
NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION

HANDOUT

DIRECT ACTION: The strategic use of immediately effective acts to achieve a social or political end and challenge an unjust power dynamic.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE: Refusal to obey civil laws in an effort to change an unjust governmental policy or legislation.

THE RUCKUS SOCIETY promotes the use of direct action that is:

- creative
- strategic
- nonviolent
- directed at a clear decision-making target
- builds people's power

EFFECTIVE NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION CAN:

- Directly stop a social, environmental, or political injustice
- Assert or defend a positive right despite the consequences
- Show willful refusal to cooperate with or participate in an injustice.
- Sound the alarm: alerts folks to an issue, problem, or idea
- Create a community based solution
- Amplify people's voices, build people power

TYPES OF DIRECT ACTION:

- Protest: registering your dissent
 - *Examples*: rallies, marches, letter writing, petitions, teach-ins, postcards, street theatre, billboard liberation, banner hangs
- Non-cooperation: withdrawing something from the system that makes it difficult to function
 - *Examples*: consumer boycotts, labor strike, general strike, student walk-outs, draft resisters, war tax resistance, fasting
- Intervention: directly intervening in the functioning of the system
 - *Examples*: blockading roads or buildings, disrupting meetings or "business as usual", bird-dogging, jail solidarity, tree-sits, critical mass, plowshares
- Creative Solution: developing alternative, community-based systems
 - *Examples*: community gardens, food not bombs, freedom schools, clinic defense, off-grid housing, worker cooperatives, peer counseling, community policing

ACTION OPPORTUNITIES:

Every system of injustice has distinct points that provide action opportunities-- times when communities can make clear demands for change, stop the system, or create their own solutions.

Each of the four types of direct action (protest, non-cooperation, intervention, or creative solution) can be used at any of the six points listed below.

- Point of production: when harmful items are created
- Point of destruction: when resources are extracted, pollution is released, or natural resources are destroyed
- Point of consumption: where products reach the consumer
- Point of decision: where plans for the future are determined;
- Point of assumption: where social norms are developed and upheld;
- Point of potential: when cultural or historic moments become action opportunities.

When planning an action for any given opportunity, think about the “**action logic**”: does the type of action you’re choosing fit the opportunity? Consider who is involved in doing the particular action, the history of the struggle, timing, logistics, and the overall story you’re trying to tell by doing the action.

SOURCE:

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www.ruckus.org

Action Opportunities from SmartMeme’s “Points of Intervention” worksheet.
www.smartmeme.org
