

Das filia-Stifterinnenporträt

Dr. Vera Bloemer, endowment contributor since 2008

Please tell us a little about your biographical background

Born in Hamburg, grew up in Frankfurt, studied Economics in Heidelberg, then business consultancy, investment controlling, investment banking – and alongside this I was committed to many social issues on a voluntary basis.

How did you hear about filia?

Good ideas get talked about. I came to the topic of foundations through the book "Besser spenden" by Ise Bosche. Perhaps I am one of those typical examples that she describes in her book. I recognised myself in it and felt encouraged to look further into the realm of foundations and donations. And so I read about filia on the internet.

What motivated you to become an endowment contributor at filia?

I was stimulated by the statement on the website, "Those who support women change the world". I found this idea wonderful. I know from my own experience that in many situations women approach matters differently and more efficiently than men. What I liked about filia was the diversity of the projects and the international nature, and I was pleased to see how carefully filia looks at whom and what it supports, always with an eye to the change approach.

What does women's perspective on social change mean for you? And what should this change bring about?

Every woman should be able to decide on her own life independently and in a spirit of self-determination, with the same opportunities, the same freedoms without any disadvantaging, whether in training, working life, the family or a life partnership. Women who experience disadvantaging need promoting so that they can have the same chances to shape their lives.

Is that why you became committed to filia as an endowment contributor?

I was curious, and stimulated by the book "Besser Spenden". I wanted to get to know more about foundations – they always used to make me think about large amounts of money invested for eternity. At filia I then found a new way as a "small" contributor, practically learning by doing. At the beginning of 2008 I rang the filia office and asked, "What must I do now, simply transfer a sum?" I was positively struck by the warm welcome I received. I must admit that the foundation experience was much more satisfactory for me than previous experience acquired with donations.

You attended a General Meeting of endowment contributors for the first time in June 2009. What was your impression?

That was an exciting experience for me because there I found diversity in filia. Getting to know everyone who played a role in these "complete works of filia", from the endowment contributors through the Foundation Council to the volunteers, the project workers, the entire team. I was particularly attracted by the relaxed atmosphere, the way people approached each other and how easily they got talking to each other. It is wonderful to be involved, to participate and to contribute something.

I liked the openness of the founding contributors and the staff. They welcome every new member very personally and naturally. There is a constructive and enthusiastic

atmosphere surrounding the foundation work and the women contributing to it with their know-how, their élan and their vigour.

One finding of the General Meeting is that future endowment contributors prefer being approached by endowment contributors. Can you imagine being an ambassador for filia yourself?

A year ago I would still have said "I would rather not be named as an endowment contributor". But then I was invited to the General Meeting and used the opportunity to gather information and exchange ideas. I fully support the ideas of filia. I trust that money is being used well and expediently here.

Are there certain projects that filia is promoting right now which you consider to be particularly useful?

I was interested to hear about the project with women from Chechnya. The insight into the everyday life and situation of these women right through to the specific project that can change their world was exciting. I was also interested in what women from autonomous women's refuges had to say about "Running against violence", the race round the Alster (a lake in Hamburg). filia supported the first race. New sponsors joined in the second race with financial and communicative support for the theme. filia provided a successful kick-start here. No long-term dependence was established, but instead a new phase was enabled.

How would you like to see the development of the foundation filia in the next five years?

I would be glad to see filia become even better known in public, adopting a position and being perceived as an international women's foundation so that donations and additional endowment contributions go to filia virtually as a matter of course, from legacies right through to company donations. It is encouraging to see how quickly filia has grown and how the team is coping with this growth. More endowment contributors, exciting projects and successful feedback from this work is what I wish for filia.

The interview took place on 9 September 2009