

UN International Women's day 2018

Stuttgart, 11 March 2018

On 11 March, the Women's Federation for Peace, Stuttgart held an event to celebrate the UN International Women's Day. Twenty-eight participants, of whom fourteen were guests, gathered in the Stuttgart UPF center.



Ute Lemme, leader of the local Women's Federation group, opened the event by welcoming the guests and explaining that the 8th of March was first declared as International Women's Day and an official UNO day of celebration in 1977. The Women's Federation is the German branch of the WFWPI, which was established in South Korea in 1992 by Hak Ja Han Moon and holds a special advisory status with the UNO.

The program was focused on four women who have contributed to society in special ways.

Ilham Mandalawy, raised in a tolerant Muslim family in Iraq, encouraged to study by her father and become a teacher, introduced herself. After her husband had been taken political prisoner, she fled in 2000 in order that she and her three children could live in safety. We were moved by her struggle to establish a new life for herself and the children. She was unable to find work in Germany and so founded a language school where she gave lessons to Muslim women and taught refugee children their native Arabic language.



Rosemarie Tijsterman told us that from very early on in her life, she was confronted with illness both in herself and her family. She trained as a nurse and worked for many years in a normal hospital. It became clear to her that many illnesses were not caused by physical factors and she prayed to find a way to help people to heal or prevent illness at the root. She heard of a method from the USA, the „Emotion Code“ and learnt how to use it. She is now

able to help people in a special way where doctors and psychologists are often powerless.

The third woman to be introduced was Irmgard Ingwersen. Although she was not able to personally be present, her photo was projected onto the screen and her report read out. Even as a small child she loved art and drawing, but was not able to make it her profession. She especially enjoyed portrait painting and through this she was able to earn money while she was in Uganda and thus support the work of local artists. When her husband became ill, she became acquainted with and trained in therapeutic painting, developing the ability to paint 'soul pictures'. An important discovery for her was the new trend of „Urban Sketching“. She meets regularly with certain others



in Regensburg, in order to paint chosen motives-just as it pleased them. Examples of her artwork were projected on the screen.



Then Ursula Simminger told us about her work. She was raised in a small family and was often lonely, but was very connected to nature. From very early on, she, and later her children were plagued by severe allergies. She was thus unable to train for specific employment and so worked in various areas. It became very obvious to her that the traditional family structure is collapsing in contemporary society; old people are shunned and isolated and children given to strangers to be raised. Traditions are lost. She is currently working on different ways to revive valuable classical family structures by educating young parents.

Following their presentations, the four women were called up to the stage (with a representative for Irmgard Ingwersen) and presented with a certificate naming them as an Ambassador of Peace. One of the guests, a woman from Kashmir, came forwards from the audience and gave Ute Lemme a special sample of handiwork from Kashmir, a gift for Stuttgart Women's Federation for Peace.



The official part of the event came to a close after a group photo; then followed an opportunity to exchange ideas and enjoy coffee and cake.



Report by Ute Lemme (English Catriona Valenta)