



## INTRODUCTION



Norm-creative innovation can have different objectives, such as drawing attention to and highlighting discrimination that has not been called to attention or creating concrete solutions to problems that are well-known. This set of cards describes various norm-creative innovation tactics, that is, different ways to achieve a desired result.

The cards describe what the tactics involve and how they can be applied as well as pointing at associated risks and difficulties. Keep in mind that, in principle, norm-creative projects are always based on a combination of a number of different tactics – one primary tactic and either one or a couple of supporting tactics. Ask yourself which cards, that is, which tactics, best describe what you want to achieve. Also keep in mind that what you wish to achieve may change with time, so consult the cards every now and then during the course of the process.

One suggested exercise is to draw a matrix, e.g. on a whiteboard, with one tactic per row and one example of norm-creative innovation (see the Role Models suit) per column, and then to mark which tactics are relevant to each role model. Mark also the primary tactic and any supporting tactic(s). Add your project, too, and compare. You will find our suggestion for relevant tactics at the bottom of each role model card.

TACTICS





## THE HOLE PUNCH

One initial step towards change for gender equality and social equality is to inform people about how discriminatory norms limit individuals. Influencing public opinion and increasing awareness through the written and spoken word is a time-honoured method.

- ♣ Use statistics. Use numbers that prove social and gender inequality. Doing so requires categorisation, e.g. comparisons between men and women, which can also be reinforcing. However, it can work as an initial step to highlight the problem.

- ♣ Ensure clarity. Ensuring readability and inclusion by using simple language, different languages and, for example, symbols and other visual aids is important.

- ♣ Appeal to the senses. Use different formats and forms of expression to arouse the senses, e.g. sounds that irritate or beautiful melodies, images or video clips that illustrate inequality. It is helpful to combine facts with humour.

- ♣ Use stories. A book or film can convey compelling stories about experiences and feelings, for example, how it feels to wait in line for medical care or what it is like to have fled from war.

Keep in mind that the results of the Hole Punch is rarely an innovation, but as part of a longer process toward innovation and new approaches it can be an important step. It can also be important when introducing a norm-creative innovation. The tactic can usefully be combined with or used as a complement to the Grater tactic.

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## 3 THE SLEDGEHAMMER



When a norm is confirmed and upheld, there is a significant risk that those who are discriminated against will not get the chance to have their say, that their experiences and needs will not be understood. The Sledgehammer tactic involves creating objects and situations that promote understanding through the direct physical experience of discrimination.

♣ Engineer experiences. Create objects or environments that make it possible for those who fit the norm to experience what it is like not to do so, e.g. by exaggerating products' weight, friction, size, sound and so on.

♣ Engineer reverse experiences. For example, what would it feel like to walk in an environment that has been fully adapted to suit people in wheelchairs, e.g. with very low doorways?

♣ Role-play. Another variation is role-play - how are you treated when you do not look like or act like the norm. Perhaps you wear a hijab or walk hand-in-hand with someone of the same gender.

Keep in mind that the Sledgehammer requires a pedagogical approach and a context, such as an exhibition or conference, where there is also room for discussion and reflection. Just because a person has 'tried it', is not the same as truly understanding what it is like to be a Muslim woman. But actually daring to try with one's own body can still provide the insight needed to help a person realize their own privilege.

TACTICS



## 4 THE PLASTERING TROWEL



When people are excluded and discriminated against, an important tactic can be to create solutions that are suitable and work for many people, i.e. that are more inclusive – The Plastering Trowel. This might involve more ergonomic and easy-to-use functions or creating forms of expression, styles and fashion that are not stereotypical.

☘ Meet needs without categorizing. As many people as possible should be able to use these solutions, e.g. public toilets that are not gender-segregating, that also have change tables for babies and are also designed to suit everybody, regardless of their level of physical capability.

☘ Avoid stereotypical expressions that categorise. For example, choose colours other than pink and blue, which are strongly gender-categorizing, use unisex solutions, or avoid patterns and images that stereotype groups in different ways.

☘ Avoid solutions that are unnecessarily complicated. They should work regardless of their user's age and physical capacity, for example. They might be tools that can be used by people with different-sized hands and manuals that are easy to read and understand regardless of one's linguistic knowledge or ability.

Keep in mind that things that are considered 'neutral' often reflect norms. For example, white is considered neutral, reinforcing norms of whiteness, and blue is considered more neutral than pink, reinforcing norms of masculinity. Be conscious of this, so as not to once again favour those who are already privileged. Be aware that the Plastering Trowel can also have the opposite effect of trying to squeeze everyone into a new mould, another uniform. For this reason, it can be combined with the Spanner, which allows for individual additions and adaptations.

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## THE PRECISION SCREWDRIVER

Solutions that must suit as many people as possible can lead to already-privileged groups and individuals being favoured at the expense of those who are discriminated against, because their needs cannot always be met through a general solution. Specific solutions may be required instead, i.e. The Precision Screwdriver tactic.

- ♣ Build on sympathetic feelings. This tactic is based on a sympathetic attitude towards and prioritization of basic human emotions and needs, like the need to feel secure.

- ♣ Address specific needs. The Precision Screwdriver builds on specific needs, for example that a woman subjected to male violence should not need to meet men in a woman's crisis centre or that someone who has fled police or military violence should not need to meet uniformed personnel at a refugee reception centre.

- ♣ Strengthen abilities. This tactic may involve creating solutions that increase vulnerable individuals' abilities, strength and independence. This may require environments in which people who are discriminated against can improve these abilities without being immediately met by discriminatory and oppressive actions.

Keep in mind that a specific solution may be criticized because it excludes, but there is a difference between exclusion and discrimination in a situation characterized by unequal power relationships. Such criticism most often comes from those who benefit from the prevailing power structure. It can be helpful to combine this tactic with the Adjustable Wrench, so that the same space, service or product can be varied and adapted according to people's needs.

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## THE TWIRL WHISK



The Plastering Trowel tactic avoids expressions that may be perceived as problematic, because they risk being counterproductive to the goal.

When a solution is labelled unisex and its palette completely lacks the colour pink, it may reinforce the belief that pink is wrong. And because pink is considered feminine, femininity (and femaleness) is thus devalued. The Twirl Whisk is a tactic that takes back, affirms and reinvents problematic expressions.

♣ Blend the problematic. Combine loaded expressions that are otherwise used to strengthen opposites in a single context. For example, children's clothes that are floral and dangerous, dark and glittery at the same time, instead of neutral and innocuous. This not only recognizes diversity of expression, but also creates opportunities for new experiences.

♣ Reclaim and reinvent. Reclaim symbols that have been hijacked to exclude people by using them in contexts where everyone is welcome, e.g. the Swedish flag in surroundings characterized by people with migrant backgrounds. Most things can be reinvented to embody new values.

Keep in mind that this tactic requires a great deal of respect for symbolic interpretations about which one may not always have sufficient knowledge. There are symbols and expressions that should be avoided, such as distorted terms and images used to offend people (for example the n-word and blackface). Be respectful of one another's experiences and listen to those who may experience

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## 7 THE CAMOUFLAGE NET



It is often necessary to introduce something new by packaging it in a way that feels safe and familiar. Think of how the first light fixtures looked like chandeliers or how TV sets looked like cabinets. The Camouflage Net allows solutions and ideas to be introduced that would otherwise be perceived as strange.

♣ Leverage aesthetics. Use aesthetic forms of expression that speak a language the recipient feels comfortable with. This can allow for more radical content. One example is when the department that sells beauty products for men is called 'male depot' instead of the make-up department.

♣ Play with roles. This tactic can be important if the idea is to make it possible for people to take on new roles. For example, it can help a father on paternity leave if a diaper bag is available in colours that are less associated with femininity, one that maybe even plays with a design coded as masculine.

Keep in mind that rather than serving to broaden, this tactic runs a high risk of reinforcing traditional roles and norms. The result may also be perceived as overdone or disingenuous. Beauty products in packaging with masculine forms of expression will not necessarily challenge traditional values and roles – but they can be a start.

TACTICS





## THE ADJUSTABLE WRENCH

Many solutions are developed with the intention of solving a problem or satisfying a need, once and for all. These types of solutions are called 'black boxes', which are hard to understand or influence. The Adjustable Wrench is based on the attitude that people's needs and problems are relative and change over time. Flexible solutions that welcome additions, changes and adjustments are therefore required.

♣ Expect the unexpected. Recognise the possibility that the solution may not be used as it was originally intended at all.

♣ Build in flexibility. The more the solution allows and actively encourages users to manipulate and make adjustments, the more people will participate – which in turn strengthens democratisation.

♣ Show trust. Participation generates accountability and commitment. Encouraging participation among less privileged groups creates the conditions for greater influence in society. For example, this could involve building public spaces that can be used by all residents of a city, on different occasions and with no need for consumption.

Keep in mind that adjustments require knowledge. Design solutions that are easy to interact with. Complement them with knowledge and support, such as courses or workshops, if necessary. Otherwise, there is a risk that only some people will benefit (those who are usually already privileged) at the expense of others' needs. Remember that the people who do not participate may not have the capacity to do so or they may not trust the methods used.

TACTICS







## THE WELDING TORCH



Since the beginning of industrialisation, the individual and individuality have been an ideal in product development and innovation.

This leads to solutions that emphasize independence. But participation, community and mutual respect are necessary to build a democratic society. The Welding Torch is based on a social context as the ideal, rather than an individual context.

♣ Build in dependence. Dependence is seen as something negative. Just consider its synonyms – reliant, bound, clinging. It can help us strengthen social ties and interpersonal relationships, counteract prejudices and generate meaning for more people. Is it possible to build functions that actually require collaboration between people, that weld us together?

♣ Create social solutions. Different forms of services are based on the strategy of helping one another. Social innovations are a typical example. This could involve solutions in which people support one another in an emergency. For example, young people and the elderly in shared housing can support and help one another practically and socially.

♣ Accept help from one another. Together, we are strong :-)

Keep in mind that power thrives in social contexts. Social solutions run the risk of being based on submission or superiority – and that is when dependence becomes negative. Focus on creating solutions based on equal terms and clear contracts between people.

TACTICS



# 10

## THE LEVER BAR



Discrimination results in the needs and interests of certain groups becoming secondary. Creating equality with fair representation among different groups can require positive special treatment, i.e. by pointing something out and specially favouring it – with the tactic the Lever Bar.

✿ Engineer reverse privileges. Discrimination is based on the fact that some groups are given privileges and advantages relative to other groups. Solutions that create a better balance may therefore be needed, for example by giving specific advantages to people who are usually discriminated against – as in golf, where players are given different handicaps to compete with one another on essentially equal terms.

✿ Recognise what has been made invisible. Whether it is a nation, organisation or family, the history of oppressed groups is suppressed. But the stories are there if we look for them, and they can be used to correct history.

✿ Elevate what has been devalued. It is not only groups of people who have different statuses. This also applies to colours, shapes and other forms of expression. But status is not written in stone. For example, traditional Swedish 'falu red' cottages with white trim were once painted to emulate the appearance of expensive red brick. But today, the colour has cultural value in and of itself. Everything can be renegotiated and upgraded.

Keep in mind to create solutions that genuinely change the power relationship. Social contexts based on some kind of required participation do not establish an environment of equality, nor do short projects financed with time-limited funds.

TACTICS



# 11

## THE ERASER



Some products and other solutions are so bad, for example because they are extremely stereotypical, that they simply cannot be justified or defended – such as sexualised clothing for children. There can also be solutions that unilaterally benefit specific groups, for example certain organisational forms that generate bad organisational cultures. In such cases, the Eraser may be the most viable path – to remove to move forward.

♣ Build a foundation. If the media or customers have not already demonstrated how problematic the solution is, a foundation may be needed to prepare for the Eraser, for example based on the Hole Punch and Sledgehammer strategies.

♣ Select. The Eraser does not need to remove everything. It can be a partial solution. If a toy store is divided into boys and girls departments, it may be enough to eliminate the divide to create a more equal business.

♣ Eliminate.

Keep in mind that this tactic has a highly problematic history. It is often recommended by advocates for groups who believe in extremely simplified solutions to complex problems. This tactic must be based on a thorough analysis. It can also be difficult in an organisation. The person who needs convincing may have once decided to create whatever is now being eliminated.

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# 12

## THE GRATER



Norms and values are often abstract and problems remain hidden in discussions and debates. This can demand a radical form of concretisation: the Grater tactic. It entails calling attention to the need for change through objects whose form and function raise questions and shine a spotlight on the issue.

♣ Start from the familiar. As a starting point, use recognisable items such as everyday products or typical pictures from the advertising world.

♣ Modify. Change the appearance of the everyday object so that it raises questions about norms and issues that are taken for granted. This may involve reversing colours and symbols and so on. Such objects often function well in pictures. Or try creating objects and settings that people can interact with – items that can be worn, touched or listened to, or a place where people can be. This approach generates shortcuts to understanding through immediate sensory impressions. The norm-critical message can even be completely concealed.

♣ Subvert. Use every trick allowed – humour, satire, irony – depending on where on the scale of deferential/provocative the results should be.

Keep in mind that the Grater is situation-dependent. A norm-critical object that calls attention to a problematic norm can be experienced in a wide variety of ways. Some people may understand immediately, while others will only be provoked. This makes it important to involve a designer or artist who is familiar with norm-criticism to prevent the results from being rude or missing the mark.

TACTICS



# 13 THE GARDEN TROWEL



It is easy to get caught in a state of battling norms without achieving results. The risk of fatigue is high, as resistance is often hard to overcome.

We also risk unintentionally reproducing norms by giving them space. A radical and positive alternative is the Garden Trowel tactic. It involves creating suggestions beyond the norm and prevailing categorisations, i.e. Queer. The effect of this tactic is nothing to laugh off. Visions and dreams have always driven human progress. Anything we can express and dream about also has the potential to become a reality.

✿ Activate your imagination. The Garden Trowel tactic is no simple task, because our pre-understandings and experiences obstruct our ability to imagine. Therefore, try to dream by changing perspectives, searching through the archives and strolling through your imagination with no destination in mind. And allow yourself to get lost. It is often then that it happens.

✿ Formulate to move forward. Dreaming is a process in which each step must be specified to lead forward. Sketch and express yourselves in different ways: make collages, models, metaphors, pictures. Don't worry about being logical. Digressions often lead to new ideas.

Keep in mind that this tactic requires a methodical and artistic approach to work. Seek help from other people who are used to activating their imaginations, such as artists. Also try to avoid creating new stereotypical categorisations in the result.

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