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# OUR VOICES

ems women's network



## WOMEN AND EDUCATION

ENGLISH



Association of Churches and Missions  
in South Western Germany

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Dear Women,  
 dear Sisters in the EMS network,

"Women and Education" is the focus of this issue of OUR VOICES. Education embraces our whole life: as humans we are invited never to stop learning. Approaches and fields may change and differ, but the joy and excitement of discovering new horizons and freedom to raise our own voice for justice should and will never end.

In many countries education is a high priority in the official words of politicians and church leaders. But what about reality? What about women and girls?

The UN millennium development goals list education as a high priority to abolish poverty. The primary target reads "Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015. Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling."

In Nepal Renate Rieck is working towards this goal by educating women in very remote villages and enabling them to teach women and girls how to read and write (p 16). In Africa people know "Educate a woman, and you educate a nation" as Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka stated at the Women's Parliament Conference in South Africa when she spoke out on the importance for girls' education (p 18,19). Besides formal school education many more forms of teaching and learning are utilized by women. For instance in Korea, in Germany and the UK women take on teaching roles in grassroots political formation. They initiate political action where power structures suppress the clear reading of injustice (p 11,12,20).

We had asked various women active in ecumenical networking on their perspective of education. We received a bunch of colourful answers what they consider decisive for learning processes:

- they marvel at the opportunities of the World Day of Prayer (p 4),
- they are amazed about the new horizons of studying theological wisdom from abroad (p 6),
- they are compelled by the chances of international and interreligious networking (p 8),
- they are aware of the heritage of the past but suggest promoting post-colonial education (p 20).

The Kairos document of Christian Palestinian leaders states: "Educational programs must help us to get to know the other as he or she is rather than through the prism of conflict, hostility or religious fanaticism (...) the time has come to begin a new education that allows one to see the face of God in the other and declares that we are capable of loving each other and building our future together in peace and security." (www.kairospalestine.ps)

Fulbert Steffensky, a German theologian, is convinced that learning, changing, conversion is not only compelled by discovering one's misery but rather by anticipating open promises of shalom.

We are aware that not all aspects of Women & Education could be sufficiently covered in this issue such as i.e. learning conditions of refugees, new media, generational gaps, economical restrictions, and many more.

But we do hope that you feel inspired by the contributions from women in teaching and learning roles putting their light on a lampstand and promoting a better future for their communities.

Kind regards from Stuttgart

  
 Gabriele Mayer, PhD  
 EMS Women and Gender Desk  
 May 2010



# My first World Day of Prayer

## Zhu Fei, perspective of a young Chinese woman

“Let Everything That Has Breath Praise God”

**Zhu Fei, a student from China doing her masters degree in ecumenical studies in Bonn spent six weeks as an intern at EMS in March 2010 and experienced World Day of Prayer for the first time.**



Photo: Gisela Köllner

Zhu Fei from China during her internship at EMS Secretariat

After a long and cold winter in Germany, it is truly a pleasant thing to pray in the sweet light and warmth of spring. On March 5, 2010, the World Day of Prayer, I participated in this global, ecumenical movement of “informed prayer and prayerful action” for the very first time.

As a Christian coming from the China Mainland, sitting in a room or a church decorated in African style, praying according to Cameroon’s liturgy in German Christian communities was really an amazing experience for me.

All of the worship service represented intercultural, close fellowship and understanding. I felt no longer isolated, which is the situation of many Chinese Christians. Especially members of home churches have been facing this isolation due to our social background. As our sisters from Cameroon remind us, life is God’s greatest gift. As long as one can breathe, there is hope, and for this we praise God. This is meaningful and Christian laywomen of various nations, cultures and traditions are doing it. And we also share pain and tears, love and hope.

During the service, Cameroon was the focus of prayer. The situation of Cameroon, specially the challenges and opportunities of women in the countryside were introduced. Although the languages and cultures are very different, it is not difficult to understand the concerns and needs of the sisters in other countries. Every woman longs for bread and roses. Every woman deserves subsistence and dignity.

Unfortunately, there are still many persons who do not experience this. We should take up the burdens of each other, empathize with the problems of other countries, and pray with and for them. Of course, putting our faith into action is important, like planting a seed, nurturing it, and watching it grow. Any action – big or small – can make a difference for our world. I witnessed German Christian congregations’ enthusiasm in actions of helping others. A sister in the church of Ludwigsburg donated 900 € for projects in Cameroon.

What a pity it is that since 1949 China has not taken an important role in this ecumenical movement celebrated in over 170 countries. Most of Chinese people do not know it just like I did. I hope that one day Chinese Christians could express our biblical understanding in our context and Chinese women become more aware of their talents and use them in the service of society. ☺



# World Day of Prayer is learning with all senses

**"World Day of Prayer means for me learning with all senses!" This is what women said in Hesse and Nassau. The two women's secretaries Kristin Flach-Köhler and Elisabeth Becker-Christ observed:**



Kristin  
Flach-Köhler



Elisabeth  
Becker-Christ

**W**omen are learning with the themes of the World Day of Prayer countries. They make the experience: dealing with the strange can put the own identity into question. Exchange with others can clarify and help to experience variety in a positive way. Variety in language of faith, in songs, in cultural traditions can thus be experienced positively and exemplarily.

Some women are touched by direct encounters and quote for example: "This year our guest speaker from Cameroon thanked us for our curiosity and solidarity she experienced in our group. This made her very happy".

Global involvement becomes more and more visible when hearing about the problems and situations in the World Day of Prayer country.

"I see the world with other eyes since I learned and discovered the relationships and in which way our lives as sisters are linked worldwide."

During the preparation and planning of the World Day of Prayer service new spiritual spaces open up shaping new forms of foreign and own faith. Sharing this with other brothers and sisters is the taste of worldwide relatedness with Christian men and women in their variety. Many women experience this as empowerment for their own daily life. ☺

## What is World Day of Prayer?

A worldwide movement of Christian women of many traditions, various races and cultures who come together to observe a common day of prayer each year, and who, in more than 170 countries, have a continuing relationship in prayer and service. Through World Day of Prayer, women around the world share their hopes and fears, their joys and sorrows, their opportunities and needs. Women affirm that prayer and action are inseparable and that both have immeasurable influence in the world.

All churches in EMS fellowship celebrate the World Day of Prayer. Women (and also men) experience this first Friday in March differently, ecumenically, in various ways and with all senses.



"Praise to the Lord", by Reine Claire Nkombo, Yaoundé, Cameroon  
© Weltgebetstag der Frauen – Deutsches Komitee e. V.

# Women studying new theological horizons

**A course on Feminist Theology World Wide took place in Southwest Germany from November 2008 to December 2009 under the auspices of Dr. Aruna Gnanadason.**

*For many years she was the Coordinator of the Justice Peace and Creation Team and of the Women's Programme of the World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland. 1988-1998 she coordinated the Ecumenical decade "Churches in solidarity with women". In December 2009 she sent a message to "my sisters in Stuttgart, Germany" on behalf of their closing ceremony:*

Photo: Bärbel Wuthe



Dr. Aruna Gnanadason

I feel honoured to have been associated with this important project that embraces Feminist Theology World Wide. It is vital for our broken world today that we as women do all we can to create new visions for a just and peaceful world. To do this we need to invest ourselves in learning from each other, so that we can recognise in other women's voices, the many new ways of knowing, of viewing the world and most importantly of seeking theological responses to the many life experiences we each live with.

It requires courage to allow one's own thoughts and knowledge systems to be challenged by what women in another part of the world are saying and doing.

The ecumenical movement creates spaces so that we can open our horizons to each other. It has nurtured us to learn from each other. Such a course is about the strengthening of our world-wide sisterhood, of forging bonds of solidarity and friendship and of recommitting ourselves to listen, to share and to care for each other across the world.

I wish each one of you God's grace and blessings as you now go your separate ways to live out all that you have gained over this period. Namaste, as we say it in India, with hands together, as I bow in deference to the divine that is in each one of you!

Blessings!

Aruna Gnanadason, Chennai, India

A course such as this one recognises and affirms that women around the world are not only providing new visions for a transformed world, but are asking new questions that challenge many existing political, missiological and theological assumptions.

Photo: Annegret Brauch



Study Group gathers for receiving the certificates

## Mission brought women's education forward

A Korean-Swiss view from Meehyun Chung who is chair of the Women and Gender Desk at mission 21, Basel, Switzerland. In her native country mission played an important role in the education of girls. In which way can mission today promote women's education?

**M**y grandmother had no possibility to go to school. The Korean Bible was her only "tool" to learn to read. Modern school education for women started in Korea in 1886 with one girl child and an American woman missionary. These were the origins of the world's biggest women's university. Possibly one progressive queen being murdered brutally by Japanese mob in 1895 played an important role for the foundation of this first women's school at that time. Additionally, mission helped women a lot to be allowed to receive formal education.

Within the frame of my work at Women and Gender Desk, I encounter many women in partner churches of mission 21 being excluded from the possibilities of formal school education. But in fact these women do have big potentials and talents even without access to money, education and decision making power. Until today education is still one of the most important aspects of "doing mission" in the 21st century as women are actors for the improvement of society. But only postcolonial methods should be applied strengthening autonomy and self-determination of women. ☺



Young Student in front of EWhA Women's University in Seoul

Photos: Gabriele Mayer

## Partnership visit allows new learning

Rev. Barbara Kohlstruck, responsible for the Women's Unit in "Evang. Arbeitsstelle Bildung und Gesellschaft" (Protestant Department for Education and Society), Protestant Church of the Palatinate in Germany

**I**n 2007 our church was visited by a group of Ghanaians from our partner church in Ghana. One afternoon our women's fellowship invited the Ghanaian women to share the question "How do I read the Bible – how do I live my faith?" In Germany the Bible and the discussion of our faith is often dealt with more privately. For Ghanaian women, however, reading the Bible is a focal point in their daily lives. And it becomes much more obvious that they want to live according to the Bible. During the discussion on this afternoon we learned a lot about these differences. The Ghanaian women especially raised one question: Why are we Germans so reluctant to tell children more about our faith?

Ecumenical learning needs such direct encounters. It is important to experience the common ground but also to allow feelings of strangeness or attitudes which might even take us aback. Dialogue can only happen where

people meet personally. We understand each other better and we can learn from each other in direct dialogue. ☺



Patterns of typical Ghanaian textiles

# Education via Interreligious Networking in Indonesia

A new network is founded: women, religions, cultures. Dr. Mery Kolimon, theologian and coordinator of the interreligious network shares her experience in this process. Forty women from different ethnic and religious backgrounds in eastern Indonesia (Sulawesi, Kalimantan, Maluku, Papua, and East Nusa Tenggara) met in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara for a workshop to talk about women, cultures, and religions.



Dr. Mery Kolimon

The issue of women and education in a context like eastern Indonesia cannot be separated from women's religious and cultural backgrounds. This is because religion and culture still play an important role in women's education. Roles and the status of women cannot be separated from the construction of cultures and religions in their societies. Therefore, in terms of education, it is essential to strengthen women's ability to critically view and also to shape cultural and religious values.

This perspective on women and education served as the backdrop of a workshop in August 2009. This workshop provided a space for women from eastern Indonesian to share stories, to reflect on the relationship of women to their cultural and religious values, to identify common problems related to women, culture, and religious pluralism in this region of Indonesia, and to reach an agreement about a **study network among women** from different cultural and religious backgrounds in eastern Indonesia.

The three points given particular attention by this network are **women, religions, and cultures**. These three entities are seen not only as related to each other, but also as influencing each other. The roles and status of women in eastern Indonesian cannot be separated from the construction of cultures and religions in their societies. On the other hand, women are not passive entities who simply receive cultural and religious constructions regarding their status and roles. On the contrary, women actively struggle to preserve or to **transform cultural and religious values** for their own liberation and empowerment. It is hoped that, based on the research and the publication of it, women can play an active role in a more just future for themselves and for their communities.

Our hope is that this network, comprising women from different faith communities in eastern Indonesia, will become a forum where women from various religious backgrounds can conduct their research and studies which, in turn, can contribute to the empowerment and liberation of women across cultures and religions. Facing the phenomena of hostility among people from different religious backgrounds, we expect that this **interfaith women's network** in eastern Indonesia can contribute to a more peaceful face of our communities.

This hope is based on the perception that each religion has in itself various elements that can be both useful and harmful for the liberation of women. Women themselves must become active agents of liberation and empowerment. The interfaith women's network will enable women from different backgrounds to claim the liberating message of their religions and at the same time criticize all doctrinal interpretations of religions that tend to marginalize and oppress women.





Photos: Paul Bolla

Theologians who brought forward burning issues on women, religion and culture

Culture is another concern of this network. Culture has been playing its role in the identity formation of eastern Indonesian women. Like religion, culture can become either a liberating or an oppressing factor for women. Women are often regarded as custodians of culture and tradition. When formal education was started in eastern Indonesia at the beginning of the twentieth century, for example, women's participation was limited. One reason was because as keepers of local traditions, women were not given many opportunities to interact with modern ideas. In turn this can also explain the limitation of women's opportunities and capacities to participate in the public arena.

Historically, in Indonesia there was also displayed violence against local cultures. The politically motivated violence of the anti-communist movement that began in 1965 and the dictatorial "New Order" regime that followed in its wake destroyed many local cultures throughout Indonesia. This movement resulted not only in the depoliticisation of citizens, but also uprooted people from their local culture. Local cultural identity was forcibly destroyed for the sake of one (forced) national identity.

Furthermore, it is hoped that the research and study conducted by this network will play a part in the **maintenance of oral traditions** that for an age-old characteristic of local communities in eastern Indonesia. It is important to write down the legends and myths that have significant meaning and offer insight regarding the identity and worldview of people in this part of the world.

All these efforts are part of a bigger attempt to enable women to make a unique and specific contribution of women to both formal and informal education in Indonesia. Education must be directed to encourage women to become subjects of their own history. ≡

# Mutual learning on HIV&AIDS and Gender Injustice

**Andrea Pfeiffer, EMS-Coordinator HIV&AIDS reflects and describes an international learning process during the international theological workshop in South Africa in September 2009.**

**H**ow can we as Christians work best towards more gender justice and against the spreading of HIV&AIDS? In the light of our faith can and must we redouble our efforts in the struggle against HIV&AIDS? These were the questions at the international EMS-Workshop on AIDS and Gender Justice in South Africa, a cooperation of the Moravian Church of South Africa, EMS Women and Gender Desk and EMS HIV&AIDS coordination, in September 2009. There, on the premises of the HIV&AIDS project "Masangane" which particularly supports women and children, this subject was expounded in the spirit of our Christian response by participants from five countries. Christian action strives for justice which means "just" relationships between all people: no prejudice against women, no discrimination of sick people, fight-

ing to improve the economic situation, treatment and spiritual care of infected people.

Each day began with an intensive biblical journey in which the participants discussed passages selected from the Bible. What became obvious was that we, from our Christian outlook, too often assume the personal guilt of a person infected with HIV. We tend to ignore other factors, such as poverty and low social status, making for example a young girl in South Africa more vulnerable for an HIV-infection in comparison to a young girl in Germany. If we face up to HIV&AIDS and gender injustice in all its complexity we can tackle the problems in their entirety. Attempts to change personal behaviour can only be successful when also the social, cultural and economic forces are uprooted and changed, for example (sexual) violence, social injustice, hushing up, stigmatization of sick people and, most important, gender injustice. In view of such complexity we must avoid prejudging people as being "sinners" and "bearing their own blame".

Emphatic learning means crossing borders and settling in with burning problems – that's easier said than done.

When we visited a young women infected by AIDS we felt helplessness and fear – but also the assurance that at least she is being taken care of by the co-workers at Masangane. ☺

Photo: Andrea Pfeiffer



Interactive teaching methods make it easier to learn from one another. Workshop participants in Matatiele: Dr. Beate Jakob, Nomkle Xulubana, Emmy Sahertian, Colleen Cunningham, Dr. Daniel Premkumar

## Wednesday Demonstrations in Korea for Comfort Women

Participants in the landmark 900th 'Wednesday Demonstration' call for an apology to the victims from the Japanese government in front of Japanese Embassy located in Seoul.

Dorothea Schweizer, former vice-president of EMS Synode sent us this contribution from Hankyoreh Newspaper, January 14th, 2010.

On January 13, 2010 the coldest day in six years with temperatures plunging to minus 12 degrees celsius during the day, the halmoni, grandmothers, who are more than 80 years old, held their 900th demonstration which began on January 8, 1992.

In 1940, when Kil was 12-years-old, she was sent to China for Japanese soldiers and spent 6 years forcibly serving as a "comfort woman" until 1945, when Korea was liberated after Japan's defeat in World War II.

Over 200 individuals participated in the demonstration, a larger group than the forty or fifty individuals who usually participate in the demonstrations.

Won Jae-yeon, 39, participated in the assembly with her two children and said, "I feel heart-stricken because the victims who have become so old are still having to ask the Japanese government for an apology." Won added, "I brought my children to the assembly so that they will learn the true facts of history."

The surviving victims now number only 87 individuals. When the South Korean government began to register the victims in 1993, there were 234 comfort women, however, 147 have already lost their lives. Kang Il-chul, an 82-year-old former comfort woman said, "I cannot die before I hear an apology from the Japanese government. The Japanese government should apologize to us before all of us die."

On the same day, Japanese and German civic organizations held assemblies for resolving the issue of the Japanese sexual enslavement of Korean women in each of their countries respectively.

The Japanese government had previously denied the involvement of Japanese military until 1993, when the Yohei Kono, then Japan's chief cabinet secretary, issued a statement that recognizing the military's involvement, however, the Japanese government has yet to issue an apology. ≡



900th "Wednesday Demonstration" in Seoul – call for apology to the comfort women



One of the survivors halmoni – at minus 12 degrees

Photos: Korean Council

## Middle East Women's Network:

German church women become activists – “We can no longer be neutral observers because we ourselves are part of the issue”.

**Gabriele Mayer from EMS Women and Gender Desk reports on the development and aims of this women's network.**

It all started more than eight years ago with a meeting of several women at a conference held by the Evangelische Akademie Bad Boll, Germany. The topic of this conference was “Heroes – Mothers – Victims. Traumatic experiences in Bosnia and Palestine”. It soon became clear that the participating women did no longer want to be silent in view of the situation in Israel and Palestine.

Who are these women?

“We are a group of active protestant and catholic women in the area of Stuttgart, Germany – representatives of various church organisations as well as individual women who have been troubled by the conflict in the Middle East for a long time. Many of us have been in touch with women in Israel and Palestine for many years.”

For instance the pax christi group Sulzbach/Murr fosters partnership relations with the town Tulkarem, West-bank for more than six years. First hand the women from Southern Germany learnt how the erection of the separation wall separates families, farmers from their farmland, employees from their job, turns villages into prisons, making them dispersed and divided cantons.

But what can German church women do in Europe to achieve changes in the Middle East? They were searching for avenues to raise their voice with others. “We wanted to overcome our feeling of helplessness and speak up loudly.”

First of all it was important for them to find other women with the same views and feelings and to come to-

gether to continue researching and gather information. With increasing knowledge they gained new insight into the complicated commercial relationship between Israel and the European Union, notably into the issue of products excluded by trade agreements. Thus, the interrelationship with their own buying behaviours became clear. The idea of a postcard campaign arose designed to draw attention, give information and win other interested people to join the campaign and influence consumer spending on a wider scale.

Accordingly this small group of catholic and protestant women jointly developed the idea of the postcard campaigns:

In 2002 they asked other consumers “Do you know where these dates come from?”

In 2003 they pushed for “Do you know where these avocados come from?”

In 2004 they insisted to think about “Do you know on which side of the fence these oranges grow?”

On the basis of this campaign, the FrauenNetzwerkNahost (Women's Network Middle East) has meanwhile become known. Numerous contacts with other action groups in Germany, other European countries, Israel and Palestine have resulted.

Of course, all fellow women had to break in the complexity of commercial agreements where the compliance with regulations under international law

# Wissen Sie...

## was Sie mit 729 einkaufen?





# NEIN DANKE

www.frauennetzwerknahost.de

Postcard-Campaign in Germany:

Do you know ...  
what you buy with 729?  
NO THANK YOU



is guaranteed. According to their research many agricultural products are grown in settlements on occupied areas. The systematic settlement in occupied areas is a severe violation against international law. Moreover it contributes decisively to the current dead end in any efforts to return to peace talks among politicians.

FrauenNetzwerkNahost, together with many other groups demand the unequivocal labelling of goods from settlements violating international law. Due to their thorough research they found out: It is not only illegal to bring these goods under advantaged Israeli-European customs treaties, it even places European consumers in a position of being unconscious supporters of the detrimental settlement policy.

During all these years the situation of the Palestine people has dramatically deteriorated. Women like Mona Owda, Lina Tanib and Maha Abukhadija shared their daily experience living in a community with no access to their farmland because of the separation wall.

In May 2010 Professor Sumaya Farhat Naser from the Birzeit University at a mission conference in Bad Boll, Germany expressed the fear that the present policy of the government is the most dangerous one in the history of Israel for both Palestinians and Israelis, because it offers no perspective of hope. She said: "A growing number of concerned Israeli friends share the same fear and see the need for joint action, such as branding illegally produced and exported goods from settlements."



Photo: Karl-Heinz Buth

Mona Owda, Lina Tanib and Maha Abukhadija from Tulkarem, Westbank during their visit in Germany in April 2010.



Photo: Andreas Tasche

Professor Sumaya Farhat Naser from Birzeit University during the mission conference in Bad Boll, Germany in May 2010.

Likewise, the women of the FrauenNetzwerkNahost do not want to be discouraged, but instead they continue to find new ways "to overcome our feeling of helplessness and to speak up".

With their new postcard 2010 they reinforce their request to say "no" to goods with the label "Made in Israel" and the bar code 729 as long as goods from the Occupied Territories are not labelled as such.

The Middle East Women's Network feel being in accordance with the so-called Kairos document, of which church leaders and well-respected Palestinian women and men calling for non-violent action towards a just and sustainable peace on the basis of their Christian faith. [www.kairospalestine.ps](http://www.kairospalestine.ps).

They believe that "the time has come to begin a new education that allows one to see the face of God in the other and declares that we are capable of loving each other and building our future together in peace and security." ☺

# 18 Years of Women's Ordination in Cameroon

Rev. Dr. Bilem Numfor Fonki was ordained as the first woman pastor in the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon PCC. She is 41, married with dean Samuel Fonki and mother of one son. Presently she is working as a lecturer at Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Douala, Cameroon.



Photo: private

Dr. Bilem N. Fonki

**T**he pause to look at 18 years of women in ministry is very pregnant. The failures helped to improve the effectiveness of the spread of God's kingdom, and the creation of better avenues for other women still on the way.

In February this year, the female pastors met for their annual conference with the theme **Female Pastors: Tools for Regeneration**. There could not have been a more suitable theme for these women, whose active work in the PCC was clocking 18.

Walking on memory lane takes one to those early years when the idea of women in ministry was not just seen as a violent intrusion, but considered sacrilegious. Some of them stopped attending worship services where these women officiated, while others held the church's administration responsible for the sacrilege that had suddenly crept in to the church.

One would have thought that the incubation period of four years during which these women were trained, might have wetted the ground for their arrival. This proved to be insufficient. The people had internalized a particular way of worship for a very long time, and a reframe of this was a violation to their faith and beliefs. They struggled on with the idea, and while some yielded, others chose to worship God in avenues that suited their long acquired beliefs. Interestingly, the tough resistance that had been anticipated from the male population was collapsible. Most of them were more open to this new way of spreading the gospel, and some helped those who wrestled with understanding this concept.

The persistence of training women as pastors may have been a slap in the face of those who found it difficult to accept. However, **the pioneer position taken by the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon**, did not just give birth to something new within the church, but flung the gate wide open for women in other denominations or 'non denominations' to train as pastors, assume positions as pastors, or be accepted as pastors. This heroic venture by the PCC was not without internal and external challenges. The church operates in a society with strong cultural values that are almost inalterable and irreversible. Some of these cultural values may have enhanced or stymied the process of assimilating these women. The task of rewriting certain policies that were conveniently tailored for a male ministry became more complicated, when the time came for application. This might have effected the later decision to limit the number of women trained for ministry.

Internally, the male ministers had bonded in some peculiar ways, and this facilitated the way they functioned in service. The bond had to be broken to include women, a hard pill to swallow. Some of the men resisted not because they were misogynists, but because they simply did not know what to do with the women. Their cultural and religious values were not ready for any kind of adulteration, let alone assimilation and the fact that they were compelled to go along with the decision of the church, created a passive atmosphere that affected servitude and created invisible barriers for the women.

Externally the women had to juggle between societal stereotypical female roles, and their positions as pastors. At face value, it might have seemed like an easy task to separate the roles, but in practice, the women experienced roles juxtaposing between the church and the society. The married men in the congregations expected married female pastors to model the ideal wife, and the ideal mother. A pregnant or breast-feeding pastor for instance, was and still is an embarrassment to her congregation, who is used to seeing men in suits and flat stomachs (or protruded from nourishment), and not women sashaying the results of sexual activity. Most of these women were and are still viewed through the lenses of domestic stereotypes, thus spurring them to work harder than their male counterparts to receive close to similar respect. So has it been eighteen years of burdensome complexities?

Women as pastors in the PCC have spiced up the church in multifaceted ways. The church administration has reported a better rapport with Christians, a superior display of morals, high trust levels and greater seriousness in service. This has led to greater output in most of the congregations where the women have been placed. The percentage of recalcitrant and wayward women in ministry is almost insignificant comparatively. The positive impact in the church has been rewarded with appointment of women into administrative positions, and further training for specialized positions. More women are being trained for ministry, and the effect of women in ministry has trickled down to the Christians who are increasingly endorsing female leadership at congregational, parish, and presbytery levels. This ricochet effect has diffused into the communities and women are walking to and through avenues that had been male-coated for eons. Are these intruders therefore empowered to be regenerators?

The training, acceptance, and inclusion of women in ministry are of course **empowerment for regeneration**. The positive impact already felt by the church is encouraging. Regeneration however, is very serious business. Spiritual reconstruction does not just require 'woman' as the qualification. It requires both professional and technical expertise. Reconstructing monumental policies internalized for decades, needs a kind of wisdom that is not obtained from learning alone, but is God induced. In the biology, regeneration entails the ability for an organism to re-grow a lost part, reinstating the original function. The women therefore have the challenge to locate the lost parts in the church, catalyze re-growth, decipher the functioning and realize it. This also means that the female pastors have the task of revisiting those areas of resistance at the onset of their acceptance in to ministry, and foster a reevaluation of the situation. This might go a long way to validate the feelings of those who felt hurt by their admission, and initiate or enhance a healing process.

This kind of regeneration however, can only be effective when the regenerators are placed aptly in strategic areas. What does this entail? Emily Dickenson states that "we never know how high we are, till we are called to rise; and then, if we are true to plan, our statures touch the skies". This calls for further daring by the PCC administration, to trust that female pastors are mature enough to be lifted from semi urban administrators, to urban administrators; from associate pastors in mega congregations to "pastor in-charge". The gender-biased internalization that has been predominantly visible for more than fifty years in a church which operates in a society where the cultural values are an intrinsic part of its fabric can not be ignored. At eighteen, it is time to put off the cultural lenses which are heavily coated with traditional stereotypes, and view the women through the eyes of Christ.

Eighteen is traditionally the legal age for many rights in many countries: the right to own a driver's license, the

right to drink alcohol, the right to purchase and smoke tobacco, the right to marry, and the right to live independently with no parental supervision. In other words, it is trusted that at eighteen, one has the capacity to choose between what is good or bad for one. What is eighteen then for the PCC female pastor? I like to re-echo what Maya Angelou the famous writer and poet says; "a bird doesn't sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song". The female pastors of the PCC may have some answers....but many more questions. For now they have a song...**Regeneration!** ☺



Photo: EMS archives

Leading African Women call for "Inclusivity in all church structures". In March 2010 the Pre-Assembly in Abuja, Nigeria calls upon the Lutheran World Federation to welcome "women in leading positions as a divine gift."

### Gender Justice

"Equal and active participation of women in leadership has long been on the agenda of the LWF. We note with concern that some member churches of the communion in Africa still do not heed the voices of women in the region crying for inclusivity within the church structures, leadership and in the ordained ministry. Women who have been divinely called by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ are not afforded the opportunity to fully practice their calling. We call on member churches to fulfill their commitment to gender justice by putting in place concrete steps to address these issues."

# Dalit Women in Nepal are taught to read and write – by trained village women

## Rela has achieved her aim

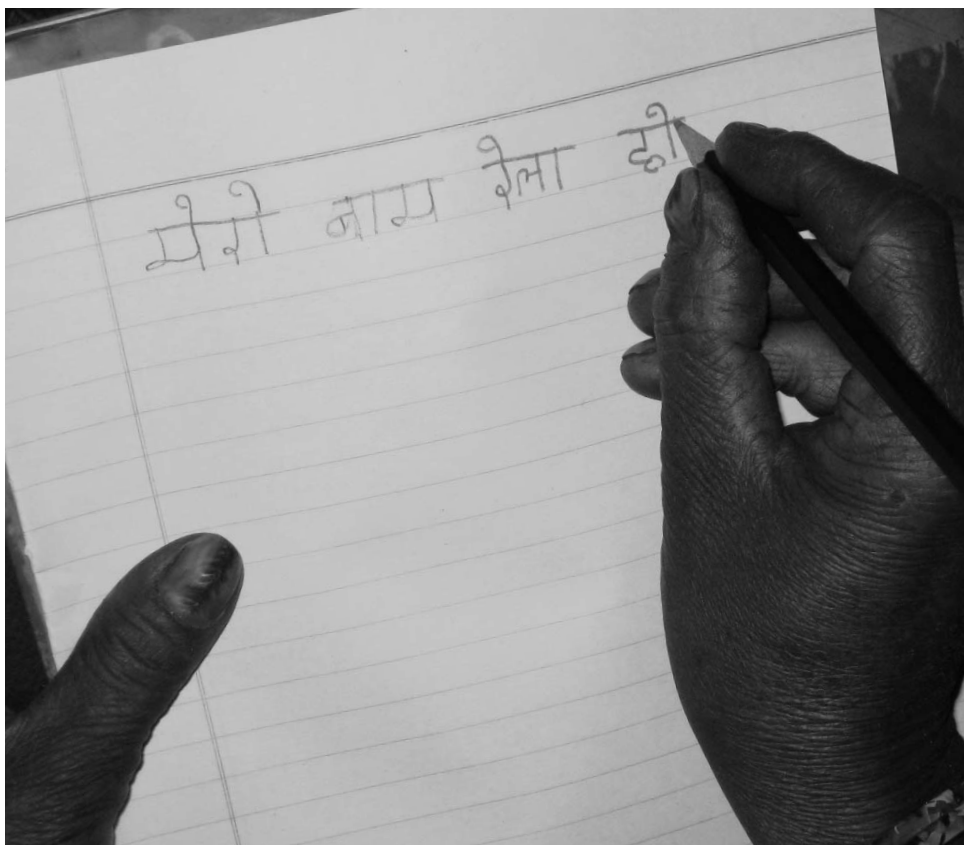
**Renate Riek, former primary school teacher in Reutlingen, Germany, has been living and working for six years now in Nepal. Each summer she returns and reports of “her” girls and women in Humla thus building a cultural bridge between Humla-Katmandu and Reutlingen.**

**R**ela belongs to the untouchable caste (Dalits). She lives at the margins of the village Humla apart from those belonging to higher castes. Dalit women are at the bottom of the hierarchy in the society of Nepal. They are not allowed to fetch water from the public village well. Under no circumstances they are allowed to enter the kitchen of a high caste family. Members of the Dalit caste, especially girls, have almost no access to education.

The women in Humla, a mountainous, 16-day walk to reach and least developed area in Nepal, have very few opportunity to go to school to learn the most basic things. Due to the hardships of life, their parents do not want to waste money educating daughters who will end up as wives in other persons' households.

Only five percent of girls above 15 years of age are literate whereas among boys older than 15 years of age, 34 percent are literate. Thus women in Humla are still suffering from this discrimination, which is surely due to the lack of educational opportunities. These women, deprived of education, will do likewise to their own children, in particular girls; as a result of their unawareness. Thus the present unfortunate and unjust conditions will hardly improve unless opportunities of changes are brought within direct reach of these women and children.

Government data shows that while at least about every third man can



Rela's hands tired from tedious work on the fields, succeeds in writing her letters.

read and write, only one out of twenty Humla women can read and write their own name. There are very few government schools and even fewer non-government educational programs.

RIDS-Nepal, a non-profit-organisation, is attempting to change this discrimination by the Non-Formal-Education program. It is a basic education program for out of school girls and women. Six times a week people who never hold a pencil or a piece of paper before meet to learn how to read and write from their facilitator, a local trained person. After having finished their



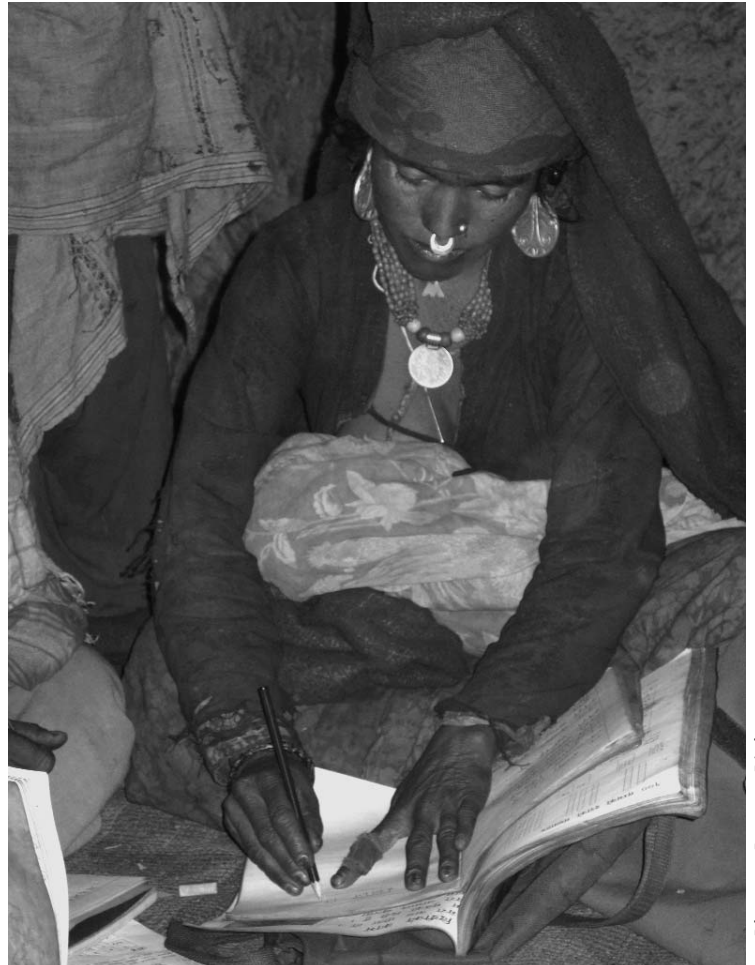
field work the women meet every evening for two hours to read and write.

Rela is one of these Women. She seized her chance. She has been joining our reading class now for three years persistently and full of enthusiasm.

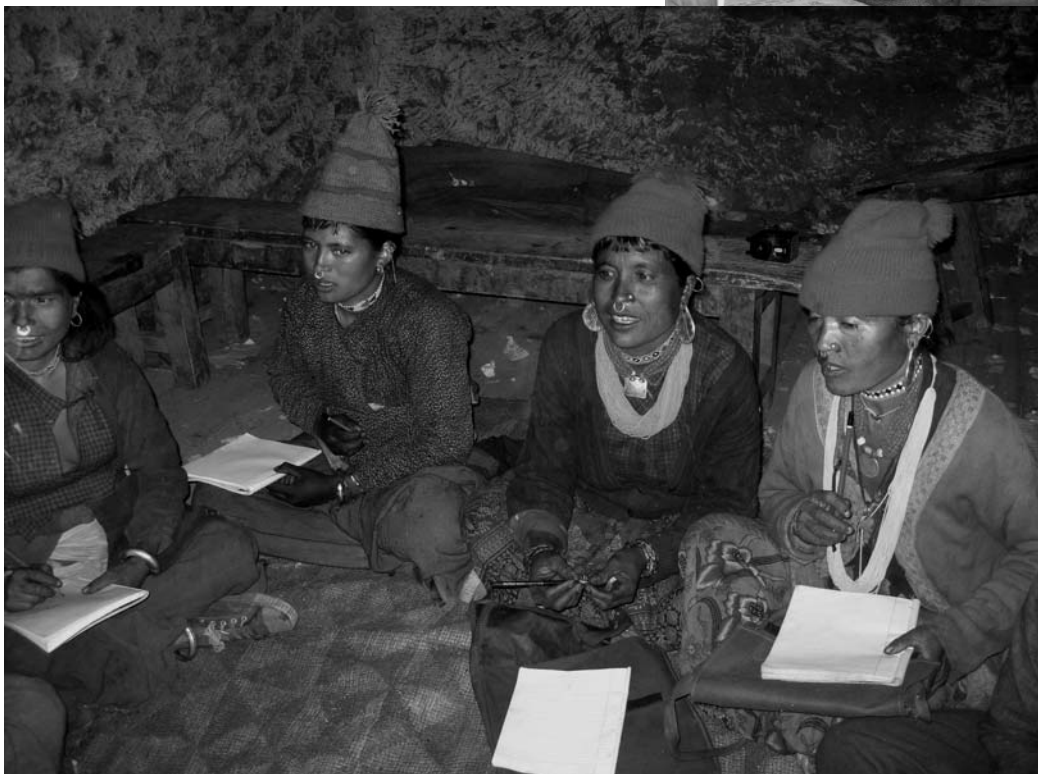
Rela has achieved her aim, a very decisive one: In a society in which she had been a no-name, now she can write her own name. She knows who she is, what her abilities are – in spite of the background of social isolation. Rela can express her thoughts and feelings in writing. In a song which she wrote herself, she says:

“Until now  
it was our destiny  
to be excluded  
from education.  
But we have the wish  
to learn reading and writing.  
This is why we go  
to the reading class  
every evening”.

Admirable how this woman goes forward, taking her life into her own hands in spite of difficult circumstances, trying to shape her life even on a small scale. ☺



Photos: Renate Riek



Rela practices writing with her new born baby on her lap.

Evening class of village women. They wear their woollen caps also a product of the evening class.

## “Send your girl-child to school” – Impressive Progress in Ghana

Elizabeth Aduama, pastor from Ghana working as ecumenical co-worker in the Protestant Church of Palatinate, Germany, for five years, is impressed by the educational progress during the past years in Ghana.

Photo: private



Elizabeth Aduama

Coming from a country like Ghana, where culture makes women inferior to men in all circumstances and where due to poverty men's privileges to education overrule that of women, I feel proud to boast of how mission work and the church, Governmental Laws, Campaigns and group demonstration have drawn women to the lime light of education.

With argumentative sentences like “what a man can do a woman can also do and even do it better”; and the popular saying from Dr. Kwegir Aggrey an Educationist, “to educate a man is to educate an individual, but to educate a woman is to educate a nation”, women education in Ghana has seen great improvement.

The churches' girl education, starting from the mission work, drew women into learning subjects like foods and nutrition, sewing, house craft/home keeping, assisted the women in their roles as housewives. Later opportunities to enter into secondary schools and all other subject areas opened up to girls, can Ghana now boast of women having education to university level, and taking up leadership

roles. In all spheres of the educational level in Ghana, one is sure to meet women. Examples are doctors, lawyers, managers etc.

As part of activities to encourage women in education, there is the strong “send your girl child to school”, and “all children deserve equal right to education” campaign. The education service runs special science and mathematics holiday courses for girls to encourage them in this fields of education.

The education ministry's informal education for adults and school drop outs helps a lot of women to read and write. A real joy that most are able to read their Bibles and sing from the church hymn books.

Opportunities to enter the schools at any point in ones life, or to learn privately and write required examinations, are open to all and this helps women to keep their homes and at the same time take up some studies. Not suprising a woman, having enjoyed her non-formal education decided to enroll in a formal education and was in same class with her third child.

Women Education is very important because women have a longer time with their children, so they can impart the good values and also assist the children in their home-work. A man once said, “I will never marry an unintelligent woman because children inherit intelligence from the mother and so women need better education to develop their intelligence”. ☺



Vocational training in Nsawam, Ghana

Photo: Gabriele Mayer

## Campaign for Girls' Education in South Africa

Lesinda Cunningham, a trained nurse and member of the Moravian Church in South Africa, is currently living in Heidelberg, Germany. She introduces us to the importance of Girls' Education Movement GEM in South Africa.

Photo: private



Lesinda Cunningham

Many in the international community and in South Africa itself are still amazed by our country's transition from an apartheid regime to a multiparty, democratic state. Local and international leaders agree, however, that the battle has only just begun. South African leaders currently face the challenge of transforming our society into one in which all segments of the population have truly equal access to resources and can fully participate in the democratic process. Education is one of the critical areas in need of change.

Under the apartheid regime, basic elementary and secondary education was not widely available to all. Indeed, with 19 redundant administrative structures, separate-but-unequal education was the norm. Indeed, the redress of educational inequities is probably the greatest developmental challenge facing the South African government today.

**"Educate a woman, you educate a nation,"** said Former Deputy President, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka at the 4th annual Women's Parliament Conference in August 2007, as she spoke out on the importance for girls education.

Education in South Africa for women has faced a hard tide with a history of conservative patriarchal customs that have caused tribal cultures to many times marginalize girls education, placing it at the bottom of the list. Traditions of early marriage, women focusing on family management, and less access to the use of information from today's technology has created gender gaps in certain areas of South Africa.

Today the GEM – Girls Education Movement – is attempting to turn the tide that makes it so hard for girls to stay in school. GEM is not a single organization, "but consists of groups of children and young people in schools and communities through Africa who are working in different ways to bring about positive changes in the lives of African girls."

Sex education on the right to say no to sex and the dangers of HIV-AIDS is also very important for girls as they begin at a very young age to actively deal with the pressing issues of sex and rape. Lack of education puts girls and women on the front lines of HIV infection which destroys their life's dreams and completely destabilizes their family structure.

Power for women in South Africa today is created through the safe availability of greater education. The gaining of status for women as they gather a greater education offers a vast improvement in their own personal world and society. These improvements, too, improve life globally. These are the improvements that impact life at all levels today – for all people. ☺



Children in Eastern Cape suffering from broken families and the lack of educational opportunities

Photo: EMS archives



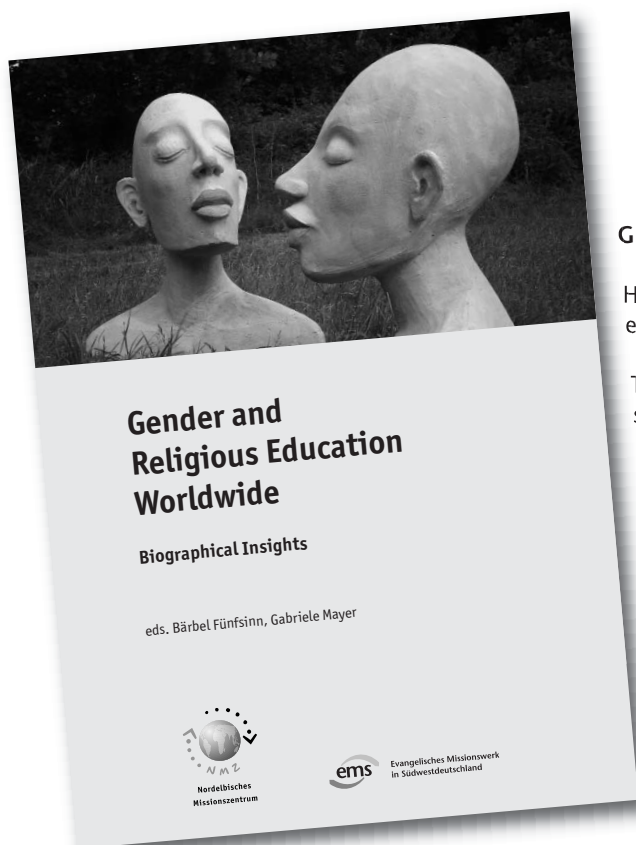
## Learning from women with “other” biographies

As a young theologian Ulrike Schmidt-Hesse did an internship with the industrial mission in Sheffield, UK. As a stranger, she interacted with disadvantaged women working in factories. The women became teachers to her in various respects. Today she is the head of Mission and Partnership Department at EMS.

“Higher wages for women’s work”, this was a central aim of the „Low Pay Campaign“ which I came to know in the eighties in England. At that time I worked as an assistant pastor in the ecumenical team of industrial mission in Sheffield. In this campaign women from many different organisations such as trade unions, women’s organisations and, of course, industrial mission were active. I learned a lot about political lobby work and co-operation between various protagonists/actors. Our aim as industrial mission was also to establish a women’s group working in the low wage

sector. The method of “activating inquiry” was used and it was my task to carry this out. We managed to get to a deep level of discussion and sharing. The women told me about their life conditions which were economically very precarious. I learned a lot about biographies and situations of women whose life was coined by discrimination and breaches in life. It also became quite clear to me how neoliberal politics can lead to an enormous aggravation of women’s problems.

At the same time I saw with how much strength and endurance these women coped with their situation. They themselves experienced mutual support in the group and how they could use their potentials while discussing, reading the Bible and sharing many other joint activities. I myself discovered that I, being a stranger with other experiences and many questions, had a specific contribution to make as an accompanier with my curiosity and sympathy, taking sides with the women contributing “strange” perspectives and thus supporting them in their struggles. ☺



### Gender and Religious Education Worldwide – Biographical Insights

How do gender issues relate to the questions of justice and religious education?

The authors of this book are mainly from Africa, Asia and Latin America, some also from Eastern Europe and Germany. All of them are dealing with gender issues in their personal and professional life, all are struggling for gender justice in churches and non-governmental organisations.

Women and men from different parts of the world present their biographical insights, theological reflections, the critical analysis of their societies and their dreams of a better church and society.

eds. Bärbel Fünfsinn, Nordelbisches Missionszentrum and Gabriele Mayer, Association of Churches and Mission Societies in February 2010 (can be ordered via EMS [vertrieb@ems-online.org](mailto:vertrieb@ems-online.org), price 3.50 Euro)



## Learning to look behind the scenes in Jordan

In 2008/09 Helen Siegle went to Jordan as an EMS ecumenical volunteer. Today she studies international social work at the Evangelische Hochschule Ludwigsburg, Germany.

I remember the day exactly: On August 14th, 2008 I entered a plane taking me on a long journey. I had decided to go to Jordan for ten months with EMS.

Life in a strange country – as a foreign woman. Alone as a young German. The place where I was to work was in the north of Jordan. Irbid is the third biggest town in Jordan. I lived with an Arabic-Christian family who took good care of me very conscientiously. I shouldn't go out on my own and after nightfall I should avoid outdoor activities. Together with my American housemate, though, I was allowed to walk back home after work. I loved these moments of being in the fresh air and at the same time this was something new, not only for me, but also for the Arabic population which normally has no contact with Western white women.

Whistles, whispers, shouts, words such as "fuck you", "welcome to Jordan - fuck you" and one day even a small stone which hit me on my back – all these were reactions on the street against me, a young white woman. But gradually I got used to this. I began to understand the Arabic language and the new culture better and better. Then I also went to other areas of Jordan where the reactions were quite different: I was respected, accepted and belonged – as a white woman.

After these new experiences I realised that of course everywhere is different and that not all people are the same – neither in Germany nor in Jordan. And my first negative impressions changed into interest: How do women live here? I had imagined that the average Jordanian's woman's place was in the kitchen and with the children. This view was partly confirmed. But not entirely. I saw women working on the streets as police officers, women as teachers, women working at computers, women as doctors, women as directors of schools – self-confident and committed women. And after ten months when I returned to my family's home for the last time, I heard people whistling and calling to me just like on the first day. And I knew all of a sudden that it's not me changing people, it's them who are changing me.

My eyes had been opened – I could now see behind the scenes and the prejudices I had brought with me and I found a society of women who are incredibly strong and committed. This is how I would like to be too. ☸



Helen walking in Northern Jordan



Photos: private

Three children share their joy of life with Helen.

# Discovering unexpected fields of learning in Indonesia

Angelique Lorentz was in Palu/Indonesia in 2008/09 as an ecumenical volunteer. Today she is a student of social work at the Evangelische Hochschule Ludwigsburg, Germany.

**A**fter having finished my training as a nursery school teacher I had the chance to realize one of my dreams and flew to Indonesia for six months. I had big plans: I was going to learn all about Indonesian culture, learn the language, and any fears or worries would be accepted as a challenge. All my preparations to these ends were very important for me before my departure – yes, before my departure!

On my arrival in Palu, however, everything was completely different: I felt excited and nervous; the air was hot, damp and dusty. There were so many motor-scooters on the streets and I was overwhelmed by the noise. On the radio you could hear Christmas carols, but the sun was hot on my skin. My first thought was: "This is madness; am I really going to live here for the next six months?" But then, my host family gave me a hearty welcome, showed me my room and gave me plenty to eat. I participated in their lives which also meant washing my clothes by hand.

My work in the kindergarten included both learning and teaching. The children were three to six years old and were taught in English. At the beginning I mixed with the children and followed the lessons from their perspective. Gradually I increasingly took part in helping the other nursery school teachers to prepare the lessons and activities and we complemented each other according to our skills.

In school it was similar. The cooperation between male and female teachers as well as between Christians and Muslims is a matter of course. It was obvious to see that the pupils and their education had top priority. The children were eager to learn and open-minded. I enjoyed working with them – although it was different than I had imagined. A completely new field of learning opened up for me: I had to learn to become more patient with myself.

In spite of intensive preparations at home, I had not "learned" what I actually needed on site: You cannot prepare yourself for homesickness. And the language sounds quite different in the country itself with new dialects and speech melodies. And also my new outlook on life could neither be anticipated nor "learned" before departure. It is hard to describe the feelings you have when you live in a completely different culture. I started out interested and open-minded – but at first when I arrived I just wanted to run away!

But in the end these six months turned out to be a very intensive experience which I really enjoyed and I have learned a lot for my own personal development. I hope I was able to give something back to the people. I still keep in touch with the families and friends in Palu. ☺



Photo: private

Angelique surrounded by her Indonesian colleagues at the occasion of school's sport event.

# Girls and Boys under one roof

## Theodor Schneller School in Jordan

Reem Al-Bairuti is 23 years old. She has a BA in English Literature and works as an English teacher in Theodor Schneller School/Kindergarten in Amman, Jordan.

I consider Theodor Schneller School my second home and it means to me affiliation, because I was born in TSS and until now I live there. During my life in TSS I was dealing and playing with students and we had a lot of activities together. As an educator's daughter I was raised in a house not differentiating between male and female and everyone of us had the same rights and duties.

On one hand:

Working as a woman with boys in a male society is a normal feeling, I don't feel strange dealing with them because all my life I was dealing with males through my childhood (kindergarten, primary school), high school, university and also through my work as an English teacher, I deal with a lot of males in this society like male teachers and parents.

For me teaching children is an exciting and important thing. I teach them how to love and cooperate with each other and how to be confident when they move up to

Primary School and how to deal with each other in an equal way. There should be no difference no matter what their gender is.

I give them attention, support, love, and care. Also I help them to discover their abilities and try to develop it. For me there is no difference between boys and girls because they are equal by giving them what they need.

On the other hand:

Society needs both genders to succeed. It's the first time in the history of Theodor Schneller School in Amman that girls and boys are sitting in the same class and that's a great achievement. This step was taken to balance our society. This combination helps them to deal with each other with love and equality as one family; also it prepares them for university life and the business community, to be successful in their life and learn about the ability to give.

Society will achieve great positions if both genders work together in equality under one roof. ☺



Photo: private

Children exposed to creative learning methods at Theodor Schneller School in Amman.

## Youth in Lebanon with unknown future

Rima Zankoul Maamari, married with three children, is currently working as the academic supervisor of the elementary department in the National Protestant College – Kfarchima, Lebanon. She portrays here the huge challenge for Lebanon's educational system in an abbreviated essay.

Photo: private



Rima Z. Maamari

Our youth are influenced in their choices by many factors such as parental guidance, peer pressure, religious views, economic and worldwide conditions as well as formal education.

As one of the youth leaders in our church, I notice that the image of the future is often vague and misguided. The young are usually unfamiliar with the supply and demand reality of the work market.

Unemployed youth are often unaware of potential job opportunities. Their plans for the future may not correspond to the Lebanese job markets. This problem is partly due to media misconceptions, stereotypes and unrealistic expectations on behalf of the youth. Moreover, parental guidance, dreams, aspirations and preferences, can sometimes pose a challenge for the youth as they feel pressured to choose the career path engineered by their parents and their parents' unaccomplished dreams.

In this fast changing world of technology, internet and inventions breakthroughs, the young Lebanese are not sure of what domain will satisfy their financial needs as well as their career aspirations. They are more directed towards fast wealth-accumulating majors of study or a prestige-related one, rather than choosing a field of study that suits their individual preferences, thus discovering their own skills, abilities and interests, and planning to practice what they like, and in which they may excel.

A geographically small country like Lebanon can offer only limited opportunities for its boys and girls. As a result, it has been the norm for many years for the Lebanese labor force to direct their future plans towards succeeding in other countries rather than their own home country. However, nowadays even this option is faced by global competition, where qualified expertise from all over the world is competing for the same jobs.

Yet another challenge for the Lebanese youth is the economic changes that our whole planet is facing. Young men and women have to adapt their future perspectives to better fit the rising job markets, while many of them might feel the pressure of an uncertain future and the inability to assess failure and/or success, not forgetting the availability of adaptation tools and programs and the importance of their timeliness.

Finally, one major obstacle is the lack of guidance from the present educational system in the schools. Before the civil war, Lebanon had one of the best educational systems in the region. ☹



## News from EMS Women's Network

### JAPAN

**Yoko Sugimori, liaison woman in Japan reports on the women's fellowship of the United Church of Christ in Japan (KYODAN):**

Last year we celebrated 150 years of Protestant Evangelism in Japan. We remember with gratitude the commitment of missionaries in the past, who worked tirelessly to spread the gospel of Christ and to serve the people across Japan. Along the paths that they tread grew churches, schools, and social welfare organizations that still stand to this day.

The earliest introduction of Christianity into Japan goes back to 1549, when Francisco Xavier came to Japan as a missionary of the Roman Catholic Church. Kyodan Women's Society also celebrated the 40th Anniversary of our national organization in June 2009. There were about 1,200 attendants from all over Japan and our theme was "Salt of the Earth, Light of the World". It was meaningful for us to have Ms. Gitta Klein representing EMS and pray together as one of the guests for peace. ☺

### BALI, INDONESIA

**Ni Luh Mastri Ayu Caerina, Chairwoman of Women Fellowship writes:**

Greetings from Bali! Thank you for your email and concern for our women's ministry in Bali. We consists of about 1000 active women within our organization in Bali. Our focus this year is to create awareness of environment. We are also in the process of creating awareness of HIV&AIDS within the church especially the danger for women.

God teaches us to follow His example by treating others as ourselves and to share the Good News to others as a life letter of Christ who has died for us. The world teaches us to do good things including to give offerings. God has loved us endlessly and unconditionally. God changes our

lives, and changes our views, that God becomes the focus, not ourselves. We wish that God may bless you. ☺

**THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM  
Deborah Edmunds, Bishop's Office, sent us this information on Women's Empowerment in the Diocese of Jerusalem:**

The Episcopal/Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem encompasses Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria where cultural traditions and expectations differ greatly. The Diocese of Jerusalem actively practices Christianity, which includes equality, dignity, mutual respect and cooperation, empowerment, and service for all. We have numerous women in leadership positions in our schools and hospitals, raise considerable funds for equal education, and are beginning to explore women's ordination while remaining sensitive to the cultural norms and the policies of our conservative Province.

The Diocese has launched a Women's Empowerment program for the women of our parishes. The Bishop's wife is active with the Women's Coordinating Leadership Team. Through this program, many women have learned public speaking, computer and email skills. Other women are directing schools and hospitals or starting new ventures of their own. The Women's program in the Diocese is designed to provide opportunity for growth and empower women in their area of interest, not to force change.

Two diocesan wide conferences have been organized by the Women's Coordinators within Bishop Dawani's three years as Diocesan Bishop. Interested women have also participated in one cross-cultural Conference sponsored by women of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai, The Anglican Communion in Japan. All conferences were held in Jordan, a country accessible by all. ☺



Photo: private

The Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem, Women's Convention in Shafeega, Jordan

## GERMANY

### Evangelical Church of Kurhessen-Waldeck, Germany

Christian Education Fund "Ausbildungshilfe" celebrates 50th anniversary.

The society in Kassel was founded in 1960 and now supports annually around 2,500 young people in Asia and Africa with scholarships, enabling them to complete an education. This missionary society has always restricted its activities to the area of the Evangelical Church of

in Asia and Africa at all levels – in the clergy and parish councils, in hospitals, schools and businesses. The expenses for the office in Kassel are largely met by the EKKW out of church taxes, so that about 95 percent of the donations go to the partner countries.

The Christian Education Fund is celebrating its anniversary in 2010 in numerous church services and mission festivals and holding a central celebration on 28th August in Kassel, Germany. ☺



Kurhessen-Waldeck (EKKW), where it collects about 500,000 euros every year. It has more than 40 overseas partner churches and organizations, including EMS partner churches in Ghana, South Africa, India and Indonesia. Chairperson of the society is Rev. Andrea Wöllenstein (Marburg), a member of EMS Women's Advisory Board.

From the outset it was clear that at least half of the scholarships should be given to women and girls, who are disadvantaged in education almost everywhere. This principle still applies today. The scholarships for young Christians from poor backgrounds have also supplied competent professionals to the former "mission churches"

### Protestant Church of the Palatinate

In October 2010 a new course on ecumenical, feminist and theological studies is going to start. The partner churches of our Protestant Church of the Palatinate in Ghana, Korea and Bolivia are brought into focus. Women from these countries and European women having lived there for a long period of time will offer an insight into theological thinking and working of women. This study course will be completed by a seminar with Dr. Heike Walz, Wuppertal/Bethel, in which we want to look into gender just theology worldwide. The course will be held under the auspices of Bishop in retirement, Bärbel Wartenberg-Potter. ☺

### EMS Secretariat, Stuttgart

66 groups from various countries are participating in the EMS project "Reading the Bible through the Eyes of Another" linking women and men in EMS Fellowship. Workshop is planned for March 2010 within the frame of EMS-Focus 2009-2012.

Implementation of EMS Gender Policy will be evaluated and presented during the Mission Council meeting in June 2010. ☺

Photo: Gisela Köllner



Some women of EMS Women's Advisory Board during a meeting in March 2010 discussing on the future of OUR VOICES in view of the financial constraints EMS is facing. From left to right: Gabriele Mayer, Elisabeth Aduama, Bärbel Wuthe, Lesinda Cunningham, Fei Zhu, Barbara Kohlstruck.

## The Liaison Women of the International Women's Network



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MATHEW 5: 14-16

'YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. NO ONE AFTER LIGHTING A LAMP PUTS IT UNDER THE BUSHEL BASKET, BUT ON THE LAMPSTAND, AND IT GIVES LIGHT TO ALL IN THE HOUSE. IN THE SAME WAY, LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE OTHERS, SO THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS AND GIVE GLORY TO YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.



Association of Churches and Missions  
in South Western Germany