



OPEN LETTER - ANNUAL REPORT

WWSF Circles of compassion + World Day for Circles of compassion – 2 November 2007

Creating compassionate societies - a world that works for all.

“Compassion is a mental attitude based on the wish for others to be free of their suffering and is associated with a sense of commitment, responsibility and respect towards others.” - HH Dalai Lama

Dear Circle members and Friends around the world,

The **World Day for Circles of compassion - 2 November 2007** is a reminder of the power of circles with heart-to-heart communication, for sharing circle guidelines with your friends and colleagues, and for the emergence of a culture of community dialogue circles. Launched in Geneva four years ago and adapted from the Millionth Circle initiative, the WWSF Circles of compassion (CC) program not only constitutes a rare experience in communication, but also provides regular workshops on “how to create your own community circle” (2007 program below).

To mark the World Day - 2 November - members of the three Geneva Circles of compassion meet for the first time in one single circle to get to know one another, exchange experiences, take stock and hear about the MC circle movement around the world <http://www.millionthcircle.org/>

Circles of compassion were created in a spirit of openness and based on 20 communication guidelines, defining an approach that creates a space for transformation and authenticity. Although the name ‘Circles of compassion’ is not a registered trademark (and we hope it will never be), we would like to remind everyone that at the heart of Circles of compassion lays a commitment to collectively participate in activities serving humanity as a whole. Circles of compassion have as an objective to find compassionate solutions to individual and world problems, such as reaching the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which aim at reducing extreme poverty by half by 2015. The eight goals are published on the 2007 World Day poster and on Internet. <http://www.undp.org/mdg/basics.shtml>

Every Circle of compassion is autonomous in its function. The only request (which is implicit when adopting the name of Circles of compassion) is to respect the 20 point guidelines elaborated by the first Geneva circle group, as well as the vision and the objectives which gave birth to them - creating a world that works for all. The building of a world more open to compassion is one of the conditions for survival and each one of us can play a vital role in creating more compassionate societies.

Members in two of the Geneva circles financially support a micro-credit project in Africa - the WWSF Mali Sheep Project for rural women in the Mopti region (80 percent of the people in Mali survive on less than 1 dollar per day). **On the occasion of the World Day for Circles of compassion - 2 November 2007**, WWSF will again transmit US \$ 3000 to the Mali partner NGO who distributes micro-credits to village women’s groups. (Names of groups and villages are available upon request). We also invite you to look at our website which presents a report and photo gallery of a visit to the Mali sheep project. <http://www.woman.ch/women/4-reports.php>

Circles of compassion are not simply about communication; they are laboratories of grace to help develop compassion in us and in society, as well as advancing our spiritual development. In this vein, we would like to suggest that in 2008 we focus on studying in depth the theme of compassion, human rights, development and peace.

For those of you who are new to the Circle of compassion initiative, we reprint basic guidelines to help you start your own circle: **Create and maintain** a Circle with a sacred centre; **Begin** with a period of silent reflection; **One person** speaks at a time (a talking stick may be used); **Share leadership** and remember that all in the Circle are equal; **Speak** from the heart and from your own experience; **Listen** for wisdom with compassion and with discernment instead of judgement; **Invite** silence and reflection when needed, in you and in the Circle; **Take responsibility** for your experience and your impact on the Circle; **Make decisions** by consensus; **Encourage and welcome** diverse points of view; **Agree** to hold the tension, instead of rushing in to fix things; **Keep the confidence** of the Circle and **respect** the trust relationship; **Feel free** to add other guidelines if need be. (The 20 point guidelines are published on Internet: <http://www.woman.ch/women/3-guidelines.php>)

The next WWSF **training workshop (2-days)** in partnership with Vivre Autrement “**How to create Circles of Compassion**” (in French only), takes place on **24-25 November 2007**. However, these trainings are not a precondition to launch your own or join an existing circle. For more information, workshop program and costs, please contact wwsf@wssf.ch



With warm greetings, Elly and Pierre Pradervand, Geneva Circles of compassion

WWSF - Women’s World Summit Foundation, an international, humanitarian, non-profit, non-confessional, and non-governmental organization (INGO) with UN consultative status, serves with its international initiatives the implementation of women and children’s rights and the UN Millennium Development Goals MDGs. <http://www.woman.ch/home.php>