



Gefördert durch den
Europäischen Flüchtlingsfonds
(EFF)

SOLWODI

Solidarity with
women in distress

Solidarität mit
Frauen in Not

Newsletter

No. 102, December 2014



Dear friends and all other people interested in our work,

I have just returned from a deeply moving ceremony in Augsburg, where SOLWODI was honoured with the Augsburg Peace Prize. The prize is awarded every three years in remembrance of the 1555 Augsburg Religious Peace, the biggest reconciliation between the churches. It makes me especially happy that with this prize, both churches honour SOLWODI's work in contributing to justice and peace.

Justice is the root of peace. When I take stock of my own situation, it has long been my most important topic. Peace is the fruit of justice – and both are impossible without real equality between man and woman. While the negotiation of the prostitution law is an important step, that is not far enough for me. So long as men can buy women, equality, justice and therefore peace are all impossible, as the contribution of Jana Koch-Krawczak (page 3) shows. Hence through the campaign “End Prostitution!” SOLWODI demands a ban on the purchase of sex in Germany, just as Canada and Northern Ireland have done in the recent months. A more just world is possible – keep building it with SOLWODI.

SOLWODI closes the year with a further celebration: we have opened our national head office in Bonn. We now have, next to the headquarters of SOLWODI in Boppard-Hirzenach, a presence in the midst of many important non-governmental organizations, the EU and other partners, enabling us to raise our concerns on the spot.

And 2015 begins even better: Pope Francis has set for the World Day of Peace on 1 January 2015 the motto “No more slaves, but brothers and sisters” and made human trafficking and slavery its theme. What a strong signal for SOLWODI to continue working towards justice and peace! I wish for us lots of energy in 2015 to meet the huge challenges.

Sister Lea Ackermann

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End prostitution! Handing over of signatures in Berlin

Successes and new SOLWODI activities in campaign for a ban of the purchase of sex

Even in 2015, SOLWODI will continue to be dominated by the “End Prostitution! No purchase of sex in Germany” campaign. The goal is to punish clients and not the women in prostitution, obtaining legislation that exists in other European countries and as demanded by the EU itself. The aim is to dispel many prejudices. “We are against prostitution because we stand in support of women,” said Sister Lea Ackermann. “In recent weeks, our many discussions with the affected women have shown that men derive bizarre, dubious rights from the fact that they pay for sex like any other service. Many women who come to us are sick and broken, even though they have only done what is allowed by the law.”

Beginning of 2015 one important step will be the handover of the 22,000 signatures collected by SOLWODI so far that support the call for a prohibition on the purchase of sex. These will be presented to Professor Maria Böhmer, Minister of State in the Foreign Ministry.

“Professor Böhmer positively understands our concerns and can lend her ears and weight to the campaign at the right places in Berlin,” says Sister Ackermann. “Nevertheless, it annoys me that Minister Manuela Schwesig, who is responsible for the negotiation of the Prostitution Act and is responsible for women’s affairs, has not taken personal receipt of the signatures. As minister, it would be an indisputable duty of hers to listen to all social groups!”

The meeting in Berlin with Minister of State Böhmer initiates a series of regular activities over the whole year through which SOLWODI—together with other like-minded organisations—will raise attention on the need for a ban on the purchase of sex, following what will be the expected adoption of the new prostitution law. This includes appointments with political and social policy makers which began as early as October 2014 – during which Sister Lea met with Malu Dreyer, the Minister President of Rhineland Palatinate, to explain the SOLWODI position.

Interested parties are kindly invited to download details and current materials for the campaign „End prostitution! No purchase of sex in Germany” at www.solwodi.de

SOLWODI is regionally active through the counseling centres, women's homes and shelters. SOLWODI Associations are networked across the country and through political and practical work, not only nationally, but also Europe wide engaged. Read for yourself!

Regionally active ... in Aachen: Artists against human trafficking

On the occasion of the European Day against Human Trafficking, three artists exhibited their work for a day on 18 October at SOLWODI Aachen's open day. The art was an ice breaker for discussions and 50 percent of the proceeds were given directly to SOLWODI.

... in Aachen: Help for women in prostitution

The Aachen ZONTA Club supported the SOLWODI Aachen counselling centre in creating a multilingual information brochure. At the cost of EUR 900, a brochure informing women in prostitution about their rights, obligations and avenues for help was developed and printed. Women who enter into prostitution in Germany are usually foreign, speaking little or no German and they do not know their rights. The brochure will help and enable them to initiate contact with counselling centres.

...in Duisburg: SOLWODI at church service

On 2 November, a service was held for the benefit of SOLWODI in the Rahm-Großenbaum Evangelical Church of Duisburg. SOLWODI's work was presented in a short interview. Then the counsellors provided, through case studies, an insight into the problems and the practical work of SOLWODI.

Networked nationwide ... in Regensburg: Huge donation for the new SOLWODI centre

SOLWODI received EUR 50,000 from the collection at this year's Catholic Day. But that's not all –the Diocese of Regensburg even added a cheque of EUR 40,000 on top! The generous donation launches the new SOLWODI counselling centre in Regensburg. The Catholic Day management has decided to support the project in view of the depressing situation of those forced into prostitution.



Generalvikar Michael Fuchs, Magdalena Bogner, Sr. Dr. Lea Ackermann, Dr. Gabriele Zinkl, Bischof Dr. Rudolf Voderholzer

... in Fulda: New counselling centre begins work

Kerstin Krüger began work at the new SOLWODI counselling centre in Fulda in early November. The counselling centre there focuses mainly on violence in the name of honour and forced marriages. Women and girls of immigrant backgrounds affected by other types of violence can contact SOLWODI Fulda. Aside from the direct counselling work, the centre also focuses on education and awareness in schools as well as networking and public relations.

Kerstin Krüger, Tel: (0661) 6006 697, Email: fulda@solwodi.de , Gerloser Weg 20, 36039 Fulda.

The SOLWODI counselling service in Fulda will be officially opened at 11am on Friday, 23 January 2015.

Nationally and Europe-wide engaged ... in Berlin: Prostitution a theme at the European workshop

The European workshop took place in Berlin again on the last weekend in November. During the event, organised by the Young European Federalists (JEF), engaged participants had the opportunity to discuss about European topics with members of the federal parliament and EU Commission. Moreover, participants were able to contribute with their suggestions. Lena Teschlade from SOLWODI Bonn spoke on the topic "Prostitution in Europe – between sex work and white slavery" about the liberal German prostitution law and launched a discussion on this important topic.

... in Augsburg: Facebook page discussing values

SOLWODI Augsburg started, together with volunteers, the Facebook page "Make love, not slavery" which will launch valuable discussions on issues surrounding prostitution and human trafficking. The goal is to reach young people who until now have had little to do with the topic as well as to sensitise people on these issues. Through the information and discussions, people should raise questions as to what kind of society we wish to live in and hopefully, motivate them to do something practical about it.

... in Koblenz: Kenyans at international football coaching course

Two young Kenyans from Eldoret, western Kenya, had the opportunity to attend a three-week football coaching course in Koblenz. They were professionally trained together with around 20 participants from 11 countries and awarded the DFB Coach C- License. The two young women are active with SOLWODI Kenya as football trainers to young girls who have either themselves been in prostitution or whose mothers do so. Thanks to LOTTO for financing the training.



Sr. Lea Ackermann, Lilian Jepkemboi Biwot, Sonja Blankenstein, Ritah Indeche Musoka, Alois Stroh (Fußballverband Rheinland)

Prostitution is death to the soul

By Jana Koch-Krawczak

Jana Koch-Krawczak, was born in 1978 in northern Poland. She published her biography in 2013 under the title „Du verreckst schon nicht ... Wie mich meine Mutter in die Kriminalität und Prostitution trieb.“ In it she explains how she, coming from a poor background and broken family, entered prostitution and made it back out on her own. Today she lives, happily married, in southern Germany and is committed to women in prostitution and helping them leave the trade. In her contribution to SOLWODI, she describes, among other things, how prostitution has changed over the past 20 years and what she wishes for the future.

I was 18 years old when I came to Germany. That was end of 1994, early 1995. At that time, many women from Poland and Russia came here and many of them dreamt a fallacious dream: I go for two, three months to Germany, make huge amounts of money with my body and come home and worry no more. I know none who has accomplished that.

Quite the opposite. I saw it for myself. At that time I came with two such women to Germany – both went of their own free will. In desperation I chose to stick with them because it was my only chance to elude a human trafficking ring in Poland. One of them is missing till today; the other was raped and deported. The dream turned into a nightmare. That frightens me till today: the credulity and naivety with which many women enter prostitution, not guessing how difficult and at the same time impossible it is to come out of that. One never casts off prostitution. There are always men who are very aggressive and who demand the unthinkable. The experience affects a woman her entire life.

With my example, I would like to demonstrate that an exit is possible. Precisely because of this, I speak openly about my experience and offer exit advice in various projects. The stories that I hear there are unimaginable. The world of prostitution has changed in mind-boggling ways since I came here, especially since 2002 when prostitution has, from a purely legal point of view, been treated as a job like any other.

This law has changed society and the values of men and women. When something is allowed the attitude changes. When I came in the mid-90s, men still felt ashamed to enter a brothel. Today, they flaunt themselves. They think: “I am entitled to it! And I may do all that I want.“ This attitude of the men changes the path of women in fatal ways. “I am here for this, this is my job. A cleaner must scrub the toilet and I must, as a prostitute, do everything that the man demands.” The demands that the men in Germany have since made are humiliating. Prostitution is today more a death to a soul.

I wish for the future that men and women develop a new picture of each other in their heads. I know that one

can change attitudes. Hence I fight here in Germany my battle against the everyday death to the souls of these young women. In my homeland, Poland, no one wants to know about it. The men there always look away, not wanting to hear my story because it cannot be what may not be.

But silence brings nothing. Because the result of prostitution for each individual one of us can haunts us the entire life. Even when the exit happens, one cannot keep it away. Whoever was once in prostitution will never be free from it. The soul remembers, and when one is unlucky, so do the people. There is always someone who knows you. Since I came out into the open about my past, I am in some respects again left with nothing. But I could not do otherwise because I want to give the women the courage to venture out into a life beyond prostitution.

I now have a family and daughter who both make me very happy. I have a vision of and belief in my future and that of women in Germany. The future I would like to build – by telling my story and showing that it is worth fighting for.



Jana Koch-Krawczak, Sr. Lea Ackermann

Christmas lecture – Two book recommendations from SOLWODI

Manfred Paulus: The organised criminality of human trafficking. Verlag Klemm + Oelschläger 2014.

“A culture of silence, looking the other way and wilful ignorance makes it possible to continue accepting the illusion that humane conditions and the rule of law exist even behind the glittering facade of the red light district.” That is the conclusion of First Detective Manfred Paul, after 153 pages on the crime of human trafficking and forced prostitution in Germany. The impetus for his book was the question posed by former forced prostitutes: “Why is there such a thing in your country?” Using many examples, Paulus illustrates the trade mainly with women and children in all their extent. He knows about what he writes and the reader senses this on every page. From his many years of experience dealing with the red light district and crimes against children, he not only demonstrates the complex relationships, but also alludes unmistakably to the failure of the rule of law in Germany. According to Paulus, the sheer misery and despair of mostly Eastern European women are brutally and ruthlessly exploited under the guise of free will, not least because the German government enables this through its legislation.



Maria von Welser: Where women have no value. Verlag Ludwig 2014.

Maria von Welser, a journalist who has for years been working for the rights of women, travelled the world to research her book through open and first-hand experience. She travelled through Afghanistan, India and Congo – three of the world’s most dangerous countries for women: gang rapes in public, forced marriages even at 12 years old, crimes in the name of a questionable honour, trafficking of women and girls, circumcision, brutal violence against women, girls and womanhood, with the worst cases beginning already in the womb. Maria von Welser gives the victims a voice, and collects examples to show how the courage of individuals can make the world for women a little better. Because no one, she writes, should be able to say he did not know. The author demands a commitment from all readers not to turn away and instead to stand up for the sisters worldwide, in order to ensure that the hidden and effective war against women will one day be history.

**Collect donations – but how? This time:****No winter sleep in Sommerloch****An entire village organises a Christmas market for good cause**

“From September onwards, it is a full time job,” says Otmar Tullius, key organiser for the Sommerloch Christmas market initiative. Since 1993, he has been responsible for ensuring that the 450-strong village near Bad Kreuznach in Rhineland Palatinate has a big fiesta before Christmas each year. It all began when the wife of the then Mayor asked during a round at a fair what they could take on a trip to Chernobyl. Tullius spontaneously came up with the idea of a charity Christmas market. The very first one was a huge success – an entire aid convoy eventually delivered relief supplies directly to the people of Chernobyl. Since then, Otmar Tullius pulls out all the stops each year: the raffle with prizes from 300 companies that Tullius mobilises across the country is extremely popular. “What’s especially great is simply how everyone here pulls together,” says Tullius happily. This event brings profit to all societies of the village including the owner of the local restaurant “Zur Lilie”, which in the first six years made the entire wine collection and he provides, till today, the winery hall including the stand, energy and water.

Half of the proceeds will always go to a project in the village and the other half to a charitable initiative in the region. That is why Tullius approached SOLWODI in 2001. “As Sister Lea Ackermann sat in our kitchen at that time and explained what SOLWODI did, I was amazed at the commitment of this woman. And secure in the knowledge that our donation actually reaches women in distress!” says Tullius. SOLWODI is a regular beneficiary, as this year, of the Sommerloch donation.



Checkbook handover in 2010

Tullius himself will, after 22 years, organise the Christmas market this year for the last time. “I had in the 80s a serious work accident. But I had at the same time a lot of luck. Perhaps God wanted to say to me that I should search for some way I could help. The Christmas market was my answer! In the meantime however, I have noticed that what I used to find easy to do has now become exhausting. Luckily I have found a successor in Matthias Skribijak, who I will naturally continue to support.” Christmas market in Sommerloch: 6 December 2014 at 4pm and 7 December 2014 at 11am.

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Sorting Code 590 500 00

BIC SALADE55XXX

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Kreissparkasse Rhein-Hunsrück

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