

WOMEN IN THE WAKE OF CONFLICT

MAY 12 2021
15:00 CET

A collective discussion on the importance of gender equality in achieving peace, stability and economic reactivation in post-conflict and fragile states.



GDSI in collaboration with Women in International Security, Italy organised a webinar entitled 'Women in the Wake of Conflict' on Wednesday, 12th of May 2021. The webinar sought to create a collective discussion on the importance of gender equality in achieving peace, stability and economic reactivation in post-conflict and fragile states.

Moderated by Fiorina Mugione, GDSI's Regional Director for Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific, the event provided an opportunity for experts in the field of mediation and Gender Inclusion to brainstorm key solutions to conflict resolution.



Ms. Fiorina Mugione,
Director for Africa,
the Caribbean, Pacific
GDSI



Ms. Karma Ekmekji,
Senior Fellow Issam Fares Institute
& Lead Advisor on Women,
Peace and Security Program



Dr. Irene Fellin,
Gender Peace and
Security & Peace mediation expert,
President of WIIS Italy



Ms. Ellen Maynes,
Operations Officer & Gender Advisor
International Finance Corporation



Ms. Jessy Carmelle Petite Frere,
Former Minister for Finance and
Economy, Haiti

Speakers from around the world joined the event sharing their own insight in advancing conflict resolution. Ms. Karma Ekmekji, Senior Fellow at the Issam Fares Institute and Lead Advisor on Women, Peace and Security joined us from Lebanon.

Dr. Irene Fellin, Gender and Security Expert with Women in International Security, Italy and co-founder and President of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network underlined the value of collaborating with institutions and multi-lateral organisations.

Ellen Mayes, Operations Officer at the Gender and Economic Inclusion Group, International Finance Corporation outlined the importance of the workplace in achieving gender equality while Ms. Jessy Carmelle Petite Frere, former Minister for Finance and Economy joined us from Haiti.

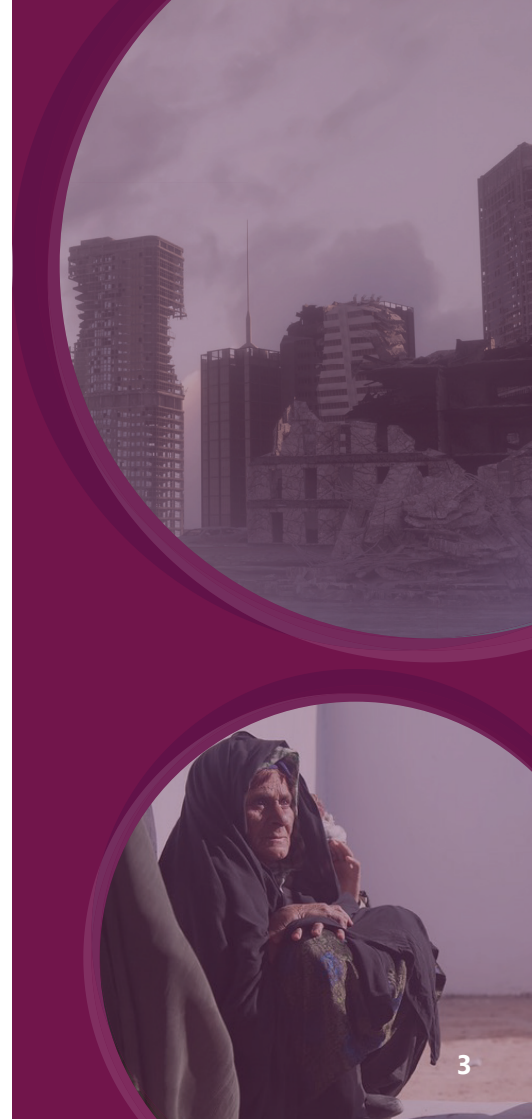
KARMA EKMEKJI

began by outlining her own experience. A child of conflict, Karma spent her first ten years living in civil war and is motivated by the fact that she faced conflict and wants to do everything in her power to avoid relapsing into conflict. 'I want to look to the future and focus on solutions' Karma explained was her raison d'etre.

IRENE FELLIN

outlined the importance of collaboration with institutions as a network - 'It is important that networks work with Politicians and Ministries and civil society because they bring the political will and capacity building. Sometimes politicians sit in Governments and don't have a sense of what's happening on the ground for women in conflict states. This creates a unique space for exchanging experiences.'

Irene added that mutual support and mentoring is a very important part of women's professional development and doesn't have to be junior/ senior but can also be peer to peer mentoring.



ELLEN MAYNES

provided insight into how solutions can be found in the workplace in conflict states outlining some of the work carried out by the IFC in the Solomon Islands.

Globally, countries are losing

\$ 172 trillion

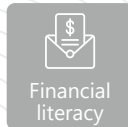
because of differences in lifetime earnings between women and men.



In the Solomon Islands we noticed there were some challenges around productivity, profitability and performance. We looked at one company, SolTuna, where there were **high rates of absenteeism** and turn-over. We found there was excessive absenteeism due to poor health, **gender based violence**, limited career prospects, and family care responsibilities.

The cost of these challenges totaled \$ 1.5 million.

SOLUTIONS



Financial literacy

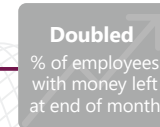


Anti-bullying policies

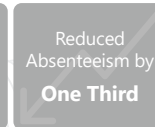


Leadership training

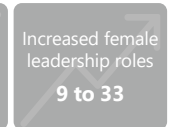
OUTCOMES



Doubled
% of employees with money left at end of month



Reduced Absenteeism by
One Third



Increased female leadership roles
9 to 33



The audience heard from leaders and activists from conflict states in Haiti, Burundi and Northern Ireland.

JESSY CARMELLE PETITE FRERE

illustrated that Haiti has been experiencing political turmoil for 200 years.

“ —————

To address this peace deficit we have to create an ecosystem to proactively foster peace building and provide equal opportunities for everyone. Peace is a state of mind, an attitude and a motivation for institutions.

LEONIDAS NZIGAMASABO

outlined the importance of empowering women.

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Gender and equality and conflict in some countries in Africa is greatly challenged in terms of development. We can achieve sustainable development in entrepreneurship when women are empowered. In Africa women are still at home with kids and do everything according to our culture I think we can achieve Sustainable development if more women are included in the process of entrepreneurship.



TARA GRACE CONNOLLY

highlighted the important role played by women in the peace process in Northern Ireland. For her, the conflict in Northern Ireland, known as 'the troubles' in Northern Ireland is a living memory.

“ _____

Having grown up in a post conflict society with parents that lived in a conflict zone in West Belfast I see it from a perspective of it being a living memory and the tensions are still so raw.

Women did so much to build solidarity between women across the divides and brought that same idea to the peace process. Many of the hallmark defining traits of the Good Friday Agreement were introduced by women yet women aren't given any credit for having pushed that agenda forward.

Twenty years on we have seen the re-emergence of tensions, we see the impact of Brexit, identity has really come back to the fore. In the middle of it all working class communities have been forgotten about and we have seen that were 13 year old children are throwing petrol bombs. There's a real annoyance that there's fantastic work being done in women's centres across Northern Ireland trying to get people involved in community work it's those same organisations that are now subject to budget cuts. The answer to peacebuilding lies in grassroots communities.



Things need to happen in parallel

Politicians work under pressure, unless they feel the heat they're not going to budge or change the way they do business. The women Peace and security agenda is still in the elitest realms the conversation is still in institutions and multilateral organisations, we need to bring the agenda to the citizens. We need to democratise the Women Peace and Security Agenda.

**If you want to fast, go alone,
if you want to go far go together.**

To go far we need to have the support system that goes into the private sector, the media, institutions, it's a multi-stakeholder effort to bring change.

- KARMA EKMEKJI



Female job losses are 1.8 times higher than men, when we think about solutions we need to think about how can we support women in this.

We need to support companies to build pathways for women to enter employment and create an environment where women feel safe to stay.

- ELLEN MAYNES



You will find capacity building programmes in every initiative. We need to expand the change and focus on men and their engagement in this agenda and look at training both men and women together.

- IRENE FELLIN



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