



Interview with Martin Umbach about the intention of the campaign:

1. What moved you to support this unusual campaign, which has turned the priorities and strategies of the development aid up until now upside down?

I always had an amorphous uneasiness in view of so-called development politics. Without seeing through the context, I felt that whilst wanting to welcome those who wanted to help in times of need, there was also a colonial predominance gesture behind it. The connection between development politics and as hard as bone interest in profits was identified in the 60s and 70s. When one however, as in the case of this campaign, ties in with the support and sponsorship of particular conditions to the receptor associations, one also gives them a piece of one's dignity and self-determination back. For you can decide: do we want to continue as up to now (e.g. cannibalisation of little girls genitals) or do we want to obtain the attention of the donor countries and organisations. Who believes he can see, in a way, a form of moral imperialism, makes it very easy for himself in my opinion. With which sort of argument can one endure such practice as being an accepted cultural tradition? The conditions, not to be influenced, are the same as the conditions, for example, that slavery can be approved of because it has existed for centuries. Human dignity and basic human rights are universal and indivisible – and they do not constitute any relative “figment” of occident.

2. Why do you find it so important that children – in this case girls – should be protected from such greivous genital mutilation?

This question seems to be able to be answered by itself. But perhaps it is, therefore, so much more justifiable. I did not show any resistance when my two male grandchildren were circumcised according to jewish ritual. The fact that genital and zest organs has been man's target for centuries of traditional manipulation attacks is incomprehensible. I am looking for some form of spiritual “superior” justification connection, but without success. A new human brother or sister on this earth is robbed of a part of his or her identity through a violent act. I preserve the hope that my grandsons will grow up to be self confident men. I cannot imagine how a girl is able to become a complete woman after such a much deeper aimed assault of female genital mutilation – to dissect a child? That CAN only be a terrible aberration.

3. What do you think about the attitude of some paten organisations, it is not possible to guarantee the protection of a female godchild – afterall one does not want to enhance pressure and exclusively rely on fair engagement?

On the contrary to other voices heard here, I cannot assume that the respective aid organisations are primarily concerned with profit maximation. For positions, yes to keep established structures, yes but I am sure that the responsible people in these organisations strictly handle in good faith and with the best possible intentions. They have set their targets, have found an instrument (sponsorships), in order to reach their targets and are convinced of the positive effect of these instruments. The have partner organisations in the respective countries and know of the difficulties to conciliate their help incentive with the locally given cultural conditions. And they know that, without their work, umpteen thousands of children – boys and girls – would not have any chance of education, enough water, food, medical care,



also of a future outside of misery and dependence. Your system of sponsorship, therefore, carries rich fruits in its perception. Without taking notice of and inclusion of local structures (cultural, religious, political) that would not be possible. (To bore a well at a cultic worshiped place? Such disrespect is dared, perhaps rightly so, only by international concerns). The intention to take the cultural circumstances seriously and to enter into a sponsored engagement is honourable – and certainly necessary! (If one accepts the basic requirement, that “we” are called upon to give “their” lives something substantial).

The perception that, in spite of good will, one at least partially contributes to the fact that the cruelest injustice happens, is surely difficult to bear and is, therefore, repelled. Repellent is cultural relativism – in the wrong place.