



ASPEN FORUM ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

SUSTAINING THE MOVEMENT: CHANGING THE CULTURE

PROMISING PRACTICES ACROSS SECTORS TO STOP SEXUAL HARASSMENT



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THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

ASPEN FORUM ON WOMEN AND GIRLS



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Who we are

The Aspen Forum on Women and Girls lifts up promising ideas and leaders and builds on the strength of families to help women and girls in the US and around the world move toward opportunity. The Forum is a dynamic thought leadership effort that taps perspectives across sectors, generations, race, and ethnicity, and curates conversations that confront the most pressing and opportune issues of our time.

The Forum leverages the convening power of the Aspen Institute for a series of conversations and programs with diverse, creative, and provocative social justice leaders to advance women's economic justice, political participation, civic engagement, and leadership. Our goal is to create a space for the next generation of conversations, leaders, and solutions that unlock the full potential of women and girls in the U.S. and across the globe.

Sustaining the Movement: Changing the Culture

Over the past year, sparked by high profile cases of sexual harassment against powerful men, and sustained by the power of #MeToo and TIME'S UP, a national clarion call has been sounded. It is a call for change that seeks to transform power dynamics and create a safe climate of respect for women. Women from various sectors are seizing upon renewed awareness as an opportunity to engage their sectors — business, the sciences, academia, medicine, journalism, the entertainment industry, the military, and the philanthropic and non-profit world —to look more closely at their own workplace culture and practices to create safe, inclusive, and respectful environments wherever women live, learn, and work.

What are the most effective measures to stop sexual harassment in the workplace and in society? How can changemakers in various sectors learn from each other to identify shared priorities, pressure points, and leverage opportunities, and expand the use of best practices and resources? The Aspen Forum for Women and Girls gathered leaders from these sectors for a roundtable, **Sustaining the Movement: Changing the Culture** on October 31, 2018 to connect and share their insights, strategies, innovations, and ideas. These leaders share a commitment to empower women across race, generation, and sector, to create more effective accountability structures, especially for the next generation of women so that they can live free from sexual harassment.



(left to right) Ana Oliveira, Jeannette Pai-Espinosa



(left to right) Rene Redwood, Jess Ladd, Fatima Goss Graves, Lorraine Hariton

Sharing What Works: Best Practices and Strategies

The participants of this roundtable representing the media, academia and the sciences, philanthropy, private sector, policy leaders, foundations and nonprofits offered powerful observations and insights on the current political and societal climate and challenges, the strategies that are succeeding across sectors, the needs that remain, and how we can take effective steps forward.

Informed by recent public opinion research on sexual harassment, participants engaged to better understand how sexual harassment manifests in each field, identify emerging innovations in the field, and learned examples of best practices.^{1,2,3}

Increased awareness of the struggles and challenges facing women in the workplace and beyond have inspired organizations everywhere to make changes. But at the heart of a deeper cross sector understanding of solutions is information. Here are highlights of how leaders in entertainment, science, academia, the media, business, the military, the workforce, and philanthropy shared some of the moves they have made to create better environments for women.

Entertainment

#MeToo and TIME'S UP gained massive attention from the entertainment industry participation. Here is how the movements are moving beyond Hollywood and into the workplace.

- TIME'S UP came about in the fall of 2017 in the midst of a reckoning about powerful men in Hollywood and other industries who have been abusers. Its reach has expanded beyond Hollywood and beyond the United States, with Time's Up and affiliates working across industries and around the world.
- Today, the movement is thinking about how it can fit into the existing ecosystem of organizations that have been historically doing this work. Building on its initial commitments to promote safety, equity, and dignity at work, and also being inclusive and intersectional, the movement now has four primary areas of focus:



(left to right) Shelley Whelpton, Lenora Lapidus, Jenn Klein, Joanne Smith

1. Eliminating discrimination and harassment in the entertainment industry;
2. Leveraging the powerful Time's Up network to raise visibility on an array of issues that support the movement as a whole;
3. Working on addressing the culture itself and diversifying who gets to tell the stories; and
4. Changing corporate practices, laws, and policies, with attention to women who are at the biggest disadvantage at work.

Science and Academia

In the sciences and at academic institutions, a groundbreaking report has fueled advancements and adoption of practices to make progress.

- The National Academy of Sciences produced a report on sexual harassment against women with findings on how institutions might be able to intervene.⁴ This is part of an effort to change behaviors and make the sciences and academic institutions more welcoming and supportive for women. It also offers proof of the prevalence of sexual and gender harassment in the sciences and its impact on women's professional and educational success as well as their mental and physical health. To note, many of the findings in the National Academy of Sciences report affirm the findings in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commissions report from 2016.⁵



(left to right) Ashley Bear, Billy Williams

The report is leading to action in professional scientific societies — and there is big potential for impact at that level, as these professional groups are not bound by the same restrictions as academic institutions. The American Geophysical Union is building a coalition of science societies to address this issue more effectively. A major area of progress is the recognition that harassment is damaging the integrity of research, with some societies reclassifying harassment as scientific misconduct and considering this behavior when making decisions for scientific honors and awards. More information on the report, its findings, and the best practices it cites can be found at: sites.nationalacademies.org/shstudy/index.htm.

- One initiative taking hold in the sciences is SEA (STEM Equity Achievement) Change, seachange.aaas.org. SEA Change is a new initiative from the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences (AAAS) and inspired by Athena SWAN (Scientific Women's Academic Network) in the United Kingdom, where organizations commit to adopting ten principles that support gender equity for women in STEM employment in higher education and research. With SEA Change, AAAS seeks to spark a transformative change to diversity and inclusion in STEM disciplines at U.S. academic institutions.
- On the academic institution side, there needs to be a better process for survivors to report abuse in the campus setting. Many survivors consider the reporting of the assault and the response they receive to be as traumatizing as, if not more traumatizing than the assault itself. Such experiences diminish students' and bystanders' trust in their schools and in social institutions mandated to protect them, and too often erode confidence in seeking justice for experiences of assault well beyond post-secondary education. Innovative platforms like Callisto, www.projectcallisto.org, offer a better process for students, one that they can trust, to report their assaults with agency and transparency. It also collects data on the process, reporting rates, and the rates of re-offending by the perpetrators.



(left to right) Gloria Riviera, Marjorie Sims

Media and Journalism

Attendees representing the media and journalism

identified two goals: creating a better working culture for women in newsrooms and reshaping the media landscape and how the news covers sexual harassment.

- Press Forward and TIME'S UP are working together to dramatically reduce sexual harassment in the newsroom. Women are leaving the media after experiencing harassment as early as at the internship level. There's also an effort to look at how the media has covered incidents over the past year, and how it can adequately and fairly report on issues beyond Hollywood and the corporate world.
- There are many challenges to reshaping the media landscape. Hollywood stories tend to get more attention than stories of low-wage working women, and there's a constant need to put forward only the most compelling stories. There is also a media structure that has operated a certain way for years and a culture of the overworked newsroom that makes taking the time to address these issues more challenging.

- The Freedom Forum Institute, through its Power Shift Project, is an industry-wide response to concerns about sexual misconduct in media organizations and a catalyst for change to create safer, more equal and diverse newsrooms. It provides Workplace Integrity training for media organizations with the goal of eliminating sexual harassment and producing opportunity, especially for those who have historically been underrepresented in media's most powerful roles. Learn more at Powershiftproject.org.



(left to right) Jenny Yang, Myla Calhoun

Business and Workforce

Attendees representing the private sector and working women shared what works when advocating for women, from the corporate suite and in lower-wage jobs.

- In every industry, there are costs for harassment in the workplace. Women leave jobs and entire industries, damaging their lifetime earning potential and hurting their families. Companies perform better when they are intentional about support and inclusion for women and employees of color.
- At the corporate level, men have the power to bring major solutions as allies and advocates. One example is Men Advocating Real Change (MARC), a program at Catalyst, which was created 13 years ago to engage men on gender equity and educate them on effective and positive role at their workplaces. MARC trainings encourage men to leverage their privilege and speak up when they see bad behavior.
- It is also important to consider the different needs of low-wage working women, who are often denied protections because of their immigration status. Laws protecting workers should extend to everyone, from rideshare drivers to agricultural workers and everyone in between. We also need to recognize how other issues, like the minimum wage and the treatment of working mothers, come into play.

Military

This part of the discussion went over the large-scale changes needed in the military workforce to better support women, and how to make them a serious priority.

- In the military, a large-scale, sweeping change is needed in all security agencies and the firms they work with. This goes beyond just sexual harassment and should also include the intimidating, hostile, and offensive behaviors that foster a culture of harassment. There is a need to establish a common understanding of which behaviors are unacceptable.

- To make this work, it must be a priority at the highest leadership levels, with training at all levels, and performance reviews that are tied to diversity and inclusion efforts. At the same time, we need to understand that the old models are not working. The same people and culture that have built a hostile environment cannot be tasked with shaping the solutions. The practice of engaging the same firms, often with leadership that has fostered the cultures that currently exist, to address these very problems also needs to change.

Philanthropy

Attendees shared how philanthropic leaders can work at the community level to support progress.



(left to right) Ingrid Saunders Jones, Cathy Trost, Lorraine Hariton, Anne Mosle

- There is a need for philanthropy to act with a sense of urgency and accountability, while considering the intersections of issues like racial and gender discrimination and forging partnerships accordingly.
- Problems and solutions often live in the same place, and philanthropy needs to support the people most affected by the issues philanthropic organizations work to address. This means saying yes; making it easy for people to work with organizations and providing visibility to the people who need it most.

Exploring a Shared Blueprint of Action to Change Power Dynamics

A deeper discussion of shared challenges and opportunities, together with the specific accomplishments and advances within the past year, shape the framework of action. Leaders across sectors and interests can come together to create far-reaching positive change for women in the workplace and beyond. We need to work together and to recognize that progress has been made, notably the progress in ten states that have strengthened their laws against sexual harassment, and build upon those positive steps. In doing so, we must emphasize believing women and keep support for survivors at the center. We need to focus on transparency and accountability and get clear on what accountability and consequential action looks like. We must activate male allies and engage them on creating a stronger climate of respect for women.

A path forward also includes actions that:

- Depolarize and depoliticize the issue, so that focus remains on the behavior of sexual harassment, including sexual coercion and unwanted sexual attention;
- Anticipate and counter the backlash;
- Translate cultural momentum into political momentum;
- Explore, in collaboration with men, the development of a restorative justice model that has a clear definition and understanding, emphasizes accountability and offers a path forward for men to “right the wrongs”;
- Make ideas like being an “upstander” the norm;
- Create institutional change (in companies, the media, government) at every step and rank;
- Build the capacity to sustain #MeToo's momentum with an emphasis on intersectionality and understanding of systemic issues;
- Consider the other forms of discrimination that intersect with inequality for women;
- Keep support for survivors at the center and continue to uplift survivors as leaders;
- Create a core message platform and framework, get clear on what “it” is when we refer to “it”;
- Embrace and support both champions and confronters; and
- Engage, listen and strategize across generations.

The other side of sexual harassment is a culture of dignity, respect and opportunity, and it's within our grasp. There are many challenges and setbacks to consider, but we need to articulate a positive vision for the future that includes everyone. Cultural change and institutional transformation are possible, but they do not happen overnight. We need to be committed to pushing forward and bending the arc toward justice.



(left to right) Debra Ness, Ingrid Saunders Jones, Peggy Clark

End Notes

¹ Ipsos. 2018. Ipsos/NPR Examine Views on Sexual Harassment and Assault. Washington, DC. Chris Jackson, Mallory Newall, Emily Chen. <https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/news-polls/NPR-Sexual-Harassment-and-Assault>.

² NPR, 2018. On #MeToo, Americans More Divided by Party than Gender. Washington, DC. Tovia Smith. <https://www.npr.org/2018/10/31/662178315/on-metoo-americans-more-divided-by-party-than-gender>.

³ The Global and Mail, 2017. Trump, Trudeau, and the patriarchy. Washington, DC. Michael Adams. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/trump-trudeau-and-the-patriarchy/article35118698>.

⁴ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2018. Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24994>.

⁵ U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2016. Select Task Force on the Study of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: Reports of Co-Chairs Chai R. Feldblum & Victoria A. Lipnic. Washington, DC: www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/task_force/harassment/report.cfm#_Toc453686297.