

## Deterrence Relay Race



### GOALS:

- give participants' insight into how third-party nonviolent intervention (TPNI) operates on the ground;
- help participants learn more theory of TPNI.

**TIME:** 80-120 minutes

**SPECIAL MATERIALS:** Set of cards for the Deterrence Relay Race

### HOW IT'S DONE:

This exercise is based on the idea of “relay races,” although in this version there is less emphasis on “winning” and more on learning. First, break groups into at least two teams (teams should be made up of 5 to 6 players each). To “warm up” their team, give them a minute to come up with a team name.

While participants are coming up with a team name, put up three headings at one end of the room: Likely to Endanger Lives, Unclear, Likely to Protect Lives. Then have each team present their team name. (Place teams to make sure they are about equal distant from the headings.)

Explain that people are about to do a “relay race.” The rules of the relay race are as follows:

- Each team will get a set of cards that describes some action they, as NP field workers, might take. Choosing one card at a time, participants must reach consensus in their team about under which heading to put the category.
- The headings are: Likely to Endanger Lives (of the people in the country NP has agreed to protect), Likely to Protect Lives (of those being protected), or Unclear (can go either way).
- As soon as your team decides, someone will grab the card and, using masking tape, put it under that heading.
- The role of the runner needs to keep rotating throughout the group to each person.
- IF YOU WISH, you can add: The first team to finish putting up all of their cards, “Wins.”

Ask for any clarification questions. After the teams are essentially clear about the rules of the relay race, read the scenario from below. Handout sets of cards face-down, telling groups not to start until you say “Go.” Finally: say “Go” and let them *begin!*

While the session is running, watch how the exercise proceeds but try not to interfere very much. If groups have questions for clarification while playing, feel free to answer those (but don't expect them; with a good set-up people should be off running up and down to go put up cards).

# Training for Change: *Tools for Trainers*

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After the game is “over” – when a team runs out of cards *or* when every team runs out of cards (your choice based on your sense of the group) – give the group a moment to catch their breath. Wherever they put various cards, congratulate them on doing some tough thinking and some tough calls.

Begin debriefing with asking immediately for any immediate feelings. Since this is a more theoretical game, fewer feelings may arise. For the remainder of the debriefing time allow the group to look at *why* they put what where (and how that action might affect people in the area). Try to make sure some of the following questions are raised as time permits:

- What considerations did people make in deciding where to place cards?
- What actions did most people think would keep people protected? How does that seem different or similar to NP’s mission? What might NP’s choices teach us about how we view conflict?
- What actions did most people think would endanger people?
- What information would you need to know to decide about actions that were “Unclear”? [Allow the raising of an important question for NP which is how to get quality information.]
- What lessons from this can we make about the action of NP?

There should be time to examine answers to these questions and get some discussion going. About halfway through the debrief, tell participants the “Suggested Answers” (or hand out copies) – especially where the group disagrees – including the considerations. Allowed for continued conversation. Eventually, tell the story of Peace Brigades International's groundbreaking work in Guatemala (on which the scenario is loosely based), defining the concept of political space.

Explain the concept of political space and walk through the concept of deterrence theory.

## **SCENARIO:**

You have currently been deployed in the country of Pongit. The military government of Pongit has been very repressive to its people, involved in killing any protestors that try to even suggest a new government. Very little organizing has thus been able to happen, and with very little results so far.

There are a few people trying to be activists, most women, still operating in the capital city, simply asking the government: where are our disappeared children? Up to date, most people organizing around such requests have been stonewalled by the government or repressed.

The government has shown that it can be swayed by international pressure, but not easily. It accepted NP’s presence only reluctantly. You have now landed in Pongit and have to decide what actions you should take. On each card are some possible options for you to examine... good luck!

## **WHERE TOOL COMES FROM:**

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