

ACTIVITY 11:

Why and how to resist

Resistance strategies are an essential part of transforming power. Blockades, protests, marches, boycotts, strikes, and occupations are just a few examples of 'direct action' to physically impede or expose abuses of power while creating pressure on formal power to advance your agenda and shape public debate. Not all resistance strategies are direct action, however. Creating autonomous initiatives that embody just, regenerative propositions and values (like the Zapatistas in Mexico, for example) can also be resistance, as can small acts of rebellion or 'crossing the line'. Acts of autonomy and rebellion can be powerful ways of communicating an alternative, or what has been called 'the threat of a good example'. History is full of examples of washer women or mothers stopping their 'invisible' care work as a form of resistance. In recent years, influential resistance strategies – the five-month movement mobilisation in Guatemala to stop a coup, Podemos in Spain, and Occupy Wall Street in the US – utilised strategic communications and social media to ramp up their outside influence in order to disrupt or change the narrative, and create public pressure for change. 'Outside strategies' – coordinated street and virtual action – can turn up the heat and pressure policymakers to take action.

Materials: Sticky notes, handout: *The basics of resistance and direct action*

Small groups: Reflect on your own experience with resistance strategies or that of a group you know of. Alternatively, discuss one of the case studies.

- Describe examples of resistance. What was the action? What were some of the key elements (for example, the number of people, target, and messages)?
- What motivated this resistance?
- What were some of the challenges?
- What was achieved?

Note one-word answers on coloured stickies – a different colour each for *Why? Challenges? Impact?*

Plenary: Each group shares examples and posts their sticky notes. Bring out additional examples from the handout. Conclude by discussing the multiple purposes and key characteristics of resistance strategies.