

Make your actions count!

This workshop gave participants a chance to think about campaign actions for our new campaign, UKTI: Armed and Dangerous. Groups' ideas are written up below, and the handout from the workshop can be found at the bottom of this document.

Using local targets

Scenario: You live in one of the many cities in the UK which hosts a UKTI office. It is the IDEAS Arms Fair in Pakistan next month, where UKTI will be promoting the British arms trade, including sales to nations with a history of human rights abuses.

Who are we aiming at? Local MPs; Staff in regional office / (London)

What is the message?

- Stop UKTI promotion of arms sales
- Pakistan (use as example because of current arms fair there) – oppression / human rights
- Take money away from development

Ideas of actions

- Staff might be sympathetic
- Play on tensions in the department
- Leaflets for passers-by and different ones for staff
- Try to get local MPs to attend – good for publicity and press
- Approaching local council / trade unions / churches / mosques etc.
- Theatrical, roleplay and eye-catching.
- Direct action (if staff not receptive to talking about issues)
- Anonymous way of staff showing support to CAAT

Tasks

- Gain support from local groups and networks
- get media interested (if not direct action)
- Publicise
- Legal advice / observers
- Notify police? Depends on type of action
- Produce leaflets relevant to staff (do research to find out the facts)
- Find out what local staff think.

Raising awareness locally

Scenario: There is a theatre festival coming up in your town next month when thousands of people from around the country will be around.

Who? General public and festival organisers.

What? General anti-arms trade info; Specifically public money supporting UK's arms trade. Human rights abuses and UKTI's role in this.

How?

- Stall – individual letters to be signed. Double-sided leaflet – one side general arms trade info / other side specific UKTI info.
- Street theatre – UKTI and arms dealers – mobile performance!
- Set up a mock UKTI stall – taxpayers' money subsidising arms trade. Leaflet / message: Artists need not apply – only arms dealers
- Press release – media and photographers

UKTI Fair in your area (1)

Scenario: There is a UK High Technology fair being hosted at a hotel on the outskirts of a neighbouring town next month. UKTI have organised it, although the arms section will not be

present.

Who? Directly – exhibitors; Indirectly – UKTI Board

What? Do you know that UKTI is involved with the arms trade? Inform them of how much of UKTI's work goes on arms sales.

How?

- Write to exhibitors in advance
- give out leaflets
- hold placards
- Send press release, especially local press

Where? Outside hotel on days of fair

Tasks

Reconnaissance of venue; letter writing; press release; inform other groups; leaflet writing and production; concise and clear message; placard making and banner on pavement.

UKTI Fair in your area (2)

Scenario: There is a UK High Technology fair being hosted at a hotel on the outskirts of a neighbouring town next month. UKTI have organised it, although the arms section will not be present.

Who? UKTI Staff

What? Raise arms issue internally

Ideas for action:

- Leaflets and placards – look at what you're missing
- Stay as guests
- Die-in
- Local media / press stunt

Tasks:

Contact press; press release; 'missile' manufacture; placard and leaflet design; reccie/research

Prince Andrew

Scenario: Prince Andrew, ambassador for UKTI is opening a children's hospital in your town next month.

Who? hospital (inform them and try and liaise with them); general public (media, spectators); children's family (patients); Prince Andrew (put him on the spot in public)

What's the message? Contrast between healing children, saving their lives and selling weapons that destroy them. "Saving children here, killing children there."

Where? at the opening of the hospital

How?

- balloons with slogan and CAAT logo
- Monitor Prince Andrew's movements for future targets
- Pictures of wounded children
- Information to give out (about UKTI, reason we are there, CAAT info, link to prince)
- Approach prince and challenge him publicly
- Press release
- Sign
- Nurses with guns? Loads of small coffins? Blood and gore?

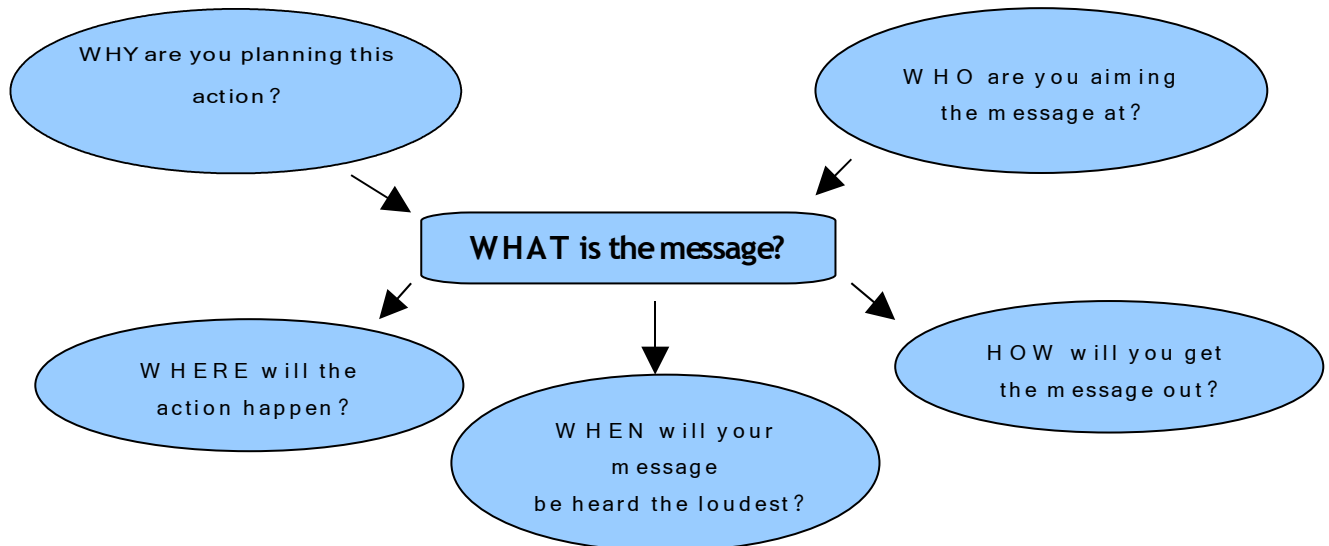
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A quick guide to action-planning

Press stunts, demonstrations, street stalls, direct action and street theatre can all be crucial for winning our campaigns. This briefing gives an introduction to the steps you can take to make your action a success.

An action-planning flowchart

Ask yourselves the following 6 questions when you plan any action. They form a framework that will help you ensure that the action you plan will deliver the results you are looking for:



WHY are you planning this action? What is your aim? What are you trying to achieve? How does this action fit into your wider campaign?

WHERE will the action happen? Is there a venue that will maximise its impact? This might be somewhere symbolic, where you can directly affect decision-makers, or somewhere where your action will get the most attention.

WHAT is the message of your action? Keep it simple and clear and relevant to your target.

WHEN will your message be heard the loudest? Is there a time that maximises the impact of your action? Do you want your action to coincide with a meeting or conference, with the visit of a politician or dignitary? Should it coincide with a public announcement or event? Maybe you want it to happen at a time when the media will be available or when there will be full of commuters or shoppers?

WHO are you aiming the action at? Who do you want to hear your message? Who is your target? Your action might be aimed directly at members of the public, the media, or at decision-makers or staff of a corporation or government office. The way you phrase and communicate your message will vary depending on your chosen target.

HOW will you get the message out? What form will the action take? What tactic(s) will you use? Do you want to do a press stunt, a demonstration or take direct action? Maybe you want to raise awareness amongst the public and can use a street stall or leafleting to achieve that?

Top tips for communicating your message

Keep the message of your action simple – this will make your action more effective. You might have to reduce the number of arguments you make in order to ensure you get one or two across clearly.

Make your action matches your message and ensure it is appropriate to your target. If your message is

targeted at winning public support, then an action which alienates them or inconveniences them might not be the best option. People will remember how you communicated with them more strongly than the message you were trying to communicate.

Resources

What skills do you have within your group? How much money do you have? How much time and energy can you put into the action? Have you got enough people to make it happen? If you lack any of these, can you realistically get them in time?

Involvement

Actions can be an excellent way to build people's involvement in your group and get new people involved. Think about how you can ensure people are included in decision-making about and preparation for the action. Look at ways informal skill-sharing can take place so newer people are encouraged to take responsibility.

Roles that can be shared in an action

Here's just a few of the tasks that might need doing in advance, for your action to happen:

- **Equipment and props** - the materials you will need
- **Transport** - to get props, materials and people to your action
- **Reconnaissance** - look at the venue for where your action will take place .
- **Research** - find some facts and figures that support your action.
- **Communications** - leaflet, banners, placards
- **Media** - news releases, photo opportunities, media spokesperson
- **Publicity** - to invite other people along to the action
- **Briefing** - to let people know what will happen on the day
- **Legal rights** - so you know your rights if you come into contact with the authorities
- **Training and skillsharing** - acquiring new skills for the group or sharing them within the group
- **Venues** - perhaps for the action itself, a debrief afterwards or accommodation beforehand.

Evaluate your action

No matter how well your action goes, it will be an opportunity for learning. Sit down together and ask yourselves what went well and what could have gone better. Celebrate your successes and learn from your mistakes! This will help people continue to work together in future and may be a springboard for you next action as new ideas emerge from the one you have just done!

Thanks go to Seeds for Change (www.seedsforchange.org.uk) who compiled the briefing upon which this is based.