



1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005  
1000 Frauen für den Friedensnobelpreis 2005  
1000 FEMMES POUR LE PRIX NOBEL DE LA PAIX 2005  
1000 женщинам – Нобелевская премия мира  
ألف امرأة لجائزة نوبل للسلام لعام ألفين وخمسة  
一千婦女得諾貝爾平和獎  
1000 MUJERES Y UN PREMIO NOBEL DE LA PAZ DEL 2005

## Newsletter 4/2003

Welcome to the New Year's Newsletter of the Project 1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005 . After trips to various countries and intensive discussions with coordinators, we look forward to bringing you up to date on the latest status quo and will inform you in the following pages about:

- A trip around the world
  - Contacts with our coordinators in Europe
  - The Nobel Peace Prize 2003
  - Further steps
- ~ The next meeting of coordinators  
~ Finances

**Very important: in case there is a woman you want to nominate, please don't forget to fill out our nomination form.**

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## Once around the world

Report from Rebecca Vermot

My around-the-world ticket entitled me to 34,000 miles. After 33,975 I have landed again in Zurich, hale and hearty. I carry as baggage experiences in 6 countries. In all of them, the coordinator responsible for identifying and nominating peace women in her region has each her own specific problems, her own ups and downs.

**Brazil, Sao Paulo and Brasilia – Clara Charf.** The vital 78-year-old coordinator for this huge country has given us very relevant pieces of advice for the realization of the coordinators' work. Together with the Católicas pelo Direito de Decidir (CDD) and Geledes, the Instituto pela Mulher Negra, we developed a strategy to address all women's and peace organizations with information about our Project, for they are the ones who can lead us to the women we are seeking, as they work together with them. We will ask these organizations and networks to nominate women they know. In the early summer of 2004 a jury composed of well-known and less-well-known Brazilians will select certain women from among those nominated and send their recommendations to the office in Bern. In this way the coordinator will not be solely responsible for the nomination of peace women, but will share this responsibility with others. An international committee, to be appointed later, will decide in Switzerland on the definitive list of peacewomen nominees.

I also had encouraging contact with congresswomen and women senators in Brasilia who are planning their own committee to support this Swiss initiative. Help is coming also from the Partido dos Trabalhadores, whose leaders (mostly men) support the Project with all the means at their disposal – although it is clear that this is not a party project, a point which is important to Clara.

**El Salvador, San Salvador – Nora Franco.** This city at the foot of a volcano seems like a village, in comparison to Sao Paulo with its daily traffic of 6.5 million cars. The houses are no higher than three stories. No wonder, for during my four days there, there were two mild earthquakes. Nora, as the coordinator for all of Latin America (except Brazil) and the Caribbean, has a mammoth job ahead. She alone will send 100 nominations to Switzerland. In order to master this job, she will need the help of women from various countries. In order to initiate these women into their work, she will organize two workshops, one in Central America and one in South America. She will conduct the Caribbean search mainly via the internet. But it will be difficult to find women in Cuba, where critics of the regime can be endangered by publicity. We will have to nominate women there with circumspection.

**Fiji, Suva – Nicci Simmonds and Koila Costello-Olssen.** Four days in Fiji – four days of rain. But this trip was about organizing work, not about sightseeing. The first objective in Fiji was to mitigate Nicci's handicap as a non-Pacific-islander – which has now been achieved, thanks to Koila's help and that of the network of ECREA, the Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy. Contacts can be established in all the South Sea states, but there will be problems with the nomination forms, as not all concerned can read and write, often especially not in English. So it was decided that while the forms will be distributed in these regions, the nominations may be handed in orally on cassettes, provided that all questions on the forms have been answered. In the offices of ECREA we held a press conference, attended by all three Fiji newspapers and by Radio Fiji and Fiji TV – and the following week-end Nicci, Koila and I were to be seen and heard everywhere.

**The Philippines, Manila – Paulynn Sicam.** Washday in Leveriza, an "upcoming" slum in Manila. Women and a few men wash huge quantities of laundry in numerous basins. 3-4 families live in a house with four very small rooms. Boys are playing basketball, children ride around on tricycles, roosters crow, men smoke and play darts. 20 years ago this area was a swamp with huts made of cardboard and corrugated iron standing on it. Today the settlement has been rebuilt, the houses are two-storied and the roads more or less drained. Nuns have been working here for years at building up a sense of community. Today women earn their living (and thereby food for their large families) working in a cooperative, making candles, soap, candy and crocheted articles, as well as giveaway items for companies. The cooperative is closely linked to Bible lessons. Whoever does not attend the latter does not work in the cooperative.

The main task in the Philippines was finding assistance for Paulynn, and I want to take the opportunity here to welcome to our Project Paulynn's co-coordinator, Karen Tanada. She is from the GZO Peace Institute, an organization (with an Asia-wide network) which gives strong support to grassroots efforts in peace processes, especially in the Philippines.

The result of my short, eventful stay in the Philippines was an appearance in a one-hour talk show on the cable channel ANK which was broadcast 4 times worldwide, and a column by the best-known woman columnist in the Philippines, Rina Jimenez-David. You can find it at the following link: [http://www.inq7.net/opi/2003/nov/30/opi\\_rj david-1.htm](http://www.inq7.net/opi/2003/nov/30/opi_rj david-1.htm).

**Hong Kong – Kin Chi Lau.** In China grassroots women are invisible, unrenowned. Kin Chi is therefore pleased to be able to make known the work and engagement of grassroots women and to enable contact between them and women from other countries. For her, networking (both national and international) is an important part of the Project. We also had to discuss political issues. It is clear that absolute transparency is the best protection. Therefore there will be a China-wide appeal for nominations – in newspapers, magazines, in the Web and in newsletters. Obviously, this will give rise to much political discussion.

**Thailand, Bangkok – Supawadee (Kratae) Petrat.** The last station on a long trip. Exhaust-polluted air, ear-splitting noise, and in my pocket an invitation to introduce the Project 1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005 to 80 women from all over Asia at the UNIFEM Conference on the subject "East and Southeast Asia Regional Workshop on Domestic Violence Legislation: Moving towards Regional Networking and Strategies". And the task of initiating a new coordinator in her work for the Project. Kratae, who works for the Human Rights Convention. will be responsible for the Indo-Chinese countries: Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand. It is still questionable how the job can be done for Burma. What the Nobel Peace Prize recipient Aung san Suu Kyi has been going through does not bode well, especially for courageous activists.

## The Coordinators Meeting in Europe

Report from Maren Haartje

I was able to meet **Zainap Gaschaeva** at the Society for Threatened Peoples in Bern during her stay in Switzerland. She was accompanied by the author Irena Brezna, who has done translations for us into Russian and German. We had before us Irena's new book about Zainap ("Die Sammlerin der Seelen, unterwegs in meinem Europa", Aufbau-Verlag, Berlin 2003 = "The Collector of Souls, along the Way in My Europe", Aufbau Publishers, Berlin, 2003). Zainap will work for the Project as coordinator for Chechnya, Georgia, Moldavia, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and will collaborate closely with her Russian network women.

At 6:30 a.m. on November 9, I met **Sima Samar** at the Zurich airport. She was in transit from Afghanistan to Canada, the U.S. and other countries. We had only a scant two hours to talk and withdrew to a corner table of a café. Like Zainap, Sima Samar regrets that she was not able in August to come to the first meeting of the coordinators in Bern. For her work, Sima will make use of the infrastructure and network of the Afghan Human Rights Committee, of which she is president. This will be a particular help to her in the regions which until now have been practically inaccessible and in which the Committee now has offices. Furthermore, she would like to nominate peace women from the refugee camps at the Afghan borders. Sima will come to Bern in February for the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of coordinators.

On November 13 I flew to Sarajevo to visit **Fadila Memisevic**, our coordinator for the Balkans. Together with her collaborator Belma, we discussed the handbook and also the difficulties in obtaining financial help there for a Swiss project. The next day we drove in warm sunny weather through isolated mountainous country to Mostar. There, in a bombed-out building, we visited the office of the women's project Zena BIH. The project leader, Azra Hasanbegovic, and her colleagues gave us a detailed account of their work, which encompasses mainly legal counseling, AIDS-prevention, information on trafficking in women, mediation and conciliation programs. We then drove to a day center which they run for senior women citizens, visited their women's center (boutique, café, hairdresser and massage), and then went to the new women's refuge Marguerite, which was inaugurated on December 8. Fadila regrets that for our Project only 3 candidates from Bosnia-Herzegovina are planned, as so many women there are engaged in peace work worthy of recognition.

## The Nobel Peace Prize 2003

On December 10, International Human Rights Day, Shirin Ebadi was honored in Oslo with this year's Nobel Peace Prize. We congratulate her! For the occasion, we sent to Swiss newspapers the following open letter to Shirin Ebadi:

Dear Ms. Shirin Ebadi

We are very happy that today, on International Human Rights Day, you have received the Nobel Peace Prize. With this award your untiring work toward democracy in Iran, your courageous commitment to human rights – particularly to those of women and children – and your integrity in such non-violent efforts have been given their due recognition.

It is no secret that your own country reacted with critical reserve to this award. We hope, however, that Iran will come to be proud of you and willing in the future to support the work you have begun in the cause of human rights and democracy.

Your example gives courage to women all over the world who are engaged day in, day out in the cause of peace and human security. They need this courage, not to give up despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles. The courage to continue despite the danger often inherent in their work. Courage, because at last another woman working for peace has been recognized by this illustrious committee, after 80 men, 20 organizations, and only 10 women have so far received the Nobel Peace Prize.

We have launched a project with the goal of having 1000 women worldwide nominated to receive the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. With this prize, we want them to be honored collectively for their courageous commitment. We want to show that women from all levels of society dedicate themselves to peace and human security.

Women in Chechnya risk their lives in documenting the war parties' atrocities. Women in Iraq struggle to survive and to attain their rights. Women in El Salvador take care of feeding their families but have no rights to own land. Women in Fiji look after women who are victims of domestic abuse and violence - threatened by sects. Women in the Philippines mediate between conflicting parties. Women in Mali fight against the proliferation of small arms which daily cost human lives. We have 18 coordinators worldwide who are helping us to identify the women for our Project 1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005. They encounter political problems and need encouragement. And today is an encouraging day.

Dear Shirin Ebadi, we, the initiators and coordinators of the Project 1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005 congratulate you most sincerely for your courage and engagement and for having received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Ruth-Gaby Vermot-Mangold, President of the Association 1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005  
Monika Stocker, Vice-President  
Maren Haartje, Project Manager  
Rebecca Vermot, Project Manager  
and the coordinators Clara Charf, Brazil; Nora Franco, El Salvador; Nicci Simmonds, New Zealand; Paulynn Sicam, the Philippines; KKin Chi Lau, Hong Kong; Kratae Supawadee, Thailand; Kamla Bhasin, India; Zainap Gaschajewa, Chechnya; Fatoumata Maiga, Mali; Vera Chirwa, Malawi; Asha Elkarib, Sudan; Cecile Mukarubuga, Rwanda; Cassandra Balchin, United Kingdom.

"Shirin Ebadi, You are a true woman of courage – such an inspiration to all people committed to justice and peace worldwide." Margo Okazawa-Rey, USA

"Congratulations! Your example serves as example for the women from Muslim countries." Marina Pikulina, Uzbekistan

"I am very proud of you, as woman and as Muslim and it is a very big success to the women in the world." Sima Samar, Afghanistan

"Your award is a symbol to all Bosnian women that with our engagement we are on the right path to peace and to respect for women's rights." Fadila Memisevic, Bosnia-Herzegovina

## Further Steps

The second coordinators meeting will take place on the Möschiberg near Bern, Switzerland, February 12-15, 2004. Agenda topics will be the selection of peace women, difficulties in this process, and the various possibilities of resolving these difficulties. We will discuss in detail the nomination of the peace women, the production of documentation, the including of local personalities, financing the Project, the feasibility of the nominations and coordination with those doing academic work. The trip around the world has shown that there will be various unforeseen problems, particularly in respect to women who do not want their peace work publicized, as otherwise their lives would be endangered. We are aware of such situations and will take them under careful consideration.

## Finances

An international project such as this is expensive. The thousand women must be chosen, portrayed and encouraged. Thanks to the collaboration of women in international networks, we are budgeting 5000 Swiss francs per candidate for the 4-year period of work on the project. This includes overhead costs and public relations.

The necessary finances should be provided by Swiss and other national and international foundations, funds, institutions and individuals. We have received various sponsor contributions and pledges of support, for which we are most grateful. Up to now, we have sold three dozen of our "1000 peace shares for 1000 francs". These shares may be bought by individuals, institutions, firms, families, etc. and have as a "dividend" documentation when the project has come to a close.

Whoever would like to participate more directly can take on, for 5000 francs, the sponsorship of one of the peace women. We are examining how far we can enable contact between a sponsor and his/her/their individually sponsored woman – this, however, not until after October 2005. Possibilities would be, for example, inviting the sponsored woman to Switzerland for lectures or workshops, or traveling to her country to meet her there.

If you participate in one way or the other, with a "share", a sponsorship, or a one-time donation, you will help us to realize this ambitious project which will set free a dynamism much-needed in the future.

The Association 1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005 has the following account at the Berner Kantonalbank (30-106-9), under the number 16 248.434.2.85.790. Further information at [www.1000peacewomen.org](http://www.1000peacewomen.org). Thank you in advance for your support!

### **Nomination Form**

Would you like to nominate a peace woman? Please fill out the following form and send it to our address (see page 1). Unless the woman you nominate is in western Europe, we will forward your nomination to the coordinator responsible for making the initial decision about including the nominee in the definitive list. The final decision will be made by an international committee, still to be appointed.

Bern, January 2005