

Policy Café: through the lens of diversity and equity



Edmonds-SnoKing Branch, Public Policy Café

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August 8, 2020

Virtual Summer Leadership Meeting

"Coming Together While Staying Apart"

Policy Makers

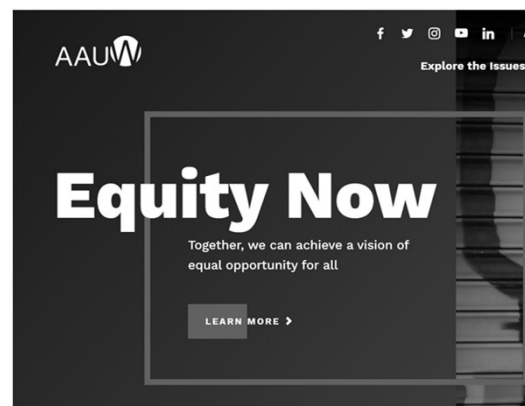
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Policy Café – Conversations that Matter

We have an opportunity as AAUW members to use our collective voices to support policy changes for a better future.

We can use a lens of equity to better understand policy.

The Policy Café is a great tool to use to effect policy change.



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Now more than ever, we see how Policy impacts our everyday lives.

Protests about Policies

Black Lives Matter Protests
Policing Policies, Practices, Funding



COVID-19 Mask Mandate
State Policies,
Local Policies
Business Policies



COVID-19 School Opening
Local policies



PolicyMakers

Executive Orders



Laws



Agencies and Department



Local Policies

Policy conversations are important.

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Policy Café – Community in Conversation

Policy Café is an important strategy to engage our member and our community in conversations



We can deep dive into a policy issue and gain insights from each other.

We can invite community members and community partners to bring new perspectives.

We gain group input on AAUW policy topics important in our community.

We can identify advocacy actions.

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World Café method applied to Policy Conversations



Key principles used in Policy Cafes

- Community conversations matter.
- How we engage in conversation matters.
- The questions we ask matter.
- How we listen and share matters.
- Diverse perspectives matter.
- Group insight leads to sustainable action.

Conversations are the core process to create tipping points for change.” – Juanita Brown

Policy conversations are political action. – Sandra Distelhorst

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How the World Café is a good story.



Juanita Brown
World Café

David Isaacs
World Café



An unexpected rainstorm moved an outside event inside.

Coffee tables were quickly set up, paper from flip charts became tablecloths, colored pens were passed around, and small group conversations began.

After 20 or 30 minutes, someone suggested everyone switch tables. 20 minutes later, everyone switched tables again.

At the end of the event, the paper tablecloths were filled with group ideas, doodles, and diagrams.

These became the wrap-up reports and the roadmaps for next steps. They represented the collective insights and collective intelligence of the room.

Participants declared the event the best meeting they had ever been to.

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Social Science and Café Method

- Conversation is one of the first human community actions.
 - Creating a safe and comfortable space allows more creative and innovative ideas to flow.
- Policy is made and refined through a collection of conversations.
 - Ideas from diverse perspective create the most durable and sustainable solutions.
 - Evolving needs of any society required continued conversations around questions that matter.



“World Café” provides details about how the World Café concept began by happenstance, how it was developed based on social science, and how it is practiced around the world.

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Lin-Manuel Miranda



The Room Where it Happens

The Hamilton musical is a must see.

The song “I want to be in the room where it happens” highlights how major policy decisions are made in small group conversations often behind closed doors.

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Social Science and Policy Decisions



Most policy decision take place through conversations.

The conversations take place in small groups, often behind closed doors.

This is true for politics, corporations, nonprofits, and community groups like AAUW unless an effort is made to invite others to the table.

The Policy Café invites Branch members and community partners to come together for meaningful conversations and to create a **Room where Something Happens.**

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Policy Café Principles from the World Cafe



Conversations Matter.

The Question Matters.

Round-robin approach works

Close listening is key.

Connect diverse perspectives.

When we share and listen, collective intelligence emerges

Sharing of collective discoveries informs future action.

"We are Wiser Together than we are alone."

<http://www.theworldcafe.com/>

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Conversations Matter

Together we can come up with better ways to think about and deal with an issue.



A group conversation taps into each person's own experience, relationships, and mutual intelligence.

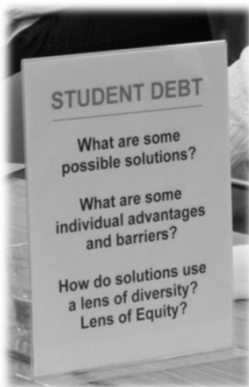
When a conversation cafe works. It moves us closer.

But we need to invite people to the conversation who will have diverse perspectives.

Otherwise you might as well be talking to yourself, treading water, getting nowhere.

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The Question Asked should Matter



Questions that *Matter* help you explore an issue critical to your group.

Developing the right questions requires a thoughtful approach.

Who will be at the Cafe table?

What lens will you use?

Use open-ended questions

Think outside the box.

Use stretch questions.

“What else can AAUW do?”

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Round-Robin Conversations



The round-robin approach is key.

- When you move from group to group you are the ambassador of the group you just left.
- You bring with you the previous conversation that informs the new conversation.

It works!

- After several rounds of conversation, people become more interested in the evolution of collective thought than in their own personal "position."

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Share Your Stories and Perspectives



Sharing your ideas deepens other people's perspectives.

Listen Closely

Rigid positions seem to drop away when people listen closely and are open to hearing multiple perspectives.

Close listening for connections and patterns of meaning results in new insights.

The Magic in the Middle

We've all felt the invigorating sense of accomplishment when a conversation feels as if it is expanding our consciousness and understanding.



The shift in awareness, from the individual to the **magic in the middle** of a group of people, is also a shift towards paying attention to the emerging ability to think together, the *collective intelligence* of the group. *Finn Voldtofte, 2005*
<http://www.theworldcafe.com/introduction-to-magic-in-the-middle-part-three/>

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Café Outcomes

Context, setting and questions may be different between café events, but the outcome goals are the same.



Letter to Legislators
Letters to the Editor



Press releases
Radio spots
Speakers at meetings



Meet with legislators
Meet with local policy makers



Bills Passed!

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Policy Cafes

The Room Where it Happens

Policy Cafes are occurring around the world. Topics include anything from health care, housing, legal clinics, child advocacy, women's rights, voting rights.

Many Policy Cafes include a pre-event Teach-in.

Oregon State
Department of
Health
Policy Café 2019



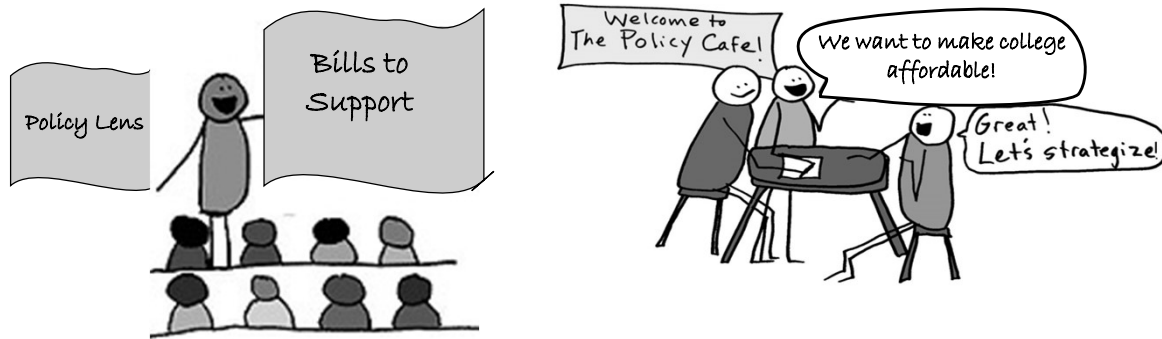
The Policy Café breakfast series.
<https://ccalac.org/events/policy-cafe/>



https://www.theseic.org/about_policy_cafes

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Policy Teach-in combined with a Policy Cafe



An AAUW teach-in it might have looked like this.

Graphic adapted from from https://www.theselc.org/about_policy_cafes

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An alternative to a Teach-in

Provide pre-event information on website, blogs, Facebook, newsletters, emails, and at general meetings.



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Provide Definitions and Resources

Policy Lens

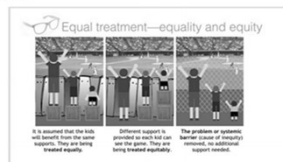
Policy Café: Public Policy through the Lens of Diversity and Equity

The program on October 12th will set the stage for our public policy activities this session. The Policy Café is modeled after the *World Café* method that was used by a number of local groups including the Edmonds Diversity Commission. The café style forum uses small group discussion, guided by a group facilitator, to engage community members in thoughtful discussion on various policy topics from different perspectives. Edmonds Diversity Commissioner Anabel Hovig will present the introduction to the Policy Café and set the stage for our conversations.

The Policy Café Topics chosen are:

I AM NOT INVISIBLE: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
LET US LEARN: School-to-Prison Pipeline
WOMEN, TAKE A CHAIR: Equal Opportunity in Leadership roles
FREE THE STUDENTS NOW: Student Loan Debt
I AM THEM: LGBTQ Rights
MY BODY, MY VOICE, Title IX

Each policy topic has had major bills passed recently and new bills expected this session in the Washington State legislature. Links to AAUW positions on the topics are provided above. Each policy priority has an important diversity and equity lens.



DIVERSITY/EQUITY

Diversity and Equity

It is important to note that **Diversity** is the presence of differences (identity differences of groups) that we can capture in data analysis: race, gender, age, income, etc. Whereas **Equity** is an approach that ensures everyone has access to the same opportunities. Equity recognizes that we don't all start from the same place because advantages and barriers exist.

POLICY

Policy is what the government chooses to do or not to do about an identified problem. Policy includes laws, regulation, executive orders, federal or state agency directives, and judicial decisions. Policy on any one issue is often a set of laws and regulations, which can make it hard to track, and can be piecemeal, leaving gaps or leaving out groups. For example, there are eight bills related to Student Loan Debt anticipated this session that include: free community college tuition for low-income students, scholarships and tuition waivers that use a lens of diversity and target specific groups. Using an equity lens, a policy would provide free community college to all students.

POLICY MAKING

Policy making is an ongoing process. Policies change when administrations change, when new technologies are introduced and need regulating, when new environmental challenges occur, or when changes occur in population growth or demographics, etc. Who benefits and who bears the burden of a policy needs to be continually reassessed. Special interest groups often lobby for policy changes that benefit only their group. Policymakers need to use a policy lens that looks at diversity and equity across groups.

Many countries, such as Canada, UK and Sweden, routinely use a "policy lens." Canada uses Gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) lens in their budget process; they have Indigenous Policy Lens, Disability Policy Lens, and Senior/Mental Health Policy Lens.

The Policy Café team is Helen Behan, Shirley Buono, Sandra Distelhorst, Anne Penny, Karen Rosebaugh, Mary Ross, and Sunny Strong.

Please join us on October 12th to share your perspectives, stories, and experiences. This will help inform our advocacy efforts with real time opinions and priorities from diverse points of view. Come meet our guest facilitators: Anabel Hovig (Edmonds Diversity Commission), Debra Parker (Tulalip Tribes member, Marysville School District), and Vicki Kleinman (LGBTQ+ advocate).

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Provide Café Table Summaries

Legislative Summary

Legislative Summary for Policy Café Topics October 9, 2019

Student Loan Debt bills are good examples of equity bills when they remove a barrier so everyone has equal access, such as tuition changes (free of lower cost), or student loan rates. Bills that provide a waiver or scholarship to certain groups (veterans, homeless students, native Americans) is an example of trying to reach "equality" by giving some more than others so they can "catch up". A bill to remove job restriction requirements for childcare assistance for students is another example.

- Track bills at Washington Student Association's (WAS) <http://www.wasstudents.org/legislative-agenda-2019/>;
- Last session bills enacted were Loan transparency Act and Student loan bill of rights.
- This session track general debt relief SB530, SB573, student loan program (1% loans) SB542, free college program SB530 and HB1149, affordable access to postsecondary education HB1123. One bill particularly helpful to women is the childcare restrictions removed bill SB534. Some bills target specific groups: Native American scholarships (HB520) & SB530 McCoy, Veteran waivers HB1123, Homeless students (SB72 and SB80) and undocumented student loan program (not yet introduced).
- Sometimes a bill is introduced because a special interest group pushes it (eg. Veterans), other times it is introduced because research and data identify a problem or area of need that a law or policy can address (general high cost of student debt).

Title IX: You can track Washington state investigations of Title IX complaints at [Department of Education website](http://DepartmentofEducation.wa.gov)

- Last session: HB1149 Sexual assault survivor protection; SB5649 Improving Statutory Protections Against Sexual Assault Crimes Washington; SB5258 The Isolated Workers Bill requires employers to adopt sexual harassment policies and provide training to supervisors and staff; SB5369 Trans-bullying. Concerning harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination in public schools.
- This session: HB1992 Creating a task force on sexual violence at institutions of higher education

PayGap Leadership Gap

- Local Resource: Women's Funding Alliance, <https://wfaalliance.org/initiatives/100>.

Topic Summary

Topics Sheet for CAFÉ School to Prison Pipeline

School to Prison pipeline

Background
School-to-Prison pipeline is a term used to describe school disciplinary policies/actions that push students out of school and into the juvenile and adult criminal justice system. Changes in disciplinary policies in past 20 years such as zero-tolerance policy and hiring police or school resource officers are being challenged. Many states have rescinded zero tolerance policies, including Washington state starting 2019-2020 school year.

Diversity Lens: Did zero tolerance policy disproportionately impact some students?

AAUW Policy Position AAUW says YES!

Public school disciplinary practices are **disproportionately harming students of color and students with disabilities**. This constitutes discrimination. Data from Civil Rights Project not GAO show:

- Black students** are punished more harshly and more frequently than white students for similar offenses.
- Girls of color** are often suspended for minor or subjective offenses and are significantly more likely to be suspended than white girls.
- Students with disabilities** are often subjected to unnecessary exclusionary and harsh physical discipline.

Impact: Exclusionary discipline, like suspensions and expulsions, deprives students of classroom learning time, which can cause them to fall behind on work and see their grades slip. It can lead to increased risk for not completing school or even push them into the school-to-prison pipeline.

AAUW joins with other advocacy groups to support enactment of the 2014 guidance to schools to help them change disciplinary practices that disproportionately harm students of color and students with disabilities.

AAUW strongly objects to Trump administration rescinding this policy guidance.

AAUW believes The Department of Education has an obligation to uphold and enforce the Federal civil rights laws.

Federal Civil Rights law says schools can't treat students unfairly based on protected traits. These laws apply to public and charter schools and private schools that get federal funds and colleges where students get federal financial aid.

- Title VI protects students based on race, color, and ancestry of origin.** This includes students of color and students from immigrant families.
- Title IX protects students based on sex and gender.** This includes transgender and gender non-conforming students, as well as students who don't conform to one gender.
- Title II and Section 504 protect students based on disability.** This includes students with mental and physical disabilities.

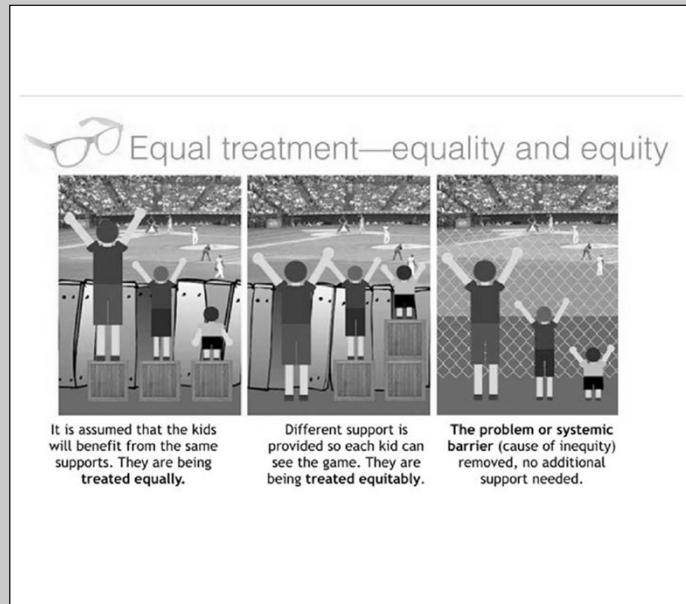
Washington State
In 2006 Washington state, like many states was considered a zero-tolerance state. State laws were enacted between 2011 and 2016 to require schools to collect disaggregated data on school disciplinary actions and policies, including behavioral codes. The data has been consistent with national data showing differences in disciplinary actions by race.

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What is a Policy Lens ?

A policy lens let you look at how a policy affects a specific group of people.

As individuals we use “lenses” every day to see and make sense of the world around us.



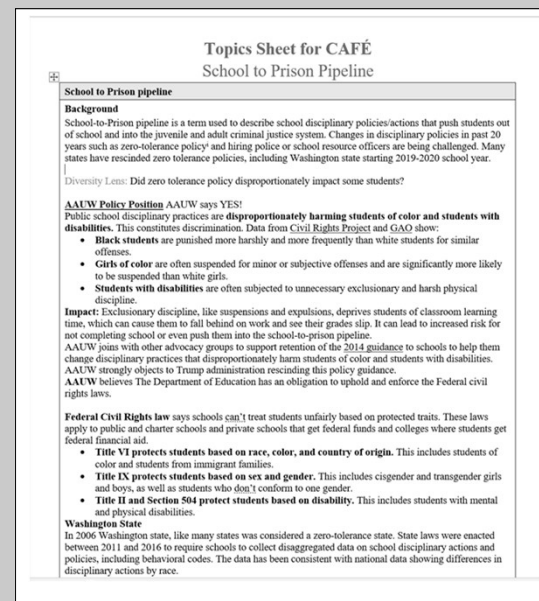
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How do we apply a Policy Lens to Bills?

Student Loan Debt Bills

In 2019 there were eight bills related to Student Loan Debt. Some bills addressed diversity, some equality, some equity issues.

- **Diversity bills** are targeted to a disadvantaged group). For example scholarships and tuition waivers for veterans or Native Americans.
- **Equality bills** remove barriers for some students. For example, free community college tuition for low-income students only.
- **Equity bills** remove barriers for all students. For example, no fee for community college for any student.



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Moving from diversity, inclusion, and equity to looking at systemic racism

In policy work, **diversity** is a numbers game. We use AVAILABLE data to see how many people represent different demographic groups: race, gender, age, income, etc.

Inclusion is more about “including” diverse members fully, for example in leadership positions that make a difference.

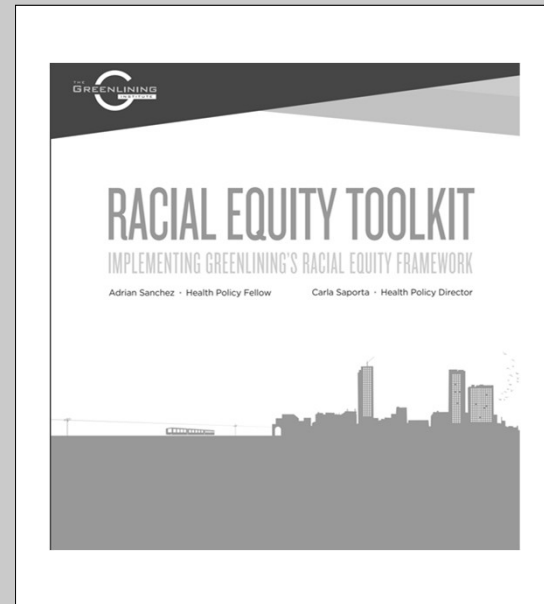
Systemic racism: How do we define it?

When race is a determining factor in one’s **access** to success, is one definition.

Using a **racial equity lens** means paying **disciplined** attention to **race** when analyzing problems, looking for policy solutions, and defining success.

Using a **racial equity policy** lens allows you to focus on achieving comparable favorable outcomes across racial and ethnic groups through the **allocation of resources** in ways designed to remedy disadvantages some people face.

Q: What are your ideas about systemic racism and how to use a racial equity lens when considering policy changes?

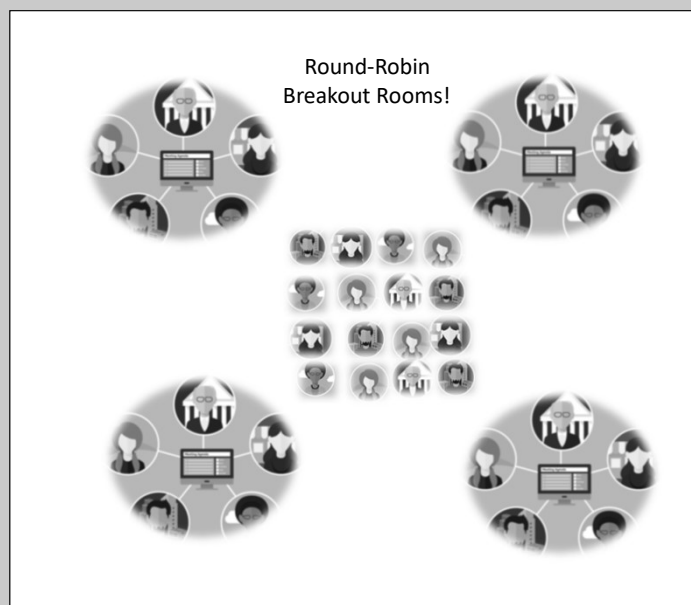


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Virtual Policy Café Works!

Some things are easier and some things harder.

- Travel is not a barrier – but access to internet might be.
- Easier to include diverse participants and invite experts.
- Physical mobility and hearing problems are easier to accommodate.
- Easier and faster to manage moving people to new table.
- Welcoming participants requires new strategies.
- Chat and whiteboards can replace paper and pen.
- Capturing and recording group insights technically easier.
- Etiquette changes to netiquette.



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Resource List

- World Café website <http://www.theworldcafe.com/>
- AAUW-Edmonds SnoKing Policy Café <https://esk-wa.aauw.net/initiatives/public-policy/>
- AAUW-WA website
 - [Legislative Report – AAUW WA](#)
 - [Newsletter Evergreen Leader \(the latest one\)](#)
 - [Two Minute Activist](#)
 - [WA State Legislators contacts](#)
- AAUW Advocacy Tool Kit
<https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/advocacy-toolkit/>

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The next set of slides were used
at the AAUW-ESK October 12,
2019 Policy Cafe Event held at
Edmonds College.

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Welcome to the Policy Café



October 12, 2019

AAUW-ESK

Policy through the lens of diversity and equity

AAUW-ESK facilitators

Helen Behan, Shirley Buono, Anne Penny, Karen Rosebaugh, Mary Ross, Sunny Strong

Guest Facilitators

Anabel Hovig (Edmonds Diversity Commission), Alicia Crank (YWCA), Debra Parker, (Tulalip Tribes), Vicky Kleinman (LGBTQ activist) Rachel Wattley (Affiliation Criminal Justice System), Winter Reed (Affiliation Criminal Justice System), Faith Nyakundi (AAUW Fellowship recipient at UW)

AAUW-ESK Public Policy Director

Sandra Distelhorst

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Policy Café Model



- The Policy Café is modeled after the World Café method.
- It uses small group discussion.
- Each group has a facilitator to guide thoughtful discussions.
- A policy topic was chosen because:
 - AAUW priority policy issue,
 - Major bills passed in our state recently and new bills expected,
 - The policy topic has a diversity or equity component,
 - Local groups and advocates share our interests.

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Policy Café Process



- Introduction (10 minutes)
 - Meet our Guest Facilitators.
 - Explain how the Policy Café works.
 - Introduce the policy topics.
 - Break into our discussion groups.
- Table talk: (three 15-minute rounds) (45 minutes)
- Wrap up (15 minutes): Table facilitators
 - Summary of conversation key points.

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Definitions



- Diversity = differences
- Equity = equal access to same opportunities
- Diversity/Equity Policy lens looks at how a policy impacts different groups access to the same opportunities.

See article in our newsletter for more details:

- <https://esk-wa.aauw.net/files/2019/10/AAUW-ESK-October-2019-newsletter.pdf>

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Policy Topics for Today



Room 338 (1s)

I AM NOT INVISIBLE - Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

MY BODY, MY VOICE – Title IX

WOMEN, TAKE A CHAIR - PayGap/Leadership Gap

Room 337 (2s)

FREE THE STUDENTS NOW – Student Loan Debt

I AM THEM – LGBTQ+ Rights

LET US LEARN - School-to-Prison Pipeline

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Logistics



- 1) We are using two rooms with 3 tables in each room.
- 2) We have 1 hour and 15 minutes.
- 3) Everyone will visit 3 tables.
- 4) Each table has a different policy topic.
- 5) Table facilitator will provide a brief statement, then start the discussion by asking the group the first question.
- 6) After 15 minutes, you switch to a new table and new policy topic.
- 7) We join back together here for a “wrap up” and next steps.

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Conversation Tips

It is about conversations, not conclusions.

- Honor diverse perspectives.
- Suspend premature judgement.
- Explore assumptions and beliefs.
- Embrace ambiguity and not knowing.
- Listen for connections between ideas.



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Let's GO!

See back here in an hour.

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Wrap Up



Room 338

I AM NOT INVISIBLE - Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

MY BODY, MY VOICE – Title IX

WOMEN, TAKE A CHAIR - PayGap/Leadership Gap

Room 337

FREE THE STUDENTS NOW – Student Loan Debt

I AM THEM – LGBTQ+ Rights

LET US LEARN - School-to-Prison Pipeline

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Next Steps

January 27th: join us in Olympia for AAUW-WA Lobby Day

- We arrange for you to meet with your legislators.

Virtual Lobby Days

- We arrange a Skype meeting with legislators.

Bill tracking and testifying at hearings

- We will train you!

Monthly Policy Conversation meeting

- Let's keep the conversation going.

Visit the AAUW-ESK Public Policy webpage for updates

Join the AAUW-ESK Public Policy team!



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Thank You

Thank you for participating in our first Policy Café!

Thanks to our guest facilitators.

Please fill out an evaluation form.

Visit <https://esk-wa.aauw.net/initiatives/public-policy/>

