

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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**Desert  
Flower  
Foundation**



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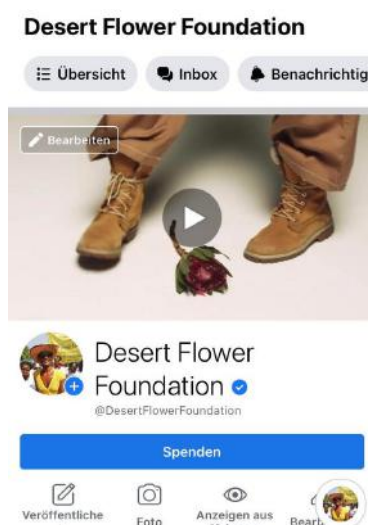
### **5. Dates: Presentations, press conferences, workshops, openings, charity events, etc.**



## **KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

Waris Dirie 2020 at the opening speech at the Brucknerfest in Linz.

# DESERT FLOWER STORIES



## FACEBOOK ACCOUNT

The Desert Flower Foundation has its own Facebook account and, together with Waris Dirie's account, can rely on well over 60,000 followers.

## 1. FGM awareness and public relations

### 1.1. Social Media platforms

Since 2003 (one year after its foundation), the Desert Flower Foundation has operated two Facebook accounts (Desert Flower Foundation, Waris Dirie), an Instagram account, a Twitter account and a YouTube channel. All information about the work of the Desert Flower Foundation is communicated on these channels. Both donors and the media are kept up to date via social networks. In addition, a monthly newsletter is sent to a total of 6,000 subscribers via email. The Desert Flower Foundation operates its own website, which is regularly updated with news in German, English, French and Polish.

Desert Flower Foundation, social media reach (as of 31.12.2020):

- DFF Facebook with Waris Dirie Facebook - 64,990 followers
- DFF Instagram with Waris Dirie Instagram - 50,140 followers
- DFF Twitter - 8,125 followers
- DFF YouTube channel with a total of 768,833 visitors
- DFF Monthly newsletter to 6,000 subscribers





## DESERT FLOWER MAGAZINE

All projects, all campaigns, all successes of the Desert Flower Foundation – for the first time also to be read compactly in a modern ePaper.

### 1.2. Premiere: Desert Flower Magazine as ePaper and print version

For the first time, the Desert Flower Foundation is developing an interactive ePaper in 2020 that compactly summarises the Foundation's mission, work and campaigns. The 32-page Desert Flower Magazine is published in German, English and French and is available in both online and print versions. The online version is published on the publishing platform Yumpu in all three languages. The Desert Flower Magazine is thus available at any time on mobile phone, laptop, PC or tablet. In addition, readers have the opportunity to donate via QR codes.

### 1.3. Longstanding collaboration with Google

The Desert Flower Foundation website with founder Waris Dirie as testimonial will also be supported by Google in 2020 with Google Grants worth USD 120,000. Since the beginning of the cooperation in 2009, the Desert Flower Foundation and Waris Dirie have recorded over 41 million entries on Google in various languages.

### 1.4. Video and photo productions of the DFF with the world's most extensive photo and video archive on the subject of FGM

The Desert Flower Foundation has set itself the goal of generating as much international attention (awareness) as possible for female genital mutilation (FGM). Since 2002, many media outlets have been using the photo, video and text material produced by the Desert Flower Foundation for their social media platforms and made available to all media outlets free of charge.

Students and pupils, in turn, use info-photo and video material to illustrate their papers, presentations, etc. The Desert Flower Foundation photo archive now contains over 15,000 images and hundreds of videos. In this context, the Desert Flower Foundation has the largest archive on FGM worldwide.



## **22 FEBRUARY 2020: WORLD PREMIERE OF THE MUSICAL "WÜSTENBLUME"**

After a book world bestseller and a successful film adaptation, Waris Dirie's life story is now also available on the theatre stage. Leading actress Naomi Simmonds (top left) and Waris Dirie with St. Gallen's theatre director Werner Signer at the premiere (right).

### **1.5. The new musical "Wüstenblume" encourages girls and women**

On 22 February 2020, the new musical "Wüstenblume" will celebrate its world premiere at the Theater St. Gallen in Switzerland. The piece tells the moving life story of Waris Dirie, the founder of the Desert Flower Foundation. At the same time, a campaign is launched to encourage all girls and women around the world. That is the message and the most important core message of the musical. Waris Dirie addresses this again and again on all occasions and in interviews.

The media response to the new musical "Wüstenblume" is enormous: Deutsche Presse Agentur, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Stern, Welt, Die Zeit, Bild-Zeitung, Hamburger Abendblatt, Blick, Tagblatt, Südkurier, SRG, Kronen Zeitung, Kurier, Tiroler Tageszeitung, Vorarlberger Nachrichten, Madonna, etc. report on it.

### **1.6. Design and production Desert Flower brochure**

Together with the St. Gallen Theatre, a folder is being produced that informs about the key aspects of the Desert Flower Foundation's work. The brochure also calls for donations. The folder will be clearly visible in the foyer of the theatre at the world premiere of the musical "Wüstenblume" in February 2020.

### **1.7. Conception and planning of the campaign Doctors Against FGM**

The Desert Flower Foundation enters into an agreement with IDS Germany. The company distributes 23 million pieces of consumer information annually through the medical profession and their practices. IDS prints 100,000 copies of Desert Flower Magazine and distributes them to gynaecologists and midwives in Germany. The Desert Flower Magazine is available in 5,400 waiting rooms. At the same time, work is being done to plan the Desert Flower webinar for 2021. The planned webinar will be conducted by the Desert Flower Foundation together with Dr Cornelia Strunz and Dr Uwe von Fritschen, the doctors of the Desert Flower Centre in Berlin. Gynaecologists, in whose medical training FGM is not a fixed component, are to be addressed directly. The campaign will be extended to doctors and medical staff.



## **SUSTAINABLE PROJECT**

School education instead of genital mutilation – these Desert Flowers can look forward to a better future thanks to support.

## **2. Desert Flower Foundation sponsorship project Save A Little Desert Flower**

The Desert Flower Foundation supports families and guardians in Africa financially if they contractually agree not to have their daughters genitally circumcised, not to marry them off as children and to send them to school. Furthermore, the parents agree to regularly send report cards and school certificates to the Desert Flower Foundation. The parents agree that their daughters will be examined every year by a doctor of the Desert Flower Foundation for their physical integrity within the framework of a health check, so that it can be verified that they have not been genitally circumcised. The parents also agree to participate in FGM education workshops organised by the Desert Flower Foundation.

### **2.1. It all starts with Safa, the first sponsored girl rescued from FGM**

Safa moved the whole world to tears. She played little Waris Dirie in the disturbing circumcision scene in the film Desert Flower. The film saved Safa's life. Because her parents wanted to have her genitally circumcised with the fee in real life. But Waris Dirie and the film crew prevented that. The Desert Flower Foundation signed a contract with the parents not to have Safa circumcised and to provide her with a school education later on. Safa's life became a success story. Waris Dirie wrote a book about the rescue in 2014. The book Saving Safa was sold worldwide. Safa is now 15 years old and attends the Lycee Francais school in Djibouti, East Africa. She wants to become a doctor or an actress. Safa's rescue was the motivation for the founding of the sponsorship project Save A Little Desert Flower.



## 2.2. Development and expansion of the Desert Flower Foundation sponsorship project to Guinea, West Africa

Despite the worldwide COVID 19 pandemic, the Desert Flower Foundation continues its sponsorship project Save A Little Desert Flower in 2020. After previous awareness-raising work in the communities, further sponsorship contracts are concluded in Sierra Leone, West Africa. And the project is being expanded to Guinea, after Djibouti and Sierra Leone the third African country where Save A Little Desert Flower is now active. While the number of sponsored girls in Sierra Leone grows to 1,117 in 2020, the Desert Flower Foundation in Guinea saves 200 more girls from the cruel ritual of female genital mutilation (FGM).

## 3. The Desert Flower Foundation schools and the education initiative

### 3.1. Kiera Chaplin School in River Number 2, Sierra Leone

10 January 2020 will always be closely associated with the Desert Flower Foundation. The opening of the Kiera Chaplin School for 400 children in River Number 2, 30 kilometres south of the capital Freetown, marks a milestone in the history of the Foundation. The school is named after Kiera Chaplin, granddaughter of the unforgettable and world-famous Charlie Chaplin. She is not only the school's godmother but also the president of the Fondation Fleur du Desert, the Desert Flower Foundation in France. In this role, Kiera Chaplin is Waris Dirie's most powerful fellow campaigner in the fight against FGM.

The opening of the Kiera Chaplin School becomes a huge celebration and makes headlines: Several ministers and official representatives of NGOs such as UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO are present at the school opening. Media reports include BBC London, Reuters London, the Swiss daily Blick and all major media in Sierra Leone.



#### CEREMONIAL OPENING

Kiera Chaplin with Father Peter Konteh (r.) and ministers at the opening of the school.



#### DESERT FLOWER HIGHLIGHT

Kiera with students and in front of an image of her world famous grandfather.





### WERNER HOLZER SCHOOL

A great moment for the children at the opening of the new school in Allentown.



### ROTARY CLUB HEIDENHEIM SCHOOL

The roof is finished. The main building contains six classrooms.

## 3.2. Werner Holzer School & Rotary Club Heidenheim School

In addition to the Kiera Chaplin School, the Desert Flower Foundation is building two more schools in Sierra Leone for a total of 800 children. The Werner Holzer School in Allentown, a suburb of the capital Freetown. And the Rotary Club Heidenheim School in Tombo, a fishing village on the Atlantic coast. The Werner Holzer School is named after the former editor-in-chief of the German Frankfurter Rundschau. Werner Holzer always had the black continent and its people at heart; he was one of the most distinguished experts on Africa. His son Philip Holzer, a top manager in the investment sector, wants to uphold his father's legacy with the school. The Werner Holzer School opens on 11 January 2020. On the same day, the roof of the Rotary Club Heidenheim School will be completed. This project was financed by a charity event of the Rotary Club Heidenheim-Giengen from Germany.

## 3.3. 20,000 more Desert Flower Foundation education packages

The Desert Flower Foundation's major education campaign for Africa's children continues in 2020. With the delivery and distribution of another 20,000 Desert Flower education kits to schools in Sierra Leone. Each education pack contains Waris Dirie's first reading and exercise book, pencils, wooden ruler, sharpener and school bag.



### DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATION PACKAGES

In 2020, the Desert Flower Foundation also distributes school supplies to children in Africa.





## RADIO SETS FOR OUR DESERT FLOWERS

During the school lockdown, the Desert Flower Foundation provided the sponsored children with radios for distance learning.

### 3.4. COVID 19 lockdown: Distribution of radio sets

The Corona crisis hits the poorest of the poor even harder. On 31 March, all schools are closed due to the Covid 19 pandemic in Sierra Leone. The government has set up distance learning via radio for primary and secondary school students. As was the case during the terrible Ebola epidemic (2014-2016). Even then, a special radio teaching programme was developed. The reintroduction is an attempt to cushion the school lessons that were cancelled due to the Corona crisis. Problem: Many school-age children in Sierra Leone do not have access to radio sets. Or families cannot afford to buy a radio set. The Desert Flower Foundation reacted immediately after the school lockdown and started distributing radio sets to sponsored children. The radios are of high quality and offer the possibility to record programmes digitally. This means that the children can repeat the lessons again and again on their own and consolidate what they have learned.

### 3.5. Desert Flower Foundation Safe House and library

In River Number 2, where the Kiera Chaplin School is also located, the Desert Flower Foundation Safe House is established. A place where girls and women can find refuge from female genital mutilation (FGM) and counselling. Connected to the Safe House is also a library, which will be opened at the same time.



## SAFE HOUSE WITH LIBRARY

Girls and women find shelter from FGM and receive guidance.





### EDUCATION COURSES

Event held at the Werner Holzer School in Allentown, Sierra Leone.



### ON THE SCHOOL BENCH

After the official school lessons, the girls' mothers receive further education.

## 3.6. Desert Flower Foundation training courses in communities

The Desert Flower Foundation repeatedly uses the schools' facilities for educational and training courses. In March 2020, such courses takes place in the afternoon at the Kiera Chaplin School. Girls and women from the community are taught knowledge and skills for professional employment by the staff of the Desert Flower Foundation Sierra Leone. At the end of the programme, what has been learned is further deepened with practical tests. The programme is part of the Desert Flower Foundation's education initiative in Africa and aims at the sustainable empowerment of girls and women.

## 3.7. Desert Flower Foundation workshops

The Desert Flower Foundation workshops 2020 in Sierra Leone are about raising awareness among women and girls against female genital mutilation (FGM) and for child protection. The participants are very committed to this interactive workshop every time. One workshop takes place at the Werner Holzer School in Allentown. For another workshop, the staff of the Desert Flower Foundation Sierra Leone also travel to the town of Bo in the interior of the country. Due to its remote location alone, the region is a very disadvantaged area where FGM is still widespread. The workshops not only provide information about the terrible health consequences of FGM, but also take the opportunity to conclude further sponsorship contracts. These workshops take place in strict compliance with local COVID 19 regulations.



### WORKSHOP

The Desert Flower Foundation team in Sierra Leone is preparing everything.





### THE MEDICAL TEAM

Dr Cornelia Strunz (m.) with Dr Uwe von Fritschen (l.) and Dr Roland Scherer.



### DESERT FLOWER CENTER

Women affected by FGM receive holistic care in the centre in Berlin.

## 4. Medical care and prevention work of the Desert Flower Foundation

### 4.1. Desert Flower centres in Berlin, Amsterdam, Stockholm and Paris

Since 2013, the Desert Flower Foundation has been offering medical treatment for women and girls affected by female genital mutilation (FGM). The Desert Flower Centre at the Waldfriede Hospital in Berlin distinguishes itself by being able to offer holistic medical treatment. Treatment services include reconstruction of the clitoris and labia minora, gynaecological care, treatment of incontinence and obstetric fistula, proctological surgery and psychological care. Around 1,000 women have already received treatment after genital mutilation at the Desert Flower Center Berlin. The centre in Berlin is managed and coordinated by Dr Cornelia Strunz, who is also the Secretary General of the Desert Flower Foundation Germany. Operations are done by Dr Uwe von Fritschen, the head physician for plastic and aesthetic surgery at the Helios Clinic in Berlin.

### 4.2. Workshops and seminars for medical staff

Furthermore, the Desert Flower Foundation offers trainings, seminars and workshops for medical staff such as nurses and midwives in the Desert Flower Centres in Berlin, Stockholm, Amsterdam and Paris. Due to the numerous lockdowns and strict measures because of the Corona pandemic, these could not be offered to the desired extent in 2020.



### ANNUAL CHECK-UP

Dr Frances Sesay examines the sponsored girls to ensure they are unharmed.



### CONTRACTUALLY DETERMINED

The health check-up is mandatory for all girls sponsored by the Desert Flower Foundation.

## 4.3. Health checks for sponsored girls in Sierra Leone

The Desert Flower Foundation organises and finances a compulsory health check for the sponsored girls in Sierra Leone once or twice a year. The check-up is carried out by a doctor selected by the Foundation, who checks the physical integrity of the girls. In 2020, Dr Frances Sesay examined a total of 980 Desert Flower sponsored girls during this health check and all 980 girls were genitally unharmed. Sponsorship girls from all eight communities (Freetown, Allentown, Newton, Dwarzak, Lungi, Bo Commit, Bo Community, Magburaka) where the Desert Flower Foundation is active with the sponsorship project Save A Little Desert Flower were checked. Parents and guardians of the sponsored girls are once again informed about the dangers and traumatic consequences of girls affected by FGM.

## 5. Dates: Presentations, press conferences, workshops, openings, charity events, etc.

### January 2020

- 10.01. Sierra Leone: Opening of Kiera Chaplin School in River Number 2 with ministers, representatives of international organisations UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and media such as BBC London and Reuters.
- 11.01. Opening of Werner Holzer School in Allentown and roof completion of Rotary Club Heidenheim School in Tombo.
- 13.01.-14.01. St. Gallen, Switzerland: Desert Flower Foundation media day, interviews.
- 16.01. Amsterdam: Desert Flower Foundation BENELUX Board Meeting.
- 21.01.-23.01. St. Gallen: Discussion on musical "Wüstenblume", fundraising event, conception of Desert Flower folder, cooperation with Swiss Fundraising Association.



## INFO BROCHURE

Education about the consequences of FGM.



## DESERT FLOWER

Waris Dirie at the premiere of the musical.



## EDUCATION BAGS

School material for Africa's children.

- 27.01. Berlin: Preliminary meeting with RSG Group for Desert Flower Foundation Project Waris Dirie Paris.
- 28.01. Munich: Review at book publisher Droemer, Waris Dirie project edition Desert Flower.

### February 2020

- 03.-04.02. Paris: Press conference, announcement of the collaboration Prisma Media Group, Desert Flower Foundation and Kiera Chaplin with museum Chaplin's World in Corsier-sur-Vevey, Switzerland. Media present: Elle, Paris Match, Prisma Media Group, Cosmopolitan, Femme Actuelle, TV5 Monde.
- 05.02.-06.02 Amsterdam/Hertogenbosch: Board Meeting Desert Flower Foundation BENELUX, collaboration with other NGOs and business and law firm Covington.
- 19.02. Munich: Meeting Deloitte Munich and Desert Flower Foundation about expansion of Desert Flower Foundation headquarter Berlin.
- 20.02.-23.02. St. Gallen: World premiere musical "Wüstenblume" (22.02.) at the Theatre St. Gallen, Waris Dirie photo shoot with STERN and Keystone, interview session Reuters London, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Bayrischer Rundfunk, Blick am Sonntag, ServusTV, Kronen Zeitung.

### March 2020

- 05.03. Brüssel: Presentation of collaboration Covington & Burling LLP with Desert Flower Foundation and Kiera Chaplin, pro bono contract with Covington, setting webinar, discussion about events, PR and lobbying.
- 06.03. Editorial meeting Desert Flower Magazine, collaboration with IDS Germany, printing & delivery of 100,000 Desert Flower Magazines to Germany's gynaecologists and midwives.
- 14.03. Going, Austria: Meeting Desert Flower Foundation regarding charity event with Waris Dirie & Kiera Chaplin at Stanglwirt.

### May 2020

- 07.05.-09.05. Burgau, Austria: Desert Flower Foundation workshop with Eva Baumann, Michael Reinprecht, Werner Krauss, Walter Unterweger, David Lutschinger, Walter Lutschinger.
- 16.05.-17.05. Burgau: Desert Flower Foundation fundraising meeting with Distillery Krauss and Kiera Chaplin.

### June 2020

- 08.06.-10.06. Going: Initiating Desert Flower Foundation WO/MEN Inc. events in Vienna, Zurich, Berlin with BOSS company, with Kiera Chaplin, Lea Vajnorsky, Janina Schüssler.





## DONATION BRUCKNER FESTIVAL

Waris Dirie with Dietmar Kerschbaum, Chairman of the International Brucknerfest.



## KIERA CHAPLIN IN SIERRA LEONE

Charlie Chaplin's granddaughter at work for the Desert Flower Foundation.

- 22.06.-25.06. Timelkam, St. Martin im Sulmtal, Austria: Desert Flower Foundation video shooting with Kiera Chaplin, preliminary discussion Desert Flower Foundation charity event with Enzo von Strachwitz at Neuwartenburg castle. Preliminary discussion Kiera Chaplin Gin with Desert Flower Foundation licence (start 2022) at Destillery Krauss.

### August 2020

- 17.08.-19.08. Initiating Desert Flower Foundation charity events in Switzerland, planning with Parkview Family Office, Carre Event AG, Inertia AG, Agentur Stöhlker, Zurich Airport.

### September 2020

- 11.09.-13.09. Linz, Austria: Waris Dirie opening speech at Brucknerfest, interviews at Brucknerhaus.
- 16.09.-18.09. Geneva: Desert Flower Foundation Switzerland Board Meeting.
- 29.09.-30.09. St. Gallen: Planning expansion of fundraising in Switzerland, implementation of the Desert Flower Foundation campaign 8000 Girls.

### October 2020

- 15.10.-18.10. Geneva, Vevey, Montreux: Desert Flower Foundation collaboration with HUG Hopitaux Universitaires de Geneve, Desert Flower Foundation collaboration with Prisma Media Paris for charity event Kiera Chaplin and museum Chaplin's World. Board Meeting Fondation Fleur du Desert (France).



## ASSISTANCE

We reach out to girls and women affected by FGM.