



NEW TACTICS STRATEGIC EFFECTIVENESS METHOD

INTRODUCTION

Defending and promoting rights is challenging. If we as activists are clear about where we are starting from, where we want to get to, and the path from one to the other, we're more likely to get there. New Tactics in Human Rights has developed a process to help activists become more focused, more creative, and ultimately more likely to succeed in their advocacy efforts. We call it the *Strategic Effectiveness Method*. It contains five important steps that assist you in recognizing your areas of strength and challenge.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

Human rights issues are often very broad and the resources to address them limited, making it difficult to create a plan of action to address a broad issue. It's important to narrow the focus and choose a place to begin an effort, defining as clearly as possible the specific issue or problem. It's also important that the problem is expressed as a violation of a particular human right because countries are legally required to respect and protect those rights. This changes perception of the problem from one that may potentially be solved by charity to one that requires action based on legal obligations. This step often begins with a broad definition and then you work your way to a tightly defined, human rights-based, and agreed-upon issue for action.

STEP 2: CREATE A VISION

It's essential to have a vision of what you want to accomplish. If you do not know where you want to go, it is difficult to get there and hard to know if you have arrived. Communicating a clear human rights-based vision can inspire and motivate others to join you, and it provides a compass for making decisions when advocacy conditions shift and change. During this step, individual members of the team formulate their own ideas of an envisioned future, then discuss together to arrive at a common vision that is accepted and shared by all members. Your vision plays an integral part in the development of your strategy and tactics.

STEP 3: MAP THE TERRAIN

It is critical to identify the people, groups, and institutions working both for and against change in your situation. Whether your work is at the local community or international level, mapping the terrain of relationships allows you to identify more opportunities for intervention. We have developed a proprietary tool (the New Tactics Tactical Mapping tool) that will help guide you through this process. After completing this step, you will be better able to assess your own resources, prepare for your opponents, identify more allies for cooperation, and use the most effective tactics.

STEP 5: TAKE ACTION

In this step, all the previous steps come together and you create a solid action plan for your organization. You will use the information collected in the previous steps to develop a strategic path – including an immediate goal and a plan to take action for advancing your advocacy work. The plan will include an assessment of resources, roles, responsibilities, a timeline and action steps to be taken, as well as how to evaluate the success of the plan in order to prepare for the next phase of your advocacy. Now you're ready to go do it!

STEP 4: EXPLORE TACTICS

Tactics are actions you take to move you toward your goal. Most organizations seeking to advance human rights can only accommodate one or two primary tactics within their institutional frameworks, due to the time they take to learn, the investment in staffing, the measurement of performance and effectiveness, and the difficulties of raising funds. This pattern is reinforced by the human tendency to "do what we know how to do." However, there are many tactics that have been used successfully by activists around the world, and more are developed every day. This step lets you explore a variety of tactics. You will also examine your organization's tactical flexibility, openness to opportunities, and ability to respond to challenges in order to innovate new ways to approach the issue that your opponents won't expect.

