

Social justice issues need a listening environment...

“It’s exciting how the groundwork was laid when you facilitated our mediation meetings”, someone told me last week, as he invited me to return and work with their broader constituency. I am incredibly encouraged by these words...they are of great importance during this time of uncertainties and divisions.

It’s been quite a journey for this cross-cultural, bi-lingual Leadership Team. Theirs is a story of divisions, mistrust, and inequality. They came together to share their stories, their hurt and deep pain of many years. There were tears and anger. We were in dialogue, and we mediated deep-seated conflicts, until they found one another. They came through it. Since then they’ve been on a journey of healing and reconciliation, working together respectfully, and envisioning the future together, not apart.

They, like many others, are facing the challenges of the current political climate which could have a serious impact on the Spanish speaking members. But even this they will face together, he said. They have found one another, they have learned how to walk in one another’s feet (the mantra I left them with), he said.

As I continue this conflict transformation and reconciliation work during very challenging times, I see its importance especially now. Social justice work needs a listening environment where we develop mutual understanding, and deal with issues that affect us all.