

agisra

Annual Report of Activity 2017

Information and Counselling Centre for Migrant and Refugee Women*

***“Tear up the cloak of
indifference that shrouds
your heart! Decide for
yourself before it’s too
late!”***

Sophie Scholl (9. Mai 1921 - 22. Februar 1943)
German resistance fighter against Nazism.

The abbreviation **agisra** stands for “**Arbeitsgemeinschaft gegen internationale sexuelle und rassistische Ausbeutung**”, which translates as “Association against International Sexual and Racist Exploitation”. agisra started in Cologne in 1993 with jobs financed solely as work-related measures. From this small organisation grew not only a **professional specialist counselling centre**, but also an important **political activist body** on issues relating to women*, migration and integration. The women* who work at agisra are qualified specialists, and the majority of them have backgrounds as migrants themselves.

Our advice is provided regardless of social and ethnic background, religion, age, sexual orientation, language skills and residency status. We take a solution- and resource-oriented, anti-racist, feminist and transcultural approach. agisra supports migrant women* who find themselves in abusive relationships and are affected by sexism (oppression based on sex), racism (oppression based on background, religion, language etc.) and other forms of oppression. The support we offer to service users is resource-oriented and aims to empower women* to organise their own lives independently. Our work is partisan and centres the best interests of the women* we help.

Self-organisation, to us, means “learning by doing”. With this in mind we aim to combine “heart and mind”, by applying courage, optimism, dedication and specialist knowledge to unite utopianism with pragmatism.

Our central demands are human rights for migrant and refugee women*, as well as legal and social equality for them in society. In line with our motto “empört Euch!”, meaning “Rise up!”, we participate actively in domestic politics, and advocate for the human rights of migrant and refugee women*.¹

¹ We use the “gender asterisk” when referring to women and girls in this document to draw attention to the areas of linguistic difficulty arising in gender dualistic ascriptions, and to attempt to solve this linguistic issue; for example, when we say “women”, we mean to include everyone who identifies as a woman, regardless of the gender they were assigned at birth or the gender characteristics they might present. Women aren’t the only people affected by heteronormative discrimination, it affects LGBTQIA people too. Nevertheless, we still find ourselves in a world/society in which patriarchal and cisnormative ideas dictate everyday life, necessitating as ever the word as well as the struggle for women’s rights. We remain in discussion on this issue at agisra.

agisra

ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES 2017

- Informations- und Beratungsstelle für Migrantinnen* und Flüchtlingsfrauen*
- Information and Counselling Centre for Female Migrants and Refugees
- centro de información y apoyo a mujeres inmigrantes y refugiadas
- centre d'information et de consultation pour les femmes migrantes et réfugiées
- göçmen ve mülteci kadınlar için danışmanlık ve bilgilendirme merkezi
- zyra për informimin dhe konsultimin e grave emigrantewe dhe te refugjatewe

Address:

agisra e.V.
Martinstraße 20a
50667 Köln
Germany
Tel. 0221 12 40 29
Fax 0221 972 74 92
Email info@agisra.org
www.agisra.org

Bank details:

Förderverein agisra e.V.
Sparkasse köln/bonn
IBAN: DE40 3705 0198
0033 5520 92
SWIFT-BIC: COLSDE33

Printing:

Annual Report of
Activities 2017
Edited by: agisra
e.V./Anastasia Dick
Design: Andreas Kunas
Printing: Moosdruck
© agisra, April 2018

CONTENTS

1. Introduction

2. Focus 2017

- 2.1 Female*-specific Reasons for Fleeing and Trauma
- 2.2 Sex-specific Homelessness
- 2.3 Towards a Successfully Implemented Istanbul Convention
- 2.4 Protection of Sex Workers

3. Counselling, Therapy and Group Activities

- 3.1 Counseling and Support
- 3.2 Therapy and Trauma Counselling
- 3.3 Streetwork
- 3.4 Empowerment Weekends
- 3.5 Group Activities
- 3.6 Other Activities

4. Education, Lobby Work and Public Engagement Work

- 4.1 Internal Educational Workshops
- 4.2 Law Seminars
- 4.3 Actions and Participation in Demos
- 4.4 Events for Experts and Educators
- 4.5 Events for Empowering Migrant Women*
- 4.6 agisra in the Media
- 4.7 Press Releases/Statements

5. Networking and Committee Work

- 5.1 Community Networking
- 5.2 NRW-wide Networking
- 5.3 Nationwide Networking
- 5.4 Europe-wide Networking

6. How is agisra financed?

7. Personnel

- 7.1 Employees
- 7.2 Part-time Employees and Interns

8. Supporting agisra e.V.

1. INTRODUCTION

Dear colleagues,

Dear friends,

Dear readers,

It's been an emotional, turbulent year!

2017 was a strong year for women*. It started with the rebellious Women's March in January and culminated in the #MeToo Campaign, which flared up in October.

Over 500,000 protesters in Washington DC and around 4.5 Million people in the USA met for the feminist protests against oppression in all forms. Abortion rights, the right to practice religion freely, LGBTQIA rights. This year started with loud resentment. We are met with the reasons for this indignation on a daily basis in our counselling centre. Many different women* sought us out with all kinds of problems that were political issues and had to be treated as such.

Activist Tarana Burke had already used the #MeToo hashtag to raise awareness of sexual violence back in 2006. Actress Alyssa Milano popularised the hashtag amidst the brewing Weinstein Scandal in October 2017, leading to a huge social wave. People who would otherwise have felt forced to stay silent found their collective courage to speak, to write and to report what had happened to them. Words are powerful. They can change the world. Names were named and public personalities were removed from their offices because of the assaults they had committed. However, #MeToo must not go down in history as the angry lynching of a certain few people. This anger, in these circumstances - for example the appointment of the US President by a noteworthy sexist - was completely justified.

World-changing actions can be inspired by indignation. However, the hashtag must continue to function and problematise the structural dimension of sexist and sexual oppression. This is not just a few bad men. This is also the celebrated child star, the competent colleague, even the beloved father. This is phrases like "Boys will be boys", "What were you wearing?" and "Be more careful what you say." This is legal discrimination (despite "No means no!"), stolen autonomy and internalised victim stigma. It hangs in the air. Rape culture permeates the air we breathe. So we will not stop fighting back and raising awareness of the abuse of women*. As an autonomous organisation of female migrants, we would like to draw particular attention to these structural discriminations. Women* who have no (certain) right to remain, or only have one dependent on their marital status, have even greater difficulties fighting back and joining

in with campaigns like MeToo. In light of the increased populist, racist reactions to New Year's Eve 2015/16 in Cologne that continue to dominate the discourse surrounding it, we want to stress once again: our feminism remains anti-racist!

The election campaign and the results of the general election in September 2017 illustrate the increasing shift to the right in Germany. Amongst the 76.2% turnout, the AfD won 12.6% of all votes and is now the strongest party in opposition to the coalition government. Furthermore, the most problematic, racist terms - reminiscent, by no coincidence, of the Nazi regime - have become socially acceptable once again. The principle of freedom of opinion is being weaponised for the purpose of open contempt for humanity, narrow-minded propaganda and senseless hate. So anyone claiming that Germany has no problem with racism and/or backwards attitudes towards women* is simply not facing up to reality. We explicitly condemn the demonisation of migrants that is being instrumentalised to win political power. Prejudice leads to socially accepted oppression. Fuelling these prejudices in the forms of islamophobia, racism and sexism only drives more divisive wedges into society. As a forward-thinking activist body, we advocate for solidarity in civil society, an actively cultivated memorial culture and political education.

In 2017, as in 2016, we were met with a high need for counselling for migrant women* and the counselling enquiries continued to rise. As before, a major problem for us was the accommodation situation of refugee women* and their children. We demand, as ever, humane accommodation for refugees! This year, our work was as focussed on counselling our service users as on sharing our expertise with other educators working with refugees.

For many years now we have participated in women*'s networks for migrant and force migrant women* and thematised racism. Equally, we continue to thematise the particular situation of women* and stand up to sexism in networks working on the issue of refugees and migration. This year, our work to raise awareness of racism and sexism and the particular situation of refugee women* has benefitted from great attention. In 2017, agisra e.V. was invited to numerous workshops, seminars and presentations. In addition, we got involved in actions for the rights of refugee women* and gave speeches at demonstrations and rallies. A paramount concern for us is the creation and organisation of spaces for self-empowerment.

We wish you happy reading,

Your agisra team.

2. FOCUS 2017

2.1 Female* specific reasons for fleeing and traumas

This year, many refugee women* came to our counselling centre and sought support in dealing with the consequences of sex-specific violence. Women* experience sexual violence in the countries they come from and/or in the process of fleeing them. This can include but is not limited to: trafficking of women*, genital mutilation, intimate partner violence, forced abortion, forced sterilisation and forced marriage. In particular, rape is an everyday risk for fleeing women* that is seen as simply the “price of fleeing”. These experiences often leave emotional scars that appear in the everyday lives of these women*. These traumatic experiences of violence, extreme powerlessness, loss of control, and fear (often of death) lead to a sustained impairment of one’s perception of themselves and their environment, and often have both psychological and physical consequences. However, trauma must be understood as a process. The danger that the consequences of traumatic experiences of violence, like sleep disorders, hypervigilance, dissociation, recurring memories, extreme tension and difficulties concentrating, will become chronic is extremely high in the prevailing conditions for refugees. Reactions to the consequences of trauma are often intensified by having to share accommodation and the uncertainty of their residency prospects. With this in mind, we offer trauma-sensitive counselling and advocate publicly for changes to conditions in accommodation and in the process of asylum applications and interactions with authorities.

2.2 Sex-Specific Homelessness

Another important issue in our work is sex-specific homelessness. Access to affordable housing in Cologne is extremely complicated, especially for single mother*s, migrant women* and women* receiving benefits. For many women*, this means they must live with their children in flats much too small for them without any privacy, they must accept terrible living conditions, and some are even forced to stay in violent relationships. Women**’s refuges have the important job of protecting vulnerable women* from all kinds of violence. However, these women*s refuges are still not receiving the urgent, crucial flat-rate financing. The one-off financing they receive forces the employees of these women**’s refuges to make financial decisions to the detriment of those affected. Women* receiving asylum seekers’ benefits, for example, can have a harder time getting accepted into women**’s refuges because legal and bureaucratic hurdles pose enormous challenges to women**’s refuge employees in spending their time and energy implementing their rights. Due to their particular legal status and the resulting social and legal disadvantages, women* from EU countries need particular support with issues including domestic violence, trafficking of women*, conflicts (especially within the family), financial support, debt, living situation, health and health insurance, discrimination and

racism, dealings with authorities, and access to German courses. This year, the accommodation situation for service users has escalated to a crisis point. The construction of social housing - a fundamental element of a welfare state - has been neglected in Cologne. Women* experiencing domestic violence are often forced to stay in violent and dependent relationships because of how difficult it is to access affordable housing.

2.3 Towards a successfully implemented Istanbul Convention

The convention for preventing and combating all forms of violence against women* and domestic violence by the European Parliament in Istanbul (known as the Istanbul Convention) was finally ratified by Germany in October 2017. In doing so, Germany has made a commitment to preventing and combating violence against women* and domestic violence, protecting victims and putting an end to letting perpetrators get away with it without consequences. We welcome the ratification of this law, but must stress the importance of its implementation in reality. For this to happen, some things need to change in Germany: preparation of sufficient accommodation options in the form of women*'s and girls*' refuges, appropriate accommodation for refugee women* with experiences of violence, sufficient funding for specialised counselling, protection and prevention centres, and easier access to medical, psychosocial and therapeutic help, including to female* interpreters. In signing the Convention, Germany has imposed restrictions on Article 59 Sections 2 and 3. This means that migrant women*'s residence permits remain dependent on their marriage for three years. This fosters possible relationships of dependence in violent relationships. The restriction must be withdrawn, the marriage term abolished and independent right to remain given to migrant women*. The contact rule must be changed according to Article 31, so that it is no longer possible for the violent ex-partner to exert pressure on the children and thus exact further violence against the women*. The responsible authorities should receive training on this issue. The welfare of the children and the security of the victim must take priority.

There is huge room for further improvement. Solutions must be found to guarantee refugee women* easier and more direct access to women*'s refuges. So long as the right to protection for all women* affected by violence is not guaranteed nationwide, a clear regulation for NRW will be needed, e.g. a decree that overrides the residence obligation and accommodation condition in cases of violence, and secures blanket funding for women*'s refuges. Accommodation places reserved for women* that can be occupied short-term must be expanded further. Specialist female* staff must be employed to support women* after experiences of violence. The addition of female* interpreters to counselling and therapy sessions should go without saying, and should be funded.

2.4 Protecting Sex Workers

We have also been preoccupied with the “protection for prostitutes law” (“Prostituiertenschutzgesetz”, or ProstSchG for short) that was passed in October 2016 and came into effect in July 2017. Sex workers are now obliged to register with the relevant authorities, undergo a medical examination and carry proof of registration. This “prostitutes’ ID” shows workers’ passport photos, names, addresses and nationalities. Sex workers’ data is saved and forwarded to the tax authorities. This law, intended to protect sex workers, actually only leads to further stigmatisation. Many women* do not even register themselves in the first place for fear of exposure, because their data being saved is unavoidable. Some migrant sex workers fear their data being passed on to other authorities and/or to the country they have come from. In this way, many women* go into hiding and are driven to working illegally and thus forfeit their recourse to advice and help. In particular women* who work in violent relationships, under pressure and in exploitative conditions are afraid to seek help and support. We therefore demand realistic protection for sex workers that no longer stigmatises, disadvantages and marginalises them.

3. COUNSELLING, THERAPY AND GROUP ACTIVITIES

Since 1993, we have offered psychosocial counselling, therapy and trauma-specific specialist therapy and accompanying for migrant and refugee women*. The services we provide are free, anonymous and take place according to the woman**’s wishes. We advise and support women* irrespective of their social and ethnic background, religion, age, sexual orientation, language knowledge and residency status.

3.1 Counselling and Support

In 2017, our transcultural team offered therapy in Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Azerbaijani, Bulgarian, English, Farsi, French, German, Lingala, Macedonian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian, Spanish, Tigrinya, Turkish and Urdu.

Counselling sessions in other languages were given with the help of female* translators. Taking migration-specific aspects into account, we integrated feminist, transcultural, anti-racist and resource-oriented approaches into counselling sessions.

We acted according to the resources and needs of the women* in order to empower them and encourage them to reach their own decisions. The aims of counselling are the development of new prospects for the women* and the realisation of their own rights. Our telephone hours are on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, which we use for arranging appointments as well as counselling by phone. In addition, we accompany our service users to authorities, lawyers' appointments, doctors' appointments etc., to support them in representing their interests and rights.

Women* tend to hear about agisra by word of mouth or through recommendations by authorities (such as the police, the Job Centre or clinics), other counselling centres, schools etc. Occasionally, women* contact agisra from abroad via the internet, and we advise them by email.

Women* from all over the state avail themselves of our telephone counselling service. Additionally, educators (e.g. teachers), doctors and employees of other advice centres come to us with migration-specific questions.

Generally, service users will come more than three times; many come to us once a week over a longer period of time. The amount of telephone counselling we do is not included in our statistics.

Below is a list of the issues that women* have come to us with this year. Many women* name more than one issue, as they come to us with complex questions and problems.

Counselling: Statistics according to Issue, 2017			
Accommodation/Housing	137	Parenting Problems/Generational Conflicts	49
Accompanying (to authorities, in trials)	191	Paternity/Recognition of Paternity	21
Acquiring Documents/Passport	57	Placement in German Courses	68
Asylum/Protection	212	Pregnancy (/Pregnancy-related Conflict)	50

Child Abduction	11	Prostitution/Sex Work	18
Conflicts with others	50	Racism/Discrimination	63
Custody/Residency of Children	58	Reallocation of Accommodation (asylum)	31
Domestic Violence	156	Residency Status	65
Education/Studies/School/Au Pair	55	Return to Germany	6
Emigration	16	Reuniting Families	45
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	66	Right to Remain	69
Finances/Financial Support/Welfare	174	Right to Remain independent of Marital Status (§31 Residency Law)	24
Forced Marriage/Intrafamilial Violence	54	School	35
Health (physical/mental)	249	Separation/Divorce	120
Health Insurance	40	Settlement Permit	6
Isolation	81	Stalking	14
Marriage	17	Trafficking of Women	68
Marriage/Relationship	118	Work/Work permit	73
Naturalisation	22	Other issues	120

Other issues included: accommodation search, bisexuality, gender reassignment, homelessness, homosexuality, getting a place in women*'s refuges, repealing the fixed abode condition, securing kindergarten places and trauma.

Service users according to age, 2017	
Underage	19
18-25	91
26-35	227
36-45	177
46-55	63
56-65	30
Older than 65	7
Unknown	18
Total	633

In 2017 we supported a total of 633 women*. We gave a total of 3593 counselling sessions.

Countries of Origin

In 2017 we gave counselling to 633 women* from 74 countries:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chechnya, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Czechia, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo, Libya, Lithuania, Macedonia, Mali, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Palestine, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Senegal, Serbia, Somalia, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, Vietnam.

3.2 Therapy and Trauma Counselling

Our colleague Jae-Soon Joo-Schauen offered couples' and family therapy up until the end of the second quarter. In addition, in some cases we were able to offer therapy from female* volunteer therapists to women* experiencing difficulties accessing regular therapy that should

be provided by the healthcare system. We also offered service users trauma-specific specialist therapy and stabilisation.

3.3 Streetwork

In 2017, agisra streetworkers sought out different sex work spots in Cologne: pubs, apartments, clubs, brothels and the streetwalking area in Cologne South. We made contact with a total of 320 sex working women* through streetwork in 2017. A large proportion of sex working women* are migrant women*. We were able to reach many of them in their native language. In addition, female* interpreters accompanied agisra streetworkers to reach women* in other languages.

At first contact, discussion is generally centred on neutral issues such as rights questions concerning health, residency or work. Since July 2017, we have been informing workers more about the protection of prostitutes law and where exactly they can go to register themselves as workers. After a continual process of establishing trust over the course of several meetings, some women* begin to report their respective relationships of dependency, violence and exploitation, and seek further support. In this way, we were able to reach some women* who had been victims of trafficking.

Thanks to an improved ease of access, we were able to reach women who were in seemingly hopeless situations and with dire health conditions. Through conversations during streetwork, it became clear that many sex workers had very little knowledge of their rights and obligations. Authorities demand that they pay taxes they do not understand (“entertainment tax”, income tax, VAT). Often these women* would regularly pay brothel owners a blanket tax, but receive no receipt and so could not even make these payments valid. This often leads to problems when the women* wanted to get out of sex work, as they could not produce any kind of proof of income. Already, the idea of getting out of sex work poses great problems for the women*. Nearly all of them become homeless, since they have no accommodation options after leaving sex work. They also often have no savings, and so cannot support themselves financially.

During counselling and support it becomes clear to all service users that they are affected by multifaceted discrimination. Women* who cannot work due to pregnancy are often dismissed from bureaus with insufficient provisions for work. For example, women* who have suffered miscarriages and bleed for months are forced to carry on working regardless. This means that they can hardly take care of their own individual, psychological and health-related situation. In

addition, many pimps exert pressure on women* to work unprotected, without condoms, in order to earn more money. Many sex workers are unable to pay for health insurance. Furthermore, without access to the benefits system, they have no sufficient treatment possibilities.

All of these women* require restraining orders from the social welfare court in Cologne, as neither the Job Centre nor the social welfare office recognises their employee status. Even the social welfare court has difficulties in understanding the particular individual needs of the women*.

3.4 Empowerment Weekends

In addition to the usually very stressful accommodation situation in homes and collective accommodations, the lack of information and free time are also very stressful for refugee women*. This situation hinders and exacerbates the living conditions of refugee women* and their children. The Empowerment Weekends project aims to offer the possibility for some leisure activities and relaxation, but, importantly, information on their rights as well. In the long term, we hope that the women* involved will gain information, empowerment, and a social network. With support from the Lohmarer Institute for Further Education (Lohmarer Instituts für Weiterbildung, LIW), and one-off funding from the Arnsberg Centre of Expertise for Integration and District Administration, we were able to offer two empowerment weekends in 2017, one from the 12th to the 14th of May in Morsbach, and one from the 1st to the 3rd of December in Xanten. This year, a total of 95 women* and children took part, spending a weekend in nature with hiking, leisure activities and childcare. Each weekend, we held one WenDo workshop and shared legal information with the women*. The participants had a great thirst for knowledge, as well as a strong desire for calm and social retreat. We were very pleased to see them connecting and sharing experiences with each other, and the women* and children rejoiced at the change from their daily life in shared accommodation. For those who were there, it put something into motion. They took the time to share their experiences in a safe environment and inform themselves about their rights. The Empowerment Weekends enable a sense of a complete change of scene. We hope to continue to offer these excursions, as they were of great value to the women* taking part and their children.

3.5 Group Activities

This year, agisra offered many group activities for refugee women, with the aim that they would gain exchanges, connections and empowerment. The topics of the group activities included healthcare, sexuality, escaping violence and non-violent upbringing. The group activities took many forms, including workshops and attending events, with support from female* interpreters. On the whole, the group activities went down very well. Those covering the topics of school, sexism and racism struck a particular chord. Many women* taking part felt empowered by the shared experience, the clarification of their legal situation and the uninterrupted interactions.

3.6 Other Activities

In 2017, agisra offered many other activities, amongst which were German conversation lessons, a weekly aerobics course, and a yoga course. In addition, we organised many free trips to Phantasialand.

4. Education, Lobby Work and Public Engagement Work

This year we were often invited to publicly introduce ourselves and our work. We welcomed the opportunity to do so and presented agisra's work in many different cities at diverse organisations.

4.1 Internal Educational Workshops

Internal educational workshops for our employees ensure the standard of our work. For our employees, volunteers and interns, agisra offered internal workshops on the following themes:

- Counselling skills
- Counselling with interpreters
- Women* and migration
- Round tables for questions
- What is trauma? Sensitising counsellors for working with traumatised women*
- Female* genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage and intrafamilial violence

In addition, we held biannual meetings with our team members, volunteers, interns, members of the booster club and board members, taking place all day and focusing on a given topic.

In 2017 we held four group supervision sessions and four individual sessions for volunteers and interns. The supervisions were held by supervisor Gerda Reiff. This framework gave the women* time to reflect on their work and address difficult issues and experiences. This was used intensively by the women* and they had good interactions there. For this reason, we would like to thank the supervisor Gerda Reiff once again for her voluntary work, as this important experience would not have been possible without her.

[Bild: Betriebsausflug in Königswinter]

18.10.17 Work trip to Königswinter

4.2 Law Seminars

In 2017, we held two law seminars, both of which were in cooperation with the employment centre in Königswinter. The seminars were aimed at employees and supporters of counselling centres, women*'s refuges and other institutions.

Our law seminars were held biannually in cooperation with our expert legal advisor Professor Dorothee Frings from the Technical College of Niederrhein and Mönchengladbach. Relevant issues were illustrated and discussed from legal, political and social perspectives.

The law seminars in 2017 dealt with the following issues:

17-18.03.17 Law seminar: “Women* and Migration. Empowerment for refugee women* - a task for social work? New developments for refugee women*”, with thematic input from Denise Klein on “Handling trauma, loss and current experience of violence”.

17-18.11.17 Law seminar: “Perspectives of refugee women* after the asylum process”, with thematic input from Elahe Sadr and Behshid Najafi on “political perspectives of anti-racist feminism and its application to asylum work with women*”.

4.3 Actions and Participation in Demonstrations

Global flashmob: “One Billion Rising”

14.02.18, Alter Markt in Cologne. Speech by Elahe Sadr.

Feminist concert: "Royal visit in Cologne"

with Les Reines Prochaines on International Women*s Day. 11.03.17, Bürgerhaus MÜTZe in Cologne, organised by Lila in Cologne.

Curb the AfD

Chain of women* at the Maritim in Cologne, 22.04.17. Speech by Elahe Sadr.

Rally: "Solidarity City"

14.11.17, Alter Markt in Cologne, organised by AG Bleiben. Speech by Elahe Sadr.

Speech on the Istanbul Convention at the protest march on International Day Against Violence Against Women*: "Take back the night!"

by Shewa Sium on the Cologne station concourse, 25.11.17.

Welcome to agisra: Open Day

02.12.17, with coffee and cake.

Speech: "Against Deportation"

05.12.17 on the Cologne station concourse. Speech by Elahe Sadr.

Speech by Elahe Sadr at One Billion Rising on 14.02.17

We are here today to show our solidarity with all women* and girls* who experience any form of violence. Welcome. My name is Elahe Sadr. I work at the independent autonomous migrant women*s organisation agisra.

agisra e.V. has been an information and counselling centre since 1993, representing the interests of female* migrants and refugees and advocating against every form of discrimination and racism. We counsel and support women* in difficult living situations, irrespective of their background, religion, sexual orientation, age, language knowledge and residency status.

Many of the women* seeking support at agisra are currently in violent situations. Around 65 million people worldwide are forced to flee their homes, of whom 70-75% are women* and children. The largest proportion of these people stay inland or in neighbouring countries, and mainly stay in refugee

camps. These women* face persecution and discrimination in their homelands not only from the state, but from religious groups or even their own families as well.

Many women* are exposed to political persecution, war, torture, expulsion and oppression as politically active people and have often experienced female*-specific violence on top of this, such as: forced abortion, forced prostitution, rape as part of religious and ethnic cleansing, policing of their clothes and restrictions on their appearance in public (e.g. forced veiling and forced unveiling), genital mutilation, threats because of their political activity, threats because of their sexual orientation, and sexual violence against women* during the migration process.

Once they arrive in Germany, it still proves extremely difficult to obtain recognition of sex-specific reasons for fleeing in the asylum process. Even in Germany, refugee women* are subjected to various forms of violence and human rights violations. They are housed in refugee camps and sports halls, where traumatised women* can have no privacy. The potential power for caretakers and security personnel is very high due to the structure of the camps. This presents the danger that some will abuse their function in the unprotected environment of the camps.

In 2016, many women* came to us having been housed in sports halls despite being alone or pregnant. There they have no privacy, no protection from assault and the hygiene conditions for pregnant people and mothers* with very young children or new-borns are intolerable. With these women*, we composed several letters to the City of Cologne, that no pregnant people, women* travelling alone or people who had undergone C-sections be housed in sports halls anymore. The City of Cologne had previously committed to considering particular conditions of vulnerability. Also, the City of Cologne is obliged to take particular vulnerabilities into consideration according to EU Accommodation Guidelines 2013/33/EU.

Only a few women* and families were relocated from sports halls to different accommodations in response to our letters, due to lack of resources. So the city continues to house women* travelling alone, pregnant people and people who have just given birth in sports halls. The particular vulnerability of these women* was not taken into consideration and the situation has not (except in a few individual cases) improved.

Refugee women* and women* with temporary leave to remain experience structural violence, racism and discrimination from bureaus and authorities day in, day out. In addition to this situation, already difficult to begin with, they have to deal with uncertain residency status: “tolerances” (temporary leave

to remain) lasting years, making them sick with the long term constant fear of deportation or accommodation in camps.

It is a problem that refugee women*, who are often highly traumatised, are subjected to such a huge extent of physical (51%), sexual (25%) and psychological (79%) violence both in their homelands and in the migration process, even in Germany. This refers to intimate partner violence, violence and racist attacks by strangers or people barely known to them, and attacks by other inhabitants and staff in refugee homes and even in the context of psychosocial counselling and support. What is especially problematic is that psychological, physical and sexualised attacks and violations of boundaries in temporary homes, bureaus, authorities and support facilities by professional aides, counsellors and support workers, upon whose help and support the women* are particularly reliant, are not uncommon.

However, it would be a grave error to cover up and refrain from discussing such cases where women* with histories of migration and forced migration become victims of sexist or racist attacks.

In order for people to live peacefully together in a society with migration, it is paramount that we protect women* with histories of migration or fleeing to the same degree as white women, and to educate on violent crimes. Democracy is not strong enough when it only demonstrably takes action against perpetrators living as refugees in our country; it can only truly function when it takes action against all perpetrators, always, everywhere, irrespective of their background.

This is a matter of protecting women* from sexual violence. We cannot do this successfully whilst we continue to reproduce sexism with racism and divide our society. Violence against women* affects us all, society as a whole. It affects women* and children, and even men, irrespective of their background - we are all affected and put to shame with regards to violence against women*. We have been fighting this problem in Germany for decades. Sexual violence is not a so-called ethical problem, it is a problem of sexism and patriarchal society.

As long as Germany continues to trivialise, legitimise, perpetuate and reproduce structural racism and sexism, there will be a fracture in German constitutionality. A discrepancy between the values it preaches and those it represents in reality.

Our feminism will always be anti-racist!

Thank you.

4.4 Events for Experts and Educators

Talk: “Arrival. Crossing over. Perspectives - a view of women and forced migration from the point of view of women’s politics” by Behshid Najafi. 02.02.17, Bremen, at “Refugee Women* and Girls* in the County of Bremen”, an event organised by the Bremen Centre for the Realisation of Equal Rights for Women (ZGF).

Information Event: “Female* Genital Mutilation in Northern Iraq” 09.03.17, Friedensbildungswerk in Cologne, with Shapal Hasan Ramadhan, organised by Shewa Sium.

Workshop: “Supporting Refugee Women* in cases of Female*-specific Violence” by Denise Klein and Shewa Sium, 24.03.17 at agisra.

Workshop: “The feminisation of Migration: Myth or Reality?” by Behshid Najafi. 25.03.17 at the Eine-Welt-Landeskonferenz (One World County Conference) in Münster, organised by Eine Welt Netz (One World Network) NRW.

Workshop: “The Right to Autonomy for Young Migrant Women* - against forced marriage and intra-familial violence”. 4 half-hour workshops focussing on the key points of defining intra-familial violence, the situation, and possibilities for supporting those affected. 07.04.17 with Behshid Najafi and Nisrine El-Fizazi and 13.10.17 with Behshid Najafi and Adrijane Mehmetaj-Bassfeld.

Workshop: “Women* and Fleeing/Migration” 22.04.17 at .lkj) Sachsen-Anhalt e.V. in Magdeburg, by Behshid Najafi.

Input in “Empowerment in Theory and in Practice” by Behshid Najafi, at the “Stepping Out of the Shadows” conference on 24.04.17 in Cologne, organised by medica mondiale e.V.

Workshop: “Supporting Refugee Women*” by Denise Klein. 04.05.17 in Münster, in co-operation with Diakonie RWL.

Educational training: “Guidelines for Action in cases of Domestic Violence in Refugee Accommodation in Cologne” for the social department of the housing bureau in Cologne, by Denise Klein from agisra, Marleena Bamberg from Diakonie Michaelshoven and Meike Michels from SKF. 01.06.17, 12.07.17 and 16.08.17 in Cologne.

Podium discussion: “Aims and Expectations of the Global Compact on Migration”

07.06.17, Berlin, with Behshid Najafi. Organised by the Association for Development Policy and Humanitarian Aid.

Workshop: “Trauma and Fleeing” by Denise Klein, 29.06.17 at the Equality Centre in Herne.

Participation in **podium discussion: “Safe, orderly and regular mechanisms for Children on the Move and other Migrants in Vulnerable Situations”** by Behshid Najafi. 29.06.17 at the Global Forum on Migration and Development in Berlin.

[Bild: 29.06.2017 GFMD Civil Society Days in Berlin]

29.06.2017 GFMD Civil Society Days in Berlin

Lecture: “Particularly Vulnerable? Refugee Girls* and Young Women* in the Area of Conflict between Support and Stigmatisation.” by Behshid Najafi. 17.07.17, at the all-day conference “Sexual Violence in the Context of Migration and Fleeing”, in co-operation with Hilfe für Jungs e.V. and Wildwasser e.V. in Berlin.

Workshop: “Supporting Refugee Women*” by Denise Klein, 15.08.17 at the women*’s centre in Bad-Honnef, in co-operation with Diakonie and SKF.

Workshop: “Challenges and Approaches in Working with Refugee Women*” 01.09.17 with refugio thüringen e.V. and Janaer women*’s refuge e.V. in Erfurt, with Behshid Najafi.

Lecture: “The Right to Protection for All Women*! A contradiction to the situation of female* migrants affected by violence?” at the 40-year anniversary celebration of the women*’s refuge of Hamburg. 07.09.17, Hamburg, by Behshid Najafi.

Workshop on the subject of “Empowerment for Migrant and Refugee Women* in the contest of Multi-Dimensional Discrimination” by Adrijane Mehmetaj-Bassfeld at the all-day conference on migration, “Discrimination and Racism: Challenges and Strategies in NRW” 07.09.17, by the Regional Equality Council for NRW, at the MÜTZe Community Centre in Cologne.

Lecture: “Certain Danger – Dangerous Safety? On the situation of refugee women* in precarious living situations” by Behshid Najafi, 29.09.17, at the Werkstatt der Kulturen in Berlin. Organised by the Association of Women*s Refugees e.V.

Workshop: “Domestic Violence and Refugee Women*” by Denise Klein, 12.10.17 at the Equality Centre in Herne.

Lecture: “The Situation for Women* with no Paper or Support” 19.10.17 at the workshop discussion by the association of women*s refugees in Berlin, by Behshid Najafi.

Workshop on “Young Female* Migrants between Marginalisation and Recognition” by Adrijane Mehmetaj-Bassfeld. 19.10.17 at the meeting of the regional board of experts on “girl*s and fleeing”. Coordination by centre of expertise on intercultural work with girls in NRW and LAG on working with girls in NRW.

Workshop: “Anti-Discrimination” 09.11.17 at In-via, Cologne, by Behshid Najafi.

Lecture: “The Right to Protection of Physical and Mental Integrity for Refugee Women*: Reality or Utopia?” 13.11.17 in Gütersloh with Behshid Najafi.

Participation on Expert Discussion: “Autonomous Organisations of Migrants in Conversation: Integration through Encounters” 14.11.17 at the August Büniger House in Wuppertal, with Behshid Najafi.

[Bild: 25.11.17 Aktionstag “Wir sind gegen Gewalt-tätig”)

25.11.17 Day of Action: “We are nonviolent and against violence”

Invitation to Day of Action: “We are nonviolent and against violence” by the Focus Group on Violence Against Women, 25.11.17 in the Cathedral Square.

Lecture: “Women* During and After Fleeing” 28.11.17 at Cologne Polytechnic, by Behshid Najafi.

Educational training on “Guidelines for Action in cases of Domestic Violence in Refugee Accommodation in Cologne” for the Cologne Council on Refugees, by Soraya Geara from agisra and Marleena Bamberg from Diakonie Michaelshoven, 29.11.17, Cologne.

Workshop: “Female* Migrants and Refugees” 06.12.17 by Behshid Najafi at the Kolping-Bildungswerk in Cologne. On images of women*, identity, lifestyle, career, forced marriage and domestic problems.

Lecture: “Cultural Specificities in dealing with Refugee Women* in Everyday Counselling” 06.12.17 by Behshid Najafi, at the specialists’ conference on “Management” by dominum vitae NRW, in Cologne.

Lecture: “The Right to Protection of Physical and Mental Integrity for Refugee Women*: Reality or Utopia?” 12.12.17 at the educational institution on family in Ibbenbüren, by Behshid Najafi.

4.5 Events for Empowering Female* Migrants

WenDo Self-Assertion and Self-Defence for Women*. Six two-hour workshops in the IFK-Klasse at the Humboldtstraße Vocational College, Cologne. Trainer: Elahe Sadr.

Jan/Mar 2017 Self-Assured in Germany. Four separate empowerment workshops by Behshid Najafi in three different classes at the Humboldtstraße Vocational College, Cologne.

Apr/May 2017: “Forced Yes” – theatre. Participants in this seminar were encouraged to analyse the information, discussion, film, dramatic staging and formal dramatic method of Augusto Boal on the issues of violence, conflict and discrimination. The seminar was held four times for four hours each time at the Humboldtstraße Vocational College, Cologne, by Behshid Najafi, Adrijane Mehmetaj-Bassfeld and drama teacher Charlott Dahmen.

Empowerment Workshop for refugee women*, 23.04.17 at .lkj) Sachsen-Anhalt e.V. in Magdeburg, with Behshid Najafi.

Empowerment Weekends for refugee women* and their children in May and December, with activities and workshops by Elahe Sadr and Shewa Sium in Morsbach and Xanten.

Empowerment Workshop against Sexism and Racism 02.09.17 with refugio Thüringen e.V. and Janaer Women*s Refuge e.V. in Erfurt with Behshid Najafi.

Workshop: “Dealing with Discrimination” by Behshid Najafi, 09.11.17 with Women against Unemployment in Cologne.

Workshop: “Protection from Violence” for service users of Denise Klein with female* interpreters, 14.12.17 at agisra.

[Bild: Teilnehmerinnen* und ihrer Kinder beim Empowerment-Wochenende im Dezember 2017 in Xanten]

Participants and their children at the Empowerment Weekend in Xanten, December 2017

Joint Trip with Service Users to the Information Event: “And that’s what love should be: recognising and dealing with warning signs of domestic violence” 15.12.17 at the Regional Council of Rhineland Cologne-Deutz. Trip organised by Afrdita Asimovska, with a talk by the women*s advice centre, FrauenLeben e.V., in Cologne.

4.6 agisra in the Media

15.01.17 Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR, West German Broadcasting Cooperation), WDR 5. In depth: **“Against Violence” – a Three Part Feature Series: “Part 1: Once a victim, always a victim?”** by Beate Hinrichs and Behshid Najafi.

15.01.17 Westdeutscher Rundfunk (West German Broadcasting Cooperation), WDR 5. In depth: **“Against Violence” – a Three Part Feature Series: “Part 2: Resilience: More Than a Trendy Word?”** by Beate Hinrichs and Behshid Najafi.

February 2017 Bremen Centre for the Realisation of Equality for Women: **“Going in, listening, improving services: experts discuss the needs of refugee women.”**

03.02.17 Report by Weser Kurier (daily newspaper in Bremen): **“More Services for Refugee Women”**.

15.02.17 Report on **“about:fem”** blog about One Billion Rising 2017.

31.05.17 Article on WDR: **“Forced Marriage: Organisation in Cologne Helps”**.

01.06.17 Article on Deutschlandfunk (German Broadcasting Cooperation): **“Protection in cases of Child Marriage and Forced Marriage”**. Interview with Denise Klein

03.07.17 Radio report on Deutschlandradio (German Radio): **“More protection? Cologne-based organisation ‘agisra’ helps refugees in cases of forced marriage.”** Interview with Denise Klein.

06.12.17 Report in WIR IN newspaper: **“The Situation for Refugee Women”**.

13.12.17 Article in the ivz-themenwelten (ivz discussion page): **“On the right to protection for refugee women. Speech by Behshid Najafi in the family education centre”** by Brigitte Streihn.

4.7 Press Releases/Statements

June 2017 agisra and VENRO (Verband Entwicklungspolitik und humanitäre Hilfe deutscher Nichtregierungsorganisationen – Association of German NGOs for Development Policy and Humanitarian Aid) demand **“organise for migrants’ rights and development policies”** of the government.

November 2017: “A City for All: Protest against Deportations” with the Forum of Migrants from Afghanistan, Kein Mensch Ist Illegal (No Human Is Illegal), Antifascist Alliance – Cologne against the Right, Remain AG and Cologne Interventionist Left.

5. Networking and Committee Work

For many years, agisra e.V. has been part of committees (“Arbeitskreisen”, or AKs), round tables and networks on issues relevant to our work on a local, regional and national scale. In this way, we are able to integrate ourselves into public and political discussions, raise awareness of the current legal situation and bring about improvements for migrant women*.

5.1 Local Networking

Remain AG

This working group (“Arbeitsgemeinschaft”, or AG) comprises several different initiatives supporting refugees and aiming to actualise a “Willkommenskultur”, a culture of welcoming. In 2017, this group developed the concept of Solidarity City. In line with this concept, Remain AG organised a conference against deportation with the Forum of Migrants from Afghanistan, Cologne against the Right, No Neighbourhood for Racism, No Human Is Illegal and agisra.

Asylum AK

Representatives from different advice centres for refugees and employees from accommodations come together at Asylum AK. The aim of the AK is to exchange and share information as well as to identify what needs to be improved in the areas of intake and accommodation for refugees in Cologne. In 2017, advisors from Diakonie’s return advice, the Remain AG and the head of the immigration authorities in Cologne were invited to work together, and conversations were held with various people involved in local politics. In addition, our colleague Denise Klein presented the anti-domestic violence guidelines for employees at accommodations.

AK against Violence against Women

This AK meets four times a year. The organisations and institutions represented include advice centres, judiciaries, the police, the department for health, emergency accommodations for women* and girls, and clinics. For International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the AK organised an information event in the cathedral square with the motto “We’re nonviolent and anti-violence. Let’s talk!” There were film showings and live music performances. The AK also set up an information stall at the Christmas Market. Many people knew this AK by its former name, AK against Violence against Women* and Children.

AK Lila in Cologne. Association of autonomous women**’s initiatives against violence against women* and girls*.

This AK meets roughly six times a year. Representatives of the initiatives involved exchange expertise, and plan and organise public awareness actions against violence against women* and girls*. In 2017, they put on a feminist concert in the MÜTZe Community Centre headlined by Les Reines Prochaines on International Women’s Day. Around 200 women* came to see the “Queens”, some of whom from outside Cologne. At a related event, there was also a party with Querbeet music from Djane and Miss Hi-Fi. In addition, AK Lila in Cologne organised the “Take back the night” protest march on 25.11.17 for International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The AK addressed the Lady Mayoress of Cologne in an open letter

demanding that the city of Cologne create an initiative for more safety for women* and girls* in Cologne.

AK Sex Work

In this AK, organisations and institutions working on the issue of sex work in Cologne come together to share information on, and improve, the situation for sex working women*. This year, the AK has been intensely occupied with the “protection for prostitutes law” (“Prostituiererschutzgesetz”, or ProstSchG for short) in Cologne. A round table was set up including all the relevant and responsible authorities. This round table met three times in 2017 and enabled a professional exchange regarding the practical implementation of the law and cooperation with advice centres.

AK Social Work with EU Citizens

This AK comprises representatives of a broad variety of advice centres and institutions, as well as establishments of the City of Cologne. The experts involved are people professionally confronted with problems for EU citizens settled in Cologne. In the AK they support each other reciprocally in their professional approaches to issues such as lack of health insurance, precarious work and housing contracts, and homelessness, among many others. In particular, the changes made to the law on 29.12.16 have exacerbated the situation enormously for certain groups of EU citizens. The austerity measures put in place have made the right to the bare minimum needed to live impossible to guarantee. This is critical to note, as the threat of homelessness, vulnerability, poverty and the enormous danger of exploitation are the practical consequences this carries.

Advice Commission for Immigrants' Rights

The Advice Commission for Immigrants' Rights in Cologne was established by the City of Cologne in 2005. The Commission develops advice and recommendations for local and regional regulations as well as for unique extenuating circumstances. Denise Klein represents us on the commission as a representative for advice centres for refugees. Aside from dealing with individual cases, there was a particular focus this year on the implementation of the decision of the main committee to campaign on the right to remain.

Cologne Forum against Racism

The Cologne Forum against Racism sees itself as a professional, working and networking committee. It guides city-level measures with regards to information and clarification of racism and discrimination to inhabitants as well as combatting and eliminating racist structures. It

develops suggestions, initiatives and projects to this end. agisra was one of the cofounding organisations of the Forum in 2009 and became an active member again by request in September 2017.

Cologne Network against Domestic Violence

In the Cologne Network against Domestic Violence, representatives of intervention centres and protection centres, autonomous women's advice centres and women's refuges, child protection centres, perpetrator counselling, Cologne police, the public prosecutor's office coordinate under the guidance of the youth welfare office to work towards the actualisation of protection from violence in Cologne. The "Cologne Guidelines for Dealing with Domestic Violence in Refugee Accommodation" were published this year. Furthermore, this was accompanied with initiating trainings for people working with refugees on behalf of the network.

Network for Advice for People without Papers

This network is a coordination of five advice centres financed by the City of Cologne for advising people without papers. They hold professional exchanges, work on managing "poverty insurance" and attempt to alleviate the situation for people without papers.

No Human is Illegal Network

The Cologne network meets twice a month and has supported refugees and people without papers for over 15 years in their struggle for human rights and human dignity.

5.2 NRW-wide Networking

AK Women in Need

The Women in Need AK is an NRW-wide network that participates in different regional associations and agencies. The living situation for women* in need is regularly thematised in a specialist conference to make political demands on a regional level. Discussions were held on the themes of women's politics in election and the introduction of the Violence against Women helpline.

Expert Women's Committee on Equality

Various regional women's advice centres and women's refuges belong to the women's committee. The members of the expert women's committee work on issues in women's politics relating to their practice and discuss current concerns and experiences derived from

their practice. This year, this included current information on national and regional politics, for example, as well as the association, forms of digital violence and presenting FAQs on legal claims to protection and help in cases of violence.

Network for Autonomy Right of Young Female* Migrants

This NRW-wide network co-initiated by agisra meets twice a year to share experiences and discuss current issues. Taking part are organisations and statewide associations working with migrant and refugee women*. Their focus in 2017 was their textual analysis of the new “combating child marriage” law and its consequences for counselling and supporting victims.

NRW Networking Meeting for Specialist Advice Centres for Victims of Trafficking of Women*/Humans

The specialist advice centres for victims of trafficking of women*/humans in NRW is subsidised by the ministry of the state. All eight specialised advice centres are connected in this working group. They have offered advice, support and accompanying services since 1987. The networking meeting gives them the chance for professional discussion and working on the challenges in supporting victims.

Round Table against Genital Mutilation of Girl*s

At this round table, representatives from politics, ministries, authorities, professional associations, human rights organisations and advice centres work together to deal with the issue of genital mutilation on a statewide scale. Together they discuss supporting survivors and protecting girl*s from genital mutilation. They invite various experts to shed light on different professional areas, including but not limited to systemic energetic therapy, and gynaecological problems arising as a consequence in refugee women during pregnancy and labour. The meeting always takes place in the state ministry of NRW. Ina Scharrenbach, the minister for homes, community, buildings and equality, presented herself at the round table on 13.12.17 and learned about our work.

5.3 Nationwide Networking

BuKo (“Bundeskongress”, the Federal Congress)

The specialist advice centre against forced marriage in Bielefeld hosted this year’s annual national expert conference on forced marriage. This is a nationwide conference that consists of female experts from crisis oriented institutions and advice centres for forced marriage. Their focal themes this year were dealing with the law for combating child marriage that was

implemented in July 2017 as well as the specific needs of the target group of refugee girl*s and young women*. agisra has been a part of this national conference by request since November 2017.

DaMigra (“Dachverband der Migrantinnen*organisationen”, the Umbrella Association of Migrant Women*s Organisations)

DaMigra e.V., the Umbrella Association of Migrant Women*s Organisations, is a nationwide umbrella organisation, comprising exclusively women* regardless of heritage, that represents the interests and demands of autonomous organisations of migrant women* in politics, in public and in the media. agisra e.V. was a cofounder of this project, and a financial supporter from 2013 until 30.09.16. Since 2016, DaMigra has been financially and materially independent. agisra remains a member of DaMigra and participates in their activities.

Integra: German Network for the Elimination of Female* Genital Mutilation

Integra’s current 29 organisations and individual members engage within the scope of their respective intentions on a national and/or international scale in the fight for the abolition of female* genital mutilation. In 2016, agisra conducted qualitative interviews with Eritrean, Somali, Kenyan and Ethiopian communities in Cologne. The study can be found at www.netwerk-integra.de. In addition, a handout accompanying the study was published in January 2017. In 2017, in accordance with the studies funded by the national ministry for families, senior citizens, women and youth, Integra filed applications for projects for refugee women regarding female* genital mutilation and the protection of girl*s in cooperation with youth welfare bureaus.

KOK (National Coordination Group, or “Koordinierungskreis”, against Human Trafficking)

The KOK is an umbrella organisation of specialist advice centres for survivors of human trafficking, women*s organisations and other organisations in Germany working on the issue of human trafficking and violence against migrant women*. In 2017, their focal themes were: fleeing and human trafficking; protection; accommodation possibilities; and support structures for women* and minors.

5.4 Europe-wide Networking

PICUM (Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants)

PICUM is a Europe-wide network of NGOs that advocates for the human rights of undocumented migrants through public outreach work and lobbying. agisra e.V. has been a part of this network for years, and advocates for the rights of women* without papers. The member organisations are organised into subgroups working on the following issues: access to justice for undocumented women (agisra); borders and detention; undocumented children; youth and families; access to healthcare for undocumented migrants; labour rights of undocumented migrants. Behshid Najafi was elected to the executive board in June 2016.

PICUM publishes regular newsletters containing information on the worldwide situation of irregular migration.

6. How is agisra e.V. funded?

The funding of our work comprises of grants from the state and local government, individual donations, subsidies from foundations and professional fees.

The grants from the City of Cologne did not quite cover the rent and office expenses alone. One peripatetic aid position was further supported by the City of Cologne in accordance with §67 SGB XII.

In 2017, 1.5 positions are financed by the Ministry for Housing, Community, Buildings and Equality (“Heimat, Kommunales, Bau und Gleichstellung”, HKBG), as well as a position for the “Autonomous Future – against Violence in the Name of Honour” project. The equity ratio in the positions funded by the state of NRW amounts to 15% of personal costs.

80% of one position is funded by the Jobcentre in accordance with §16e SGB II; the remaining 20% is supported by the City of Cologne as part of “We in the District” (“Wir im Quartier”).

As part of the support for autonomous organisations of migrant women from the NRW Ministry of Work, Integration and Social Issues (“Ministerium für Arbeit, Integration und Soziales”, MAIS), we received financing for one project (0.25% of a position), on the issue “End Female* Genital Mutilation! – the Right to Bodily Integrity”.

We received financing for just about half of one position from the NRW HKBG Ministry for psychosocial support for traumatised refugee women* and group activities for refugee women*.

The City of Cologne funded counselling for refugee women* in the form of one position. In addition to this, we also received a grant from the City of Cologne for counselling for people without papers. Since 15.03.17 we have been running a project funded by the EU (FEAD) supporting the social integration of newly migrated EU citizens (BONVENA). Within this framework we financed one position. Voluntary work and group meetings were supported by the "KOMM-AN NRW" programme.

This year, as ever, we received a donation from the Lohmarer Institute for Further Education ("Lohmarer Institut für Weiterbildung", LIW) for educational work in schools. The donation for 2017 was notably higher, which enabled us to run more Empowerment Weekends. In addition to this, we received an even greater donation from Soroptimist International. We would like to express great thanks to Phantasialand as well. Through sponsoring, we were pleased to offer day trips to our service users several times throughout the year. A further source of income was the fees we received for seminars, lectures and other events.

We are reliant on donations in order to cover material costs and equity payments. In addition to this, in 2017 we took on service users' additional travel costs. We also used more donation money than last year to help service users in emergency situations.

We would be delighted to welcome you to our booster club as a member. Information and our forms on the application process can be found on our website as well as at the back of this booklet.

7. Personnel

7.1 Employees

After a session of intensive organisational counselling in 2016, we decided that from November 2016, we would work with an elected leading team, consisting of Behshid Najafi, Denise Klein, Nezihe Gökkus and Shewa Sium.

Adrijane Mehmetaj-Bassfeld has a diploma in social education (FH) and an MA in Empowerment Studies. She has been an employee at agisra since April 2017. Her professional specialisms include psychosocial counselling, support, and accompanying services, partially within the framework of the FEAD project BONVENA. She represents agisra in the AK against Violence against Women, the Cologne Forum against Racism, and BuKo.

Afrdita Asimovska has been working at agisra since October 2017, organising group activities and assisting in counselling and accompanying appointments. She interprets in Albanian, Bulgarian, Italian, Macedonian, Serbian and Turkish.

Aleksandra Gajek has an MA in German Studies and is currently studying social work alongside working at agisra. Her professional specialisms are psychosocial counselling and streetwork. She represents agisra in the AK Women against Violence and has been on maternity leave since March 2016.

Behshid Najafi, the longest serving team member at agisra, is qualified in education and political science. Her professional specialisms are psychosocial counselling and support. She represents agisra in the Network for the Right to Autonomy for Young Female* Migrants and is on the executive board of PICUM.

Denise Klein has a diploma in education and is a specialist counsellor in psychotraumatology (DeGPT/BAG-TP). Her professional specialisms are psychosocial counselling, support, and trauma-specific stabilisation. She represents agisra in the Network for Advice for People without Papers and in the Cologne Network against Domestic Violence. She is a representative member of the Immigrants' Rights Advice Commission of Cologne ("Ausländerrechtliche Beratungskommission Köln", ABK).

Elahe Sadr is a trained sports teacher, motopedic therapist and WenDo trainer. Her professional specialisms include psychosocial counselling and support. She also offers an aerobics course for women*. She represents agisra in the network No Human Is Illegal.

Halima Abdul has been working at agisra since January 2016, assisting in counselling and accompanying appointments and translating in Amharic, Arabic, Hindi, Kurdish, Saho, Tigre (aka Tigrayit), Tigrinya and Urdu.

Jae-Soon Joo-Schauen was an employee of agisra until the end of June 2017. She has a diploma in education and is a trained couples' and family therapist. Her professional specialisms included transcultural and systemic therapy, counselling and educational work.

Jimena Escobar Torres has a BA in social work and has worked at agisra since July 2017. Her professional specialisms lie in psychosocial counselling and support.

Kelechi Monika Mennel studied popular cultures and psychology. She previously led the Makasi department specialising in human trafficking of the specialist centre for trafficking of women* migration amongst women* in Zurich. She has worked as a counsellor at agisra since October 2017.

[BILD: Teamfoto am 13.12.2017]

Team photo, 13.12.17

Nezihe Gökkus is in charge of our accounts. She is responsible for the management and finances of agisra.

Nisrine El Fizazi has a BA in social work and has worked at agisra since January 2017. She holds counselling sessions in German, English and Arabic. Her professional specialisms include forced marriage, psychosocial counselling and support.

Sevda Aliyeva has worked at agisra since February 2017 and assists in accompanying and counselling. She interprets in Azeri, Russian and Turkish.

Shewa Sium has a diploma in education. Her professional specialisms include psychosocial counselling and support as well as streetwork in sex work areas. She represents agisra in AK Sex Work, the NRW Round Table against Genital Mutilation of Girl*s and the Integra Network.

Soraya Geara has a diploma in education and is a trained resource-oriented counsellor specialising in trauma. She has worked at agisra since May 2016. Her professional specialisms include psychosocial counselling and support as well as accompanying services. She represents agisra in AK Asylum.

Tatjana Kirnich has a diploma in psychology (specialising in clinical, pedagogic and ethno-psychology) and is a trained systemic counsellor. She represents agisra in AK Lila in Cologne as well as in AK Violence against Women.

Valentina Maradjieva has a diploma in social work. Her professional specialisms are psychosocial counselling and support as well as streetwork in sex work areas. She was in charge of coordinating our interns and volunteers. She represents agisra in AK Social work with Female* EU Citizens, in the KOK and in the NRW Network of Specialised Counselling Centres for Victims of Human Trafficking.

7.2 Volunteers and Interns

Our work is constantly supported by many volunteers and interns (all of whom are female*).

We would first like to thank our board members: Barbara Jurecka, Hannah Farhan-Dorn, Julia Schwieterjann and Xanarzu Demir for their excellent cooperative work in 2017.

The following women* helped us as volunteers this year:

Anastasia Dick, Barbara Jurecka, Canan Tekin, Catherine Antoine, Christine Gockeln, Claudia Nägler, Derya Durur, Ida Schrage, Ifeyemi Erdmann, Inge Lingath, Inge Mirtschink, Jasmin Schüle, Julia Lingott, Julia Schwieterjann, Laura Koren, Linda Wunsch, Lisa Siems, Marieke Saad, Martine Kayser, Maryam Salehi, Nahmat Khalo, Nicola Deuticke, Sabrije Rexhepi, Sara Farahzadi, Sarah Rohlfing, Shaghayegh Shana Zafari, Ozra Shahizare, Ulrike Goldbach, Xanarzu Demir.

The following interns supported us actively in 2017:

Afrodita Asimovska, Alia Istarbadi, Ana Steininger, Anastasia Dick, Anastasia Jansen, Angelina Lotter-Jones, Annika Rolke, Antonia Sehleier, Barbara Weimann, Christine Gockeln, Dominique Fileccia, Gina Hallström, Helen Stenger, Isabelle Edler, Jasmin Schüle, Larissa Walker, Linda Wöhler, Linda Wunsch, Nadira Khalikova, Nina Keen, Noemi Wolf, Rika Boelsen, Ronida Ismailj, Sara-Lena Sefrin, Tabea Böckle, Viola Schumacher, Yolanda Weidmann.

Our German conversation course for migrant and refugee women* was provided by Judith Baumgärtner with support from Lisa Siems. Lisa Siems has led the course since spring 2017.

We would like to thank Julia Lingott and Marieke Saad for their additional service in managing our Facebook page, Gerda Reiff for providing supervision services for volunteers and interns, Uwe Twelker and Steffi Raack (web design: “eyelikeit – visual solutions”) for supporting our

online presence through the creative management of our website, and Anastasia Dick for the coordination of the production of our annual report of activities.

We would especially like to thank our long-term supporter Professor Dorothee Frings for her tireless willingness to provide legal advice.

We warmly thank all our supporters, both named and unnamed, for their wonderful support and commitment.

8. agisra e.V. Booster Club

We warmly thank the board of our booster club: Anja Schulte, Sabine Hegerl und Dorothee Hackethal. In addition, we would like to thank Pilar Czoske, Theresa Philippi and all other active members for their committed voluntary work.

If we have been able to persuade you of our work at agisra e.V., join our booster club! If you are interested, fill out the form and send it to us at the address given below or by fax at 0221 97 27 492. If you wish, we can send you a copy of our constitution.

[BILD: Moosdruck]

HOW TO JOIN

Booster club: agisra Köln e.V., Martinstr. 20a, Ecke Bolzengasse, 50667 Köln, Germany

In order to become a member of the agisra Köln e.V. booster club, please fill out this form and send it to us signed at the address given above. We will regularly inform you of our activities. The constitution is available to download on our website.

Surname

***Human rights for migrant
women*!***

Translator's Note

It has been, just as last year, a great pleasure to translate agisra's annual report of activities. I'm honoured and proud to have played a role, however small, in some of the amazing work detailed in this document as an intern in 2017, as I am to translate the document too.

I have naturally aimed to make my translation as faithful as possible to the original text; however, one thing I have altered slightly is the frequency with which the aforementioned "gender asterisk" is used. Whereas the original text uses it very frequently but not in certain cases, I have used it in all cases except some where the word in question ("women", for example, or "female") is part of a name, for example of another organisation or of an article. This is because in every case where we talk about "women" when discussing sexism, misogyny and discrimination, it is fundamentally impossible to mean only cisgender (i.e. not transgender and not non binary) women. While I entirely accept that there are some issues discussed here that apply only to AFAB (assigned female at birth) people, describing this category as one hundred percent "female" excludes many members of it (non binary AFAB people, for example, and transgender men), which would exacerbate the violence they face as AFAB people by denying them the possibility to talk about their experiences and marginalising them further, which, as I can confirm having worked at there for several months, agisra most definitely does not do. Equally, some of the issues discussed here are faced by both cisgender and transgender women. The "gender asterisk" aims to acknowledge that the category of "women" is a complicated and linguistically problematic one, to which we refer in this shorthand because the discriminations faced by people in this category can largely rightfully be called misogyny and/or sexism.

The only other notable translation decision I have made is to translate "Klientin" as "service user" rather than "client", as this has replaced "client" as the accepted term in current English language social work literature.