

EXPANDED RESOURCES

Books

Center for Policy Alternatives, The – 2006 Progressive Agenda
Guinier, Lani – The Miner’s Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, Transforming Democracy
Sen, Rinku – Stir It Up: Lessons in Community Organizing and Advocacy
Themba-Nixon, Makani – Talking the Walk: A Communications Guide for Racial Justice
Themba-Nixon, Makani – Making Policy, Making Change: How Communities are Taking Law into Their Own Hands

Other Reports from ARC

California’s New Majority: 2005 Legislative Report Card on Race
Closing the Gap: Solutions to Race-Based Health Disparities
Falling Through the Cracks: How CalWORKS Keeps Families Poor
Mapping the Immigrant Infrastructure

Newsletters

ColorLines Magazine – www.colorlines.com
Drum Major Institute Blog: Politics, Policy and the American Dream
www.dmiblog.com
Facing South – Institute for Southern Studies,
www.southernstudies.org/facingsouth
The Black Commentator – www.blackcommentator.com
The Chicago Reporter – www.chicagoreporter.com

Organizations

The Advancement Project – www.advancementproject.org
The Aspen Institute – www.aspeninstitute.org
The Center for Policy Alternatives – www.cpfa.org
Center for Urban Economic Development at the University of Chicago –
www.uic.edu/cuppa/uicued
The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University – www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu
Drum Major Institute for Public Policy – www.drummajorinstitute.org
The Greenlining Institute – www.greenlining.org
Institute for Women’s Policy Research – www.iwpr.org
Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity – www.kirwaninstitute.org
Northwest Federation of Community Organizations – www.nwfco.org
Political Research Associates – www.publiceye.org
Poverty and Race Research Action Council – www.prrac.org
The Praxis Project – www.thepraxisproject.org
The Sentencing Project – www.sentencingproject.org
Women of Color Resource Center – www.coloredgirls.org

For use with the video "Race and Public Policy: A Dialogue" --
youtube.com/watch?v=q0R8pPj0UaQ
(Length = 9:53)

The Applied Research Center (ARC) is a public policy institute advancing racial justice through research, advocacy and journalism. Founded in 1981 to bridge efforts between analysts and activists, ARC has five program areas: Research, Public Policy, Media and Communications, Leadership Advocacy, and Journalism. Based in Oakland, California, with offices in Chicago and New York City, ARC also publishes ColorLines, the national newsmagazine on race and politics.



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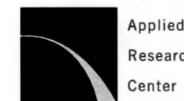
DISCUSSION GUIDE

CONTENTS:

- DVD
Length: 9:52, DVD is compatible with MAC, PC, and freestanding DVD players.
- DISCUSSION GUIDE

“Race and Public Policy: A Dialogue” demonstrates the relationship between policy decisions and disparate outcomes in communities of color. The Discussion Guide encourages audiences to approach organizing campaigns and public policy efforts with a Racial Justice Frame.

Feedback from audiences around the country suggests that the whole experience might be fun—as well as educational.



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DISCUSSION/TRAINING FORMAT

STEP 1

INTRODUCTION TO AUDIENCE

(5-10 minutes)

For your discussion you need easel pad paper, butcher paper, or chalkboard.

EXPLAIN PURPOSE

This session has two purposes. The first is to surface a discussion about how public policies, even those that are seemingly “universal” or “race neutral” affect life chances for people of color. The second purpose is to examine how talking explicitly about the racial impact of a proposed policy will affect its success in the legislature. The video features activists from across the U.S., who are involved in policy struggles for racial equity.

However before we view the video, can you name any policies currently proposed at either the federal or state level that will have differential impacts on whites versus communities of color?

Write a list of 6 to 10 policies for the group on butcher paper or on a blackboard.

Hints: Driver’s license legislation, new social security checks on all workers, exit exams/high stakes tests, language mandates, failure to pass racial profiling legislation, etc.)

STEP 2

WATCH DVD

(10 minutes)

STEP 3

Discussion Questions

General Video Debrief (15 minutes)

1. Did anything about the video surprise or jolt you?
2. Are there any points you strongly agree or disagree with?
3. Referring to the list of policies the group listed in the Introduction...
 - Did any of the policies listed talk about race directly?
 - Were the policies proposals successful?

STEP 4

Small Group Session

(15 minutes)

A number of activists in the video argued that “you can’t solve racism if you are unwilling to talk about race.” In small groups discuss the following two questions and list the top three answers.

1. Why are some organizations reluctant to explicitly address race in their policy work?
2. What are some reasons that an organization may want to “lead with race” in a policy fight?

STEP 5

Debrief & Closing

(15 minutes)

1. Have each small group list their top “reluctance”, second reason, etc. and write up responses. Do the same with reasons to “lead with race.” As a final debrief add any of the reasons listed in either category from the chart on the next page.
2. How can you build on this discussion to further your work?
List possibilities and thank participants.

For a shorter session, simply watch the DVD and discuss the following three questions:

1. Did anything about the video surprise or jolt you?
2. Are there any points you strongly agree or disagree with?
3. What are the ways that the video is relevant to your current work? (list)

REASONS NOT TO ADDRESS RACE

Winnability: When addressing systemic racism, the policy or issue may seem unwinnable and there is a higher burden of proof.

Difficult Frame: The frame goes against the common cultural myths of meritocracy, the level playing field and color blindness.

Class versus Race: Racism is not viewed as a useful issue frame or handle for organizing campaigns – all inequality is viewed as primarily class-based rather than race-based.

Too Complicated: “Racing” an issue makes it too politically charged, too complex, too loaded.

Too Risky: Racism may be internally risky to address. There may be tensions simmering under the surface between different racial groups or there could be a backlash directed at the organization.

REASONS TO LEAD WITH RACE

Promotes Equitable Policy Change: It addresses *systems and structures* of inequity, not simply the *symptoms*.

Reveals Reality: Since racism is a major contributing factor to social inequities, leading with race provides an opportunity to dispel popular myths, clarify facts, challenge dominant cultural patterns and highlight values of equity.

Can broaden the base of support for the issue—particularly in communities of color.

Dispels myths, advances values. Exposing racial inequality can emphasize and advance values of equality, fair treatment, equal access, equity, civil rights, human dignity and justice.

Build Movement Connections: Raising issues of race, if done thoughtfully and constructively, can unify, strengthen and expand organizations, coalitions, and the social justice movement as a whole.