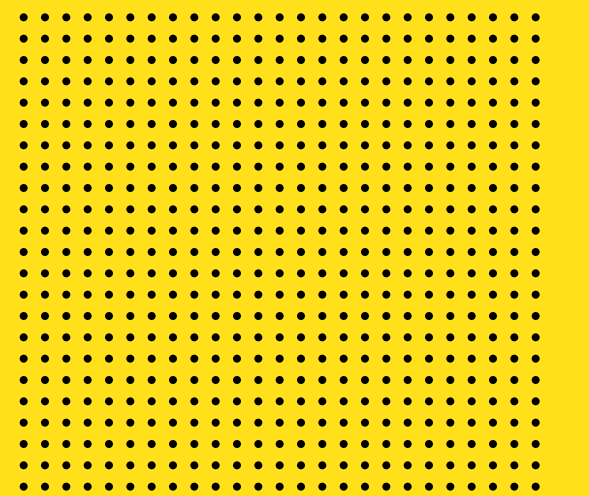


Digital
Action

Impact 2023

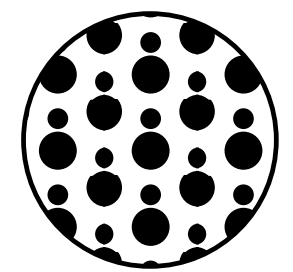




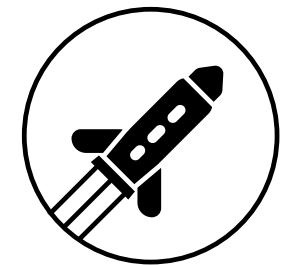
Navigate

2023 at a glance

Starting a global movement to challenge the global equity crisis at the heart of tech accountability

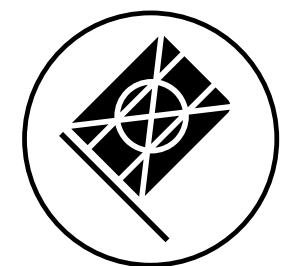


+200 organisations and experts joined our Global Coalition for Tech Justice from over 55 countries

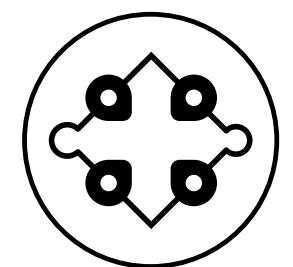


1 global *#yearofdemocracy* initiative launched to protect people and elections from Big Tech harms in 2024

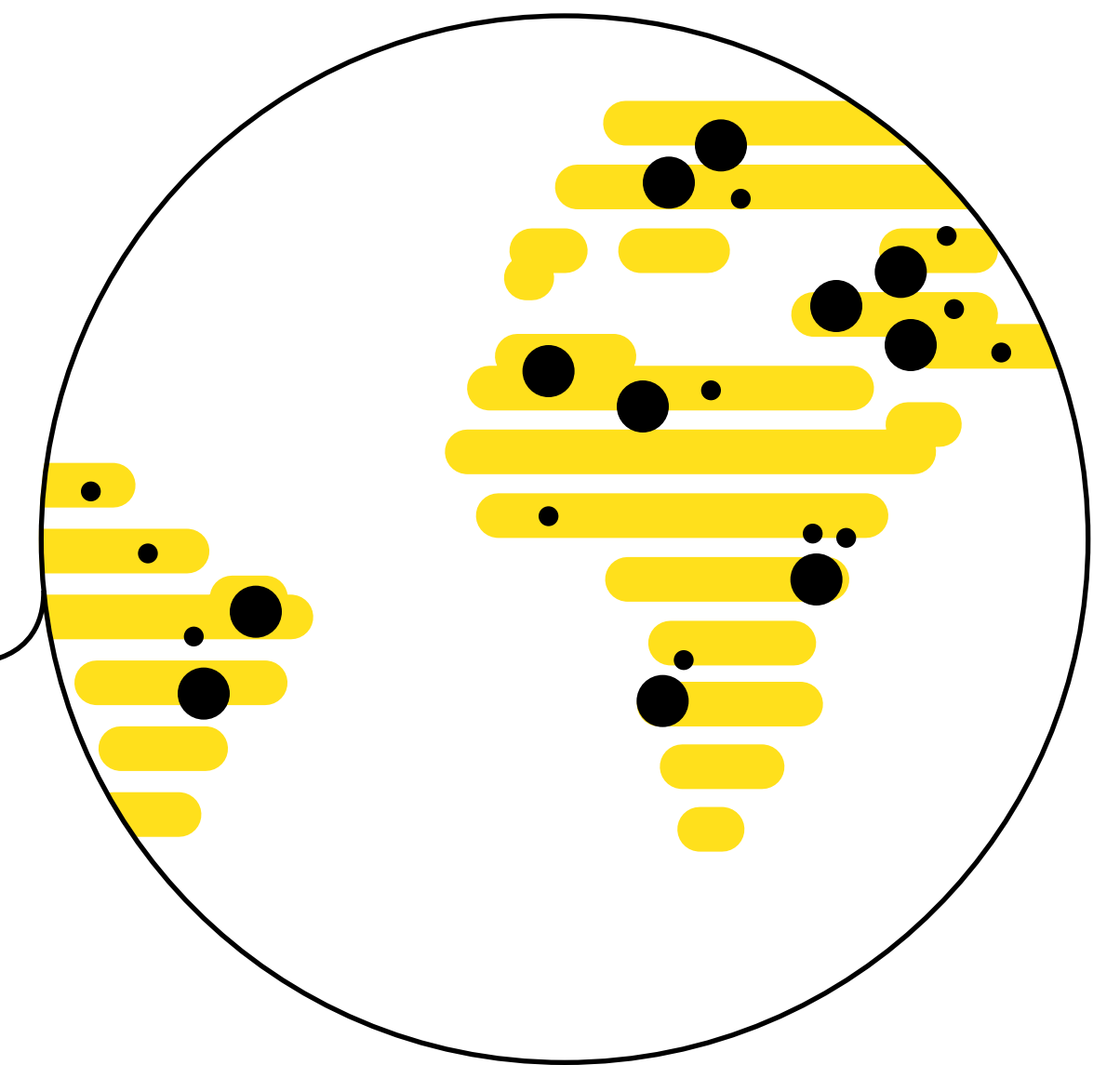
5,000 stakeholders reached globally



8 nationalities in our team in 2023



34 events spoken at in **+10** countries and online



2023 at a glance

In 2023, we embraced our role as a field catalyst to ensure tech accountability is global, equitable and inclusive. We spent much of the year listening to, convening and consulting civil society groups from global majority countries, to understand how tech harms are affecting their peoples and democracies. This helped us develop one of the most diverse and equitable coalitions in tech accountability, the Global Coalition for Tech Justice.



There are four things we are really proud of for 2023:

- 1 Building and growing the Global Coalition for Tech Justice
- 2 Kicking off the Coalition's first initiative: 2024 Year of Democracy
- 3 Establishing meaningful access and paths to influence Big Tech
- 4 Strengthening the resources and capabilities of the field

The Global Coalition for Tech Justice



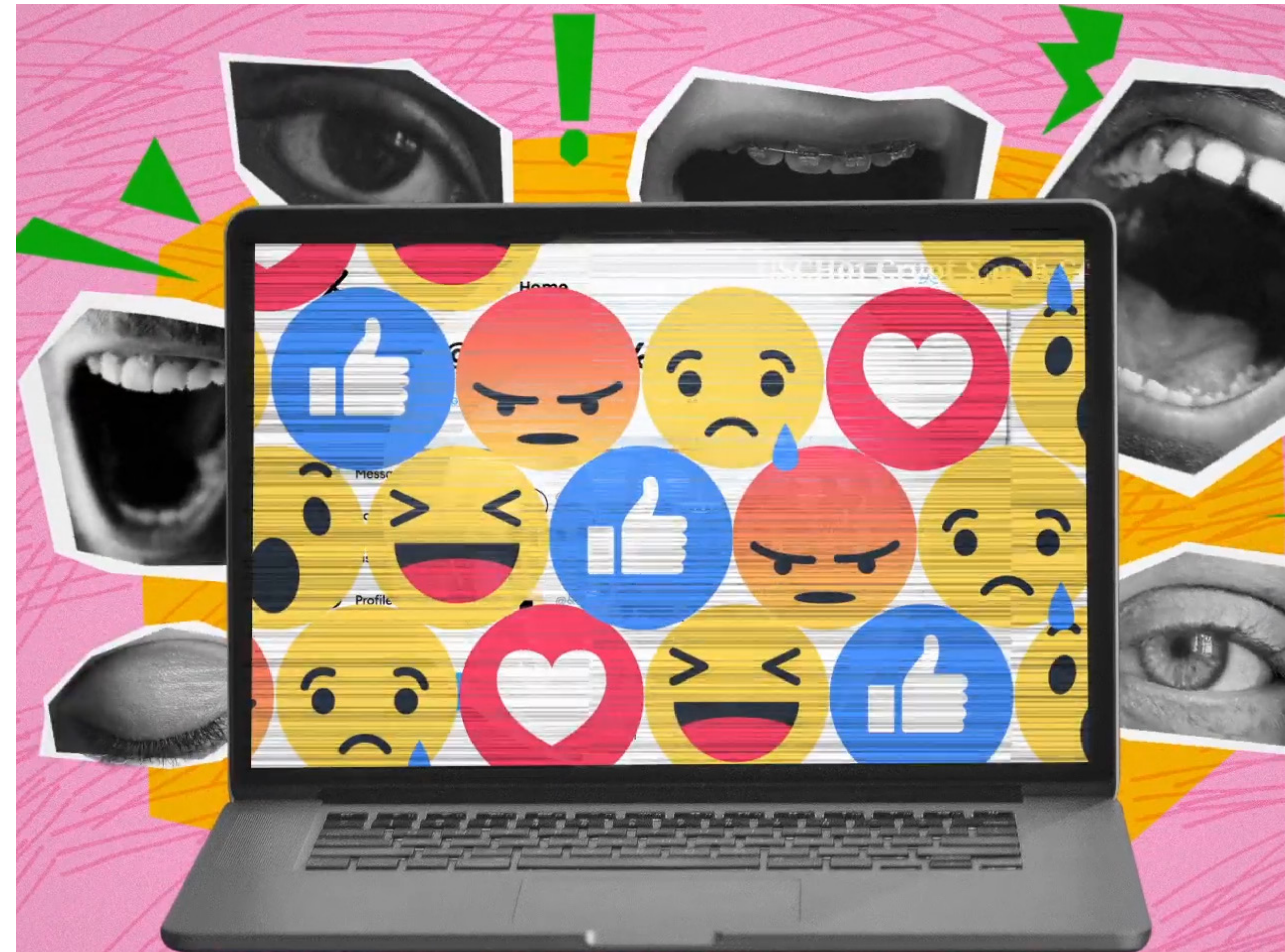
Thanks to an extensive programme of outreach and partnership-building, **the Coalition has grown to more than 200 member organisations and experts from over 55 countries.** It includes the groups and networks furthest away from Big Tech power across Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America, as well as some of the world's largest NGOs, like Human Rights Watch and influencing networks like People vs Big Tech in Europe.

The Coalition's leadership, structures and agenda are specifically **weighted towards transferring power and influence towards the global majority within the tech accountability ecosystem.** To better support the Coalition, Digital Action expanded our programmes team to develop relationships with civil society actors and policymakers in Latin America, Africa and MENA. We also began **building the bridges needed with the tech accountability ecosystem in the global north.**

Rallying around the 2024 Year of Democracy global call to action

Catalysing the global tech accountability field has involved rallying partners around a joint opportunity: 2024 #yearofdemocracy. In 2024 over 2 billion people go to the polls, with the United States elections converging with 65 others across the world, creating an elections megacycle. This is taking place at the very height of Big Tech's influence over information ecosystems across the world.

This offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to understand the impacts of deficiencies in ad tech design and practices, while engaging the media and influential groups, such as advertisers, investors and policymakers, in addressing gaping holes in global corporate accountability.



Rallying around the 2024 Year of Democracy

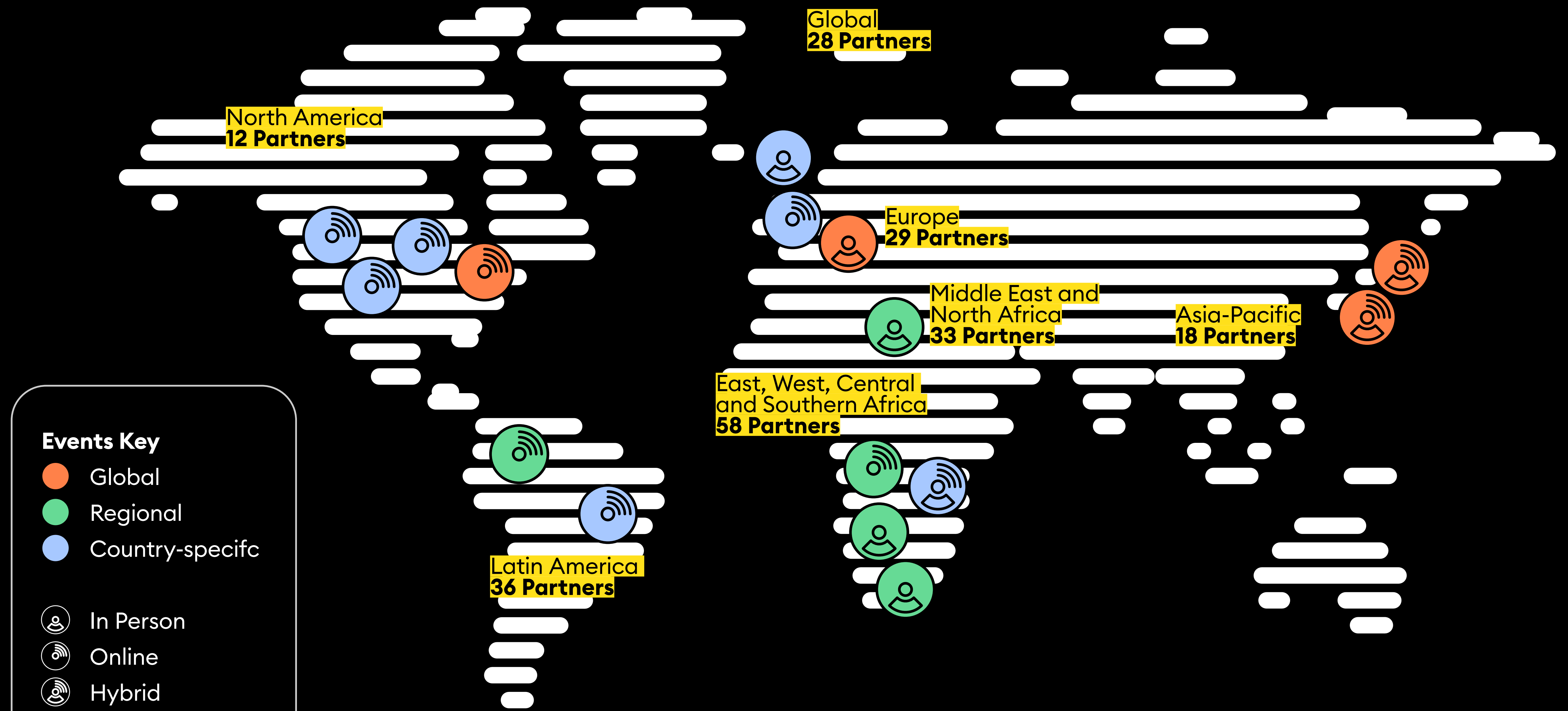
global call to action



The #yearofdemocracy launched in September 2023 with first-hand accounts from tech harm survivors and witnesses. As US Congressman Ro Khanna from the Silicon Valley district of California said at the kick-off, the intent is to “Protect people and elections, not Big Tech.”

In laying the foundation for this initial step in corporate tech accountability, the Coalition and a team of experts created and presented **10 asks for Big Tech to protect people and elections in 2024**, as an important milestone in developing the field’s collective agenda for change. Additionally, we developed case studies with our country partners, to develop the Coalition’s narrative and problem analysis around the 2024 elections, and to brief the media and target stakeholder groups like investors and policymakers.

Overview: events and partners around the world



Creating a more equitable pathway to access and influence

2023 saw Digital Action's footprint become truly global. From Kyoto to Brasilia, Abuja to Amaan, we reached over 5,000 stakeholders across the world.

Engaging policymakers and regulators

We had an active programme of engagement with policymakers, electoral commissioners and regulators to strengthen awareness and contribute to new efforts to address the impacts of tech around the world. Members of the US Congress, the Brazilian Government, the European Parliament, and leaders of the African Parliamentary Network on Internet Governance have all participated, engaged thoughtfully and lent support.

An important track of work was to feed into growing multilateral discussions on information integrity, the future of online governance and artificial intelligence, while connecting partners to new influencing opportunities. We were one of the few NGOs invited to host an event at the Open Government Partnership Summit where, together with coalition partners, we engaged global policymakers on information integrity and the 2024 elections. We connected partners to a key

influencing opportunity to develop the first social media guidelines for elections in Africa, led by the South African Electoral Commission.

As an increasingly respected actor in the field, we lent our expertise to UN-led discussions, including the UNDP's Action Coalition on Information Integrity in Elections, where we advised an audience of electoral assistance organizations, UN and government agencies on tech company engagement. This has resulted in further collaboration with the UNDP. We also spoke at the UK Internet Governance Forum on [«Avoiding Internet Fragmentation and Creating a Shared Digital Future»](#), and at the 17th edition of the United Nations Internet Governance Forum in Kyoto, Japan, on social media regulation, internet shutdowns and fragmentation. And we showcased our growing role as a policy convenor, by moderating a panel at the 53th Session of the Human Rights Council on defining limits for the use of artificial intelligence.

Increasing access and conversations between partners and Big Tech

Given the huge numbers of tech layoffs, including trust and safety and stakeholder engagement teams, with inevitable consequences for platform safety, it was all the more important to ensure Coalition members got opportunities to engage with Big Tech companies directly in 2023.

We increased partner access to Big Tech companies such as TikTok and Meta. This meant brokering meetings in which partners met with company representatives from regional and global teams, sometimes for the very first time. We also engaged on a bigger stage with them at the Human Rights Forum. Following an investigation by two coalition partners, Legal Resources Centre in South Africa and Global Witness, into TikTok's failure to prevent the approval of hate speech ads, we brokered a meeting between the platform and Global Coalition for Tech Justice members in which **the company committed to investing in more training of content moderators.**

Informing media reporting and leveraging advertisers' power

Our Year of Democracy initiative has raised our profile, and we have now been approached by and are advising leading newspapers on their 2024 elections coverage, including the New York Times, Time magazine, Politico, Wired, and BBC World Service, and have been connecting them with experts and partners across the global majority. We also featured on podcasts in the USA, Brazil, Africa, and Germany, and gave television interviews on the role of social media disinformation in the Israel-Palestine war. At Conscious Thinking Live, the Conscious Advertising Network's annual event for advertisers and media buyers, we engaged an audience of advertisers and ad agencies on how to leverage their market power with social media companies for the common good in 2024 and beyond.

Strengthening the resources and capabilities of the field

This year we started advising funders to the field, including the Skoll Foundation, and those wishing to expand their portfolios into new regions like Latin America and Africa. We have attracted new resources, resulting in new grants between funders and partners, and a new tech accountability fund for Africa. The fund, which will be administered by coalition partner CIPESA, will help organizations conduct research and advocacy on platform harms in 2024, contributing to deeper knowledge of Big Tech impacts in Africa.

Strengthening the connections and capabilities of the field is crucial for growing a collective understanding and evidence base of tech harms outside the United States and Europe. So Digital Action is **building a community of practice** within the Global Coalition for Tech Justice, helping partners prepare for flashpoints in online harm during elections and learn from past strategies and approaches.

We have held Coalition workshops on research, investigations and engagement strategies and methodologies, with the participation of over 50 partners from every region. These included trainings and presentations with partners and allies, including Meedan, *desinformante, What to Fix, and Global Witness, covering: research and advocacy approaches tested in recent elections in the Philippines, Brazil, and Myanmar; how to collaborate with electoral courts in tech accountability efforts; and how to investigate the effectiveness of platform enforcement of community standards.

Strengthening the resources and capabilities of the field

We connected researchers and advocates with each other, supported and shared new initiatives within the field. This has included contributing to the formation of an alliance of African researchers advocating for open platform data.

We also **filled gaps in field-level research**, including producing a mapping of Meta and Google's corporate structures, leadership and key policies. We are using these reports to **support partners in designing influencing strategies** tailored to each of the companies, thereby strengthening the field's collective capabilities to achieve impact.


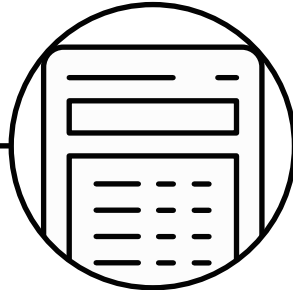

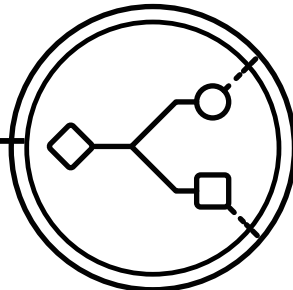
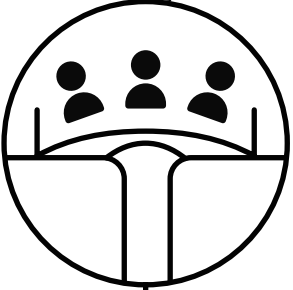
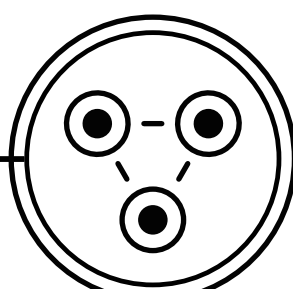

“ India Civil Watch deeply values the work Digital Action has done to bring such a diverse and strong coalition of organizations from across global majority countries. In particular, we drew a lot of learnings and connections from the workshops organized by the various workstreams. We also found a terrific community of practice through these convenings, and particularly appreciate being connected with colleagues from Brazil, South Africa, the Philippines, and those with experience working in Myanmar.

2024 is a deeply challenging year for all who are concerned with democracy and the rise of hate speech and disinformation in the context of elections. We look forward to building on the foundations laid by Digital Action, and make 2024 the year we turn the tide. ”



Partha P. Chakrabarty, India Civil Watch International

Generating new resources for global tech accountability

-  **Tech accountability fund for Africa, developed with partner CIPESA**
 -  New Digital Action website, with directory and resources to serve funders, partners and stakeholders.
-  **New Global Coalition for Tech Justice website for 2024 #yearofdemocracy**
 -  Corporate mapping reports on Meta and Google
-  **New staff positions focused on global bridge-building, Africa and the MENA region**
 -  Working group developing the field's first ever global equity focused asks to tech companies
-  **Training and learning workshops on research, investigations, election monitoring, policy development, and company influencing**

Our organization

In 2023, Digital Action operated as a project that is fiscally sponsored by New Venture Fund, a 501(c)(3) public charity that incubates new and innovative public-interest projects and grant-making programmes. Although fiscal sponsoring suited our start-up phase, we have explored the case for independence and will be pursuing that in the year ahead.

The majority of our funders have continued to support our project with repeat funding, we secured new support from the Skoll Foundation in 2023 and we're **now scaling up our team and campaign capabilities globally.**

