

Check-List for Planning an Action

Preparation for Action

There are times when you will prepare a one-time action, perhaps as your contribution to someone else's campaign, or as a stand-alone event in itself. At other times your action will be part of your wider campaign strategy, with each and every action being a step towards your overall campaign aims. Here we provide a check-list to bear in mind while planning an action.

Before the Action

Framework

- What is the analysis of the situation?
- What structure will the group use? Who makes the decisions and how?
- What is the strategic goal (i.e., who are we trying to influence, and what do we want them to do)?
- What is the political objective (what is the action or event)?
- How does this event communicate the group's goals before, during, and after the event?
- How does the group define its commitment to nonviolence? (Are there non-violence guidelines or stated principles?) (See p30 and p31.)
- What will the scenario be? (including place and time)
- Who will provide overall coordination of the event?
- When and how do you expect the action to end?

** See 'Developing Effective Strategies' and 'Components of a Campaign' for more ideas and exercises, p34.*

Outreach

- Will the group be trying to work with other groups or communities? If so, what groups and who will make the contacts? (See the 'Spectrum of Allies' exercise, p130.)
- Will the group have a flyer, explaining to the public what it is doing? If so, who will prepare it?
- What publicity will you do? Will you try to reach other people to join you? If so, who will do it?
- What kind of media work will you do? Will you send out a press release ahead of time? Will there be spokespeople during the event, ready to talk to the press? Will there be a media kit with 'talking points'? Will you need a media sub-committee? (See 'The Role of Media', p49.)

Participants' Preparation

- What opportunities do participants in the action have to prepare? Are there orientation sessions? affinity group development? nonviolence training? skills training? legal briefing?
- Are the participants empowered to make decisions about the scenario? How is that done? Is the group process clear to all?
- Is it clear that many roles are needed for an effective action, not just those doing the 'direct action'?



Logistical Preparation

- Are the logistics regarding the time and place well planned?
- Have all the materials been prepared and is there a distribution plan?

During the Action

- Is there a communication system between those in various roles such as police liaison, legal observers, media spokesperson, medical team, people risking arrest, support people, and demonstrators? (See 'Roles In, Before, and After an Action', p86.)
- Who is documenting the action with photographs and video?
- Is the decision-making process clear?

After the Action

- If people were arrested, is there legal and jail support? (See 'Legal Support', p87 and 'Jail Support', p88.)
- Is follow-up media work being done, spreading info on the action to mainstream and alternative media?
- Has the group evaluated the action? (See 'Action Evaluation,' p90.)
- Does the group plan to document the action (creating a case study)? (See 'Campaign Case Study Guide', p54.)
- What are the group's next steps? Will this action lead to the development of a campaign? If part of a campaign, how does it change the situation?