The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) promotes a legal environment that strengthens civil society and advances the freedoms of association and assembly, philanthropy, and public participation around the world. Since 1992, ICNL has engaged with partners in more than one hundred countries. We share a vision in which people are empowered to work together to improve their lives.
Civil society faces intensifying pressure. However, recent achievements give us hope that with sustained support and constant vigilance, meaningful progress is within reach.

Over the past year, ICNL has had the privilege of partnering with colleagues in international organizations, civil society, government, and parliament who have committed themselves to safeguarding civil society around the world.

At the global level, ICNL works with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association to articulate international norms protecting civil society. ICNL also serves on the Community of Democracies Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society, a multilateral initiative that helps mobilize the international community on civic space issues.

Complementing this work, ICNL supports partners at the regional level. In this report, you’ll read about our work with regional institutions in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America to protect the freedoms of association, assembly, and expression.

At the national level, we have engaged in over 100 countries. For example, we worked with partners in Myanmar to pass a progressive new law, Kyrgyzstan to protect civic space, and Morocco to support a national dialogue between the government and civil society.

To provide comparative information to our partners and the public, last year ICNL produced 145 country reports, and we maintain an online library with over 3400 documents from 205 countries and territories.

Our distinguished colleague Filiz Bikmen completed her term as the Chair of ICNL’s Board of Directors. Our current Chair, Betsy Buchalter Adler, and the members of ICNL’s Board thank Filiz for her many contributions to ICNL’s governance during her years of service.

We close by expressing our gratitude to ICNL’s staff, partners, and funders, whose commitment, dedication, and hard work make progress possible. We look forward to our continued work together to enhance civic space around the world.

Betsy Buchalter Adler
Chair

Douglas Rutzen
President and CEO
Where We Work

Afghanistan
Albania
Algeria
Argentina
Armenia
Australia
Azerbaijan
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Belarus
Bolivia
Bosnia-Herzegovina
Brazil
British Virgin Islands
Bulgaria
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cambodia
Canada
Chile
China
Colombia
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Estonia
Ethiopia
Fiji
France
Georgia
Germany
Ghana
Guatemala
Guyana
Haiti
Honduras
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Iraq
Ireland
Israel
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Kosovo
Kyrgyzstan
Latvia
Lebanon
Libya
Lithuania
Macedonia
Malawi
Malaysia
Mexico
Moldova
Mongolia
Montenegro
Morocco
Myanmar
Namibia
Nepal
Nicaragua
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Peru
Philippines
Poland
Romania
Russia
Rwanda
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Serbia
Sierra Leone
Slovakia
Slovenia
Somalia
South Africa
South Sudan
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Tajikistan
Tanzania
Tunisia
Turkey
Turkmenistan
Uganda
Ukraine
United Kingdom
USA
Uzbekistan
Vanuatu
Venezuela
Vietnam
Yemen
Zambia
Zimbabwe
Raising Public Awareness

Around the world, advocates for safe space for civil society find their work challenged by limited public awareness about the importance of civil society.

As President Obama said in September 2014, “This growing crackdown on civil society is a campaign to undermine the very idea of democracy. And what’s needed is an even stronger campaign to defend democracy.”

To raise public awareness about the importance of protecting civil society, the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL) and ICNL organized TEDx Liberdade: The Power of Together through the Civic Space Initiative.

Artists and activists, legislators and innovators joined together to share their stories of civic activism and urge viewers to protect civil society around the world. The event also had a live online audience of approximately 2,100 people from over thirty countries.

As governments use rhetoric against civil society to justify legal restrictions, the time is critical for all to be aware of the “Power of Together” and the value of civil society.

To view these inspirational talks, please visit: www.tedxliberdade.com.
In Nigeria, joining an LGBT organization could land a person in jail for ten years. In Myanmar, members of the Rohingya minority group have no right to peaceful public assembly.

Around the world, members of and advocates for these and other “most at risk” groups face disproportionate challenges in asserting their rights to come together in order to improve lives.

In June, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association reported to the UN Human Rights Council on the unique challenges that marginalized groups face. He emphasized that “individuals belonging to marginalized groups fully possess the right to freely associate and assemble peacefully.”

ICNL provided its expertise in the development of the report and sponsored a UN Human Rights Council side event to reflect on these challenges and possible responses.

By articulating global standards and norms protecting their rights to assemble and associate, the report provides these groups with a powerful advocacy tool wherever they find their rights threatened.
Universal rights and norms encounter diverse contexts when implemented on the ground. To empower local actors to advocate for the protection of the freedoms of association and assembly, ICNL works with regional bodies to develop norms and guidelines for the exercise of these freedoms in member states.

In Europe, ICNL is engaging with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to draft regional guidelines for the freedoms of association and assembly.

We support an African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) study group that developed a report on association and assembly rights in the region. The report was adopted by the ACHPR, and the group is now developing guidelines with ICNL’s expert guidance.

ICNL also supports the protection of assembly and association rights in Latin America and Southeast Asia through the Organization for American States (OAS) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

With the weight of these regional bodies behind them, civil society activists can be more prepared than ever to defend their rights.
Myanmar civil society leaders discuss the draft Association Registration Law at an ICNL training in October 2013. With their efforts, a progressive law was enacted. “We just hoped we didn’t get caught.” These are the words of a civil society organization (CSO) leader, whose group provides emergency aid in Myanmar’s poorest regions.

The prior legal framework in Myanmar forced many organizations like his to operate “underground,” leaving them vulnerable to criminal sanctions for failing to register. Other CSOs tried to register but faced lengthy delays; one women’s rights group sought to register in 1997, but only received approval in 2012, after a 15-year wait.

This year, ICNL partnered with Myanmar activists and parliamentarians to improve the legal framework for civil society. ICNL trained CSOs and parliamentary drafters on international standards for the freedom of association and provided expert comments on draft laws. Empowered by ICNL assistance, local activists successfully persuaded parliamentarians to enact a more enabling law.

In an historic step, the Parliament enacted a law in July that removes the registration requirement. One training participant stated, “Without the support of ICNL, we would not have been able to change this law.” The enactment of this law is proof that progress is indeed possible. ICNL is now supporting implementation of the law to safeguard the civil society rights that it enshrines.
Svetlana Bashtovenko and Bubusara Ryskulova, ICNL’s Kyrgyz partners, display their petition to protect civil society’s right to receive funding.


These are only a few of the objectives of the CSOs that are supported by the Association of Civil Society Support Centers (ACSSC), ICNL’s local partner in Kyrgyzstan.

For over a decade, ICNL has provided legal expertise to the Association as they analyzed and improved draft laws affecting civil society, including a recent initiative that would stigmatize internationally funded CSOs as “foreign agents.”

Our robust partnership is contributing to long-term progress. By sharing our global perspective with ACSSC, we help them apply best practices to the Kyrgyz context. In the process, they gain the skills and knowledge necessary to continue their important work.

“ICNL’s expert assistance is crucial and effective when we are talking about defending civic space,” stated Erkina Ubysheva, former Executive Director of the Association.

As obstacles mount for civil society in Kyrgyzstan and new restrictive initiatives are proposed, ICNL and ACSSC remain on the front lines to protect the sector’s rights.
In Kenya, civil society, government, Parliament, and the international community join to defend civil society at a workshop on international best practices.

“The ability of CSOs to access funding...from domestic, foreign and international sources is an integral part of the right to freedom of association,” the UN Special Rapporteur on association and assembly declared in May 2013.

Six months later, the right of Kenyan CSOs to access funding from abroad came under direct threat. A bill was introduced that would have banned CSOs from receiving over 15% of their funding from international sources. By crippling access to their main source of funding, the bill would have forced many crucial groups to close their doors. By some estimates, up to twenty million Kenyans could have lost access to basic health care services that these organizations were providing.

With advocacy and technical support from ICNL and the international community, Kenyan organizations united to advocate against the bill. CSOs successfully mobilized public support for the sector and convinced Members of Parliament that by decimating civil society, the bill was not in the country’s best interests. The Parliament rejected the bill the following month.

New restrictive bills have since arisen, and continued vigilance is required. ICNL continues to support partners in this long-term effort to enhance civic space in Kenya.
Moroccan civil society participates in a consultation on CSO-Government relations in the Meknès-Tafilalet region. Photo: The National Committee

Morocco has witnessed a spectacular growth of civil society organizations in recent years, with an estimated 60,000 operating throughout the country.

Recognizing the crucial role that these groups play as development partners, the Government of Morocco launched a National Dialogue on Civil Society in 2013, aimed at strengthening civil society on a national level.

As part of this process, a National Dialogue Committee was tasked with developing recommendations to improve the laws and regulations governing civil society and enhance public participation in governance.

The Committee invited ICNL to lead a workshop with civil society and government representatives on best practices for promoting civil society, public participation, and voluntarism. ICNL was also invited to submit its expert recommendations to the Committee.

“Morocco has made a strategic choice to constitutionalize the culture of consultation,” the head of the Committee declared at the commencement of the dialogue.

ICNL continues to support the government to transform the Committee’s recommendations into one of the region’s most progressive civil society laws.
Partnership with CSOs is key to Brazil’s overcoming complex development challenges. However, until recently there was no legal framework for the government to partner with or fund CSOs, which led to mistrust and a lack of transparency.

A new law promises to address this challenge by creating clear and transparent mechanisms for supporting and strengthening civil society.

The new law, approved by President Dilma Rousseff in July, was created with the active engagement of CSOs. The law will increase transparency in the awarding of government grants and contracts to CSOs and enhance their participation in policy-making. The law was drafted by ICNL Advisory Council Member Lais de Figueiredo Lopes, Special Advisor to the relevant Ministry.

ICNL is supporting the implementation of this landmark law. We are working closely with the Government of Brazil to design the mechanisms necessary for meaningful participation.

While laws restricting civil society have made headline news across the region, this new Brazilian law shows that progressive legislation is also possible.
How enabling is the environment for civil society in your country - and how do you measure it? In search of a method to assess and compare countries, a growing number of monitoring tools have been developed. In the latest issue of Global Trends in NGO Law, we compare eight such tools, including those developed by ICNL, ECNL, and our partners.

Global Trends in NGO Law is an online periodical published by ICNL, synthesizing key legal developments affecting CSOs around the world. It is one of a range of research products that we produce to equip civil society with tools to effectively advocate for safe legal space.

A civil society activist in Cambodia assesses civic space in his country, using a monitoring tool designed by ICNL and our partner CIVICUS.

Other tools in our online research center include:

- **The NGO Law Monitor**: Covering 49 countries and 8 multilateral organizations.
- **The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law**: Cutting-edge research by legal experts.
- **Online Law Library**: Over 3400 essential legal documents from 205 countries.
- **Thematic Portals**: Key materials on 12 topics.
- **US International Grantmaking Project**: 35 Country Notes to facilitate global grantmaking.
- **CSO Sustainability Index**: Covering 60 countries in 4 regions.
## 2013 Financial Overview

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<td>Interest Income</td>
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<td>Other revenue</td>
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<td>Net assets released from restrictions</td>
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<td><strong>Total public support and revenue</strong></td>
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<td>General and Administrative</td>
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<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
<td>10,232,814</td>
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<td>Changes in net assets before other item</td>
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<td>5,585,542</td>
<td>5,690,582</td>
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<td><strong>OTHER ITEM</strong></td>
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<td>Changes in net assets</td>
<td>105,040</td>
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<td>Net assets at beginning of year</td>
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<td><strong>NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR</strong></td>
<td>1,758,692</td>
<td>13,996,801</td>
<td>15,755,493</td>
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Board and Advisory Council

Board of Directors

Betsy Buchalter Adler, Chair  Oonagh Breen  Jeff Thindwa
United States  Ireland  Malawi/United States

Feliciano Reyna Ganteaume, Vice Chair  Natasha Gaber-Damjanovska  Lais de Figueiredo Lopes
Venezuela  Macedonia  Brazil

Adam Kolker, Secretary & Treasurer  Noshir Dadrawala  Aubrey Webson
United States  India  Antigua

Douglas Rutzen, Ex-Officio  United States

Advisory Council

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<th>Country</th>
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<td>Miklos Marschall</td>
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<td>Emile van der Does de Willebois</td>
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