

I Will Go Reach My World



"We have different gifts according to the grace given us..." — ROMANS 12:6, NIV

A MINISTRY FOR EVERY WOMAN



2021.04. February 19, 2021

News from Women's Ministries Inter-European Division

STATISTICS



A REVIEW OF THE PAST YEAR

When a year has passed, we look back in review. The media does this, but even in the church, we deal with reports and statistics. Just like all other departments, the Women's Ministries Department reports on what has been achieved in the past year. The WM directors in the conferences send a questionnaire to the leaders of the WM groups in the local churches as well as to the pastors to gather information. These statistics are then reported to the Union. 148 groups sent in reports, for which we are grateful. You might not have great expectations for what was reported in 2020 considering the circumstances, but you will be astonished at the results:

Newsletters, Christmas letters and "impulses" were sent by mail.
Information was shared on Facebook.

On Instagram, spiritual inputs were offered through 523 posts.
These spiritual inputs on Instagram were viewed by 13,980 followers.

Visits were conducted 7,880 times following the rules of hygiene and distancing.

Telephone calls were made for pastoral care.

104 prayer meetings via Zoom were held. Prayer is the most important "tool of the trade" for Christians.

Two groups with active sewing circles reported the production of heart pillows for breast cancer patients, star.

This is just a fraction of the volunteer efforts done in 2020. If all 570 church groups would have reported their activities the numbers would be greater.

We would like to encourage you to write down now what you are doing for your neighbors a God during this year that still has restrictions due to Corona so that the statistics will be ready at the end of the year. The statistics have been forwarded to the division, where Dagmar Dorn, EUDWM Director, will combine the reports from all the Unions and send them to the General Conference. It is overwhelming to see the global statistics. We would like to thank all the women who volunteer and also those who sent in reports. Be a part of the big picture when the statistics are put together each year!

Graphic 200 Degrees Pixabay

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES ADVISORY IN GERMANY PER ZOOM



A WEEKEND OF SHARING

The Women's Ministries leaders in the seven German Conferences met virtually from February 5 to 7, 2021, for a time of sharing, planning and prayer. Although each leader does her work in her own area, it is necessary and inspiring to share challenges, ideas and plans. They feel privileged to minister to women in the church and society. The past year has been challenging with all the restrictions due to the pandemic, but the leaders are looking forward to better times when women can meet again in person. You will be surprised at all the things that are being planned by the leader in your Conference. Stay safe!

NEWS FROM ROMANIA



CALL HIM „ABBA”

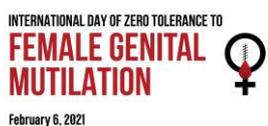
On Friday night, January 29, 2021, the Romanian Women's Ministries team gathered by zoom to celebrate a Sabbath opening meeting with Dagmar Dorn, EUD WM Director. The time we spent together on this occasion was very moving and special.

Due to the context in which we live right now, the end of the year 2020 and even the beginning of 2021 has not been a quiet and a pleasant time. Losses, sorrows, and grief surround us. That is why Dagmar wanted to bring us rays of hope and reassurance through God's Word that we can trust God and His plan. In the gospel of John, Chapter 14:8,9 Jesus showed God as being very close to us, as someone who understands our hardships and joy at the same He is so kind to us that we can call Him „Abba” or „Father.” She comforted our hearts and encouraged us to continue living with the knowledge that we have a Father who is with us in every situation, helping and protecting us.

We heard the Word of God, prayed together, shared experiences and promises from the Bible and through the Holy Spirit we felt nurtured and empowered for the mission. God bless us all!

News reported by Liliana Radu, WM Department, Romanian Union Screenshot WM ROM

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ZERO TOLERANCE FOR FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION



THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH SUPPORTS THE RESOLUTION OF THE UN ON FGM ZERO TOLERANCE

February 04, 2021 | Bern, Switzerland. | Andreas Mazza, EUDnews.

On December 20, 2012, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in which it “Calls upon States, the United Nations system, civil society and all stakeholders to continue to observe 6 February as the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation and to use the day to enhance awareness-raising campaigns and to take concrete actions against female genital mutilations.” (1)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons, and is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. It reflects deep-rooted inequality between

the sexes, and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women and girls. The practice also violates their rights to health, security and physical integrity, their right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and their right to life when the procedure results in death.

A global & traumatizing phenomenon

Every 11 seconds, a girl is being mutilated through the so-called ritual of female genital cutting. 8,000 little girls share this fate every day. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there are some 150 million mutilated women and girls worldwide. FGM does not only occur in the countries of Africa, but also where it is actually banned. Although primarily concentrated in 29 countries in Africa and the Middle East, FGM is a universal problem and is also practiced in some countries in Asia and Latin America. FGM continues to persist amongst immigrant populations living in Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand.

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) estimates that over 600,000 women are living with the consequences of FGM in Europe and that a further 180,000 girls and women are at risk of undergoing the harmful practice in 13 European countries. Even in Germany, alone, live about 50,000 victims of female genital mutilation! Moreover, UNHCR estimates that every year for the past five years at least 20,000 women and girls, as asylum seekers coming to Europe, might be affected by FGM.

The women are deeply traumatized. The horrors they went through have a lasting impact on the rest of their lives. Inflammations in the genital area, incontinence, fistula problems, the resulting societal isolation, an unbearable feeling of shame, and even death are most often the consequences.

"I was only 10 or 11 years old, when my father decided to circumcise me", shared Purity Soinato Oiyie, a women's right activist. "I was to become the fifth wife to a 70-year-old man. I talked to my class teacher and she informed the police chief. Just two hours before the cutting ceremony, the police came and took me away," she recalls. Oiyie was the first girl in her village to say no to FGM.

In the eight years that followed, Oiyie lived in a rescue center in Narok, Kenya, far from all that was familiar. "The hardest thing for me was leaving home, leaving my family. I couldn't sleep...I would wake up in the middle of the night and think, should I go back and get FGM?" she says.

For Oiyie and thousands of girls with similar stories, her escape impacted her family dynamics, and the consequences weighed heavy on her shoulders. "My father started beating my mother at home, blaming her for my escape. But my mother didn't want me to go back and get circumcised. I stayed in the rescue centre and finished school." (2)

Desert Flower Center – Waldfriede Hospital

Globally, there are numerous organizations and associations that fight against this phenomenon. In Europe, there is, in particular, the End FGM European Network - a European umbrella network of 30 organizations working to ensure sustainable European action to end female genital mutilation.

The End FGM EU is based in 14 European countries operating to sustain European action to ending female genital mutilation by connecting grassroots communities with non-government organisations. The Network strives to build bridges and cooperations with all relevant actors in the field of FGM both in Europe and globally. All this by platforming community voices to influence European governments and policy makers to work towards the elimination of FGM. Partnering with a Foundation established by a former supermodel, Waris Dirie, a Seventh-day Adventist hospital in Berlin took action by opening a new center to help restore victims of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

The Waldfriede Hospital, in cooperation with the Vienna, Austria-based "Desert Flower Foundation," which was launched in 2002 by Somali model Waris Dirie, opened the Desert Flower Center on September 11, 2013, Waris Dirie, herself a victim of FGM at age five, is an international activist and established the foundation to raise awareness of the ritual. Her 1997 book "Desert Flower" was made into a movie in 2009.

"Female Genital Mutilation has nothing to do with culture, tradition, or religion. It is a torture and a crime, which needs to be fought against," declared Waris Dirie, founder of the Desert Flower Foundation.

Waldfriede Hospital is the first and only European hospital to treat the problems of mutilated women in a holistic manner. "Since the opening in September 2013, more than 600 women have sought our medical help," affirmed Dr. Cornelia Strunz, medical coordinator at Desert Flower Center. "Surgery was necessary for half of them," she shared.

A few testimonies

"I am from Eritrea. I want to tell you that it is good to have such an opportunity. In our homelands there are still no such possibilities. Now I can finally live and love without fear nor pain. I am so grateful. Thanks to this surgery I can now live a new life," gushed a beneficiary of the Desert Flower treatment.

"I am feeling well now. I feel comfortable. The doctor's treatment was very nice and reassuring. I was very afraid at the beginning, especially of the pain, but the surgery cured me," shared another woman treated at the Desert Flower Center.

"During a training course for doctors and midwives at the end of September, I had the opportunity to gain an insight into this valuable work » said Dagmar Dorn, midwife and Women Ministries director at the Inter-European Region of Seventh-day Adventists office (EUD). "It made me sad as well as angry to see the pain and misery these women have endured throughout their lives and how, once more, innocent girls and women are made targets of violence. The biggest wish of the women is the restoration of their physical integrity. As a worldwide church, we are called upon to take up the fight against FGM and not to tolerate this appalling practice anywhere", concluded Dagmar Dorn.

"Let's give little girls a chance to have a different future and avoid experiencing one of the most cruel practices. We urge all who may have any influence and power to move forward and stop this cruelty, to speak: advocate and act now! Tomorrow is too late!" echoed Elsa Cozzi, EUD Children Ministries.

"Together, we can eliminate female genital mutilation by 2030. Doing so will have a positive ripple effect on the health, education and economic advancement of girls and women", affirmed UN Secretary Antonio Guterres (3). This is also our purpose.

References:

(1) https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/67/146 (21)

(2) <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2019/2/compilation-women-leading-the-movement-to-end-female-genital-mutilation>

(3) <https://www.un.org/en/observances/female-genital-mutilation-day>

Here is the Newsletter 'Bring Hope', Kenya - edited by Evelyn Brenda, Chairlady of Bring Hope Kenya e.V.

Here the story of Eunice, reported by Evelyn Brenda, Chairlady of Bring Hope Kenya e.V.

DESERT FLOWER CENTER, INTERVIEW WITH DR. CORNELIA STRUNZ



A CENTER HELPING TO RESTORE VICTIMS OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

PARTNERING WITH A FOUNDATION ESTABLISHED BY A FORMER SUPERMODEL, WARIS DIRIE, A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST HOSPITAL IN BERLIN TOOK ACTION BY OPENING A NEW CENTER TO HELP RESTORE VICTIMS OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM).

February 04, 2021 | Bern, Switzerland. | Dagmar Dorn, Corrado Cozzi, EUDnews.

The Waldfriede Hospital, in cooperation with the Vienna, Austria-based “Desert Flower Foundation”, which was launched in 2002 by Somali model Waris Dirie, opened the Desert Flower Center on September 11, 2013.

Waris Dirie, herself a victim of FGM at age five, is an international activist and established the foundation to raise awareness of the ritual. Her 1997 book “Desert Flower” was made into a movie in 2009. Waldfriede Hospital is the first and only European hospital to treat the problems of mutilated women in a holistic manner. “Since the opening in September 2013, more than 600 women have sought our medical help,” affirmed Dr. Cornelia Strunz, medical coordinator at Desert Flower Center, who kindly granted us the following interview.

What, do you think, are the most important actions to achieve the goal (zero tolerance) of this day? Apart from the professional help you give, what can we do as individuals to end FGM?

The most important measure in the fight against FGM is widespread education and schooling of children, locally, in their home countries. In general, the public should be sensitised to the issue, information on FGM should be bundled and further developed on an interdisciplinary basis, and professional competences should be strengthened. Thus, in 2020, we founded the “Berlin FGM_C Coordination Office”. This is a cooperation of three organisations: the family planning centre—BALANCE, Terre des Femmes, and the Desert Flower Center at the Waldfriede Hospital. The aim of the coordination office is to link the existing services in Berlin and to expand them according to need, to train professionals in dealing with the issue, and to strengthen awareness-raising activities in the communities.

In the sense of holistic support, the coordination office offers psychological support and psychosocial group services for those affected in addition to medical counselling and treatment.

To this end, the coordination centre focuses on raising awareness among professionals and qualifies them for dealing with those affected. A hotline also offers the first point of contact and counselling for affected persons and professionals, and enables simple and low-threshold mediation.

As we receive many enquiries about shadowing at the Desert Flower Centre, we have been offering an FGM intensive seminar for colleagues, midwives, and nursing professionals, twice a year since 2018.

Can you briefly explain what the Desert Flower Center is about?

The project “Desert Flower Center” Waldfriede (DFC) came into being out of clinical necessity, as many women in Germany also suffer from the health and psychological consequences of FGM. The project was realised in cooperation with the Desert Flower Foundation under the patronage of Waris Dirie and her manager, Walter Lutschinger, in December 2011, as it became clear that purely preventive work did not meet the needs of those affected. Our goal is to offer holistic medical care to women suffering from the consequences of genital mutilation. This includes not only surgical interventions and reconstructive operations, but also psychological and physiotherapeutic help. We also offer a self-help group that meets once a month at Waldfriede Hospital.

What motivates you to work in this sensitive area?

As medical coordinator and senior physician of the “Desert Flower Center” Waldfriede, I am the first person the women get in touch with by phone or e-mail. The fact, alone, that these often very emotional preliminary talks and the medical examination take place in a trusting environment from woman to woman makes it easier for the women to open up to me. In the counselling session, the problems presented are dealt with individually. It is not always about an operation. Some want to talk to our psychotherapist or join our self-help group. Others need a medical certificate for their ongoing asylum procedure. It is important to take time for a detailed anamnesis and examination, and to respond to the needs of the patients, thus alleviating their fears and addressing their concerns.

As a specialist in our department, it was with great gratitude that I started working at the “Desert Flower Centre” Waldfriede. I feel that this specialist work is very honourable. The many positive feedbacks encourage me in our highly important work.

You have been working in the Desert Flower Center since its foundation in 2013. What are the most important developments?

Since the opening in September 2013, more than 600 women have sought our medical help. Surgery was necessary for half of them.

A stable solution has also been found in the meantime for the financial settlement of problematic cases. An operation costs around 2000 to 4000 euros. For people with statutory health insurance, the costs are covered by the health insurance. However, since we also want to treat people who are not insured, we have founded the Förderverein

Waldfriede e.V. (Waldfriede Association). The support association, which is financed by donations, supports or assumes the costs in these cases.

Since January 2015, we have been offering a support group once a month. Both women who have already been treated by us and those who are still looking for help come to the meetings. In a protected setting, the women can exchange experiences and learn that they are not alone with their fears and worries. Sometimes affected women talk about their fate, or women who have already undergone reoperation talk about their experiences.

A major problem at the beginning was the intercultural perception and communication. We are very happy to now have two employed counsellors/interpreters, in addition to volunteer counsellors, who enable us and the women to overcome these non-verbal hurdles. With Evelyn Brenda (born in Kenya) and Farhia Mohamed (born in Somalia) we have two therapists in the team who can work psychotherapeutically in German as well as in their respective mother tongues.

All the women tell us how valuable this community in the self-help group is for them because, here, they can often talk about their worries and experiences for the first time in their lives—in a protected setting among like-minded people. At these meetings we always notice that the work with the women is much more than just a "job".

When the women come together, there is always a very warm atmosphere. We all call each other by our first names, and especially the women who have already been treated are bursting with self-confidence. In these moments, we realise how much this task fulfills us and what the team at the "Desert Flower Center" Waldfriede achieves. Here, women are literally given their lives back.

In April 2016, we were awarded the Louise Schroeder Medal. It is the highest award of the state of Berlin.

Since 1998, the medal has been awarded to a personality or institution that pays outstanding tribute to Louise Schroeder's political and personal legacy and has rendered outstanding services to democracy, peace, social justice, and gender equality.

In October 2020, we published the first German-language reference book on FGM (edited by Dr. Uwe von Fritschen/ Dr. Cornelia Strunz/ Dr. Roland Scherer). Our aim was to share our experiences with this complex issue and to provide assistance for all professions in coping with the multi-faceted problems of circumcised women. As the number of women with female genital mutilation (FGM) is also increasing in Germany as a result of migration and globalisation, many professional groups are confronted with this issue without having received any training so far.

On October 19, 2020, the first issue of the new Desert Flower Magazine was published, which was designed by the Desert Flower Foundation/ Waris Dirie. In the magazine, we provide a detailed overview of the work, and the projects and successes of Waris Dirie and her Desert Flower Foundation in the worldwide fight against the inhumane ritual of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

The Desert Flower MAGAZINE is available in German, English and French.

Link to the German edition:

<https://www.yumpu.com/de/document/read/64608181/desert-flower-magazin>

Link to the English edition:

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/65173882/desert-flower-magazine>

Link to the French edition:

<https://www.yumpu.com/fr/document/view/65176146/fleur-du-desert-magazine>

In addition to our activities in Berlin, we also want to take action against female genital mutilation in the home countries with prevention measures and educational work. Therefore, Waldfriede Hospital supports two girls' schools in Kajiado, Kenya. (1)

Waldfriede Hospital also cooperates with the Gynocare Women's & Fistula Hospital, in Eldoret, Kenya. Here, among other things, women are operated on for urinary and faecal incontinence due to their genital circumcision. The specialist in this surgical technique is Dr. Hillary Mabeya.

Interview by Dagmar Dorn, Women's Ministries Director, and Corrado Cozzi, Communications Director of the Inter-European Region of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

(1) Here is the Newsletter 'Bring Hope', Kenya - edited by Evelyn Brenda, Chairlady of Bring Hope Kenya e.V.

Here the story of Eunice, reported by Evelyn Brenda, Chairlady of Bring Hope Kenya e.V.

Photo: Waldfriede Hospital - Desert Flower Center

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