



**CCWESTT 2024 Policy Forum  
May 23, 2024 - Victoria, British Columbia**

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# CCWESTT 2024 Policy Forum Report

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# CCWESTT 2024 Policy Forum Report

## Introduction and Context

For over 30 years, The Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering, Science, Trades and Technology (CCWESTT) has been a recognised leader for and a voice of a national community for gender equity within Science, Engineering, Trades and Technology (SETT). CCWESTT champions a gender equitable, diverse, and inclusive Canadian SETT sector and is committed to reducing systemic barriers so that women and gender diverse people can have fulfilling and successful careers in SETT workplaces. CCWESTT hosts national biennial conferences that highlight activities by member organisations, industry partners, and government initiatives, working towards a more diverse and equitable SETT workforce in Canada. Since 2012, CCWESTT has hosted five Policy Forums, all preceding events to the biennial CCWESTT conference.

The 2024 CCWESTT Policy Forum, held on May 23, 2004, was a half-day event preceding the 20<sup>th</sup> Biennial CCWESTT conference in Victoria, British Columbia. The 2024 Policy Forum was attended by 76 SETT participants from across Canada. This space was designed for participants to deepen their understanding of systems change and to work together within small groups to discuss how to apply systems change thinking within the SETT ecosystem. The 2024 Policy Forum was designed to accompany the themes and objectives of the 2024 CCWESTT conference.

The 2024 conference theme was Charting a Course - Navigating Systemic Change. Attendees were invited to join CCWESTT to learn how to become an advocate for systems change that advances gender equity in SETT. CCWESTT recognises the critical need to shift the dialogue from changing women and other underrepresented folks 'to fit' within male-dominated spaces, to *changing the system*.

*"It takes a system to change a system."*  
*CCWESTT 2023 Gap Analysis Report*

The 2024 Policy Forum builds on the momentum from the 2022 forum (see [2022 CCWESTT Policy Forum Report](#)) and was designed based on lessons from CCWESTT's 2023 [Gap Analysis Report](#). The Gap Analysis Report Executive Summary is available [here](#). The 2024 Policy Forum was designed with a systems-change approach to engage all stakeholders in working towards gender equity. This report documents the forum's design and outlines the outcomes of discussions among participants who attended the 2024 Policy Forum.

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## Key Terms within Systems Change

**Systems Change:** Modifying components or combinations of components within a system to address and remove fundamental societal, environmental, and cultural elements that prevent change.

**Scaling:** To grow, achieve sustainable impact, become law, become normalised.

### **Scaling Out, Scaling Up and Scaling Deep:**

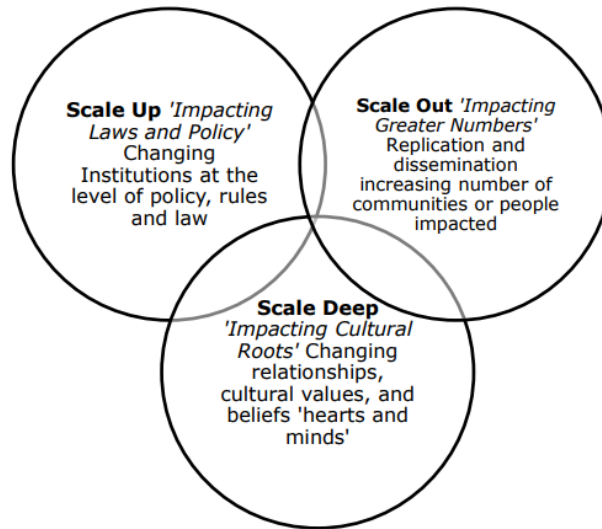


Figure 1: Scaling out, scaling up and scaling deep for social innovation.

Diagram modified from Moore, M. L., Riddell, D. and Vocisano, D. (2015) "Scaling Out, Scaling Up, Scaling Deep: Strategies of Non-profits in Advancing Systemic Social Innovation." *Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, 58:67-84

**Social Innovation:** A complex process of introducing new products, processes or programs that profoundly change the basic routines, resource and authority flows, or beliefs of the social system in which the innovation occurs. Such successful social innovations have durability and broad impact (Westley & Antadze, 2010, p. 2). Social Innovation can be both destructive and catalytic, challenging the social systems and institutions in which people learn, work, and reside. True social innovations involve changes in institutional and social systems and can contribute to overall social resilience.

## Past Policy Forum Documents

- The 2022 CCWESTT Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia, had two reports:
  - [2022 Pre-forum Briefing Document](#)
  - [2022 Policy Forum Report](#)
- The 2018 CCWESTT Conference in Edmonton, Alberta, hosted the 3rd Policy Forum: [2018 Policy Forum Document](#)
- The second Policy Forum was held at the 2016 CCWESTT Conference in Ottawa, Ontario: The [2016 Conference Document](#) includes information from the forum.
- CCWESTT's first Policy Forum was held at the 2012 CCWESTT Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia: [2012 Policy Forum Document](#).

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## The 2024 Policy Forum Format

The 2024 CCWESTT Policy Forum was a half-day event, facilitated by Dr Darcy Riddell and supported by nine table facilitators.

The Policy Forum was broken into four components, starting with a welcome and context-setting, followed by a brief background on social innovation and systems change. Next, the participants heard from a case study panel discussion to better understand strategic opportunities and reflections. For the remainder of the Policy Forum participants put their learning into *Action* through breakout sessions and next steps.

<b>CCWESTT CONFERENCE 2024 - Policy Forum</b>	
<b>Thursday May 23rd, 2024</b>	
<b>Room</b>	<b>Carson Hall B/C</b>
<b>12:30 PM - 12:45 PM</b>	<b>Welcome and Setting the Context: An Overview of Promising Levers for Impact</b>
<b>12:45 PM - 1:30 PM</b>	<b>Primer on Social Innovation and Systems Change</b>
<b>1:30 PM - 2:15 PM</b>	<b>Strategic Opportunities and Reflections (Case Study Panel)</b>
<b>2:15 PM - 2:40 PM</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>2:40 PM - 4:30 PM</b>	<b>Putting the Learning into Action!</b>
<b>4:30 PM - 5:00 PM</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>



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## Policy Forum Presentations

### **Welcome and Setting the Context**

The policy forum was launched with a welcome from CCWESTT Board Member Suzanne Abraham and CCWESTT Program Manager Bonnie Douglas. The session began with a land acknowledgement by Bonnie, while Suzanne thanked the participants for joining CCWESTT a day before the official 2024 Conference began. Suzanne recapped the last Policy Forum with a focus on Bold Actions, and Bonnie explained that the 2024 CCWESTT Conference and the 2024 Policy Forum were created as action items from the 2022 Policy Forum. Suzanne then introduced the day's facilitator, Dr Darcy Riddell.



Dr Riddell has been working for social change for 25 years in a variety of roles, including in forest campaigns and catalysing innovative land conservation in the Great Bear Rainforest, leading philanthropic evaluation and transformative learning at McConnell Foundation, designing and facilitating multi-sector change initiatives, and founding and funding collaborative networks that centre sustainability, justice and systems change. She currently works as a consultant with the RAD (Restore, Assert, Defend) Network advancing Indigenous-led conservation finance and nature-based solutions, and on other strategic engagements. Dr Riddell completed a transdisciplinary PhD in Environment and Resources Studies at the University of Waterloo, focused on transformative leadership and social impact in complex multi-scaled contexts, and has published on systems change in sustainability, social innovation, and scaling. She chairs the board of Social Innovation Canada and is a board director at Hollyhock Educational Centre on Cortes Island. Dr Riddell is a fifth-generation British Columbian, living with her family in the territories of the əsəlilwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh), Xʷməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), & Sk̓w̓x̓wú7meshsi (Squamish), where she is a student of nature and the wisdom traditions of longstanding cultures.

Once introductions were concluded, Dr Riddell kicked off the learning portion of the forum with a prepared presentation on social innovation and systems change. The *facilitator's presentation* can be found in *Appendix A*.

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### ***Primer on Social Innovation and Systems Change***

The topics of social innovation and systems change were still new for many participants. Dr Riddell set the stage by explaining these concepts and providing models participants could use to navigate topics in their work.

Key learnings from the presentation include:

- The benefits of collaboration/knowledge sharing versus a 'silo' approach
- Systems need to be tackled from 3 levels (Iceberg Model of systems)
  - Reactive and Responsive - addressing the challenge as it presents itself today
  - Proactive and Adaptive - building capacity to deal with the challenges in the future
  - Creative and Transformative - changing incentives, goals, information flows, mindsets, root causes, and paradigms to create different futures
- Complexity called for new approaches, including to 'act-learn' simultaneously, working with paradoxes, and emergence, to build on what grows
- Make scale and impact a conscious choice as scaling is both a strategic and a personal process; it requires stepping into the mindset of being architects of future systems
- Conduct broad system analysis to identify and focus on the roots of problems via collaborative problem and solution definition, integrating multiple perspectives, and systems mapping & thinking
- Embed the solutions into our initiatives or organising DNA, as our work is always a "partial" solution to big systemic problems, we need to *sow future seeds* of transformed cultures, institutions and behaviours by modelling the world we want in our relationships and actions *now*

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- Take a systems view to influence systems
  - Understand the systemic problem, learn as much as you can about your system and how it behaves, and map it
  - Be realistic and strategic about facing barriers to change in the system or problem domain
  - Pay attention to key influencers; the bigger picture matters
  - Identify and make the most of opportunities for change in the system, leverage points, allies and unlikely collaborators
  - Listen to what's working, what's already happening, and at what scales

In the presentation, Dr Riddell included initiatives at the scaling-out, scaling-up, and scaling-deep levels. She identified a barrier at each scaling and suggested solutions to help overcome them. These examples were a good starting point for participants to think about before the breakout sessions later in the day.

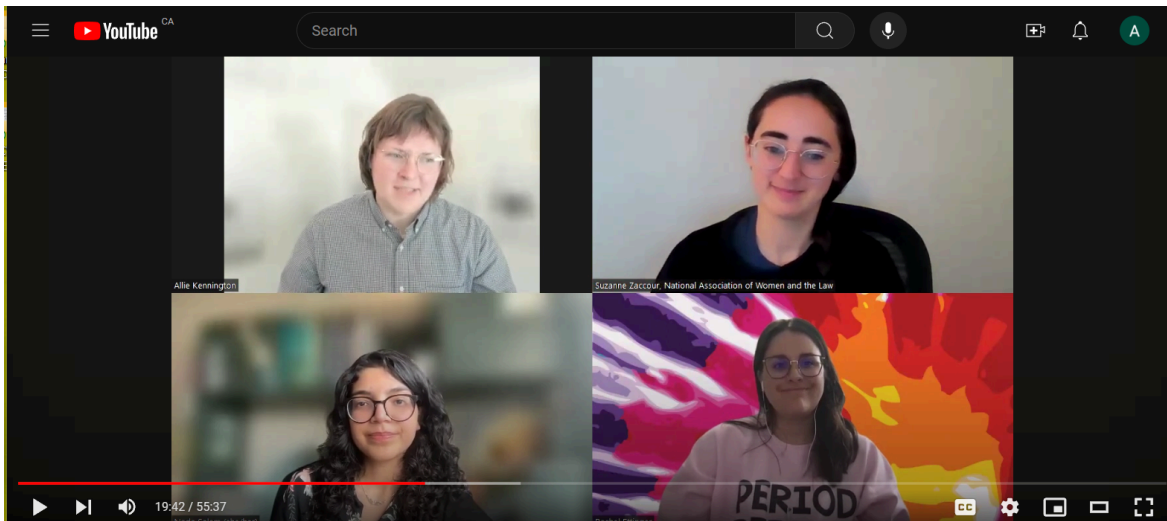
The presentation was concluded by providing the participants with the planned activities for the breakout group session. The breakout group session will be discussed further in the *Participant Discussions and Recommendations* section of the report.

### ***Strategic Opportunities and Reflections: Case Study Panels***

The Policy Forum case study panel, facilitated by Dr Riddell, consisted of two panellists from the CCWESTT community. The panel lasted about 45 minutes. The first panellist was Jennifer van Zelm who represented [WISE Planet](#), an organisation that strives to create a diverse, inclusive, equitable and just society by training women and other underrepresented groups in STEM to be change leaders equipped to address the major, shared challenges our societies face. The second panellist, Suzanne Abraham from Seneca College, spoke specifically to the success of the college's [Bachelor of Computer Science Program](#) which offers an innovative three-year degree with a unique focus on inclusion (including equity, diversity and accessibility), and blends comprehensive technical studies with experiential career-focused learning opportunities.

The case study panel was an opportunity to build on a pre-conference panel discussion hosted by CCWESTT on April 17, 2024. This discussion was moderated by Allie Kennington, featuring Nada Salem from [Evidence for Democracy](#), Suzanne Zaccour from the [National Association of Women and the Law](#), and Rachel Ettinger from [Here For Her](#). The recording of this event can be found [here](#).

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Key takeaways from the panel discussions:

- Advocacy success can happen at a variety of levels and scales, e.g.
  - *WISE Planet* has found success in corporate/institutional settings
  - *Seneca College* focuses on bringing social innovation at the education level
  - *Here for Her* has successfully led campaigns at the municipal and federal government levels
  - *E4D* has worked at a variety of scales, from teaching scientists the skills of science communications to influencing change at the federal government level
  - *NAWL* has influenced the design of federal bills and has created changes within the justice system
- The public can be a strong stakeholder - create ways/platforms for the public to be involved, when advocacy wins public opinion, this goes a long way to winning a political battle, e.g. petitions, rallies, letter campaigns at the different government levels

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- Finding an ally within the system can be a powerful force to move your topic forward (e.g. an MLA, an MP, a Senator) they can advocate for your cause in spaces where you are not
- Start lobbying through official channels and always bring concrete solutions, be the experts politicians need to draft policy e.g. submitting briefs, presenting/testifying in front of parliamentary committees, meeting with members of parliament, and collaborating with others to broaden your knowledge
- Don't underestimate law reform - this is a skill that can be learned, since many groups do not work within this space, there is room to have your voice heard and to make a change
- Have both responsive and proactive goals/actions; the responsive can include 'small wins'/short-term goals being reached (celebrate the wins!) - this can be positive to your advocacy in both keeping you going and giving you legitimacy as you work on long-term proactive (sometimes longshot) goals - these take more time/resources and can be daunting
- Build on momentum - self-created or within a greater societal movement/time; sometimes you have to repeat your message and stay on course until society is ready for change, and then you are the ones ready to help develop and move that change forward
- The media is a strong partner when you can get their attention, be persistent and try a variety of options/angles - be strategic vs impulsive in your messaging, e.g. writing op-eds, directing social media campaigns and content creation, rallies, news releases and news conferences, also take the time to build a brand
- Create a task force on a topic across Canada allowing for a collective push of a topic at various levels/geographic locations, working together on a common goal, this also helps to keep internal momentum - it is good to have a network to learn and grow with
- Surround yourself (individually and as a group) with others who align with your values and goals, take the time to learn from a variety of voices and spaces that still need attention, say what needs to be said and challenge the systems in place, be authentic and know that you cannot make everyone happy all the time
- Finally, learn self-care, advocacy can be hard and burnout is real



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## Participant Discussions

### **Putting the Learning into Action: Breakout Group Activity Description**

The Policy Forum facilitator, Dr Darcy Riddle, led a breakout group session to help participants think in a systems-change mindset. The *Worksheet* can be found in *Appendix B*. The participants were asked to join breakout group session tables under five main systemic issue themes. These themes were chosen based on findings from the [2023 CCWESTT Gap Analysis Report](#) and input from the 2022 Policy Forums. Each systemic issue theme had two table groups. Each table had five-seven people plus a facilitator.

#### **Theme 1: Funding Models and Systems**

- e.g. a feminist budget, gender-based analysis +, systems that don't rely on unpaid labour, not-for-profit funding models

#### **Theme 2: Barriers to Participation**

- including accessible childcare, role models, wraparound supports, unpaid labour, societal norms

#### **Theme 3: Safe & Inclusive Workplaces**

- including gender-based violence, personal protective equipment, hiring practices, culture etc.

#### **Theme 4: Pay Equity & Advancement**

- such as equal pay among and across professions, women in leadership, work expectations, dress codes

#### **Theme 5: Building Power Through Collaborative Action**

- e.g. organisations, companies, key stakeholders working with intentional efforts

There were four steps for the breakout groups to work through.

#### **Step 1: Understand your Systemic Issue**

- Identify key elements of the system of interest and how it behaves – map it if you can
- Identify targets: who has the power to advance/change the system
- Identify key influences in the system – is anything currently happening that could move this issue forward or backwards?
- What are the barriers to change in the system on this issue?

#### **Step 2: Identify Key Opportunities**

- What's working or already gaining momentum on this issue? At what scales? (localised in organisations, Provincially, Federally?)
- Who needs to support and advance this? Who else cares about this issue?
- How can you build power or momentum around this issue using opportunities?

#### **Step 3: Generate strategies and action plans**

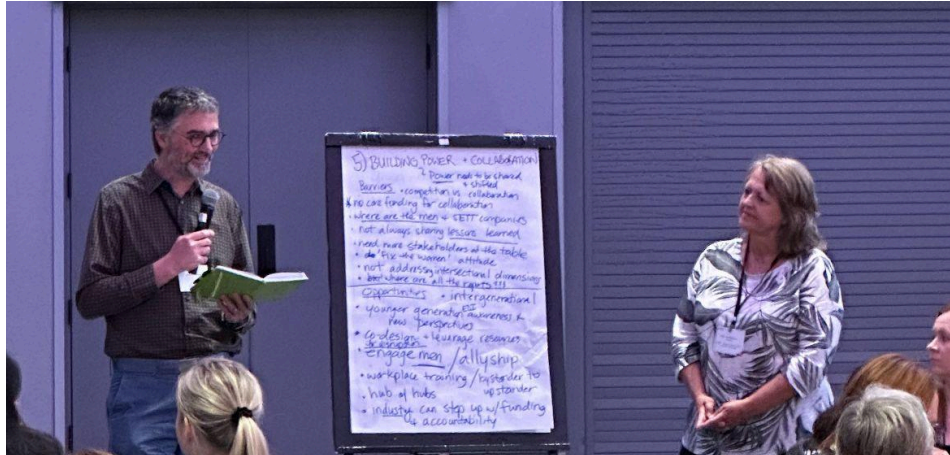
- What strategies seem promising for taking advantage of opportunities and addressing current barriers? *Policy advocacy? Media engagements? New collaborations? Campaign ideas?*

#### **Step 4: Identify Possible Next Steps**

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- What are two to three concrete next steps?

Each table worked on its assigned systemic issue theme for the first two steps. The tables working on the same theme then joined to report on what they had gathered from the first two steps. These larger groups worked together on steps three and four. Once all assigned steps were completed, the five themed groups presented their systemic issue to the greater group.



### ***Participant Responses to the Five Main Systemic Issue Themes***

#### **Theme 1: Funding Models and Systems**

##### **Systemic Issue**

1. **GBA+ Use** - In general, a lack of political continuity at all levels of government (even among departments)
  - **Key Opportunity** - Ideology can get caught up in jargon, which could be preventing forward momentum and limiting funding options
  - **Strategies and Action Plans** - Adjust language depending on partner/funder to fit with who you are working with
  - **Possible Next Steps** - Make plans that work with any government or group
2. **Feminist Budgets** - Put an economic spin on your ideas (present solutions as more than the 'right thing to do')
  - **Key Opportunity**: Need to identify where the women are and what they need.
  - **Strategies and Action Plans** - 'You don't know what you don't know', ask women what they need
    - Daycare vs wrap-around care, elderly care, etc.
    - Municipal budgets will include street clearing but not sidewalk cleaning - the focus has been on getting people to work vs the care economy
    - The need for food/transit funding
  - **Possible Next Steps** - Include value add in EDI topics
3. **Lack of Advocacy Funding** - From industry, private sources and government
  - **Key Opportunity** - Funders want innovative ideas but will not fund the next

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steps, e.g.

- Funding for recruitment but not retention or advancement, impacts the momentum
  - Fund the pilot, but even when successful, not the long-term implementation - "Feast or Famine"
  - Fund project-based KPIs, but not the day-to-day operations or the capacity-building
  - **Strategies and Action Plans** - Create models that are not just fitting with current government departments, to broaden appeal
    - Do not go after 'trendy funding', focus on more consistent funding, find an issue bigger than SETT that other nonprofits are tackling to work on it together
    - For core funding, look for strategic partnerships to push for nonprofit funding collectively
  - **Possible Next Steps** - Leverage new funding options from like-minded charities (i.e., the federal government recently changed the rules of giving for charities to support grassroots initiatives)
4. **Gender Roles** - The societal normalisation/expectations within the binary
- **Key Opportunity** - Societal expectations cross-cut scales (e.g. home, work, society), need to tackle it at various levels
  - **Strategies and Action Plans** - None given
  - **Possible Next Steps** - None given
5. **Advocacy through unpaid labour** - e.g. EDI, Employer Resource Groups, nonprofits, speakers, etc.
- **Key Opportunity** - Unpaid labour benefits companies/society but not necessarily the women/underrepresented folks' career paths; it lacks industry involvement, and when industry is involved, it is often through a "Pink Tax" - charging women money and time
  - **Strategies and Action Plans** - Find charities with synergies to you to work with and get funding from, rather than relying on the government of the day and their funding
    - Turn unpaid labour into value added for both companies and the individual, formalise EDI roles so they are not 'from the side of a desk', optics - recognitions, need to change the narrative
    - Create alternative payment methods for people's time (e.g., stipends, honoraria).
    - Focus on the economic spin vs what is just/right
    - Governments need to move away from performative EDI
  - **Possible Next Steps** - Adjust language away from ideological jargon
    - '2 horns of the dilemma' - find common ground
    - Set up a standard for payment including unified narratives regarding unpaid labour (e.g. speakers, expert involvement, etc.), and include an intersectional lens e.g. speaker fee calculation based on intersectional upcharge and minimums

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6. **Lack of political involvement** - The SETT community needs to get political
  - **Key Opportunity** - Need to be better at lobbying (e.g. pre-budget submissions, meeting with ministers, focus on both the federal and provincial level), may need to adjust to understand and work within lobbying rules
    - Need to push regulators for safe and inclusive workplaces, regulators need to have the best interest of workers' safety, not just the public's safety
  - **Strategies and Action Plans** - Go where there is momentum
    - Need collective discussions with other advocacy groups and sectors to create a unified voice
    - Create a SETT voting block
  - **Possible Next Steps** - Get politically active!
7. **Lack of male allies**
  - Key Opportunity** - Need men to be engaged and help advance the topics
  - Strategies and Action Plans** - None given
  - Possible Next Steps** - None given

### Theme 2: Barriers to Participation

#### Systemic Issue

1. **Hiring/Promotion** - Combating institutionalised bias
  - Key Opportunity** - Power structures within recruitment/hiring, promotions (tenure), performance metrics
    - Lack of intersectional lenses used in the recruitment/promotion topics
    - Need allies in leadership to make changes to policies
    - Mandatory training of managers to promote culture change, have the learning filter down - limit conscious/unconscious bias within the system
    - Limited resources to support underrepresented folks wanting to advance
    - Revamp hiring practices, including cluster hiring, to help with retention
    - Create policies to support promotion practices
    - Support cultural change through bystander programs and other training; all employees must be trained to bring about change
    - Give presentations on education opportunities
  - Strategies and Action Plans** - Policy - Funding - Action, be flexible to change and adjust, understand risk
    - Business case initiatives to support economic incentives for change
    - Offer a special letter of offer (directly from leaders) during hiring
    - Create clear expectations of the job and its requirements within the hiring practice, e.g. that a heavy equipment operator needs a driver's license to be able to drive to remote work sites
    - Leverage red seal, etc., success by reaching out to the media - 'telling the stories'
    - School districts need training on trades, teachers need to relate math to trades: "You will need this topic/subject in 'x' trade." See the resource [She](#)

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## Built

**Possible Next Steps** - Inventorying, sharing/unifying scattered, siloed (e.g., K-12 outreach) programs

- Learn and scale successful programs (e.g. [IMHOTEK Legacy Academy](#), which has role models, action, cohorts with tone on task, tied to curriculum, and resources)
- Link programming (technology and other) with broad perspectives to recruit more people
- Go to the schools to recruit, e.g. a happy hour for folks to learn more, recruit through K-12 legacy/cohort programs
- Media attention with women champions

## 2. **Retention** - 'Hard to fix what we do not acknowledge'

**Key Opportunity** - Battling perceptions (real or not) that women leave their profession due to childcare responsibilities or that women do not want to be working

- Fighting an abusive mindset of 'can't do'
- If women do work differently than men, e.g. leaving early then coming back, there is a misconception that 'she must be going shopping'
- Hard to navigate career on and off ramps
- Lack of an intersectional lens
- Lack of role models - holistic experiences
- Isolation, lack of knowledge of resources

**Strategies and Action Plans** - Create places where employees and their families thrive

- Show the advantages of hiring and keeping women employed/engaged, such as how it builds the community and its health
- Avoid the strategy of picking/recruiting from other jurisdictions
- People keep moving jobs - we need to support folks so they will stay
- Removal of tenure (automatic promotion)
- Employers should reach out to enable the kids of staff to come to work, even 'on-site'
- Promote new entry and transitions into SETT
- Bring underrepresented folks into meetings with decision-makers
- Employers need to acknowledge that work done by parents is important
- Make training (e.g. bystander/bias training) mandatory for firms greater than 25 employees

**Possible Next Steps** - Conduct surveys (why people left trade/apprenticeship, where do they go?)

- Secure funds for action, including from government programs
- Programs to support employer training for successful onboarding
- Create peer mentoring
- Have men 'be a women' in the workplace/home with all that entails for a month

## 3. **GBA+ and Maximising Data Collection**

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**Key Opportunity** - Government funding requires the use of GBA+, but lacks direction/teeth on how to implement and does not present consequences, e.g. paying back funds

- Fear of change even at the government level - afraid of upsetting partners (board members, community, politically)
- Need data e.g. employment of women by profession; need effective tracking mechanisms for retention, Federal and Provincial tracking systems need to be aligned
- Include union leaders to promote change
- Use STEM tracking systems as a template for trades and technology

**Strategies and Action Plans** - Create a strategy to understand data e.g. physiological changes i.e. childbearing vs perimenopause, men's burnout

- Interpret data (using an intersectional lens) to push for accountability (statistics), both quantitative and qualitative 'stories'

**Possible Next Steps** - Find leverage point - address systems change with accountability, data linkage (need for trades, like there is for STEM), work with:

- Employers
  - Who/how decision making
  - Government and policymakers
  - Organisations and programs
- Have some benefits for employers who participate (stickers, logo, write-up in a local paper), tax rebates

### Theme 3: Safe & Inclusive Workplaces

#### Systemic Issue

1. **'Old School' Culture** - Changing mindsets and behaviour; move away from defensiveness and denial, to justice

**Key Opportunity** - culture is defined by the worst behaviour tolerated

- Culture change through effective training, standardisation
- Workplaces need a better understanding of gender-based violence (GBV)
- Create buy-in through storytelling, relatable, centring lived experiences, e.g. Love is love; Workplaces that are good for everyone
- Engage allies through sponsorship, and go beyond mentorship; these relationships support safe work environments, help with retention (cost savings)
- Identify power holders in different spaces; find cultural intersections that cross over, find common ground through different interest holders, create allyships to leverage for change together; note that it takes emotional energy to identify power structures
- Speak in relatable language to get buy-in, need evidence-based information (help combat culture created through 'influencers' promoting unsafe behaviours)
- Note generational culture with younger people needing to 'conform' as

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they have limited power to influence a change

**Strategies and Action Plans** - To change the system, fund the fight!

- What does safe and inclusive mean to you?
- Need to ask/share those with underrepresented experiences vs taking a majority view - advocacy from the ground up
- There is power in individuals when we empower the process; power in storytelling
- Provide funding for expertise from equity-denied organisations
- Do cohort hiring to help combat isolation

**Possible Next Steps** - There needs to be a will for change; it is not an issue of training, it is an issue of culture

- Generative conversations through allyship
- redefining what makes a candidate 'good'; debunk the myth of meritocracy - attitude and behaviour
- Ask the question - how are you willing to live, and what are you willing to give up for the collective good?
- Use examples such as the APEGA video campaign (with members reading the stories of those who face barriers) - trigger aha moments, hit at the emotional level

### 2. Underdeveloped Safety Standards

**Key Opportunity** - Ask 'What does safety look like?' Need more awareness

- Safety culture is often reactionary, event-based
- Workplaces need more understanding of psychological safety
- Workplaces need to be more aware of domestic violence
- Health and safety legislation is different between provinces

**Strategies and Action Plans** - Create policies that cover psychological and physical safety

- Enforcement of policies - unsafe people in workplaces is a 'culture of production over personal'
- Seek and understand the implications of women's lived experiences
- Provide PPE that fits workers

**Possible Next Steps** - Evaluate GBV and OHS policies

- Campaign for a framework for safety and inclusion
- Promote the use of proper PPE
- Inclusive engineering in design: who defines what is safe? Who has the power to advance/change the system?

### 3. Lack of Accountability - Policy is useless without accountability

**Key Opportunity** - Cultural change at a company level can be asynchronous and lack accountability; policy design needs to be practical and actionable

- Government-funded programs come without accountability - and often require voluntary actions
- Efforts are piecemeal and lack standardisation - need contextual nuance
- Lack of coordination among groups causes competition for funding
- Training is not enough; there needs to be an impact

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- Need for policy enforcement to go along with programming

**Strategies and Action Plans** - Design policy based on relatable models - e.g. WHIMIS

- Policy/accountability, i.e. pay equity, PPE (provincial), quotas
- Need policies that are government-mandated with built-in accountability (laws/fines) - not much change in 50 years between gender equity and safety
- Small and medium-sized employers struggle to hire and provide adequate training; they need access to government resources
- Collective bargaining with a focus on accountability
- Support litigation for harassment

**Possible Next Steps** - What does accountability look like on different issues?

- Find ways to monetise the impact of culture on productivity and retention, e.g. report card - turning culture into corporate cost, such as burnout/mental health, count the cost and quantify psychological costs
- Collective bargaining - specific and accountability vs 'management fights'

#### 4. Intersectionality - 'Practice walking in their shoes'

**Key Opportunity** - better understanding of lived experience and empathy from people of all different backgrounds

- The Pipeline metaphor identifies the treatment of people as a commodity
- Show why we want women in the trades
- Need funding to support people

**Strategies and Action Plans** - Intercultural and intergender

- Storytelling, reframing stories with lived experiences, and exponential learning that are empathy-based - who is missing from the conversation?
- Ask - What does fair representation look like?
- Everyone wants a good job
- Collaboration - no silos, need an integrated approach that crosses groups/sectors

**Possible Next Steps** - Restorative justice/victim impact

- Multiple lenses/approaches

### Theme 4: Pay Equity & Advancement

#### Systemic Issue

##### 1. Glue Work - Undervalued and/or unpaid

**Key Opportunity** - 'Glue work' is not recognised and undervalued i.e. mediation, strategy setting, team success; a gendered norm around what skills have value

**Strategies and Action Plans** - addressing/shifting expectations of gender roles i.e. care work, relational labour, emotional labour; add an economic value to 'glue work' e.g. pay for time in committee work

**Possible Next Steps** - Include 'glue work' as valued time for promotions and advancement

##### 2. Transparency - In salaries and skills expectations

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### **Key Opportunity** - Acknowledge gender biases

- Job postings need to reflect the fact that women are known to under-self-promote and not apply if they do not have 'all' the credentials/qualifications
- Women are often the primary caregivers (80%), and can experience a childcare/children 'tax'
- There is a stigma around talking about salaries - make them transparent, post salaries in job descriptions, identify pay inequity based on 'gendered' skills

### **Strategies and Action Plans** - Model professional compensation ranges on existing groups, such as the engineering pay scales

- Job postings with salary ranges
- Identify gender bias within performance reviews and policies
- There is a skills shortage and a need for strategies to have people apply for positions

### **Possible Next Steps** - Establish transparency and equity for equal work

### 3. Intersectionality - Within workplace culture

#### **Key Opportunity** - Create space for those who hold privilege and power to feel compelled to act

- The need for an analysis of who benefits from pay inequality and the costs of a lack of involvement within the workforce
- Male allyship and sponsorship - invite men into conversations as a starting point, offer them opportunities to take risks
- Identify women leaders/sponsors - profile and uplift women

#### **Strategies and Action Plans** - To create a cultural change, it is essential to have women in leadership positions and on boards, to have allies at the corporate table, and to design a business case and financial modelling showing the benefits of inclusion

- Need to design workplace policies to help shift cultures, e.g. encourage men to take paternity and mental health leave, to destigmatise and demonstrate secure masculinity
- Shifting the dial with intersectionality by using the business case, productivity, maximised profitability and tying in economic advancement with retention, advancement efforts
- Engage women in STEM positions in academia, i.e. there is a lack of women in chair or tenure academic positions; these positions offer an opportunity for female mentorship for female students, role models, champions (sponsors), and lobbying

#### **Possible Next Steps** - Encourage men to use flexibility policies, parental leave

- Create lobby efforts to advocate for government change (e.g. in maternity leave programs), find potential like-minded partners, e.g. nurses, etc
- Lobby professional associations and societies to conduct current/post salary surveys e.g. traditionally lower pay and undervaluation in female-dominated fields (teachers and nursing, etc)

## CCWESTT 2024 Policy Forum Report

- Use storytelling to get the important messages across, such as:
  - The need for allies at home, create an anonymous storytelling campaign to normalise parental leave/flexible work
  - How equal home care work helps with equal pay
  - The need for flexible work hours, daycares at work, and parental/split leave, e.g. Sweden
  - The need to bring family to remote work sites
  - Company workwear that is an improper fit creates a workplace that encourages unprofessionalism

### Theme 5: Building Power Through Collaborative Action

#### Systemic Issue

1. **Allyship** - Need more stakeholders, where are the men and SETT companies?  
**Key Opportunity** - Engage men/allyship, power needs to be shared and shifted - priority to equity groups; industry can step up with funding and accountability  
**Strategies and Action Plans** - Connecting policy - to action - to accountability
  - Decision-makers need to be on board, along with those impacted, and stronger accountability is needed
  - Leverage power and privilege
  - Understand power dynamics - institutional and self-relational**Possible Next Steps** - Create coalitions/networks working across governments, and the public-private sector; recognise each group's strengths and weaknesses (do a gap analysis)
2. **Intersectionality** - Need to be more dimensional  
**Key Opportunity** - Go beyond gender and embrace intersectionality; include intergenerational, as younger generations have an EDI awareness and new perspectives  
**Strategies and Action Plans** - Bridging and Breaking: How can different conversations be fostered to achieve EDI? - through education, storytelling, information sharing, meaningful connections
  - Be responsive and open to feedback - how do we find common ground?
  - A culture of calling in vs calling out
  - Human rights are good business (business case)**Possible Next Steps** - Gather data and self-ID demographics - connect this with policy and advocacy, don't focus on deficit language
3. **Systemic Change** - Not 'Fix the Women'  
**Key Opportunity** - Consider full scope/holistic thinking - transformative spaces vs bringing people into spaces that are not built for them  
**Strategies and Action Plans** - Work to make more co-resistors; workplace training - bystander to upstander  
**Possible Next Steps** - Cultivate activists and advocates
4. **Collaborative Efforts**  
**Key Opportunity** - Collaboration over competition; we are not always sharing

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lessons learned; hard to find core funding for collaboration

**Strategies and Action Plans** - Understand your capacity and leverage the power of collective action - be tenacious but self-care is key

- Be a disruptor
- Leverage media
- Lobby for core funding that encourages collaboration
- Reframe experiences and plans (what's the worst that can happen?)
- Work across disciplines, perspectives broadened; the vision - how does this fit with other forms of change?
- Intentional program design and relationship building, building networks, and encouraging mentorship

**Possible Next Steps** - Co-creation of policy - important that it's a conversation

### 5. **Need More Data** - Where are the reports?

**Key Opportunity** - Create a hub of hubs; co-design and leverage resources for disruption

**Strategies and Action Plans** - Design case studies and solutions, create ongoing conversations

**Possible Next Steps** - Create a hub of resources, lessons learned and reports/recommendations

### **Takeaways from the Policy Forum Workshop**

The 2024 CCWESTT Policy Forum breakout session allowed participants to work through a process to unpack a systemic issue and help identify potential next steps for SETT advocacy. The groups presented valuable insights on their topics (please refer to the previous section). There were common threads found within the final presentations that are valuable to consider when evaluating paths for systemic change advocacy in SETT.

#### **Intersectionality**

All five groups mentioned the need to incorporate intersectionality into systems change work. 'Practice walking in their shoes.' An intersectional lens can help to identify gaps and for whom. *Advocacy Next Steps* included using empathy through storytelling and creating a culture of calling in vs calling out. Participants suggested using a business case/economic advantage to systems change, as justice models have had limited success.

#### **Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)**

Tied to intersectionality, groups mentioned their disappointment at the underutilisation of GBA+. This analytical tool could support governments, companies, and institutions as they design and implement policies that work for everyone while setting clear expectations and ensuring accountability. *Next Steps* include for the SETT community to audit current policies and/or advocate for GBA+ to be used in all policy development.

## CCWESTT 2024 Policy Forum Report

### **Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing**

Momentum and resources can be limited by duplicate efforts. *Next Steps include* identifying potential collaborators to limit competition in funding, encourage knowledge sharing, and create stronger advocacy networks. Participants suggested going beyond SETT by partnering with other groups that advocate for gender equity/equality in society. Opportunities are emerging to partner with like-minded charities that are now allowed to fund grassroots efforts due to a policy change at the federal level.

### **Language**

Participants suggest that the use of unfamiliar jargon and deficit language could prevent buy-in toward systemic change. There were concerns that this could also be limiting potential funding sources. *Advocacy Next Steps* include using language that all people can understand.

### **Gendering of Work**

All five groups found the gendering of work in domestic spaces and workplaces to be a barrier to success in SETT. Societal expectations can prevent structural policy change, including pay equity and the sharing of care responsibilities. *Next Steps* include advocating for collective solutions through policy creation.

### **Unpaid labour/Glue work**

Groups discussed how companies, institutions and governments still willingly use unpaid or undervalued labour, regardless of the stress this places on individuals and society. *Next Steps* included advocating for turning unpaid labour into value added for individuals, companies, institutions, and governments.

### **Allyship for Change**

All groups identified the need for allyship within their systemic issue theme. Power needs to be shared and shifted. *Next Steps* include continuing to advocate for male allyship to support change. One suggestion was to create spaces for risk-taking as allies develop their skills.

### **Lobbying**

Finally, lobbying was a major topic within the discussion groups. It is time to get politically active! Participants suggested pairing with other groups seeking gender equity/equality to create a united voice. We are stronger together and should tackle this as a collective. *The advocacy next step* is to become familiar with lobby rules, learn together, and teach others to join the efforts.

### **Participant Evaluation Survey Highlights**

A post-forum online survey was emailed to the participants a few weeks after the forum. Only about 10% of the participants submitted responses. A lesson learned for future forums is to have the online survey ready for participants to fill out on the day of the forum, capturing the

## CCWESTT 2024 Policy Forum Report

participant experience while it is still fresh. Despite the low participation, there are a few insights to share.

The 2024 Policy Forum was designed to help participants learn strategies to deepen their understanding of systems change. One participant expressed they *“appreciated the systems and iceberg work”* presented in the session. Another preferred the style of past sessions that focused more on *“actionable items and next steps.”* Others appreciated learning small strategies for change, such as tailoring one's message to a broader audience and the importance of combating unpaid labour:

*“I learned that other organisations are also interested in finding ways to pay women for their time. I was surprised that something I was feeling on my own was reflected back to me by people in similar positions. Proposing to pay our guest speakers more is one direct result of participation in the policy forum.”*

When asked in the survey, *“Call to Action! How has the session impacted you?”*, one participant expressed how reassuring it was to hear about the openness and willingness of fellow participants to discuss or mentor one another on specific challenges, such as funding. Another participant said they left with more to contribute to their college's EDI Working Group and the management team they are a member of. One participant quoted that they were:

*“More informed, with more readily available and varied resources, and a strengthened sense of community with changemakers.”*

A participant's response stated that the policy forum would help them to *“identify what ‘culture change’ actually means”* to their team and organisation. Another said they would *“continue strategic and operational planning to achieve (a) common vision for women in SETT.”* One participant stated that a powerful takeaway for them was learning about scaling deep. Going forward they plan to *“involve community and families in encouraging a change in how we view trades - involving them in activities at the college, (and in) campaigns.”*

When asked what CCWESTT could do better going forward, six themes emerged:

- Include the Policy Forum as part of the conference instead of a stand-alone event
- The Policy Forum was too short
- CCWESTT should lobby for gender equity in the STEM community
- CCWESTT could teach advocacy/lobbying - e.g. Lobbying 101
- Invite government bodies to be part of these discussions
- Invite allies, including men (e.g. a campaign to bring your ally to the conference day)

CCWESTT thanks those who took the time to fill out the post-forum survey.

## CCWESTT 2024 Policy Forum Report

### Looking Forward

The 2024 CCWESTT Policy Forum and CCWESTT Conference set the stage for our broader community to learn more about system-change thinking. Going forward, CCWESTT plans to build on this success. During the conference, CCWESTT announced that it had received funding from Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) for Women's Economic and Leadership Opportunities. Funding under this call supports the scaling of successful systemic change projects to expand their reach and impact. This funding allows CCWESTT to build on past grant efforts to address gaps and barriers to the economic security and prosperity of women and gender-diverse people.

The information gathered in this report will be used by CCWESTT to inform the direction of this most recent grant, including hosting future forums to expand our systemic change community and connectedness.

CCWESTT thanks all participants for attending this year's forum on systems change. Thank you to the CCWESTT Policy Committee for helping plan the 2024 Policy Forum. CCWESTT looks forward to continuing the work!



# CCWESTT 2024 Policy Forum Report

## Appendixes

### Appendix A

#### Facilitator's Presentation



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CCWESTT CONFERENCE 2024 - Policy Forum	
Thursday May 23rd, 2024	
Room	Carson Hall B/C
12:30 PM - 12:45 PM	Welcome and Setting the Context: An Overview of Promising Levers for Impact
12:45 PM - 1:30 PM	Primer on Social Innovation and Systems Change
1:30 PM - 2:15 PM	Strategic Opportunities and Reflections (Case Study Panel)
2:15 PM - 2:40 PM	Break
2:40 PM - 4:30 PM	Putting the Learning into Action!
4:30 PM - 5:00 PM	Next Steps

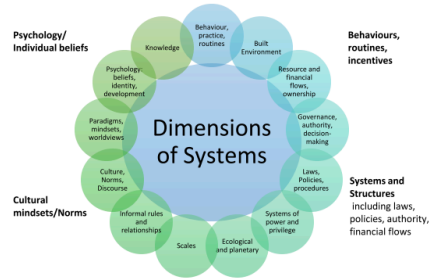
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#### Primer on Social Innovation and Systems Change



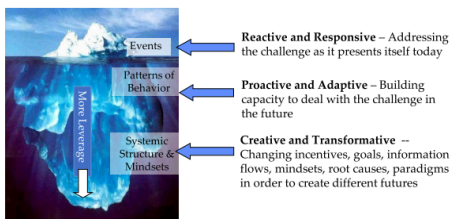
*"Collaboration is the human face of systems thinking"*  
- The Necessary Revolution, Smith et al., 2010

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#### The Iceberg Model of Systems



**ALL 3 are needed!!!**

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#### Complexity Calls for New Approaches

##### Simple/Complicated Problem

- Plan then act
- Explicit plans
- Formulate then implement strategy
- Eliminate contradictions
- Look for agreement
- Limit types of action
- Specify pathways and policies

##### Complex Problem

- "Act-learn" simultaneously
- Explicit plans *and* tacit knowledge, intuition
- Strategy Formation
- Work with paradoxes
- Generative relationships
- Multiple actions and experiments
- Min Specs/Simple Rules
- Emergence: Build on what grows

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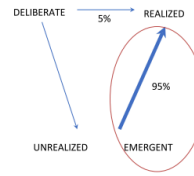
# CCWESTT 2024 Policy Forum Report

## Systems Competencies

- Seeing the whole**  
Applying systems approaches to see relationships between elements and wider context
- Perspective taking**  
Seeing the truth in differing viewpoints and working in the space between multiple worldviews
- Working with uncertainty and emergence**  
Being with ambiguity, the unknown, and the unknowable, and responding to what wants to emerge
- Navigating power**  
Understanding power dynamics, leveraging power effectively, and sharing power equitably
- Catalyzing collaboration**  
Fostering ethical engagement, and shared vision & action among diverse stakeholders
- Adaptive action**  
Listening, acting, reflecting & adapting in an iterative cycle of learning and innovation

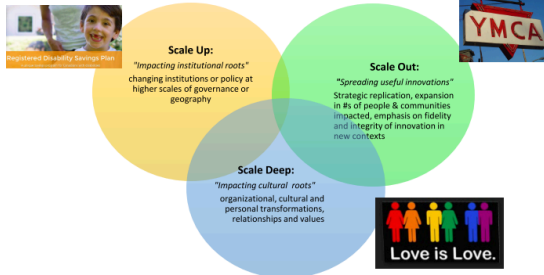
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## Planning vs. Emergent Strategy



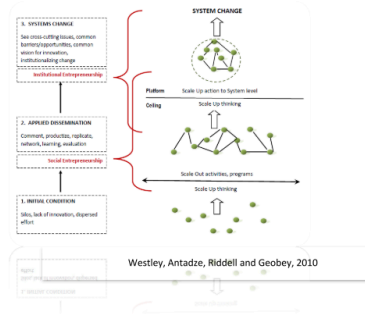
Mintzberg and Walters, "Of Strategies Deliberate and Emergent"

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## Pathways to Systems Change: Scaling Out to Scaling Up



Westley, Antadze, Riddell and Geobey, 2010

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## Scaling Up

*"Impacting institutional roots"*  
- Changing institutions or policy at higher scales of governance or geography

- Building a movement for change: changing definitions and motivations
- Develop clear understanding of relevant policy contexts, lobbying skills
- Identifying policy windows and opportunities to leapfrog
- Building partnerships with those with system change experience and unusual partners
- Continuous refinement of system understanding and identification of leverage points
- Finding and creating resources for escalating change



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## Scaling Deep

*"Impacting cultural roots"*  
- organizational, cultural and personal transformations, relationships and values

Scaling Deep works to grow and integrate new values into relationships, organizations, and cultures.

- This involves:
- Personal learning, transformations
  - New forms of relationship and organizing
  - New organizational forms
  - Media and storytelling
  - Rooting new cultures and values
  - Engaging the 'whole system' and many viewpoints



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# CCWESTT 2024 Policy Forum Report

**Some Cross-Cutting Lessons...**

**Make scale and impact a conscious choice:** scaling is both a strategic and a personal process – requires stepping into the mindset of being architects of future systems

**Conduct broad system-analysis to identify and focus on the roots of problems:** via collaborative problem and solution definition, integrating multiple perspectives, and systems mapping & thinking

**Embed the solutions into your initiatives or organizing DNA:** our work is always a “partial” solution to big systemic problems, so we need to *sow future seeds* of transformed cultures, institutions and behaviours by modeling the world we want in our relationship & actions *now*.

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**SCALING OUT** →

- Scaling Out Barrier: Shift focus from “fixing women” to fit into current unwelcoming SETT cultures.

**SCALING UP** →

- Scaling Up Barrier: Lack of legal obligations and accountability


**SCALING DEEP** →

- Scaling Deep Barriers: Performative allyship and performative equity

- Programming to recruit/train male allies to champion gender inclusion
- Humanising and decolonizing SETT fields through education including curricula, addressing outdated social norms of gendered roles within SETT and domestic spheres
- Acknowledging an intersectional approach to knowledge production and dissemination
- Work with governments at all levels to create strategic plans and legal frameworks to advance gender equality using examples such as European countries Iceland and Lithuania 2
- Build and track Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for equity, diversity and inclusion within organisations, include actionable items such as collecting disaggregated data, transparency, and consequences for not meeting goals
- Learning from the lived experiences of SETT students/professionals of all intersectional backgrounds
- Going beyond gestures and words to meaningful action
- Gender equity work IS work and must not rely on unpaid labour to move change forward
- Programming such as mentorship, Equity Resource Groups (ERGs) need to be examined for effectiveness and their reliance on marginalized members

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**Take a Systems View to Influence Systems**



- UNDERSTAND YOUR SYSTEMIC PROBLEM**  
Learn as much as you can about your system and how it behaves- map it
- Be realistic and strategic about facing **BARRIERS** to change in the system or problem domain
- PAY ATTENTION TO KEY INFLUENCES**  
The bigger picture matters
- Identify and make the most of **OPPORTUNITIES** for change in the system leverage points, allies and unlikely collaborators
- Listen to **WHAT’S WORKING?**- what’s already happening, at what scales?

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**Leverage Points for Breakout Group Discussion**

- Funding Models and Systems** - a feminist budget, gender-based analysis +, systems don't rely on unpaid labour, not-for-profit funding models
- Barriers to Participation** - includes: accessible childcare, role models, wraparound supports, unpaid labour, societal norms
- Safe & Inclusive Workplaces** - includes: gender-based violence, personal protective equipment, hiring practices, culture etc.
- Pay Equity & Advancement** - equal pay among and across professions, women in leadership, work expectations, dress code
- Building Power Through Collaborative Action** - organizations, companies, key stakeholders working with intentional efforts

Through our consultations and planning sessions we learned that CCWESTT has an important role to play in advancing policy at a federal level given the representation of members from across Canada, and to support members to engage in policy at a provincial level.

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**Breakout Group Discussion**

**STEP 1: UNDERSTAND YOUR SYSTEMIC ISSUE**

- Identify key elements of the system of interest and how it behaves – map it if you can
- Identify **targets**: who has the power to advance/change the system
- Identify **key influences** in the system – is there anything currently happening to move this issue forwards or backwards?
- What are the **barriers** to change in the system on this issue?

**STEP 2: IDENTIFY KEY OPPORTUNITIES**

- What’s working or has momentum on this issue already? at what scales? (localized in organizations, Provincially, Federally?)
- WHO needs to support and advance this? who else cares about this issue?
- HOW can you build power or momentum around this issue using opportunities?

**STEP 3: GENERATE STRATEGIES AND ACTION IDEAS**

- What strategies seem promising to take advantage of opportunities and address current barriers? Policy advocacy? Media engagements? New collaborations? Campaign ideas?

**STEP 4: IDENTIFY POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS**

- What are 2-3 concrete next steps

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# CCWESTT 2024 Policy Forum Report

## Appendix B

### Facilitator's Breakout Group Handout

**CCWESTT POLICY FORUM  
WORKSHEET FOR BREAKOUT GROUPS**

**Creating**

**STEP 1: UNDERSTAND YOUR SYSTEMIC ISSUE**

- Identify key influences in the system – is there anything currently happening to move this issue forwards or backwards? At what scales?
- What is holding this system in place? Beliefs? Policies? Incentives?
- Identify targets: who has the power to advance/change the system?

Targets Who can affect this issue?

→

What is holding it in place? Who benefits?

→

Describe Issue

**STEP 2: IDENTIFY KEY OPPORTUNITIES**

- Who needs to support and advance this? who else cares about this issue?
- How can you build power or momentum around this issue using opportunities?

**STEP 3: GENERATE STRATEGIES AND ACTION IDEAS**

- What strategies can take advantage of opportunities and address barriers?
- Brainstorm and identify leverage points for change
  - Policy advocacy? Media engagements? New collaborations? Campaign ideas?

Consider:

- How are you working across local, provincial, national scales and making the most of your network?
- What capacity is needed to do this?
- What issues could be powerful in public opinion?
- How can you grow your leadership and systems competencies?
- What collaborations could you expand or pursue?

**STEP 4: WHAT ARE SOME POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS?**

- What are 2-3 concrete next steps you can take to advance your ideas? It's OK if it is "do more research to understand the problem" or "engage more people to see if this strategy has traction"
- Be specific

Systemic Issue	Examples
Funding Models and Systems	feminist budget, gender-based analysis +, systems don't rely on unpaid labour, not-for-profit funding models
Removing Barriers to Participation	accessible childcare, role models, wraparound supports, unpaid labour, societal norms
Creating Safe & Inclusive Workplaces	gender-based violence, personal protective equipment, hiring practices, culture etc.
Pay Equity & Advancement	equal pay among and across professions, women in leadership, work expectations, dress code
Building Power: Improve Collaborative Action	Collaborations with organizations, companies, key stakeholders working with intentional efforts to build power for collective change, aligning on shared policy agenda

Questions:

- Key policy opportunities** – Federal and Provincial? What are our asks? Strategies for influence: How are we mobilizing around a shared policy agenda?
- Which issues could build leverage?**
- Communications and engagement opportunities?** How can we focus our communications on the levers for policy change?
- How do we build power and alliances to achieve policy change?** (scaling out + up)
- Organizing for Impact:** How can we act more like a movement? What areas can we work on together for most impact and what does this mean in terms of re-organizing our efforts? What capacities might we need to grow to focus on scaling up? How can we get there?

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**Dimensions of Systems**

**The Iceberg Model of Systems**

- Reactive and Responsive** – Addressing the challenge as it presents itself today
- Proactive and Adaptive** – Building capacity to deal with the challenge in the future
- Creative and Transformative** – Changing incentives, goals, information flows, mindsets, root causes, paradigms in order to create different futures

3

	Description	Main Strategies
Scaling Out:	Impacting greater numbers. Based on the recognition that many good ideas or initiatives never spread or achieve widespread impact.	<b>Deliberate replication:</b> Replicating or spreading programs or initiatives geographically and to greater numbers. <b>Spreading principles:</b> Disseminate principles, with adaptation to new contexts via co-generation of knowledge
Scaling Up:	Impacting law and policy. Based on the recognition that the roots of social problems transcend particular places, and innovative approaches must be codified in law, policy and institutions.	<b>Policy or legal change:</b> New policy development, partnering, advocacy to advance legal change and redirect institutional resources.
Scaling Deep:	Impacting cultural roots: Based on the recognition that culture plays a powerful role in shifting problem-domains, and change must be deeply rooted in people, relationships, communities and cultures.	<b>Spreading big cultural ideas</b> and using stories to shift norms and beliefs <b>Investing in transformative learning</b> and communities of practice
Cross-cutting strategies for scaling:	Cross-cutting strategies are common to many successful scaling initiatives and were not specifically associated with scaling out, up, or deep.	<b>Making scale a conscious choice</b> <b>Analyzing root causes and clarifying purpose</b> <b>Building networks and partnerships</b> <b>Seeking new resources</b> <b>Commitment to evaluation</b>

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