

Corinna Seith



Leaves behind a great legacy to the many women and children suffering as a result of domestic violence

Corinna Seith was a remarkable woman. She trained as a special education teacher in Germany and was one of the pioneers in **mainstreaming for disabled children** in Swiss schools. We wish to honour her memory by sharing her many achievements in the week which marks the occasion of the **International Day of Innocent Children – Victims of Aggression**, on the 4th June.

For twenty years she was a gender researcher, undertaking studies on women's equality in universities and in forestry, and most recently becoming the most prominent researcher on **domestic violence** in Switzerland. She developed new methodologies and research questions, always seeking to create 'useful' knowledge from a gender perspective - knowledge that influenced policy and practice, especially for children living with domestic violence. She was just establishing a research group on violence and inequalities when she was diagnosed with a brain tumour in 2009. She was a researcher on two important Daphne studies - one looking at women's self-defence across Europe and the more recent study on attrition in rape cases in 11 countries.

Throughout her time in Switzerland she was a strong campaigner for 'feminist science politics' being a board member of the influential FEMWYSS, a network for academics and teachers interested in gender issues.

She is widely recognised in Switzerland and Germany as a woman who made **a substantial contribution to gender politics and research on violence against women** and her work is widely cited in the German speaking context. She worked tirelessly to maintain debate and discussion between women in NGOs, in gender equality offices and academic circles, and was an important member of several international networks working on VAW, including the gender power network and CHARV.

In her 18 month illness she continued to be a strong feminist - refusing to be a 'cancer patient', or that women should have to wear a wig to be 'accepted', or hide the fact that they were sick. She continued to work for as long as possible, was wonderful company with her friends and family and took control over her own death and memorial with the help of a group called Fahrfrauen. The theme of her memorial was 'Feminism and friendship'.

Relevant Information:

On 19 December 2006, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted without a vote a resolution entitled '**Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women**' (A/RES/61/143). This mandate reinforces the increasing demand for indicators on violence against women, and, also enhances the role and contribution of national statistical offices in one crucial area of gender equality. Here are some statistics on women, children and violence:

i) An analysis of 10 separate domestic violence prevalence studies by the Council of Europe showed consistent findings: **1 in 4 women** experience domestic violence over their lifetimes, and between 6-10% of women suffer domestic violence in a given year (CoE, 2002).

ii) In the UK, at least 750,000 children a year witness domestic violence (DoH, 2002). Children who live with domestic violence are at increased risk of behavioural problems and emotional trauma, and mental health difficulties in adult life (Kolbo, et al., 1996; Morley and Mullender, 1994; Hester et al., 2000). **70%** of children living in UK refuges have been abused by their father (Bowker et al., 1998).

iii) Partner violence accounts for a high proportion of homicides of women internationally: between 40% - 70% of female murder victims (depending on the country) were killed by their partners/former partners, whereas the comparable figure for men is 4% - 8% (Krug *et al.*, 2002).

iv) Domestic violence is internationally acknowledged to be one of the health inequalities affecting women particularly, and forms a significant obstacle to their receiving effective health care (World Health Organisation, 1997; United Nations, 1993).

iv) Domestic violence accounts for between **16%** and **one quarter** of all recorded violent crime (Home Office, 2004; Dodd et al., 2004).

v) **29 children** in 13 families were **killed** between 1994 and 2004 as a result of contact arrangements in England and Wales, 10 of them since 2002. In five of these families contact was ordered by the court (Saunders, 2004).

vi) 54% of UK rapes are committed by a woman's current or former partner (Walby and Allen, 2004); and on average 2 women a week are killed by a male partner or former partner: this constitutes around one-third of all female homicide victims (Povey, (ed.), 2004, 2005; Home Office, 1999; DoH, 2005.)

Metadata

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