

## WFWP UK - Women Faith and Family: The Role of Women in Community Building

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Four speakers, each rooted in a different faith, elaborated in their presentations on various aspects of community building, focusing on the contribution and participation of women.

Gill Barstow, from the Church of the Latter-Day Saints in Milton Keynes and business consultant for business development, posed the question to everyone - is community building more than a task, or a particular talent, a challenge, a privilege, a mission or our calling for women? She related to her experiences, overcoming differences because of personality, cultural background and religious understanding. She found that as women we can look after each other, not just accept but welcome those that are different, can be peacemakers and social connectors.

Asma Ahmed, a mother representing the Islamic tradition, is passionate about women's education for leadership. She believes 'peace starts with me'. From her religious perspective, values like empathy, service and charity she is inspired to find ways to action them and engage in the community. Her daily prayer gives her strength, to serve and take responsibility. She founded an NGO "Inspire Visions Collective" to support each other as women and others in the community.

Dr. Vani Moodley practices Ayurvedic Medicine, representing the Hindu tradition and is a mother of twins. She states that the mother is responsible for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the child. During pregnancy, our food, thoughts and environment determine the personality of the child.

We need to raise children with values to build a strong foundation that will withstand the test of all challenges in the world. Vani emphasizes that leadership by mothers serves as the example. Her engagement with several community initiatives and projects have shown her, that the future of the world lies in the hands of a mother. When her children are great, society will be good and if society is good then countries will prosper and when countries prosper spiritually, then the world becomes a haven of peace.

Oksana Torok, Secretary General of WFWP believes in the value of one's conscience, changing herself will impact change in the community. She states, 'by investing in myself I invest in my community'. Oksana joined a group that teaches Universal Principles. This led her to get involved in community oriented cultural events and peace projects as well as character development and leadership training programs. She conducts workshops for peace education for children and is involved in Art for Peace programs for children. Oksana is convinced that what does matter is that coming together, sharing the knowledge and experience, ways of means and adapting and changing that becomes a communal knowledge which is then disseminated out into the world. To conclude the event, a video was shown to introduce WFWP, its vision, initiatives and projects, as well as promoting the concept of realizing the one global human family.

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