

## IS IT RISKY ENOUGH?

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**Risk and reward are closely linked.** However, we hear from lots of groups, especially those working under oppressive regimes, that some **creative campaign and tactic ideas get stopped in their tracks because of fears around the risks involved. These can be very real fears** — everything from a backlash online to violence, imprisonment, even death. But sometimes they're more creatively risky and the fears are around looking silly, not being taken seriously, being misunderstood... or just trying something new, having it fail, and feeling like you came up with something dumb, spent a lot of wasted time on it, and now everyone hates you — wait — who said that? Get them out of here!

If you're thinking your tactic through, you'd never do something "dumb," and you'll waste more time if you never allow yourself to experiment and learn from it. And everyone doesn't "hate" you! BEAT IT, HEAD VOICES!!

Still, sometimes **creativity and innovation can get cut down prematurely when we try to face down our fears.**

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### EXERCISE:

## CREATIVITY MEETS RISK

10-15 MIN

Work through this exercise with your team when you find that creative ideas are getting stopped by fears of risks and failure.

- **Make a risk manifesto.** Talk amongst your team and wider organization about how, collectively, you want to approach risk and reward. Acknowledge that smart risks can lead to big rewards, but making change will mean some mistakes and missteps. Talk through the worst and best that could happen as a result of the wildest ideas you have.
- **Conduct experiments.** Agree to do two small experiments in the next three months that nudge the boundaries of what is considered risky. Afterwards, debrief with everyone and evaluate what happened. Did taking a risk pay off? Do you want to take the experiment further? If so, what adjustments would you make?
- **Examine the boundary-pushers.** Look to colleagues, artists, activists, and other cultural agents who are pushing the boundaries, getting attention from their audiences, and initiating significant steps forward. How are they successfully navigating the terrain of risk? What can you learn from their example and use in your work?

