

WFWP Birmingham, UK: Women Transforming Our World: Listen to Our Stories!

Patricia Earle
March 19, 2021



One hundred and forty women joined this online celebration of the United Nations' International Women's Day 2021, hearing contributions from 6 excellent speakers, and a number of respondents.

After warmly welcoming everyone, Patricia Earle invited Mrs. Mitty Tohma, President of WFWP in the United Kingdom, to share opening remarks and briefly outline the aims, values and projects of the organisation. She emphasised the need for women, particularly young women, to take responsibility and work in partnership with men, for the betterment of society.

Dr. Harriet Crabtree, Executive Director of the Interfaith Network UK, spoke of a world where people of different faiths now live side-by-side and can learn many things from one another. "We must give confidence and encouragement to one another, transforming others lives, as well as our own.

Dr. Lakshmi Vyas, President of the Hindu Forum of Europe, spoke about life in India, inheriting values from her upbringing in a Hindu family, and being grateful to be born as a woman. She studied noise pollution, and pioneered a way to influence legislation which could improve the environment for all members of society.

Dr. Sadia Ahmed, Chair of the Women's Group in the UK Islamic Mission, studied hard to become a doctor, as well as becoming involved in faith groups and a considerable amount of charitable work. She

spoke of women's need for mental and emotional support, the spiritual upliftment of young people, and her recent work to allay people's fears about vaccination for Covid-19.



Mrs. Anthea McIntyre, a Member of the European Parliament from 2011 until 2020, described attending an all-girls school, belonging to the Women's Foundation in her Church, and being the first female consultant in a very male-dominated ship building company! She supports women of all ages by giving talks in schools, universities and various companies. She is a co-Founder of West Midlands Together, which works to tackle Hate Crime in society.

Mrs. Joyce Fletcher, wife of Bishop Neville Fletcher in the Church of God of Prophecy, has worked to promote women's leadership for 30 years in the West Midlands, including in the area of mental health. She strongly emphasised the power of 'Connectivity' and togetherness, using the example of people of faith coming together to tackle the current Pandemic, including in the NHS. Getting people who are isolated to connect with others can make all the difference.



Finally, Mrs. Shabina Kauser, a family support worker and activist, described the challenges posed by the sexualisation of young people, on television and via the internet, and her work with young people, especially girls, to protect them from the dangers posed, to equip them and their parents with the right information and choices, and to promote the values of self-control and personal integrity. Society has become a battleground in many respects.

Musical interludes were provided by Pawanjit and Julia, and excellent responses then came from Luljeta (Shpresa Programme), Hina (TV Presenter and Leadership Coach), Rev. Marcia (Minister and Prison Chaplain), Fatmira (Teacher and Foster Parent) and Shenaz (Clifton Rd Mosque Interfaith Secretary), before the meeting concluded with a candle-lit song 'Make Me A Channel Of Your Peace.'

Reported by Patricia Earle
WFWP Birmingham Chapter Leader