

WAR-TORN CHILDREN EVENT

Conversations on war and peace

March 9th 2018, 12.30 – 2.30pm

This event was divided into two parts.

The first part was a conversation with people who had lived in countries where conflict was an everyday occurrence. They talked about their own personal stories and also the experiences of their communities.



Attendees at the event listening attentively.

Billy Banda spoke about living in South Africa during apartheid and how his mother who was an active member of the ANC was consistently the subject of harassment and death threats by the apartheid regime. He spoke about his memories of the day that a parcel bomb was sent to their home and how it exploded under his sister's cot.

Louise talked about her experience of living in South Africa and the hugely abusive regime that was endemic throughout the society and the secrets that were forced on families over generations. Louise talked about how she is still affected by these secrets to this day.



Louise, speaking of her experience in South Africa, with Billy Banda, who chaired this part of the event.

Grace gave an account of her life growing up in a Nigerian family and how your future was planned out for you especially if were female. Grace also outlined her work trying to locate the girls abducted by Boco Haram and also her involvement with the rehabilitation of these girls following their horrific captivity. Grace also talked about her work with the girls who were freed and also her work lobbying governments to try and put a stop to this.



Louise (left) and Kathryn (right) listen as Grace recounts her experiences from Nigeria.

Myra spoke about her Grandparents flight from their country into Pakistan and the awful scenes they witnessed of neighbours and friends being murdered.



Myra, giving us an insight into her Grandparents experience of fleeing Pakistan

We were also joined by two young women recently in Ireland from Syria. Shadia and Amena shared their experiences of living in war torn Syria, of having to live during bombardments and having to flee to safety. They talked about their time before they came to Ireland and the newness of everything for them. We sincerely wish them well.



Amena (left) and Shadia (right) from Syria, who shared their story after listening to the other speakers.

The second part of the event was hosted by Glenties own Breezy Willows. Breezy uses 'the baking of bread ' as her symbol for peace. She baked scones with the help of Joseph, Emmanuel, Victoria and others and shared these with everyone in the audience. Breezy also used storytelling and song as well to provide us all with very practical, hands on approaches to keep peace at the top of our agenda in our daily lives.



Breezy and her 'helpers' at the baking table.

Photos by Maire Magenis, Letterkenny Amnesty Group
Report by Nuala Caslin, Letterkenny Amnesty Group

20th March 2018