Celebrate

When we reach our goals, let's take time to recognise what we have done and celebrate our achievements. Sometimes we reach beyond our goals, or accomplish other goals, and don't take the time to understand that. Collective evaluation is vital; by documenting our successes and failures and sharing with others we have sources to learn from when we take steps towards our next goal. If key activists are tired or burnt out, they may not see what is being achieved. Some compulsive types may also not accept that a campaign is stuck and may need some help to see that the best part of banging your head against a brick wall is when you stop.

Evaluate

We have a lot to consider when developing strategic nonviolent campaigns. We need to learn to think strategically, to develop our understanding of the power of nonviolence, and to go through the steps that can move us effectively to our goals. This should strengthen and empower our community along the way. It's important to evaluate our campaign, not just at the end, but as we go through it. Unless we do so, we may be making mistakes that we will not recognise until it is too late. We should listen to everyone involved. Keeping a record of our meetings, our decisions, and our work becomes the basis of our own case study. Whether we were successful or not, we can learn from our experiences. And it's crucial so we can share our strategies and stories.

Constructive Programme

According to Gandhi, nonviolent social change requires building a new society in the shell of the old, which he termed constructive programme. 'Nonviolence for Gandhi was more than just a technique of struggle or a strategy for resisting military aggression,' Robert Burrowes explains in his 1995 study, The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense: A Gandhian Approach. Rather, 'it was intimately related to the wider struggle for social justice, economic self-reliance, and ecological harmony as well as the quest for self-realization.' As Burrowes describes it: 'For the individual, [constructive programme] meant increased power-from-within through the development of personal identity, self-reliance, and fearlessness. For the community, it meant the creation of a new set of political, social, and economic relations'. In cases where political revolutions have taken place but the population was not organised to exercise self-determination, creating a new society has been extremely difficult, and a new dictatorship usurping power has too often resulted.

   Gandhi posited three elements needed for social transformation: personal transformation, political action, and constructive programme. He saw them as

YOUTH BUILDING BOXES FROM SINCELEJO, COLOMBIA.   PHOTO: PAZ CARIBE SINCELEJO

intertwined, all equally necessary to achieve social change. The core elements that Gandhi saw as necessary for transforming and liberating India involved programmes to embody equality, liberate education, promote economic self-reliance, and create a clean environment. Equality meant creating ashrams, political campaigns, and cooperative enterprises across social divides. They would cut through communal lines (Hindu/Muslim/Sikh, etc.), gender inequality, and caste distinctions — especially 'untouchability' — and include members of the 'hill tribes' and people suffering from leprosy. Gandhi began education projects: literacy campaigns to promote basic reading and math skills, political education, knowledge about health, and nonviolence training for students. His economic self-reliance campaigns involved, most famously, spinning homemade cloth, which was done throughout India. A constructive programme that was often done collectively, it was also a campaign of non-cooperation with Indians' systematic dependency on the British for cloth. Economic self-reliance also involved diversifying crops, creating village industries, and developing labour unions. Environmental efforts involved the whole community in village sanitation, which meant, for Hindus, overtly flouting caste norms.

The process of working on constructive programme has fundamental benefits, the first of which is providing immediate assistance to those in greatest need. As people come together in community, not individual, action, they build constituencies for social change. Gandhi saw constructive programme as training for civil disobedience, which often included non-cooperation. Constructive work provides opportunities to develop the skills needed to build a new society.

Examples of Constructive Programmes

Colombia

Since the year 2000, Sincelejo, a small Caribbean town in Colombia, has been the second largest city receiving displaced people from the Colombian conflict. The youth in this town have faced forced recruitment by the state army, the rebel groups, and the paramilitary. Many of them have joined these forces because of economic reasons, to support their families. The conscientious objection group from Sincelejo started creating alternatives against forced recruitment, first by giving workshops on peace culture, nonviolence, and conscientious objection. Then, as they realised that economics were a main reason why the youth in Sincelejo were recruited, they started creating economic alternatives by forming their own small enterprises. The group now produces cartons and boxes, organic vegetables, margarine, t-shirts, and bakery goods which bring an income to them and their families. The main aims of these effort are:

- to prevent the recruitment of youth
- to form a support network to prevent forced recruitment
- to form youngsters in nonviolent methods for resolving conflicts
- to come up with economic strategies to support the basic needs of their families.

Kenya

Far-sighted as is Wangari Maathai, the founder of the Green Belt movement in Kenya, not even she could see in 1976 where a simple constructive activity such as tree-planting would lead. She first proposed this to the Kenyan National Council of Women as an activity to carry out in cooperation with the government forestry commission that provided the seeds. Through this, she argued, women could address some of the economic problems urgently affecting their lives. She had no idea that the expansion of this network would lead in the 1990s to the Green Belt Movement being in the forefront of national campaigns against corruption and for multi-party democracy, in which she herself was beaten and jailed, or that later that she would be a leading spokeswoman in the world campaign to write off 'third world' debt.

United States

The nonviolence movement in the West has not emphasised constructive programme, but has focused more on protest, yet examples of constructive programmes in the United States include community land trusts for permanently affordable housing, worker-owned cooperatives, battered women's shelters and rape crisis centres, an amplified interest in alternative public schools, urban gardens, local food production without pesticides, the viral spread of free and open-source software and art, and affordable renewable energy. Constructive programme is more than constructing new things. Many aspects of Gandhi's programme focused on moving toward equality. In the United States

that means serious anti-oppression work, as well as dealing with economic inequalities. While there is poverty in the United States and a growing gap between the rich and the poor, constructive programmes need to support reducing materialistic consumption.

Bill Moyer's Movement Action Plan (MAP)

'The Movement Action Plan provides activists with a practical, how-to-do-it analytic tool for evaluating and organising social movements that are focused on national and international issues, such as nuclear energy and weapons, non-intervention in Central America, civil and human rights, AIDS, democracy and freedom, apartheid, or ecological responsibility.

MAP describes eight stages through which social movements normally progress over a period of years and decades. For each state, MAP describes the role of the public, powerholders, and the movement. It provides organizers with a map of the long road of successful movements, which helps them guide their movement along the way.

Most social movements are not just in one stage. Movements usually have many demands for policy changes, and their efforts for each demand are in a specific stage.

For each of the movement's major demands or goals, MAP enables activists to evaluate the movement and identify which stage it is in; identify successes already achieved; develop effective strategies, tactics, and programmes; establish short and long-term goals; and avoid common pitfalls.

Social movements do not fit neatly into MAP's eight stages or move through them in a linear way. Social movements are more dynamic. Movements have a number of different demands, and the effort for each demand is in a different MAP stage. When movements achieve one demand, they focus on achieving other demands that are at earlier stages.

Finally, MAP is only a theoretical model, built from past experience. Real-life social movements will neither fit exactly nor move through the stages linearly, smoothly, or precisely in the manner outlined.

The purpose of MAP is to give activists hope and empowerment, increase the effectiveness of social movements, and reduce the discouragement that often contributes to individual burnout, dropout, and the winding down of social movements.'

■ http://historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/moyermap.html
■ charts: http://www.nonviolence.org.au/downloads/moyer_charts.pdf

✱ *See over for 'eight stages' diagram*