

The Power of Nonviolent Direct Action: Using Civil Resistance to Fight Oppression



Environmental Advocacy Webinar Series

**Wednesday, September 23, 2020
12:00 PM-1:00 PM ET**

The time has never been more urgent for environmental advocacy. Climate change, biodiversity loss, and social inequity are creating an increasingly unstable and impoverished world. The magnitude of the problems we face demands systemic changes to our economy and way of life, and science and education alone are not sufficient to bring about those changes.



Clara Fang

Center for Climate Preparedness & Community Resilience Graduate Assistant & Organizer of the Environmental Advocacy Webinar Series

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Climate Impacts: Vulnerability and Adaptation Planning

October 4-31, 2020

Registration Deadline: September 29, 2020



Instructor: Christa Daniels

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Webinar Logistics



Everyone should be connected via Audio Broadcast upon entering the webinar. You do not need to call in & you are automatically muted



The presentation will be recorded and posted to the Antioch CCPCR web site within one week



Please submit any questions you have for the presenter in the Q&A section



If you are having trouble with any aspect of the broadcast, use the Chat section to message the Host directly

Presenter: Dominique Thomas

- **Dominique Thomas** is an activist, organizer, researcher and black feminist based in Harlem, NY. In her current position, she serves as the NY and Mid-Atlantic Regional Organizer for 350.org, an international climate movement organization. Prior to 350, she was an organizer with Black Youth Project (BYP100) NY, where she organized around housing injustice. In her current position, she is responsible for building a multiracial base of organizers and activists affected by climate change. Her interests include strategizing from the intersections of climate change, structural systems of oppression, such environmental racism and in particular in relation to Black communities.



The Power of Nonviolent Direct Action

Using Civil Resistance

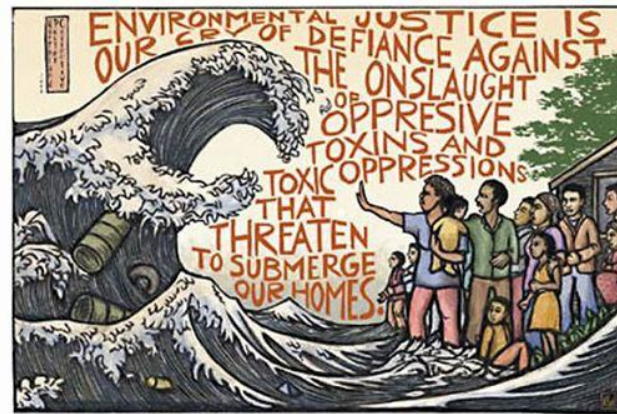


Agenda

- 1) My story of self
- 2) What is NVDA?
 - a) Nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience
 - b) Types of NVDA Tactics
 - c) Examples of NVDA in history
- 3) NVDA is important and powerful
- 4) Basics of planning a NVDA
- 5) Questions and Responses
- 6) Closing Resources

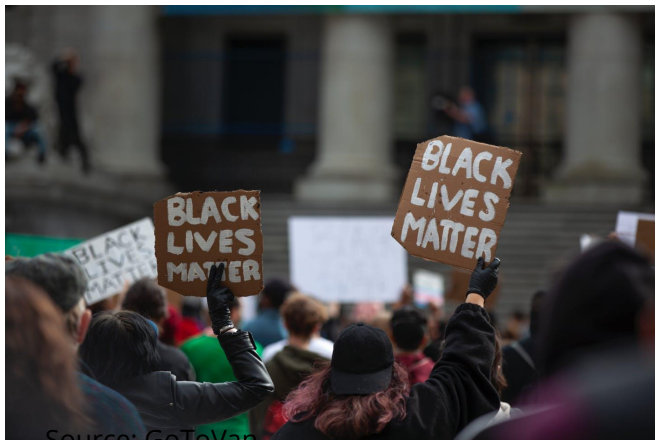


Source: ACLUM



Source: Ricardo Levins Morales

Climate Justice is Racial Justice



Source: GoToVan



Source: Mark Makela

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Non-Violent Direct Action



What is NVDA?

Behavior that is outside of the status quo to highlight and issue or bring awareness about an injustice and the unbalanced power dynamics without the fear of harm, threat or violence to the opposition.



Non-violent Resistance and Civil Disobedience

“Non-violent resistance is the practice of achieving goals such as social change through symbolic protest, civil disobedience or other methods while being non-violent.

Highlights the desires of an individual or group that feels that something needs to change to improve the current condition of the resisting person or group.”

“Civil disobedience is the active, refusal of a citizen to obey certain laws, demands, orders or commands of a government or entity. Hence, civil disobedience is sometimes equated with nonviolent resistance.”



**What does non-violent resistance
mean to you in the context of the
climate justice movement?**

Examples of NVDA tactics

Marches

Strikes

Sit ins

Bird-dogging

Die-Ins

Street
Blockades

Workplace
Occupations

Vigils



Examples of successful NVDA



Source: NY CaribNews



Source: Ricky Stille



Source: History Collection



Source: Guy Bell



Source: Jack Mosher

Why is NVDA important and powerful?

- 1) Power flows both downward and upwards
 - a) Direct action can be used as a tool to shift power to the people.
- 2) NVDA is not just a tactic but is a lifestyle and requires a great deal of discipline
- 3) Attracts more people and you can have more buy-in from people who want to engage in lower risk--there is a much lower barrier to participation compared to violent action



**How have you used non-violent direct
action or civil disobedience to win a
demand?**

Planning a NVDA



Planning a NVDA

Before action

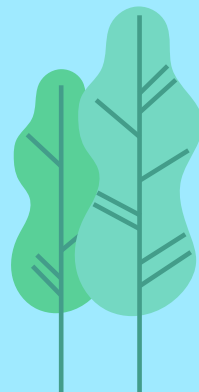
- 1) Action is rooted in your theory of change
- 2) Have allotted at least a month to the planning process
- 3) Make space for political education, learning and strategic organizing

During Action

- 1) Stay connected to what your demands are and the commitment of nonviolence
- 2) Have regular check-ins with you buddy and affinity group members

After action

- 1) Debrief what went well and ways you could improve for next time
- 2) REST!



Key Roles

- 1) Police liaison-someone who is ready to speak to the police during and after the action
- 2) De-escalators
- 3) Care bears
- 4) Outside the action support
 - a) Jail Support
- 5) Media/comms teams
 - a) Spokespersons
- 6) Action coordinator
- 7) Action organizer
- 8) Legal observers



Source: Baltimore Jail support

Martin Luther King's NVDA Steps

- 1) Information gathering
- 2) Educate others
- 3) Personal commitment
- 4) Negotiations
- 5) Direct action
- 6) Reconciliation

Chenoweth's elements of successful nonviolent campaign

- 1) Large, diverse, sustained participation
- 2) Elicits loyalty shifts among the elite and security forces
- 3) Lots of variation in the methods and tactic used
- 4) When repression happens, stick to nonviolence in the face of chaos

**If you've worked on a NVDA, what
made the action successful?**

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Questions and Responses



Resources . . .



- 1) Six Steps for Nonviolent Direct Action
- 2) planning effective
- 3) HANDBOOK FOR NONVIOLENT ACTION
- 4) The Power of Nonviolent Direct Action - Daniel Hunter (final)

THANK YOU!!!



Teaching Advocacy: Planting the Seeds of Change

Wednesday, January 13, 2021 – 12:00-1:00 PM ET

- How do we teach advocacy in academic environments skeptical of political involvement? In this webinar, our presenters will provide examples of advocacy lessons, experiential learning, and ways to incorporate civic engagement into teaching of environmental issues. They will examine the pitfalls of teaching advocacy and how to avoid them. It is possible to teach solutions as well as problems and encourage students to make change even while they are in college.

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