



## **Who we are: “The alliance for protection of girls from genital mutilation”**

**We can achieve more together, that is obvious. For this reason we have united as an alliance in order to mutually campaign for protection of female god-children in development aid projects:**

### **1. AKIFRA Society:**

The Africa Society acts as a regional and international active organisation for improvement of health, education and development for women and children. The Africa Society campaigns for the construction of womens' centres, nurseries and primary schools. These establishments are shelters and educational establishments at the same time. We have been supporting initiatives for overcoming female genital mutilation since 1999: [www.afrika.org](http://www.afrika.org)

**“Protection of children directly concerns us, as we work as “development experts” or god-parents who want to help development, thus, also in other countries and especially in the development projects which we financially support or in which we work. To protect and help endangered or mistreated children through violation to human rights, effectively and early enough, that is part of the development and protection agreement of NGOs, who in their project daily routine have contact with children and youths and in this way can see signs of possible child endangerment. Development workers, teachers and project staff, in particular, have direct access and contact to children and youths who they support and observe during their development. This chance to protect them – should be taken, in order to really support children during their development!”.**

Dagmar Schneider (Lawyer) and Melanie Feuerbach (Development political scientist, geographer)

### **2. Giordano-Bruno-Trust:**

The Giordano Bruno Trust (Trust for supporting evolutionary humanism) is a think tank for humanism and enlightenment, to whom numerous famous scientists, philosophers and artists belong. The Trust collects the latest knowledge of humanities, social science and natural science in order to establish their meaning for humanistic concerns of a “peaceful and equal cohabitation of people in this life”: [www.giordano-bruno-stiftung.de](http://www.giordano-bruno-stiftung.de)

**“Genital mutilation is not legitimate cultural practice, but a crime! One must distinctively accentuate this, as the cultural relativism, which absurdly protects traditions as oppose to humans, and is parallel assessed, much too frequently, as a sign of “real patience”. In reality, however, it is a sign of ignorance, from dulling compared to the real suffering, which is often generated from “patriarchal” cultural practice. In the case of genital mutilation this suffering is particularly evident. Therefore, it is a scandal, that german aid organisations undertake so little to protect the god-children cared for by them. We must not allow the violence, caused to the girls, to continue to be suppressed, but must do all possible to effectively combat it. “Consideration for cultural traditions” is totally inopportune here: ultimately human rights must be valid for all – regardless of sex, age or ancestry. “**

Michael Schmidt-Salomon, Author and Spokesman of the Board of the Giordano-Bruno-Trust



### 3. Lobby for Human Rights Society:

The Lobby for Human Rights Society acts as governing body and as representation of interests for organisations, who are active, in a professional way, in the area of “sexualized violence” resp. human rights work. It was founded by women, who have been active for human rights and in womens’ organisations for years on national european and international levels: [www.lobby-fuer-menschenrechte.de](http://www.lobby-fuer-menschenrechte.de)

**“A god-mother, who sponsored a girl in an african country, received the following information from the organisation:**

**“Please understand that, in order to protect the dignity and privacy of our god-children, we are not allowed to give information about such an operation on our patients and god-children”.**

**I call that a classical paradox!**

**To protect the dignity through not preventing greivous violation of human rights?**

**And then: an operation? Does this organisation think it is a totally normal OP like taking out an appendix?**

**So much sarcasim and disrespect for human dignity make me speechless”**

Monika Gerstendörfer, Dipl.-Psych., authoress, human rights activist and founder of the „Lobby for Human Rights“

### 4. Trust for the German Forum for Childrens’ Future

Each child has the right to grow up healthy and develop its own personality. This development can be strongly influenced through psychosocial burdened living conditions and health risks and, in a sharpened form, lead to mistreatment and negligence.

The Trust has the task, to prevent health and social deficits. By implementing the Trusts’s targets life and future chances for children and youths are effectively improved and risks duly prevented: [www.forum-kinderzukunft.de](http://www.forum-kinderzukunft.de)

**“The protection of children from violence should be guaranteed from the day of their birth. Female genital mutilation represents a grievous form of violence against girl-children which leads to lasting psychological damages and physical health consequences...The mutilation of girls is practiced in 30 African countries, as well in countries of the Middle East and Asia. Up to 30% of the victims die. The governments but also the organisations who support sponsorships in the concerned countries are responsible to resolutely prevent this violence...”**

Dr. Wilfried Kratzsch, Chairman of the Board, retired Chief Medical Director of the Childrens’ Neurological Centre of the Santa Clinic in Düsseldorf-Gerresheim, co-initiator of the prevention project “Future for Children” in Düsseldorf



## 5. TABU Society:

We are going to break a taboo, in order to protect children and women against ritualised violence: We are campaigning through specific public work and lobby work in Germany and Kenya against female genital mutilation ( in short FGM). Our project work in Africa shows that genital mutilation and other misogynic practice can be overcome in their region of origin. It is our concern to protect girls and women against sex-related violence and rejection: [www.verein-tabu.de](http://www.verein-tabu.de)

**„Each girl has the right to protection against greivous violence – regardless of whether it be in Europe or in the poorest countries in this world. To prevent these girls from futile avoidable suffering is not only necessary for moral and legitimate reasons:**

**In fact, the german donors have a right to know what is intended with their money: namely for education, to grow up healthy and the best possible protection against violence. In the case of genital mutilation, protection should be easy to achieve, many african self-help groups are role models for us. If such protection is not demanded, the aid and development organisations are jointly responsible for the continuation of greivous violence to children”.**

Ulla Barreto, Chairwoman of the Board TABU Society

## 6. Task Force for effective prevention against genital mutilation:

The Task Force for effective prevention against genital mutilation campaigns, as a nationwide network, for comprehensive protection against genital mutilation for girls who live in Germany/Europe and who are, however, subject to this violence. Primarily, the Task Force’s demands are aimed at the political decision makers on state, federal and EU levels: [www.taskforcefgm.de](http://www.taskforcefgm.de)

**“As long as the organisations do not make a stop to genital multilation a basic requirement for any kind of financial investment, they do not only ignore the responsibility of the development aid for encouragement of human rights but, do indeed, commit double deceit: Deceit to the donors, whose heart and purse promise that their god-children will have a better future opened to them. And deceit to the god-children, whose faces, names and stories are used as acquistion to market donated funds – but are not prepared to protect them from avoidable, life-threatening violence, whose multilation has to be accepted and endured”.**

Ines Laufer, Initiator of “Task Force for effective prevention against genital mutilation”

## 7. WADI Society:

WADI have demanded, for more than a decade, a programme for self-help in the Middle East – Israel, Jordan and Iraq. To fight underdevelopment, discrimination and poverty more is needed than just to provide food, build wells and disperse seeds. Help in times of need is a question of granting rights and the freedom of individuals to make their own decisions for their future, not to separate them from such. Therefore, development aid workers must take sides. Because the alleged “unprejudiced” help becomes prejudiced in the worst way, whereby social causes,



in times of need, are left unaffected and structures follow suit which continue to codify injustice and poverty: [www.wadinet.de](http://www.wadinet.de)

**“The comprehension intimacy of the sponsorship organisations for one of the worst malediction to children is, at best, to be classed as cynical. No culture is worthy of protection from itself. Copious mutilation of small girls doesn’t deserve our sympathy, sensitivity or patience. It requires decisive, concrete acts, here and now in order to protect as many girls as possible from these assaults. No one has such good possibilities as the sponsorship organisations. They must not allow further excuses to be made.”**

Avid Vormann, WADI Society

#### **8. Human Rights Services, Oslo/Norwegen:**

The organisation „Human Rights Services“ in Oslo/Norway is one of the most engaged children- and human rights organisations in Norway, if not in Europe. Consequently and strictly, they go forward to protect especially migrant children, mostly girls, from specific traditional violence, like forced marriage and female genital mutilation. One of the leading heads of the organisations, Hege Storhaug, documented in her touching book „Human Visas – Report from the front lines of European's Integration-crisis“ (Oslo, HRS 2003) about the helplessness of the victims in front of our doors. [www.rights.no](http://www.rights.no)

**„The minimum one should expect being a sponsor, is that your girl child is not exposed to grievous violence. To protect the child from FGM – the worst traditional and irreversible violence against children world wide – is incomparable with for example having medical care in general. Hopefully this campaign will force PLAN international and similar organizations to give the girls basic dignity and include them in the same human rights we in the West take for granted. The fact that PLAN and its alike, has turned a blind eye to the terror against helpless children, is actually unbelievable! This campaign gives the sponsors a fabulous opportunity to make PLAN and other organizations change their policy immediately, which means to humanize their profile.“**

Hege Storhaug, Human Rights Service