

ACTORS IN ACTION RESEARCH



*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,
committed, citizens can change the world.
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*
– Margaret Mead

Assignment Overview

In this group project, you are going to follow and investigate the actions of a specific actor working towards change. Using the Theory of Change model, you will, thereby, develop a deep understanding of your actor's vision, aims and the strategy to reach those aims, as well as their limitations and shortcomings.

You will present the results of this project both in a written report, as well as via a student-led group session in which you will present your results and facilitate a discussion with the rest of the class to get feedback and insights from other students.

Task

For this task, you are required to sign up for a topic of your interest at Studentportalen before the 22nd of February.

There are three weeks in the beginning of Module 3 dedicated to work specifically on this project. Still, we encourage you to start with the preparation of the project as soon as you can, since from experience we can say that it might take time to connect with the desired actor.

After forming a group, you are required to find an actor that is working in your respective topic of change. We encourage you to find a local actor as it will be easier to follow them, but you are permitted to find an interesting actor wherever. Now you have learnt the basics of the [Theory of Change model](#), you can use this to guide your analysis of your actor. You should use this model when following your actor to make sense of their actions. Your research should be based on following your actor in their daily work, as well as conducting at least two interviews with the actor(s) or a representative of their organisation (if applicable). If you are following just one individual actor, just one interview is of course acceptable.

For the report:

- Include your diagram of your case study using the ToC model.
- Within your depiction of the ToC model and the report, please consider and answer the following:
 - o Identify the rationale, narrative, aims, underlying theory/worldview and strategies of your actor, preconditions, assumptions, interventions, indicators.
 - o Where does the actor attempt to implement change?
 - o How do they want to bring about change?
 - o Does the actor work on an individual or systemic level?
 - o How does the actor connect with other areas of change, e.g. politics or business?
 - o How does the actor apply the principles of sustainable development?
 - o Examine the actor critically. What are their strengths? Where are their weaknesses?
- Relate your insights to the literature you have been reading throughout the course. Make sure that you include all the books that members of your group have been reading, as well as relevant papers that you have read during the course.

Deadline for the hand-in of the report is the 10th of May.

In addition to this report, we ask you to present your results in a student-led discussion which should include a presentation of your result (approx. 10 minutes) and a session in which you will facilitate a group discussion that should allow for a critical feedback from your fellow students, building on the knowledge they gathered through their actors-in-action research and the literature that they have read. Since we will have 9 sessions of that kind, we invite you to be creative with the task, making this session fun, interactive and energetic. You will not be graded for your performance in this session, so we encourage you to try out something new, play around with the room and the equipment to involve and engage everyone present. The goal of this session is to have a lively discussion that incorporates aspects from the course literature, the actors in action, and personal reflections from your fellow students. This will be beneficial when writing the final assignment of the course in Module 3.

From the 16th of April to the 9th of May, you have the possibility to check in with us if you have questions concerning the report or the facilitation. You can book appointments with us either personally or by mail at asc@cemus.uu.se

Topics to choose from

- Activism
- Arts
- Agriculture/Farming
- Politics
- Business
- NGOs
- Lifestyle/Behaviour
- Science/Academia/Education
- Media

Please note, do not select any of the course guests to follow as part of your Actors in Action research.

Instructions

Formal Requirements

- The paper should follow the rules and meet standards of **academic writing**
Word count: 1000 words per person. So a group of 5 would be 5000 words in total. (+ / - 10%)
- Font Size: 12. Spacing: 1.5. Font: Times New Roman. Margins: 25mm
- Write your name on top of every page (in the header)
- The submission must be in WORD or PDF format.
- Name the file in the following way: actiongroupnumber.AinA (example: actiongroup1.AinA.pdf)
- Upload file(s) on Studentportalen

References

References to course literature and other literature

1. You will have to refer to course literature when writing your article, even if you focus on problems and challenges not mentioned in the course. **Make at least one reference to your chosen course books and to two articles from the literature relating to your selected topic.** You may of course reference the same book or article several times, but this will only count as one reference. Beyond this you are free to refer to lectures and other literature. Don't forget to include a bibliography.
2. Support your claims with reasons and evidence. Make sure to make it clear to the reader when you express your own ideas and opinions, and reference your sources when you write about other people's opinions or ideas. Be aware to use only credible sources. The [Harvard College Writing Program](#) provides a useful overview on how to evaluate your sources.

Deadlines

Sign up for group: 22nd of February

Hand-in report: 10th of May

Present Research: 13/05/19, 20/05/19, 27/05/19

Assessment Criteria

The following grading criteria will be used for assessment (alongside the critical thinking criteria). Note that this paper is graded and will determine your grade for the course. For attaining a higher grade than 3, the criteria should be met to a high degree or a very high degree. For attaining a pass/3 the criteria should be sufficiently met. When assignments are graded U-3/45, the ability of the student to meet the assignment deadline is part of the assessment.

- **Analysis and discussion:** Coherent argumentation, with relevant arguments that are supported by the literature and/or other relevant sources. Relevant different perspectives and interpretations are analysed and discussed. The student shows capacity of independent analysis and critical reflection on referenced material.
- **Connection to theory and literature:** Sufficient connection to core/central theoretical frameworks. There are relevant references to the literature and/or lectures or other relevant sources. Key perspectives and viewpoints are discussed.
- **Originality and creativity:** Expression of original connections between (and/or development of) different (scientific) perspectives and experiences. The student argues well for his/her opinions and choices.
- **Completeness, clarity and precision:** The language is clear and comprehensible. References and other formal aspects of the text are satisfactory and in accordance with the requirements of the assignment. The course goals that the assignment relates to are met. The student answers the question(s) fully.

Related course goals:

- have an up-to-date, interdisciplinary understanding of the issues of sustainable development;
- give an account of, and be able to evaluate, the strategies, room to manoeuvre and limitations of different societal actors in striving toward a sustainable society;
- be able to discuss individual/actors perspectives compared to structural/system perspectives on cultural change;