

**The International Day of the Girl  
IDG2020  
Reflection Winifred Doherty**

The International Day of the Girl, IDG2020, with its Good Shepherd Asia Pacific Forum Panel was a historic groundbreaking event, a festival proclaiming girls' rights with girls and for girls throughout the 19 countries of Asia Pacific. It was a truly global virtual experience. This event and its ongoing activities for 9 more weeks reach the epitome of collaboration and it was a privilege for the GSIJ Office in New York – Alexis and Winifred - to be actively engaged and participating. The event showcased girls' voices, girls' art work, girls' music, girls' poetry girls' drama and girls' dreams. While containing many elements of fun and creativity the message was very clear – 'we have experienced discrimination as girls.' We must say no to every and all forms of violence perpetrated against girls whether in the name of religion, tradition or culture.

The highlight for me was being the moderator of the panel with four eminent girl activists – May Twe, Sanjana Angeline, Jillian Fernandes and Merrylove Gloria Albert. Their presentations were clarion calls as to what needs to be done in four distinct areas of discrimination, abuse and violence against girls- migration, girl activism, LGBTQI+ sensitivity and child early and forced marriage. In their very persons they demonstrated integrity, resilience and action for their cause. The words of the theme song echo in my mind and heart even a week after the event:

*"We raise our voices... being feminine is a pride... empowered with vision for the future...with joy and power we claim our equal rights...resilience is our name...we break the silence... we are willing... we are ready... with vision and inspiration we claim our equal rights."*

The logo and art work were inspirational reaching the stars and beyond!

And the message from it all – to quote Maya Angelou, an American poet, memoirist, and civil rights activist, - "Nothing can dim the light that shines from within." This light I saw shining clearly within the many girls from Asia Pacific who contributed to IDG2020. It was brightly shining in our 4 girl/youth advocate panelists and it shone brightly in Deepthi and Deeprka, showing us that it is never too early to be engaged! And the light has not dimmed in the many who collaborated to bring the event to fruition, technicians, videographers, teachers, mentors, administrators, and our fearless leader, Theresa Symons!

*Winifred Doherty*

*October 19, 2020*