

Esua Goldsmith

Interview took place via Zoom. See also Interview UKLSE_CT1_SD01_001_001_0004_0001.wav, transcript UKLSE_CT1_SD01_001_001_0004_0001.pdf and photograph UKLSE_CT1_SD01_001_001_0004_0001.tif

Interview Summary

0:00 mins:

Esua Goldsmiths' experience of working in the women's voluntary and community sector to improve women's structural position in the UK. Esua was the first woman of colour to be elected chair of the Fawcett Society, and co-founder and chair of the Gender and Development Network. She was a commissioner for the Women's National Commission, and a member of the UK government delegation to the UN's fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing in 1995. She's currently director of the Healing Solidarity international feminist collective.

Feminism, intersectionality and the Women's Liberation Movement. Esua's mother as her first role model and growing up as a 'brown kid on a white working class estate'. Conflicting narratives. Simone de Beauvoir.

5:30 mins:

The first Women's Refuge. The expression of empowerment. Feminism as intersectional.

8:27 mins:

Women in Esua's family. African women. Esuantsiwa, Esua's great great grandmother. Inspiration of the worldwide women's movements, women's organisations and women's activism. Black women writers. Angela Davis.

15:08

Women's resilience, vision and impact. Women's leadership vs feminist leadership. Feminist leadership as transformational leadership. Kindness as a political principle. Informal leadership of women. Leadership as fluid. Patriarchal vs feminist leadership.

23:03 mins:

Feminist leadership about building trust - power with rather than power over approach. Women and the impact of Covid. Injustice, fear of not being good enough and re-imagining a better future as motivators.

30:14 mins:

The intersection of gender with poverty, race, class, anti-racism and mixed race identity. Role of diasporic women. Reparations, international solidarity and equality. Enabling and helping to change

the landscape for women. United Nations Decade for Women, Beijing Platform for Action and the rights of girls and young women. Development of international instruments and CEDAW. Development of a worldwide common agenda. Involvement in setting up women's organisations and networks.

37:50 mins:

Women's sector leadership as compassionate, collective and consultative. Being visionary and part of a global women's movement. Applying a values-based approach to work. Ability to thrive and inspire others. Resilience. Culture of overwork. Flexibility and ability to pivot.

42:58 mins:

Being collaborative and collective in formal leadership roles. Creating a safe, brave, creative and fun learning space as a facilitator/enabler. Learning from organisations. Women's sector as Esua's life passion. Balancing growing and thriving with a culture of overwork. Positive role model for children. Missing children and children missing out. A whole family commitment. Power of sisterhood. Esua's experience of working on a project training low-income women the basics of economics and how it empowered a participant.

54: 38 mins:

Creating a space where women can become empowered. Creating worldwide connections. Enabling cross-cultural learning between continents and within local communities. Development of a diverse women's sector addressing the seven demands of the 1970s women's liberation movement. Women's sector leadership in changing laws and structure of society. Esua's first speech on feminism. Structural changes but more to do

1:03:25 mins:

Race, intersectionality and transrights. Climate change. Post-colonial attitudes. Encounter while working for VSO in Tanzania and establishing the women's return volunteer action group. Inequality. Treating each other with respect and learning from each other. Changing superiority mindset. Healing and reparation.

1:11:03 mins:

Need to campaign for implementation of laws and transparency. Need for culture shifts. Education of women's rights in schools. Impact of Me Too and Black Lives Matter movements. Women's rights not just a legislative issue The importance of being able to tell your story.