ADDRESSING ORGANIZATIONAL RACISM:

A FEMINIST MODEL

by

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B.A., Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut
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Submitted to the Department of
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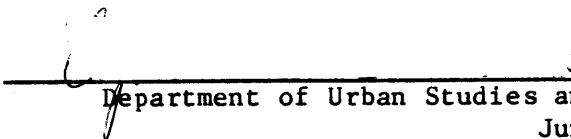
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ABSTRACT

The thesis presents a model of addressing racism in white-dominated women's organizations based on the experiences of several feminist organizations and organization development/systems theory. The model is applied to the Cambridge YWCA, an organization which is changing to address a culturally more diverse constituency. Broader applications of the model are discussed.

The model embodies a whole-system approach, including creating a structure to manage the change; building relationships based on reciprocity between the organization and racial and linguistic communities; changing the policies of the organization to make its programs more relevant and accessible to women of color; addressing organizational dynamics which present barriers to change; and addressing individual resistances to change, including learned racist attitudes. It draws extensively on documentation of an outreach project conducted in 1978-1980, in Hartford, Connecticut's Black and Puerto Rican communities, by the Sexual Assault Crisis Service.

This model is applied to the Cambridge YWCA, with specific recommendations for short-term and long-term goals for the organization, in its efforts to become more relevant, accessible and empowering to women of color.

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Lisa Peattie
Professor of Urban Studies and Planning

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This thesis has drawn extensively on the work of Donna Landerman and other women at the Sexual Assault Crisis Service in Hartford, who undertook the Outreach Project with courage and persistence, and who documented it with unusual thoroughness and openness. My involvement with that project provided me with a sense of possibility and direction which has transformed all of my work since.

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INTRODUCTION

Overview

This thesis develops a model through which white-dominated women's organizations can become relevant, accessible and empowering to women of color, and applies the model to a particular organization, The Cambridge YWCA.

Although memos and reports based on this research have been presented to the Cambridge YWCA, this thesis is written for a wider audience of change agents: administrators and affirmative action officers, organizational consultants and anti-racist educators, people who are in positions to facilitate the process of cultural diversification in white-dominated women's organizations. The YWCA is an organization similar to many in its structure and functions, but with its own unique characteristics. The Y is presented as a case study to illustrate the nature of the problem and the application of the model to a particular set of circumstances.

The model is based on the experiences of several feminist organizations, supplemented with ideas from organization development and systems theory. It draws heavily on research conducted by The Sexual Assault Crisis Services (SACS), a rape crisis center in Hartford, Connecticut. During the course of a two year outreach project to Black and Puerto Rican women, SACS was transformed from a

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virtually all white organization into a culturally diverse organization whose clients, staff and board reflected the major cultural and racial groups in the city. Nearly every aspect of the organization -- decision-making structures, counselling protocols, political analyses, social networks, and more -- was changed, either in support of or as a result of the Outreach Project.

I chose SACS as the basis for this model because it is one of the few white, middle class women's organizations which has addressed its cultural and racial biases through such a systematic and well-documented effort. I was personally involved in the outreach project near its conclusion -- long enough to have acquired a feel for the project, but peripherally enough to have perceived it on an organization-wide level.

My personal and professional concerns about racism in women's organizations grew out of two sets of experiences. While working within white-dominated organizations, I saw how difficult it is for an organization to break out of culturally and racially exclusive patterns, to involve women of color in respectful and empowering ways. On a personal level, I felt how painful and dehumanizing racism is for me as a white. I saw that my own fears of anti-Semitism prevented me from acknowledging my own white privilege. Those and other fears prevented me from acting effectively to make changes in the organizations in which I held leadership positions.

Later, I came to know women and girls from several cultural communities in Cambridge in the context of my work in community oral history projects. I developed a much deeper sense of their particular positions as women of their cultures, understanding more about the tensions inherent in bicultural life and respecting more about the resourcefulness with which they faced their situation. I came to know young Portuguese girls who can't leave their houses unchaperoned, Colombian women who need markets for their crocheted ponchos, and Haitian women who remain linguistically isolated from the larger community. Most of these women participated enthusiastically in culturally sensitive projects which addressed "women's issues". Their lack of involvement in feminist organizations does not reflect a lack of "consciousness," but the unavailability of accessible organizations and a lack of support for potential leaders.

The women's movement in Cambridge is as vital as in any American city -- with women's centers, newspapers, bookstores, battered women's shelters, gyms, multi-service agencies, schools, concert production companies, anti-nuclear groups, organizations of clerical workers, and more -- but it has barely touched the lives of many of the city's women of color. It has ignored their needs and has been deprived of their strengths.

What needs to change in order for a Cambridge-based women's newspaper to cover stories about, and be read by, Portuguese women teaching in

Cambridge elementary schools? How can the resources of women's studies programs at Harvard, MIT, UMASS, Simmons, Wheelock, and other local colleges become accessible to community women? How can women's organizations of all kinds provide services which are needed by women of color, and support them to become leaders themselves?

With what conceptual frameworks and tools can an individual intervene in white-dominated organizations to facilitate their transformation into resources which are useful to women in the city's cultural and racial communities?

This thesis proposes answers these questions. It represents an effort to synthesize, in an action-oriented way, my experiences in feminist organizations and my work with women in the various cultural communities in Cambridge.

"IT'S A SENSITIVE ISSUE AROUND HERE:"

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AT THE YWCA

This chapter describes the Cambridge YWCA in relation to issues of cultural diversity. It includes a brief history, a description of dynamics within the organization and its relationships with racial and ethnic communities, and the resistances to change which are manifested on both individual and organizational levels. The chapter illustrates the problems inherent in the cultural diversification of a white-dominated organization, even when addressing racism is an explicit organizational priority.

Information for this chapter has been drawn primarily from interviews with eight women on the Y's board and staff, and several conversations with the organization's affirmative action officer. I also observed a meeting of the Racial Justice Committee, and reviewed several documents relating to policies and programs.

Historical Perspective: "An Advance Towards Sisterhood at a Snail's Pace"(1)

The Cambridge YWCA is an organization attempting to make its programs more relevant to women of color, and to involve more women of diverse cultural and racial backgrounds in all aspects of its functioning.

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These efforts draw on a long and varied tradition, including both racial exclusivity and efforts towards inclusion, in the national organization and the local branch.

The Young Women's Christian Association grew out of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, a white and middle class women's movement. In its early years, between 1893 and 1919, the national YWCA maintained segregated branches in the North. In Southern States, Negro branches were established as "subsidiaries" of local white chapters, partly as a way to prevent southern Negro leadership from attending regional and national conferences. In this way, Southern whites were protected from socializing as peers with Blacks.

However, by the 1930's, in favorable contrast with other national women's organizations, the national YWCA supported anti-lynching legislation and, in the 40's, worked for the integration of the armed services and housing. In 1946, the national convention adopted an "interracial charter," committing the organization to the full integration of blacks into the "mainstream of association life."(2) In 1970, with the Cambridge branch playing an important part, the national YWCA adopted the "elimination of racism....by whatever means necessary" as its primary organizational imperative. Historian Gerda Lerner describes the national Y's efforts to include women of color as "an advance toward sisterhood at a snail's pace." The vision of a fully anti-racist and multi-cultural organization has yet to be fulfilled.

On the local level, in the years between 1920 and 1945, Black women participated in the Y in segregated clubs. These clubs were disbanded in 1946, when, following its adoption of the interracial charter, the National Y issued an order to desegregate all activities. One group of Black women, the SSENISUB Club (that's BUSINESS, spelled backwards) renamed itself the World Fellowship Committee, and continued to meet with a predominantly Black membership. It failed to recruit younger members, however, and recently was dissolved because its aging members could no longer sustain it.

Through the sixties and seventies, Black women did become involved in the Y's ongoing programs and committees. Partly through their influence, a Black executive director was hired in 1976, who provided leadership to the organization through a series of major building renovations. During this time, however, with major portions of the organization's financial and human resources focussed on the physical plant, programs suffered and many active volunteers left, including many of the women of color.

In the last four years, fewer and fewer Black women have been involved in the Y. Areas of particular concern include the professional staff — all white except for a recently hired financial manager — and the pool, whose staff and users are virtually all white. People of color who are on the staff tend to be concentrated

in positions of low status and pay. The board of directors presents a positive contrast: 6 of its 26 members are Black.(3)

The participation of other women of color, including members of the city's Spanish-speaking, Portuguese, Haitian and Chinese linguistic communities has remained consistently low over time. In the last year, no women of color other than Black women sat on the board of directors; of 151 women volunteering in the committee structure, the only non-Black "minorities" were one Hispanic and two Asian women.(4)

The Y's legacy is one of contrasts. It includes a history of segregation and patterns of exclusivity, contrasted with persistent and dramatic efforts to make the Y accessible and relevant to women of all backgrounds. These efforts, which have been led by both white women and women of color, have consisted of policies which addressed both the internal workings of the organization and racist patterns in the society at large. Policies, such as "the interracial charter" and "the one imperative" have clearly moved the organization forward, but have also faced resistance --on the level of organizational systems and norms as well as from individuals-- at the point of implementation.

Overview of Organizational Structure and Programs

The Cambridge YWCA is situated in Central Square, Cambridge, a location ideal for reaching and serving many of the city's racial and cultural communities. Along with the adjacent Cambridgeport and Area IV neighborhoods, the Central Square area includes the homes of many Afro-American, Hispanic, Haitian and Greek individuals, organizations, and businesses. It is also a major public transportation node.

The Cambridge YWCA is a complex organization, with 5,000 members, over 70 part- and full-time staff members. Its committees and projects involve hundreds of volunteers. In addition to the Y's Cambridge site, it oversees a "suburban branch" in Marshfield.

The YWCA offers services in four broad program areas:

Its Adult Service Department sponsors a variety of classes and a recently initiated "Displaced Homemakers" program, which provides job counselling and referral to middle-aged women entering (or re-entering) the labor market.

The Youth Services Department provides day-care, after-school and teen programs, and a summer camp.

The Health, Physical Education and Recreation Department provides an overall fitness program, which includes swimming, dance and exercise classes, and nutrition education.

The Residence, renovated last year, houses 98 women, who may stay for up to two years. Its clients are generally women in transition: students, travellers, young women leaving home, and women leaving institutionalized settings such as mental hospitals.

These programs are administered through a committee structure, in which volunteers and paid professional staff jointly determine program directions. Committees of volunteers also address organization-wide matters, such as planning and evaluation, volunteer development, public and community relations and public policy.

The twenty-six member board of directors determines policy for the organization; each of its members also serves on at least one other committee. A six-member board of trustees, all women by a recent decision, oversees the two million dollar corporation.

The committee and board structure has a dual purpose: to provide resources for and members' input into the organization's programs, and also to provide opportunities for women to develop leadership skills. As the director put it, "The YWCA is a center for women's power in Cambridge. Numbers of women have learned to manage and administrate here at the Y. You can learn a lot of skills here: financial, personnel and program development skills. Women can learn about management and apply the learning anywhere."(5)

The Y's annual operating budget exceeds $700,000, drawing revenues from The United Way, from the Y's endowment, from program, membership and rental fees, and from donations. Currently, the organization is straining financially under recent cutbacks in social service funding and the costs of maintaining an old physical plant. (Last year, for instance, the organization lost $130,000 in revenue because of renovations to part of its residence.) Now that major building renovations have been completed, the organization is turning its attention to the quality of its programs and to its relationships in the community.

The Y's current directions emphasize improving the quality of programs and consolidating administrative functions. Under the leadership of a director who assumed the position two years ago, the Y is in the process of making significant changes. The organization has cut back substantially on overhead costs, established evaluation standards for programs, and consolidated its committee structure. It is just completing a year-long planning and evaluation process in an effort to clarify the organization's priorities. ("The Y is coming up with a 3-5 year plan, and a large part is saying NO," said the director. "We should cut back on the number of programs and strive for excellence at what we do.")(6)

For instance, as a result of efforts to improve its quality, the children's program has blossomed: participation in the after-school

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program has jumped from 12 children in 1982 to 52 children in 1984.

In a change with particular salience to this study, last year The Affirmative Action Committee expanded its mission to include the implementation of the national YWCA's "one imperative: to thrust the organization's collective power toward the elimination of racism wherever it exists by whatever means necessary." The committee renamed itself the Racial Justice Committee (RJC), and recruited new members from all levels of the organization, including a resident, a member of the support staff, and both the executive director and president of the board. The new RJC has initiated several new projects: it planned and implemented one-session racism-awareness trainings for the entire YWCA staff and instituted a program to honor individuals for outstanding contributions to racial justice. It is currently planning a multicultural fair for the fall.

Diversity of Representation Within the Organization

The current situation at the Cambridge YWCA in relation to cultural diversity, like the organization's historical legacy, embodies contradictions. In some parts of the organization, people of diverse backgrounds seem to be working together and sharing in decision-making in very successful endeavors. In other aspects of the organization, people of color are not present, or work only in positions of low prestige and power. Very few women from the city's

bilingual communities are involved at the YWCA in any capacity. In general, communication across class and status lines seems problematic.

On the positive side, Black women have been and continue to be involved in positions of leadership in the YWCA, on both local and national levels. Currently, for instance, the board of directors includes 6 Black women, one of whom is chairing the first long-term planning process which the Y has ever undertaken. The newly formed Racial Justice Committee consists of both Black and white women who are proud of its work and enthusiastic about its mandate.

Two of the four program areas -- The Youth Program and The Residence -- serve multicultural constituencies, and involve people of color on corresponding administrative committees. The staff of the youth programs is also racially diverse, and its programs highlight multicultural themes. Recently distributed fyers announce the Children's Programs in both Spanish and English.

In addition, the Y has recently been renting rooms to groups serving the city's refugee communities, and has co-sponsored several special events and programs with them. Readings by Angela Davis and Ntozake Shange, an International Women's Day Celebration and a benefit concert with a new organization called Women of Color Organizing Committee, all drew multicultural audiences. In addition, some weekly

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programs have been designed for specific cultural groups: sewing classes co-sponsored by the League of Haitian Families and a support group for refugees from Central America co-sponsored by El Centro Presente (a Central Square-based organization providing crisis intervention services to refugees from El Salvador).

Furthermore, the Y has committed itself to a more rigorous affirmative action policy in hiring, and it is likely that the extensive outreach efforts for the position of financial manager will become a precedent until the professional staff is more representative of the diversity of Cambridge communities.

Finally, to complete the positive side of the picture, the Cambridge YWCA is part of a national organization which has adopted the elimination of racism as its "one imperative." This national commitment can be a source of motivation, support and legitimacy for the efforts of the local branch. Women of color who hold positions of power and prestige in both the national organization and in other branches can be an important resource to the local branch. For instance, one Black member of the RJC told me that when she attended a regional conference in Ohio she "really had a chance to see the kinds of things the Y is involved with....It was really a kind of eye-opener because I had never realized there were so many women of color...in positions...of leadership. So coming back from that experience made me really willing to do some work."(7)

However, the YWCA is far from fulfilling its potential in empowering the women of Cambridge. In fact, issues of racism and cultural diversity are "sensitive right now," according to the Affirmative Action Officer, because the number of Black women working at and using the Y has declined significantly in the last five years.(8)

For instance, with the exception of the recently hired financial manager, who is an Ethiopian-born Black woman, the entire professional staff is white. The two Black women previously hired into professional positions left after very brief tenures. The lack of women of color in professional positions is seen by most staff and board members as significant: it makes recruiting women of color into committees and programs more difficult, and it perpetuates perceptions of the Y as a "white-dominated" organization.

Although the organization as a whole employs about 20% "minorities", these people are disproportionately represented in lower level clerical, maintenance and receptionist positions, with few paths for upward mobility. Job qualifications tend not to reflect the kinds of expertise which many working class and Third World women possess, such as knowledge of community networks, bilingualism, and styles of peer support particularly effective with women of similar backgrounds.

Almost everyone with whom I spoke at the Y saw the swimming pool as the most obvious indication of "the problem": both its staff (of some

17 part-time lifeguards and instructors) and virtually all its users are white. (This stands in direct contrast to the swimming pool of the YMCA, just down the block, which is used by Blacks, Hispanics and whites.) The Affirative Action officer attributes the racial homogeneity of the pool's users directly to the all-white staff. This circumstance, she says, results from two sources: 1) lifeguards work only one or two two-hour shifts per week, tending to exclude people who need more extensive work; and 2) the pool supervisor, herself white, has not made it a priority to reach beyond her personal and professional white networks when seeking lifeguards. Also, since many of the lifeguards are drawn from the Y's own classes, the cycle tends to perpetuate itself.

The swimming pool story extends beyond staff and users to show how the committee structure and leadership development efforts are affected by the exclusive use of the pool by whites. Not surprisingly, members of the committee and subcommittees which determine policy for the Health, Physical Education and Recreation Programs are also drawn from the users of the pool and its physical education classes. In 1983-1984, of 51 positions on 5 committees, 50 were filled by whites; only one was filled by a Black woman.(9)

Adult services is acknowledged as another problem area, primarily because classes are consistently underenrolled by both women of color and white women. It is difficult to determine which aspect of the program —— its content, format, staff, publicity, or some combination

-- are responsible for the low involvement of women of color. It is the Y's policy that, unlike the youth programs, which are supported by grants, adult programs must pay for themselves through tuition and fees. This funding strategy may contribute to low attendance; it is difficult to provide quality programs at costs which are affordable to many of the city's women. People at the Y have indicated that they believe it is easier to fundraise for children's programs.

Recently, the YWCA did receive public funds to initiate a Displaced Homemakers Program, under the Adult Services Department, which provides job counselling and referral to middle-aged women entering (or re-entering) the job force. In spite of extreme pressure for affirmative action outreach and hiring, a white woman was hired as director of the new program. In spite of several attempts at outreach, the director reported that few women of color use the program's services. This director said that she felt unsupported at the Y, and hampered by its policies that all outreach material must be requested two months in advance from the Public Relations Office. She said that in her experience, women from the city's racial and linguistic communities have an image of the YWCA as a white middle-class and lesbian organization, and do not feel comfortable or welcome there.(10)

In addition to concerns about the numbers of women of color participating in particular programs at the Y, people also expressed concern about the diversity of women of color who are involved in

the organization. Women from the city's lingustic communities --
Portuguese, Puerto Rican, Colombian, El Salvadoran, Haitian, Greek
and the several Asian communities -- are almost totally absent. For
instance, the Board of Directors consists of a total of 26 women: 6
are Black and 20 are white; no other cultural groups are represented.
Of the entire 151 women who served on committees in 1983-1984, all
were either white or Black except two Asian women and one Hispanic
women. The virtual absence of bilingual and bicultural staff, except
in maintenance and security positions, is seen as a significant
barrier to the involvement of women from the city's linguistic
communities.

In summary, some of the programs of the Cambridge YWCA are
characterized by cultural diversity; other aspects of the
organization are exclusively white. At first glance it seems
paradoxical that an organization with a biracial board would hire an
all white professional staff, and somewhat contradictory that an
organization with a culturally diverse children's program would
sponsor adult programs attended exclusively by whites. Ideas about
how to make all of the Y's programs more accessible and relevant to
women of color can be found within this seeming paradox.

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Other Relevant Dynamics Within the Organization

There appear to be significant problems in respectful communication

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across differences in power. Although this was not raised as an issue by women at the YWCA themselves, I particularly observed the quality of interactions across cultural and racial differences. My observations led me to this hypothesis, which I would need to confirm with additional data: women of the same class and in positions of approximately the same status communicate with reasonable ease and respect, even across race lines; but communication across class/status differences tends to be much less open.

For instance, the receptionists who staff the front desk and the residents seemed to interact with ease and warmth; both groups include both Black and white women. I was told that they sometimes socialize together. In another example, I was also told of an incident in which a Black member of the Racial Justice Committee confronted a white peer during the anti-racism workshop about definitions of racism; the process sounded clear and respectful, and the confict was resolved with mutual satisfaction.

However, communication across class/status differences tends to be much less open. For instance, a Black receptionist reported to me that her recommendations for programs, based on requests received from women of color who called in, were not implemented, and she was never informed of the reason why. Since most of the people of color who work at the Y are in positions of lower status, and since many of the communities of color are disproportionately comprised of working class and poor people, any difficulties which the Y's professional

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staff have in communicating openly across class lines could have serious racial consequences.

There were other incidents in which communications between women with different levels of power in the organization seemed problematic. Two program directors mentioned that they felt unsupported by the executive director; one said, "There is not two-way communication." I learned of several unresolved conflicts between supervisors and supervisees which had culminated in restricted in communication.

Feelings of isolation among women on the staff is anothefr critical organizational dynamic. In direct contrast to feelings of women on the board, who reported that they were excited by their work at the Y, felt supported, and felt themselves to be learning a great deal through their involvement, women who worked in the Y, both on the support staff and in programs, told me they felt unsupported by the organization as a whole. One program director said that staff people never have lunch together, and that the executive director never expresses interest in her program.

This sense of isolation, while most strongly expressed on the personal level, is also manifested in (and may partly result from) the lack of co-ordination across programs. Although there are bi-monthly meetings of the directors of different programs, each area functions totally autonomously from the others and are, in effect, in competition with each other for use of the Y's financial and human

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resources.

Relationships With Cambridge's Cultural Communities:

The YWCA's board and professional staff seem not to be rooted in the neighborhoods and institutions of Cambridge. This detachment from Cambridge institutions and communities manifests itself in many ways. For instance, at this point in time, the organization as a whole remains detached from the network of Cambridge agencies providing services to and mobilizing women and people of color. The director is not present at community events and does not communicate on a regular basis with other agency heads.

As another example, one of the Racial Justice Committee's first actions was to protest racist jokes on the Johnny Carson show by sending a letter to the president of NBC. While a laudable effort in itself, this choice of actions could hardly be further removed from the dynamics of Cambridge communities. Similarly, the public policy committee has failed to involve itself in any visible way in the major issues which have been identified by the city's cultural communities: housing, employment, safety, access to education, police practices, the maintenance of neighborhood health centers, adequate bilingual and bicultural staff in municipal institutions. This detachment is reflected in people's lack of awareness about the characteristics of various neighborhoods and communities. A program director, for example, who had attempted to raise funds for a special project for women in the Newtown Court-Washington Elms

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Housing Project didn't know the ethnic composition of the project.

None of the members of the professional staff grew up in Cambridge, and many members of the board do not live in the city. One member of the board indicated that, although she had recently returned to live in Cambridge, she didn't know much about the political situation in the city because she never read the Cambridge Chronicle .

The relationships which do exist between the Y and these cultural communities of the city are limited in nature. In some cases they emanate from a particular program area of the Y. The children's programs, for instance, are networked with other agencies providing services to children and resources for children's programs. In other cases, these relationships revolve around a particular event, such as a co-sponsored concert or weekly support group.

These events and program-level relationships have been significant in providing services to women and children, but they are not perceived as part of an overall outreach or community relations strategy for the organization as a whole. No mechanisms exists for translating what is learned through a jointly sponsored event about the needs of women of a particular cultural community into the Y's program planning or outreach strategies.

In some of the interactions which the Y does have with community groups, the Y presents itself as disproportionately concerned with

its own interests. Concerns about the Y's budgetary or affirmative action goals seem to supercede the staff members' abilities to project their sincere concern about the needs of women of color and their communities. For instance, two members of the adminstrative staff questioned whether the events co-sponsored with community groups were "effective," because these events had not caused women of color to become members of the Y.

The limited nature of the YWCA's relationships with Cambridge communities has consequences both for the Y and for women of color in Cambridge. From the Y's perspective, the organization's detachment from community dynamics means that it often lacks sufficient information to plan programs which are relevant to many of the city's women. Efforts to recruit volunteers, workers and board members are more difficult. When directors of particular programs conduct outreach, they sometimes feel unsupported, representing an agency which has not built a reputation of credibility in the community. They can speak only for the intentions of their own particular program, not for the organization as a whole.

The Y's detachment from Cambridge communities is reflected in the vagueness of the organization's goals for cultural diversification. Although there is a general consensus that people at the Y would like to see it serve more people of color, there are no ongoing or concerted efforts in relation to any particular community, nor any acknowledgement that strategies in relation to different communities

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would themselves be very different. Individual outreach efforts stand in isolation, and tend not to create momentum or to build credibility. This will probably remain true until the Y becomes a presence in, and itself a member of, Cambridge communities.

From the point of view of Third World women, the Y's detachment from Cambridge communities means that they have less access to the organization's services. In order to go to the Y, Portuguese girls living in East Cambridge, for instance, would need to travel geographically outside of their community (probably against their parents' rules) into an organization in which no one speaks their first language, and in which none of the programs reflect any awareness of or sensitivity to Portuguese culture. They would need to move totally outside of the "boundaries" of their community.(11) Their access to the Y's resources would be very different if the Y maintained some kind of reciprocal relationship with the Cambridge Organization of Portuguese Americans, or held special programs in East Cambridge. It would also be different if several members of the Y's professional and support staff spoke Portuguese, or knew the girls' parents, or if the Y maintained some kind of presence at Portuguese festivals.

Organizational Dynamics Which Present Barriers to Change:

The preceding sections consist primarily of descriptions of the

Cambridge YWCA: its background, the involvement of women of color in the organization, and its relationship with racial and ethnic communities in Cambridge. This section, and the two that follow, are more analytic, presenting interpretations of the patterns which are described above.

The relatively low participation in the YWCA of women from the city's cultural communities, particularly on the professional staff, as well as the organization's detachment from the racial and linguistic communities in the city, both lead to a lack of awareness about the lives of women of color and the communities in which they live. To the extent that these phenomena --cultural exclusivity, detachment from communities, and lack of awareness-- are present, they form two mutually reinforcing cycles.

In relation to the internal functioning of the organization, the lack of information about communities makes it difficult to design programs and outreach strategies which will draw more women into the system -- as users, staff members or volunteers. In terms of the organization's relationships with communities, lack of awareness makes it difficult to know where and how to become a presence, and how to relate in mutually beneficial ways. This, in turn, leads to an image of the YWCA as irrelevant and "outside" of the communities of Cambridge.

The stories about the use of the swimming pool and the Displaced

Homemakers Program both illustrate the relationship between the organization's image and its ability to involve people of color. Once an organization has an image as white and middle class, it is much harder to recruit staff and to attract clients, even if the content of the programs is itself useful. This absence of participation only perpetuates the image. Interventions planned for the YWCA should take into account the mutually reinforcing nature of these dynamics.

A related cycle involves the community's image of the organization as lesbian. This is important to address because any women's organization, whether or not it is comprised of lesbians, is susceptible to such an image. Homophobic attitudes funcion in racial and ethnic communities, as they do in white communities, to constrain both men and women from stepping outside of culturally prescribed sex roles. To the extent that part of the Y's resistance to reaching out in fact does reflect lesbian women's efforts to sustain a homogeneous (and therefore seemingly safe) environment, then these two sets of fears reinforce one another. To interrupt this cycle of fear, the organization must establish respectful relationships with cultural communities, and develop norms in which safety for everyone (of any sexual preference, race, or ethnicity) is based on respect for difference as opposed to the narrowness of homogeneity. Homophobia within communities can best be addressed by members of those communities after trusting relationships have been established.

A second organizational barrier to change is inherent in the difficulties in establishing respectful and open relationships across differences in power. On several different levels, the YWCA manifests difficulties in establishing respectful and open relationships across differents in power. Barriers to effective communication and cooperation are evidenced in several relationsips between supervisors and supervisees, between the affirmative action officer and program directors with the responsibility for hiring, between the Y and lesser endowed community agencies with which it seeks to interact. These barriers result from too little positive feedback, from fears of conflict and from lack of skill in productive conflict resolution. There is little evidence that those with power are consistently committed to creating contexts in which those with control over fewer resources can become more powerful. Staff people working in the Y who are not feeling empowered by their own involvement with the organization cannnot be expected to present a convincingly positive image to the community.

The ability to acknowledge differences in power and work productively within those differences is crucial for culturally diverse organizations, because of the inequalities inherent in a society with pervasive racism. The need for these skills should be taken into account in plans for transforming the YWCA into an organization more accessible to women of color.

A third organizational barrier to change is the lack of

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organization-wide coordination. With the exception of the very recent effort at organizational planning and evaluation, the four major program areas of the YWCA function very autonomously. This is important because outreach efforts conducted in one program are generally not useful to other programs; thus each program director must build her own individual set of relationships within a particuar community. The organization lacks the ability to respond to community needs as they become evident. In addition, the lack of coordination reinforces the feelings of isolation which accompany the barriers to communication and cooperation mentioned above.

Financial constraints are seen by several women in the Y as a fourth barrier to designing programs which would be relevant to women of color, particularly in relation to Adult Services. The associate director mentioned that it was very difficult to start new programs because the existing classes were not full, and therefore not generating any seed money for new efforts. It is important to note that the organization is operating out of the belief that it is difficult to find public or private support for adult programs. This belief is part of a self-perpetuating cycle: It is difficult to secure outside support for programs which address mostly middle class constituencies and are poorly attended. The Y has been unable to commit the resources to step outside of these constraints.

Range of Attitudes Towards Racism and Individual Resistances to

Change

People in leadership positions at the Y reflect a range of attitudes towards the cultural diversification of the organization. Nearly everyone with whom I spoke expressed positive attitudes towards multiculturalism, and include it in their visions for the organization. The director, for instance, would like the Y to be "a cauldron containing a joyful acknowledgement of differences; the resources of women from all these communities should be brught to bear on every aspect of the Y." The president of the board envisioned that a strongly multicultural perspective could be the "thread which ties together all of the Y's diverse programs." A Black member of the Racial Justice Committee has consistently raised her concern that the committee itself should become more diverse, representing more of the city's cultural communities.

On the other hand, racist attitudes also surface in the comments and behaviors of women in leadership positions at the Y. The most striking manifestation is most people's ignorace about the cultural communities in the city of Cambridge, and their unwillingness to make it a priority to educate themselves or to establish relationships with people and organizations in communities of color. This ignorance results from white ethnocentrism, a narrowness of vision based on the unconscious assumption that white culture is more important. The idea that people of color ought to assume that they are welcome at

the Y, even though the organization in no way reflects aspects of their cultures, is probably based on a similar narrowness of vision. It fails to take into account the value of various cultural traditions, and the overt racism which most people of color in Cambridge have experienced in white-dominated institutions.

Related to white women's ignorance of cultural communities in Cambridge is a tendency to place responsibility for reaching out to people of color onto the Black women who are present in the organization. For instance, a woman on the adminsitrative staff felt resentful that black women on the board don't make themselves more visible by attending more Y events. She felt that women of color would be more likely to attend events if Black women already involved with the organization were there. While there is obviously some validity in this assumption, it seems unfair to ask Black volunteers to assume a disproportionate share of the outreach work, especially since the paid professional positions in the organization are filled by whites.

Several women in leadership positions at the Y suggested that the underlying problem relating to cultural diversity in the organization was community people's <u>perceptions</u> of the organization. This seems like another way to place responsibility for change on people of color. Again, there might be some validity to the idea that the Y in

fact is safer and more affirming than people in the community perceive it to be. However, the organization's outreach policies, programs, staffing patterns, and public relations efforts should be the focus for change.

One woman on the professional staff confided that she did not, in fact, support the imperative to eliminate racism because she felt it would diminish the Y's commitment to empowering women. She perceived it as "another case of women making someone else's problem more important than our own." This candid comment is important because it expresses fears of differences among women which overshadow identification with commonalities: fears which are probably held but not expressed by many women at the Y.(12)

Addressing Racism on Levels of Policy AND Consciousness:

The local YWCA's official interpretations of racism and the imperative to eliminate it are still evolving. Its behavior indicates that racism is seen as both a matter of policy and of consciousness, and that it is perceived to operate on both individual and institutional levels. The Y as an organization and the individuals within it express both a commitment to change and significant resistances to that process.

Two events demonstrate that both organizational policy and individual

commitment are necessary to create change. In the last six months, probably the two most significant anti-racist events at the Y were the rigorous application of the affirmative action policy in hiring the financial manager and the workshop on the one imperative conducted for the entire staff by members of the Racial Justice Committee. In the case of the affirmative action hiring, the policy had always been clear: place job listings where they are likely to attract "minority" candidates; cite the Y's commitment to affirmative action and the eliminatin of racism on all job descriptions, etc. But it was a matter of individual commitment on the part of members of the Racial Justice. Committee to undertake a special outreach effort when the first round of applicants did not produce a qualified woman of color. The policy alone, while necessary, was not sufficient, to produce the desired results.

The anti-racism training illustrates another interesting interplay between organizational policy and individual attitudes. The focus of the event was clearly on change at the level of individual consciousness. But it was a matter of organizational policy to make the event mandatory for all staff members. Interestingly, none of the part-time pool workers attended this "mandatory" training — probably reflecting both their limited sense of identification with the Y and their limited interest in addressing racism. So far, their non-attendance has received no formal response. If a response is made, it will reflect individuals' willingness to be confrontive. It will also give new definition to the policy on mandatory attendance

at anti-racism workshops, and also clarify the relationship between part-time staff and the organization.

Efforts to facilitate the YWCA's transformation to a culturally diverse organization should take into account resistances on both organizational and individual levels, and the interplay between them.

Conclusions:

The YWCA has the potential to be an important resource for women in all of the city's cultural communities. Its mandate is broad and flexible, and could allow for as wide a variety of programs as would be necessary to involve women and girls of very different backgrounds. Because the Y is a city-wide organization with a record of fiscal responsibility, it could provide credibility to fledgling women's groups which are trying to organize or provide services within particular cultural communities. The Y's resources are among those most needed by women in the city's various racial and ethnic communities: the ability to plan, advertise, implement and evaluate programs, and to fundraise; structures through which to develop leadership; comfortable rooms for meetings; and expertise in many aspects of organizational functioning.

The Cambridge YWCA could be well on its way to becoming a culturally diverse organization in which women of different races and cultures

share in the organization's resources and decision-making. It already has many of the pieces of an anti-racist, multicultural organization: some of its programs are culturally diverse; its board is biracial; it acknowledges the importance of actively anti-racist roles for both whites and people of color; most of its staff has recently attended a workshop which introduced them to the idea of becoming actively anti-racist; the oranization has recently committed itself to a more rigorous application of affirmative action.

In order to become a more fully diverse organization, the Y needs to put all of these pieces together into a coherent and effective whole. The current organization-wide planning and evaluation process provides a unique opportunity to devise a long-term strategy for coordinating efforts across all levels of the organization.

Strategies to facilitate the Y's transformation must take into account the resistances which are evidenced on both the organizational and personal levels. They should address the dynamics of isolation and communication across differences, as they help the organization build relationships within the city's cultural communities.

"UNLEARNING COMPLICITY:"

A FEMINIST MODEL FOR CONFRONTING ORGANIZATIONAL RACISM

Overview

The description of cultural diversity at the Cambridge YWCA leads to several questions:

The Y seems to be caught in a cycle: as an organization it remains relatively detached from many Cambridge communities; few women from those communities are involved with the Y; many of its programs seem not to be relevant, or at least are not perceived as relevant; in general the Y's credibility as an organization committed to the well-being of the cultural communities in the city seems low. How can the Y break out of this cycle?

How can the culturally diverse parts of the Y, such as the board of directors and the youth programs, become resources for parts of the organization which are still white-dominated?

How can the Y incorporate what it learns from the involvement that it does have with communities of color into programs, outreach strategies, and organizational policies?

How can the Y identify and address the individual and

organizational resistances which prevent well-intentioned policies from being implemented? Who should coordinate the process? How can people be held accountable?

What are effective and efficient ways to gather the information necessary to develop clear goals? Could that research be designed to address organizational and individual resistances to change?

This chapter presents a model for understanding the transformation of a white-dominated women's organization into an organization which is culturally diverse. (For the purposes of this thesis, an organization is considered to be culturally diverse when it is jointly controlled by, relevant to, and accessible to women from the various cultural groups in the geographic area which the organization addresses.) The model is based on the experiences of white-dominated feminist organizations which have made concerted efforts to broaden their constituencies. Hopefully this framework could be used by facilitators and anti-racism educators to design interventions which can help the YWCA and organizations like it to answer questions like those listed above, and become fully accessible and relevant to women of color.

This model draws heavily on the experiences of a particularly successful and well-documented outreach project conducted by the Sexual Assault Crisis Service (SACS), in Hartford, Connecticut. The project, funded by the National Institute for Mental Health, was

designed to "reach out to Black and Puerto Rican women in Hartford, investigate their needs in the area of sexual assault, and create rape crisis services that meet those needs."(1) SACS was extremely successful in increasing the accessibility of its services to Black and Puerto Rican women: forty-two women of color received services in 1979, compared with only eleven in 1977. In percentage terms, this represented an increase from 6% Black and Puerto Rican clients before the project began, to 28% after the project's first full year.(2)

During the course of the project, virtually every aspect of SACS was changed: the composition of its staff and board, the content and format of its volunteer training programs, its outreach strategies, protocols for counselling victims of assault, and its ideology about rape. The cumulative effect of all these changes was a transformation in the identity of the organization: rather than being a feminist organization, its members referred to it as a multicultural anti-racist feminist organization. Embodied in the new identity was a new organizational culture: an expanded sense of the organization's mission, new ways of getting work done, different values, new ways of socializing members, and different relationships with the communities in Hartford.

Fortunately, these changes were thoroughly documented in reports to NIMH, articles, and brief papers that were written during the course of the project. The model presented here is grounded in the experiences of SACS and of other women's organizations which have

attempted similar changes. It incorporates recommendations based on analyses of the limitations of previous efforts as well as their successful strategies.

Information for this chapter has been drawn fom SACS' final report to NIMH, two articles which appeared in Aegis: A Magazine on Ending Violence Against Women , papers written during the project and personal notes from observations of counsellor training sessions and a white women's anti-racism group. In addition, I have used perspectives from interviews with a former director and present co-director of the New Bedford Women's Center, the director of Women for Economic Justice, and written descriptions of anti-racism efforts at a karate school in New York and in a support group in California. This analysis has also benefitted from discussion with Tia Cross, an anti-racism educator and consultant.

The Importance of a Whole-System Approach:

In the early and mid-seventies, many white feminists began to realize that there was something wrong about the white and middle-class composition of a movement which ostensibly built its theory on a universal analysis of women's oppression, and which claimed to empower all women.

Early attempts to address the problem were less than successful because white feminists generally tried to incorporate women of color

into their organizations without reconsidering the cultural bias reflected in both their analyses and their ways of working. Organizations made piecemeal efforts, as if to <u>appear</u> to be non-racist.(3) A flyer translated into Spanish, job listings sent to the NAACP, a single Black women's issue of a feminist journal -- these were isolated events intended as much to relieve feelings of guilt as realistically to broaden an organization's perspective and constituency.

At SACS, for instance, before the Outreach Project, white women wondered why Third World women didn't come to the organization. "It was speculated...that Black and Puerto Rican women were not concerned about rape -- they were too busy just getting by. Or perhaps it was that their ˆconsciousnesses weren't sufficiently raised' about what White women defined as women's issues: if only <u>they</u> would change, the problem could be solved."(4)

Gradually, women at SACS realized that the organization's ability to provide crisis intervention services to Black and Hispanic victims of sexual assault depended on having women of color as counsellors. They recruited six Third World women to join a regularly scheduled volunteer training program, but nothing about the training itself was changed: it was led by whites, it reflected an analysis of rape based on the experiences of white women, and advocated intervention techniques which ignored the circumstances and perspectives of most women of color. Five of the six women of color dropped out before

the training was completed.(5)

The ineffectiveness of such hasty attempts to involve women of color can be understood most clearly, I think, by considering their point of view. Beverly Smith, a Black feminist activist and scholar, described her feelings about such an experience in an article which appeared in 1979:

> As Black feminists we are constantly being asked to legitimate feminist activities by our participation. At a recent academic conference I was the only Third World woman among 12 feminist panelists. I was the only woman whose talk focused on women of color. I am furious that white women think they've dealt with Black women and with racism by giving me the total responsibility of speaking for and about Black women. It's overwhelming to me and it's tokenism.(6)

The cumulative effect of many failed outreach efforts and the words of many angry women of color finally led some white feminists to develop a new analysis of the problem. They began to understand that racism is a pervasive system, and that whites had to acknowledge their own role in racist dynamics. In order to create a multicultural movement capable of empowering all women, it was the movement that would have to change, not the women of color. In order to create organizations and a movement which is empowering to women of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds, strategies for change would have to be as broadly focussed as racism is pervasive.

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Systems Analysis: In systems terms, this means that the change effort must address all levels of the organization; all of its sub-systems and the rules which govern their interaction, the organization's boundaries and its definitions of and relationships with its environment will change.

Organizations can be seen as complex, dynamic organisms. They consist of many parts, or sub-systems, such as governing structures, task groups, social groups, communications systems, and structures for socializing new members. These sub-systems are always functioning in relation to one another, according to particular rules or norms. In healthy organizations, major changes in one organizational sub-system will generate changes in the other sub-systems, so that the various parts of the organization remain aligned with one another.

For instance, when the racial and ethnic composition of the clients and staff of an organization becomes more diverse, other parts of the organization might have to change in response. For instance, structures for decision-making might have to change in order to accomodate a wider range of values, more diverse styles of communication, and, most likely, lower levels of trust.

Like any organism, organizations exist in environments: they are systems operating within larger systems. For the Cambridge YWCA,

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for instance, these "supra-systems" include the National YWCA, the city of Cambridge, a statewide coalition of day-care providers, and the local network of job training agencies. Healthy organizations are "open systems," exchanging information with relevant portions of the environment, and adapting accordingly.

Becoming more culturally diverse requires a shift in an organization's definition of its relevant environment, as it relates to different organizations and networks of agencies.

Finally, systems have boundaries, ways to distinguish what is inside from what is outside. These boundaries can be tangible, such as geographic borders or membership fees, or cultural, such as norms which govern appropriate behavior and values to which people who are part of the organization must ascribe. These norms and values are reflected in every aspect of the organization: how people relate to one another, how work gets done, how the organization presents itself in words and pictures, and how conflicts are addressed.

As organizations become more culturally diverse, their boundaries shift. The organization incorporates elements of the cultures (people, values, languages, decision-making styles, etc.) which it is attempting to address. What was once on the "outside" is now on the "inside", and vice versa. In addition, the boundaries become more permeable; information flows more freely.

However, these changes don't occur automatically. Many feminist groups which have begun the process have stopped short of creating organizations which are fully accessible and relevant to women of diverse backgrounds. In other cases, major conflicts grew out of early attempts to change, and the organization split or folded altogether. From the perspective of hindsight, it is clear that few of these groups had created a structure to manage the change.

A Structure to Manage the Change: Change as comprehensive as transforming the culture of an organization needs to be coordinated, whether by a director, a collective, or a special task group convened specifically for this purpose.(7) The management of such a change includes establishing clear goals, developing plans of action to meet those goals, and evaluating progress. In the case of transforming a white-dominated organization into a culturally diverse organization, there must be systems through which the organization can use what it is learning through outreach efforts, for instance, to inform new policies and programs.

The structure to manage change must be capable of identifying both organizational and institutional resistances, and create strategies to overcome them. It must devise ways of holding people and groups accountable for their parts of the process.

In summary, then, a whole-systems approach to making a white-dominated organization culturally diverse is an approach which:

-addresses all levels of the organization;

-changes the relationship between the organization and its environment;

-changes the boundaries between the organization and various cultural communities; and

-changes the prevailing norms and values of the organization.

In order to be effective, such changes must be managed, so that clear goals are met, strategies are evaluated, and structures are created to maintain accountability and facilitate organizational learning. Individual and organizational resistance, which will inevitably occur, must be identified and overcome.

Clarifying Motivations

"The first thing I would question is why an organizaion wants to involve women of color. A lot of times people think it's what they should do, but they really aren't prepared to give up any power. Their desire to ˆhelp the disadvataged' betrays their own feelings of superiority. They end up using Third World people as tokens -- to relieve their own feelings of guilt."

-Debra Robbin, Co-director, New Bedford Women's Center.

Feminists who have been in leadership roles in organizations becoming more diverse culturally agree that it is crucial for individual women to be clear about their motivations for reaching out to women of color. Donna Landerman, the director of the Outreach Project at

SACS, wrote that it is important for women in positions of leadership to be clear about their motivations in order to convince other women to participate in the process and to keep themselves going during inevitable periods of frustration.(9)

Initially, many began to address racism in their organizations in response to angry -- but often eloquent -- criticisms from women of color, who have confronted racism in the women's movement with persistance and vision. For instance, on several occassions Black poet and scholar Audre Lorde criticized feminist academic conferences she was addressing. She was one of only two Black women who spoke at a 1979 conference honoring Simone de Beauvoir. On a panel entitled "The Personal is Political" she questioned why other Black women and Third World women weren't found to address the conference:

> Poor and third world women know there is a difference between the daily manifestations and dehumanizations of marital slavery and prostitution, because it is our daughters who line 42nd Street....If white American feminist theory need not deal with the differences between us, and the resulting differences in aspects of our oppressions, then what do you do with the fact that the women who clean your houses and tend your children while you attend conferences on feminist theory are, for the most part, poor and third world women? What is the theory behind racist feminism? I urge each one of us here to reach down into that deep place of knowledge inside herself and touch that

terror and loathing of any difference that lives there. See
whose face it wears. Then the personal as the political can
begin to illuminate all our choices.(10)

As Lorde's remarks suggest, there are both political reasons and
personal reasons for combatting racism. Feminists have found that
their motivations for addressing racism and for making their
organizations culturally more diverse have changed during the course
of their work. At first, they were interested in avoiding criticisms
and being seen as politically "correct." Gradually, they began to
develop political analyses which acknowledged the mutually
reinforcing effects of racism and sexism, and realized that efforts
to increase women's control over their lives were doomed to failure
unless they addressed the realities of all women. As anti-racist
work created contexts in which white feminists were able to build
relationships with women of color, they discovered many personal
reasons for continuing this work: energy once consumed by denial and
guilt became freed up for more life-enhancing purposes; they
experienced a greater sense of integrity; they opened themseves up to
new worlds of people and cultures, with new music and food and ways
of understanding which enriched their lives.

It is important to understand motivations for combatting racism and
increasing the cultural diversity of organizations. The greater the
clarity, the less likely it is that strategies to involve women of
color will themselves perpetuate racist patterns which are entrenched
in the larger social system.

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White-dominated women's organizations which are just beginning to reach out to women of color could help clarify their motivations by considering the following questions:

What do we (as individuals and as an organization) have to gain by creating a culturally diverse organization? What do we have to lose? Why is this process important to us? What kinds of commitments are we able to make to see it through? What are we willing to give up?

Building Relationships within Communities

White-dominated organizations which are trying to become more relevant and accessible to women of color will inevitably need to interact with people and organizations in various racial and ethnic communities. The organization will want to let women in the community know about its program, and will want to recruit women of color for staff positions or as volunteers. It might request time to make a presentation at a staff meeting of an agency serving a particular community, or place an ad in a newsletter, or simply request time to talk with individuals. I have found it useful to conceptualize these sets of activities as "building relationships" between the organization and the community.

The interactions between a white-dominated organization and the people and organizations of a particular community almost always involve some kind of exchange -- of information, resources, time, or

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services. Feminist groups found these interactions most successful when their relationships with particular communities were based on the principle of reciprocity.

For instance, when SACS began to do "outreach" to inform the Black and Puerto Rican communities of its services for victims, it was also learning about the communities' perceptions of sexual assault. Outreach workers "sought the active involvement of participants, soliciting their ideas, opinions and experiences, and incorporating them into the Project's ongoing analysis and program development. This type of approach, with reciprocity of ideas as a base, prevented the Project from imposing preconceived program plans on the two communities."(11) In the first stage of the project, it was determined that there were no organizations capable of and willing to provide crisis intervention services within the community itself.(12)

In both the Black and Puerto Rican communities, SACS workers found unique historical and social factors which influence how women experienced sexual assault, and therefore what kinds of services and outreach would make SACS resources accesible to them. In the Black community, rape was perceived as a tool of racist (as well as sexist) domination. The historical link between rape and racism began during slavery, when white men had unrestrained sexual access to Black women. During the Reconstruction Period,

fake accusations of rape were used as justifications for the lynching of Black men, which was the cornerstone of a system designed to keep Blacks "in their place." These patterns are still present, in the sexual harrassment of Black female workers by white bosses, and in the unequal sentencing of Black and white men accused of rape.(13)

In the Puerto Rican community, women's reactions to sexual assault are strongly related to the high value which the culture places on virginity. Women who were assaulted were seen as bringing shame onto their entire family; they were perceived as "dirty" or "ruined". In this cultural context, many women chose never to tell anyone about the assault.(14)

In order to make its crisis intervention services and community education programs relevant to Black and Puerto Rican women, SACS had to change to counselling procedures, its training program, and its outreach materials and strategies. (These changes are described in the next section of this chapter.)

In this case, it was information that was shared between SACS and the community. SACS workers told about the organization and its services, and presented basic information about sexual assault. Members of the community talked about their feelings and perceptions about the issue, and about their experiences in seeking help. SACS used this

information to modify its counselling protocals, volunteer training and outreach strategies, returning it to the community, in a sense, in the form of better services. Many organizations use the sharing of information as the basis for relationships based on reciprocity, and as a way of involving women of color in an organization which is in the early stages of becoming culturally more diverse.

In other cases, actual resources can be shared between a white-dominated organization and organizations within various racial and ethnic communities.

> For instance, in the Cambridge Women's Oral History Project (CWOHP) I found several opportunities to provide services in exchange for the help in outreach and project design which I received from members of various communities. In one instance, a caseworker in the Cambridge Organization of Portuguese Americans (COPA), who had helped me recruit both older women and teenagers for the oral history project, was planning to start a new group for girls. I was able to augment the CWOHP's schedule with several special training sessions at COPA, in effect providing programs for this girls' club. Later, the CWOHP sought additional funding to create a Portuguese version of its slide presentation, and made this available on a sliding scale for community education in the Portuguese community.

In relationships between white-dominated organizations and racial and ethnic communities the principle of reciprocity is especially

important because there is often a history of mistrust which must be overcome. This mistrust is based on white-dominated social service systems which often create dependencies and fail to involve members of communities in decisions about programming. Communities of color have rarely experienced benefits from research in which they participate. This is especially true in cities like Cambridge where many students are doing field work, and many political organizations are testing their ideologies.

Outreach efforts also tend to be more successful when they take into account "where the community is at" both literally and figuratively. In the literal sense, this means locating events in appropriate neighborhoods, scheduling programs to occur at regular community meetings, and using existing communication channels. In the figurative sense, it means taking into account the various community perspectives and presenting information in formats which are likely to be accessible. Especially in cases where the content of presentations is likely to be controversial, the language, style and medium of the communication can be especially important. For instance, for its outreach to Hartford's Puerto Rican community, SACS developed a _fotonovella_ , which presented information about sexual assault and SACS' services in a comic book format which was familiar and comfortable.(15)

The following story from The Community Karate School in Brooklyn, New York, describes a series of attempts to involve women of color in its

all white classes. It illustrates how going into the community, in a geographic sense, was important. Offering eight-week self-defense classes proved to be an even more important way to meet the community "where it was at:" women could participate in the school without making a longterm commitment to study karate. .rm79

Women in the school felt that their "skills were remaining a privilege" and were not being shared with other women who needed them. At first they just assumed that their school was "open to all," but didn't make any "actively welcoming moves." Then they began to do outreach to women of color in earnest by holding open-houses and offering free self-defense classes. They began to be known in the community through these efforts and through a concerted leafletting campaign, but still few women joined their classes. They tried to make the classes mre accessible by changing the schedule, arranging for child care and publicizing their sliding scale fee. But it wasn't until they went out into the community and did demonstrations for neighborhood groups that a few Third World women joined their classes. The most significant changes occurred when a CETA grant allowed the Karate School to give eight-week self-defense classes for free. The grant also provided for paid positions, and a Third World woman who had already joined the class did outreach on a full-time basis.(16)

White-dominated organizations gain credibility by building relationships based on reciprocity and by demonstrating their persistence and flexibility in reaching out to communities. As

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members of racial and cultural communities begin to feel a sense of trust, they share more information about the circumstances of a community. Working with members of a particular cultural community on a project which they define has been one way which members of white-dominated organizations learn about communities. It has been important for feminist groups to learn, for instance, what differences and conflicts exist within communities, how sexism operates, who has influence, and what are the sources of women's power. All of this information can be used to develop more relevant programs and more effective outreach strategies.

In building relationships with cultural and racial communities, a white-dominated organization should try to gain a sense of the communities' boundaries: how does a community distinguish between "us" and "them"? How far does the community extend? These boundaries can take the form of language, location, values or ideology. Ultimately, the outreaching organization will want to stretch itself so that it is not wholly outside of these communities' boundaries, so that women of color can come into the organization without needing to leave their cultural identities behind.

All of this information about communities -- their boundaries, their perspectives, their channels for communicating information, their needs, and their resources -- should be used by the organization to create programs which are sensitive and relevant to different communities. The process of creating new programs and incorporating

new members occurs _within_ the organization, and is discussed in the following section.

Within the Organization:

Changing Policies and Changing Consciousness

When a white-dominated organization seeks to become more relevant and accessible to women of color it not only builds relationships with ethnic and cultural communities but it also transforms itself. In other words, there is a process of _inreach_ which occurs simultaneously with organizational _outreach_ . On the level of the organization, these changes consist of new policies; on the level of individuals, they take the form of new understandings. In a dynamically changing organization, these two sets of changes reinforce each other.

As individuals in positions of leadership develop new understandings, they seek to act on those by creating and reinterpreting policies. For instance, it was the commitment of individual women at the Cambridge YWCA, based on their awareness of the importance of Third World women on their professional staff, which led the organization to apply its affirmative action policy more rigorously.

Conversely, it is often changes in policies which create the context in which individuals learn. For instance, when SACS hired women of

color as outreach workers, white women were confronted by their stereotypic reactions, based on attitudes which they held unconsciously. They were also given an opportunity to build respectful relationships across class lines, which allowed them over time to develop more realistic understandings of cultural similarities and differences.

An organization's ability to transform itself from white-domination to cultural diversity depends on both effective policies and individual consciousness and commitment.

Changing Policy: Organizational policies should also be reviewed to consider the relevance of the organization's programs to women from the various cultural communities it is attempting to address.

SACS, for instance, found that many aspects of its program had to be changed in order to be relevant to women of color. The counselling protocol, which previously had limited its definition of "appropriate" crisis intervention topics to issues directly related to the assault, was expanded. It was found that many women of color, most of whom were low-income, often had pressing health, housing, and employment needs which required attention before the assault victims were able to deal with their feelings about the assault. In addition, many women of color found the "counselling relationship" to be foreign; they needed to talk about emotionally neutral issues in order to develop feelings of trust. Also, many

Third World women encountered institutional racism in dealings with health and criminal justice systems which were necessitated by the assault; counsellors needed to be prepared to advocate for clients if necessary.(17)

All of these changes in counselling procedures meant that the counsellor training program had to be revised. Counsellors needed to be trained to establish trust in cross-cultural contexts, identify and address institutional racism, and advocate in relation to housing and welfare systems, etc. In addition, the families of Puerto Rican victims of assault were often in need of counselling; this too required additional training for the volunteer counsellors.(18)

Policies and strategies for increasing the access which women of color have to the organization should take into account the unique characteristics of various communities, such as languages spoken, communication networks, traditional views of women's roles, etc. Ideally, women from various communities should be sought for all levels of the organization, from clients and workers to policy-makers, because it is more likely, although not inevitable, that policies and programs will reflect the needs and resources of a particular community when women from that community are making decisions and also implementing them.

Policies to increase the accessibility of an organization to women of color should address both the internal workings of the organization

and its outreach strategies. Internal changes include writing new job descriptions so that responsibilities include maintaining relationships with appropriate groups in the community, and creating paths for upward mobility for women of color working in lower levels of the organization.

Outreach strategies, include recruiting members of the board, volunteers, workers, and clients through concerted efforts using channels of communication which are familiar to the particular community. Many organizations find that using personal networks is the most effective form of outreach in Third World communities. It is important that the organization incorporate the communities' perspectives into its outreach material.

> For instance, since Black and Puerto Rican communities each perceive sexual assault differently, the outreach material generated by SACS had to be expanded to incorporate different perspectives on the issue. In particular, it was important to acknowledge the historical relationship between rape and racism. In regard to this issue, SACS found that women of color were less likely to choose to report their assaults to police, and that outreach materials had to highlight more strongly SACS' policies that police reporting was a matter of individual choice for women.(19)

Finally, many other policies will need to be adjusted to support the goals of accessible and relevant programming. These have included new fee scales and funding sources, and new criteria for hiring

workers (such as bilingualism, or knowledge of community networks, or experience in multicultural work). Several feminist organizations have found that the increased diversity in their staff and board required more structured decision-making processes.

In order for an organization's new policies to genuinely increase the cultural diversity of all levels of an organization, the organization must be learning about the lives of women in various communities and incorporating that learning into the policy-making process. Creating the structures for this communication is one of the important tasks for the group which is coordinating the change effort.

Feminist groups have also found that it is important to identify and address both organizational and individual resistance to change. These efforts have been unique to feminist anti-racism work, and are described in detail in the next sections.

Addressing Organizational Dynamics which Present Barriers to Change

On the organizational level, resistances to change usually result from barriers to organizational learning, and often reflect more general organizational weaknesses, such as inadequate decision-making structures (overly centralized or overly diffused), competition between departments, inadequate structures for surfacing and resolving conflicts, or inadquate channels for the flow of information. An organizational change as dramatic as cultural

diversification will almost inevitably stress the system to the point where its weaknesses become visible and problematic. Whatever individual or group is managing the process should be prepared to identify, and address or circumvent these orgnization-level resistances to change.

At SACS, for example, before the Outreach Project, the organization was ostensibly governed by a steering committee with representatives from each committee and workgroup in the organization. In reality, as was the case in many feminist collectives, many decisions were made through informal friendship networks. As the Outreach Project increased the organization's paid staff from two to seven workers, the formal structure would have maintained an all-white steering committee. Since there was no clear decision about which body would manage the change effort, no group or individual had the authority to evaluate the decision-making structure in light of other organizational changes. This lack of clarity reflected the organization's ongoing ambivalence about leadership and accountability. What happened was that the management of the organizational transformation devolved onto the staff of the Outreach Project, and the steering committee became virtually defunct. As the Outreach Project formally ended, the steering committee was restructured to reflect the new composition and structures of the organization. The lack of clarify took its toll on the organization: there was a high turnover of both staff and

volunteers; many white women left the organization because no clear roles were defined for them.

In its final report to NIMH, SACS reported that its previous collective structure, "frequently proved insufficient for ...the diversity of goals, priorities and interactional styles" of the diverse staff of the Outreach Project. "In the absence of sufficient cohesiveness to insure effective decision-making and accountability procedures, more clearly defined patterns of authority and responsibility are advised."(19)

Some degree of disruption is inevitable in a major change effort, because some elements of the system will inevitably lag behind others in adapting to the change. A structure which is responsible for maintaining an overview of the change effort can sometimes identify the organizational dynamics which present barriers to change, and create ways for those dynamics to be confronted. It is possible through that process, to minimize the disruption to the organization.

Addressing Individual Resistances to Change

The six year old girl in Texas who had to be bodily restrained from drinking at the "colored" water foundtain; the eleven year old who was banished from the dinner table by her father when she refused to stop arguing with an adult male guest who was making racist remarks; the fourteen year old girl in an all-white suburb who registered for a Negro

history class in summer school when all her friends were taking Pre-Algebra; the fifteen year old who attended the funeral of her high school friend -- a young Black man -- even though her father threatened her with death if she did so.   Reclaiming our resistance helps to challenge our notions of our "helplessness" as white women.   At the same time, remembering the punishment we received for our resistance helps us know how and why we came to comply with oppression. This work has also given rise to deeper emotional expession, and we are risking more with one another.(20)

Just as organizational dynamics often present barriers to the change effort, so do dynamics within and between individuals.   These individual resistances often result from unconsciously held racist attitudes, from feelings of guilt, fear and powerlessness, or from the inability to see privilege or relinquish power.   It is not generally obvious what is happening: a program director chooses not to make the time for special outreach phone calls, a co-worker doesn't think to invite the new Puerto Rican outreach worker to lunch, or, project directors deny there is a problem by discussing only the parts of their projects which are successfully multicultural.

Both women of color and white women have found that meeting in homogeneous groups have been instrumental in helping them break through individual resistance to change.   The groups have served slightly different functions for each.   All-white groups have

provided a safe but challenging context in which women have been able to surface and examine internalized racist learning, work through the feelings of fear, guilt, and anger which are associated with racism, and create strategies for changing their own behavior and organizatinal policy. Women of color have found these groups useful in validating their own experiences and feelings, discussing sexist dynamics within their own communities (often difficult in mixed-racial groups), supporting each other to take leadership, and creating strategies for changing their own behavior and organizational policy.

There are potential dangers creating racially separate groups in organizations: the fact that many organizational events are processed separately can become a barrier to communication and separate groups can exacerbate feelings of mistrust or exclusion.(21) They are not the only solution to overcome individual resistance to change: some organizations, for instance, have worked with facilitators and consultants in mixed racial contexts. However, because racially homogeneous groups create a specific kind of emotional safety, they have proven very powerful tools for generating support among Third World women and changing racist behaviors among white women.

I will describe white women's anti-racism groups in detail because I believe that they represent a uniquely feminist contribution to anti-racist education and social change. Although these groups are not necessarily appropriate for every organization, the theories they

reflect and the techniques they use can be adapted to many contexts, including culturally heterogeneous groups.

White women's anti-racist groups were based on the model of Consciousness-Raising (CR) groups, which were developed early in the second wave of the women's movement. CR is a process in which people meet together to create social and political understandings out of their personal experiences. These uderstandings become the basis for poliical action. It was the process of CR which surfaced many of the issues of the recent feminist movement: reproductive rights, freedom from physical violence and sexual assault and harrassment, child-care, access to traditionally "male" jobs, and more.

In CR groups, each member takes an equal share of time to relate personal experiences on a given topic. The group as a whole reflects on the shared stories, using them as a basis for political and social analyses. CR groups established norms for dealing with emotions: feelings were validated, but women were also given support for emotional change. Internalized and non-conscious attitudes were seen as important factors inhibiting the kind of personal growth which leads to effective political change. For these reasons, CR was seen as an appropriate methodology for addressing internalized racist attitudes.(23) In the late 70's, white anti-racism groups sprang up in various cities with active feminist movements.

    At SACS, a white women's anti-racist group proved to be a crucial component of the organization's successful

transformation from white-domination to cultural diversity.
Throughout the entire Outreach Project, interactions between
Third World women and white women were often conflicted and
tense. In retrospect, the tension is understandable: the
organization's decision-making structures were insufficient
to the increased diversity on the staff, and it took time for
the organization's policies to catch up to the outreach
worker's analyses of their community needs. In additon,
individual white women were just becoming aware of their own
internalized racism. White women made mistakes; women of
color were mistrustful. White women acted in ways which
revealed racist attitudes, and women of color sometimes
unfairly accused them of racism. The combined focus on both
sexual and racial violence was bound to be "explosive". Both
white women and women of color found themseves in need of
support.(24)

The white women's anti-racist group at SACS consisted of the same
elements as the anti-racism support groups which had been developed
in many feminist commuities. This description uses stories told by
women in such groups to illustrate how a supportive but challenging
environemnt can help women to uncover unconscious attitudes, see
their own privilege, and acknowledge emotions -- all with the goal of
changing behavior.

Perhaps the most essential element of white women's anti-racist
groups has been the creation of <u>safe</u> but <u>challenging</u>

environments.(25)   In these environments, women are encouraged to
uncover racist attitudes, deal with feelings and changed behaviors.
Safety is created in the groups in two ways. First, members are
encouraged to take pride in their own particular ethnic identities
and to acknowledge oppressions which they face in their own lives.
Secondly, groups are based on an ideology which minimizes individual
responsibility for racist attitudes: given the pervasiveness of
racism, all whites internalize attitudes from their families,
textbooks, and the media. Although individual whites may not have
chosen to live in a racist system, they are accorded privilege on the
basis of skin color. They can choose to acknolwedge this reality and
act responsibly by interrupting racist comments, behaviors, and
institutional practices.(26)

A major goal of white women's anti-racism groups is to help white
women uncover the stereotypes which, although unconscious,
nevertheless inform their behavior. The following stories, taken
from descriptions of several anti-racist groups, illustrate how
racist attitudes become interalized by whites at a very young age.
These attitudes are generally unconscious, and usually are
contradicted by more recently acquired beliefs. They still influence
behaviors, although this influence is minimized once the attitudes
are surfaced and the accompanying feelings expressed.

Elly Bulkin, a feminist author and literary critic, wrote about her
experiences in an anti-racism group:

Asked to recall my earliest awareness that there were differences between people of color and white people, I remembered two instances which symbolize for me some of the complexity of transcending my own racism to take clearly anti-racist positions. I recall my immigrant grandmother, who died before I was 6, referring to Black people as "schwartzes," dropping a word of Yiddish into a stream of English sentences and thereby impressing on me without further explanation that "they" (and, by extension, other people of color) were so alien to my white world that their very existence could not be acknowledged in my own language. Years later, in the mid-fifties, I remember my parents speaking with the implied superiority of Northern liberals about civil rights for Black people in the South and thereby impressing upon me both that prejudice was a terrible thing and that it could be defined in terms of basic civil rights and the intellectual concept of racial equality. For them, racism was floating around someplace out there --certainly in Birmingham and Little Rock; and if I only believed in the equlity of all people, I would be forever safe from the corrosion in my grandmother's message.(27)

A woman in SACS who participated in the white women's anti-racism group described her feelings about uncovering a racist memory:

My family would go on Sunday afternoon trips. All three of us kids would pile into the car with my Mom and Dad and drive to downtown. Dad used to take us for sightseeing rides

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through the ghetto. We had to keep all the doors locked and windows up. He would drive slowly through the back streets, the main streets, and tell us how lucky we were that we didn't have to live in the "slums". Sometimes he'd yell things out the window, "Saphire!", "Kingfish!". This was during the fifties. I thought nothing of these afternoon drives at the time. When I recalled them in the group it was with horror and a great deal of shame. In some ways, I felt I was an awful person for having participated in this. One woman mentioned that it wasn't my fault, we were all brought up in racist homes. Realizing this, I was able to look on that childhood experience and learn first-hand the kind of ignorance that supports white arrogance/racism.(28)

Feminists have found that surfacing such memories serves to lessen their impact on current behavior. In most groups, early session have used a variety of techniques to help members recall and discuss such events. Several white women's anti-racism groups have also found that when members recalled specific childhood incidents of resistance to racism they felt less helpless about becoming actively anti-racist in the present.(29) The quotation at the beginning of this section summarizes incidents which were discussed in a white women's anti-racism group in California.

One of the most difficult concepts for whites to fully grasp is that of privilege. Seeing privilege requires looking at familiar and accepted occurrences from a different point of view, and

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acknowledging that something which we have come to consider "natural" is in fact being denied to others on the basis of skin color. In the following story, the director of the Outreach Project at SACS describes how the white women's anti-racist group helped her to see how white privilege operated in a particular situation:

I recently had a dramatic experience with white privilege through my work at SACS. I learned a lot, but it was a very painful experience, especially, I think, for the Black woman at whose expense the lesson was learned.....Cheryl [a Black woman co-ordinating outreach in the Black community] had been working on a series of short radio programs for station WKND. She purchased the programs because WKND reaches a lot of Blacks in Hartford....Things were going well....but when Cheryl recorded two shows on "Rape and Racism", the station manager refused to air them. He said they were inflammatory and asked for documentation of the information in the programs. When Cheryl provided him with articles and bibliographic materials, he refused to look at them. Cheryl came back to the office very angry.....I went to the stations with Cheryl and Jenny [the counselling co-ordinator] to meet Ken, the white male station manager and Carla, the black woman in a lower position in the station hierarchy. We said the same things that Cheryl had said to them the week before, we showed them the same documentation that they had refused to look at from Cheryl, and we assured them that SACS fully supported what Cheryl was presenting. They agreed to run the

shows with the same disclaimer that they refused to use when Cheryl suggested it.

After we left, Cheryl was even angrier. She had been ignored. When she said something it wasn't heard. When I said the same thing it was. They wouldn't look at her. They looked me in the eye, and talked with me. What was it that made the difference? It was my white skin. I had hardly noticed that Cheryl was being ignored. I was so busy being articulate and trying to impress, that I got caught up in assuming that I was being listened to because I was saying it better. When I look back on it, it is clear that Cheryl was saying the same things and just as clearly and articulately. When we discussed it in the White Woman's Anti-Racism Group, I remembered my own experiences of being treated like I wasn't there in male dominated situations. I began to feel what that meeting must have felt like to Cheryl. The situation reinforced the idea of her inferiority and the superiority of the Whites. Even though we may intellectually know that we were being treated differently because of our skin colors, it is very hard not to be affected by racist treatment. I had an experience of being effective and powerful. She was made powerless and ineffective.(30)

As white women uncover memories about early racist learning, childhood resistance to racism, and white privilege, they are accompanied by intense feelings --of pain, anger, fear, and guilt. It is these feelings, which generally go unexpressed, which create

resistance to change. Once they are validated and expressed, they lose some of their power to control behavior. Many people avoid thinking about racism, for instance, for fear of discovering prejudice in themselves.(31) Women at SACS discovered that fears were often at the base of their inability to act effectively, and to relate respectfully with Third World women:

Fear: of being called racist, of the unknown, of being rejected, of making a mistake, and of being hurt. Fear kept white women volunteers from coming into the SACS office after the staff was no longer white. Fear of conflict keeps white women from speaking up when they disagree with Third World women. Fear of seeing the ugly effects of our racist socializaion keeps us from honestly looking at ourselves, our privileges, our pasts. Fear of seeing the devastating truth of racist oppression keeps the volunteer from believing the presentation of a black woman in the training program; it is easier to believe that the black speaker must be "exaggerating," that all the information cannot be correct...And, once we begin to turn our commitment and learning into action, we often fear the reaction. For example, when the white Women's Anti-Racism group decided to come out publicly....by offering to do a workshop for whites at a local university's conference on racism, we were afraid: afraid of making mistakes, afraid of the reactions of Third World people, afraid of reactions of other whites. Overcoming our fear is an important part of confronting our

racism and doing anti-racist work for whites.(32)
Guilt is another common reaction, and it can become paralyzing.
Women at SACS found that they needed to experience periods of
immobilizing guilt before moving beyond it to take action.(33)

White women who are dealing with racism often experience intense
anger directed at them by women of color. Women at SACS found that
their own emotional reactions to the anger made it difficult to
respond in ways which both acknowledged the anger and were
self-respecting. Other anti-racist white women could help them gain
perspective and respond productively:

> Whites often cannot hear the underlying message of any angry
>
> interaction with a Third World woman because of the intensity
>
> of feeling with which it is delivered. In our experience,
>
> this anger can be an icy knife-edged coldness or a boiling
>
> rage. The white women at SACS have begun to develop a useful
>
> way to cope with some of these situations. By not responding
>
> immediately, we can get together with other white women and
>
> clarify our perceptions of the situation and carefully
>
> develop a response. Sometimes, if the anger is directed at
>
> one or a few individuals, other white women with less
>
> emotional investment are able to pull the situation apart
>
> more objectively. Within the supportive atmosphere of the
>
> White Women's Anti-Racism Group, for example, white women
>
> could critically and carefully examine the situation and try
>
> to come to honest conclusions. What is true about what the

Third World woman was saying? What can we learn from it about racism and interacting with Third World women? What can we actually do now to respond in a useful way? This is not to say that Third World women are always fair and accurate in the things at which they are angry. White women must not let white guilt blind us to self-respect and limply agree with any criticism made by black or Puerto Rican women.(34)

For white women in organizations addressing racism and becoming culturally more diverse, learning to effectively deal with emotions --both their own and those directed at them — is an important component of overcoming individual resistances to change.

People in positions of leadership in white-dominated organizations or facilitators intervening in them should create contexts in which individual women can be supported to break through their own resistances to change. It should be anticipated that individuals are likely to lack the emotional and communications skills required for optimal functioning in culturally diverse contexts. Adapting techniques referred to here to the particular circumstances of an organizaton could remove some of the barriers before they become problems.

The Transformation of the Organization's Culture as the Culmination of a Whole-System Change

All of the changes outlined in the preceding sections -- changes in policy, in individual consciousness, in relationships with communities, in the composition of the organization, and in structures for organizational learning -- ultimately comprise a change in the organization's culture . These changes build on one another to generate new norms for appropriate behavior and new values which are reflected in different organizational priorities and working styles. As women of color gain increased influence, they come to feel a sense of ownership of the organization and investment in its future. Their influence can be felt on all levels, from policy, to language, to decor. The feeling of the organization -- its ambience -- reflects these changes.

Before the Outreach Project, in 1976, visitors to SACS would encounter a sea of white faces and English-speaking voices. SACS, coincidentally to this thesis, was located in a YWCA, which itself was more closely associated with its white middle class suburban members than its Third World neighbors. In 1976, there were only 5 Blacks and one Puerto Rican working in professional or clerical positions in th YWCA. Visitors to SACS would encounter only White, English-speaking employees behind the information desk and few Third World women or men in the lobby. Since all signs in the building

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were posted in English, Spanish-speaking visitors were likely to feel unwelcome.

In the SACS office itself, no one spoke Spanish, and the logo on the poster which greeted visitors consisted of two White women. People seemed to know each other well, and the conversation was typically loose, informal and personal. There was frequently a great deal of talk about feminist activities. Reports by Third World women of uneasiness when coming into the office were not surprising.(35)

Four years later, after the Outreach Project, one can see many changes. No longer does one see only whites. Conversation floats freely in and out of Spanish, and one frequently sees groups of women of color meeting in the office or in surrounding rooms on projects initiated by the Outreach Project. The SACS logo which appears on posters and brochures shows Third World women of a variety of ages, with wording in English and Spanish. Black and Hispanic women report feeling more comfortable in the organization, and feel that its work reflects their own concerns.(36)

When a white-dominated organization becomes culturally diverse, its identity changes: it defines its mission differently, and it means something different to its members. As the organization's composition changes, and as its boundaries expand, it will enjoy more credibility in racial and ethnic communities.

A major part of the transformation from a white-dominated to a culturally diverse organization is the institutionalizing of new systems of learning into the organization's on-going structures. The organization will have learned not only new systems of being, but new systems of adapting to the communities which surround it. It will become more able to respond programmatically to changing needs.(37)

The organization will also have created structures and styles of operating which allow for greater diversity of values. Ideally, its decision-making processes will be clarified, and processes for surfacing and resolving conflicts will become regular parts of meetings.

Clearly, the transformation will have addressed all levels of the organization. It has involved building relationships with communities based on reciprocity; changing organizational policies to make programs more relevant and accessible to women of color; addressing organizational dynamics which present barriers to the change and individual resistances.

This chapter has outlined a feminist model for addressing racism in white-dominated women's organizations. In the next chapter, this model is used as the basis for making recommendations to the Cambridge YWCA.

RECOMMENDATIONS: APPLYING THE MODEL TO THE YWCA

This chapter applies the model for cultural diversification of white-dominated women's organizations, developed in the last chapter, to the particular circumstances at the Cambridge YWCA.

Overview

The model focusses on the organization --as a system of interacting parts relating to an environment -- as the locus for the change. It calls for the creation of a structure to manage the effort, and for clarity about motivations and goals. It acknowledges the importance of individual competence and skills as well as policy, and requires that barriers to change -- both organizational dynamics and individual resistances -- be identified and addressed. The successful application of this model culminates in transforming the culture of the organization.

The Cambridge YWCA is an organization already in the process of addressing racism and attempting to reach women from more diverse backgrounds. It has resources potentially of great value to women of color in Cambridge, including skills in leadership development, a wide range of programs, and a phsycial plant which consists of a residence, a swimming pool, and many rooms for meetings and activities.

The YWCA current situation with relation to cultural diversity is inconsistent; some of its programs are used and staffed exclusively by whites, while others are fully multicultural. As an organization, it remains detached from the linguistic and racial communities which surround it.

Although its anti-racism efforts are supported by a strong organizational mandate, the commitment of the organization's leadership, and an active Racial Justice Committee, the organization manifests several dynamics which impede such a major transformation: lack of co-ordination, barriers to communication across differences in power, and patterns of isolation on many levels. The Y is caught in a cycle, in which the limited participation of women of color in the YWCA, its image in the community as a white, middle class organization, and its lack of relevant information about the cultural communities of the city reinforce one another.

Individuals in leadership positions in the organization are inexperienced in multicultural work. They exhibit a range of attitudes and behaviors in relation to racism, ranging from enthusiastic commitment to multiculturalism to the belief that a commitment to the elimination of racism diminishes the organization's ability to empower women. Individual resistances to change, based on fears and denial, are manifested in an unwillingness to take responsibility, and in an ethnocentric lack of awareness about the

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lives of people of color living in Cambridge.

Racial and linguistic communities in Cambridge: Cambridge, the immediate "environment" with which the Y interacts, is the home of many diverse communities. Although it is difficult to find exact information about their size, the fact that the public school provides full bilingual programs in Portugese, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese and Greek gives some indication of their importance. Substantial numbers of immigrants from the Caribbean and Latin America have arrived in recent years, including many from Haiti and El Salvador. Many of these recent immigrants are without legal status.

The city's Afro-American communities are diverse in themselves, some rooted in old Cambridge and Boston families, some descended from early Black migrants from Nova Scotia, others recent immigrants from the south. Each of these groups draws on distinct cultural patterns.

The variety and changing compositions of the city's cultural groups create a complex situation. Furthermore, there are long-standing conflicts between some of the groups. For instance, tension between Cambridge's Portuguese and Afro-American communities has erupted into serious violent incidents several times in the last six years. This could be especially relevant to the Cambridge YWCA, given that its Central Square location is considered "Black turf" by many Portuguese people. Furthermore, the Portuguese community is concentrated in

East Cambridge neighborhoods, and there are particularly strong sanctions against young women leaving the neighborhood unchaperoned. For all these reasons, the Y would face many challenges in reaching out to Portuguese women and girls in Cambridge. If it could meet those challenges, it would provide some very important services while addressing a serious city-wide racial/ethic conflict.

In addition to conflict between ethnic groups, there are also conflicts within communities which would have to be taken account in planning programs and designing outreach strategies. For instance, Cambridge's Portuguese-speaking community consists of three distinct groups: immigrants from the Azores, immigrants from the Continent, and immigrants from Cape Verde. Various political and social differences within the community have roots in these different backgrounds. The Spanish-speaking communities similarly have diverse national roots which are reflected in political and social differences.

In addition, women play somewhat different roles in the various cultural and racial communities in the city. Most of the formal organizations, however, are controlled by men, many of whom do not place a high priority on women's programs.

An effort to end the white-domination of the YWCA and make it a more useful resource to the city's women of color must take into account both the dynamics of the organization and the nature of the

communities which it is attempting to address.

Preliminary Steps

Women in positions of leadership at the YWCA should reconceptualize the problem of addressing racism using the perspective of a whole-system approach. As it stands now, the YWCA's efforts towards the elimination of racism and increasing cultural diversity in the organization have been isolated events, not part of any overall strategy. The organization's attempts to increase the involvement of women of color should be redefined as an effort to transform the organization itself.

A structure to co-ordinate the change and to hold people and programs accountable for their participation in the effort should be designated to manage the process. At the YWCA, the Racial Justice Committee (RJC) should be given the mandate to oversee the change effort, for several reasons. It is logical that the committee whose mandate is the implementation of the orgnizational imperative to "eliminate racism" co-ordinate the organization's own efforts to become fully multicultural. Furthermore, the RJC has already taken on some of the tasks which would be incorporated in an overall strategy, such as leading anti-racism trainings for the staff and involving members of various community organizations in planning a multicultural fair. In addition, the RJC consists of a cross-section

of the organization, from the residents and support staff to the executve director and the president of the board. It is an energetic and dynamic group whose members, both Black and white, feel proud of its ability to make things happen.

It order to successfully co-ordinate the transition, the RJC would need a mandate from the board of directors to propose organizational goals in relation to cultural diversity. Subject to the board's approval, the RJC would work with each committee and program to develop plans of action relating to that particular area.

In addition, early in the process the RJC should broaden the diversity of its own membership. (It has already made this one of its own goals.) The committee should be flexible about finding ways to involve women from several of the city's major linguistic and racial communities. If women do not have time to formally join the committee, they might be willing to work as advisors, or to suggest other women from their communities who could participate.

The RJC should consider whether, and for what purposes, the organization should hire consultants and trainers to facilitate the process of cultural diversification. Following the anti-racism training which its members led this spring, several felt that future sessions should be led by people with more experience and skill, both in order to create a safer environment and to encourage challenges to racist comments. Given that the change process will need to address

organizational dynamics which involve everyone within the organization, it might be useful to draw on consultants from outside the organization at certain junctures. In addition, the fact that women who work in the Y have little information about the cultural communities of the city might point to a need for outside expertise.

Clarifying Motivations for change: One of the first activities of the RJC should be to clarify its own motivations for addressing racism at the Y and increasing the cultural diversity of the organization. Members of the RJC should address questions of motivation (i.e. What do we have to gain? What do we have to lose?) on both personal levels and for the organization as a whole. Periodically, and as the RJC works with each program and committee, its members should repeat th process of clarifying motivations for change. Members of the RJC would probably find it useful to read about the experiences of other women who have been involved in similar processes, to understand how motivations are likely to change.

Setting goals: Next, the RJC should propose clear goals for the change effort. The longest range goal is clear: to transform the organization from a situation of white-domination to full multiculturalism -- in which its resources are accessible, relevant and empowering to women of color.

But to move even one step towards operationalizing this goal is

impossible, because program directors and policy makers at the Y do not have information about the characteristics and needs of women in the various cultural communities in Cambridge. To whom, in fact, does the organization wish to be accessible? In what ways?

On the basis of my own interpretation of dynamics in the Cambridge YWCA, and its relationship with the city's communities, I think the Y can set three short-term goals all of which should put it in a better position to make clear and specific long-term goals within one to two years:

- Learn about the lives of women of color in Cambridge and their communities;
- Strengthen the ability of the organization's leadership to address racism and to work in culturally diverse contexts;
- Make several immediate changes in organizational policy to increase accessibility for women of color.

The specific plans which follow propose strategies for meeting these short terms goals. The plans have been designed to simultaneously address some of the underlying organizational dynamics and individual resistances which have so far interfered with the change effort.

Using the Process of Gathering Information to Build Relationships With Communities

For the YWCA to be in a strong position to design programs which are

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relevant and accessible to women of color, it needs more information about their lives and better relationships with their communities. The process for gathering information can be used both to strengthen community relationships and to involve women of color in the Y. This information-gathering process might also address the lack of coordination and the problems of isolation in the Y by involving several of its committees and programs.

Many other processes for collecting information could be designed to incorporate the same essential elements: involving women and organizations from the various cultural communities in choosing what information to present and how to present it; becoming visible in the communities through the process of gathering information; creating something useful for the individuals and communities involved through the infomation-gathering process itself; and developing a specific plan to incorporate the information into organizational goals that increase the involvement of women of color at the YWCA.

A subcomittee of the RJC, Women's Education Committee (overseeing Adult Services) and the Public Policy Commmittee, consisting of a total of five to ten members, would co-ordinate a series of workshops on the lives of women in various communities. Women would work in teams of two to research particular racial and/or cultural communities, including Afro-American, Portuguese, Haitian, at least one Spanish-speaking community (Puerto Rican, Colombian, and/or Salvadoran) and at least one Asian community (Chinese, Vietnamese,

and/or Laotian). Other members of the RJC would document the workshops and write brief reports analyzing the implications for the YWCA's programs and policies.

The possibility of co-sponsoring the workshop series should be considered in order to generate more energy for coordinating it and to link the Y to other organizations in an anti-racist endeavor. The Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women, the Cambridge Peace Commission, the Margaret Fuller House, the Multicultural Project, The Oral History Center, The Cambridge Civic Unity Committee, Boston Women's Radio Collective, The Cambridge Organization of Portuguese Americans, El Centro Presente, Concilio Hispano, Cambridge Haitian American Association, are all organizations in close geographic proximity to the YWCA with strong anti-racist/multicultural agendas. Women's studies programs in area universities might be in the position to support the project through placement of student interns and access to equipment for documentation.

Assessing the feasibility of involving women from the communities in the project: Each research team spends a month getting an overview of the community. First steps would include locating people already involved with the YWCA from the relevant community; talking with people in key agencies; reading material from the library, Community Development Department, The Oral History Center, or relevant museums; and visiting neighborhoods, restaurants, businesses, festivals, etc. Throughout this time, members of the research teams should try to

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identify women from the communities who would be interested in and able to help co-ordinate a workshop about the lives and needs of women in their communities. Members of the team would indicate that the Y is in the process of gathering information so that it can better meet the needs of women from the city's various cultural communities, and that it is looking for women to help present information and also to help propose programs. It will probably be possible to locate women who could gain something for themselves or their communities through participating in this process: a supportive context to think about their lives as women, skills in program planning or publicity, credit for college courses. Women from a particular community might feel the need to communicate to a particular constituency; such as health care providers, or local officials, or public school teachers. If this is the case, the workshop could be designed in part to communicate to that particular group.

At the end of the first phase, a decision should be made about the feasibility of involving women from this community in planning the workshop. Would it be possible to continue the planning process in such a way that both the Y and the women from the various cultural communities will benefit? If so, two or more women from each community should be invited to join the research/planning teams. If no women from a particular commuity have expressed an interest, then this phase should be extended (perhaps members of the initial research team need some additional support), or else the workshop

should be dropped from the initial series.

Planning the Program: The augmented research teams should develop a program which will help members of the Y learn more about the lives and needs of women from each cultural community and about the community as a whole. The workshops might include speakouts from individual women, the telling of personal stories, descriptions of the political and social situation in native countries (when appropriate); music, poetry or dance/ films or slide presentations; presentations by agency people. In most cases, it would be desireable to involve additional people from the commuity in panels, or to help think through issues to be presented. In many cultural communities in Cambridge, women rarely meet in public contexts to analyze their situations as women, so time should be allowed for developing perspectives as well as for practical details. For instance, in early sessions, women might share stories about their own backgrounds and problems, and see what issues emerge from these discussions. In any case, final presentations should present both the strengths and the needs of the communities. Care should be taken to represent the diversity of women's experiences within the communities (such as age, class, length of time in the United States, educational background, etc.).

The event itself: Each team should decide on the format for its own particular program, although it might be possible to create a common framework. For instance, each event might consist of a panel,

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workshops and cultural program, but this should not be imposed at the start. The various programs might be suitable for audiences of different sizes and compositions.

If acceptable to speakers and presenters, the programs should be video-taped and/or audio-taped for use in future trainings and for other agencies. It might be possible to get donations of equipment from local university media centers, or cable TV station.

After the event: After each event, members of the Racial Justice Committee should summarize what was learned and identify any additional questions which remain unanswered. They should think through each YWCA program and activity to determine how to make them more accessible and relevant to women from the community, in light of what was learned. Are there new programs which the Y should consider? Could the Y help women from the community link up with other resources which would meet certain needs more effectively? Is there information which the Y could and should act on right away, such as taking a policy stand on a key issue, or sharing information with a specific agency? If appropriate, women from the community who worked on each event should be invited to continue to participate in the Racial Justice Committee, or some other relevant Y committee or program.

Each event should be evaluated in terms of its goals: Did the Y learn useful information? What did women from the community gain from

the experience? Was the audience appropriate for the event? The results of evalations from each event should be applied to subsequent events if appropriate.

Synthesizing what was learned into more specific goals for the YWCA and recommended strategies to meet those goals: Following the series of events, the members of the Racial Justice Committee should recommend an overall outreach strategy for the YWCA. This outreach strategy includes ways for the Y to relate to particular communities, goals for levels of participation in the organzation, kinds of programs, and ways to increase accessibility (language, location, means of outreach, transportation, sliding fee scales, etc.) In relation to particular communities, the RJC might recommend that members of the staff or board act as liaison to organizations. In relation to program directions, the RJC might recommend that the financial committee research sorces of funding for leadership development projects, or nutrition educaton progams, or for translation of all organizational newsletters into three languages.

Once the overall goals have been agreed upon by the board of directors, the Racial Justice Committee can work with each program and the committee in the organization to develop an action plan to meet the goals.

Strengthening the YWCA's Anti-Racist Leadership, and Creating

Contexts for Support:

As it currently stands, only one member of the YWCA's professional staff has had experience working in multicultural contexts. None have been through the process of transforming a white-dominated organization to a culturally diverse one.

In several different ways, women in positions of leadership at the YWCA -- members of both the board and staff -- have indicated that there is a need for training and support for their anti-racist efforts. Some have asked for more anti-racism trainings directly. Others have said they feel their efforts are not fully supported by the organization as a whole. The feel it is difficult to create culturally diverse programs for an organization's whose visibility is low in many communities, especially with limited financial resources. Most of the women I spoke with at the Y indicated some kind of ambivalence or resistance to really making this change happen.

This section proposes structures to strengthen the leadership capacity of women at the Y effort to address racism in the organization. The first structure, an intensive support group for women in leadership roles, should be designed primarily for members of the professional staff whose work involves program planning and community outreach. It should include at least the director and associate director, affirmative action officer, public relations director, and all four department heads. In addition to dealing with

issues overtly relating to racism, its activities should be designed to address the organization-wide problem of communication across differences of power. It should have the impact of decreasing isolation, and indirectly, increasing co-ordination across the departments in the organization. It should also create an opportunity for support and personal growth for the professional staff, experiences which will inform the image which they portray of the organization in the community.

Intensive support for women in leadership roles: The YWCA should establish opportunities for ongoing support and/or supervision for members of its staff whose work is central to the effort of cultural diversification. This support could take the form of individual supervision from people experienced in multicultural programming, or, following the model of SACS, it might take the form of a group.

Such a group could be designed with the explicit goal of strengthening the organization's anti-racist leadership. Based on the model of anti-racism support groups described in the "model," it would provide a safe but challenging environment in which women could identify and address their own resistances to change, and reflect on that process so that they would be better able to productively confront resistances in their co-workers and in the community. Membership in the group should be based on the roles which women play in the organization; it could be racially homogeneous or culturally diverse. Activities should be planned accordingly.

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Members would discuss particularly troublesome interactions to determine whether and how racist dynamics were involved and explore ways to interrupt racism. They would also work together to develop programs and outreach strategies. Whether or not the Y as a whole adopted the plan proposed here for involving women from various cultural communities in a "research" endeavor, activities could be designed for members of this group to develop the particular sensitivities necessary for multicultural programming. These include developing an awareness of community "boundaries"; an understanding of the concept of organizational culture; the willingness to take risks and reach out across cultural and racial differences; the ability to interrupt racist dynamics; the ability to identify and resist guilt-tripping; and more.

General anti-racism education: The anti-racism training which members of the RJC led this spring for all staff members should become institutionalized as a once-a-year event required of all people working at the YWCA. These trainings should be structured to lead into optional, on-going anti-racism support groups. These groups, either self-led or initially led by members of the RJC, could become the base for additional anti-racist leadership in the organization.

Opportunities for support structures for women of color: At the YWCA now, many of the women of color do not know each other,

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especially across divisions of status and power. Opportunities should be created so that women of color could network across roles if they choose to do so. The purpose of such a group would be to provide a space in which they can hear about each other's issues and strategize ways to support one another; to provide a safe environment in which feelings can be vented and issues defined; and to foster the development of leadership among women of color.

Policy Changes to Increase the Organization's Accessibility to Women of Color:

Most of the changes in organizational policy will come as a result of the research into the city's cultural communities. Several changes, however, could be initiated immediately.

Policies relating to access for women of color to staff positions:

A joint subcommittee of the RJC and the personnel committee should review personnel policies and practices with the aim of increasing both access to the organization and upward mobility within the organization for women of color. For instance, qualifications for applicants for ' jobs should be amended to include skills and experience s which are needed for working in multicultural contexts. These skills are generally unacknowledged, but they are also those which often make women of color uniquely capable for positions. They include: bilingualism, knowledge of community networks, experience in

working in multicultural contexts, knowledge of relevant cultural values and norms. For instance, knowledge of traditional Haitian or Puerto Rican child-rearing styles would be a useful skill for a teacher in a multicultural day-care program. Note that none of these skills would necessarily exclude women who are white.

In addition, this subcommitte should explore opportunities for career advancement for people working in lower level positions at the Y. Could jobs be restructured so that there was no longer such a large discrepancy of skills needed for lower level and middle level positions?

The affirmative action hiring policy should continue to be rigorously applied for all job openings.

Policies relating to access to the board of directors and other committees: The nominating committee for the board of directors should include people who are familiar with women from the city's racial and linguistic communities. The RJC should recommend guidelines to the nominating committee for cultural diversity among new board members.

Committees whose membership is not culturally diverse tend to be drawn from programmatic areas which are not serving women of color. In these cases, such as the Health, Physical Education and Recreation Committee and subcommittees and the Women's Education Committee,

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people from outside the Y membership could be sought as members of the committee or as advisors to the committee.

Policies relating to access to programs: Even before completing the research into the lives of women in the city's cultural communities, it would be possible to experiment with some policies to address the key programmatic problem areas -- the swimming pool and the adult services programs.

Two ideas have been discussed by members of the professional staff in relation to adult services: 1) locating some adult programs in sites outside of the YWCA, in collaboration with other community groups; and 2) seeking outside sources of funding for adult programs. Currently, all adult programs are held in the YWCA building itself, and, with the exception of the Displaced Homemakers Program, are supported through tuition and fees. During the year when research is underway to establish specific goals for the Y's efforts at diversification, the Adult Services Department could explore these recommendations on a limited basis by holding one or two programs in particular neighborhoods and by researching the kinds of private and public funding available for programs. At this point in time, the programmatic direction for adult services is very flexible, so many options could be considered.

Funding should be researched for programs which address issues such as health care and nutrition, housing, employment, child-rearing,

leadership development, and creative expression which would not exclude women of color. Any special projects should be designed to be specifically _inclusive_ . Public funding for job training, older people's services and arts and humanities programming are likely starting points for funding research.

In relation to the swimming pool, the affirmative action officer mentioned to me the possibility of holding special lifeguard classes for women of particular cultural groups, perhaps in collaboration with another agency. In this way, a number of people of color would be starting to use the facilities at the same time, and would generate a network of certified lifeguards who are people of color. This in turn would probably create a context in which more people of color would use the pool on a regular basis. This seems like a worthwhile experiment if the organization can commit the resources to coordinate it.

Summary

As a long-term (5-10 year) goal, the Cambridge YWCA should work towards the transformation of its culture from one that reflects white domination to one that reflects the involvement of women of color in every level of the organization's functioning. The YWCA should involve Afro-American women and women from at least some (if not most) of the city's linguistic communities on its staff, on its board and committees, and in its membership. It should be a place

where women from many different backgrounds feel "at home".

By that time, the YWCA should be a strong presence in the networks of agencies and community groups providing services to and organizing women and people of color in the city. Its public policy committee should be taking leadership roles in addressing issues of concern to women and people of color in the city and in the state. Groups in Cambridge's cultural communities should think of the YWCA as a resource and an ally.

In addition, by that time the YWCA should be structured so that its various programs support one another's efforts, and so that its policy-making is informed by the relationships which it shares with the city's various cultural communities. Its efforts should be co-ordinated across programs and across all levels of the organization. It should be capable of adapting to changes in the community, and in the political and economic environment.

In order to move towards these long term goals, in the short term, (1-2 years), the YWCA should:

-give the Racial Justice Committee or some other specific group the mandate to co-ordinate an organization-wide effort to transform the YWCA from a white-dominated to a culturally diverse organization.

As part of this process, the RJC should continually clarify the organization's motivations for changing in

this way. It should also hold people and programs accountable for following relevant organizational policy.

-strengthen its anti-racist leadership and support individuals to overcome their resistances to change;

-create specific goals in relation to particular cultural communities in Cambridge and develop plans for implementing those goals in which every program and committee in the organization co-operate.

-gather the information necessary to create the plan mentioned above, and use that process to build relationships with cultural and racial communities based on mutual respect and involve women from those communities in planning programs and other activities at the YWCA.

-increase the accessibility of the organization to women of color through changing relevant personnel policies; developing guidelines for broader cultural representation on the board of directors to be given to the nominating committee; and seeking women of color to participate on committees as members and/or advisors.

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-commit organizational resources to experiment with solutions for changing the exclusivity in the Health, Physical Education and Recreation Department (particularly the

swimming pool programs) and the Adult Services Program.
These recommendations propose strategies for building relationships between the YWCA and the racial and ethnic communities in the city, and for changing the composition of the organization itself. The processes used to accomplish those ends would take into account the organizational dynamics and individual resistances which have presented major barriers to change.

CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters have described a model through which white dominated women's organizations can transform themselves into resources which are fully accessible, relevant and empowering to women from various cultural and racial communities. The model has been applied to a particular organization, the Cambridge YWCA. This final chapter describes, in general terms, the application of the model to other organizations.

This model can be used by both administrators and affirmative action officers working from within an organization, and by trainers and facilitators who intervene as consultants. The first step in planning a change effort is to assess the organization, using the conceptual framework of the model as a guide:

Cultural Diversity within the Organization: What is the racial and ethnic composition of the organization's clients, staff, and board? Are any groups concentrated in particular positions, such as in certain programs, or in positions of power? How does the organization compare with the cultural diversity of the communities which surround it?

Relationship between the Organization and Cultural Communities: In what ways does the organization relate to agencies, networks and individuals in the racial and ethnic

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communities in the geographic area? Are existing relationships characterized by reciprocity? What is the organization's image in the community? Are people in the organization aware of its image?

Relevance: To what extent are the programs, services, products, etc., offered by the agency relevant to the needs of women of color in the area? Could more relevant programs be designed, still in keeping with the organization's general mandate?

Accessibility: In what ways are the organization's resources accessible to women of various cultural communities? This should be considered in terms of: location, language, format, fee structure, transportation and child-care needs.

Resources: In what ways are the organization's resources dependent on its constituency? For instance, does it depend on fees for services which would be unaffordable to poor women? If so, are there alternative sources of income or fee structures? Are public or private funds available? What would be the implications of seeking and accepting such money?

Relevant Organizational Dynamics: How are decisions made in

the organization? How open is communication, both within the organization, and between the organization and its environment? How are conflicts handled? What are informal social networks?

Individual Awareness and Resistances: Who in the organization supports the effort to make it culturally more diverse? Who opposed this effort? What are their positions in the organization's decision-making structure, and what would be the ramifications of anticipated opposition? How is racism manifested in the organization now? What seems to be beneath individuals' resistances?

Organizational learning and Change: Through what processes does the oranization incorporate new information and change itself? how adaptable is it to changes in its environment? How easily is relevant information transferred from one department to another?

Once a decision has been made to undertake a major organizational transformation, a structure for managing the change must be chosen, and given the mandate to propose goals and strategies and hold individuals and groups accountable. This structure, whether an individual or group, should be consistent with the organization's ongoing lines of responsibilities and authority.

Initial interventions should address issues which are commonly

acknowledged in the organization as "problems", but they should be designed in ways which also address some of the underlying barriers to change, such as problems in communication, or lack of coordination. In this way, the extent to which major barriers to cultural diversity are incorporated in the change process itself can be minimized. Other aspects of the organization's functioning will probably be improved as well.

Interventions should also be designed to maximize the organization's strengths. For instance, they should build on positive relationships with community agencies, previous collaborative efforts between women of color and white wmen within the agency, and the organization's culturally diverse programs. To the extent possible, the change effort itself should model the clarity of communication, acknolwedgement of conflict, openness about difference, and the responsible use of power which characterize successful multicultural activities.

Other Applications:

The model for addressing racism in white-dominated women's organizations outlined in this thesis calls for simultaneous and interactive attention to both policy and individual consciousness; in this way it is different from most other anti-racist work. Unlike many feminist anti-racism groups, which consist of individual women

meeting autonomously, this model places consciousness-raising activity in the context of an organization. It makes a direct and immediate link between changes in individual consciousness and collective action. On the other hand, it is different from traditional approaches based exclusively on policies such as quotas or affirmative action hiring.

Whether this model can be used in mixed-gender or male-dominated groups, or to address oppressive dynamics other than racism is a question which is difficult to answer. There are characteristics unique to women and to women's organizations which explain why this approach to anti-racist work emerged in the feminist movement. Perhaps most important of these is the tradition of consciousness-raising, which links political action to emotional vulnerability and changing consciousness.

It would be interesting to experiement with this model in a male-dominated organization addressing sexism and a mixed gender group addressing racism. In either case, adjustments would need to be made to account for dynamics relating to sexual politics.

For women's organizations, though, addressing racism will continue to be important. As American cities become increasingly culturally diverse, organizations attempting to address the needs of urban women and mobilize them to take action can become important links in the development of a global feminist movement. If these organizations

maintain a narrow ethnocentric vision, they will fail to address even the most basic issues of physical safety, health care, housing and employment for women in their own communities.

Hopefully, the model presented here, based on the successful experiences of several organizations, will be useful to other women's groups in their efforts to become fully multicultural.

FOOTNOTES

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