

Action Development Checklist

Introduction: This document is designed to provide a general “check-list” for developing a creative action. Think about how this action, and the organizing around it, can help you achieve your overall goals. Think both about how the *process* of organizing this action (the meetings, making things, rehearsals, and action itself) can strengthen your group, as well as how the action can have as much impact in impacting your target as possible.



IDENTIFY:

Conflict -

What is the problem that needs to be addressed? Identifying the problem will allow you to see how you can intervene.

Context -

What are the external circumstances that need to be taken into account? *What are dominant narratives already surrounding your target? What story do they tell about themselves and how they relate to your community and the world (think both local and global)? What logos, slogans, images, events or places do they use to tell that story? How does your target relate to other emblematic symbols, memes or narratives about the place you are from? What local symbols (food, places, flags, clothing) are locally resonant? For example, if the bank talks a lot about their loans to local farmers to make cheese, what cheese dishes are emblematic of local culture?*

Goal -

What is your objective(s) with this action? How does it relate to your overall campaign strategy? What change will be created by this action?

Tools/Tactics - What tools and tactics do you use to achieve your goal? What talents/skills do you have among your group? How can you build on previous actions?



Once you have a general plan, get into the details...

ACTION PLANNING CHECKLIST:

Assess resources and information:

- What skills, contacts, experience, knowledge, access, spaces, talents, or materials does your group have among its members?
- What more do you need to make this action a success?

Choose and check out the location: All activism is theater, find a nice backdrop!

- Who frequents that space? How do they related to your target - what do they need to know to be changed?
- What is the history or symbolic value of that space?
- Think about where you can photograph from?
- How do people normally interact with the space - and how you will interact with them? How will your relationship to the space be different?
- What safety concerns are there? Can people fall off something, slip, etc.
- Is there security/police presence?
- Where are entrances and exits?
- How can you tell people to get there easily?



Make an action plan: (and plan B, C)

- You have a general plan, now think it through step by step. *What* has to happen *when*? Include logistics, transportation, construction, press work, cleanup, police liaison, media, everything!
- Now imagine a few different scenarios whereby your action can't be carried out. Think of plan B (and C, D, etc...) so that you have a plan in case things don't go "according to plan".

Identify and determine roles:

- Once you know what needs to be done, determine *who* will do *what*. Try to distribute roles evenly so that no one is overloaded with too many tasks. Make sure everyone knows that its ok to be busy, but people should be upfront rather than committing to something they won't be able to do.
- What tasks can be done together that might help build the team (checking out the location, building materials, research, etc.)?
- If you will be engaging in direct action, get in touch with emma@350.org for more resources on detailed action preparations.

Practice the action (over and over):

- The more familiar you are with the action plan, and its steps, the more likely your action to go smoothly. Treat it like theater - do a rehearsal with scripts, a rehearsal without scripts, with props, and then with costumes. Make sure everyone knows their role and knows what to do if there is a problem. Treat every mistake as a “learning opportunity” in case the same thing happens during the action.

Perform and document the action:

- Now is the easy part! Do the action.
- Know who your audience is - if it's the people around you, the newspapers, the people inside the office building or the video cameras - play to your audience.
- Make sure you have a good documentation plan, with camera's charged and specific people whose *only* role is to document and share content.
- Think about social media live-sharing as well during the action.

Celebrate!

- Seriously, take the time to celebrate after your action. Go together for a meal, for a drink, or go out dancing. We need to celebrate our victories, however small they may be. Building friendships is an important part of social change.

**Debrief the action:**

- Take time to debrief the action properly.
- Discuss personal reactions: What went well? What could have gone better? What did you learn? When were you afraid? What was your favorite part?
- Evaluate your goals, how were they met or not met? What has changed because of this action?

Next steps:

- Think about how your action can continue to support your overall strategy. What is the next step after this action? How will the group stay in communication with each other?

Most of all, HAVE FUN, learn, don't get too complicated. Remember, history (and thus activism) is about storytelling. Try and make your action such a good, clever, unexpected, beautiful story that you'd want to tell about it. If it's a good story - the word will spread. Think about *how* you tell that story: what images, videos, texts, etc. could communicate this story to your audience.