

“Gender Based Violence in Post-Conflict Areas”

Date: Tuesday, 9 March

Ryan Faello

1ST Speaker Dr. Majid from the El Medina Center for Gender and Development (MCG)

Dr. Majid spoke about the work of her NGO in Southern Sudan and the Darfur region. The Medina Center is focused on preparing women for leadership roles in Sudanese Society. MCG has implemented several different programs on Gender Mainstreaming and has started workshops and educational programs aimed at preparing women to serve in conflict resolution roles. Investing in the future leadership for civil organizations has been another objective of MCG'S education programs, focusing on the greater involvement of women in decision making processes. MCG also continues to press for the inclusion of women's views in the Darfur peace building process. Dr. Majid also spoke about the “Culture of War” in Sudan, tribal socialization and the view of the “other” or outsider. The “other” is always seen as a threat and an enemy which serves to justify violence against them. Children are bred into this environment and the cycle continues over generations. MCG seeks to create a “Culture of Peace” by planting seeds inside individuals one -by-one. By spreading the ideas of understanding, tolerance, and peace MCG hopes to undermine the cultural and social values that lead to conflict.

2nd Speaker Dr. Amira

Dr. Amira spoke about a paper she recently published about Gender based violence. The paper focused on academic works and NGOs dealing with Gender issues. The discussion also covered the aspects of subordination and inferiority found amongst women who are victims of gender violence. Early marriage and divorce, social isolation, and genital mutilation are examples of how gender based violence can also take on a psychologically form. Many of the problems resulting from early marriage and pregnancy before age eighteen are due to social and cultural value systems. Dr. Amira called for the creation of a system to classify the causes of gender based violence so that these issues could be better understood and confronted. Dr. Amira also spoke about mechanisms of prevention ranging from breaking down the social constructs that enable gender violence to the empowerment of women through education and opportunity as well as spiritually and psychologically. Helping women gain a sense of self-worth is essential to stopping their victimization.