

WFP Youth UK, Parliament: Ending Sexualisation of our Youth

Asmah Anis and Jack Corley

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International UN Day of Elimination of Violence against Women

Houses of Parliament, London, England



Members of the WFP 'Young Women' group joined up to organize a meeting in Portcullis House on the 24 November to commemorate this special day for women; its theme was “Ending the Sexualisation of our Youth”.



A panel of speakers from diverse backgrounds highlighted issues relating to the topic of sexualisation and the damaging and painful effects physically as well as emotionally and psychologically resulting from misunderstanding/wrong education, wrongful cultural practices, exploitation etc.



Ms. Leyla Hussein, a trained psychotherapist, began the evening by speaking on Female Genitalia Mutilation (FGM). Having recently filmed for Channel 4 “The Cruel Cut” she spoke on certain cultural norms in countries where FGM is practiced and the horrific effect this has on young women and children, being scarred forever. Leyla has been consistently campaigning for change, raising awareness and to bring education and an attitude of care to bear on this very sensitive issue in the UK.



The second speaker, Gemma Aitchison, founder of 'Yes Matters' focused on addressing norms and behaviors. She believes, not is done enough to support women. For example in cases of rape, a woman is often asked about her dress code and whether this provoked the attack; regardless of what she is wearing she should not be subject to such a violent act of intrusion. Women also fail to come forth and press charges for fear of being shunned. The process itself of charging perpetrators many times is a very traumatic experience when a case is taken up by the authorities. Gemma seeks to bring about changes through appropriate and better education of young people, including in schools.



Asmah Anis focused on some factors contributing to the phenomena of sexualisation in today's society, in particular the influence of music videos, TV, Magazines and the all-encompassing 5 internet. She pointed to some solutions, including better education at a young a introducing some form of censorship for assessing material suitable for young children on the internet, curbing of advertisements on TV, a.o.

Georgina Curtis of 'MsUnderstood' spoke on gender inequality. Her organization aims to address gender inequality through education of capacity building and collaborating with community based organization and schools. Georgina believes the world that is created by adults then effect the youth and poses complex problems that are difficult to manage and deal with.