



Reflections from our network on their participation at the UN75 Dialogue

Biggest Virtual Conversation on Zoom By Shubhra Singh Senger (Class 11 - St. Francis Convent Inter College, Jhansi (India))

“Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.” Certainly I felt privileged on being approached and grabbed the opportunity of sharing my views in this esteemed Virtual Meet.

Sr. Cynthia CJ – The IBVM/CJ UNGO Representative organized a consultation, to bring to light the voices of people from our network to be a part of the UN 75TH Global Conversation, to mark United Nation’s 75th Anniversary, 2020.

On 25th June, 2020 at 4 p.m. with Sr. Cynthia CJ as the host while Sr. Deepti CJ – The JPIC Coordinator of the Delhi Province and Mrs. Caroline Gahlot Coordinator of FMW, as co-hosts, conducted a Virtual Zoom Meeting which encompassed twenty five participants from CJ schools, coterie of zealous teachers, Intermediate students, esteemed alumni and college girls of CJ schools in the Delhi Province.

The Zoom meet commenced with a prayer by Mrs. Josephine Scott, followed by sharing of views on the **three questions on the issue of ‘Covid 19 and the future.**

1. Do we think we will be better/ worse off? What kind of future we hope/ want to be?

The members seemed panglossian about the upheaval which upended our lives. They fostered the positive notion “Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall.” Technology was appraised for keeping people connected. The participants brought issues of sanitation and mental care to limelight. The burgeoning ideas about the imminent world embodied strengthening relationships, being discreet about environment, wishing for good leadership, prioritizing health and lastly hoping for a world of love, compassion, empathy and tolerance.

2.) Are we on track to achieve these? If not what are the obstacles / challenges.

Here the participants were ambivalent. Many members believed that myriad impediments lie bare – weak public healthcare, dearth of health professionals, deficiency in Medical Research Associations, business recovery is an uncertainty, Indian economy was trailing a descending track, the snollygosters awaiting this trying time to cumulate wealth, painful picture of the migrant workers, the nonchalant and insolent masses violating Covid

safety norms and lastly perishing human values in today's generation. However, regardless of the obstacles the participants had an affirmative outlook that "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

3.) What would you like to suggest the UN Secretary General to address the Challenge?

All wished to draw the attention of UN towards – stern education of Girls and Women, monetary assistance to developing and under developed nations, prevention of child/girl/women abuse, imparting efficient education to youth, working together without discord continue trade and commerce, more Online Degree courses for youth, protection of senior citizens, encourage sustainable job's formation, facilitating counseling cells to lend a listening ear, funding NGO's and prioritizing maintenances of ecological balances.

My Experience of the UN75 Virtual Conversation by Sonia Elizabeth Zuñiga Quincho (Peru)

I believe that these meetings scheduled by the UN have been about information, communication and reflection on public policies of other countries along with our own. We have reflected on the social, educational, health and digital gaps in the participating countries and on the strategies governments are applying to meet the needs of the population. These painful realities are the product of the already existing inadequate government strategies and the pandemic.

Imagining and yearning for a promising future for the new generation of students who will assume the leadership of the country: We want a country that closes all the gaps in every area of the development of the person; emphasizing the eradication of corruption; the selection of professionals who assume roles and functions in the political life of the country, with a mystique of work and service to others; that the economy improves and supports investment and job creation, reactivation of existing and national companies; as well as attention to the socio-emotional and mental health of the people; attention to a healthy and healthy diet, an end to violence and discrimination against women, access to education and to digital technology for all.

Faced with this situation, it is our responsibility to get involved and to assume the educational task for our students: to be mediators and facilitators of their learning; trainers of future citizens empowered by values and virtues; because it constitutes the moral reserve of our country which is plagued by corruption and neglect of those most in need.

Finally, aware of our role, I reiterate my commitment to work and service, cooperatively and collaboratively; to meet the just national and population demands.

Call for Change in the Context of the Post COVID-19 World by Pauline Waithaka IBVM (East Africa)

It was just on a normal day when an interesting message hit my WhatsApp inbox. I had been invited to participate in a global conversation! I was intrigued by the idea and braced myself to a background on what this really entailed as the global COVID-19 Pandemic continues to disrupt varying spheres of our social, political, spiritual and economic lives. To mark its 75th anniversary in 2020, the United Nations initiated the UN75 Global conversations launched by the UN Secretary General António Guterres. The conversations invited people around the world to discuss their priorities for the future, obstacles to achieving them and the role of global cooperation in overcoming the obstacles.

On the 26th of June 2020, I participated in a zoom dialogue meeting focusing on Recovery from COVID-19 / Preparedness / Building resilient Systems and Society. It was facilitated by Janet Palafox, UN representative for IBVM and Maureen Wanyora, Eastern African Province JPIC UN representative. The dialogue brought together

IBVM members from Eastern Africa representing various ministries in the Province. We had a moment of reflection, listening and sharing on all that humanity has achieved and all that remains to be done. Despite the lingering uncertainty brought by the pandemic, we appreciated the growing compassion towards humanity and nature in many parts of the world. In our Province locality, there have been successful efforts and interventions to reach out to the poor, elderly, sick and those losing livelihoods, giving them a chance to live a dignified life. However, in light of the growing crisis, much is still called for in order to attain this dignity. There are still obstacles such as; gaps in social protection, unequal access to basic services (food, water, health, shelter, and education) corruption, gender discrimination and gender based violence, exploitation and abuse of children, low level of ICT literacy and accessibility of devices, collapsed waste management in urban informal settlements and overcrowding.

It was indeed an insightful dialogue tailored to my ministry (outreach to women and the vulnerable in informal settlements). It was an opportunity to realize more than ever the need for the global community to commit energies and resources in promoting the dignity and liberation of the future generation particularly women and children. Great emphasis needs to be put in order to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor, increased participatory democracy and cooperation, proper management of resources and finances, involvement of women, youth and vulnerable groups in policy making, improved health care, prioritization in budgets, and evaluation of projects aimed at meeting the sustainable development goals. The forum enlightened me as I realized more the importance of shared responsibility, solidarity and community driven solutions to challenges. It is important to give people a chance to voice their concerns and allow them to participate in any initiative directed towards their well-being.

“..An authentic faith-which is never comfortable or completely personal-always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it. We love this magnificent planet on which God has put us, and we love the human family which dwells here, with all its tragedies and struggles, its hopes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses” (Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation: Evangelii Gaudium ,n.183).

My Personal Experience by Javier Alonso, teacher from BVM-Irlandesas Leioa School and member of the Charism Formation Team of the Institute in Spain

The opportunity to take part in the UN 75 Global Conversation with more than one hundred people from all around the world and very different ages has been a fantastic experience. To take part in an action that is able to get to the top and be part of the world transformation is an opportunity that arises few times in the life and that has been really enriching for those of us who took part in the webinar.

We don't ask for magnificent things; we just demand to put the focus on the people and their problems, global citizenships living in a Common House. SDG are our route plan and they are now more important than ever. Our goal is clear: we have to keep on working on the SDG and not to leave anyone behind.

Global Loreto - UN at 75 by Ailish Gaughan – Head Girl 2020 Loreto Altrincham (United Kingdom)

On the 13th June I took part in a meeting with around 25 other members of the Loreto Network to discuss a range of current issues through the lens of women and girls at the 75th anniversary of the UN. The issues discussed were 1. Recovery from Covid19, 2. New Technologies and 3. Hate Speech, misinformation. Each theme interlinked throughout the discussion and hearing the global perspectives of women in various roles across our international Loreto community was so insightful to understanding the work being done. Sister Janet Palafox, our current UN NGO representative, directed the meeting and introduced our purpose and goals.

The conversations around the possible effects of Covid19 were uplifting, as many participants noted the humanitarian responses and shows of support for social issues such as the Black Lives Matter Movement internationally and the renewed desire to acknowledge the powerful work done by NHS staff and their crucial role in our society. Such movements have brought huge issues to the fore, so that whilst disheartening news remains prominent during the pandemic, there has simultaneously been a growth of community strength across society. Participants noted the need for a collaborative effort to bridge poverty gaps and aid marginalised people by 2045. The growth of Covid19 has made many realise there is a lot more we can do so that we are prepared in future to help those in our communities most at risk.

Among the many topics discussed, that of the importance of education as a tool to help prevent the problem of miscommunication and learn how to enhance technology to help others, was one many were passionate about. This is vital to us at school as we develop our academic and individual opinions alike. In the conference I mentioned the importance of having safe sources of reliable information devoid of harmful or manipulating influences or xenophobic ideals, so that we are able to formulate ideas, opinions and solutions to modern day problems that value empathy and equality. It was agreed that education is our most significant tool in reducing the spread of hate in the age of new technologies and social media and should be prioritised and appreciated by governing bodies.

Another topic of discussion I thought key to fighting injustices as a Loreto school, was the acknowledging of the power of grassroots and community leadership. As our ability to connect with each other across societies and countries grows, we must recognise the influence all people can have in being involved with groundwork organisations. The term 'Build Back Better' was especially appropriate, as in school we can learn how leadership and interest in the betterment of society will be needed as we move through the impact of the Pandemic- hopefully with a more ethical outlook. The conference was overall greatly inspiring and a great opportunity to understand the various faces of the Loreto community across various nationalities, ages, and circumstances, but aligned in a shared concern for the Loreto Values to be employed in battling global issues.

How I experienced the virtual conversation with the United Nations by Tatiana Azucena Iparraguire Navarro (Peru)

The experience of the virtual meeting was immediate and beneficial; Sharing experiences and opinions with people from the sister countries of Brazil, Chile, Argentina and Spain was very important as we reflected on the difficulties we are going through due to this pandemic; what we need to improve to reach a better world in 2045 and the challenges that we will have to face along the way.

I liked hearing the opinions where they mentioned that we will achieve many changes if we act with the values of equity, equality and empathy. I am very grateful for the opportunity to participate in this discussion where different opinions were shared, with many of which I totally agree: especially on the need for quality education based on values so as to forge an ecological conscience; on the need to improve the health system; and to live free from discrimination and corruption.

I have high expectations for 2045 but it all depends on whether we are ready to take action to generate these changes that we need.

UN 75 Experience by Dr. Irene Rattan, mother of Aryaa Chandraratna (Class VI Lily) Loreto Convent Tara Hall Shimla (India)

Interacting with the participants at the webinar was definitely an illuminating experience. The concerns we deliberated upon were worrying and therefore extremely relevant.

Reaching across the country, exchanging views and raising awareness thereby was remarkable and a learning experience for me. It was gratifying to reach out to people who were equally concerned and worried in these times of the pandemic, when meeting in person, face to face, has become impossible. The rapt expressions on the esteemed participants' faces, the bond we established as we discussed, heard and responded to each other's verbalisation of concern was somehow comforting and uplifting in a way.

I felt connected in a circle of friendship and camaraderie that helped me to strengthen my convictions of a more understanding world even further.

The views propounded by the respected participants helped to further broaden my horizons and understanding of a life other than my own. The significance of a gentler world, of empathy and strong resistance to nefarious forces became clearer to my mind. The variety of observations were like more fertile soil to the garden of my mind and I'm so grateful to the organisers for including me in the fruitful discussions which I hope shall help in the evolution of thought processes via the UN and its impact upon the world.

The discussion we had centred around physical and emotional health— especially of the young. Voices were in unison at the anxiety felt about the pandemic and its effects. Cyber bullying, hate speech and the depression the youth undergo thereby established a major cause for concern for the participants. We were united in feeling the need for a wholesome society where gender biases and inequalities of all kinds would be discouraged and negated. The worrying spectacle of the workforce hit by the pandemic and forced to take to the roads raised concerns about the inadequate social security net for the weak and the poor.

The environment was another topic that troubled all of us at the discussion. Major stress was laid upon the desperate measures required to be adopted to save the planet for the coming generations. Everybody expressed their apprehensions about the declining health of all creatures due to continuously worsening climatic conditions.

However, as all humans with awareness of circumstances around us and means to make a difference, there was great hope for the future at the webinar. Despite the fact that there is cause for concern, yet many solutions were offered, which helped in raising the spirits of all present.

All in all, the experience added to generate greater awareness of areas of concern around us and establish a bond between the participants for a clarity of purpose in our lives.

UN Conversation Experienced Shared by Debjani Biswas Class XII, Loreto Convent Entally (India)

I was filled with enthusiasm and zeal when I received the message. I had been selected to represent my school in the UN conversation. I felt a sense of belonging to a larger world as I was about to give voice to my opinion at a global platform like UN. The UN is an international organisation founded in 1945, committed to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights. The topic - Digitalisation through the lens of Women and Girls, captivated me for its exceptional nature. I found it very relevant to the present circumstances. I think there has never been a more important time to address the digital gender divide and ensure women are

not left behind. Connecting more women and helping them to reap the benefits of digitalisation and technology will support them and their families to navigate this global pandemic, and help achieve many of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

I was glad to be a part of the world's biggest ever global conversation to mark UN's Glorious 75th Anniversary. The conversation involved a group of one teacher, one student and one parent from each school and a few respected IBVM Sisters. The topic was fragmented into three parts or three questions. One speaker from each school answered each question. Each one spoke about one minute. The respected sisters also gave their precious opinions. This interactive session contained a lot of valuable information. Some genuine problems were discussed that should be addressed as soon as possible to enable a safe cyber space for women of all ages. It was short and crisp session of only two hours addressing an issue of concern.

As a girl I feel safe and uplifted, witnessing the efforts of the United Nations for ensuring women's safety in the cyber world. Certainly a secure cyberspace will enable many women to grab opportunities online to scale their social and economic growth. I felt enriched after attending the conversation. I am grateful to my school for providing me with an opportunity to give voice to my views at a global platform and also grateful to UN for selecting my speech.

UN 75 Experience by Mrs Dipshikha Roy, Teacher Loreto Convent Ranchi (India)

To reach to the global public, to listen to their hopes and fears and to learn from their experiences are the objectives of the Global conversation launched by United Nations as a mark of its 75th anniversary this year. As a participant, I felt honoured and enriched after interacting with members and sharing our thoughts. I humbly present a brief review of the conversation held on 2nd July 2020.

GLOBAL MISTRUST, INEQUALITIES, DISINFORMATION INCLUDING HATESPEECH:

Due to the current situation of this global pandemic, there is mistrust and fear. Nations don't know what the future holds, as they deal with the spreading virus, and an increasing intensity of natural calamities. We want a safe environment for the next generations to grow up in, with resources to live a happy and healthy life, and access to proper education and healthcare.

We have inspiring young female leaders such as Greta Thunberg, Malala Yousafzai and Sejal Makhija who are leading the way. Technology has made it easier for like-minded youth to connect and channel their energy into something meaningful.

There are still challenges that need to be tackled- climate change, lopsided demographics, inaccessible healthcare and gender inequality, rising violence. And women still bear the heaviest burden, especially in low income countries.

The UN must advise nations to build up healthcare infrastructure so that it's affordable for all and push for sustainable energy and way of living. There also needs to be global cooperation in eliminating all forms of terrorism. Most importantly, give women equal opportunity so that they contribute in innovation, invention and lead nations!

RECOVERY FROM COVID 19/PREPAREDNESS, BUILDING RESILIENT SYSTEMS AND SOCIETY THROUGH THE LENS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS:

COVID has taught us to purchase only things of necessity. In a way, it is organically encouraging sustainable living. It is also showing us how relationships are more valuable than material needs.

But, regardless of where we look, it is women who have to bear more responsibility. In spite of that, even in professional settings, they are not paid as much as their male counterparts. Women are now faced with the challenge of working with limited resources at home.

WHO, as an independent global institution should get all member states aligned on how to effectively defeat this pandemic that has disrupted the whole world. It should make a stronger push to bring fighting nations and stakeholders together, and remove any form of partisanship.

The UN must also introduce educational projects that help train young girls to meet challenges and to be resilient because post COVID, women must learn to simultaneously multi-task at home while reinventing their skills for a rapidly changing workplace.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES/ DIGITALIZATION /CYBER THROUGH THE LENS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

There is a lack of proper knowledge on how to leverage technology in many parts of the globe, which can be tackled by effective learning programs. Women currently hold the lowest paying roles in the technology sector. We should aim to remove such inequalities in order to provide women with higher paying jobs. Moreover, there needs to be stricter laws in order to protect women from cybercrimes and create a safe environment. Unless this digital gender divide is bridged, the World's push towards digitalization will further establish the political, economic, and social marginalization of women.

Young women, those of 18 to 24 years of age in third world countries experience a disproportionately high level of harassment, driven by the poor literacy rate. The government must take measures to help women overcome the present situation where technology is too expensive. An important factor is the proper allocation of funds in order to meet infrastructure costs in rural areas.

The UN, through its various agencies especially UNICEF and UNESCO must spread awareness on the advantages of new technologies, digitalisation and cyber information to girls and women.

The UN Secretary General can address the problems discussed by making all 193 member states aware that new technologies, digitalization, and cyber are all very helpful and good for the future, only if they are readily available to both men and women alike.