



## **Women in Exile**

Asylum Seeking Women  
organising and empowering  
themselves

# Preface

This brochure narrates the history of “Women in Exile” ten years work of active political struggles and includes other activities such as Peer Education Seminars, Empowerment Workshops. These workshops and seminars are meant to educate the women of their rights in the Heims, for their asylum procedure, right of stay, labour rights etc. This brochure is also meant to sensitise women asylum seekers who are still living in the Heims to empower themselves and to be more active in fighting for their human rights as well as in this campaign so that we can achieve our goals.

Asylum rights are human rights, is one of the popular slogans, we hear in all the demonstrations. As a human being one is entitled to freedom of movement and choice. The brochure includes our different activities e.g. in Seminars where we learn together and try to look for solutions on how to improve our situations in our environments; Meetings with our supporters to exchange information and experience; Organize demonstrations for our aims together with other groups; Presenting the authorities with our demands; Participating in panel discussions to find ways to improve women living conditions and celebrating Christmas together with food and giving presents to children.

We believe the living conditions in Heims which cause stress, trauma and feeling of worthlessness can be described best by the people who are living in these situations. Women are affected twice as much by these conditions because they lack privacy and their children are growing up in an environment that is not child friendly. We (women) are the only ones who can bring these issues out to the society by being active, by joining activities which are meant to improve our living conditions.

In our first brochure “Women in Exile” requested the German society and groups fighting against the racist discriminative laws faced by the asylum seekers to support our campaign “No Lager for Women and children”, “Close All Lagers!”

This campaign has been going on for the last three years and some things started to improve a little bit, but we need to struggle more. We want our demand “No Lager for Women and Children,” “Abolish all Lagers” to be met.



# 10 Years – Women in Exile

## “I am an asylum seeker but a woman”

### How it all started:

Already ten years ago women asylum seekers were politically active. Then it became obvious that apart from the discriminative laws faced by all asylum seekers, women and children were facing problems of a different kind. These problems are due to the compulsory collective accommodation system such as lack of privacy, sexual harassment and violence in the Heims.

Those problems were not visible to the outsiders or organisations who were interested in helping the asylum seekers to fight against the discriminative laws. Among the women activists this brought up the idea of organising an initiative to give women a forum to meet together. Here they could express their fears and needs, and try to seek for solutions politically and socially.

Women activists from different Heims in the state of Brandenburg got together and decided to organise themselves as a group “*Women in Exile*” and meet once a month in Potsdam. Women in Exile organised meetings, seminars, demonstrations and produced info materials. The group was supported with finances and logistics from different organisations which fight for human rights in the society, especially those fighting for the discriminative laws against asylum seekers.

In 2010 the organisation launched a campaign “*No Lager for Women*” demanding the immediate removal of women and children from the Heims and the eventual closure of the Heims.

The group celebrated its 10 years anniversary in August 2012. The three day programme started with protest rally in front of the ministry for labour, family, social and youth issues. Later we met at the outskirts of Berlin, in a children friendly environment with sleeping places and conference rooms. There we had seminars and a podium discussion composed of former and current group members and supporters about our work as “Women in Exile”. And obviously we celebrated our Anniversary with a barbeque and dancing.

Other activities include “Peer Education” seminars which are meant to help the women pass correct information to other women living in the Heims. We network with groups working in Refugee issue and other groups working on women issues.

Future plans: To carry on with the campaign “No Lager for Women!” “Abolish all Lagers!” and to empower more women to engage in activism.



## Workshops: Empowerment & Peer Education

We organise “Empowerment” seminars to inform the women about their human and political rights and encourage them to be active in fighting against laws which hinder their emancipation.

Women are encouraged to talk about the issues which disturb them in general: the discriminative laws faced by the asylum seekers, their lives in the Heim, medical experiences, experiences of buying with vouchers, working permits and problems of working without working permit.

Together we try to find solutions on how to go about these issues and when there is a needy case the person is directed to a proper institution where they can get help.

We also organise “Peer Education” seminars where women participated with the aim to pass on their new knowledge to the other women in the Heims.



# Networking

We participate in conferences, meetings, demonstrations and different political events organised by different groups. We participate in Podium discussions with politicians and activists to talk about issues concerning asylum seeking women and the difficulties they face in the collective homes due to lack of privacy.

Organisations from different areas in Germany invite us to talk about our work and to encourage other asylum seeking women to fight for their rights.



## Political actions

Demonstrating is one of the ways to bring issue to the civil society. In the last three years we have organised two big demonstrations directed to the minister for labour, family, social and youth issues and another protest in front of his office.

These demonstrations are always accompanied by press releases and press conferences. The minister promised to support our demands but in reality its hard to change laws and we need to keep on pushing our demands.



## Handing over our demands (Memorandum)

Women in Exile produced a brochure after visiting different Heims, highlighting the problems faced by the women in the Heims. There we gave details of some of their day to day problems.

We handed over this brochure “No Lager for Women” and our written demands to the Minister for labour, family, social and youth issues. Our demand was (and still is) that women and children have the opportunity to have private flats in places of their choice and that Heims should be completely closed.



# Documentation of women`s experience when looking for flats

Women in Exile and Friends have a campaign to give women and children the opportunity to move out from the "Heims" and to abolish "Heims" in general.

We use this questionnaire as a guide to find out about women`s experience when looking for flats. We seek to know how is the situation in the various districts in Brandenburg, how many women/families applied for flats and if their application was successful.

**In case of rejection of your application "Women in Exile and Friends" are ready to offer assistance in appealing for the decisions and making applications for women who are interested in moving to flats.**

You would support our work a lot –

- by filling your answers in the questionnaire on the next page and by posting the filled questionnaire back to us. You can do this anonymously or if you wish to be supported by giving us your telephone number for contacting you
- by giving us a telephone interview along this questions. Just give us a call – 0176 32920586
- By passing on this questionnaire to other refugee women and maybe assisting them to fill it.
- If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us!

**This questionnaire is also available in German and in Farsi.**

# Our questions

1. How long do you live in the Heim? Since when?
2. With how many persons do you live in one room?
3. Did you ever ask for a flat? (if you are since a long time in the Heim and you didn't: why not?)
  - Who did you ask? Did this person direct you to somebody else?
  - Is there a formal procedure to apply for a flat or to get the permission to move out? Did you need to fill a form? Or to write a letter?
  - Who assisted you in that application procedure?
  - What was the outcome?
  - If your request was rejected: Who did tell you that? What did they give as reasons?
  - Did you get a written rejection ( That is very important for making an appeal against it)
  - Did you make an appeal against it? Who assisted you with that appeal?
  - What do you know about the procedure or the requirements to get a flat? Who is getting a flat and who does not?
  - If they allowed you to move out, but left it up to you to find a flat:
    - Who is assisting you to search for a flat? Do other refugees get more assistance than you?
    - Do you think the whole procedure is fair? What would be your demands how it should be changed?
4. Do you need help with making these demands

**We offer support in the process of looking for a flat. For example writing applications for flats and accompanying women to the responsible authorities.**



Dear refugee women in Brandenburg,

Women in Exile and Friends have a campaign with the demands to give Women and Children the opportunity to move out from the "Heims" and to abolish "Heims" in general. This questionnaire is a guide to find out how the situation in the various districts in Brandenburg is and how many women/families applied for flats.

In case of rejection of these applications "Women in Exile and Friends" are ready to offer assistance in appealing for the decisions and making applications for women who are interested in moving out for flats.

You would support our work a lot -

- by filling your answers in this questionnaire and post the filled questionnaire back to us. You can do this anonymous or if you wish to be supported by giving us your telephone number for contacting you.
- by giving us a telephone interview along this questions. Just give us a call – 0176 32920586.
- By passing on this questionnaire to other refugee women and maybe assisting them to fill it.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us!

### Questionnaire

How long do you live in the Heim? Since when? In what place?

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With how many persons do you live in one room?

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Do you live together with children? If yes, how old are they?

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Did you ever ask for a flat?

(if you are since a long time in the Heim and you didn't: why not?)

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Who did you ask? Did this person direct you to somebody else?

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Is there a formal procedure to apply for a flat or to get the permission to move out? Did you need to fill a formular? Or to write a letter?

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Who assisted you in that application procedure?

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What was the outcome? If your request was rejected: Who did tell you that? What did they give as reasons?

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Did you get a written rejection? (That is very important for making an appeal against it)

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Did you make an appeal against it? Who assisted you with that appeal?

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What do you know about the procedure or the requirements to get a flat? Who is getting a flat and who does not?

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If they allowed you to move out, but left it up to you to find a flat:  
Who is assisting you to search for a flat?

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Do other refugees get more assistance than you?

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Do you think the whole procedure is fair? What would be your demands how it should be changed?

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Do you need help with making these demands?

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Anything else you want us to know?

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How can we contact you?

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**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TRUST!**

## Get together

From the beginning we organized activities to bring together women and children from different Heims. We meet for different workshops, like the ceramic workshop or the video workshop. And in winter time all women and children, regardless of one`s religion, are invited for a Christmas party. Children in Heims often do not have the advantages of receiving Christmas gifts. Women in Exile started raising money from well-wishers to buy presents for the children of the women whom are currently active. This is combined with a party for all and is usually in one of the Heims or in a central place like Potsdam or Berlin.



# Women in Exile, Sisters and Friends

Refugee women and individual activists decided to work together to make this campaign a success. The “Sisters” are women from the “Pan African Women” group while the “Friends” are individual activists from the civil society.

For the last three years friendship and trust has been built within the group and the Friends have been very supportive not only to the campaign but also to other Women in Exile work.



# Leaflets of Women in Exile

## Invitation to a Demonstration in Potsdam 8 MARCH INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY No to Lagers for Women! Close all Lagers!

Since 1911, 8th March has come to be the day internationally associated with the struggle for women's interests, against oppression, sexual violence and war, for women's suffrage, for better working and living conditions, for equality and against capitalism and racism. This year we are going to protest the unbearable living conditions of refugee women in Brandenburg and press for changes by holding a demonstration in Potsdam.

In many locations across Germany refugees have campaigned against intolerable living conditions by staging strikes and protests. Under the Act on Benefits for Asylum Seekers (Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz), refugees in Germany are required to live in poor conditions in refugee camps (lagers), are often not allowed to work and instead are made dependent on benefits in kind provided by the authorities, do not have adequate access to health care and are forced to live on less than the unemployment benefit II rate (Hartz IV). At the same time refugees are denied the human right to freedom of movement under the so-called "residency obligation" (Residenzpflicht). This law and other racist special laws provide the legal framework for oppression, isolation, and social exclusion.

In Brandenburg refugee women and their children have to live in "collective accommodation" for years, usually squeezed together in confined spaces (the minimum standard set by the Federal State's Government is six square metres per person), without privacy or possibility to take the control of their lives into their own hands. The camp-like accommodations are often situated outside built-up areas. The social isolation leaves women defenceless and they often become victims of sexual harassment or rape, they suffer due to bad hygienic conditions and the lack of prospects for their children.

**We demand:**  
 -> **No to lagers for women! Close all lagers! Private rented housing for all!**  
 -> **Against all forms of oppression, be it because of sex or gender, appearance, origin, age, sexual orientation or mobility restrictions.**

**WomenLesbianTrans\* demo starting 16.30pm**  
**Men showing solidarity are welcome outside the WLT\* block**  
**Brettscheid Str./Karl Liebknecht Str., Potsdam, S-Bth. Babelsberg**

**WIE** is a group of refugee women, who are located on asylum seekers problems from a woman perspective who fight against them, that damage emancipation of women and children.  
**2011 WIE-leaders\*heads started the campaign:**  
**No to Lagers for Women! Close all Lagers!**  
[www.womeninexile.blogspot](http://www.womeninexile.blogspot)

© 2012 WIE, Women in Exile/Arbeitskreis, Potsdam/Brandenburg-St. 161, 16626 Potsdam

**WIE women in Exile**  
 Flüchtlingfrauen werden laut

**Video and Empowerment seminar for young refugee women**  
**Video und Empowermentseminar für junge Flüchtlingfrauen**  
**ويلنو و سمينار توانمند سازی برای زنان مهاجر جوان**  
**12-14.07.2013 in Potsdam**

We invite you to participate in our summer seminar workshop. In this workshop you will have the opportunity to discuss with other young refugee women on your rights in the asylum procedure and your rights in the "lagers" and we will exchange information of the current living conditions in the "lagers" and the labour laws. You will learn how to make videos, view them together and discuss them.  
 At the end, participants will be given the opportunity to suggest new ideas of seminars and discuss possibilities of moderating the seminars themselves.  
 The seminar is free of charge. You can bring your children, there is a canteen. The seminar takes place in a room with 12 women being registered. A maximum of 20 participants. More information and registration in English: [raunassay@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:raunassay@yahoo.co.uk), Tel. 01763292666

Wir laden euch ein, an unserem Sommerseminar-Workshop teilzunehmen. In diesem Workshop werdet ihr die Gelegenheit haben, mit anderen jungen Flüchtlingfrauen über eure Rechte im Asylverfahren und eure Rechte in den "Lagern" zu diskutieren und wir werden Informationen über die aktuellen Lebensbedingungen in den "Lagern" und die Arbeitsgesetze austauschen. Ihr werdet, wie man Videos macht, sehen sie zusammen und diskutieren sie.  
 Am Ende werden die Teilnehmerinnen die Gelegenheit haben, neue Seminarideen vorzuschlagen und Möglichkeiten der Moderation der Seminare mit zu diskutieren.  
 Das Seminar ist kostenlos. Ihr könnt eure Kinder mitbringen, es gibt eine Kantine. Die Teilnahme ist für Flüchtlingfrauen aus Brandenburg begrenzt. Maximal 20 Teilnehmerinnen. Das Seminar findet in einem Raum mit 12 Frauen angemeldet statt. Mehr Information und Anmeldung in Deutsch: [raunassay@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:raunassay@yahoo.co.uk), 0176 999 33 631

# WOMEN IN EXILE

WICHTIGE ADRESSEN - IMPORTANT ADDRESSES - ADRESSES IMPORTANTES - DIRECCIONES IMPORTANTES

**Medizinische Flüchtlingshilfe - medical help - aid medical - ayuda medica**  
 Vermittlung anonym und kostenlos medizinischer Behandlung, unabhängig vom Aufenthaltsstatus.  
 montags und donnerstags von 16.30 Uhr bis 18.00 Uhr  
 im Mehrlinghof, Gernerstraße 2a, 10961 Berlin Kreuzberg, Vierzehnhof, Aufgang 2, 5 Stock  
 U-Bahnhof Mehringdamm U6/U7  
 Tel.: 030/ 69 46 740 E-Mail: [info@medhilfe.de](mailto:info@medhilfe.de)

**Rechtsberatung - legal advice - consultation juridique - asesoramiento juridico**  
**Les Migras (für Frauen und Lesben)**  
 Kottbusstr. 20a 10783 Berlin  
 Tel.: 030/ 21 91 50 90  
 E-Mail: [info@lesmigras.de](mailto:info@lesmigras.de)

**Rechtsberatung - legal advice - consultation juridique - asesoramiento juridico**  
 S.U.S.I. - Interkulturelles Frauenzentrum  
 donnerstags von 16.00 Uhr bis 17.30 Uhr  
 Umnitzstr. 138

**Beratung bei Gewalt gegen Frauen - consult for women who experienced violence - consultation pour les femmes avec experience violence - asesoramiento para mujeres con experiencia de violencia**  
**Lara**  
 montags bis freitags 9.00 Uhr bis 18.00 Uhr  
 Fuggenstr. 16, 10777 Berlin-Schöneberg, U-Bahnhof Wittenbergplatz  
 Tel.: 030/ 21 688 98 [www.lara-berlin.de](http://www.lara-berlin.de) (Informationen auf vielen Sprachen)

**Deutschkurs - german course - cours d'allemand - curso de aleman**  
**KuB Kontakt- und Beratungsstelle für Flüchtlinge und Migrantinnen e.V.**  
 Oranienstr. 159, 10969 Berlin, Tel.: 030 / 614 94 00, 614 94 04, 531 42 119  
[kontakt@kub-berlin.org](mailto:kontakt@kub-berlin.org)

**Notübernachtung - emergency accommodation - albergamiento en cas - alojamiento en emergencia**  
**Notübernachtung für Frauen**  
 Tieckstr. 17, 10115 Berlin-Mitte  
 Tel.: 0-30- 283 79 39  
 Fax: 0-30- 27 57 69 37  
 E-Mail: [Notuebernachtung@gewbe.de](mailto:Notuebernachtung@gewbe.de)

**Umsonst - for free - gratuit - gratis**  
**Kleiderkammer leutech**  
 Nischenkirchstraße 15  
 10379 Berlin, Mitte  
 Fon (0 30) 2 74 72 80

**tägliche Essensausgabe**  
 Flüchtl. 12  
 10115 Berlin, Mitte  
 Fon (0 30) 2 88 84 59 80

**Kontakt - contact - contact - contacto**  
**Women in Exil**  
 C/o Kontakt und Beratungsstelle für Flüchtlinge und Migrantinnen e.V.  
 Oranienstr. 159, 10969 Berlin, 4 Stock, Email: [raunassay@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:raunassay@yahoo.co.uk)  
 Chancenstr. 159, 10969 Berlin, 4 Stock, Email: [raunassay@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:raunassay@yahoo.co.uk)  
 Tel.: 07676999077 Handy: 0176/37374988

**WIE**  
**women**  
Flüchtlingfrauen

**in Exile**  
werden laut [womeninexile.blogspot.de](http://womeninexile.blogspot.de)

Was erwartet mich in meinem Asylverfahren?  
ماذا ينتظرني في قضية اللجوء؟  
ماتن بكون لي حق بطلب مخرج؟  
هل انا مطرحة بداعي اموال؟  
مماثل خدمات في السجون للناضحين؟

What am I waiting for in my Asylum process?  
Do I have to pay for a Service in the Heim?  
When do I have the right to a translator?

Wenn habe ich das Recht auf einen Dolmetscher?  
Qu'est-ce que j'attends de mon processus d'asile?  
Quand est-ce que j'ai droit à un traducteur?  
Dois-je payer pour un service dans le Heim?

We invite you to Participate in, a workshop where you can discuss with other refugees women and have these and more questions answered.  
More Information in English: [frauenasyl@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:frauenasyl@yahoo.co.uk) 017632920586

Wir laden Sie zur Teilnahme an einem Workshop ein. Dort können sie mit anderen Flüchtlingfrauen diskutieren und Antworten auf diese und weitere Fragen finden.  
Mehr Information auf Deutsch: [frauenasyl@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:frauenasyl@yahoo.co.uk) 0173 9594306.

Nous vous invitons à participer à un atelier où vous pouvez discuter femmes réfugiées et avoir des réponses concrètes à vos questions.  
Plus d'informations en français: [frauenasyl@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:frauenasyl@yahoo.co.uk) 0173 9594306.

من خلالنا يمكننا نناقش لاجنات والحصول على اجابات كثير.  
البريد: [frauenasyl@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:frauenasyl@yahoo.co.uk) 0177 - 288 11 46

**Samstag 26.11.2011 10<sup>00</sup>-17<sup>00</sup>**

Mit freundlicher Unterstützung der

**WIE**  
**women**  
Flüchtlingfrauen

**in Exile**  
werden laut [womeninexile.blogspot.de](http://womeninexile.blogspot.de)

Ausländeramt  
Jugendamt  
Heimleitung  
Job Center  
Polizei  
Standesamt  
Sozialamt

Bundesamt für Migration und Flucht

**Zusammen finden wir einen Weg.**  
**Qu'ensemble nous pouvons trouver des voies.**  
**Together we can find ways.**

We invite you to participate in our PEER-EDUCATION-WORKSHOP and to discuss with other refugee women. More Information and registration in English: 017632920586

Wir laden Sie zur Teilnahme an unserem PEER-EDUCATION WORKSHOP und zur Diskussion mit anderen Flüchtlingfrauen ein. Mehr Information und Anmeldung auf Deutsch: 0173 9594306.

Nous vous invitons à participer à notre PEER-EDUCATION-WORKSHOP où vous pouvez discuter avec d'autres femmes réfugiées. Plus d'informations e application en français: 0176 374 286 09

**Part 2 Samstag 28.1.2012, 13<sup>00</sup>-16<sup>00</sup> in Berlin**  
**Part 3 Samstag 25.2.2012, 13<sup>00</sup>-16<sup>00</sup> in Berlin**

Mit freundlicher Unterstützung der **do** Stiftung



## Women in Exile and Sisters and Friends

### Meetings

We meet every first Saturday of the month in Berlin, Mariannenplatz 2a (Bethanien) at 1 pm. You are welcome to join us in our meetings in order to get to know us and what we are doing.

### German Course

Twice a week – Wednesdays and Fridays – we organize German classes in Berlin at Ohlauer Straße 21 (2nd floor, women's space).



### **Contact**

You contact us by phone and mail.

Phone: 0176 32920586

Mail: [asylfrauen@women-in-exile.net](mailto:asylfrauen@women-in-exile.net)

### **Information**

On our weblog you find more information:

<http://women-in-exile.net/>

You are welcome to join us in our activities!



**Women in Exile e.V.**

Rudolf-Breitscheidstr.164  
14482 Potsdam

**Spenden-Konto:**

Women in Exile e.V.  
Konto-Nr: 1152135400  
BLZ: 430 609 67 (GLS Bank)

*Seit 2013 sind wir (vorläufig) als gemeinnützig anerkannt und können  
Spendenquittungen ausstellen.*

Unsere Arbeit wird unterstützt von der

