

Dear friends and supporters of SOLWODI, dear interested readers,



er with a crowd of well-wishers.

SOLWODI itself will mark its 35th year of existence in Germany. Since 1987 SOLWODI members and supporters have served countless women and children in need. A lot has changed since that time. For example, today, we encounter very few cases of marriage for immigration purposes. There have also been many changes to the legal landscape, not always in the best interest of women, as debates over the right of residency and the Prostitute Protection Act shows. What remains is our same commitment to work with each woman who comes to us in search of help to develop an individual perspective no matter how great the obstacles are. We are always glad and it makes us happy every time when one of “our women” manages to free herself from the many forms of systemic violence, to educate herself and learn to stand on her own two feet.

In 2022, we circled lots of special days on our calendar. In February Sr. Lea Ackermann celebrated her 85th birthday, togeth-

From its inception SOLWODI has relied on networks and on its cooperation with diverse organizations. While occasional differences in approach and emphasis between cooperative partners arise, our common dedication to create a world in which women and children suffer less violence keeps us united. SOLWODI members are always open to learning new methods and approaches in order to better support women in need. One example of this can be seen below in the biography project section of this Newsletter.

Almost from the beginning, and now for over 30 years, the Return and Reintegration Project supports women who want to or are obligated to return to their homeland. The Kickoff event for the 30-year celebration is on the 22nd of September in Bonn. Read more about it in this newsletter.

Also, locally there is reason to be thankful for all that has been achieved, and for all the support that we’ve had. This year marks the 25th anniversary of our counseling center in Duisburg.

2022 is proving to be a full year, and an exciting one. We look forward too many positive meetings, and to hearing about your impressions as well!

Maria Decker, Gudrun Angelis, Barbara Wellner

30 Years of SOLWODI’s Return and Reintegration Program

“Return in Dignity: The Chance for a Self-determined Life” – under this motto SOLWODI is celebrating the 30-year anniversary of its return and reintegration program this year. To mark it, a celebratory event is planned that will offer a retrospective in documentary and artistic formats that portrays the program from the point of view of the women who have experienced it over the last thirty years. We invite you today to attend the planned exhibit opening and celebratory kickoff on the 22nd of September, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Women’s Museum in Bonn.

In the exhibit we wish to photograph the last thirty years of the return and reintegration program, and also to represent SOLWODI work as always being done in close connection with the political and social situations of the corresponding countries of origin. The exhibit takes place in conjunction with a documentary partially made up of stories from the women themselves and of artistic items that enable viewers to see the reintegration process from a differentiated point of view. In this comprehensive way of looking at things the backgrounds that lead to a return in the homeland can be clarified together with all the problems that entails.

Interested artists who would like to work on the life story of our in-homeland-reintegrated clients, may apply to do this up until the 31st of March 2022. Please request application materials at: angelis@solwodi.de an.

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Fund-raising for the Ukraine

As we prepare this newsletter the world turns its gaze full of indignation on the war in the Ukraine. We do not know how the situation will develop, but we must consider the likelihood of a large number of refugees, among them, many women and children traveling alone. The women are unfamiliar with the German system and do not speak the language. SOLWODI helps them gain access to support payments, with the search for housing and work opportunities, and offers therapeutic help for women and children who have been traumatized by their experiences.

To support our work with women from the Ukraine please contribute to:
IBAN: DE84 5905 0000 0020 0099 99, intended purpose, "Ukraine".

Please include your address in the purpose line, so that we may send you a donation receipt.

The Biography Project – Strengthen yourself in your own life story

In the framework of the project, "Biographical Work: Culturally Sensitive Empowerment of women who have been victims of violence or refugees" we offer women who wish to examine their own life story the opportunity to do so in a protected, trustworthy framework. We use diverse methods in various settings to look critically at women's individual life histories. Central to this exercise is the "search for buried treasure" in women's own heroic stories. Where had they been especially strong? What can they be proud of? What helped them in difficult times? How did they manage to do it all? The goal is to establish positive reference points to one's own life story as a life resource. When women are reminded of times when they were happy and strong, it has the effect of strengthening their feeling of self-worth and the belief that they can overcome current life challenges.

Work on the biography often takes place in the context of individual conversations. Additional opportunities for group work presents itself in the framework of a neighborhood meeting place and in "Women's Cafes". The women are supposed to experience each other as part of one community, make contacts and thereby understand that they are not alone with their histories, as even though those experiences are

also very individual. In the process, each woman and her biography are empathetically and respectfully accepted, and is valued as the expert of her biography.

One way of working on the biography is to create a so-called "timeline". The timeline in the photograph came from the biography work of a mother of four, who had to flee from her abusive husband. To the left of the line are pictures that represent the obstacles and difficulties, and on the right side are pictured the strengths or resources that helped her to pull through. The section ends with a photograph placed on the line that represents her as she finally began to feel free. After reflecting on the timeline, the client commented that she had really never thought about that part of her life history in this way, and that she can now have closure about it. She felt relieved. At the end she was allowed to take the pictures with her that symbolized her most important resources. Now they hang in her hallway on the mirror.

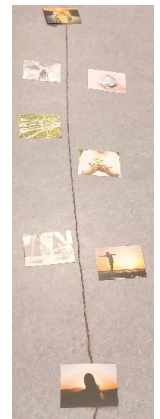


Photo: © SOLWODI

SOLWODI Administration Moves to a new Address

As of April 2022, the administrative offices of SOLWODI Deutschland e.V. has a new location. Our new address is: **SOLWODI Deutschland e.V. - Viktoriastraße 32-36 - 56068 Koblenz - Tel.: (0261) 889 772 – 0**

So that we don't have too many moving boxes to carry, we would like to reduce our inventory of books a bit. Should you be interested in the SOLWODI Chronicle, (SOLWODI Chronik) please contact us either by email info@solwodi.de or by telephone at: (0261) 889 772-0. On offer as long as supplies last.



30 Years of Solidarity with Women in Need in Germany - SOLWODI Deutschland from 1987 to 2017 (by Lea Ackermann, Barbara Koelges and Annemarie Pitzl)

Read the illustrated chronicle of the beginning of the organization in Kenya, through its establishment in Germany and the growth of the nonprofit, its work, and its action on behalf of women (112 pages.)

Price: 5.00 € plus Shipping

In Conversation with... Elizabeth Akinyi, Leader of our Partner organization SOLWOGIDI in Kenya



Elizabeth, you have already worked for over 20 years with SOLWODI. How did the work with Sister Lea and SOLWODI come about?

It began in 1997, when I received a letter from SOLWODI. I became aware of their projects in Kenya and that they were looking for social workers. One year later I met her personally for the first time. She trained me and two additional colleagues in visitation work.

Since that time, you have accomplished many projects with SOLWODI. What do you consider to be the greatest challenge in your area of work?

The available resources are not adequate to deal with the multiple challenges that we face. Among these are food security, children's access to schools, or even basic shelter. The ones we are able to help motivate us to continue the work. We discuss very difficult situations with each other and that helps us to emotionally work out our problems.

Is there any one experience that stands out to you?

One client, Mary, made a big impression on me. She was one of the participants in the BMZ-Project. At that time SOLWOGIDI offered a course for women in the manufacture of soap, jewelry, baskets, sandals and baked goods. After completing the course Mary, opened a small bakery company and in this way, she

generated an income of her own that she used to pay the rent, the school costs and other childcare expenses. Today she enjoys good prospects for her future. The Project really changed her life for the better!

What makes the work that you and your colleagues do so important?

The women and girls that we work with come from very poor, very difficult backgrounds. They are at high risk of becoming victims of poverty prostitution. SOLWOGIDI pursues an integrated approach that has proven both successful and sustainable. We offer systematic support of our clients. Psycho-social support is part of that since many women and girls have lived through traumatizing events.

What keeps you motivated each day?

Seeing how women's lives change for the better—that with our support they are able to put something on the table, provide for their children and for their education. The fact that they are able to stand on their own two feet—that motivates me the most. SOLWODI Germany is the reliable partner that is always there for us in Kenya. This support enables me to go the extra mile, because I know that there's always that shoulder to lean on when the going gets rough.

Photo: © Gudrun Angelis, SOLWODI Germany e.V. More information about the project and the work in Kenya is available on our website www.solwodi.de.

To finance project funding our partners in Kenya are dependent on donations. If you would like to support specifically the work in Kenya or you would like to support the work of Elizabeth and SOLWOGIDI, make a note to this effect on the purpose line of your money order.

Stay informed

In addition to the quarterly newsletter there is also a weekly newsletter "SOLWODI+++Aktuell" (in german only). Both can be subscribed to at info@solwodi.de. It is possible to unsubscribe at any time. (info@solwodi.de)

Legal notice

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News from the EU-Projects

In this section we regularly report on our current EU projects—but, what really goes into making an EU project?

The European Commission requests work in the form of short projects from its member organizations on particular themes. Such projects usually have a term of about two years, and for SOLWODI, human trafficking and sex-specific violence are themes of special concern. These projects carry with them a closed package of measures that taken together lead to an improved situation for that project's target group.

Where is the added value in this type of project?

Primarily, it lies in the fact that when the work of SOLWODI-expert counselors with clients takes place in the framework of the project, it forms a substantial part of the package of measures, which means that the counseling work is therefore partially funded.

Another added value concerns the scientific work that is performed in EU-projects. Through their access to clients SOLWODI-expert counselors have knowledge about the target group that other parties lack. Because of the way that counselors anonymously assess and summarize knowledge about their clients, that knowledge can be made available to other specialized providers. In "Project ACTIVATE", for example, specialists in shared accommodations and lawyers are trained in how to relate to victims of human trafficking. In order to make the transfer of knowledge sustainable and available, handbooks and reports are published for the project.



A third reason why SOLWODI participates in EU-projects is to develop its international network. This is very helpful, for example, when clients are unable to stay in Germany and must return to the EU designated „country of first entry". Project SISA supports women who are being deported to Italy in that they are put into contact with the partner organization in Italy. The hope is that this will work to keep women from falling into the hands of human traffickers again over there.



Making Women's Needs more Visible



For SOLWODI it is important to make women and their needs more visible and to educate the public about them. In the framework of Project SARAH, a podcast was started last year featuring women speaking about their own experiences.

In order to call the attention of politicians to the plight of women, EU projects prepare reports focusing on existing cracks in the social system and exposing them as in the example from 2021, Project COALESCE, (Legal, Psychosocial and Economic Empowerment for the Integration of Female Third Country Nationals that are Victims of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation) which focused on female residents of EU third-state nations who become victims of human trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation.



The current project called AMELIE, is about medical support for victims of human trafficking. SOLWODI has up to this point collaborated on 11 international EU-Projects, and was able to accomplish a lot for the clients. However, as an organization, we have to provide our own capital to project funding. To keep the project going we depend on contributions from supporters.

ACTIVATE, COALESCE, SISA und AMELIE are financed through EU-AMIF Funds (Asylum-, Migration- and Integration funds of the European Commission). SARAH is co-financed by the EU program, Rights, Equity and Union Citizenship (2014-2020).

For further questions about the projects please contact SOLWODI-representative Anne Derksen: derksen@solwodi.de.