



A Blueprint for Climate Revolution

Srdja Popovic, Otpor!, CANVAS
Serbia

☀ Call to Action

Learn how you can build a movement or support those transitioning to democracy: canvasopedia.org

Follow CANVAS:

Twitter @CANVASNVS

Facebook: @PeoplePowerCANVAS

☀ Values

- Committed
- Imaginative
- Courage
- Creative
- Environmentalist

☀ Lessons Learned

Activism works. Get involved. Use your voice. Bring your ideas. Change the world!

Violence breeds violence, so refuse to participate in that cycle. If you have a cause to fight for, use your intelligence and your compassion, not your fists, or weapons.

Pacifism is the ultimate act of defiance against a tyrant. Nonviolence is the one weapon that can bring an end to tyranny.

Identifying the root of a problem is the first step in solving it. The second step is proposing a way to solve it.

Renegade rocker turned nonviolent activist, Srdja Popovic wrote the handbook for nonviolent resistance—a text that’s now taught around the world, from the halls of Harvard to the frontlines of Extinction Rebellion’s global environmental movement.

In his twenties, Srdja founded Otpor! a Serbian resistance movement that helped to overthrow the dictator Slobodan Milošević. Srdja later went on to found the Center for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies (CANVAS), which has supported and built nonviolent resistance movements around the world. Now, he says, the next frontier of the global resistance struggle is a common one: climate change.

☀ Language Arts

Who was Slobodan Milosevic? Write a research paper about the War in the Balkans and explain why Srdja’s choice of using nonviolence to fight Milosevic is so impressive.

Who are the most influential activists you know of who have achieved significant change using nonviolence? Make a list of at least 10, then choose six of them. Create a Tik Tok video for each activist you have chosen that focuses on how they used nonviolence to effect significant change in their countries, or in the world.

Read the article Countdown: Top 10 Civil Resistance Stories of 2020, Looking Forward. Choose one of the conflicts mentioned in the article, and research it thoroughly: its origins, the government’s position, the opposition’s position, what possible solutions there are, and the current status of the conflict. With the information you have gathered, create a 10-15-slide Power Point presentation explaining the conflict to your peers.

Watch Srdja's Ted Talk on [How to Topple a Dictator](#)¹. Some of the tactics he and his friends used to topple Milosevic were [guerrilla theater, humor, and satire](#)². Choose one issue in the world that you would like to change and write a guerrilla theater-style script aimed at achieving change.

STEM Activities

War and conflict can have devastating impacts on the environment, including the destruction of habitats, and pollution. Lead bullets in shrapnel shells, rifles, and machine gun cartridges, a major source of pollution of water and soil; can cause damage not only to people, but to the environment as well. Have students research the effects of lead on various parts of the human body (the nervous, circulatory, digestive systems, etc.), individually or in groups. (If they are working in groups, each group should choose a different body system.) Then students will create posters or 3-D models to present their findings; they should include information on symptoms, physiology, long-term effects—and prevention!

Between 1946 and 1958, the United States set off 23 separate nuclear explosions near the Bikini Atoll, about half-way between Papua New Guinea and Hawaii, to test the impacts of nuclear weapons on naval ships. Each of these explosions raised the surface temperature of the sea to 55,000 degrees Celsius (the sun's surface temperature is 5,500 degrees Celsius). In this [activity](#)³, students will learn how an increase in ocean temperature can lead to coral bleaching.

Students will analyze and develop mitigation plans for the global CO2 emissions that will be necessary to forestall global climate change by reviewing various models for mitigation strategies. Guiding question: "What would it take to reduce carbon dioxide emissions on a global scale such that atmospheric concentration reaches a stable level of 350 ppm, and the global average temperature change stays below 2 degrees Celsius in 50 years?"

- [Activity Link](#)⁴

Sustainability Innovations

Srdja was able to collaborate with other individuals his age to address the issues caused by the dictatorship in Serbia. This [Ted Talk](#)⁵ highlights his approach and the things that transpired during this effort.

Srdja was able to accomplish monumental feats in Serbia, but not all countries are dealing with the same issues. The United States Institute of Peace highlights strategies and situations to deal with various issues of oppression globally.

As society has developed, the use of technology has advanced the push toward reducing oppression. This [article](#)⁶ features some of the ways activists have used technology to fight oppression. One of the main highlights of the article is the information about the [Digital Citizen Fund](#)⁷, a 501(c)3 nonprofit based in Afghanistan that helps women in developing countries gain access to technology for collaboration.

Sustainability Career Pathways

Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Trainer. CANVAS isn't the only organization providing training in non-violence. There are organizations doing this around the world. Typically, one learns these skills as part of their experience in activism. But one can also learn how to train others. Here is a [list of trainings and organizations](#)⁸ to explore--whether to be trained yourself, or perhaps one day, to become a trainer. Want to learn more about one group's effort, check out the [Fellowship for Reconciliation](#)⁹.

Conflict Mediator. There are a growing number of career opportunities in the field of conflict resolution: mediators, arbitrators, consensus-builders. Mediators help parties resolve conflict--whether two individuals, organizations, or communities--and whether the conflict concerns financial issues, territorial disputes, or environmental concerns. Want to learn more about this field? Visit [here](#)¹⁰. Are you interested in a career in conflict resolution? Read this [step-by-step guide](#)¹¹.

Social Psychologist. People, being social by nature, sometimes experience the dark sides of social interaction--whether it is dictatorship at the state level, or bullying at the individual level. Social psychologists study and help address key social issues like bullying, crime, community health problems, and so on. Do you want to become a psychologist? Here is an [overview](#)¹², including how to become one and what you can use these skills for.

Political Scientist or Social Movements Expert. Some years ago, Erica Chenoweth found that nonviolent revolutions have been far more successful than violent revolutions over the course of history. Scholars of political science, social movements, and revolution contribute significantly to the power of movements. Read more about [Chenoweth's findings here](#)¹³ and consider becoming a [political scientist](#)¹⁴.

Documentary Filmmaker. PBS's [Bringing Down a Dictator](#)¹⁵ is a powerful documentary: like so many others, it reveals the power of documentary to help change history and mobilize people. Perhaps you want to become a filmmaker? Here are some tips about [how to become a filmmaker](#)¹⁶ by none other than Ken Burns. And here you will find [tips on how to actually making a living doing it](#)¹⁷.

1 https://www.ted.com/talks/srdja_popovic_how_to_topple_a_dictator?language=en

2 <https://study.com/academy/lesson/guerrilla-theatre-definition-examples.html>

3 <https://www.dropbox.com/s/wlz6v1w5lc6altq/Coral%20Bleaching%20in%20Caribbean.pdf?dl=0>

4 <https://www.clarkson.edu/stem/project-based-climate-modules/mitigation>

5 https://www.ted.com/speakers/srdja_popovic

6 <https://www.fastcompany.com/3066519/watch-these-activists-explain-how-technology-helped-them-fight-oppressive-governments>

7 <https://www.digitalcitizenfund.org/about>

8 <http://nonviolencetraininghub.org/events/categories/>

9 <https://forusa.org/what-we-do/educate/leadership-training/>

10 <https://careersinpsychology.org/conflict-resolution-careers/>

11 <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/how-to-become-a-mediator>

12 <https://careersinpsychology.org/becoming-a-social-psychologist/>

13 <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/faculty-research/policy-topics/advocacy-social-movements/paths-resistance-erica-chenoweths-research>

14 <https://www.truity.com/career-profile/political-scientist>

15 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bringing_Down_a_Dictator

16 <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/ken-burns-shares-tips-for-becoming-a-documentarian#ken-burns-7-tips-for->

17 <https://www.desktop-documentaries.com/how-to-make-a-full-time-living-as-a-documentary-filmmaker.html>

