celta utilised the conversation guide to enable meaningful dialogue on the issue of political polarization. Participants expressed that the tool was very useful and committed to using it in private gatherings as a way to work towards consensus in the country.

After adapting and distributing the template press release, Girls Education Mission International's SPEAK! event made it to the headlines of a popular newspaper in Nigeria. The coverage not only helped to spread the word about the event itself, it also showcased the broader work the organisation is doing to prevent gender-based violence.
#6: FINDING THE CHAMPIONS

Following the three R’s:

*SPEAK!* was intentionally designed to be a global, distributable campaign. In 2019, this was put to the test as we removed financial grants for event organisers.

To enable this transition, we introduced the concept of *SPEAK! Champions* – organisations across the world, who volunteered to lead the campaign in their country or community. In doing so, we followed the three R’s...

1. **Recruitment:** We sought to identify organisations that understood the value of *SPEAK!* and could communicate this to their networks, to help maximise the reach and impact of the campaign. We were highly selective, prioritising quality over quantity. Of the 234 applications received, only 41 organisations were named as Champions.

2. **Resourcing:** In addition to the digital tools available to all organisers, we provided a range of unique resources for Champions. This included a Facebook group, online chats and webinars, as well as one-on-one advice from the *SPEAK!* team, data collection training, and letters of support to help engage authorities and decision-makers.

3. **Recognition:** We made sure to acknowledge Champions’ actions and create spaces to communicate their successes and challenges. Examples included: a public announcement of selected Champions, hundreds of social media posts profiling their efforts, and an online ceremony with individualised certificates.
#6: FINDING THE CHAMPIONS

Celebrating success:

A range of evidence suggests that our efforts to make SPEAK! 2019 truly distributable through the introduction of Champions were successful:

- there was no significant drop in the quality or quantity of events compared with last year (179 events in 2019 vs. 181 in 2018)
- organisers reported the results of events in a higher percentage and less time than previous years
- of the original 41 organisations selected, only 2 Champions did not complete the process
- a range of organisations in Latin America and Africa have since expressing interest in becoming a Champion in 2020
#7: INTRODUCING ‘ONE NEXT STEP’

Going beyond a one-off event:

A frequent comment from last year’s SPEAK! organisers was that a single event is often not enough to create significant change, particularly when seeking to bridge deep divisions or ease long-held tensions. As a result, we reframed SPEAK! 2019 events as the beginning of ongoing action, rather than an end to all challenges. To reinforce this, we asked all event organisers to have participants agree to #OneNextStep they could realistically take, either individually or collectively, in the 30 days following the event.

We then sent a follow-up survey to organisers at the 30 day mark to record any changes that occurred as a result of their event, including the extent to which participants followed through on their #OneNextStep. Not only did these methods allow us to track the tangible outcomes of SPEAK! events, they created mutual accountability between organisers and participants regarding their commitments to ongoing action and improvement.

A particularly powerful example of this occurred in South Sudan. After facilitating a community dialogue on peaceful co-existence, SOSUCCA, together with 5 other organisations, committed to continue to promote peace and reconciliation by organising a series of events until the end of the year.
“A small step can make a difference. It can be anything; you can start from cleaning your room to cleaning your community.”

(SPEAK! event participant in Nepal)
Supporting and promoting collective action:

The challenges of our time will ultimately impact us all. That's why SPEAK! 2019 was scheduled for Friday 20th September — helping kick off a week of global action that included the Global Climate Strike. We used this timing to spread the message that if we are to stand with one another in creating a more just, peaceful and sustainable world, we need to speak with one another — especially those with whom we disagree. In addition, we used a 'cascading approach' to partnership development, designed to maximise the number of stakeholders participating in SPEAK!. One example was our global partnership with RNW Media, resulting in events run by RNW’s national partners in the DRC, Mali and Libya — each of which involved multiple local partners.
#8: BUILDING & BIRTHING MOVEMENTS

Sparking new local and national initiatives:

Many of the 2019 SPEAK! events helped birth new local and national movements. In Nepal, following a SPEAK! event, “Peace with Integrity”, hosted by Accountability Lab, a network of participants was established for future collaborations on environmental conservation and working towards peace. In Mexico, the event organised by Otro Tiempo inspired a range of partners to create a professionalised network of organisations working on human rights. And, in Nigeria, the Neighbourhood Environment Watch Foundation event gave birth to a movement called "We SPEAK! Against Climate Change". Participants have developed a work plan for their advocacy objectives, assigned roles and responsibilities, and set monthly meetings to follow up on action items. An accompanying WhatsApp group already counts 34 members.
Welcoming feedback from participants:

In Pakistan, OpenMic, hosted a vibrant dialogue titled “Being kind online”. Though they felt the event went very well, with active youth participation and some robust conversations, the participant Net Promoter Score (NPS) was lower than expected. They discovered this was due to a discussion that occurred on gender and feminism – culturally sensitive topics that require carefully facilitated dialogue. The NPS helped OpenMic reflect on the participant experience, and plan to better manage these dynamics in future events.

Managing the risks of open dialogue:

One of our 30 day follow-up surveys revealed that an individual was subject to an assault after participating in a SPEAK! event in a community with ongoing conflict. Our assumption was that event partners could mitigate risks of this nature, however, organisers don’t always know the risks and/or they overlook them in the excitement of joining a global campaign. Members of the SPEAK! team are working with local partners to respond to the incident and prevent further repercussions. The experience highlights the need for our own internal risk analysis, and reinforces the importance of follow up, without which we would not have known this occurred.
1. **Distributed models of action are possible:**
   In 2019, SPEAK! event organisers received resources, recognition and tailored support instead of financial grants. Even so, compared with 2018, we saw no significant drop in the quantity or quality of events and a net increase in levels of engagement. Key to this was the innovation of identifying a group of Champion organisations, who helped lead the campaign in their communities and countries.

2. **People-powered data can drive real change:**
   We increased our efforts to embed simple, quick, and effective methods for data collection — including post event follow up to help track outcomes. The result was evidence of both successes and 'failures', which can be used to improve work at the local level and power advocacy at the global level.

3. **Efforts to bridge divisions are increasing critical:**
   The core objective of SPEAK! is to bring people together across lines of division. Feedback from event organisers, as well as new CIVICUS research on the rise of anti-rights groups, suggests the use of dialogue to resolve conflict and build trust has never been more crucial — indeed, in some cases, it should have begun long ago.
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