Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Aotearoa Section

Newsletter November 2020

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Feminist Budget Project

Aotearoa WILPF members have begun work on preparing a feminist budget. The three-month research project is being supported by funding from International WILPF and Reaching Critical Will.

Ema's PhD from Auckland University was on gender and militarisation in Fiji, and Meghan is currently doing her Masters at the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Otago University. They are initially preparing a brief on what a feminist budget is and identify key.

There will be a Zoom call with WILPF members to get feedback and suggestions for the budget and what to include – or not – keeping in mind the short time frame and the questions the budget could answer.

Ema Tagicakibau addressing a crowd at the 30th anniversary celebration of New Zealand's Nuclear Free legislation, in Auckland, 2017

A photo from the Creating Cultures of Peace training workshop a WILPF Aotearoa member attended in Indonesia, in January this year

Wellington branch report

Edwina Hughes reports

Wellington WILPF had an informal online branch meeting on Saturday, 5 September, for a catch-up with members and for a presentation from Katharine Woolrych, who we supported to go to Geneva as an intern with the New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations earlier this year.

Katharine is a recent Victoria University graduate with an interest in human rights and disarmament. Her background is in volunteer work with Amnesty International, the NZ Red Cross and Oxfam and she is currently working as a

researcher for Peace Movement Aotearoa. Katherine reported:

"In February I travelled to Geneva to complete an internship at the New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations and World Trade Organization: while I was only there for six weeks, instead of the six months that was planned (thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic!) it was an incredible experience and one that will continue to inform my approach to human rights advocacy. Wellington WILPF was kind enough to sponsor me $500 towards my travel: this was massively appreciated, and I am hugely grateful. Below is a brief summary for WILPF members who missed the Zoom meeting last week where I explained some of the work of the Mission.

The New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations and World Trade Organization is an outpost of MFAT (NZ's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade) in Geneva that carries out diplomacy on human rights, disarmament, environment and trade issues. Geneva is a very internationally-connected city, and serves as home to the World Trade Organisation, International Labour Organisation, OHCHR (the UN human rights agency), World Health Organisation, UNHCR (UN refugee agency), ICRC and IFRC (global Red Cross agencies) amongst other organisations (including WILPF International!).

Attending meetings with these agencies was definitely a highlight of my time as an intern: however, most of our work revolved around the Conference on Disarmament and the Human Rights Council, both based out of the Palais des Nations. I focused on the latter in my presentation to Wellington WILPF as an example of how the New Zealand government approaches international human rights advocacy.

The Human Rights Council is an intergovernmental body within the UN system which is responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations, including by making resolutions on them. The Council is composed of 47 Member States, with roughly proportional geographical representation. The Council meets for three four-week sessions a year, the first of which we attended in March. One key activity of the Council is adopting resolutions, and while non-Member States like New Zealand cannot vote on these resolutions, they play an integral role in the negotiation and 'sponsorship' of resolutions.

At the March session of the Council, New Zealand the lead sponsor of one resolution (on rights of persons with disabilities) and co-sponsored 13 others (topics of these included human rights defenders; freedom of expression and assembly; minority rights; freedom of religion and belief; rights of the child; mental health and human rights; and human rights and the 2030 agenda). The country-specific resolutions we sponsored addressed the human rights situations in Syria, Iran, South Sudan, North Korea, and Myanmar.

Non-Council members can also make statements to the Council during interactive dialogues and general debates. At the 43rd Session, New Zealand supported three joint statements on women's rights: one reaffirmed commitment to the Beijing Declaration and the Vienna Programme of Action; another emphasised the importance of women's participation in multilateralism; and another welcomed progress since the Beijing Declaration of 1995 on International Women's Day. Notably, this statement also noted a resurgence of regressive trends, including discriminatory laws and policies which threaten gender

equality and women's sexual and reproductive health, and concerns about gender-based violence and "shrinking civil society space" for female human rights defenders.

Negotiating these resolutions and statements was a phenomenal experience which really developed my understanding of the strengths - and limitations - of state advocacy on human rights. We also attended a range of fascinating side events to the Council, on topics ranging from accountability (or the lack thereof) in Myanmar, to the resurgence of human rights violations in Sri Lanka, to "best practice" implementation of the Convention against Torture, to freedom of religion and belief.

Thanks again to all WILPF members for your kind support! As a young person seeking opportunities in the human rights field this type of experience was invaluable."

New Zealand's negotiating team at the Human Rights Council, Katherine (second from left). Anna the other MFAT intern is on the right

We share some of the Autumn Newsletter for the Christchurch-based Disarmament and Security Centre, May 2020

The Team Disarmament and Security Centre team are: Kate Dewes (a long-term WILPFer, pictured below) is the current Director, although she is retiring by the end of the year.

Lucy Stewart (also WILPFer, pictured below) presenting on nuclear disarmament and climate change for the Security and Disarmament Centre in 2019. Lucy has recently returned from maternity leave and continues in her role as DSC Coordinator.

Marcus Coll is continuing as researcher and project support (alongside his PhD study at UC).

Some quick highlights of DSC work in the past few months:

The DSC has been going through a big transition the past 18 months as we wind down the Christchurch based home-office of Dr Kate Dewes and Commander Robert Green (RN Ret'd), which has been operating for several decades.

The team has been very busy archiving the extensive collection of resources and materials that Kate and Rob have built up over four decades of work in disarmament. The archive has been collated, catalogued and now donated to the Macmillan Brown Library at the University of Canterbury where it will be available for future students and researchers. Several collections of books have also been donated to other depositories around the country and to the Christchurch City Library peace collection.

UC's Macmillan Brown Library and Heritage Collections Manager, Joanna Condon, says she is thrilled to receive the important archival material. The collection provides historical evidence for a critical time in New Zealand's international relations, and documents the individual contributions of Cantabrians such as Kate Dewes to this period in history and the peace movement.

It also relates to the impact of nuclear testing in the Pacific, and the contributions of Pacific Islanders in campaigning against it.

We've been busy documenting the stories of unsung NZ peace makers so that their stories are not forgotten and available for future generations. Please get in touch if you have further stories that you think we should add to this collection.

Below, before moving files to University of Canterbury's Macmillan Brown Library

* We've been working with Christchurch City Council to update their website on Christchurch Peace City. There is lots of great information on there now about how Christchurch became a peace city, peacemakers from Christchurch, the World Peace Bell (located in the Botanic gardens) and more, do check it out!

* The DSC offered at Disarmament Fellowship position to help build the capacity of young New Zealanders in the field of disarmament, funded through PADET. The successful Fellow for 2019 was Tankeen Saeid of the Peace Foundation. We hope this will be a yearly position, so do get in touch if you are interested in our Fellowship positions.

If your school, tertiary class or community group would like to have one of our team hold a lecture, workshop or just come and discuss disarmament, please get in touch: lucy@disarmsecure.org

In light of the current restrictions and precautions in place regarding Covid-19, we are also happy to do online lectures to groups both locally or across the country. Please get in touch to discuss what might suit your learners.

Just a reminder to those that haven't visited our new website lately, it is jam packed with lots of great information and resources on disarmament and nuclear free New Zealand. : www.disarmsecure.org

WILPF Peace Craft stall at the Parnell Rose Festival, Auckland

In November, Auckland WILPFer Kathy Ross organised WILPF members and friends to run a Peace Craft stall at the annual Rose Festival in Parnell's rose gardens. It was a day of creativity and delight, and an opportunity to talk about WILPF to the adults who were there with their children.

Back left: Tamsin Kingston, Kathy Ross
Front left: Megan Hutching and friends

Megan Hutching and Angelina Weir

Creating beauty and colour for a peaceful World, at the WILPF stall

Nuclear ban treaty milestone

WILPF Aotearoa is one of ICAN Aotearoa NZ supporting groups celebrating a significant milestone towards a world free of nuclear weapons. This was achieved on United Nations Day, 24 October, 2020 when Honduras became the fiftieth state to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) which activated its entry into force.

New Zealand played a leading role in the diplomatic process that led to the adoption of the TPNW by the United Nations General Assembly on 7 July 2017, and it will now enter into force on 22 January 2021.

The TPNW recognizes the urgency of achieving a nuclear weapon-free world and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. It acknowledges the unacceptable suffering of the atomic bomb and nuclear test survivors, and the disproportionate impact that nuclear weapons and related activities have on indigenous peoples, women and girls.

Ten Pacific island nations have already joined or are covered by the TPNW: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Tokelau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The full list of Pacific signatories and state parties to the TPNW is available on the ICAN Aotearoa New Zealand site, http://www.icanw.org.nz

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Asia Pacific Region -News

WILPF Australia has been running a series of Women Peace and Security webinars.

To celebrate the recent landmark anniversary of 1325, and remind governments of their responsibility to the Women, Peace and Security agenda, the Korea PeaceNow! campaign hosted an October roundtable on the role of women in advancing peace on the Korean Peninsula. Speakers included: Suzy Kim from Rutgers University, Hyun-Sook Lee from Women's Forum for Peace and Diplomacy, Christine Ahn and Youngsook Cho, ROK Ambassador of Gender Equality. The discussion was moderated by Madeleine Rees, WILPF Secretary-General.

Videos saved to WILPF's Youtube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/user/wilpfinternational/videos

Contact us

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And see us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/wilpfaotearoa.newzealand

Young WILPF – YWILPF
https://www.wilpf.org/our-members/#young

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Section Treasurer: Tamsin Kingston

Section Co-ordinators: Edwina Hughes, Celine Kearney

Updating Aotearoa WILPF Website

You may be having some trouble finding the WILPF website at the moment. We currently have a consultant look at upgrading it. Apologies. But check out WILPF International at www.wilpf.org

WOMEN'S POWER TO STOP WAR