

Creative Actions for #RefugeesWelcome - Sep 24 - Oct 19, 2015

"It is our duty to fight for our freedom.

It is our duty to win.

We must love each other and support each other.

We have nothing to lose but our chains."

— [Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*](#)

Table of Contents

[Table of Contents](#)

[1. The Basic Idea](#)

[2. The Politics](#)

[3. Steps to organize an action](#)

[BUT FIRST - a NOTE ABOUT SECURITY CULTURE](#)

[3a. Scouting the location](#)

[3b. Preparing materials.](#)

[\(i\) Banner](#)

[\(ii\) Tools to lock down](#)

[\(c\) Flyers](#)

[\(d\) Sound amplification](#)

[3c. Getting your team ready](#)

[3d. Know Your Rights](#)

[3e. Media - Mainstream and Documentation](#)

[3f. Re-group, debrief, celebrate, plan.](#)

1. The Basic Idea

What is Non Violent Direct Action (NVDA)?

- The strategic use of immediately effective acts (or refusal to obey civil laws) to achieve a political or social end and challenge an unjust power dynamic. Create a “crisis” or conflict to force the other side to address issue at hand:
 - a. Nonviolent protest: marches, picketing, vigils, sit-ins, lock downs
 - b. Noncooperation: withdrawing power, e.g. boycott/strikes/walk outs, fasting/refusing food
 - c. Nonviolent intervention: Sit-ins, flash mobs, obstructions, invasion
- Faced with nonviolent resistance, those in power or those who are challenge have three choices: negotiate, concede, or use violence.

Idea 1: Border Blockade

1. Shut down the entrance of your local MP elections campaign office
2. Create a border blockade at a Federal Leader’s campaign bus
3. Set up a border check-point at a busy street.
 - a. For a street check-point, watch this video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_zatLjgZzs

Idea 2: Refugees Are Welcome Here Sing-a-Long

1. Get into a campaign event or a candidate meeting and sing.
 - a. The song is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uzB26yfdRIw>
2. Organize a group sing-a-long at in a mall or a similar high-traffic location.

2. The Politics

- 60 million people are displaced around the world.
- 44,000 people have died crossing borders.
- Yet Canada has assisted about 7,000 people each year to come in as refugees.
- The entire immigration system is in shambles - see www.neverhome.ca for details.
- This is a crisis - and we cannot allow politics as usual to continue until it is resolved.

3. Steps to organize an action

BUT FIRST - a NOTE ABOUT SECURITY CULTURE

This document will help you plan a non-violent civil disobedience action which we believe is both morally and legally just.

However, the police may not share this point of view. So remember this:

- Anything you say on the internet or on the phone can be used against you. Only talk in person.
- Need to know only. If your best friend, your mom, or your boss are not going to be organizing in the action, they don't need to know.
- If you are going to do it, why talk about it. If you aren't going to do it, why talk about it.
- Don't leave anyone behind. Support your people. It's only over when everyone is out of jail, and without charges.

3a. Scouting the location

If you are planning an action at the MP's campaign office,

- Go there a few days earlier before they open the offices and sit nearby to see what time the doors are unlocked, and when people actually start coming in. If your intention is to shut down the office, you want to do it before it's opened. Make sure the hours are the same on the day you're going to be doing your action as the day you scout it.
- Think about how many people you will need to have to actually keep the door closed and be visible. How big a banner do you need to hold up so that it can be done properly?
- Think about how you are going to lock the door. Are you going to just stand in front of it till you are asked to move, or are you going to lock it shut with a bike lock, or are you going to lock a person to it so that the police will have to cut them out? So pay close attention to the entrance to the door, including what you can lock the door handle to, and how big or small everything is, pay attention to which way the door swings. Only take photos if you are certain you can be surreptitious.

- Also think about coming and leaving, where will you leave your bikes or cars - you don't want to be worrying about your car getting towed in the middle of an action.
- While you are at the office - wander in and pretend to be a supporter of whichever party it is. Try and find out if there are any major media events coming up (you can also call and ask this information if you feel uncomfortable doing so in person). If there is such an event coming up - it would be good to do the border blockade that day.

If you are planning an action in front of a leader's campaign bus

- Find out where the bus will be parked or where it will be pulling in or out from. The more controlled your space is, the easier it is to block something.
- Go there a few days earlier and watch traffic flow, watch how big the space is that you will be blocking.
- Think about how many people you will need. Will you be standing in front of the bus till you are asked to move, or will you chain yourself together, or will someone chain themselves to the axle of the bus - figure out what you want to do and how the space can help or hinder your plans.

If you are planning an action in a street or a mall

- Go there a few days earlier at the time you want to do the action and watch the traffic. Is it mostly on foot or in cars? How many people walk or drive by in an hour? Are they in a rush? Are there alternative routes?

More info

Much more detailed document for scouting other actions you may do:

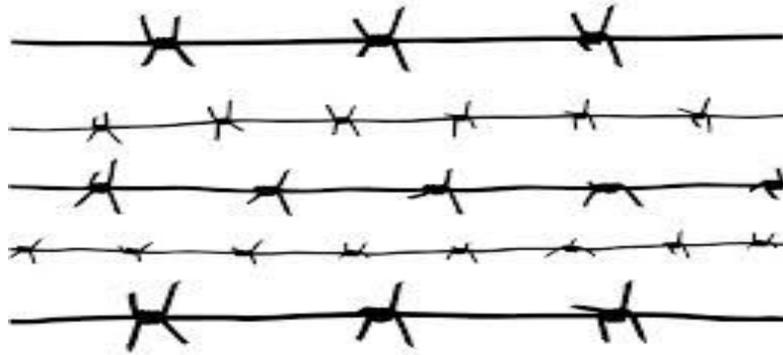
<http://ruckus.org/downloads/Ruckus%20Scouting%20Manual.pdf>

3b. Preparing materials.

(i) Banner

Banners are good for messaging and are a good way for a small number of people to block a large entrance. You can easily purchase materials that are 3 to 5 feet wide at any length.

You can take a banner and paint barbed wire on it like this and you are good to go



You can also add text of your message on it.

- Refugees Welcome!
- No One Is Illegal!
- Open the Borders!

Here's how you can put text on a banner

LAYING OUT GRAPHICS

OLD SCHOOL METHOD:

1. Draw your banner image onto paper.
2. Lay the banner out on a table or the floor. Measure the length of space to be covered by the text.
3. Figure out how many units your text requires:
 - All lowercase letters, numbers, and spaces between words count as 1 unit except m & w (1 1/2 units) and f, l, j, i, and t (1/2 unit).
 - All capital letters count as 1 unit except M & W (1 1/2 units) and I (1/2 unit).

Banners & Flags

Creative Direct Action Visuals A RUCKUS SOCIETY MANUAL

4. Divide the total length into the number of units needed.

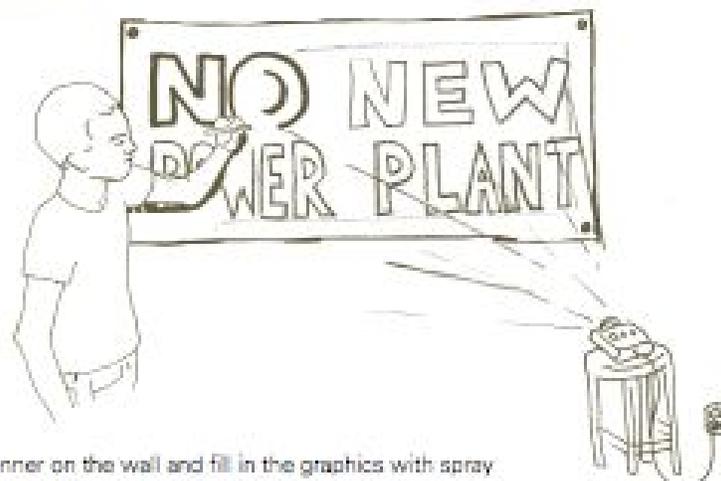
5. Freehand sketch the letters onto the banner using a pencil or marker. Freehand the graphics in the space remaining, or use the grid method to transfer. (Draw a grid over your image on the paper, make a larger matching grid on the fabric, and transfer box by box.)



6. Fill in letters and graphics with spray paint or use brushes and water-based paint.

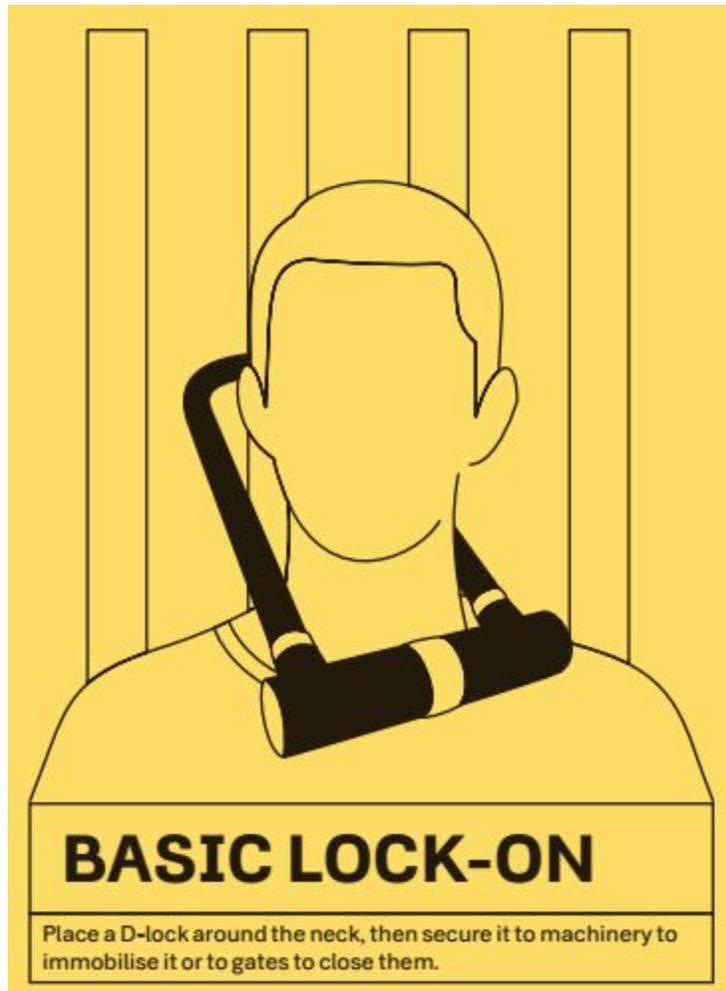
HIGH TECH METHOD:

1. Create the graphic or text on a computer-based graphics program. Make sure your dimensions match the dimension of the final banner.
2. Hang banner on a wall. Project the graphic onto the blank banner using a digital projector.
3. Trace the graphics and text with permanent markers. It can be helpful to mark the color of each shaded area onto the banner as you trace.



4. If using spray paint, leave the banner on the wall and fill in the graphics with spray paint. If using water-based paint, spread the banner on the floor before painting.

(ii) Tools to lock down



Other lock-down tools:

www.vam.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/242800/VA_DO_How-to_Lock.pdf

(c) Flyers

You can download flyers from www.refugeeswelcome.ca/Tools

(d) Sound amplification

Do you need a bullhorn or a sound system? Is it small enough to move? Will you be OK if it get seized by the police as evidence?

3c. Getting your team ready

Readiness for any direct action requires focused preparation:

- Strategic Readiness
 - Who can do what? What choice are we asking them to make? How will this action get us closer to our ultimate goals? What's the tone? What are the eventualities?
- Logistical Readiness
 - What is the map for our action? Who will bail people out if there are arrests? Legal help? Does everyone know their roles, have the equipment they need and have practiced together?
- Soul Readiness
 - How will we prepare ourselves to make the choice to act with courage in spite of our fear? How can we organize and coordinate ourselves on a daily and weekly basis to support each other and our families under whatever hardship may come?

Here are some very basic roles depending on the action you are doing. Get together and have an honest conversation about who can do what. Do a few practice runs in an area similar to where you will do the action, so that you work out any problems in advance.

- **People risking arrest:** intending to risk arrest and commit civil disobedience
- **Direct Support People:** risking arrest by staying with those locked down as long as possible and necessary and providing a human shield to those locked down. They can also be the helpers for getting people locked down and in place.
- **MC:** If you are doing a rally - type action and you want to inform passers-by or keep up morale.
- **Police Liaison:** maintains communication between police and demonstrators.
- **Diversion Team:** to draw attention away from people (Do you need this?)
- **Media spokesperson** (More on this in the media section)

- **Communication team:** Taking photos and filming the action. Tweeting and uploading on facebook. #FreedomtoMove (More on this in the media section)
- **Demonstrators/Sign-holders/Chanters/Singers/** Hand out literature etc. (This is if you are organizing a bigger action with more people. NOII's chant sheet: <https://goo.gl/GK6BCM>)
- **Jail Support Contact person:** The person you call if you get arrested who can arrange a lawyer for you if you need one (if it's an arrestable action)
- **For lock-downs:** an off-site key holder
- **Decision Makers:**

3d. Know Your Rights

Knowing your basic rights and the common charges that are leveled against protesters can help you in your interactions with the police. However, our rights in theory are very different from our rights in practice. It is important to recognize that the police often disregard our rights. Police may try to intimidate or threaten protesters who try to assert their rights, or may act friendly in order to gain information or persuade you to waive your rights.

Before the action:

- Write down a lawyer's number on your body in permanent marker. (police may take paper from you, or you could forget the number due to stress or injury)
- Don't bring drugs, weapons, your address book or any other sensitive materials with you to the protest.
- Make sure that someone (friend, family, or member of an affinity group) knows you are going to the demonstration.
- Be aware that certain people face increased risk of being targeted by the police because they are a member of a marginalized group, because of their political beliefs, immigration status, or because of how they look.

More information about dealing with the police and immigration officers, during/post arrest, and common charges can be found here:

<http://movementdefence.org/node/10>

3e. Media - Mainstream and Documentation

Pre-action:

- Draft a press release
 - Please modify existing press release as appropriate:
<https://goo.gl/0iQACc>
 - Your headline can be “#RefugeesWelcome shuts down XY Campaign Office in X City” or “#RefugeesWelcome sings for justice at X place”
 - If you need to discuss your media advisory, email refugeeswelcomeCA@gmail.com - please remember security culture while emailing.
- Identify local spokesperson and practice quotes with them.
 - Media speaking points and FAQ: <https://goo.gl/nkM7wT>
- Develop a list of email addresses for key journalists that you want to send your press release to. Depending on action, you may send this press release at two possible sets of times.
 - If it's a public action, like a sing-a-long in a public place: You can send the press release 3 days before, the day before, and the morning of the action.
 - If it's an action that requires surprise: Send the press release as soon as you are deployed. You can save a draft of it in your inbox and send it from your phone or have someone on a computer with all the info at a second location that you call who then hits send.
- Media calls
 - Develop a list of phone numbers for key journalists and news outlets that that you want to send your press release to. Depending on the action, you may make calls at two possible times
 - If it's a public action: Call first thing in the morning, around 7:30am - 8:00am.
 - If it's a surprise action: Call as soon as you send your press release. You may need a person to make media calls for this either at the action or off-site.

During action:

- Set up your shots for the media and your own people
 - Make sure banners/placards/visuals are in any photos/videos (for example a visual could be 3 people with blood on their hands wearing oversized Harper, Trudeau and Mulcair masks).
- Documentation (Photo and film)

- Please email refugeeswelcomeCA@gmail.com the best footage/shots so we can share on the Cross Canada Mobilizations photo gallery:
<https://goo.gl/A8eWIF>
- Social media: Have 1-2 designated people live tweeting/sharing on Facebook
 - Gallery of memes and images for social media: <https://goo.gl/BTKJVM>
- Media spokesperson: Do interviews, stay on message
 - Media speaking points and FAQ: <https://goo.gl/nkM7wT>
- Media handling: Direct all media present to media spokesperson, keep track of all the media present (get business cards, contact info, etc.), have press kit (including press release) available; set up shots so that visuals/people are in view; do any follow up with reporters for access to their articles/footage

Post-action:

- Production: have someone lined up to immediately edit video or post pictures within hours of action
- Media watch: searching for and compiling all print/web/video/radio pieces on the action, share on social media
- **Reportback: Send photos, links to videos, all media coverage, and short recap of your action to: refugeeswelcomeCA@gmail.com**

3f. Re-group, debrief, celebrate, plan.

- Set up a meeting in advance for everyone to meet once the action is done.
- Take your time to celebrate what went well.
- Be open to giving and receiving criticism about the action - and the individual steps that took it.
- Remember: criticizing someone's actions is NOT about criticizing their person.
- Talk about what you learned.
- Plan your next action.