
IFGK Activity Report 2018

The IFGK had nine active and six dormant members in the reporting period. The active members are: Martin Arnold, Anne Dietrich, Reinhard Eismann, Albert Fuchs, Mirjam Mahler, Gudrun Knittel, Barbara Müller, Achim Schmitz, Christine Schweitzer.

Our long-time member Roland Vogt passed away in spring 2018.

Activities of the IFGK staff

In the reporting period, **Dr. Martin Arnold** was mainly active in refugee work and at the Round Environmental Table Essen. As in previous years in various cities, he participated in the award ceremony of the Gandhi Prize for Civil Courage in Cologne (<https://gandhi-preis.de>) and also gave lectures on the Rosary Revolution in the Philippines in 1986 and on Nonviolent Peaceforce. The monthly open "Gütekraft-Stammtisch", see www.Martin-Arnold.eu, now meets in the new Essen Vielrespektzentrum.

Anne Dietrich continues to work as a peace expert for GIZ; she has been in Rwanda since October 2016.

In 2018, **Reinhard Eismann's** work continued to focus on preparing a draft statute for the foundation planned jointly by the IFGK and the BSV, into which the IFGK's endowment money will flow. Reinhard Eismann also participated in the amendment of the IFGK statutes, which became necessary in the context of the foundation to be established, as well as in the general revision of the IFGK statutes in the course of this amendment.

To a very limited extent, Reinhard Eismann continued to work in 2018 as an individual on the campaign council of the campaign "Macht Frieden. Civil Solutions for Syria" campaign as well as with CampaNet.

Prof. Dr. Albert Fuchs participated in the discussion about the Foundation and served as auditor. He is also involved in the Bonn Peace Alliance, in pax christi, in the Forum Peace Psychology and as an advisor to the journal Wissenschaft und Frieden (Science and Peace).

Gudrun Knittel provides process support for housing and construction projects, conducts training on consensus decision-making procedures, skills for constructive conflict management and dialogue principles.

Mirjam Mahler left her job as executive director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation towards the end of 2017. She is completing training at the project Alternatives to Violence (PAG).

Dr. Barbara Müller looks after the finances of the IFGK as treasurer. Professionally, she works mainly as a counsellor in Hunsrück (see her website <https://www.dr-barbara-mueller.com/>). She has also taken care of the amendment of the IFGK's statutes and since then has been intensively involved in the preparatory work for the establishment of a foundation by the BSV and IFGK for the long-term safeguarding of their association work, research and action of active nonviolence and peace work.

Academically, she is currently working on two topics: She relates the concept of peace logic to the experiences in passive resistance in the Ruhr struggle. The guiding question is: What

is the relationship between social defence and peace logic? What new insights can practical experience contribute? After a presentation at the study day in November, the processing of the results is in progress. Important feedback has already come from Reiner Steinweg, Hanne-Margret Birckenbach and Sabine Jaberg. A working paper is planned for the course of the year.

The other topic is a kind of "Listening Project". It is called: Where do you want to go, Germany? People with different perspectives on this country are interviewed about their opinions on the current situation in the country, their wishes for development and their assessment of lines of conflict. The first interviews are just now yielding interesting deeper insights: There is the question of belonging, recognition and exclusion. Another question is that of a more respectful discourse with dissenters and their preconditions. A third question is about visions for the future and the space that people in this society have to develop this with each other. Has not too much been surrendered to the "political space" and its inherent polarised discourses? Finally, a last question is that of the power of definition, who is allowed to talk to whom? Who is not allowed to talk to?! And what are the sanctions if one does talk to "others"? This is where interesting insights into the demarcation mechanisms of different "bubbles" open up.

Dr Achim Schmitz offered an integration course with literacy mainly for refugees in Krefeld. He continued his education in this field. He continued his communication training at the University of Stuttgart. He also began a teaching assignment in Krefeld at a vocational school for geriatric care on various conflict topics.

In the Fellowship of Reconciliation and in pax christi he was active in the commissions for peace education.

Dr. Christine Schweitzer: In addition to her work as executive director of the BSV, she continues to be an assistant editor and editor for the journal Friedensforum (www.friedenskooperative.de) as a staff member of the IFGK.

Christine has continued her work as a documenter of Nonviolent Peaceforce good practice workshops with two more workshops - in Beirut and Nairobi-. The first two reports are now online: <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/what-we-do/about-3/new-report-good-practices2>; the third will be online soon.

In addition, she again conducted two coaching sessions for peace workers at the WFD and wrote several articles (e.g. on the Korean conflict from a peace logic perspective) and gave lectures.

Study days

On 17 November 2018, this year's IFGK study day took place in Cologne - in cooperation with the Bund für Soziale Verteidigung. Around 25 participants* listened to five lectures on various topics and projects - from mediation efforts in Afghanistan to civilian peacekeeping in South Sudan, from the Ruhr struggle to non-violent approaches in religious education and Barbara Müller's new project "Wohin willst Du Deutschland?" A report of the study day is now ready and can be downloaded as a PDF from the IFGK website (www.ifgk.de).

One of the presentations at the study day was about a study conducted by Outi Arajärvi at Nonviolent Peaceforce in South Sudan. It is about competencies that those who work as peace workers at Nonviolent Peaceforce need to bring or develop. The first results of this study are now ready and can be downloaded as a PDF from the IFGK website. The full study is expected to be published later in 2019.

International networking, cooperation and representation

Martin Arnold continued to represent the IFGK at the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (AFK).

Christine Schweitzer represented the IFGK at the Council Meeting of War Resisters' International (WRI) (albeit via Skype) and at the German Friends of War Resisters' International, of which she is Chairperson.

Several IFGK staff members attended the annual meeting of the Bund für Soziale Verteidigung (BSV) in Braunschweig in April 2018.

Several IFGK members also took part in the meeting of the Platform for Civil Conflict Transformation.

Management and public relations

The management of the IFGK continues to be carried out by several members of staff. Barbara Müller is responsible for everything to do with finances and personnel. Christine Schweitzer is in charge of the website, is responsible for the organisational preparation of study days and looks after the distribution list for interested parties, the information folder and the annual report. Other tasks such as preparing the content of study days etc. are carried out on a rotating basis.

The chairpersons of the IFGK e.V. remain Achim Schmitz and Martin Arnold; the treasurer is Barbara Müller. Auditors are Regine Kranich and Albert Fuchs.

All core IFGK work is done by the staff on a voluntary basis.

The IFGK has handed over the distribution of its working papers to the Bund für Soziale Verteidigung.

Amendment of the statutes

In order for the IFGK to be in a position under association law to set aside funds for the establishment of the foundation, an amendment to the statutes became necessary. In the course of this change, the statutes were fundamentally revised: Points that have evolved and proven themselves in practice were codified; the statutes were adapted to the new spelling; old spelling and numbering errors were eliminated; minor stylistic changes were made; gender-sensitive language was introduced. The new statutes were unanimously adopted at the IFGK General Assembly on 16 November 2018 in Cologne.

The planned foundation

The establishment of a public foundation under civil law with legal capacity, jointly planned by IFGK and BSV, is progressing with great strides. The establishment of a foundation association, initially sought by both associations, was discarded.

Barbara Müller and Reinhard Eismann are involved in the formal organisational preparations for the establishment of the foundation on the part of the IFGK; Outi Arajärvi is involved on the part of the BSV board.

The process of finding and deciding on the name of the foundation, moderated by Barbara Müller, is currently underway.

The foundation is expected to be established in spring 2019.