



The Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP)

www.meaningfulworld.com

NY Office

185 E. 85th Street, New York, NY 10028

Phone: 1 (201) 941- 2266

E-mail: drkalayjian@Meaningfulworld.com

ATOP Meaningfulworld Organizes a Parallel Event for United Nations 57th CSW Transforming Violence against Women Around the World

Renoude Charles, and Jane Kearns

“Shared sorrow is half sorrow, while shared joy is double joy”

During the past two weeks the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW) held its 57th session at the United Nations, where a series of workshops, conferences and side events took place. Once again, The Association for Trauma Outreach and Prevention (ATOP) Meaningfulworld organized a parallel event presenting a symposium on ***Empowering Women Around the Globe: Transforming Violence through Mind-Body-Eco-Spirit*** on 14 March, 2013 at the UN. The conference warmly welcomed close to a hundred attendees from academia, NGO’s, grass root organizations, UN staff and others who came from near and far. We provided ATOP membership applications, information handouts, as well as the 7- Step Integrative Healing Model. Symbolic figures and energy balancing healing oils collected from around the world set the peaceful atmosphere for the panelists and the audience.

The symposium opened with an awe-inspiring musical meditation, including an original



Leysa Cerswell presented Dr. Ani, & talented duo MAYA Sato Moughalian, & John Hadfield

piece by MAYA, with Sato Moughalian on flute and John Hadfield on percussion. *The Book of Goddesses*, by Robert Paterson and the Armenian Asparani Dance inspired celebration and unification through its melding of rhythm and melodies. It created a beautiful calming quality grounding the audience with a sense of peace and healing. Leysa Cerswell assisted in opening the conference by presenting ATOP Meaningfulworld’s empowering outreach in communities around the world in the last twenty-two years. She then introduced the Chairperson, Founder & CEO of ATOP Meaningfulworld, Dr. Kalayjian, who gave her passionate welcoming remarks and reinforced that men and women are like the two wings of a bird, and if these two wings don’t fly harmoniously the human race will never prosper. At the panel discussion, Dr. Kalayjian raised awareness on issues that women encounter every day and what steps to take to empower each other and ourselves using mind-body-eco-

spirit health. One of the messages we were left with, which was also a part of the fabric of the conference, was “Now more than ever, the cause of women is the cause of mankind.” Female

empowerment equals empowering the world, and we can do that by taking a stand to make a difference in our own life first, and then making a difference in someone else's life.

The first speaker, Sarah Thontwa, graduate student at Columbia University, is currently completing her studies in Economics and highly involved in International Affairs. Thontwa, a native of Democratic Republic of the Congo, spoke of empowering women of Africa by identifying pressing issues of gender-based discrimination, property rights, labour rights, and civil liberties that are impacting the population. By showing slide presentation, she brought a poignant focus to poverty, the exploitation of women, and the manner in which they are being brainwashed by the cultural policies created by men. The overrepresentation of African women has evolved over time, with the average of women and girls with no access to education significantly higher than boys. She mentioned that in a population of over 70 million Congolese, 60% are women who live in the shadow of men with no entitlement to properties. They are



Dr. Kalayjian building relationship with the panelists

punished for crimes they do not commit, while men receive honorable treatments, and also get discriminated at home and in the workplace. Thontwa advocated international pressure in seeking help to bring women's issues to a bigger platform, with both macro and micro level policies to better the future for Congolese women. "Finding male allies to bring to the cause because there is a willingness in men to help with women empowerment" was a powerful concluding message that moved the audience in taking a similar stand as CEDAW ratification for the protection of women and girls around the globe.

The next speaker was Amal Abu Sif, a PhD candidate at Ban-Gurion University in Israel, with research focus on the impact of endless political violence on the population of Israel and Palestine. A Palestinian-Israeli descendent herself, Abu Sif is the first Muslim female to maintain a senior staff role in

a program of Jewish education. For many years, she has been involved as a co-existence activist, inspiring younger Jewish generations in hopes for a better future. She addressed issues of cultural policies, lack of educational access and financial stability in taking steps for "Empowering Arab Women in Palestine and Israel" to end the violence and silence of women in the Middle East. Her thesis, "Building Peace Through Knowledge: The Israeli-Palestinian Case," focused on the knowledge that, despite humankind's loss of hope for unity and peace due to the slow progress of the political peace process, hope is still alive in ending violence against women. She expressed her concern about "Honor Killings," the murderous acts that rob innocent women of their lives at the hands of men in their own family. She suggested that raising awareness to poverty, lack of education and mistreatment of women is one of the many ways to educate others and empower women in the Middle East.

The last speaker was Myra Godfrey, also known as Sri Sri Sri Jaya Jaya Myra Parameshwari Devi, who founded Gita for the Masses in helping others overcome challenges in their life through Hridaya Healing. She spoke of spiritual ways to empower women and men in her "Cultivating the Divine Feminine Energy Within" discussion. She began speaking of shakti, which means empowerment, of which women possess a higher level than men and stated that men not being empowered is the real reason why they often engage in maltreatment against women. There are two aspects in one, women are typically represented with positive attributes, namely loving, creative/compassionate, nurturing, embodying peace, as well as providing

inspiration to people in the world. The other are aspects that need to be reclaimed, such as dark, violent, forceful and conquering. She stressed that women ought to remember their strength and claim their empowerment in leading the pathway to change the world. She unveiled a process of “unity consciousness,” which lies in the source of love where masculine and feminine sources



ATOP Meaningfulworld Team: R. Charles, J. Kearns, Dr. Kalayjian, K. Martinez, L. Cerswell

must reunite and unify everything as one, for both men and women. She ended by guiding the audience in an empowerment meditation exercise that conveyed a peaceful aura, which can be practiced anywhere, and anytime, and takes only a few minutes.

The conference ended with a Q&A period led by Dr. Kalayjian. Questions were raised regarding why do men engage in violent acts? Why are some men so gentle yet unappreciated by women? And why do women engage in violence toward one another? Dr. Kalayjian responded using the term “horizontal violence” to expound further that the pressure that builds up from the top (through policies, governments, and states), when unable to be addressed towards the perpetrators, will then spread horizontally, hurting the very sisters and other women

around. She also pointed out the many violent role models that we have in governments, and lack of commitment to a healthy, peaceful, non-violent paradigm to maintain peaceful resolutions to our conflicts. Dr. Kalayjian offered the audience many positive action plans:

- To sponsor a child from Africa, Asia, the Middle East and support their education,
- To use non-violent communication,
- To practice forgiveness and self-healing,
- To use empathy to transform the violent acts into loving acts of kindness, and
- When faced with violence, instead of reacting, break the chain of violence and send the perpetrators love and empathy.

In conclusion, the human race is like a bird with two wings, one wing is male and the other female. If we don’t learn how to fly harmoniously together, then the human race will be destroyed.

Our next United Nations event will take place on 4 April, 10-1 PM on Preventing Genocide: Nations acknowledging their Dark History, using non-violent mindful acts to educate and transform violence. Registration is a must e-mail: info@Meaningfulworld.com.

Founded in 1990, the Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP) Meaningfulworld, charitable organization affiliated with the United Nations Dept of Public Information, has achieved international recognition as a leader in training humanitarian outreach professionals as well as responding to two decades of global and local disasters. ATOP is committed to health and global education promoting state-of-the-art scientific theory, peace, forgiveness, consciousness research, internship, and the development of technical skills to train mental health professionals, teachers, psychologists, art therapists, nutritionists, alternative medicine practitioners, clergy, nurses, mediators, interfaith ministers, and lay persons committed to service the self and humanity. Meaningfulworld Humanitarian Outreach teams have helped rehabilitate survivors from over 45 calamities, making a daily difference in people’s lives helping to transform tragedy and trauma into healing and meaning-making through post trauma growth, resilience, emotional intelligence, mind-body-eco-spirit health, visionary leadership, empowerment and artful collaboration through a new world view.

Our Motto: When one helps another BOTH become stronger