

## **Beyond Surviving to Thriving: Building a Gender Equitable Economy Based on Womens' Lived Experience**

March 7, 2023

### **SPEAKERS**

#### **Mona Masri (moderator) – Asset Funders Network**

Mona Masri is a Senior Director for Asset Funders Network (AFN). She works to advance AFN's mission by leading its national programming around guaranteed income and intersectional and intergenerational issues related to the care economy. She also manages AFN's place-based efforts in both the Bay Area and California.

Mona's 25 years' experience in community economic development and asset building/preservation encompasses leadership roles in the public, private and non-profit sectors. Her efforts around supporting collaborative initiatives and advocating for policy change are driven by an ideal to reduce racial economic inequities. Her previous experience includes consulting with foundations to design and deepen their strategic focus on key solutions to address intersectional issues and solutions which can reduce both the gender and racial wealth gap. She had led the development of national publications focused on better understanding the issues, challenges and opportunities for funders and policy makers to address the women's wealth gap.

Mona has long been motivated to support wealth building in lower-income communities through philanthropic investments and the development of innovative community-based solutions. She has led statewide efforts for Citi's Community Development Group in California which included supporting the development of responsible financial products such as peer lending circles. Mona also managed the Northern California office of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), a leading international non-profit humanitarian aid organization where she established a Financial Opportunity Center to support the economic security and mobility needs of refugees in Oakland.

#### **Celine Apollon – Aspen Institute, Financial Security Program**

Céline Apollon is a researcher, urban planner, and designer by trade and a self-taught filmmaker. All of Céline's work is driven by her passion to use a variety of methods to lift up the voices of black and brown communities around the world to stimulate change. She has a Bachelor's degree in Economics from Georgia Tech and a Master's degree in City Planning as a Moelis Fellow from the University of Pennsylvania. Her community and economic development work has been in collaboration with government, nonprofit, academic, and private sector partners both domestically and internationally. Recently she co-directed an award-winning video called "as a WHOLE," for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which highlights the voices of black residents who have

suffered from environmental and racial injustice in Eastwick, Philadelphia. She is currently living in Brazzaville, Congo working on a documentary focused on highlighting the role, importance, and daily struggle of four Bantu mothers to advocate for improved policy and infrastructure to working mothers in Congo. In addition, since June 2022, she has been honored to work on the Women in the Economy (WE) research + action project initially as a graduate fellow and currently as a Senior Research Partner. She has led the data analysis, design, and content development processes for capturing the key challenges and solutions women are lifting up through interviews and survey responses. Currently, Céline is preparing with Heather to hit the road and creatively shine light on women's stories gathered from WE.

### **Wendy Chun Hoon, Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor**

Wendy Chun-Hoon serves as the 20th director of the Women's Bureau, appointed by President Biden on February 1, 2021. Wendy is skilled at coalition building, bridging strategy across grassroots community organizing, and public sector policy making at state and national levels. She has held senior positions in Maryland state government and private philanthropy, overseeing large-scale, results-driven initiatives for worker and family economic justice.

For the past 10 years, Wendy's led Family Values @ Work, a national network of grassroots coalitions that have won more than 60 new paid leave policies bringing new rights to 55 million workers and their loved ones and are organizing to win greater access to child care, and fair wages and employment conditions for workers. Recognizing the ways in which her own family would be excluded from new policies for paid time to care, Wendy spearheaded the development of the Family Justice Network, building cross-movement organizing among paid leave advocates, communities of color, groups working for reproductive and disability justice, equality for LGBTQ individuals, and organized labor that has made inclusive family recognition a hallmark of the paid leave movement. Under Wendy's leadership, FV@W's staff and board grew and are now majority women of color. She was also instrumental in bringing together dozens of organizations to form a coordinated national campaign known as Paid Leave for All.

Born and raised in Hawaii, Wendy graduated from Vassar College before earning master's degrees in Philanthropic Studies and Nonprofit Management from Indiana University. An avid soccer player, Wendy lives with her wife and their two kids in Silver Spring, MD.

### **Dena L. Jackson Texas Women's Foundation**

Dena L. Jackson, Ph.D. is Chief Strategy Officer at Texas Women's Foundation where she has served since 2012. In this role, she oversees the effective business operations,

ensuring a strong and capable team is in place to transform the lives of women, girls and their families across Texas while also driving Foundations research initiatives. Following 14 years in healthcare administration and consulting, Dr. Jackson joined the nonprofit arena in 2001 starting with the Susan G. Komen Foundation training staff and volunteers around the U.S. to develop, manage, and evaluate local breast cancer programs. Later, Dr. Jackson opened both the Foundation Relations and Research Development offices at the University of Texas at Dallas during five years as Assistant VP of Research Development.

A native Texan, Dr. Jackson earned her Doctoral degree in Health Studies at Texas Women's University. She is a graduate of both Leadership Texas and Leadership North Texas. Currently, she serves as co-chair of Asset Funder's Network, Membership co-chair for Philanthropy SW and Advisory boards of Early Matters Dallas and AFN North Texas. She spends her free time cooking, reading, playing with her two cats and one dog and traveling with her husband, Bob.

### **Josie Kapelini, Family Values at Work**

A national leader, social worker, organizer and vocal advocate for justice and liberation for Black and Indigenous people, immigrants and people of color, Josephine Kalipeni has served as the executive director of Family Values @ Work (FV@W) since October 2021.

Kalipeni is an expert on care with a race- and gender-equity lens and believes that the future of work must center the caregiving infrastructure. Under her leadership, the economic justice-focused FV@W nationwide network of more than two dozen organizations is mobilizing to address the most pressing issues facing working families. This includes paid family and medical leave, earned sick days and affordable, high-quality childcare. To date, as a result of FV@W and its partner organizations' state and federal efforts, more than 55 million workers have been impacted positively by paid sick days and family leave wins.

Born in Malawi, in southeast Africa, Kalipeni has witnessed firsthand the inequities and systemic failures that plague both the poorest and wealthiest countries in the world and believes that those most impacted by the problems are closest to the solutions. As a millennial caregiver herself, Kalipeni is committed to advancing a culture of care that recognizes and values caregiving and caregivers, and fostering a society and economy in which all people have the rights and supports they need to live and thrive with dignity.

The oldest of six children, Kalipeni and her family moved from Malawi to the United States when she was a child and her father, an academic focused on geography and infectious disease, joined the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Kalipeni attended the University of Illinois-Urbana as an undergraduate, studying sociology and political science, with the intention of becoming a lawyer. Her career trajectory changed when she began working with [Generations of Hope](#), an innovative nonprofit that facilitates diverse, intergenerational, “intentional neighboring” communities that provide support for vulnerable children and youth and families – particularly those with adopted foster children – and purposeful lives for elders.

Driven by her experience, Kalipeni then earned a masters degree in social justice and community development at Loyola University in Chicago and launched a successful career in policy and organizing that centers on the most marginalized and seeks to dismantle racism and the narratives of individualism, scarcity and “the deserving.”

Prior to her leadership appointment, Kalipeni served as deputy director of the organization. She previously worked as a strategy consultant and was director of policy and federal affairs for Caring Across Generations and has published several policy research briefs. Kalipeni has served on outreach and policy committees for political campaigns and the board of directors for a number of organizations, including the National Academy for Social Insurance, American Association of Caregiving Youth, and Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women.

Kalipeni is a communications fellow at [The Opportunity Agenda](#).

### **Heather McCulloch, Aspen Institute, Financial Security Program**

Heather McCulloch is an entrepreneur-in-residence at the Aspen Institute Financial Security Program and a national thought leader on gender economic equity. She recently launched the Women in the Economy (WE) project at Aspen FSP, a two-year initiative to inform the design of a gender-equitable economy based on the insights, wisdom, and lived experience of working women across America.

Heather has more than two decades of experience working as an advocate and thought leader in closing the racial and gender wealth gaps and building an equitable economy. Previously, she founded and led Closing the Women’s Wealth Gap (CWWG), a multiracial/ethnic, cross-sector network of leaders working together to transform public policies and systems to advance gender economic equity. Prior to starting CWWG, she was the principal of Asset Building Strategies, a consulting firm that supported nonprofit, philanthropic, public, and private-sector leaders to advance policies and strategies to build the financial security of low-wealth families; and a founding staff member of the national nonprofit, PolicyLink.

Her insights have been covered in major news publications, including CNN Business, Fast Company, The Hill, Los Angeles Times, New York Times, NPR Marketplace, Slate, and USA Today. She earned an MSc in International Political Economy from the London School of Economics and a BA in Political Economy from the University of California, Berkeley.