

+++ Press Release – September, 11, 2006 – Page 1 of 2 +++

Sakharov Prize Inspires Art Project European artists support nominated Fulda-Mosocho Project

The European Parliament has awarded the annual Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to individuals and projects working for human rights since 1988. Among this year's nominees is the Fulda-Mosocho-Project. The project has been working against female genital mutilation (FGM) in Kenya since 2002. In accompanying cooperation with the grassroots people, the initiator Prof. Muthgard Hinkelmann-Toewe and her colleagues have prompted a shift in public opinion, resulting in a drastic reduction of the rate of FGM. Convinced by these results, among the most successful in the world, the German MEP Alexander Alvaro (FDP) proposed the nomination of the Fulda-Mosocho-Project for the Sakharov Prize. To mark the occasion, Alvaro and the illustrator Nils Oskamp (from the German professional association "Illustratoren Organisation e.V.") have launched an initiative for artists to donate their works on the subject of female genital mutilation for the production of a book. The illustrators are part of the art project "ART against FGM".

Kunst gegen weibliche Genitalverstümmelung (ART against FGM – AAFGM)

More than 100 artists from seven countries have donated over 150 works of art. These will be used free of charge for the work of the Fulda-Mosocho Project and other anti-FGM organisations. Claudia Wegener from the Fulda-Mosocho Project commented: "The women, whether directly or indirectly affected, will be impressed and encouraged by the solidarity and sympathy expressed in the pieces."

The Fulda-Mosocho-Project has received great encouragement in the Kisii region of Kenya, a very traditional area. On the basis of the Value-Centred Approach, Prof. Hinkelmann-Toewe and her team have managed to create a new consciousness

+++ Press Release – September, 11, 2006 – Page 2 of 3 +++

there. Targeted teaching of knowledge and working out new ways in communal discussion have prompted a cultural revolution in the Kisii region, bidding farewell to female genital mutilation. If its work is honoured with the Sakharov Prize, the Fulda-Mosocho Project would be the first German organisation to win.

The Fulda-Mosocho-Project

The Fulda-Mosocho-Project, founded in 2002, is a cooperation of the grassroots people of the Kisii ethnic community in Kenya, the Center for PROFS, Fulda University of Applied Sciences and the organisation "Vivid Communication with Women in their Cultures", Fulda. In a 3-year further education programme, teachers – 50 % female and 50 % male - in Kenya have been trained as respected multipliers. Seminars for clan elders, church leaders and chiefs were the next step. In an equality-based dialogue with the local people, the project succeeded in reducing the FGM rate in the Mosocho region from 98% by 32% by the end of 2005.

47 former circumcisers have been convinced to give up the job. Over 4000 uncircumcised girls, celebrated in major public events as full members of the Kisii community, have been spared the suffering that their mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers had to bear for centuries. For them, human rights have become reality. The project aims to achieve this goal for many more hundreds of girls. For more information, see www.fulda-mosocho-project.com or call: +49 (0) 661 – 65062 / Contact: Claudia Wegener.

The Project "Art against FGM"

Initiated and completed in only five weeks to support the selection of the Fulda-Mosocho Project for the Sakharov Prize, over 150 pictures and comics have been donated from Germany, France, Spain, Austria, Switzerland, New Zealand and the USA. Due to the enormous sympathy and commitment to the project, the organisers Nils Oskamp (illustrator/IO), Marian Meinhardt-Schönfeld (illustrator/IO) und Nataly Brombach (copywriter/author), in close cooperation with advisers from anti-FGM organisations and the participating artists, are considering expanding the project. After the announcement of the Sakharov Prize, the organisers plan to produce a book and a touring exhibition around Europe, with the aid of cooperation partners, foundations and sponsors from the fields of politics, culture and industry. The project is already supported by the Holtkamp printing company, Lünen (printing of invitation volume) and Station.ch (website provision). For more information, see www.art-against-fgm.com.

+++ Press Release – September, 11, 2006 – Page 3 of 3 +++

Alexander Alvaro (FDP), MEP:

Alexander Nuno Pickart Alvaro (31) is spokesman for the ALDE fraction for civil liberties, domestic issues and justice in the European Parliament, and chairman of the “Campaign for Parliamentary Reform”. He has been a member of the German Free Democratic Party’s national executive committee since May 2003. The trained bank clerk and lawyer with German and Portuguese citizenship grew up in Australia and Germany. From 2000 to 2005 he was a member of the executive committee of the Young Liberals (JuLis), most recently as Vice Chair. He is also an active member of Amnesty International, the German animal protection association and the Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations. For more information on Alexander Alvaro see www.alexander-alvaro.de. Press contact: Martina Rozok, Tel: +49 (0) 30 – 4004468-1.

You can find all submissions (selected works as printable files) and the PDF of the invitation volume at www.art-against-fgm.com. If you have any questions on printable data of individual pictures, please contact Nils Oskamp (nils@oskamp.de) or Marian Meinhardt-Schönfeld (mails@mamel.com).

For direct enquiries on the “ART against FGM” project, please contact:

Nataly Brombach

LexxHexx – Die Texte-Hexe + Auf der Böck 3 + 40221 Düsseldorf spells@lexxhexx.com

tel: +49 (0)211 – 58 06 186 ++ fax: +49 (0)211 – 58 06 187