

Dear Friends of SOLWODI,

Do you remember? In November 1997 the "Network European Movement Germany" (EBD) honored me by awarding me the title "Misses Europe 1998"



EBD is a non party amalgamation of 155 interest groups from all the various groups of the society. Also SOLWODI is a member and we participate in EBD's election campaign for the European election 2009. In "Testimonial-announcements" the EBD member organizations have the opportunity to ask the electorate to make their election decision to depend on certain criteria. Naturally, we can't miss such a chance. On 7. June,

62,2 million Germans, men and women, are entitled to elect the 99 German representatives for the EU-parliament. It's worth to mention, that participating in that campaign doesn't cost us anything. The design for the testimonial-announcement allows for the slogan only one word and for the statement only one sentence. We decided to use the word "Women rights" for the slogan and as a sentence we choose "Elect candidates, who go for that slogan". I would have preferred another text, however that didn't match with the design of the announcement, which reads:

"This claim of the women should also become a claim of the men!". Mostly only women are fighting against sexual exploitation and other forms of abusing women. It's time, that also many more men get more engaged in this matter – not only in the European parliament.

Yours, Sister Lea

Prostitution – Law Campaign: We continue with our efforts!

We don't want to call the present situation good: Although many single persons, women's groups, communities of nuns, as well as schools and organizations are supporting our campaign for a reform of the prostitution – law, we were not really successful so far. There were almost no reports in the media about that subject. Also politicians didn't react, at least we couldn't see such a reaction. Supporters however, who sent letters – addressing the SOLWODI claims to Mrs. Ursula von der Leyen (the minister responsible for that subject) – at least got an answer letter from the Bonn office of the ministry for families, seniors, women and youth. This 6 page letter gives the impression, that our campaign is fully unjustified. This opinion however is not generally being shared.

Susanne Hagemann from Schleswig had sent the SOLWODI claims to Mr. Wolfgang Börnsen (from the Christian Democratic Party CDU), the member of parliament, representing the area she is living in. On 9. January 2009 Börnsen replied: I will personally introduce those SOLWODI claims in the party working group responsible for families, seniors, women and youth. The head of this working group, Mr. Johannes Singhammer (from the Christian Socialist party CSU) informed his colleague Börnsen on 14. January 2009 as follows: "What Mrs. Hagemann addressed in her letter is in principle correct. Also after the introduction of the prostitution – law by the former red/green government, no real improvement – legally or in the daily life – of the situation of the women concerned could be observed. I will have an eye on the forwarded proposals during the ongoing discussion in parliament." So, there is still some reason for hope.

We are not giving up and we will continue our campaign. This means to continue to collect signatures and to go to a SOLWODI stage discussion with the subject: "Prostitution and human rights". This discussion will take place on Wednesday, 6. May 2009 at 19:00 in the residence of the representatives of the country Rhineland-Palatinate in 10117 Berlin, Ministertgärten 6.

(The above mentioned letter of the ministry and our answer to that can soon be read in full length under www.SOLWODI.de)

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Visit to SOLWODI in Kenya: So much with so little achieved

From Sr. Lea Ackermann

In November 2008 I travelled – as every year before – to Mombasa, to see how SOLWODI is making progress there.

This time I was accompanied by Oanh Tran (SOLWODI book keeping), Monika Weiler-Helbach (SOLWODI project management), Ingrid Krumm (SOLWODI contact office Ostalb), Dr. Annette Speidel (SOLWODI contact office Ostalb), Dr. Ulrich Speidel (Aalen) and Dr. Franziska Frizen (Bop-pard).

Oanh Tran installed in the SOLWODI Kenya office a new book keeping programme, which allows a better exchange of information with SOLWODI here in Germany. Monika Weiler-Helbach was expected to get a better idea of the projects in Kenya, to be so in a better position to claim more efficiently money for such projects and to discuss the progress of those projects with the persons who are responsible for those projects. The other above named persons came with me, because they were interested in SOLWODI's work in Kenya and they paid the costs for their journeys themselves.

Since during that Kenya journey quite a comprehensive visiting programme had to be covered, we were always splitting our team in small groups. One programme point was the opening of a new advice - office in Voi and another one was the inauguration of the new "Drop in Centre" in Maungu, which lies in a very poor area.

We also visited the new SOLWODI protection-home in Mombasa, which could be established in a former monas-

tery. Although the construction work had not yet been finished and the financing of that project was not yet assured in November 2008, already 20 children, aged 4 to 15 years, had to be accommodated there.



Many of those sexually abused and maltreated children need medical care. It was embarrassing to see, that due to a lack of money for the care of those children, one had to beg for money in the neighbourhood. Money was also lacking to pay the employees. Still in November 2008 they were taking care of those children without asking for payment. But now we are making progress!

In the meantime the ministry for economic cooperation (BMZ) has approved our request for financial support. As a result of that, a kitchen to feed those children is being built, a fountain is being drilled to provide clean water and a wall with barbed wire on top of it is being built, to keep the

monkeys of the terrain. For the transport of the children and also of goods, a car will be bought and to keep insects out of the rooms, nets will be placed in front of the windows. The ministry (BMZ) will take over 75 % of those costs; the remaining 25 % will be carried by SOLWODI; for our share we are hoping to find sponsors.

We enjoyed a visit to Emily. Her mother was one of the first clients of SOLWODI – Kenya. Although Emily never was trained for a job, she is a very busy person. She doesn't only sell second hand clothing, no, she also grows vegetables, that she uses to cook food which she sells in turn.

Not only Emily, many of those women, who are being supported by SOLWODI in Kenya, achieve so much, after relatively little had been invested there.



The detailed report about that Kenya journey in 2008 can be read on our homepage info@solwodi.de or you can order it for 6,- Euros, when calling 0049-(0)6741-2232.

10 Years SOLWODI in Osnabruck: This was a very successful jubilee – matinee

On 27. February SOLWODI in Osnabruck celebrated its 10 years anniversary in the cathedrals forum. There were over 100 guests. They were welcomed by general vicar Theo Paul and a festive lecture to that event was read by Sr. Dr. Lea Ackermann. Messages of greetings came from the attorney general Hubert Feldkamp, the city's officer for equal rights Anna-Maria Schmitz-Hülsmann and from Maria Kruthaupt, representing the catholic working group of women-organizations in the diocese. Hildegard Stockhofe showed expressive dancing and Yael Brunnert entertained the guests with her saxophone and the guests also fully enjoyed the good food, which had been prepared by Sr. Anna Surmann and SOLWODI clients. The Osnabruck SOLWODI office deserves a lot of praise for how well it had organized that event. The head of that office – Sr. Anna Mayrhofer – reminded of the beginnings of their work. On 1. March 1999 we received the keys for a flat, which we had rented, to serve as a protective shelter for 5 women. In the Spanish mission, the diocese made available rooms for us– free of costs – for the advice office. Already before Easter we were ready to start our work, although we had no clients yet at that moment. And then it started. Within one week, all five spaces were occupied. In 2000 another flat had been rented in the same house, offering space for further 3 women. Since then, 160 women and 30 children have found shelter here in those flats. 92 of those women were victims of enforced prostitution. In total, the Osnabruck SOLWODI office has supported and advised, during the past 10 years, 600 women.

A detailed report about that event and the lecture of Sr. Anna Mayrhofer can be found under:

www.solwodi.de/Termine/Rueckblicke



Enforced Marriages and Violence, as a result of a misunderstood code of honor: More and more victims come to SOLWODI

A tendency, which had already been observed for a while, has continued: The number of requests for help in cases of enforced marriages and of the above described violence has again increased – we from SOLWODI assume, that the victims develop now more courage to ask for help.

In 2008 1348 female migrants sought contact to SOLWODI. Among those were 126 women and girls, threatened to be married or who had escaped from those enforced marriages. In addition there were 118 women and girls who had left their family or planned to do so, because they were suffering from psychological or physical violence as a result of a misunderstood code of honour in their families. In total there were 244 persons or 18 % of all primary requests for help in 2008. The rising tendency can be seen, when looking at the figures in the years before: 16 % in 2007, 14,5 % in 2006 and 12,3 % in 2005.

Those rising figures must not mean that the number of crimes committed by family members against female migrants is increasing. Maybe it indicates that the victims develop more courage – at least some of them. What about all those, who haven't got this courage?

There are vague estimates, that there are thousands of those victims. Nobody knows the details. For that reason, the Federal Ministry for Families is preparing a study about that problem with the title "The numbers and the extent of enforced marriages in Germany"; results shouldn't be expected before 2010. In an investigation, published in May 2006 by the Federal Office, dealing with criminal offences, (BKA), an investigation concerning the above mentioned "honour murders", 55 such cases (including attempted murders) were counted, cases which became known to the police between January 96 and July 05. But there is a great probability, that there were many more such cases, since BKA believes, that many murders were not identified by the police as "honour murders", since the police was not aware of that definition. Also here we can see a great dark area.

To go to SOLWODI or other help organizations, asking there for help, requires not only courage but also psychological strength because the decision to leave the family has in most cases severe consequences. Sr. Paula Fiebag, the head of our SOLWODI advice office in Braunschweig explains: "The

women concerned very often have to protect themselves against their own family – their whole life long. They are very often fighting against a feeling of being guilty. At the same time, they miss their sisters and brothers and also their girlfriends. Since each contact to their former social environment could mean a real danger for them, they feel lonely and isolated."

Also the struggle for the permission to stay here in Germany is a great burden for such women, says Sr. Paula from her long experience. Women from abroad, who were forced to marry here in Germany – against their will - , normally get only after 2 years such a permission for their person to live in Germany, even if the enforced marriage still exists. For youngsters under the age of 18, who have grown up here in Germany, their parents have the right to decide, where those youngsters should live. For that reason, Sr. Paula adds, it's often a great problem for us, to accommodate such young girls in our protective shelter homes.

What actually does it mean, if violence is being committed for honour reasons? This is a form of violence against women and girls, which can be found in highly patriarchally structured families, says a highly recommendable brochure, published by TERRE DES FEMMES, a brochure intended to serve as a guide for offices and authorities providing help and advice to women concerned (Download: www.frauenrechte.de) Although violence in the name of honour and also enforced marriages are mostly being justified with religious honour codes, they are really a relic of archaic tribal structures. In Germany mostly women from Turkey and Kurdistan are affected, because the majority of the migrants come from Turkey or regions in Kurdistan.

According to the code of honour in those areas, unchaste dressing, a conversation or a flirt with a stranger, trying to be independent and opposing an arranged marriage, are, when practised by girls or women, considered as a dishonorable behaviour. In many cases,

girls can't say "No", because they don't know, what the consequences will be for them: One consequence could be a so called "Marriage – kidnapping". The parents are promising the girl nice summer holidays in their home country. And there the girl will not only see the beloved grandparents, no, it might discover, that a marriage had been arranged with an unknown cousin. Such girls, who had been lured abroad to be married there, loose – if they have no German passport – their right to live in Germany after 6 months. For that reason, politicians of the various German parties are claiming, that those girls should be allowed to return to Germany also after more than 6 months. The opposition in the German parliament also wants to establish a law, which would allow women from abroad, who were forced to marry here in Germany, to live here on their own.

Not only the policymakers, no, also are we required to do something to help such migrants. For example, when a girl from the neighbourhood should secretly give us a piece of paper with the following note on it: "I am anxious to be married against my will, during the holidays in my parents' country of origin. If I shouldn't return to Germany from those holidays, this will be against my will!" Such a paper, which constitutes a "Power of authority", to see a lawyer or the police, is the basis of a project which has been initiated by the female lawyer Seyran Ates and the social scientist Necla Kelek and which they called: "Holiday brides – not with us!". Such a paper should enable a lawyer or the police to take action to help such a girl. (Download: www.zwangsheirat.de)

Here are some proposals for literature concerning above subjects:

Necla Kelek: "Die fremde Braut" (Goldmann 8.95 Euro); Serap Cileli: "Wir sind eure Töchter, nicht eure Ehre" (Blanvalet 7.95 Euro), Inci Y.: "Erstickt an euren Lügen" (Piper 7.95 Euro), Seyran Ates: "Der Multikulti-Irrtum" (Ullstein 8.95 Euro)

Why does SOLWODI not have a donation seal?

That's a question, we are often being asked. The very simple answer is: We never asked for one!

The German Central Office for Social Questions (DZI), which is responsible for issuing such a seal, doesn't give away such seals like decorations. To get such a seal, one has to request it. The initiative for such a request, says the DZI on its homepage, rests with the organization concerned. Next question: Why doesn't SOLWODI simply request this donation seal? Answer: Because this is too expensive. A first request normally costs 1500,- Euros plus the value added tax. The annual costs for that seal, that has to be requested every year again, depend on the amount of donations and can amount to up to 10.000,- Euros plus again the value added tax.

It should also be noted, that the way, the DZI issues that seal, has been criticized. Christian Ruck, the speaker of the Christian Parties in parliament for development policy said in February 2008 in the newspaper "Die Welt": "The question arises, whether those 10 employees of DZI, who handle every year around 240 requests for that seal,

are really competent enough for that job. And in fact, this question is justified. According to the homepage of DZI, those employees have to check whether all those 237 (this figure is of February 2009) charitable organizations, which have such a seal, really spend the money donated to them, in accordance with their own rules and in accordance with all the tax laws. In addition to those checks, they have to work on the new requests for such a seal. Now how does such a small team of employees manage to do all that work?" Due to the strict controls of the tax authorities and an auditor, SOLWODI is employing, our organisation (SOLWODI) doesn't waste donated money. If this would be the case, we no longer would be considered a charitable organization, we would lose the exemption from taxes and we were no longer allowed to issue charitable donation certificates. Here comes another point of criticism for the donation seal. The DZI issues that seal without mak-

ing public the housekeeping of the organizations concerned. According to the seal rules, not more than 30 % of the donated money may be used for administrative and advertising purposes. But many organizations spend much less than that. However, this is not being published by DZI. That's being so, we, if we had the seal, could not advertise with SOLWODI's moneysaving work. So, if we had the seal, we would land in the same pot as those organizations, which spend – in accordance with the rules – 30 cent of each donated Euro for administration and advertising.

For administration and advertising we spend the absolute necessary minimum. We issue no shiny brochures and no newsletters or annual reports in 4 colour print. The SOLWODI central office in Boppard-Hirzenach is furnished with used furniture, the telephone system is a pretty old one – the only new equipment is our computer and this we got as a present from Microsoft.



Charity Concert in Castle Schleißheim near Munich

We are very glad, that Mechthild Maria Kiendl and further musicians have offered to stage in 2009 another charity concert in the Maximilian chapel of castle Schleißheim (Max-Emanuel-Platz 1, 85764 Oberschleißheim) The concert will comprise "Romantic songs of love and longing" for singers, piano and horn and it will take place on 21. June 2009 at 16:30. Instead of an entry fee we are asking for a donation for SOLWODI. For questions and bookings please call SOLWODI in Munich, tel. 0049-(0)89-27275859 or go internet leonhardt@solwodi.de

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Bank Accounts

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 Sorting Code 570 900 00
 BIC GENODE51KOB
 IBAN DE68 5709 0000 6565 6510 00

Landesbank Saar, Saarbrücken
 Acc.-No. 2000 9999
 Sorting Code 590 500 00
 BIC SALADE55XXX
 IBAN DE84 5905 0000 0020 0099 99

Kreissparkasse Rhein-Hunsrück
 Acc.-No. 11 270 00
 Sorting Code 560 517 90
 BIC MALADE51SIM
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