



Exercise – Critical Evaluation of Tactics

Methodology:

This exercise is designed to help a group evaluate their existing tactics and to consider new tactics to use in their work in solving their given human rights problems. This exercise is best used after other tactic sharing exercises have been completed (Step 4) and when the group has determined an immediate goal (and target for that goal) to address the identified problem (the Strategic Path tool). The emphasis of this task is on the critical evaluation of whether or not a tactic is appropriate for the target, for reaching the immediate goal, and for the group itself – given its resources, its constituency, its opponent, and both the opponent's and the group's strengths and weaknesses.

Objectives:

- To review the group's strategic path and identified goal(s)
- To engage the creative energy of the group to generate their own tactic ideas
- To evaluate tactical ideas based on target, goal, resources and capacity
- To select tactics for implementation

Getting Ready:

This exercise will take 50 – 60 minutes. You will need flip chart paper and markers.

Facilitation Note:

Ask the group to monitor their time to do three tasks:

1. Review the identified goal(s) outlined in their strategic path (Step 4). (10 to 15 minutes)
2. Tactic brainstorming process (10 to 15 minutes)
3. Critical review of tactics (30 minutes)

Ask the group to review the identified goal outlined in their strategic path before moving into the a) tactic brainstorming process, and b) the critical evaluation of tactics.

Provide “guidelines” for the initial **brainstorming process**:

Non-critical - no one is allowed to give any feedback about the idea (for example, we can't do that, we don't have the resources, we don't know anyone there, etc.); but also no positive feedback (such as, that's a great idea, we should do that, etc.). You may want to create a way to remind people to remain non-critical. For example, use soccer rules – each person is allowed 2 yellow cards (warnings) and the third is a red card – they are “out of the game” and must then just observe. Emphasize that this first portion of the exercise is a free-flow of ideas – list ALL the ideas that people can think of during a short, set period of time (such as 10 to 15 minutes) getting as many ideas as possible. All potential tactics should be listed even those that people



may think are too radical or impossible. These may be too radical now but the idea may take root and be appropriate at a later time.

After the brainstorming process – review the tactics ideas. As the groups are completing the critical portion of the exercise, it is helpful for you as facilitator to circulate and remind them of the following questions:

- What tactics are the groups currently using on this issue? Are they the most effective possibilities? Are they the best use of your resources?
- What tactics can they identify that others (not present) are using on this issue? How might they better serve their vision?
- How do these tactics affect the context, key relationships, etc. of the issue? Are they achieving the desired results? If so, how? If not, what might be the barriers to effectiveness?
- What key relationships (people, institutions, social groups, etc.) are still unaffected or have not been targeted by current tactics? (Here it can be helpful to remind the groups of the work they did on the tactical map and in their spectrum of allies.)

The Group Exercise Process:

1. Instruct the group regarding the purpose of the initial “Brainstorming Session.” For example, to generate tactics ideas for a target, ask the groups to focus on the target identified from the strategic path’s first goal. The purpose of this brainstorm session is to generate tactic ideas that will move the target toward the “active allies” position and the group a step closer toward their vision.
2. Give the groups approximately 10 minutes to brainstorm a list of potential tactics for their target based on ideas from their experiences, from the case study activity, from the ideas they heard from others, or even from new ideas they are just thinking of now.
3. After the brainstorm session has generated a list of potential tactics, ask the group to spend time critically evaluating each tactic. Remind them that tactical choices must be influenced by:

- ✓ A group’s capacities (resources, people, etc.)
 - Limitations to better manage your time & resources
 - Allies – support networks to enhance your capabilities
- ✓ Analysis of the opponent (potential response to the tactic)
- ✓ Tolerance for risk (degree of danger)
- ✓ Context in which the tactic will be used

Some questions for reflection during the evaluation of tactics:

- How effective is the tactic in reaching the objective outlined for the target?
- Is the choice of target and tactic(s) effective in making progress in moving the strategy toward the goal?
- What dangers need to be considered or are being encountered?
- What can be done to adjust the tactic in order to minimize the danger?
- If you are not able to minimize the danger, do you need to stop the tactic? Can another tactic be used instead?

Reflection and Sharing:

In the reflection and sharing portion of this exercise, each group will individually decide on the tactic from the brainstorming list that is best suited to their problem’s specificities (to what they know about their work, including their: knowledge of self, knowledge of their opponent, and knowledge of the terrain).

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