

## Activity Report 2019

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.

On the eve of the Study Day 2019, the IFGK met for its General Assembly on 15.11.2019. The previous board was unanimously re-elected (Achim Schmitz, Martin Arnold and Barbara Müller). The Study Day 2020 will probably take place on September 12th in Essen.

### Activities of the IFGK staff

**Dr. Martin Arnold** continued to be active in refugee work and at the Environmental Round Table during the reporting period. Gandhi's 150th birthday on October 2, 2019 was the occasion to organize a total of 12 events ( [www.t1p.de/150G](http://www.t1p.de/150G) ) together with the Essen Peace Forum, the VielRespektZentrum and other cooperation partners in a "Month of Peace Culture". The lecture "700 Years of Nonviolent and Powerful Concepts of Action for More Justice and Peace" met with particular interest, also at Gandhi's birthday events in Linz, Darmstadt, Mainz and Frankfurt. In addition, Martin Arnold is leading a new local peace group, which is involved, among other things, in the new discussion process initiated by the Protestant Church in the Rhineland with its "Word of Peace 2018 - on the way to a just peace".

**Anne Dietrich** has been working as a peace expert for GIZ for several years; she has been in Rwanda since October 2016, where she is working at PIASS (Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences) with both students from the region and peace practitioners\*, gathering practical insights for her research on "Needs-oriented conflict transformation".

In 2019 **Reinhard Eismann's** work focused on finding a name for the new joint foundation of the IFCC and FSIO, drafting the statutes and preparing the foundation business for the new joint foundation.

After active participation was no longer possible throughout the year for time reasons, Reinhard Eismann officially ended his membership in the Campaign Council of the campaign "Macht Frieden. Civilian Solutions for Syria" campaign.

Also the participation in CampaNet was only possible to a limited extent in 2019.

**Prof. Dr. Albert Fuchs** was active as cash auditor. He works in the Bonn Peace Alliance, at pax christi, in the Forum Friedenspsychologie and as an advisor to the journal Wissenschaft und Frieden. For some time now, he has been particularly involved with a W&F dossier on the ethical dimension of the drone debate.

**Gudrun Knittel** works as a trainer in the field of political culture and democracy. She accompanies processes for housing and construction projects, conducts training on consensus decision-making procedures, competencies for constructive conflict management and dialogue principles. Theory U according to Otto Scharmer, Integral Impulses and dialogue forums of the journal Evolve on consciousness and culture deepen her work around the spiritual and physical dimension. As a member of Mehr Demokratie, she supports citizens' councils, citizens' expertises and forms of direct democracy and expands her networking in the field of citizen participation.

**Mirjam Mahler** is completing training with the project Alternatives to Violence (PAG).

**Dr. Barbara Müller** is the treasurer of the IFGK. Professionally, she works mainly as a consultant in the Hunsrück region (see her website <https://www.dr-barbara-mueller.com/>). She is also involved

in the preparatory work for the establishment of a foundation of BSV and IFGK to secure their association work in the long term, research and action of active nonviolence and peace work. Scientifically she is currently working on the continuation of the topic: Where do you want to go, Germany? This has come to a head in the direction of the question of identity. In contrast to theoretical discussions, Barbara Müller has followed this topic in a biographical-reflexive manner. She has published the first stages of this journey of discovery in various blog posts on her homepage.

The aim is to be able to live their identity as Germans in a more relaxed way than before. This means first of all to perceive the historical resistance to this identity and to recognize the burdens that are associated with it. Instead of the previous avoidance of this identity, it is a matter of recognising and understanding the susceptibility of precisely this identity to political instrumentalisation, for example with the help of the Composite Heritage approach. One perspective that is currently opening up is that at the end of this history a new approach to a relaxed and open German identity could be possible, one that perceives and values the diversity of German identities. The challenge is precisely to anchor in this process the experience of Auschwitz, which is a central breaking point for German identity.

As of 1.1.2020 Barbara Müller is working again as an employee at the IFGK, responsible for the business area: Counselling from a Non-Violent Perspective.

**Dr. Achim Schmitz** taught an integration course with literacy in Duisburg and job-related German courses in Krefeld. He continued his communication training at the University of Stuttgart and had teaching assignments at vocational schools for geriatric care in Krefeld and Neuss on various conflict issues. At the Fliehdner Fachhochschule Düsseldorf-Kaiserswerth he offered seminars in sociology and intercultural education. In the reconciliation federation and at pax christi he was active in the commissions for peace building.

Dr. Christine Schweitzer: In addition to her work as managing director of the Federation for Social Defence ([www.soziale-verteidigung.de](http://www.soziale-verteidigung.de)), she is also an assistant editor and editor for the magazine Friedensforum ([www.friedenskooperative.de](http://www.friedenskooperative.de)).

Christine continued her work as a documentator of good practice workshops of Nonviolent Peaceforce in the year under review with a further workshop in North America. The first three reports are now online: <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/what-we-do/about-3/new-report-good-practices2> ; the fourth (and fifth, dated January 2020) are in progress. She also conducted a moderation and a small study on the skills of peace workers for the Academy for Conflict Transformation.

She is also active in the small group that is preparing the aforementioned establishment of the foundation.

She has also written or given various articles and lectures (e.g. on the role of local actors in conflicts for FEST and on non-violent resistance for the Gandhi Conference in Linz).

### Study days

This year's IFGK Study Day took place on Saturday, 16.11.19. Place was the Vielrespekthaus in Essen. About 17 participants\* listened to and discussed four very different inputs:

- German identity, what is it, what can be exciting about it and even be fun sometime?  
Dr. Barbara Müller (IFGK)
- 700 years of non-violent action concepts for more justice and peace,  
Dr. Martin Arnold (IFGK)
- Global Peace Education - Unifying and different aspects of peace education in Germany, Georgia and South and North Sudan.'  
Jürgen Menzel (Act for Transformation)
- Research among friends: Good Practice in Civil Peacekeeping  
Dr. Christine Schweitzer (IFGK)

A short summary of the four lectures can be found on the IFGK website: <http://ifgk.de/aktuelles/>

