



Many to Many

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Anthony & Gita Brooke,
co-founders

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“Many to Many” is a quarterly publication under the aegis of Peace Through Unity as a communicating link between “we, the peoples” of all nations, races, creeds and ideologies offering in the spirit of the preamble of the United Nations Charter an instrument for the furthering of better relationships based on deepening mutual understanding and the aspiration to promote unity and cooperation beyond all differences.

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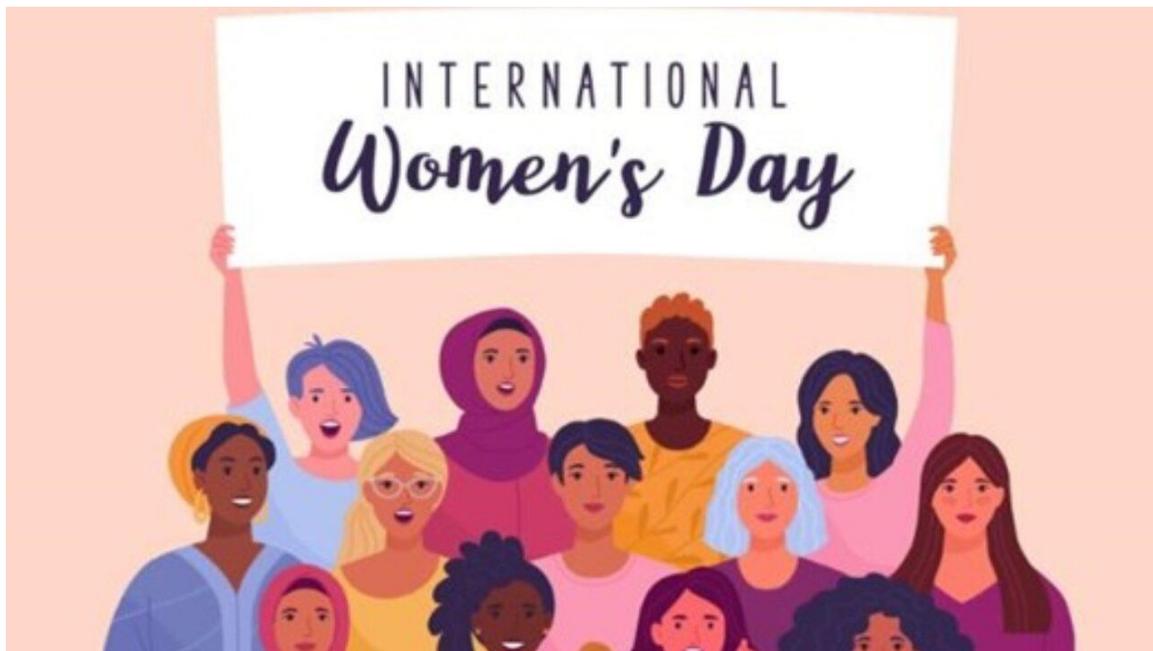
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International Women's Day



By Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the United Nations; initiator of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 as the President of the UN Security Council in March 2000 and Founder of the Global Movement for The Culture of Peace (GMCoP), a civil society coalition based in New York promoting the UN Declaration and Programme Action on Culture of Peace.

I am delighted that “Many to Many” is publishing its March issue of 2022 on the Eighth of March, the International Women’s Day and deciding to focus on “Women as Peacemakers”. I have been invited to write the lead article in view of my deep involvement in advocacy for women’s equality and empowerment for more than two decades. For the overall topic for this issue, my preference is for use of the expression "Women as Peacebuilders" as it is more appropriate in clearly expressing the role women play in the area of peace and security.

At the outset, allow me pay my whole-hearted tribute to my dear colleague, a lifelong peace activist Gita Brooke who founded in 1975 “Peace Through Unity”, a UN-accredited civil society organization, and in 1982, started the publication of this newsletter called “Many to Many” with an inspiring mission statement saying that it “...is a communicating link between ‘we, the peoples’ of all nations, races, creeds and ideologies offering in the spirit of the preamble of the United Nations Charter ...”

A statement from the Fourth World Conference on Women, convened by the United Nations in Beijing in 1995 underscored that full respect for the human rights of women; the release of women's creative potential in all aspects of life; the equal participation of women in decision-making; equal access to educational opportunities

for woman and girls; the promotion of equality between women and men are all prerequisites to attaining the culture of peace in our violent world.

The core message of this 1995 statement continues to be equally valid and relevant today as we the observe the International Women’s Day in all parts of the globe.

This year’s International Women’s Day comes as the world remains steeped in the COVID-19 pandemic and its staggering impacts on women. Covid has exacerbated the gender gap. "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow," is the theme for the Day this year. The new data released by UN Women highlighted that the pandemic has markedly deteriorated for women, especially young women and has impacted women’s safety at home and in public spaces. Last year’s Generation Equality Forum marks a critical moment in women’s rights and equality movements, especially as the world assesses the impact of COVID-19.

This year’s International Women’s Day is also being observed as a major war now appears inevitable. However, I keep believing that peace is possible, even in these troubling times. I honor all the local peacebuilders in Ukraine who are continuing their work for peace, even at great risk to themselves.

In its objective of realizing and ensuring women’s rights, during last five decades, the international community organized four world conferences on women under the United Nations umbrella in Mexico City, in Copenhagen, in Nairobi and in Beijing; adopted UN Security Council’s history-making resolution 1325 on “Women and Peace and Security” and agreed on the inclusion of an autonomous, self-standing goal for women’s and girls’ equality and empowerment in the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, commonly referred to as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



For a long time, there has been an impression in the UN Security Council of women as helpless victims of wars and conflicts. Women’s role in fostering peace in their communities and beyond has often been overlooked. But on 8th of March 2000, that inexplicable silence of 55 long years was broken for the first time.

On the momentous day of 8 March 2000, as the President of the Security Council, I could mobilize it to recognize in an agreed statement that “peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men” and affirmed the value of full and equal participation of women at all decision-making levels. The pioneering and most-referred-to Resolution 1325 of the Council was finally adopted unanimously on 31 October of the same year after tough negotiations for eight months.

Adoption of 1325 opened a much-awaited door of opportunity for women, who have shown time and again that they bring a qualitative improvement in structuring peace and in the post-conflict architecture.

But the reality is that women’s rights and equality continue to be under threat from a backlash of conservatism and fundamentalism around the world. The United Nations has underlined that overall progress towards gender equality had been unacceptably slow, with stagnation and even regression in some areas. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres lamented that everywhere, we still have a male-dominated culture.

My work has taken me to the farthest corners of the world, and I have seen time and again the centrality of women’s equality and the culture of peace in our lives. This realization has now become more pertinent amid the ever-increasing militarism and militarization that is destroying both our planet and our people.

An essential message that I have experienced from my work for the culture of peace is that we should never forget that when women – half of world’s seven plus billion people - are marginalized, there is no chance for our world to get sustainable peace in the real sense. It is my strong belief that unless women are engaged in always advancing the culture of peace at equal levels with men, sustainable peace would continue to elude us.

As I reiterate time and again, women bring a new breadth, quality, and balance of vision to a common effort of moving away from the cult of war towards the culture of peace. Women’s equality makes our planet safe and secure.

Sustainable peace is inseparable from gender equality. As UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan had always underscored, “For generations, women have served as peace educators, both in their families and in their societies. They have proved instrumental in building bridges rather than walls.”

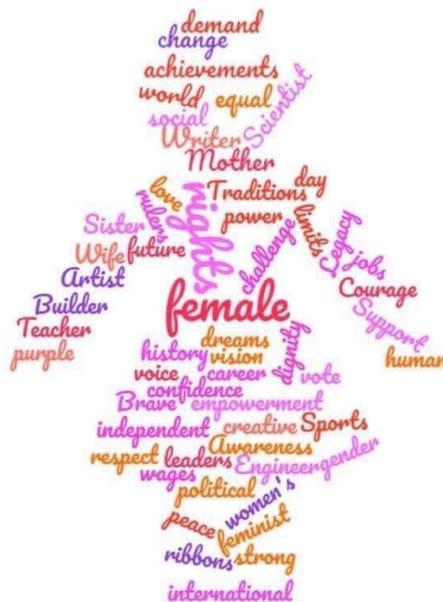
When women participate in peace negotiations and in the crafting of a peace agreement, they have the greater and longer-term interest of society and community

in mind. They think of how their children and grandchildren will live in their country, how they will benefit from the peace agreement in a sustainable way. Whereas, historically in post-conflict situations, men are interested in ensuring that, following the peace agreement, they will retain authority and power in the government or in the cabinet or in any other power structures. As I have said often, when women join politics, they want to do something, while men join politics, they want to be something.

The Mano River Women’s Peace Network, for example, mobilized women in West Africa from Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone and, in pursuing their vision of peace, rallied together to call for disarmament and resolution of the ongoing conflict and violence in their countries. I have observed that process personally with immense pride.

It is a reality that politics, more so security, is a man’s world. Empowered women bring important and different skills and perspectives to the policy making table in comparison to their male counterparts. The slogan of the Global Campaign on Women, Peace and Security which we launched in London in June 2014 reiterates “If we are serious about peace, we must take women seriously”.

International Women's Day Words to Inspire



A stark and inexplicable reality of today’s world is that patriarchy and misogyny continue to thrive as scourges that pull us all back from our aspiration to live in a world of equality, peace, and justice. Unless we confront those vicious and obstinate negative

forces with all our energy, determination, and persistence, we will never make any real headway with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, more so for SDG-5.

I would strongly stress the importance of women's equal participation in all efforts for peace and security – in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding. While women are often the first victims of armed conflict, they must also and always be recognized as a key to the solution. Women have an essential role to play in rebuilding war-shattered societies, not through token representation but as full-fledged participants in the process. By bringing their experiences to the peace table, women can inject in the peace process a practical understanding of the various challenges faced by civilian populations. The mechanisms and arrangements that come out of such involvement are naturally more sensitive to the needs of common people and, therefore, more purposeful, and sustainable.

This was reflected very eloquently when in 2011 three women were chosen as Nobel laureates. Their citation for the Nobel Peace Prize referred to the Resolution 1325, saying that “It underlined the need for women to become participants on an equal footing with men in peace processes and in peace work in general.” The Nobel Committee further asserted that, “We cannot achieve democracy and lasting peace in the world unless women obtain the same opportunities as men to influence developments at all levels of society.”

As I always strongly emphasize, empowering women's political leadership will have ripple effects on every level of society and the global condition. At a recent conference on “Women in power and decision-making: Building a different world”, the leading participants emphasized that “It is not about men against women, but there is evidence to show through research that when you have more women in public decision-making, you get policies that benefit women, children and families in general.”

As we find a male-dominated culture everywhere without exception, the role of men is extremely crucial to reverse the current pushback. In this context, the launch in 2020 of the initiative for “Mobilizing Men as Partners for Women, Peace and Security”, with which I am closely associated, is significantly purposeful.

Civil society, in particular women's organisations, human rights activists, and peace groups around the world, need to mobilise their efforts to hold governments accountable for the commitments they made in Resolution 1325.

Coordinated and coherent support by the United Nations system is particularly needed to achieve greater effectiveness of peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts through the increased participation of women and strengthened capacity to address gender issues in peace and post-conflict planning processes.

In real terms, National Action Plan (NAP) is the engine that would speed up the implementation of Resolution 1325. All countries are obligated as per decisions of the Security Council to prepare the NAP. So far, only 98 out of 193 UN Member States have prepared their Plans – what a dismal record after 22 years. At that rate, we need another 22 years to have all 193 covered.

Talking of political participation, the United Nations' own record is not something which we can be proud of. To assist UN, move in the right direction and assert its credibility, in September 2012, a "Call to Action" was issued to world leaders gathering at the UN – and reiterated in 2016 - asking for urgent action in four areas:

1. Appointment of a woman as the next UN Secretary-General. In its more than seven and half decades of existence, the world body has not elected any woman to that post.
2. Nomination of women as future Presidents of the General Assembly. Out of its 193 member-states, only four women were elected as the Assembly President.
3. Election of more women as Heads of Various UN Governing Bodies.
4. Appointment by Member States of more women as Ambassadors to the UN in New York and Geneva.



[Celebrating International Women's Day](#)

My own experience during my different responsibilities – more so during past twenty plus years – has shown that the participation of women in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding assures that their experiences, priorities, and solutions contribute to lasting stability, good governance, and sustainable peace.

A growing understanding of the role of women in conflict resolution and the specific skills and abilities they bring to the decision-making process:

- The Netherlands has introduced a programme entitled "Engendering the Peace Process", which encourages Israel and Palestine to appoint more women to negotiating teams and political decision-making posts in the Middle East peace process.

- The African region developed a "First Ladies for Peace Initiative" in early 1997, which has included conferences on peace and humanitarian issues.
- Belgium supports the use of women mediators in conflict situations and has developed an initiative for peacebuilding between the women of two parties in conflict.
- Georgia has adopted a Plan of Action which includes the development of a mechanism to ensure the active involvement of women in decision-making in armed conflicts and peacebuilding.
- In Nepal, the Forum for Women, Law and Development has changed the law to better protect Nepalese women from cases of rape and acid attacks.
- In South Africa, Embrace Dignity has helped start a movement of sex trade survivors, fueling the conversation to end sex trafficking on the African continent.
- In my country Bangladesh, women's participation in the decision-making at the local and municipal level bodies has brought about a qualitative change in living conditions.

Let me emphasize, as I do always, that feminism is not about women against men or men against women. It is about smart policy which, is inclusive, uses all potentials and leaves no one behind.

I am proud to be a feminist. All of us need to be. That is how we make our planet a better place to live for all.

Women's equality and empowerment are not only issues concerning women; those are relevant for humanity as a whole – for all of us. This is most crucial point that needs to be internalized by every one of us.

We, all of us – women and men, particularly men, should always remember that without peace, development is impossible, and without development, peace is not achievable, but without women, neither peace nor development is conceivable.

A challenged world is an alert world. And from challenge comes change. We need to understand that "Feminism isn't about making women strong. Women are already strong. It is about changing the way the world perceives that strength." Let us strive to build a gender equal world. An equal world is an enabled world. Our individual actions, conversations, and mindsets can have an impact on our larger society. Together we can make change happen.

Women Whose Lives are Food, Men Whose Lives are Money

By Joyce Carol Oates

Mid-morning Monday she is staring
peaceful as the rain in that shallow back yard
she wears flannel bedroom slippers
she is sipping coffee
she is thinking –
 – gazing at the weedy bumpy yard
at the faces beginning to take shape
in the wavy mud
in the linoleum
where floorboards assert themselves

Women whose lives are food
breaking eggs with care
scraping garbage from the plates
unpacking groceries hand over hand

Wednesday evening: he takes the cans out front
tough plastic with detachable lids
Thursday morning: the garbage truck whining at 7
Friday the shopping mall open till 9
bags of groceries unpacked
hand over certain hand

Men whose lives are money
time-and-a-half Saturdays
the lunchbag folded with care and brought back home
unfolded Monday morning

Women whose lives are food
because they are not punch-carded
because they are unclocked
sighing glad to be alone
staring into the yard, mid-morning
mid-week
by mid-afternoon everything is forgotten

There are long evenings
panel discussions on abortions, fashions, meaningful work
there are love scenes where people mouth passions
sprightly, handsome, silly, manic
in close-ups revealed ageless

the women whose lives are food
the men whose lives are money
fidget as these strangers embrace and weep and mis-
understand and forgive and die and weep and embrace
and the viewers stare and fidget and sigh and
begin yawning around 10:30
never made it past midnight, even on Saturdays,
watching their braven selves perform

Where are the promised revelations?
Why have they been shown so many times?
Long-limbed children a thousand miles to the west
hitch-hiking in spring, burnt bronze in summer
thumbs nagging
eyes pleading
Give us a ride, huh? Give us a ride?

and when they return nothing is changed
the linoleum looks older
the Hawaiian Chicken is new
the girls wash their hair more often
the boys skip over the puddles
in the GM parking lot
no one eyes them with envy

their mothers stoop
the oven doors settle with a thump
the dishes are rinsed and stacked and
by mid-morning the house is quiet
it is raining out back
or not raining
the relief of emptiness rains
simple, terrible, routine
at peace

Joyce Carol Oates, "Women Whose Lives Are Food, Men Whose Lives Are Money" from *Women Whose Lives Are Food, Men Whose Lives Are Money*. Copyright © 1978 by Joyce Carol Oates. Reprinted by permission of Joyce Carol Oates.

Source: *Women Whose Lives Are Food, Men Whose Lives Are Money* (Louisiana State University Press, 1978)

Empowering Gender Swaraj

Learnings from the Historical Steps of Global Women Activists Creating a NonViolent World and the Culture of Peace



A Project Paper
Submitted by Georgina Galanis for
The Winter School on Gandhian Nonviolence and Peace 2021

Introduction:

Rising above impossible odds, the promulgation of gender violence permeates not only the body, but the psyche, spirit and human rights of all humanity. Subjecting this manly act specifically onto the girl child is one of the main reasons true peace is amiss in our world. Feminine grace and balance have been unjustly dismissed by a vile patriarchal ruling of accepted societal violence. Mental health issues resulting from domestic violence are the greatest affliction in the 21st century for both genders. There can be no peace in the nation nor in the valley of the world, if not in the household first. The woman's role as birth maker of humanity, to nurture children's growth and that of the family is a supreme example of nonviolent response to violent patriarchal acts that to this day remain in practice without reason. [<https://www.thecultureist.com/2014/09/29/gender-issues-affecting-women-around-the-world/>]

The purpose of this paper is a reflective response on gender justice and feminine *soft power* in relation to Gandhian philosophies including Satyagraha and Swaraj seen in a new light; to trace how women activists dissolve and neutralize the cult of violence, patriarchal inflictions and oligarchical exploitations, to heal this societal disease by offering empathic empowerment action, through women's rights and the Culture of Peace that aims to change mindsets, not force them through antiquated patriarchal rulings. Highlighting the perseverance of pioneering women and their success through 'self-rule' or *gender swaraj* as named herein. Included is the inspirational life and role of Kasturba Gandhi, who in a historical, yet often subverted way, was instrumental in the making of the Mahatma, yet is often referred to as the Forgotten Woman.

Review:

Scores of ancient scripts to this day hide the story of violent rituals forced onto the innocent nonviolent, non-assuming girl child. Born into servitude, misused power, cultural vanity and the warring patriarchy, this silent story is one elephant that stands tall amongst the crossroads of war and peace. Kneeling at the foot of the master, not seeming to revere God as the one master of all, the cult of patriarchal violence has autonomously ruled for aeons.

To begin the rise of "Gender Swaraj" somewhere amongst the rubble of historical

feminine demise, it is outrageously exposed in one such painful bodily violence named from China's Song Dynasty (960 - 1279) as the torturous act of foot binding through the ages; whereby women's feet were aggressively broken, bound, adorned and jeweled for aesthetic and cultural reasons to stunt growth for male servitude and pleasure. In order to marry or be accepted, this daily torture began as young as age 3 and over the centuries became the norm as 50 - 60 percent of women were subjected. Centuries passed and it was not until the year 1912 that foot binding was finally banned by the new Republic of China government. Other such antiquated acts of gender violence and domination forced as norm, the acceptance of the child bride worldwide, stoning and moral judgements (Arabic) or female genital mutilation FGM (Africa), burning at the stake (Pagan) and the global work force against equality, to name a few. As depicted by Abigail Disney's award-winning film "Women, War and Peace," women are abused as weapons of war, a systemic scourge and ongoing tragic reality we must change.

Gandhi's words emit truth beyond the veil of time in this introductory quote.
"The impenetrable darkness that surrounds us is not a curse but a blessing. He has given us power to see only the step in front of us, and it should be enough if Heavenly light reveals that step to us. We can then sing with Newman, 'One step enough for me'. And we may be sure from our past experience that the next step will always be in view. In other words, the impenetrable darkness is nothing so impenetrable as we imagine. But it seems impenetrable when, in our impatience we want to look beyond that one step."

In an attempt to bring to light the idea of "occhiolism", herein a word that describes the small awareness of each person's chosen perspective and limited view, regardless of gender. By example Gandhi's open mind brought forth the concept of Satyagraha, by holding firmly to truth force as a particular form of nonviolent civil resistance to evils is yet another way to expand our insights to the positive potential in conflict to move our consciousness forward. The isms are numerous; whether it is about casteism, racism, sexism, feminism, black lives matter, #metoo or the salt movement, all are about removing stereotypical divisiveness, that down trod marginalized sects of our society.

Kasturba and Gandhi: Challenging the Convention

The story of Kasturba is a story of women being makers of a better humanity. Her life story gives hope and inspiration for the new generation.

The Honorable Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhi', husband of Kasturba Gandhi, brought to light, "Woman is more fitted than man to make exploration and take bolder action in nonviolence. The religion of nonviolence is not meant merely for the rishis and saints. It is meant for the common people as well. Nonviolence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute, and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law - to the strength of the spirit."

"In Hindu philosophy the way to God is to free yourself of possessions, and the passions that inflame anger and jealousy. Bapu has always struggled to find the way to God."- Kasturba Gandhi

In addition, Gandhi's concept of Swaraj advocated India's discarding of British political and economic rule, whereas the focus of this paper "Gender Swaraj", gender equality and self-rule, and control of the anima and animus in balance, is an evolutionary justice and awakened truth needing to take substantial hold in our present day governance and consciousness reset. It will be through the leadership of women prevailing at the tables of governance and peace building, setting Infrastructures for departments of peace in governments that can transform and heal our world. "Yet not with one wing but with two we can fly together" and only with substantive male leaders in cooperation of gender equality for the betterment of our whole humanity will this unjust separation and human burden be lifted.

"The need to rattle the foundations of habit. That to be free one needs constant and unrelenting vigilance over one's weaknesses. A vigilance which requires a moral energy most of us are incapable of manufacturing. We relax back into the moulds of habit. They are secure, they bind us and keep us contained at the expense of freedom. To break the moulds, to be heedless of the seductions of security is an impossible struggle, it is one of the few that count. To be free is to learn, to test yourself constantly, to gamble. It is not safe."- Robyn Davidson

It is said Kasturba Gandhi was the living symbol of Indian womanhood, "the priceless jewel", who taught Gandhi about nonviolence through her non-traditional resistance and perseverance. At that time in 1882 cultural tradition reigned and these two children (later known as Ba and Bapu) were engaged at the age of 7 whereby the wedding was celebrated when Kasturba came of age, a child bride at just 13, to 13-year-old Mahatma. (Gandhi was few months younger to Kasturba). Kasturba became in time an accidental activist who took an ardent and unexpected stand next to her beloved husband for 62 years. She gathered women for democracy towards India's liberation and again in South Africa despite being repeatedly jailed for her activism. On one occasion she helped Gandhi escape when a white mob was

threatening him and took her sons with her and found safe shelter. In his shadow, she was a true example of living peace through perseverance despite poor health and great sacrifice. Gandhi said, *"If anything she stood above me. But for her unfailing co-operation I might have been in the abyss. She helped me to keep wide awake and true to my vows. She stood by me in all my political fights and never hesitated to take the plunge. In the current sense of the word, she was uneducated; but to my mind she was a model of true education. She was a devoted Vaishnav. But she had obliterated all feeling of caste from her mind and regarded a Harijan girl with no less affection than her own children. She personified the Kasturba Gandhi ideal of which Narsimha Mehta has sung in Vaishnavajana hymn. There were occasions when I was engaged in a grim wrestle with death. During my Aga Khan Palace fast, I literally came out of the death's jaws. But she shed not a tear, never lost hope or courage but prayed to God with all her soul."* The Forgotten Woman

https://kasturbagandhi.org/preview/https://yourstory.com/2015/10/kasturba-gandhi?utm_pageloadtype=scroll

The Forgotten Woman written by Arun Gandhi, grandson is an account of her life long gifts. <https://www.amazon.com/Forgotten-Woman-Untold-Kastur-Gandhi/dp/1886940770>

Rush forward to the present where Forgotten Women, a UK charity, is run by women for women, dedicated to helping women in crisis and emergencies. The charity was set up after witnessing first-hand the 'sex for aid' and manipulation of women in vulnerable situations.

Gill Hicks "Making A Difference for Peace"

On 7/7, 2005 a young woman boarded the crowded London underground Piccadilly Line Tube train between King's Cross and St. Pancras on her way to work. She took her seat quietly beside a young man. Before the train reached its destination the devastating detonation killed all but a few. On that day, one such survivor of that horrific terrorist action fatefully left behind both her leg limbs to become a double amputee with severe daily challenges. The young design executive, Gill Hicks was tagged as "One unknown" survivor. "Making A Difference for Peace" became her response to endless surgeries, painful trauma and a life fate she never imagined. In present day with her young daughter Amelie (conceived miraculously following the incident) and with the dedicated support of her husband Karl, Gill's nonprofit center life work stands tall on peace education, conflict resolution and dialoguing with gang members as a means towards awareness building and educating on unity through diversity and global citizenship. Such a monumental daily sacrifice, and act of enriching forgiveness is a supreme example of Gandhian Satyagraha, truth seeking, Ahimsa values and peacebuilding principals in the making. Another such nonprofit, Global Network for Sustainable Development, works with their Peace Clubs and

Sister Schools initiatives to organize educational and social actions towards the upholding of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, peace and Global Citizenship values. [<http://www.gnsd.org/gnsd-sister-schools.html>]

Success stories:

There have always been women who thought otherwise; rebelled against the patriarchy, the convention and systems. Their lives inspire the world for justice and they instill hope in the suffering women. Some of them are depicted herein.

Leyhma Gbowee: Mighty be our Powers

In 'Mighty be our Powers', Leyhma Gbowee tells how she was broken by the Liberian civil war, a brutal conflict that destroyed her country and claimed the lives of countless relatives and friends. Propelled by her realization that it is women and girls who suffer most during conflicts, she found the courage to turn her bitterness into action.

She helped organize and then lead the Liberian Mass Action for Peace, which brought together Christian and Muslim women in a nonviolent movement that engaged in public protest, confronted Liberia's ruthless president and rebel warlords, and even held a sex strike.

With an army of women, Gbowee helped lead her nation to peace - and became an international leader who changed history, won the Nobel Peace Prize for her work, and fiercely advocates for girls' empowerment and journeys from hopelessness to liberation to touch all who dream of a better world. <https://www.amazon.com/Mighty-Be-Our-Powers-Sisterhood/dp/0984295194>

Marianne Williamson: The Age of Miracles

"Every age has its teachers, who keep the eternal truths alive for all of us," writes Marianne Williamson, the best-selling author of 'The Age of Miracles.' Williamson is an unapologetic visionary and staunch advocate, raising consciousness by and for women's leadership and equality. Guided by spiritual vision as her premise, through a long study of the 'Course in Miracles', this depth and excavation of inner being uplifted her controversial theme during her paramount campaign for the 2021 presidency. "The Politics of Love" was her aim to re-educate America, to expose its historical underbelly, the dire poverty of spirit and the trauma of overdue reparations were some of her enlightened views. She has singlehandedly led a revolution of

“Sister Giant” raising women into their own power and leadership. [Marianne Williamson, *The Politics of Love* <https://marianne.com/books/>] At the forefront of social action throughout her courageous and outspoken career, Williamson brought to light untouchable issues: those related to the AIDS crisis, indigenous and racist conflicts, and the founding of a groundbreaking organization -The Peace Alliance. To make a real difference today, one may advocate for Departments of Peace by contacting your country’s elected official or sponsor the HR 1111 bill (USA). <https://peacealliance.salsalabs.org/becomedopponsor/index.html?eType=EmailblastContent&eld=070c56dd-ad5a-4f3f-8cbc-a280af0bc4ed>

Cori Bush: The Rise

The global and systemic crisis of domestic abuse comes to light in America and around the world every day in silent and horrific ways. Cory Bush walks us through the early years of her life in a devastating relationship with a domestic abuser. Despite this debilitating period which included manipulative, isolating conduct defined as more than assault and now named ‘coercive control’, her recovery is a nonviolent response that crowns her ultimate rise in position as Missouri’s first congresswoman. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/22/us/cori-bush-fka-twigs-coercive-control.html>

Ruth Bader Ginsberg: The Gaze Remembered

A more solemn gaze with a grander pearl presence has never graced the judicial bench as strongly as Ruth Bader Ginsberg. Remembered as the *Notorious RBG*, her five-foot stance brought seismic consequences to the Supreme Court in her profound impact as a liberal icon on the judicial landscape of America. Her pioneering career persevered and stood tall amidst a court ruled primarily by conservative men in a time and place where to be heard as a woman was a monumental feat. Her gavel along with her voice carried brazen power and enduring change right up till her last moments of life when her departure altered the balance of power in the United States government. *“Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you. I would like to be remembered as someone who used whatever talent she had to do her work to the very best of her ability”.*

Eugenia Zoitakis: One Step Forward for Immigrants

Not unlike the refugee trauma and displacements of today, one more case study from the 1950s references an unknown immigrant woman Eugenia, who arrives in a new land with her family, two daughters and husband. Expecting another child, in her ninth month of pregnancy, she faces intolerable daily beatings from an insecure and

disturbed husband. Finally, out of control with frustrated anger, threatening to kill her, he kicks her to the ground in front of the children. After considerable injury to her and the spontaneous death of the unborn child, this hardworking yet illiterate mother arrives at the local hospital where in mental anguish she is too terrified and traumatized to say what happened for fear she will lose her home and family. One day not long into the future, after emigrating yet again to another country and after the last child was born, again in a violent frenzy of abuse her husband throws her down a flight of stairs. Fearful of legal repercussions he removes all joint funds and abandons the family for good returning to his native land. Fatefully saved by his disappearance Eugenia raises her four girls across three countries in three continents: Greece, Australia and Canada without any child or governmental support as a determined immigrant single mother.

Appropriately submitted this March, UN Women's History Month, amongst the new invisible transitions and pandemic risings, this paper is a tribute to Kasturba Gandhi, the women of the world, my own mother, immigrant Eugenia Zoitakis included (just entered her profoundly vibrant 95th birthday). We celebrate their perseverance and all those alongside that faced challenge and adversity for the claim of dignity, the triumphant spirit of nonviolence and courage that continues to infuse and empower the daughters and sons that dare to walk a new path. A profound statement by Andrew Harvey confirms, *"Sacred Activism is about finding gratitude, forgiveness, and compassion; it is about opening yourself up to the kindness within you, letting go of pain, and making a conscious choice to help heal the world through the power of love."* We have come a long way in the fight for peace and equality - to make the triumph known now support the Violence Against Women Act https://peacealliance.salsalabes.org/violence_against_women_act/index.html?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=070c56dd-ad5a-4f3f-8cbc-a280af0bc4ed

Kasha and Marla: Modern Intergenerational Activism

In a valiant response to the world's pressing issues, a single mother and daughter team par excellence, bridge the generation gap and bring innovation and creativity to activism (#youthpeaceandsecurity) through media, photography, and filmmaking. Initiated at age 8, Kasha now 22 years young, and guided by her mother Marla, together they explore modern activism expressed through the feminist intergenerational youth voice, to form a bond and basis for the expanding consciousness of sustainable peace and its importance in the climate crisis we are facing. The Sunrise Storyteller, their award-winning Canadian film exudes the message that we females, males, all genders, cultures, and races can live together as global citizens. On a mission, a 747 wing and an indomitable spirit subsidized through crowdfunding, they set out on a trip that spanned 6 countries to establish a legacy by

example, to uphold the kind of world we want for our children, today and into the future. <https://www.theglobalsunriseproject.com/the-team>

Their Global Sunrises Manifesto emphasizes that the choice each individual makes has the ability to impact our world, and the collective responsibility calls for each person's personal effort. This year amidst pandemic challenge, pre-production development and the shooting schedule of their second film - "1.5 Degrees of Peace" - is manifesting with every ray of hope to unite peace building movements with the race to reverse climate change. *"Our current generation is learning that we cannot have true equality until all women are given equity, freedom and choice. Prior waves of mainstream feminism have often left marginalized women out of their efforts. Our generation's iteration of feminism honors the steps of the past that have led us to this point. We take the baton forward as we evolve to become more inclusive and intersectional so that women of color, disabled women, trans and lgbtq+ women, women of all religions and nationalities can experience equality."* - Kasha Slavner <https://www.theglobalsunriseproject.com/1-5degreesofpeace>

As each global mother buttons the shirts on her children's back, their triumphant spirit in tandem with evolution, is alive in this insight from renowned physicist David Bohm proclaiming, *"If we are to develop new concepts we need to be like children, forming concepts from scratch and not rely on concepts we were taught"* ...and his cohort Basil Hiley continued *"The mathematics then enabled us to dress the ideas in adult clothes"* ...

The Hope Manifest

As we forge forth with boots and heels on the ground and miles to go before we sleep, a new humanity is urgently birthing a thriving human right to live free in what is known as the Culture of Peace. As defined by the United Nations, "Culture of Peace" is a "set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations."

Let this past injustice, "never again" become our resilient response and aspired goal to transform this fertile post pandemic age into one of Gender Swaraj, nonviolence and peace building lead by competency and positive change and that can fill volumes of triumph for equality in our history to come.

In 2018, in an effort to level up actions of governmental leadership, Canada set forth the office and position, Ambassador of Women, Peace and Security, appointing Jacqueline O'Neil. <https://connect2canada.com/2019/08/meet-canadas-first-ambassador-for-women-peace-and-security/> What is this progressive change aiming for? Creating

foundations and infrastructures for the Culture of Peace, that support the 1999 UN Resolution 53/243, Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, and strengthening Departments and Infrastructures of Peace in government. This progressive five-year plan in the making will focus on matching funding with all gender and peace related issues and is part of the dedicated mission of Canadian Voice of Women for Peace - Canada's oldest national feminist peace group since 1960. <https://vowpeace.org/vow-herstory/>

Statistics are also available in the [UNSD portal for the UN Minimum Set of Gender Indicators](#) and can contribute to the monitoring of progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Target 5.2: *Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.* genderstats.un.org

On the 2021 occasion of the 65th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, amidst pandemic and in the effort to bring greater awareness to the issues raised in this paper I aim to create a petition that every inspired reader and advocate can activate and support in the following ways.

Let us each commit today to that which these beloved and remembered women, set in motion. Building and sustaining a global coalition of women requires all walks of women and youth to step up their game to tip the scale of equality, to meet the challenge of a complex and politically fraught 21st century.

Gender Swaraj

This must become a personal declaration, a spiritual revival to halt the war on humanity through the release of the patriarchy from past unrealistic distorted responsibilities of gender governance, including ego portrayals, power mongering, mansplaying, holding accountable all, especially governmental officials contributing to a cult of violence and war. Let us forgive but not forget together through active reparations and consciousness raising. To “forgive but not forget” and to “never again” tolerate the sins of the past inflicted upon women, upon men, upon our divisive and divine humanity.

To hold accountable perpetrators, heighten awareness about the #Metoo movement, exposing the demented Non-Disclosure Agreement, its necessary legal reform from corrupted elitist values and to bring justice punishable by law through high courts, the criminalization of abuses towards women and children as weapons of war and in the daily workplace.

To eliminate the scourge of war, loss of life, of rape, FGM, Stoning and other tribal antiquated practices including child marriage and all that persecute the life of a woman, stigmatized as the weaker sex yet bestowed as sacrificial procreator.

To honor the Mothers of the World - a joy bearing act “in a time of tomb, to protect the womb of our humanity” governmental funding for childbearing and rearing services for all gender parents, must be supported by a living wage. Make Mothers Matter has built a network of 40+ organizations that defend the rights of mothers and children with a strong global campaign focus on the power of mothers to make the world a better place. Make Mothers Matter, www.makemothersmatter.org

To support early gender re-education in this equitable walk of life hand in hand. “Not in front nor behind”. Retraining for teachers to present Early Education curriculums, to strengthen communities with Global Citizenship and peace values, for both boys and girls, the leaders of our tomorrow.

Learnings lead the way to change

With unbound feet and a fearless spirit, let us take our next historical steps together focusing on the re-education of boys alongside girls, through early peace and nonviolence education, human rights upholding dignity, awareness of Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 and global citizenship values that bridge the gap promoting leadership of women and new justice reforms that curtail the ever-rising demise of domestic and wartime violence. Young feminist men alongside women are stepping up in all sectors of society to shift outdated mindsets. The earth is one and only humans create boundaries and prejudice. Just as Gandhi named India’s independence from British rule, a political swaraj, today all must stand together without gender boundaries for the patriarchy to fall and women to rise to their respective stance of equality.

Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, founder of the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace, a proud feminist and UN initiator of the precursor decision leading up to UN Security Council Resolution 1325, Women and Peace and Security, asserts, *"Feminism isn't about making women strong. Women are already strong. It is about changing the way the world perceives that strength"*. This resolution has reaffirmed the important role women play in the prevention of conflict, peace negotiations, peace building and related humanitarian issues, nationally, regionally and globally. <https://apcss.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/N2546-Chowdhury-Intrvw-UN-1325-WPS.pdf>

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the nonviolent response and supreme gift of women activists to our world, is their vast potential to seed and create change in everything they touch with empathic nurturance, skill and love. The Satyagraha Institute trains leaders in this type of nonviolent evolutionary practice presenting Ghandi's experience to deepen understanding of the spiritual and cultural roots of his philosophies. *"Love is the strongest force the world possesses and yet it is the humblest imaginable. The hardest heart and the grossest ignorance must disappear before the rising sun of suffering, without anger and without malice"*. Prof Carl Kline, The Satyagraha Institute (2021 GRI Winter Course Materials) <https://satyagrahainstitute.org>

In the film 'The Third Harmony', Dr Micheal Nagler founder of the Metta Center for NonViolence evokes a passionate call to come to terms with our individual inner Conflicts. In order to face our world with a new perspective we must diligently seek our true being to arrive at our greatest untapped resource. <https://thirdharmony.org> Change is what our world requires to evolve. Peace is what our hearts require to live nonviolently, to regenerate and thrive in a meaningful world for all sentient beings. Let love heal. Let us create a new story of love, together.

"But when we break free and see the game for what it is, we will let out a howl, and our silence will be deafening. We will hear the holy choir of angels, our eyes will brighten, and our smiles will burst forth. We will see the angels and know the angels, and do lunch with them, and speak their case. We will be intimate with the stars and ride rainbows to ancient lands. We will light up like lamps, and this violent world will never be the same again." – Marianne Williamson, A Woman's Worth

Georgina Galanis

In service to

GMCOP -  <https://m.facebook.com/groups/gmcop/>

UN NGO Representative for

The Good News Agency

www.goodnewsagency.org

Accredited United Nations NGO

DGC supporting the SDG Agenda and the Culture of Peace

Are You an Exceptional Woman of Peace?

Yes, and here is why!

On March 8th, International Women's Day, Pathways To Peace (PTP) is launching an award campaign "Exceptional Woman of Peace." The Campaign will give out two awards - one for an Exceptional Woman of Peace and one for an Exceptional Young

Woman of Peace. The Campaign will culminate on September 12th, in conjunction with the anniversary of the UN Resolution for a Culture of Peace and Programme of Action.

How do we define Exceptional Women of Peace?

We know that women are rising all around our world and in great numbers. In large and small ways, women are standing in their power and speaking their own truth. Out of this “rising up,” we see women using their voice and presence to create positive change. Intuitively we know that women are leading the creation of our New Earth, a world at Peace. We honor that woman have been the heart and hands of the movements for Peace throughout history.

At the heart of most exceptional women of Peace, we see five essential driving forces:

- **Passion** for the world they want for all
- **Compassion** that recognizes and respects the value and suffering of those in need
- **Vision** to clearly see a future world at Peace
- **Conviction** that manifests as an unwavering belief that change can happen
- **Action** to produce the desired change

At PTP, we know that you are *a pathway to Peace*, regardless of your profession, background, or lifestyle. You can *choose* to create peace in your daily interactions with family and friends, and in your spheres of influence. When you *choose* to embrace *inner* peace, your light emanates out, transforming everyone and everything in subtle and sometimes dramatic ways. Our world is forever changed through these simple acts, and you become an Exceptional Woman of Peace!

There are some observable qualities we often see in the lives and work of Exceptional Women of Peace. While not an inclusive list, the qualities listed below will likely resonate with you and the peace you bring.

Qualities of Exceptional Women of Peace

Inner Peace: Exceptional Women of Peace know that inner peace is crucial to working for peace. Inner peace allows us to remain calm regardless of the turmoil surrounding us. It can be a source of strength, and a survival mechanism that helps us cope with the challenges at hand. It provides the fortitude to be a compassionate, caring, and responsive support to others. We recognize that while we have little or no control over the external forces surrounding us in our complex world, we can choose to nurture a peaceful heart.

"What drains your spirit drains your body. What fuels your spirit fuels your body." - Carolyn Myss

Spirit-Based: However, it is defined, Exceptional Women of Peace possess "an inner navigation system" that provides guidance or direction, giving a sense of joy, peace, and comfort. It does not matter how we define or name our sacred source or how we see our "soul," we know that it is core to who we are as unique beings and our work for peace. Particularly in challenging times, it is often our spirituality that carries us through, gives us hope, and recognizes that this too shall pass. Exceptional Women of Peace often find the gifts in difficult circumstances that reaffirm a connection to our sacred source, allowing us to see beyond the current circumstances.

"If you want to accomplish the goals of your life, you have to begin with the spirit." - Oprah Winfrey

Courageous: Exceptional Women of Peace have the courage of their conviction. They have mastered the ability to stand in their own power and speak their own truth. Their clear mission or purpose gives them strength and powers their motivation to keep going, even when the path gets difficult, as it often does. Facing fear builds courage, and choosing to be courageous over time builds resilience. Resilience is an essential tool for building peace. It brings us the capacity to self-regulate, to manage our stress, and to bring us into coherence – the balance between body, mind, and spirit. Peacebuilding can, at times, be challenging. However, every Peacebuilder will tell you that the rewards far outweigh those challenges, and they would not choose any other path.

"Having courage does not mean that we are unafraid. Having courage and showing courage means we face our fears." - Maya Angelou

Empathy: Exceptional Women of Peace have the capacity to imagine themselves in the circumstances of others. They see through the eyes of others. They understand and have compassion for both those who are oppressed and those who oppress. They recognize the gift of "presence" – just being there with those in need. Empathy is the source of caring relationships with others. Empathy drives action – those small and larger acts that make a difference in people's lives and bring real peace.

"Empathy is simply listening, holding space, withholding judgment, emotionally connecting, and communicating that incredibly healing message of you're not alone." - Brene Brown

Kindness: Kindness is an essential building block of peace. Kindness is a state of being that is constant and uncompromising. Exceptional Women of Peace are kind, to themselves and others. They do not expect perfection or recognize failure. They do embrace opportunities for growth and change. Forgiveness is an essential quality of

kindness, and always begins with first forgiving ourselves. Kindness is sacred balm to the soul, and Exceptional Women of Peace recognize that all humanity is worthy of it. *"Through your kindness to others, your mind and heart will open to peace."* – Dalai Lama
"A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees." – Amelia Earhart

Authentic: We all know women who light up the room upon entering. Everyone wants to know them, and many want to be them. They express the kind of passion that is contagious, and they inspire us by simply being themselves. They mirror the possibility of what each of us can grow into becoming. Exceptional Women of Peace possess a strong sense of who they are. Their authenticity is the foundation that supports their willingness to speak their own truth and stand in their own power. They do not succumb to social standards or expectations that diminish what they know to be true for themselves. They do not allow other people's approval of them to get in the way of their mission and purpose. They know and do not compromise their own core values in their work for peace. Exceptional Women of Peace keep their eye on the prize and are not distracted by the unimportant expectations of them by others. For Exceptional Women of Peace, Peacebuilding is a lifestyle, not a professional. *"Authenticity is a collection of choices that we have to make every day. It's about the choice to show up and be real. The choice, to be honest. The choice to let our true selves be seen."* - Brene Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection*

Interconnected: Exceptional Women of Peace *live into* the knowledge that we are all connected, and there is no separation between us, other living things, and the natural world. This is sometimes known as Oneness-Consciousness or Unity-Consciousness. When fully embraced, this consciousness informs how we approach others and our work for peace. Embracing this knowledge can bring better results in our connection with others and our work for peace. If I know that what harms my sister also harms me, I am less likely to commit harm. All forms of violence, oppression, and devastation are rooted in our individual and collective belief in separation. A world at peace requires us to recognize that we are one with all that exists.

"The boundary between ourselves and other people and between ourselves and Nature, is illusion. Oneness is reality." - [Charlene Spretnak](#)

Collaboration: Exceptional Women of Peace know they cannot do it alone. Peacebuilding requires the engagement of the unique talents, skills, and perspectives that others bring to the work. It is true that "teamwork makes the dream work." The greater the diversity of those involved, the greater the achieved results – whether it be creativity, better decisions, relevance, or accomplishments. Exceptional Women of

Peace can ignite the passions of others, inspire action, organize around strengths, and let go of control – all essential ingredients in successful Peacebuilding.

"I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things." – Mother Teresa.

As an Exceptional Woman of Peace, I am certain you saw in yourself many of the above qualities, as well as some that are not listed. We hope you can surround yourself with those who nurture your passion, deepen your compassion, fine tune your vision, strengthen your conviction, and inspire bold action.

At Pathways To Peace, we thank you for being peace, we applaud your commitment to co-creating Peace, and we look forward to our work together. Please remember that wherever your heart leads you, and what opportunities surface for you, you ARE a pathway to Peace!

Tezikiah Gabriel is the Executive Director of Pathways To Peace

For more information about "The Exceptional Woman of Peace Awards," please feel free to contact Tezikiah (Tez) Gabriel at tez@pathwaystopeace.org or 651-357-4436. To learn more about Pathways To Peace: www.pathwaystopeace.org

United Nations Association of New Zealand

No bystanders – Women's economic empowerment, peace and security issues

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the NGO CSW66 (Commission on the Status of Women), New York.

5pm Thursday 17th March NZDT (3/17/22 12:00AM EST)

As the world continues to grapple with the effects of climate change and COVID-19 it is imperative to ask an important, but simple question- what would the world look like if women had the same access to leadership, decision-making, and opportunities as men? The answer is clear- it would be a society which ensured that no one person is left behind.

As women grapple with being the hardest hit group economically because of COVID-19 and women and children are also the most vulnerable groups susceptible to the effects of climate change- it is imperative they are included in the solution.

This event will highlight the challenges that are still in place for women to be active participants at the public and corporate leadership levels; but also provides a unique

perspective for the future of women's leadership and participation to address these challenges in the future. Whilst there is still work that needs to be done, New Zealand's youth have shown they are prepared to fight for a more equitable and sustainable future, not just in New Zealand, but in the wider Pacific region.



No bystanders – Women's economic empowerment, peace, and security issues – Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific

For detail and registration, please go to https://www.eventbrite.com/e/no-bystanders-womens-economic-empowerment-peace-and-security-issues-tickets-264979991287?internal_ref=social

Civil Society Briefing "Nuclear Disarmament and Disaster Risk Reduction: Women and Girls in the Lead"

Organized as a side event of the 66th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in collaboration with Pathways to Peace

11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. EST 17 March 2022

This briefing will address the relationship between gender and nuclear disarmament, including the use or testing of nuclear weapons, making a case for the value of including gender in the discourse and decision-making processes on nuclear disarmament. Highlighting the humanitarian consequences that would result from any use of nuclear weapons and the challenges of planning for a humanitarian response.



For registration please go to bit.ly/17March2022

Councils

by Marge Piercy

from *Circles on the Water* 1985 New York: AA Knopf
(for two voices, male and female)

(Women)

We must sit down
and reason together.
We must sit down.
Men standing want to hold forth.
They rain down upon faces lifted.

(Men)

We must sit down on the floor
on the earth
on stones and mats and blankets.
There must be no front to the speaking
no platform, no rostrum,
no stage or table.
We will not crane
to see who is speaking.

(Women)

Perhaps we should sit in the dark.
In the dark we could utter our feelings.
In the dark we could propose
and describe and suggest.

(Men)

In the dark we could not see who speaks
and only the words
would say what they say.

(Women)

Thus saying what we feel and what we want,
what we fear for ourselves and each other
into the dark, perhaps we could begin
to begin to listen.

(Men)

Perhaps we should talk in groups
small enough for everyone to speak.

(Women)

Perhaps we should start by speaking softly.
The women must learn to dare to speak.

(Men)

The men must learn to bother to listen.

(Women)

The women must learn to say "I think this is so."

(Men)

The men must learn to stop dancing solos on the ceiling.
After each speaks, she or he will say a ritual phrase:

(Women and Men)

It is not I who speaks but the wind.
Wind blows through me.
Long after me, is the wind.

Ordinary lives being turned upside down

“This war is a wakeup call to humanity, we now need to learn to speak the common language of peace, and filter out all the noises from the political narratives.”

On 26 February 2022, a somewhat unusual Saturday evening, I talked to Dr. Olexandra Sorokopud, CEO of YMCA-Lviv of Ukraine, amid the 3rd day of constant bombings in various part of the country by the Russian army. Olexandra started her YMCA service in 2004, her academic background is in political science, with previous work experience at United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Western Region Crimea-SOS Network. The vision of YMCA-Lviv is to empower youth in post-soviet local communities. It intends to establish a new intellectual, social and art concepts to facilitate a social change based on a synergy between all stakeholders. At the time of this interview, Lviv, a city in the western part of Ukraine, approximately 469 km away from the capital, Kyiv, is still relatively quiet and isolated from the Russian attack. Our conversation is around the reaction of Ukrainians towards the invasion, and how the YMCA and its members are dealing with this ongoing crisis. The content has been edited and condensed.

It is devastating to see this invasion unfolding in Ukraine, it has been widely reported that from the eastern part of the country, all the way inward toward Kyiv have been bombarded by the Russian army in the past 2 days, from different directions. How is the situation in Lviv? Are the people there much impacted so far?

People in the east have the experience of fighting the aggressions from Russia in the past, but people in the west and the south do not. At this moment, it is not exactly safe and isolated from this ongoing attack at Lviv. There are these so called “scouts” as undercover of the Russian army, dressed as civilians, some even dress as Ukrainian army, going around the streets, putting symbols/marks in strategic locations, that help the Russian army to attack later on. Also, they are locating where Ukrainian forces are hiding. People wake up in the morning now and gather their families and their pets, to take shelter in their basement. Some people are staying in public locations such as the metro station because it is not safe for them to stay at home. Everybody here is on high alert and taking shelter from the attack.

Have you been in contact with other YMCAs in the country?

All the YMCAs in Ukraine received a report yesterday, from Viktor Serbulov, National General Secretary of YMCA Ukraine, located in Kyiv. The situation there is very tense, through the window of Viktor’s house, he heard gun shots and bombings at regular intervals. Over the past 3 days, there were over 25,000 Ukrainian volunteers who have war combat experience signed up to help the military to defend Kyiv, they have been all given machine guns. The YMCA Ukraine is working very hard to support people to escape from Kyiv to a safer location.

Is Lviv YMCA in coordination with other YMCAs to support the civilians at this time?

Our YMCA building has been providing shelters to people from Kyiv and other parts of the country, as a safe stepping point before they move onto other countries, like Poland, Moldova and Romania. We are coordinating with the YMCAs over there and they have mobilised many of their staff and volunteers at the border, and train stations to provide the Ukrainian a temporary shelter after they arrived. We are working with Denmark YMCAs to fund raise and support the medical supplies for the wounded soldiers and civilians who are arriving in Lviv from the front line and locations where the attacking occurs. At the same time, the fund raising is to support people who have decided to stay in their city, in the midst of attack and the indefinite suspension of business activities. We are working with the other YMCAs and partners in Ukraine in providing our international YMCAs with update on the situations here, to avoid fake news and misinformation coming from the Russian government. Further down the line, Lviv YMCA will try to focus on rehabilitation works for the young people and the war veterans, whereas for humanitarian aid, we expect to have more support from the international communities.

The sovereignty issue between Ukraine and Russia goes back many years, with the recent annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the conflicts in the eastern part of Ukraine, it seems there are different voices and opinions among the Ukrainians in this ongoing conflict. Do you think this is the cause or the effect of the war that is underway right now?

The war made it very clear on what is going on, and the war has brought a lot of names to the situation, and to the events that is going on. Before that, there were different political views that say different languages about war, depends where you are and which position you are. For now, we are learning through a very difficult lesson, but we are learning to speak a common language, not just in Ukraine but also in Europe, and the rest of the world. We are learning to give names to the current situation, to identify what is really happening. Many people who have not experienced this level of aggression in the front line, are not familiar with this war time rhetoric.

What is your hope for the current situation?

Peace is something that we want, but this is not something that is happening right now. The international community talked about building a peace dialogue in Ukraine, but we are receiving aggressions as a result, we don't have peace dialogue, instead we have rockets flying over our house, and the Russian army shooting people on the street. We need to think in depth who should be participating in the peace dialogue and what it really means. The world can learn from the situation of Ukraine, and the voices of the people who have suffered and who have lost their families and home have to be heard. What do we mean by justice, freedom and protection, and how to provide it. I think this war is a wakeup call to humanity, we now need to learn to speak the common language of peace and filter out all the noises from the political narratives.

By Eric H.Y. Wong, PTU Co-worker, ericwong729@gmail.com

THE GREAT INVOCATION

From the point of Light within the Mind of God

Let light stream forth into human minds.

Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God

Let love stream forth into human hearts.

May the Coming One return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is known

Let purpose guide all little human wills

The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the human race

Let the Plan of Love and Light work out

And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the plan on Earth.