

TRAINING AND EXERCISES

Tasks and tools for organising a training

This section describes exercises to help in developing your nonviolent campaigns and actions, and ways of bringing them together to create training sessions and workshops. These exercises can be used during nonviolence trainings, workshops, or group meetings. Exercises make our time together more participatory and contribute to the process of learning and building capacities among participants.

The exercises we have collected come from a variety of sources in our rich history. Often, these exercises have been adapted and changed over time. We expect that you will do the same, changing them to meet your needs. While most of the exercises in this section can be used for different purposes, we give some recommendations for where and how to use them best, as well as tips for the facilitator/trainer. Each exercise also has a link back to a section in the handbook where more information about a particular topic can be found.

We hope you find these exercises useful in your process of building nonviolent campaigns and that they motivate you to search for and develop more exercises to continue to enrich the repertoire of the nonviolence movement.

Topics for nonviolence training

Trainings – especially when relatively short – tend to focus on a specific element of nonviolence relevant to the group at that time. For example, if you're training is in preparation for an action the following day, there are probably better things to focus on than a comprehensive history of nonviolent movements! However, in a broader training looking at strategy, this might be a very helpful element to look at, and there are some excellent exercises in the handbook that can help with this. Below is a list of different topics that trainers have covered in their trainings.

- History and philosophy of nonviolence and practice of nonviolent action (see 'history of nonviolence, p13)
- Overcoming oppression, ethnic/racial, and gender dynamics (see 'nonviolence and gender', p22).
- Campaign strategy development (see 'why things don't just happen' p39, and



NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION TRAINING IN SANTIAGO, CHILE

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'planning nonviolent campaigns' p46).

■ Consensus decision-making and quick decision-making (see 'working in groups', p89, and the 'decision-making' exercise, p211).

■ What an affinity group is, and roles within the group (see 'affinity groups', p96, and 'roles before, during and after an action', p128).

■ Skills such as legal and media work (see 'legal support', p136, and 'media', p131).

Planning and facilitating trainings

Planning and facilitating nonviolence training requires a range of tasks that a number of people should share.

First, campaign organisers need to be aware of when and what training is needed. Does the group need training in strategic campaign development or gender sensitivity? Is training needed to prepare a new group of people to participate in nonviolent actions, or for an experienced group to achieve new skills? Do affinity groups need training in group process? Does everyone in the group know each other?

Once a decision is made to have a training, trainers are needed. As stated in 'Nonviolence Training' (p18), if trainers are not available, create a team of co-facilitators to do the training. This section has check-lists to help organise, plan, and facilitate trainings.

Organisers and trainers need to talk together before working on their own tasks. A lack of clarity and assumptions made by trainers or organisers can result in an ineffective training. A training can be an important opportunity to test plans, to find weaknesses in the group, or to bring more people into the process. A trainer must be open to those goals.

If the trainers are part of the group, they need to be clear about their role as trainers. While they understand the context, the group, the campaign, the action scenario, etc. better than an outside facilitator, trainers deeply involved in the work can have difficulty stepping into a different role; clarifying roles should help in that process.

The “Developing strategic campaigns” (p39) and “Organising effective actions” (p84) sections include information that can help trainers and organisers understand what they need to do and what they may need to train for.

Working together

1. Several of the organisers and all the trainers should meet well in advance to plan the training. Depending on the situation, the organisers may need to go back to the group for further decision-making. The trainers’ questions may help the organisers understand what more they need to do to prepare the group for the training.
2. Discuss how much time is needed to accomplish the goals of the training. Can it be done in one day (how many hours) or a weekend? Can the training be done in steps, following the process of campaign development? Do you need a series of trainings to plan a campaign? Some groups take a holiday week to plan and prepare for a campaign. If people are travelling to an action, how can you plan for training?
3. Trainers need information about the participants: are they people coming together just for this action or do they meet regularly? What level of experience do they have? Have they done trainings before? Have they done nonviolent actions and what kinds?
4. Discuss the group’s approach to nonviolence and training. Does it have non-violence guidelines? (See p102.)
5. Ask the campaign organisers to present specific information at the training (e.g., scenario plans, campaign background). Be clear how much time they have for this task.
6. Identify what handouts are needed; use maps and pictures if appropriate.
7. Be clear who is responsible for bringing supplies (markers, paper, tape, photocopies of handouts, copies of the handbook, equipment for films, etc.) and arrangements for food or other physical needs.

Check-list for organising a training

1. Make sure that the space where the training will occur has enough room for people to do role plays and exercises, to sit in a circle, and that it is accessible to those coming.
2. Make sure there is a wall board or paper to write on.
3. Food and beverages are important; make sure someone is responsible for it or that participants are asked to bring something to share.
4. Outreach should include a clear description of the training and the need for full participation, its length, and other details.

Check-list for facilitating a training

1. Facilitators should realise that it may take as long to prepare for as to actually present/facilitate the training. It is important that co-facilitators work together to build the agenda and are clear who is responsible for what and how they will work together.
2. Be realistic about the amount of time allotted for each section. Don't give in to the pressure to do the training quickly if it can't be done. Start the training with introductions. Break the ice with introductory exercises. Take some time to put together a group agreement (see p94) which states how the group want to communicate, relate to each other, and what participants responsibilities are to each other.
3. If the group members know each other well, ask a question so people learn something new about each other. If trainers don't have enough information about people's experiences, use non-competitive ways to ask. Set a tone, explaining that the trainers need the information but that it is not an exercise in identifying who is 'better'.
4. Early in the training, have exercises that will encourage participation, such as a simple parallel lines (see p193). Balance activity in pairs or trios with activity in larger groups.
5. Mix discussion with moving exercises; provide regular breaks.
6. Keep track of time, and mark possible cuts if you get behind schedule. But don't cut the last items as they may be some of the most important, such as the scenario role play.
7. Always leave time for evaluation, and use different forms of evaluation. Write on wall charts 'what went well' (+) and 'what could have been better' (>). Ask a series of questions to solicit comments; use a go around or a brainstorm method. Written evaluation forms are very helpful for long trainings.

Intellectual Property

Only a few of these exercises give 'credit' to particular trainers or training groups. We apologise in advance to anybody who feels they should have been credited as the author of a particular exercise. Please let us know so that we can rectify this on the Web and in future printed editions. However, most exercises used in nonviolence training have been passed from group to group and adapted according to new situations or styles.

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