



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  
全球和平婦女

## Newsletter 01/2007

# VISIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY

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#### PeaceWomen Across the Globe

##### International Secretariat

Baerenplatz 2

Postfach 524

3000 Bern 7

Switzerland

Tel +41 (0)31 312 02 40

Fax +41 (0)31 312 02 39

info@1000peacewomen.org

www.1000peacewomen.org

##### Berner Kantonalbank

Account Nr. 16 248.434.2.85 790

PC-Nr. 30-106-9

##### Commerzbank Hamburg-Mittelweg

Account-Nr. 8210031

BLZ: 20040000

BIC: COBADEFFXXX

IBAN: DE12 2004 0000 0821 0031 00

## Editorial

*By Kamla Bhasin, Co-Chair PeaceWomen Across the Globe, India.*

Dear friends of PeaceWomen Across the Globe

PeaceWomen Across the Globe (PWAG) is a peace movement that aims to redefine the notion of peace through bringing together women with varied experiences and backgrounds, from different age groups and many geographic locations and celebrating the work they do for producing peaceful and just societies.

Today our work is shifting from documenting women's work on peace to building partnerships with women's organizations and peace organizations. It continues to popularize our holistic notion of peace. Our strategies are slowly transforming to ensure that we reach out to many organizations and people globally to strengthen our quest for just peace.

PWAG participated actively at the World Social Forum in Nairobi in January 2007. It was a strong sense of solidarity we felt amidst more than 50,000 people during the WSF. It was once again acknowledged that women are key in taking the global peace movement forward. New work approaches have emerged out of the Nairobi meeting clarifying our priorities in the movement. One of the priorities identified has been extensive advocacy work on UNSC Resolution 1325. We now plan to form a formal alliance with Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) that has worked extensively on UNSCR 1325.

In South Asia advocacy work on UNSCR 1325 is a need especially in countries such as Nepal which at present is going through a major social and political transformation. It is just the right time for complete implementation of UNSCR 1325 whose fundamental principles are attuned with the core objectives of PWAG, i.e. women's participation in bringing change and sustainable peace and the recognition of their work and their capacities as individuals. We see possibilities of collaborative work on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 with organizations in Nepal especially because one of the 1000 PeaceWomen, Sahana Pradhan, is presently Minister for Foreign Affairs in the interim government of Nepal—the first woman in Nepal and in the region to hold this important ministerial position.

We have been consolidating our PeaceWomen Network in the world. We are continuously reaching out to our PeaceWomen in the regions; inviting them for different programs and also, connecting with different women and peace groups through them. Partnership building with many women's organizations and peace organizations has further strengthened the regional PWAG network and hence the global network.

Our network is ever expanding and we hope to have strong and visible global women's peace movements through the work of PWAG and million others. ◀

## Roadmap to 1325: Integrating women into all levels of peace processes and in conflict situations

*By Ute Scheub, PWAG Coordinator and co-founder of the German Women's Security Council that works towards the implementation of the UN-Resolution 1325.*

In Berlin, at the conference *Roadmap to 1325 – Gender in EU peace- and security policymaking*, more than 150 women from 25 countries – peace work experts from business, political, women's, and other non-governmental organizations developed specific measures to implement the U.N. resolution. At the invitation of the Feminist Institute of the Heinrich Boll Foundation and the German Council on Women's Security, the experts drew up the cornerstones for a *Roadmap to 1325* through which UN-Resolution 1325 should be implemented in all countries and EU institutions.

Resolution 1325, binding under international law and adopted by the UN Security Council in October 2000, includes three essential 'P's: **Participation** by women in crises, peace negotiations, and national reconstruction processes and the integration of gender policies in security policymaking; **protection** from (sexualized) violence; and **prevention** of war. In addition, gender should be included as a central category in all peace and security policymaking measures.

The call of the former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, for national action plans to be enacted for the implementation of this resolution has, to date, been answered in Europe only by Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland. At the conference, plans were detailed and in part debated as a model for a European-wide action plan.

The critical analysis of the former EU peace and security policymaking was given a broad hearing through speakers such as the journalist Andreas Zumach and the peace researcher Simone Wisotzki, and also through the exchange of the often negative experience of women's organizations in the so-called intervention countries. Not one single woman took part in the negotiations between Kosovo and Serbia, although UN-Resolution 1325 imperatively stipulated it. The multi-ethnic Kosova Women's Network (an organization in which 85 women's organizations work together), represented at the conference by Igo Rogova, has called for women's participation for years. In Afghanistan the integration of women in the justice and police departments has been proceeding in a most unsatisfactory manner, according to a statement by Afghani human rights expert Horia Mosadiq: Victims of mass rape and sexualized war criminals cannot be expected to turn to policemen or male judges. In Darfur, Sudan as well, where numerous rapes are still part of the crisis-laden situation, women are also still excluded from the peace negotiations. The dramatic situation there was described by both the Director of Human Rights International, Lotte Leicht, and Safaa Adam, one of the 1000 PeaceWomen from around the world nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize: Of the inhabitants of the refugee camps, 85% are female. Even while gathering firewood, the inhabitants are regularly subject to assault and multiple rape, primarily by the militia.

The conference also aimed at drawing attention to these acts of gender-specific discrimination and crimes against humanity. The participants demanded concrete action for the elimination of gender-specific violence. ◀

### PeaceWomen Research in Canada

Canadian Voice of Women for Peace - VOW, Science for Peace - SfP and the International Holistic Tourism Education Centre - IHTEC are researching peacewomen in Canada for the  PeaceWomen Across the Globe Partnership Project. Most importantly for Canadians, we are excited by this excellent methodology to record historical documentation of past and present peacewomen in Canada. Audio and video technology is being used for communication, synchronous with Talking Communities and iVisit, being used for interviews. Asynchronous uploading of the research is being housed in [www.nicenet.org](http://www.nicenet.org) which is a virtual classroom. Anyone interested in helping to add peacewomen's names into nicenet, are invited to contact Julia Morton-Marr: [ihtec@3web.com](mailto:ihtec@3web.com).

## Peace and Women in the region China

By Christine Menz, PWAG Board Member, Switzerland..

### Peace, Women and the Everyday – academic conference in Hong Kong

From 26-27 May, 2007 an academic workshop on the topic „Peace, Women, and the Everyday: Across Borders, beyond War, and for Change“ took place at Lingnan University. The workshop was organised by Professor Kin Chi Lau, PWAG board member and coordinator for Northeast Asia, and Dr. Chan Shun-hing from Hong Kong. Several professors and assistant professors attended the workshop and discussed about women, and human security and its significance in everyday life. The results were presented in form of strategic analyses of different case studies. All the speakers are researchers from universities in Peking, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the USA. The different contributions from the conference and further researches will result in an academical book.

### Colours of Peace – Book with the biographies of the 108 PeaceWomen from China, Taiwan, Hongkong



An important highlight of the workshop was the presentation of the book with the life stories of the 108 PeaceWomen from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. The book was presented for the first time in the public, several PeaceWomen from the region were present at the ceremonial. The book with the English title „Colours of Peace“ is written in Mandarin and contributes to making the PeaceWomen of the region known and visible.

The book is the result of the tireless work of Kin Chi, the coordinators of the region and and the support and work of many young volunteers. If you are interested in the book, please contact Kin Chi Lau:

[laukc@ln.edu.hk](mailto:laukc@ln.edu.hk).

### Two documentaries about PeaceWomen and their projects in China

#### ***Making Possible the Impossible: Peace, Women, Nobel Prize***

Kin Chi Lau ist he initiator, together with her very engaged and active coordinators, responsible for China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, of a documentary film about the PWAG project and the PeaceWomen in this big region. The film with the title “Making Possible the Impossible: Peace, Women, Nobel Prize”, shows impressively how the project developed in the region and gives an insight into the different important events that were organised for promoting networking and visibility of the PeaceWomen in this region. Furthermore the film explains the importance and meaning of the project by portraying some of the 108 women.

#### ***Let the World See***

Another documentary with the title „Let the World See“ tells about the impressive and touching life stories of three very different women from China. The film has English subtitles and is very worthwhile watching!

Both films can be ordered from the secretariat.

I participated at the conference and the vernissage of the book and the films and talked about the meaning of peace, women and the everyday from the point of view of the worldwide project. I would like to thank the very active team in China for their big effort and tireless work. It is thanks to them that the project’s publicity and the recognition of the PeaceWomen and their work is constantly growing in China. ◀

### PeaceWomen honored:

- **Moema Viezzer, PeaceWoman from Brazil, received the Bertha Lutz Prize**
- **Sharmila Chanu, PeaceWoman from India, received the Gwanju Prize for Human Rights**
- **Anna Politkovskaia, PeaceWoman from Russia who was murdered in October last year, was posthum awarded the Guillermo-Cano-Prize from UNESCO for Freedom of Press**
- **Fatima Ahmed Mohamed Ibrahim, PeaceWoman from Sudan, received the Ibn Rushd Prize for Freedom of Thought**
- **Seyran Ates, PeaceWoman from Germany, received the Margherita von Brentano Prize**
- **Ma Zhiying, PeaceWoman from China, received the Outstanding Mother Award**
- **Madeeha Gauhar, PeaceWoman from Pakistan, received the Prince Claus Award**
- **Zainap Gaschaeva, PWAG coordinator for the Russian Federation, received the International Human Rights Movie Award**
- **Fadila Memisevic, PWAG coordinator for the Balkans and Southeast Europe, received the Srebrenica Award**

**We warmly congratulate all women!**

## Repressive measures against Itsmania Pineda Platero and her organisation Xibalbá in Honduras

*By Itsmania Pineda Platero, PeaceWoman from Honduras, who due to her tireless dedication for marginalised groups is now being harassed and threatened herself.*

In 1989, along with a group of artists and community activists, we founded Xibalbá Art and Culture, an organization with the mission of rehabilitating young persons with different types of problems—from drug abuse to gang membership, from young persons who over time were stigmatized for their way of thinking, dressing, or acting, to others for being associated with illegal acts of various kinds.

We began this work in response to the radical increase of the extermination of minors and young adults in Honduras, initiating a campaign to slow these tragedies that provoked an environment of violence and fear in Honduras during the 1990s, and simultaneously, to establish opportunities for minors and young adults to integrate into the educational system and the workplace.

In the year 2002, the police of Central America was regionally integrated to create a unified strategy against street gangs. In Honduras, this event was adopted as direct persecution against young men and women with tattoos, these markings taken as the best identifier of persons involved with gangs. In these regional and national accords, there was no space created for the labor of groups working in prevention or rehabilitation, such as Xibalbá. These laws articulated a politics of repression and initiated a period of national insecurity in Honduras. Groups such as Xibalbá, working closely with at-risk minors and youth, were henceforth not seen as beneficial to the nation, but as groups through which the state authorities could find information about or access directly tattooed and persecuted persons.

It was during this time that members of the Honduran police mounted campaigns against Xibalbá. The police demanded that I personally deliver the names of youth who formed part of our organization—a demand which I refused. Because of my refusal to comply in this matter, which would have ensured the detentions and possible deaths of these individuals, a series of measures

began against my person as the public voice of Xibalbá, as well as a systematic persecution of volunteers identified with Xibalbá as an organization.

During the continual detention of supposed gang members by virtue of their tattoos, the Honduran police established tattoo experts as judicial actors with the authority to dictate whether a person should be allowed to live within state society or should be condemned to prison. It is important to realize that Xibalbá has been seen as the singular organization effectively resisting a regional and national application of state repression against a large sector of civil society. Xibalbá has for this reason become a credible database for the national and international press, as well as international investigators from the United Nations, Harvard University, Columbia University, among other distinguished institutions.

The persecution against my person has incremented each step of the way to the extent that I have faced several attempted kidnappings by the Honduran police and the constant surveillance of my activities that has led me to occupy several different living spaces simultaneously and, at the present time, abandon all of these living quarters for an undisclosed location. All of this has been thoroughly documented in different instances and legal orders in Honduras. I hope that you will take into consideration that cases such as ours, which are not unique, demonstrate a state of total insecurity in Honduras up to the official organs established to protect human lives.

To the present day, the repressive measures against Xibalbá as an organization and against those who make up the organization have intensified to such extreme that we had to disarticulate of all public offices and reduce the public promotion of our programs to nearly zero. However, we find our organization strengthened despite these factors, given that Xibalbá is not a building, nor an office, nor a bureaucracy, but a network of volunteers fulfilling an ethical promise to their communities—and risking their lives in order to do so. The moral and psychological damages that we suffer as volunteers are impossible to calculate or elaborate in a single letter such as the one I am writing here, though it should give some indication of the struggle that we face in Honduras, in a society where human lives have no value whatsoever.

For more information visit Itsmania's blog: [www.xibalbahonduras.blogspot.com](http://www.xibalbahonduras.blogspot.com). ◀

### **Goodbye Rebecca and welcome Sara**

**Rebecca Vermot left us at the end of February to get back to her roots: to journalism. As one of the project managers in the secretariat in Switzerland she has been at the forefront of this project since its beginning in the year 2003. We would all like to thank Rebecca for her tireless engagement. We are happy that she remains by our side as an advisor and friend.**

**Rebecca's job has been taken over by Agota Hasenfratz. Our new assistant is Sara Bukies. Sara joined us in March. She is a student of political science at the University of Berne and one of the initiators of the Swiss Socialforum, taking place in Biel in September 2007 ([www.sfb.ch](http://www.sfb.ch)). Sara spent her first 12 years in Benin, West Africa. She speaks French and English fluently and often travels worldwide.**

## Nobel Laureates redefining Peace

*By Ruth-Gaby Vermot, Co-Chair PeaceWomen Across the Globe, Switzerland.*

„It's the women who have to act for their rights and initiate peace work“, said Shirin Ebadi, the Iranian Peace Nobel Prize Laureate at the first conference of the „Nobel Women's Initiative“ that was founded in 2006 ([www.nobelwomensinitiative.org](http://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org)). The conference took place from May 28 until June 1, 2007 in Galway, Ireland, under the theme “Women Redefining Peace: The Middle East and Beyond.” Present were five Nobel Laureates, Wangari Maathai, Jody Williams, Betty Williams, Mairead Corrigan Maguire and Shirin Ebadi – whose presence was for long unsure because the Iranian government had searched her institute a couple of weeks ago and menaced her and her colleague because of their fight for human rights in Iran. Aung San Suu Kyi from Burma was the only Laureate unable to join because she is still imprisoned; we could only greet her through an impressive video conference. Rigoberta Manchu from Guatemala couldn't come to Ireland neither as she is in the middle of the election campaign for being the possible next president of her country.

The five present Nobel Laureates invited 80 women from different fields to discuss various issues. The main topics were the wars in the Middle East and the connection to the violation of women's rights. There were discussions about the patriarchally motivated violence, abuse, honour killings and forced marriages. Shirin Ebadi said at the press conference that it is high time to make the atrocities against women public and to challenge governments to protect women from assaults. However, she added, “in spite of all the adverseness there's still place for optimism, because the demands for women's rights, peace and human security also have to be heard in Iran.“

One of the topics was the suffering of the people in the occupied territories of Palestine. A woman from Palestine and one from Israel each gave an account on their joint work despite the almost insuperable and strictly guarded borders. The Israeli lost her son, a soldier, the Palestinian lost her sister during a bombing raid. Since then they are trying to build bridges of collective sympathy and acceptance. Their work is hard and accompanied by big distrust on both sides. Other topics were the long-lasting, successful and almost model-like peace process in Ireland, the armament insanity in connection with combatting terrorism, the exorbitance with which big powers are enforcing their economical interests and the production and trade of land mines and „cluster bombs“, which have a devastating impact on the civil society in war zones.

I participated in the conference as the co-president of PeaceWomen Across the Globe and I met five of our nominated PeaceWomen who were invited as presenters: Charlotte Bunch from the USA, Haya Shalom from Israel, Terry Greenblatt, originally from Israel and now living in the USA, Farida Shaheed from Pakistan and Nani Zulminarni from Indonesia. It was very impressive to see with which competence these five women enriched the discussions.

The Nobel Laureates affirmed at the end of the conference their conviction that peace is only possible when all people have the same rights. Apart from that peace is a democratic world, free from physical, economical, cultural, political, religious, sexual and environmental damage. „We know“, said Jody Williams in the name of all Laureates, „that violence is a dead-end and that the creation of a just and peaceful world is only possible together with the civil society. We resist all solutions that are a result of violence or abusive religious or ideological influences!“ Jody Williams closed the conference with the promise, that „arising from our deliberations in Ireland this week, we feel strongly mandated by some of the most prolific women peace activists to advocate at the highest level for greater roles for women in achieving peace and combating violence.“ ◀

### **The exhibition 1000 PeaceWomen Across the Globe – a success story**

Our exhibition is still touring around the world, the public interest for it is growing constantly and there is hardly a month when our exhibition is not hosted in one place or the other. Different organisations, women's associations, church institutions, universities and private persons hosted our exhibition. Also thanks to the support of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs more and more countries all around the world are hosting the exhibition.

Some of the countries where our exhibition has been hosted recently are Switzerland, Germany, France, Kenya, India, Nepal, France, Canada, Spain, Tanzania, Brasil and Singapore. To see pictures of the exhibition please visit our website.

And there are plans to show the exhibit this year in Indonesia, Egypt, Rumania, Austria, Azerbaijan, China, Bangladesh, Columbia, Argentina, Peru, Bolivia and Senegal to mention just few of the locations.

We would like to thank Eva Gillis and Lasse Andersson, our wonderful team in charge of the exhibitions, from the first request to consultation, logistics and design. They are often present at the exhibitions, helping with the book table and answering visitors' questions.

In collaboration with Eva and Lasse we recently published a dossier with information for people who want to host the exhibit. The dossier can be ordered in the international secretariat or directly from our exhibition team: [exhibition@1000peacewomen.org](mailto:exhibition@1000peacewomen.org).

The exhibition folder with all relevant information for exhibitors can be ordered in the secretariat.

## **To all PeaceWomen who were not at the WSF in Nairobi in January 2007**

*By Nicci Simmonds, PWAG Board Member, New Zealand.*

We missed you! This January, more than 35 PeaceWomen met in Nairobi at the World Social Forum (WSF). It was our first truly international meeting. The main message that emerged was that physically connecting face-to-face, being able to listen to each other's stories and share personal and professional experiences, is invaluable. A lot of strength and inspiration was drawn from meeting in Kenya.

We decided to organise our first meeting around the WSF for two reasons. Firstly, because many PeaceWomen and other women peacebuilders would be attending the WSF anyway, so there would be great opportunities for networking, the costs would be lower and it would be easier to find funding. Secondly, we wished to influence the WSF by ensuring that a strong, gendered message was clearly heard - that peace and women's leading role in peacebuilding must be pursued.

Coordinating this meeting in Nairobi was a huge challenge because the WSF is such a large, complicated event and there were big logistical and political problems internal to the WSF itself. I salute the dedication of Wahu Kaara, Kenyan PeaceWoman and WSF Coordinator for Mobilisation, for her commitment to connecting the grassroots to the WSF and mobilising their interest to engage. PWAG would not have been able to coordinate the Women for Peace Programme and bring PeaceWomen together in Nairobi without our local partner, Coalition for Peace in Africa (COPA). Around 70 women fully and directly participated in the programme, with many others coming to particular workshops that were of interest to them.

There were certainly a lot of challenges that we and COPA faced together! There were many problems, small mistakes and stresses during the week - for both sides - but we pulled together so well as a team. It was a very positive working experience and we are open and hopeful that there will be future opportunities to work as partners again. COPA also decided to develop a COPA Women's programme from their experience.



We created a Women for Peace Programme for the WSF. It was a collaborative programme with other women's peace organizations like COPA, WILPF USA ([www.wilpf.org](http://www.wilpf.org)) and WILPF PeaceWomen Project ([www.peacewomen.org](http://www.peacewomen.org)), IWTC ([www.iwtc.org](http://www.iwtc.org)), TW-MAE-W ([www.tw-mae-w.org](http://www.tw-mae-w.org)) and VAM ([www.vamother.org](http://www.vamother.org)). The highlights of the programme were the opening and closing workshops. The opening began with just 30 people, but ended with more than 200 participants who came to hear the three speakers and contribute their thoughts to "What Women Peace Builders Want from the WSF?". The three speakers were very inspiring and met with great applause: Wahu Kaara, Kamla Bhasin (Co-Chair of PWAG), and Seline Korir from Kenya's Rural Women's Peace Link.

Shortly after beginning, Kamla was interrupted by wonderful singing and chanting as the World March of Women (WMW) joined us; it was a very special moment and included one of the PeaceWomen from Burundi, Jeanne Gacoreke, who had not known that we would be there. Despite a lack of translation services, the WMW stayed with us to the end and others in the audience provided interpretation. Women spoke about knowing what you can bring before asking what you want (from the WSF), and spoke about offering their vision, energy, commitment, passion and knowledge. Requests were made that the WSF International Council commit to gender parity and bring on more women.

The final workshop was a collaboratively planned event with our partners: "Women Speak Out: Peace in 2007". In both events, Dekha Ibrahim Abdi (a Kenyan PeaceWoman and also a Board Member of COPA) did a fantastic job at facilitating and bringing things together - in some cases having to organise the setting up of the venue because no space had been organised for us! The Speak Out Event and the following day's planning session resulted in many great ideas and commitments for this year. Some of them are mentioned below. Please do let me or the Secretariat know if you are involved in any one of these or have interest in picking up on one or more of the ideas. We can help connect you to other PeaceWomen with similar plans.

- We women leaders in the peace movement will make personal commitments to mentoring another younger woman during the year.
- Focus solidarity at the national level and organise to meet other PeaceWomen. National and regional level meetings are most important in conflict and post-conflict zones.
- Act as bridges to reduce the impact of discrimination, and help rural women and other marginalised women to have a leadership role.

- Integrate peace education into the formal education system, ensure it is gender sensitive, and lobby it as a strategy in preparing citizens to participate in democracy.
- Join in and support IWTC's "Women Reclaim the Media for Peace" week, beginning this October 2007 and taking place annually. See [www.iwtc.org](http://www.iwtc.org).
- Work at your national levels with other women peacebuilders to prepare, implement, and monitor National Action Plans for UN Security Council Resolution 1325.
- Combine issues, condense them and plan holistically – whatever the problem you are trying to resolve.
- Work in partnerships.
- Write down the lessons you have learned from implementing UNSCR1325, and send it to the Secretariat.
- When analysing a problem, remember to link class issues with ethnic/clan issues with gender issues.
- Reflect and draw upon the spirituality of peacebuilding – whether religious in foundation or based upon connecting with nature and other human beings. ◀

**The full World Social Forum-report from the PWAG-delegation can be downloaded on our website.**

## World Social Forum – so what?

*By Emma Leslie, PeaceWoman from Australia who was nominated for Cambodia. In the past ten years Emma has been actively engaged in the integration of peace education into the Cambodian educational system and she regularly conducts peace trainings for organizations.*

One of the challenges of peace work for me has always been how to be strategic and make an impact, versus making a lot of noise. During the World Social Forum this challenge presented itself once again. In a gathering of over 50'000 people I wondered how such an event would and could impact on the world and really make a difference. Definitely such a gathering was leaving a huge foot print on the planet – all those flights, plastic drinking bottles, and so on. But how could such an event really influence the current dilemmas we face as a global community – environmental degradation, discrimination and prejudices, conflict and human rights violations in Palestine, Zimbabwe, Burma, Sri Lanka and Iraq, underdevelopment and empire building, and the other myriad of problems we face. So what? Who cared?

These questions plagued me throughout and while I was surrounded by the most wonderful women on the planet I could not help feeling that as 50'000 people we were somehow insignificant. After all, where were CNN and Al Jazeera? Why were we not making headline news around the world? Why was it so hard to get news on the internet? Was it that we as social activists were so out of touch that we did not know how to communicate our message? Was it we have become so insular looking that we only talk to ourselves and can not communicate our message to 'the other'?

And yet, despite all my questions and angst, somehow the whole experience was not unpleasant. As a member of the PeaceWomen Across the Globe (PWAG) delegation there was so much going on. Everyday we were gathering at the breakfast room, the bus stop, the women's tent and all you could hear was noise. Women telling their stories, women laughing, sometimes crying, women carrying on together!! Here was human interaction, here was that touch of humanity that these days is so hard to find on the streets of New York, in the slums of Calcutta, on a crowded airplane, or in the hustle and bustle of our daily lives. People making connections, discovering each other,

helping those with physical disabilities on to the bus, laughing at the many anomalies of traveling in another country and, most of all, affirming one another in the work that we do and the people that we are. Amongst these women there were so many religions, so many colours, so many opinions and yet we were one. With a limited amount of effort we were bonded at the hip, making lasting friendships and life long partners in the struggle.

And there you have it – the reason for the World Social Forum. Its not a place, necessarily, for strategic directions, or cerebral academic debates. It's not a place for critiquing and assessing and economic rationalisation. No – we have enough of that in our organisations, companies, governments, and corporations. No – the World Social Forum is a little space for humanity. For people to connect. To remind us we are, at the end of the day, all human beings with feelings and stories, loved ones and heartaches, joy and frustration. We need spaces to share those feelings, and to inspire, affirm and encourage one another to journey on. For me the Peace Women's delegation was a source of all of those things and more. As we marched down the streets of Nairobi yelling our slogans in the peace parade, in a childlike (not childish) way, I felt once again connected to the roots of how I came to be in this peace movement in the first place – human beings!!

More power to you all! ◀

#### **Social Forum Biel, Switzerland, September 7-8, 2007**

**PWAG will be represented at the Social Forum by two PeaceWomen who will each participate in one workshop and talk about their work. The two women are Bridget Lew from Singapore, who runs the shelter HOME for displaced migrant workers and Elisabeth Reusse-Decrey from Switzerland, who is the founder and director of „Geneva Call“ ([www.genevacall.org](http://www.genevacall.org)), an organisation that wants to convince non-governmental actors to ban land mines and accept humanitarian standards and norms. You can find more detailed information about the Social Forum and the workshops at [www.sfb.ch](http://www.sfb.ch).**

## **A Moldovan journalist at the WSF**

*By Alina Radu, PeaceWoman from Moldova, investigative journalist and founder of the independent newspaper Ziarul de Garda. Alina has revealed many cases of human and organ trafficking in Moldova.*

A trip by a Moldovan journalist to Kenya is quite impossible, as in fact is a trip by a Moldovan journalist anywhere. Moldova remains the poorest country in Europe, and this affects everybody and everything. But when you are a part of a very important network, the status of your country does not restrict you as much; and by the same token, you can do much more to help change your country's status.

I was one of the lucky members of PWAG to be invited to the World Social Forum in Nairobi, Kenya. After some two years of communicating only through e-mails to PeaceWomen, finally, I was on the way to meet some of them. It was amazing and unforgettable.

For a whole week in Kenya I tried hard to find at least one other Moldovan participating at the World Social Forum. I didn't find even one among those tens of thousands. But I did find a lot of people interested about Moldovan citizens, about our problems and about finding common

solutions.

The first “Moldovan friend” I met in Nairobi was of course Gaby Vermot-Mangold. She had led the first report, the first official research on organ trafficking in Europe; Moldova was a case study. “How is Michail, how is Angela, how is Eleonora?” Gaby asked. I remembered poor men and women – victims of poverty and organized crime in Moldova, who were forced to sell a kidney.

We talked about the victims of baby-selling and illegal adoption, and also about trafficking in children and women. But at that moment we were no longer the only two discussing these problems. Our PeaceWomen colleagues from Mexico, from Sudan, from Pakistan joined the discussion. Everyone of us has stories to tell, everyone of us has experiences to share.

Looking for Moldovans there, I discovered my neighbours: women from Romania, Ukraine, Georgia, Russia, Bulgaria, all of us discussing the same phenomena of transition – women’s rights and peace. I saw everyday that the PWAG network increased, because everyday a friend of a friend visited our exhibition and connected to the project. And none of us stayed silent, because “another world is possible” simply when everybody cares.

With Marina from Uzbekistan and Lyazzat from Kazakhstan, we discussed opportunities to meet with PWAG members in the former Soviet Union. There is too much to do for all of us in these impoverished countries. Gabriela from Germany joined our post-Soviet team – she has spent several years living in Russia and feels our spirit very well.

A week passed very quickly and then we had to go home. A thick agenda of “to do” things became a part of our luggage. On the way to Europe additional plans are added, because other people we meet in the plane have to know about our project and they are excited to learn about this biggest PeaceWomen network in the world where 1000 incredible stories are being lived out.

But I had to return to Moldova – I had to do. I had to meet Moldovan members of PWAG and give them the 1000 PeaceWomen Across the Globe book and share memories and plans. Soon after I published some articles in the Moldovan media so that people would better know who we are. The next step has been to answer questions from other journalists, and to talk about journalists who are members of PWAG. Among them is Anna Politkovskaia – killed because of her strong, committed stand to speak out against corruption and war in Chechnya.

Since then I have had a request from Romanian journalists to help them establish contact with PWAG members in Chechnya, to learn from these women-heroes. After that an invitation to travel to Norway arrived in my mail box – I was invited to attend the International Press Day to speak about the situation of press freedom in my part of the world. I am going to speak again about journalist members of PWAG, about our fight to make life better, and of course now - to meet the Norwegian PeaceWomen.

Being a part of PWAG, I will never and nowhere feel alone. And most importantly – I will never feel redundant – so many things to do! ◀

## The network that sustains us – a retrospect to the beginning of the project

*Rebecca Vermot, former PWAG Project Manager, Switzerland.*

The journey from Tashkent to Bukhara is unforgettable. In the plane, businessmen telephone blithely, while in my thoughts, I remain in noisy Delhi. There, just a few days ago, the brother of a friend set himself on fire. I have just shared in the mourning and incomprehensibility of it. In the plane to Bukhara, I do not yet realize how important this experience will become.

The delegate for gender affairs of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation has maintained over and over, “A key concept for successfully raising political awareness and exerting influence is public relations.” In professional life or in politics, many men – not all – benefit from relationships that are often formed during military service and later reactivated time and again. Women, too, use their business or professional networks today, whether during business club luncheons including an exchange of knowledge, as in the Business and Professional Women’s Clubs (BPW); in charitable and service clubs for women in responsible positions, such as the Soroptimists; or as mentor and mentee in various sectors or through databanks for scientists in the most diverse fields. What is important for everyone is personal contact and exchange.

Bukhara, this oasis in the middle of the Kyzylkum Desert, is breathtaking. The millennium-old mosques and madrasahs, Islamic religious schools exude history. A place for reflection, also for me. Just now I am coming from a meeting with two Uzbekistani women’s organizations. I have requested their support for the 1000 PeaceWomen’s project and really hope that they will nominate women from their region. Although communication was difficult, I think that we understood one another, especially the young woman with the old face and worn hands. I do not realize exactly how attentively she listened to me. Her question shortly after my statement sounded like a cry for help. She had tears in her eyes. “What can I do,” was translated for me, “my neighbor just couldn’t go on. Everything was difficult. Still, she was so committed to the women here and a few days ago, she set herself on fire.” Silence. Nodding. “And she isn’t the first to do this.” The phenomenon is ‘new’, it is explained to me, and women are helpless confronted by it. This kind of protest is new here.

I forget the project and tell about my experience in India, saying that this is a phenomenon that unfortunately also exists in other places. Just this was enough. I looked at the young woman. Not alone with this ghastly problem. She asked me for the telephone number in India. A small network was born.

“What will it take to break the cycles of poverty, violence and discrimination?” asked Noeleen Heyzer, Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). And her answer was: “If we are to find sustainable solutions to the challenges the world is facing, the world’s women must be empowered to contribute their knowledge to the process.” The women must bring in their knowledge, sharing it and learning from one another. This is what happened at the World Social Forum in Nairobi, where over 30 of the 1000 PeaceWomen met, found things in common, and today, regardless of the extent of the geographical distance, work together. Networking means from individuals to a group – this is how we can all become stronger, more knowledgeable and more influential. ◀

## PWAG needs your support!

PWAG still needs your support. Our network has to be consolidated and developed. We want to strengthen our activities in the different world regions. For that purpose five regional secretariats are being built up this year in Uzbekistan, India, Brazil, Argentina and in Hong Kong.

We also want to enable the PeaceWomen to meet each other and to exchange their experiences. The goal of these meetings is the creation of regional and supra-regional working groups and the strengthening and networking between the women and their organisations. Meetings are planned in Azerbaijan, Peru, Bolivia, Middle East, Rumania, Egypt and many more.

More and more we also work with schools and universities to integrate peace education into the curricula, for example in West Africa and different parts of Asia. Peace-trainings are taking place together with the PeaceWomen, women's organisations, youths and the media. The next training will take place in Bakou, Azerbaijan.

Soon you will be able to see all regional activities on our website. Additionally, we will install a website forum in order to enable PeaceWomen, who due to geographical distance or their financial situation, are not able to meet each other in person, will nevertheless be able to discuss and share their experiences and peace efforts. You are more than welcome to share your thoughts with the forum as well.

Thank you for helping us to keep this network sustainable.

**You can invest in the network by purchasing a peace share of CHF 1000.-<sup>1</sup> or by making a general donation of an amount of your choosing.**

### Information for bank transfers

#### For non Euro donations:

Bank name: Berner Kantonalbank  
 Account name: 1000 Friedensfrauen  
 Account number: 16 248.434.2.85 790  
 Swift Code: KBBE CH 22  
 IBAN Code: CH79 0079 0016 2484 3428 5

#### For Euro donations:

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 BLZ: 20040000 (from Germany)  
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<sup>1</sup> EUR 645.- | USD 830.- | GBP 440.-