

6 Community Mobilization





Advocacy Expert Series

Book 6

Community Mobilization

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Book 1: Advocacy Campaign Management

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Book 3: Working with the Media

Book 4: Building and Maintaining Coalitions

Book 5: Advocacy through Legal Services

Book 6: Community Mobilization

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Introduction

In an ideal world, governments provide services efficiently, corporations behave responsibly, and people treat each other with fairness and respect. However, we know that every day communities struggle to get their basic needs met, natural resources are exploited for profit, and individuals face discrimination. This handbook provides a few techniques and methodologies to assist community activists challenge these problems by mobilizing people into advocacy campaigns. Through a rights-based approach, activists can help their family, friends and neighbors secure their rights and receive better social services.



Our Rights in the Community

Community people have the right to advocate for better access to land, fishing lots, forests, health, education and other services. These rights are protected by the Cambodian Constitution.

The term "rights-based approach" is often used to describe problem-solving campaigns that are based on a community's needs. What does this term really mean?

A rights-based approach means empowering people to understand and exercise their rights. At the same time, government is expected to fulfill its duties. Generally, we divide people into two main groups: Rights-holders and Duty-bearers.



Rights-holder: This term means individuals and groups who have particular entitlements. For example, every child in Cambodia has a right to receive free education. All Cambodians have the right to be free from torture by the police. Sometimes, people's rights are not respected and people must work hard to get their rights.

A rights-based approach encourages the respect and fulfillment of human rights and also requires active participation by people to secure their own rights and monitor the government's actions.

Duty-Bearers: These are people who have a responsibility to protect, promote, and realize particular human rights. They also have a responsibility not to violate people's human rights. Usually, these are elected or appointed people in the government: police, judges, parliamentarians, bureaucrats, even the Prime Minister.



Government has a duty to fulfill its obligations to the people. Government's responsibility to provide education, health care, and protect human rights is not based on whether a person has a personal relationship with a government official. People should receive basic services because they are *rights*, not *gifts*.

What is a Community?

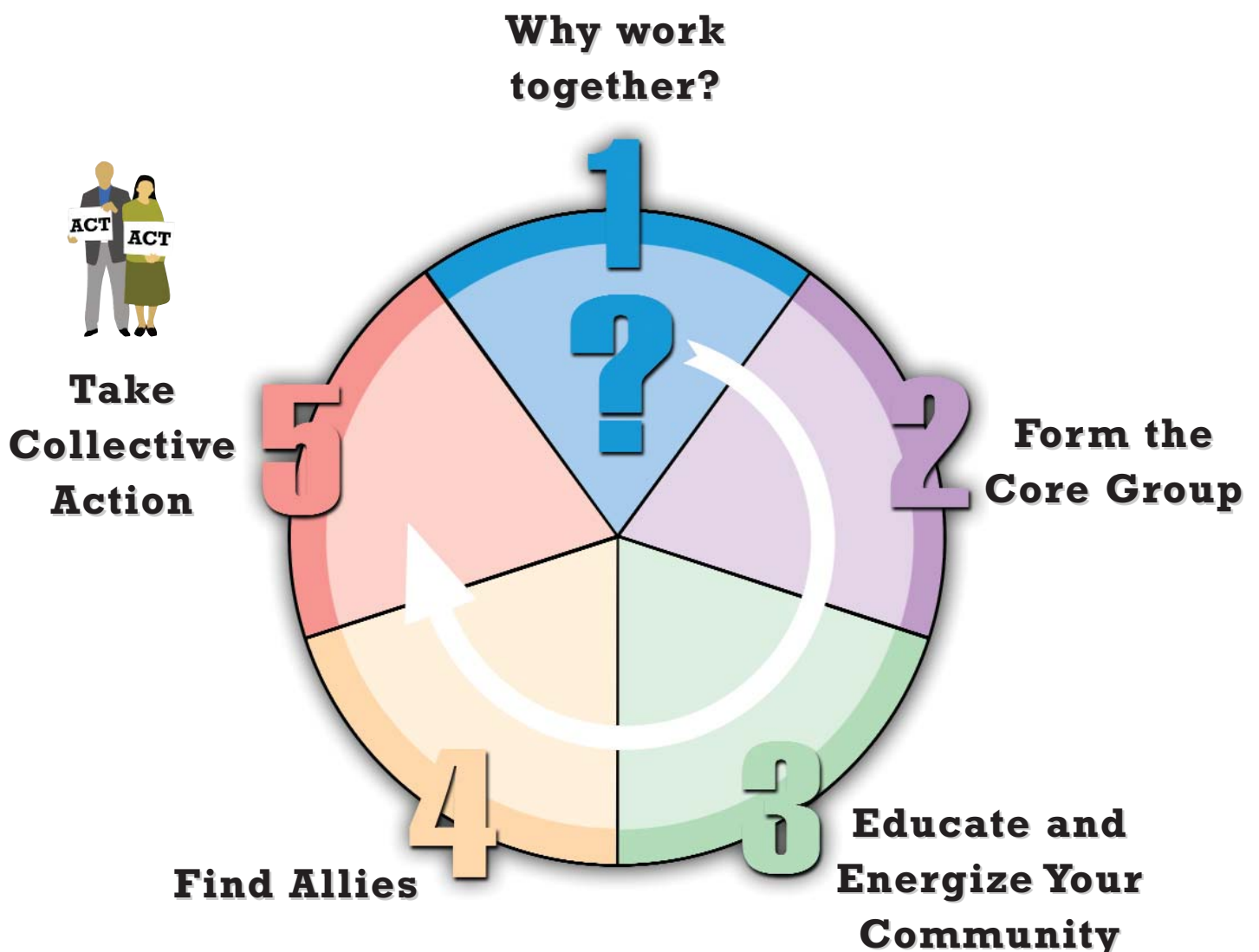
A community is a group of people living in the same area (e.g., village, commune, town, city, or urban areas), sharing social relationships and having a common interest.



All communities should help identify and mobilize their own resources efficiently. It is important that when an issue is identified, all members of the community are invited to become involved in discussing, learning, analyzing, sharing ideas, and taking action together to solve their problems in order to build a community's self-reliance, self-sufficiency and improve their lives.

Mobilizing to Solve Your Community's Problems

This handbook divides the process of activating and mobilizing your community into five steps:



1

Why work together?



By working together to solve their own problems, a community can:

- Build more unity and solidarity among their members
- Promote collective decision-making, which is more likely to peacefully resolve conflict and may prevent conflict from happening
- Create pressure on duty-bearers/decision-makers to deliver services
- Change policies or laws that affect the community.

To achieve these expectations, the community, or Core Group, needs to work closely together and continually look to develop connections with, and gain support from, existing and potential allies.

Challenges for communities who mobilize to solve their own problems:

- People may face physical or economic dangers when they claim their rights
- It may be difficult to convince enough people to participate
- Energizing people and resources to fight the problem may take a lot of time
- People have different perceptions and levels of commitment, which may lead to disagreements
- It may take a long time to overcome bureaucratic systems within government.

To address the community's needs, problems, and challenges, you must form a core group of committed people to lead and facilitate discussion, sharing, analyzing, and taking action together.



2

Form the Core Group

In the beginning, people in your community may not feel the same urgency that you feel about solving the problem. Many times, they will not even believe there is a problem. Convincing people to become involved is a difficult task but your community's problem was created by more than one person and you will need many people working together to solve it.

At first, you will want to organize a small core group of people to work together. This core group will be responsible for gathering data about the problem and creating a long-term strategy. Finding effective leaders and followers is an important step in solving your community's problem. Leaders come from many places and do not always hold any formal positions in the community. A good leader is able to express deep feelings and impress upon others that a problem exists and that something needs to be done about it. This leader will create the energy needed to educate and mobilize the community. This leader may be you!



Characteristics of Leaders and Followers

Good Leaders	Good Followers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speak persuasively - Motivate others in a respectful way - Take risks - Delegate significant tasks to followers - Help resolve conflicts - Encourage creative problem-solving - Share information - Accept responsibility for their actions - Communicate and inspire - Are self aware and principled - Believe that power is best employed if shared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek ways to accomplish goals in harmony with leader's vision - Use creativity, knowledge, and insight to take initiative and respond quickly - Have loyalty to the community and the willingness to act according to their beliefs. - Understand the community and their contributions to it - Are versatile and flexible enough to adapt to a changing environment. - Take responsibility for their own actions and their own ideas



Recruiting Members of the Core Group

Of course, it is important to involve many people with different capabilities and skills in your effort. But the core group needs certain types of people. In order to maximize your chance for success, you should try to build upon people's natural tendency to imitate people they admire. Your core group should contain people from your community who act as the:

Brain

Other people ask for reliable advice.

Heart

Have connections to many people and enjoy creating alliances among people.

Mouth

Speak persuasively and cause other people to change their opinions or habits.

After you identify these three types of people, speak with them. At first, they may not understand your issue or problem. It is your job as a community activist to explain why it is important to act now and offer good reasons why they should join your cause.



Whenever a group of people work together, there may be some struggles or conflicts. Different levels of expertise may cause people to feel jealous of others' ability. Different levels of commitment may cause people to feel resentful if they believe some people are being lazy. As much as possible, make sure everyone feels like their contribution-whether it is big or small - is important. Rotate leadership roles by allowing different people to act as chairperson of a meeting or organizer of an event. To avoid one or two people dominating conversations, set a time limit for how long people may speak. Recognize and praise people's suggestions and ideas, even if they contradict your own. Use democratic techniques - like voting - to arrive at solutions or agreement.

Identify the Problem

Your Core Group should now conduct some basic research and gather information on the way this problem affects your community. Understanding the problem will help you persuade more community members to join your cause and give you evidence that you can present to decision makers or the media. Remember, accurate information is better than gossip. People in powerful positions cannot easily ignore solid evidence.

An example :

Problem: Most of the families in our village, Phum Svay, are poor farmers. The Government has granted a land concession to a foreign company in a neighboring village. Without consultation, the company built a road and fence near our village. One of our village elders has obtained a copy of the company's plan, which indicates that they will seize land in Phum Svay next.

First Step: Create a community map of how the possible land dispute will affect people. Go to each household and ask::

- How many hectares of land does your family own? Grow crops on?
- How would the loss of any land affect your family life?
- Are there any changes your family would have to make if you lost any income? Would you still eat the same amount of rice? Would all of your children go to school?
- Do you think you could go to anyone for help to solve this problem? If not, why?

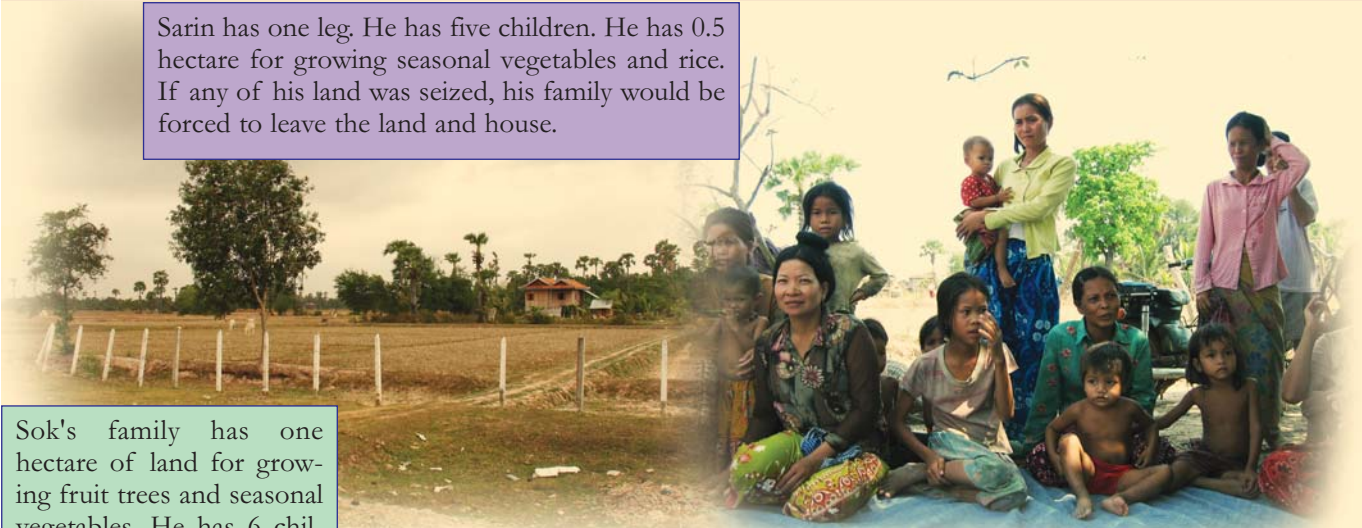


Basic research could involve activities such as meeting with individuals and groups, and carrying out surveys.

Make sure your interviewers are sensitive and polite when conducting the interview. Many people are embarrassed about their inability to share experiences, speak out, or dialogue with you. People may not be motivated to discuss the land issue openly because they fear retribution by the company or believe that the local authority is rude or corrupt. Make sure that your interviewers get a full understanding of the whole situation.

After you have collected the data, make a map:

A Community Map of Phum Svay



Sarin has one leg. He has five children. He has 0.5 hectare for growing seasonal vegetables and rice. If any of his land was seized, his family would be forced to leave the land and house.

Sok's family has one hectare of land for growing fruit trees and seasonal vegetables. He has 6 children. The main income for his family is farming this land. All of his land could be seized by the company.

Yeoun has 4 children and an elderly mother. She has only 0.5 hectare of land for growing rice and she tries to grow rice two times per year. About half of her land could be seized by the company. If her land is seized, she could no longer afford to send her youngest daughter to school.

After you have collected your data, you should ask some questions in your Core Group: What is the potential impact on your community? How many people would go hungry if their land was seized? How many children could no longer go to school? How many families would have to move? How many people own title to their land? How many people could own title to their land if they had the proper documents or information? How many people are living illegally?

In this example, the Core Group decided that the real problem was the lack of consultation with the people about the land concession and the lack of information about getting title to the land. The Core Group decided they needed to focus their efforts on demanding the rights to live, and possess land where they have lived for many years.

Researching Your Problem

While you research your community's problem, check to see if the Cambodian government has already agreed on a solution. Ask your commune councilor, local ministry official, or Prime Minister's cabinet if you need more information. Maybe there is already a local government or national policy or law that will help you. The easiest solution to implement is one that already exists.

In addition, you should know that the Cambodian Government has already agreed to respect many fundamental rights of the people, such as civil rights, political rights, economic rights, social rights and cultural rights. More information on international human rights documents is available at the end of this manual.

Sometimes, you may discover that you have more information or knowledge than the responsible government official does. Many people are elected or appointed to their position because of loyalty to their political party rather than expertise in the issue. This is a normal situation around the world. However, it is no excuse for not taking action. Remember that you are a rights-holder. Part of your responsibility is to understand and demand your rights. If a duty-bearer fails to respect your rights, you have two powerful weapons - your voice and your vote.

Create a Strategy

Once you have analyzed your research, your Core Group needs to create a strategy which should clearly identify:

- The problem and the behavior that needs to change
- What activities you will do and what resources you will need
- Who in the media to contact
- Which public officials and allies you should meet

Remember to clearly identify who will take responsibility for each task and set deadlines for when work must be completed.

Strategy to Mobilize Our Community to Protect Our Land

What We Will Do	When We Will Do It	What Do We Need?	Who is Responsible?
Organize a meeting with Commune Council	Immediately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Send letter to the Commune Council office to request for a meeting. - Prepare an agenda and decide who should attend the meeting. - Bring a copy of community map to meeting. Ask for the commune councilors' help to arrange a meeting with the company. 	Socheat
Go on radio talk shows to discuss the possible land-grabbing and your demands to register your land by using the Land Title Law	One week from now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact radio station - Choose Spokesperson who will go on the radio. - Prepare a speech and practice answering questions - Have volunteers ready to call into radio station with questions. 	Sopheap
Art contest for school students on title: Our Land, Our Life for My Community!	Begin in two weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have volunteers talk with and get permission to go to the school and announce to students. - Post art contest results at commune council office. 	Meta
Organize land registration day to ensure all villagers legally register their land	In one month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteers go to houses and encourage villagers to participate and assist villagers in understanding registration requirements. - Contact relevant land registration office to send a representative. - Ask local authority's permission for organizing the event. - Assign people to be responsible for security and logistics. - Invite the media to the event and choose one or two representatives to talk with the media. - Submit land registration documents to the proper government office. 	Sinthay

3

Educate and Energize Your Community

When confronted with a difficult problem, many people avoid trying to find a solution. This may seem strange but it is a natural human response to avoid conflict, especially if you cannot see how your situation will improve. You might even believe that if you try to change the situation, you or your family will be harmed or threatened.

Helping people realize and understand why they need to take action is called "consciousness-raising". As a community activist, you can help raise people's consciousness by:

- o encouraging group dialogues among people who may share the same problem
- o speaking with people about how their lives will be better if they work to change the situation
- o discussing and finding ways to address and solve their community problem.

Example: Host a Community Meeting

The Core Group believes that unless action is taken, the company will seize land from villagers in Phum Svay. To energize people, the Core Group gathered together people for an afternoon meeting. The Core Group wanted people to honestly share their stories and experiences. This was not a time for criticism but for sharing concerns and insights and building strong solidarity among people.

One member of the Core Group facilitated the meeting by asking questions like: Has anyone been told by the company that they must leave their land? How is this potential conflict affecting villagers' lives? Has anyone been threatened? How can we work together to peacefully resolve this conflict? Who should we talk to and get support from? How many people understand the Land Law? How many people have registered their land and have a Land Deed?

After listening to everyone's experiences, the Core Group asked participants to name people who were able to resolve the issue. Everyone agreed that though many people had influence - friends, neighbors, teachers, elders - the most important were the commune council, district, and provincial authorities in charge of land registration. So the Core Group decided it was most important to encourage villagers to register their land. The Core Group also thought that the commune council should meet with the company to discuss the concession.

Though people expected that the commune council would support them, everyone was concerned that the Government would not change the concession unless there was outside pressure from the public. One member of the group suggested that the local radio show be contacted as well as the newspapers in Phnom Penh. The villagers agreed and suggested that the most convincing message to gain the support of their neighbors was:

*"It's our land,
it's our right. Don't
steal the food from
our bellies and our
babies!"*



Once people have finished sharing their stories and experiences, it is very important that you ask people in the group to tell you which words, phrases or ideas they believe are most convincing to encourage other people to support and work together to solve this problem. Pick a phrase or two that you can say in 30 seconds or less. This is your core group's "Message". Whenever a member of your Core Group attends a community meeting, speaks with a public official or neighbor, or talks to the media, they should try to state the "Message" at least twice during their conversation.

Once people hear the Core Group speaking in the community, they will be interested in joining your cause. They may not have the time or energy to work as hard as you but remember that we need as many people to be involved as possible. Creating change is hard work and goes faster with many hands. Imagine that you are a pebble thrown into a pond. One pebble creates a few ripples that fade away. Many pebbles create a wave.

Remember to look for resources outside your community. If your community is having a problem, it is very likely that other communities have a similar problem. They may have thought of an innovative solution or they may want to join your effort to create change.



Note: As your community becomes interested in helping to solve the problem, more people will join. In expanding the membership of the Core Group, the community should be encouraged to identify those people who they believe would make the most positive impact.



Though Community Mobilization should encourage self-reliance, sometimes, we need to find people outside our community - NGOs, government, the media - in order to get resources and make our change happen.

Protect Our Land: Finding Allies

The Core Group decided that they needed an activity that would attract attention of the media. At one meeting, someone suggested that schoolchildren might have some good ideas on why and how we should claim our land rights. The Brain and the Mouth got permission from the principal to speak with the schoolchildren, their parents and teachers.

Before contacting others, we should be clear on what we can do and what we think they can do.

How an NGO might help you:

- Build the capacity of the Core Group and community members
- Foster links between the community and government officials and members of the Senate and National Assembly
- Lend a constant and informed voice to the legislative drafting process
- Creating linkages to other communities in different parts of the country
- Resources: Materials, Technical Assistance, and Finance
- Conducting complex research, such as surveys or legal research
- Creating linkages to other countries
- Providing legal service

While many NGOs practice good methods that encourage communities to gain experience, some NGOs believe only they have the knowledge to solve your problem.

NGOs should not lead the effort directly. Instead, NGOs should assist the community to peacefully solve their own problems.

Depending on the problem, you can choose from many different types of actions. You do not have to spend a lot of money or organize big events. Instead, concentrate your limited time and resources on actions that are most likely to reach the people whose behavior you want to change. These are just a few possible actions you could take:

- **Interview** on a local radio show or local newspaper.



- **Host community meetings or dialogues.**

If your problem needs legislation or regulation to solve it, encourage a commune councilor or government official to attend or even facilitate the meeting. Meet with them in advance to make sure they understand (and agree with) your position.



- **Organize a "Let's Talk" day.** Every month, set aside one day when all of your activists - your Core Group and volunteers - go to a new person's house to talk about your community's problem.

If the person becomes interested, ask them to volunteer for your cause or at least suggest names of their friends who might be interested in speaking with you. Be respectful of people and realize that their time is valuable. If a farmer is busy harvesting or planting rice, she will not appreciate being interrupted and will not listen to your Message.

- **Sponsor a fun activity for the community.** Plan the activity to take place when there is a holiday so many people are around and feeling social. Invite the media to attend. Take photographs and recruit volunteers



After speaking with the students, the Core Group in Phum Svay decided to sponsor a student's art contest. The theme of the contest was: "Our Land, Our Life for My Community". All of the students' drawings were put on display at the commune council office and other public places. People in the community placed their thumbprints on a piece of paper next to the drawings in order to vote for their favorite. The media were invited to the awards ceremony for the best drawing.

- **Active Non-Violence.** If people with the power to solve your community's problem do not listen or refuse to hear from you, you may need to act more forcefully to get their attention. Marches and rallies require a lot of organization but as history has shown, peaceful protests are not passive. In early 2006, the Prime Minister of Cambodia was forced to release five human rights activists who were imprisoned on spurious allegations of defamation, due to broad and sustained pressure from the public.

Conclusion

Mobilizing a community to face and solve a problem is not an easy task. Often, you are asking people to change behavior that they believe is normal or even required by their culture. A good strategy requires patience, persistence, and creativity.



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6. Mr. Oeung Jeudy, CHRAC
7. Mr. Samreth Uth, Environment Protection and Development Organization (EPDO)
8. Mr. Yoib Meta, Mr. Lam Socheat, PACT

ADVOCATE

Formal Statements

Public Speeches
Letters of opposition or support
Declarations by organizations and institutions
Signed public statements
Declarations of indictment and intention
Group or mass petitions

Communications with a Wider Audience

Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
Banners, posters, and displayed communications
Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
Newspapers and journals
Records, radio, and television
Skywriting and earthwriting

Group Representations

Deputations
Mock awards
Group lobbying
Picketing
Mock elections

Symbolic Public Acts

Displays of flags and symbolic colors
Wearing of symbols
Prayer and worship
Delivering symbolic objects
Protest disrobings
Destruction of own property
Symbolic lights
Displays of portraits
Paint as protest
New signs and names
Symbolic sounds
Symbolic reclamations
Rude gestures

Drama and Music

Humorous skits and pranks
Performances of plays and music
Singing

Processions

Marches
Parades
Religious processions
Pilgrimages
Motorcades

Honoring the Dead

Political mourning
Mock funerals
Demonstrative funerals
Homage at burial places

Public Assemblies

Assemblies of protest or support
Protest meetings
Camouflaged meetings of protest
Teach-ins

Withdrawal and Renunciation

Walk-outs
Silence
Renouncing honors
Turning one's back

SOCIAL NON-COOPERATION

Ostracism of Persons

Social boycott
Selective social boycott

Noncooperation with Social Events, Customs, and Institutions

Suspension of social and sports activities
Boycott of social affairs
Student strike
Social disobedience
Withdrawal from social institutions

Withdrawal from the Social System

Stay-at-home
Total personal noncooperation
Protest emigration (hijrat)

ECONOMIC NON-COOPERATION: Economic

Actions by Consumers

Consumers' boycott
Non-consumption of boycotted goods
Policy of austerity
Rent withholding
Refusal to rent
National consumers boycott
International consumers boycott

Action by Workers and Producers

Workmen's boycott
Producers' boycott

ECONOMIC NON-COOPERATION: The Strike

Agricultural Strikes

Peasant strike
Farm Workers strike

Strikes by Special Groups

Refusal of impressed labor
Prisoners strike
Craft strike
Professional strike

Ordinary Industrial Strikes

Establishment strike
Industry strike
Sympathetic strike

Restricted Strikes

Detailed strike
Bumper strike
Slowdown strike
Working-to-rule strike
Reporting "sick" (sick-in)
Strike by resignation
Limited strike
Selective strike

Multi-Industry Strikes

Generalized strike
General strike

Combination of Strikes and Economic Closures

City Wide Strike
Economic shutdown

POLITICAL NON-COOPERATION

Rejection of Authority

Withholding or withdrawal of allegiance
Refusal of public support
Literature and speeches advocating resistance

Citizens' Noncooperation with Government

Boycott of legislative bodies
Boycott of elections
Boycott of government employment and positions
Boycott of government departments, agencies, and other bodies
Withdrawal from government educational institutions

Boycott of government-supported organizations
Refusal of assistance to enforcement agents
Removal of own signs and placemarks
Refusal to dissolve existing institutions

Citizens' Alternatives to Obedience

Reluctant and slow compliance
Non-obedience in absence of direct supervision
Popular non-obedience
Disguised disobedience
Refusal of an assemblage or meeting to disperse
Sitdown
Noncooperation with conscription and deportation
Hiding, escape, and false identities
Civil disobedience of "illegitimate" laws

International Governmental Action

Changes in diplomatic and other representations
Delay and cancellation of diplomatic events
Withholding of diplomatic recognition
Severance of diplomatic relations
Withdrawal from international organizations
Refusal of membership in international bodies
Expulsion from international organizations

NONVIOLENT INTERVENTION

Psychological Intervention

Self-exposure to the elements
The Fast
Reverse trial
Nonviolent harassment

Physical Intervention

Sit-in
Stand-in
Ride-in
Wade-in
Pray-in
Nonviolent obstruction

Social Intervention

Establishing new social patterns
Speak-in
Theater
Alternative social institutions
Alternative communication system

Economic Intervention

Reverse strike
Stay-in strike
Defiance of blockades
Preclusive purchasing
Dumping
Alternative markets
Alternative transportation systems
Alternative economic institutions

Political Intervention

Overloading of administrative systems
Disclosing identities of secret agents
Seeking imprisonment
Civil disobedience of "neutral" laws
Dual sovereignty and parallel government

Adapted from Gene Sharp, The Politics of Nonviolent Action, Vol. 2: The Methods of Nonviolent Action (Boston: Porter Sargent Publishers, 1973).

Glossary

Alliance

An association of people, groups, organizations, or nations based on short-term relationships to achieve narrowly focused objectives.

Authority

The power to give orders to people or the right to do something

Consensus

An opinion or decision reached by a group.

Consultation

The act of discussing something with somebody or with a group of people before making decision

Delegate

To entrust or transfer power, authority, or responsibility to another person or group.

Network

A group of people or organizations with similar interests or concerns who share information and ideas.

Mobilize

To work together in order to achieve a particular aim, to organize a group of people to do something

Obligation

Something which you must do because it's your duty or because of a law

Resources

For more information on these topics:

Advocacy for Immunization:

Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations (2001)

UNESCO/APC Multimedia Training Kit

Search for Common Ground

<http://www.itrainonline.org/>

ACT UP: Civil Disobedience Training

<http://www.actupny.org>

Mind Tools

<http://www.mindtools.com>

Good Practice Participate

Office for the Community & Voluntary Sector

<http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz>

New Product Development Solutions

<http://www.npd-solutions.com>

Advocacy Tools and Guidelines: Promoting Policy Change

Sofia Sprechman and Emily Pelton, CARE (2001)

<http://www.careusa.org/getinvolved/advocacy/tools.asp>

International Human Rights Documents

<http://www.cambodia.obchr.org>

Additional Resources

For more information on these topics:

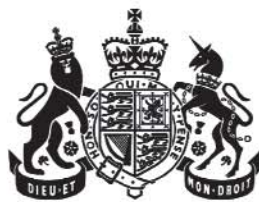
The Advocacy Expert Series, developed by Pact Cambodia:

1. Advocacy Campaign Management
2. Building Relationships with Government
3. Working with the Media
4. Building and Maintaining Coalitions
5. Advocacy through Legal Services

o Graham Gordon, Advocacy Toolkit: Understanding Advocacy, Tearfund. 2002. Volumes 1 and 2.

o Grassroots Advocacy Handbook. Pact Cambodia, May 2006.

o InWent and Lutheran World Federation, Training Manual: Facilitation Skills for People's Empowerment, 2004



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