

NATIONAL ACTIVISM STRATEGY

TOOLKIT

How to develop an activism
strategy for your section



**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

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© Amnesty International (photo: Grace Gonzalez)
Women, girls, men and boys take to the streets in Nicaragua on the Day for the Decriminalization of Abortion in Latin America and the Caribbean, September 2011.

CONTEXT

“Only when the last prisoner of conscience has been freed, when the last torture chamber has been closed, when the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a reality for the world’s people, will our work be done.”

Peter Benenson, Amnesty International Founder on Amnesty at 40.

Amnesty International is a movement of ordinary people standing up for human rights. Without a broad base of individual, group and mass activism Amnesty loses its unique identity among human rights organizations. Activism for human rights is the primary means by which Amnesty’s expertise is converted into a force for change. It is organized around global campaigns, thematic projects, regional and country actions, individual case work including urgent actions, crisis work and tactical campaigning and human rights education. Activism methods are adapted and developed according to the context and as the needs of campaigning change.

The campaigning environment we’re working in is changing, both externally and internally. The *Impact Assessment of Activism Project* (Index: ACT 10/017/2011) carried out from 2009 to 2011 highlighted the need for a strategic approach to activism. For the success of Amnesty’s human rights campaigns now and into the future it is important to ensure that Amnesty’s activism and the activism it enables among others, is primed to meet contemporary human rights challenges, is attractive, rewarding and motivating for activists, is deployed strategically and thus is as effective as it can be in its contribution to the defence of human rights, both globally and locally.

Therefore, a strategic activism mindset needs to be shared and embedded in the movement, and developing an Activism Strategy at Section level is one of the means to ensure that Amnesty’s activism is effective and contributes to human rights change.

With this in mind, the Global Group on Activism (GGA) has produced this toolkit for the development of national activism strategies drawing from the experiences of Sections and Structures who have developed activism strategies already and through the participation of the activism community.

The aim of this toolkit is to provide step by step guidance for the development of national activism strategies by Sections, Structures and national offices (hereafter referred to as Sections). This can be adapted to produce regional activism strategies. Although many of the principles and steps outlined in this toolkit also apply to the development of an Activism Strategy for a specific campaign, it is not aimed at supporting that process. This toolkit helps you think through the key questions in strengthening your activism and increasing its impact. It will help Sections review their existing Activism Strategy, and provides a structure for those who are yet to start. It should be useful for Sections of all sizes and capacity – the thought process is the same, even if the methodology can vary depending on capacity and resources. Sections of various sizes have gone before you, so don’t let it daunt you! This toolkit will help you along the way, step by step.

All appendices to this toolkit, with practical tools and examples, are collated in a separate document (Index: ACT 10/004/2014) and can be found at <http://bit.ly/1zzEeUk>

If you have any questions or would like support in developing your Activism Strategy, don’t hesitate to contact the Global Group on Activism at Global.Group.Activism@amnesty.org or the Activism & Youth Unit at the International Secretariat at AYU@amnesty.org.



Students light lanterns with photos of the Letter Writing Marathon cases, Poland, December 2012.
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OUTLINE OF THE TOOLKIT

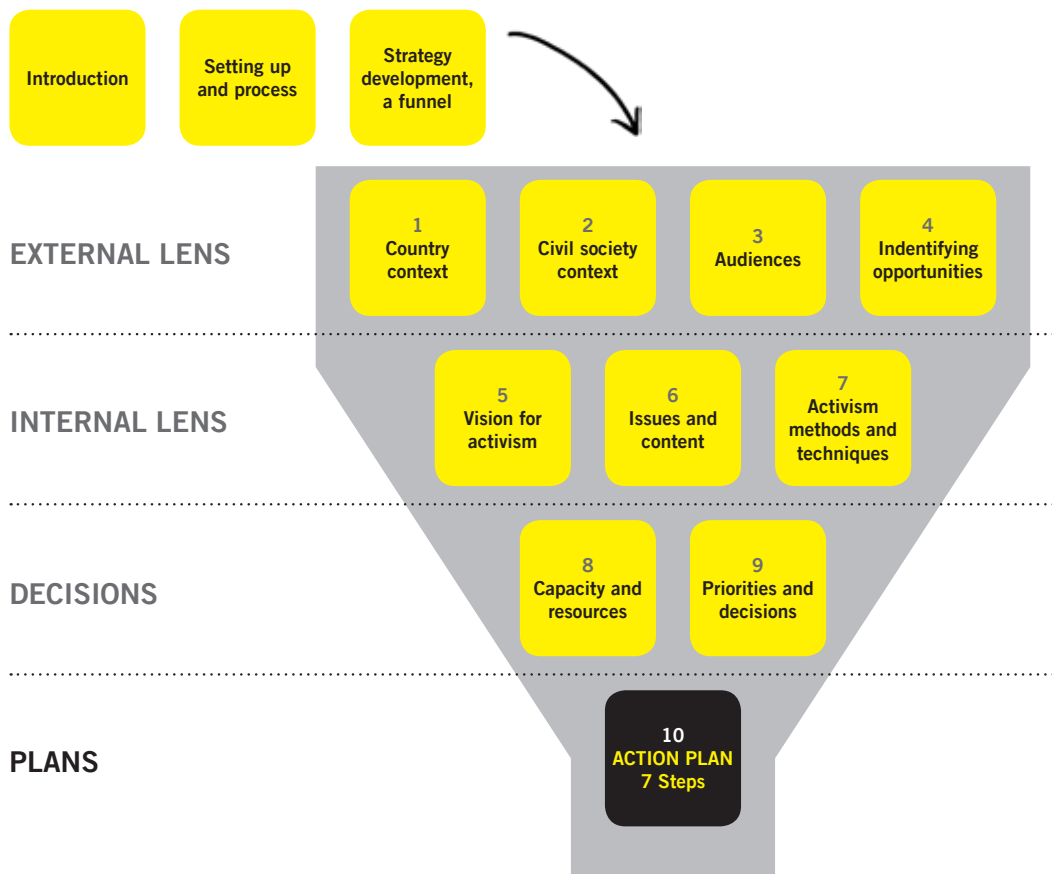
Although developing an Activism Strategy follows the same principles of developing other strategies in your Section, this toolkit captures the unique aspects of developing activism strategies at the national level. The exercise is like a funnel, or a coffee filter, with ideas distilled through external information and an assessment of internal factors. The most important elements are concentrated and drop out of the bottom as an action plan, based on a realistic assessment of what you and your Section can achieve.

The toolkit is organized with this structure in mind, with sections on the point of having an Activism Strategy (pages 4-8), and getting set up (pages 9-11). The “funnel”, which will help you in your strategy development, is described at page 12 (Strategy Development).

The structure of the chapters helps you distil your ideas as you gather information and understanding and come up with a realistic plan. It starts with an External Lens (Chapters 1-4) – the outside world, and then goes on to the Internal Lens (Chapters 5-7).

This helps you think about Amnesty International’s and your own Section’s priorities and boundaries. Finally you come to assessing capacity and resources, and making Decisions (Chapters 8-9) which will inform your Action Plan (Chapter 10).

You may find yourself thinking about some of these chapters in parallel, or in a slightly different order, since they are inter-connected. That’s okay. Use the structure as a guide and checklist, to make sure you have considered everything.



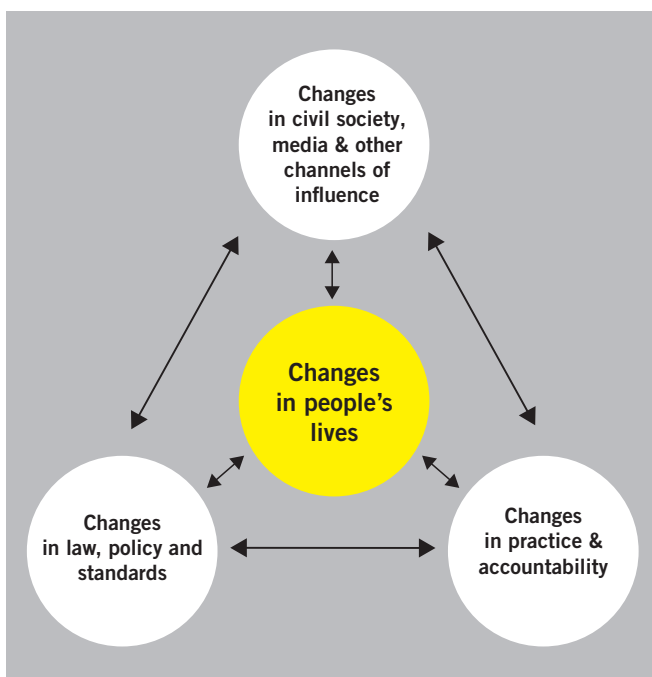
INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS ACTIVISM AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL? WHY MIGHT YOU WANT TO DEVELOP YOUR ACTIVISM?

Amnesty International is a worldwide movement of people who campaign for internationally recognized human rights to be respected and protected. Outraged by human rights abuses but inspired by hope for a better world, we work to improve human rights through campaigning and international solidarity. Amnesty's members and supporters exert influence on governments, political bodies, companies and intergovernmental groups. Activists take up human rights issues not only through various communication and media channels but also by mobilizing public pressure through, for example, demonstrations, vigils and direct lobbying.

In the movement, activism is understood in many different ways. For the purpose of this toolkit activism means individuals, groups, communities and networks taking action to create human rights change.

Amnesty's Dimensions of Change Framework



Activists are central to the campaigning of Amnesty International, because through their action and voice, influence can be brought to bear on those with power. Activism is part of *Amnesty's Dimensions of Change* (Index: POL 50/010/2008). The Dimensions of Change is Amnesty's model of how human rights change is achieved. The different dimensions represent the areas in which Amnesty is expected to make a positive difference as a result of its work. The primary Dimension of Change within this framework is "changes in people's lives". However, while all of Amnesty's interventions are directed ultimately at achieving change for individuals, not all do so by focusing directly on the individual/s. Much of Amnesty's work focuses on influencing the actions of those who have the power to act in a way that affects the lives of these individuals or by changing the legal or social environment affecting the lives of people. Hence, Amnesty's theory of change adopts three other interrelated dimensions: changes in law, policy and standards; changes in practice and accountability; and changes in civil society, media and other channels of influence – this is the dimension that relates to activism.

Activism is one of the tactics in campaigning. As Amnesty International is a membership-based organization and believes in people power, activism is a critical component of its campaigning. A strong, active and resilient civil society is critical for the human rights of all people to be upheld and Amnesty International plays a key role in strengthening the human rights movement.

Activism and activists may look and act differently in different countries, depending on the context, the issues and priorities, the space for activism, and the opportunities and tools that are available and appropriate. How Amnesty International can engage and support activism and activists in a wider context will also be different, depending on the capacity and resources. What works on one issue in one country, may not work the same way somewhere else.



Staff from the East Asia Regional Office and Asia-Pacific Sections develop a strategy as part of the Strategic Campaigning Workshop, Hong Kong, October 2014.

WHAT IS AN ACTIVISM STRATEGY, AND WHY DO YOU NEED ONE?

An Activism Strategy is a road map for building your Section's activism. It defines the vision (an aspiration of what the Section wants its activism to look like in the future), the ambition for activism (the changes you expect or want it to make) and the building blocks to get to that vision. It needs to be forward looking and practical.

An Activism Strategy helps you think about whether or not activism will help to reach your campaigning and growth objectives. It will also help to determine what the most appropriate activism methods and tools are in a given context and to understand and get the required profile of activists you need in your country, to best address your challenges and meet your priorities. Further, the strategy will enhance your capacity to mobilize resources, to think how best to mobilize activists around issues and support them in their journey with the organization.

Importantly, your Activism Strategy is also a means of communicating internally – to your board, colleagues, members, supporters and activists – the key directions to take, the rationale for the choices to make and the investment needed. Sometimes a shift in focus may be necessary as your work may have become routine – doing things because you always did. Creating a strategy and using it is a great opportunity to stop this autopilot and check whether you're going in the right direction.

By Activism Strategy we do not mean your Section's Operational Plan – what you do month to month to serve your priorities. Remember your Activism Strategy is an overarching strategy specific to activism, that links to your Section's strategic plan and objectives around campaigning, communications, growth and fundraising. An Activism Strategy can be part of the theory of change of a specific campaign, but this toolkit is about an Activism Strategy for the whole Section, aligned to your planning cycle.

Every situation is different, there is no single right approach. Instead, there are questions to ask, ideas and tips and others to learn from.

CAN YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?

- Are you clear why you need an Activism Strategy?
- Do you know how and when activism might have influence on particular global, regional and national campaigns and have an impact in your country context?
- Do you know how to build and organize your activist structure, through groups, communities, networks or supporter mailing lists?
- Do you know how to engage activists to participate and stay involved?
- Do you have a realistic plan for your activism?
- Have you written it clearly so others can understand it?

If you answer YES to all of these questions, you have a strategy.

If you answer NO to at least one question, you need one.



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ACTIVISM STRATEGY OR GROWTH STRATEGY? WHICH COMES FIRST?

Is an Activism Strategy part of a broader Growth Strategy or is growth in activism an element of an Activism Strategy? It's chicken and egg!

Fortunately, there are positive links between growth and activism: growth can generate more activism and activism can generate growth, together they can achieve human rights impact. However those positive links do not develop automatically and unless you clearly link them in your strategies you may fail to take full advantage of them.

You can choose to have one strategy incorporating both, otherwise if you choose to develop a Growth Strategy and an Activism Strategy they need to be mutually supportive, very well aligned and each contributing to the achievement of the other. Growth in activism could appear in both. But how you grow your activism should be more detailed in the Activism Strategy. The Growth Strategy, on the other hand, could go into more depth on getting more out of activists, that is activists can be agents of growth by actively recruiting new activists. The Activism Strategy can also be a means of designing how to engage and retain all the different categories of people that the Section aims to grow.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT?

This Toolkit is designed to prompt your thinking process. You can decide how you address the areas to suit your own needs and capacity.

It is structured to help funnel your thinking from the external environment and the issues you want to deal with, through your internal capacity and resources, to a place where you can review opportunities and capacity, and make decisions on priorities. From this, you can make a plan.

There is a chapter on each of the steps outlined in the "funnel". The chapters are broken down into why this step in the development of an Activism Strategy is important; what questions you might ask; how you could answer these questions, including suggestions for sources of information and tools you could use. Finally, there are tips of what to do or not do when developing this step of your Activism Strategy, based on lessons learned from Sections who have been through the process. These are all sample questions and tools to prompt your thinking, not an exhaustive list.

The important thing is to do as much of the thinking as you can, based on as much information as you are able to put together.

Image left: Section staff and youth activists develop “circles of change” at the Global Training of Trainers Workshop on Sexual and Reproductive Rights, London, October 2014.

Image right: Amnesty Morocco mark the launch of Amnesty’s global campaign, My Body My Rights, March 2014.

HOW MUCH TIME WILL IT TAKE TO DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY?

This Toolkit is to help you with the process and the thinking. Developing an Activism Strategy should not be a burden. Some Sections have done it over a period of one year, some others have done it in a three-day workshop, bringing representatives of a range of stakeholders into the room. Size of Section is not a factor! A range of Sections of different sizes and capacities have developed Activism Strategies appropriate to their context. Look at other Sections’ plans and seek advice on what was useful or not for them.

- Appendix 2 describes the process that a few Sections across the movement went through while developing their Activism Strategy.
- If you would like to see examples of some Sections’ Activism Strategies, they are available at <http://bit.ly/1AdEGus>

If you don’t have much time or capacity start with what you know already. You probably already have a good idea based on the experience and knowledge in your Section. Use what you know and make educated assumptions for what you don’t. At the very least you need to get an outside perspective to check your assumptions.

You might not have enough information to know where to start. If you already have an Activism Strategy/plan – stand alone or as part of other Section strategies – you may want to check whether it is comprehensive, links well to your other Section’s strategies, and is still relevant to your current context. You might want to take a bit more time to do detailed analysis, and engage your team, other teams in your Section, the leadership, members, activists, young people, rights holders and partners in the process.

Throughout this toolkit there are suggestions on how to go about collecting information. They are ideas based on what some different Sections have done, from workshops, to focus groups, to external research.



Decide what suits your needs, depending on what time and resources you have available.

Remember that the world changes fast. Make sure your strategy is not out of date by the time you have finished it! Also ensure to adjust it if major changes occur which affect the strategy, or your assumptions will no longer be valid. It should be a living document.

Write a document you will use. It is to focus and capture your thinking and plans and bring everyone on the same page. Don’t write a document merely to satisfy others. It has to work for you and your Section. It can be long or short as long as it works for you and your Section.



Image left: Flock of balloons for the “To Russia with Love” Campaign by Amnesty Brazil on Ipanema beach, Rio de Janeiro, September 2013.

PRINCIPLES THAT UNDERPIN YOUR ACTIVISM STRATEGY

The *Seven Action Points for Effective Activism* (Index: ACT 10/011/2011) that came out of the movement-wide Impact Assessment of Activism outline the factors that facilitate effective activism. These are good practices which – if put in place – are more likely to make our activism effective. Understanding and using these seven action points as principles that underpin your Activism Strategy can help give a framework to your activism approach. The seven action points for effective activism are:

- Plan for Impact
- Engage with Rights Holders
- Gain Activist “Ownership”
- Make Relationships Count
- Innovate and Take Risks
- Adopt an Integrated Approach
- Ensure Impact through Reflection and Learning



SETTING-UP AND PROCESS

You cannot produce a strategy on your own. You cannot deliver it on your own either. An Activism Strategy cannot live in isolation from the rest of the Section's plans, but has to be linked to and support the other plans.

Your Activism Strategy will need to be understood and supported by the rest of your Section.

10 THINGS TO MAKE SURE THE PROCESS AND YOUR ACTIVISM STRATEGY WILL WORK:

01 Organizational Context

Does your Section have a Strategic Plan and Growth Strategy that provide the context for an Activism Strategy, or suggest where activism, growth, campaigning and fundraising might integrate? Be clear of policy guidelines and parameters you need to work with. Are you clear on priorities outlined in the global plans, and where these are relevant to you?

Make sure your Activism Strategy is aligned to and supports wider Organization and Growth Strategies, and any other policy guidelines. Think of your Organizational Strategies as a set of Russian Dolls, one inside the next.

02 Responsibility and Authority

Who commissions/is the sponsor of this strategy? It could be yourself, the head of your department, Section Director, Board or even the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Who needs to approve and sign off the strategy? Who is responsible for owning and delivering it?

Make sure the right decision-makers support the strategy, that there is a clear project lead and responsibilities are clear. Use the RACI model for this – who is Responsible, Accountable, needs to be Consulted or Informed.

► TOOL A IN APPENDIX 1 - RACI

03 Stakeholders

Are you clear who needs to know about and be involved in developing the Activism Strategy? Who else will contribute to delivering it? Whose work will be affected by it?

Map the stakeholders who will influence the success of the strategy, and who it will have an impact on. Ensure a diverse range of stakeholders (for example gender, age, functions within the Section, levels of engagement of members, activists, supporters, external stakeholders).

► TOOL B IN APPENDIX 1 – STAKEHOLDER MAPPING TOOL

Image right: Activism and Youth Coordinators inspire, share and create at the Global Activism Skillshare, London, November 2013.

04 Approach

How participatory can you be, balancing the need for buy-in and ownership with the right input to get the job done within a reasonable time? How widely can you involve other colleagues in your Section, members, activists, supporters, partners and rights holders to gain diverse perspectives and challenge thinking?

Make sure you are clear what level of consultation will be necessary, for both buy-in and input, with whom, and at what stage.

Example:

Amnesty South Africa held an Activism Strategy development workshop that was split into two parts – the first part was a staff workshop to reflect on their activism, ways of working and have a common understanding of the general direction they wanted to take their activism. In the second part of their workshop they invited members, activists, youth activists, working group members (equivalent to board members) and partners to jointly develop the Activism Strategy. This mix of perspectives was extremely beneficial. The participants brought different views and expertise, which was especially helpful in analysing the external context and the direction that Amnesty South Africa's activism should go in. It enabled a wide buy-in to the strategy from a range of stakeholders, a better understanding of Amnesty South Africa's work and increased potential for engagement from Amnesty South Africa's partners.



05 Project Team

Will a project team help you, or will a meeting(s) or workshop suffice? The composition of the project team will depend on the skills and experience you need.

Make sure you have people with the right expertise and perspectives to support the process.

06 Terms of Reference

Is the scope of the mandate clear, with defined outputs and outcomes, with clarity over roles and responsibilities?

Make sure the Terms of Reference are understood and agreed by the participants and their managers.

SETTING-UP AND PROCESS

Image right: Cards received in support of Coastei Street families, UK, March 2013.

07 Project Plan

Do you have a clear idea of how you will do the strategy development, from its initiation through consultation to its approval? Where are you in relation to the organizational planning cycle and timeline? Have you realistically estimated and secured the amount of human and financial resources you will need? Is monitoring and evaluation of the project built into your project plan?

Make sure you are clear about the process of how you are going to develop your Activism Strategy, and when it will be done and by whom. Set a clear timeframe and budget.

08 Advisors/resource people

Do you have internal and external advisors/resource people (for example sector experts, members, activists, supporters, NGOs, rights holders) to advise and challenge your thinking? These are particularly important if you do not have a lot of data and have to make assumptions. What advice can you get from the International Secretariat Activism & Youth Unit, and from Amnesty Sections similar to yours?

Make sure you have people to test your thinking and assumptions.

09 Review and Learn

Have you reviewed your activism work/plans? What have you done before that worked and didn't work? What lessons have you learnt? How can you apply them to developing your Activism Strategy? Have you spoken to other Amnesty Sections and offices to find out what they have done? Who else can you learn from?

Make sure you draw on your own and other's experience, and learn from what you do as you go along.

10 Reality Check

The point of a strategic exercise is to think big and set a road map, which you can use to make the case for investment. But at the same time, you will have to be realistic. Try to anticipate likely capacity and budget parameters. Is there anything else that could prevent you from developing and then implementing your strategy? Are there threats and risks you can anticipate at every stage to see whether this strategy is relevant and achievable?

Make sure you've thought through all the above ten points. Investing in the process will make it easier along the way!

► **TOOL C IN APPENDIX 1 – RISK ASSESSMENT**



TIPS



- Don't reinvent the wheel – there is a wealth of experience of developing Activism Strategies available within the movement. Ask the International Secretariat Activism & Youth Unit which other Sections are similar to you (whether in size, experience, stage in the process), and ask for existing models, templates and other tools. Also, share your own.
- Document the process.
- Keep records of sources of information, people you talk to, photos and notes of meetings. They are all resources for the future, and for other people to learn from.
- Think about how you could involve existing and potential activists and volunteers, for example helping with interviews, holding focus group meetings, or conducting surveys online for example through Survey Monkey.

Survey Monkey

Survey Monkey is a free online tool that helps you to create, publish and evaluate the results of a web-based survey. The Survey Monkey website provides template surveys you can copy, collects responses on your personalized URL, and delivers free analytical tools to help you evaluate what your survey results mean.

www.surveymonkey.com

- Think about the context of your Section.
- What stage of development is it in? Is it growing? Facing crisis? Restructuring? How will an Activism Strategy support or be affected by that?
- Communications. Make sure to keep sponsors, stakeholders and budget holders on board with appropriate communications. If you're a funded Section, also keep the Resource Allocation Mechanism (RAM) team at the International Secretariat informed.

TOOLS



- RACI template
- ▶ **TOOL A IN APPENDIX 1**
- Stakeholder Analysis
- ▶ **TOOL B IN APPENDIX 1**
- Risk Assessment/Management Template
- ▶ **TOOL C IN APPENDIX 1**

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT – A FUNNEL

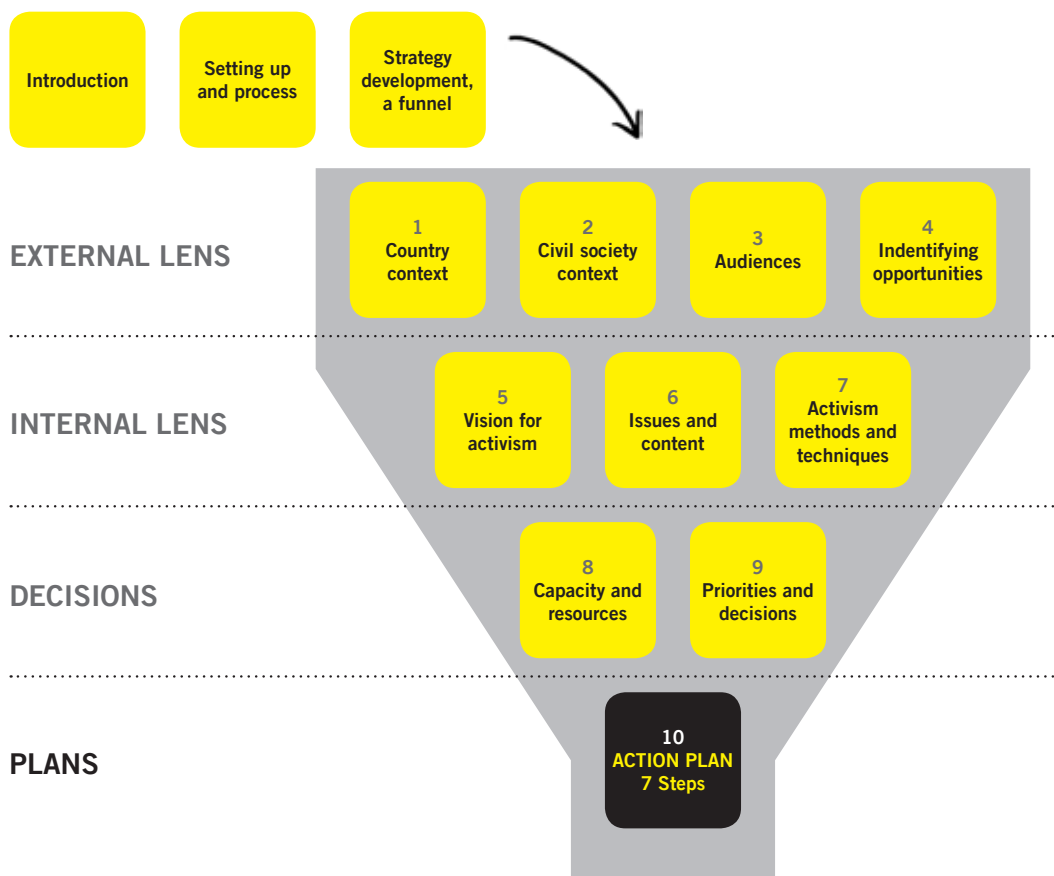
As mentioned earlier, developing an Activism Strategy is like a funnel with ideas filtering through and the most important elements informing your eventual action plan. It starts by looking at your external environment. What are the challenges? What is going on, in the country, in the region and in the sector? What could you achieve? Which people could you engage? While there are four suggested areas to think about, there is a lot of cross-over and some information may apply to more than one area.

Then look at your internal context. What are existing global, regional and national plans and priorities? What human rights changes does Amnesty as a movement want to achieve in your country? How can activism in your country support that? Where could your Section add

value locally to campaign issues? What activities and methods of mobilization do you have available to you? Then you assess the resources and capabilities you have available to you. Are they appropriate to match your Section's ambitions? What resources and capabilities do you need to have? And in light of this, what priorities and decisions can you take?

With that information, you can make a plan that should ensure that your resources and capabilities are directed most effectively at having the most impact. It will include the investment and support you might need to deliver it.

Here's the "funnel" again with ten steps to help you while developing your strategy.



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CHAPTER 1

EXTERNAL LENS – COUNTRY CONTEXT

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Amnesty adopts different approaches in different countries based on local realities, challenges and opportunities. Some of these experiences may be relevant to your context and you may benefit from learning from others. At the same time, it is important to think about what is both appropriate and possible for your country.

Example:

It is critical to understand the context in which you're trying to generate activism. The Brazil impact study on Police Accountability in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro (Index: ORG 30/008/2009) highlighted that the postcard action had limited impact due to the choice of target and the activism tool: "All postcards produced were addressed to the Governor of Rio De Janeiro; however...it was widely known that the governor was a 'puppet' with no real decision making power..." The postcards proved to be of little use for the favela residents' – who were the primary stakeholders – demands for accountability or in efforts to have their voices heard: "Local people didn't have the resources to post the cards and didn't know about the government receiving international ones... some expressed doubts about the [postcards'] relevance...Radio and TV were thought to be more effective in getting a message across."

QUESTIONS TO ASK



- What are the relevant political, economic, social, cultural and technological trends in your country?
.....
- What spaces exist in your country for NGOs and the broader civil society?
.....
- What is the state of the human rights movement in your country, which Amnesty is part of?
.....
- What influence and impact can activism have in your country (or not)?
.....
- What are the activism trends in your country? What do people do and don't do?
.....

HOW TO ANSWER THEM



- Brainstorm things you know already, including your assumptions. Make sure to involve different stakeholders in the brainstorm to bring in a range of views
.....
- Monitor and document media reports of activism in your country
.....
- Look at existing secondary information – media, research, statistics
.....
- Surveys/interviews/focus groups with academics, activists, politicians, journalists, community leaders, partners and NGOs
.....

Image right: Residents and activists in Kibera informal settlement, Nairobi, participate in the week of action against forced evictions and for housing rights, Kenya Forced Evictions Roadshow, March 2012.

USEFUL TOOLS



- The PESTLE model is a good starting point. A PESTLE analysis is an analysis of the environment as a whole in which an organization operates. Remember to focus on the context for activism. Your Organization Strategy probably has a wider analysis of the context in which Amnesty operates.

▶ TOOL D IN APPENDIX 1 – PESTLE ANALYSIS

TIPS



- Don't just rely on your assumptions. You may have an exaggerated view of the opportunity for activism when you are close to it. Find advisers, including outside the sector, who can test your assumptions.

Example:

Amnesty France consulted with external people for an objective perspective. They invited Johanna Siméant to their AGM in 2012. She is a sociologist specialised in engagement and mobilization in French society. They also looked at information from many sociological studies on the evolution of activism and mobilization in France (for example J. Ion, F. Sawicky, etc). They gathered information from organizations who do annual evaluations on engagement in civil society in France (such as France Bénévolat). And they gathered information from think tanks such as Terra Nova who made recommendations based on the Obama presidential campaign in 2008.

However, don't spend too long on this. You need a good enough picture to inform your strategy, but you are not writing an academic thesis.



CHAPTER 2

EXTERNAL LENS – CIVIL SOCIETY CONTEXT

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Knowing and understanding your sector allows you to build alliances with partners, but also to draw on support, insight and advice, and learn from the experience of others. It is useful to know what organizations and issues may be “competing” with you in the minds of different audiences and stakeholder groups. Maybe they are complementary, maybe not.



New Zealand supporters take part in Auckland's Pride Parade, New Zealand, February 2013.

QUESTIONS TO ASK



- Who else is engaged in activism (other NGOs, social movements, unions, civil society)?
-
- What issues do they work on? What do they do?
-
- What audiences do they engage with (groups, individuals, communities, organizations)?
-
- What activities do they undertake? Are these different to the activism methods and tools Amnesty uses?
-
- Which activism methods and tools, including digital, are working well? Are they adaptable to Amnesty?
-
- Who is doing it well? What reputation do they have? What can you learn from them?
-

HOW TO ANSWER THEM



- Talk to other NGOs, their activists and think tank organizations
-
- Commissioning external market research by an agency, where resources permit NGO benchmarking exercises.
-
- Advertising agencies may be willing to offer pro bono support.
-
- Engage with other organizations in your sector, be open about Amnesty, its structure and agenda, but above all, listen.
-

Example:

Amnesty Netherlands contacted various international and local NGOs and held a brainstorm meeting with them. Also, several scholars were contacted and interviewed. This informed Amnesty Netherlands on how other organizations deal with changes in engagement and how they see Amnesty and Amnesty's activism. This helped to identify what challenges Amnesty faces in the Netherlands in terms of activism and to find (new) ways of dealing with challenges in the mobilization of activists/growth in activism.

USEFUL TOOLS



- Matrix mapping is a simple way of mapping organizations on different axes to determine how you relate to others. This gives you an idea of where Amnesty International, and your Section, sits in relation to others.

Example:

Axes that you might use in your matrix mapping:

Approach (Community Organizing/Advocacy)
versus
Focus (Development/Human Rights)

Size (small-big Financial/Membership)
versus

Profile (low-high Awareness/Reputation)



TIPS



- Don't ignore activist organizations around issues that might be in opposition to yours. It is important to know what you are competing with in the community. They may have strong influence and support, but also tactics to watch and possibly learn from.
- If you are interested in collaborating with other NGOs in your activism, here is a useful tool:

Partnering for Change: A guide to working effectively with others in campaigning
(Index: ACT 10/005/2012)

The guide covers a wide range of different types of relationships, from formal coalitions to informal contacts. It sets out to give Amnesty staff, primarily in Sections, a framework to clarify and improve the process of working with others to develop, deliver and evaluate our campaigning strategies and projects. It includes examples of how Amnesty has delivered its campaigning work through working with others and offers practical tips on developing effective partnerships. It also reminds us all of the principles and values underpinning partnership work.

CHAPTER 3

EXTERNAL LENS – AUDIENCES

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

All good communication and engagement starts with knowing and understanding who you are talking to. Otherwise, you are simply broadcasting information. You will need to know what groups of people – whether demographics (age, gender, income, ethnicity, social status, geographical spread), community or professional interest group – you are talking to. You will need to know what issues concern them, and what their motivations could be for engaging in activism. You will have several audiences, and you will need to tailor your communications to each accordingly, to be effective.



Members of the Sawhoyamaxa community in a workshop with Amnesty International, Paraguay, November 2008.

QUESTIONS TO ASK



- What audiences are you already engaged with (members, supporters, activist, students, rights holders)? Why are they engaged in activism with Amnesty?
.....
- Where are possible other audiences?
How do you reach them?
.....
- What contribution does each make to your current activism?
.....
- Could you engage more people in these audiences?
.....
- What other groups or audiences are concerned about Amnesty's issues?
.....
- What issues concern them and what are their motivations for getting involved?
.....
- What are their expectations and needs that you will need to meet or manage?
.....
- How attracted are they likely to be to activism?
.....
- What are possible entry points for people to engage – issues or activities?
.....

HOW TO ANSWER THEM



- Focus groups with difference audiences.

► TOOL E IN APPENDIX 1 – FOCUS GROUPS

- Mapping of potential new activists, based on the profile of activists you need.
- Segment your audiences to see how many types of audiences you are engaging with, and how many people are in each.
- Analyse your contact database. This can be as simple as a gmail account or an excel spreadsheet, where you can flag contacts into categories. Or it can be a large complex database that can manage tens of thousands of records requiring data analysis.
- Ensure that you collect contact information and data on interests, skills, level of engagement and stage of people's activist journey and types of activity they do with you.

TIPS



- Analyse your existing communications materials. Who are they aimed at and for what purpose? Imagine your audiences receiving them – are your materials what they will find relevant? Are the materials in the correct style and language? Amnesty's Strategy & Evaluation Unit's Communication and Stakeholder Template can help to develop a communications plan based on an analysis of your audiences.

► TOOL F IN APPENDIX 1 – COMMUNICATION & STAKEHOLDER TEMPLATE

- If you have access to data analysis, consider doing a proper profiling segmentation exercise of your supporter database. This is best done with fundraising colleagues so you have a full picture of your audience engagement. Talk to your database administrator about what is possible.

Example:

Amnesty International Australia runs a regular data analysis programme in which they compare their database with demographic data from the national census and voting data from recent election results to get a breakdown by postcode of supporter density (proportion of population who are supporters, both actual and predicted), actions taken by issue and method, average donation per supporter, average actions per supporter etc. This analysis enables them to identify areas where Amnesty has the greatest potential for growth and this helps them determine where to concentrate their resources.

In addition they analyse the characteristics and behaviour of lead activists by examining the data held about them in their database. They then find others in the database who most closely match those characteristics and behaviour. These are the potential lead activists to contact in order to encourage greater involvement with Amnesty's campaigns and potentially become future leaders of action groups.

CHAPTER 4

EXTERNAL LENS – IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

This Section is where you make decisions about what might be possible for activism in light of what you have learned in the previous chapters about the country context, the civil society context, and the interests of your audiences. Are you doing the right things with the existing and potential audiences? Could you be doing more? Do you need to do new or different things with different audiences groups to achieve the change you want?

QUESTIONS TO ASK



- How will activism make a difference to Amnesty’s and your Section’s growth, campaigning and fundraising strategies?
.....
- How will activism have influence, given your analysis of the context and audiences? Where will activism not have influence?
.....
- What activism techniques are best suited to your context and to your audiences’ interests and needs?
.....

HOW TO ANSWER THEM



- Talk to activists (existing and potential), partners, rights holders and key external advisors to help you do a power analysis and to understand what influence Amnesty could have directly or through the activism of different partners and audience groups.
.....

Image right: Amnesty supporters attend a protest for the abducted Nigerian Girls held by Boko Haram as part of the “Bring Back Our Girls” Campaign, New Zealand, May 2014

USEFUL TOOLS



- Do a power analysis and influence-mapping exercise. This will visually map the relationships between decision-makers, opinion formers, companies, media, civil society, activist and other groups. Where are the levers to influence change? The website <http://www.powercube.net> is a resource for understanding power relations in efforts to bring about social change.
- A SWOT Analysis will help you look at different activism approaches and different audience groups.

► TOOL G IN APPENDIX 1 – SWOT ANALYSIS

TIPS



- Think about riding waves rather than making them. This means looking to see what issues are in the public eye that you can build on, rather than trying to raise awareness of an issue from scratch. Building a campaign issue on your own is difficult. Are there issues others are working on that you can build on, coalitions to engage supporters in? Find ways to connect your issues with those of other sectors and special interest groups, to reach their constituencies. Think of sectors like welfare, education, environment, youth, religious organizations etc.



CHAPTER 5

INTERNAL LENS – VISION

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

At this point, remember you are thinking about the activism capacity and capability you need to build and strengthen to match your Section’s strategic plans. Not just for the immediate support of campaign goals and activists, groups, networks and communities, but for the longer term. This exercise is to imagine what activism could and should look like, given the political and civil society space, and the concerns and opportunities with different audiences.

In the context of your Organizational Strategies and the opportunities you see for activism in your country context, what activism capability, structure, resources and profile could and should you be aiming to build and/or strengthen within your Section, to deliver your campaign and growth objectives?

QUESTIONS TO ASK



- What do you want your activism to look like in three to five years’ time in terms of scale (number and diversity of activists, type of audience engaged, breadth and depth of activity)?
.....
- Where are you now in terms of your activism and your vision, and how big is the gap?
.....
- How effective is your activism now?
How participatory and relevant to audiences?
How focused on impact? How cost-effective?
.....
- What is changing in your context that will need new approaches or shifts in direction?
.....
- What do you do now that may not work in future and will you need to stop?
.....

HOW TO ANSWER THEM



- Run a “vision” brainstorming exercise across the Section.
.....
- Ask key stakeholders (internal and external) what their vision and ambitions are for Amnesty’s activism in your country.
.....
- Planning backwards from your three to five-year vision is useful for a long-term strategy, especially for building capacity and skills. To get to where you want to be, what steps have to happen, in what order, along the way?
.....

USEFUL TOOLS



- Use the six-year Integrated Strategic Plan / upcoming four year Strategic Goals to help think about what areas you need to strengthen in your activism.
- Refer to the *Seven Action Points for Effective Activism* (Index: ACT 10/011/2011) to derive a set of principles that would apply in your country and Section context.
- Use the data from *The State of Amnesty's Activism – Activism Indicators and findings from the Global Activism Survey* as questions to stimulate your thinking. The document is available at <http://bit.ly/1xFStJj>
- Use the results of your activism audit if you have done one. This can be helpful in getting feedback from experienced activists to help you shape your future vision.
- Use any specific campaign evaluations to learn lessons about campaign actions you've carried out.
- Mapping tools can help you to capture ideas and identify big themes, such as mind maps, word cloud, CATWOE.

► TOOL H IN APPENDIX 1 – MIND MAPPING

TIPS



- While ensuring that you include a wide range of perspectives, be mindful of keeping it manageable in terms of time and resources.
- Think big, and think to the future. Don't limit your thinking by what has always been done before.
- After thinking big, do a reality check to see if it is tangible and practical. Avoid using language that may not be clear to new or external audiences.
- It may be helpful to turn your vision into a drawing or diagram to make it easier to visualise. Test it with different audiences, internal and external.
- Remember that a vision statement is not the same as a mission statement. A vision statement should articulate your dreams and hopes for activism. It is a photograph in words of your future activism. It should answer the question "where do we want to go in our activism?" (not how).
- In Appendix 6 you will find an example of Amnesty Netherlands, who articulated a vision for the future in relation to where they are now in terms of their activism.
- Amnesty South Africa, Amnesty Israel and Amnesty Algeria have developed visions in participatory workshops.

Example:

Amnesty Israel developed a vision statement for their growth strategy. They started by working in groups to each create a vision statement. All the vision statements were then written on a flipchart and compared. In plenary they analysed which were the recurring/similar concepts, which led to a final shared vision statement.

CHAPTER 6

INTERNAL LENS – ISSUES AND CONTENT

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Your Section may have already made choices about what issues and themes you will work on. This may reflect global campaigns, other priority campaigns (global and regional) and your own locally relevant priorities. You can find them in your strategic plan and campaign strategies.

This chapter will help you to make choices about where your activism can be strategically deployed to make greater human rights impact.

If your strategic plan does not give you sufficient guidance to choose the issues/themes to work on over the duration of this strategy, then you may have to carry out a prioritisation exercise in conjunction with relevant stakeholders in your Section.

What Amnesty's priority issues are at a global level, and what they are at a local level, may not always be exactly the same. This will depend on the political space, the social context, and the level of concern for issues among target audience groups. Low interest does not mean you should not prioritise certain issues, but it may mean that effort will be high for the impact, and it may mean that activism engagement does not interest as many people. To be most effective, you have to find the balance between the issues you decide are most important, and those that are most relevant to the local context and audiences.

QUESTIONS TO ASK



- What are Amnesty's priority issues, globally, regionally and locally?
.....
- Are these issues relevant locally, in terms of urgency of the issue, affected rights holders, and opportunities for influence? Do they resonate with relevant audiences?
.....
- Are there opportunities to frame global priorities in a way that is relevant to local or national concerns?
.....
- Will activism have an impact on these issues?
.....
- What issues are relevant to people locally? Are they the same as your priorities?
.....
- What are people interested in/willing to engage in?
.....

HOW TO ANSWER THEM



- Refer to the global strategies, for example, Integrated Strategic Plan/Strategic Goals, critical paths, operational plans, growth strategies, global and national campaign strategies, as appropriate
.....
- Talk to a cross-section of your activists about why they are/are not engaged in an issue, to see where the energy is
.....
- Consult colleagues in your Section to map out priorities
.....

USEFUL TOOLS



- Use available data collected by your Section, or use secondary data where available
- You may consider carrying out opinion polls and market research, where possible, that can provide insight into public concern for certain issues

Example:

Amnesty Peru organized a national survey on people's attitudes to violence against women as part of the 16 days of action for the Stop Violence Against Women Campaign. More than 150 activists participated as "market researchers" and 5,000 people were interviewed.

Sections have used the results from opinion polls to guide research and campaigning and/or to publicise the results in the media. Opinion polls can be a useful tool to use at the start, middle and end of a campaign to monitor any changes in the debate/attitude of people on the campaign issue.

- Use matrix mapping (for example Amnesty importance high/low versus local interest high/low)
- Use SWOT analysis to assess different issues

► **TOOL G IN APPENDIX 1 – SWOT ANALYSIS**

TIPS



- Recognise the difference between an issue that people will identify with because it is locally relevant, and one that they will be concerned about from a wider concern for human rights and solidarity.



Amnesty Peru carry out opinion polls on people's attitudes to violence against women as part of the 16 days of action for the Stop Violence against Women Campaign, 2006

CHAPTER 7

INTERNAL LENS – ACTIVISM METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

In order to have the greatest impact on human rights, Amnesty International employs a range of activities and tactics to engage and mobilize different audience groups, from supporters to activists, to communities, to rights holders. Amnesty’s approach and motives can differ greatly, from being focused on building the capacity of rights holders, to engaging members, activists and supporters around international solidarity action. Activism methods and techniques will vary too, according to audiences and available or preferred channels: for example petitions, rallies, email, SMS actions, street theatre etc.

You need to determine which tools and techniques are likely to be best for your context, issues and audiences, to know which to build and support.



My Body My Rights report launch, El Salvador, October 2014.

QUESTIONS TO ASK



- If you already have activists, how did they come to Amnesty, and can you engage more people the same way?
.....
- What methods are you and your activists already familiar with and using? Which are the most effective in having an impact for your campaigns? Could you experiment with others to see if they could work?
.....
- What methods for recruiting new activists do you use, or do you know what others use?
.....
- What methods of engaging and mobilizing activists are you aware of elsewhere in the Amnesty movement? Which ones could work for you?
.....
- What do you have to offer people? Good training relevant to them, collaboration and sharing experience etc?
.....
- Do you have the systems in place to collect, manage and track data?
.....

HOW TO ANSWER THEM



- Do an audit of your activist base, organize them by the type of activism to see where you have most people engaged, and assess whether this delivers the most impact. This will give you information to make choices on where to focus efforts.
.....
- Refer to your thinking on the earlier External Lens sections (country context, civil society context, audiences, identifying opportunities).
.....
- Work closely with your fundraising colleagues. They will have strong experience of recruiting supporters through various techniques, and experience of managing supporter communications and journeys for larger numbers of people.
.....

USEFUL TOOLS



- Activism matrix from the report on *The State of Amnesty's Activism - Activism Indicators and findings from the Global Activism Survey* available at <http://bit.ly/1xFStJj>. This lists some of the activism methods used across the Amnesty movement, as well as which Sections use them and have expertise in them to share.

- Matrix mapping, listing activities by number of activists versus impact on campaigns. This will give you an idea of the quality/quantity of different audiences and where to concentrate your efforts.

- Do a SWOT analysis to assess the value of different audiences groups in terms of impact on your campaign objectives (see chapter on identifying audiences).

- Supporter Journeys – Think about the different stages in a new supporter or activist's engagement with Amnesty: welcome information, asks and feedback information, different action opportunities.

Supporter Journey:

At the Activism Skillshare in 2013, Amber Macintyre, former Digital Activism Coordinator in the Activism & Youth Unit at the International Secretariat, wrote a "think piece" on Supporter Journeys: can one framework provide you with any model you need? It proposed a "discovery framework" that guides you through the principles behind the varying supporter journey models and help to generate a personalised model for your needs. The steps should help to integrate your organizational goals with your audiences' motivations and result in a personalised model. You will also find examples from a few Sections' supporter journeys at <http://bit.ly/1xAdxRo>

- Problem/solution trees to determine the relative opportunity for success of activism activities

► TOOL I IN APPENDIX 1 – PROBLEM/SOLUTION TREES

TIPS



- Use your existing audiences to reach out to their peers acting as “multipliers” and bringing in new audiences, for example student groups to reach out to student audiences, use partners/contacts among rights holders to reach out to non traditional Amnesty activists etc.

- Make sure you are listening to your activists, feedback to them about the impact in order to keep them engaged. Also, engage key activists not only in implementing activities, but also in planning, monitoring and evaluation for their expertise as well as ownership.

- Learn from other Sections about their organizing models (how they organize their members, activists, supporters, groups, volunteers, networks etc).

- Useful resources from Sections:**
 - Amnesty Burkina Faso has produced a manual at <http://bit.ly/14FEV4y>, on building volunteer networks.
 - Amnesty Ireland provides activist training as a tool for developing and engaging activists. Those that have been trained take more action and stay involved longer.
 - Amnesty Denmark has developed an impact matrix tool to help make decisions about which activism methods and tools to use

► TOOL J IN APPENDIX 1 – IMPACT MATRIX

- Amnesty Sweden has developed a leadership training programme

► APPENDIX 3 FOR MORE INFORMATION

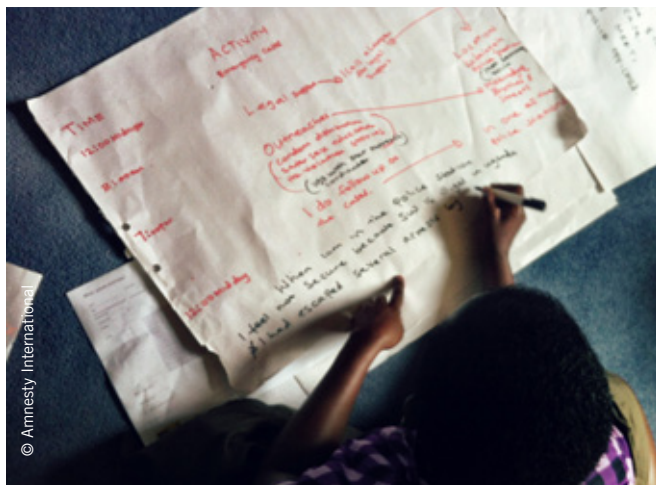
- Also see chapter 3 on Audiences and the example from Amnesty Australia described there.

CHAPTER 8

DECISIONS – CAPACITY AND RESOURCES

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The best ideas and plans will come to nothing if there are insufficient resources to carry them out. This includes people with expertise and required skills, money, tools, technology and infrastructure (for example database systems). It is important to be realistic about the capacity and resources available to you and additional resources you may possibly mobilize, and look at your strategy and ambitions against them. This is the key step before making decisions, because at that stage, the first choice is between doing what you can with what you've got, and getting what you need to do what you want.



Activists and technologists from around the world explore the opportunities and risks of using digital tools in human rights work, Kenya, October 2012.

QUESTIONS TO ASK



- What money, skills, capacity, resources and infrastructure do you have to recruit, engage, manage and work with your audiences (activists, members, supporters, groups, networks and online communities)?
.....
- Is this enough for what you want to do and achieve?
.....
- What skills, capacity, resources and infrastructure do you need to deliver identified goals?
.....
- How can you use your available resources more efficiently and effectively?
.....
- What extra resources are realistic?
.....
- Do you have the right structures and internal relationships to deliver your vision?
.....
- How have you organized or segmented your activists according to how you need to manage and support them (groups, networks, online communities, leaders/coordinators and geographical distribution)? Are you able to meet their different needs with appropriate support and communication?
.....
- What induction, training and capacity building do you already offer and what else do you need in place – for staff, activists and leaders?
.....
- Do you have the right systems and capacity for data capture (contact information and other interests) and management to effectively organize, manage and support your activists?
.....

- How can you engage and organize volunteers/activists to complement your own capacity and resources? Are there “in-kind” donations of support you can get?
.....
- Do the audiences you want to reach have access to technology and which are the most appropriate channels of communication to engage them (for example email, social media, SMS etc.)
.....
- What external resources are available, either pro bono (for example free publicity, materials) or options for out-sourcing if you have budget but not the expertise?
.....

HOW TO ANSWER THEM

- Carry out an inventory of resources, staff and activists’ skills audit and financial budget.
.....
- Do a costing of time, money and other resources needed for proposed activities.
.....
- Talk to other Amnesty Sections and partners who have done similar activities to estimate the capacity and resources needed for projects.
.....

USEFUL TOOLS

- GRAT - Growth Resources Assessment Tool is a tool that is designed to provide a Section with a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of its capacity for growth. It has a list of questions to help map resources and capacity and has a scoring process. The GRAT tool is available at <http://bit.ly/1xkvrq2>
.....
- Use a SWOT Analysis to assess your resource and capacity needs for managing different audiences, and to meet the needs of your vision and goals (see chapter on Identifying Opportunities for more information on SWOT analysis)

► TOOL G IN APPENDIX 1

TIPS

- Think about cost sharing and integration of functions across teams. For example:
- Are you working with fundraising colleagues so that data capture and management is on the same system, which avoids duplication and provides opportunities for a better supporter journey?
.....
 - Are you working with campaigning colleagues to ensure you are recruiting and mobilizing audiences that will engage in campaign priorities?
.....
 - Are you working with other colleagues, for example growth, communications/media to ensure you are recruiting and mobilizing a diversity of activists and supporters to align your strategy with growth priorities?
.....

CHAPTER 9

DECISIONS – PRIORITIES AND DECISIONS

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

This stage is about reviewing all the information you've gathered about the political and social environment, about the space for activism and the opportunities to develop it, and the capacity and resources available to you.

It's time to establish the priorities for your Activism Strategy, and then take decisions about what to do and perhaps what to stop doing, in light of the capacity and resources you have, and any investment you might be able to mobilize.



Activists and technologists from around the world review and test the Panic Button Mobile Application, Kenya, October 2012.

QUESTIONS TO ASK



- Refer back to the key questions on the country context, the civil society context, your audiences and the opportunities that you have identified. Also review your answers to the key questions on your vision for activism, the issues and context and the activism methods and techniques. Check these against your capacity and resources.
.....
- What will further Amnesty's human rights agenda, your Section's strategic plans and organizational priorities in terms of activism?
.....
- Where does your Activism Strategy complement or contradict your other strategies, for example campaigning, growth, fundraising and communication strategies?
.....
- What issues will be relevant to which audiences, and how many areas of work can you manage with your capacity and resources? Which will be relevant to all audiences, and which to specialist interest groups? Which audiences have the potential to deliver the most impact?
.....
- What issues do you need to build awareness on because of their importance in your country?
.....
- What might be immediate and urgent issues, either campaign or capacity building, and what might have a longer timeframe?
.....
- What areas of work will have the most impact for the effort?
.....
- What resources and investment are needed?
.....
- What is the right balance between investing in existing activists and activist structures and recruiting new activists and developing different activist structures?
.....

HOW TO ANSWER THEM



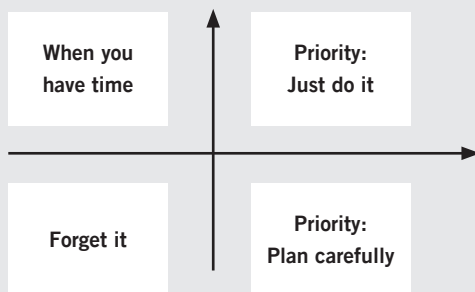
- There's no more information! You have to consider what you know from the information you've gathered in the previous chapters and make judgments as objectively as you can.

USEFUL TOOLS



- Ease/Impact model – What is easiest/most important/has the most impact?

Ease of implementation



- GANTT charts help you think about the scheduling of a strategy to make sure capacity and resources you might need later are prioritised and put in place before they are needed.

GANTT Chart:

This is a type of bar chart that is used to illustrate a project schedule. As well as showing the start and end dates of a project, a GANTT chart displays the main steps that need to be taken at each time period to reach the end goal (completion of the project).

- Using a GANTT chart encourages effective project management as it creates a visual breakdown of a complex project into manageable steps, each of which has a scheduled time deadline.

- How to create a GANTT chart in Excel: <http://www.smartsheets.com/blog/gantt-chart-excel>

- A Force field analysis helps you measure whether your priority is an impossible fight (or not), or the scope there is for it.

► TOOL K IN APPENDIX 1 – FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS

- Matrix scoring/ranking to prioritise your issues. Matrix scoring provides a way to score and compare different things against the same criteria. [Refer to Tool 63 in the International HIV/AIDS Alliance booklet “Tools Together Now: 100 participatory tools to mobilize communities for HIV/AIDS”: <http://www.aidsalliance.org/Publicationsdetails.aspx?Id=229>]

TIPS



- It might seem obvious, but a lot of people who are developing strategies assess the external and internal environment, and think about the vision, but then carry on doing just what they've always done. Avoid this pitfall!
- At this stage you may want to sense-check your priorities and options with your key decision makers before making final choices. Don't forget to consult with the International Secretariat's regional/thematic/growth teams about priorities.
- Remember your Activism Strategy is not carried out in isolation, but should match and deliver in accordance with organizational ambitions cascading from national and campaign strategies.
- Amnesty Ireland works with a useful checklist for choosing issues.

► TOOL L IN APPENDIX 1 – CHECKLIST FOR CHOOSING ISSUES

CHAPTER 10

ACTION PLAN – SEVEN STEPS

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Your strategy guides what you do, taking into account the context, opportunities and priorities, your future ambition and current reality, and your resources. Your action plan documents the practical steps you will take to move from where you are now, to where you want to be.

Remember that your Activism Strategy is not done in isolation, and nor should your action plan be. This is now part of a rolling planning process, and you should align your activism planning into your Section's annual planning process and budget allocation timetable, and the plans of other teams.

STEP 1 – WRITE DOWN THREE TO FIVE PRIORITY GOALS

What will take you towards the vision in your Activism Strategy? This is about the long-term horizon, it should be tied to your Section's planning cycle. For example, if your Section's strategic plan is for six years, your Activism Strategy could also be for six years. Your action plan could span a shorter period tied to your operational plan/budget cycles. Priority goals are the main areas of work you need to focus on to get from where you are now, to where you want to be.

STEP 2 – SET MILESTONES OVER THE TIMESPAN OF YOUR ACTIVISM STRATEGY

Where do you need to be at different points in the future? Working backwards, write down for each of these goals what you will need to do, in the LONG TERM (for example five years), MEDIUM TERM (for example three years) and NOW (for example one year) to build and manage your activism and reach your vision.

STEP 3 – SET SMART OBJECTIVES

SMART Objectives are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic/Relevant, and Time-bound. These are the clear outcomes you expect to deliver in the short term, describing what success looks like. For each, write down the activities needed to achieve them. As you enter into the medium and long-term planning you should make SMART objectives for those as well.

STEP 4 – DEVELOP YOUR ACTIVITIES AND SCHEDULE

From your objectives, detail what you will do and when, throughout the year. Organize activities accounting for key moments in the organizational calendar and available capacity. Develop or refer to your existing supporter journey to make sure you identify the best moments to engage and communicate with activists. Make sure you have a clear and compelling story they want to hear about.

Describe any dependencies you have on other teams/departments in delivering these activities. Have you let them know and negotiated this with their own plans?

STEP 5 – SET UP A MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Make sure you can measure and evaluate progress and success, with clear milestones and Key Performance Indicators written for your objectives. How will you capture learning and changes that are necessary to your implementation plan throughout the year? Three good simple evaluation questions are: Did we do what we said we'd do? Did it make a difference? What will we do differently next time?

STEP 6 – BUDGET YOUR RESOURCES (CAPACITY AND FINANCES)

Make sure you have what you need to deliver your objectives (or to make the case for investment and growth). Do you have the right people, skills, expertise, support and infrastructure? Will you need to invest in these? Will you need to draw on external support and capacity?

STEP 7 – COMMUNICATE, PROMOTE AND USE YOUR PLAN

Make sure your strategy and plan are approved. Make sure it is understood by your team and other stakeholders. Remember it is a document to use, do not leave it on a shelf!

USEFUL TOOLS



- Problem/Solution tree can help define your objectives. Then you can use a critical path tool to break down your objectives so you map out your path to change

► REFER TO TOOLS I AND M IN APPENDIX 1

- Gantt charts – This project planning tool can help with scheduling. Map all activities to a timeline; work out what needs to be done in what order, and how much time they will take. You will see what is dependent on what. This helps identify high, medium and low priorities too (see also chapter 9)

- Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks

► TOOL N IN APPENDIX 1

- Communication plan-template/sample

► TOOL F IN APPENDIX 1

TIPS



- Remember your SMART objectives here are about developing activism as the goal, and not about Amnesty's human rights campaigns! You should focus on engagement, growth, diversity of supporter/activist groups, and appropriate use of activism tools and techniques.
- Make sure you don't have too many objectives. Three to five is ideal.
- Plan backwards from what you want to achieve by when, to determine what you need in place beforehand. This helps prioritize the order and timing of activities.
- Focus on the BIG things first. If you plan the big things into your activity schedule first, smaller things will fit around them.
- Review progress regularly, against your strategy, not just your objectives. Are you still doing the right things, the most important thing(s)?
- And importantly: celebrate success! Recognise individual and group contributions.
- And also: share it! Your experience might be very valuable for other Sections.
- USE YOUR STRATEGY – IT SHOULD BE A LIVING DOCUMENT. DON'T LEAVE IT ON THE SHELF!

CONTACT

If you have any questions about this toolkit or about developing an Activism Strategy, don't hesitate to contact the Global Group on Activism or the Activism & Youth Unit at the International Secretariat.

Please send any queries you may have to Global.Group.Activism@amnesty.org or AYU@amnesty.org

The Global Group on Activism consists of activism staff members from Sections/Structures around the world and two members from the Activism and Youth Unit at the International Secretariat.

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Cover photo: Activists attend an Egypt rally in Trafalgar Square, London, as part of a Global Day of Action, February 2011. © Amnesty International

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Image above: Staff from the East Asia Regional Office and Asia-Pacific sections present their campaign strategy at the Strategic Campaigning Workshop, Hong Kong, October 2014.

Image right: Ballet dancers perform Swan Lake outside the Russian Embassy in London, calling for the Putin administration to end its crackdown on human rights, January 2014.



ОСТАНОВИТЬ
РЕПРЕССИИ

Amnesty International

NATIONAL ACTIVISM STRATEGY

TOOLKIT

How to develop an activism strategy for your section

Amnesty International is a movement of ordinary people standing up for human rights. Without a broad base of individual, group and mass activism Amnesty loses its unique identity among human rights organizations.

In a changing campaigning environment we need to ensure that our activism meets contemporary human rights challenges, is attractive, rewarding and motivating for activists, and is deployed strategically.

An Activism Strategy is a road map for building activism at a national level and having one ensures our activism is effective and contributes to human rights change.

This toolkit provides step by step guidance for the development of national activism strategies by Sections, Structures and national offices. It draws from the experiences of Sections and Structures who have developed activism strategies. The toolkit helps you think through the key questions in strengthening your activism and increasing its impact. It will help Sections review their existing Activism Strategy, and provides a structure for those who are yet to start. It is designed to help funnel your thinking from the external environment and the issues you want to deal with, through your internal capacity and resources, to a place where you can review opportunities and capacity, and make decisions on priorities.

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