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NHWI

Gender Ambassadors Panel (GAP):  
Contemporary Gender Equality Listening Session Report  
For NH

NH

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Note-taker| Carmen

## About the New Hampshire's Women's Initiative (NHWI):

The New Hampshire Women's Initiative (NHWI) is a new non-profit organization dedicated to continuing the legacy of success of our merging partners: the Commission on the Status of Women, the Women's Lobby and Alliance, and the Women's Policy Institute. The NHWI mission is to advance social, economic, and political opportunity and equality for women in New Hampshire.

The NHWI has a unique governance structure. Its board is supported by both a Founding Mothers' Panel, comprised of the founders of the merging partners, and a Gender Ambassadors Panel, a group of young women leaders who are interested in better understanding and re-framing the dialogue around gender equality issues in New Hampshire. This multi-generational sphere of influence will help the NHWI leverage both the rich history and accomplishment surrounding women's issues in New Hampshire and at the same time craft a new path forward for gender equality born out of contemporary thinking and needs.

## About the Gender Ambassadors Panel (GAP):

The goal of the Gender Ambassadors Panel (GAP) is to support the mission of the NHWI by informing its research, outreach, and advocacy with a better understanding of the gender equality issues that younger women and men identify as important to them. GAP members will work toward that goal by hosting Contemporary Gender Equality Listening Sessions in various geographic locations around the State. The Listening Sessions will be facilitated focus groups consisting of six to ten participants engaged in a formal discussion for up to ninety minutes using pre-determined questions. Results will be documented and shared with the NHWI Board. The Listening Session participants will come primarily from the existing networks of GAP members and are expected to be primarily women, however the method can be adapted to reach other networks and populations, including men.

## About the Network Facilitators:

The first round of listening session hosted by GAP members took place in the fall of 2011. The listening sessions generated so much interest that participants, board members, and other colleagues wanted to be a part of the process and host their own sessions! The NHWI Board and GAP members enthusiastically support this extension of the listening sessions to others in our community. Network Facilitators use the same facilitation packet, including the note takers table, and draft a report based on the content of their session.

## About the Authors:

*FACILITATOR BIO:*

*NOTETAKER BIO:*

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## Introduction and Background

This listening session was designed to solicit input from women who are members of the New Hampshire Bar Association and actively engaged in law practice. Invitations were made primarily, but not exclusively, to attorneys who are actively involved with the Women's Bar Association.

This listening session did not have a geographic focus, however all participants live and/or work in Hillsborough or Merrimack County. The majority of the participants work in Hillsborough County. Hillsborough County's population is 50.5 percent female. Median household income is \$69,321. Women own 26.3 percent of businesses.

## Methods:

Gaining insight into a community with the use of focus groups is a commonly used approach to qualitative research. Qualitative research is a systematic approach to understanding human thoughts, behaviors and motivations through thoughtful survey design, observation, and inquiry.

The GAP Listening Sessions are designed like focus groups where a facilitator and note-taker work together to gain insight into participant's thoughts and feelings about contemporary gender equality issues facing young women and men in NH.

Prior to conducting the listening sessions, each facilitator and note-taker is provided a facilitation packet that details instructions for conducting an effective focus group. This includes instructions for the specific roles of the facilitator and note-taker, the length of the session, and how to draft the report after the listening session.

## Location

## Participant Background

### Listening Session Format

The listening session followed a traditional focus group format, which included a two to three minute allotment per question, per person. Each session was designed to last two hours including introductions, participant feedback, a participant exercise, and concluding remarks.

## Summary of Findings:

The Summary of Findings is organized by each question asked at the listening session. Synthesis of material will occur at a later date when all of the listening sessions have been conducted. Please note that participants are identified only by a number to protect their privacy.

NEW HAMPSHIRE WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

GENDER AMBASSADORS PANEL CONTEMPORARY GENDER EQUALITY LISTENING SESSION

April 19, 2012

5:30pm

FACILITATORS: Lillye Ramos-Spooner, Rashida Mohamed

Note-Taker: Carmen

### PARTICIPANTS:

(First Name, Age, Zip Code, Occupation)

#### FIRST NAME NOT FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

- 01-
- 02 - Psychiatrist
- 03 - Social Worker, 03104
- 04 - Victim/Witness Advocate
- 05 - Restaurant owner
- 06 -
- 07 -
- 08 - State worker
- 09 - Social Worker, 03103

#### 1. What brought you here tonight?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
	To talk to other women about gender equality.	Looked frustrated about the fact that black women are not being hired for higher position. We sensed the participant's frustration regarding minority women not being hired for higher position.
2	Identified herself as a three-term commissioner that was eager to engage in dialogue with other women regarding this issue. She was quiet most of the time, but she was emotional during the dialogue.	No non-verbal cues from her, she was very observant.
3	Very eager to have this conversation with women in my community.	Non-verbal cues, used hand signals and worked with co-facilitator in

		order to control the discussion.
4	Co-facilitator stated that looking forward to hear what others think and feel about gender equality.	
9	Was the transcriber and she stated that she was curious to hear from other minority women.	
7	Was here to engage in conversation with likeminded women.	Non-verbal cues, used her hands a lot while talking, she appeared a bit intimidated by the conversation and the jargon that was used.
8	As women who works with minority health issues, she was very excited to be in the room.	

## 2. How do you define gender equality?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
	Gender equality is a human rights issue, young girls. It's still a boys world, and women that come here from other countries. We need to look at how they adapt and changes that need to we made; women are not in high ranking positions in management	
8	From the restaurant business, I can only talk about culture, for Latinas, in my restaurant I only work with women. I don't have health insurance, can't afford the deductible. Insurance shouldn't cost that much, \$5000 deductible, not including children.	
1	We all work together; there is no difference. I don't see places where they only want women - same energy, assembly work. I don't see the difference; or even doctors, they are the same, why are they going to	

	pay me less.	
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3. How have you, in NH, experienced gender equality or inequality? - What issues related to gender equality do you think are most important for NH women to address

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
5	As owners of restaurant, when we incorporated, we went to a law firm. He insisted that he was president, and she was secretary. I was so pissed, and I am the one who writes the checks. When you come to see me, my husband is there doing nothing, but I am doing the job.	
8	Going through a divorce, the things you need to do. We have to encourage women to keep their names, separate bank accounts; we have to encourage them, credit card separate.	
	I don't know about inequality, men make more than women, doing the same job.	
4	Police depart test has less requirements than male; but to do the job, you have to be and do the same. There is no difference.	
	When a child is sick, who stays home? That affects the hiring process, the employer thinks about it before they hire a woman.	
	When I was pregnant, I didn't get maternity leave, never. Three children, working full time 17 years ago. And for my son they gave me one month and then back to work.	
	Women work hard, long days and then they go home and they have to do more - housekeeping, taking care children. Women	

	do work at home and then they go to work.	
	I worked at a dry cleaning, very hard, to do all those jobs, but they paid me less. They give the job to a man, and he gets paid more; that is not fair.	
	Women underemployed, refugees and immigrants have the worst jobs, work more hours, under pressure.  I had two daughters and they are educated, but they don't get the same respect men do. Daughter working for a man was always pressured; even when she was right, they put down your work, so that others go along with it.	
	For me, we all go to work and then go home and work some more, undervalued work. As a stay home mom, you don't get the education part; you are so busy taking care of the house, and the children, and the husband, and he thinks he has the right to come home and be taken care of.	
	My daughters, they hold very good positions, but they still have to fight with the men a lot, just to be there. One of them said she was trying to get rid of him, men feel threatened.	
	Personal level, when I am in a room, and there is a men, automatically, women are always assumed to do the menial jobs, it is important not to assume.	
	We need to encourage women to go for sciences or engineering.	
	Subtle discrimination is more predominant, if I go way back, at 86 years old, women were supposed to be teacher, or nurse,	



	secretary, always male dominated society.	
	10% quota for women or minorities in my college, mandatory maternity leave. When I started working, everything that we won we had to fight for, that's why am angry that we have to fight for it again, losing ground.	
4	I thought I came to the United States because of equality. I was dismissed from school because I didn't want to wear the shawl. I was half of a human being, just because I am a woman, and then I came here, and we are still fighting.	
	Going through the same, similar, I have concerns, health care the big one. I have two kids in college. I got involved in a lot of programs geared to self-sufficiency. I am doing the job of 2 or 3 people; my kids are in college in Mass., had to purchase Mass health, the other one didn't qualify.	
	<p>In order to become self sufficient, I had to quit my job and do freelance, and then I can be there for my child. We should not have to give up the bond with the children by going to work all day and relying in day care.</p> <p>The process is self-defeating a program. I took advantage of system; I have section 8, but I am against having handouts, and constantly having to disclose my information.</p> <p>Facts don't change, but reporting requirements do. We see it too in the organization. We make people jump through hoops, demeaning, humiliating. System is humiliating.</p> <p>There should be an unified system, but it doesn't work.</p>	

	I have to reimburse housing authority for over income, threat letters, etc.; I was working practically only to pay childcare. There was a confusion and now I have to reimburse housing for unreported income in 2010.	
	Gaining independence, as a woman is very difficult, no equal income, or access to health care, graduate from college with so much debt and interest.	
	A friend of mine is paying 17% in school loans; men will get better paying jobs.	
	Yes. I worked in different fields, as interpreter; many women, but not management, also in addictions field, and that is also dominated by men, and also in college now, and I am not directly affected in the work place, because I left the job.	

How is it different for minority women?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
	Work ethic for minority women is different; white women are out at 5pm, and I am still here taking care of things. I don't see the passion in white women.	
	We have experienced in my country, a woman union they fighting for equal rights for women, very hard, but here. When I came to the USA, women had experience fighting for her rights, that's what I thought.	
	There is a man mentality yet, but if we compare with other countries is better here, Arab countries, the Koran, if a girl is born, the father is not happy.	

	In Sudan, women can't be witness in court; there has to be two women to be equal to man. I would not challenge that.	
7	Here the situation is different. I am journalist; when I worked the news, I faced big problems. When I went to OO for a job, they give me interview, the man invite me to his office to discuss the interview, but unfortunately, I don't know, immediately he called me. 'Don't accept this job.' 'Why not?' 'Because you are single woman, you can't go to far area to make interview and meet men, they will say they love you.' He made me afraid; I was mature.	
	In the USA, equal opportunity, yes, but sometimes with white people, they consider them before me; race is an issue.  Minority women's issues aren't brought to the table, because they are considered just a little percent. Nowhere in the women's initiative have they collected the numbers, and we need to include. NH has changed, more diverse, by age, country of origin, work experience; we are the ones struggling the most.	
	Developing women's potential has to mean political potential, we have to change policy, We are angry, because we are going to make recommendations to a very elite group of white women, on how we want to make change.	
	What we do on TV, public access, there is no presence of women of color, but we are struggling all the time, even if I don't look it. But now that we talk about it, I see it.	
	Women and health care, and in schools, police depts., we need role models; young	

	women need mentors, and boys need to see it happening.  Teach women how to access resources for education. Women need help. We need to make sure we network, and we delegate to other women.	
	We want to maximize the potential for developing minority women and girls in NH, appointing them to boards, institutions, etc.	
	Develop some type of resource, where when somebody calls asking for help in certain areas, that they have somebody right there to provide resources and to mentor.	

4. Post-it exercise

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation

Closing remarks

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation

Closing remarks from participants:

None.

## Limitations:

## Facilitator and Note-taker observations and concluding thoughts:

### Appendix A: Listening Session Script

#### I. Welcome and Introductions (\*slightly shortened for this listening session)

- Thank participants for coming
- Distribute participant information sheets (and agendas if using)
- Introduce facilitator and note taker
- Overview of New Hampshire Women's Initiative
  - The New Hampshire Women's Initiative is a new non-profit organization
  - A unification of:
    - The Commission on the Status of Women
    - The Women's Lobby and Alliance
    - The Women's Policy Institute
  - ***NHWI Mission: To advance social, economic and political opportunity and equality for women in New Hampshire.***
  - Has a Board of Directors and two advisory panels
    - Founding Mothers
    - Gender Ambassadors Panel
- Objective of Listening Sessions & GAP
  - Gender Ambassadors Panel will support the mission of the NHWI through researching and better understanding the gender equality issues that younger women and men identify as important to them.
  - Members of GAP will host a series of Contemporary Gender Equality Listening Sessions in various geographic locations around the State.
- Introduction of participants: *First name, age, town, occupation*

#### II. Overview of the Process

- Description of plan for Listening Session by facilitator
- How discussion will be documented during the Session
- How a report will be prepared after the Session
- Assurance of confidentiality (inform participants that any report will only identify participants by age, zip code, and industry/occupation)

## I. Establishment of Ground Rules (\*slightly shortened for this listening session)

- Ground rules encourage active and honest participation and a safe discussion environment.
- If a participant violates a ground rule, they will be politely reminded of the ground rule.
- If a participant continues to violate a ground rule, they will be asked to leave the group.

### Ground Rules (The 5 A's)

#### Participants of this group...

- Agree to maintain confidentiality
- Agree that there are no “right or wrong” answers to the questions
- Agree to speak honestly based on our own experiences
- Agree that only one person will speak at a time
- Agree to respond to one another politely and respectfully

## II. Discussion of Contemporary Gender Equality

1) What made you interested in attending today's listening session on gender equality?

2) How do you define the term gender equality?

What does gender equality mean to you?

What does gender equality not mean to you?

What issues or subjects do you think about when you think of gender equality?

3) In New Hampshire, have you experienced or observed gender equality or inequality?

## III. Post-it Note Exercise

What issues relating to gender equality do you think are most important for the New Hampshire Women's Initiative to address?

**(Each participant receives 3 standard yellow Post-it notes and a black sharpie; they must write their top three issues, one per Post-it note. Ask them to put the Post-its up on a white board or wall. Then each person gets one red dot. They must place their red dot on their top issue, which doesn't have to be one of the ones they originally wrote.)**

*\* Facilitator must collect the Post-its and return to the GAP Committee when complete*

#### **IV. Wrap-up**

- Do you have any other thoughts or ideas that you really want to share about gender equality in NH? (\*not asked at this listening session due to time constraints)
- Thank you to participants by facilitator
- Collect participant information sheets; distribute NHWI information sheets

#### **V. Adjourn**