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Strategies for Change: Action Plan Workbook

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Action Plan Workbook

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for use with

**What is a system?
How does it work?
Some strategies for change**

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ABOUT LILA AURICH

Lila Aurich, member of the AAUW Topic Committee for Women as Agents of Change, combines a mathematical background with a master's degree in organizational development to focus on the theory and practice of change agency. A participant herself in the first AAUW-sponsored community action training program in 1970, she has been a consultant in leadership and communications skills. She is a former director of the Women's Life Planning Center, which was sponsored by the San Fernando Valley (CA) Branch of AAUW. She has served on several urban planning advisory committees for the city and county of Los Angeles and currently directs the Women's Center at Los Angeles City College.

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**What is a system?
How does it work?
Some strategies for change**

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WOMEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

ACTION PLAN WORKBOOK

Introduction

The Women as Agents of Change Association Topic Committee was charged with the responsibility to develop an action Topic to train members to be agents of change in every aspect of life--community concerns, home, education, job, and government.

In the first Topic year we provided:

A training series for useful change agent skills ('77-'79 Program Guide, pp. 13-24).

Guidelines for forming and working effectively in coalitions (Program Guide, p. 26; Tool Catalog, pp. 225-228).

In early 1978 we added a booklet on systems analysis, What Is a System? How Does It Work? Some Strategies For Change by Beverly Ann Scott. (Available from the AAUW Sales Office for \$3.50 and included in the Women as Agents of Change Workshop Kit.)

When we take action to produce change, frequently we tend to move immediately from a superficial identification of the problem to action. Experience indicates that a more thorough diagnosis of all aspects of the situation to be changed, and of our relationship to the situation as agents of change, will produce a more effective result.

This Workbook is a companion to the Program Guide and What Is a System?. It is designed to help you put theory into practice when analyzing and laying out an action plan.

How to Use This Workbook

1. To plan action on some part of your Branch program.

It is probable that your Branch is already interested in accomplishing some change, as an outgrowth of one of the other Topics or a continuing Area of Interest. The Change Agent Topic group can join forces with others to plan and carry out the action.

2. In acting as a consultant and member of a support group for a Topic group or Branch member who wants to accomplish a change in some other group or system in which she is active.

The Topic group can work with her to analyze, design, and evaluate the plan she will carry out.

3. As a simulation.

Your group may not have the time to carry out an action plan for change. You can still improve your analytical and planning skills by going through the Workbook, focusing on an issue in which you are interested, without making a commitment to carry out the plan.

Step I	Establishing Goals and Objectives
Step II	System Analysis
Step III	Force Field Analyses
Step IV	Choosing a Change Approach
Step V	Inventory of Your Resources
Step VI	Building Support
Step VII	Designing the Action Plan
Step VIII	Evaluation of the Project

STEP I: ESTABLISHING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A. What is the problem you want to address?
(Example: Members are not sufficiently involved in our AAUW Branch activities.)

B. What change would you like to see happen? Write a positive statement of your goal.
(Example: Members would participate more at all levels of Branch activities.)

C. What system will make this change, i.e., be your target system?

System: a collection of interconnected parts that function together as a whole and a collection that has a recognizable boundary.

(Example: The target system is the Branch itself.)

Will the change happen inside the system? _____

Or will it be a change in the way the system acts on the environment outside its boundary? _____

Or both? _____

STEP II: SYSTEM ANALYSIS

A system can be considered to have four components (Scott, What Is a System?, 1977, p. 3)

- A. Power: *The capacity to act and change events.
to make and carry out decisions.
to use and mobilize resources.*

Who has the power in your target system?
(Example: In a Branch, the Board, certain influential members.)

What kinds of power do they have: (1977-79 Program Guide, p. 22.)
(Example: Power of elected office, contacts, knowledge.)

B. Resources: *valued assets, money, property, status, affiliations.*

What are the resources of your target system?

(Example: Branch budget, reputation in the community, communication channels.)

- C. *Institutional Policies and Practices:* *formal written policies and informal, often unspoken practices that establish the structure, set the norms and standards of behavior, and provide guidelines for interaction of systems members.*

What are some of the written policies of your target system?
(Example: Branch bylaws, policies, and procedures.)

What are some of the informal practices?
(Example: Branch members don't discuss things they can't agree on. Meetings always start 15 minutes late.)

D. Cultural Values: common definitions and assumptions shared by dominant members of the system.

What are some of the values in your target system?

(Example: In AAUW, it is important that everyone feel good about the Branch. Women should have equal opportunities in all areas.)

To Sum Up

If you have not been able to answer some of these questions about your target system, how can you find the answers?

Sources of information:

Who will obtain this information?

By when?

How will they report it?

What component (or components) of the target system will be involved in the proposed change?

(Example: To increase Branch member involvement, changes will be made in use of resources, practices, etc.)

STEP III: FORCE FIELD ANALYSES*

Review your objectives, stated on page I of this workbook.

- I. List as many forces as possible that will help or hinder you in accomplishing your objectives.
(Example: To increase member involvement in the Branch:

Helping (+)

- a. Enthusiastic board members.
- b. Branch history of community action.
- c. Good Bulletin editor.

Hindering (-)

- a. Many members employed.
- b. Other organizations compete for members' time.
- c. Local newspaper not cooperative about printing news.)

Your force field:

Helping (+)

Hindering (-)

*Adapted from the work of Dr. Kurt Lewin; see 1977-79 Program Guide, p. 20.

Force Field Analysis (continued)

2. Select the largest positive and the largest negative forces that you can do something about.

Largest positive force:

Largest negative force:

STEP IV: CHOOSING A CHANGE APPROACH

As Beverly Ann Scott defines it in What Is a System?,

"The term 'approach' is used here as a way or means of changing components in a system. 'Strategy' in contrast, is the specific plan or technique chosen for achieving the change."

Which of the approaches on the following check list will you use in your change effort?

Caution: Consider all the following approaches before making your selection. Don't limit yourselves unnecessarily to the way you have always done it.

Criteria to use in selecting one approach or a combination of approaches:

1. Which are most likely to affect the component of your target system involved with the change?
2. Do you have the resources for this approach?
3. Do you feel comfortable with it, or are you willing to experience the discomfort of doing something unfamiliar? Is it acceptable within your value framework?

CHECK LIST OF POSSIBLE APPROACHES*

- _____ Moral: this change is morally right.
- _____ Personal growth, consciousness raising: bringing about individual change by identifying, acknowledging, and sharing feelings and experiences.
- _____ Value clarification: becoming aware of inconsistencies and unconscious assumptions in value hierarchies.
- _____ Educational: supplying new information to change beliefs and behaviors.
- _____ Economic: using economic resources to reward (gifts) or punish (strikes or boycotts).
- _____ Legal: action through the courts or regulating agencies.
- _____ Political: working for legislative change or electing sympathetic representatives.
- _____ Demonstration: influencing decision makers or gathering public support through highly visible, often symbolic actions.
- _____ Violence or physical force.
- _____ Community development: organizing local residents to work on a community problem.
- _____ Social planning: professionals design solutions to community problems.
- _____ Professional-technical: consultants provide expertise to improve the system.

No list is ever exhaustive. Add your own approaches.

Reasons why you chose the approach(es) you have checked.

*For a more complete explanation of each, see What Is a System?, pp. 15-19.

STEP V: INVENTORY OF YOUR RESOURCES*

Contacts within the target organization:

Other contacts:

Special knowledge, expertise:

Sources of funds:

Access to equipment:

Other:

To Sum Up

Review your choice of approach(es).

Do you have the resources, or can you get them as needed, for each approach?

Yes _____

No _____

If no, go back to Step III.

*See Program Guide, p. 22.

STEP VI: BUILDING SUPPORT*

Are there others who should be working with you on this? If so, list them.

What actions will you take to involve them?

Are there others who should be informed about what you plan to do?

What actions will you take to inform them?

*See Tool Catalog, pp. 225-228.

STEP VII: DESIGNING THE ACTION PLAN

In order to accomplish your objectives and to make the change you want in your target system:

<u>Who</u>	<u>Will Do What</u>	<u>By When</u>	<u>Anticipated Outcome</u>
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Evaluation of planning:

1. Is it clearly stated?
2. Is it possible?
3. Do we want to do it?

STEP VIII: EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Action is not complete until it has been evaluated.

1. Was this an appropriate problem for you to work on?
Was your goal stated accurately?
Did you identify the target system accurately?
Were your objectives appropriate? Clearly Stated?
If not, and you wish to continue with your action project, go back to Step I.
2. Were you able to describe the target system in terms of its power, resources, institutional policies and practices, and cultural values?
Did you correctly identify the component(s) involved with your proposed change?
If not, go back to Step II.
3. Did you list all the helping and hindering forces accurately?
If not, go back to Step III.
4. Did you choose an appropriate approach for your action?
If not, go back to Step IV.
5. Did you leave out some important resources?
If so, go back to Step V.
6. Did you involve everyone who should work with you?
Did you inform everyone who needed to know what you were doing?
If not, go back to Step VI.
7. Did all participants understand their assignments?
Did they do them?
Did you achieve the outcomes you expected?
Was your timetable realistic?
If not, do you want to continue by planning additional action steps?

AND REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU ACHIEVED YOUR DESIRED CHANGE, CELEBRATE THE GOOD EFFORT YOU MADE AND YOUR WORKING TOGETHER!