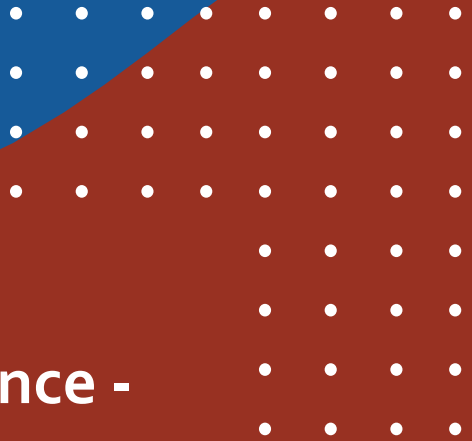


Project dIdI/ድልድል Annual International Conference 2024



Domestic Violence - Religion - Migration

Integrating cultural and religious diversity
in UK domestic violence and abuse services
and developing a future roadmap for the sector



Conference Booklet

The Organisers, Sponsors and Partners



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CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Day 1 – June 19th

- 8:00 Registration
- 9:00 Introduction by the organiser, Dr. Romina Istratii
- 9:15 Keynote by Huda Jawad, Co-dounder and Executive Director of the Faith and VAWG Coalition
- 9:30 OPENING DISCUSSION: Conference Aims and Objectives
‣ *Panelists p. 7*
- 10:30 Refreshments
- 11:00 PANEL 1: Current state of evidence and gaps on DVA, faith communities and culturally-sensitive services
‣ *Abstracts p. 9 ff.*
- 12:00 PRACTICE BASED WORKSHOP: Improving domestic abuse service provision for ethnic minority women in East England (The Dahlia Project)
‣ *Description p. 13*
- 13:00 Lunch break
- 14:00 PANEL 2: DVA, faith and culture: Perspectives from the ground
‣ *Abstracts p. 15 ff.*
- 14:45 PRACTICE BASED PRESENTATIONS
‣ *Abstracts p. 17 ff.*
- 15:30 Afternoon tea and cakes
- 16:00 PANEL 3: Engaging religious stakeholders and religious spaces in DVA responses and services
‣ *Abstracts p. 20 ff.*
- 17:30 End of Conference Day 1



- 18:00 FILM SCREENING OF 'TIDAR' followed by Q&A
‣ *Information p. 24*
- 19:00 Reception in Cloister, Senate House, SOAS University

Day 2 – June 20th

- 9:00 am PANEL 1: Religious tradition, cultural context and theological responses to domestic violence and abuse
‣ *Abstracts p. 26 ff.*
- 10:30 Refreshments
- 11:00 CONVERSATION: Engaging diverse communities: language matters
‣ *Panelists p. 30*
- 12:00 PRACTICE BASED WORKSHOP: Enhancing cultural competency and faith literacy in Domestic Homicide Reviews
‣ *Description p. 33*
- 13:00 Lunch break
- 14:00 PANEL 2: Faith-sensitive and trauma-informed counselling approaches and responses to domestic violence
‣ *Abstracts p. 35 ff.*
- 14:45 PRACTICE BASED WORKSHOP: Trauma and Faith Sensitivity
‣ *Description p. 38*
- 15:30 Afternoon tea and cakes
- 16:00 ROUNDTABLE: Developing a future roadmap for faith-sensitive and culturally appropriate domestic violence and abuse services in the UK
‣ *Panelists p. 39*
- 17:00 Closing remarks by Dr Romina Istratii



INTRODUCTION

Dr Romina Istratii

Project dldl/ድልድል,
SOAS University of London

Dr Romina Istratii is UKRI Future Leaders Fellow at the School of History, Religions and Philosophies at SOAS University of London, co-chair of the SOAS Centre of World Christianity and Research Associate to the Institute of Orthodox Christian Studies in Cambridge.

She acts as Principal Investigator of the UKRI-funded project “Bridging religious studies, gender & development and public health to address domestic violence: A novel approach for Ethiopia and the UK” known as project dldl/ድልድል, which responds to domestic violence in religious communities through an interdisciplinary, theologically-informed decolonial partnerships model with government, NGOs and grassroots groups.

For the past 13 years, Dr Istratii has worked to promote epistemological reflexivity, ethical research practices and healthy partnerships and collaboration models in international development in Africa.

*She has written extensively on the ethics of international development, capacity building and community engagement and is author of the monograph *Adapting Gender and Development to Local Religious Contexts: A Decolonial Approach to Domestic Violence in Ethiopia* (Routledge, 2020).*



KEYNOTE **

Huda Jawad

Co-founder and Executive Director
of the Faith and VAWG Coalition (VAWG)

Huda Jawad is an intersectional Muslim feminist, co-founder, and Executive Director of the Faith & VAWG Coalition. The Coalition is a partnership of organisations and activists working at the intersections of faith, feminism, and violence against women and girls. She is also a founding member of the Anti-Racism Working Group, which was tasked by the women's sector to create an anti-racism charter that can be adopted sector-wide.

Huda was the former co-director of Musawah, an international non-governmental organisation that led the global movement for equality and justice in the Muslim family. She was also the Lead Co-Organiser of Women's March London, which organised annual events and public demonstrations that brought over 600,000 people to the streets of London to protest misogyny and racism.

Currently a trustee of Counterpoints Arts, a refugee arts charity and one of the trios of the award-winning anti-racist campaign group, The Three Hijabis, who started a petition signed by 1.2 million people to ban racists from football in response to the racist backlash against three Black England players in the 2020 Euro Cup final.

Please note that due to pre-elections being announced, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner is unable to deliver any speeches during this period. We are pleased and honoured to have secured a keynote from Huda Jawad instead.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING SLIDO

During the conference, we want to use **slido** to collect questions during the presentations. This is to make sure - as, unfortunately, we have only very limited time for each presentation - everyone has an equal chance to ask their question. The questions most relevant for everyone will be selected by the moderators.

Further, we will use this channel to collect some feedback from you.

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OPENING PANEL DISCUSSION: CONFERENCE AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Chair: Dr Romina Istratii, Project dldl/ድልድል, SOAS

Participants:

- Huda Jawad (Faith & VAWG Coalition)
- Bekah Legg (Restored),
- Mariam Ahmed (AMINA)
- Emma Hier (Respect)
- Archbishop Angaelos
- Imam M. A. Hasan

► *Biography of Huda Jawad see above p. 5.*

► *Bekah Legg is the CEO of Restored, a Christian charity working to speak up about VAW and equip the Church to stand against DVA and with survivors. Bekah Legg is a former teacher, youth worker and Church leader. Bekah also developed a youth support line and relationship education programme for a sexual violence center on the South Coast. Bekah has a Masters in Applied Theology and presented the winning paper at the Centre for the Study of the Bible and Violence annual student symposium in 2020. She lectures on a biblical understanding of power and leadership, DVA and GBV and has spoken at the UN CSW on the important role the Church can and does play in ending VAWG and DVA in particular.*

► *Mariam Ahmed, CEO of Amina MWRC, a key women's rights organisation in Scotland, specialises in gender-based violence, equalities, and empowering marginalised women, particularly Asian, Black, and Ethnic Minority women. As a qualified Independent DVA Advocate, she's dedicated to ending violence against women, collaborating across sectors. Mariam amplifies stories of destitute women and advocates for those facing human rights challenges under immigration control. She's a training expert on harmful traditional practices and coercive control. Additionally, she serves on the Equalities and Human Rights Commission committee in Scotland.*



- ▶ *Emma Hier is Respect's Accreditation Lead. In her role she is responsible for assessing the safety and effectiveness of perpetrator interventions, ensuring services are compliant with the Respect Standard before gaining accreditation. Emma also provides expert support and guidance on the accreditation process as well as case consultations. Previously, Emma worked with colleagues at Welsh Women's Aid to implement the Change that Lasts approach, which aims to change communities' and professionals' responses to domestic abuse and the women experiencing it. Emma worked in the probation service for 17 years in various frontline teams and brings to Respect a thorough understanding of the criminal justice system.*
- ▶ *His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos is the first Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London, and Papal Legate to the United Kingdom. He is the Founder and Director of Refcemi (The first Coptic Orthodox Office for Advocacy and Public Policy) and is known for his extensive advocacy work, being conferred an OBE by Her Majesty The Queen for 'Services to International Religious Freedom.' His Eminence was conferred the Lambeth Cross for Ecumenism by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Coventry Cross of Nails for Reconciliation by the Bishop of Coventry.*
- ▶ *Imam M. A Hasan, founder of Imams Against Domestic Abuse, leads a global campaign uniting religious leaders to combat domestic violence. As founding trustee and current co-chair of The British Board of Scholars & Imams (BBSI) and The Global Imams & Scholars Council (GISC), he leverages his expertise in counselling, psychology (MSc), and Islamic law to bridge theory and practice within communities. From serving mosques in London, Peterborough, to Greater Manchester, Imam Hasan advocates for understanding and support for victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse. His extensive research, including papers on domestic abuse from an Islamic perspective and a book on interpreting Qur'an 4:34 (not published), reflects his commitment to fostering empathy and education. Despite internal scepticism and external misconceptions, Imam Hasan's leadership remains pivotal in driving change and promoting peace within diverse communities worldwide.*



PANEL 1: CURRENT STATE OF EVIDENCE AND GAPS ON DVA, FAITH COMMUNITIES AND CULTURALLY-SENSITIVE SERVICES

Panel Chair: Professor Parveen Ali, University of Sheffield

Presentations:

📌 The relationship between DVA and faith internationally and the integration of religious and cultural diversity in DVA services in the UK: Key findings from two scoping reviews

Dr Romina Istratii (on behalf of Professor Parveen Ali and Professor Gene Feder)

The current presentation is based on two scoping reviews completed by the authors that a) explored the relationship between religious beliefs and experiences in the DVA experiences of ethnic minority religious communities internationally, and b) the integration of religious beliefs and experiences in DVA services provision catering to diverse migrant populations in multicultural societies like the UK to inform good practices in the sector. Cumulatively the reviews suggest the need to move toward more diversified and holistic understandings of religion and more context-specific approaches to designing faith-based interventions and counselling responses that are theologically grounded and trauma-informed and embedded in the sociological realities of the individuals and communities they seek to support. The evidence points to numerous approaches and efforts in integrating religious beliefs and faith-based resources in DVA services, differences and tensions in generalist and community-based responses, and the need for various measures in DVA services to cater to multicultural populations.

- ▶ *Biography of Dr. Romina Istratii see above p. 4.*
- ▶ *Professor Parveen Ali has a joint position at the University and Doncaster & Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals (DBTH). Prof Ali is a Registered Nurse, Registered*



Nurse Teacher and Senior Fellow of Higher Education Academy and Fellow of Faculty of Public Health and Fellow of American Academy of Nursing. She is Editor-in Chief of International Nursing Review and editorial board member of Journal of Advanced Nursing and Journal of Interpersonal Violence. Her research focuses on GBV, DVA, inequalities in health related to gender and ethnicity, and health care professionals' preparation. She is a mixed method researcher and has led and contributed to many projects around her research and teaching interests. She is an expert in developing and delivering effective and interactive face to face and online learning material. She is the developer and lead educator of Supporting victims of domestic violence and domestic abuse training game.

► *Gene Feder works as an inner-city GP and a professor of primary care in Bristol medical school, where he established a domestic and sexual violence research group. He is director of VISION, a United Kingdom Prevention Research Programme consortium of violence researchers. His methodological expertise is in randomised controlled trials and systematic reviews, while collaborating more broadly with epidemiologists, economists, and social scientists in the application of their methods to violence prevention. His research started with the health and healthcare of Traveller Gypsies, followed by studies on the development and implementation of clinical guidelines, management of chronic respiratory and cardiovascular conditions in primary care and the epidemiology of and health care responses to domestic violence. His research has informed UK and global policy on the prevention of GBV and support to survivors.*

📌 Domestic violence attitudes and responses in ethnic minority and migrant communities in the UK and the role of religious and cultural mediators: A synthesis of qualitative studies

Aysha Ahmed and Dr Natalia Paszkiewicz, Project dldl/ድልድል

The presentation discusses findings from community-based research into the DVA realities of ethnic minority and migrant/ refugee communities in the UK that engaged participants of Bangladeshi, Eritrean and Ethiopian backgrounds, belonging to diverse Christian and Muslim religious communities. The aim of the study was to identify culturally appropriate responses and to explore how best to leverage on religious mediators and faith as a resource to respond to DVA in these communi-



ties. The three community researchers conducted 16 interviews and one focus group discussion (in two different sessions) involving 8 participants (n=24 participants). The participants talked about the cultural, political, and societal dilemmas women experience and the role of masculinities and gender disempowerment that is prevalent. A lack of understanding within the wider secular setting of religion and culture present challenges for Bangladeshi women and prevents them from talking about abuse beyond their family network. The level of awareness of domestic violence among all the participants interviewed seemed to be a function of numerous parameters, including their understanding of women's rights (also in the context of legal frameworks in the UK) and socio-cultural notions of gendered notions of 'obedience' that cut across all three communities. When talking about support from religious organisations, women limit themselves in seeking help as those establishments are led and dominated by men. There is willingness but also a lack of knowledge on how to bridge domestic violence with the faith agenda on a regular basis.

► *Dr Natalia Paszkiewicz is Project dldl/ঔদ্যঔ manager. Dr Paszkiewicz is an anthropologist with a particular interest in migration and refugee studies. She has twenty years' experience of working with migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in different capacities, including as a researcher involved in applied social sciences projects, and as a practitioner in the third sector. She has provided consultancy and research support on topics related to forced migration, specifically around issues of economic inclusion of refugees and livelihoods in the humanitarian sector. Dr Paszkiewicz has also published journalistic pieces discussing refugee protection and political violence, with a focus on the Horn of Africa.*

► *Aysha Ahmed is an academic researcher and has completed research as part of her PhD, "Finding our Voices: Bangladeshi women's experiences of domestic violence and abuse". She works as an independent researcher in social sciences and has published on her research on DV and Bangladeshi women. She is also a visiting lecturer. She has expertise in working with South Asian communities in addressing harmful practices, Honour Based Abuse, and Forced Marriages. Aysha is a registered social worker with Social Work England and has over 35 years of experience in working with children and families. Aysha is the founder and director of AASHA Consulting, which provides consultancy and training to professionals from social care, health, education, and voluntary organisations.*



ገ Domestic Violence Service Providers' Engagement with their Clients' Religious Beliefs and Experiences: Results from a country-wide survey

Dr Mahmoud Afifi, Project dldl/ድልድል

The aim of this paper is to present the findings from an online survey administered by project dldl/ድልድል with domestic violence and abuse (DVA) providers. The survey sought to identify whether and how DVA service providers engage with the religious beliefs of their clients and the extent to which they integrate or employ faith-based resources and strategies in their services. The ultimate objective of the survey was to identify if there are better ways to integrate religious sensitivity in the DVA sector and build preparedness among DVA providers to support clients from diverse religious backgrounds. The survey asked (DVA) providers questions around 1) the relationship between religion and culture; 2) the importance of religion to clients; 3) the extent to and the way in which religion was used by providers in treating cases; 4) the religious sources, if any, that providers rely on and how they use them; and 5) the in/significance of using religious discourse at all in treating cases. Initial findings show diversity of responses among the providers to the way they treat DVA cases. However, the overall evaluation suggests that religion as defined and understood by the participants plays a positive role in treating cases and that more thinking is needed as to how religious resources could be integrated in services provision.

► *Mahmoud is a postdoctoral researcher at SOAS University of London, working for Project dldl ድልድል in the UK. He received his PhD in Religious Studies from Lancaster University (2023). His thesis addresses how the imams in the UK interpret Qur'an 4:34 in connection with their practical treatment of wife abuse. His interests include contemporary Islamic studies, Quranic interpretation, Islamic law, Islam in the UK, and Islamic feminism. He is currently working with Dr. Romina Istratii on a research project that examines the feasibility of developing an interfaith approach toward domestic violence in Egypt and Ethiopia.*



PRACTICE-BASED WORKSHOP

¶ Improving domestic abuse service provision for ethnic minority women in East England

The Dahlia Project

Facilitators: *Mandy Geraghty, Irram Razzaq and Samina Nawaz (Peterborough Women's Aid, UK) & Dr Mirna Guha (Anglia Ruskin University, UK)*

In this workshop, Ms Mandy Geraghty, CEO of Peterborough Women's Aid and Community Outreach Workers Ms Irram Razzaq and Ms Samina Nawaz will share insights from the implementation of a Home Office funded specialist intervention 'The Dahlia Project' for South Asian women victims of domestic abuse. In a region with minimal 'by and for' specialist services led by ethnic minority women and low representation of Asian women within local politics and policymaking, the Dahlia project is breaking new ground in providing culturally competent support to victims with complex and unique needs, and transforming the organisation in the process. The workshop will be co-led by Dr Mirna Guha, Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Anglia Ruskin University, who is leading the impact evaluation of the project since its start in April 2023.

► *Mandy Geraghty began working in the domestic abuse sector in 2004 for the Probation Service. Her first role was facilitating Perpetrator Programmes in Prisons and the Community. Mandy spent the next 14 years at Probation in various roles, all focussing on domestic abuse. During this time Mandy wrote victim and Perpetrator Programmes, policies on domestic abuse, and ended her career with Probation as Deputy Director for Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. Mandy then progressed into the third sector working for Refuge in Cambridgeshire, and then moved on to oversee several VAWG services in London. Mandy is now the CEO at Peterborough Women's Aid. PWA deliver services including refuge accommodation, group work, live chat, and specialist community projects.*

► *Dr Mirna Guha is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Anglia Ruskin University and holds a PhD in International Development from the University of East Anglia. Her research and teaching specialisms include gender relations, everyday violence*



and social (in)justice in the lives of marginalised communities globally. She has published findings from her doctoral research on everyday violence in the lives of marginalised women who sell sex in India in leading journals viz., Gender, Place and Culture, Contemporary South Asia, Gender and Development, and has co-edited a special section on feminist research on sex work governance in India in Contemporary South Asia. Since 2021, Mirna has been researching the domestic abuse vulnerabilities of Asian women in East England and is passionate about fostering the leadership of global majority women in domestic abuse service provision nationally.

► *Irram Razzaq, born and raised in the United Kingdom, is a dedicated South Asian Community Specialist Worker with Peterborough Women's Aid, a position she has held since June 2023. As a British Pakistani, Irram understands the intricate balance between cultural identity and the challenges faced by her clients. Her role involves safety planning, risk assessing, advocacy, and providing emotional and mental support to women affected by domestic abuse. Each day in her position is unique, reflecting the diverse needs and unpredictable nature of her work. Irram's expertise is rooted in her academic background in criminology, with a focus on Honour-Based Violence, which she explored in depth during her university dissertation. She examined whether such violence is a cultural or religious practice, bringing valuable insights to her current work.*



PANEL 2: DVA, FAITH AND CULTURE: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE GROUND

Panel Chair: Aysha Ahmed, Project dldl/ድልድል

Presentations:

¶ Untangling relationships between honour-based abuse and Islam

Dr Sadiq Bhanbhro, Sheffield Hallam University

Honour-based abuse or honour crimes involve violence and abuse, including murder, committed by people who want to defend or restore an individual or a social group's supposedly tarnished honour, which can be a family, caste or community. It is an umbrella term that includes a range of harmful practices, from forced marriage to honour killing. Honour is a universal concept, but its meaning, value, and applications are historically and culturally varied. Also, not a single faith, community, culture or country has the monopoly on defending one's honour through violence. Yet, honour crimes, including honour killings of women and girls, are mainly associated with Muslim communities in their own countries and diaspora communities worldwide. Diaspora Muslims usually live in countries where Islam is not the majority religion because of their propensity to othering and invoking 'different culture' explanations. Much empirical research and discussion have not examined the relationship between Islam and honour crimes. This paper discusses my transnational ethnographic study conducted in the UK and Pakistan to reflect on this relationship critically.

► *Dr Sadiq Bhanbhro is a Senior Research Fellow at Sheffield Hallam University. He is an interdisciplinary, cross-cultural researcher with over 17 years of academic experience in the UK and abroad. Sadiq holds a PhD in the political economy of honour and honour killings of women and girls in the UK and Pakistan. His research focuses on intersections within gender, health, and violence, particularly honour-based abuse across the world. Sadiq has significantly contributed to*



improving understanding and addressing honour crimes, particularly within abuse and killings of women and girls. His projects have developed our knowledge of how communities view honour and its implication in honour crimes.

சு கட்டம்ப வன்முறை (Tamil: English - kudumba vennmurai: family violence) and women's conceptualisation of abuse and self-termination strategies

Minoya Patkunam, PhD student, University of Kent

Tamil women's experiences of domestic abuse have often been blurred within the South Asian woman's experience, or not included in research or service design. Women's experiences can be conceptualised through a decolonial-intersectional-feminist methodology, to explore the multifaceted experiences of Tamil women as such experiences are not only a Tamil issue nor is it a new issue within the Tamil community. There are complex barriers to safety and disclosures, contributing to a silenced/silencing culture, these barriers include how woman identify, interpersonal gendered experiences within family dynamics, and the wider Tamil community, diasporic and migration experiences, affective belonging and colonial histories. Although the specific experience of forced migration, genocide and displacement, and domestic abuse may be perceived as historic, we can explore the real experiences and long-term intergenerational effects through understanding women's self-determination strategies. This piece is a reflection of personal and practitioner experiences and current literature on women's experiences.

► *Minoya is a PhD student researching the narratives of Tamil women from the Sri Lankan diaspora in the UK who have experienced domestic abuse with indigenous creative practice. She works closely with Tamil organisations, led by Tamil women and the diaspora, exploring new ways of meaning-making within the multifaceted and intersectional diaspora space. She has also worked in the domestic abuse sector as a frontline manager working in refuges during the pandemic and project management in local authority overseeing domestic abuse training project for practitioners and local stakeholders.*



PRACTICE-BASED PRESENTATIONS

¶ **Transforming Communities: A Decade of Imams' Leadership Against Domestic Abuse – Challenges & Opportunities**

Imam Hasan, Imams Against Domestic Abuse (IADA)

Over the past 15 years, my efforts in combating domestic abuse have encountered both internal and external challenges. Founding Imams Against Domestic Abuse (IADA) was met with scepticism and resistance from within the Muslim community, where addressing such sensitive issues was often taboo. Externally, misconceptions persisted, particularly regarding the intersection of religion and domestic abuse. Despite these obstacles, campaigns conducted in mosques and presentations at national events helped bridge gaps in understanding. Additionally, I provided faith-sensitive counselling to victims of domestic abuse, offering support rooted in religious principles and cultural context. This counselling extended to perpetrators of domestic violence, aiming to address and rectify harmful behaviours while respecting their faith backgrounds. In addition, I provided faith training to religious leaders and practitioners. As we continue this vital work, fostering empathy and education remains pivotal in overcoming societal barriers and ensuring support for victims within and beyond the Muslim community.

► *Biography see p. 8.*

¶ **The Church as a sacred space for everyone**

Archbishop Angaelos, Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom

In Christianity the home is considered a small 'church' and thus must follow the same ethos of the sanctity of church and all that entails. For this to be done there must be an understanding of the equal importance of every member of the family and both their rights and responsibilities to ensure that this 'church' functions as a sacred space for them and for everyone who encounters them. As religious leaders we are bound to intro-



duce and support principles of mutual love, respect and harmony within the home, and when any of these break down, to support every member of the family in the journey towards healing and reconciliation. Having said that, this by no means suggests acceptance in any way, of any form of abuse, whether it be physical or emotional as this would go against the very notion of the sanctity of life and the right of every individual, as made in the image and likeness of God.

► *Biography see p. 8.*

📖 **A journey to change in the Church**

Bekah Legg, Restored

Restored has pioneered faith-based research and survivor support. It has a mission to speak up about violence against women and girls, to equip the church to stand against domestic abuse and to support survivors. This seminar will demonstrate how anecdotal evidence about the barriers facing Christian women seeking support led to evidence-based research, the founding of the Restored Survivors' Community, resources for Church leaders and a growing national network of Church choosing to stand against domestic abuse and support survivors. It will explore the challenges and learnings of the journey and share the resources created.

► *Bekah Legg is the CEO of Restored, a Christian charity working to speak up about violence against women and equip the Church to stand against domestic abuse and with survivors. Bekah Legg is a former teacher, youth worker and Church leader. Bekah also developed a youth support line and relationship education programme for a sexual violence center on the South Coast. Bekah has a Masters in Applied Theology and presented the winning paper at the Centre for the Study of the Bible and Violence annual student symposium in 2020. She lectures on a biblical understanding of power and leadership, domestic abuse and gender-based violence and has spoken at the UN CSW on the important role the Church can and does play in ending VAWG and DA in particular.*



PANEL 3: ENGAGING RELIGIOUS STAKEHOLDERS AND RELIGIOUS SPACES IN DVA RESPONSES AND SERVICES

Panel Chair: Naana Otoo-Oyortey, FORWARD

Presentations:

📌 Researching Black majority churches and domestic abuse

Dr Joanne Wilson (Independent Researcher) & Dr Ava Kanyeredzi (Queen Mary University of London)

The Spirit and Solace study (2022) investigated the response to disclosures of domestic abuse in Black majority churches in the UK, churchgoers' experiences of making reports and support. As with previous research conducted in the USA and UK, the study found pastors/church leaders implicitly promoted a culture of silence on domestic abuse, preferring instead to protect the church 'brand' especially when the abuser was also a church leader, uphold patriarchal traditions that husbands knew best, and that the church should not interfere between a husband and his wife. There were examples of resistance to such secrecy both from leaders and congregants who held strong expectations that churches can and should do more to effectively respond to domestic abuse. The methodology included a survey disseminated amongst churchgoers, in-depth interviews, focus groups and a steering group comprised of Academics, study participants, and prominent members of the Black majority church communities.

► *Dr Ava Kanyeredzi is a Senior Lecturer/Programme Director in Mental Health (Digital Education) at Queen Mary University of London whose research draws on feminist, critical and community psychology with a strong track record of working in partnership with health service and third sector organisations, to develop robust and impactful projects. Using mostly qualitative/participatory/action research methods to explore experiences of violence/abuse, mental distress, psychiatric spaces and seeking support.*



► *Dr Joanne Wilson has led and supported highly sensitive research projects with women on child sexual abuse and sexual violence for over 10 years. Dr Wilson has conducted the only source of primary research from a British perspective focusing on the experiences of African-Caribbean British adult victim -survivors of CSA. Additionally, she has led and coordinated research on racial inequality in relation to political participation, sexual violence and CSE whilst employed as a researcher/consultant at Race on the Agenda (ROTA) (Female voice in violence; Girls and Gangs, 2008-2010). More recently she has been the research coordinator for a European wide study for Oxford University which explored inequality in education.*

Addressing Domestic Abuse in Black Majority Churches – The toolkit and lessons learned from The Black Church Domestic Abuse Forum

Dr Zina Arinze (BCDAF) and Elaine Bowes (BCDAF)

Black Church Domestic Abuse Forum Studies have concluded that belonging to a faith group can be a barrier to accessing help and support from secular organisations for domestic abuse. Faith and secular organisations need to partner to more effectively support women within such contexts. The BCDAF Project aims to address the poor response of Black Majority Churches (BMC's) to domestic abuse, both within the church and in the wider communities where they have their ministries. We have developed a toolkit especially designed for the use of BMC's. The toolkit is essentially a guidance document and training resource. We deliver training to church leadership groups who would be expected to deal with reports of domestic abuse. Our aim is to empower churches to support congregants affected by domestic abuse, and to build their confidence to work with in partnership with local agencies to contribute to community wide intervention measures.

► *Dr Zina Arinze is a multi-award winning international transformational speaker, lawyer, bestselling author gender empowerment strategist and founder of Believe and Live again Divorce Recovery coaching and mentoring. In 2018 Dr Zina launched the Reinvent You! After Abuse Foundation, a charity restoring the*



mental, emotional social and financial wellbeing of women and children affected by the stigma of trauma and abuse. Dr Zina is a member of the BCDAF and one of the lead trainers.

► *Elaine Bowes is a Director of BCDAF and one of the founding members. She is a credentialed coach and trainer and provided EDI training for workers at the domestic abuse charity Refuge for over 5 years. This work helped to inspire her passion for an improved response to DA from the Black Majority Church.*

📌 **Building Bridges of Collaboration Between Clergy and Service Providers**

Dr Pamela Shelley, University College London Hospital

There is rising evidence that service providers and clergy do not collaborate to support Christian women survivors of IPV. However, there is scarce research on how service providers and African clergy collaborate to support African Christian women survivors of IPV in England. The presentation aims to explore how service providers and African clergy collaborate to support African Christian women survivors of IPV. The researcher used interpretative phenomenological analysis and remote, semi-structured interviews to collect data from purposefully selected service providers (N=9) and African clergy (N=9) in England. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed. They show that service providers and clergy lack collaboration. A 10-step guideline for collaboration between clergy and service providers was developed, which could be adopted to foster a successful collaboration.

► *Dr Pamela Shelley is a clinical research nurse at University College London Hospital. She worked as a midwife for 12 years at Rosie Hospital, Cambridge and six years as a health and disability nurse assessor, where she supported women who had experienced intimate partner violence. She is also a Christian leader in her church, and she provides support as 'women-helping-women' to Christian women survivors of intimate partner violence. Her professional experience and personal experience of intimate partner violence experience inspired her to conduct this research to contribute to the knowledge of IPV and Christianity.*



፡ The role of religious actors in addressing violence against women in Cape Town, South Africa

Dr Fungai Chirongoma, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Violence against women is a social reality in South Africa. In 2014, the country was named the world rape capital because of the intensity of violence. Several legal reforms have been put in place to address such violence, which include the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 and the establishment of Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences investigations units across all South African Police Services stations. It appears these laws and policies have not been an effective strategy to address violence against women. Despite the longstanding tendency in the social sciences to overlook the role of religion or religious actors in the realm of social service provision, faith-based organizations have proven to be key religious actors in addressing the challenge of violence against women in Cape Town. Although research on the work of FBOs and violence against women mitigation is still in its infancy, these organizations have proven to be essential partners in responding to the challenge of violence against women through advocacy and campaigns, offering training to religious leaders and providing shelter to survivors of violence against women. It is significant to appreciate that in a society such as South Africa where religion determines gender power relations, laws and policies alone are not an effective strategy to curb violence against women. There is need to appreciate the role of religious actors in addressing social problems such as violence against women. The work of FBOs in addressing violence against women reflects the continued presence of religion in the public square and its continued role in addressing social problems.

► *Fungai Chirongoma is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. As a Postdoctoral fellow at Stellenbosch, she is currently working on a project that examines the intersection of religion and popular culture in raising awareness regarding the pervasive reality and effects of gender-based violence. Fungai recently completed a project on the effects of COVID 19 on the death and burial rituals of the Xhosa people as a Postdoctoral fellow at the University of Cape Town. She holds a PhD in Religious Studies from the*



University of Cape Town. Her PhD research analysed faith-based interventions in addressing violence against women. Fungai's research interests include religion and gender, religion and development, religion and society and the study of African traditional religions.



FILM SCREENING: 'TIDAR'

Based on real people's stories and testimonies collected through research in Ethiopia, docudrama Tidar (Marriage) tells the story of Genet, who is experiencing domestic violence, and presents her search for a moral and practical solution to her situation within the village community. It shows how the community responds to Genet's predicament and how personal faith, religious mediation, and theological teaching influence how she thinks through her situation. The aim of the film is to raise awareness about the complex role that religion can have in situations of domestic violence in the Ethiopian Orthodox community, influencing both victim and perpetrator rationalisations and behaviour.

The film is re-enacted by Amharic-speaking actors in Ethiopia, with subtitles being produced in Tigrigna, Afaan Oromoo and English. The film was written and led by Dr Romina Istratii, produced by Hermon Hailay and Max Conil of Exile Pictures, and directed by Yidnekachew Shumete of Kurat Pictures.

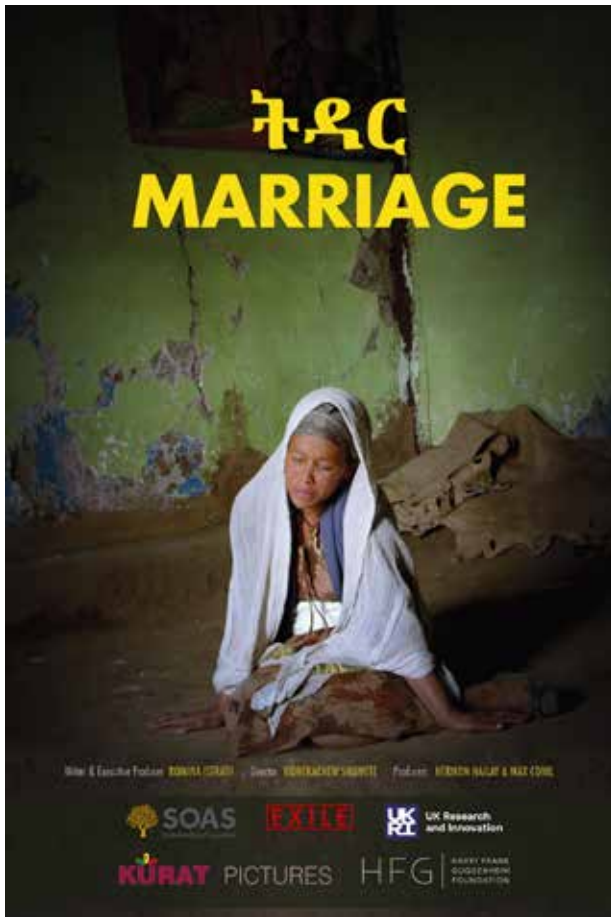
► *Hermon Hailay, born in Tigray and trained at the leading theatre school in Addis Ababa, is one of Ethiopia's leading filmmakers, with several critically and commercially successful documentary and feature films to her name. Her first theatrical feature film was the award-winning Price of Love, which screened at Toronto International Film Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam, Palm Springs, Stockholm, Hamburg plus over 50 others where it won 11 international awards. She does not shy away from difficult subjects matters, focusing on the female perspective and raising awareness of a range of sensitive subjects including sexual and gender-based violence. She is committed to telling important Ethiopian stories that speak to both a local and international audience to break the stereotypes of both Ethiopian and African society and culture.*

► *Max Conil is a screenwriter and creative producer whose first feature, Price of Love screened at Toronto International Film Festival, Rotterdam, Palm Springs, Stockholm, Hamburg plus over 50 others where it won 11 awards. He was awarded a grant by Creative England to work with Number 9 Films (Carol, Made in Dagenham) to develop his next feature which is currently in development with Lionsgate. He has worked on numerous narrative and documentary productions*



as well as television programmes for all major UK commercial broadcasters as well as a range of productions across Ethiopia, where he was based for 5 years. He setup and runs Exile Pictures which currently has a slate of projects in development.

► Yidnekachew Shumete Desalegn is an award-winning filmmaker based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and is the Co-founder and General Manager of the production company Kurat Pictures. He has been at the forefront of the expansion of domestic cinema and screen content production in Ethiopia since the early 2000s, both as an instructor at Tom Videography and Photography Training Center from 2001 until 2010 and as a practitioner whose films have been screened at various film festivals across Africa, America, and Europe.





- DAY 2 -

PANEL 1: RELIGIOUS TRADITION, CULTURAL CONTEXT AND THEOLOGICAL RESPONSES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Panel Chair: Dr Mahmoud Afifi, Project dldl

Presentations:

☞ Project dldl/ድልድል's research-based and theologically-informed approach developing training materials and training clergy on domestic violence

Dr Romina Istratii, Benjamin Kalkum and Henok Hailu

Domestic violence interventions that engage religious leaders and clergy have increased significantly in recent years, spanning social work, psychology and international development. The evidence indicates the need for culturally appropriate, theology-informed interventions that combine religious and secular knowledge. The current paper presents such an intervention that was implemented with Ethiopian Orthodox clergy employing ethnographic, theological, safeguarding and legal training content. Qualitative evaluation of the pilot showed that the theological component achieved the highest engagement and helped the participants to become more confident in teaching against domestic violence in their communities. We proposes the need for developing robust evaluation strategies to better quantify the impact of theology informed training materials to inform domestic violence work in religious contexts.



- ▶ *Biography of Dr. Romina Istratii see p. 4.*
- ▶ *Henok Hailu is a psychology professional with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology, a Master's degree in Counselling Psychology, and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. As a lecturer, psychotherapist and student supervisor at Addis Ababa University's Department of Psychiatry, he is dedicated to educating future mental health professionals. His research focuses on mental health, neurodevelopmental disorders, and the intersection of religion and psychology. Additionally, Henok is the current president of Ethiopian Psychology Association, Executive member of Pan African psychology union and serves as a deacon in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. He has a work experience of 10+ years in his respective field.*
- ▶ *Benjamin Kalkum is researching religion and gender norms, in particular masculinity norms, in Sub-Saharan Africa. After his Master's thesis about the religious foundation of masculinity norms, for which he interviewed married Christian men in Zambia, he worked in an HIV prevention project in Zambia's Northwestern Province, where he became curious about the teachings of local traditional marriage counsellors. After having relocated to Ethiopia to join his wife, he became associated researcher at Project dld/ድልድል, where he continues to work on the intersection of religion and gender, in particular religion as a positive resource for SGBV survivors and the inclusion of religious actors into response programmes. Next to his duties as a father, he also works as a freelance consultant for international organizations.*



📖 **Redeeming Scripture: does Judges 19 victim blame the Levite's concubine?**

Bekah Legg, Restored

Judges 19 tells a story of unspeakable violence against a woman who is never named. It is a story of a woman who leaves her priestly husband, and it has long been used as a cautionary tale of what happens to unfaithful women. Yet, this story has not always been told this way. A reexamination of the original text and a tracking of the changes in interpretation, present a very different story that finishes with a challenge that echoes through the ages to speak up and do something about violence against women and girls.

► *Biography see above p. 7.*

📖 **Women's Great Guile in the Muslim Exegetical Tradition**

Dr Taira Amin, Independent scholar

The notion of guile in the Qur'an deserves serious scholarly engagement, particularly when it is attributed to female characters of the Qur'an. This is because, all too often, Q12:28 has been read by some Muslim exegetes to justify the "othering" of women and heightening the perceived threat women pose to men. By way of expanding on previous research, in this paper, I seek to explore and contrast how classical Muslim exegetes understand the six *kayd* and *makr* of women as represented in sura Yusuf with six *kayd* and *makr* verses relating to several men in the Qur'an. The hermeneutical methods used interpret these verses will also be thoroughly examined. This is since, all too often, in the Muslim exegetical tradition, women's great guile is juxtaposed with the relatively weak guile of Satan. In this regard, using Wodak and Reisigl's Discourse- Historical Approach, classical exegeses from the Muslim East and Muslim West whose works are widely referenced to this day will be explored by way of exploring how these Muslim scholars understood the meaning of Q12:28.



The questions I seek to answer for this paper, are as follows: 1) How do exegetes conceptualise women's *kayd* and *makr*? 2) To what extent is the notion of men's *kayd* and *makr* perceived as similar or different from women's? 3) What are the linguistic contexts of this juxtaposition? 3) What broader discourses about men, women and male-female relations that arise from their interpretative engagements? 4) What are the potential ramifications of their discussions in terms of shaping Muslim ideas, roles, and practices? The main thrust of this paper is that there is a complex interplay of intertextuality and interdiscursivity in the Muslim exegetical tradition, shaped by the genre conventions of exegetical writing, which means that some discourses about women are entrenched over time, whilst others are marginalized.

► *Taira Amin completed an interdisciplinary PhD in Applied Linguistics at Lancaster University. Her research encompasses linguistic and discursive methods, gender construction and Quranic Studies. Working under the supervision of Professor Ruth Wodak, a pioneer in the field of Critical Discourse Studies and Dr. Shuruq Naguib, a leading scholar in Islamic Studies, her research involves exploring gender constructions in Quranic narratives and their interpretation in the Muslim exegetical tradition. She has an M.A in Language Studies and a B.A in English Language and Literature.*



CONVERSATION

🗨️ **Engaging diverse communities: language matters**

Chair: *Professor Parveen Ali, University of Sheffield*

Discussants: *Mariam Ahmed and Nosheen Ahmed (AMINA), Emma Hier (Respect), Naana Otoo-Oyortey (FORWARD), Imam M. A. Hasan, Rahel Kassa and Dr Addisalem Genta (EMIRTA)*

This session will explore questions such as:

- What are some of the tensions that exist between DVA practice and policy language and understandings and terminologies used by communities?
- What approaches could be used to achieve proper linguistic/cultural contextualisation?
- What degree of contextualisation is desirable to ensure that pernicious community norms and ideas are challenged effectively?
- How might current language in DVA policy and practice be diversified?

► *Biography of Professor Parvewen Ali see above p. 9.*

► *Emma Hier is Respect's Accreditation Lead. In her role she is responsible for assessing the safety and effectiveness of perpetrator interventions, ensuring services are compliant with the Respect Standard before gaining accreditation. Emma also provides expert support and guidance on the accreditation process as well as case consultations. Previously, Emma worked with colleagues at Welsh Women's Aid to implement the Change that Lasts approach, which aims to change communities' and professionals' responses to domestic abuse and the women experiencing it. Emma worked in the probation service for 17 years in various frontline teams and brings to Respect a thorough understanding of the criminal justice system.*

► *Tina Patel is the Head of National Systems Change for the Drive Partnership. National Systems Change programme identifies systemic gaps and brings together the insights of survivors, service users, practitioners, specialist organisations, researchers, and policy makers to build solutions. With funding from the National*



Lottery Community Fund, the Drive Partnership has launched a new phase of its National Systems Change work by partnering with specialist by-and-for organisations and experts by experience to co-design improved responses to perpetrators of domestic abuse across Black African, Caribbean and Mixed Heritage communities, South Asian communities, and LGBT+ communities.

► *Dr Addisalem Genta is an Assistant Professor at Ambo University-Ethiopia. He has completed B.Sc. degree from Jimma University in 2007, and MSc from Addis Ababa University in 2011. He earned his PhD in Computer Science and Technology from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi-India in 2019. He is the Chief Executive officer of EMIRTA Research Training and Development Institute He is currently engaged in conducting research, teaching, and supervising postgraduate students in many higher institutions across Ethiopia. He is highly interested in research related to indigenous knowledge and innovations, cultural and religious studies, and impact of technologies in maintaining cultures, traditions and faiths, the role technology plays in preventing GVB and other forms of violence in communities.*

► *Rahel Kassa is a researcher, lawyer, and a gender & development professional. She holds graduate degrees in Master of International Studies in Development Cooperation and a Master of Business Administration degree. Rahel earned her first degree in Bachelor of Laws. Rahel's research interest focuses on human-centred sustainable development issues; gender and development; policy and legal research; human security and justice; and understanding the policy and development insinuation aspects of the nexus between indigenous knowledge and contemporary science and innovation development. She is also interested in social development and project management affairs.*

► *Mariam Ahmed, CEO of Amina MWRC, a key women's rights organisation in Scotland, specialises in gender-based violence, equalities, and empowering marginalised women, particularly Asian, Black, and Ethnic Minority women. As a qualified Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate, she's dedicated to ending violence against women, collaborating across sectors. Mariam amplifies stories of destitute women and advocates for those facing human rights challenges under immigration control. She's a training expert on harmful traditional practices and coercive control. Additionally, she serves on the Equalities and Human Rights Commission committee in Scotland.*



- ▶ *Nosheen Ahmed previously served as VAWG Development officer in 2018 and 2023 at Amina MWRC. Trained as an Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate (IDAA), she boasts 16 years of experience in community development, project management, and marketing for charities like Women's Aid. With a BA (Hons) in Business Economics & Marketing Management, and a Postgrad Diploma in Operations Management, she excels. A freelance photographer in her spare time, she's also a Trustee for the Corra Foundation since 2022. Joining the Employability project in October 2023, she's proven herself adept at managing initiatives, such as the Minority Ethnic Emerging Leaders Programme at John Smith's Centre.*
- ▶ *Naana Otoo-Oyortey is a gender justice activist and the Executive Director of FORWARD, a pioneering organisation led by and for African women, working to end multiple forms of violence against women and girls including female genital mutilation. Naana has worked at global and national levels and is passionate about gender justice and advocates for ending child marriage, child motherhood and nurturing young women's leadership and wellbeing. She has years of experience as a trainer, researcher and mentor. Naana was honoured in 2009 by the Queen for "services to Human Rights Issues for Women". Naana has served as a trustee on a number of development organisations and was co-founder of the End FGM European Network, which advocates for ending FGM in Europe.*



PRACTICE-BASED WORKSHOP

¶ Enhancing cultural competency in DHR Reviews

Facilitators: *Aasifa Usmani, Coaction Hub & Training Manager at Asian Women's Resource Centre (AWRC), Fran Richards: Coaction Hub Coordinator at Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse (STADA) and Sukhi Kaur: DHR Mentee for Coaction Hub & Chair of Trustees at Sikh Women's Aid.*

The Coaction Hub is a partnership project between Asian Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) and Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse (STADA) which explores the efficacy of the Co-ordinated Community Response (CCR) to domestic abuse and harmful practices specially for Black and minoritised victims and survivors. At Coaction, we highlight gaps and challenge behaviours and 'cultures' entrenched within systems and responses to domestic abuse in statutory and non-statutory sectors, for example with regards to Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs).

In February 2023 we commenced our DHR scheme which aims to increase the voices of those heard in DHRs to include specialist agencies who have an understanding of the experiences of Black and minoritised victims and victims of faith, through mentoring, training and shadowing. The scheme is a response to our lack of understanding the intersectionality of victim's experiences. Without this understanding panels will struggle to establish what lessons can be learned from the domestic homicide, a key purpose of a DHR. We will present on our learning from the scheme, including the following: a) The importance of cultural and faith competency in raising awareness of the structural barriers impacting victims/survivors in a DHR setting, b) The need for increased involvement of agencies who are both domestic abuse and faith literate in DHRs, c) The marginalisation of specialist agencies and the impact this can have on DHRs, and d) Sharing learnings for countering culture-specific norms, illustrating how this will bring about improvements in systems and attitudes, building an improved response in attitudes and understanding of domestic abuse and harmful practices.



► *Aasifa Usmani works with Asian Women's Resource Centre, a 'by&for' Black feminist organisation dedicated to addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG), she is the Coaction Hub Coordinator and Training Manager there. She has worked with various community and VAWG institutions including the Police, Health, women's centres, and schools. She is passionate about raising awareness regarding public health issue of domestic abuse with the health and community organisations and she has delivered workshops and presentations at National Conferences. However, working with women has been the most transformative experiences for her personally and politically. She is also passionate about raising awareness through poetry as poetry strengthens her. She is interested in themes of exile, grief, colonisation, intersectional feminism, trauma, love, and endurance.*

► *Fran Richards has been working in the Violence against Women and Girls sector for over 20 years, having previously worked in homelessness. She worked directly with clients in refuges, outreach and as an IDVA before commencing work in 2017 at Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse, a second-tier domestic abuse organisation. Fran studied for a master's in social work at Goldsmith's and is a registered social worker. She co-founded the Harmful Practices Strategic Partnership (HPSP), a pan London by and for led partnership in 2021. The following year, with a colleague from the Asian Women's Resource Centre, she co-created the Coaction Hub project, which aims to strengthen the Co-ordinated Community Response (CCR) to Black and minoritised/ global majority survivors of domestic abuse and harmful practices.*

► *Sukhvinder Kaur is a dedicated stay-at-home mother of two boys on the autism spectrum and a passionate advocate for human rights within the Sikh and broader BAME communities. She is the co-founder and Chair of Trustees at Sikh Women's Aid and also serves as the organisations Faith and Exploitation Lead. She is also the co-author of two publications 'From Her, Kings Are Born' that evidenced, for the first time, the depth and breadth of domestic and sexual abuse specifically in the Sikh Panjabi Community. With extensive experience in the voluntary sector, she has served as the Director of Operations and spokesperson for a Sikh human rights charity and was a member of a national Sikh body from 2015 to 2018. In these roles, she was one of only three women advocating for safeguarding responsibilities within Sikh faith institutions, often facing resistance from entrenched patriarchal structures.*



PANEL 2: FAITH-SENSITIVE AND TRAUMA-INFORMED COUNSELLING APPROACHES AND RESPONSES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Panel Chair: Nikki Dhillon Keane, Safe in Faith.

Presentations:

✦ Exploring the experience, attitude, challenges, and opportunities of clients of Faith-based and trauma-informed counselling approaches in the case of Ethiopian Orthodox Church: A Phenomenological Study

Dr Henok Hailu, Kesis Yigzaw Mekonnen, Mesfin Betru (Fnot Social and Psychological Counselling Charitable Organization, Ethiopia)

The presentation presents a qualitative phenomenological study that explored the experience, attitude, challenges, and opportunities of clients who have gone through Faith-based and trauma-informed counselling approaches in the case of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The study was carried out in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia at Fnot Social and Psychological Counselling Charitable Organization, which offers faith-based and trauma-informed counselling for individual clients and couples. Participants in this study were selective on through purposive sampling and 14 clients were recruited. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data, which was then thematically analysed. Data collection and analysis were carried out concurrently. Four themes and six sub-themes emerged from the data describing Experience, attitude, challenges, and opportunities of clients who have gone through faith-based and trauma-informed counselling approaches in the case of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The themes were: (a) “God is the healer”, (b) “God speaks through the priests” (c) “I didn’t realize I have gone through trauma” (d) “I never thought I will be well again.” These are discussed in the presentation.



- ▶ *Biography of Dr. Henok Hailu see above p. 26.*
- ▶ *Kesis Yigzaw Mekonnen is a dedicated priest of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) with a strong academic background and extensive professional experience. He holds a BA degree in Management, a BA degree in Theology, and an MA degree in Counselling Psychology. As the General Manager of Fnot, Kesis Yigzaw plays a crucial role in overseeing the organization's operations and initiatives. His work at Fnot focuses on providing comprehensive counselling services and delivering impactful training sessions to support the community's mental and spiritual well-being. In addition to his managerial and counselling responsibilities, Kesis Yigzaw is an active preacher within the EOTC. He is committed to fostering spiritual growth and providing guidance to his congregation. Kesis Yigzaw's unique combination of theological expertise and psychological insight, coupled with over 25 years of experience, enables him to effectively address the diverse needs of those he serves, making a positive and lasting impact on the community.*
- ▶ *Mesfin Betru is the Project Department Manager at Fnot Social and Psychological Counselling Charitable Organization (Fnot). With six years of experience in project management, Mesfin specializes in project monitoring and evaluation. At Fnot, Mesfin coordinates three key units within the Project Department: Training and Counselling, Project Team and Resource Mobilization, and Research and Development. Mesfin holds an M.A. degree in Project Management from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, and is currently pursuing a PhD at the same institution. Outside of work, Mesfin enjoys training youth, including higher education students, particularly through organized programs at Ethiopian Orthodox Church Sunday schools.*



¶ Religion as a positive resource for trauma healing? Results from a scoping study among religious actors in Tigray

Benjamin Kalkum, Project dldl/ድልድል

A broad variety of studies affirms the positive effect of religiosity for mental health generally and also trauma coping and healing in particular. In the Tigray war which devastated the north of Ethiopia from 2020 to 2022, sexual violence was systematically used as a weapon of war. As Tigray is a very religious society, for most survivors religion is a pivotal part of their identity, and for many the main – and often only available – resource for coping and healing. This scoping studies among religious actors working in Tigray addresses the following questions: How do Christian churches respond to this situation? What approaches do they apply to care for the survivors? And lastly: how could religion as a positive resource also be integrated into secular approaches to support the survivors?

► *Biography see above p. 26.*



PRACTICE-BASED WORKSHOP

📌 Trauma and Faith Sensitivity

Nikki Dhillon Keane, Safe in Faith

There is evidence that survivors of trauma which occurred in faith contexts require faith-sensitive therapeutic responses to support recovery. This includes survivors spiritual abuse in the context of domestic abuse. Safe in Faith provides a model of faith-literate trauma therapy in the training offered to counsellors and psychotherapists working with survivors of domestic abuse and gender-based violence. This presentation argues that in addition to the need for faith-sensitivity in our understanding of trauma, there is a benefit to applying the lens of trauma to explorations of faith and spirituality. A trauma-informed lens through which to explore Christian spirituality, as well as a faith-sensitive approach to trauma therapy is proposed.

► *Nikki is a therapist specialising in trauma and faith. She is the founder of Caritas Safe in Faith, co-founder of the Faith and VAWG Coalition, and works with the Catholic Church nationally on domestic abuse. Nikki has written the domestic abuse guidance for the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, and is a visiting lecturer at St Mary's University and honorary fellow of the Association of Christian Counsellors. Her books include "Domestic Abuse in Church Communities" (Redemptorist). Nikki is fluent in British Sign Language and is the founder of Caritas Signs of Hope Deaf Counselling Service.*



ROUNDTABLE

🔗 Developing a future roadmap for faith-sensitive and culturally appropriate domestic violence and abuse services in the UK

Chair: Professor Gene Feder, University of Bristol

Participants: Huda Jawad (Faith and VAWG Coalition), Emma Heir (Respect), Mandy Geraghty (Dahlia Project), Naana Otoo-Oyortey (FORWARD), EMIRTA, Project dldl/ድልድል, and others

In this session, participants will be invited to share summary thoughts on the overall conference discussions and to explore questions such as:

- Given the conversations had today, what areas and issues should be prioritised in current efforts to diversify responses in DVA services?
- What are the next steps for improving cultural sensitivity and religious literacy in the sector and whose remit should this fall under?
- What is the role of accreditation standards in faith-sensitive services and how could such a system be set up to ensure a productive and ethical engagement with clients' religious beliefs?
- What does a future roadmap for the DVA sector look like and how can the outputs of this conference be utilised to develop this?

► *Biography of Professor Gene Feder see p. 10.*

Other Speaker biographies as above.



LOGISTICAL INFORMATION

Registration

Registration opens at 8am on both days. The registration table will be located in the Cloister area in Senate House (walk straight as you enter Senate House). Signage and a banner will be placed in Senate House to direct you to the registration area.

Venue and Facilities

Please carry your conference badge at all times to avoid being stopped by security. If you are stopped, you can check in as a guest.

All conference activities on day 1 and 2 will take place in the Wolfson Lecture Theatre (SWLT), which is located on the 1st floor of Senate House. The film screening on June 19 will take place in the Alumni Lecture Theatre (SALT) also on the 1st floor of Senate House.

Lunch and refreshments will be served throughout the two days in the Cloister area in Senate House (the same area with the registration).

Please note that all lunch options are vegan. Drinks during the reception will be clearly marked as alcoholic or non-alcoholic and will be served on separate tables.

Fire Alarm

If a fire alarm goes off, it is not a drill and we must all exit the building as orderly as possible.

Prayer room

A prayer room is available in the SOAS Main Building. To reach it, you need to exit Senate House and enter the SOAS Main Building. After you enter the building, walk straight through the doors towards the library. You can access the basement through the stairs on your right.



Toilets

The closets toilets to the lecture theatres on the 1st floor are located on the left for women and on the right for men as you enter through the staircase doors.

Videography and photography during the conference

The conference and the film screening evening event will be video-recorded in full. All the presentations and practice-based sessions will be filmed and the recordings will be published on the project's Vimeo account and shared through the project's multiple communications platforms. In addition, photos will be taken during the conference.

By registering for this conference, you have agreed to be filmed and photographed. In the case that there are important reasons for which you need to opt out, please let the organisers know at the time of registering. No advance communication means that your special requests will not be considered.

Shooting a testimonial video with our team

During the conference, we plan to shoot 30-60 second testimonial videos with participants. These will be published on our Vimeo account, website and social media after the conference. If you'd like to shoot a short testimonial video, please prepare to respond to any of the three questions below:

- What was the most useful aspect of the conference (so far)?
- What has impacted you the most (so far)?
- What is your main take away from the conference (so far)?

The testimonials will be shot during the refreshments and lunch breaks on both days, and at the end of the conference and before the beginning of the film screening on June 19.



If you'd like to shoot a testimonial please approach either the photographer or videographer during the break and let them know.

Wellbeing advice and support during conference

We realise that the subject of domestic violence and abuse is a sensitive one and that we may have in the room people who have been personally affected or have loved ones who may have suffered.

If you need to speak to someone, you are welcome to reach any of the individuals listed below, who are either trained psychotherapists or spiritual teachers working with domestic violence victims and survivors (some combining both capacities). Please ask the organisers to point you to any of these individuals if you are uncertain how to locate them.

- Nikki Dhillon Keane, psychotherapist based in the UK (in English)
- Henok Hailu, faith-sensitive clinical psychologist based in Ethiopia (in English and Amharic)
- Rev Samson Bekele, Ethiopian Orthodox priest based in Ethiopia (in English and Amharic)
- Sheikh Hasan, Imam working against domestic violence based the UK (in English)
- Kesis Yigzaw Mekonnen, Ethiopian Orthodox priest and practising psychologist based Ethiopia (in Amharic)

Domestic violence and abuse support services

If you have been or are currently affected by domestic violence and abuse, please consider the below resources that are available to you:

- National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247
- Samaritans: 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org
- Shout text support: text SHOUT to 85258
- Mind Helpline 0300 123 3393



'If you need any assistance, please approach the organisers or student ambassadors wearing purple bibs who will be happy to help you.'

Thank you!

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Project dldl/ድልድል

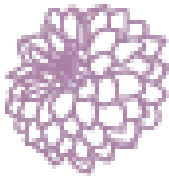
- Website: <https://projectdldl.org/>
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/project-dldl/>
- Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/projectdldl>
- Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/projectdldl>

EMIRTA

- Website: <https://www.emirta.org/>
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/emirta-research-training-and-development-institute/>



Faith and
VAWG Coalition



THE
Dahlia
PROJECT

Restored
CHANGING THE STORY
for women 



AMINA

The Muslim Women's
Resource Centre

**Peterborough
Women's Aid** 
Set yourself free



EMIRTA

Indigenous Wisdom for Excellence

IADA
IMAMS AGAINST
DOMESTIC ABUSE

