Religions for Peace
United Kingdom Women of Faith Network

Celebrating International Women's Day March 2021



Ravinder Kaur Nijjar Chair of RfP UK Women of Faith Network welcomed the panelists and participants. She introduced Karen Maxwell who chaired the event We began our session with lighting a candle for Sarah Everard, and all victims of male violence, and ensured we were referencing both the historical and modern plight of women.
Karen Maxwell, Religions for Peace UKWFN Coordinating Committee Member, and chair of our IWD event made the remark that to her, the panelists for this event were simply inspiring people. However, International Women's Day provides us with the opportunity every year to celebrate and investigate the remarkable contribution of women who improving society and the quality of people's lives. And in terms of women's contributions to peace, equality, and society at large, we were joined by three truly remarkable women for this event: Laura Marks OBE, Dr Maureen Sier, Trishna Singh OBE.



For our ~50 attendees what was moving about this event was the difference in approach. Where often these panel events formally outline professional careers and achievements, but for this event through the warm and personal interviewing from Karen, we dove into the common motivations these women shared. We discussed three areas: what motivated you to start on your path of social activism, what examples from your faith or cultural background have inspired you/ how does your faith empower women and which issues do we need to address to continue on our path to equality?

Through asking questions which concentrated on the personal and spiritual motivations behind change making, we were able to look into the similarities of our speakers' experience. Similarities in the barriers and criticism they faced, which surpassed cultural difference. The inequalities they all seek to address, and the social justice at the heart of their faith and cultural tradition which motivates them to challenge the status quo.
In our Q and A, when asked for advice for the next generation of changemakers, our speakers encouraged us to keep building community, and to not be afraid to be seen as "trouble-makers". No matter your background, that's a criticism you will inevitably face, when you're trying to level the playing field and carve a more equal future.

The contribution from the inspirational women can be accessed via the link below:
https://youtu.be/FE6omNYu-Eo