



Bremen Peace Award 2015

Crossing Thresholds –
Breaking Vicious Circles

International Bremen Peace Award of the schwelle Foundation
for exemplary commitments to justice, peace
and integrity of creation

„The Bremen Peace Award is of great importance!

It makes us aware of how much disharmony, injustice and environmental destruction there is throughout the world, whether in Ghana, in Israel and Palestine, in Guatemala or in Belarus. The award gives courage! It draws attention to great and courageous people who are committed to helping war orphans, to the difficult reconciliation process between religions, or preserving human rights. They are our role-models.“



Bremen's mayor Karoline Linnert
Patron of the schwelle Foundation's
peace award

Program

of the award ceremony

Welcome by Kristina Bulling,
board of the schwelle Foundation
Greetings from Bremen's mayor Karoline Linnert,
patron of the Bremen Peace Award

Award presentation to Farah Abdullahi Abdi
as the „Unknown Peace Worker“

Music: Willy Schwarz

Laudatory speech: Britta Ratsch-Menke,
Zuflucht – Ökumenische Ausländerarbeit

Award presentation to „adopt a revolution“
as Exemplary Organization

Music: Willy Schwarz

Laudatory speech: Ivesa Lübben,
University of Marburg: Politics of the Middle East

Award presentation to Mary Montague
for her Public Engagement

Music: Willy Schwarz

Laudatory speech: Corinna Hauswedell,
Protestant Institute for Interdisciplinary Research (FEST)

Interlude: Pupils from the Orchestra
of the Gesamtschule Bremen-Ost

8 pm: Invitation to the reception

Morning of Encounters

Get to know the peace award winners and their work
Saturday, November 28th, 2015 at 10 am
in Forum Kirche, Hollerallee 75, Bremen

International Bremen Peace Award of the schwelle Foundation

Every two years the schwelle Foundation awards the International Bremen Peace Award. The prizes are given in three categories worth 5000 Euro each and they will be awarded in 2015 for the seventh time. The patron is Bremen's mayor Karoline Linnert.

Awarding a prize means drawing public attention to issues that would otherwise receive very little consideration. One could also say: We want to bring into the limelight what is good and important, so that the news is not just dominated by what is bad and destructive. Encouragement for everyone involved and for everyone who hears about it.

The Peace Award is divided into three categories:

- First and foremost the „Unknown Peace Worker“. This distinguishes our Peace Award from other comparable awards.
- In the second category we honour an outstanding and Exemplary Organization whose activities serve as a role model for other initiatives and organizations.
- In a third category we award a prize for Public Engagement to honour people in rather prominent positions who swim against the tide, staying true to their convictions and thus serving as a role model to all.

In November 2014 we invited national and international nominations for the award and we received 71 nominations from all over the world. It is always an impressive collection of individuals and organizations committed to peace, justice and the integrity of creation.

In a difficult selection process, 13 individuals and organisations were shortlisted; all 13 are worthy of receiving an award. Three of them are the winners of the peace award 2015:

- Farah Abdullahi Abdi from Malta/ Somalia as the „Unknown Peace Worker“
- adopt a revolution from Germany / Syria as „Exemplary Organization“
- Mary Montague from Ireland for „Public Engagement“

The 10 additional applications were shortlisted and will be presented at the end of this brochure. It is worthwhile taking a look at the diversity of their commitment at www.dieschwelle.de.

For tomorrow, Saturday, we invite everybody to a Morning of Encounters. There you will have the opportunity to directly hear from the award winners about the important aspects of their work and to talk to them. It really is worth it!

Venue: Forum Kirche, Hollerallee 75, Bremen

Time: 28.11.2015 from 10 – 12.30 pm



Reinhard Jung
Chairman
of schwelle Foundation

Farah Abdullahi Abdi, Malta / Somalia

Protecting the rights of refugees



He courageously denounces breaches of human rights suffered by refugees and fights for the dignity of migrants: Farah Abdullahi Abdi from Somalia.

He became aware of his sexual orientation at an early age. Homosexuality is a crime in many African states and so, at the age of 16, he left his native country and headed for Europe. Although he was a minor, Farah was put under house arrest in Malta. He was soon released as he spoke such good English and was able to communicate very well. However, it had become clear to him that the dignity of refugees is permanently violated in Europe. For this reason, he regularly publishes on the blog of „Malta today“ and has become the mouthpiece for many migrants whose problems he describes.

Today, Farah no longer has to hide his homosexuality and the humiliation of exploitive work is also a thing of the past. On account of his commitment, Farah is the victim of hostility, ridicule and even violence almost on a daily basis. He made his personal fate public and in doing so, appeals for understanding for the plight of many unheard refugees throughout the whole world.

adopt a revolution, Germany / Syria

A different perspective on Syria



Defying war and terror: With unerring persistence, local civil society initiatives lead a non-violent campaign for democratisation in Syria. The initiative “adopt a revolution” supports their efforts.

Air raids lead by the Assad regime, Isis terror attacks refugees: It is rare that other pictures from Syria make their way through the media. But they do exist. There are stories of Syrians who still harbour the hope of peace and freedom in their home country and who campaign with great endurance. The initiative “adopt a revolution” draws attention to these activities and collects donations to support them financially. For example, there is the initiative which rebuilds schools and encourages children to think independently. Or the aid workers who smuggle food supplies into an occupied town for the remaining inhabitants. „adopt a revolution” sees its work as an act of solidarity with the Syrian civilian society. The activists are in risk of being politically worn down between the Assad dictatorship and Isis terror. International solidarity is therefore understandably an important sign of hope and encouragement.

» More information at: www.dieschwelle.de/en/peace-award

Mary Montague, Northern Ireland

A life dedicated to peace



For decades, Mary Montague acted as a mediator in the Northern Ireland conflict and made a significant contribution to reconciling the communities. With her strong sense of courage, compassion and justice, she was able to gain the trust of all conflicting parties. She was asked to act as a go-between with armed groups and the police to reduce the use of violence. She has also worked with young people to prevent them becoming involved in separatist groups which could lead them into using violence.

Mary also helped to build peace in other parts of the world. In cooperation with Mediation beyond Borders and other organisations she worked across the Balkans, in Afghanistan and the Sudan.

She is convinced that peace can only be achieved through empowering local people to create their own solutions: „I work to ensure the empowerment of people enabling them to find their way forward, they live the conflict, they understand the dynamics and the drivers, they will find their solutions, feel ownership of the outcomes therefore the peace will be sustainable.“

Courageously Crossing Thresholds: Our Shortlist

We received 71 nominations when we requested proposals for the Bremen Peace Award 2015. Alongside the three award winners, 10 individuals and organisations were also shortlisted. We believe that each one of them is worthy of receiving a prize and are absolutely convinced of their work.

Here we will give a short overview of the shortlist and invite you to read more about our fascinating peace work on our website:

» More information at:

www.dieschwelle.de/en/peace-award/peace-award-2015/shortlist



Shortlist

Knowledge of the tropical rain forest in Brasil:

Benki Piyāko



The indigenous Ashaninka Benki Piyāko leads a persistent and non-violent campaign for the protection of the Amazonian rainforest. Since his youth, he has been campaigning against the ruthless hunting of game and felling of trees. For this purpose, he makes use of contacts to non-indigenous neighbours as well as the networking opportunities of the internet.

Nun and lawyer for the indigenous peoples in India:

Avila Tharayil



Adivasis are Indian natives. Today they are both exploited and threatened by members of higher casts and the Maoist Naxalites, which originally aimed to protect them. This was the reason for Sister Avila Tharayil to become a lawyer. She supports the indigenous in court and helps them to find security and perspectives.

Shortlist

Interreligious commitment to climate protection in Ghana: Relbonet (Religious Bodies Network on Climate Change)



The effects of climate change are already distinctly noticeable in Ghana. Christians, Muslims and representatives of traditional religions join efforts in campaigning for people to adopt a careful approach to nature through awareness raising and environmental protection projects. The religious representatives work together under the motto „Many heavens – one earth“.

He lends the Roma a voice in Hungary: Aladár Horvath



For many years, the Hungarian human and civil rights activist and politician, Aladár Horvath, has been fighting tirelessly against the discrimination and marginalisation of the estimated 700,000 Roma living in his home country. Through his tireless commitment he has become a role model for civil courage for many Roma.

» More information at: www.dieschwelle.de/en/peace-award

Shortlist

Voices of the unheard in Pakistan:

Zubair Torwali



Zubair Torwali risks his life for the rights of minorities: he helps marginalised peoples to develop an awareness of their own cultural identity and, as a journalist, he denounces breaches of human rights in Pakistan, his native country, which lead to public protests and a government offensive against the Taliban.

The balance between tradition and the modern age in Israel:

Amna Kanane



She reconciles Israelis and Palestinians and empowers young women to find their own independent way within a patriarchal society: Amna Kanane is an Arabian Israeli who treads between tradition and progress with a mixture of courage and wisdom.

Shortlist

Breaking the Silence in Guatemala:

ECAP (Equipo de Estudios Comunitarios y Acción Psicosocial)



200,000 people were killed in the civil war in Guatemala between 1960 and 1996. Many of the victims were indigenous women. The organisation ECAP helps relatives seeking clarification of past deeds, strengthens the status of women in Guatemala collectively and sensitizes men to the problem of gender violence.

A creative and clever path towards nuclear disarmament:

Basel Peace Office



The Basel Peace Office uses unusual campaigns, networking between the different parties involved, political negotiations and an internet portal in its campaign for a world without nuclear weapons – and has already succeeded in recruiting a large number of fellow campaigners.

» More information at: www.dieschwelle.de/en/peace-award

Shortlist

Fearlessly campaigning for human rights in Pakistan: Qamar Naseem



He is a human rights campaigner, peacemaker and advocate of a new way for men and women to live together: for the past 15 years Qamar Naseem from Pakistan has risked his life for social justice and reconciliation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a region shaken by crisis.

Beyond Dictatorship and Terror in Syria: Miral Biroreda



Campaigning for peace can be dangerous. Miral Biroreda, the Syrian human rights activist, has experienced this first hand on many occasions. In spite of this – or perhaps rather because of this – he has founded the Centre for Democracy and Civil Society in Syria.

» More information at: www.dieschwelle.de/en/peace-award

Contributions to Peace

The schwelle Foundation and its partners strive for peace, justice and integrity of creation. We initiate and support projects that create and shape society and societal change through non-violent means. Through their work, our projects and project partners support and campaign for social justice, compliance and implementation of human rights as well as environmental sustainability. Overall, the foundation's work aims to inspire other projects to show support for a social change towards greater justice.



Stiftung die Schwelle
schwelle Foundation
Wachmannstraße 79
D-28209 Bremen

Tel. +49 (0) 421-30 32-575
Fax +49 (0) 421-30 32-464

stiftung@dieschwelle.de
www.dieschwelle.de/en
www.facebook.com/dieschwelle

Donations Account:
IBAN: DE 45 2903 0400 0000 0942 93
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To carry out our work we are dependent on donations and thank you for your support.