



Community Conversations Project Overview of project structure

The Community Conversations project was a series of meetings of community leaders, hosted by local AAUW branches, to encourage dialogue about the importance of preventing unintended pregnancies among adult women. Each Conversation also concluded with a discussion about what actions could be taken in their community. The project was ramped up slowly, with a “crawl, walk, run” mentality, taking about 18 months from initial planning to the first meetings. A pilot group of six Conversations was held in October 2011. Three more Conversations were held in September-October 2012. The state AAUW board is considering continuing the project after the Iowa Initiative office closes in December 2012.

Project start: The Iowa Initiative partnered with the Iowa chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW).

- Realized a natural partnership based on mission statements
- Met with president of the Iowa AAUW first. Once she was on board, we decided to form a committee of five AAUW representatives from across the state, who were selected by the AAUW president.
- The committee met a few times to discuss how the project would work, developing the concept for how the meetings would be run, what should be discussed, and what tools were needed to successfully host the meetings.

Planning & Preparation: The Iowa Initiative was primarily responsible for the development of the materials used during planning process, and for the meetings themselves. Drafts of the materials were run by the AAUW committee for their input throughout the process. Items created included:

- A short video to be shown at the beginning of the Community Conversation meetings.
- A toolkit for the AAUW branches who were hosting the Conversations. The toolkit was available in hard copy as a binder, and also in electronic format. A copy of the toolkit’s Table of Contents is on the next page.

Project Execution

- The AAUW branches were responsible for issuing invitations to the meeting, collecting RSVPs, and securing a meeting location with the necessary equipment to show the video.
- The Iowa Initiative paid for trained facilitators to lead the meetings. The toolkit will be updated to provide a more detailed facilitator guide so volunteer facilitators can be used for future meetings, should the AAUW continue to host meetings after the Iowa Initiative closes. That toolkit will be available on the lowainitiative.org website, which will be up until December 2013.

Evaluation

- Meeting participants were given a paper evaluation form prior to leaving the Conversation.
- Participants in the pilot group were also e-mailed the link to an electronic survey approximately 6-8 weeks after their meeting, to help determine what revisions, if any, were needed for the continuation – and betterment – of the project.

Let's start the conversation.



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