

Refugee & Immigrant

WOMEN FOR CHANGE

# Cultural Dynamics: Women's Voices

KEYNOTE

Leymah Gbowee

## Program Agenda

- 11:00 Registration
- 11:15 Welcome *Lynn Moline*
- RIWC Introduction *Doris Parker*
- 11:30 Keynote Address *Leymah Gbowee*
- 12:00 Audience Q&A *Gloria Contrares Edin*
- 12:30 Closing *Bryan Thao Worra*
- 1:00 Adjourn

Convened by CAPI, the Refugee & Immigrant Women for Change organizes this event in partnership with the Advocates for Human Rights and the Human Rights Program of the University of Minnesota. It is part of a series of the International Women's Day.



# Refugee & Immigrant WOMEN FOR CHANGE

is a coalition of refugee and immigrant women-led and women-focused organizations.

We have come together, across multiple ethnic identities, to build a movement for gender equity so that our communities thrive with the full participation of everyone whose individual rights and self-determination are respected.



# CHANGE HAPPENS NOW

## Refugee & Immigrant **WOMEN FOR CHANGE**

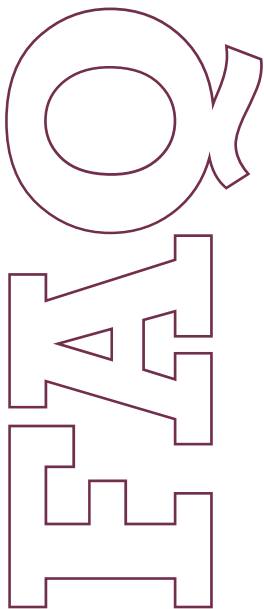
### Mission

Build the capacity and leadership of the RIWC organizations to plan, design, and implement programs to achieve gender equality for refugee and immigrant women.

### Vision

Refugee and immigrant women and our communities thrive in a gender equitable world where we have:

- 1) Violence-free homes and communities
- 2) Access to health care, education, and life-skills training
- 3) Economic independence and vitality



### What is gender equity?

It is the right to individual self-determination regardless of sex. Sexism is not unique to immigrant and refugee cultures. It must be uprooted within each cultural tradition.

### What is the difference between an immigrant and refugee?

A refugee is a person who is unable or unwilling to live in his or her native country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. An immigrant is a person who moves to a country where he or she intends to settle permanently.

### Why do immigrants and refugees come to Minnesota?

There are three main reasons that people settle in Minnesota: family, work and freedom. In 2002, 63% of new Minnesotans came primarily for join family here, 16% of immigrants came for work, and 12% are asylum seekers and refugees. 9 % of immigrants in 2003 were orphans, under the 1 year old and adopted by American citizens.

### Why us?

Multi-ethnic, grassroots leadership is vital to address the intersection of gender, race, class and sexuality. We all wear many hats, and we must transform from within and push for change by forming alliances across identities.

## Speaker Biographies

**Lynn Moline** is the chair of CAPI's board. She joined the board in 2008, having been drawn to the agency's energetic focus on empowering immigrants and refugees to re-establish their lives in Minnesota. Lynn is a consultant and speaker who guides businesses and nonprofits to success through smart strategy, strong leadership, and effective processes. She began her private practice 1995 after having served nearly two decades in executive roles at Xcel Energy and the Minnesota Council for Quality. Lynn also serves as adjunct faculty at the University of St. Thomas, Century College, and Normandale College.

**Doris K. Parker** is the co-founder of the leading Liberian women organization in Minnesota, Liberian Women's Initiatives Minnesota and has served as the Executive Director since 2003. She is also a founding member of the Bethel World Outreach Church in Robbinsdale, MN where she serves on the Board of trustees and as a deaconess. She is a graduate of the College of St. Catherine and a trained Registered Nurse with experience in medical institutions throughout the Twin Cities. Ms. Parker is actively engaged in both Liberian and broader communities, and served as a member of the board of directors of the Organization of Liberians in Minnesota. She also serves on CAPI's Board of Director.

**Gloria Contreras Edin**, daughter of Mexican immigrants, was born and raised in Los Angeles California. Gloria has spent her career working with immigrants and on the issues that affect immigrant integration. Until recently, Gloria was the Executive Director of Centro Legal, Inc. a non-profit law firm that provided legal services to immigrants. Currently, she runs a private law firm where she provides immigration law services. Her work on immigration has been recognized locally and nationally and she is known for her strong impetus for justice and integrity in the law. Gloria is a board member of CAPI, the Charities Review Council Board, the Minnesota Council on Foundations, the Initiative Foundation of Minnesota, and the Women's Foundation of Minnesota. She is married to David Cook and has two boisterous little boys, Josh and Erik.

**Bryan Thao Worra** is an award-winning, internationally published author and community activist. He began working with the Lao Assistance Center in 2009. Bryan has worked on housing foreclosure issues in North Minneapolis through the Hawthorne Neighborhood Council and has over ten years experience in the non-profit sector, including work with Hmong National Development, the National Youth Leadership Council and the Hmong American Institute for Learning. Bryan has worked at national and regional levels on issues of Southeast Asian refugee resettlement. He also holds a Fellowship in Literature from the National Endowment for the Arts.

# Refugee & Immigrant WOMEN FOR CHANGE

## Leymah Roberta Gbowee

Leymah Roberta Gbowee is the executive director of the Women Peace and Security Network Africa, based in Accra, Ghana. She is a founding member and former coordinator of the Women in Peacebuilding Program/West African Network for Peacebuilding. During her tenure as coordinator for WIPNET/WANEP, Ms. Gbowee organized collaborative peace-building initiatives for a network of women peace builders from 9 of Liberia's 15 counties. She also served as the commissioner-designate for the Liberia Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Additionally, Ms. Gbowee has presented on several regional and international panels, including UNIFEM's "Women and the Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Repatriation (DDRR) Process." She most recently presented at the United Nations Security Council's Arria Formula Meeting on women, peace, and security organized around the 5th anniversary of UN resolution 1325. In October 2007, the Women's Leadership Board at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government honored Ms. Gbowee with the Blue Ribbon Peace Award. This annual award is given to individuals and organizations that have made a significant contribution to peace-building through innovative strategies that promote women's leadership in peace processes on the local, national, or international level. In 2009, Ms. Gbowee and the women of Liberia were awarded the Profiles in Courage Award by the Kennedy Library Foundation. Ms. Gbowee is the central character of the award-winning documentary "Pray the Devil Back to Hell."

