

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



**Desert
Flower
Foundation**



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WARIS DIRIE WITH SPONSORED GIRL IN SIERRA LEONE

A Desert Flower sponsorship protects against female genital mutilation and forced marriage. In addition, every Desert Flower sponsored girl receives a school education and medical care.

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PANEL DISCUSSION

Lecture and talk on FGM at Club The Nine in Brussels.

DESERT FLOWER STORIES



SOCIAL MEDIA

The Desert Flower Foundation has its own Facebook account and, together with the account of founder Waris Dirie, has tens of thousands of followers.

1. FGM awareness and Public relations work

1.1. Social media, the platforms

Since 2003, one year after its foundation, the Desert Flower Foundation has been present on Facebook (with the two accounts Desert Flower Foundation and Waris Dirie), Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. All information about the work of the Desert Flower Foundation is transported on these channels. Both donors and the media are kept up to date via these social networks. Furthermore, a monthly newsletter is sent to a total of 6,000 subscribers by e-mail. 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 31.12.2021):

- Desert Flower Foundation Facebook with Waris Dirie Facebook - **54,990 followers**
- Desert Flower Foundation Instagram with Waris Dirie Instagram - **60,000 followers**
- Desert Flower Foundation Twitter - **8,307 followers**
- Desert Flower Foundation YouTube channel with **948,955 visitors**
- Desert Flower Foundation monthly newsletter to **6,000 subscribers**



DESERT FLOWER MAGAZINE

The 32-page magazine (l.) was distributed to gynaecologists.

MUSICAL

Restart of musical
Wüstenblume
after Covid forced
break.



1.2. Desert Flower Magazine for 5,400 gynaecologists in Germany

To kick off the new campaign Doctors Against FGM, a large-scale distribution campaign is being launched in collaboration with the company IDS. The company distributes 23 million pieces of consumer information annually through the medical profession and their practices. IDS distributes 60,000 copies of the Desert Flower magazine to gynaecologists in Germany. The Desert Flower Magazine is thus available in 5,400 waiting rooms.

The Magazine summarises the mission, work and campaigns of the Desert Flower Foundation on 32 pages. Since 2020, there has also been an online version, which can be read as an interactive ePaper on the publishing platform Yumpu in German, English and French. The Desert Flower Magazine can be accessed on mobile phone, laptop, PC or tablet. In addition, readers have the opportunity to donate directly via QR codes.

1.3. Restart of the musical Wüstenblume after Covid forced break plus investor workshop in St. Gallen

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, more than 150 performances of our musical Wüstenblume, which tells the life story of founder Waris Dirie, had to be cancelled at the St. Gallen Theatre in 2020 and 2021. After an 18-month break, the musical could be performed again to an enthusiastic audience on 27 October 2021. Waris Dirie's great wish is that Wüstenblume will be performed worldwide and one day made into a film like her book. In the course of the revival, the Foundation in St. Gallen organised an investor workshop for the financing of a possible musical film adaptation.

1.4. Collaboration with Google for years

The Desert Flower Foundation website with founder Waris Dirie as testimonial will continue to be supported by Google in 2021 with Google Grants worth 120,000 US dollars. Since the beginning of the cooperation in 2009, the Desert Flower Foundation with Waris Dirie has recorded over 41 million entries on Google in various languages.



MEDIA COVERAGE

The mission of the Desert Flower Foundation always creates stories. Like here in the Kronen Zeitung, Austria's highest-circulation daily newspaper.

1.5. PR work of the Desert Flower Foundation

The Desert Flower Foundation has set itself the goal of creating worldwide awareness for the fight against the horrific ritual of female genital mutilation (FGM). Many media outlets use the photo, video and text material produced by the Foundation since 2002 for their social media platforms and made available to all media free of charge. Students and pupils, in turn, use informational photo and film material to illustrate their dissertations, presentations, reports, etc. The photo archive of the Desert Flower Foundation now comprises over 15,000 pictures and hundreds of videos. In this context, the Foundation has the largest archive on the subject of FGM in the world.

1.6. NEW! FGM webinars of the Desert Flower Foundation

In 2021, due to the global covid crisis, the Desert Flower Foundation started organising FGM webinars in connection with FGM campaigns:

The first Desert Flower Foundation FGM webinar was organised with the Korean women's rights organisation Women Rights Plus of Korea. Waris Dirie gave interviews for high-circulation Korean media at the launch of the campaign. The Korean book trade supported the initiative by promoting and selling Waris Dirie's books and aiming to raise 120,000 US dollars for Desert Flower education projects in Africa.

The Desert Flower Foundation organised the second FGM webinar for the French NGO Les Orchidées Rouges, which is doing very effective work in the fight against FGM in France and in Ivory Coast. In addition, the Desert Flower Foundation organised a full-day FGM workshop with Les Orchidées Rouges in Bordeaux. Further joint events were planned for 2022 in Paris.

The Desert Flower Foundation held the third FGM webinar together with the renowned US law firm Covington & Burling LLP at their offices in Brussels.

Covington has been considered the best law firm in Washington DC for many years and is deeply committed to human rights. Covington, with its 1,120 lawyers in a total of 13 countries, represents the Desert Flower Foundation pro bono worldwide.



STRONG WOMEN'S DOUBLE

Waris Dirie (l.) and Kiera Chaplin have joined forces to eradicate female genital mutilation.

To mark International Girls' Day on 11 October, the Desert Flower Foundation and Covington organised the first webinar on Women's Rights - Girls' Rights. Waris Dirie and Kiera Chaplin, the two presidents of the Desert Flower Foundation, Eva Gerhards (Deputy Head of Cabinet European Union, Commission for Equality), Beatrice Vos (Deputy General Counsel at Elanco) and Covington top lawyer Louise Nash explained their views on the topic and answered the questions of the very well-attended webinar.

This was followed in the evening by a panel discussion on female genital mutilation with Waris Dirie and Kiera Chaplin for 100 invited representatives of the EU Commission, embassies and NGOs at the Brussels Club The Nine-only for Women.

The fourth FGM webinar for 5,400 German gynaecologists was organised by the Desert Flower Foundation with the medical team of the Desert Flower Center in Berlin. Dr. Cornelia Strunz and Dr. Uwe von Fritschen presented the worldwide unique concept for the holistic treatment of women affected by FGM and answered the questions of the webinar participants.



WOMEN'S POWER AT COVINGTON IN BRUSSELS

Waris and Kiera with Beatrice Vos, Eva Gerhard and Louise Nash.



WARIS WITH SPONSORED GIRLS

Founder Waris Dirie during a visit to Sierra Leone, West Africa.



LITTLE DESERT FLOWERS

All sponsored girls are protected from FGM and forced marriage.

2. Save a Little Desert Flower - the Desert Flower Sponsorship Project

The Desert Flower Foundation supports families and guardians in Africa financially if they contractually agree not to have their daughters genitally circumcised, not to force them into a child marriage and to send them to school. Furthermore, the parents commit themselves to regularly send school reports and school certificates to the Desert Flower Foundation. In addition, the sponsored girls are examined every year by a doctor selected by the Desert Flower Foundation as part of the health check to ensure their physical integrity. This ensures that the girls have not been genitally mutilated. Parents and guardians also undertake to take part in FGM education workshops organised by the Desert Flower Foundation.

2.1. Save a Little Desert Flower is also present in Guinea

Despite the worldwide covid pandemic, the Desert Flower Foundation was able to further expand its sponsorship project Save a Little Desert Flower in 2021. Not only in Sierra Leone were further sponsorship contracts concluded, but the project was also placed even more strongly in the neighbouring country of Guinea. After Djibouti and Sierra Leone, Guinea is the third African country where the sponsorship program Save a Little Desert Flower was able to gain a foothold. The number of sponsorships was increased to 1,377 in Sierra Leone in 2021. In Guinea, a total of 200 more girls were saved from the terrible ritual of female genital mutilation.



EDUCATION BOXES

Further school materials were distributed to children in Sierra Leone in 2021.



RAISING AWARENESS

Lectures are held to raise awareness among the population for the fight against FGM.

3. Education stops FGM: Schools, Education boxes, Workshops and vocational courses

3.1. Sierra Leone: Three Desert Flower schools for 1,200 children, a fourth school in planning

For Waris Dirie, founder of the Desert Flower Foundation, it is obvious: "Education is the only way to eradicate FGM sustainably". That is why the Foundation built three schools in Sierra Leone for a total of 1,200 children. With Kiera Chaplin, granddaughter of the great Charlie Chaplin, the Foundation has a strong fellow campaigner in its rows. Kiera is also the patron of the Kiera Chaplin Desert Flower School in River Number 2, 30 kilometres south of Sierra Leone's capital Freetown. She is not only the school's patron, but also the president of the Fondation Fleur du Desert, the Desert Flower Foundation in France. The other two schools are in Allentown (Werner Holzer School) and in Tombo (Rotary Club Heidenheim School). At the end of 2021, an agreement was reached for the construction of a fourth Desert Flower School in Sierra Leone. It will be built in Hastings, 24 kilometres east of the capital Freetown, and will be called Africa Aweee School.

3.2. The next 10,000 Desert Flower education packages

The Desert Flower Foundation's major education campaign for Africa's children continued in 2021. With the delivery and distribution of another 10,000 Desert Flower education boxes to schools in Sierra Leone. Each education box contains Waris Dirie's first reading and exercise book, pencils, wooden ruler, sharpener and school bag. In total, the Desert Flower Foundation has already distributed more than 30,000 education kits to school children in Africa.



CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES

The Desert Flower Foundation regularly organises training courses for women.



ORGANISATIONAL TALENT

Father Peter Konteh, director of the Desert Flower Foundation in Sierra Leone.

3.3. Workshops of the Desert Flower Foundation in Sierra Leone

The Desert Flower Foundation workshops in Sierra Leone aimed to raise awareness among women and girls against female genital mutilation and for child protection. The staff of the Desert Flower Foundation in Sierra Leone also travelled to rural, remote areas where the cruel FGM ritual is still widespread. The workshops not only provided information about the terrible health consequences of FGM, but also took the opportunity to conclude further sponsorship contracts with families.

3.4. Desert Flower Foundation vocational training in the communities

The Desert Flower Foundation repeatedly uses the facilities of the schools for education and training courses offered to the local population. Girls and women from the community are taught knowledge and skills for professional employment by the staff of the Desert Flower Foundation in Sierra Leone. What is learned is further deepened at the end with practical tests. The programme is part of the large Desert Flower Foundation education initiative, which aims at the sustainable empowerment of girls and women.



EDUCATION

Our staff member Wuyatta educates people on site in Sierra Leone about the dangers of FGM.



DESERT FLOWER CENTER

Here at the Waldfriede Hospital in Berlin, FGM victims find holistic aid.



TEAM OF DOCTORS IN BERLIN

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

4. Medical care and prevention of the Desert Flower Foundation

4.1. Desert Flower Centers 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. The Desert Flower Center at the Waldfriede Hospital in Berlin distinguishes itself by being able to offer holistic medical treatment. The treatment offers include restoration of the clitoris, the labia minora, gynaecological care, treatment of incontinence and obstetric fistula, proctological surgery and psychological care. The center in Berlin is managed and coordinated by Dr. Cornelia Strunz, who is also the Secretary General of the Desert Flower Foundation Germany. Operations are performed 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 Centers in Berlin, Stockholm, Amsterdam and Paris. Due to the tense Covid situation and the strict pandemic measures, these courses and seminars could not be held to the desired extent in 2021.



HEALTH CHECK

Dr. Frances Sesay examines the sponsored girls for their integrity.



PART OF THE CONTRACT

The annual health check-up is compulsory for all sponsored girls.

4.3. Sponsor girls checked for physical integrity

The Desert Flower Foundation organises and finances a compulsory health check for all sponsored girls in Sierra Leone, West Africa, once or twice a year. The examination is carried out by a doctor selected by the Foundation, who checks the physical integrity of the girls. Dr. Frances Sesay also checked a total of 980 Desert Flower sponsored girls in 2021 as part of this examination and all 980 girls were not genitally mutilated.

Sponsorship girls from all eight communities (Freetown, Allentown, Newton, Dwarzak, Lungi, Bo Commit, Bo Community, Magburaka) in which the Desert Flower Foundation is active with the sponsorship project Save a Little Desert Flower were examined. Parents and guardians of the sponsored girls were once again informed about the dangers and traumatic consequences of FGM.

5. Dates: Presentations, Webinars, Press Conferences, Campaigns, Workshops, Charity Events

January 2021

- 15.01. Online meeting with Yeolda Books Korea. Initiation of FGM campaign with human rights organisation Womens Rights Plus of Korea.

February 2021

- 16.02. Briefing on new campaign Students Against FGM - preparation with students from Erasmus University Rotterdam.



DELIVERY

New Desert Flower education boxes.



CERTIFICATE

Workshop participants become Desert Flower ambassadors.



PROTECTED

Students of our Werner Holzer School.

March 2021

- 01.03. Preparation of the new campaign Doctors Against FGM in Germany.

April 2021

- 15.04. Webinar Desert Flower Foundation Switzerland study.

May 2021

- 01.05. Continuation of the campaign Education Against FGM with distribution of another 10,000 Desert Flower education boxes to schools in Sierra Leone. Including FGM workshops for pupils, teachers and parents.
- 21.05. Initiation, preparation and meeting for the initiative FGM education for migrant women in Austria.
- 28.05. Geneva: Meeting with medical team of the University Hospital Geneva (Hôpitaux universitaires de Genève) - collaboration and networking with Desert Flower Centers.

June 2021

- 17.06. Preparation of presentation Desert Flower Foundation and Waris Dirie at the Union International Club Frankfurt.
- 19.06. Preparation and concept for a new school building project Desert Flower Foundation Africa Aweee School.

July 2021

- 27.07. Meeting on the Desert Flower Foundation Switzerland study with Samira Mathiuet.

August 2021

- 11.08.-13.08. Desert Flower Scandinavia NFT project and Desert Flower Foundation campaign Students Against FGM.
- 23.08.-25.08. Bordeaux: Meeting and collaboration with Les Orchidées Rouges (France).

September 2021

- 14.09.-15.09. Geneva: Meeting and collaboration with Non-Violence Foundation.

October 2021

- 11.10. First Desert Flower x Covington webinar with Waris Dirie, Kiera Chaplin, Beatrice Vos (Deputy General Counsel at Elanco), Eva Gerhards (Deputy Head of Cabinet European Union) and Louise Nash (Covington).
- 12.10. First Women's Network Event by Desert Flower Foundation, Covington & European Union at The Nine in Brussels. Lectures by Waris Dirie and Kiera Chaplin, panel discussion with 100 representatives of the EU Commission, embassies and NGOs.
- 15.10. Launch of the campaign Doctors Against FGM with distribution of 60,000 Desert Flower magazines to 5,800 gynaecologists in Germany.



WEBINAR DESERT FLOWER CENTER

Online by doctors for doctors – information on the treatment of FGM victims.



PROUD DESERT FLOWER

A Desert Flower sponsorship runs in any case until the end of a school graduation.

- 18.10. First Desert Flower Foundation FGM webinar with medical team of the Desert Flower Center in Berlin for 5,800 gynaecologists in Germany.
- 26.10. St. Gallen: First Desert Flower Foundation networking event with Skyland Wealth and Parkview Family Office.
- 27.10. St. Gallen: Desert Flower Foundation investors meeting on the revival of the Musical Desert Flower at the Theatre St. Gallen (Switzerland).

November 2021

- 09.11. Frankfurt: Desert Flower Foundation event with lecture and discussion Waris Dirie for 150 invited guests at the Union International Club.
- 10.11. Paris: Desert Flower Foundation workshop with Waris Dirie and RSG Group.
- 15.11. Planning Desert Flower Art Foundation to empower Female African Artists.
- 20.11. Desert Flower Foundation meeting for the Re-foundation of the Desert Flower Foundation United Kingdom London.

December 2021

- 28.12. Construction start Desert Flower Foundation Africa Aweee School in Sierra Leone.
- 29.12. Webinar on the founding of Desert Flower Foundation US in New York City.



SUPPORT

We reach out to those affected by FGM.