What is social change?

Social change builds community-based responses that address underlying social problems on an individual, institutional, community, national and/or international level. Social change can change attitudes, behaviors, laws, policies and institutions to better reflect values of inclusion, fairness, diversity and opportunity. Social change involves a collective action of individuals who are closest to the social problems to develop solutions that address social issues.¹

Example:

Casa de Esperanza is a Latina based organization in Saint Paul that focuses on mobilizing Latinas to end domestic violence and abuse. The social change it works on in changing systems of domestic violence and abuse in the Latino community. The systems in place can be: notions of manhood, gender, language, and family.

What is social justice?

Social justice is the distribution of benefits and how they are allocated in society. It is thought of as a society that affords individuals and groups fair treatment and a just share of the benefits of society. Social justice is often equated with the concepts of human rights and equality. Because the word *justice* can be vague, ambiguous, and subjective, individuals in a society can have different ideas of social justice and what "just" means.

Example:

Economic issues, particularly the disparity between the rich and the poor can be seen as a social justice issue. In 2005, the top 20% of households accounted for a record 50.4% of the national income, up from 49.8% in 2000 and 43.2% in 1970. In contrast, the bottom fifth's share fell from 4.4% in 1970 to 3.6% in 2000 to 3.4% in 2005.² This can be seen as a social justice issue because the benefits of society are allocated in an unjust way.

What is social service?

Social services are seen as organized efforts and/or services that help to improve and advance social well being. Social services can be providing meals, shelter, food, clothing, programs for youth and adults, health care, ability/disability services, language interpretation and translation and others. Social services agencies can provide a wide variety of services that meet the social well being of a community, region, or group of people.

Example:

Ramsey County Community Human Services Department provides many of the aforementioned services to the people in its county. It has several departments that deliver social services such as mental health. In this area, they provide individual and group therapy, medication management, consultations and evaluations, diagnostic assessments, and others.

² Statistic is taken from the following: http://www.socialworktoday.com/archive/marapr2007p24.shtml



¹ Definition of social change is adapted from the Fund for Southern Communities, www.fundforsouth.org

Exercise: Identifying Social Change, Social Justice, and Social Services

Think of an issue your organization is working on. Identify whether you think it is a social change, social justice, or social service issue. Why do you think this, and then share your responses with the members of your group.



Necessary Components to Becoming a Social Change Leader

Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed. You cannot uneducate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore. We have seen the future, and the future is ours.

-- Cesar Chavez

What does it mean to lead social change efforts? What does it mean to be a leader in creating social change?

The ability to lead is vital to creating social change. Leadership is a *process* of which social change is be distributed, promoted, and expressed by leaders to multiple communities and diverse populations. A collective action from a collective group cannot come about if there is no unifying voice, vision, and/or goal. Leaders help to shape and provide a space for people to unite and reach towards their goals. They inspire and motivate others through their actions, behaviors, and words. For social change to occur within institutions, communities, or organizations, individuals would need to know what type of leaders they want to be in the social change process, and how their leadership can have an impact within these arenas.

The following are key leadership components needed in social change. Use the exercise worksheet to help you shape and form your leadership to meet the needs of your social change efforts.

1. Develop Self-Awareness and Self-Knowledge

In the leadership process, you certainly will need to know about who you are leading; however, the most important person you will need to know about is YOURSELF. Knowing your strengths, your improvement areas, what it is that you value, your beliefs, your interests, and how you handle emotions is critical to leading social change. How will others follow you if you are not sure why you would lead change – whether small or large? People are generally attracted to those that can express and share the same values, beliefs, and interests as themselves. How can you use what you have, what you know about yourself to bring others into your change efforts?

The following are key components in this step:

- Personal beliefs and values.
- Attitudes towards social change.
- Emotions: how do you relate to others and to yourself?
- Motivations: what would excite you, motivate you?

Exercise

Explore the following questions, and then share your responses with others.

- 1. Describe your personal beliefs and values. Who and what shaped them?
- 2. What excites you and/or motivates you about social change?



2. Walk Your Talk

How many times have you heard someone say she/he is committed to "X,Y, and Z" but in the end she/he did not deliver? *Walk Your Talk* is about aligning your behaviors, feelings, actions, and thoughts with your values and beliefs. It is about being consistent with your most deeply held beliefs and values. It is about speaking your truth with conviction; being authentic to yourself and others. Authenticity arises from your own life stories; your own "A-ha" moments.

The following are key components in this step:

- Authenticity: Who you are matters and what and/or who has shaped you matters.
- Consistency: Demonstrating your values and beliefs in your words and actions are important.

Exercise

Provide an example of when your beliefs and values were expressed when you worked for social change. In other words, when did you "walk your talk"? Was there a time when you did "not walk your talk"? What were the outcomes?

3. Learning to Serve Others

What makes you want to commit to the social change work you are undertaking? What energy fuels your work and change? These questions point to your leadership commitment, that is - your ability to serve others. Understanding why you want to serve others and articulating that as part of who you are as a leader can be very powerful in social change. Imagine the impact of your leadership when you express to others that the reasons for your work in change is to provide a service to others. Ultimately, social change creates a more just society in which people collaborate and perform service that is for the common good. Through servant leadership, individuals empower themselves and others through trust and collaboration.

The following are key ideas to help you think through your service to others:

- Commitment: How can you create commitment in collaborative work?
- Community Building: How can you create environments where people trust, learn and work with and for each other?
- Nurturing the Spirit: How do you nurture people's spirits and provide work that is meaningful?
- Relationships: How do you create positive and healthy relationships and systems?

Exercise

When did your leadership in social change work serve others? How did it affect those involved and those were not involved in the issue?



4. Shared Vision

Leadership is a process that includes leading people towards achieving a goal. Thus, in leadership creating a shared vision and purpose is important in that it unifies people towards a common purpose and direction. Shared visions are outer expressions of ourselves and what we would like to be. Coming to share individual visions is a collective and powerful mechanism in the first step towards social change. As a leader in social change, think about what shared vision and purpose exists in your neighborhood, community, and/or organization. What would make people motivated and inspired to reach the shared vision? How will you articulate it in a way that creates more energy and momentum?

E	xercise
W	That is your vision for change?
	Tho is affected by the change, and how will you involve them in making that vision eir own?
Н	ow can you get them to be excited about this vision and share with others?



Creating a Social Change Plan

Creating social change takes patience, energy, time, and resources. It takes more than just individuals; it takes a collective action by a collective group of people. Engaging a collective action and group can be challenging especially if you are a small group, organization, or if you have limited people, time, and resources. Because of the challenges in social change work, you will need to be strategic and thoughtful about how you will create the change and gather people to your social change vision. To do this, it is important that you keep in mind key steps in creating social change or any change effort. The following outlines the key steps in change, and will help you to focus your change efforts.

Step 1: Create a vision

Step 2: Create key messages

Step 3: Involve others

Step 4: Pick your targets, activities, and dates

Step 5: Generate short-term and long-term change

Step 6: Create an action work plan and budget

Step 7: Monitor, adjust, and reflect

Step 1: Create a Vision

"The best way to predict your future is to create it "
-Anonymous

For any social change to occur, you must be able to see the end result or a vision that depicts the change. You must see the change as if it has already happened. This is the only way that you can articulate the steps you will need to take to make your vision come true.

A vision must be your intentions for a better future than what currently exists now. This vision must:

- Be understood among a collective so others can share in the vision.
- Empower and engage people to want to take action.
- Be well defined and articulated.
- Be vivid, engaging, and expressive.

The first step in engaging a collective action in your vision for change is for you to know what it is that you would like to change. What underlying issues are you trying to address? Are you working towards eliminating sexism in the community? Is it about ensuring every child is healthy, safe, and secure? Is it to reduce crime and violence in your neighborhood? Is



it to keep small "mom and pop" stores in your community? You must be able to identify that one key issue you will address that can make a difference in your community and/or neighborhood.

Next, in your creation of a vision, describe the vision as if it already happened. Use the present tense to convey that you own and see your vision, NOW.

Finally, test your vision on yourself. Do you think it will be understood by others? Will it empower or engage people to take action? Is it well defined and articulated? Is it vivid, engaging, and expressive? If it doesn't have these items, why should you expect others to join your change efforts?

Step 2: Create Key Messages

What messages about a social issue mobilized you to join the change efforts? What made the messages memorable? Was it the delivery? The language or words that were used? The body language of the individual(s)? The person who delivered the message?

All of the above items are important in creating change. The ability to articulate clearly your vision and the change you would like to see is important for "buy-in." How you describe your vision to people through key messages will help you bring people into your efforts. You must help them recognize and see the vision. You can do this by using key messages that inspire, are action oriented, justifies the need for their help, and asks for their help.

Key messages can also be told using stories, quotes, or metaphors that describe the change you would like to achieve. If there is a person that everyone in your neighborhood admires, the qualities of that person or what he/she has done for the neighborhood can be used to convey your key message. Or, you can use a national or international hero or figure such as President John F. Kennedy, Rosa Parks, Ghandi or Mother Theresa. When using "heroes" to help you deliver your key messages, identify the parts of these individuals that you know will speak to your audience.

Remember that in developing your key message, you need to include the following items:

- Your message should be inspiring.
- Your message should be action-oriented.
- Your message should justify the need for the change.
- Your message should ask them for their help.

Step 3: Involve Others

Now that you've created a vision and key messages, you'll need a coalition of people to help you deliver the message and work with you. There are a few things you need to think about when creating a coalition:

- 1. You need to identify people who need to hear this message.
- 2. You need to identify people who will support you in this message.



3. You need to identify the people who can help you influence other people about this message.

How do you identify the individuals in your coalition? You will need to be strategic and purposeful in coming up with your list. This is important especially if you are a small organization or neighborhood group or if you have limited resources and people to do the work. You can identify people by using a power and interest grid. Power is the ability to influence others. You want to identify in your coalition those who have the power to influence others and bring them into your efforts. Interest describes the attention that certain groups, people or individuals may have towards your issue. An example is show below:

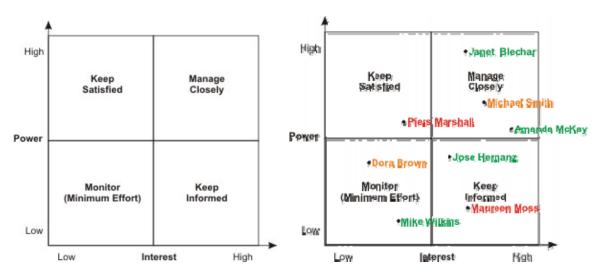


Figure 1 and 2: Power and Interest Grids (www.mindtools.com)

From this power and interest grid, you identify those who have interest in your work and narrow your strategies to target specific audiences.

Step 4: Pick your Targets, Activities, and Dates

At this stage of your social change efforts, you should identify where you want your efforts to be targeted and when you will target these efforts. This is about the marketing strategy you will use to deliver your message. For example, having created a vision to eliminate sexism in the community, as well as created key messages and identified your coalition of people, you will likely determine a few key events that will support your change efforts and what methods you will use to address them. You need to identify the places and/or events that will most likely want to or need to hear your message. You will need to identify how the message will be delivered and what method works best. You should keep in mind the following:

¹ Taken from the following source: J. M. Bryson, "What To Do When Stakeholders Matter: A Guide to Stakeholder Identification and Analysis Techniques"



- 1. Who is your audience? For this, you can go back to Step 3 on creating a coalition. Is your coalition made up of diverse individuals, people with interests that are different or similar than yours, and so on? If so, this can influence your targets and moments.
- 2. What marketing methods work best for your audience? E.g. fliers, word of mouth, radio, advertisements, door knocking, etc.
- 3. What are the reasons for using the methods you choose? Why would you choose fliers over door knocking for your audience? Speaking at events rather than newspaper advertisements?

In this step of social change, you will also need to identify how you can keep your efforts moving. This speaks to the frequency of your targets and moments. Will you continue to reach the audience with the same messages on a monthly basis? We you try a different method in a week? Will you use a different method to deliver the message to the same audience?

Step 5: Generate Short-term and Long-term Change

Creating social change can be a long, arduous journey. You may feel that what you are doing is not sufficient or enough to reach the vision you dreamed about. Keep in mind that social change efforts can take years and even generations to come to fruition. As a change agent, it is important to take note of the small steps, the smaller milestones in your change efforts. By doing this, you're keeping your "eyes on the prize" while paying attention to the details of the prize. As you take this journey, you should keep in mind the following items that will help you to remember to win small, win early, and win often:

- Articulate the smaller changes that are important in the larger vision.
- Identify the milestones (goals) for your change efforts. (Ensure they are measurable).
- Determine how you will celebrate the milestones.

Step 6: Create an Action Work Plan and Budget

When you have completed the above steps, the next action is to put the information you have created into a work plan. It is not enough to have thought about the information and resources you need in creating social change. You must document the information and create goals to help you reach your vision. The work plan serves as a document that guides your work and helps you to document and measure your deliverables. Attached to this work plan is a budget for the expenses and income that are needed for each item in your social change plans. Important items in your work plan include the following:

- Key staff/volunteer to carry out the activity
- Begin and end dates
- What will tell you that you achieved your goal?
- Smaller "wins" or milestones



Step 7: Monitor, Adjust, and Reflect

One of the key and final steps in social change work is to monitor and adjust your strategies, key messages, or other components of your work as needed based on the responses you received. Often times, social change advocates are so busy and involved in the actual day to day work and activities that they forget to monitor and adjust what works and doesn't work and reflect on the process and their progress. You have to remember that when you mobilize your community, group, neighborhood, or organization to change and you start to see some change, you may not be able to use the same strategies or key messages. You'll need to constantly and consistently change your message to meet your audience's needs. Your vision may still stay the same, but the messages may be altered.

You should think about the following items in this step:

- How will you know there is change?
- How will you evaluate your work?
- How will you make sense of your progress?



Creating a Social Change Plan Worksheet

Step 1: Create a Vision

Write down in <u>one sentence</u>, the social change you or your organization wants to see. Describe the vision of the social change you will address, as if it already happened. When creating this vision, make sure it follows the items below:

- Be understood among a collective so others can share in the vision.
- Empower and engage people to want to take action.
- Be well defined and articulated.
- Be vivid, engaging, and expressive.

Step 2: Create Key Messages

Create two or three key messages that will support your vision. Your key message should be inspiring, justify a need for the change, action oriented, or ask others for help. Share your responses with others and test it out.



Step 3: Involve Others

In the power and interest grid below, identify four individuals that will help you in creating the social change you would like to see. Place them on the chart where you think they belong.

nigii	Keep Satisfied	Manage Closely
Power		
	Monitor Efforts	Keep Informed
Low		

<u>Step 4: Pick your Targets, Activities, and Dates</u>
Use the chart below to help you identify your targets, activities and dates.

Audience List the people or groups you want to reach in this column.	Activities List the activities that you will need to conduct to reach this group, e.g. attend an event.	Dates List when you think this activity would best be completed.
Example: Reach out to child care providers who serve immigrant and refugee children.	Example: Attend three network group meetings of child care providers who serve this population.	Example: Begin on Oct 1, 2008 and end by July 2009.



Step 5: Generate Short Term and Long Term Change

1. Over the next six months, what would be examples of social change progress for the issue you have identified? *Example: All members of our group are able to articulate the vision statement.*

1. Over the next year, what would be examples of social change progress for the issue you have identified? Example: Our group was able to recruit fifteen new members to join our social change efforts.



Step 6: Create an Action Work Plan and Budget

VISION STATEMENT:				
MILESTONE #1:				
MILESTONE #2:				
MILESTONE#3:				
ACTIVITY	KEY STAFF	BEGIN DATE	END DATE	WHICH MILESTONE WILL THIS ACTIVITY CONTRIBUTE TO?

ACTIVITY	KEY STAFF	BEGIN DATE	END DATE	WHICH MILESTONE WILL THIS ACTIVITY CONTRIBUTE TO?



Step 7: Monitor, Adjust, and Reflect

Take a few moments to describe how you monitor, adjust and reflect about your change efforts.

1. How will you know when the change has happened?

2. How will you evaluate your work?

3. How will you make sense of your progress?

