

## WFWP International Young Leaders' Retreat 2022 in New York

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This year WFWP International hosted a young leaders' retreat in New York, USA under the theme 'Spread Your Wings Using Your Gift to Transform the World.' I arrived in NY on 3 August and stayed at the Harlem Centre. The following day we were received at the New Yorker Hotel and transported to UTS Messina House in Barrytown, New York. There we got a warm welcome from the WFWP UN staff.

We started with an introduction and icebreakers led by Mrs. Alexa Ward who shared about her life as well as the history of WFWP. We were each encouraged to share our personal intentions about what we wish to experience at the retreat.



On the second day we were workshopped on becoming women that this world needs. The challenges and

hopes of women living in this era were shared, and we as participants discussed our ideas and vision on what we could do to make this world a better place by becoming true women leaders. We ended the day with a spa night and a movie.

The next day Merly Barlaan shared her personal journey in creating a sustainable project. She started her project over a decade ago and now it is at a point where it has brought a holistic change to her home island of Bohol in the Philippines. Thereafter, architect Yani Dutta shared about her permaculture project in the Philippines, she spoke about restoring nature, combating climate change as well as the economic benefits of permaculture.



In the end all participants gave presentations on existing projects or ideas they had for a sustainable subject, after each presentation Merly Barlaan gave us personal advice on how we can make our ideas a success. This was a powerful and inspiring day.

On our last day in Barrytown we started the day by hiking at the Kaaterskill Falls, it was serene and beautiful, and we enjoyed going into the water at the waterfalls. We then had a conclusion ceremony before heading back to the city.

The following day we took a group tour of the United Nations headquarters where we were enlightened on the work done by the UN to bring change to the world. Then our last activity was lunch with Dr. Sun Jin Moon, International Vice President of WFWP. This was another inspirational moment; Dr. Moon personally spoke to us all and encouraged us to do great things.

The retreat had 15 participants from 11 countries including Germany, Austria, Spain, and Portugal. We all had personal interactions with each other, and things were set in a way that we could all feel at home.

The retreat was a success and will help us to grow our network and have more young people participate in WFWP activities. One thing all participants agreed on was that WFWP is run by great women who are teaching us how to continue that legacy of the movement.

Personally, this was an amazing experience because after 2 years of lockdown I was able to represent Germany on the international level and also make good connections. I hope that I can make a positive contribution from all the things I've learnt. My gratitude goes towards Die Frauenföderation für Weltfrieden, WFWPI UN Office and everybody who made this possible.

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