



# Peace and Conflict Transformation

## CONVERSATION CLASSES RECAP

Key talking points developed by PACT members in our conversation class sessions during the summer of 2020. We asked - what are the problems facing people from marginalised communities and how can we as a society better improve life for deaf people?

### The Deaf Community

- Anything publicly funded / in a civic place should come with funding for accessibility (transcription and sign language – hearing loops). Currently you have to apply separately for these platforms. Business accountability for accessibility may produce more facilities.
- Thinking about COVID-19 and masks – this must be so difficult for deaf community members as they need to lipread. It is better to use a transparent mask - have your mouth visible.
- Education - we need a greater understanding that there are different sign language formats.
- Rolling out more teaching and incorporation of needs of deaf community into school curriculums so children understand issues from a young age.
- There isn't the same opportunity for loop funding. Key to changing this is diverting funding streams into helping marginalised people. This means respecting and learning the needs of others as well as our 'able-bodied privilege.'
- Awareness training is important, for example in dental clinics there is no training for staff - nor a chart or card for deaf / blind patients.
- Sign language should be considered as a 'minority language' - needs protective rights?
- Have a signer at talks and festivals etc and for bigger theatres, have permanent signers as staff members. This requires more funding and us bringing awareness to the situation.
- Consider using games as learning tools with our children - 'Mr Tumble makaton' - would be a great help.
- Provide deaf people a platform so their needs can be met.
- Introduce sign language in primary school as a way to raise awareness and communication for children and parents.
- Room in these discussions should be made for those with hearing difficulties rather than 'loss' – sound being overwhelming for autistic people for example.
- We talked about how difficult it would be to be blind and go to a restaurant and not be able to read the menu and thought about how this would compare with deafness.



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Key talking points developed by PACT members in our conversation class sessions during the summer of 2020. We asked if participants you were writing a 'constitution' for this region, how would you deal with the issue of religion?

## Women & Religion

- "Growing up it was 'them and us' in Derry - going to University and getting a job made a difference but there is still some of that fear going around - where you're from - being targeted."
- Religion isn't just about spiritual beliefs - it's also a cultural identity - an identity of your community, even if you don't practice
- "Just on the point of education, I know down the south it's very difficult to have your children educated in a school that is not Catholic. It is great to see more religion experiences but also its an institutional issue here."
- "Someone told me once that all religions are like fingers but the are all pointing at the same thing and that really resonated with me."
- Spirituality and meditation - going to church alone - can often provide a break to meditate and escape from stress.
- Conflation of politics and religion in Northern Ireland reinforces the divide.
- Is the question about being Catholic and Protestant redundant? For younger members of the conversation, this was increasingly true.
- Perceptions of being Catholic or Protestant - barriers broken down by conversations such as the PACT Project.
- Few people experience different religions that aren't their own.
- There is a difference between your personal relationship with faith and a more social element.
- "It is important to acknowledge the negative impact on women from many religions, issues of exclusion, patriarchy, removal of human rights etc."
- "We received pretty abysmal sex education because of how education and religion were intertwined at school. I think we should educate everyone on different religions but not let religion dictate education."
- "I was working with some Mercy Sisters last year on a participatory project and their openness, feminist views, critical thinking, activism etc. were amazing. I found that a lot of my own prejudice was challenged."
- "There are integrated schools in Derry but very few send their children to them. There is an opportunity there."
- We talked about how Jesus respected women - women found Jesus in the tomb.
- Community and friendship are key to solving problems across the divide.
- "Some Protestant churches are a little more forward thinking: Derry has a female priest - what would be the difference?"



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Key talking points developed by PACT members in our conversation class sessions during the summer of 2020. We asked participants about women's role in peacebuilding, security and how can we better participate and get involved in these issues?

### Women, Peace & Security

- "Women are resilient – they bounce back – keep strong – especially in times of adversity. During the Troubles, we kept the house going – got children to school, housework and a job – try and keep everything normal – Stop children from joining paramilitary groups."
- "There is a lot of fear stopping women - for a woman to put yourself out there back in the day was to make yourself a target."
- A female understanding of issues like discrimination and violation is important in developing empathy and being intersectional – uplifting all other groups is important.
- We spoke about what was needed in terms of leadership skills for women – "you can get more with bees than honey."
- A long process to forgiveness.
- "Women have empathy – look at our everyday interactions – we look after children – listening – women don't close their minds as much as men do."
- Interesting to hear about the women's perspective – war is the pinnacle of our gendered society – female combatants challenge this idea that women traditionally need to be protected.
- The qualities and skills women can bring mean we should be at the table – women have the ability to listen, mediation, great networkers We can multitask, are vulnerable and promote positive individuality.
- Reforming the justice system – incredibly difficult but necessary.
- Understanding we are conditioned by media - e.g. what we should wear to protect ourselves from rape? Ulster rape rugby case. Rape trial where underwear shown in court – violating you even more – essentially telling you it's your fault.
- Importance of internet resources – surge of MeToo type discussions, sharing trauma, educating trauma, combating victim blaming, etc.
- "Are we taught as a society that we need to be passive? Our voices aren't as important? Do we grow up with this?"
- The personal responsibility we have as we go out to our families and rear children - we should rely on support from other women more and not judge each other.
- If you're not at the table you don't have a voice.
- Gender quotas are something that need to happen.
- "Women empowering each other is vital. We will have a long wait waiting for men – stand up and insist on a seat at the table."
- Raise boys differently as opposed to expecting women to change.
- Child care expensive – two child care cap is awful and wages don't reflect the reality of trying to raise children.
- The building blocks for women and participation in peacebuilding needs to be education, literacy skills, chance to go to university.



Very grateful for opportunity to participate with so many strong women. Thanks for the PACT Project and hopefully many more initiatives like this are made available.

It's been incredible to hear so many different perspectives from such an incredible group, so grateful to have been a part of these discussions and to have had the opportunity to learn from you all

Thank you everyone. Fantastic session. You are all fabulous strong women who have made the first steps to enable a change.

As a POC, things are even harder. Despite enduring regular racism and sexism from white men as well as the "Karens", the most dangerous experiences are with "nice" white women, just recall Amy Cooper.

I was delighted to have had the opportunity to be part of these wonderful discussions. Really insightful, honest, thought provoking discussions.

Brilliant session everyone, I'm learning so much from everyone and the sharing is so generous.

Would love to continue this again with PACT or suchlike <3

