

# SOLWODI

Solidarity with  
women in distress

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Solidarität mit  
Frauen in Not

## Newsletter

No. 91, March 2012



### Dear friends and all other people interested in our work,

2012 will be for SOLWODI a year of an emergence into a new time. I have just celebrated my 75<sup>th</sup> birthday at Boppard-Hirzenach (See page 4). It was a wonderful party with many guests.

Shortly thereafter, I, respectively SOLWODI, experienced a great honour - on the 29<sup>th</sup> Feb. I was awarded the Great Order of the Federal Republic of Germany in the state chancellery in Mainz, in the presence of many prominent people (See below).

For SOLWODI such honours are always an appreciation of the work being done by the advice offices with and for women and children in distress. Such an award also attracts the attention of people who didn't know SOLWODI so far. This helps to establish new contacts, which then often become helpful.

SOLWODI needs and looks for such contacts. For this year a number of greater information and celebrating events are planned. Although my 75<sup>th</sup> birthday is the original reason for celebrating, all the activities will centre on SOLWODI's work and the situation of women and children in distress. The most up to date information concerning those activities can always be found on our homepage [www.solwodi.de](http://www.solwodi.de). There you can also find reports and pictures about those events – just have a look at it.

On 7<sup>th</sup> March I had been invited by the catholic academy in Munich, where I, at the evening before the world women's day, discussed with Prof. Ursula Männle, member of the Bavarian parliament, and with Klaus Bayerl, criminal director in charge of the criminal police inspection Augsburg, the chances of women in the future. This event, which carried the motto: "Set signs today for tomorrow, show courage and solidarity for the future" was presented by Andrea Kamhuber from the Bavarian Broadcasting Company.

I have set myself a great goal, which will be translated into action in 2012. SOLWODI's work has to be continued and for that reason SOLWODI's future will be transferred in the hands of a new managing director. In the next circular letter you can read then, who this new person will be. I myself will stay with SOLWODI as its president. I wish you happy Easter days

*Yours, Sister Lea*



### The Great Order of the Federal Republic of Germany for Sr. Lea Ackermann

Minister Kurt Beck has awarded the Great Order of the Federal Republic of Germany to Sr. Lea Ackermann. During the festiveness in the state chancellery the minister paid tribute to Sr. Lea's extraordinary example for humanity and solidarity.

"You have made your engagement against enforced prostitution, trafficking and enforced marriage to your life's work. Where ever the dignity of women has been abused, you felt a challenge to do something against it. I admire your courage, your vigour and your persistence, with which you help very efficiently the poorest and the weakest" said the minister, when he awarded the order to Sr. Lea.

The engagement of Lea Ackermann had already frequently been acknowledged, what she deserves. For him it was a great honour and pleasure to add with the Great Order of the Federal Republic of Germany another great award. "I wish you god's blessing and many more years to come and the ability to continue this so important job, you are doing", said minister Kurt Beck.

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<p><b>WAS IST SOLWODI?</b></p> <p>SOLWODI ist die Abkürzung von „Solidarity with Women in Distress“ – Solidarität mit Frauen in Not.</p> <p>SOLWODI engagiert sich in Deutschland für ausländische Frauen und Mädchen, die hier in Not geraten sind, Opfer von Menschenhandel und Zwangsprostitution, Opfer von Beziehungsgewalt wie Zwangsheirat.</p> <p>Manche Migrantinnen werden sich aber auch einfach nur wegen Aufenthaltsrechtlicher Probleme oder Integrations-schwierigkeiten an uns.</p> <p>Seit Oktober 2009 gibt es in Oberhausen eine Kontaktstelle für Frauen in der Prostitution. Im Projekt „LILJA“ (gefördert von Aktion Mensch) wird den Frauen Beratung, Begleitung und Hilfe beim Ausstieg angeboten.</p>	<p><b>SO KÖNNEN SIE HELFEN!</b></p> <p><b>ENSATZMÖGLICHKEITEN:</b></p> <p>Als Sprach- und Kulturmittler begleiten Sie ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bei Behördengängen wie Einwohnermeldeamt, Ausländeramt, Sozialamt (Passbeschaffung u.ä.)</li> <li>• bei Arztbesuchen oder bei Krankenhausaufenthalten</li> <li>• beim Erledigen von Alltagsaufgaben z. B. Einkauf</li> </ul> <p><b>VORRAUSSETZUNGEN:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sie sind weiblich, verfügen über Lebenserfahrung und sind in einer gefestigten Lebenssituation.</li> <li>• Sie verfügen über gute Deutschkenntnisse</li> <li>• Sie sind offen gegenüber anderen Kulturen und anderen Lebensentwürfen</li> <li>• Fremdsprachenkenntnisse sowie gute Ortskenntnisse sind von Vorteil.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WERDEN SIE SPRACH- UND KULTURMITTLERIN!</b></p> <p><b>SOLWODI'S SPRACH- UND KULTURMITTLERINNEN IM MILIEU / APRIL-DEZEMBER 2011</b></p> <p>Über 80% der Frauen in der Prostitution haben einen Migrationshintergrund. Sie können kaum Deutsch sprechen, ihnen fehlen Orientierungspfeile für das Leben in Deutschland. Sie haben zu wenig Kenntnisse über ihre Rechte und Pflichten.</p> <p>Wir suchen Frauen, die bereit sind, ihre Kompetenz und Lebenserfahrung in die SOLWODI-Arbeit für Frauen in Not einzubringen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sie sind bereit zur „Begegnung auf Augenhöhe“ frei von Vorurteilen</li> <li>• Sie leisten einen Beitrag zum Abbau von Hemmschwellen und Sprachbarrieren</li> <li>• Sie erleichtern die Kommunikation mit Frauen, die über geringe oder keine Deutschkenntnisse verfügen</li> <li>• Sie sind bereit, sich auf einen gemeinsamen Lernprozess einzulassen</li> </ul>
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## Women are learning solidarity – a SOLWODI project in Oberhausen

"We don't say prostitutes. We say women in the prostitution. We don't say, women work as prostitutes. We say women are busy in the prostitution. Prostitution is not a normal job. It's not a job like others."

The SOLWODI project coordinator of the project "Lilja" in Oberhausen – a contact office for women in the prostitution – tries to differentiate how one is talking about women. The language shows what people are thinking. But with the language alone, the fight against prostitution can't be won. "Lilja" tries to help women to exit prostitution. The way the SOLWODI personnel try to meet women in that milieu, shows that such an exit is a complicated process, which requires new thinking and a competent, individual and longer lasting company by SOLWODI personnel. Bearing this in mind and in the framework of the programme "Power in place" the micro project "Language and cultural mediators" has been developed.

The main goal of that project was to establish a pool of language and cultural mediators, who are able to assist the fulltime SOLWODI advisors. With the help of those mediators one tries to contact, support and accompany more women in that milieu. The women, who are busy in prostitution in Flasshofstreet in Oberhausen, are between 18 and 60 years old. 80% of them have a migration background. They mainly

come from Southeaster Europe, especially from Romania and Bulgaria. Most of them have only little knowledge of the German language, most of them are not health insured and they don't know, how to communicate with the local authorities. Due to the EU expansion to the East, most of those women are legally here in Germany. But due to their lacking language knowledge, their lacking school education and a missing permit to work, they have almost no chance on the German labour market. And for that reason they see no other possibility except in prostitution.

The language and cultural mediators are planned to assist those women in the prostitution milieu by making use of their competence and life experience. The aim is a "meeting at eye level" to reduce the inhibition level and the language barrier. This way, the communication between the SOLWODI advisors and the women in prostitution has been improved.

The possibility, to get assistance of the language and cultural mediators when visiting local authorities, has been highly welcomed by the women in prostitution. Examples for such assistance are visits to the

various authorities, the doctor, being visited when in hospital or all-day challenges like shopping or bookkeeping. Additionally there are further offers like language courses, assistance to apply for a job in order to show those women in prostitution that there are actually other possibilities to take on a new job outside their present milieu. The language and cultural mediators have taken on simple but also time intensive jobs. This enabled the fulltime SOLWODI advisors to solve more complex problems such as to get a legal permit to stay in Germany and it made it also possible to contact and to accompany more women in the milieu. With the different offers the project makes, the women in prostitution got more information about their rights and duties as EU-citizens, tips concerning health and about sexually transmitted diseases. The SOLWODI project coordinator also observed: "In the beginning, the women had difficulties to develop a group feeling. But gradually the women started to support each other in the learning process and to meet each other in their free time" With that project, SOLWODI has translated its motto "Solidarity with women in distress" into real life.

### Dialog for Germany

SOLWODI participates in the project: "Dialog for Germany". That's an internet forum, in which German citizens can make proposals to the German chancellor about the future living together in Germany.

SOLWODI presented there its position to the subjects: "Trafficking and enforced marriage". You cannot only make comments to the SOLWODI opinion, no, you can also vote for the SOLWODI position. Please spare some time and support our political statement or discuss it with us.

Here you find the link to our position:

[https://www.dialog-ueber-deutschlad.de/DE/20-Vorschlaege/10-Wie-Leben/Einzelansicht/vorschlaege\\_einzelansicht\\_node.html?cms\\_idldea=11276](https://www.dialog-ueber-deutschlad.de/DE/20-Vorschlaege/10-Wie-Leben/Einzelansicht/vorschlaege_einzelansicht_node.html?cms_idldea=11276)

## **A scandal: "A German court shows more compassion for a criminal than for his victim Nadja"**

Nadja (the name has been changed) was only 17 years old, when she attended the 12<sup>th</sup> class of a high school in Romania and fell in love with a young man. That this man was – as we call it – a so called "loverboy", she didn't realize. Loverboys are men, who pretend to love the girl, only to rape it and treat it so brutally, that the girl panics and finally does everything this man requests her to do.

Exactly that happened to Nadja. Only when her anxiety – to be further treated so brutally – was no longer bearable, Nadja went to the police in Romania. The loverboy was then imprisoned. But Nadja went from bad to worth. Nadja, highly traumatized, trusted in the police-officer, who was responsible there for trafficking. This police-officer – knowing her dependence on him – used her as his "lover". When Nadja asked him for a possibility to work in Germany, he established a contact to a couple in Germany that introduced Nadja then in a so called "Saunaclub", a luxury brothel. Here she had to behave according to the club-rules. This meant 7 days "work" per week – that is 13 hours per day working as a prostitute – and to give away 500 Euro of the earned money at the end of the week. This money was going to the couple and the Romanian police officer. The same happened to 2 other women from Romania. When those 2 women

finally went to the German police, the police also started investigating in Nadja's case. Without much hope to get justice, she told her story. Although the prosecuting attorney later on said to her: "Well done", she was again disappointed.

During the legal proceedings, the judge had a look at the life circumstances of the accused policeman and he concluded, that the police-officer had been an offender for the first time and that the ailing economic system hadn't enabled him to earn enough money for his family and that he had invested all the earned money in the education of his children. As a result, the criminal police-officer got only a suspended sentence of 2 years with probation and left the court as a free man.

"I am asking myself, how should one see this judge's ruling? Is that a license for men, even for civil servants, who live in an economically bad environment, to increase their income

illegally by abusing a young girl?" says Soni Unterreithmeier, who is in charge of the advice office in Augsburg. "I consider the behaviour of the accused police-officer as extraordinary immoral and reprehensible, especially since the young woman was dependant on him and expected his protection. He considered the traumatized girl as an easy to get victim. He also misused her already shattered trust in a state under the rules of law and this twofold – as a human being and as a police-officer, who is expected to stick to the law.

In Germany Nadja accepted her fate without hope to get justice. She even assisted the German state in fighting criminal activities. But safety and protection of that state of law she didn't get. She continues to live in anxiety and she knows that the same could happen to other girls as well." "He will do the same again", said Nadja recently. "I am 100% sure he is already in Germany".

## **Already nine long months are mother and daughter not allowed to see each other**

Since 9 months Mrs. H. lives separated from her daughter Liane (name has been changed). Liane is 9 years old and she is living with a foster-family in Holland, since her mother, who comes from Iran, had to spend some time in a hospital, as a result of a short life crisis. We have reported about this case already in the last circular letter in Dec. 2011. But still the inhuman situation has not changed a situation that contradicts all family rights' principles.

Liane has a Dutch guardian, who believes, that Liane should stay with her Dutch foster-family for good. He supports this opinion with the words: the girl doesn't want to return to its incompetent and unstable mother in Germany and it feels quite well with its foster-family. Neither the authority for youth in Holland nor the court there are interested in Mrs. H. The Dutch authorities ignore or are not interested in the psychiatric report of the responsible German doctor or the evaluation of the German youth-authority. The Dutch lawyer is not authorized to receive the respective papers from Germany. Both German authorities agree that Mrs. H. in Germany, who has given birth to a second child, is psychologically sta-

ble. Both authorities also believe that she has a good relation to Liane and that she would be able to raise her daughter with competence and love. One also doesn't ask Liane. She is 9 years old and capable to state, where she would like to live.

There are strict rules for the telephone calls between mother and daughter. Once a week, Liane is allowed to talk 20 minutes with her mother. But the 62 years old foster-mother is then always present and listens to what Liane says. So the child is anxious and doesn't dare to speak openly, except on the toilette, when the water is flushed. A court decision is not due before 4<sup>th</sup> April.

Soni Unterreithmeier, head of the SOLWODI advice office in Aug-

burg, who provided legal assistance for Mrs. H., can only shake her head. Mrs. H. is an educated, cultured and warm hearted woman. I experience her with her second child and myself and others are considering her a loving and also caring person.

This is also being confirmed by the German authorities in their statements. I fully understand the deep despair and the accusing question of Mrs. H. "Why?"

Soni Unterreithmeier, a social education worker with a diploma, is asking: How is it possible, that a short period psychological instability is a sufficient reason for a permanent separation of a mother and her child, both living now in different countries?

## Sr. Dr. Lea Ackermann celebrated her 75<sup>th</sup> birthday with friends and colleagues in Boppard-Hirzenach

With the song "Red roses should rain for you and you should meet all miracles ..." from Hildegard Knef, song by Bea Nyga and Django Reinhardt, friends, supporters and colleagues of Sr. Dr. Lea Ackermann celebrated on 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb. in Boppard-Hirzenach her 75<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The text line of the song: "I said, I will" expresses her willpower and the will to make her way in life and it characterizes the 75 year old Lea until today.



This willpower enabled her to build SOLWODI, an organization that will not accept any compromise in its fight against trafficking, enforced prostitution and enforced marriage. And that is, why Sr. Lea Ackermann also said this year: "I will..." and SOLWODI plans further festive events in those cities, where the 15 SOLWODI advice offices are at home. SOLWODI also plans to expand its advice offers and it will be reorganized.



## Latest news

**The district court Bayreuth** has ruled, that a 29 years old woman, who had been forced by her now 64 years old ex-friend to work as a prostitute, when she was only 17 years old and who had been brutally raped by that man, will now get a compensation of 1 Million Euro. Her ex-friend was sent to prison for 9 years.

**A good idea** for the good purpose: The SOLWODI contact office in Ostalb had collected old gold and silver jewelry, due for repair, and sold it. A total of 4.100,- Euro could be raised.

**Sr. Lea Ackermann:** "In the journal "Continents" (from Jan. / Feb. 2012) I read an article about the death of Sr. Fidelis, who died at the age of 96. Half of her life she lived in Kagondo/ Tanzania. In 2000 she returned, due to her age, to Germany. Since she considered the people of Kagondo as so important, she stayed in contact with them. What touched me very much was the message from Kagondo the day after her death. From the minaret of the mosque at Kagondo the muezzin had cried: "Our mama "Huruma" has died" "Huruma" means "goodness". Exactly that is our task and wish that people of different religions learn to understand and appreciate each other. This message is good evidence that this wish can become true."

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Sorting Code 570 900 00

BIC GENODE51KOB

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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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