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SYNERGIZING NONVIOLENT ACTION AND PEACEBUILDING
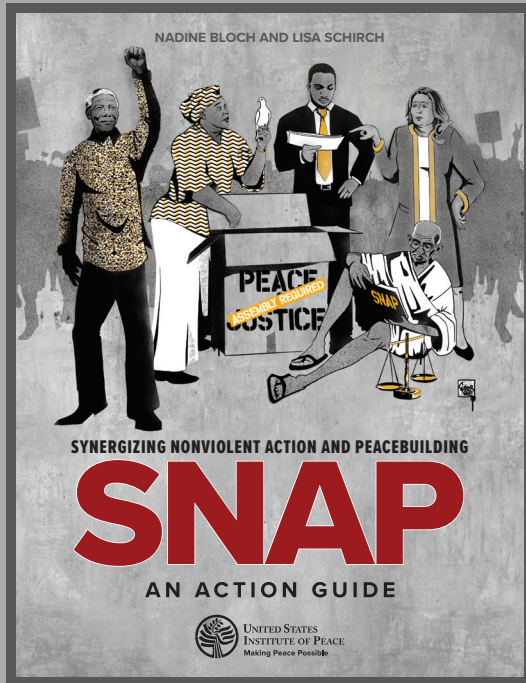
SNAP

AN ACTION GUIDE

UNITED STATES
INSTITUTE OF PEACE
Making Peace Possible

EXCERPT FROM

SNAP: Synergizing Nonviolent Action and Peacebuilding

BY NADINE BLOCH AND LISA SCHIRCH

VIEW THE FULL GUIDE AT

Set SMARTT Goals

CONTENTS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the lesson, participants will be able to:

Use the results of assessment exercises to develop a strategic plan based on goals

Explain why using nonviolent action and peacebuilding methods within a developed strategy can be more effective compared with using tactics outside of a developed strategy

Identify SMARTT (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound + Theory of Change based) goals

Use the SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) Matrix and part 2 of the Spectrum of Allies and Opponents Tool as strategic planning tools
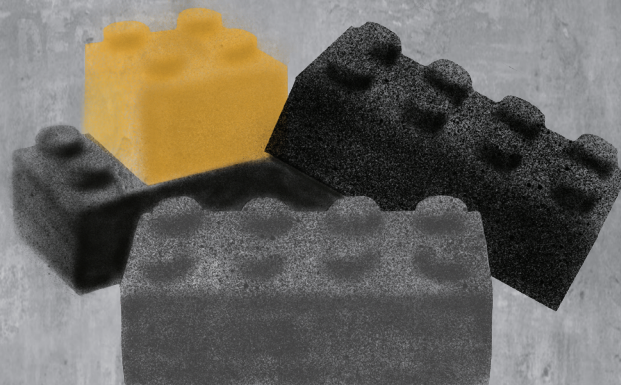
Set SMARTT Goals

This unit guides the next step of strategic planning: how to decide on "smart" goals. Planning is strategic when it grows out of analysis. This unit builds on the exercises and tools from the previous unit on conflict assessment. A strategy is a set of goals, processes, and tactics that all work together to achieve a desired outcome. Both nonviolent action and peacebuilding processes require goal setting. Smart goals enable these processes to work toward conflict transformation and shape the vision for the future. Setting a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMARTT) goal, based on a solid theory of change, is an essential part of strategy.

Danish Resistance to Nazi Occupation, 1940–45

In April 1940, at the onset of World War II, Germany invaded Denmark, which had been neutral in the war. Danish leaders recognized that their country's military forces were no match for Adolf Hitler's superior army. To limit the number of casualties, the Danish king and government negotiated with German authorities, who allowed the Danish government to remain in power while Germany occupied the country.

Over the next several years, Danish leaders employed a strategy of resistance disguised as collaboration. They came up with different nonviolent approaches to undermine German operations. Nonviolent resistors derailed trains carrying war supplies to Germany, and workers participated in slowdowns to limit the Germans' exploitation of Denmark for food, labor, and materials to perpetuate the war.

Danish joint actions to oppose the occupation gave people a sense of national pride and unity. Citizens gathered in public to sing songs about Danish culture and history, organized festivals, and hung the nation's flag outside homes and buildings. In March 1943, Germany allowed Denmark to hold parliamentary elections, which had nearly 90 percent voter participation.

The election year brought increased resistance by the Danish, and workers across the country began to strike. Shipyard and factory workers, fishermen, police, and others walked off their jobs and took to the streets to rally against the Germans. The German authorities imposed curfews that were ignored, and the strikes continued, many of which had been publicized through media outlets that had gone underground to avoid German detection. The Germans, dissatisfied with the Danish government's handling of the situation, took control, cracking down with an increasing number of arrests and acts of violence.

When German troops called for a roundup of the Jewish population in Denmark, Danish citizens offered up their homes and offices as hiding places for Jews. Jews also found refuge in hospitals, schools, and churches. Many Jews were able to flee the country with help from Danish fishermen who volunteered to ferry them to Sweden. Danish defiance of German authorities helped prevent thousands of Jews from being sent to concentration camps.

While Denmark's methods of nonviolent resistance did not stop the Nazi occupation before the end of the war in 1945, they did help the Danish achieve many of their goals along the way. Denmark's nonviolent movement in response to the German invasion allowed the Danish to maintain the sovereignty of their government and preserve their society and culture, all while limiting the amount of resources Germany was able to exploit from Denmark and protecting Danish Jews.

Adapted from "Danish Citizens Resist the Nazis, 1940–1945," Global Nonviolent Action Database, accessed May 16, 2018, https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/danish-citizens-resist-nazis-1940 -1945; Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

Key Concepts

HOW DO WE GET FROM ANALYSIS TO STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION?

As we saw in the last unit, strong strategic planning is based on accurate and detailed conflict assessment. A quick look back at the Six Step Strategic Pyramid Planning process from unit 2 will show that we are now ready to use the assessments to set goals. Each of the tools in the previous unit offers unique insights into how to identify and frame your goals and tactics.

Strategic planning is an ongoing process, and the most useful plans set short- and long-term goals with regular assessment points along the way. This cycle will allow you to refine your work, change course if needed, and use your resources efficiently. Assessments will enable you to determine whether you have moved from one phase of the Curle Diagram to another, leading to more informed decision making on appropriate goals for a specific phase of conflict.

Table 15 illustrates the six key areas of assessment we reviewed and the corresponding questions for a planning process.

The SWOT Matrix shown in figure 16 is one tool that can help you move from assessment to planning by organizing your answers to these questions into internal and external factors. Strengths and weaknesses are considered internal factors, and opportunities and threats are considered external. Where they intersect become scenarios around which to design goals. In this way, and with the results of the assessments introduced in the last unit, the SWOT analysis prepares the way for choosing SMARTT goals.

The process has two steps. First, integrate information from the other assessment tools into internal *strengths* and *weaknesses*, alongside external *threats* and *opportunities*. Then, identify (1) your "best-case" scenarios, (2) where you have "missed opportunities,"

TABLE 15.

Assessment for Strategic Planning

	ASSESSMENT QUESTION	PLANNING QUESTION
WHO	Who are the stakeholders (the people who have a stake or interest in the conflict/issue)?	Who are we trying to influence or change? Who are our primary and secondary targets (those who can reach the primary targets if you cannot)?
WHY	Why are the stakeholders acting the way they do? What are their motivations?	Why are we motivated to take action and why will people join us?
WHAT	What factors are driving or mitigating the conflict/issue?	What issues will we focus on given all the problems that exist?
HOW	How are stakeholders waging conflict? What are their sources of power?	How can we generate more and greater sources of power?
WHEN	When does the conflict/issue happen? Are historical patterns or cycles of the conflict/issue evident?	When are the holidays, anniversaries, or seasons when we can have the best chance of success?
WHERE	Where is the conflict/issue taking place—in what cultural, social, economic, justice, and political context or system?	Where will we put our focus geographically given all the problems that exist?

FIGURE 16.

SWOT Analysis and Planning

		EXTERNAL Factors	
		Opportunities 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. etc.	**Threats** 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. etc.
I N T E R N A L F a c t o r s	**Strengths** 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. etc.	**BEST CASE**: You can do this with minimal effort and expense, or change to existing capacity	**MOBILIZATION OPPORTUNITY:** Work from your strengths
	Weaknesses 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. etc.	**MISSED OPPORTUNITY:** Limited by internal shortcomings	**WORST CASE**: Avoid or minimize impact as much as possible

(3) your best "mobilization scenarios," and (4) your "worst-case" options and where these all intersect.

Say you are running an anticorruption campaign. If a SWOT analysis reveals that an internal strength (you have a large core of committed volunteers) overlaps with an external opportunity (a huge corruption scandal has just broken), you would potentially have the best-case scenario of being able to field a large team to deliver information or materials to newly aware constituents. This could lead you to identify a need to develop materials and raise funds for printing. If, however, you have a minimal staff and no trained volunteers (weakness) when a major corruption scandal has just broken

(opportunity), this could be a missed-opportunity scenario, meaning you may need to develop alternative ways to meet your goals or focus on places where your strengths and opportunities intersect.

You may notice that, depending on the situation, an organization or movement's strengths could be similar to its weaknesses. For example, having a strong cadre of dialogue facilitators can be a strength if you need to facilitate a series of dialogues on a particular issue, and a weakness if you do not have the dialogue design and organizing capacity to bring them to fruition. In the same way, an interest from a new party to participate in negotiations can be both an opportunity (as a chance to build a more inclusive peace process) and a threat (if the new party is only joining as a spoiler to derail talks).

The SWOT Matrix's superpower is to help you determine or clarify your strategic goals, identify challenges you may encounter, develop an effective strategy, and articulate a theory of change based on assessment.

Notice that what shows up in the SWOT boxes (in figure 16) will be influenced by your assessments using the previous tools: Spectrum of Allies and Opponents, the Onion, the Tree, and so on. Your scenarios, and therefore your goals, will be different depending on where you are in your campaign or movement. If you are in the latent conflict phase, for example, your assessment would likely point out the need to do recruitment and consciousness raising (internal weakness); it would be unlikely that you would have an opportunity to negotiate for your demand (external opportunity) before you built power.

WHAT ARE SMARTT GOALS, AND HOW DO WE DEVELOP THEM?

Take a look at the potential scenarios you identified in the SWOT Matrix. Start with either a best-case or mobilization opportunity and turn that scenario into a statement that describes how to achieve that situation (or overcome it if it is negative). That statement becomes a goal.

The trick with writing goals that will lead you closer to achieving your mission is to make them SMARTT:

- **S**pecific: Choose a goal that is simple to identify—who you will work with, what you will do, and where and when you will do it. Find a *pivot point*, a specific issue, not just general objectives like peace, freedom, or democracy. The issue must be definite and easily understood.

- **M**easurable: Choose a goal that is meaningful—identify how you will know when you achieve your goals. What are you measuring?

- **A**ttainable: Choose a goal that is possible to achieve.

- **R**elevant: Choose a goal that directly relates to your vision of what you want to achieve.

- **T**ime-bound: Choose a goal that is time-limited and timely to public concerns.

- **T**heory of change supporting: Choose a goal that is supported by an evidence-based hypothesis of how change could happen.

The Beyond the Page #1 exercise has examples of SMARTT goals to help you design your own. But before we practice, let us talk more about goal setting in general using the strategic planning pyramid (shown in figure 17).

FIGURE 17.

Strategic Planning Pyramid

Vision & Values

Mission

Assessment

SMARTT Goals

Strategic Steps

Implementation Plans and Tactics

Beyond the Page #1

Strategic Planning Pyramid

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Develop a strategic planning pyramid and walk through the essential elements

- Practice developing SMARTT goals

SETUP:

- You will need large sheets of paper and markers

HOW IT IS DONE:

1. Select a current campaign you are working on, or use any of the Front Line stories in this guide for inspiration.

2. Gather your previous assessment pieces (if this is a practice run, and you have limited time, select and complete either the Spectrum of Allies, the Stakeholder Map, and/or the Pillars of Support from the previous unit).

3. Fill out the Strategic Planning Pyramid from the top down:

   What is your vision? A big-picture hope or intention for your world or community.

   Example: Our vision is . . .

   no civil war in our country

   an end to corruption that is stealing from our citizens

What is your mission? A description of your purpose and a general idea of who and how you will work toward your vision.

Example: Our mission is . . .

to build a movement for a ceasefire to create space for negotiations between factions

to build transparency into the budget process through a community-led social audit

SWOT ASSESSMENT TO SMARTT GOALS

1. If this is an actual strategy session, it is important to assemble the right team for the job: those with the knowledge of both the internal strengths and weaknesses, and the external threats and opportunities. You can also gather information with assessment tools from the previous unit at a prior time.

2. Fill in the SWOT Matrix outline, first listing your internal "strengths" and "weaknesses," then the external "threats" and "opportunities." (Remember, some items can end up in more than one category.) If you are working with a large group, consider sketching the matrix on a large sheet of paper, writing the SWOT items on sticky notes, and then placing them in the appropriate boxes.

3. Take some time to figure out how your strengths and opportunities intersect, and write down those ideas in the appropriate scenario box. Do this for the remaining scenario boxes (strengths and threats, weaknesses and opportunities, weaknesses and threats). Note that the ideas that come from the intersection of strengths and opportunities fall in the "best case" box and could be considered low-hanging fruit—actions that can be done fairly

easily, with minimal effort or expenditure of resources. Where weaknesses and opportunities intersect, you will find your potential "missed opportunities"—opportunities that are hard to act on unless you can overcome your shortcomings. Where strengths and threats overlap is a possible "mobilization scenario," where you have the potential to proactively meet the threat. Finally, where weaknesses and threats intersect you will find your "worst case" scenarios (where you end up in the "W.C."), which you should try to avoid if possible.

4. Select one of the best case or mobilization opportunities and create a SMARTT goal. You can come up with a general goal first, and then make sure to answer the SMARTT questions by adding specifics—including dates, numbers for action items, and clarifying adjectives, as seen in the examples below. These specifics will be helpful in setting up your implementation plans and analyzing whether your ideas and theory of change allowed you to meet your goals or whether they need adjusting for the future.

Example: Our goal is . . .

- **An internal goal:**

  - Not SMARTT: Start a new education and training team in our organization.

  - SMARTT: Hire two people as new staff for an education and training team by March 2020.

- **A network/outreach goal:**

  - Not SMARTT: Recruit everyone into the peace movement.

- SMARTT: Recruit key leadership from each of the five warring factions to agree to negotiate preliminary ceasefire talks by January 2025.

- **An external goal:**

  - Not SMARTT: Get the government to stop taking bribes.

- SMARTT: Organize a community audit of top-level government employees by January 2021.

Keep these SMARTT goals handy for the next section on tactic development.

Resources

- Strategy tools/methodologies online at BeautifulRising.org:

    - SMARTObjectives: https://beautifulrising.org/tool/smart-objectives

    - Spectrum of Allies: https://beautifulrising.org/tool/spectrum-of-allies

    - Strategy game: https://beautifulrising.org/platforms/game

    - SWOT analysis: https://beautifulrising.org/tool/swot-matrix

    - Other methodologies: https://beautifulrising.org/type/methodology

- Bobo, Kim, et al. *Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists*. 4th ed. Santa Ana, CA: Forum Press, 2010.

- "Campaign Accelerator: Innovative Campaign Planning." *Mobilisation Lab* (blog). Accessed December 19, 2017. https://mobilisationlab.org/campaign-accelerator/.

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- "Strategy Chart." Midwest Academy. Accessed November 28, 2017. http://www.tcsg.org/sfelp/toolkit /MidwestAcademy_01.pdf.