

Overcoming Cultural Barriers in Empowering Women & Girls

Thursday 14th March 2019 | 16:30-17:45 | Parallel Event
The Gallery, Armenian Convention Centre, New York, NY 10017

Contributions by:

Islamic Relief Worldwide, Islamic Relief Canada, Sonke Gender Justice, Muslim Aid and Side by Side: Faith movement for gender justice.

Join us for an event that highlights the needs around providing social protection schemes and accessing public services for people with disabilities. The role of faith leaders has had a major impact in breaking down barriers and expanding access for people with disabilities. Yet, it is also true that social protection schemes can create unexpected and under-critiqued forms of social exclusion for people experiencing intersecting inequalities. This parallel event will share powerful case studies of powerful advocacy and programmatic work that is transforming the lives of women and girls around the world. Our parallel discussion promises to raise questions about the challenges faced by those experiencing intersecting inequalities, by proposing alternative ways of thinking about inclusiveness, challenging stigma and enabling accessibility.

Target audience: Policy makers, national level delegates, intergovernmental organisations and civil society actors, including Faith-Based/Religious Organisations and faith/religious actors.

The format for this event will be:

Opening remarks and Introduction to the panel and speakers:

Nora Shamrouck, Islamic Relief Canada

Disability, Social protection and conflict: Proposing alternative ways of thinking about inclusiveness and accessibility.

Mousumi Saikia, Islamic Relief Worldwide

Challenging Masculinity, the necessary step in Gender equality.

The Rev. Bafana Khumalo, Sonke Gender Justice

Uncovering best practice of how faith based challenges are challenging norms and breaking barriers by addressing gender dynamics.

Lotifa Begum, Muslim Aid

Questions and Answers:

Chaired by Nora Shamrouck, Islamic Relief Canada

Closing remarks:

Dr. Rachel Tavernor, Side by Side: Faith movement for gender justice



Islamic Relief
Worldwide



Speaker Biographies

Mousumi Saikia has over 15 years' experience in both the profit and not for profit sectors with expertise in the humanitarian, development, education and health sectors. She has designed, managed and delivered programmes for Oxfam, Care International, Sphere Project, British Council and for Islamic Relief Worldwide. Additionally, Mousumi also has managed the delivery of more than ten high quality education projects in the UK in partnership with the UK Department for Education (DfE). Mousumi has also worked for the National Health Trust (NHS) in the UK and provided consultancy services to manage the transition of Primary Care Trusts (PCT) to Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG). Mousumi currently works as the Partnerships and Programme Development Manager for Islamic Relief Worldwide and is the organisational lead for developing and implementing innovative programmes to strengthen IRW's ability to grow, maximise and diversify its funding portfolio. The current new Chair of CONCORD's Inclusive Network Committee. Mousumi holds Masters' Degrees in Sociology and Population Sciences. Mousumi has worked in Bangladesh, India, Jordan, Kenya, Macedonia, Malawi, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey and the UK. She currently lives in London.

Lotifa Begum is currently the Global Advocacy Manager for Muslim Aid with over 7 years of experience leading on advocacy issues internationally. Lotifa was the Global Advocacy lead for Islamic Relief Worldwide and a Co-Chair of the British Overseas NGOs in International Development Faith Working group which brought together faith based agencies to tackle advocacy issues such as climate change and take faith inspired action on international development promoting faith literacy on humanitarian issues. She has led on the gender justice policy work ranging on issues from gender based violence to early forced marriage at Islamic Relief and has been influencing at various policy forums over the past few years. Lotifa hosted several panel discussions on gender justice issues from a faith based perspective at the United Nations in New York advocating on issues of gender justice and the global refugee crisis. Lotifa is a graduate of Politics & East European Studies from the University College London and from the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies Young Muslim Leadership Programme. Lotifa has written for Huffington Post and spoken on several media platforms on humanitarian advocacy issues.

Bafana Khumalo is a Senior Strategic Advisor at Sonke Gender Justice and one of the organisations' co-founders. He served as co-director of the organisation from 2006-2010. Bafana has a long and accomplished track record in the NGO sector. He was senior gender technical advisory for EngenderHealth South Africa between 2012 -2013. From 2001-2008 Bafana served as a Commissioner at the National Commission for Gender Equality from 2001-2006 and 2007-2010. At the CGE he was instrumental in assisting National and Provincial Departments of Government to plan and coordinate many activities related to men, gender and HIV/AIDS. Bafana has spoken at many national and international conferences on men, gender and HIV/AIDS, including the UN Commission on the Status of Women in 2007, 2008 and 2010, and at the International AIDS Society conference held in Mexico in 2008. Together with Sonke Co-Director Dean Peacock, he was awarded Men's Health Magazine "Best Man" Award in 2007. Recipient of the Vital Voices' Voices of Solidarity Award 2014. Currently, he chairs the SANAC National Men's sector which is one of the components of the South African National AIDS Council responsible to provide oversight on the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on HIV, STI's and TB. He holds a Bachelor of Theology (Hon) and Masters in Theology from the University of Natal – Pietermaritzburg.

Dr. Rachel Tavernor is the International Coordinator for Side by Side, which is a faith movement for gender justice. Rachel has a background in community mobilisation, advocacy and communications. Her PhD research focused on global solidarities and power-relations. Rachel is interested in enabling practices that enable collaboration and participation. In her role for Side by Side, Rachel supports faith leaders to amplify their prophetic voice to advance gender justice.