

meet social needs. Defenders of microfinance argue that it enlivens self-help and avoids the dependency and corruption that inevitably accompanies foreign aid solutions. A negative team could develop an entire strategy around microfinance solutions. Because many international institutions already support microfinance, it isn't even necessary to present a counterplan. The negative can argue that the present system is superior to the affirmative plan because it promotes microfinance-based, self-help solutions rather than dependency/corruption-prone foreign aid schemes. By conducting in-depth research, the negative team can find evidence linking microfinance solutions to many of the case areas likely to be chosen by the affirmative (water purity and sanitation, women-in-development, training of health workers, treatment of homes for malaria prevention, and so on).

The most successful negative teams are those that can succeed in bringing the debate to familiar negative ground. So the affirmative case might be advocating some little-known system for water purification, but the negative succeeds in making the debate about microfinance solutions. Find two or three strategies that work against almost any case. This makes selecting a strategy much simpler. After you discover the affirmative case area, you just choose the strategy that best fits this particular case.

5. *Take what the resolution gives you.* The affirmative team is defending the resolution; you are defending the nonresolution. Every policy debate resolution in the past quarter century has the United States federal government as its agent of action. This locks the affirmative team into defending federal solutions to public policy problems. This leaves considerable leeway for the development of negative strategies. State or local government action can be superior to federal action.

Private enterprise can provide a better way to deal with problems. International actors such as the United Nations, the Global Fund, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, or the International Criminal Court might be able to solve problems in a much more advantageous fashion. If these nonfederal-government agencies already have programs underway to deal with the affirmative harm claims, inherency arguments are in order. If no such solutions are underway, the negative team can advocate a counterplan (the subject of Chapter 8).

CHALLENGING TOPICALITY