

**Priority theme:**

Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.

Review theme:

Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women, from the 47th session of the CSW.

It is now the 5th day of the CSW 62 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. Since there are many on-going events happening throughout the day, the participants need to schedule their day so that they can attend the sessions that they want. With all the choices for both side and parallel events, they are given the freedom to choose and decide for themselves. Oftentimes, they would go to the ones that align with their ministries or where their passions are. There is also the openness to attend events that are new. Sr. Margaret would also suggest or recommend some events to attend.

For more information about the CSW 62, click:

1. Brief history of [CSW62](#)
2. [Side Events](#)
3. [Parallel Events](#)

With a minimum of 80 events per day, it can be overwhelming. This is why they need to pace themselves and plan ahead so that they can maximize their time. After five days, they are now more adept in choosing and deciding which events they would like to attend.

The participants would like to share their reflections, learnings and insights with regards to the different side and parallel events that they have attended.

Indigenous Women Transforming
Power

Sr. Christín Tomy, OP

Parallel Event was sponsored by MADRE

Background: Moderator was a Maya woman from Guatemala (I came in late and didn't catch her name); she led us in a greeting to the elements. The panel featured four women from around the world:

1. Rose Cunningham - Nicaragua - community leader, activist, first indigenous woman (she's Miskito) mayor of her town
2. Lucy Mullenkei - Kenya - works with indigenous women, especially promoting mentorship of girls and teen girls to find and use their voices
3. Aminatu Samira - Cameroon - Mbororo Pastoralist indigenous young woman who went through Lucy's program
4. Yasso Kanti Bhattachan - Nepal - Thakali Indigenous, vice-chair of the National Indigenous Women's Forum.

Each woman shared a bit about her story and personal participation in transforming power. Some common themes among them:

- Political autonomy and personal autonomy go hand-in-hand. Women must be able to develop and exercise each kind of autonomy in order to make the other kind to be possible.
- Linking global advances with local realities - the high-level work of the UN is meaningless if it isn't based upon or translated into the realities of indigenous women's lives
- Exchanges between and among indigenous women and other women are crucial, and so is intergenerational exchange in leadership building
- The transformative power of organizing and community - this is an immense gift and a powerful tool for indigenous women
- They also spoke of the criminalization of women activists as a tool of oppression.

A question was raised by a Native woman from the US: who is advocating for and passing along traditional knowledge? Political representation is crucial, but indigenous rights and power are really going to be supported, then what about protecting the ability of indigenous women to preserve and pass on their traditional knowledge? To this, Rose responded that intergenerational exchange is crucial! It stretches women in both ways: the young women learn from the grandmothers' wisdom, and the grandmothers learn from the young women are finding their voices in new ways.

About the "EVENTS"

- There are two types of events: (a) Parallel events which are held outside the UN Headquarters; and (b) Side events which are held inside the UNHq.
- There are more than 30 Side Events and approximately 60 Parallel Events per day.
- These events are sponsored by different NGOs and by the different entities of the United Nations.
- Events usually begins between 8:00 to 8:30 and would often last for an hour to two hours.

My reflections:

Being with Dominicans from around the world, as much as we may be strangers to one another and speak different languages, is also always a little bit like coming home. Margaret and Viviana have been wonderfully helpful and hospitable with us, helping us navigate NY transit and getting oriented to the UN. The session on indigenous women was particularly powerful and I hope to hear / take part in more conversations around this topic as the week goes on. Particularly powerful for me was peripheral mention of during my morning session of how indigenous women lead the charge for care of Earth and solutions to climate change. Specifically, they tend to grow a wider variety of crops than men, to practice communal agriculture, and to save seed. We only need to look to rural indigenous women for the solution to climate change.

Parallel events are often held at the following venues:

- The Armenian Convention Center
- Church Center
- Salvation Army
- 4 W 43rd Street
- Japan Society Auditorium

Rights, Voice, Dreams and
Friendship: How Teenage Girls
Achieve Empowerment

Sr Trish Madigan, OP

Parallel event sponsored by Young Women's Development Groups

On Monday 12 March a group of young Chechen women discussed their experience of being mentored during their first formative years at university during a panel discussion on "Rights, Voices, Dreams and Friendship: How Teenage Girls Achieve Empowerment" which was presented by Young Women's Development Groups and Peacebuilding UK.

In being enabled to critique aspects of their culture and socialization which might be holding them back in their potential to achieve, in an atmosphere of friendship and support with professional guidance, each young woman was impressive in her determination to overcome obstacles and fulfil her potential. I was moved by the way they described how they were enabled to move beyond their fears, to succeed in such areas as architectural studies and psychology and to become the person they dreamed of being.

✓ 'They Say I Ruin Families':
Women's Human Rights Defenders'
Experience of Backlash

Sr. Mary Ryan, OP

Parallel event sponsored by Australian Women Against Violence Alliance

Attending the first session in the morning on "They say I ruin Families" highlighted how difficult it can be for frontline workers in rural and remote laces in Australia, and no doubt throughout the world too. The quote for the heading is one of the things said to Workers by men whose partners and families have gone to shelters after domestic violence abuse. The message was basically that we need to educate the general public about what domestic violence is and that it is not acceptable - not the woman's fault. Education with young people about healthy relationships may effect changes in attitude that leave no room for violence from either party.



Preventing Human Trafficking
among Rural Women and
Girls: Integrating Inherent
Dignity into a Human Rights
Model

*This side event was organized by
the Holy See.*

The second session was hosted by the Holy See on the trafficking of women and girls. A very powerful presentation by a Filipina, a survivor of sex trafficking, received a standing ovation. Besides explaining the horrific experience, she managed to regain her sense of self and move forward with hope. She received support from several Women Religious communities. Other speakers highlighted the inherent dignity of all people and stressed the need to educate both boys and girls about the importance of equality,

which assists with respectful relationships.