



THE NEW TACTICS IN HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT OF THE CENTER FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE

"All around the world and at all levels, in small villages and in national governments as well as at the highest levels of international justice, people are creating and using innovative tactics to make their work more effective. The New Tactics in Human Rights Project captures these tactical innovations and shares them with others striving to advance human rights. I invite you to join me in celebrating this work and in making use of this valuable resource."
- Justice Richard J. Goldstone

Local human rights activists throughout the world struggle with a sense of isolation, are forced to "reinvent the wheel," and choose tactics not because they are the best fit for the strategic situation, but because they are the only tactics they know. At the same time, innovative practitioners have devised a wide range of creative approaches for promoting human rights, but these are too-often known only by their closest allies.

Since 1999, **the New Tactics in Human Rights project** has created unique resources -- organized around analysis of potential solutions rather than that of specific issues, geographic regions or target groups -- that allow activists to clearly recognize the unique elements of their situation, and to seek promising approaches that have worked elsewhere and apply them to new regions or issues. It also improves activists' ability to combine diverse tactics into complex strategies.

The New Tactics Project's methods have included:

1. In-person trainings, such as:

- *An International Symposium* held in 2004 in Ankara, Turkey with 450 human rights activists from 89 countries to focus on a full range of tactical possibilities, from fields as diverse as domestic violence and sustainable development.
- *Regional workshops* in which 10-50 innovative activists train each other in the diverse tactics they have used, and develop "tactical portfolios" of practical tools for applying new tactics. Seven workshops have been held by New Tactics and its partners -- the most recent in Liberia in February 2007, focusing on post-conflict tactics for rebuilding civil society.

Project staff have carried out presentations/consultations for other institutions in a dozen additional countries.

2. Publications, including:

- The book *New Tactics in Human Rights: A Resource for Practitioners* offers a conceptual framework for thinking strategically and tactically to promote human rights, and gives dozens of examples of innovative tactics, categorized by the strategic situation in which they were used.
- More than 45 *Tactical Notebooks*, created by participants from the regional cross-training workshops, that provide first-person, detailed information on the use of a tactic and how it may be adapted to other situations. Examples of tactical notebooks produced to date include:
 - *Recipe for Dialogue: Corporate Training for Building Relationships with Indigenous Communities* By Jo Render, First Peoples Worldwide, USA
 - *Using Popular Theater to Break the Silence around Violence Against Women*, by Oulimata Gaye, Réseau Africain de Développement Intégré (RADI), Senegal
 - *Access to Justice: Creating Local Level, Citizen Action Mediation Bodies to Ensure Human Rights*, by Dinesh Narayan Suddhakar, Center for Victims of Torture (CVICT), Nepal

New Tactics materials have been translated into twenty languages by local human rights advocates and distributed to thousands of activists around the world.

3. The project website www.newtactics.org hosts Information and Communications Technology tools that allow thousands of activists to learn directly from each other. These tools include a searchable database of 160 tactical examples, the blog *InterTactica*, and regular Online Dialogues on topics such as Election Monitoring or Using Mobile Phones. The website has registered members from more than 120 countries

The New Tactics in Human Rights Project at the Center for Victims of Torture
www.newtactics.org, newtactics@cvt.org, 612-436-4800

4. We have also provided direct financial and technical assistance to more than 50 groups as they used New Tactics resources in their campaigns. One of the most striking aspects of similar New Tactics assistance to local groups has been their use of project materials for outreach: subgrantees report using the materials to reach more than 8100 other activists and more 80,000 general audience members via radio, newspapers, online and newsletters. The quality of some of the past activities has also been noteworthy, such as a group in Indonesia that helped organize an alternative to the flawed Truth and Reconciliation Commission process first proposed and later struck down by the country's Supreme Court. In Kyrgyzstan, a New Tactics subgrantee mobilized youth to do election monitoring, and uncovered irregularities in the election; they also organized a forum that got mining companies to talk to civil society organizations for the first time.

Evidence of Success

One sign of the success of the project is the growing demand for the project from activists around the world – thousands of copies of the New Tactics book have been downloaded, and there have been rapid increases in Website traffic and requests for consultations.

With these accomplishments have come greater indications of the project's real-world impact. Dozens of project participants have told us how they used New Tactics ideas and materials to strengthen their work. In formal evaluations, informal follow-ups, and reports from subgrantees and partner, they have told us that the project has helped them:

- *Make critical changes in strategy*, such as the Mongolian activists who switched to higher visibility tactics – from hunger strikes to protests at government buildings – to attract public attention and media coverage for the Convention on Disability; or the coalition of women's rights groups in Nigeria that launched a new microcredit initiative after recognizing the need to address economic dependency in efforts to reduce wife-beating and widowhood practices.
- *Reach out to potential partners*, such as the Turkish activists who used tactical mapping to engage hundreds of others in strategies to end torture (www.stramap.org), or an Armenian participant that says New Tactics resources helped a group of activists come to quicker agreement on efforts to defend political prisoners, including the freeing of a soldier falsely accused of murder.
- *Transfer a tactic first used elsewhere*, such as a Slovak organization that used a Korean approach for preventing corruption in local government; a Salvadoran group that adapted a Nigerian tactic for preventing violence against women; a Macedonian group that increased the representation of women in Parliament by modifying a Dutch mobile phone tactic; or the activists in Zimbabwe that adapted a Serbian method for rapidly freeing political prisoners.

The New Tactics project emerged from CVT's own experience as a creator of new tactics, a leader of coalitions, and as a center that also advocates for the protection of human rights from a unique position – one of healing and of reclaiming civic leadership. In addition to the New Tactics project, CVT's international work includes projects to create community mental health and trauma healing capacity in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Jordan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and a capacity-building project that has strengthened torture treatment organizations in 19 countries.

“It is hard to point to another human rights initiative that has accomplished more or been more appreciated by those who have had an opportunity to participate.”

-Luis Moreno Ocampo



One of the New Tactics project's most popular tools is *tactical mapping*, used to analyze the relationships supporting a human rights abuse, and to map existing or potential interventions. Above, participants at a workshop in Liberia use the tactical map and “spectrum of allies” tools.