

# Strategies for Addressing Racial Inequity in our Programs and the Field

**Carmine Stewart and Cynthia Peters**

April 27, 2021, 4:00 - 5:30 pm (eastern)



**WORLD EDUCATION**

# Welcome



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# Thank You for Joining Us Today!

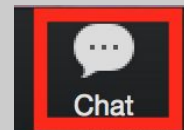
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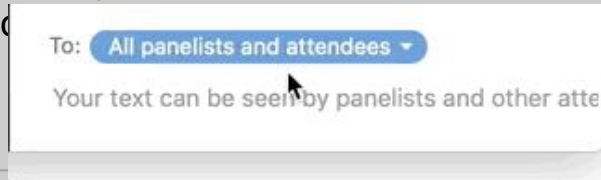
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For further assistance, contact **Maegan or Ebony** in the chat or at:

**[MAEGAN\\_MORRIS@WORLDED.ORG](mailto:MAEGAN_MORRIS@WORLDED.ORG)**

**[EVANDROSS@WORLDED.ORG](mailto:EVANDROSS@WORLDED.ORG)**

The header features a light blue background with a horizontal band of light green. Above this band, there are several colored squares: a teal square on the left, a red square, a grey square, a dark teal square, and a pink square on the right. The text 'Warm-Up' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font on the light green band.

## Warm-Up

What's a conversation you've had about racial equity in your role as an educator?

E.g., I talked with \_\_\_\_\_ about \_\_\_\_\_.

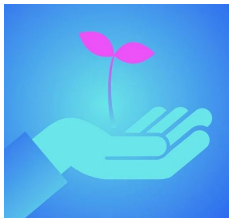
The header features a light blue background with a horizontal band of light green. Above this band, there are several colored squares: a teal square on the left, a red square, a grey square, a dark teal square, and a pink square on the right. The word "Agenda" is written in bold black text on the light green band.

# Agenda

- Introduction/Welcome/Warm-Up
- Context for this webinar
- Four Areas:
  - Welcome and Orientation -- Cynthia
  - Social and Cultural Norms -- Carmine
  - Collection and Study of Data -- Carmine
  - Advocacy -- Cynthia
- Poll
- Resources/Closing/Evaluation

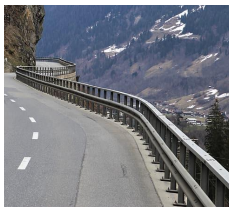
# How can we work to combat biases?

1



Raise our own awareness so we can change our attitudes

2



Slow down, put up guard rails to keep ourselves on track

3



Change the water we swim in

## 6 areas

More strategies  
available in [this  
interactive  
document](#)



# Area 1: Welcome and Orientation

There are many strategies. I will focus on two:

1. Investigate how the pandemic has deepened racial inequity and consider a trauma-informed approach to your welcome and orientation.
2. Use welcome and orientation to put serious attention on addressing inequity in digital literacy and digital access.



# #1 A Trauma-Informed Approach

Pandemic + last year of police violence has put a spotlight on disparities that were already there



Issue 52, pp. 26-27

# From the Mental Health issue of *The Change Agent*

## Not Just on Our Shoulders Systemic Stressors and Mental Health

*Ebony Vandross*

**BEFORE YOU READ:** Discuss the term “systemic stressors.” Look at the subheadings. What are some of the systemic stressors the author will likely talk about in her article?

### So Much Stacked Against Us

Many people struggle with mental health. While there is a lot we can do to manage and repair our mental health, most of these strategies rest on the shoulders of the individual: seek therapy, take medication, practice self-care. However, we are all deeply affected by things that feel outside of our control. I have been a long-time advocate for people acknowledging their mental health problems and seeking treatment, but for the past year, I have struggled to maintain this resolve while living in a world with systems seemingly stacked against those simply trying to survive.



myself that I was getting worked up over nothing. Surely our national leadership would take action seeing that no one was exempt from the effects of this deadly virus. Instead, our country had one of the least coordinated national responses in the world! It turns out, my panic wasn't rooted in my disorder as much as it was a rational response to a system not supporting citizens.

Adjusting to working from home wasn't easy, but I eventually found a routine that worked for me. However, as I learned more about the alarming rates of Covid infections and deaths, I wondered if my co-workers were feeling as anxious as I was.

As I noticed the administration seemed more

**Issue 52, pp. 14-16**

## Covid Diary 2020

*Annette Bowen*



**BEFORE YOU READ:** Do you know anyone with anxiety or depression? How has the pandemic affected them?

As far as my mental health is concerned, 2020 has been like a never-ending episode of “The Twilight Zone.” Here’s a brief look into the mind of someone with depression and anxiety during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### February 2020: A New Flu

There are whispers of a medical crisis in China. Ever curious, I turn on the news and hear a

**White noise blares through my head. My pre-Covid coping skills are useless.**

reporter talking about a new flu caused by the coronavirus. A switch flicks on in my head. “Did I hear him correct? This is serious!” Panic settles in my bones like

can American and Latino communities.

During an intense Tele-Med session with my therapist, I allow every ounce of panic to gush from the deepest parts of my mind. I’d never experienced this amount of primal fear.

I quit riding public transportation. Panic evolves into crippling paranoia. I am constantly afraid that I will contract Covid-19. Paper products, Lysol, Clorox, hand-sanitizer are precious commodities.

Thank goodness, my daughter sends a huge care package, loaded with scarce cleaning and paper products. I consult with my therapist twice in one month! After our second session, she urges me to speak with someone at the Georgia Covid-19 Emotional Support Line. It helps a little.

On March 31, 2020, Georgia announced that Covid-19 is a public health emergency.

April 20

**Issue 52, pp. 24-25**



# Drowning Without a Life Jacket

A therapist uses a Liberation Health approach to look at all the factors and develop an action plan.

*Mahlet Meshesha*

**BEFORE YOU READ:** Think about the word *factors*. What factors contribute to the challenges you face? Define *personal*, *cultural*, and *institutional* factors.

## Sleepless Nights

*"Ugh, it's 3:15 am. I am never going to fall asleep. Only two more hours until my alarm goes off. I have to remember to pick up Dad's prescription. I wish my brother would pick it up! I really hope Dad just has a cold... Maybe we should get him tested for Covid-19? But he can't go alone... No one there speaks Somali,*



Issue 52, p. 17

### Personal Factors

- difficulty sleeping for many years

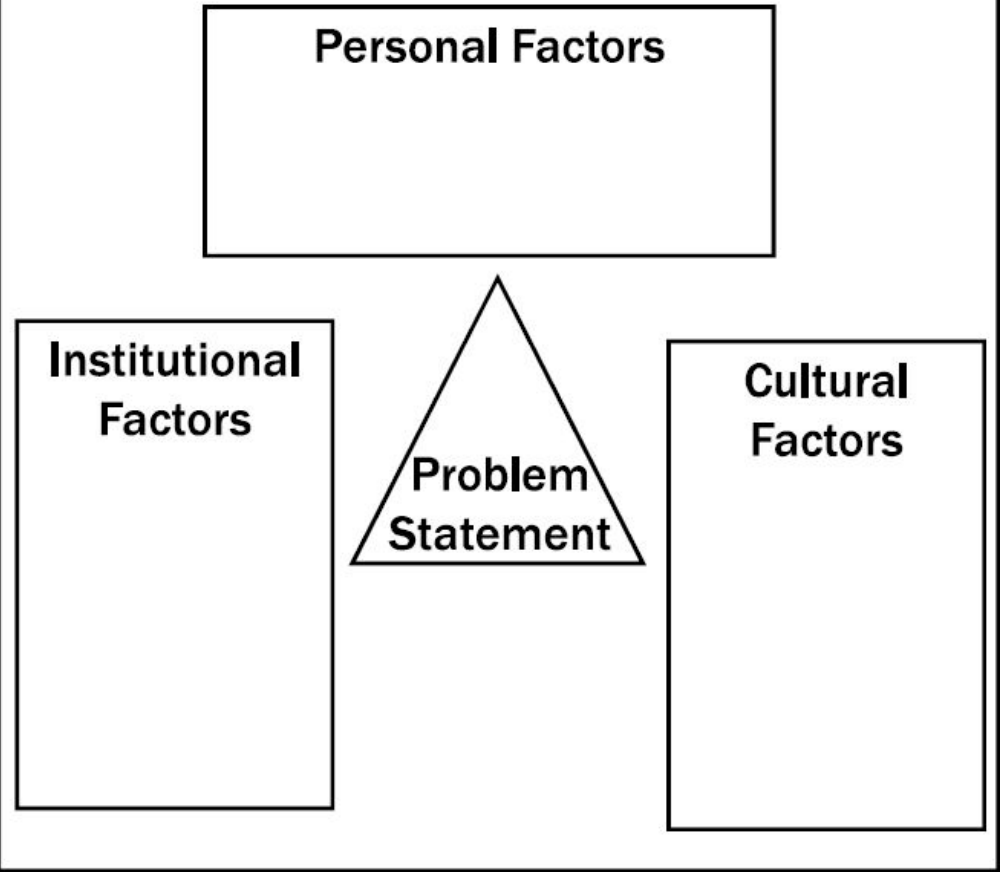
### Cultural Factors

- not okay to ask for help

### Institutional Factors

- **racism** -- Covid has hit communities of color harder than white communities
- **mistreatment of frontline workers** -- her employer does not supply enough masks or sufficient paid sick time or family medical leave

# Liberation Health Triangle



- “ You could be a victim. You have to know one day it could be your turn.
- “ Racism is something they built against us.
- “ Sometimes you say, “I don’t want to go out and deal with white people.” You are afraid of white people. You are afraid of white cops.
- “ What we learned in class helps us deal with this situation. Thanks, God.”



**Dalsaint Lavoie**  
**(from webinar #2)**

<https://youtu.be/xxwhHK7t8Yg>

# What can you do now?

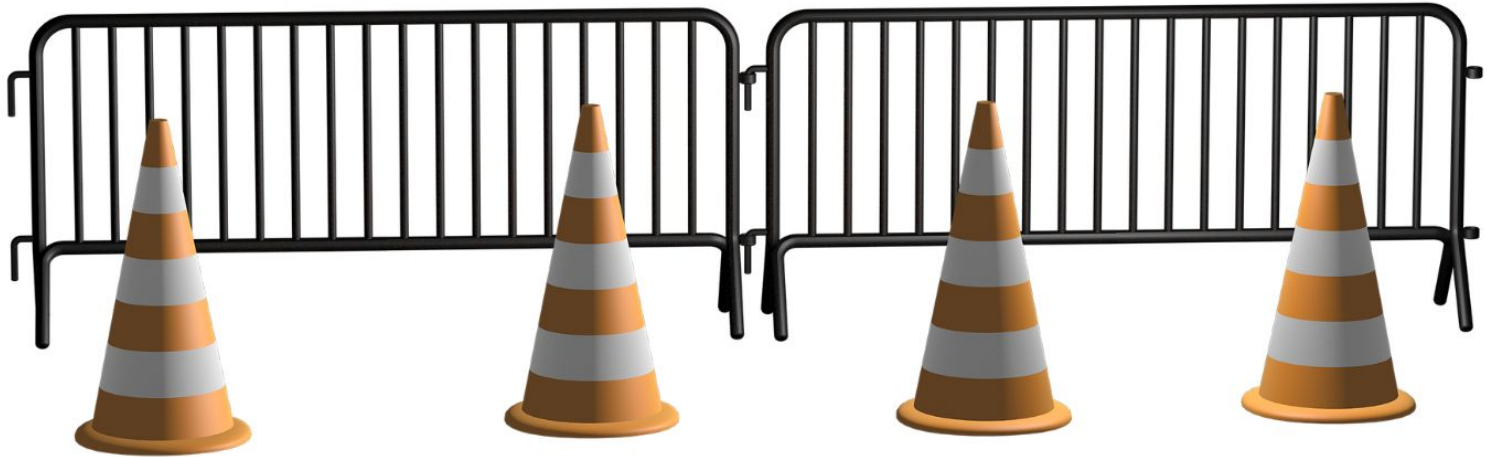
- Read this: [\*A Trauma-Informed Approach to Workforce\*](#)
- Share resources for care
- Expand from orientation to wrap-around services
- Provide opportunities for people to connect
- Friday seminars
- Buddy system/Paid mentors



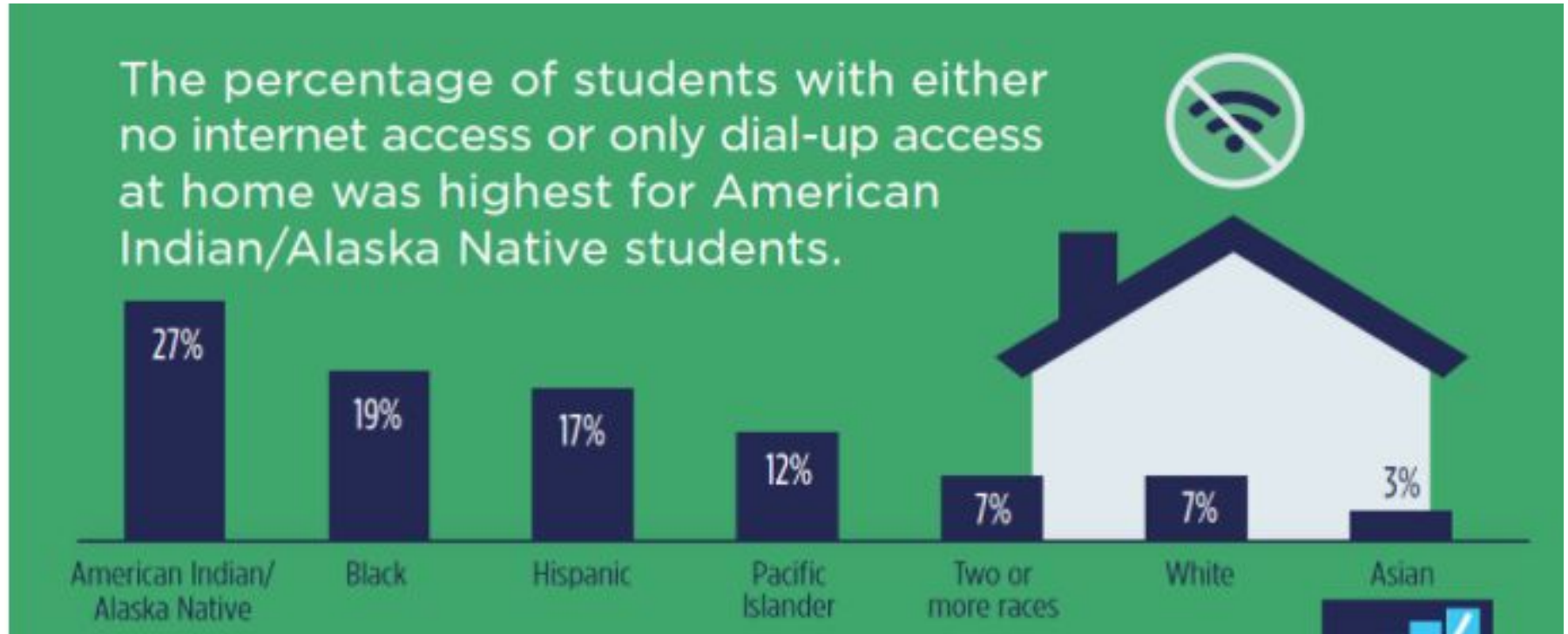
Issue 28, pp. 10-11

## #2 Addressing Digital Equity

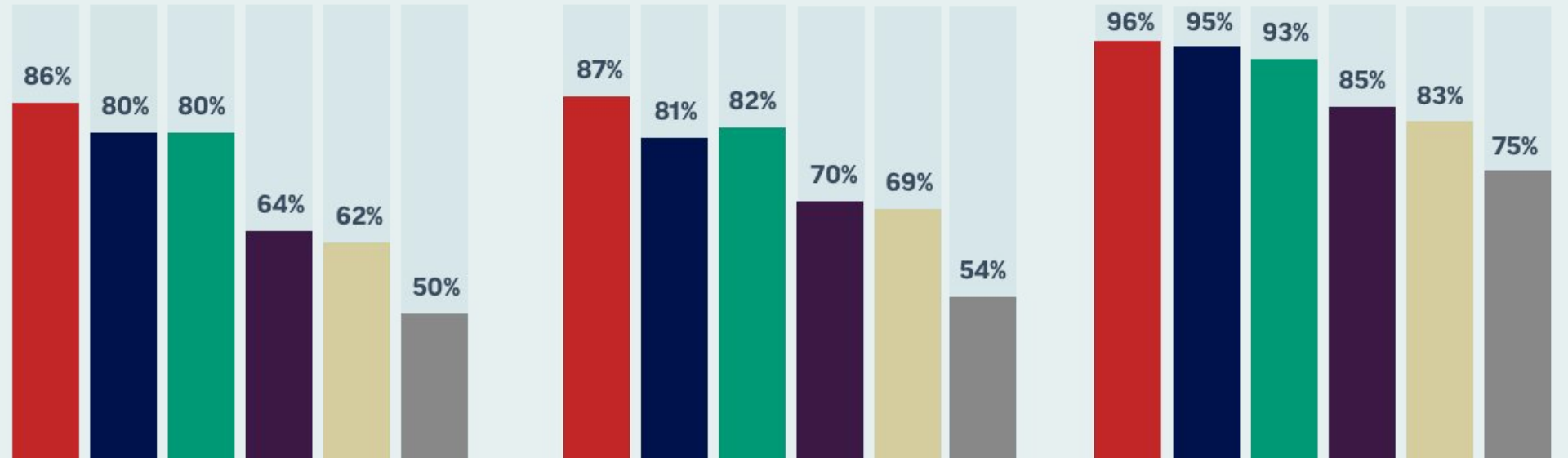
In the chat: what has been your experience of student barriers to remote learning?



# Racial inequity in internet access







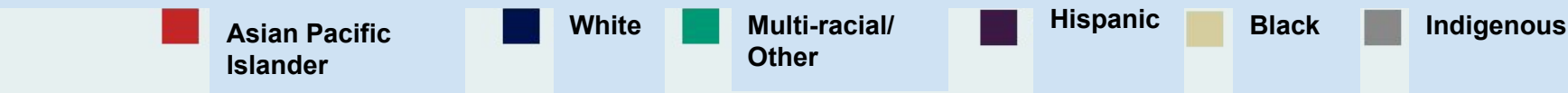
## Students of color have less access to devices & broadband



Full access

Broadband access

Device access



# Key Strategy -- Digital Navigators

*“Digital Navigators help learner-workers secure **connectivity** to reliable internet; access low-cost **devices**; offer **tech support**; provide **referrals to digital literacy and upskilling programs**; provide foundational **digital skills**; and provide **upskilling and job training support**.”*

Find resources here:

<https://digitalus.org/digital-navigator-resources/>

Toolkit here:

[https://edtechbooks.org/digital\\_navigator\\_toolkit](https://edtechbooks.org/digital_navigator_toolkit)



# Resources:

Free/low-cost internet --

<https://www.digitalinclusion.org/free-low-cost-internet-plans/>

PCs for People

<https://www.pcsforpeople.org/>

Libraries loan hot-spots. Example:

<https://www.provcomlib.org/library-info-services/borrow-internet>

Digital Literacy Action Plan (Rachel Riggs)

<https://wakelet.com/wake/oE8aSwllj5lskWqbMqnug>

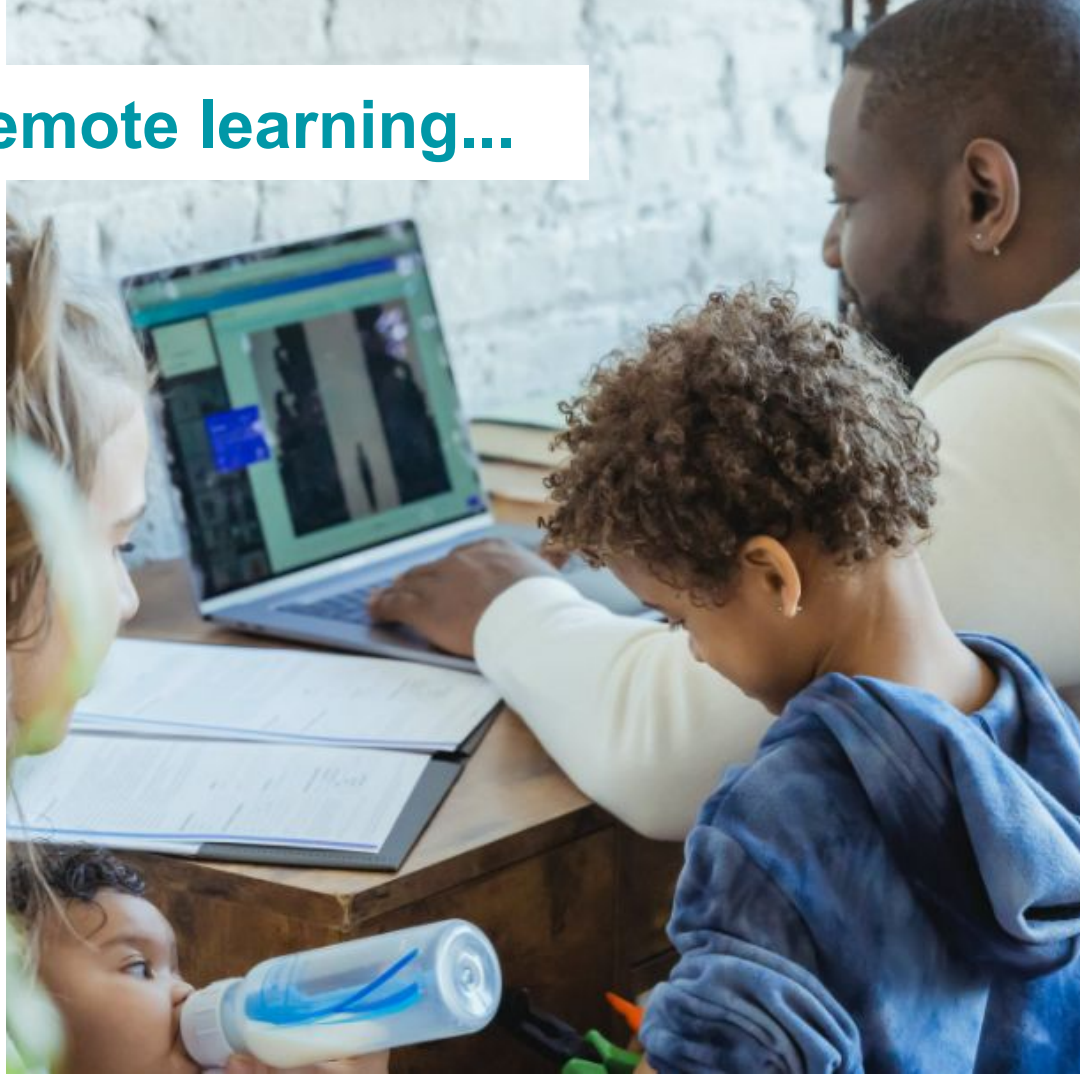
# Another dimension of remote learning...

A physical space to use your device!

Article: “Zoom and crowded homes:  
Pomona students discuss inequities in  
learning environments”

<https://tsl.news/pomona-college-zoom/>

One college set up an Online Learning  
and Teaching Committee to investigate  
methods that work for everyone and  
identify and address inequities.



## Area 2: Cultural and Social Norms

- 1) Evaluate existing culture of organization
- 2) Work collectively and collaboratively to modify cultural norms within your organization

# Cultural and Social Norms Defined



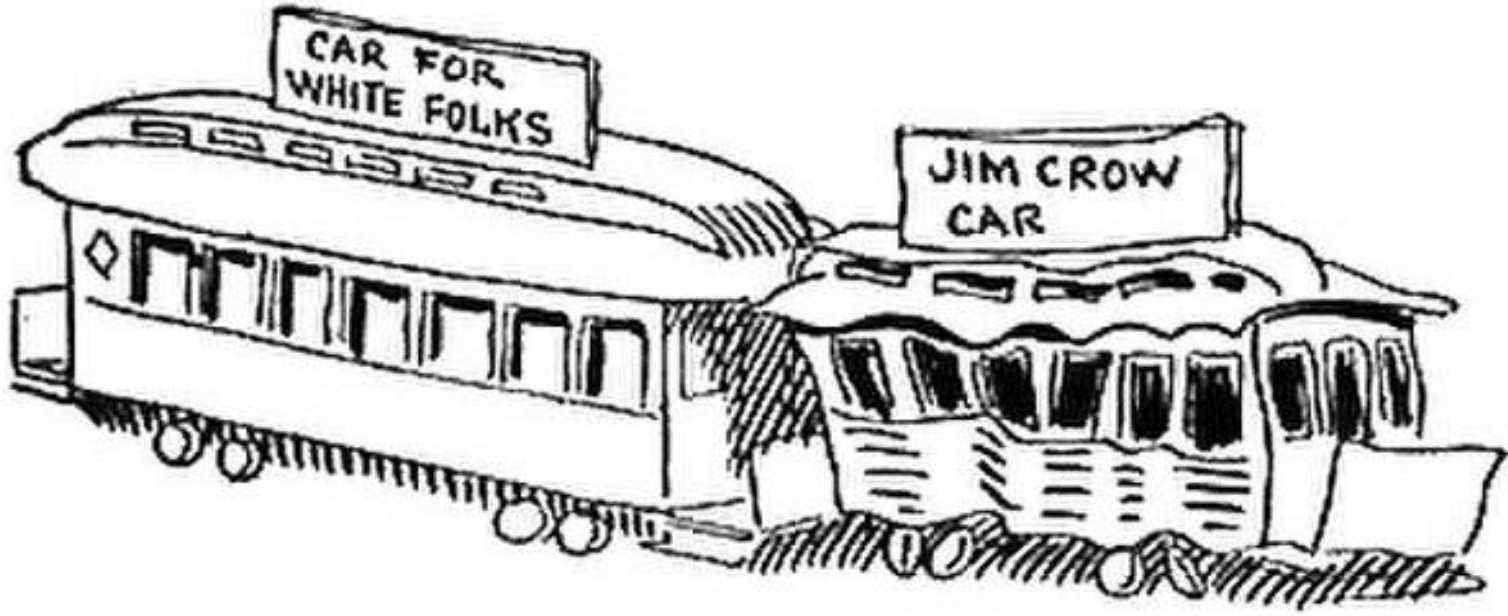


# Cultural and Social Norms Examined



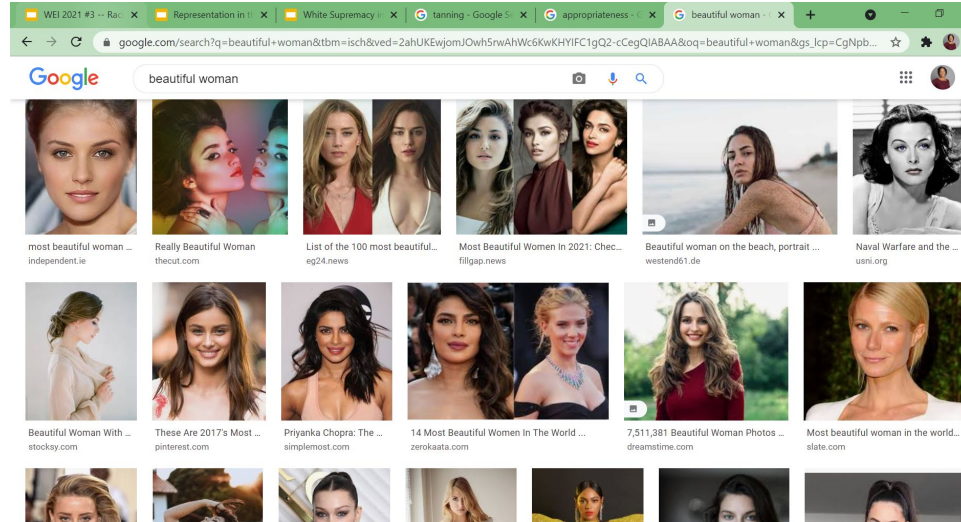
Creative Commons 2017 Dom w Pławnicy by [Jacek Halicki](#)

# White Supremacist Culture





# White Supremacist vs White Supremacy Culture



# White Supremacy Culture and Adult Education



Public Domain Staff Meeting  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Frank\\_Schulenburg\\_\(Wiki\\_Education\)](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Frank_Schulenburg_(Wiki_Education))



Creative Commons Library Books by [CCAC North Library](#)

Cultural and Social Norms Modified



# Cultural and Social Norms Examined in Adult Education

9 organizations

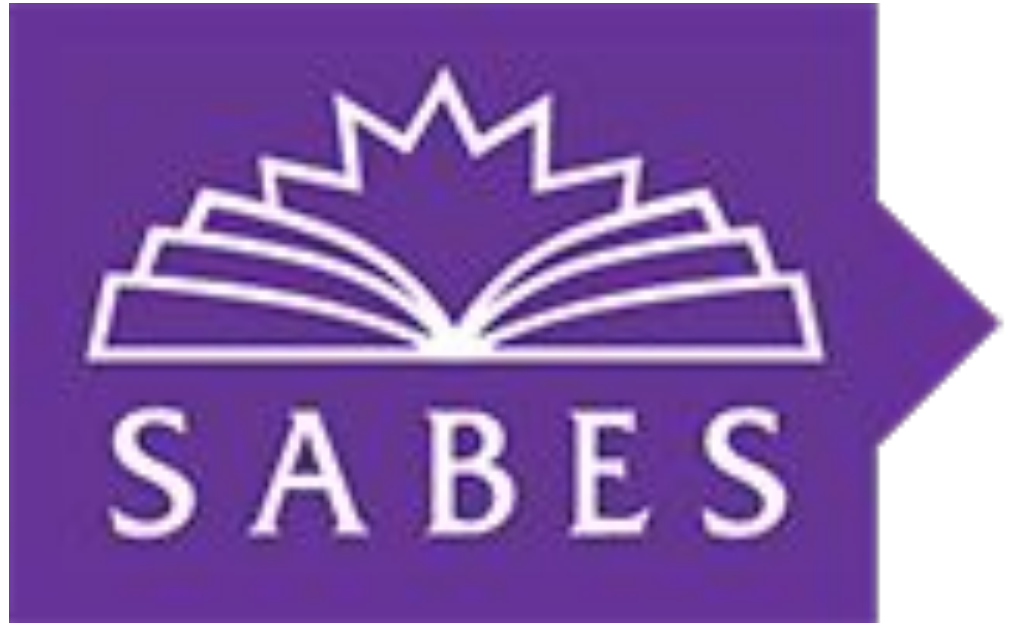
DEI Audit Process

- Audit Tool  
[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Uy2Zwpb7ZBR\\_4xhwX2JzUMKcbJM9mCf\\_GGvn4qUS968/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Uy2Zwpb7ZBR_4xhwX2JzUMKcbJM9mCf_GGvn4qUS968/edit#gid=0)
- 
- Survey

Identify objectives

Create Plan

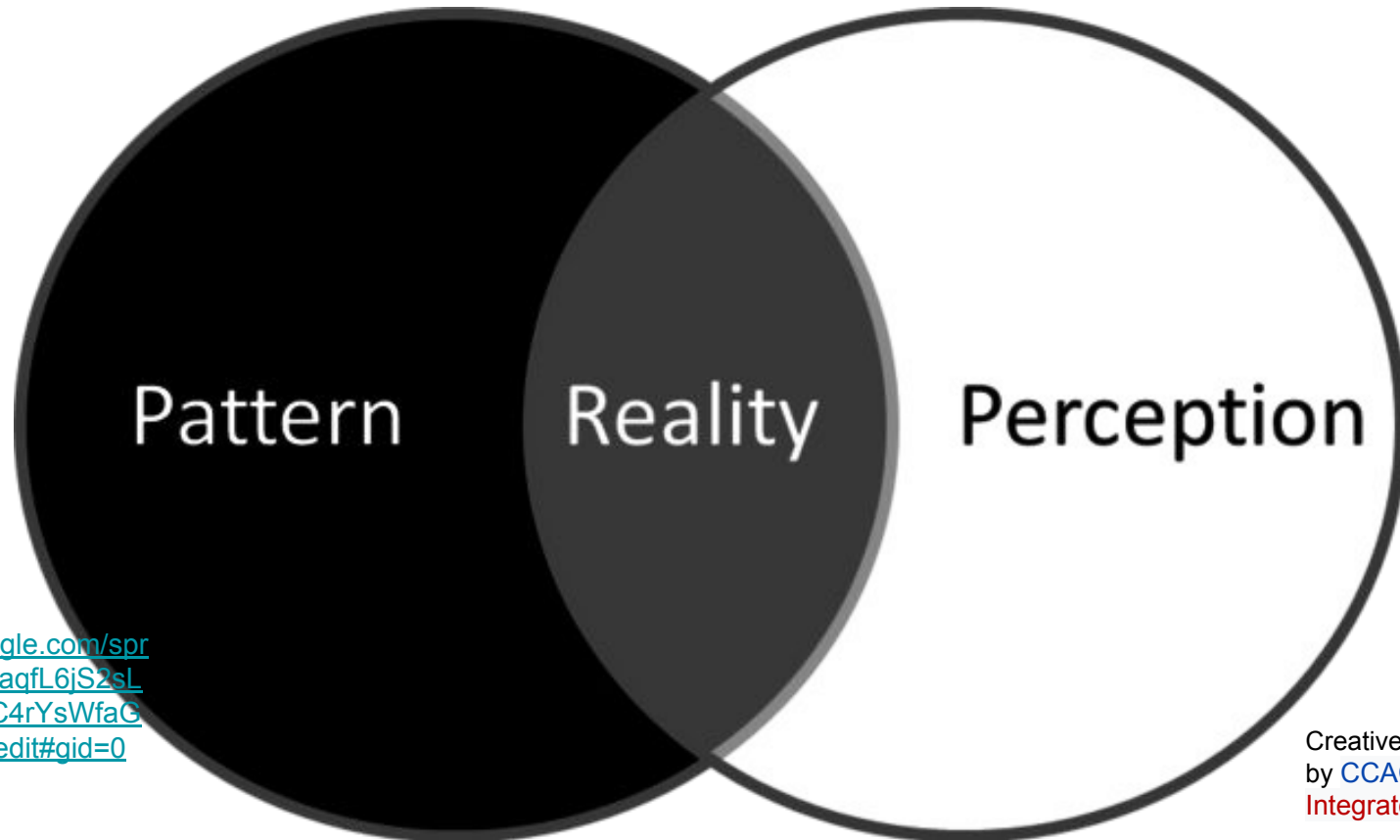
Implementation



## Area 3: Collection and Study of Data

- 1) Collect and analyze program data to examine the extent to which DEI practices are implemented in your program
- 2) Disaggregate Data to Determine Problematic Patterns

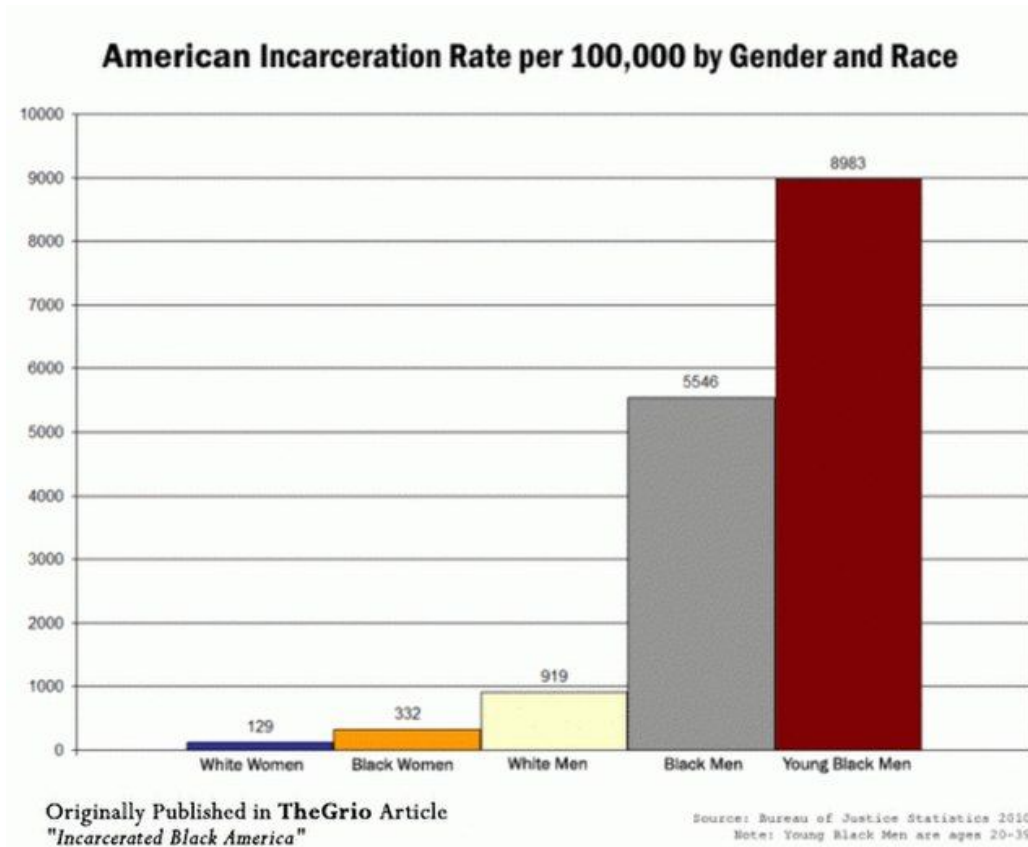
# The Benefit of Collecting Data (CS)



<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1DaqfL6jS2sL-mkEU9v5VianC4rYsWfaGBzk8Ro6sDPA/edit#gid=0>

Creative Commons Patterns  
by CCAC North Library  
Integrator321

# Problematizing Adult Education Data (CS)



Creative Commons Incarc by  
[Caliv1s1on](#)

## Area 4: Advocacy- a more expansive definition

1. See student leadership and voice as critical to growth/survival/direction of our field.
2. Make your program a civics “hot-spot” -- by centering students’ voices, by showcasing the many ways they show agency, and by offering pathways for them to develop their leadership in your program and in the community.
3. Fight for funding for adult ed. at the state and federal level, as well as other policy changes that lift all boats, strengthen the social safety net, address racial inequity.
4. See the workplace as a place of advocacy and organizing.



## *Field Trip!*

Voting Ambassadors -- for 2020, quite long(!), will need to be adapted for current elections

Suppression vs. Fraud -- learn the definitions, examine claims

Moving from Anguish to Power -- two women talk about their experience facing eviction and fighting back

No Sick Days? -- a student writes about the need for paid sick time

# “Voting is our nuclear weapon.”

“ Even though they have gerrymandering and they have [voter] suppression, we have to go to vote.”



**Dalsaint Lavoie  
(from webinar #2)**

<https://youtu.be/xxwhHK7t8Yg>

# My Family Heard My Voice

*Meriem Asri*

**BEFORE YOU READ:** Think about the phrase “I stood up for myself.” What does it mean? Share a time you stood up for yourself.

Let me share with you how I made my voice heard in my family. When I won the Diversity Lottery Visa, no one in my family wanted me to leave Morocco and go to the United States alone. I explained to them that it would be good for me to go to the U.S. I would learn a new culture and new language, and I would have a better life and career.

At first, my family tried to convince me that I would have similar opportunities in Morocco. But I stood up for myself, and I said no. I gave them an example of my friend Sofia who won the Diversity Visa Lottery before, and now she is doing great in Texas. She became a nurse after four years of hard work. My family was amazed by this story and actually started listening to my plans. I told them that I would follow similar steps as my friend Sofia. I would learn English, and then I would go

“Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it and possibly without claiming it, she stands up for all women.”

– Maya Angelou



to school in Information Technology (IT). My plan is to work for one of the biggest IT companies in Boston.

When they saw how motivated and serious I was, they eventually agreed with my plan. To sum up, I want everyone to know that I am a hard-working young lady and if I have something that I want to achieve in my life, no one can stop me, not even my own family. My family once disagreed with me, but now they are really proud of me.

## Making an Argument? Use Evidence!

“Evidence is anything that you see, hear,

### AFTER YOU READ:

1. What are some strategies Meriem used to convince her family that she should come to the U.S.? What strategies of persuasion do you use when you are making an argument for something?

# Defending my Son against Racism

*Daffeh Fatou*

When my son went to public school, some children tore his books and bullied him. They made fun of his name and called him an "African Boodie Scratcher"! One boy kept making fun of his name and changing the letters around to something very rude. The teacher didn't do anything. She said that my son was being a troublemaker. But he never started any of the trouble!

It happened more than 10 times. We had many meetings with the teacher about this problem. She never did anything to help. If this same

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**Confronting the teacher and the principal was hard. But it was even harder for me to see what my son was going through.**

---

thing happened with other people, I think the teacher would have done something more quickly.

Finally, we had a meeting that included the teacher and the principal. The principal told the teacher that she

must tell that boy to stop being a bully. Confronting the teacher and the principal was hard. But it was even harder for me to see what my son was going through. Compared to that, going and talking to the principal was not very hard to do.

After the meeting with the principal, the problem was solved. No more problems at school!



Before this happened, I always believed whatever a teacher said. That was my mistake. I even decided to volunteer at that school, to see what was going on there. That's how I realized that my son was being bullied and that the teacher's story was wrong. I became a Learning Leader at my son's school. I learned that it is good to listen to your child and believe your child. What they are telling you is the truth.

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*Daffeh Fatou is a student at the Adult Learning Center, at Lehman College, in the Bronx. She is from Gambia, in West Africa, and was born in a city called Banjul. Her family worked as farmers there. She has been living in the Bronx for the last 27 years.*



# Make your Voice Count

## A Story of Student Leadership

Matias Rodriguez

**BEFORE YOU READ:** Find pre-reading activities on our website, as well as a version of this article adapted for intermediate readers.

### We Noticed a Student Missing in Class

As I continue my second year in AmeriCorps and as a student leader in my ABE program, I have learned about the importance of “paying it forward” so that others in my program can have more opportunities to better their lives.

Here’s a story of how students from the morning and evening Student Leadership Council at the El Rio Learning Center are paying it forward. Classes at night run from 5:30 pm until 8:30 pm. The majority of the students attend classes at night because of their busy work schedules. One evening, a student leader named Francine Raymond was in her math class working out equations and all that fun stuff, when she noticed a fellow student was not coming to class as often.

### We Found Out What was Wrong

When her classmate returned a few weeks later, Francine asked if everything was okay. The student explained that she got in a bike accident on her way home

### The student explained that she got in a bike accident on her way home from school.

(She has to ride her bike because the last bus leaves before her class is over.) She was hit by a car, and she got a

head injury. She had to spend a few nights in the hospital, and her bike was demolished.

Francine’s heart dropped after hearing the terrible news. She asked, “If the bus ran later, would you ride it instead of your bike?”



“Of course,” she replied.

At the next Student Leadership Council (SLC) meeting, everyone was devastated to hear what had happened to the student, and they felt empathy for her. The members shared different ideas about how to make it safe for students to travel from school to home. During this brainstorming, two other students came forward with other safety concerns. One of them stated that on that same bus route, the bus stop across from the El Rio Center had no shelter. While waiting for the bus,

### The members shared different ideas about how to make it safe for students to travel.

people have no protection from the sun or rain. (If you’ve never been in Tucson, you can only imagine the 100-plus degree heat in the summer and the torrential rains in the rainy season.) Another student came forward with her concern that there was no lighting at another stop. It made her feel unsafe when she waited for the bus.

### We Did Something About It

We decided to contact our local city official. With the help of our civics program, the SLC prepared

for the meeting by improving our public speaking, learning how to create a Power Point presentation, and learning how to facilitate a meeting.

On the day of the meeting, all of the guests heard and listened to the concerns of the students. Regina Romero, our city councilor, was thrilled to see what the students had done and was impressed with their work. Thanks to our organizing, along with her support and the support of other city officials, we now have one new bus stop and lighting at two of the bus stops! There is still more work to be done. The bus route hours are still too short, but we started a petition, and the Student Leadership Council will continue to work on this issue. I’m extremely proud to be part of this project that not only helps the community now, but will also help generations to come!

Matias Rodriguez was born in Tucson and is a GED student at the El Rio Learning Center of Pima Community College. He is an Ambassador for Adult Education and an AmeriCorps and Student Leadership Council member. He assists the Civics and Student Leadership Team and is also a representative for Pima Community College’s Inter Campus Council (ICC).



Thanks to the organizing work of student leaders at the El Rio Learning Center in Tucson, AZ, the city added this bus shelter to the bus stop across the street from their school. They are still fighting for a bus schedule that better meets students’ needs.

## What Improvements Would You Like to See?

**Read this essay** by Matias Rodriguez and the one on the next page by Rachel Murray. List the specific transportation challenges that they talk about.

**In small groups**, discuss the transportation challenges you face. Report back to the whole class and develop a comprehensive list of transportation challenges.

**Take action.** Look back at the steps Matias and the SLC took to address a transportation challenge. Which of these steps could you use or adapt for your situation? What other action steps could you try?

**See our website** for more activities.



**Analyze the image.** What do you see?

What do you see?  
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**Issue 43, pp. 30-31**

“ I would to go work everyday as a landscaper, and I would look at the refugees [who lived in my apartment complex] and think, “What a bunch of freeloaders.” [...] In my ABE class, I learned more about what these refugees experienced [...] war and torture. I had been numb, but these classes helped wake me up.

“ El Rio Learning Center helped me get my GED, but not only that, I participated in the Leadership Council.”



From Webinar #2

[https://youtu.be/AWwL\\_KgYvj8](https://youtu.be/AWwL_KgYvj8)

# Collaboration for Active Communities (CACs)

Funded by World Education back in 1999, this effort matched community organizations with adult ed programs to collaborate on work that would meet needs of CBO and students.

One example: Campaign on Contingent Work (CCW) matched with ABCD in Boston to survey community members and analyze data about working conditions and wages for day laborers.



Photo by Mr. Prada from [wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Day_Laborers_in_Boston.jpg)



# Car Wash Workers Organize

Carlos Linarez and Rocio Valerio

## We Want Wages and Respect

Car wash workers have had enough abuse and humiliation. We are just like any other person in this world who wants to have honest work and respect. Therefore, we are uniting for a good cause. We are asking for benefits such as a minimum wage, overtime, adequate equipment, set work schedules, vacation time, and health insurance, as well as sick days.

To make ourselves stronger, we work together with several community organizations and a labor union. Our campaign is called WASH NY.

## Many Bad Experiences

I got involved in WASH NY after a friend who had been working for 17 years got fired because he went to get a cup of coffee. This ugly and unjust situation made me angry and sad and inspired me to join the campaign to organize for rights for the jan wash workers.



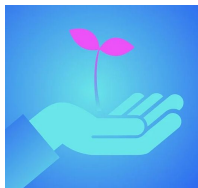
*WASH NY is a collaboration between NY Communities for Change, Make the Road New York, and the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union (RWDSU).*

Now, workers have better wages and better working conditions. At the carwash where I work,



# Wrapping up/Taking away

## 3 Dimensions



Raise awareness



Slow down/guard rails



Change water we swim in

## 6 Areas

Don't forget about [this document](#) where you can find more strategies. And add your own!



## You + (at least) 1

Think about not doing this work alone. Find trusted allies. Be in conversation with others. Find your “accountabilibuddy.”



# Next steps -- a poll -- possible way to close out?

**I want to think more about. (Check all that apply):**

1. How I experience privilege in my own life so I can better understand how that affects my work.
2. What I can read and study to expand my understanding.

**I want to talk with others about. (Check all that apply):**

1. Developing, collecting, and curating classroom materials that address racial equity
2. Considering what we can do at the program level to address racial equity

**I have some concrete ideas from these webinars that I intend to implement. (Check all that apply):**

1. Build racial equity into my classroom discussions
2. Introduce new materials written from diverse student perspectives
3. Learn more independently or with others about trauma-informed practices in adult education
4. Explore the “Digital Navigator” or “Digital Literacy Action Plan”
5. Examine cultural norms in our organization that aren’t conducive to equity
6. Collect data about our existing or potential student population to help us understand where racial inequity might exist
7. Advocate for funding levels and workplace conditions in our programs that are conducive to having more diverse staff
8. Advocate for adult ed. funding that includes broader purposes and outcomes
9. Find an “accountabilibuddy.”

**Questions? Comments? Want to pursue  
this work in your program or region?  
Contact us at:**

**Carmine Stewart**

President & CEO of Aspire Consulting and Educational Services, and Vice President of Programming at Seeds of Literacy, Cleveland, OH. [aspire.educ@gmail.com](mailto:aspire.educ@gmail.com)

**Cynthia Peters**

*Change Agent* editor, PD provider at World Education, former teacher [cynthia\\_peters@worlded.org](mailto:cynthia_peters@worlded.org)



**WORLD EDUCATION**

# Please fill out the evaluation.

Stay in touch about future efforts to address racial inequity by going to [this link](#) and signing up for your choice of World Education newsletters. (This link will also be at the top of the evaluation.)

Need a certificate of participation? At the bottom of the [evaluation](#), there will be an option to indicate that.