

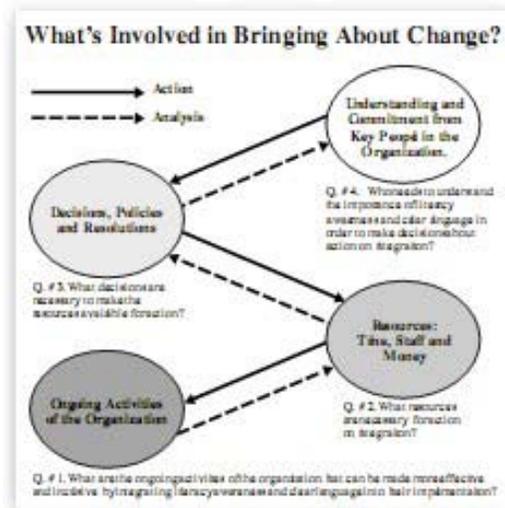
# What's Involved in Bringing About Change?

by Jean Cannon Unda

When I was asked to work with the CLC Literacy Working Group, I saw that the sharing of experiences took place primarily through stories and that these stories were structured, as might be expected, by taken-for granted understandings of what constituted literacy work in a labour context. Upon closer scrutiny, these understandings seemed to be significantly shaped in relation to the process of getting government funding to hire a project coordinator and carry out fundable activities. Labour values deeply influenced the philosophy of these projects and the ways they were implemented. However, in most cases, project proposals were drawn up by literacy advocates working in isolation within their own organizations. This meant that they then had to get the organization to buy into and support a project that was often perceived as peripheral to the central work of the organization.

The time was ripe to step back from our accustomed images of labour literacy work and re-imagine it as part of the organizations work on its central agenda. This re-imagining would entail a shift away from a focus on getting the organization to adopt a literacy project and toward a focus on the bigger picture of the organization as a whole. Starting with the organizations existing goals and activities, we could then begin to identify where literacy awareness and clear language might make a contribution.

I wanted a framework that would facilitate not only analysis but also strategizing and action. I also felt that the conceptualization of the process had to be integrative from the very beginning. That is to say, it could not perpetuate a framing that posited a gap between the labour organization and the literacy project, a framing which then made bridging that gap the key task. Rather, we needed a framing that took the organization and its structures and processes as the context within which literacy and clear language would have to find places to serve. As well, I wanted to come up with an analytic tool



that would allow us to start with developing a shared vision for an organization and then work backwards from there to identify where and how we might have to engage the organization in making that vision a reality.

As luck would have it, at that time I happened to be reading a book by Emma Jung in which she named a four-part classification to apply to individuals (deed, will, word and meaning). It struck me as an apt way to look at key aspects of an organization: ongoing activities (deed), resources (will), policy (word), and vision (meaning). I adapted this framework to structure the strategic planning session. A full report of our work is included in *Moving in from the Margins: Integrating Literacy and Clear Language into the Labour Movement*, by myself and Lynette Plett (Ottawa: CLC, 2004).

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