

SESSION 6

INSPIRED BY STORIES – EMPOWERED BY TACTICS

Presentation Script

Presentation Script

Tactics for promoting human rights

This script for the session 6 presentation is illustrated by slides 13-24 of the session PowerPoint.

INTRODUCTION



In this and previous sessions, we've heard stories about different people doing different things to try and make the situation for freedom of religion or belief better in their community. We've also reminded ourselves of the problems for FORB in our community. (Point to the FORB in our town flip chart sheets).

We are now going to learn about different tactics that can be used to promote and protect human rights at the community level. And we are going to think about how we could use these tactics to tackle the problems we've identified in our community.



So, what do we mean by tactics? Tactics are defined as 'a planned set of actions done to achieve a goal'.



There are four different types of tactics for human rights work. To help explain these four types of tactics we can think about fire as a metaphor to represent human rights violations. Not a nice fire that we sit around to get warm, but a dangerous, out of control fire. Just like human rights violations, fires harm people – they traumatise, injure and kill people, and destroy property and land.

So how do we stop fires? We do four types of things:

1. EMERGENCY TACTICS



Emergency tactics are about stopping fires before they start, putting out fires and saving people.

What would you do if you saw a child playing with matches? You would blow the match out and take the matches away! You would try to prevent the fire from starting.

If you were too late and a small fire had started already, you might try to put it out yourself, with a fire extinguisher or a bucket of water. You would try to protect the people and property at risk by stopping the fire. And if the fire was too big for that, you would call for help from the fire brigade and warn people to get out.

Emergency tactics for human rights are just like this! We use emergency tactics for human rights abuses that are about to happen or happening, now to particular people, in particular places. That might mean intervening directly to prevent or stop an abuse and save people or it might mean calling for help and warning people who are in danger.



Presentation Script

Tactics for promoting human rights

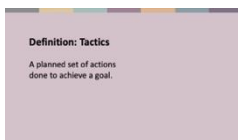
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So, what kind of FORB violations might we use ‘emergency’ tactics for? Harassment, hate speech, assaults, vandalism of property, attacks on places of worship, communal violence and arbitrary arrests are all examples of violations that happen to specific people or groups, in specific places, at specific times.

Although emergency tactics respond to immediate events like these, they require us to be prepared – to know what to do. Just as people learn the phone number of the fire brigade or learn how to use a fire extinguisher, we can learn about ways to prevent, stop and call for help when human rights violations happen.

2. CHANGE TACTICS



Fires happen and spread for reasons – for example dangerous electrical wiring. Change tactics are about changing the situations that lead to fires happening – for example making sure there are building regulations that ensure that wiring is safe.

Human rights violations happen for reasons too – for example because society doesn’t have the rules needed to protect people or because the people who are meant to ensure those rules are followed don’t do so. Because society is ‘wired’ wrongly.



Many human rights violations can only be solved by convincing people to change the rules or the way things are done. We can do that in 4 different ways:

- by campaigning and protesting to highlight the problem,
- by persuading people who have the power to change things that they should do something about the problem – let’s call this advocacy,
- by providing incentives for people to behave differently,
- or by peacefully defying bad laws or social norms to show that we don’t accept them.

These are change tactics. They tend to focus on longer-term, more systematic problems in society – problems that affect lots of people in many places.

3. BUILDING TACTICS



Another way we can work to stop fires is by building public awareness and changing attitudes, for example raising awareness of the dangers of throwing cigarette butts on dry ground. We can also build public engagement – getting more people involved in volunteer fire fighting. And we can build skills – for example making sure people know how to use a fire extinguisher.

In relation to human rights, building tactics are about the long-term work to build a culture of human rights. That means working towards a society in which everybody understands their rights and the rights of others, sees respect for human rights as normal and right, knows what to do if rights are violated and knows HOW to respect and stand up for their own and other people’s rights.

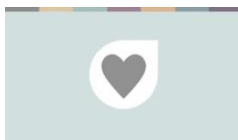


Building this kind of society involves doing 4 things:

- Building awareness of the importance of human rights, and awareness of the violations taking place and the damage they do.
- Building engagement – getting more and more people to be committed to taking action to promote human rights.
- Building skills – so that people know how to promote human rights.
- And building networks of people and organisations, who do different things in different places, but work towards common goals in a coordinated manner.

These are long-term tactics that create the pre-conditions for change. They build a foundation for us to stand on when we use all the other tactics.

4. HEALING TACTICS



Finally, we have healing tactics. Just like fires, human rights violations damage people, property and communities. Healing tactics are about what we do to look after people after human rights violations have taken place.



Partly, this is about making sure people get the medical, material and psychosocial support they need to recover. But it's also about dignity and justice:

- about documenting what happened to make sure it can't be swept under the carpet,
- about giving people the opportunity to speak of and commemorate what happened,
- and about making sure people get justice and compensation.

CONCLUSION



All these different ways of working are important for promoting human rights. They complement, overlap and can be used in parallel with each other.

No one person or organisation can use all the tactics – we have different roles, skills and opportunities that rightly affect our choice of which tactics to use. The important thing is that everyone can do something and that between us, through networks of people and organisations who are pulling in the same direction, we can make things change.

We can all contribute to stopping the fires of human rights violations and building a society where human rights are respected in our homes and communities and by our governments.

Acknowledgement

This presentation is inspired by and uses an adapted version of the methodological framework of tactics developed by the New Tactics in Human Rights Project, run by the Center for Victims of Torture. www.newtactics.org