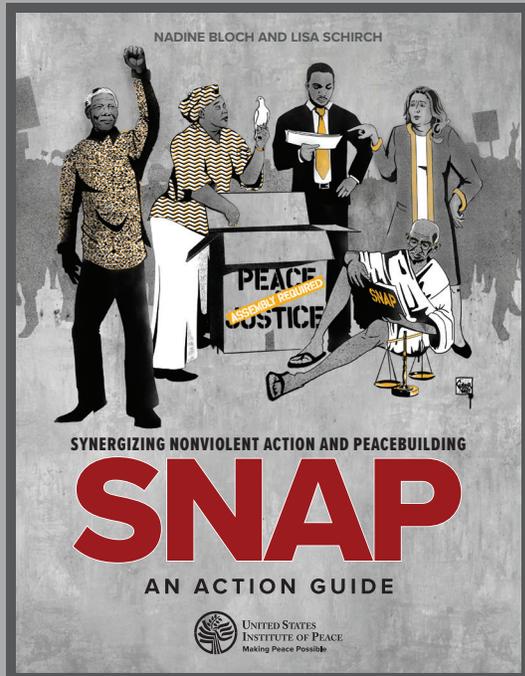




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BY NADINE BLOCH AND LISA SCHIRCH

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UNIT 9

Bringing It All Together: Strategic Planning Time Lines

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

Bring together assessment and strategic planning tools to develop time lines for integrated nonviolent action and peacebuilding

Recognize the considerations that inform decisions about sequencing actions

Understand the components of an implementation or action plan

UNIT

9



Bringing It All Together: Strategic Planning Time Lines

Throughout this guide we made the case for how activists and peacebuilders can employ nonviolent action tactics and peacebuilding approaches in tandem to effectively transform conflict and work toward sustainable peace. We reviewed the basics of nonviolent action and peacebuilding, as well as the dynamics of power within the two approaches. We also introduced the Curle Diagram as a helpful way to illustrate that conflict transformation can occur when nonviolent action and peacebuilding approaches are synergized. We addressed peacebuilding approaches like dialogue and facilitation early on in the guide, underlining their usefulness in organizing nonviolent action as well as their importance as stand-alone tools before nonviolent action starts. We also emphasized the importance of effective conflict analysis to strategic planning and creating SMARTT goals. And we discussed various nonviolent action tactics that can be employed to shift power through effective organizing and incentivize groups to engage in dialogue or negotiate when a negotiation or peace process is stuck.

This final unit seeks to put the skills, tactics, and approaches from units 2–8 into practice by creating clear time lines and plans to implement a group’s strategy and SMARTT goals to seek social change. In this way, these time lines can be considered a visual manifestation of effective sequencing and bringing nonviolent action and peacebuilding together to shift power, address grievances, and make just, sustainable peace possible.

2006 Democracy Movement in Nepal

One of the most striking recent campaigns for democracy took place in Nepal, where both nonviolent action and a negotiated peace process played key roles. Because the country has more than one hundred ethnic groups and spoken languages, as well as severe isolating geographic features (eight of the top ten world's tallest mountains), it took many years to build a countrywide mass movement big enough to win.

From 1992 to 2004, there were fifteen changes in the ruling government. Many communist parties were involved, including a small faction of Maoists. Even though the Maoists denounced multiparty democracy, one group established a political front to contest the elections. It was well received, becoming the third-largest party in the parliament in 1991 and setting the stage for future involvement within the government.

In 1996, the Maoist Communist Party of Nepal began guerrilla warfare in the countryside to challenge an inefficient and corrupt parliamentary government. This parliament had been put in place in large part because of an active people's power campaign in 1990 that had succeeded in limiting the powers of the monarchy but was unable to sustain effective governance.

By 2005, the general population was fed up with ineffective and corrupt party politics and silently consented to King Gyanendra's takeover. However, the king's autocratic power grab served to unite and mobilize the entire political spectrum against him. This included the Maoists, who were losing ground against stronger government forces and had been internationally labeled as terrorists owing to waging guerrilla warfare in the countryside since 1996.

Recognizing the moment was right to work in solidarity against the monarch, a successful peace process involving both the Maoists and representatives from the democratic nonviolent movement led to an agreement called the 12-Point Understanding. Through a negotiation process, the Maoists pledged to stop their armed struggle and join the democratic nonviolent movement. This negotiated unilateral truce allowed the broader resistance to stage joint street rallies and a joint general strike in 2006 with broad participation from across the population.

The mass strikes and demonstrations of the spring of 2006 forced the king to reinstate parliament (which he had dissolved in 2002). As a result, the 2008 elections produced a parliament (one-third of which were women) that was the most representative yet of Nepal's diversity. The parliament then promptly and almost unanimously abolished the monarchy.

The unusual feature of the April 2006 movement was that the Maoists decided to join with the mainstream democratic parties and ordinary members of the public in an unarmed struggle for democratic reform. After ending their People's War and entering into constitutional politics, the Maoists emerged as the largest parliamentary party and the ruling coalition appointed a Maoist prime minister. Although major problems persist, people power movements continue to be key in holding the government accountable to democratic practices and civil society today.

Adapted from Manish Thapa, "Nepal's Maoists: From Violent Revolution to Nonviolent Political Activism," in Civil Resistance and Conflict Transformation: Transitions from Armed to Nonviolent Struggle, ed. Veronique Dudouet (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 190; Howard Clark, "Unarmed Resistance, 'People Power' and Nonviolent Struggle," openDemocracy, October 15, 2014, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/civilresistance/howard-clark/unarmed-resistance-%E2%80%98people-power%E2%80%99-and-nonviolent-struggle>.

Key Concepts

HOW DO WE DEVELOP TIME LINES TO ACHIEVE SMARTT GOALS?

In unit 6 we discussed how to develop SMARTT goals that provide focus, clarity, and specificity to our conflict transformation work. In this next section, we will take three example SMARTT goals, focused on **strengthening internal group dynamics**, **expanding coalitions**, and **engaging with powerholders (including opponents)**, and propose sample time lines for achieving those goals using nonviolent action and peacebuilding tools.

TIME LINE FOR SMARTT GOAL #1: STRENGTHENING INTERNAL GROUP DYNAMICS

As we discussed in unit 3, building a strong and effective movement requires addressing interpersonal conflicts and getting everyone on the same page. Such internal work requires a spectrum of conflict transformation tools, a combination of nonviolent action and peacebuilding skill sets that include building relationships and negotiating with members of your own group, and learning how to carry out joint assessments and plan for actions together. The key question is this: How will you identify and sequence your internal work to build a stronger movement?

An example of a time line for planning work to achieve SMARTT goal #1 might read as follows: To develop the organizational capacity to carry out a nonviolent action with at least twenty affinity groups that have done the internal work of examining power dynamics, assessing the context, and building a trusting team culture by November 2022.

Members of a community group might begin by carrying out a visioning exercise to imagine their hopes and ideals for what their community might look like (see figure 23). The group might then realize they need to address internal power dynamics and enable participation by all. Next, the group might organize a day when they can begin using the assessment tools to help address their own understanding of the situation, determine gaps in their knowledge, and develop a research agenda. Recognizing the need for strong teamwork and trust, they may decide to spend more time doing team-building exercises and begin to form affinity groups.

FIGURE 23.

Example Time Line for Strengthening Internal Dynamics



**TIME LINE FOR SMARTT GOAL #2:
EXPANDING COALITIONS**

Widening and increasing participation in a peace process or nonviolent movement is essential to successful conflict transformation. This goal is about identifying and prioritizing potential allies, expanding

the community that is engaged with you in your struggle, and building your shared analysis.

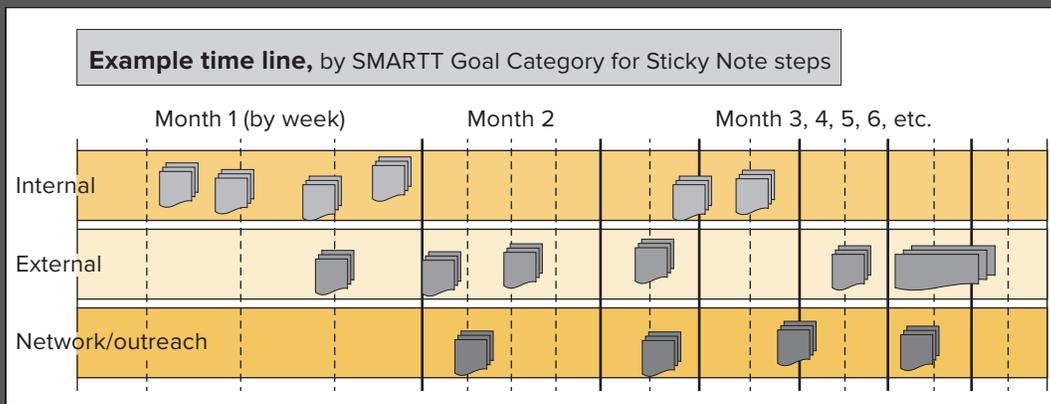
What will you do to build your coalition or grow your outreach?

A SMARTT goal #2 might read something like this: To develop a coalition of groups with total membership of 5,000 people to participate in joint nonviolent actions and be represented in negotiations with key decision makers, within six months.

A time line to achieve this network building might begin with a group using the assessment tools to map the spectrum of allies and opponents to prioritize potential allies (see figure 24). Step 2 might draw on a task force or affinity group to reach out to these potential allies and set up a meeting in person to build relationships and trust. A next step might be to begin a dialogue between the original planning group and the potential allies. Next, the new allies can be included in the next round of assessment and planning, so the group begins to build shared analysis and frameworks for understanding the situation. The time line illustrates the synergy of combining the analysis of the spectrum of allies from nonviolent action tool kits along with peacebuilding processes to build a stronger and wider coalition.

FIGURE 24.

Example Time Line for Coalition/Outreach Planning



TIME LINE FOR SMARTT GOAL #3: ENGAGING WITH POWERHOLDERS

Conflict transformation almost always requires some form of communication with powerholders, including those who oppose your aims. This could entail programs that encourage communication with powerholders to interventions or creative projects. What specific goals will help achieve your mission? How will your

group reach out to your allies to build opportunities to take action together, or to reach adversaries on the way to negotiation?

The following is an example of how this goal could be broken down into steps that clearly illustrate the synergy of nonviolent action and peacebuilding to achieve a policy change.

A SMARTT goal #3 might read something like this: To achieve a town council resolution banning hate speech on public billboards by January 2025.

Step 1 might be to hold a public vigil with the original group of people as a way of garnering media attention to advertise the issue and call for the public to join step 2, a town hall protest (see figure 25). After these two nonviolent tactics, the group attempts to meet with the mayor using informal dialogue skills. Next, the group asks the public to join in a letter-writing campaign and puts up a billboard in town advocating for passage of a resolution. Once public awareness is increased and power shifts to citizens taking the lead on banning hate speech, the group may ask for a meeting with the town council, and finally may have a negotiation to work out the exact language in a resolution.

FIGURE 25.

Example Time Line for Engaging Powerholders



BRINGING YOUR SMARTT GOALS TOGETHER

Once you have your separate goal time lines, the next step is to bring them together. The Beyond the Page #2 exercise shows one way you can create a comprehensive planning time line that aligns with your overall strategy and SMARTT goals.

HOW DO WE IDENTIFY AND PRIORITIZE TARGETS OR KEY STAKEHOLDERS?

Another key aspect of goal setting is identifying who will be critical to accomplish these goals.

In the previous section on assessment, we introduced the Spectrum of Allies and Opponents tool, where we identified specific stakeholders related to an identified goal. Deeper work with this tool will help you dig into the strategic usefulness of each stakeholder (ally or opponent) given the scenario.

In the Spectrum of Allies diagram (figure 10), notice that the outer ring contains actions that would help a group reach or mobilize each sector and move it along the spectrum toward “active allies.” The red arrows represent the tactics focused on moving their targets. The targets listed should be ones that can directly impact achieving the group’s goals or delivering its demands. The diagram also makes clear the need to avoid mobilizing opponents to increase their influence on targets.

There are two types of targets that groups should focus on as they consider moving individuals along the Spectrum of Allies and Opponents. **“Primary targets”** are those people who can address a group’s interests and needs. A primary target could also be someone

with whom you want to build a relationship or negotiate in order to understand their point of view and develop potential solutions. While groups may not have direct access to primary targets for all their demands, they can always identify either **“secondary targets”** that have direct relationships with primary targets or secondary targets whose actions can impact a primary target’s decisions. A primary target might be the CEO of a corporation, the head of the town council, or a symbolic public figure. A secondary target could be consumers of a corporate product or an influential spiritual leader, for example.

Table 21 contains four guiding questions to assess reaching and mobilizing any group in the Spectrum of Allies diagram. Notice the fourth question about their relationships to the primary and secondary targets. Place a higher-priority focus on those with a more direct relationship with power holders and lower costs to reach them. The context in Nepal provides an example of what kinds of answers might fill out the chart.

Movements and peacebuilding processes gain supporters by focusing on people’s interests and moving them one step closer to being active participants or allies. Since resources are always limited, careful analysis and prioritization of target groups and activities are key.

In the Beyond the Page #2 exercise is a blank chart that you can fill out that will help identify where the most effective outreach for the largest number or most influential persons can take place.

Ready to get to work? Start with the Beyond the Page exercises below.

TABLE 21.

Mobilization Planning: Examples from Nepal

A SPECIFIC NAME FROM THE NEPAL STORY'S SPECTRUM OF ALLIES DIAGRAM	WHERE COULD YOU FIND THIS GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL?	WHAT KIND OF COMMUNICATION IS MOST EFFECTIVE FOR REACHING THEM?	WHAT IS THE COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF TARGETING THIS GROUP?	HOW CAN THIS GROUP PUT PRESSURE ON THE PRIMARY OR SECONDARY TARGETS?
<i>Politically aware Nepalese University students</i>	<i>University class, youth housing, teahouse, clubs</i>	<i>Word of mouth, leaflets, posters (texting, social media)</i>	<i>Easy to reach, low cost, potentially high numbers gathered in one place</i>	<i>Willingness to join street actions/strikes, will mobilize to canvass others to take action</i>
<i>Poor rural Nepalese farmers</i>	<i>On their farms, local teahouses, temples, community gathering spot</i>	<i>Word of mouth, at community events, religious events (many farmers are not literate so no printed media)</i>	<i>High cost—need 1:1 contact but could help us reach other farmers + religious groups; primary target family lives nearby</i>	<i>Power of strike—withholding production, can mobilize to pressure local relatives, affect business as usual</i>
<i>and so on . . .</i>				

Beyond the Page #1

Prioritize Targets or Key Stakeholders

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Identify and prioritize primary and secondary targets or key stakeholders
- Practice using a simple table assessment matrix to identify where the most effective outreach for the largest number or most influential persons can take place

SETUP:

You will need large sheets of paper, markers, and a completed Spectrum of Allies and Opponents Diagram from unit 5, page 86

HOW IT IS DONE:

1. Select a current campaign or peace process you are working on or use any of the Front Line stories in this guide for inspiration. Note this on the top of table 22.
2. Gather your previous work with the Spectrum of Allies and Opponents tool, or start by following the directions for using the tool in unit 5, page 86.
3. Note any specific target or stakeholders you have identified in your Spectrum of Allies and write them in the far-left column in table 21.

TABLE 22.

Mobilization Planning

CAMPAIGN/MISSION:

SMARTT GOAL:

A specific group or individual from the Spectrum of Allies and Opponents	Where could you find this group or individual?	What kind of communication is most effective for reaching them?	What is the cost-benefit analysis of targeting this group?	How can this group put pressure on the primary or secondary targets?

4. Move across the table and fill in answers to the questions across the top in the appropriate boxes as modeled in the **How do we identify and prioritize targets or key stakeholders?** section above. If you cannot answer any of the questions, note that further research is needed—and do it before completing your assessment phase.

5. When you have added several groups or individuals to the table, take a moment to compare and contrast your notes. Since we all have limited resources, careful use of them is key to success. If the cost-benefit analysis of moving any particular group is too high, this comparison can help identify where the most effective outreach for the largest number or most influential persons can take place.

Beyond the Page #2

Synergizing Strategic Planning Time Line

This exercise creates a calendar that brings your goal time lines together. This is a key way to ensure that all the strategic planning completed becomes actionable and achievable. After prioritizing your SMARTT goals and determining whether they

are internal, external, network/outreach, identify the main steps that would need to be taken to achieve these goals, and place them on a combined time line. Then do a reality check on the feasibility of the time

FIGURE 26.

Example Time Line



line, thinking about access to resources and staff, and insert assessment points.

An additional tool to help think through, when, how, and by whom a certain task or activity should be performed is an **action implementation plan**. You can find an example action implementation plan below. Not all goals need to be worked on at the same time; in fact, very few organizations or movements have the resources to do everything they would like to do at any given moment.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Develop a strategic planning time line into a unified calendar to support effective conflict transformation

SETUP:

- You will need space for small group breakout sessions and a place to hang several (three to six) sheets of chart paper horizontally along a wall to make a giant chart that will be the time line.
- You will need markers and sticky notes (or small pieces of paper and tape), preferably in three colors to distinguish among the three goals.
- Prepare the basic blank time line ahead of time or while the small groups are working out their strategic steps from the SMARTT goals. Hang the paper at a height that is easily reachable by everyone.

- Divide the time line horizontally into three sections, for the three goals. Divide the time line into vertical segments that show weeks or months (and years), depending on your planning parameters. See the example diagram in figure 26 and scale it to fit your space on the wall.

HOW IT IS DONE:

1. In small groups, if possible, take the SMARTT goals from unit 6 and prioritize them to identify those that are most important to work on for the success of your mission. One fun suggestion is to use a visual voting system. Write the goals on flip charts and give everyone three sticky dots of different colors. Assign each color a value (e.g., green = first priority, blue = second, red = third). Instruct people to put their dots on their priorities in each category. This allows some movement and a quick visualization of the sense of the group.
2. Develop the top priorities into strategic steps. If there is time, do more in-depth implementation or action plans to flesh out the planning. See table 23 for guidance. Groups can be broken out by the individual goals.
3. Write the main steps on sticky notes, and place them on a giant time line that is hung on the wall—with a length of time that makes sense for the campaign being developed. Fill the largest

TABLE 23.

Action Implementation Plan

ACTION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

SMARTT GOAL:

SPECIFIC TACTIC:

STEP/ ACTIVITY	COMPLE- TION DATE	RESPON- SIBLE PEOPLE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	POTENTIAL BARRIERS OR RISK	COLLABORA- TORS

wall or vertical space you have with three to eight flip chart papers on their sides (horizontally). Block out the first month or six months vertically so that it is about a quarter of the time line, the next year gets about half of the time line, and the succeeding years get the remaining space. Divide the paper horizontally into three levels for the three SMARTT goals so that there are clear paths across the time line for these different areas of work.

4. Add holidays, opportunities, vacation days, elections, and other external events that were identified in the SWOT exercise or Past Time Line Assessment tool, as well as things that are important to the group (e.g., all-team retreats, anniversary events) to get a sense of overall time commitments.
5. Conduct a gallery walk, where everyone takes a good look at the entire time line as constructed. When everyone steps back, it is time for a reality check:

- a. If there are too many sticky notes in one place, is that realistic?
 - b. What can shift, or needs to?
 - c. What is forgotten?
6. Add in assessment points—times to check strategy. Were SMARTT goals met? Why or why not? The reason they have dates, numbers, and other descriptors and are tied to a theory of change is to support healthy evaluation: Is our strategy working? Do we need to adjust? Add more time? Focus on another tactic?
 7. Plan a full strategic planning session after a significant amount of time—a year or two (will vary with the campaign).
 8. Finally, take a look at each action implementation plan and discuss the following:

- a. Is a person identified as the point person or responsible party? Is there a budget or a way to secure the needed resources?
- b. If no one is responsible for an action or specific step, and there is no budget or a way to secure the resources, the group must acknowledge that, unless these gaps are addressed, it will not happen.

Congratulations! Now that you have your time line and action plans, it is time to get to work. We hope that these exercises—and the entire SNAP guide—have helped deepen your understanding of why and how to strategically synergize nonviolent action and peace-building to advance more just and peaceful societies. As a reminder, if you have any questions or comments about SNAP, please contact us at snap@usip.org. Onward and upward!



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