

WFWP UK Women in Peacemaking: The Roadmap to Reconciliation Series 1

Cassandra Humble
March 30, 2021



The WFWP Northern Region hosted its first joint conference Women in Peacemaking: The Roadmap to Reconciliation series on Tuesday, 30 March 2021. This three-part series opened with the theme of "Women and Conflict Management: The Evolution of a Concept" and we invited our four speakers – Dr. Njoki Wamai, Dr. Buba Misawa, Kimberly Myosai Lohi and Dr. Yasmin Chilmeran – to share their thoughts.

Speaking from an academic perspective on women and conflict management, this segment began with Dr. Njoki Wamai's introduction of the liberal peacemaking approach. She defined this approach as a template borrowed from western peace processes, such as Israel and Palestine and the Good Friday Agreement, which struggled to understand peacemaking in non-western conflicts. Likewise, Our third speaker, Kimberly Lohi, spoke from her experience as a conflict negotiator and author of "Compassionate Conversations" about the importance of macro-micro level discussions around conflict management. She suggested that instead of seeing the conflict as immoral (excluding Just Peace processes), conflict exists to tell us something about our reality.

Our second speaker, Dr. Buba Misawa, took a historical, theoretical and practical approach to conflict management. Speaking about chaos theory, Dr. Misawa drew a narrative of colonial and post-colonial two-track peace processes. The first process tends to exclude women while the second provides an opportunity for women to exhibit skills in negotiation. This was echoed by Dr. Yasmin Chilmeran, who shared her research on women's participation and security building in post-war (2003) Iraq. Working through multiple regional perspectives, she spoke about a Continuum of Violence, highlighting that the reality of transitions from conflict to post-conflict are not neatly reflected in statistics and violence in war has a multifaceted affect and shouldn't be disconnected from post-conflict violence.

This conference was moderated by Sharon Kabubi and the QandA session focused on the question: What is the peacebuilding phrase you most use in your work and why? The committee was interested to know the reason behind the interchangeability of these phrases and the session delved into the 1992 UN "An Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping" report which first used the phrases "peacemaking" and "peace-keeping". However, with the end of the Cold War in 1991, a broader strategy to understand conflict resolution was needed. The general consensus from our speakers was that the terms peace building/peacemaking/conflict management/ conflict resolution all have a place in the international peace debate and it is, therefore, appropriate to select the specific term for each specific scenario.

This first conference was received extremely well with:

- Sold out zoom ticket sales,
- Strong engagement with social media promotion,
- 1,100 individual engagements with the Facebook livestream in real time and
- Over 380 views of the livestream on Facebook after the event.

WFWP Women in Peacemaking: The Roadmap to Reconciliation series 2, "Women in international peacemaking and reconciliation processes" will be held on 6 April 2021, 6.30-8pm (BST) with our speakers and will be moderated by Louice Widfeldt Lomås.