



PeaceWomen Across the Globe
 FRIEDENSFRAUEN WELTWEIT
 نساء من أجل السلام عبر العالم
 Femmes de Paix Autour du Monde
 Женщины мира за мир на земле
 MUJERES DE PAZ EN EL MUNDO
 Mulheres pela Paz ao redor do Mundo
 DONNE DI PACE NEL MONDO
 ピースウーマン—国境を越え平和をつくる女たち
 全球和平妇女

Newsletter 1/2014

TOPIC WOMEN PEACE MEDIATORS

Dear Readers,

Strengthening women in peace processes

I still remember very clearly how eagerly we awaited the applications last summer for the peace mediation course in Nepal. We certainly didn't expect to receive 250 applications! This great interest showed us that our gender-specific approach had struck a chord. The three-week course with women from various backgrounds was a great success; the work with our partner organization SANGAT in India was an enriching experience; and the TEWA Center in Nepal was the perfect host. The course is the main topic of this newsletter.

From Nepal, we move to Chile in order to introduce the PeaceWoman Viviana Díaz Caro, who for many years now has been working to uncover the fate of the over 90,000 people who disappeared during the military dictatorships and civil wars all over Latin America. You can read more about Viviana, who was awarded Chile's National Human Rights Prize in 2012, in the article.

The final feature is a report on the Oficina de la Mujer in Argentina. And of course, you will also find news from all over the world.

MEIKE SAHLING, PWAG DIRECTOR

Women must urgently be included to a greater extent in conflict resolution and peace processes. Although this is widely recognized, they are highly under-represented at peace negotiations. This is due to discriminatory norms and patriarchal structures, as well as to the fact that there are not enough well-trained women peace mediators. PWAG and its Indian partner organization SANGAT want to rectify this situation by holding mediation courses that address women's specific needs and potential in peace processes. The aim is not merely to teach content, but also to set up pools of competent female mediators who will network among each other. The first Women Peace Mediators Course (WPMC) took place in Nepal from 18 September to 8 October 2013.

above: Course exercise to test one's strength and deal with implied violence.

Why have a mediation course for women?

Mediators play a crucial role in peace processes. By mediating between the parties and helping them to draw up agreements that are acceptable to both sides, mediators make a significant contribution to conflict resolution. Techniques, approaches and skills that have been tried and tested internationally help mediators in their challenging work and can be learned in training courses. In most parts of the world, however, it is far more difficult for women than it is for men to obtain access to training. Furthermore, women's rights are rarely seen as a priority in mediation processes, and there is often no gender-sensitive approach whatsoever in conflict analysis and transformation. PWAG and SANGAT therefore developed a course for women peace mediators that takes these elements into account and is free of charge for the participants.

"I take back inspiration, courage and some useful tools for conflict transformation."

Participant feedback



TOPIC **WOMEN PEACE MEDIATORS**

CONTINUED > **Holistic and participatory**

The WPMC in Nepal took a holistic and participatory approach. It was holistic because it included the body and mind in the learning process, for example through yoga, intercultural activities, films or debates. Loud laughter and empathy were regular features of the course, as was the feedback at the end of the day that was included in the rest of the course where possible. In this way, the participants were actively involved in the course structure. The practical approach was of particular benefit to the women who were involved in ongoing peace negotiations at the time, such as the participants from the Philippines.

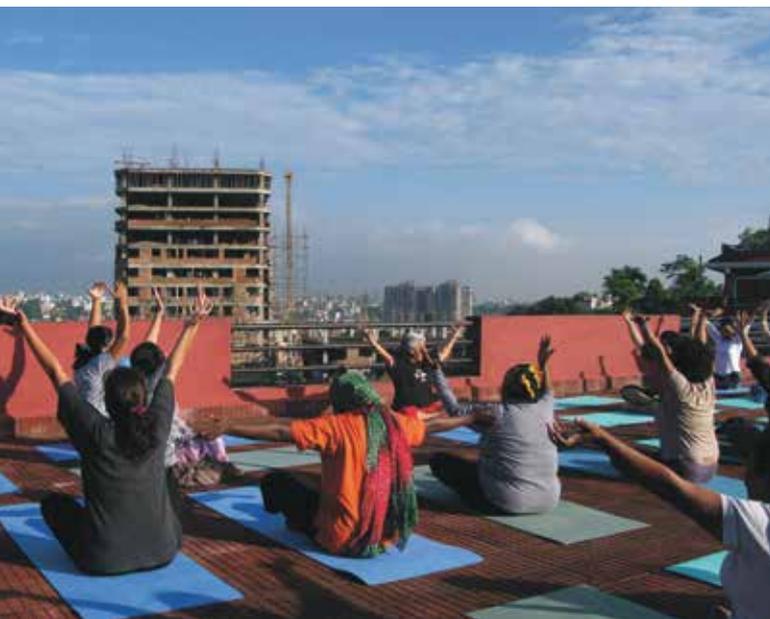
Networks as an important goal

One of the most lasting ways of providing mutual support and multiplying activities is to set up networks. During the course, the participants formed national groups, analyzed their programs, identified gaps in their activities, and drew up action plans on how they intended to apply what they had learned after the course. The Women Peace Mediators Network in Pakistan is a direct outcome of the course. Two months afterwards, the four Pakistani participants coordinated a youth forum in Islamabad on gender-sensitive action. They each took two women activists from their region to this event, thus extending the reach of the network. However, these networking activities will not be limited to the national level. A very positive outcome was that the participants felt like “part of a peace community” at the end of the course. This successful result shows that further networks of women peace negotiators may well develop in the future.

The multitrack approach as a factor of success

The call for applications for the Women Peace Mediators Course was only announced in Asia. Twenty-five women from 12 countries were chosen from among the 250 applications. Many of the participants have been working in the peace field for many years. The selection process involved choosing participants from different tracks¹ in order to create a comprehensive learning atmosphere. This multitrack approach proved challenging during the theory classes, as the participants had very different levels of knowledge. However, the diversity of the group was a huge benefit when it came to sharing experiences. Depending on their track level, the women approached the same challenges in different ways. This gave the participants new ideas and allowed them to learn more intensively. The multitrack approach also helped the participants to overcome prejudices against the other tracks.

¹ The term “tracks” is used in diplomacy to describe various intervention levels in society. The “multitrack approach” combines several of these levels, which are divided into the government, (influential elements of) civil society, and the community.



above: The participants played a very active role in the course.

left: A great start to the daily classes: an early-morning yoga session.



PEACEWOMAN



Viviana Díaz Caro, Chile

Since her father's imprisonment and subsequent disappearance 38 years ago, Viviana Díaz Caro has been fighting to uncover the fate of people who were detained under Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship and have been missing ever since. For many years, her work met with skepticism and disbelief in her home country, but she is now recognized as a human rights defender.

It's December 16, 2013, a day after the presidential election in Chile. The former director of UN Women, Michelle Bachelet, has been re-elected for a second term in office. PeaceWoman Viviana Díaz Caro is pleased, as President Bachelet was always open to the concerns of Viviana's agrupación AFDD, an association that aims to uncover the fate of the disappeared, during her first term in office. Nevertheless, this is a day like any other for Viviana – another day devoted to her fight for justice.

Since being awarded Chile's National Human Rights Prize in 2012, Viviana describes herself as a human rights defender. Her aim is not to emphasize her – truly significant – achievements, but rather to draw attention to her campaign and, to a certain extent, to highlight the state's recognition of it. For a long time, many Chileans resisted the notion that their state had tortured and murdered prisoners. However, the evidence speaks for itself. And now, almost 25 years after the country returned to democracy, the passing of time is AFDD's greatest enemy. Most of the torturers and commanders, as well as the dictator himself, are no longer alive. What point is there in wanting to bring them to justice? Why does Viviana continue to fight a solitary battle to find out exactly what happened in the past?

Actually, she isn't really alone. Over 90,000 people disappeared all over Latin America during the military dictatorships and civil wars. There are similar organizations to AFDD in many countries, and they have joined forces in FEDEFAM. Viviana played an active

role in this association for many years. She also made a significant contribution to the draft of the UN Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

Moreover, her endeavors are not futile. Although the fate of only some ten percent of the disappeared has been uncovered so far, AFDD has been successful in various ways. For example, it discovered a notorious torture center, which was located in the heart of a residential area, as well as an incinerator that was used to burn prisoners alive. The perpetrators were moved from a luxurious detention center to a normal prison. AFDD also uncovered mistakes made in identifying remains. As a result, the victims' families can now at least be certain that they are burying the "right" person.

Of course, neither the National Human Rights Prize nor being honored as a PeaceWoman will bring Viviana's father back to life. However these awards give her work something it had lacked for a long time, namely recognition, and thus greater credibility among the public. With this support, Viviana continues to fight for justice. She also lobbies for human rights education in schools to teach children dignity and respect – essential values for a society that resolves conflicts without violence.

above left: Viviana Díaz Caro always carries a photo of her father with her.

above right: Office of the Agrupación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos in Santiago de Chile.



Good to know

Oficina de la Mujer

In 2009, the Argentinian Ministry of Justice set up a Women’s Office (Oficina de la Mujer – OM) to support and coordinate public institutions’ equality activities. OM’s training unit organized train the trainer workshops; its data collection unit produced a gender map; and its research unit introduced gender equality measures in the workplace. One outstanding example of these measures was that rooms where women can breast-feed were set up in all of the ministry’s buildings. The aim is to make it easier for women to return to work after maternity leave. Paternity leave was extended from two to 15 days.

In 2013, OM held a train the trainer workshop on gender mainstreaming, human trafficking and sexual exploitation. The idea was that judicial officers and civil society organizations would learn about the sensitization methods developed and tested by OM and subsequently share these methods with their colleagues. Of relevance to the success of the workshop was the fact that each sex had to make up half of the participants. The PWAG coordinator for Latin America, María Julia Moreyra, was allocated one of the limited places for NGOs. She finds OM’s methodology very promising, and is planning to apply it in PWAG’s inter-regional project on violence against women. She will hold her first workshop in March in a center for immigrants in La Matanza, Buenos Aires, where she will train local authorities and staff from the center in gender-sensitive conduct towards immigrants and explain the dangers of human trafficking.

above: The word “peace” in the languages of the women who attended the mediation course.

News

Team in Bern

PeaceWomen Across the Globe would like to thank **Annina Gonzenbach** for her valuable work as a project assistant from September to December 2013 and to wish her every success with her next challenge in the Cape Verde office of UN Women.

We would also like to wish **Kathrin Wartmann**, who provided our office with support as an intern from September 2013 to February 2014, all the best for her new role at the think tank Foraus. Finally, we would like to welcome **Andrea Grossenbacher**, who started her internship with us in February.

Awards for PeaceWomen

Haifa Abu Ghazaleh from Jordan has been appointed Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League in Cairo. **Sharon Bhagwan Rolls** from the Fiji Islands received the 2014 Woman of Distinction Award from the “NGO Committee on the Status of Women Forum” in recognition of her media work aimed at empowering women.

Hadayai Majeed from the US was awarded the prize for humanitarian services by the association “Muslim American Community Enhancement”, for her work with survivors of domestic violence.

Anne-Marie Mukwayanzo Mpundu from the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been appointed Peace Ambassador by the association “Observatoire Africain de la Sanction Positive”.

Forthcoming events

30 April – 6 May, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Annual meeting of the coordinators from Argentina, Brazil and Indonesia of the international project on tackling violence against women on the topic of human trafficking and sexual exploitation from a gender perspective.

17 June, Bern, Switzerland

PWAG’s board meeting will take place from 15 to 17 June. On the last evening, we would like to invite all our members and those interested in our work to attend the **annual general meeting with our international board**. We can offer you a chance to meet with one of the experienced experts on women’s rights and peace from China, Fiji, India, Colombia, Togo and other countries, or to invite her to give a talk. Please get in touch with us if you are interested!

Solidarity

Peace needs us – and we need you! Please support our work by making a donation or by buying a “peace share” for PeaceWomen Across the Globe.

Many thanks!

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We have a new blog that describes the work of our worldwide network and creates a forum to share PeaceWomen’s stories with you. Find out more at www.1000peacewomen.com



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