

Certificates instead of Mutilation

Fulda Professor Fights to Change Consciousness / First Successes for Girls in Kenya

FULDA (vn) Professor Muthgard Hinkelmann-Toewe from the Center for Practice-Oriented Feminist Science (PROFS) in Fulda has been reaping the fruits of her labours: In December, the Gusii tribe in Kenya organized celebrations for more than 2,000 girls whose families have decided for / have chosen a new culture without female genital mutilation (FGM). While the genital mutilation of girls aged 4 to 14 remains widespread in Kenya, despite the 2001 law forbidding the practice, the community of Mosocho Division in Kisii District 500 kilometers north of Nairobi near Lake Victoria rejects female genital mutilation.

The most important persons in the celebrations, which took place in December, the traditional month for circumcision, were 2,000 girls. 10,000 people – parents, clan elders and selected guests and politicians from the region – participated in the ceremony. Until now, nearly all Gusii girls have been affected by the bloody practice. Through the work of the Fulda pilot project "Overcoming female Circumcision!" which follows the approach developed by Muthgard Hin-



Professor Muthgard Hinkelmann-Toewe at the Celebrations of the 2000 Kenyan girls.

foto: private

kelmann-Toewe and was devised in cooperation / collaboration with local people, consciousness and in the consequence attitudes in the region have been permanently changed. The project has been conducted for two and a half years with 210 teachers at 70

schools, and is largely funded by the European Union. It has been extended to incorporate clan elders and political decisionmakers. Fulda professor Muthgard Hinkelmann-Toewe helped set this cultural change in motion. She visited Kenya for the first time in 1985, and the insights she gained found

their way into the pilot project that the Fulda organization "Vivid Communication with Women in their Cultures" implemented together – hand in hand – with the population of the Mosocho Division. All of Mosocho turned out to watch 2,000 uncircumcised girls, festively clad in bright

yellow t-shirts, receive certificates from high-ranking politicians declaring them to be "Omoiseke" (marriageable girls).

The bank account for donations to this project against genital mutilation is:
No. 435 102 03, Sparkasse Fulda, BLZ (Bank routing code) 530 501 80

