

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION – GENDER EQUITY

Traverse City

January 31, 2020

GENDER EQUITY DEFINITION: Behavior, contributions, aspirations and needs of any/all genders are considered and valued equally. Access, rights, benefits, and opportunities are equal for all genders. Economic, political, and social equality of the sexes. Fairness of treatment for people regardless of their gender identity.

CARD QUESTION: What is the greatest challenge women of NW Lower MI face related to Gender Equity?

- Childcare/Family Leave/Economic
- Pay Equity
- Equality in Respect/Inclusion
- Diversity
- Women in Leadership

DIALOGUE Q1: What would be different if gender equity was achieved in NW Lower Michigan?

- Childcare/Family Leave/Economic
- Women in Leadership
- Cultural Bias
- Healthcare
- Pay Equity

DIALOGUE Q2: Critical Elements & Key Actions are needed for the greatest impact in moving gender equity forward in NW Lower MI?

- Childcare/Family Leave/Economic
- Allies/Conversations
- Diversity
- Cultural Bias
- Women in Leadership
- Education
- Pay Equity

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Achieving gender equality requires the engagement of women, men, girls, and boys.
It is everyone's responsibility.

Ban Ki-moon

REFLECTION:

What actions will you personally take within your spheres of influence to make Gender Equity a reality?

“We all have a responsibility to break barriers and level the playing field for women in our state”

Governor Gretchen Whitmer



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Gender equality is not a *woman's* issue. It is a *human* issue that affects us all.

Community Conversation on Gender Equity
Traverse City, January 31, 2020
Event Output Report – Detail

A community conversation on gender equity was held in Traverse City, MI. The event, a gathering of over 100 women, took place for the purpose of sharing experiences, insights, and ideas on a topic important to the lives and contributions of women, their families, and society overall.

Objectives:

1. Explore the state of gender equity within the community
2. Identify the change desired and vision for the future
3. Facilitate meaningful dialogue for the collaborative identification of key issues and opportunities for taking constructive and positive action for long-term impact
4. Prioritize actions for greatest impact in moving gender equity forward within the community
5. Understand the Governor’s experience, perspective and commitment to gender equity and supporting the women and families of Michigan
6. Provide opportunity for connections to form among participants
7. Inspire attendees to action within their spheres of influence

Summary by Event Segment

Gender Equity Question Card: What is the greatest challenge women of NW Lower MI face related to Gender Equity? [Note: Some answers have been combined due to frequent appearance. The numbers in italics reflect this.]

Equality in respect/inclusion: Keeping up with the “Gold Boys club.” Over-competitive males who are not educated to value women’s input and/or give them credit. Being recognizable by patriarchal men as valuable contributors to discourse. To be seen as an asset that can do the work that in the past has been traditionally dominated by men. Being in small town, women are treated as if they have less knowledge on various subjects. Having the female voice; being given the same respect as the male voice. Valued input from women should be taken seriously in all areas; Native women have other barriers that they have to overcome. Trying to be just as equal and getting the same. The prejudice of low expectations. Having an unrestricted voice on local planning. Getting taken seriously in professional roles in northern MI that have been traditionally filled by men. Being treated equal – the women are not given the opportunity to work anywhere except the cash register. A voice (3). Lack of respect when you try to expand yourself outside from gender conformity roles into male dominated areas. Being treated with respect on the same level as male colleagues (2). People tend to overlook out elderly women. That society still supports inequality and sexualization, and that we are “less man.” Educate men of all ages of the appropriate way to treat women. We are 100% people not property, we stand on our own feet. The lack of understanding for women who are breadwinners in their

household. Respect in the workplace.

Childcare/Family Leave/Economic: Resource inequality. Many of the women I regularly interact with struggle with economic equity in large part due to lack of access to greater affordable childcare. Affordable housing (4). Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), effects of domestic violence, early childhood and childcare, poverty, affordable housing, equal pay, affordable health care, early childcare funding. Affordable childcare (11). Childcare for 2 and under. Paid time off for caregivers. Unskilled jobs that pay more than what childcare costs; women are expected to mother and provide income to their family; single mothers face the most challenges. Poverty in our area opens women up to the possibility of abuse and exploitation. Lack of affordable and/or available childcare (cost and availability). Housing closer to TC (affordable). Family planning – maternity help/care post baby leave. Affordable childcare to pursue economic independence. Two: childcare availability and cost (2). Childcare and caregivers not being paid for work/credited. Parental/sick leave. Professional and financial security-mostly due to limited childcare resources available. Lack of adequate childcare disproportionately affects women. Economic disparity – it effects all other areas from political to education and job opportunities to even having a “seat at the table” when decisions are being made. Isolation – it is difficult for working poor women to find the resources they need to elevate their lives or to get out of the abusive/violent situations. Most of us working poor don’t even really have internet to look up how to get help. Access to after hour childcare. Women veterans (vs. men veterans) are invisible; poverty; working moms - childcare; housing in Traverse City; child welfare – too many Native children in foster care. Programs to get women ready for home ownership. Food security.

Pay Equity: Wages. Unskilled jobs that pay a living wage. Professional and financial security-mostly due to lower wages. At-will employment in combination with lack of wage transparency allows business owners to discriminate without consequences. Pay discrimination. Equal pay for women of all colors; overtime pay; hike min. wage. Minimum wage which has not kept up with the cost of living let alone increased to livable levels. Employment- salary and consideration for advancement. All women: pay equity. Financial equity with sustainable jobs that support whole person, including training and opportunities for the future...benefits, retirement, etc. Low pay, irregular hours, schedule out too late to plan. Fair and livable wages for stereo-typical female occupations, i.e., teachers, social workers, childcare. Pay equity (5). Money.

Women in Leadership: Representation; racial/minority voices; lack of political power/influence. Opportunity in government roles. Being recognized as potential leaders. Not enough opportunities for women to advance in the workplace. Access to the table with decision making. Being represented as leadership figures. Lack of representation that respects and progresses gender equity. I feel as though sometimes women seeking to obtain a leadership position are looked down upon, but we are very competent. Representation of women in our political environment and small business. Needing women of color at the table when decisions are being made; access, empowerment, mentorship, representation. Business ownership; mentorship for women management positions. Women are underrepresented in public office. Traditional gender bias, especially regarding leadership roles.

Violence and Safety: Abuse. Native women have 10 times the murder rate than any other “race.” Safety as a woman. Given the tight job market in northern Michigan, many women are hesitant to forward sexual harassment and /or hostile work environments including threats of violence - this occurs despite laws and protections. Probably people thinking that they’re bad or super sexual when they’re not; don’t want to be harassed. Safety and support in our own homes and community, re: domestic violence and sexual assault. Domestic violence and systems (police, courts, prosecutors) that do not take a stand against the abusers.

Healthcare: Access to affordable health care and access to the midwifery model of care to combat maternal/infant mortality. Women’s fertility rights – prochoice/ prolife. Healthcare - access, affordability, the right to make decisions for ourselves (abortion at risk at even fed level). Access to mental health care. Access to abortion. Problems getting inferior healthcare from male doctors who don’t take us seriously. Reproductive rights and accurate information (2). Childbearing age: right to choose/health quality. Shortage of access to health care (2). HEALTHCARE accessibility of women’s healthcare, specifically midwifery for all people. Lower cost for Rx. Stop warehousing mentally ill in jail. Mental healthcare for women.

Education: Mentorships for girls K-12 and post-secondary education. Sexism toward both male and female but mainly women during school. Inadequate funding for Traverse City Area public schools, lowest pupil funding in state. Support for single mothers that are trying to get extended education, training or degrees

Miscellaneous: Culturally-embraced misogyny. Teen women rights and knowing what equity even means. Feeling confident enough in themselves and knowing their opinions and thoughts matter. Elder women – engage in community and acknowledge contributions past – present-future. Our region has a growing aging population, but as a community we continue to overlook the value and contribution of older women. Overcoming motherhood penalty. Women are expected to do more at home and for kids which causes them to sacrifice time and energy and their careers.

Diversity: Valued input from women should be taken seriously in all areas; Native women have other barriers that they have to overcome. People tend to overlook out elderly women. Generational demographic legacy and personal privilege. Creating a family as Native American has become difficult in today’s society. Here in my region acceptance to embracing our culture as women to implement to our families has been the biggest struggle. Representation; racial/minority voices; lack of political power/influence. Access to this meeting (inclusivity) how many women here are waitresses, cashiers, stay at home moms have less, etc. Women veterans (vs. men veterans) are invisible; poverty; working moms - childcare; housing in Traverse City; child welfare – too many Native children in foster care. Equal pay for women of all colors. Native women have 10 times the murder rate than any other “race.” Needing women of color at the table when decisions are being made. Women face different challenges in their race, ethnicity, class, gender, etc. Gender neutral bathrooms for our transgender brothers and sisters.

Small Group Dialogue Question 1: What would be different if gender equity was achieved in NW Lower Michigan?

Childcare/Family Leave/Economic: Less children in poverty. Affordable childcare – goal of government funded (for all single mothers). Would not be a shortage of housing and it would not be an issue (2). State funded maternity leave remove barriers for mothers and business owners. Affordable childcare – universal tax supported; on-site day care/flexibility at your job supported. Accessible transportation. Coordinated care services that provide support for women and kids. Greater/better more access to childcare and accommodate non-traditional. More women owning homes/ownership. Affordable housing would be available and safe. More funding for disability services. Less people on assistance. Equal paternity leave for men. Childcare – costs are high, school system supports are minimal and early childhood support is low. Economic parity/no fear of debt. Financial security into retirement. Easier access to affordable childcare. Less fear of debt, dependence. Less poverty. Improved/expanded childcare. More freedom and safety with owning homes. More resources for people with disabilities.

Pay Equity: We would be wealthier/closed wage gap. No exploiting folks in services jobs with unreasonable hours and pay. Appropriate pay for childcare providers. Fair pay, self-sufficiency. Women would apply for more jobs and get them. Everyone should be able to make a living wage. Making what we should be making, not 2/3. Women would make as much as men. \$15 minimum wage – most women living in poverty make much less today. More vocational opportunity. Raise minimum wage. More freedom and safety with jobs.

Women in Leadership: There would be more women representing us at all levels. More diversity in our representatives. Mentorships of women for success in management level jobs. Access to affordable trainings – upskilling. More women in city/ county elected government and staff. More women in city/ county elected government and staff. More women owned businesses. More female cops/judges – trades. More women on top executive positions. Equal access to business opportunities. Expand K-12 activities for girls’ sports and arts (leadership opportunities). Entrepreneurial opportunities. More civic leadership & equal representation in community leadership. More women in influential positions.

Healthcare: Access to full reproductive healthcare in rural areas. Localized maternity care. Access to health care – affordable for all. Quality universal health care. Reproductive freedom/ better health. Women listened to, not ignored (i.e., in the health care system). Free access to feminine products/contraception. More access to health care for women’s health. Expansion of building awareness of behavioral/ health services especially to young mothers. Healthier mental/physical. Gender equality would result in better health care. Health care and abortion access. Access to menstrual products. Healthier mental/physical.

Violence/Safety: No victim blaming, change paradigm in victim-predator relationship. Less violence. More funding for support services addressing women’s needs in our community, including sexual assault. Feeling safe/security. It would be safer to raise boys/bring end to rape

culture. Doctors, police and everyone would listen to us (women + non-binary). Truly be safe – LGBTQ+ community, including more than just straight women.

Education: More education for women = less poverty.

Cultural Bias: Supportive of shared parenting. Eliminate presumption that we're less competent. Women would not have to work harder to be considered "as good" as men. Training of family and school system on healthy masculinity. Comfortable with grey hair. Less worry about the appearance/more focused on being heard. Baseline of respect not requiring women to establish credibility. More equity in childrearing/childcare responsibility (men take more responsibility). Women would be viewed as equal bread winner. Lack of breast feeding supports, particularly for working moms. Hard to adopt, ageism; dealing with career change is a challenge. Better division of housework and family care among men and women. Fewer restrictions. Culture change; DON'T CALL ME SWEETIE.

Allies/Conversations: Education on issues and awareness. More inclusion, get more focused on goals and less focused on personal biases. Education on inclusivity. Privilege to all. A lot more uncomfortable conversations; talk vs. conversation. People would be brave and listen. Safer to be a part of boys' club than support women. Working together/ more collaboration to solve problems. There would be a different conversation. Can we end the competition culture?

Economic/Community Growth: Keep young folks, more opportunities. More economic activity. Family-oriented businesses/ government. More local spending, investment. More stressful – success of any community; every person in community fully capable; whole; strong as our weakest member. The culture will shift from survivor mode to fully participating in community. All contribute to more time for women to contribute toward stronger communities.

Miscellaneous: Greater job satisfaction, work performance, feeling worth (for all professions). Healthier and happier women, children and families. Quality family time. Self-confidence in women would increase. ALE's education and training. Life should not be a struggle. More art in the world. Decrease "toxic" stress. No hostile work environment (promotion; lose job).

Diversity: More funding for disability services. More resources for people with disability. Doctors, police and everyone would listen to us (women + non-binary). Less racial profiling. Truly be safe – LGBTQ+ community, including more than just straight women. More protection for LGBTQ. Gender neutral bathrooms (a sign is not enough, behavior must change).

Small Group Dialogue Question 2: What critical elements/key actions are needed for the greatest impact in moving gender equity forward in NW Lower MI?

Childcare/Family Leave/Economic: Incentives from the state to build affordable housing/work force; Stream line process for builders to obtain funding/ housing incentive; Local support for affordable housing. State funded childcare; local task force that works with state to advise on local child care needs.

Parental leave – state funded/supported. Maternity protection (parental protection). Universal childcare. Track tax dollars to arrange money to things we care about. Education to manage finances. Childcare for under 2. Funding emergency for women; coordinated council. Available and affordable childcare (3). Actual affordable housing. Non-discrimination ordinances to be put into place; change the “at -will employment” to for cause housing protection, can’t evict families (discrimination). Support sensible childcare licensing. Latch key support for single parents; access & hours. State level policy --. Wages, etc that ensure everyone has access to care for their basic needs. Tax cuts/subsidize/incentive businesses and daycares to have affordable 24/7 hours or non-traditional. Communities – particularly here, living wage hard to find, safe affordable housing. Access to quality and affordable childcare.

Allies/Conversations: Women with privilege need to amplify the voices of less privileged folks. More community dialogues like this. Increase case though programs for male buy-in. Continue to listen/hear women and their concerns. Non-complacency. Community promise to embrace equity. Educate men on their biases [toward] women. Speak up against the inequality when you observe it or hear it. Elected officials who are respectful of gender differences. Improved listening skills. Women band together – work together.

Women in Leadership: Remove financial and cultural barriers to running for office and being at decision making table. More women running and winning for local state and national [office] (3). Represent more women/ hear their voices: immigrant, economic strained; intersection. Promote more women in leadership. Local pro-women political leadership. Interviewing women for the C-suite. Provide mentorship (women to women/girls). Leadership training at school (K-12). Loans for women-owned businesses. More women in higher positions, representing in government

Pay Equity: More wage transparency. Pay better for teachers. Creating affordable upskill opportunities. Raising the pay rate – living wage → be able to pay bills. Not being able to ask for previous pay

Healthcare: Universal affordable health care (mental, dental, comprehensive). Provide menstrual products + contraception. Manageable healthcare costs. Better understanding of family planning on an individual’s future. Health insurance – affordable or provided for all. Make a law for free feminine products/contraception (jail, schools, gov. buildings, public parks)

Violence/Safety: Hold perpetrators of abuse accountable. Empower women who are victims of intimidation by men: women’s advocacy, educate abusers/respect for all. Better support for victims of domestic violence. Better funding for behavioral health, sexual assault, people facing trauma → both removing stigmas and making help accessible to all who need it.

Education: Affordable and accessible education. Public education – early on – gender equity in curriculum; inclusive of ethnicity/heritage. More scholarship opportunities for non-traditional students. Education curriculum changed to include more role models – LGBTQ. Education – teach teachers to be less gender-based; introduce non-binary structures – dress codes,

bathrooms, clothing label roles. Early childhood education in equity & respect. Curriculum on equity, real life skills – gender. Sex education from an early age focus on consent; change the way gender-based roles are taught; eliminate focus on abstinence, replacing with consent focus.

Cultural Bias: Change the culture of how we respect women in all spaces. Do not objectify women (teach this; develop an appreciation). Educating and empowering younger women. Advocating for women to know they can do anything. Women need to get more involved; don't be afraid to run for office; apply for job, go back to school, speak up! Educate about the nature of power. All of us modeling/willingness to model a communication style respectful of the voices of women and men. Raise awareness of the consequences of gender equity (regional movement); profile file issues; public engagement. Empower self [sufficiency] from early age. Confidence to take action. Speaking up on the issues that relate to GE. Teaching empathy to young kids. Change of hearts and minds. Cultural shifts → arts and public media (can't make someone listen through legislation but can fund the arts). Recognizing women as powerful beings. Educating our girls – self-esteem, confidence, true self awareness. Girls → community strong. Education for a cultural shift; talk about it. Education for girls + women to understand their value and know how to promote themselves. Teach women to question men (without feeling like a bitch).

Miscellaneous: Culture shifts in non-profits to center and listen to voices of the impacted communities they serve. Register more people to vote; easier; Voting day a national holiday. Don't make feminism an "F" word; it's a human rights issue. Pass the Equal Right Amendment. Ceremonies or parks dedicated to women, women veterans (women as more than a mother). Money for non-profit organizations. Company mobilization. Respect modeled; deal with bullying issues; build people up. Early political education at relevant times; resources to help understand; access to voting. Establish fairness practices and community resources to hold employees/landlords accountable. Dialogue/initiatives for EQ at a local level. Women involved in service organizations/non-profits i.e., elks, rotary. Resources, opportunities to help rise people up; break down access to barriers. Register to and go vote. Critical thinking to enable people to access truth. Deep canvassing for social issues to help rural communities understand why services are needed and to gather support for funds and legislation. Put women and men in non-traditional roles. Put pressure on advertisers to be more gender inclusive and not display stereotypes of women. Ecological + political + spiritual together = real change. Worker owned co-ops. Eliminate stock market.

Diversity: Women with privilege need to amplify the voices of less privileged folks. Women's movement should include all issues. Represent more women/ hear their voices: immigrant, economic strained; intersection. Public education – early on – gender equity in curriculum; inclusive of ethnicity/heritage. Inclusive of all walks (age, race, economic class). Non-discrimination ordinances to be put into place; change the "at-will employment" to for cause housing protection, can't evict families (discrimination). Education curriculum changed to include more role models – LGBTQ. Education – teach teachers to be less gender-based;

introduce non-binary structures – dress codes, bathrooms, clothing label roles. Resources, opportunities to help rise people up; break down access to barriers. Ask more than typical decision makers and be more inclusive of other traditions (alternative and spiritual).

