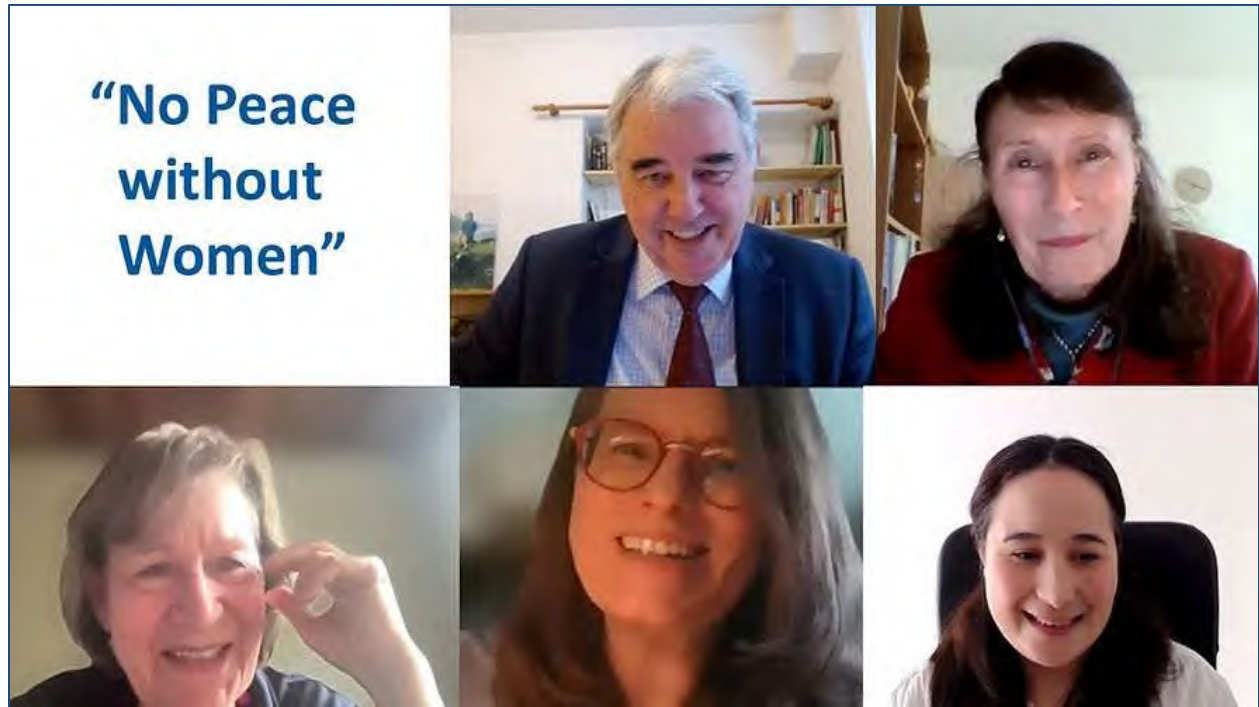


UPF-Germany: German Panelists Portray Critical Roles of Women

Gudrun Hassinen und Hildegard Piepenburg
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Berlin, Germany – A professor of crisis management and peace education, a lawyer from the Federal Office of Justice, with eleven years' experience as a judge, and a young pastor, wife and mother – these three women were the speakers at a Zoom event hosted by UPF-Germany on March 28 on the theme "No Peace without Women," to commemorate International Women's Day. They spoke about their experiences as women in the family, working life and society.

In his welcoming address, UPF-Germany Chairman **Mr. Karl-Christian Hausmann** quoted Dr. Hak-Ja Han, co-founder of UPF, who said that the 21st century needed "a culture of leadership that comes from the heart," supported by men and women alike, where "women play a central role in leading humanity to love, forgiveness, harmony and cooperation."

Mr. Hausmann mentioned the surprising results of gender-neutral education in Israel's communal Kibbutzim, which confirm the thesis of Australian authors Alan and Barbara Pease, that many of the differences between men and women are biologically and evolutionarily determined and not exclusively a social construct. In the relationship between the very differing natures of men and women, it is above all the skills of women which maintain relationships and families.

Moderator **Ms. Gudrun Hassinen** introduced the three panelists, who each addressed the issue of how easy or difficult it was for them to find their place as a woman.

Prof. Angela Mickley came to her profession as a lecturer in conflict resolution and mediation through a stay in Northern Ireland. As a German researching the propensity to violence between hostile parties in that country, she was acceptable to, and respected by, both sides because she was not part of the conflict.

Meeting women in Northern Ireland, who were working against violence and for peace, was an important experience. In a conflict situation, she said, focusing on the matter at hand rather than the person, and seeking a third path that considers all involved parties, has proven an effective approach.

Dr. Helia-Verena Daubach explained her experiences as a woman in the legal system. She described a patriarchal power structure and lack of flexibility both at university and later in court, which were challenging. She posed critical questions about the fairness of the system, which she said still has many contradictions, especially for unprivileged social groups. Her understanding of the teachings of Baha'i has led her to question a society that tends towards competitiveness and to seek alternatives. She strove to find empathy in herself, respect for others as well as for herself, and to be in harmony with herself, regardless of how others around her behaved.

Ms. Anna Becker-Yap, the youngest panelist, has already taken a slightly different path. As a paramedic, she found it normal, for example, that a male colleague would carry a sick person down the stairs while she as a woman mostly sat in the back of the ambulance and took care of the patient. As a pastor in the community of Leiden and leader of the Dutch Family Federation for World Peace, she and her husband complement each other and work in close cooperation. She is happiest taking care of people, whereas her husband prefers to take care of organizational matters.

One male viewer asked in the chat whether women weren't also created with the ability to rule, and a lively and informative discussion arose between the three panelists about the meaning of "power." Dr. Daubach explained that the term "power" should not be used in connection with hierarchy and violence. Dr. Mickley said that her experience with the military and police force led her to conclude that hierarchies based on competence are more flexible and resource-oriented than those which are rigid. She spoke out against a permanent Herrschaft (rule by men) as well as a Frauschaft (rule by women), and against negative peace, or the avoidance of being killed, as opposed to positive peace, which brings the possibility of development. Mrs. Becker-Yap stressed that to be a "leader" does not mean to dominate, and that she prefers to use the terms Menschenschaft (rule by people) and partnership.

In closing, the moderator noted that women of earlier generations were often pioneers who paved the way for equal rights and values in the family and society for future generations of men and women. One can learn much from their examples and lives. She closed with an appeal to the "spirit of love," which women can infuse into their families and society.