

## WFWP Philippines: The Women's Response To The Pandemic

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The Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) Philippines hosted the Women's Group Dynamics for Peace on the afternoon of September 29, 2021, on the theme, "The Women's Response to the Pandemic." This was attended by 77 participants via Zoom and 3 guest speakers. This virtual forum highlighted the unique contributions of women as they cope during the pandemic, particularly in the field of mental health awareness, economic and socio-political aspects. This event provided a platform for women leaders to address the critical issues faced by women and to come up with resolutions to create a positive impact on society.

The Opening Address was delivered by the President of WFWP Philippines, Mrs. Almera Grace Mayo. In her speech, she paid tribute to the sacrifices and achievements of women front-liners who have been putting themselves at great risk since the beginning of the pandemic. She also emphasized that women's roles as the nurturers of the young generation are not bound within their own families but should be extended to their communities. In her address, she said that as mothers, we women nestle and nurture the values, moral upbringing, and unlimited potential of human beings, and that itself is a vital role in ensuring a better future for the future generation.



The Opening Address was followed by a Keynote Address given by Mrs. Theresia Kittel, a mentor of the Surrendered Wife and Adored Wife Program. In her message, she spoke about the Six Intimacy Skills wives need to have to enjoy a happy marriage. She highlights that good marriages and families are the cornerstones of a peaceful nation, so the role of wives and mothers is crucial to ensure a fulfilled marriage. Some of these intimacy skills include being respectful to your husband and having a happy and grateful attitude.

The first panelist was Dr. Janet Liban-Kabayama. She is the Secretary-General for the Asia Mobile Medical Services (AMMS). Her topic was about Mental Health Awareness where she spoke about the mental toll the pandemic can take not only on women but most especially to the senior and younger generations. She emphasized that as mothers in the homes and community, it is our responsibility to

ensure mental health issues are addressed and are given proper attention to.

She said that while mental health issues have been more rampant than ever during the pandemic, there are simple ways to improve them. Some of these ways include having a healthy lifestyle of exercise and diet, employing relaxation techniques such as meditation and yoga, and most importantly, having a support system you can talk to and open up about your emotions. She emphasized that as women in the homes, we must be the first ones to ensure the mental and emotional wellbeing of our families are in check.



The next panelist to share her insights was Mrs. Blessie Dhakal. She is the International Coordinator of the International Association of First Ladies for Peace. Well knowledgeable in the socio-political arena, thanks to her extensive experience working with several diplomatic and political leaders in her field; Mrs. Dhakal emphasized the importance of being intentional and inclusive in our efforts towards achieving gender equality. She especially highlighted a focus on education to advance awareness and efforts on women empowerment and equality. She said broadening women's access to education will eventually broaden their access to economic opportunities.

Mrs. Dhakal said that economic empowerment isn't just about having a steady income. It is about women being confident about themselves. It is seeing them claim and hold power in making life decisions. Economic empowerment is about teaching women, young and old to stand up against discrimination violence and inequality.

The final panelist, Hon. Pillar C. Braga, a city councilor of Davao City who gave an in-depth insight on the socio-political perspective on women's role during the pandemic. In her message entitled, "The Pathway to Peace," she spoke about the importance of mind education going hand in hand with the education of the heart. Women should never allow the compromise of heart and values. She says that the preservation of our culture, ethics, spirituality, and character is what our challenge is as women in the field of educating our young.

The school's most important task is the formation of human beings with solid ethical values, individuals who not only can navigate their way in a complex world but one who can also be relied upon to help make the world a better place to live in.

She also spoke about women's empowerment to achieve a more prosperous nation. She quoted former UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon who said that "countries with better gender equality have better economic growth, and those with more women leaders perform better."

Now that the Philippine legislature has more women leaders, we have more bills that cater to health, gender discrimination, child support and the likes. Thus Hon. Braga concluded her speech by highlighting the fact that when women work together, nothing is impossible. She quoted some words from the Co-founder of WFWPI, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, that problems faced in the world today cannot be solved by the logic of power. Our present problems can only be solved by the logic of love.

This was followed by an open discussion where participants sent in questions for the panel speakers to address.

Mrs. Angel Lorenzana, the Vice President of WFWP Philippines gave the Closing Remarks.