



# PEACE ON THE STREETS

**Toolkit for antimilitarist and pacifist  
youth activism and education**



This toolkit is the outcome of three projects:

- „Peace on the Streets“ training organised in Vienna, Austria from 1-7 June 2019
- „Methods Against War“ seminar organised in Mitrovica, Kosovo from 1-6 June 2022
- „Not Your Soldier“ youth exchange organised in Klosterneuburg, Austria from 10-18 August 2022

All projects have been organised by Service Civil International Österreich (<http://www.sci.or.at>). „Methods Against War“ was organised in cooperation with GAIA Kosovo.

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We thank the participants of all of these projects for their contributions to the toolkit!

Cover photo: Street action during the training „Peace on the Streets“ in June 2019 in Vienna.



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# WHY THIS TOOLKIT?

**This is the outcome of a series of international peace and antimilitarist projects by SCI Austria.** As a branch of the international peace organisation Service Civil international (SCI), we want to stand up for peaceful resolution to conflict, global disarmament and demilitarization. We want to connect our organisation with other befriended networks already or potentially working on this, such as War Resisters International, IFOR, Alliance, ICYE and CCIVS. Our first project „Peace on the Streets“ trained European youth workers from 1-7 June 2019 in Vienna (Austria) how to do street activism around peace with young people. In the seminar „Methods Against War“ in Mitrovica (Kosovo) from 1-6 June 2022, youth workers shared antimilitarist education materials and methods with each other. And with the youth exchange „Not Your Soldier“ in Klosterneuburg (Austria) from 10-18 August 2022, we brought together young people from European countries with active military conscription to share their experiences and to relate them to the peace movement. All of these projects were funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ programme.



**For a lot of young people, violence is acceptable, when inflicted by those in official uniforms.** It is seen as being in a position of power to have a gun or weapon, and this image is reinforced by military promotion. The military is seen as a protector, an institution of safety. And a bringer of job security and perspective for marginalized youth. There are many reasons why people join or support the army,

**We don't talk enough about peace and non-violence.** It is a common practice to export weapons to countries in war, both directly and indirectly. Several countries uphold the military conscription and force young people into military training. We need activism and education to bring critical perspectives on militarism into the public discourse of youth and to give youth opportunities to become active in disarmament, peaceful conflict resolution and peace activism. With this toolkit, we want to create a base for youth workers to come back to for ideas and input.



**Peace activism should be young.** With frames for becoming active in civil society, e.g. through volunteering or street actions, we want to motivate young people to become active citizens around issues of peace, non-violence and antimilitarism. We want to encourage youth to make our democracies more alive, both online and on the streets. With this toolkit, we want to give some incentives on how to work with young people around these issues.

**SCI has a lot of experience with peace activism and it's time to collect some of our skills.** Since its beginnings in 1920 with the first volunteering camp depicted above, Service Civil International in its pacifist roots and values strongly opposes any form of militarization. Instead, we promote a culture of peace that brings people from different cultures and backgrounds together to overcome prejudices and hatred. Usually, we organise volunteering projects in order to reach this culture of peace, which might involve other forms of activism such as the ones described here. There is always an international aspect to our projects.

# PEACE EDUCATION

In the following we describe some methods that youth workers use in their educational practice and have shared with each other or methods that we as SCI Austria have tried out during our youth exchange „Not Your Soldier“. Please keep in mind that these methods are not fully flashed out and will be further tested and renewed in a future version of this toolkit.

## Is it a mouse or a face?

**Topic:** Conflict resolution

**Aims:**

- Get participants to see that there are several perspectives to a topic and to see things from a different perspective
- Make participants aware how difficult it can be to share a practice together with someone who has a different reality than oneself
- Challenge participants to compromise and find resolutions to conflict

**Time:** 15-25 minutes

**Preparation:**

- 3 illustrations printed on A4 papers or bigger (see attachment)
- 1 sheet of A4 paper and 2 pens for each pair of 2 people
- Please be aware that you need 2 facilitators for this method

**Description:** First the participants are split in two groups and lined up in front of each other. Each of them turns their back to someone from the other group. They are told they cannot talk or react to the picture. One facilitator each stands in front of a group with a picture they have to look at attentively for one minute. The first group has a drawing of a mouse and the second group has a drawing of a face (a bold man's profile).

Then participants are asked to turn around and sit together with the person in front of them (from the other group) and that they are not allowed to talk. A facilitator distributes one sheet of paper per pair, but both participants receive a pen each. One of the facilitators holds up the third picture for 5 minutes and asks them to draw the picture they see together on the sheet of paper in silence.

This picture shows a combination of the two previous pictures and it represents neither clearly a mouse nor a man anymore. They might run into the understanding that they have been shown different pictures before and don't see the same thing in the mashed up picture. They can find different ways to cooperate such as turning the paper so that both of them could draw the image by the side in the same time or wait for their turn to

orientate the paper in the right direction and alternate. The facilitators don't give any instructions except that they have to stay silent.

**Debriefing:** Finally, participants are asked to form a circle and they are allowed to speak again. Some reflection questions we propose:

- What happened?
- How did you feel during the activity?
- How did you resolve the conflict you had? What peaceful ways of resolving this conflict are there?







# Non-violent communication

**Topic:** Conflict resolution, non-violence

**Aims:**

- Make participants aware of their emotions and needs and how to communicate them in a non-violent way

**Introduction / background:** Non-violent Communication (NVC) is a method of communication developed by Marshall Rosenberg. This method aims to facilitate dialogue and explores how to manage conflict and express empathy / self-empathy. You can learn how to connect with yourself and others. The concept does not give others the responsibility for how you feel.

With non-violent communication, anger is not bad. It is an emotion that you can express. However, you can express your needs and feelings in a way that is constructive rather than destructive.

According to the pyramid of needs, there is a scale of needs, meaning for some people certain needs are more important than others at different times, but it is subjective what need is important. This method urges us to look at our privilege and have empathy.

**Description:** This exercise is inspired by the activity "The wind blows for the ones who...". Start by making a circle of chairs, with each person sitting on one chair. The facilitator doesn't have a chair and stands in the middle. The facilitator explains that whoever is in the center expresses a need of themselves. For example: „I need collaboration“. If someone has same need, they stand up from their chair and look for a new place in the circle, until there is a new person in the middle.

**Debriefing:** We suggest to first talk about these reflection questions:

- How did you feel during the activity?
- Were some needs universal, while others were not? Can you give examples?

After a discussion, we propose to explain the core of Non-violent Communication as a method: How to express empathy. Give the example of two animals:

- Giraffe - symbol animal, with the biggest heart, heart symbolizes empathy, so if someone acts like a giraffe they show empathy (ears outward)
- Jackal - prototype of the aggressor, who tends to judge others and themselves (ears inwards)

Explain that we all have both animals inside ourselves and can train ourselves to be more like one or the other.

Then introduce how to act like a giraffe:

1. See / Observe without judgement: 'What do I observe (see/hear) that does not contribute to my well-being'.
- 2 Feel / our internal feeling: 'How do I feel in relation to what I observe?'
- 3 Needs: 'What do I need or value that causes my feelings?'

- 4 Action / Request: 'The concrete actions I'd like to be taken ....'

Give an example: I noticed that when I was addressing the group, you were looking at your phone several times. I feel uneasy and I need to feel my attention is being valued, like I value yours. My request is for you to actively participate in the session.

## Identities and Contexts

### Aims:

- Participants reflect about how their identities and become more aware of each other's different positions in society
- Participants reflect about how their identities relate to peace and war

**Time:** 60 min

### Materials:

- papers and pens for everyone
- 1 flipchart paper with these 6 reflection questions:
  1. What makes me me? What different aspects are there for your identity?
  2. How are your identities influenced by your gender, nationality, ethnicity, race, class, age, abilities, etc.?
  3. When and how did you become aware of your identities?
  4. What role have different identities played in your life? What role do they play now?
  5. What challenges do you face around identities in your context? In what ways do you benefit from your identities?
  6. How do your identities influence how you talk about war and peace?

**Description:** Ask participants to write down keywords for these questions individually for 10 minutes. Afterwards, ask them to take a walk with someone in the group for 30 minutes to reflection about their answers. Ask them to make sure they get to the last question.

**Debriefing:** For the reflection, you could discuss questions like these:

- How do you feel after the walk? What were important points that came up in your conversations?
- What answers did you have for the last question?

## War and Peace: a silent exhibition

**Topic:** Militarism and Antimilitarism

### Aims:

- Participants discover different aspects and examples of the consequences of war and militarization and antimilitarist responses to them

- Participants discuss these inputs and relate them to their own lives

**Time:** 60 min

**Materials:**

- flipchart papers with discussion questions
- papers that say „Comment on this video/article here“ for each article or video element
- printed articles and QR codes for videos (see Attachment 1)
- a functioning pen for every participant

**Description:**

Before the activity starts, set up the room with different elements (see Attachment 1):

- Set up flipchart papers with discussion questions.
- Hang up QR codes for videos to watch on the wall (or place one laptop with headphones for each video and distribute them in the room). Put papers that say „Comment on this video here:“ next to each video.
- Place articles in the room. Also here put posters for comments next to each article.

Once the session starts, give participants the instructions for the Silent Exhibition:

- Tell them to take a pen and walk around the room. Explore the videos by scanning the QR codes with your phone, read the articles, answer the discussion questions.
- They can comment on each other’s responses to the questions, videos and articles. They can also just make a + next to comments they agree with. Ask them to be nice to each other, even if they disagree on something.
- Tell them they don't need to write your name, it can be anonymous.
- Ask them to say their last words to each other and then to be silent for the next ca. 40 minutes (depending on how long you want them to explore).

Participants then participate in the exhibition.

**Debriefing:** Ask participants to go in pairs and tell them to walk through the exhibition and show each other things they found interesting for ca. 10-15 minutes.

Then have a final debriefing in the big group:

- How do you feel after this exhibition?
- What did you learn? What was surprising for you?

**Attachment 1: Suggestions for Exhibition Elements**

Videos:

- Everyday life of a Ukrainian refugee abroad: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CetTZybAvum/>
- George Bush mistakes the invasion of Ukraine with the invasion of Iraq: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CduKXSfjasM/>
- Balkans and Ukraine war: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CaxcJMUgnfg/>
- Is war over? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbuUW9i-mHs>
- Lego Violence: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDThHosFS\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDThHosFS_0)

- Glock Female Business Owner: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mzMLiyFabeU>
- Why we should ban Lethal Automatic Weapons: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVwD-lZosJE>
- Hiroshima survivor: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ohqe1Su6NY>
- Visit Hawaii: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfAiB2ZoRhM>
- Profit from War in Ukraine: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mgirj9upfRk>
- WW1 Conscientious Objectors at Richmond Castle: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1jdYzLnmnk>
- Timelapse Nuclear weapons: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLCF7vPanrY>

#### Discussion questions:

- Define War
- Define Peace
- Define Militarism
- Define Antimilitarism
- What are the connections of [the country you live in] with war?
- How do (people around) you contribute to militarism?
- Can there be gender equality in the military? Why yes? Why no?
- What personal experiences do you have with the military?
- What are the benefits of having a military? What are the benefits of being a soldier?
- What are the disadvantages of having a military? What are the disadvantages of being a soldier?
- How are wars today different from wars in the past?
- Who are past and present peace activists from your country/community that you admire? Why do you admire them?

#### Cartoons, info graphics, quotes:

- Ukraine: [https://www.instagram.com/p/Cf\\_5JUyNRiK/](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cf_5JUyNRiK/)
- Nuclear deterrence: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CeYy8umqHzp/>
- Conscription by country: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CdGXX0aD7S3/>
- US militarism and climate crisis: <https://www.instagram.com/p/Ccp3vKSPuD5/>
- Yemen: <https://www.instagram.com/p/Cbko1eUt1EC/>
- Nuclear disarmament: <https://www.instagram.com/p/Cba6rZTs4CH/>
- Trans people in Ukraine: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CbKtW4zlcHU/>
- Military-industrial complex: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CaSZhHfpcceY/>
- Number of soldiers kicked out because of right-wing extremism: [https://www.instagram.com/p/CZJyfwQKE\\_3/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CZJyfwQKE_3/)
- All oppressed people have a right to violence: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CYC9HGyp6Hv/>
- Weapons industries create refugees: [https://www.instagram.com/p/CR6Ld\\_4qUsT/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CR6Ld_4qUsT/)
- Coercive spending: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CSgrBo-l5Nd/>

#### Articles:

- <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/peace-activism-what-it-good>

- <https://www.businessinsider.com/top-countries-exporting-weapons-arms-sales-2018-3?IR=T>
- <https://daily.jstor.org/is-mandatory-military-service-good-for-a-country/>
- <https://www.wri-irg.org/en/story/2018/expanding-fortress-new-report-exposes-firms-profiting-eu-border-militarisation>

Statistics:

- Where in Europe is there military conscription?  
<http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/countries-with-mandatory-military-service/>
- Drones in Europe [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-71087-7\\_2](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-71087-7_2)
- Global Peace Index: <http://visionofhumanity.org/indexes/global-peace-index/>

## Forum Theatre

**Aims:** Forum Theatre is one form of the Theatre of the Oppressed, which was invented by Augusto Boal for whom theatre is happening in daily life and should not be an elitist kind of art (vgl. Adratic greenet-onlus w.y., w.p.). It is a form of theatre that helps solving conflicts by picking up experiences and involving the audience. Through that getting active is not only trained for and in the performances but also for daily life.

**Materials:** Enough space; if wished a few props (they are helpful to get in and out of the role you play); one prop (often a hat is used) to mark the joker

**Group size:** min. two people who play the scene and I would suggest at least four people as audience

**Description:** A group of people prepare a short scene in which some kind of oppression happens. Then they show the scene to an audience once. Afterwards the scene is played again and people from the audience have the possibility to say stop at a time in which they would like the plot to be differently. The actors will freeze and the person who stopped can choose one of them, but not the oppressor, and step into their role instead of the actor. The person tries now to improvise in a way to solve the oppressive conflict. When the scene is finished all people on stage are asked how they feel now and a debate can take place. This and the change of actor/audience is facilitated by the so-called joker. The scene is repeated a few times, so different ways of solving the situation can be tried. When the performance finish's it is important to make exercises to get rid of the roles and come back to be yourself again.

**Source:**

Adratic greenet-onlus (w.y.): Theater der Unterdrückten. Online found on <https://schoolofpeacevg.org/theater-der-unterdrueckten/?lang=de#:~:text=Das%20Theater%20der%20Unterdr%C3%BCcken%20hat,die%20klassische%20Theaterform%20als%20fehlerhaft.> (17.06.2022)

# A world without army - Antimilitarist utopias

**Topic:** Utopian thinking, Peace, Antimilitarism

**Aims:**

- Participants understand the political importance of having the utopian vision of a peaceful future and that utopias are possible
- Participants imagine their own peaceful future, share it with others, criticize it and this enables them to have a more constructive approach to how they can get there

**Time:** 2,5 hours (can be less, if parts are shortened)

**Materials:**

- paper for everyone
- pens for everyone
- paper with critical reflection questions

**Description:**

Ask people to go into groups of 3-4 for 15 minutes and to find things that have changed positively around war and militarism in the past 30 years? In what way has the world become more peaceful in the past 30 years?

Then come back in the big group and collect all things that people have found on a flipchart paper. Add events or trends from the past 30 years that you find important, if participants haven't mentioned them yet.

Then given an introduction into utopian thinking. You could talk about things like these:

- Meaning of word utopia: Thomas More 1516  $\epsilon\upsilon$  ("good" or "well") and  $\tau\acute{o}\pi\omicron\varsigma$  ("place")
- utopias vs. dystopias
- the ideology of utopias
- challenges to utopian thinking, view of utopia as naive; utopian thinking is a skill we usually are not trained in
- not just one utopia, the future is plural/endless
- utopia doesn't mean there is no conflict; for whom is this a utopia? For whom is it desirable?; It's not possible to create a perfect future; there will always be conflicts
- Dystopias became more popular in the 1950s after George Orwell's 1984 gained popularity; even more since dissolution of Soviet Union 1991; often the view that with the fall of the Soviet Union we came to an „end of history“ (Francis Fukuyama)
- Future Studies is an academic field that deals with utopian thinking

Then invite participants into a dream journey into the future for 20 minutes. Tell them that they will now imagine a positive future that is in 30 years from now. This can be

emotional, it can be difficult to imagine a positive future. Ask them to sit or lie comfortably and to close their eyes (if they want to). You could do a breathing exercise with them for 2 minutes. You can set a cozy atmosphere playlist in the background (we have used this one: [https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4Ypcl2lkP7esfQiQopE4n0?si=XPaq7BzyRyOzW5Djgpa5OA&utm\\_source=copy-link](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4Ypcl2lkP7esfQiQopE4n0?si=XPaq7BzyRyOzW5Djgpa5OA&utm_source=copy-link)).

Then ask the participants these questions or a selection of those. Make sure to read them calmly, slowly, loudly and clearly - and make sure to make breaks between the questions, so participants have time to think about them and include them in their world-building of their utopia. The questions could be:

- You wake up in 30 years from now
- How old would you be in 30 years?
- What is your body like?
- You live in a utopian society
- There is no war
- There is no military anywhere in the world
- What does this mean?
- What effects does this have on your life?
- Where do you live? In which village or city?
- What does the place where you live look like?
- How does your community look like?
- How is your relation to your neighbors?
- How is your relation to your family?
- What do you do when you wake up in the morning?
- What are public spaces like?
- How did politics change?
- What happened to poverty?
- What happened to violence?
- How are conflicts resolved?
- What institutions are there for resolving conflict? Locally, globally?
- What happened to Europe?
- What happened to climate change?
- How do we relate to nature?
- What happened to capitalism, to greed, to people wanting to make money?
- What are companies like?
- What happened to technology? What happened to cellphones?
- What is family like? What is it like to raise children?
- What do school buildings look like?
- What is our health system like?
- How do people see the past?
- How do people talk about wars in the past?
- What is the role of young people in society?
- What are youth exchanges like?
- Come back

Then ask participants to open their eyes and to share their utopias in pairs. It is fine if what they share is blurry or also just a feeling. Give them 10 minutes for this.

Then ask them to criticize their utopias. This is to help them understand that no future is perfect and criticizing a utopia is an important part of utopian thinking. Give them some reflection questions on a flipchart paper. It is okay if they don't talk about all of them.

Some suggestions for questions:

- Which social groups (age, gender, race/ethnicity, class) benefit from your vision? Which ones lose? How do people coexist despite this conflict?
- Where do resources for technology of your future society come from?
- How could your vision reflect a world that is equal everywhere and not just in some privileged parts of the world, like your region?
- Who controls whether people live in peace and follow the politics of your utopia?

### **Debriefing**

Ask participants in the big group:

- How was this? How do you feel?
- What was your utopia like?
- How come there was no war in your utopia?
- How did you resolve conflict?

Afterwards you can ask participants to work creatively on their utopia. You could give them different options:

- Draw a poster about your utopia
- Draw a monument that would stand on a public place in your utopia
- Write a letter to yourself from the perspective of yourself in 30 years from now
- Write a newspaper article from the future, write about an event that happens in 30 years from now
- Draw a short comic about the utopia
- Do a short theater sketch about your utopia
- ...

After 30 minutes, ask participants to share their creative output with each other.

# ANTIMILITARIST ACTIVISM

## Starting a peace campaign or action

In this section, we will introduce some reflection and planning tools that help you to define how to begin planning an action. It might be helpful for you to apply several of these tools. They overlap each other, but you might get different results and different information out of them.

**Essential questions.** When planning a campaign or action in order to make an issue related to peace, non-violence and antimilitarism more visible, we need to start from the basics by asking ourselves some questions:

- What do I want to achieve by doing this?
- Why do I want to do this? Why is it important?
- When do I want to start doing this? When do I want to finish?
- Where do I want to do this?
- Who does this? Whom do I want to reach?
- How do I want to do this?

**Problem Analysis.** What is the actual problem you want to tackle? To understand your problem and the need and structures behind it is an important step in the beginning of your planning phase. It might require some additional research, if you don't have the solutions yourself. You could do a survey among people who know about the problem, you could read up on the backgrounds online, you could talk to people who know more about this than you.

One way to start formulating a problem is to follow these three steps:

1. State the issue, e.g. "Weapons exports"
2. Make it specific, e.g. "Weapons exports to Saudi Arabia"
3. Localize it: e.g. "Weapons exports to Saudi Arabia in Austria"

Some more questions to help you reach a deeper understanding of your problem:

- Is the problem relevant? For whom is it relevant?
- Who causes the problem?

- Who identified the problem?
- Is the problem new or does everyone know about it already?
- Can you explain the problem?
- Which images show the problem very well?
- Are there solutions out there for the problem?
- Does the solution cause other problems? For whom?
- Can a campaign or action improve the situation around the problem?
- Are other groups and organisations already better equipped and experienced at dealing with the problem?

**NAOMIE as your start.** A common concept in project planning is NAOMIE. Each letter in the acronym stands for a different part of project planning, which is a great introduction to looking at a project.

- **N****Needs analysis:** What are the needs you are trying to address? Who needs your campaign or action? In what aspect that you are trying to address does the world need to become a better place?
- **A****ims:** What is the overall vision you have for how the world and society should change about the issue you are addressing? Where do you want to end up eventually?
- **O****bjectives:** What concrete goals do you have for your campaign in order to get closer to your aims?
- **M****ethods:** How will your campaign or action look like? What will you do?
- **I****mplementation:** How many people do you need? What and how much money, materials, tools or other resources? What is the timescale for our project?
- **E****valuation:** What else do you need to do once the project is finished? What new needs have been created from your project?

**Making your objectives SMART.** While it may be easier for you to find your overall aims, coming up with good objectives for a project is a real skill. A very common tool for finding objectives is to check whether they are SMART! Again an acronym, there are different ways to define the letters:

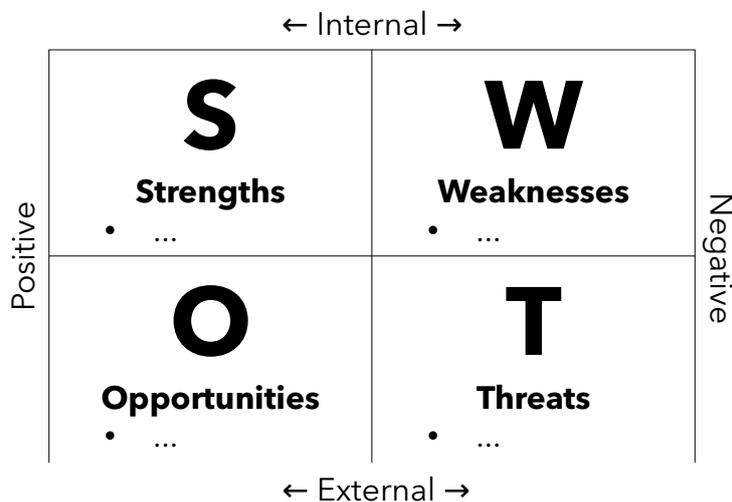
- **S****pecific:** Come back to the Essential questions above - who, when, here, how, etc.
- **M****asurable:** How can you track progress within your project? How do you measure whether you succeeded? Give your objectives something that you can measure, e.g. number of people reached, number of mentions in the press, etc.
- **A****ttainable:** Is the goal completely out of reach for you? Then tune it down a bit, so you can actually tackle this within your scope. (Alternatives for A are **Achievable** or **Attractive**)

- **Relevant:** Is this objective actually something that you should tackle and not other people? Is the objective necessary for you to reach your aims? Is the goal consistent with other goals you have set? (Alternatives for R are **Reachable** or **Reasonable**)
- **Time-bound:** By what day of what year will you have completed this goal? In order for a project to be successful, it is really helpful to set yourself deadlines and to create a sense of urgency.

**Reflecting on your context by doing a SWOT Analysis.** Another common tool for project planning, a SWOT Analysis helps you to look at possible challenges and possibilities that might await you before, during and after the project. Basically, you list **Strengths** (S), **Weaknesses** (W), **Opportunities** (O) and **Threats** (T) for your project. While strengths and weaknesses are things within yourself or/and your organisation, opportunities and threats are broader things in society and outside that might help or hinder you in achieving your objectives.

Think about your own capacities, the capacities of your organisation or organisations/groups/people around you, but also your opponent's capacities, society as a whole and practical issues.

The model can look like this:



## Action forms

There are countless ways how you can gain attention for your issue. Some really common methods are:

- Having a **campaign website**

- **Social media**
- **Campaign videos**
- **Press releases**
- **Petitions**
- **Testimonials by celebrities**
- **Communication behind the scenes** (e.g. with opponents)

There are many different ways of doing **demonstrations and street protests**. The easiest way is to have a few people standing at a symbolic place with a message e.g. on signs or on T-shirts, either silently or shouting slogans. Think about whom you want to reach (journalists? random people on the street?) and how you can reach them. Some things that help your demonstration become more visible and more interesting in a media landscape that is saturated with news and actions:

- A huge number of people - That is the goal of mass protests, to get as many people on the streets as possible, so that media can not *not* report about your action.
- Funny or interesting costumes, e.g. animal costumes, colors, nudity, don't dress like a protester
- Funny or interesting demo signs
- Noise, music or silence
- Unlikely alliances, i.e. getting groups that are not associated with an issue to be in solidarity with your campaign (e.g. „Grandmas against Killer Robots!“)
- Doing it in a prestigious or symbolic location, e.g. at a high-level event of the opponent

**Guerrilla communication** gives an interesting twist to activism. Here you take on the symbols, language and identities of those you want to criticize and you mock and criticize them, basically using their own PR weapons against themselves. This can be for example fake ads (adbusting/subvertising) and fake press releases on behalf of the company or institution you want to criticize.

Another interesting and historically pretty successful action form is **civil disobedience**. That's the intentional breaking of a law in order to showcase one's protest against the law's legitimacy. Rosa Parks for example didn't get up from her seat in a bus in the segregated US in the 1950s, even though it was reserved for white people and she was black. Doing civil disobedience - e.g. blocking or occupying something - needs, among other things, a good moral ground why to do it, it needs experience, good planning and a good legal team.

# Strategic Storytelling

In order for a campaign or action to reach its goals, you need to be strategic. Here are some tips for you when planning one.

**Who is your audience?** Whom do you want to reach with your campaign or action? What do typical followers and supporters look like? What media platforms do they use? (Which social media do they use, which newspapers do they read, which shows do they watch?) What kind of language do you need to use to reach them?

**There is a conflict.** Every problem is basically a conflict between different interests. That your goal has not been achieved on its own probably has to do with some people in power not being willing to comply with what you want (e.g. a certain political party or the Ministry of Defense doesn't want to abolish military conscription). Media are much more likely to report about your action, if they can identify this conflict and they see the conflict as a relevant one. Make clear that there are different sides in this and on which side you stand on. Create actions that protest against your opposing side's positioning and put those into media.

**Keep it simple, stupid! (K.I.S.S.)** When people hear about your action or campaign, it should be very easy for them to understand what it is about. They should easily be able to tell other people about it and to repeat your core message. Having witty references to pop culture can be fun, but it might make it inaccessible to a lot of people who don't get them. Of course lots of issues are complex and multifaceted, but one of the difficulties of doing activism is to make complicated matters simple. Even the title of your campaign shouldn't be anything complicated ideally.

**Emotions are key.** While facts and rational arguments are great and can be part of your reasoning, what really reaches most audiences is emotions. Emotional images, emotional language, sad piano music in the background of a campaign video.

**Don't keep doing the same thing!** If you want to make media continuously report about your campaign and your goals - and thus also giving visibility to the problem you want to address - you should not just stage one street protest looking exactly the same after another. Bring variety into your campaign, use different action forms, have a surprise element.

**Be a superlative.** For media to report about you, it can be interesting for them, if your action is the first, the biggest, the only of its kind.

**Keep a red thread.** If you are doing several actions, make sure that there is a consistency between them in terms of language used, message, images etc. People should recognize that it all comes from the same place and has the same goals. When they hear about your campaign in different points of time, they should be led through your campaign like through a story, with continuous progression.

## Best practices: Cool campaigns and actions

It is always good to look at what other people have done and are doing to see what works, what gets attention and what actually changes things. During our training, we shared a few cool and interesting campaigns and actions (around peace, non-violence and antimilitarism, but also other topics) that could be an inspiration for your own planning. Some examples here:

**Women in Black:** This women's organisation stages vigils in front of places where militaristic decisions are made. Women dress up in black funeral clothing, often with flowers or other symbols associated with grief and funerals, and protest against war. ([More here](#))

**Our Grief is not a Cry for War:** After the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York on 11th September 2001, artists staged a performance in different places in the city to announce that they were grieving for the victims of the attacks, but still not asking for the US to use this as a justification for starting a war. The artists wore all black and signs depicting the name of the campaign. ([More here](#))

**End the Cage Age:** It is still legal to keep animals in cages in huge factory farms. This EU-wide petition asked the European Union to ban cages from animal agriculture, e.g. cages for pigs, chickens or other farmed animals. Hundreds of animal rights organisations from around Europe were part of the petition and more than 1.6 million signatures were signed. This helped to make the issue of cage farming much more visible and it reached the goal of forcing a discussion on abolishing it in the European Parliament. ([More here](#))

**eva.stories:** What if a Jewish teenage girl in the Holocaust had Instagram? This art project on Instagram staged for several months Insta stories and posts on an Instagram account in order to gain visibility for the atrocities of the Shoah and to reflect on how this still relates to today's society and media landscape. ([More here](#))

**Stop Killer Robots:** Several countries (e.g. the US, China, Israel, Russia, South Korea and the UK) are developing fully autonomous weapons which by themselves would be able to kill, e.g. during armed conflict but also to suppress protest. The campaign informs about the situation through simple language („killer robots“). ([More here](#))

**Save the Arctic:** Greenpeace wants to prohibit industrial fishing and oil drilling in the Arctic in order to preserve Arctic ecosystems. On their website, they ask people to sign petitions about the issue. In several actions, e.g. through hanging banners on a Gazprom drilling site in Russia or by making a parody website of the Shell company, the campaign gained a lot of attention and became controversial. ([More here](#))

**Clean Clothes Campaign:** A network of NGOs and labour unions want to make the poor living and working conditions of workers in the global garment industry better by raising the issue, pointing out the malpractice of retailers and distributors, educating consumers and supporting workers on site. ([More here](#))

**Food Not Bombs:** First started by anti-war activists in the US in the 1980s, the concept is simple: Collecting "surplus" vegan or vegetarian food, cooking it and then distributing it in a public (or otherwise visible) space, along with educational materials like pamphlets. The idea behind it is to show how various forms of systemic injustice are interconnected - poverty, food waste, the military-industrial complex, as well as others like ecology and animal agriculture. Approaching people and engaging them in conversation is also an important part; holding it in a public space, having visible banners and lots of educational materials at the event itself, and/or publicizing it beforehand with posters or on social media helps to draw people's attention.. ([More here](#))

# MONEY, MONEY

How to get money for a workshop, an action or campaign? There are different ways for you to move forward with this:

**No budget.** Do you need money actually? The easiest way to deal with an action is to see what resources you need and then to try and get around this with as little money as possible (low budget) or no money at all (no budget), as then you save a lot of time and effort on complying to your funder's guidelines and conditions, e.g. on what kind of actions you can or cannot do or on reporting.

**Public money.** This is a really common source for funding:

- city governments,
- embassies,
- federal ministries (e.g. culture or youth),
- regional governments,
- Council of Europe (e.g. the European Youth Foundation)
- European Commission (e.g. Erasmus+ like this toolkit here)

All of these institutions give money to youth and activist projects. Think about whether this could fit your project though - while some public institutions might actually be really supportive of also political actions and campaigns around peace and non-violence, others might see you as detrimental to their own work.

**Foundations.** Both public institutions and wealthy people or families might create funds to support non-profit projects with specific causes. Some foundations might especially focus on the topic that you're trying to address. Foundations are not a big source of project funding in every country, but e.g. in Switzerland, Germany, Norway and the US there are a lot of foundations that also give out money to projects outside of their own national scope.

**Donations, sponsorships, etc.** You might also think about crowdfunding, which is collecting money online by lots of people giving small donations and you offering them something in return (e.g. a product or an experience). You could organise a solidarity party, where people come to dance and the entrance fee goes as a donation to your project. Some companies might also be keen on providing you with materials and capacities for free, if they support the cause of your campaign or action.

# FURTHER READING

**[campaignstrategy.org](http://campaignstrategy.org)**. This is a great website by the British Greenpeace campaign strategist Chris Rose, featuring some basic tips for campaigning and lots of interesting further resources.

**[350.org Trainings](http://350.org)**. This climate justice organisation gives lots of lessons on how to create grassroots actions and campaigns. They have very hands-on and useful tips on how to communicate with journalists, creating the right video, which images to use, but also on for example reaching decision-makers through people power.

**[Beautiful Rising](http://BeautifulRising.org)**. This beautiful activist web platform has lots of interesting tactics and tips when planning a creative action or campaign. It connects it to inspiring best practices and stories from all over the world.