

AMERICAN
INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S CLUB
of COLOGNE e.V.



2021-2022

ANNUAL REPORT

PREPARED BY
Marcee Martinez
Tricia R Saur

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

How exciting to present our first ever Annual Report. Looking back on the 2021/2022 club year fills me with great joy knowing that despite COVID restrictions, we were active and had a meaningful impact on both our members and the community. I hope you are able to get a better sense of who we are and what we do as you read through the following pages.

At our core, we are an engaged group of English-speaking individuals living in the Cologne/Bonn region, supporting one another and facilitating cultural exchange, while giving back to the local and international community.

If you find yourself thinking you would like to be part of this community, we would be very glad to welcome you to our small but mighty club.

Tricia R Saur (she/her)
President

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ABOUT US

In 1961, a dynamic group of American women living abroad in Cologne, Germany, founded an organization known today as the American International Women's Club of Cologne e.V. (AIWCC). An English-speaking social network with a charitable calling, the AIWC Cologne fosters a fun and welcoming community while enriching our lives and those around us through social and philanthropic activities.

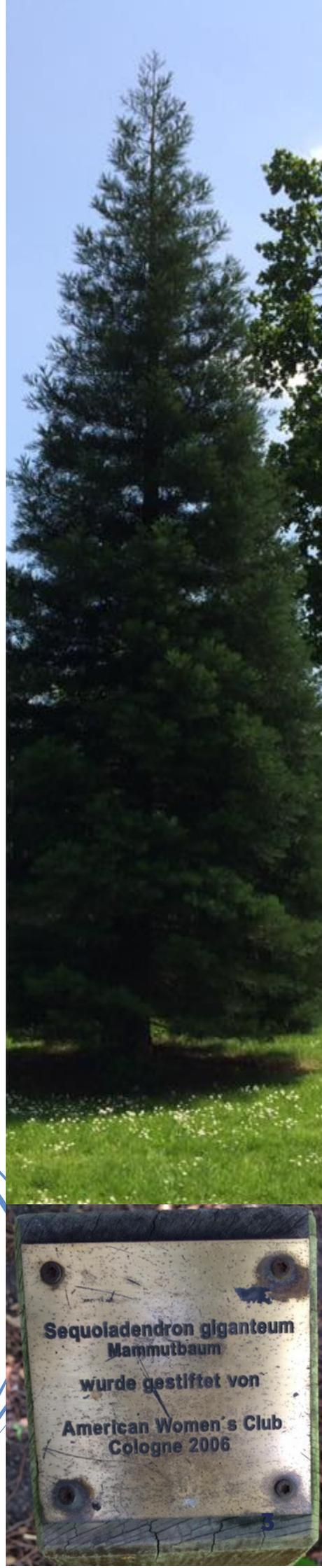
OUR MISSION

Support members and their families as they adjust to life in Germany

Provide a forum in which to speak English

Encourage cultural exchange among Americans, Germans and other nationalities

Champion local and international initiatives which help people in need, especially women and children



MEMBERSHIP

Despite the ongoing presence of COVID, membership grew over the past year. We welcomed 35 new and returning members, while bidding farewell to 26 members. Membership dues have remained stable for many years. Annual dues are 60 euros with reduced rates for young members (30 euros/30 and under) and 20 euros for non-resident members.



159

YEAR-END MEMBERSHIP

Regular Members

Those with an American connection

Associate Members

Those with other nationalities

Young Members

Those under thirty

Non-Resident Members

Those who have left the area but wish to maintain their club membership

24+

NATIONS REPRESENTED

Our diversity makes us strong.

Germans, Americans and Britons make up the majority of membership. The other nations represented are:

Austria, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, France, Iceland, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Malta, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, and The Netherlands.

Welcoming and Outreach

Welcoming

One aspect of being a member of the AIWCC is meeting other members in person, regardless of whether they are new in town or longstanding members. To suit the schedules of our busy members, we offer coffee mornings, late afternoon drinks, and dinners. We gather at Museum Ludwig and the Hard Rock Cafe — both central locations within walking distance of the main train station and within sight of the cathedral's spires.

Outreach

The outreach program is a continuation of the popular and essential COVID calls that began in 2020. The outreach volunteers contacted club members individually, checking to see how everyone was doing, finding out a little about how the club meets their needs, and encouraging them to participate in activities or events that might be of interest. Feedback suggested that members appreciated our personal touch. Experience from the outreach team has proven invaluable and is being taken into account in shaping the program for the coming club year. Reaching out to individual club members helps us all stay better connected and engaged.

The 2021-2022 Outreach Team

Kate Becker

Joan Brassat

Dagmar Breitenbach-Ulrich

Claudia Butterly

Janet Davis

Krissy Dorn

Heather O'Donnell

Marcee Martinez

Kathy McMillan Wilhelm

Sally Webersinke

Tricia R Saur

Geraldine Stals van Moerkerk

Audrey Thomas



SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

"Facebook groups feel like speed dating.
The AIWCC feels like a community."



CLUB ACTIVITIES

The AIWCC offers a variety of activities that correspond with members' interests, skills, and hobbies. Activities are scheduled to accommodate members' availability and are open to all members and guests. These are listed on the website in the Club Calendar, where members can register online with the click of a few buttons. Alternatively, members can use an app to sign up right from their phones.



Throughout the 2021/2022 club year, a variety of member-led activities took place on a regular basis. Groups met mostly in public spaces including cafes, restaurants, parks, and playgrounds. The pandemic compelled us to be inventive and adaptable. Thanks to the Zoom and Google Meet platforms, members also gathered online, in the comfort of their homes, while maintaining contact with fellow club members.

Activity Leaders

Birgit Dickinson · Book Discussion
 Stacey Kimmig & Audrey Thomas · BonnJour
 Heidi Cramer · Bumps, Mothers, and Others
 Maria Reinirkens & Shila Hemati · Kaffee Klatsch
 Sally Bollinger · Menopause Café
 Lesley Taubert · Rodenkirchen Rendezvous
 Janet Davis · Southern Swizzle
 Dagmar Breitenbach Ulrich · Sprechen
 Sarah Denney · Stadtwald Runners/Walkers
 Mary Dobrian & Sally Webersinke · Stitch 'n' Bitch
 Martina Mühlburger · Urban Sketching
 Sally Webersinke · Welcome Meetups
 Cherie Parenteau · Writing Women



CLUB ACTIVITIES

Over the course of the year several one-off activities were offered by members as special events:

- A guided tour of the Sculpture Park in Nippes
- A three-part kimchi workshop in the fall
- A family sushi workshop in winter in celebration of the Lunar New Year
- A St. Martin's goose dinner at a local restaurant in November
- A youth outing to the Waldlabor in the fall
- An excursion to the Arp Museum Rolandseck
- A clean-up day down at the Rodenkirchen Riviera in the spring with AWB's Kölle Putzmunter
- A tour of Schloss Augustusburg, Brühl
- A two-week hormone balancing detox
- A six-session Yamuna Body Rolling class



ANNUAL EVENTS

The Corona pandemic impacted our ability to host our traditional annual events. Many were held virtually via Zoom. We were grateful to meet in early September at Beethoven Park for a family picnic in lieu of our Welcome Back Brunch, and thanks to several dedicated members, the kids celebrated Halloween. Sadly, Cologne carnival was canceled.

In the spring, we were thrilled to host our Annual General Meeting in person for the first time in three years!



MONTHLY MEETING

Speaker Series

Our Monthly Meetings are held virtually on Zoom, typically the second Wednesday of the month. They are an opportunity for members to easily connect and get updates from the club's leadership team.

A main feature of the meeting is our Speaker Series - an interview-based program hosted by Robin Meloy Goldsby. Robin hosts dynamic speakers on a variety of topics. The format is simple: she interviews the featured speaker on her/their area of expertise, then the session is opened to our audience for a Q&A period.

This past year we've featured speakers from our unique membership roster, but also offered sessions with women from far corners of the world. During the 2021/2022 season, we successfully hosted author and inspirational speaker, Tracie Frank Mayer; Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice, Debra Todd; social entrepreneur, Monika Becker; functional medicine coach, Sally Bolinger; and coral restoration biologist, Randy Cinski. Our roster of fascinating women educated us on coral reef building, self confidence, hormonal imbalance, the hula and other Hawaiian traditions, and the inner workings of the justice system in the USA.

Our Monthly Meetings continue to provide entertaining and rewarding opportunities for our curious and truth-seeking members to learn about topics that affect our world and the way we interact with it.

Engaged • Proactive • Inspirational



MONTHLY MEETING

As part of the Monthly Meeting series, members of the AIWCC presented an online version of Eve Ensler's play, *The Vagina Monologues* - it was a big hit with our Zoom audience. We're hoping to offer an encore production (maybe live!) in 2023. The play featured Robin Goldsby, Janet Davis, Tracy Frank Mayer, Krissy Dorn, Jo McElroy, Dagmar Breitenbach, and Mary Dobrian.



PHILANTHROPIC GIVING

"I believe life is a journey. Some travelers have a paved road while others have rocky cliffs. By being active in fundraising causes like the Fashion Bash, I can help someone have a smoother ride. Giving back is graciousness." - Melissa H.

Charitable Giving is a cornerstone of the AIWCC's mission. We are committed to working to improve the lives of women and children in our adopted local community and the broader international community.

Club fundraising was significantly impacted by COVID-19 restrictions and overall uncertainty created by the pandemic. As a result, the Sustainable Fashion Bash and Trivia Night, our two main fundraisers, were canceled the past two years. We are grateful for the individual donations, purchases through Amazon Smile, and contributions from various activity groups that were made throughout the year. Despite limited fundraising, the club rose to the challenges of the past year - catastrophic flooding in the region and the outbreak of war in Europe. We held matching campaigns to encourage donations from members, family and friends.



With the end of our 2021/2022 club year, we concluded our charitable giving cycle dedicated to improving the lives of women and children in the area of health. From July 2019 through June 2022, we supported Bunter Kreis Rheinland, a local organization based in Bonn, and the FAWCO Target Project, S.A.F.E. (Safe Alternatives for Female Genital Mutilation Elimination, an initiative of Hope for Girls & Women Tanzania)...



Bunter Kreis Rheinland

Plötzlich ist Ihr Kind schwerkrank. [bunterkreis.de](https://www.bunterkreis.de)

Bunter Kreis Rheinland (BKR) works with families of disabled, chronically ill and critically ill children. BKR requested support in launching a sibling program in the Cologne area, patterned after the Bonn organization.

Due to the pandemic, these plans never came to fruition. Our fundraising efforts were limited and the pandemic made it impossible for BKR to take on such an ambitious initiative. We worked with BKR to identify how best to support their work given the circumstances.

Over the course of three years we donated €4500. These funds were allocated to secure personal protective equipment (PPE) i.e. surgical masks, gowns, gloves, and sanitizers at the beginning of the COVID crisis; and to underwrite the costs of a riding camp for children with mental, physical or emotional-social impairments. The club fully sponsored one young girl for the one-week camp. The camp provided a wonderful experience for the children and offered much-needed respite for the parents. Additional funds will help rent a room in the fall of 2022 to host the initial Cologne-based sibling group sessions.





HOPE FOR GIRLS & WOMEN

Tanzania

Hope for Girls & Women Tanzania (HGWT) advocates to end female genital mutilation (FGM) and other harmful practices (intimate partner violence, child marriage and other forms of violence) affecting women and children in the Mara Region of Tanzania. HGWT designed the programs that were part of the FAWCO Target Project, S.A.F.E. More than \$177,000 was raised by the FAWCO community to support this important work! The AIWCC is proud to have contributed €6,000 to the effort. Here are some of the outcomes the project achieved:

AQUAMARINE DONOR



13

Alternative Rites of Passage ceremonies were held with more than 5,000 attendees; 810 dignity kits were distributed to girls

20

Women's groups were provided seed funding to start income-generating projects

402

Girls were successfully reconciled with their families following a commitment not to subject them to FGM

523

FGM survivors and their families received psychological counseling and other supports

146

Peer educators were trained to support the fight to eliminate FGM

1126

Women and girls were educated on sexual and reproductive health, GBV (gender-based violence), life skills and maternal and neonatal care

MATCHING CAMPAIGNS

"Be the change you want to see in the world" is one of my favorite quotes. It's easy to get discouraged about the world at times, but helping with charities and fundraising is the way for me to remember that I can't change the world, but I must do my small part to try to make it a better place for others." - Julie M.



In July 2021, the region experienced disastrous flooding. Within a week we raised €8,095 through a €3,000 matching campaign. Funds were donated to Aktion Deutschland Hilft in support of flood relief.



© Julia Goldsby 2022

In March 2022, we raised €9,300 to support Ukrainian refugees arriving in NRW with another matching campaign of €4,500 (€1,000 provided by an anonymous member). Thirty five *innatura* vouchers, valued at €250 each, were distributed to organizations working with newly arriving families.

COMMUNICATIONS & TECH

OUR RESOURCES



The club uses different technologies, platforms, and softwares to manage the many digital needs of our organization.

We use **Wild Apricot** to host our website, manage membership, and facilitate communications. In addition to our public pages, members have access to our For Members section of the website which includes access to the Club News Blog, Club Calendar, Member Directory, and much more. A monthly newsletter is sent out through this platform as well as invitations to club activities. Members can take advantage of the Wild Apricot app (for Apple and Android) to easily register for upcoming events..

Members also connect with one another through various social media platforms. **WhatsApp** groups facilitate communication for our various activities; our **private Facebook group** keeps members current and past members connected; **Instagram** and our **public Facebook page** reach beyond our members to the greater public.

Throughout the pandemic, the club organized virtual activities using **Zoom** which allowed members to stay in touch when it was not possible to attend events in person.

The club's leadership uses the **Google Workspace** suite of services to host our virtual office and facilitate collaboration when working on projects.

Technology is constantly changing and for an organization of our size, it can be challenging to meet the needs of members who possess not only very different equipment/software but also knowledge. We are happy to say we've risen to the challenge.

CLUB NEWS BLOG

Our Club News Blog can be found in the For Members section of the website and is the place where we report on club happenings, FAWCO-related news and offer opportunities for members to contribute to the club through special interest features. A prime example is Sally Bolinger and her regular posts addressing women's wellness topics. Other special features include the Member Spotlight, which has been one of our most popular. To date, we have featured 14 members!

Women's Wellness • December 2021

News Editor 2C6 AIWCC (Administrator) | Tuesday, December 21, 2021 10:00

The connection between hormones and brain fog



Submitted by: Sally Bolinger

Like all of your systems, your brain depends on the right balance of hormones in your body to be healthy and function at its best. When you are under stress, whether physical or emotional, your hormone levels suffer.

→ [Read more](#) + [Add comment](#)

Member Spotlight • March

By News Editor 2C6 AIWCC (Administrator) on Tuesday, March 01, 2022 11:11

Meet Birgit Dickinson

Our club is composed of amazing women from around the world and we'd like to introduce them to you! Each month we will spotlight a different member as they answer a list of questions we've put together. This month we introducing long time member and host of the **Book Discussion**, Birgit.



Please give us a little taste of your personal and professional life before and since you moved abroad.

We are always looking for new content! Members are encouraged to share ideas with us, especially for the series "In and Around Cologne."

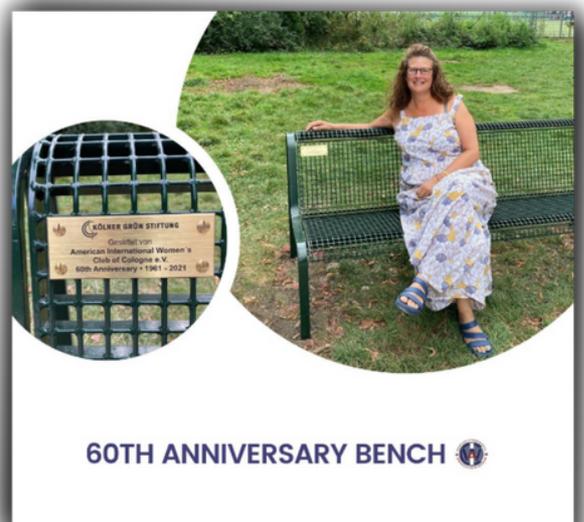
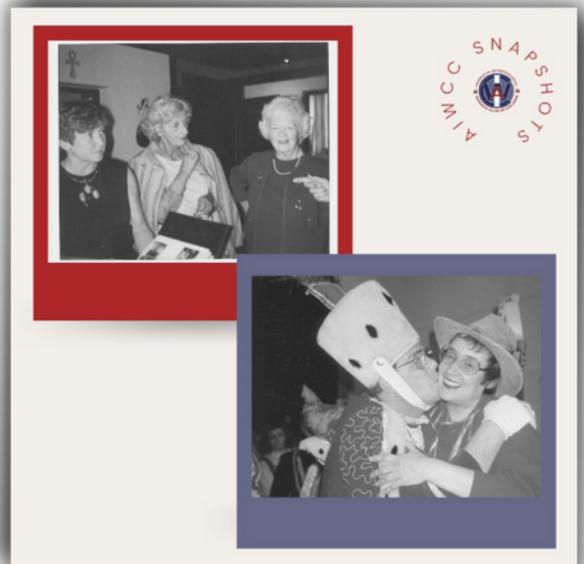
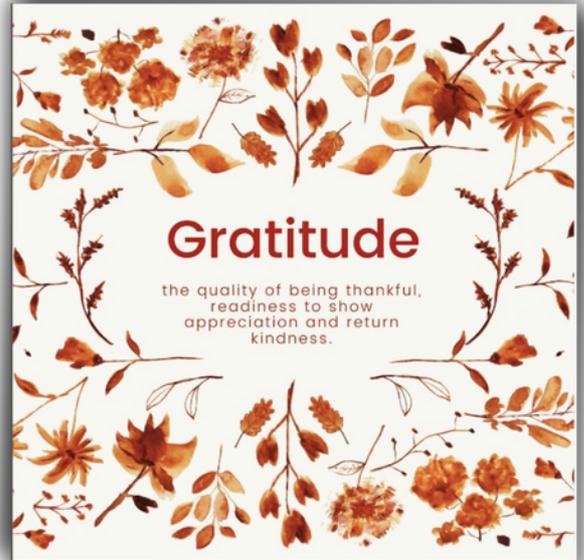
SOCIAL MEDIA

In the last year, we shared over 100 posts on our social media channels. We created inspirational campaigns, conducted polls, ran giveaways, raised funds for nonprofit organizations, highlighted the talent within our club, celebrated important dates, and posted some snapshots of our club's history.

Our top IG post from this past year was our action-focused campaign raising donations for flood victims in Germany. We are grateful to all who donated. When we rise together, we are powerful!



We engaged with more than 100 accounts from as near as Germany and as far as Vietnam. We appreciate the support of our followers and those engaging with our posts and are excited to watch the way our social media channels evolve. We encourage all our members to follow us.



MEMBER SURVEY

After two years of online meetings and limited interactions due to COVID, the leadership team felt it was time to reach out to members to gauge member involvement. Our AIWCC Club Survey was launched in May 2022 with the intent of learning more about our members in some key areas: engagement and interests, as well as seeking suggestions on how to improve the club moving forward. Out of 150 active members, an overwhelming 57 responded. Their feedback was thoroughly reviewed. Initial feedback was shared verbally during the 2022 Annual General Meeting and followed up with highlights in our June 2022 Newsletter. A more comprehensive report will be created for the leadership team and then summarized in our Club News Blog in September.



93%

of members gave communications from the club a 4+ rating



76%

members are currently working; opportunity to advertise their businesses/services on our Market Place webpage

Over the course of the coming year, we will be actively following up on these results, using the information to prioritize time and resources to ensure we are providing the best range of services, activities and events for members.

"I feel welcome and supported and have met wonderful women. I appreciate all the possibilities, activities the club offers and the regular information."

- Club Member 2022

ADVERTISING & PARTNERS

The Market Place is a hub where both members and non-members can profile their business and professional services. It was launched in December 2021 as a useful go-to place for our members interested in various services — everything from wellbeing to educational resources.

Based on feedback from surveys, our goal is to grow the Market Place to include more member businesses, restaurants and English-speaking resources (such as tax, legal and household services).



We look forward to building the Market Place to create a useful and engaging resource for members.

We will be introducing our Partners Program in the coming year. Our goal is to partner with local international corporations to support our mission and our philanthropic initiatives. We will also approach international and bilingual schools and universities as these are often sought-after resources for our members. Conversations are ongoing in this regard.



At our Annual General Meeting (June 2022), we hosted a Market Place showcase where our business owners presented their services to attendees. This offered a chance for members to mingle and learn more about our members' business initiatives.

PROUD MEMBERS OF...



AmerikaHaus NRW e. V. is a nonprofit organization that promotes German-American relations throughout North Rhine-Westphalia. They host events throughout the region centered on politics, culture, economy, and education. The AIWCC enjoys Associate Member status with AmerikaHaus NRW which allows members to attend their programs.



Founded in 1931, FAWCO is an international network of independent clubs and associations spanning six continents with a total membership of 8,000 - 10,000 individuals. FAWCO's missions range from member club support; to advocating for women and children on global issues; to advocacy on US issues for overseas nationals. As a member of FAWCO's Region 5 (Germany and Austria), the club enjoys close relationships with sister clubs in our area. We meet once a year in the fall to share ideas, support one another and participate in cultural programs.

Read more about our relationship to FAWCO on the next page.



AIWCC has a major presence within FAWCO with members holding the following positions:

- Education Team Co-Chair, FAWCO
- Editor of Inspiring Women Magazine, FAWCO
- Resolutions and Recommendations Committee Member, FAWCO
- UN Representatives to Bonn, FAWCO
- Parliamentarian, The FAWCO Foundation
- VP of Global Issues, FAWCO
- Social Media Manager, FAWCO
- Silent Auction Coordinator, The FAWCO Foundation

Our SDG puzzle project was featured at the Region 5 Meeting, AIWCC members contributed quilt squares to the FAWCO Friendship Quilt, and our charity donations took us to the Aquamarine level for contributions to the Target Project. AIWCC also co-sponsored a Development Grant to regreen degraded land in rural India.



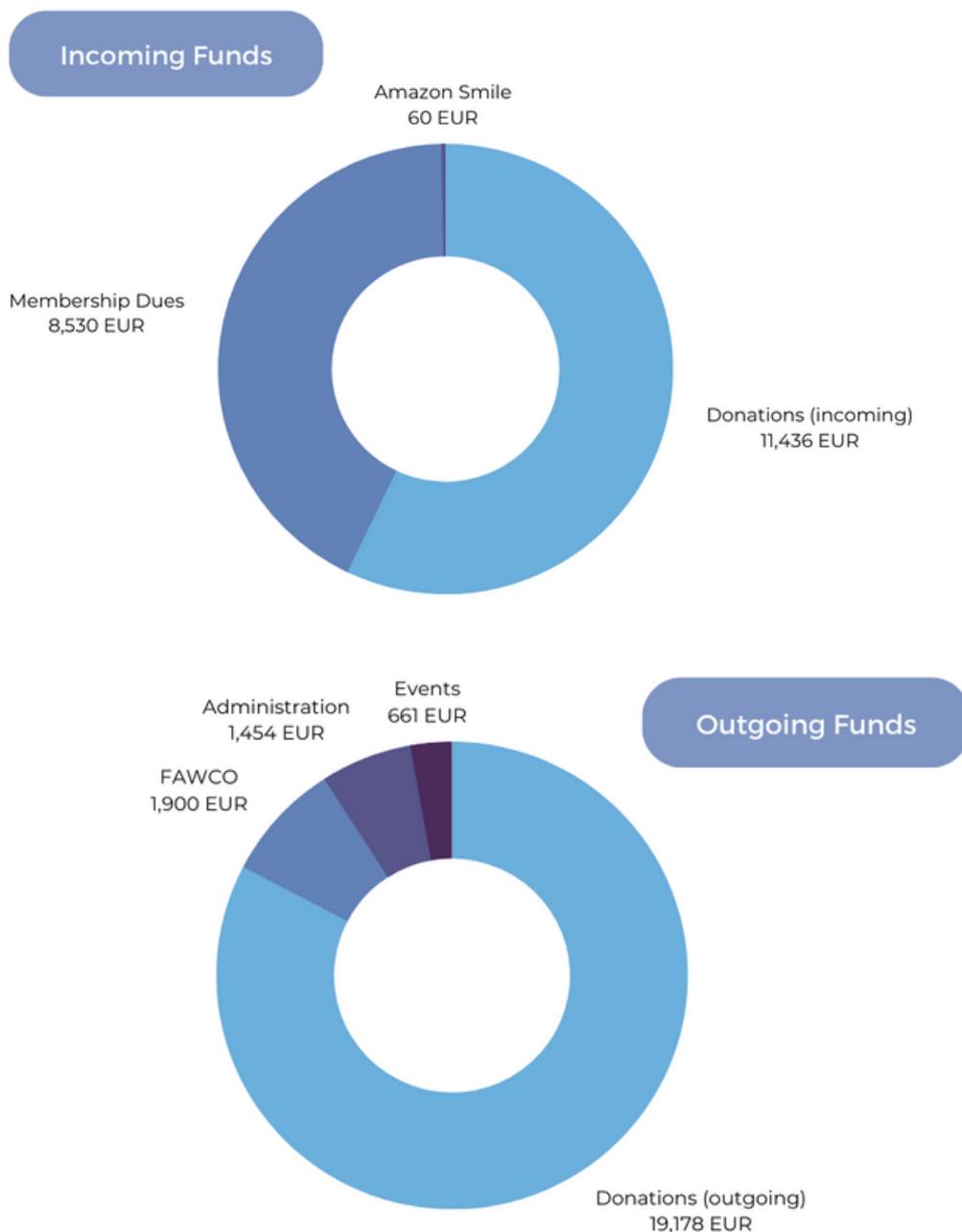
Much of FAWCO's 2021-2022 year was online. While in-person meetings were missed, many more members joined worldwide online discussions and conferences on themes of Human Rights, Education, Health, the Environment, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Diversity & Inclusion, US voting issues, and the yearly business meeting. The Target Team did a phenomenal job of raising funds and awareness about FGM and the intersection between health and women's rights. The UN's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was a hybrid event and many FAWCO members participated virtually.

FAWCO's myriad contributions to the AIWCC are incredibly important but sometimes unseen by our membership at large. FAWCO action has been the impetus for many of our local activities from SDG awareness (Waldlabor, climate march, *innatura* tour, spring clean-up) to US voter awareness campaigns; from inspiring our charitable activities to supporting our members with Education Awards. One AIWCC daughter was a FAWCO Youth Volunteer in Amsterdam and another received a \$4,000 grant to further her university studies.



BUDGET

During the 2021/2022 club year, we generated incoming funds of more than €20,000. Thanks to our members, we collected more in donations than in membership dues. Those donations to AIWCC were made mainly during our matching campaigns to help the victims of the local flooding and the war in Ukraine. In total, we donated more than €19,000 to different charities. Because of the flood and refugee emergencies, this year we used a part of our reserve to support those in need. Outgoing funds totaled €23,200.



AIWCC is in solid financial standing with an end-of-club-year account balance of 11,988.45 EUR.

2021-2022 CLUB LEADERSHIP

Executive Board

Tricia R. Saur · President

Marcee D. Martinez · Vice President

Sara Harris · Treasurer

Janet Davis · Membership

Kathy McMillan Wilhelm · FAWCO Representative

Robin Meloy Goldsby · Parliamentarian

Vacant · Secretary

Vacant · Events

Leadership Team

Kate Becker · Activities Coordinator

Carol Jordan · Advertising & Partners

Michelle Grams · Club News Editor

Roxana Theodorescu · IT Officer

Adelina Matinca · Social Media

Robin Meloy Goldsby · Speakers Coordinator

Sally Webersinke · Welcoming & Outreach Co.

2021-2022 CLUB VOLUNTEERS

Monika Becker

Sally Bolinger

Claudia Butterly

Joan Brassat

Dagmar Breitenbach-Ulrich

Heidi Cramer

Janet Davis

Sarah Denney

Birgit Dickinson

Mary Dobrian

Krissy Dorn

Julia Goldsby

Robin Meloy Goldsby

Michelle Grams

Sara Harris

Sara Hartmann

Shila Hemati

Nora Hoppe

Carol Jordan

Stacey Kimmig

Corinn Lutz

Marcee Martinez

Adelina Matinca

Tracie Frank Mayer

Jo McElroy

Julie Meyerson

Ayuska Motha

Martina Mühlburger

Heather O'Donnell

Ruth Owen

Cherie Parenteau

Maria Reinirkens

Sofia Rischio

Tricia R Saur

Veronique Spiteri

Geraldine Stals van Moerkerk

Eiko Takahashi

Lesley Taubert

Lisa Tauszig

Roxana Theodorescu

Audrey Thomas

Sally Webersinke

Kathy McMillan Wilhelm

JOIN US! 

Become a Member

Membership is open to all English-speaking women living in Cologne, Bonn and the surrounding area. We embrace diversity!

Volunteer

We are a member-run club. Members are encouraged to pursue what they love and share their passions!

Fundraise

We are a social network with a charitable calling!

Donate

Bank Transfer

IBAN: DE 35 3705 0198 1931 0895 59

BIC/Swift: COLSDE33

PayPal

Treasurer@aiwccologne.org





AIWCC e.V.

The American International Women's Club of Cologne e.V. is registered in the Association Register of the District Court of Cologne under registration number VR 15282.



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