



# BREMEN PEACE AWARD 2007

Courageously Crossing Thresholds



Bremen Peace Award of the *Threshold Foundation*  
for exemplary Commitments for  
Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

## Preface

The hopes that the resolution of the socio-political confrontations in the East/West conflict would lead to the necessary conclusions being drawn from the bitter experiences of the twentieth century, i.e. to make the coexistence of races and states easier by radically reducing violence, were not realistic. The conflicts between states, combined with violent conflicts between larger and smaller population groups – and the effects of non state-legitimised violence - have been associated with flight and expulsion in many parts of the world. Unfortunately they still determine the agenda of our times. And so as not to accept all that as god-given, the foundation 'Die Schwelle' (Threshold) is consciously dedicated to promoting peaceful coexistence. The Internationale Bremer Friedenspreis (International Bremen Peace Award) is an eloquent expression of this. The award honours individuals or organisations that champion the cause of non-violent coexistence in an exemplary manner.

The Threshold foundation attempts to make dedication to reconciliation visible, using the example of a courageous Palestinian and his efforts to promote understanding between his compatriots and the Israelis, and to set an example for - in many cases unspectacular - work for peace. The initiative of a Columbian organisation and its dedication to 'citizens' rights for all' is also an example of civil courage in a civil war-like situation that is worth copying; it is after all a conscious action in spite of considerable danger to life.

Both of these decisions by the jury are dedicated to the acknowledgement of public effort 'towards justice, peace and the integrity of creation', which reaches a broader public through the literary support of an important publisher.

By honouring these individuals or groups, Threshold shows us a way towards reconciliation and non-violent coexistence. However, its intention is not just to draw attention to the work of the featured Peace Award winners, but also at the same time to show us a larger number of initiatives and involvements, which are worthy of being honoured in their own right, and which should not just disappear into the annals of peace work after the Peace Awards have been presented, but which embody total understanding for personal dedication. They give this year's awards their full significance.

I would like to thank the Threshold foundation for its continuing dedication to promoting conscious work for peace in our world. We know that work for peace is laborious and that perseverance is required, and we are prepared to confront the politicians of our age when they spend billions on the procurement of weapons but are not prepared instead to spend a significant proportion of these funds on the handling and prevention of civil conflicts. Necessary peace work demands more than public declarations and resolutions; apart from a different fundamental political mood in society, it demands exactly the kind of personal dedication which is honoured by this Peace Award.

Hans Koschnick



# POR LA PAZ



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### For the third time: The courage to cross thresholds and to break vicious circles

The idea for a Threshold Peace Award was born in 2002. The first award ceremony, under the title 'The courage to cross thresholds and to break vicious circles', took place in late 2003 in the upper chamber of Bremen town hall.

In late 2004, national and international nominations were invited for the second time for the Bremen Peace Award, and the awards were presented to a total of five individuals in three categories on 25th November 2005. The award will be presented for the third time on 16th November 2007. Nominations will continue to be invited and the prize will be awarded biannually in future.

#### Idea and intention: Good news for us all

You award a prize when you want to put something in a public spotlight that would otherwise receive too little attention. You want to generate recognition and to encourage the award winners to carry on. You could also say: 'We want to make news out of what is good and important, so that the news is not just dominated by that which is bad and destructive.'

It is said that attracting attention is everything nowadays. And yet we are not governed primarily by the spirit of the times. It is much more the primal insight that even Jesus of Nazareth expressed: 'Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house' (Matthew 5:15).

Light in the darkness of bad news and reality. And that is what the Threshold Peace Award is all about too: encouragement for everyone who is involved and for everyone who hears about it.

#### *Previous winners of the Bremen Peace Award*

##### **Unknown peace workers**

2003: Sister Weronika Sakowska, Rwanda  
2005: Roswitha Jarmann, England – Barbara Gladysch, Germany – Chechenian involvement

##### **Exemplary Organisation**

2003: Parents Circle, Forum of Bereaved Families, Israel/ Palestine  
2005: Interfaith Mediation Centre – Pastor James Wuye, Imam Muhammad Ashafa, Nigeria

##### **Public work**

2003: Hans Graf von Sponeck, former UN diplomat in Iraq  
2005: Prof. Wassilij B. Nesterenko, atomic physicist, Belarus



#### **The invitation for nominations for the award and its categories: 'The unknown peace worker' in first place!**

After assessing the previous award ceremonies we stuck to three nomination categories:

- The Threshold Peace Award distinguishes itself from other comparable awards in that it honours first and foremost the '**unknown peace workers**', i.e. people who devote themselves to their cause without a great deal of attention or recognition.
- The criterion 'unknown' was, however, not enough for us. It was to be supplemented by '**particularly exemplary**' – regardless of whether known or unknown.
- And we (also) add a third category – **work in the public arena**: we also want to honour people who are in rather more prominent positions and who, moving against the mainstream, stay true to their convictions and hence have an exemplary character.

So we once again invited nominations for the award in the entire field of topics to which the foundation is committed: justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Regionally, nationally and internationally – the latter primarily via the Internet.

#### **Great response**

By the end of February there had been almost 40 nominations, as well as (a few) self-nominations. Once again the range of nominated initiatives and individuals was very encouraging. Only a few nominations were rejected immediately because they didn't meet the minimum requirements with regard to content or form.

What remained was an impressive collection of mostly unknown individuals or initiatives, who dedicate themselves with a high degree of personal commitment to the concept of 'shalom' in the broad sense. Our Peace Award really has an international dimension: nominations were received from four continents.

## Introduction

### **The third brochure: the courage to cross thresholds or: there are many initiatives and people worthy of receiving an award!**

The second thing that distinguishes the Threshold Bremen Peace Award from comparable awards is that the awarding of the prize to the three winners is not the sole purpose. In fact, we announced right at the start that we would publish a brochure mentioning all of the projects and individuals who we consider to be worthy in principle of receiving an award. It is just as important to us as the award ceremony itself. We have therefore tried to give this third brochure a particularly attractive design.

However, in order to keep the brochure in a handy format, we have limited the number to 25. This means that we have had to eliminate around fifteen of the nominees. Most of them also carry out very impressive work, but unfortunately we had to draw the line somewhere.

The result can be seen here in a German edition and an English edition. We want to give all the readers the same encouragement that we felt. We also want to give them the opportunity to make direct contact. We want to publicly honour the work of the people and projects presented here and, last but not least, to ask for donations to them.

For that reason we would ask everyone that receives this brochure to pass it on to friends and acquaintances or to order extra copies. It could be a **small Christmas present** with the motto: A little light into the darkness of the bad news.

### **The award winners**

As usual, the choice of the three prizewinners was very difficult for the foundation's board and advisory council. Once again there were many possible candidates in every field. Regional aspects also always played a small part in the final selection – this time we almost selected a Bremen-based organisation, for the first time, in 'Refugio Bremen'. It was a very close-run thing and we decided on a Latin-American initiative (also for the first time) in the category for 'exemplary' initiatives. However, the Threshold foundation has already supported Refugio in other ways in the past.

Our three award winners were honoured on behalf of all of the other individuals and groups who are presented in this brochure. They particularly impressed us, but that doesn't mean that the work of the others is inferior.

They are all distinguished by exemplary dedication, and encourage us to cross thresholds and break vicious circles. They are 'good news' for all of us.

Reinhard Jung

Chairman of the board of the Threshold foundation



*The Threshold Advisory Board*



*Note for the Reader:*

*The following texts have been written by Thomas Joppig, Bremen, based on the texts of the submitted proposals.*



**Bassam Aramin  
(Palestine)**

P.O. Box 66353 Jerusalem  
bassaam6@yahoo.com

Nominated by Yehuda Shaul

Bassam Aramin was born 38 years ago in the small village of Sair near Hebron in the West Bank. Despite being handicapped, he decided at an early age to fight for the independence of his nation. He joined the Fatah movement and belonged to a small troop that planned attacks on various Israeli military targets. In 1985, at the age of 16, he was arrested by the Israeli forces and convicted of being a member of an illegal movement and possessing weapons. As Bassam testifies, he underwent an incredible change during his seven years in prison in Hebron and discovered the human beings behind his former image of the enemy.

Before his release, he committed himself to non-violence and the promotion of peace and dialogue in the Middle East. He married and started his own family. He taught his six children how important it is to strive for peace and justice. Bassam became one of the most prominent partners of Israeli peace organisations and movements in the West Bank. Alongside his work in the Palestinian archive in Ramallah, he founded the El-Outs organisation, which promotes democracy and peace and educates young Palestinians in the occupied territories in this respect.

In 2005 he founded the 'Combatants for Peace' initiative together with other peace activists. The group comprises former members of the Israeli military forces and former Palestinian militant fighters who were imprisoned in Israeli jails. The initiative is intended to encourage Israelis and Palestinians to end violence and injustice. Bassam is also one of the most important partners of the Peres Centre in the West Bank. Together with its staff, he has been involved in the design and coordination of various projects aimed at bringing together young Israelis and Palestinians.

The harsh reality of the Israeli occupation put Bassam and his family to the test again this year: on 16th February, a border patrol soldier shot dead Bassam's 10-year-old daughter Abir. She had just come out of school in her home village of Anata with her sister and some friends when a jeep from the border patrol drove by and opened fire on the group of girls. Abir was hit in the head by a rubber bullet and seriously injured. Two days later she died in hospital of her injuries. But even this tragedy has not silenced Bassam's appeals for peace.



### Conciudadania (Columbia)

**Carrera 49 60-50, Medellin,  
Antioquia, Colombia,  
[www.conciudadania.org](http://www.conciudadania.org)**

Nominated by Dr Beate Neuhaus

Columbia – a beautiful country that has been in the grip of violence for decades: private paramilitary groups and official military units fight for supremacy against left-wing guerrilla organisations in many provinces. Massacres of civilians, kidnappings and land mines have cost hundreds of thousands of lives and made refugees of three million people. This is all described as 'armed conflict'. However, the times when violence in Columbia was just the concern of armed units are long gone. It has become the normal means of 'resolving conflicts' – in politics and neighbourhoods alike and even within families.

The Conciudadanía organisation – 'Civil Rights for All' – is working to break this vicious circle with a culture of peace. Dedicated private individuals founded the organisation 16 years ago in Medellin, the capital city of the province of Antioquia, one of the strongholds of violence.

The Conciudadanía advisors, who live locally, work in 40 districts with grassroots organisations, women's and youth groups, as well as public institutions and councils. They demonstrate non-violent methods of resolving conflicts, explain the basics of group work and show how networking and participation in political processes can succeed. Conciudadanía also ensures that the wider public gets to know about its work and its objectives by means of its own radio programmes. Adolescents and young adults in particular are deliberately involved in all of these processes.



The so-called 'circuitos de convivencia', rounds of talks aimed at peaceful coexistence, are an innovative and much copied example of this. In these talks a human right is first of all discussed and then each individual considers how he/she has violated this right when dealing with his/her fellow human being, and how it might have been possible to behave differently. Each person may only accuse him/herself, not the other participants. At the same time, a mutual promise is made not to use this for purposes of malicious gossip. Conciudadanía is equally dedicated to the care of traumatised victims of the civil war and the social rehabilitation of former paramilitaries.

**Award winner**



**Wolfgang Kessler  
(Germany)**

**Mühlweg 7, 61191 Rosbach  
wk@publik-forum.de**

Nominated by: Reinhard Jung

Dr Wolfgang Kessler, born in 1953 in Ravensburg in Swabia, is an economic and social scientist who has headed the 'Politics and Society' department of the independent Christian magazine 'Publik Forum' for the last 16 years. He has been one of the two editors-in-chief for the last eight years. The unmistakable socio-ethical profile of this astoundingly successful press project, which has 40,000 subscribers, in the cause of 'justice, peace and integrity of creation' is not least due to his work.

Wolfgang Kessler, who was influenced in his youth by the Bund der katholischen Jugend (Catholic Youth Association), is notable for his high degree of professional competence in economic and socio-political questions. He combines this knowledge with a distinctive socio-ethical orientation and the talent of being able to explain and elaborate the most complicated facts. Added to that he displays an untiring personal dedication to 'New ways to more justice – against the division of society', as one of his lectures last year was called.

Through his work at 'Publik Forum' and his extensive lecture activities in church congregations and in other places – naturally at the 2007 'Kirchentag' in Cologne too – Kessler reaches many people and let them reflect. Besides that he has also been prominent since the 1980s as the author of many pertinent works. Particularly well-known is his book 'Worldquake. Ways out of the globalisation trap'. The book first appeared in 2002, then in 2004 in an extended edition and is now in its seventh edition in 2007.

As in many of his lectures, Kessler attempts in this book not to get bogged down in the criticism of the globalised economy. His agenda is about finding 'ways out'. He doesn't just show us the effects of neo-liberal politics, warts and all, but also demonstrates positive approaches which should be followed. He pleads for an economic and political globalisation that serves the people, in particular the poor. That is too sophisticated for many globalisation critics, but this realistic approach encourages the reader: there are not just theoretical, but also practical ways out of the current situation – towards a humane future.

Examples of peace work



**Germany**





**Initiative Nordbremer Bürger  
gegen den Krieg  
(Initiative – North Bremen  
Citizens Against War)**

**Contact: Gerd-Rolf Rosenberger  
phone +49-421-6098464**

Nominated by Volker Keller

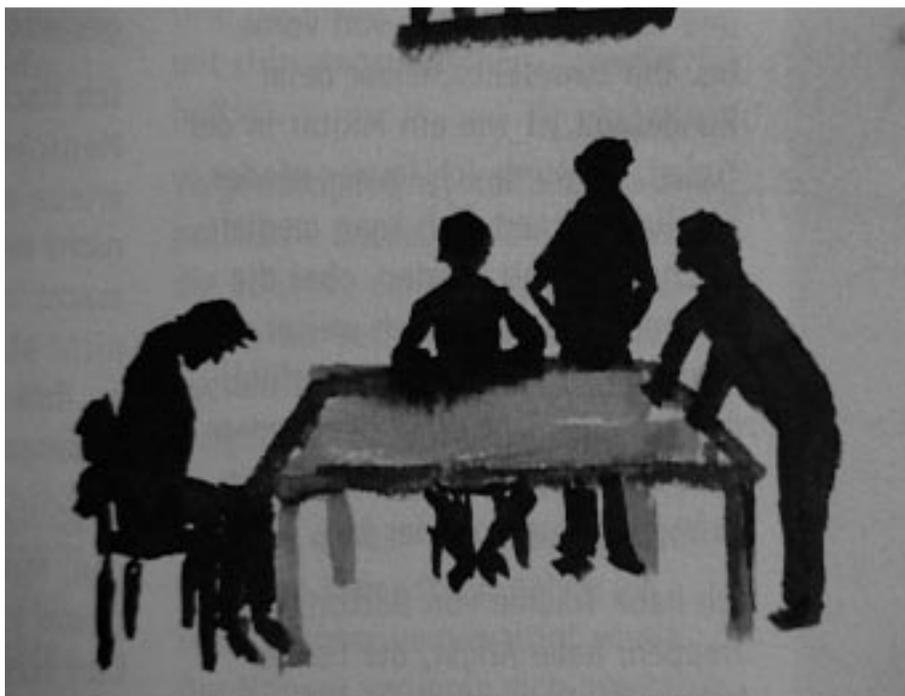
The protests began in the run up to the Afghanistan war: The initiative 'North Bremen Citizens Against War' began holding Friday demonstrations to protest against war and injustice in November 2001. Since then, not a week has gone by during which the peace activists have not gathered in the pedestrian zone in Vegesack. They can now count on a whole series of prominent supporters. The demonstrations have been attended by the Green politician Hans-Christian Ströbele, the long-serving UN diplomat Hans-Christof Graf v. Sponeck, the actor Rolf Becker, the National Chairwoman of 'Terres des Hommes' Dr Petra Boxler, the theologians Dorthee Sölle and Eugen Drewermann, and many more. The people of North Bremen welcomed Dr Rolf Verleger from the Board of Directors of the Central Jewish Council to the 250th demonstration.



What is special, however, is the meeting of people from the widest variety of backgrounds, who are drawn together by the wish for peace. Representatives of initiatives from 25 countries around the world, from Venezuela to Iran, have already spoken and taken part in discussions in Vegesack. Many minor Bremen Initiatives have taken part, from the Tibet Initiative through to the comprehensive school pupils' representatives. Pastors, hocas and even a Buddhist monk joined together with avowed atheists.

The subject 'No to War' and the examination of the causes of war have thus been kept in the press. The solicitor Johannes Philipp has created an archive of the many newspaper reports. Radio and television have also reported on the demonstrations. The initiative won the Bremen Peace School's Franco Paselli Peace Award in 2003.

The initiative has collected a total of Euro 12,000 in donations on Fridays up to now, which has been used to support a school project for former child soldiers in Myanmar, among other good causes.



**Refugio – Psychosoziales Beratungszentrum  
für ausländische Flüchtlinge e.V.  
(Psychosocial Advice Centre  
for Foreign Refugees)**

**Parkstr 2-4, 28209 Bremen  
[www.refugio-bremen.de](http://www.refugio-bremen.de)**

Nominated by Luise Scherf

Refugio, the psychosocial advice and treatment centre for foreign refugees and torture survivors, was established over 17 years ago in Bremen. More than 200 people have sought help at Refugio every year since it was founded. The centre offers specialist advice and treatment for mentally ill and often traumatised refugees. Wherever possible, Refugio tries to make the normal German health system accessible to these people, and in doing so Refugio's work also contributes to social justice in the health service.

For many refugees this is the first time that they have experienced unprejudiced respect, and that someone listens when they speak about the violations of human rights that they have suffered. This helps them to rediscover and strengthen their resources. They learn, as far as possible, to confront their mostly traumatic experiences, to deal with them and to integrate what they have experienced into their own personality, and into their image of themselves and the world.

Refugio takes a holistic approach to its work: in addition to spiritual health they also focus on physical healing and social reintegration. Opportunities for socio-political recognition and rehabilitation are also sounded out here. In addition to individual therapy, Refugio offers group meetings intended to promote the exchange of experiences between refugees and to strengthen their wish for healing.

In order to ensure intercultural understanding with the refugees Refugio works with specially trained interpreters, who function not only as language interpreters, but also as cultural interpreters. In addition to regular supervision for all of its employees, Refugio also offers advanced training in psychotraumatology and trauma therapy, which is also open to external participants. A further field of work is political lobbying. In various projects, the Centre attempts to bring the violation of human rights more to the public eye. Refugio is a founder member of the BAFF (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der psychosozialen Zentren für Flüchtlinge und Folteropfer – Federal Consortium of Psychosocial Centres for Refugees and Torture Victims). The BAFF is intended to be the political voice of the centres, and is involved in the campaign 'Right of Abode for Traumatized Refugees'.



**Friedens Räume Lindau  
(Lindau peace rooms)**

**Lindenhofweg 25, 88131 Lindau,  
[www.friedens-raeume.de](http://www.friedens-raeume.de)**

Nominated by Dr Wolfgang Kessler

The Peace Museum in Lindau has existed since 1981. When a complete new redesign became necessary eight years ago, an initiative group was formed within the catholic 'pax christi' peace movement, which developed a new museum design in two years. Their objective right from the start was not to create an anti-war museum, but rooms that show positive examples of dedication to peace, and that challenge and encourage the visitors to make a personal contribution to a peaceful and just world.

The design artist Ruth Gschwendtner was commissioned with the project and with great dedication she converted the specifications in terms of content into an artistic, didactic design. The museum was reopened in 2001. Today, around 50 volunteers work there with extraordinary dedication, in order to ensure a normal museum service. The sponsor of this peace initiative is pax christi in Augsburg.



The 'peace rooms' are more than just a museum. They are an intercultural, interreligious place for exchanging ideas and meeting people, in which peace can be individually experienced and learned. A forum of many and varied stimuli awaits the visitors, moving them towards a living concept of peace that provides thought-provoking impulses on the basis of past experiences and makes awareness easier today. The presentation is aimed at a broad audience – from tourists visiting Lake Constance to One-World groups. The 'peace rooms' also address youth groups and school classes with a special programme.

The various rooms are all designed to be interactive; the visitors have to do something in order to discover the message. They have to open the archive drawers in the reading room in order to 'get to the encouraging contents'. In the decision-making room you have to move to different locations in order to view the decision-making options from different perspectives. In the listening room, on the other hand, visitors can address such varying subjects as 'language moves the masses', 'music moves the masses' and 'experiences of violence and visions of peace'.



**Christlich-Islamische  
Arbeitsgemeinschaft Marl  
(CIAG – Christian-Islamic  
Consortium Marl)**

**Contact: Ursula August  
phone +49-2365-42440**

Nominated by Dr Ferdinand Kerstiens

The Christian-Islamic Consortium in Marl (CIAG) has been working continuously and doggedly without a break since 1984. It is a kind of citizens' initiative made up of dedicated men and women from all generations, who belong to both protestant and catholic communities as well as various Islamic communities.

The CIAG initiates encounters between the religious communities and its members. This includes mutual visits as well as joint public 'Prayers of the Religions'. Three intercultural and interreligious women's circles have been organised autonomously within the CIAG. The CIAG involves itself in communal political topics of religious relevance (e.g. the building of mosques, or the Azan call from the minaret) by means of 'round tables'. It also cooperates with community offices in social hotspots.

The CIAG is equally dedicated to promoting intercultural learning and coexistence in schools, kindergartens and youth centres. For example, the consortium established the annual Anti-Racism Day in Marl's schools in 1994, and has organised it together with the town every year since, on the UNO's Anti-Racism Day on 21st March. The CIAG also assists young people with an immigrant background on the often difficult route to obtain an apprenticeship.



Last but not least, the CIAG continually organises large PR events. On 17th December 2001 the German president at that time, Johannes Rau, took up the CIAG's invitation to visit examples of successful integration in Marl. The religious dialogue has been extended to a 'trialogue' since autumn 2001. The reason is the annual Abraham festival, which the CIAG organises together with the churches, the mosques and the Jewish religious community, as well as the town and its Integration Council. Each Abraham festival has a particular theme – for example, 'women in the religions', 'peace not war' or 'economy and justice'. There are various separate programmes addressing children, young people and adults.



**Pre-deportation detention  
contact group, Dresden**

**Contact: Ursula Mai, Am See 15/74  
01067 Dresden**

Nominated by Pax Christi  
Regionalstelle Leipzig

The initiative 'pax christi – refugee contact Dresden' was established in 1992 when Bosnian war refugees came to Saxony. The initiative had set itself the task of helping and showing solidarity with the victims of war and violence. Even when many Bosnians returned to their homeland after the official end of the war, contact was not broken off. Many of those who returned home had to survive as refugees in their own country. The initiative organised aid projects in Bosnia-Herzegovina before its willingness to help was once again in demand in Germany at the turn of the millennium: the Kosovo refugees came.

Due to its work, the initiative became well-known amongst asylum seekers who had been rejected. The members were moved by the fates of people who have no chance in Germany, but who are afraid to return home – because there, they would not have enough money to live, or would be at risk of being thrown into a military jail or suffering other painful experiences.

More than a few go into hiding and end up in pre-deportation detention. There are no special facilities for this in Saxony; the people in question are put into prisons together with criminals. They live there in isolation and suffer from a lack of meaningful opportunities to occupy themselves. Language barriers and the lack of prospects of an assigned defence lawyer make the problem worse, and the social workers and pastors in prison do not have sufficient time to address the issue appropriately.

So five years ago Ursula Mai started to look for people who specifically wanted to dedicate themselves to helping those in pre-deportation detention. Today, the group comprises nine men and women. They are primarily protestant and catholic Christians, including one monk. There is also a Muslimah woman from Iraq, a woman from Vietnam and another from Siberia. The initiative can also engage other interpreters as and when necessary.



It usually doesn't end with personal visits and conversations – concrete help in many different forms is necessary. The members talk on the telephone and write to authorities, solicitors and relatives. They experience many shocking things, but also the prisoners' joy at being helped.



**Unterstützerkreis Köln  
(Cologne Circle of Supporters)**

**Feltenstr 130, 50827 Köln  
[www.unterstuetzerkreis.de](http://www.unterstuetzerkreis.de)**

Nominated by Rita and Friedrich Steinforth

Since the beginning of 1993, the 'Unterstützerkreis für die von Abschiebung bedrohten Kinder und Jugendlichen e.V. (Cologne Circle of Supporters for Children and Young People at Risk of Deportation) has been championing the cause of young immigrants and refugees whose residence in the Federal Republic of Germany is at risk.

The aim of the Circle is to have the requirements of a child's well-being considered when decisions are made on residence permits for children and young people. The child's well-being is an essential criterion of German family law. Therefore, in the association's view, it should also be considered when decisions are made on residence permits for children and young people from other countries of origin.

If children and young people lose their right of residence, they lose much more besides: friendships and relationships are broken off, as well as their school career to date or an apprenticeship that they have started. It is clear to the members of the association: deportation means unreasonable hardship for children and young people. They are forced to return to the extremely difficult or miserable living conditions or politically dangerous situations that they had escaped with the help of their parents, relatives or other people.

The Cologne Circle of Supporters advises affected children and young people and their relatives – if need be in consultation with their solicitor. The association makes contact with the Aliens Authority and if necessary emphasizes facts of which the officials had previously been unaware, but which are relevant to the decision. It drafts petitions to the Hardship Commission, the Petitions Committee or other bodies. The association also assists the children and young people with school enrolment, health insurance and housing problems, and with translations or medical treatment if needed.

In its work the association cooperates with charitable organisations, initiatives and other associations that are dedicated to the interests of children, immigrants and refugees. Besides that, the Circle of Supporters organises training events on subjects such as the Aliens Act or the living conditions of young immigrants.



**Mädchentreff MaDonna  
(MaDonna Girls' Club)**

**Falkstrasse 26, 12053 Berlin,  
madonnaedchenpower@web.de**

Nominated by Anette Klasing

The MaDonna Girls' Club in the Neukölln district of Berlin offers open, mobile youth work and advice for girls and young women between 8 and 18 years of age. MaDonna's work is intercultural, creative, low-threshold, neighbourhood related, crisis-proven, chaos and conflict-capable, full of the joys of discovery, emotional - and MaDonna also involves itself in social and political topics. For instance with a successful postcard campaign, with which the girls agitated against forced marriages and honour killings and for equal rights. The campaign provoked public discussion between adolescents and young adults and with parents, representatives of the media and politicians.

This is how the girls' club describes its multifaceted offering: "We have sports and games, with and without inline skates, excursions in all directions, paint for paper and dye for your hair, beauty and flirting tips, cooking and eating, lazing in the cosy room, Internet surfing, multimedia work, disco and party time, and dancing, dancing, dancing. There are also tests of courage and we train our self-confidence, help with homework and give advice. We all help each other. Personal organisation skills, imagination and participation are required by the bucket load! The cost of participation ranges from good value to free, and if there's a lack of money we organise it – with good ideas, jobs and stuff to sell. Girls conquer the streets. The neighbourhood belongs to us!"



'MaDonna Mädchenkult.Ur e.V.' (MaDonna Girls' Culture) is a self-supporting, ideologically and politically independent association for the preservation of human rights. The leader of the Girls' Club, Gabriele Heinemann, was awarded the Neukölln Badge of Honour by district mayor Heinz Buschkowsky on 10th December 2005 in a ceremony at Schloss Britz. It was emphasised that 'the children and adolescents in MaDonna learn to become aware of their role as girls and women between Islamic culture and democratic values and freedoms. Gabriele Heinemann has taken the subjects of integration and parallel societies in different projects and offerings to the environment of the Rollberg district and other neighbourhoods in Neukölln for many years. Ms Heinemann has displayed admirable steadfastness in this respect.'



**Judith Bernstein**  
**Viktor-Scheffel-Str.5**  
**80803 München**

**judith.bernstein@web.de**

Nominated by Anette Klasing

The interpreter Judith Bernstein was born in 1945 in Jerusalem as the daughter of German emigrants, and has lived in Munich since 1976. Together with her husband, the historian Reiner Bernstein, she is involved with the Israeli-Palestinian 'Geneva Initiative' and founded the 'Shalom5767' initiative together with other Jewish and non-Jewish German citizens. Judith Bernstein's grandparents died in Auschwitz. She is dedicated to human rights in general and to a just peace in the Middle East in particular.

In an article for the Süddeutsche Zeitung (German Newspaper, issue of 23rd June 2006), she described her experiences during a trip to Israel and the Palestinian areas. She wrote that the situation there had never before seemed so hopeless. She describes Bethlehem as "a city surrounded by walls, in which Palestinian families are torn apart and separated from their fields." Or Hebron: "a city in which four hundred settlers have, with the aid of the military, caused many Palestinians to lose their houses and businesses, streets to be concreted over and entire districts to become desolate".

"And what do we in Europe do in the face of such indefensible conditions? We watch and say nothing", she says. During her latest stay she also tried to speak to political visitors from Germany and to appeal to their sense of responsibility. "Protocol doesn't allow any official visits to 'the wall'," was the reply which she received once again. Meetings with Palestinians may only be of a private nature – in order to avoid any accusations of anti-Semitism.

Judith Bernstein is convinced that this spiral of silence will achieve the exact opposite. In conversation with German friends and acquaintances, but also in chance encounters, "I am sometimes held personally responsible for Israeli policies against the Palestinians." When she came to Germany around forty years ago, she thought that anti-Semitism had been overcome. "Today, I am no longer sure if history will catch up with me, my own children or at the very latest my granddaughter. Will we then be able to justifiably claim that we didn't know about any of this?" She believes it is possible that many Israelis have no idea about what is being perpetrated in their name, because of the segregating walls and the one-sided media reporting in Israel. "But what about us? We know – and we make ourselves equally guilty if we don't raise our voices."



**Aktionsgemeinschaft  
Friedenswoche Minden e.V.  
(Minden Peace Week  
Action Group)**

**Postfach 2110, D-32378 Minden  
[www.friedenswoche-minden.de](http://www.friedenswoche-minden.de)**

Nominated by Dr Holger Grabbe

When neo-Nazis tried to march through Minden on Christmas Eve 2006, 2000 citizens, both young and old, stood successfully against them. Astounding for a town with 80,000 inhabitants, but then again not, because there has been an active peace movement here since the end of the 1950s: 'Fight Atomic Death', Easter marches and then the first Peace Week in 1972 under the motto 'peace is more than just no war'.



The Peace Week Action Group views peace as a dynamic, creative process that aims for the greatest degree of social justice, freedom and happiness for everyone. This holistic definition of peace has also enabled the support of social initiatives for work with homeless people, in intercultural learning and the establishment of two educational institutes in Minden and Frille.

Three of the association's projects have been recognised by the UNO because they serve to strengthen education for sustainable development. That is the objective of the UN decade 2005-2014. The Minden contributions are summarised under the motto: '3D – children, art and solidarity – three decade projects in Minden'. One of them is called 'India lies behind the King's School – effective learning in a One-World village'. This construction and art project, which is used by 13 schools in Minden, contributes demonstratively to the awakening of greater understanding for other cultures, the support of development projects and care for the natural world. There is close cooperation with the 'One World at School' project at the University of Bremen.



A further project is the BOA network, a consortium of currently twelve educational and training centres, as well as citizens' initiatives and charities in the upper old town of Minden, which has already been to some extent involved in intercultural and political development work for many years. Their aim is to create synergy effects for their own work and for the district.

The third project is called 'Lebens(t)raum Sport – fit – friedlich – fair – für Eine Welt' (Sport: the dream of a lifetime/room to live – fit – peaceful – fair – for One World). This is now the sixth International Project Day of the Unesco Project Schools. The Project Days have become something of an institution and take place every two years with a subject from the area of 'learning sustainability'. They pick up on subjects which are dealt with throughout the school year.



**Baum der Religionen  
(Tree of the religions)**

**Birkerfeld 43  
51429 Bergisch Gladbach  
wbrauner@gmx.de**

Self-nomination by Barbara Brauner

The idea came to Barbara Brauner during an interreligious prayer evening in November 1997. The motto was: 'World peace is not only possible, but unavoidable'. A very special tree that stands in the garden of the Bergisch Heimatmuseum (Bergisch Local History Museum) in Bensberg has for some eight years now been inviting people to think about what such a peace might look like. It is an apple tree that bears seven old kinds of apples from the Bergisch Land, symbolising the seven world religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Bahá'í). The tree serves as a visible symbol for understanding among nations, peaceful coexistence of religions and integration. The initiator's motto is: 'Live with one another, learn from one another and understand one other'.



The tree first had to recover after the grafting process. The Apple Blossom festival, which has a particular theme each time, is now celebrated every year in Bensberg in spring. Representatives of the world religions perform something or read from their religious scriptures at the festival. This year, for example, the subject of 'creation' was selected. Between the readings, the guests and organisers hear music – and last year primary school children presented the 'Ring Parable' from Lessing's 'Nathan the Wise'. Subsequently coffee and apple cake provide an opportunity to exchange thoughts. The Apple Blossom festival has been well accepted; more visitors come every year. "I'm delighted that this idea has borne fruit", says Barbara Brauner.



The organisers celebrate the festival every year in order to give other people an opportunity to learn more about other religions, in particular about the many similarities. The tree symbolises this. The seven branches are all fed by one root and supported by one trunk. This is intended to show how people from different cultures and religions are linked with one another. Despite their diversity, the different types of apple grow alongside each other on the tree. This is intended to inspire people to live with one another in harmony and brotherhood – in a world where xenophobia has no place, only unity in diversity.



**Verein Miteinander  
(Togetherness Association)**

**Erich-Weinert-Str.30  
39104 Magdeburg  
[www.miteinander-ev.de](http://www.miteinander-ev.de)**

Nominated by Wiebke Jung

The non-profit making association 'Miteinander – Netzwerk für Demokratie und Weltoffenheit in Sachsen-Anhalt e.V.' (Togetherness – Network for Democracy and Cosmopolitanism in Saxony-Anhalt e.V.) is dedicated to an open, plural and democratic society in Saxony-Anhalt and beyond. It works against racism, anti-Semitism and all other forms of group-related enmity between people that lead to discrimination, ostracism and violence. The association is particularly concerned with the support of immigrants and alternative, non-right-wing youth cultures.

The association is very busy in these times of increasing right-wing violence. It advises victims of fascist attacks and fights courageously against the increasing ideological appropriation of young people with no prospects by neo-Nazis. 'Miteinander e.V.' trains opinion-formers, organises youth projects, exhibitions and readings. The particular quality of the association's work lies in the use of a wide range of methods to develop offerings that are tailored to meet the respective problem. Not only young people, but also adults can benefit from a comprehensive range of information, education and advice.



In this way the association intensively collects information on the activities of extreme right-wing groups. These facts are then supplied above all to teachers, local politicians and youth workers. In this way, the association aims to help them to recognise extreme right-wing trends at an early stage and to counteract them appropriately. The information available also includes practical advisory brochures such as 'Conflicts with neo-Nazis? Dealing with public appearances by the extreme right-wing' or 'What to do after a right-wing attack'.

'Miteinander e.V.' has contact points in Magdeburg, Halle and Lauenburg and also takes good care of rural regions at the same time. As part of their mobile advisory service, the members travel to places where extreme right-wing attacks have taken place. They encourage victims and witnesses of fascist violence to report it to the police and help to mobilise democratic forces and ideas for preventative work. Beyond that, the association makes it possible for young people to meet Hungarians, Poles and Czechs as part of their apprenticeships. In this way, the association aims to strengthen the intercultural skills of the apprentices. In addition, the members make young people aware of the fate of concentration camp prisoners in exhibitions and guided tours.



**Eastern European Region**



**Mevlida Macanovic**  
**Lübecker Str. 34**  
**45145 Essen**

**mevmac@web.de**

Nominated by Doris Straßburger

The Muslimah Mevlida Macanovic was driven out of her hometown Bosanka Dubica in 1993 by Serbian paramilitaries. The single mother with an eight year-old daughter came to Essen-Kray at the initiative of the association 'Den Krieg überleben' (Survive the war).



Mevlida Macanovic did not accept the expulsion and did not allow it to become part of her world outlook. The people in her town were and remain 'Neighbours from Dubica' in her stories of the same name. She did not render the events banal, but investigated the causes of the civil war. She helped her former neighbours whenever possible, irrespective of whether Bosnian Serbs, Croatians or Moslems, and kept in touch with all of them, even though some of them called her a traitor.

Although the war was a traumatic experience for her, she did not accept the role of a victim. Instead, she broke the vicious circle of perpetrator-victim and motivated the protestant church congregation of Essen-Kray to become involved in the Bosnian war and post-war situation. At the turn of the year 1998/99 she organised the transport of medicines to the 'Kozma i Damian' hospital in Dubica. She obtained the customs documents and interpreted at the borders. She encouraged the current district Bosnia team to travel with her. At first there were two and then later eleven people who organised regular transports. From 2001 onwards this took place with the help of the citizen's association 'Putevi mira', which had been founded by returning Moslems.

Together with this association, Mevlida Macanovic has initiated a three-year project in her home country entitled 'Help for old and lonely people'. Its objective is to remind the communities of their social obligations. A comparable project for young people is at the application stage. Mevlida Macanovic networks her activities not just in Bosnia, but also with institutions in Germany.



Alongside taking evening classes to become a state-approved business administrator, she has completed a basic study of Peace and Conflict Research at the Open University in Hagen. In keeping with her dedication, in her thesis she dealt with the contribution of civilian activists to the process of reconciliation and construction. She was awarded the grade 'good' for this.



**Komitee für Grundrechte;  
Aktion „Ferien vom Krieg“  
(Committee for Basic Rights;  
Action 'Holidays away from war')**

**Contact:**  
**Helga Dieter, Flußgasse 8, 60489 Frankfurt,**  
**[www.vacation-from-war.com](http://www.vacation-from-war.com)**

Nominated by Maria von Borries

Thanks to the 'Holidays away from war' campaign, over 19,000 children, adolescents and young adults from the crisis and war zones of the Balkan peninsula and the Middle East have met up over the last thirteen years for peaceful holidays together. The project is financed exclusively by private donations.

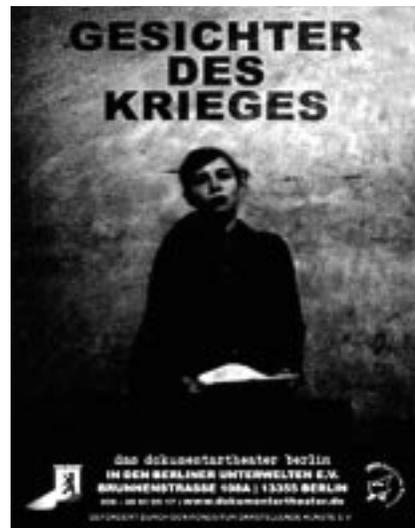
The history behind it is as follows: During the Balkan war, the 'Committee for Basic Rights and Democracy' became involved in the campaign 'Helfen statt schießen' ('Helping instead of shooting') and collected more than 13 million Marks in private donations. All aid transports were accompanied by Hanne and Klaus Vack. The 'Holidays away from war' campaign arose from this in 1994 and has been coordinated by Helga Dieter since 1998.



Just one year after the massacres in Srebrenica, many of the oppressed children were able to travel to the coast to recuperate. One boy wrote to his holiday host family: 'I didn't know that peace could be so beautiful'. Two years later, Bosniac children who had been deported from Srebrenica came together for the first time with Serbian children who were now living as refugees in their houses in Srebrenica. Whilst playing, swimming and during creative leisure activities, they got to know 'the others' without any moral pressure. They found not only caring adults whom they could talk to, but also children of the same age who had had to suffer similar appalling experiences.

Regardless of which region they come from, most of those who participate in the 'Holidays away from war' campaign have never before had any contact with people from the other side. In their leisure time they talk in small groups about everyday threats and fears and also their hopes and visions. In working groups, they examine, in a manner suitable for their age, the causes of the respective conflicts, the mental mechanisms of ostracism and hatred, and the political and economical interests of war. During the encounters, the participants learn that the question of guilt is not as easy to resolve as their family, school, media, politicians or local propaganda would have them believe. Sometimes the participants can only understand their own life story when it is reflected in the biographies of their supposed enemies. Many of the fates on both sides are identical right down to the terrible details.





**Marina Schubarth  
Das Dokumentartheater Berlin**

**Marina Schubarth  
Bonhoefferufer 5  
10589 Berlin  
[www.dokumentartheaterberlin.de](http://www.dokumentartheaterberlin.de)**

Nominated by Katharina Goebel  
and Julia Gorr

Marina Schubarth was born in 1966 in Kiev and danced for eight years as a trained ballet dancer on various stages, finally at the renowned Theater des Westens under the direction of Helmut Baumann. Following an operation, she was unable to continue her career and from then on worked as a ballet teacher and as an actress in several films and theatre productions. Then she became unemployed. By chance, her attention was drawn in 1999 to a victims' association of former slave labourers and victims of fascism in the Crimea. Marina Schubarth spoke up for the unheard voices of former slave labourers from the Ukraine. She told the public about the difficulties these people had in obtaining compensation and coping with everyday life on a pension equivalent to around 25 Euros.



Together with the association 'KONTAKTE - KOHTAKTbi e.V.' she organised her first exhibition on the subject of slave labourers in the Red Town Hall in Berlin, and collected donations for the victims. Since then, she has distributed hundreds of thousands of Euros to people in the Ukraine, Russia and Belarus. In this way she helps many people to alleviate poverty, to make operations possible or simply to buy food. But she also makes reconciliation possible. She takes people from Germany with her on her trips to the poorest villages and the victims of the Nazi regime. They talk to one another, cry and then embrace each other.

Marina Schubarth has been awarded the Carl von Ossietzky Medal for her work and was honoured by the mayor of the City of Kiev. Four years ago, together with the Russian director and actress Natalia Bondar, she founded the 'dokumentartheater berlin' (Berlin Documentary Theatre), a theatre group made up of 40 participants from 16 countries. They concern themselves with the fates that lie behind words such as war, destruction and slave labour. On their international tours, the ensemble also come into contact with people who themselves suffered under the Nazi regime. One member of the audience in Kiev summarises her impressions: "I was just a little girl when I was put into a concentration camp with my mother. Later on in our homeland, after we had survived this hell, we were victimised by the Russian authorities. We didn't count at all because we had been in Germany. Mama always said that they had stolen our dignity. Today, after seeing your show 'Dancer Behind Barbed Wire' and looking into these friendly young faces from Germany, I want to say to you: you have given us back our dignity! Now I can die in peace, knowing that, as long as there are such people, peace in the world is assured."





**Heim-statt Tschernobyl**

**Bodelschwinghstr. 18  
32257 Bünde  
[www.heimstatt-tschernobyl.org](http://www.heimstatt-tschernobyl.org)**

Nominated by Heike Mahlke

After seeing the devastating effects of the radioactive contamination following the Chernobyl disaster whilst on a visit to Belarus, Irmgard and Dietrich von Bodelschwingh founded the initiative 'Heim-statt Chernobyl' in 1990. The association attempts to help the victims in their own country and to build new homes together with them in uncontaminated areas in Northern Belarus. 50 houses have been built using clay construction methods in the last 14 years.

Whereas politicians continue to insist that it is possible to live in the contaminated zones, the association attempts to persuade people to move. Mother and child holidays prove to be helpful in this respect. Children and their mothers who live in the contaminated zone are invited to recuperation holidays in the first resettlement village Drushnaja, and experience untouched nature, good wholesome food and a comprehensive holiday programme.

The houses are built by the resettlers together with volunteer helpers from Germany and Belarus. The three-week work camps help to make the new start in a strange place easier. Regular meetings, courses and joint festivals help the people to get together, form social ties, resolve school problems and find job prospects. The native population is also invited to the activities. In addition, young people from Germany have for the last ten years been taking care of old, lonely and often completely impoverished people, some of whom had been slave labourers in Germany.



The association wants to do more than just help with resettlement. Based on its knowledge of the dangers of atomic energy, it promotes safe and environmentally-friendly forms of energy production. Thanks to practical help and donations, two wind farms have been built, as well as a production facility for reed insulation blocks, which are used in building the houses, and a village outpatient's clinic, which is located in a low-energy house. Carpentry and plumbing workshops were set up for building the houses, hence creating further jobs. In addition, the association is urgently clarifying the facts about the deadly radioactive contamination, not just in Belarus, but also in Germany, that was released by the Chernobyl reactor catastrophe 21 years ago, and the threat to life that will remain for centuries.



### Campus 15

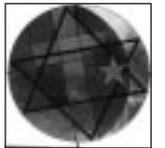
**Kontakt: Hubert Simon**  
**An der Schlade 9**  
**53797 Lohmar**  
**www.campus15.org**

Nominated by Susanne Schu

To secure peace is one of the aims of the European Union. However, that doesn't succeed everywhere: not in the former Yugoslavia, Cyprus, Northern Ireland nor in the Basque country. Although the people continue to live in their homelands following cease-fire agreements or peace accords, hatred, painful memories, prejudice and economic misery still fuel the old hostilities.

This is where the work of Campus15 begins: boys and girls aged from 15 to 16 years old from different ethnic, religious or national groups are invited to meet up. The intention is that these young people should develop trust in and respect for their supposed enemies and at the same time meet youngsters from other European countries.

Campus15 has organised six summer camps in the Rhineland since 1998. Three return encounters followed from 2001 onwards in Western Balkan countries, once the political situation had stabilised there. Whilst the establishment of trust is the focal point in the summer camps, the return encounters are used for joint work on social projects to help others. In Sarajevo, for example, the group carried out work at a centre for blind people, and at the facility for the blind in



Derventa, CAMPUS15 built a garden for blind children in the outdoor area, which had been lying barren since the end of the war. Young Croatians and Bosniacs worked together with Serbs on a project in the Bosnian Serbian Republic, and Serbs worked together with Croatians and Bosniacs in the Federation of Bosnia and Croatia.



This year, the participants from the 2006 summer camp will meet again to work at an orphanage in Tuzla in the north of Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as with underprivileged people at a Roma Organisation in Bela Palanka in the south of Serbia. The participants developed the concept for the return encounter themselves, making intensive use of the forum on the Campus15 website. Enes, a Bosniac from Tuzla, summarised his impressions after returning to his homeland thus: "Before the summer

camp, I only knew the people from the other side by their grenades and bullets. Now I know that they only knew me that way too. But they are human beings like you and me and that gives me hope for peace."



**African Region**



**Mira Mikaza**

**c/o. Institut Des Beaux Arts  
Kinshasa-Gombe  
D.R. Congo**

Nominated by Heinz Rothenpieler

A 72-year-old unwittingly provided a top hit that was played non-stop in the clubs in Kinshasa. That alone is unusual. But the song achieved much more: with a humorously packaged musical appeal for peace, it was substantially responsible for the marauding soldiers keeping their cool in the tense period before the announcement of the election results in the Congo last year.

The hit was written by 31-year-old Mira Mikaza, a student at the National Arts Institute in Kinshasa. In it, he imitated the leader of the UN mission in the Congo, William Swing, who is known locally as 'Koko Souing' (Grandfather Swing). "Whilst we were waiting for the results of the election, we were afraid that there would be further disturbances. So I wrote the song to implore the gunmen to keep cool," said Mikaza to the BBC. "Nobody was in a better position than William Swing to order the fighters to lay down their arms. That's why I decided to imitate him." Mira Mikaza succeeded very well in doing so by donning a white wig and a false moustache and parodying the UN official's American accent.



"I'm Koko Souing," he sings. "I want peace and quiet in the City of Kinshasa and the whole Democratic Republic of Congo - ok right, ok swing!" he sings at the beginning of the song. "When Koko Souing is on stage, no-one is allowed to shoot," it continues. The song combines traditional Congolese dance and music with modern rap and cinematic acting, and lets war 'swing out' in a humorous fashion.

Over the years, MONUC, the French abbreviation for the UN mission in the Congo, has acquired the nickname 'Monique' because, as the joke goes, it is as weak and fragile as a woman who, faced with so many armed rebels, is unable to defeat them. 'Nique' is at the same time a French slang word for sexual intercourse, and some people maintain that Monique refers to the sex scandal involving the UN Peace Corps two years ago. In the song, Monique becomes 'Koko Souing's' wife.

The 'real' Swing had previously been constantly occupied with warding off criticism from all political directions because the UN soldiers had not really managed to stop the disturbances in the Congo. He has not personally commented on his new pop star status, but, according to the BBC, a UN spokesman said the song was "a positive sign that the Congolese sense of humour has outlasted the years of war."



**Husband and wife  
Nicholas Hitimana and  
Elsie Mukantaganda**

**BP 4790 Kigali, Rwanda  
enhtimana@yahoo.co.uk**

Nominated by the  
Ökumenischer Arbeitskreis Ruanda  
(Ecumenical Working Group for  
Rwanda) in Detmold-Hiddesen

A meeting of exiled Rwandans in Detmold eleven years ago provided the decisive stimulus: the agricultural scientist Dr Nicholas Hitimana confessed to the atrocities which the Hutu had perpetrated against the Tutsi during the genocide. On behalf of his ethnic group, he asked the Tutsi who were present for forgiveness. In the commotion that followed, the Tutsi also confessed to their transgressions against the Hutu and the five European participants confessed to the joint guilt of the colonial powers in the division of the Rwandan population. The individual confessions were summarised in the 'Detmold Confession' and publicly read out in a church service.

Nicholas Hitimana is married to Elsie Mukantaganda. Elsi is a Tutsi and lost almost her entire family during the genocide in 1994. The couple fled to Kenya with their first child and were given a residence permit for Scotland. They have experienced healing and reconciliation as a result of the Detmold Confession. They wanted to share that with many of their compatriots and so they returned to Rwanda in 2001. Their dedication has been expressed since then through the Christian organisation 'Link Ministries', which aims to use healing through God's forgiving love as the stimulus for reconciliation and a change in society. In all of the projects, people from the various ethnic groups come together, learn to listen to one another and to support one another.

In an area where more than 80 percent of the population are widows and orphans, 'Link Ministries' has established among other things a collective that extracts oil from geranium plants. From 2007 onwards, it is intended that the project will be economically self-sustaining and pay out profits to all those involved.

'Link Ministries' build simple houses for widows and orphans who had previously lived in shacks that were not fit for human habitation. The initiative also helps 20 orphans to attend school. They had often previously had to take care of their younger brothers and sisters and had therefore neither the opportunity nor the money to attend school.

30 young women and girls, who for reasons of financial need had worked as prostitutes, find space at 'Link Ministries' to exchange their life stories and receive advice and spiritual guidance. In addition, they learn knitting and other handicrafts with which they can manufacture goods for sale.



**SONAD (Sudan Organization of Nonviolence and Development)**

**PO Box 6426 Khartoum  
Sudan  
www.sonad.net**

Nominated by Jürgen Menzel

SONAD is one of the few Sudanese organisations which dedicate themselves expressly to non-violent change in the country. The training and workshops on human rights, democracy and non-violence are especially aimed at underprivileged people, for example the internal refugees in the area around Khartoum. More and more people from all social classes and ethnic groups are now taking part in the events, including political representatives. The interreligious dialogue between Christians and Moslems has become a very important matter here.

The members of SONAD work actively in various local groups and have had an indirect influence on non-violent actions in Sudan. The reason that SONAD cannot take an active part in such activities has to do with the protracted civil war and the Fundamental Islamic military regime, which attempts to suppress and control any impulses from civil society.

SONAD is one of the few civil society organisations in the north that has been founded by Sudanese people themselves. They came primarily from the Sudanese student movement and were able to get involved as an underground movement with the support of the church. The activists protest against the discrimination of refugees and people of a different faith. Once the basis conditions had eased somewhat as part of the peace negotiations, SONAD was able to officially register itself in 2004 as a non-governmental organisation in the north. In the meantime, the organisation has extended its activities to the south also and has been registered there since last year.



In the training and workshops, people who had previously never spoken to one another listen to one another. A Christian suffers under the Fundamental Islamic state structure and hears for the first time from a Moslem that he, too, feels oppressed because he believes in a non-dogmatic, tolerant Islam. A young African, who joined the rebels in the bush as a child, meets an Arab student who grew up in the safe north. A mother from a refugee camp, who has lost her husband and all of her brothers, and a rich Sudanese woman from the north consider together how they can achieve education and a better future for their children. SONAD represents the civil society in Sudan that finally wants peace in the country.



**Middle East, Asian and  
South American Regions**



**“Learning Each Other's Historical Narrative: Palestinians and Israelis”**

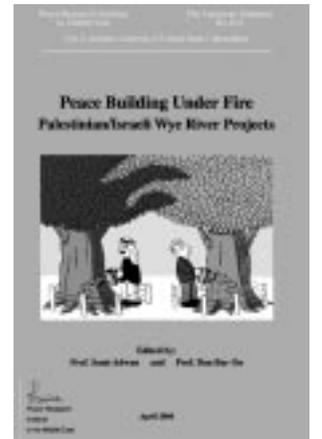
**Contact: PRIME, Talitha Kumi, P.O.Box 7, Beit Jalah, Palestinian National Authority, <http://vispo.com/PRIME/index.htm>**

Nominated by Prof. Dr. Ursula Apitzsch and PD Dr. Lena Inowlocki

The project “Learning Each Other's Historical Narrative: Palestinians and Israelis” concentrates on teachers and schools as the decisive force that, in the long run, can change the deep-rooted, increasingly polarised stances on both sides of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The goal of the project is to 'disarm' the way the history of the Middle East is conveyed in Israeli and Palestinian classrooms.

Teams of Palestinian and Israeli teachers and historians developed parallel Israeli and Palestinian views of history, translated them into Hebrew and Arabic and tested their use in both Palestinian and Israeli classrooms. Presently, no sufficiently broad basis exists for the Israelis and Palestinians in their polarised histories to be able to create a uniform view of history. The project was therefore developed in order to give pupils from the age of 15 years a closer view of the representation of the same events by the other side in each case. For the first time, pupils in both school systems learn not just how the understanding of historical events shapes their own culture, but are forced to deal with the historical perspectives and contexts that constitute the other side's perception of reality. The objective of the project is not necessarily to create a uniform 'connecting' view of history shared by both sides, but rather to break down stereotypes and achieve a more multifaceted understanding for the next generation.

The project was initiated by Prof. Dan Bar-On from the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences at the Ben-Gurion University in Negev, Beer-Sheva, Israel and Prof. Sami Adwan from the Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Bethlehem, TPNA. Together they founded the 'Peace Research Institute Middle East' (PRIME) in 1998, located in the Talitha-Kumi School in Beit Jala/Bethlehem. PRIME is a non-profit making, non-governmental organisation founded by Palestinian and Israeli researchers. Its objective is to stand up for mutual coexistence and peacemaking through joint research. The impressive and important work of the PRIME researchers includes ecological studies and an oral history project on Palestinian refugees and Jewish-Israeli immigrants who share a region.





**Yahya Hassan Bajwa**

**POB 1351, 5400 Baden Switzerland,  
www.livingeducation.org**

Nominated by Sr. Myriam

Decades of dictatorship and fundamentalism have left deep scars on Pakistani society. Poverty prevents children from attending school, and without education they cannot escape poverty. Millions of parents who cannot afford to feed their children send them to Koran schools, because the religious zealots tempt them with free board and lodgings. Hence religious schools have become the only access to education for a large part of the population.



The only escape from this cycle of poverty, dependence and fundamentalism is education. This is where the work of LivingEducation begins. The non-profit making association was founded by Dr Yahya Bajwa and, among other things, has run a boarding school for girls near Islamabad since the beginning of 2004. Girls from poor families and orphans have the opportunity here to obtain a higher school qualification and basic computer skills. The scholars are taught from the sixth to the tenth year, enabling them to subsequently study at a college or university.

In establishing kindergartens in various parts of the country, LivingEducation is pursuing the goal of creating scope for children in which they can learn and build up their self-confidence without social pressures. The kindergarten teachers are trained by Swiss teachers. In running the kindergartens, LivingEducation is also pursuing the goal of convincing parents of the value of school education in order to ease their decision to send their children to school afterwards.

With computer schools, LivingEducation is aiming to strengthen the future prospects of the destitute and to broaden their opportunities in the employment market. The association attempts to convey vital basic knowledge to the destitute by means of health and hygiene courses as well as free medical examinations. The courses are led by professional nursing staff and doctors from Switzerland.



### **Sister Fides (Hildegard) Behrendt**

**Conv. SSma. Trindade  
Rua S. Benedito, 2146  
04735 - 004 - Santo Amaro -  
São Paulo / SP - Brazil  
[www.forumeinewelt-gauting.de/forumlak2.htm](http://www.forumeinewelt-gauting.de/forumlak2.htm)**

Nominated by the One World Forum Gauting

Raised in East Prussia, Hildegard Behrendt experienced the unimaginably brutal revenge and punitive actions of the Russian army against the civilian population in 1945. Threats to life and limb, terror and harassment, slave labour and illness, and the constant encouraging help and solidarity from compatriots led to a deepening of her faith. After nine months she finally managed to reach the West, personally uninjured, by way of an adventurous escape. It was in particular due to her salvation that she felt that God was calling her to place herself entirely at His service.

After years of serious illness, she joined the Order of the Steyler Mission Sisters in 1952, which dispatched her to Brazil. There, Sister Fedes, as she was known from then on, studied mathematics, physics and religious sciences, taught in schools and became a trainer in the convent in São Paulo. She gradually moved into community work and made contact with families in the favelas, the Brazilian poor quarters. At the request of the bishop of her diocese, she began her social work for children and families from the slums of São Paulo. Today she is 83 years old and, despite the limitations imposed by poor health, is still untiring and dauntless in her work to alleviate need, pain and suffering in the violent, drug-infested quarters of the city. Looking back, she views the misery she suffered in 1945 as the preparation for her service of today. She faces conflicts, violence and even threats of murder with her trust in God.



Since 1976 she has established, renovated or extended around 30 crèches, children's homes and youth and training centres in the mega-city of São Paulo. She has been supported in this by dedicated laypersons and even clergymen. Although she herself has no money, she has collected donations for years and keeps in touch regularly with various donors and support groups.

More than 50 families from favelas have been provided with a permanent dwelling. Besides that, she has built a housing estate with 64 houses on the site of a former Jesuit mission. She has also provided accommodation for 22 needy families in the 'Parque Sonya' housing estate. She founded eight social families for street children or children assigned by juvenile courts. Furthermore, Sister Fedes takes care of people who turn to her again and again, and supports vocational training workshops that are attended by youngsters and adults.

### **About the Threshold Foundation**

The Foundation's mission is to contribute to Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation as an all-embracing 'shalom' service (Peace service). We are a small charitable foundation with many personal contacts. We place our trust in small steps, people on the spot and God's guidance. We see ourselves so far as part of the worldwide, ecumenical process for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation which was started in the mid-eighties.



**Via the e-mail address [stiftung@schwelle.de](mailto:stiftung@schwelle.de)  
the following German publications can be obtained:**  
Chronicle of the work of the The Threshold 1979-2004

Detlef Bald (publisher): Crossing Thresholds.  
Collection of articles for Dirk Heinrichs, 2005



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We are a small charity foundation with many personal contacts. We trust in small steps, people on location, and in God accompanying us. We try to provide help in peace work and thus to contribute to the process of peace, justice and the integrity of creation.

The Threshold was founded by Ruth-Christa and Dr. Dirk Heinrichs in 1979. It has a Board and an advisory committee. Board: Reinhard Jung (chairman), Dr. Urban Bulling, Regine Heuer, Wiebke Jung, Jürgen Seippel and Kristina Bulling. Executive staff person: Dr. Burkhard Luber.

The Threshold is a member of the Diakonisches Werk Bremen and of 'Church and Peace' Laufdorf. You can support the work we do by donating, and a certificate will be provided for the amount donated.

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***Extract from the articles of the foundation:***

*The purpose of the foundation is to recognize the causes and practical assistance to solve destructive conflicts and healing of damages in the One World, especially those caused by science, technology and globalization. Thus the foundation has the purpose to contribute to Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation as a universal Schalom Service. (Peace Service)*

**THE THRESHOLD FOUNDATION**

CONTRIBUTIONS TO PEACE WORK

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