**Swiss Interfaith Women**

Esther R. Suter, President, Dornacherstrasse 281, 4053 Basel, Switzerland

0041 61 331 1724, [e\_r\_suter@hotmail.com](mailto:e_r_suter@hotmail.com)

Project «Religion and Art» 2019

**Short summary of the organizer**

The association “Swiss Interfaith Women” (since 2018) offers for 2019 as one of their activities for the first time an international, intercultural and interfaith youth camp within “Religion and Art”. Swiss interfaith women – a member of the umbrella organization International Association of Liberal Religious Women (1910) is committed for human rights, gender-justice, religious freedom as well as against discrimination and racism.

The planning of the project “Religion and Art” in form of a youth camp goes together with the Atelier “Kreativwerkstatt” in Solothurn. The “Kreativwerkstatt” offers the participants various possibilities to improve their creative abilities. Young people, especially young women, shall have the opportunities to meet together and exchange in an unconventional context, far from profit-oriented activities. They shall be encouraged to a meaningful way of passing time together. The “Kreativwerkstatt” is project-oriented and prefers to integrate the participants into the common planning and organizing.

**Description of the project**

“Religion and Art” follows the already existing project of “intercultural text images” (Schriftbilder) of the “Kreatiwerkstatt” and offers on the basis of their excellent experiences an additional dimension with a religious approach. So participants shall already represent various religious backgrounds (Christian, Muslim, Jewish… e.g.) and three specialists in art and religion, among them the artist of the Taizé Community (France), Brother Marc and the Swiss-Afghan Muslima Sozan Mohebbi-Rasuli, responsible for a dialogue programme in the church of Basel will give insights in art and meaning of sacred texts.

In various exchange groups, in living together, cooking together “religious” meals, working together the young women exchange cultural, religious, political, social and art questions. Differences and similarities become obvious and will influence the discussions. Such experiences will reinforce ones identity, as we learn better understand our own background through the difference of others, their perspective and their experience.

The young adult women from Switzerland -with and without migration background – and 10-12 young women (between 18-30) from two other countries (Spain and Georgia) will work in a similar way as in previous youth camps and do a creative art work with scriptures, alphabets, texts around the subject of “Peace” in a free expression, together with Gabriella Affolter, with the usual tools and materials.

The art work will be exhibited at the end in a Church Center in Basel, Vernissage August 2nd at 5 p.m.

**Goals and priorities**

The project “Religion and Art” encourages encountering the “strange” other, as well as mutual understanding between young people from various countries. It is oriented at their own needs in adolescence, opens their horizon and capacity to become curious about other religions and cultures. The project forwards respect and works for peace prevention.

Together the participants reflect their own religious background, language and the differences and commons. Their cultural, religious and female roots and identities become visible. This motivates the common creative work. Art, religion and culture bring up forces and energies and strengthen the young people. Interfaith dialogue may arise. Diversity becomes an enriching experience. Art, religion and culture offer by their dynamics of expression and images a chance to build bridges of communication.

**Planning**

December 2018 Establish concept

From January 2019 Financial support application

Publication of the project

June, date to fix (Swiss) preparation meeting with participants; ev. parallel preparation meetings in Spain and Georgia

July 22nd – August 4 Youth Camp “Religion and Art” in Solothurn

2019

Followed by the exhibition from August 2nd – 10, 2019 in Zwinglihaus of the Reformed Church of Basel, where the “Forum für Zeitfragen” is taking up the issues of interfaith dialogue

September 2019 Evaluation