

WiP THEME: *Systems and Structures*

Here are some ideas for exploring the role of societal systems and structures in leadership with your Women inPower chapter:

1. Host a discussion. Some sample questions you can ask your group:

- Who holds leadership positions in our community? Who makes the decisions that affect all of us? Who holds power?
- Who has access to that power and those individuals?
- Could you tell us about a time when you made your voice heard and made a difference in a decision? What made it easy? What challenges stood in your way?
- Is it easy or hard for women to be part of the decision-making process and leadership teams in our community?
- What has stood in the way of other women achieving leadership in our community?
- What would we like to see happen differently?
- What can we do as individuals and as a group to move towards a more inclusive society? Would you be willing to make an individual commitment to do one thing to move towards that before our next meeting?

2. Work through an activity together.

- Get a large sheet of paper.
- Together (or if you are a very large group, you might want to break out into groups of six to 10), select one leader from your community who you all believe has a significant role. Write their name in the middle of the paper.
- Then, using Post-it notes or writing directly on the paper, brainstorm who has access to that person, who influences that person's decisions. (Think about individual people as well as institutions like businesses, the media, the government, etc.)
- Working together, regroup and draw lines between people and institutions, making a "map" that shows who has the most influence on the leader, and even consider among the influencers who has the most influence on each other.
- Share observations about power in your community. Are women represented in leadership and in the influencers of leadership? Where? Why? Why not?
- What could women do to increase their access to leadership and decision making in our community?
- What would we be willing to do as individuals and as a group to increase women's access to leadership?

3. Invite a speaker to talk about his/her experience. Some ideas for people you can ask:

- A government leader or a business leader.
- Journalists who write about business, politics or the nonprofit world.
- Ask your chapter for ideas. Pool your connections and identify someone you may already know.

How did it go? Did you find something worked particularly well or not so well? Did you follow the script or make up your own? What did your group learn? Share your experiences in the Women inPower Facebook group so we can all learn from each other.