

WFWP USA: Getting Ready for Commission on the Status of Women - CSW63

Angelika Selle
February 15, 2019



The 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is less than a month away and WFWP staff are busy making final preparations for a whirlwind of exciting events. What exactly is the CSW and what can we look forward to during these two weeks in March?

Established in 1946, the commission is an intergovernmental body focused on women's rights and gender equality and hosts a two-week session each year to highlight important issues for women and girls. More than 5,000 participants, including representatives of UN member states, UN entities and ECOSOC-accredited organizations across the globe gather at the UN headquarters in New York around a specific theme.

This year the focus is on "Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls."

WFWP representatives from around the world will come to New York and be given the opportunity to network with hundreds of civil society organizations and bring their perspective to the discussions.

Hundreds of meetings, known as side events (inside the UN headquarters) and parallel events (in other locations around the city), will take place from March 11th to 22nd, and this includes a couple of events hosted by WFWP.

Here is an outline of WFWP events to look forward to:

March 13 - WFWPI Parallel Event with the theme "The Family and Social Protection" from 12:30 to 2pm at 4 West 43rd Street

March 16 - "Advancing the Culture of Peace" Horizon Summit, an all-day intergenerational event dedicated to fostering peace leadership. The schedule typically consists of a panel of speakers, interactive sessions, networking opportunities, and more.

To find out more, check out last year's overview [here](#) and read reflections from participants of CSW62 [here](#).

And don't forget to keep an eye on social media posts and reports of all the activities in upcoming newsletters.



CSW62 OVERVIEW AND USA CONTRIBUTIONS

Written by [WFWP USA President Angelika Selle](#)

March 31st, 2018



This year's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62) and surrounding WFWP International events marked yet another level of progress and development.

It was a joy to work together with and support the International Office and UN team under the leadership of WFWPI UN Deputy Director Mrs. Alexa Ward and her very capable team of young women in their great efforts to prepare for and execute high level events during the first week of the CSW62.

Already at the opening Consultation Day, a sense of hope was felt as the women who presented on this year's topic, Women and Girls in Rural Areas, not only highlighted the dire situations and issues women are facing in just about all countries including the United States (!), but also pointed out possible solutions, as well as the need for men to be involved.

One point which came up across the board in many sessions I attended was that women, especially women in leadership, are needed not only to provide **"balance"** but also **a more "holistic" approach** to solving problems. There was also discussion of the need for spirituality, **a focus on implementation**, and celebration and **recognition of the amazing resilience of women**, who, in spite of their seemingly impossible circumstances, pain, and suffering, have never given up, but rather continue investing themselves for the cause (*a more in depth article on Consultation Day will appear in next month's issue*).



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WFWP USA's Contributions to CSW 62

WFWP USA was mostly involved in getting the word out about the CSW events and to solicit participation from around the country, especially among young women. WFWP USA Administrator Mrs. Kiyomi Schmidt served as the main liaison to the UN office during the weeks and months of preparation for the events, and we would like to commend her for her wonderful work!

US participants came from all parts of the country, including New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Las Vegas, Arizona, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Washington DC, and Massachusetts. WFWP USA contributed about **40 participants**, including young women professionals, mothers and daughters, husbands, friends, and women leaders, as well as our local chairwomen and WFWP USA members.

Many participated in the WFWP International Side event and Parallel event, which offered high quality and varied panelist speakers and topics of discussion, and were very well selected by the UN team. Most all of our participants truly respected, loved, and were impressed by Dr. Sakena Yacoobi from Afghanistan who graced us with her presence and wisdom during the entire week. She made a deep impact on most everyone who heard her speak and experienced her warm heart and big smile.

WFWP USA was also very happy to co-sponsor again this year's Horizon Summit entitled "Rising Side By Side," an intergenerational gathering dedicated to fostering peace leadership. Ambassador Suzan Johnson Cook, Former Ambassador-At-Large for Interreligious Freedom, spoke as a panelist but also shared profound and solid pointers in her capacity building session on preparing for peace leadership. We were also happy to introduce a taste and practical experience of WFWP USA's Leadership of the Heart Curriculum, which was received very well (*Also see the other articles about the Horizon Summit, entitled "A New Beginning: WFWP Intern's First Experience with WFWP at Horizon Summit" and "Horizon Summit Bridging Generations of Peace Leaders"*).

On a personal note, it is always priceless to meet with our international guests and VIPs, in various sessions throughout the week, and most of all engage in special meetings with our International President, Professor Yeon Ah Moon.

I would like to thank especially Alexa Ward and our UN team for their mammoth work, effort, thought, and sacrifice which went into creating these multiple events, each of which was excellent, rich in nature, and well attended.



Summary of WFWP USA's contribution to the CSW62 WFWPI events in New York 2018:

- **Outreach:** Our office promoted the WFWPI Parallel event, Side event, and Horizon Summit to our friends and contacts through email updates, announcements in the Logic of Love Newsletter, Facebook, Instagram, and by reaching out to young women leaders. Local chapters shared about the upcoming events through their programs and to their community leadership and networks.
- **Homestays:** The WFWP USA office found homestays in the US to provide additional options for those coming from abroad.
- **Sponsorship:** WFWP USA financially contributed to the events, as well as sponsored a number of young women to attend.
- **Co-sponsored Horizon Summit:** For the third consecutive year, the WFWP USA office co-sponsored the intergenerational leadership program together with the WFWPI UN office. WFWP USA gathered nearly 40 guests to represent the US at the program. WFWP



President's Corner:
Turning Trials into
Triumph and
Celebrating Women's
Resilience



Say "No" to Silence,
Inaction, and
Indifference: WFWP
International Parallel
Event at CSW 62

USA President Angelika Selle gave welcoming remarks and closing remarks together with WFWPI UN Deputy Director Alexa Ward.

- **Horizon Summit Speakers:** WFWP USA invited Ambassador Suzan Johnson Cook, Former U.S. Ambassador-At-Large for International Religious Freedom, to speak on the Peace Leadership Panel, and to host a capacity building session on what it takes to become an international game changer. WFWP USA President Angelika Selle and WFWP USA Vice President Katarina Connery held a capacity building session on “Discovering the Leader Within.”
- **Horizon Summit Co-Emcee:** WFWP USA Administrator Kiyomi Schmidt co-emceed with WFWP International Horizon Summit Project Manager Krista Smith to represent both sponsors throughout the day.

I believe the **many positive reflections speak for themselves**, which in the end is what really matters and what makes this kind of effort worthwhile. Please enjoy the reflections below.



Horizon Summit Reflections

Bonne-Elise Deshotel:

I attended the Horizon Summit primarily because of Dr. Yacoobi. She is an individual about whom I wrote a research paper during my junior semester at the University of Bridgeport. I saw her Ted-Talk and was very inspired by her story and the courage she had to continue to bring access to quality education in Afghanistan during the Taliban occupation. Therefore, when I saw her name listed as one of the speakers, I had to find a way to make it work in my schedule. Being able to meet her and discuss refugees and the importance on both education and health care was very impactful in my life. This was the big takeaway for me and I've attached a photo of that happy moment.

Overall, I gained much more than I had anticipated from the event. I was very impressed with the panel of speakers. The former U.S. Ambassador for International Religious Freedom was truly an inspiration as well for my ambition going into the professional working world. I learned to take care of the relationships I have now because I never know where they may take me, and that my presence and how I carry myself will bring me closer to success in the world.

I would encourage others to participate really in any WFWP event because each one has an abundance of knowledge, connections and inspiration to give you. Every time I network with new individuals and learn something valuable. I very much appreciate that WFWP is also so supportive and willing to reach out to individuals such as myself, that may not have the excess funds to participate. I'm very grateful for the experience and look forward to future events.

WFWP USA Membership Coordinator Hanabeta Deshotel:

Horizon Summit 2018 was a wonderful, invigorating gathering of women leaders of heart, skills, and intellect. Women of many different backgrounds and realms of expertise shared their journeys to create a positive impact in the world. We heard from ambassadors, psychologists, leaders of service organizations, and more. All are intent on ensuring that all women, of every age and every creed, feel empowered to utilize their unique talents, rise

up, and speak out!

Co-Chairwoman WFWP Boston Tamara Starr-Perry:

This is my third year attending and am blown away every time! It's amazing to see women from around the world who not only want to see change, but are actively working hard within their own communities to make an impact. I was so inspired that I'm already starting to invite women to attend next year's event!

WFWP Pittsburg, PA Chairwoman Rita and Tom Baldwin:

Thank you for the effort that was invested in the Horizon Summit. Ambassador Chowdhury was an excellent choice for the Global Women's Peace Award. The panel members on Peace Leadership challenged us with proven strategies. The capacity building sessions covered a wide range of topics and proven methods for peace leadership. The introductory video gave a catching overview of the vision of WFWP. The interns gave a good introduction to encourage young people to volunteer. Our visit to East Garden Museum was a wonderful finish to an excellent weekend.

Matogba Nelson:

The Horizon Summit was an inspiring event to be part of especially because I am a college student and still figuring out what I can do to make a difference in the world. Hearing the stories of the speakers and what they have done in their communities inspired me to think ahead and to think more deeply about the issues we are facing today. It is possible that someone like me can help impact people's lives in a positive way.



Zaiya Konno, a student and local CARP (Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles) leader:

Last week I received the opportunity to visit New York for the Horizon Summit. I just came for the end, so I only got a small taste of everything. One thought that often came up in my mind during the summit, was a question that we often ask students at my college when we are approaching them for CARP activities. We ask questions like, "What causes people to suffer?" or, "How can we create a better world?" The question that often came up in my mind was, "Why does history tend to repeat itself?" For many of the questions we ask the students, we get a wide range of answers, but for this particular question, the most common answer is, "because we don't learn from the past."

Throughout the summit, the different aspects of masculine and feminine leaderships were made clear. Masculine leadership might include more clear direction giving or assertiveness, and feminine leadership might include listening, embracing, and compassion. Throughout history, feminine aspects of leadership have been looked down upon and seen as "weak," so what women leave their positions and try to be like men and overthrow men. Today, we see many young children who have lost their value, who are unhappy and go out and hurt others. I could really see that WFWP is really about finding the balance between the masculine and feminine forms of leadership. I felt like they are really about learning from the past in order to not repeat it.

At the summit, I met many women from different countries including Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, and Australia, who are really doing something to change the world. Some of them worked with refugees, uneducated children, and women who have been abused. They truly

embraced their motherly heart and were so open to learning from each other.

On the last day, we visited to home of Eleanor Roosevelt. I learned a lot about her and how she worked with immigrant children when she was younger. I also learned how she helped to make child labor laws and was a civil rights activist and a women's right activist. As I thought about the history of America, it became clear to me: this was the heart of a mother.

Throughout the whole event as I was surrounded and taken care of by so many great women and mothers, I felt the strength of the mother's heart. I had a very valuable experience and I'm really grateful I could go to the Horizon Summit this year.



HUMAN RIGHTS & PEACE

'Where, after all, **do universal human rights begin?** In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen...

E. Roosevelt





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REFLECTIONS ON CSW62 2018

Written by various participants

March 31st, 2018



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WFWP USA Financial Administrator Irmgard Baynes, reflection on CSW62:

All events were very interesting and stimulating for me. The speakers came from all over the world and showed that the issues in the US are similar to those in Nepal and Thailand. The speakers were excellent in bringing their point across in a matter of 10 minutes or so. I noticed that there was a common thread woven through all the different presentations, including the one from Dr. Panter-Brick at the WFWP side event, who reported from the scientific research point of view:

- We need to listen carefully to the people we want to uplift and help.
- We need to focus on creating trusted relationships in the communities and with the leaders of rural government.
- It is important to create a path for education by connecting elementary and higher education to a job and a profession.
- Access to education is not enough: quality education is needed, including extra curricular activities to strengthen healthy family relationships and moral and character education.
- We need to integrate "old" knowledge, coming out of the existing traditions and culture, with the "new" knowledge.

I deeply appreciated that our WFWPI President Professor Moon brought out the aspect that we are one human family and our response to any suffering of "brothers and sisters" wherever in the world should be guided by compassion. She addressed this in both of her presentations, at the side event about refugees, and at the opening of the Horizon Summit. Here she asked in my opinion the very valuable question: "What is lacking in the impact of all the great programs?" As an answer, she pointed to WFWP's Motto "Living by the Logic of Love" and "Living for the sake of others." This gave me ideas on how I can bring this up when networking with others and start a conversation to share our vision to respond to the burning issues all over the world. I was so very impressed how Carolyn Handschin, Director of the WFWP UN Office in Geneva, then further made WFWP's vision clear in her presentation. She connected to Professor Moon's points of compassion and love being our motivation as the reason why we need feminine leadership.

The Horizon Summit was for me the icing on the cake. I learned about the work and efforts of Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury and his role as the leading United Nations

Culture of Peace emissary. He said women bring new breath to work of creating peace and we cannot achieve peace if women are left out. I especially took note of his message to the young people in the audience, because it is true for all of us: "Look into yourself, and even though our society's materialistic focus is dominant, create a space for spirituality and never sell your soul." He ended with a quote by Albert Einstein encouraging us to be involved and be an agent of change: *"The world is a dangerous place to live, not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it."* I certainly had takeaways from the two capacity building session I attended.



President's Corner:
Turning Trials into
Triumph and
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Resilience



CSW62 Overview and
USA Contributions

Ambassador Johnson Cook made it easy to be attentive. She is so energetic and I could feel she walked the path she talked about. My takeaways from her topic are:

- Create peace in yourself to promote peace.
- Preparation determines your presentation.
- Politics and policies are facts of life, anticipate and learn how to deal with them.
- Relationships are crucial.

I was surprised about her point on professionalism as a responsibility to your position and your family. I love when I have to ponder on things.

The second session I chose, "Mindful Social Action," had the biggest impact on me. The title had intrigued me. Ms. Katz presented very thought provoking concepts relating to social activism. It painted a path to practice the vision of living by the logic of love. The concepts of emptying yourself when listening from the heart, oneness, none-otherness, non-enemy, and non-attachment are somewhat radical and remind me about WFWP's Founder's spiritual guidance. In my opinion, they are really the only way to true reconciliation, on a personal level as well as a on a community and even global level. It confirmed my belief and encourages me to practice it. I have two pages of notes from that session.

One of the highlights for me was that I could meet Dr Yacoobi in person. I was so inspired by her Sun Hak Peace Prize acceptance speech in 2017. I still remember that she said, "God looks at refugees the same way as he looks at every human. We must rise above the hate, we must use our voices for good."

Last but not least, I'd like to share these quotes I jotted down in my notebook:

- "Peace takes roots not as we demand equality but when we seek to develop ourselves and bring our own unique contributions."
- "Peace leadership must be rooted in love lived in the understanding that dignity comes from purpose." (This one I need to ponder on more).
- "If you want to go fast you go alone, if you want to go far you go together."

Thank you for putting such high quality events on. I was uplifted, encouraged, and proud to be part of Women's Federation for World Peace!





Dustin Knoblauch, reflection on CSW62:

I was fortunate enough to be a part of the parallel event planning team in addition to receiving a UN grounds pass while attending CSW62. I was incredibly pleased to see the event “Engaging the Rural Family: The Vital Role of Education” come together. The event’s speakers were excellent; it was wonderful to hear first-hand accounts of different professionals’ work across the globe, all shared with such humbleness and a clear appreciation for the opportunity. The several events I attended all discussed such unfortunate behaviors, yet each closed on an uplifting note. Human trafficking was a common theme across events, in which survivors had a chance to share their stories. It was moving to hear accounts of hope, gratitude and resilience, as well as sense of community within the #MeToo movement. I will certainly reflect on my CSW62 experience in my life, community, social work profession, and leadership role as I have in years past. I certainly consider myself fortunate for the opportunities and privileges in my life and believe it my mission to advocate for positive change, a theme of inspiration shared by all speakers. I am truly thankful to be a part of WFWP, as well as a CSW62 attendee and event contributor, and I look forward to future opportunities.

Edith Marie Hall, overall reflection:

This was my first meeting so I didn't really know what to expect. As a speaker/coach I have attended lots of events. I really enjoyed this one. The presentation/setup was very nice and professional. I loved the involvement of women worldwide. Hearing about the various concerns was eye-opening for me. There were so many different issues but yet [they are] the same really. It was nice to see the involvement of the younger generation as well as the ambassadors and other high ranking officials. [This] proved we all have a place, a role. I am grateful to have had this opportunity to be a part of such an organization. I see so much potential! Thanks for all you have done and continue to do for the good of mankind.





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