

NEW TACTICS IN HUMAN RIGHTS REGIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sometimes solving an old problem requires a new tool: a fresh approach, an innovative tactic. In the field of human rights, new tactics and combinations of tactics are emerging that may alleviate persistent and seemingly intractable human rights problems.

From April 17 to 24, advocates in the human rights movement from Central and Eastern Europe, former Soviet Republics, and Turkey met in Romania, to share ideas, tactics and skills. **This was the first in a series of five workshops to be held around the world.**

The participants in the workshop, representing ten countries, are not only innovators in their fields, they are also **experienced practitioners who have used creative tactics** to make real advances for human rights. They are all involved in truly unique and remarkable work. (For a full list of participants and their tactics see Appendix A.)

Over six days participants trained one another on a tactic that they have used successfully in their countries. They **discussed ways to use new tactics and to build stronger, more effective strategies** to end human rights abuses. Participants also began the process of creating training materials so that their tactics can be shared more widely.

The workshop illustrated that tactical training experiences can be powerful in helping advocates share their work, learn new ideas, conceptualize their work differently, and feel inspired to create new possibilities. The analytical framework used at the workshop— **discussing human rights work in terms of tactics and strategy— proved helpful for advocates.** Together they learned about how to go beyond traditional perspectives and thinking.

Since the workshop, several participants and teams in Turkey and South Africa have **already shared their experience and put ideas into practice.** With their help, the New Tactics in Human Rights project will continue to make an impact far beyond far beyond six days in Romania.

Examples of tactics & participants:

Ezel Akay, a film producer from Istanbul, Turkey, was one of the organizers of a massive public campaign called Darkness for Light, to protest government officials' involvement with organized crime. Every day at the same time, people would turn out the lights in their homes and businesses. A staggering 60% of the population of Turkey participated.

Boris Pustintsev, Citizens' Watch in St. Petersburg, Russia, is working to bring Russian bureaucrats onto the side of human rights activists. Citizens' Watch approaches individuals such as those in the judiciary and police department who are essential to building the foundation for democracy, and connects with them on a personal basis, sensitizing them to human rights issues. They then support the officials' efforts to reform their own departments.

Here are just a few comments from the participants about the experience:

“In fact, I have found this program to be different from lots of human rights programs worldwide. It was not a theoretical session about torture, but really practical sessions with experts from the region explaining tactics they usually use in their every day work. To be honest, I was thinking that this was going to be a boring session (and questioned whether to come or not) but this was a PERFECT EXPERIENCE! And I am happy that I was part of it. Useful: I learned a lot, shared experiences and made new friends!” – *Sasa Madacki, Human Rights Center, University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina*

“During the program and breaks, I learned a lot about other participants’ tactics, their work, countries and I learned about me and my country. Right now, I know that there are lots of things to be done in the region but also, maybe more important, is that we can do it.” – *Zorana Smiljanic, National Democratic Institute, Serbia and Montenegro*

BACKGROUND ON THE NEW TACTICS IN HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT

The workshop is part of a larger project called New Tactics in Human Rights, which was initiated by **the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT)**, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. The New Tactics project emerged from CVT’s experience in developing new tactics, its staff’s previous experience in global human rights advocacy, and its success building and leading coalitions of human rights organizations.

CVT recognizes that the modern human rights movement has made enormous strides in the past half century. Nonetheless, in recent years the world witnessed human rights violations shocking in their scope. It is clear that new tactics are needed.

The New Tactics in Human Rights project helps develop strategic thinking and tactical flexibility to allow human rights activists to be **more effective** in their work. It is about creating **new thinking among human rights advocates** and **developing new tools and resources**. The

project also strives to help advocates around the world **learn to share experiences** and to **find new tactics they can adapt** for their work in order to be more effective.

Significant accomplishments since the project’s inception include:

- Establishment of a high-level **International Advisory Committee** and **Human Rights Working Group** to provide direction and collaboration on the project;

If strategy defines what to do, tactics embody how to do it.

Strategy is not a single decision, but rather a confluence of decisions: the selection of key objectives and of appropriate targets, an understanding of the constituencies and resources needed, and the decision of which tactics to use and when. It is the development of a larger plan, the *combination of a series of actions to reach a goal*.

Tactics are *how* a particular task or operation is performed. They embody how one goes about making change and relate to some aspect of carrying out the overall strategy.

- Compilation of more than 200 case studies representing 120 tactics used around the world to advance human rights in a **Draft New Tactics Workbook**;
- Realization of a **meeting of the Human Rights Working Group** to provide feedback on drafted materials and to develop future project plans;
- Development of a **database** structure to house and analyze tactics, ultimately designed to serve as a tool to search for tactical ideas;
- Creation of a **web site** to share information; (www.cvt.org/new_tactics)
- Formation of **international partnerships** with organizations in regions of the world;
- Involvement of the **United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights** and dissemination of information on the project to the staff;
- Implementation of the first Regional Training Workshop in Romania and plans outlined to carry out four more regional workshops;
- Formulation of a vision and concrete plans to stimulate innovation and greater effectiveness in the human rights community.

Why New Tactics?

- A narrow range of tactics leads to narrow constituencies; a broader range appeals to, and involves, broader constituencies.
- An over-reliance on any tactic leads to application in the wrong circumstances.
- A range of choices allows tactical flexibility, creating surprise and making it difficult for adversaries to systematize their responses and defend their positions.

Leading human rights advocates and organizations have joined CVT in this project. A **Human Rights Working Group** of 22 human rights leaders from 18 countries provides leadership and expertise. An **Advisory Committee** of nine world leaders adds visibility and political support to the project. The Advisory Committee includes former heads of state and leaders of distinguished stature from government and business.

Partner Organizations include the Danish Centre for Human Rights, Desmond Tutu Peace Centre in South Africa, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly in Turkey, ICAR Foundation in Romania, National Coordinator for Human Rights in Peru, and

Institute of Public Administration for Turkey and the Middle East.

The Regional Training Workshops are part of this process to involve human rights advocates and to create regional leadership to share, learn and incorporate new ideas in human rights work. This process began with the creation of the Human Rights Working Group and Advisory Committee as well as with the alliance with partner organizations in the regions. Through the Regional Training Workshops, the project expands this leadership from two to three individuals to that of 10 or more in each region, each of whom will be equipped to advance the project with his or her network of colleagues.

The Regional Training Workshops will build toward an International Symposium. The symposium is envisioned as a gathering of 700 people from a broad range of disciplines (NGO, business and government) and representing all five regions of the world. They

will come together to share tactics, learn about new approaches, and build international networks of innovation. It will involve approximately 100 to 120 people from each region, with the people who participated in the Regional Training Workshops serving as the core group of trainers for the program. Ideas will be exchanged across regions and sectors as well as through regional caucuses.

After the Regional Training Workshops and International Symposium, regional and sub-regional meetings will take place with the assistance of local leadership. At each stage, the involvement of local advocates and leaders will begin expanding the opportunities to conduct this work—such as tactical training workshops, the use of new tactics, and the exchange of tactical ideas—at national and regional levels.

THE REGIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP

The Regional Training Workshop in Romania was the first of five such workshops being organized around the world. Additional Regional Training Workshops will be held in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the West Group nations (this grouping was chosen by the Human Rights Working Group, based on the system used by the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Commission).

The purpose of the workshops is to:

- Bring practitioners together to **train one another** on their tactics;
- Help **develop the skills** of practitioners to **share** their work and **learn** new ideas;
- Bring more **tactical and strategic thinking into the human rights community**;
- Facilitate the creation of tactical training materials (each person will develop a **resource notebook** on one of their tactics), eventually encompassing a training catalogue of 50 to 60 different tactics;
- Help practitioners to **share their experiences across the region and the world**;
- Form a **group of trainers** to be the core-training group at the International Symposium on new tactics.

Participants for the Regional Training Workshops are recruited from a broad range of disciplines, including activists from groups working on ethnic minority issues, women's rights, social and environmental justice, and torture treatment. They are drawn from nongovernmental organizations (NGO), intergovernmental agencies, government, and business. Organizers seek diversity in types of tactics, human rights areas, scopes of the tactics and geographic areas, and are particularly interested in tactics that draw in new constituencies to identify with human rights work. Through the recruitment process, CVT and its partner organizations learn about many innovative tactics being used in the regions. This information will then be shared with others around the world through written and electronic materials.

Each participant is accepted based on their agreement to share a specific tactic, as identified through the selection process interviews. The expectations for participants are:

- Attend the entire Regional Training Workshop;
- Present a workshop on a tactic of approximately 2 ½ hours in length;

- Develop and finalize a workshop and a tactical training notebook (materials to help others in using the tactic);
- Share the experience and information on tactics with others in their respective organizations and countries.

Participants

For the Regional Training Workshop in Romania, the coordinators received more than 100 recommendations of organizations and individuals who were doing interesting work in the field. Recommendations were received from people who work in the region as well as from organizations such as the Open Society Institute, the Balkan Human Rights Network, and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The coordinators of the project sought to identify a **mix of types of tactics** that were **utilized effectively**, were used **to build constituencies**, had **an element of surprise**, and would be **valuable to others** in the region as well as to people around the world.

Each person who participated in the workshop is someone who is at the forefront of implementing a creative tactic in his or her own country and is in a position to explain how their work is carried out, challenges that have arisen, resource needs, etc. They each also live and work in the region. They have a demonstrated capacity to move others into action and a desire to explore new ways of thinking as well as to develop new approaches. Because of limited funds and the wide variety of languages in the region, this workshop was conducted in English.

In addition to the participants, five observers attended the program. The observers included a staff member from the U.S. State Department's Office of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, a representative of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and partners of the New Tactics project from other parts of the world. (For a full list of observers see Appendix B.)

Not only did these individuals add to the program by offering useful comments and suggestions, but each of them will also play an important role in sharing the ideas in the future. Representatives from partner organizations in South Africa and Turkey who participated in the workshop are also in a position to replicate parts of the program in their regions and countries.

CVT and ICAR staff, as well as New Tactics project advisors, coordinated and facilitated the program. (For full lists of members of the Project and Workshop Support Teams see Appendix B.)

The Program -- Introductions

The workshop was held in Sinaia, Romania, for six days. The first day began with introductions and greater background on the project. For the introductions, participants were asked to tell a short story about their tactic. Participants shared stories about how

they began using the tactic, personal experiences that inspired them to get involved in their work, and humorous anecdotes. Examples include:

“We always had Plan B to save the people when they were arrested.”

Zorana Smiljanic of Serbia and Montenegro told the group about how Otpor! learned always to have a “Plan B” in order to show continual resistance and to protect human rights activists during the campaign against the Milosevic regime. In 1998 she and several students were arrested and held at the police station. They were released suddenly after several hours.

It turned out that the student march that day had ended in front of the local police station. Public attention outside the police station coupled with attention from media and international organizations had convinced the police to let the students out.

From this day onward, when an activist was arrested, the media was alerted and crowds gathered outside the jail. The arrestees, who might otherwise have been tortured, were protected and became heroes, attracting others to the cause. This also tended to make activists less fearful of actions that might get them arrested in the future.

“It allowed the public to show an opinion they agreed on but had held private.”

Ezel Akay, a producer and director from Istanbul, Turkey, told the story of how the Campaign of Darkness for Light surfaced. Here is an excerpt from Ezel’s introduction:

On November 3, 1996, a Mercedes crashed into a truck in Western Turkey. Inside the car was: a parliament member who was the head of an extensive Kurdish family; a current police chief; a very well known ex-right-wing drug smuggler sought by police for more than a decade; and a former beauty queen. There were also weapons in the car and two of the people had pockets full of cocaine. A sleepy truck driver had made a wrong turn, killing everyone except the parliament member.

The crash made it obvious that the three different groups were inter-related. The public already knew about the black market and its ties to people in power, but the crash made this open secret undeniable.

People from all different backgrounds came together to move the masses in an apolitical manner. We chose the idea of turning off the lights in all the houses for one minute each day as a message to the government that this should stop and that justice was needed. We wanted to force parliament to revoke the immunity of people who were corrupt. It was an improvisational campaign. While it started with people turning on and off the lights, suddenly people were banging pots and pans, honking horns and pouring into the streets, and even visiting the crash site in the thousands. Almost 60 percent of the entire country participated in the campaign.

“We give people tools to know how to carry out civic activities.”

Olena Suslova, Director of the Women’s Information Consultative Center in the Ukraine, explained that through empowerment education the Center has created a network of trainers in the Ukraine, throughout the region, and now extending to Asia. The trainers seek to help people overcome centuries of authoritarianism and apathy and to change the people’s perspective on civil society. As Suslova explained “we give people tools to know how to carry out civic activities.”

It began in the late 1980s when Olena and her husband were educating their teenage daughter and wanted to do so in an empowering way. They wanted to break from a past of authoritarian teaching and a system that imposed certain values to one that transformed learning by using new principles –conscious solidarity, individual determination of values, leadership, and tolerance—as basic values and approaches in education.

They realized that while it was very difficult to educate just one person about civil society, the broader society would also have to be educated to foster these values. Friends, family and relatives were the first to be trained and to train others. The network of trainers has since expanded to members of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and people throughout the region, as well as in Asia. In each place, they found aspects of the training methods that united and empowered people.

“Is the government implementing human rights policies at the local level? “

Columbus Igboanusi, Executive Director of the League of Human Rights Advocates, moved to Slovakia from Nigeria in 1995. Columbus said, “I didn’t understand racism. I hadn’t experienced it in my country.” When he got on a bus in Slovakia he noticed that people would move to another section, which he thought was their way of showing respect. He didn’t understand what was going on until one day when he was severely beaten up and spent five days in the hospital. “No one came to stop them,” he said.

After this experience, he started to learn about skinheads and to hear similar stories from other African students. He also began to learn about the Roma population, who are called black people in Slovakia. “Something had to be done,” Columbus decided.

Columbus knew that any international treaty signed by the Slovak Republic became law in the country, overriding local law. He knew that many such laws dealt with human rights issues and decided that he would monitor the application of these policies at the local level.

Through a NGO he started, a network of dedicated volunteers was formed (many of whom are Roma) to monitor the situation in local communities and report on the true application of international policies at the local level. Steps are taken to make monitors’ role official by, for example, issuing identification cards that bear the stamp and signature of the organization and sending a letter to each local police office introducing local monitors and their duties. Columbus also works with monitors to differentiate

human rights abuses from personal disputes and to train them on using human rights instruments. Monitors send written reports to the head office and receive a financial stipend for verifiable reports.

Tactical Training Sessions

The majority of the program was dedicated to tactical training sessions conducted by each participant. In the months before the workshop, a coach aided each participant in preparing his or her session. The idea of the training session was for participants to prepare others to imagine applying the tactic to particular situations and to motivate them to consider using it.

The format for each participant's training session was:

1. Presentation of the tactic
2. Question and answer period
3. Interactive group exercise
4. Feedback period

The **presentation period** was used to provide a practical overview of a tactic. During this point in the program, participants explained the context in which the tactic was used, steps involved in carrying out the tactic, lessons learned in the process, and tips for others thinking of using it.

The **question and answer period** helped participants draw out information and get more to the heart of the tactic. It was one of the most useful aspects of the training sessions for many of the participants because they were able to ask about the details of the tactic, other aspects of the context, and results that made this tactic work.

Each presenter then facilitated an **interactive group exercise** (e.g., case study, small group discussions, practice developing and delivering a training on the tactic, etc.) to give participants a sense of how such a tactic would be applied and to help them imagine applying it.

After each presentation and interactive session, there was a 30-60 minute **feedback period** during which participants, observers, and staff completed a feedback form and discussed the following questions:

"It was useful because there were exercises on tactics and lots of interactive discussions and Q&A sessions, which I have found very interesting, important and inspiring. It was also useful to hear different tactics and to discuss whether it is possible to implement them in our countries." – *Zorana Smiljanic, National Democratic Institute, Serbia and Montenegro*

What did you find particularly useful: "thinking together about the adoption of the tactics in different countries." – *Bea Bodrogi, Legal Defence Bureau for National Ethnic Minorities, Hungary*

What will you use when you return home: "way of evaluating presentations. Very stimulating. You can get a completely new set of ideas. I am really delighted with the [evaluating method] we used during this workshop." – *Sasa Madacki, Human Rights Center, University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina*

- What information/ideas do you think you might use or tell others about when you return home?
- What aspect of the training session helped you learn about this tactic?
- What would have helped you learn more about the tactic and apply it?

Everyone found these sessions to be very helpful. They gave them an opportunity to define what was learned, what was still confusing, and how a training session on this tactic could be improved.

Perhaps more importantly, the feedback session also allowed people to make comments about the tactic, talk about **applying it in their own contexts**, and give the presenter ideas they had for how the effectiveness of this particular tactic could be improved. **It allowed people to think together.** We saw **problem solving in action** -- participants re-thinking their work and recruiting others to help them do so.

Examples of Tactical Presentations

People presented their tactic in a variety of ways, from using flip charts to presentation software to video. Some participants read papers while others involved people in a more interactive way. Below are excerpts from a few of the participants' presentations:

“We want to help you in your work -- collaboration not confrontation “

Boris Pustintsev, Chairman of Citizens' Watch in St. Petersburg, Russia, is working to build collaboration instead of confrontation between government administration and the public. At a conference in Madrid he had asked police “what is your duty as a police officer?” The Spanish police answered “protection of the constitution and the protection of constitutional rights.” He had asked the same question of Russian police officers and only heard “to fight crime.” Upon his return to Russia, he was inspired to do something to change this view.

Boris gave a powerful talk on the context in Russia, the development of his tactic, and examples of its use. He said:

A Russian judge gets envious of the enormous respect people demonstrate for his counterparts in the West. Then he thinks: What the heck, I am no worse! But then he begins to comprehend that this respect implies absolute trust from the public as to his independence and integrity. Besides, Russian judges are now being elected to international courts; they join international judicial associations. If a judge gets convinced that international cooperation and recognition may help his professional career, he is just a step away from realizing that today his ambitious pursuits may coincide with the interests of civil society. Our task is to help him make this step. The same with police officers and other state servants.

We monitor the activities of important administrators in respective spheres, their public utterances, and their public reaction to meaningful events. If we think the case is not hopeless we try to find the people we know in his or her surroundings. Then we ask these people if, in their opinion, the person in question would be responsive

to civic initiatives directed at solving the problems that are of interest to his or her agency. Finally, we approach the bureaucrat directly.

We do not designate a role for bureaucrats. Rather, we offer to help them play more effectively their usual role as officials responsible for solving this or that problem.

For example, in 1996, a new head of St. Petersburg migration department attracted our attention as potential collaborator... When we met, we did not ask him to help us; we asked him what we could do to help him and his department.... He complained about the lack of a Russian version of some international documents regulating migration issues. We got them for him. Several documents needed to be translated, which we did. Then in 1997, The International Institute of Humanitarian Law asked Citizens' Watch to recommend some Russian government officials working on migration for an internship at their headquarters. After spending two weeks at the Institute, the man returned full of ideas as to meaningful reform of his service. Since then he has waged a war at his Ministry for more civilized and humane approaches to migration problems.

“ How can human rights advocates sift through all the information?”

Sasa Madacki, Head Librarian and Webmaster at the Human Rights Center at the University of Sarajevo, presented an organizational strengthening tactic. In a world with vast amounts of information and access to the Internet, Sasa talked about how an information resource person can help human rights advocates sift through this information and get to the resources that are most helpful to them. He also noted “a resource person can contribute to the creation of an efficient resource center that helps people be more effective in carrying out human rights.”

During his training session, he reinforced his message by giving everyone a CD with resources on the usage of information sources, the creation of library and information services, and an introduction to technology and human rights as well as competitive intelligence.

Why do organizations need a resource person? According to Sasa:

--Search engines, for example, only search about 50% of the current Internet sites.

--Approximately 80 percent an individual's time is spent searching for and finding information. By having an information person, much more time could be spent planning and doing human rights work.

“ Creating an alternative social movement.”

Rafal Pankowski, Secretary of Never Again in Poland, spoke about how his group had built a national network of correspondents to report on and challenge the tolerance of extreme-right and racist groups and ideas in society. Never Again's reports break the silence and fill the information gap on these issues, which the media is not covering.

Rafal explained that one of their key recruitment tools was concerts featuring major music artists that carried anti-racist/ anti-fascist messages. Over 250,000 people attended one concert that Never Again participated in with their message. Several of the musicians wrote songs and included anti-racist/ anti-fascist messages on their CDs. After the concerts, Never Again received many letters from youths who could relate to their message and wanted to become correspondents.

Never Again also works with volunteers to counter racism in sports, especially soccer. They encourage and support anti-racism activities, songs, and materials to communicate their message to sports fans.

What did you find particularly useful: "Identifying the blind spot in society, which is a serious issue but is never exposed/ discussed/ addressed (the social unconscious); the simple mythology of a network of correspondents built up not on active recruitment but on spontaneous motivation to act; and the use of popular cultural events to highlight and 'socialize' the issues targeted." – Christophe Peschoux, Department of Protection and Field Methodology, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Never Again now has 150 volunteer correspondents who provide regular written reports on cases of racism. Rafal explained that to recognize incidents of racism "you need to know the cultural context which often means understanding the youth scene; you need to know the meaning of certain symbols on T-shirts, patches, graffiti, etc." Never Again links its work to the youth and social culture, creating a social movement against racism and fascism.

"A significant reshaping of society through engagement of government."

Kozara Kati, Executive Director of the Albanian Human Rights Center, talked about using an educational tactic to create a human rights culture. In 1993, soon after the first democratically elected government was in office in Albania, Dutch organizations approached the Albanian Ministry of Education, The Institute of Pedagogy, and the Albanian Human Rights Center to bring human rights education into the Albanian classroom. Together their desire was for the next generation to learn a new system, a new way to relate to others. Their work focused on influencing teachers.

Kozara talked about how they had reached thousands of teachers throughout Albania by creating model schools. In each district they formed boards that included a representative of the school, the Ministry of Education, her organization and parents. Such representation on the board ensured involvement and commitment to the program. A model pilot school was formed in each district. All the teachers at this school would be trained to use a human rights curriculum and manuals. These pilot schools are key anchors of the program in each school district and serve as models as well as a source of trainers for other schools in the district. Today the program has reached thousands of teachers.

Interactive Exercise Examples

Several of the interactive exercises helped people to think about applying the tactic in another context or to see different factors that would affect its implementation. Below are just a few examples.

“Applying a tactic in a new context for a different issue.”

Camelia Doru, Director of the ICAR Foundation in Romania, presented a tactic to mobilize public resources to treat former political prisoners in Romania. After 1989 there were 65,000 survivors in Romania. She explained:

In 1993 we began building the trust and confidence of our target group. We chose to try to provide the services for them that no one else was providing.

It was important that we have continuous activity once we start. You can't start a medical service and then stop for lack of support, so we had to be sure to ensure the financial continuity. The tactic was born out of a very practical need – the shortage of international funding.

Camelia broke down the steps they had used to implement their tactic:

1. Define the target group
2. Make a list of their unmet needs
3. Analyze the unmet needs and list the most urgent ones
4. Start working on the highest priority needs
5. Study legal opportunities; speculate on opportunities for interpretation in your favor
6. Identify supporting legal context in international law
7. Find the legal framework that will allow you to comprehensively address the rights of the target group
8. Make an alliance with smart lawyers who are sympathetic to your cause
9. Make an alliance with sympathetic journalists
10. Do not underestimate the target group; make maximum use of the potential within the group.

For the interactive portion of her session, she divided everyone into three groups, each focusing on an issue where public resources might be leveraged (victims of rape and domestic violence, street children, and victims of violence among refugees), and asked them to work through initial steps to secure government support. Each group was asked to identify:

- The ministry(s) that are or could be held responsible for the problem
- The public institutions or agencies that could be persuaded to include this group among their responsibilities
- Relevant legislation that may be interpreted as pertaining to this group
- Relevant international instruments (conventions, declarations, etc.) that may be referred to as arguments for supporting this group
- Professional associations, humanitarian organizations, NGOs (national and international) that may be persuaded to support your demands for action

The steps created by Camelia and the exercise allowed participants to think outside of the specific way the tactic was used in Romania and look at ways that it might be used to access public resources for other human rights issues.

“Testing for discrimination in new ways.”

Bea Bodrogi, Deputy Director of the Legal Defence Bureau for National and Ethnic Minorities in Hungary, said that her organization receives 130-140 complaints of discrimination against the Roma population each year. They use a tactic called “testing to prove discrimination,” a tactic that a colleague learned in the United States.

If there are charges of discrimination, they send out pairs of testers (a Roma and a non-Roma tester) who have the same characteristics and background as the person who was discriminated against.

For Bea’s interactive exercise, she divided the participants into groups of three to talk about a human rights situation where such a testing tactic might be useful. She had participants look at how this tactic might be used outside of the legal arena. The small groups were to discuss:

- What is the problem that needs to be addressed?
- What would work?
- What would not work?
- What are the risks involved in using the tactic?

One group talked about how testing could be used to look at the practices of a specific company or an industry and to see if they used discriminatory practices. Another group talked about using mass testing to validate the existence of discrimination and create fear of being discriminatory. And yet, another group talked about how the concept could be used to look at discriminatory practices in an institution such as the police department by having minority persons apply to the police academy to test the policies.

“Help me think about how to approach others to use this tactic.”

Boris Pustintsev did not want to miss this opportunity to have the group help him think about an opportunity he wanted to move forward in Russia. He used his interactive time to have the group role-play how to advance a method of fighting corruption that he had recently learned about from the mayor’s office in Seoul, South Korea. The method was a computer system to track applications for government permits as a way to avoid corruption. Boris had the group role play how he might engage business and NGO leaders to lobby his city mayor to adopt the Seoul program. Everyone quickly took on their roles, which helped Boris see the situation from different points of view and get ideas on how one might navigate the politics involved in pushing for the implementation of this tactic.

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

While there was significant progress made toward all of the program objectives, the following comments focus on how the workshop helped to bring more tactical and strategic thinking into the human rights community and to develop the skills of practitioners to share their tactics and to learn new approaches.

Creating More Tactical and Strategic Thinking

The analytical framework – **discussing human rights work in terms of tactics and strategy – helped advocates learn and think in new ways.** Human rights practitioners taught each other about their tactics and learned together how to go beyond traditional perspectives and thinking. As Olena Suslova said, “it was a ‘fresh’ point of view at old (sometimes inert) practices.”

The program structure allowed people to engage deeply in the thinking of the tactic and talk about **applying it in their own context.** The program **encouraged people to think together** about how to be more effective and how to re-think their work.

Developing Skills of Practitioners to Share and Learn Tactics

Through the workshop, human rights practitioners improved their ability to:

- Conceptualize their work differently;
- Talk about their work in a way that would help others learn about it;
- Capture new ideas to incorporate into their current work.

This was possible because of the **broad mix of tactics and people** in the program. The participants all work on human rights issues, yet they do not talk the same human rights language or address rights problems the same way. Participants quickly realized they needed to explain their work differently and change their thinking in order to consider how they might apply a new tactic.

Perhaps more importantly, each participant did the hard work of **developing a tactical training session.** This process allowed them to analyze their work and think about it in a way that perhaps they had not done before. Also, the fact that each participant presented his or her tactic to a group of human rights practitioners, took questions, and

“The concept of gathering innovative tactics in the field of human rights and learning from each other is very good. Each of the presentations gave me food for thought.

– *Rafal Pankowski, Never Again, Poland*

“I have changed my position because I am always in contact with colleagues from the library field and it is obvious when I speak to them [what I am talking about]. In the future, I will adjust my vocabulary and approach for non-librarians and I will try to eliminate presumptions. I presume some knowledge, but now I will prepare for my future presentations in a more approachable way.” – *Sasa Madacki, Human Rights Center, University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina*

“Looking into the past I saw more clearly what we have achieved.” – *Kozara Kati, Albanian Center for Human Rights, Albania*

got feedback on their session helped them to learn to share their work, understand the concept of tactics, and ask tactical questions.

IMPROVEMENT IDEAS FOR FUTURE WORKSHOPS

We have learned a great deal through this process and plan to build on this model for future workshops. A few areas that we plan to address in future workshops are:

Defining tactics: ‘Tactic’ is not a word and concept that is readily used in the human rights community. It is often a new approach and, therefore, difficult for advocates to define and utilize. For future workshops, we plan to provide more materials and coaching on tactical thinking before participants arrive. Written materials, films and other examples from this first workshop may be shared with participants to help them use the concept and more precisely define their tactical training session.

Teaching a framework: It is challenging for participants to develop their training session according to the established framework and in a way that is consistent with their personality and cultural background. The following questions arise: How do you communicate this analytical framework and help people learn it in a way that is also respectful of their culture and thinking? How do you discover what people already know and yet introduce them to new thinking? For future workshops, coaches will need to work carefully with each participant to review and understand the training framework. It may also be useful to devise a plan for collaboration with each participant.

Background – political, historical, and contextual – Human rights professionals are often more comfortable talking about context and less fluent talking about what they do and why. There exists a tension between giving enough context and background and focusing enough attention on the tactic. We are considering a number of potential ways to address this issue in future workshops. For example, workshop coaches can help people specifically define the strategic context in which they have used the tactic (a critical component to understanding the tactic), and assist them in framing this aspect of their training session. It might also be useful to provide participants with a framework that will aid in laying out the theory of causality incorporated into their work. We could also plan to set aside time in the program to allow participants to discuss other contextual issues, e.g. at lunch discussion tables.

Thinking outside of your context: It is difficult for people to think about how their tactic could be applied in another context or for a different issue. There is also a tendency for people who are hearing about a new tactic to immediately say “it won’t work in my country.” The New Tactics project does not promote any particular tactic, but rather tries to develop leadership skills to analyze, imagine, and evaluate one’s strategic context and opportunity. Therefore, we plan to add more targeted interactive exercises to help people think about a tactic in other contexts and struggles. For example, the first five minutes after a presentation might be devoted to brainstorming how else this tactic could be used.

PUTTING IDEAS INTO PRACTICE

The real work begins now that the workshop has ended. The question is whether the human rights advocates will be able to use what they have learned when they return home. As of the end of June, participants have already reported a number of ways they have shared the experience and put ideas into practice. Examples of participant activity to date include:

Bea Bodrogi traveled to Turkey at the invitation of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly and shared her tactic with people from NGOs and the government.

Columbus Igboanusi decided to explore opening a medical rehabilitation center for torture victims in Slovakia. He is also raising funds to hold a workshop in Slovakia on new tactics in human rights.

Olena Suslova reported to the Ukrainian Soros Foundation Board, one of the major financial supporters of the nonprofit sector in Eastern Europe, about the workshop in Romania. They are now doing a review of the educational tactics currently in play in Ukraine, which they plan to compile in a printed document and share with other NGOs.

Boris Pustintsev translated the Turkish Campaign of Darkness for Light presentation and text of a video on the tactic into Russian. He has also started to negotiate the showing of the video with a TV program that reaches most of Russia. Citizens' Watch plans to make copies of the video and disseminate them to Russian NGOs.

Christophe Peschoux recommended that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights begin a series of tactical discussions within the office so that team members would more explicitly share with each other what they do, how they do it and, ultimately, improve methodologies.

Carine Kaneza, the New Tactics Researcher at the Desmond Tutu Centre in South Africa, and her colleagues have incorporated the experience into their work and have begun to actively recruit participants for the African Regional Training Workshop, tentatively scheduled for November 2002.

In Turkey, Emel Kurma, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (hCa) Project Coordinator for Development, shared the experience and tactics showcased in Romania with the team at hCa, the Turkish New Tactics Advisory Committee, and approximately 80 members of civil society and the government. In-country workshops are now being organized on new tactics; practitioners from the region will be involved as tactical trainers. hCa's work is building support and interest in the ideas of the project and the International Symposium, tentatively scheduled for 2004. (For more information on the symposium, see page 3.)

The New Tactics in Human Rights project will facilitate these efforts and seek resources to support this regional network of innovation and leadership. Participants from the workshop have expressed a desire to come together as a group to plan the next stage of

work, cooperate where possible in the implementation of tactics, and bring one another to their countries to continue, and expand, the tactical training. This regional group will be important in providing national and regional leadership on the project and expanding the network of advocates who benefit from this work.

Our early experience with the Regional Training Workshop model is promising. We saw it help people learn new ideas and analyze their own work in new ways. We received very positive feedback from the participants at the workshop; more importantly, since the workshop, the participants and the African and Turkish teams have taken the initiative to present the ideas of the workshop to colleagues in their countries and regions. The ideas are quickly having an impact beyond the workshop itself.

Appendix A - Participants and Their Tactics

Regional Training Workshop – Central Eastern European, Former Soviet Republics and Turkey

1. Developing mass participation campaigns such as those used during the Campaign from Darkness to Light, which involved 60 percent of the population of the country in a vast movement of popular protest against official corruption and crime - **Ezel Akay** (Turkey), film maker and social and cultural activist
2. Testing tactic for identifying and proving discrimination against ethnic minorities - **Bea Bodrogi** (Hungary), Deputy Director, Legal Defence Bureau for National Ethnic Minorities
3. Mobilizing public health resources in support of victims of torture - **Camelia Doru** (Romania), Director, ICAR Foundation (center for treatment of victims of torture)
4. Grassroots monitoring of compliance with international human rights commitments in relation to ethnic minorities - **Colombus Igboanusi** (Slovakia), Executive Director, League of Human Rights Advocates
5. Negotiating with government to officially incorporate and support human rights education in elementary and high schools - **Kozara Kati** (Albania), Executive Director, Albanian Center for Human Rights
6. Competitive intelligence gathering, efficient and effective use of information for the promotion and protection of human rights - **Sasa Madacki** (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Head Librarian and Webmaster, Human Rights Center, University of Sarajevo
7. Engaging a volunteer network of correspondents to monitor and combat racism - **Rafal Pankowski** (Poland), Secretary, Never Again (an anti-fascist and anti-racist organization)
8. Creating working partnerships with government officials - **Boris Pustintsev** (Russia), Chairman, Citizens' Watch
9. Developing a Plan B to protect arrested activists and mobilize citizens in a system of surveillance (based on the Otpor! ("Resistance") campaign that contributed to bring about democratic change in Belgrade) - **Zorana Smiljanic** (Serbia and Montenegro), Regional Trainer, National Democratic Institute
10. Creating an innovative approach to education for partnership and building up a regional network of trainers - **Olena Suslova** (Ukraine), Director, Women's Information Consultative Center

Appendix B – Project Staff and Observers

Participating Observers

1. Stephen Epstein, Department of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., USA
2. Erik Holst, International Consultant, ICAR Foundation, Bucharest, Romania
3. Carine Kaneza, New Tactics in Human Rights Researcher, Desmond Tutu Peace Centre, Cape Town, South Africa
4. Emel Kurma, Coordinator for Project Development, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, Istanbul, Turkey
5. Christophe Peschoux, Department of Protection and Field Methodology, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva, Switzerland

Project Team

1. Camelia Doru, Director, ICAR Foundation, Bucharest, Romania
2. Douglas A. Johnson, Director, Center for Victims of Torture, Minnesota, USA
3. Kate Kelsch - Project Manager, Center for Victims of Torture, Minnesota, USA
4. Liam Mahony, Notebook Development Coach, Human Rights Activist and Lecturer, Massachusetts, U.S.
5. Paul Milne, Meeting Facilitator and Teaching Session Coach, The Institute for Effective Action, California, U.S.

Workshop Support Team

1. Daniela Atanasiu, Project Assistant/Logistics Coordinator, ICAR Foundation, Bucharest, Romania
2. Bogdan Caloianu, Liaison Officier, ICAR Foundation, Bucharest, Romania
3. Octavian George Doru, Finance and Planning Director, ICAR Foundation, Bucharest, Romania
4. George Ionita, IT Consultant, ICAR Foundation, Bucharest, Romania
5. Tatiana Nutu, Human Resources and Financial Officer, ICAR Foundation, Bucharest, Romania