



LIBERATED
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GRACE

YOUTH PRE-ASSEMBLY
THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION
3-9 MAY 2017 - ONDANGWA, NAMIBIA

REPORT OF THE LWF YOUTH PRE ASSEMBLY

2017



LWF Twelfth Youth Pre Assembly,
Ondangwa, Namibia, 03–09 May 2017

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YOUTH PRE ASSEMBLY REPORT

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Introduction

The year 2017 was a historic and special one for Lutherans around the world: The year of the 500th anniversary to commemorate the Reformation globally, as well as the LWF Twelfth Assembly in Namibia.

This report is a summary and gives insight into the LWF Youth Pre Assembly 2017, which was one of the milestones in this historic year.

During only one week, some 120 young Lutherans came together in Ondangwa, Namibia to prepare together for the LWF Twelfth Assembly, to get to know the hosting churches and to experience global Christian communion.

Being part of this Pre Assembly meant not only a unique chance, but also a lot of work for everyone, which was only possible through commitment, patience, creativity and active participation of everyone. Many of the participants were involved with the LWF Youth work before, for example through the LWF Council, the 4-years program “Global Young Reformers Network” or the LWF Youth climate justice work. Others joined for a first time a global Lutheran gathering.

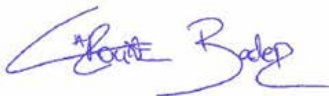
The report aims to give an overview of the framework, the working sessions, and the process to develop the LWF youth priorities 2018-2024 and the Youth Message to the LWF Twelfth Assembly.

In addition, it provides information about the planning teams, all participants, and the news articles published by the LWF communicators and blog posts by participants.

But sometimes, words are not enough to describe the atmosphere and uniqueness of a youth gathering. That is why a professional documentary movie was produced, capturing the spirit and special moments of the LWF Youth Pre Assembly 2017.

Wishing you a good read and new inspiration, as well as God’s blessings.

In Christ,



Caroline Bader
LWF Youth Secretary

1. Framework of the LWF Youth Pre Assembly

Dates: 03-09 May 2017

Venue: Heja Lodge, Windhoek and Ekamuti Town Lodge, Ondangwa, Namibia

Countries represented: 44

LWF Churches represented: 61

Young reformers among all participants: 47

Climate working group among all participants: 7

Main goals of the LWF Youth Pre Assembly

1. Full youth participation at the LWF Twelfth Assembly and related decision making bodies and governance is achieved by number and quality.
2. Enable intercultural exchange and networking towards a reconciled communion in a fragmented world.
3. Strengthen global, cross-regional learning among LWF member churches, including the LWF Twelfth Assembly and beyond.
4. Strengthen youth leadership in LWF member churches
5. Raise the collective youth voice in public witness that all are “Liberated By God’s Grace.” Creation, salvation and human beings are not for sale”.

NB: The total number of youth delegates at the Assembly was 82, which means that 21 delegates, 25% did not attend the Youth Pre Assembly

Facilitation and shared leadership

A. LWF communion office

The LWF Youth Secretary (Ms Caroline Bader) organised and lead the global process and the *LWF Local Assembly Coordinator* (Rev Martin Nelumbu) supported the preparation and implementation locally.

B. Global preparation team

The 8 members were assigned to prepare the agenda, facilitate the program PAYC and take programmatic decisions together.

The global team was composed of Youth delegates from all 7 regions, plus one from the Namibian hosting church

Young Reformers

1. Rev Heikki Repo – Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, Northern Europe Region
2. Ms Triin Salmu– Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Central Eastern Europe Region
3. Mr Tim Sonnemeyer - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, Central Western Europe Region
4. Mr Daniel Sinaga- Protestant Christian Batak

Participants

Total number of participants: 128

Categories

Youth delegates: 61

Stewards: 30

Ex officio: 5

LWF staff: 5

Local youth leaders: 18

Consultants: 2

Speakers (1-2 days): 5

Visitors: 2



Church (HKBP), Asia Region
 5. Rev Makarios Medgella- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Africa Region
 2 young LWF Council (2010-2017) members
 1. Ms Mikka Mc Cracken- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, North America Region
 2. Rev Danielle Dokmann- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suriname, Latin America and the Caribbean Region
 Rev Helvi Muremi – The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), Africa

The global planning team has met through virtual meetings from September 2016 through April 2017 and met for one day prior to the Youth pre Assembly. They have developed, decided upon and chaired the global agenda of the meeting.

C. Local preparation team

The team was composed of 10 youth leaders below the age of 30 from all three LWF member churches in Namibia. (see also page 10)

They were assigned to plan and lead the exposure to the hosting church, help with logistics and connect with the Namibian youth. The local planning committee has regularly met between October 2016 to May 2017 to prepare the local program and the logistics of the meeting. It was the first time to have a joint youth leader's process with all three Namibian churches. The learning's and joy

have resulted in the plans for an "United Youth Council of the Lutheran Churches in Namibia" (UYC-NELC) which needs approval by the leadership of the UCC-NELC. During the Youth-Pre Assembly, the local planning team was supported by 10 more volunteers from the three churches, who helped managing the conference.

The main local program aspects were the welcoming ceremonies at the Windhoek airport, lunch stop in Tsumeb and at the Ekamuti Town Lodge in Ondangwa, Sunday worship service visits, overnight-stay in host families, local visits to social diaconal projects, a cultural night and the farewell evening.

Communication

The communications team, comprised of 6 young communicators from all LWF regions was highly engaged in producing articles, pictures, social media content and video recording of the gathering. In addition, a professional film maker was engaged to produce a documentary movie about the process and result of the LWF Youth Pre Assembly 2017 which was launched in July 2017 under the title "Freed by God's grace".

2. Hosting churches

We're grateful that the three Lutheran churches of Namibia have hosted the Youth-Pre Assembly in the North of Namibia in the town of Ondangwa. It was a first time to have an international LWF Youth meeting in Namibia. The hosting churches were much engaged in the preparation and implementation of the Youth Pre Assembly.

The three hosting churches were:

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia - German Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCIN-GELC)

With 5000 members, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (German Evangelical Lutheran Church) is the smallest of the three Lutheran churches in Namibia. The church's eight pastors are supplemented by German-speaking pastors from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany. The ELCIN (GELC) trains lay-preachers and lay-readers, and offers courses in congregational leadership.

The youth organization, Jugendnetzwerk, employs two youth pastors. The church publishes a magazine, Perspektiven, which offers a platform for authors to reflect on issues, such as language, land distribution and youth. The church supports a home for the elderly and a project that reaches out to people who are mentally challenged.

Local team member:

Mr Jürgen Braun, Deacon

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN)

With 772,400 members - about a third of the Namibian population - the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia is the country's largest Lutheran church. Most parishes are located in rural areas. The church runs various social institutions and centers, such as two secondary schools, the Onandjokwe Lutheran

Medical Mission, the Engela Parish Institute and the ELCIN Rehabilitation Centre.

Paulinum United Lutheran Theological Seminary is the only school of theology to prepare young men and women to take up the challenge of pastoral ministry toward God's people.

Both the church and its sister church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia, run this theological seminary. The ELOC Printing Press provides books, newspapers, and articles to parishes and businesses.

Local team members:

Rev Hafeni Lineekela Shikulo, Rev Kleopas Nakale, Rev Helvi Muremi, Rev Joseph Ngula, Rev Lyauvika Ndapewa Nashuuta, Rev Filemon Shuudeni Nampadhi
Ms Esther Sakaria.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN)

The ELCRN offers community and social services in four main areas. It carries out mission work in five rural areas. Evangelization is practiced in towns and rural areas, farms and communal areas, mining towns and cities. The mission to provide Christian education is manifest in its kindergartens, Sunday Schools, and youth, women's and men's groups. The church has an HIV and AIDS program, a social development desk, diaconal services in prisons and hospitals, hostels in rural areas, old age homes and soup kitchens.

Its 420,000 members cover 55 parishes. The church is mostly active in central and southern Namibia. In addition to clergy and office staff, it employs 188 hostel and kindergarten workers.

Local team members:

Mr Wynand Lukas (Chair) Rev Iyaloo Nuuyuni



3. Agenda of the LWF Youth Pre Assembly

The program was prepared through the global and local planning team. Except for a few speakers on specific sessions, all sessions and workshops were youth-led. Through highly engaging and interactive methodologies the aim to include all participants as much as possible was reached and the LWF Youth Pre Assembly 2017 was as participatory as possible.

Morning and evening devotions

Each day started and ended with prayer, songs and reflection from each region to give time for spirituality and communion. The devotions were each prepared by the delegation from one LWF region.

Bible study

Bible verses from morning devotion were shared and reflected together in small village groups of seven people. The biblical texts were:

Thursday, 4 May: Salvation- not for sale
“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— 9 not the result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Friday, 5 May: Human beings- not for sale
„Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15 and said, “What will you give me if I betray him to you?” They paid him thirty pieces of silver.” (Matthew 26:14-15)

“God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.” (Gen 1:31)



Session I: Opening and Welcome

Official welcome by the hosting churches, introduction to the hosting church, roll call, agenda overview, security briefing, Code of Conduct.

The aim was to introduce to the local context of the YPA and enable intercultural exchange
Speakers: Presiding Bishop Nambala; Namibian local planning team; Ms Magnea Sverrisdottir, LWF Council member

Training: Intercultural Communication

to sensitize for cultural diversity in the global communion. This session was very useful to make all participants aware of (possible) difficult conversations.

Facilitators: Ms Helena Funke, Mr Atil Takri, Ms Szilvi Garai, Ms Rebecca Lühmann, Mr Joas Lwankomezi, Mr Joshua Seepersaud

Session II: Report of LWF youth activities and priorities 2011-2017

to inform about the youth work in the global communion and to strengthen youth leadership in LWF member churches

Facilitator: Ms Caroline Bader and former program participants

Session III: Youth participation as a crosscutting priority in the LWF

Participants have learned, practiced and discussed about LWF's commitment to youth participation.

This sessions aimed to prepare for qualitative youth participation at the LWF Twelfth Assembly and related decision making bodies.

Facilitator: Ms Caroline Bader

Regional meetings

These meetings in smaller groups gave space for sharing about regional themes, governance and youth programs and strategize together for the Assembly.

Facilitators:

Africa: Rev Makarios Mdegella and Ms Mami Brunah

Asia: Mr Daniel Sinaga and Mr Warime Guti

Central Eastern Europe: Ms Triin Salmu

Central Western Europe: Mr Tim Sonnemeyer

Latin America & the Caribbean:

Rev Daniëlle Dokman

Nordic Countries: Rev Heikki Antero Repo

North America: Ms Mikka Mc Cracken

Session IV: Our Lutheran Communion today and tomorrow

The LWF General Secretary Rev Dr Martin Junge delivered his keynote to the youth delegates and Ms Julia Brümmer, LWF project coordinator, spoke on the role of the Lutheran churches for sustainable development. (The article about the speech can be found in the media chapter).

World Café of the Young Reformers

Participants could discover the Living reformation projects and ideas of the young reformer delegates by rotating in this “world café” among twelve presentations. They heard about how salvation, human beings and creation are not for sale.

The aim was to strengthen global, cross-regional learning among LWF member churches, including the LWF Twelfth Assembly and beyond. Overall, the 47 young reformers among participants played a strong role in informing about their project work; long-term involvement with

“Youth were given chance to speak out their thoughts on every agenda.”

LWF and sustainable youth leadership has been developed and was very visible

Living Reformation Projects: Awareness on child labour (Ghana), Youth and Diakonia (Brazil), Empowerment for Action(Finland), Empowerment for Action (India), Being Lutheran today (Colombia), Being Reformers today (Norway), Awareness raising campaign against Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (Tanzania), Creation-not for sale: Reforestation in my church (Democratic Republic of Congo); Climate Change awareness (Philippines), Glasses of compassion(Germany) ; Postcard Movement “Note for sale” (Germany)

Thematic workshops

These learning spaces inspired and encouraged new themes for churches and for the global Lutheran communion. All themes were prepared and presented by participants, three among them only during the Youth Pre Assembly.

Themes: Lutheran identity today, Young People- Africa’s Untapped Resource, Sunday- not for sale, Leave no one behind-The Sustainable Development Goals, Interfaith skills and peace building, Shrinking churches (new), Leadership based on youth participation (new), Increasing pastors corps for our churches (new).

Facilitators: Ms Febrisa Silaban, Mr Hesron Hanshen Sihombing, Dr Simone Sinn, Ms Paula Charlotte Göhre, Mr Arne Jureczek, Mr Lasse Schmidt-Klie, Ms Julia Brümmer, Ms Mikka Mc Cracken, Mr Collins Shava, Mr Sem Loggen, Mr Simon Kristian Blix Nielsen, Ms Szilvia Garai

“We were so different yet so connected; that’s what I felt because LWF gave us a platform to understand and cherish our diversity.”

Session V: Open Space on the LWF youth priorities 2017-2023

During this open space participants have discussed, agreed and voted upon the global LWF youth priorities for the next seven years. Facilitators: Ms Triin Salmu, Rev. Makarios Mdegella, Ms Caroline Bader

Cultural Evening

After sharing a traditional dinner in a beautiful location, every region presented itself through songs, dances, games, information, etc. Masters of ceremony: Rev. Lwazi Masina, Ms Marta Maas



Role play: Assembly negotiations

By playing different roles and characters of a global governance meeting participants could understand and practice the rules and procedures of the upcoming LWF Assembly. After the acting part there was time for reflection and questions. The aim was to enable every delegate to fully participate in the LWF Twelfth Assembly.

Facilitators: Mr Tim Sonnemeyer, Ms Mikka McCracken, Rev Danielle Dokman

Develop the Youth Message

During the Youth Pre Assembly participants took decisions about the LWF youth priorities, reflected about the LWF Assembly themes and used the learnings from workshops and keynotes. They were tasked to develop a joyful, outward looking, transformative, and forward looking youth message. Every participant prepared the delivery in one of the working teams: drafting the youth message, social media, drama/dance, music/song, video, delivering the speech, decoration/set up.

Host family visits and Sunday worship service

All were invited to visit one of the many ELCIN congregations around Ondangwa, to stay in a host family and to join the Sunday morning worship service. Thereby all gained a deeper insight into the daily life and worship life of the members of the hosting church. Organizers: Rev Filemon Shuudeni Nampadhi and Rev Hafeni Lineekela Shikulo

4. LWF Youth Report

2011-2017

By Caroline Bader, LWF Youth Secretary (the report was free speech with PowerPoint presentation, of which the summary is presented below)

Dear LWF Youth, dear participants, dear brothers and sisters. With this report I would like to present to all of you the multitude of work done since the last LWF Assembly, the success stories, the challenges and thereby provide a backbone for planning the future together. So I invite you to look back together first, before we look ahead.

Looking back: LWF Youth Priorities 2011-2017

The Pre-Assembly Youth Conference in *Dresden, Germany from 10- 17 July 2010* has defined the priorities of the LWF Youth Work around the world:

- Sustainability
- Gender Justice
- Visibility of the LWF

LWF Youth programs from 2011-2017

1. Youth participation and leadership

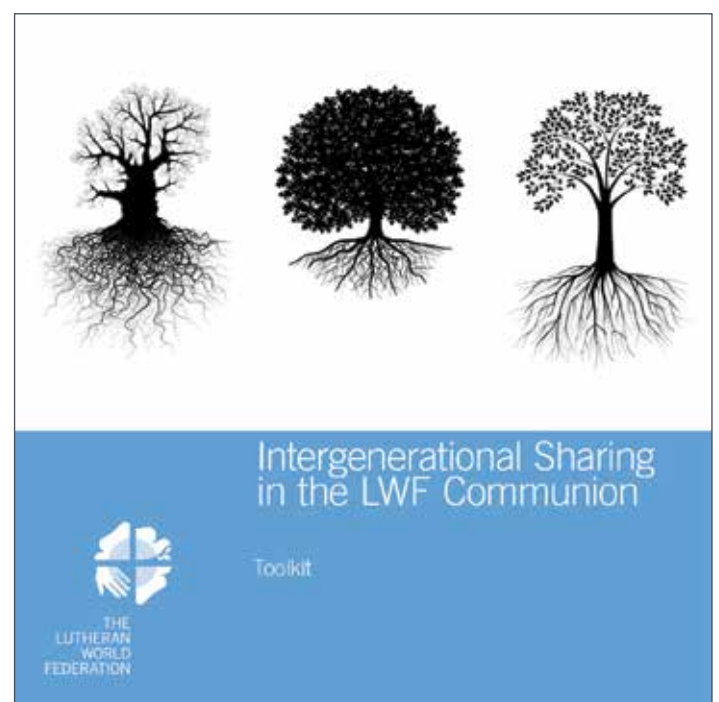
Background

The Lutheran World Federation, through

its strategic commitment, wants to ensure that *“young people have a place and a voice in all aspects of church and communion life, including decision-making and leadership”* (LWF Strategy 2012-2017). Youth participation and youth leadership are held to be cross-cutting priorities which require attention and commitment at all levels of church and communion life.

Youth in decision-making

The LWF commits to 20% youth below the age of 30 in each decision making body. Youth delegates should be well prepared for their responsibilities in strategic meetings, e.g. as young council members, youth delegates to the LWF Assembly, or in regional leadership



consultations. From 2012 to 2016, there were

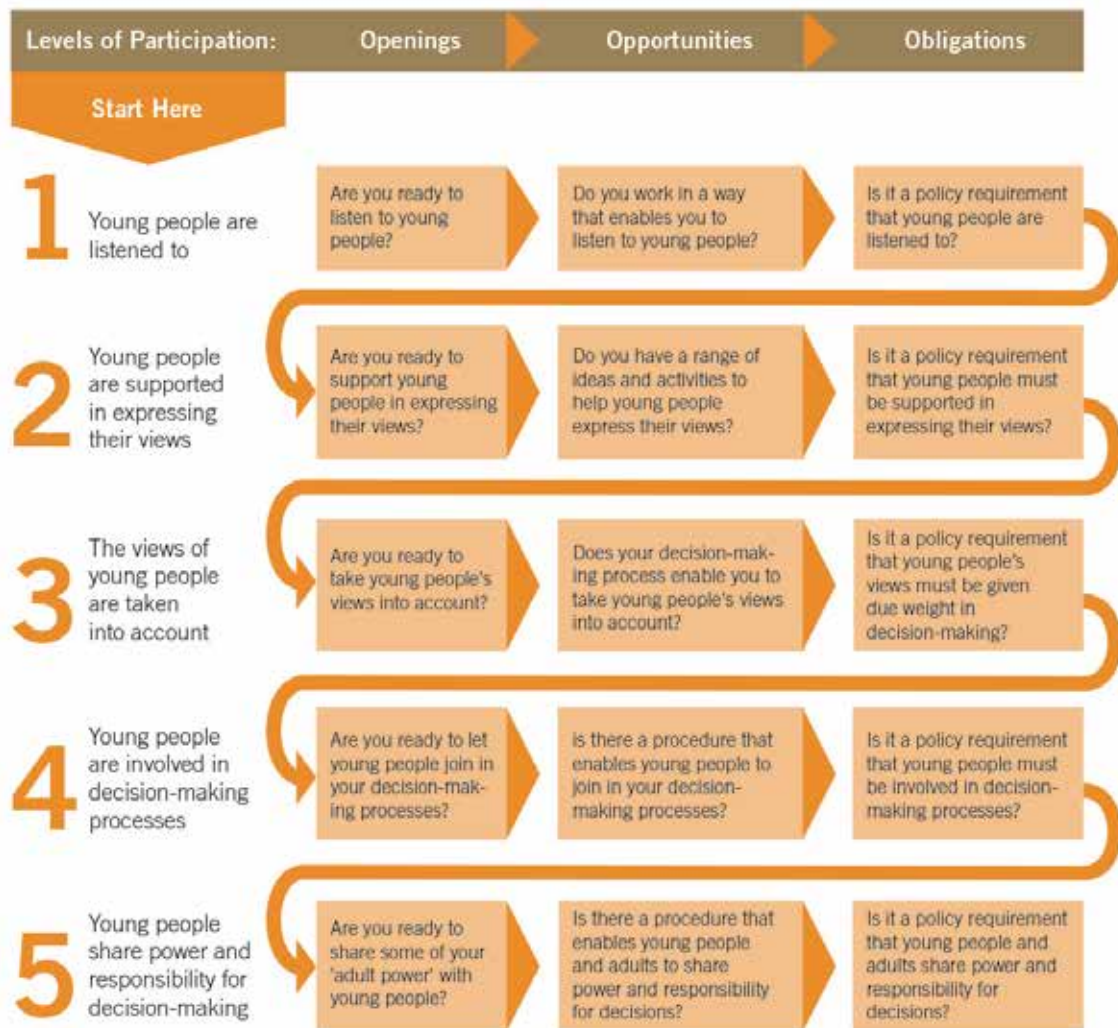


Figure 12: Harry Shier (2001): Pathways to participation: Openings, Opportunities and Obligations.

at least 3 youth leadership trainings coordinated by the LWF Youth Desk each year.

Survey of youth participation and leadership in LWF member churches

As part of an on-going commitment to ensuring that young people have a place and voice in the LWF and its member churches; that their views, concerns and hopes are acknowledged and that their needs are served; as well as to ensure that LWF programs remain relevant to young communion members, the LWF Youth Desk conducted a study on youth participation and leadership in all LWF mem-

ber churches, called “*Here I am; for you called me*”: Youth Participation and Leadership in the LWF Member Churches (LWF 2014).

According to the answers of 80 LWF member churches, youth participation today can fall into several different themes, such as:

- Being and Belonging
- Active participation and decision making
- Having a voice and speaking out
- Receiving and Contributing
- Growing and Building
- Inter-generational sharing and sustainability
- Service and Guidance
- Commitment and shared responsibility

The study book also proposes a more quali-

tative approach to increasing the participation of young people in the life and decision making of churches, through the “Pathway to participation”: Based on the findings, some 15 youth-led initiatives to increase youth participation in 12 churches were funded through the LWF. Their results were published to inspire others around the world.

Activities

- 2013: Mapping of youth participation in LWF member churches
- 2014-2016: Small scale projects on youth participation
- 2013- 2017 LWF Global Young Reformers Network
- Building regional Lutheran youth networks in LAC, Africa and Asia
- Advise on and training for youth participation in LWF member churches

Intergenerational Sharing

Background

The LWF communion is like a big family—it gathers different generations. We believe that working together across generations is valuable in shaping the future of the communion.

We therefore developed a methodology for intergenerational dialogue and implemented it at the 2013 LWF Council meeting with a session on “Envisioning a sustainable LWF.” This tool can help to improve the dialogue between different generations at the church level, too.

“Youth who made the LWF communion”

After 70 years of the LWF, we see that the communion of churches is full of the stories and testimonies of those who were impacted by the LWF at early age and who made an impact on the communion and their churches as young persons. The 2017 publication gathers testimonies from all regions and decades to underline the diversity of youths engagement and the importance for intergenerational dialogue.



Activities

- 2013: First intergenerational dialogue at LWF Council, topic: „Envisioning a sustainable LWF“
- 2014: Toolkit „Intergenerational dialogue“
- 2014-2017: Intergenerational aspects in regional leadership consultations, Ecumenical commemoration and LWF Twelfth Assembly
- 2017: Publication: „Youth who made the communion- Testimonies and stories from 1947-2017“

2. Ecological sustainability and Climate Justice Advocacy

Background

In the 2010 LWF Youth Pre-Assembly Message, the LWF youth raised the following concern: “We are challenged to promote sustainable development in its economic, environmental and social aspects.” They decided to actively engage and promote ecological justice and equity within the LWF communion.

One of the seven priority themes for LWF’s global advocacy is climate change and environmental protection, with an emphasis

on ameliorating impacts for already poor and vulnerable people. The LWF carries out this advocacy in two ways: through the climate adaptation projects of LWF World Service country programs, and through the engagement and mobilization of youth to represent LWF at United Nations climate change conferences. From 2011 to 2017, the LWF closely followed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and was represented at the UN Climate Change Conferences (COP) by a young delegation.

Activities

- 2011-2017: Young LWF delegations to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
- 2013-2017: Regional climate justice advocacy and project management trainings in LAC, Asia, Europe and Africa

2013- The start of “Fast for the climate”

The Fast for the Climate movement started at the UN climate negotiations in Warsaw in November 2013. Typhoon Haiyan had just devastated the Philippines and that country’s climate commissioner, Yeb Saño, whose own family was caught up in the disaster said he would not eat until the Warsaw conference delivered actions by countries to “stop the madness” of the climate crisis. Hundreds of others from around the world chose to fast with him in solidarity. The LWF delegation to COP19 supported his call with the interfaith initiative *#FastForThe-Climate* and invited people to fast on the first day of each month. This call quickly reached thousands of supporters around the world and resulted in new partnerships and networks with faith- and secular climate organisations.

2015 - A key year for climate justice advocacy.

In June 2015, the LWF council adopted the *Public statement - Advocacy and Action for Climate Justice*, which contained more specific advocacy tasks for political leaders and member churches and also took the historic decision to “not invest in fossil fuels” anymore. In December 2015, the LWF delegation was present at the historic COP21 in Paris and delivered meaningful and effective message. They were able to reach new target groups and greater visibility: over 150 news outlets mentioned the LWF at COP21, among them The New York Times, The Washington Post, the Guardian, The Huffington Post, and others. Our focus on social media proved to be successful and resulted in 1.4 million hits over the two week conference. This work was accompanied by regular climate advocacy trainings, climate project support, and network building for young people.

LWF visibility and the role of youth

Background

LWF Youth advocate for improved ways of communicating, decision-making and meeting to facilitate more active youth participation. They engaged in improving the visibility of the LWF through new social media platforms (LWFyouth Facebook grew to 5500, Twitter 1500, Instagram 500 followers), training young bloggers and regional communicators for the LWF and developing campaigns such as “Fast for the Climate”, “I am freed from- I am freed by” and others. The LWF Youth Desk also introduced virtual conferences and live online gatherings (discussion, prayer, game, small groups, keynotes etc).

Activities

- 2011 “LWF together: the earth needs you” Local meetings
- 2012 “Green and just” First Virtual Conference of the the LWF
- 2013 “Journey to Climate Justice” Virtual Conference and online game
- 2013 Creative competition for the Global Young Reformers Network
- 2014 Global Young Reformers Network-Website and social network
- 2014 “Freed by God’s love to change the world” Virtual Conference
- 2014 “Virtual Choir” by Young Reformers
- 2015 Global Young Reformers Network – Smartphone App
- 2016 “Young Reformers’ Space” – 10 monthly consultations
- “Living Reformation programs” in 54 LWF member churches

- LWF International preaching contest for the LWF Twelfth Assembly

List of LWF Youth Publications

- 2011: “LWF together: the earth needs you” - guidebook for local groups
- 2012: “Green and just” guidebook for local groups
- 2014: „Here I am, for you called me“- survey
- 2014: „Intergenerational sharing in the LWF communion“ – toolkit
- 2015: „Climate Hero“-board game
- 2017: „Youth who made the LWF communion- Testimonies and stories from 1947 to 2017“
- 2017: „The Global Young Reformers Network“ exhibition and website



Programs by regions:

Africa

2011	Durban, South Africa: LWF delegation to COP17 and ecumenical formation
2014	Accra, Ghana: Youth advocacy training, Arica Leadership Consultation
2015	Marangu, Tanzania: Regional Young Reformers meeting, 20 youth leaders at the “Marangu celebration”
2016	Marrakech, Morocco: African LWF delegation to COP22 Ondangwa, Namibia: YPA local planning team meeting
2017	Johannesburg, South Africa: Africa Climate Project Training

Asia

2012	Doha, Qatar: LWF delegation to COP18
2013	Koraput, India: Ecumenical Youth Conference and JELC visit
2014	Medan, Indonesia: Youth PreCouncil meeting Lae, Papua New Guinea: Youth participation seminar and ELC-PNG visit
2015	Taipeh, Taiwan: Regional Young Reformers meeting, Asia Lutheran Youth Network, 15 youth leaders at Asia Leadership Consultation

Europe

2011	2011-17 Bi-annual meetings of German LWFyouth delegates Dresden, Germany: LWFyouth at Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag
2012	Dresden, Germany: LWFyouth at EVA Peace Academy
2013	Wittenberg, Germany: Steering meeting of the Global Young Reformers Network Warsaw, Poland: LWF delegation to COP19

2014	Geneva, Switzerland: Steering meeting of the Global Young Reformers Network
2015	Trondheim, Norway: Regional Young Reformer meeting, European church leadership consultation Wittenberg, Germany: "Workshop Wittenberg" of 140 young reformers
2016	Lund, Sweden: Young Reformers at Ecumenical Commemoration
2017	Västerås, Sweden: Världens Fest

Latin America and the Caribbean

2012	Bogota, Colombia: Youth PreCouncil meeting Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: LWFyouth at "Rio+20" Conference
2013	Managua, Nicaragua: Youth advocacy training, youth leaders at COL (LAC Leadership consultation)
2014	Lima, Peru: LWF delegation to COP20 La Paz, Bolivia: 10 youth leaders at COL
2015	Mexico: 10 youth leaders at COL
2016	Timbo, Brazil: 30 LAC Young reformers meeting and joining Congrenaje

North America

2011	2011-2017 New York City, USA: UN Consultations on the Status of Women (CSW)
2014	Minnesota, Chicago, USA: Young Reformers presentations in ELCA Theological seminaries. New York City, USA: Climate March and Interfaith Climate Summit
2015	Detroit, USA: Regional Young Reformers meeting at ELCAYouth gathering
2017	New York City, USA: ECOSOC Youth Forum on Sustainable Development Goals

Summary

In conclusion, I could witness many strengths of and opportunities for LWF youth since the last LWF Assembly. Many departments, units and colleagues are more and more sensitive to including youth. This trend was supported by closer monitoring, but also through the strong features that LWF Youth bring to the communion, such as

- Being vocal, passionate, committed and creative
- Expertise on specific issues
- Solution oriented
- Communication, networking, campaigning

Still, there are challenges remaining for active and effective youth participation, such as:

- LWF youth quota and crosscutting priority applies for global and regional LWF programs and governance, but not to each member church
- The recognitions of youth networks and active LWF youth leaders needs to be

further improved at decision making level of the churches

- Lack of finances for youth delegates at regional leadership meetings and specific LWF programs. This could be improved by including a 20% youth budget from the beginning of planning.
- Planning: long-term planning and information is needed, Coordination with church and regional offices, Liaison persons and youth delegates change often
- Duration of LWF events: Too long for volunteers and for non-church staff

After 5 years of serving as LWF Youth Secretary I have witnessed that young people are a gift to the global communion. As LWF Communion office we want to strengthen, enable and promote youth participation and youth in leadership at all levels.

Thank you all for your trust, working together and mutual respect during those years!

Caroline Bader, LWF Youth Secretary,
May 2017





5. Address of the LWF General Secretary

The LWF General Secretary Rev Dr Martin Junge was invited to address the Youth Pre Assembly on May 5, 2017 under the theme “Our Lutheran communion today and tomorrow”. He shared about the importance of young people as integral part of the LWF, and praised the engagement of LWF Youth on the areas of climate justice, global young reformers network, intergenerational methodologies and sustainable LWF in the past years and encouraged them for continuing their good work.

“Theology is the center, Christ is the center, and there is a need to always place Christ in the center. With so much noise currently around the world and in society, this is instrumental for us to remember: It all begins with Christ. It’s because of who God is and what God does, not because of what we are and what we do.”

Martin Junge, 05 May 2017, Ondangwa

LWF is committed to empowering young people in all aspects of church and communion life by receiving and embracing the gifts young people bring into discussions, decisions and leadership throughout the Lutheran communion. Recognizing and utilizing the gifts brought by young members of the communion is essential in the life of the LWF, Junge said: *“Youth are vibrant in the life of the communion, integral to the future of the LWF.”*





6. Voting of the LWF youth priorities 2018-2024

Methodology: Open Space with all participants
Voting members of the LWF Youth Pre Assembly: 90

In the first phase, all were invited to write down important topics from the discussions of the previous days on large sheets of paper. After this, the “law of two feet” applied, meaning that one goes to topics of interest to discuss it with others as long as one can contribute relevant. This phase ended with main topics identified and related questions and ideas noted down. 1st round- every voting member received 3 green sticking dots for voting

Results:

1. “Reviving Churches” - 61
2. “Gender Justice, human rights, advocacy” - 38
3. “Education – Not for Sale” - 26
4. Climate Justice and Sustainability - 28

5. Youth Participation - 32
Second Round: 2nd round- every voting member received 3 blue sticking dots for voting among the top 5

Results:

1. “Reviving Churches” - 79
2. “Gender Justice, human rights, advocacy” - 60
3. “Education – Not for Sale” - 45
4. Climate Justice and Sustainability - 43
5. Youth Participation - 42

It was hence voted that the 3 priorities were: “Reviving Churches”, “Gender Justice, human rights, advocacy” (name of the cluster), “Education – Not for Sale” and that the themes “Climate Justice and Sustainability” and “Youth Participation” would be highlighted as crosscutting priorities in the youth message to the LWF Twelfth Assembly and supported through resolutions proposed to the Assembly.

7. LWF Youth Message to the LWF Twelfth Assembly

Process:

After the voting of 3 LWF youth priorities, the LWF Youth message 2017 has been developed by a drafting team of youth delegates from the 7 LWF regions. They have shared the draft twice with all youth delegates to get feedback, discuss and vote upon the message. The message was finally voted upon by the 90 voting members on May 7, 2017 in Ondangwa, Namibia.

Message

Freed By God's Grace to Change the World

3–9 May 2017, Ondangwa and Windhoek, Namibia

1) Before you is the 2017 Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Youth Pre-Assembly Message. 2) In the days of the 3 to the 9 May, 120 Lutheran youth from 61 LWF member churches gathered together in Ondangwa and Windhoek, Namibia to participate in the Youth Pre-Assembly and discuss our current context and envision our future under the theme “Freed By God’s Grace to Change the World.” 3) Through respectful discussion of diverse opinions and common experiences, we tackled challenges we face and addressed how we want to be active participants in finding solutions. Together, we shared in our joys and learned more about our distinct and collective Lutheran identity. We commemorate the 500 years since Martin Luther’s reformation and see our communion as one that is ever reforming.

4) As young Lutherans in a changing communion and world, we know our obligation to take steps towards a thriving future. This future should be open, honoring of cultural context, ever changing and cognizant of the impact of globalization and cultural exchange. We know that things we might take for granted now might not be taken for granted in the future. As we look forward to the Twelfth LWF Assembly in Windhoek, Namibia, we are Liberated by God’s Grace and are called to embrace our neighbor as Christ embraces us.

5) We affirm the current efforts for climate justice through activities, such as #fastfortheclimate and the work done toward increased youth participation within the communion. These initiatives will continue as crosscutting themes.

Moving forward, we have named three key priorities to shape the next phase of LWF Youth work: the revival of churches, equity, and education.

Revival of churches



6) To be a thriving church, we must have an active and strong membership in both church and society. We are grounded in the Gospel, centered in worship, gathered at the table, and sent to serve in mission. We must be bold, flexible and proud of our Lutheran identity in the face of ever-present change. We are not limited by the divisions of our past and affirm the LWF statement, “The Church in the Public Space.”¹ Staying rooted in the Gospel, we must honor our diversity and

contextualize worship throughout the communion while improving our work to spread the Gospel and being a welcoming communion. Lutheran youth play a significant role with the revival of churches and share this responsibility with the whole church. Intergenerational dialogue and leadership are essential to this task.

7) We celebrate the diaconal work of our communion and recognize the opportunity for increased communication. This visibility raising is key to show the world that being a Lutheran is much more than attending worship and providing services. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, we are freed to serve our neighbors.

Equity



8) To achieve justice, we must first strive for equity. Equity is fairness; ensuring that all people have the same access to opportunities while taking into consideration barriers that some might face. We firmly believe equity is for every human, based upon the underlying foundation of human dignity (imago dei). The full equity of people requires bringing the concerns of all communities, especially those historically marginalized, to the center.

Respectful use and responsible sharing of land is also required to attain equity of creation. As youth, we know there is strength in the diversity of communities around the world.

9) In the pursuit of equity for all, we look especially to address gender justice within all communities. The role of women and men must be reexamined and engaged through ongoing dialogue to redefine these roles in our contexts. In order for equity to be attained, transformation must take place at the community, church, and structural level. We affirm the gender justice work of the LWF including the “LWF Gender Justice Policy” and propose continued attention on the grassroots level.² We know the

presence of sin continues to separate us from one another, and we long for the reconciling power of Christ to unite, heal, and empower us in this task.

Education



10) Education is key in addressing a variety of challenges facing our communion such as poverty and hunger, climate change, conflict, and lack of empowerment.

Education serves as the foundation for all of our communities and communion. Recognizing the human dignity of each person, quality education must be accessible and free. We advocate for education for all with full participation at all levels: lower, higher and vocational education. Proper and pedagogical education can transform our societies.

11) We do not only advocate for basic education but also for proper theological education, exchange programs, and dialogue opportunities between Lutheran churches and interfaith communities are part of the transformation. Following in the footsteps of Martin Luther, Lutherans have promoted education for 500 years and must take responsibility to continue this legacy.

Closing – a call to action

12) The world today is ever and fast changing, and we, the Lutheran youth, members of a global and varied community, take our responsibility. Our three key commitments to reviving churches, striving for equity, and education are our call to action for all. We are happy and proud to share, participate in this ongoing reformation and strive to carry this commitment into the next 500 years.

8. LWF youth Song “Our communion needs”

This song was composed by some 20 youth delegates during the workshop “Music and Song” at the Youth Pre Assembly. The composition process was led by Eduardo Borchard, Brazil and Isabel Sixt, Germany. The final arrangement was done remotely by Immanuel Sixt.

Lyrics:

Verses:

*Revive our church, it's a unified work.
Let's build upon the existing church.
Come together now.*

*We're created, we're created,
Created in God's image, created in God's image.
Where's the equity? We want the same rights.
Equity right now.*

*Education, education,
Not for sale, not for sale.
It's our right to learn and excel.
Free education now.*

Chorus:

*To be freed by God's love to change the world.
Our communion needs equity, revival, education.
Believing God is at our side.*

Our Communion Needs

Arr.: Immanuel Sixt

- by LWF Youth -

(D=110)
Solo

S. *Solo* *All* *Solo*

Re - cre - vive our church, re - cre - vive our church, it's a
 We're cre - a - ted, we're cre - a - ted, cre - a -
 Ed - u - ca - tion, ed - u - ca - tion, tion, crea - ted

3 F F/E *All* B \flat /D F/C F/A B \flat G/B

S. u - ni - fied work, it's a u - ni - fied work, Let's build up - on the e -
 in God's i - mage, crea - ted in God's i - mage, Where's the e - qui - ty? We
 not for sale, not for sale, It's our right to learn and ex -

A. Hm... Hm... Let's build up - on the e -
 Where's the e - qui - ty? We
 It's our right to learn and ex -

T. Hm... Hm... Let's build up - on the e -
 Where's the e - qui - ty? We
 It's our right to learn and ex -

B. Hm... Hm... Let's build up - on the e -
 Where's the e - qui - ty? We
 It's our right to learn and ex -

6 Gm/C Dm B \flat E m 7 A Chorus Gm7 F

S. xis - ting church, Come to - ge - ther now, To be freed by God's love to
 want same rights. E - qui - ty right now, ty right now, freed by God's love to
 cel our - self. Free ed - u - ca - tion now. u - ca - tion now.

A. xis - ting church, Come to - ge - ther now, To be freed by God's love to
 want same rights. E - qui - ty right now, ty right now, freed by God's love to
 cel our - self. Free ed - u - ca - tion now. u - ca - tion now.

T. xis - ting church, Come to - ge - ther now, To be freed by God's love to
 want same rights. E - qui - ty right now, ty right now, freed by God's love to
 cel our - self. Free ed - u - ca - tion now. u - ca - tion now.

B. xis - ting church, Come to - ge - ther now, To be freed by God's love to
 want same rights. E - qui - ty right now, ty right now, freed by God's love to
 cel our - self. Free ed - u - ca - tion now. u - ca - tion now.

9 Dm7 C Dm C/E F F/A B \flat F E m 7 A Gm7 F F \sharp us4 F

S. change the world. Our fu - ture com - mun - nion needs e - qui - ty, re - vi - val, ed - u -
 change the world. Our fu - ture com - mun - nion needs e - qui - ty, re - vi - val, ed - u -
 change the world. Our fu - ture com - mun - nion needs e - qui - ty, re - vi - val, ed - u -
 change the world. Our fu - ture com - mun - nion needs e - qui - ty, re - vi - val, ed - u -

13 Dm C Dm7 C B \flat Gm/B \flat C7sus4 C7 Gm7/C F

S. ca - tion. Be - lie - ving God is at our side.
 ca - tion. Be - lie - ving God is at our side.
 ca - tion. Be - lie - ving God is at our side.
 ca - tion. Be - lie - ving God is at our side.

9. List of participants

Sorted by country

Title	Last name	First name	Category	Member church	Country	LWF Region
Ms	STEILMANN	Karla	Delegate	Evangelical Church of the River Plate	Argentina	Latin America & the Caribbean
Ms	HUTH	Carolina	Steward	United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Argentina	Argentina	Latin America & the Caribbean
Ms	REINDL	Roxana	Delegate	Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Austria	Austria	Central Western Europe
Ms	KISKU	Eva Bithi	Ex-Officio	Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church	Bangladesh	Asia
Mr	BARMAN	Stephen	Steward	Bangladesh Lutheran Church	Bangladesh	Asia
Mr	KISKU POLLOB	Sikiom Sagenan	Delegate	Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church	Bangladesh	Asia
Ms	TICONA MAMANI	Luz Ely	Delegate	Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church	Bolivia	Latin America & the Caribbean
Mr	MOSEKI	Bakang	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Botswana	Botswana	Africa
Ms	MAAS	Martha Regina	Delegate	Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil	Brazil	Latin America & the Caribbean
Mr	BORCHARDT	Eduardo	Steward	Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil	Brazil	Latin America & the Caribbean
Miss	BRATVOLD	Jenna	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada	Canada	North America
Mr	LEBLANC	Daniel	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada	Canada	North America
Ms	ORREGO	Elizabeth	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile	Chile	Latin America & the Caribbean
Ms	SUAREZ PRE-CIADO	Liria Andrea	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia	Colombia	Latin America & the Caribbean
Mr	YUMBA KITWA	Cedrick	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo	Congo, DR	Africa
Mr	HANAK	Filip	Delegate	Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession	Czech Republic	Central Eastern Europe
Mr	NIELSEN	Simon Kristian Blix	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark	Denmark	Nordic Countries
Ms	SCHJODT CALLESEN	Emma	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark	Denmark	Nordic Countries
Ms	SALMU	Triin	Delegate	Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church	Estonia	Central Eastern Europe
Mr	GUDETA	Gutu	Delegate	The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus	Ethiopia	Africa
Dr	GICHAMO	Fregenet Zekiewos	Delegate	The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus	Ethiopia	Africa
Mr	FUFA	Daba Moti	Steward	The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus	Ethiopia	Africa
Rev.	KATAJA	Sini-Maaria	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland	Finland	Nordic Countries
Father	REPO	Heikki Antero	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland	Finland	Nordic Countries
Mrs	LATVUS	Sara-Anna	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland	Finland	Nordic Countries
Ms	GERSTLE	Karine	Steward	United Protestant Church of France	France	Central Western Europe

Mr	HEUMANN	Marcus	Delegate	Church of Lippe [Lutheran Section]	Germany	Central Western Europe
Mr	BUGS	Sebastian	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg	Germany	Central Western Europe
Ms	SIXT	Isabel	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg	Germany	Central Western Europe
Ms	GÖHRE	Paula Charlotte	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria	Germany	Central Western Europe
Mr	SONNEMEYER	Tim	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria	Germany	Central Western Europe
Ms	LÜHMANN	Rebecca	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover	Germany	Central Western Europe
Mr	SCHMIDT-KLIE	Lasse	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover	Germany	Central Western Europe
Ms	FUNK	Helena	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany	Germany	Central Western Europe
Mr	JURECZEK	Arne	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany	Germany	Central Western Europe
Ms	BRABAND	Julia	Delegate	Evangelical Church in Central Germany	Germany	Central Western Europe
Ms	MÄRTZ	Sarafina	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria	Germany	Central Western Europe
Mr	JETTER	Benedikt	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg	Germany	Central Western Europe
Ms	SCHUNK	Rivka	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg	Germany	Central Western Europe
Mr	TRZEBIATOWSKI	Fabian Christopher	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria	Germany	Central Western Europe
Mr	KALBE	Felix Maximilian	Steward	Evangelical Church in Central Germany	Germany	Central Western Europe
Ms	IRMER	Kea	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover	Germany	Central Western Europe
Ms	SCHAUBE	Lisa	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria	Germany	Central Western Europe
Ms	ZIELKE	Annemarie	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony	Germany	Central Western Europe
Mr	ADJEI	Amos	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana	Ghana	Africa
Mr	SEEPSAUD	Joshua	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana	Guyana	Latin America & the Caribbean
Mr	RODRÍGUEZ RAMÍREZ	Grosvyn Ariel	Delegate	Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras	Honduras	Latin America & the Caribbean
Mr	YEUNG	Hok Chi	Delegate	The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong	Hong Kong, China	Asia
Ms	GARAI	Szilvia	Delegate	The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary	Hungary	Central Eastern Europe
Mr	KACHHAP	Benison	Delegate	Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chotanagpur and Assam	India	Asia

YOUTH PRE ASSEMBLY REPORT

Mr	TAKRI	Atil	Delegate	Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church	India	Asia
Ms	MOHANTY	Krutika Priya-darshni	Steward	Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church	India	Asia
Mr	SAMUEL CHANDRASEKARAN	Ajay Solomon Joel	Steward	The Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church	India	Asia
Mr	SILABAN	Torang	Delegate	The Indonesian Christian Church (HKI)	Indonesia	Asia
Ms	SARAGIH	Delmi Rohdearni	Delegate	Simalungun Protestant Christian Church (GKPS)	Indonesia	Asia
Mr	SIHOMBING	Hesron Hanshen	Delegate	Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia (GKPI)	Indonesia	Asia
Ms	FEBRISA	Miranti Silaban	Delegate	Protestant Christian Batak Church (HKBP)	Indonesia	Asia
Rev.	TAMBUNAN	Tetty Sabrina Rotua	Delegate	Protestant Christian Batak Church (HKBP)	Indonesia	Asia
Mr	SINAGA	Daniel Andy Hoffmann	Delegate	Protestant Christian Batak Church (HKBP)	Indonesia	Asia
Ms	ANDO	Fu	Delegate	Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church	Japan	Asia
Mr	BEARE	Arthur Fallah	Steward	Lutheran Church in Liberia	Liberia	Africa
Ms	ZOELIARILAZA	Heriniaina	Delegate	Malagasy Lutheran Church	Madagascar	Africa
Ms	ARO SANDANIAINA	Mami Brunah	Ex-Officio	Malagasy Lutheran Church	Madagascar	Africa
Mr	MELKIZEDEKA	Joslis B.	Delegate	Malagasy Lutheran Church	Madagascar	Africa
Mr	NDALAMA	Davie	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi	Malawi	Africa
Mr	LAI	Vincent Hon Jun	Delegate	Basel Christian Church of Malaysia	Malaysia	Asia
Mr	ANGALA	Sem Zenipo Halolye	Delegate	The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN)	Namibia	Africa
Rev.	NDAPANDULA NUUYUNI	Iyaloo Ndapan-dula	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN)	Namibia	Africa
Ms	HOFMANN	Anneliese	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN-GELC)	Namibia	Africa
Ms	SAKARIA	Ester N.	Steward	The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN)	Namibia	Africa
Mr	LOGGEN	Sem	Delegate	Protestant Church in the Netherlands	Netherlands	Central Western Europe
Ms	SAM	Ofonime	Delegate	The Lutheran Church of Nigeria	Nigeria	Africa
Mr	YUSUF	Leviticus	Delegate	The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria	Nigeria	Africa
Ms	ADAMU	Esther Bano	Delegate	The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria	Nigeria	Africa
Ms	JONSSON	May Bente Anita	Delegate	Church of Norway	Norway	Nordic Countries
Ms	LALIM	Ingvild Bjornoy	Delegate	Church of Norway	Norway	Nordic Countries
Mr	FONGAO	Jeffrey	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea	Papua New Guinea	Asia
Mr	GUTI	Warime	Ex-Officio	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea	Papua New Guinea	Asia
Mr	VALERIANO	Johan Celine	Steward	Lutheran Church in the Philippines	Philippines	Asia
Mr	RASZKA	Arkadiusz	Delegate	Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland	Poland	Central Eastern Europe
Ms	ANHELOVSKA	Anastasia	Steward	German Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Ukraine	Russian Federation	Central Eastern Europe

Ms	MARTONOVÁ	Lucia	Delegate	Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Slovak Republic	Slovak Republic	Central Eastern Europe
Rev.	MASINA	Lwazi	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa	South Africa	Africa
Mr	MAGWAZA	Khulekani Sizwe	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa	South Africa	Africa
Rev.	DOKMAN	Daniëlle	Ex-Officio	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suriname	Suriname	Latin America & the Caribbean
Mrs	GARDE	Johanna	Delegate	Church of Sweden	Sweden	Nordic Countries
Mr	HJERTEN	Kristian	Delegate	Church of Sweden	Sweden	Nordic Countries
Ms	STRINNHOLM	Sofia	Delegate	Church of Sweden	Sweden	Nordic Countries
Rev.	RUBENSON	Karin	Delegate	Church of Sweden	Sweden	Nordic Countries
Ms	BADER	Caroline	LWF Staff	The Lutheran World Federation	Switzerland	Central Western Europe
Ms	GANO	Elizabeth	LWF Staff	The Lutheran World Federation	Switzerland	Central Western Europe
Ms	ARCI	Xela	LWF Staff	The Lutheran World Federation	Switzerland	Central Western Europe
Ms	BRUMMER	Julia	LWF Staff	The Lutheran World Federation	Switzerland	Central Western Europe
Mr	CACERES DEL CASTILLO	David	LWF Staff	The Lutheran World Federation	Switzerland	Latin America & the Caribbean
Ms	MSHANA	Giftiel Abraham	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania	Tanzania	Africa
Rev.	MDEGELLA	Makarios	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania	Tanzania	Africa
Mr	LWANKOMEZI	Joas Jasson	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania	Tanzania	Africa
Ms	MUHANGO	Rachel Johnson	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania	Tanzania	Africa
Mr	HUNT	Branden	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	USA	North America
Ms	McCRACKEN	Mikka	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	USA	North America
Ms	PHILIP	Cheryl	Ex-Officio/Nominee	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	USA	North America
Mr	VILLALON	Joseph J.	Co-opted Staff	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	USA	North America
Mr	NDLOVU	Hillary	Delegate	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe	Africa
Ms	MOYO	Blessed Lillian	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe	Africa
Mr	SHAVA	Collins Kudakwashe	Steward	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe	Africa

10. Global LWF stories

“These events are like a fuel for our faith and will to make difference and spread news about how beautiful the Lutheran churches are.”

Young Namibians excited to host global Lutheran youth gathering

ONDANGWA, Namibia/GENEVA | 23/1/2017

More than 110 young Lutherans expected for LWF Youth Pre-Assembly in Ondangwa (LWI) –

Young pastors and youth leaders from the three member churches of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Namibia have launched preparations for the LWF Youth Pre-Assembly to be held in Ondangwa, northern Namibia, from 3-9 May.

The young members of the local planning team are part of the first generation born and raised after Namibia’s independence in 1990, the so called “born-free.”

The Pre-Assembly will gather 110 participants from more than 70 countries.

“We want to bring to the Youth Pre-Assembly a spirit of *ubuntu* (compassion and kindness),” says Rev. Helvi Muremi, a parish pastor in a rural congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN). She brings global experience to the team, having served also on the steering committee of the LWF Global Young Reformers’ Network, which supports youth participation in

commemorating the 500th Reformation anniversary and the forthcoming assembly.

ELCIN Presiding Bishop Dr Shekutaamba V. V. Nambala says the youth delegates have been invited to visit congregations and Lutheran families in Ondangwa in order to experience church life in Namibia.

Mr Wynand Lukas, chairperson of the planning team and a student of social work, shares his excitement about planning for the global gathering, the first in LWF’s history to be hosted by the ELCIN, Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia, and the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia. “We have developed an inspiring program that we want to share with you. We are waiting for you with excitement. Come, so that we can be liberated in the Grace of God.”

Confronting social problems in Namibia

The “born-free” Namibians long to improve the social-economic situation in their country and create fairer education and employment opportunities for young people. Thus, the international youth delegates at the pre-assembly will not only learn about the history of Namibia and its Lutheran churches, but also get first-hand experience of the country’s post-independence generation. Lukas says: “We need to talk about the challenges our young people have due to alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, HIV and AIDS, and youth unemployment, and we hope to learn from the exchange about realities in other countries.”

While preparing the agenda for the international delegates, the planning team raises important issues confronting society such as how to prevent child trafficking, churches’ response to gender-based violence, and how the church positions itself in the public space. The reality of climate change is a key issue for Namibia, which has experienced recurring water shortages due to poor rains and the resulting



drought over the past few years. The region around Ondangwa has significantly suffered from a persistent heat wave since 2013. LWF Youth Secretary Caroline Bader hopes the gathering will encourage cross-cultural exchange: “We invite all delegates to come with an open mind and heart: active and energetic, willing to share insights from the youth work in their context and open to learn from the challenges of different churches in the Lutheran communion. This is how we will witness a truly global communion of churches,” she adds.

LWF Youth Pre-Assembly gathers 120 young people in northern Namibia

***ONDANGWA, Namibia/
GENEVA, 2 May 2017 (LWI)***

Young Lutherans are leading the way to The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Twelfth

Assembly, as they prepare for the Youth Pre-Assembly (YPA) in Ondangwa, northern Namibia, 3-9 May.

“We want to raise the collective youth voice in public witness and live the message that all are ‘Liberated by God’s Grace’ and that creation, salvation and human beings are not for sale,” said Caroline Bader, LWF Youth Secretary, referring to the assembly theme.

“This was amazing, made me learn about life in Namibia. I made new friends!”

The YPA brings together nearly 120 young men and women, comprising delegates and 30 stewards from 61 LWF member churches in 44 countries around the world, and 20 local youth leaders from the Namibian churches. Young people are a key constituent of the



Lutheran communion and the LWF empowers them for leadership in church and society. The 324 delegates at the Twelfth Assembly, 10-16 May, in Windhoek, Namibia, will include 71 youth. More than half of them are actively involved in the Global Young Reformers' Network. "Since the Seventh Assembly in 1984 the LWF has had a policy of 20 percent youth quota in each LWF decision-making body. We uphold that principle, but want to enable participation not only through numbers but quality. This empowers young people for leadership in church and society, and to be voices of their generation," said Bader.

The Twelfth Assembly host churches: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), the German-speaking, ELCIN-GELC and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) will host the YPA. This

"It was amazing seeing young people working for God."

will be the largest international gathering in the history of the country's Lutheran churches. "The youth delegates from all over the world are coming together to equip themselves for

the Assembly, to build communion and learn about Namibia today," Bader said.

Liberation struggle

Located in Namibia's far northern region, Ondangwa is some 80 kilometers south of the Angolan border. The town has historical significance as it was first established as a mission station of the Finnish Missionary Society. It is near what was until 2016 the Onandjokwe Lutheran Hospital, the oldest hospital in the north, which is now a state hospital.

The town is also close to Oniipa, the hometown of former ELCIN Bishop Dr Leonard Nangolo Auala [†1908-1983], a respected, outspoken advocate against the then apartheid regime, who in 1963 became the first indigenous bishop in the history of the church in Namibia.

Life at Ondangwa was disrupted during Namibia's war of independence, 1966-1990, when the town was mostly the main air force base of then apartheid South Africa's security forces fighting against the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). LWF supported the country and churches during this period.

Speakers at the YPA opening session include ELCIN Presiding Bishop Dr Shekutaamba V. V. Nambala, the Western Diocese Bishop Rev. Dr Veikko Munyika, and the church's youth leaders. A space to learn, discuss and become a voice of the young Lutheran generation

Youth participation is a cross-cutting LWF priority, and the pre-Assembly provides space to discuss, learn and practice how this is made possible. Participants will also take part in workshops on Lutheran identity, interfaith skills and peace building, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and hear about 52 "Living Reformation Projects" being implemented by Young Reformers in their respective churches. LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Martin Junge and LWF Council member Ms Magnea Sverrisdottir will address the gathering.

Young people have led the LWF communion in climate justice advocacy, highlighting it as a matter of intergenerational justice. "These young people are ready to speak out and lead

discussions about the issues and challenges of their generation and churches,” said Bader. “Highlights from the local program are visits to families and congregations, a social action in the city of Ondangwa and experiencing the hospitality of Lutherans in northern Namibia,” Bader added.

Vibrant in the life of the communion

WINDHOEK, Namibia 8/5/2017

LWF General Secretary addresses Youth Pre-Assembly

The General Secretary gave a heartfelt presentation to over 120 young men and women from 61 LWF member churches in 44 countries. Speaking on the life of the LWF communion today and its future direction, he expressed: “Theology is the center, Christ is the center, and there is a need to always place Christ in the center. With so much noise currently around the world and in society, this is instrumental for us to remember: It all begins with Christ. It’s because of who God is and what God does, not because of what we are and what we do.”

With that grounding in theology and understanding, Junge introduced the LWF and its direction: “Our presence and witness is paramount to the life of the communion and bridging global relations,” he said. Junge then shared a quote about what the LWF meant to Carolina Huth, a Global Young Reformer from Argentina:

“From there came four years full of experiences which I wouldn’t be able to explain with words. I learned, discovered, and rediscovered myself as a Lutheran Christian. I found a place where voices are heard, where we walk together. Thousands and thousands of people from every corner you can imagine which are dreaming of a different world and are working to make it possible. A world of dialogue, jus-

“It helped me to contextualize my work. I could see the same problems we have in my context in larger scale on the LWF youth.”

tice, communion, one of respect and equality.” More than a quota

Youth have enriched and added life to LWF beyond a quota, Junge said. The active participation and leadership provided has led to various key areas directly influenced or impacted by youth, especially in the areas of climate justice, global young reformers network, intergenerational methodologies and sustainable LWF. Climate justice under the leadership of youth has been a matter of intergenerational justice, sustainability and the work of the global young reformers. The fast for climate movement started at the UN climate negotiations in Warsaw in 2013 with hundreds standing in solidarity in fasting to “stop the madness” of the climate



crisis, including the LWF youth. The LWF youth lead movement began with the initiative of #FastForClimate, inviting people to fast on the first day of each month.

This call quickly reached thousands of sup-

We were very well trained to participate in the Assembly!

porters around the world. The initiative has been accompanied by regular climate advocacy trainings, climate project support, and networking for young people.

Youth have taken leadership on these issues and they are among the accomplishments of the LWF youth.

Embracing young people's gifts

LWF is committed to empowering young people in all aspects of church and communion life by receiving and embracing the gifts young people bring into discussions, decisions and leadership throughout the Lutheran communion. Recognizing and utilizing the gifts brought by young members of the communion is essential in the life of the LWF, Junge said: "Youth are vibrant in the life of the communion, integral to the future of the LWF."

He expressed his hope that the youth will be a catalyst in the life of the communion. There is a need for this to be true at the global level and also at the local church level so that youth may be empowered and continue to enrich the life of our shared communion. The participants received the address with gratitude, affirmed, and challenged the General Secretary in the need to continue the strengthening of young people's position in the LWF and to develop the channels for youth.

"Bold, flexible and proud of our Lutheran identity"

Youth Message to LWF Twelfth Assembly

***WINDHOEK, Namibia,
10 May 2017***

Young Lutherans are not taking the future for granted in their changing world, they want to be active participants. This they told the Twelfth Assembly of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Windhoek, Namibia.

120 Lutheran youth from 61 LWF member churches met in the northern Namibian town of Ondangwa prior to the LWF assembly from 3 - 9 May, for the LWF Youth Pre-Assembly under the theme "Freed by God's Grace to Change the World." They discussed their current context and how they envision the future.

"The world today is ever and fast changing, and we, the Lutheran youth, members of a global and varied community, take our responsibility," they said in their message.

"Our three key commitments to reviving churches, striving for equity, and education are our call to action for all. We are happy and proud to share, participate, in this ongoing reformation and strive to carry this commitment into the next 500 years," they said.

Globalization and cultural exchange

"This future should be open, honoring of cultural context, ever changing and cognizant of the impact of globalization and cultural exchange," they said in their message.

"We commemorate the 500 years since Martin Luther's reformation and see our communion as one that is ever reforming," they stated.

"We know that things we might take for granted now might not be taken for granted in the future. As we look forward to the Twelfth LWF Assembly in Windhoek, Namibia, we are liberated by God's grace and are called to embrace our neighbor as Christ embraces us," the youth said.

Climate justice

The youth delegates affirmed the current efforts for climate justice through activities, such as the #fastfortheclimate movement and the work done toward increased youth participation within the communion.

They cited three key priorities to shape the next phase of LWF Youth work: the revival of churches, equity, and education.

Revival of churches

“To be a thriving church, we must have an active and strong membership in both church and society. We are grounded in the gospel, centered in worship, gathered at the table, and sent to serve in mission,” they said. “We must be bold, flexible and proud of our Lutheran identity in the face of ever-present change. We are not limited by the divisions of our past and affirm the LWF statement, The Church in the Public Space,” they added.

Equity

The youth expressed their firm belief that equity is for every human being, based on the

underlying foundation of human dignity. “To achieve justice, we must first strive for equity. Equity is fairness; ensuring that all people have the same access to opportunities while taking into consideration barriers that some might face.” The youth affirmed LWF’s gender justice work including the Gender Justice Policy and proposed continued attention at the grassroots level.

Education

Education, which they said serves as the foundation for all communities and the communion, is key in addressing a variety of challenges such as poverty and hunger, climate change, conflict, and lack of empowerment. They advocated for basic education and proper theological education, exchange programs, and dialogue opportunities between Lutheran churches and interfaith communities as part of their transformation.

“Following in the footsteps of Martin Luther, Lutherans have promoted education for 500 years and must take responsibility to continue this legacy,” the Youth Message stated.





11. Regional LWF stories

Liberated by God's Grace – to Serve, Unite, Love

11 May 2017

Assembly Theme Liberates Young Asians

A call to Serve

Young people representing 54 member churches of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Asia with their many gifts are convinced that they are called to serve their neighbors as God's co-workers regardless of race, color and creed. A living and authentic testimony is important in a globalized world that is fast moving, ignoring the need of one's neighbor. Sikiom Sagenan Kisku Pollob from Bangladesh says that he is liberated to be among friends and to live selflessly, for it is selfishness that creates greed that in turn takes grace for granted. He strongly feels that grace that liberates

should be reflected in our daily life—for him it is serving the needs of poorer youths in Bangladesh.

A call to Unite

"Faith is a fairly important part of our life as Asian youths. At a time when religious tension is on the rise in some parts of Asia, "Liberated by God's grace" brings in a new fresh opportunity," says Milka Dwi Nofrianti Harefa from Indonesia. She adds, "The fact that I am freed by God's grace, his grace empowers me to initiate unity and tolerance with my fellow countrymen. Young delegates from Asia are convinced and inspired that it is easier to unite with other young people in their context to build each other, to take responsibility for the other, for a country's future lies in the hands of its youth and their perspective of the other."

A call to Love

"Faith is related to identity, in my understand-

ing “Liberated by God’s grace” is not just our decision; faith is a gift granted by God. So in my opinion, faith is both personal and communal, and I hope that young people around the globe will experience God’s grace that liberates through the love that I share,” says David Yeung Hok Chi from Hong Kong.

Krutika Priyadarshni Mohanthy from India feels the need to engage with the Dalit community, “People in my context do not believe that one is saved by faith through God’s grace—one has to offer something; without offering, one cannot attain salvation. On the contrary, I want to offer them the love of Christ.”

David Yeung Hok Chi further adds, “I’m willing to struggle with others. We are not alone, God is with us.” It is then right to say that love struggles to eradicate any form of exploitation and violation and establishes the fact that God’s grace truly liberates.

Steven Lawrence, LWF Regional Officer for Asia

Youth Pre-Assembly Encourages Youth Leadership

12 May 2017

An Indonesian Returns Home Empowered

When Delmi Rohdearni Saragih, 28, in charge of partnership and education in Simalungun Protestant Christian Church (Gereja Kristen Protestan Simalungun, GKPS) in Indonesia, entered the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Youth Pre-Assembly in the northern Namibian town of Ondangwa prior to the LWF assembly, she felt happy. It was different from past experiences. Unlike other forums she has attended, all the participants were her age. During the conference, from May 3 to 9, 2017, she had opportunity to share her stories and hear stories from other young delegates. They discussed their current context and how they envision the future. The essence of their stories was the need to encourage youth participation and leadership in churches.

Together with 120 other delegates and stewards, she was able to set the youth agenda and message to be forwarded to the Assembly. “The conference empowered many youth like me to take up leadership roles in the church, council and higher bodies,” she says.

Pre-Assembly message design: a consultative process

Saragih was particularly fascinated by the way the Youth Pre-Assembly message was designed. All the delegates were consulted to design the key message. “Following a series of consultations, the youth in attendance determined ‘revival of church, education and equity’ as the elements of our Pre-Assembly message,” she says. These elements were grasped well by all the youth and are their key commitments and call to action.

An encouragement for youth leadership Saragih terms the Youth Pre-Assembly as symbolic for the encouragement of youth leadership in churches and councils. “Since youth have a high potential to lead and are rich in ideas and energy, youth participation in all the structures of churches and councils is important,” Saragih says. She thinks that young people’s energy and can-do attitude should be blended with the wisdom and experience of older people. She strongly believes that youth leadership can provide a new direction for the church. She also shared that her church has given due priority to the issues of youth. “We have a practice



“It was a great platform for me as interacted with different people around the world. We shared our experience and knowledge.”

to include youth in different structures of churches,” she says. In addition, the church has been implementing different activities targeting youth. A key to empowerment

Following her participation in the assembly, Saragih feels that she is empowered. “I got an opportunity to meet church representatives my age and we developed a common message that unites us in our collaboration and joint action. This definitely promotes youth leadership,” she says. On her return to Indonesia, she will share her experience from the Assembly and will be passing the Assembly message to fellow youth members in the church. “All my efforts will be to advocate for the voice of youth in different forums of the church,” she says.

LWF/Umesh Pokharel

Youth Pre-Assembly experience leaves lasting impression

12 May 2017

African region youth connect with key themes outlined at youth pre-assembly meeting

For several youth members from the African region, the experience of participating in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Youth Pre-Assembly will leave a lasting impression.

“I met fellow young people from all the continents around the world and I have witnessed diverse cultures,” says Esther Sakaria, a youth leader in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia. “It’s amazing how we have all come together for one major cause, the Assembly, and it’s because we have all been liberated by God’s Grace.”

Both Sakaria and Joas Jasson Lwankomezi, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, were members of the organizing team for the Pre-Assembly. Lwankomezi says the opportunity to participate in this capacity made him feel recognized by the church. “By organising the Youth Pre-Assembly, we have been mentored and prepared for bigger church roles and assignments in the future,” Sakaria adds.

Youth and leadership

Leadership and the participation of youth in decision and policy-making were common themes discussed throughout the Pre-Assembly. “Youth are an important organ of the church who should be represented at the LWF Assembly,” says Hillary Ndlovu, delegate from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe. Sakaria says elders should support and mentor youth for leadership roles in the church. “Youth are the next leaders and senior preachers of the church, this is the time to mentor them for the roles ahead,” she adds.

Access to education and poverty

For Lwankomezi, the lack of access to education is a major contributing factor to the cycle of poverty, another theme discussed



at the Pre-Assembly. “Education should be free,” says Lwankomezi, who notes this is a basic need that should be accessible to everyone around the world. He feels most of the poor and marginalised people are not able to access education because they can’t afford it. The cycle continues when job opportunities are further limited due to lack of education. Speaking on behalf of the youth in his church, Ndlovu expressed his need for the Lutheran church to advocate for equal social, economic and political development around the world even in marginalised communities

LWF/Shamim Nalubega

A Strong Message

15 May 2017

Youth delegate appreciates result of youth pre-assembly

His first experience with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) he sees as really encouraging. Sem Loggen was sent as a youth delegate from the Protestant Church in the Netherlands to the Namibian capital of Wind-

hoek to take part in the Twelfth Assembly of the LWF from May 10 to 16.

Regarding the message crafted by the youth delegates from all over the world in their Pre-Assembly, Loggen said, “I am convinced that the message we bring to the Assembly will have a strong impact.”

On the first day of the Assembly, the youth delegates presented the result of their discussions to the other delegates.

Loggen, who himself was a member of the drafting committee, said he was very happy with the outcome: “We have ensured that the proposals of all the youth delegates are reflected in one way or another in the final document of the Pre-Assembly,” Loggen explained.

“We had an open discussion, in which sensitive points such as the ordination of women were raised,” Loggen said.

The 20-year-old delegate is in his first term studying international relations and organisations at the University of Leiden. As his focal issues he points out gender justice and equality of all. He believes his opinions align with many other youth delegates. But the role of women and men may be seen differently in some Lutheran



“I came back loaded with new ideas and while there I wish half of my youths was there with me to experience what I did.”

churches, he continued.

While all may find their views reflected in the three overall messages of the Pre-Assembly, the themes will be enacted differently in member churches.

“We would like the churches to start thinking about the role of women and men in their own contexts,” Loggen explained.

He is convinced that the message of the youth delegates is also good for the future. “It must be valid for the next seven years,” Loggen said. At the end of the Pre-Assembly it became clear that the renewal of the church is the first priority of the youth delegates. Second is the demand for equity, including human dignity and human rights. Third is the issue of universal education

LWF/Rainer Lang

Justice is key for young people

15 May 2017

Swedish youth delegate talks about the importance of education and equity

Sofia Strinnholm is a youth delegate from the Church of Sweden attending her first Assembly with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). She is enthusiastic about the possibility of meeting and engaging with other delegates and the issues that the LWF is involved in.

“The LWF Youth Pre-Assembly in the northern Namibian town of Ondangwa was a gateway

into the LWF Assembly where we were able to create a common understanding of our differences and similarities as young Lutherans,” says Strinnholm.

During the beginning of the Pre-Assembly an Open Space was conducted and the participants suggested and voted for which topics to focus on. The top three topics were revival of the churches, equity and education. Throughout the Pre-Assembly the keyword was justice. “For me equity concerning education is a very important issue. And not only basic education but also the possibility to participate in higher education,” says Strinnholm. “While recently visiting a refugee camp in Uganda, I understood that without higher education it is more difficult to achieve positive change when finally being able to return home. This is a subject that I believe we need to address in our future advocacy and diaconal work.”

Strinnholm is hopeful concerning the future of youth participation in the LWF. The Nordics and the Church of Sweden have a positive movement within their church organizations. Within her home church it is Church of Sweden’s Youth.

“We need to encourage this work and involve even more young people in participating in the international communion and the work it includes,” says Strinnholm.

She is aware that different regions face different challenges and realities concerning getting more young people involved in the international communion. But she has high hopes for the LWF’s new initiative “Waking the Giant”. The initiative is a program to strengthen local member churches’ capacity to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, also known as the 2030 Agenda.

“It will provide us with the opportunity and tools to further the understanding of our global communion as Lutheran churches. We are millions praying and working together all over the world to create the basis for just living for all human beings,” Strinnholm highlights.

LWF/Johan Ehrning



12. Blog Posts by Participants of the LWF Youth Pre Assembly

One Body, Different Parts

07 May 2017

The Youth Pre-Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation has brought together 106 individuals from 45 countries. From my perspective, I see this first bit of time together as each person in the room becoming aware of each other and what gifts that we all bring to the table.

Being relatively new to the LWF, I have not experienced this kind of diversity in a church setting before, and I am aware that I am in a sacred space. The stories I have heard so far from the people I have met have made it obvious to me that the Church is bigger and more complex than I could have ever imagined. On the morning of the first day at the Pre-Assembly, we went through an intercultural training led by youth. I really appreciated that we were encouraged to lift up the uniqueness of

“We cannot say by ourselves because none of us has been in other LWF Assemblies, but the repercussion of the Youth interventions and the testimony of older bishops about Youth participation were very clear of how important was that.”

where we come from. We as the church claim to be the body of Christ. Anytime there is a claim that we are together as one, there is the possibility that could mean that people must give up part of their identity to be the same as everyone else. But the reality is that the body has different parts that has different responsibilities. This day at the assembly has brought to light the idea that a group of people does not have to give up their individual identity or culture to come together as one. We were a part of a devotion led by the Latin American and Caribbean region, heard stories from the people in Namibia, and joined in songs brought to us by the youth from Northern Europe. In bible study with people from other countries, I could see perspectives that I would be unable to see by myself.

On this day at the Pre-Assembly, we were all made aware of the gifts and abilities possessed by the different people in our church, and we realize that without all these unique gifts at the table, we cannot be fully one church together. I cannot wait to see what else happens this week and what else is possible when a bunch of different people, so enthralled by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ come together in community.

Mr Branden Hunt, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Assembly delegate

Setting priorities for Lutheran youth worldwide

08 May 2017

Collins Shava from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe is a youth delegate and serves as a steward at the Twelfth LWF Assembly. In this text, he shares his experience from the youth pre-assembly and the development of the youth priorities for the next seven years.

The second day of the youth pre-assembly was an important day for me. Important in the sense that we as youth had the opportunity to decide and vote for LWF youth priorities in 2018-2023.

As a fairly new participant to an LWF meeting, I felt the passion, honour and the responsibility to decide priorities on behalf of so many Lutheran youths across the globe. The session was in afternoon, I even thought it would not be interesting as young people would have become tired and exhausted. I was amazed with the energy we had and the passion we had when the time came. The open space session was divided into five parts: introduction, gathering ideas, market place, discussion and voting. We started by going around the room to place ideas at various blank flipcharts. Some of them had messages coming from regional pre-assemblies. As I moved around placing my ideas to the flip charts, I felt a lot more ideas were coming into my mind by just being in the presence of other young people. I placed my comments, my ideas and my priorities, without fear nor favour, I never felt afraid to speak up. We clearly wrote what we felt and we showed support on issues in which we shared similar interest. After the random gathering of ideas, we decided which issues were similar to each other. During the market place, we discussed our ideas. Now we were using the “law of the two

feet”, where one would only stop at issues of particular interest. I was amazed by the discussion and how we listened to each other’s opinions even though you wouldn’t always agree with them. I listened critically. This boosted my confidence before the voting process.

The voting processes was interesting with each voting member having three stickers to put on issues of interest. We had two rounds of voting, at first we had 17 priorities, were left with 5, and out of the 5 we were left with 3. During the process I got sad when one of the priorities I had favored was not voted for despite my passion, but I comforted myself with the knowledge that the final result represented the voice of us as the youth from all around the world. This was an important session, I learnt a lot from this.

Mr Collins Shava, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, Steward.

Diversity Meets Creativity, Churches Needs Meet Solutions

11 July 2017

The World Café during the Youth Pre-Assembly in Ondangwa, Namibia was an exhibition of the Living Reformation Projects where diversity met creativity and churches needs met solutions.

All the participants of the Youth Pre-assembly (YPA) got a chance to experience and to learn about 11 projects from different countries - which means various regions and churches of the LWF community. They came from Ghana, Tanzania, Philippines, Germany, Brazil, Norway, Colombia, India, Finland, and Congo. Those youth-lead initiatives are just a peak of an iceberg of the 55 Living Reformation Projects which take place all over the world. That’s the result of the LWF’s youth program called Global Young Reformation Network. All projects are focused on the three communions’ main topics: Salvation-Not for Sale, Human Being-Not for sale and Creation-Not for sale.



A few people can make a difference – with these words I would summarize many of the projects. I was astonished when I heard about how some of the ideas grew into big church’s campaigns. When young reformers were telling their stories with voices and eyes full of passion, I felt motivated to ‘steal’ some of their best practices.

Three of them stuck in my mind. The Brazilian project, that empowered youth to take diaconal action. The Colombian guide for youth leaders - really well prepared and published - considering the theme being Lutherans. And last but not least, a website from Finland (lutheristi.fi) that reaches teenagers with the reformation story, which was told in a very modern way. Wondering why those three, I must say that all of them, no matter what part of the world they come from, could be implemented also in my context. That fact shows that we are a global communion that faces similar challenges. The World Café was a very inspiring place, a meeting point of many cultures and ideas. Yet, with the same goal: to worship God.

And that was the most important thing to me – meeting energy that is focused to give praise to God by serving and taking care of others! That gave me a kick to action!

Mr Arkadiusz Raszka, Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession in Poland, Assembly delegate



REVIVAL
OF CHURCHES



EQUITY





EDUCATION



“Liberated by God’s grace, a communion in Christ living and working together for a just, peaceful, and reconciled world.”

LWF vision statement 2012-2017

