**Activist Skills and Experiences Questionnaire**

This is a list of useful skills and experiences for social change activists. It can be used for self-assessment, goal setting, or progress evaluation. Consider including your applicable experience in non-social change activities too.

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|  | | **Experience** | | | **Skill** | | | |
| None | Some | Lots | Weak | Fair | Strong | Expert |
| **A** | **Self-Education / Educational Outreach** |  | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Educate yourself about an issue |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Clearly present your ideas to another person |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | Discuss your ideas with someone who disagrees |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Attend a house meeting, community meeting, or teach-in |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | Plan a house meeting, community meeting, or teach-in |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 | Arrange a speaker for a group (civic group, etc) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | Speak to a small group |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | Give a formal speech to a large group (more than 30 people) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9 | Engage in street speaking (public speaking to passersby) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | Pass out leaflets on an issue |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11 | Table (pass out or sell literature from a table) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12 | Canvass door-to-door to present information (not for $) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13 | Make a sign, banner, poster, etc. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14 | Create a flyer announcing an event |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15 | Write a news article for publication |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16 | Write an editorial for publication |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 17 | Create or curate a website |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18 | Publish a blog or Facebook page |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 19 | Engage others using social media |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20 | Interview someone for publication/airing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 21 | Publicly sing a song |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 22 | Write a social change song or poem |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 23 | Perform a play or skit (street theater) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 24 | Write a social change play/skit |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 25 | Publicly display social change artwork |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 26 | Create social change artwork or crafts |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 27 | Write a social change short story or novel |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 28 | Create a podcast |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 29 | Create a video |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **B** | **Background Research** |  | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Research a specific problem or solution |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Compile data to illuminate a specific problem or solution |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | Statistically analyze data to learn about an issue |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Write an informational leaflet or article explaining research |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | Write a research report/analysis explaining research results |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **C** | **News Media Outreach** |  | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Write a letter-to-the-editor |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Write a calendar or public service announcement |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | Create a TV or radio public service announcement |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Write a press release (and send it) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | Make follow-up phone calls to news media |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 | Be interviewed by the news media |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | Build a relationship with a reporter/editor |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | Arrange a press conference |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9 | Speak at a press conference |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| Page 2 **Experience** | | | | | **Skill** | | | |
| None | | | Some | Lots | Weak | Fair | Strong | Expert |
| **D** | **Legislative Work** | | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Write a letter to your member of Congress or other official  Sign a petition  Circulate a general petition (non-legally binding)  Circulate a legally binding petition  Write a general petition  Write a legally binding petition  Coordinate a letter-writing/petition campaign  Call or visit a public official (lobbying)  Coordinate a lobbying campaign  Speak at a government committee hearing  Arrange a government committee hearing (with an official)  Register people to vote  Walk a district (canvass) for a political candidate  Call voters on behalf of a candidate or to get out the vote  Write a speech for a candidate  Analyze voter data for outreach targeting  Organize a political campaign  Handle the finances for a political candidate  Run for office  Be elected and hold a government office  Be an assistant to a government official  Be a delegate to a political party convention  Be a political party official | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **E** | **Legal Intervention** | | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Research the legal aspects of a social problem  Assist lawyers in preparing a lawsuit/injunction  Prepare a lawsuit/injunction  Argue a legal case in court | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **F** | **Demonstrations / Protest / Direct Action** | | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Wear or display a symbol representing a cause  Attend a rally  Participate in a vigil  March or parade for a cause  Participate in a boycott  Organize a boycott  Vote your company shares for social responsibility  Divest from socially-irresponsible companies or funds  Be a whistleblower (release secret information)  Fast for a cause  Participate in an economic, political, or social strike  Attend a civil disobedience demonstration  Be a nonviolent monitor/peacekeeper at a demonstration  Provide support for those risking arrest/jail  Plan a demonstration (rally, march, strike, blockade, etc.)  Negotiate with opponents or police  Risk arrest for a cause  Be arrested for a cause  Spend time in jail | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| Page 3 **Experience** | | | | | **Skill** | | | |
| None | | | Some | Lots | Weak | Fair | Strong | Expert |
| **G** | **Strategic Planning — Campaign Design** | | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Evaluate the forces supporting and opposing social change  Establish a specific goal for a campaign  Design a campaign that accomplishes a specific goal  Evaluate a campaign for its effectiveness | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **H** | **Building Organizations** | | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Contribute money to an organization  Volunteer for an organization (some involvement)  Join an organization (active involvement)  Encourage someone to join an organization  Form an organization | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **I** | **Group Bonding** | | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Teach or lead a group in song  Teach or lead a group in a game or ritual  Organize or facilitate a group outing (party, picnic, etc.)  Organize or facilitate a community ceremony or celebration  **Cooperative Decision Making**  Plan a meeting agenda  Facilitate a small meeting  Facilitate a meeting of more than 30 people  Facilitate a difficult meeting  Propose a social change activity for a group  Write a formal proposal for a group activity | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **K** | **Personal Skills / Conflict Resolution** | | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Ask someone who is unlike you about her/his background  Sympathize with another person’s perspective (unlike yours)  Tell someone your criticisms of her/him  Tell someone your appreciations of her/him  Mediate a dispute between individuals  Mediate a dispute between groups  Learn/develop techniques to help yourself when upset  Arrange for others to support you when you are upset  Support another person when she/he is upset  Set personal goals and achieve them  Help another person evaluate her/his goals  Encourage and support another person to reach a goal  Learn about oppressive behavior (sexism, racism, etc.)  Interrupt interpersonal oppressive behavior  Ask a disruptive person to leave an organization | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **L** | **Multicultural Connection** | | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Teach someone else about your group’s culture  Learn the background of someone from another culture  Work closely with someone from another culture  Learn a great deal about another culture  Teach someone of your culture about another culture  Inventory the ways you are oppressed and privileged  Resolve conflicts between people of different cultures | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| Page 4 **Experience** | | | | | **Skill** | | | |
| None | | | Some | Lots | Weak | Fair | Strong | Expert |
| **M** | **Coalition Building** | | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Actively participate in a coalition event/campaign  Design a coalition event/campaign  Speak to a group to get them involved in a coalition  Negotiate with another group to resolve disagreements | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **N** | **Fundraising** | | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Write a fundraising letter or email  Purchase a mailing list for fundraising  Write a grant request proposal  Make a presentation to a foundation granting committee  Arrange a benefit event (speech, film, dinner, etc.)  Call a potential donor  Visit a potential donor  Canvass to raise money | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **O** | **Office Work** | | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Mail requested literature  Answer correspondence for a group  Make copies, collate, and staple documents  Use a computer for email and surfing the web  Use a computer to create documents  Use a computer for complicated page layout  Use a computer for financial analysis  Solicit articles, photos, graphics for a newsletter/newspaper  Design a flier, leaflet, newsletter, or newspaper  Edit a flier, leaflet, newsletter, or newspaper  Lay out a flier, leaflet, newsletter, or newspaper  Have a flier, leaflet, newsletter, or newspaper typeset  Have a flier, leaflet, newsletter, or newspaper printed  Prepare a bulk mailing  Manage an email list  Prepare a mass email message using a database  Write a budget for a project  Perform basic bookkeeping (check deposit, recording, etc.)  Perform complete bookkeeping  Manage petty cash  Manage an organization’s finances (check writing, etc.)  Manage a mailing list  Manage an office (organize files, establish procedures) | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **P** | **Supervising Others** | | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Recruit a volunteer/intern  Hire an employee  Supervise an employee, intern, or volunteer  Evaluate the performance of an employee, intern, volunteer  Fire an employee, intern, or volunteer | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| Page 5 **Experience** | | | | | **Skill** | | | |
| None | | | Some | Lots | Weak | Fair | Strong | Expert |
| **Q** | **Kitchen and Life Skills** | | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Cook for more than 10 people  Plan a meal for more than 10 people  Plan a meal for more than 100 people  Take care of a toddler  Take care of a young child  Take care of an older child  Take care of several children at once  Work with teenagers | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **R** | **Teaching Skills to Others** | | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Attend a skills-building workshop  Teach a person one-on-one  Present activist skill information to a group  Facilitate a role play or exercise  Develop a skills-building workshop  Facilitate a short workshop  Facilitate a several-days-long workshop  Evaluate the effectiveness of a workshop  Write skills-building leaflets or manuals | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **S** | **Evaluating Effectiveness** | | | |  | | | |
| 1 | Evaluate your own skills and abilities for effecting change  Evaluate your effectiveness in bringing about change  Evaluate the effectiveness of the groups you work with  Make changes in your activites so you are more effective | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **T** | **Other Things Not Listed Above — Please Fill In** | | | |  | | | |
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**Inspired by: “Skills and Knowledge of a Social Change Agent,”**

by Jim Nunes-Schrag and Christopher Mogil, April 5, 1984, Movement for a New Society.

— Prepared by Randy Schutt <http://www.vernalproject.org> OK to copy for non-commercial purposes.

ActQuest-5.xlsx, Pt. 1 RDS 5-22-2018

**Activist Knowledge and Experiences Questionnaire**   
**Philosophy, History, Issues Topics, and Methods**

This is a list of social change philosophy, history, issue topics, and methods about which activists should have at least some knowledge. It can be used for self-assessment, goal setting, or progress evaluation.

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|  | | **Knowledge** | | | |
| None | Some | Lots | Expert |
| **A** | **Economic Systems / Philosophies / Critiques** |  | | | |
| 1 | Capitalism/markets, government regulation |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Unequal negotiating power: monopoly, monopsony |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | Other market failures – externalities, information, behavior, etc. |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Free enterprise/entrepreneurialism |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | Welfare state |  |  |  |  |
| 6 | Marxism/socialism |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | Communism |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | Cooperative ownership |  |  |  |  |
| 9 | Stewardship |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | Macroeconomics – productivity, inflation, unemployment, trade |  |  |  |  |
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| **B** | **Political & Social Systems / Philosophies** |  | | | |
| 1 | Monarchy |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Oligarchy/plutocracy/kleptocracy |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | Dictatorship |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Fascism/nationalism |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | Representative democracy, pluralism |  |  |  |  |
| 6 | Libertarianism |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | Participatory democracy |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | Anarchism |  |  |  |  |
| 9 | Pacifism |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | Militarism |  |  |  |  |
| 11 | Colonialism/imperialism |  |  |  |  |
| 12 | Humanism |  |  |  |  |
| 13 | Multiculturalism |  |  |  |  |
| 14 | Environmentalism |  |  |  |  |
| 15 | Consumerism |  |  |  |  |
| 16 | Religion and spirituality |  |  |  |  |
| 17 | Utopian visions |  |  |  |  |
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| **C** | **Oppressive Social / Cultural Institutions** |  | | | |
| 1 | Patriarchy/sexism |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Racism |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | Nativism/xenophobia |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Colonialism |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | Ageism |  |  |  |  |
| 6 | Ableism |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | Heterosexism/CIS genderism |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | Classism |  |  |  |  |
| 9 | Consumerism |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | Authoritarianism |  |  |  |  |
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| Page 2 | | **Knowledge** | | | | **Social Change**  **Experience** | | |
| None | Some | Lots | Expert | None | Some | Lots |
| **D** | **History of Major U.S. Social Change Movements** | | | | |  | | |
| 1 | Anti-slavery  Populist  Labor  Women’s suffrage  Civil rights  Ban the bomb, anti-nuclear weapons  Anti-Vietnam war  Women liberation/feminist/#MeToo  Gay/lesbian/transgender rights  Anti-nuclear power  Anti-U.S. intervention in Central America  Anti-globalization (corporatization)  Anti-prison-industrial complex  Environmental  Climate change  Gun control  Black Lives Matters | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **E** | **Common Progressive Change Target Issues** | | | | |  | | |
| 1 | U.S. foreign policy, generally (militarism, military spending)   Russia/Eastern Europe  Western Europe/NATO  Africa  Latin America  Middle East  Southern Asia  Pacific Rim Countries  Transnational corporations, World Trade Organization  Labor conditions, economic class system  Wealth distribution  Tax policy  Corruption  Homelessness  Hunger  Mining  Real estate, land, and development  Agriculture (and pesticides)  Energy  Transportation  Waste disposal and toxins  Healthcare  Social security and retirement  Family issues and childcare  Family planning and abortion | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| Page 3  **Target Issues (continued)** | | **Knowledge** | | | | **Social Change**  **Experience** | | |
| None | Some | Lots | Expert | None | Some | Lots |
| 26 | Cultural conditioning, generally |  |  |  |
| 27 | News media  Entertainment media (including sports)  Schools  Churches  Oppression of women  Oppression of African-Americans  Oppression of Chicanos/Hispanics  Oppression of Native Americans  Oppression of disabled people  Oppression of gay/lesbian people  Oppression of animals  Law enforcement (and abuse)  Prisons  Voter discouragement and suppression  Government structure and governance  Corruption | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **F** | **Large, Progressive Change Constituencies** | | | | |  | | |
| 1 | Labor/workers  Professionals  Farmers  Students  Military personnel  Government officials  Homeless/poor  African-Americans  Hispanics  Asians  Native Americans  Women  Gay men  Lesbians  Transgender people  Elders  Young people  Teens  Religious community | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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