



10 JAHRE YEARS



PeaceWomen Across the Globe  
 FRIEDENSFRAUEN WELTWEIT  
 نساء من أجل السلام عبر العالم  
 Femmes de Paix Autour du Monde  
 Женщины мира за мир на земле  
 MUJERES DE PAZ EN EL MUNDO  
 Mulheres pela Paz ao redor do Mundo  
 DONNE DI PACE NEL MONDO  
 ピースウーマン—国境を越え平和をつくる女たち  
 全球和平妇女

Newsletter 2/2015

TOPIC POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Dear Readers,

Conflicts, wars and violence dominate the news. We hear about them every day. The situation was the same over a decade ago, when 1000 women were nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. It is, therefore, no surprise that we are still here. We are very much looking forward to celebrating our ten-year jubilee with you this October.

Of course, our project work continues as normal during this anniversary year. A milestone in the first half of 2015 was the National Dialogue Forum, which we held in Alexandria in May. Egypt is currently in a difficult political situation. This made it all the more fascinating to experience what it means when over 100 women agree to come together and oblige the government to fulfil its obligations.

Rose Wawuda, our long-time coordinator in Kenya, visited us here in Switzerland in June. This newsletter contains an interview in which she gives insights into her important work and talks about what drives her.

Before you continue with what I hope will be an inspiring read, I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to our anniversary activities in October. The preparations are well underway.

Best wishes,  
 MEIKE SAHLING, PWAG DIRECTOR

# “We Must Stand up for Our Rights Together”

In May, PeaceWomen Across the Globe came together with Egyptian and international organizations to organize a national dialogue forum on the political participation of women. The event was held in Alexandria. Roughly 100 participants from different population groups spent three days working on a strategy for implementing political equality in Egypt.

Egypt’s 2014 constitution has improved women’s rights in several ways. For instance, it contains an article that protects the “equality of women and men in all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights”. The task now is to actually implement the various articles. After all, what use are rules and principles if no one is aware of them and no one complies with them?

Split between roughly ten tables, the participants worked on recommendations collected during three regional dialogue forums held in 2014. The aim was to concretize the recommendations and sketch out the steps needed to implement them. In between the dialogue sessions, three experienced PeaceWomen from our network – Justine Mbabazi from Rwanda, Thulisile Madonsela from South Africa, and Fawzia Talout Meknassi from Morocco – shared their insights with the participants.

### Motivated and impatient

The dialogue groups were divided into different sectors of society. At the civil society table, for instance, participants discussed ways of improving collaboration between women’s and equal opportunities organizations. They called for a database listing all projects and organizations. At the table focusing on candidates for the next parliamentary elections, participants discussed measures for tackling the widespread violence that occurs during elections and prevents many women from participating in politics. The discussions were lively and there was a palpable sense that the women (and the few men) present were deeply motivated to stand up for their

Top: After two days of intensive discussions, everyone relaxes for the final photo. Alexandria, May 2015.



## TOPIC **POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

CONTINUED >

rights and for social change. It was also clear that many of them are losing patience. Rather than just dreaming of a better society, they want to finally start seeing results.

### **“You don’t have to be best friends to work together”**

PeaceWoman Justine Mbabazi from Rwanda is a seasoned gender expert and human rights activist. During her captivating talk, she urged the women in the audience to not lose themselves in unnecessary power struggles. Sixty-four percent of the Rwandan parliament is female, making it an absolute frontrunner in women’s participation. Justine talked about the spectacular change that had taken place in Rwanda, the country where one million people were murdered during the 100-day genocide in 1994:

“I can still clearly remember being part of the Rwandan delegation that participated in the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing just nine months after the genocide. We were devastated and we admired the Egyptian women who seemed so strong and successful. We realized then that we have to work together to make real progress.”

### **Discussions across social divides**

The final dialogue sessions brought the various sectors of society together so that, for instance, journalists talked to scientists, and NGOs talked to government representatives and young people. This type of exchange across all age, religious, gender and party boundaries is new to Egypt, where the society is heavily divided and constructive conversations rarely extend beyond one’s own group. We are delighted that our dialogue forums have helped break down these barriers.

### **What now?**

Now we have a table full of requests, all jumbled up. The Egyptian organizations – i.e. the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, the National Council for Women, and UN Women Egypt – are responsible for taking the next steps. Their task is to

develop a practical strategy that is in the hands of dedicated people from all sectors of society. Political authorities are also points of contact: seven ministers are explicitly supporting the ongoing work. PeaceWomen Across the Globe will assist with the process wherever possible.

Long-term success naturally also depends heavily on how Egypt’s political landscape develops. Will the elections announced by President al-Sisi actually be held before the end of 2015? If so, how democratic will they be? The work is sure to take a long time, and some might become discouraged and give up. During the discussions, however, it became clear that there was no way around this difficult process. As South African lawyer Thuli Madonsela put it in her talk: “It is better to move ahead slowly and take along everyone who wants to be part of the journey. If you speed ahead, sooner or later you will be brought back by those who never really understood what it was all about.”

*More information on the dialogue project is available here: [www.1000peacewomen.org](http://www.1000peacewomen.org) > Activities > Projects*

Women and men representing all sectors of society worked together to come up with a national strategy. Alexandria, May 2015.





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Rose Wawuda, center stage during a series of events in Switzerland. June 2015.

TOPIC **RECONCILIATION**

# Trauma Healing for a Peaceful Future

The 2007 elections in Kenya were followed by a sudden outbreak of violence. Spurred on by the government and the opposition, gangs of young people moved through the country, looting and murdering. Many people were killed, others were forced to leave their homes, and countless women were raped. Gender expert Rose Wawuda Ouko, our coordinator in Kenya, works with women affected by the violence. She also campaigns for reconciliation through her organization Coalition for Peace in Africa (COPA).

*Caroline Honegger, PWAG: What is the situation like in Kenya today? Have the wounds healed to some degree?*

COPA was one of the first organizations to conduct trauma healing directly after the post-election violence. We went into the conflict hotspots and were able to reach over 1 000 women, men and children – both victims and perpetrators. For instance, we trained women so that they could return to the villages and share their knowledge about trauma healing and management. After journeying with these people for two years, we wondered if they were really forgiving each other, if they were really able to talk to each other. So we organized group discussions and found that the trauma healing had actually worked very well.

*How so?*

Many people were able to forgive each other, move back home and begin living a normal life again. The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, which parliament set up in 2008, also played an important role. It encouraged reconciliation by traveling all over country and collecting information about human rights violations. Of course, a lot of tensions still exist, but I'm glad to say that the 2013 elections were very peaceful.

*What role did women play in the reconciliation process?*

An important one! Women in the government and from the opposition were instrumental to the mediation process and in forming a coalition government. Women also did a lot at the grassroots level, such as trying to calm down the young people in the gangs. The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission was also mostly led by women.

*But new conflicts have flared up since then. Last April, the Somali militant group al-Shabaab attacked Garissa University and killed 150 students.*

Yes, the terrorists want to split the population and start a religious war. But Christians and Muslims have always co-existed very peacefully in Kenya. The government and civil-society organizations now have to target the roots of the conflict and address the problem of radicalization. The terrorists do not all come from Somalia – some young Kenyans are also joining their ranks. Young people with no jobs and no prospects will respond to someone offering them a lot of money.

*Your job is not easy. You hear so many terrible stories, for instance from women who have been raped. How do you manage to not lose hope?*

When people tell us about everything they have experienced, we share in their trauma to a certain degree. I talk about it a lot with colleagues and my family. That helps me let go of things a bit. Everything becomes lighter when you talk about it. And of course I see how much hope the women themselves have. When I meet a woman who says, "I have forgiven my tormentor and now I feel better," that gives me an enormous amount of strength.



## Jubilee: 10 Years PeaceWomen Across the Globe

### The World Needs Courageous Women



**Welcome message by Ruth-Gaby Vermot**, initiator of the 2005 initiative 1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize, and co-president of PeaceWomen Across the Globe.

On 7 October 2005, everyone who worked on the 1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize initiative is sitting together in a tiny office in Bern. There are flowers everywhere and the mood is celebratory. We are in high spirits, but anxious, too. We are doubtful, we laugh, we reassure each other. The media wonder what would happen if we really did win the Nobel Peace Prize. We don't know. It is a magical moment, an impossibility. The Nobel Peace Prize does not go to the 1000 women.

Ten years have passed since then – ten intensive, work-filled and at times difficult years. PeaceWomen Across the Globe, the organization that succeeded the initiative, works closely with the PeaceWomen who are part of the ever-growing network that was set up back in 2005. We need these courageous women in Colombia and Sudan, in Kosovo, Palestine and Fiji, in Eritrea, Afghanistan, Iraq and Guatemala. We need their very specific demands for peace, which are much more than merely renegotiated boundaries.

Achieving reconciliation, resolving conflicts, laying claim to human rights, living without fear of violence and rape, going to school, playing, having a home and drinking clean water – this is what true peace looks like.

*For more information on our jubilee, e-mail us at [info@1000peacewomen.org](mailto:info@1000peacewomen.org), or call us on +41 31 312 02 40. We will also keep our website updated with the latest news.*

### Forthcoming events – save the dates!

- October 22, 2015, Bern  
**Jubilee event: 10 Years, 1000 Women, 100 000 Stories, on Münsterplatz**
- October 23, 2015, Bern Bümpliz  
**Jubilee celebration at Schloss Bümpliz**
- Program**  
 Afternoon: Panel discussion, Enhancing Women's Participation in Peace Talks – Challenges and Solutions, followed by an aperitif  
 Evening: Benefit event, 10 Years PWAG – and the Network Keeps Growing!  
 Dinner with cultural entertainment

### Milestones

- 2005:** Ruth-Gaby Vermot, then member of the Swiss National Council and the Council of Europe, calls for the peace work of women to be made visible. The idea is that 1000 women should receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Even though they have high-profile supporters, the 1000 PeaceWomen leave Oslo empty handed.
- 2006:** The coordinators continue working and found the organization PeaceWomen Across the Globe (PWAG).
- 2008/2009:** With its program Redefining Peace – Women Lead the Way, PWAG lays the foundations for its project work.
- 2010:** PWAG develops an exhibition entitled No Women – No Peace, which draws attention to the fact that women are excluded from peace processes.
- 2013:** PWAG runs its first peace mediation course for women in Nepal. It also begins its project on tackling violence against women in Indonesia, Argentina and Brazil.
- 2015:** After spending several years supporting a dialogue process in Egypt, PWAG organizes a national dialogue forum in Alexandria on the political participation of women. PWAG celebrates its ten-year anniversary in Switzerland and around the world.

## Solidarity

**Peace needs us – and we need you! Please support our work by making a donation or by buying a “peace share”.**

Many thanks!

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You will find further information on our events and activities on our website, where we also present each PeaceWoman of the Month:  
**[www.1000peacewomen.org](http://www.1000peacewomen.org)**



Our **Blog** provides information on the work of our global network:  
**[www.1000peacewomen.com](http://www.1000peacewomen.com)**



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