

# Because we know God's voice

Annual Report 2019



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION

A Communion  
of Churches

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A group of approximately 12 diverse individuals, including men and women of various ethnicities, are lying on their backs on a lush green lawn. They are arranged in a circle, looking towards the camera. Most are wearing white t-shirts with logos, including the 'Greater Network of Women' logo and the 'LWF' logo. Some are wearing blue lanyards. The scene is bright and outdoors, suggesting a community gathering or training session.

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

*LWF Vision*

LWF Symbols of hope program: Leaders of  
a network of returnee migrants in Nigeria's  
Edo and Delta States.  
Photo: Thomas Lohnes/GNC



LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr  
Martin Junge and LWF President  
Archbishop Dr Panti Filibus Musa.  
Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert



## Because, we know God's voice

In this report, you can read about LWF's work in 2019, which expresses the pledge of the 148 member churches to work together as a communion, supporting vibrant and relevant churches and promoting human dignity, justice, and peace.

The Lutheran World Federation Council gathered in Geneva for its June 2019 meeting. The theme—“Because we know God's voice”—which framed our deliberations, was taken from the Gospel of John (10:4). As is our practice, this theme is also the title of the 2019 Annual Report.

The work during the year included regional gatherings of church leaders, women, and youth, celebrations of an ecumenical milestone, global consultations on Lutheran identities and of women theologians, and much more. The LWF intensified local and global advocacy for the indelible rights of individuals and communities, and humanitarian and development work to directly support close to 2.5 million of the most vulnerable people in the world. We are grateful for the work we were able to do and to all who helped make it a reality.

The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has dramatically changed the context of the LWF member churches and the communion. Our vocation has not changed, and neither has the call to be churches standing in solidarity as a global family. Our strategy, developed on the basis of commitments and directions set by our last Assembly, continues to guide us in this new context.

We invite you to look back at LWF's work during the year 2019. We offer our thanks to those of you who are a part of that journey. As we move forward during these uncertain times, our vision remains unchanged: as a communion in Christ, we live and work together so that the world we share may be just, peaceful, and reconciled.

*Archbishop Dr Panti Filibus Musa, President  
Rev. Dr Martin Junge, General Secretary*

Participants in the 2019 Retreat of Newly Elected Church Leaders. This annual activity brings church leaders together to learn from each other, discuss theology, leadership and management in the church, and to learn about the LWF. Photo: LWF/P. Lok



CHURCHES PRESENCE AND VIBRANT WITNESS IN THE WORLD

## Nurturing communion relations

LWF's member churches live in different contexts, vary in size, gifts and resources. Their diversity—cultural, sociological, economic and political—presents a unique opportunity to witness to the communion we share in God and with one another.

The LWF churches understand that being in communion is both a gift and a task. While we acknowledge that every church is a branch of God's Vine, we also embrace the task of strengthening relationships as

## LWF member churches in Asia identified interfaith relations, promoting gender justice, and equal participation of youth, as some of the core concerns.

core to LWF's strategic goals and the churches' ministries.

One of the platforms through which this is expressed is the annual Church Leadership Consultation (or Conference), which allows one or more member churches in a country to host church leaders, lay and ordained members, male, female and youth delegates from other countries. These are unique opportunities for mutual learning, sharing gifts, growing in practices of mutual care, interaction to deepen understanding, and sharing the joys and sufferings as churches with one another. At the regional meeting in Asia last October hosted by the churches in Indonesia, around 200 delegates representing the 55 LWF member churches from

17 countries there identified interfaith relations, promoting gender justice and equal participation of youth, as some of the core concerns. However, delegates also learnt that such issues can be readily addressed through theological and other resources that are already available locally, regionally, and in the LWF Communion Office.

Nurturing communion relationships requires investing in multilateral engagement with the member churches. While many of them have committed themselves to common witness through theological reflection and formation, service and justice in God's mission, others would require encouragement and accompaniment in order to live fully in communion.

A prayer moment during the LWF Leadership Conferences for Latin America and the Caribbean and for North America, held in Lima, Peru. Photo: LWF/A. Danielsson

“I thank the LWF for always being attentive to strengthening the bonds and ecclesial relationships.”

*A participant in the women's meeting in Chile*



## Spaces to network and learn together

As the LWF continues to promote interaction through the different platforms, churches themselves realize they must own those spaces to strengthen unity in the global communion.

Thankfully, member churches are becoming more aware of the importance of having spaces for church leaders from different levels to collaborate, network, and learn together. Mutual learning and support increase understanding in the different regions and sub-regions about their common concerns in the world. Furthermore, sharing how churches respond to local challenges has empowered leaders from other regions to explore creative ways to address situations in their respective settings.

An example was the appreciation expressed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile annual women's gathering for presentations by women leaders from the Salvadoran Luther-

an Church and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (in Argentina) respectively, about their ministry and leadership opportunities.

The shared understanding of living in communion has motivated the Lutheran churches to connect and communicate with others about what God is doing in their contexts. This effort to enhance communication contributes to strengthening the relations between the churches.

For instance, the LWF continued to build on the capacity of the Asia Communicators' Network by offering on-going training for its members and exploring ways to improve coordination and information sharing in the region and globally.

## Furthering holistic mission in changing times

Holistic mission encompasses proclamation, diakonia and advocacy, three interconnected dimensions.

At the Africa Lutheran Church Leadership Consultation (ALCLC) in Moshi, Tanzania, delegates discussed in-depth new ways of doing holistic mission in an ever-evolving context. The consultation affirmed that mission activities need to be transformative and comprehensive enough to meet the varied needs of people. The churches there called for inclusive methodologies of being churches as they face new realities such as illegal migration, deteriorating situations of poverty and a shrinking public space.

The theological perspective that undergirds the mission of the church also helps to build churches' resilience to adapt and amplify their prophetic voice. The growth in numbers,

while adding to diversity, calls for structures that are more inclusive, allowing a healthy balance in the participation of men, women and youth.

In Europe, diaconal practitioners from countries in the three LWF re-



Youth delegates lead a discussion on climate justice at the ALCLC in Moshi, Tanzania. Photo: LWF/ALCINET



“It’s wonderful how economic and diaconal arguments can go hand-in-hand on an equal level”

*Comment by a German participant after visiting diaconal projects*

gions shared their experiences and looked for new models of holistic mission in ‘convivial churches’ (conviviality – the art and practice of living together) during the workshop “People on the Move – Responding to Growing Diversities” (Netherlands, March 2019). They deepened reflection on the impact of growing diversity across the continent that includes migration and social change, and how the role of churches can be strengthened to respond and deal with such issues.

Visits to ‘Augustanahof’, a project of the Lutheran Diaconia in Amsterdam, and ‘De Nieuwe Stad’ (the New City) ecumenical center in the multicultural southeast part of Amsterdam, contributed to new insights of holistic mission in modern societies.



## Strengthening and celebrating ecumenical witness

Ecumenical milestones offer opportunities to celebrate and strengthen joint witness.

In a year marking the historic 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ), LWF's ecumenical relations' work began with a consultation between five Christian World Communions (CWCs) that have signed the JDDJ.

The JDDJ consultation in March at the University of Notre Dame in the United States, was the first-ever multi-lateral dialogue bringing together representatives of the LWF and Roman Catholic Church—the 1999 JDDJ signatories—and the new partners, World Methodist Council, World Communion of Reformed Churches, and the Anglican Communion. They expressed the desire to strengthen their



bonds and further the core commitments that the doctrine of justification become relevant for their work and for the world today.

In the context of the LWF Council meeting, the five communions celebrated the JDDJ anniversary in the Cathedral of St Pierre in Geneva.

In bi-lateral work, the Lutheran-Pentecostal dialogue on “The Role



Ecumenical prayer service in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame, USA. Co-presiders Rev. Dr Anna Adams Pétrin (left) and Rev. Dr Neil Arner sprinkle baptismal water on congregants as a sign of the shared Christian baptism. Photo: Peter Ringenberg/University of Notre Dame

“We will work to strengthen our witness to the common bond of baptism we share.”

*Notre Dame Consultation Statement*

of Healing in the Life of the Church” held its meeting in Antananarivo, Madagascar in May. The Malagasy Lutheran Church offered insights into the country’s strong indigenous Christian revival movement called Fifohazana (Awakening), and highlighted the need to take into account local pastoral realities.

The Lutheran-Orthodox dialogue was relaunched at a September meeting in Tirana, Albania. Discussions focused particularly on the understanding of the place and role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church, and pneumatology, as it relates to Baptism, Ministry and Eucharist. The theme for the next dialogue phase is “The Holy Spirit, the Church and the World.”

At the October meeting of Secretaries of the CWCs in Christiansand, Denmark, the LWF General Secretary completed his term as chairperson.

The year ended with the launching of Project 2021, exploring Reformation events in view of the Augsburg Confession anniversary in 2030.

## Innovative theological approaches towards transformation

Theological reflection is a hallmark of Lutheran identity.

Today's economic, political and social forces tend to exclude people and the church from public discourse. In this context, the LWF facilitates inclusive spaces for member churches to discern theological challenges and build capacity for transformational change as they participate in God's work of justice, reconciliation and peace.

The LWF launched a process to explore how spirituality shapes Lutheran identity and the effect on church engagement with contemporary issues in the local contexts and beyond. The multi-phase study that will run until 2022, was inaugurated at a conference in October in Addis Ababa, hosted by the Ethiopian Evangelical Mekane Yesus. An LWF publication will document presentations at the gathering.

The LWF advanced in its goal of establishing a Lutheran communion

support platform for those who feel called to lay or ordained ministries in their churches. The approval of a strategy developed by an international group of theologians who led this work opened the way for setting up a Global Network for Theological Education and Formation.

Theological reflection is inseparable from transformational praxis in the world. The LWF published the volume *Resisting Exclusion - Global Theological Responses to Populism* in its Studies series, documenting a 2018 global conference in Berlin. The publication relates to the rise of exclusionary politics and policies that threaten to fragment society and weaken democracy, showing how churches can strengthen the public space to be safe, participatory and inclusive.

Collaboration with the World Council of Churches and the Pontificate








“A Lutheran theology of the work of the Holy Spirit for our times must characteristically lead to the revitalization of the ministries of the church not for the church’s sake but for the sake of the world.”

*Rev. Dr Kenneth Mtata, General Secretary, Zimbabwe Council of Churches*

Rev. Dr Mari-Anna Auvinen, General Secretary of the Finnish Ecumenical Council, during a panel discussion at the Lutheran identity conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert

Council for Interreligious Dialogue focused on education and interfaith solidarity in a multi-religious world. LWF’s growing partnership with Islamic Relief Worldwide included a joint pledge at the first Global Refugee Forum in Geneva, underlining interfaith collaboration, advocacy for refugees and protection of children refugees.



Youth delegates at the Asian region meeting of the Global Young Reformers' Network 2.0, held in Pematang Siantar, Indonesia. Photo: B. Nahampun

## Empowering a new generation for bold action

Each year, the LWF empowers a new generation of young people through activities that challenge them to act boldly from a faith conviction, including taking up leadership at the local and global levels.

The second generation of the Global Young Reformers Network which convenes youth in all the seven LWF regions held meetings in Asia and Europe, and the remaining are scheduled for later. The network keeps young people connected about their ideas for the church and helps them

to speak out on today's social and political questions.

Youth have opportunities to discuss how faith is expressed in fast-changing contexts of pluralistic and interreligious diversities. In 2019, the young reformers reflected on practices and attitudes about the involvement of youth, women

and men at all church levels, and access to theological education. With some regions more affected than others, discussion on climate change highlighted the need for dialogue between the different generations and solutions that young people can offer to secure a habitable planet for future generations.

Peace Messengers, a program built on strengthening young people's contribution to peace building and preventing violence, held its second global training in Tallinn, Estonia. Participants discussed the connection between one's vision of peace and understanding conflict in multi-faith and multicultural contexts.

An important aspect of LWF's advocacy is demonstrated during the an-

nual conferences of the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change. The 25<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP 25) in Madrid, Spain, was the ninth year that youth were representing the Lutheran communion. LWF's training and accompaniment enables them to understand the complex negotiations and push for climate action that favors the most vulnerable and poor people. Upon return home, delegates initiate projects that reflect this shared goal.

The Lutheran communion climate advocacy includes participation in the annual Season of Creation campaign, during which the LWF developed a liturgical resource, online prayers, and the photo exhibition "And It Is Good."

“Being a peace messenger in El Salvador is not only about transmitting the message, but also helping people to find peace in themselves and provide a different view of having hope for the future.”

*Juan Carlos Orantes Rodríguez, Salvadoran Lutheran Church*



## Accountability for women's rights and leadership

LWF's gender justice work promotes equal dignity of every person created in God's image through the empowerment of women and leadership development.

Through global, regional and local initiatives involving around 340 women all together, the communion's gender justice work focused on strengthening leadership skills, building networks, and deepening understanding of women's human rights in partnership with the UN.

The role of scriptures, cultural and church contexts in reinforcing gender injustices around the world was discussed at an international consultation on Women Doing Theology, hosted by the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland. Participants analyzed the global trend of eroding progress on women's rights, agency, leadership and issues related to sexuality and family life, and the ordained ministry too. Greater effort is needed in promoting inclusiveness and mutual accountability as core

values of the equal dignity of every person created in the image of God.

The Gender Justice Policy implementation continues. In a regional gathering: "Faith, Gender Justice and Women's Human Rights," leaders from European churches in 15 countries explored how the LWF policy relates to the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention when it comes to challenging discriminatory laws and practices and protecting women and girls. The universality of human rights was articulated also in the publication *Affirming Women's Human Rights, Resources for Faith-Based Organizations*.

"Awareness, Action and Accountability," the theme of the annual 16



The annual 16 days of advocacy to overcome sexual and gender-based violence, included a training in Geneva, with participants calling for action to end impunity, stigma and silence surrounding such crimes.  
Photo: LWF/L. Gillibert



days of advocacy to overcome sexual and gender-based violence, was highlighted through liturgies, prayers, pledge cards and other materials shared with churches and country programs. The campaign included a workshop for survivors of sexual violence, coordinated with the Mukwege Foundation and SEMA, a global network of victims and survivors to end wartime sexual violence.

“Today, 500 years after the Reformation, Lutherans have a responsibility to name sinful attitudes that distort the gospel message of dignity and freedom for all people.”

*Delegates at the global consultation on Women Doing Theology*

PROMOTING HUMAN DIGNITY, JUSTICE AND PEACE

## Advocacy that influences human rights' policy

The values of Christian faith and Lutheran heritage have a lot in common with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The LWF participates in international human rights' mechanisms in collaboration with its member churches, country programs and other civil society actors. This support is aimed at influencing policy on protecting people's rights and bringing about transformation, especially for the most vulnerable.

In July, the LWF rolled out its *Advocacy Handbook* at regional level with a training on human rights and advocacy in Costa Rica, attended by 21 representatives from some of the Latin American member churches and country programs. The global Women's Human Rights Advocacy Training and participation in the UN Commission on the Status of Women deepened engagement with the CEDAW committee, among other UN processes.

In 2019 the LWF presented 11 oral statements and written submissions to the Human Rights Council, and sup-





ported 25 human rights defenders and civil society leaders at advocacy events in Geneva. The LWF assisted Kenyan civil society actors in submitting a Universal Periodic Review (UPR) shadow report and coordinated advocacy

meetings—including the presence of a refugee representative—with Permanent Missions. At the local level, the LWF supported the country program in presenting recommendations to the Kenyan parliamentary discussion on the National Refugee Bill.

In Colombia, the LWF assisted its member church and country program to advocate for peace implementation that includes protection of the rights of both victims of the armed conflict and human rights' defenders. The focus in Guatemala was also on human rights advocates, including the case of a local pastor.

Some of the advocacy efforts lead to significant policy decisions. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy sent a written submission for its country's UPR process on protecting the rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Out of the 36 recommendations regarding the rights of migrants and refugees that the Italian government accepted, 13 were directly related to the church's recommendations.

Advocacy for the rights of refugees was one of LWF's pledges at the first Global Refugee Forum in Geneva.



LWF advocates for the rights of refugees around the world. Two young men construct a house in the Beldangi Refugee Camp in southeast Nepal. LWF/Albin Hillert

# Who we are and where we work

148 Member Churches

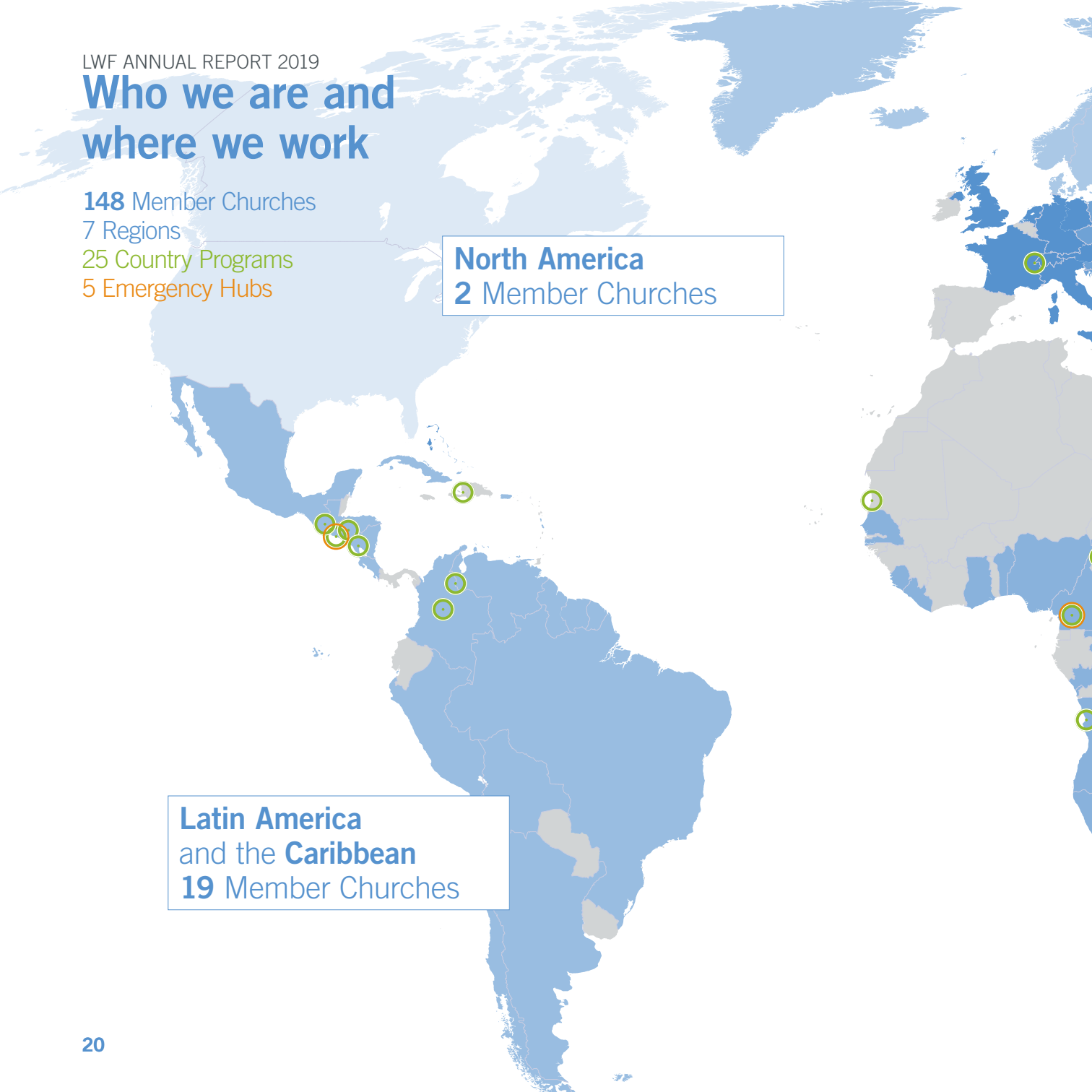
7 Regions

25 Country Programs

5 Emergency Hubs

**North America**  
2 Member Churches

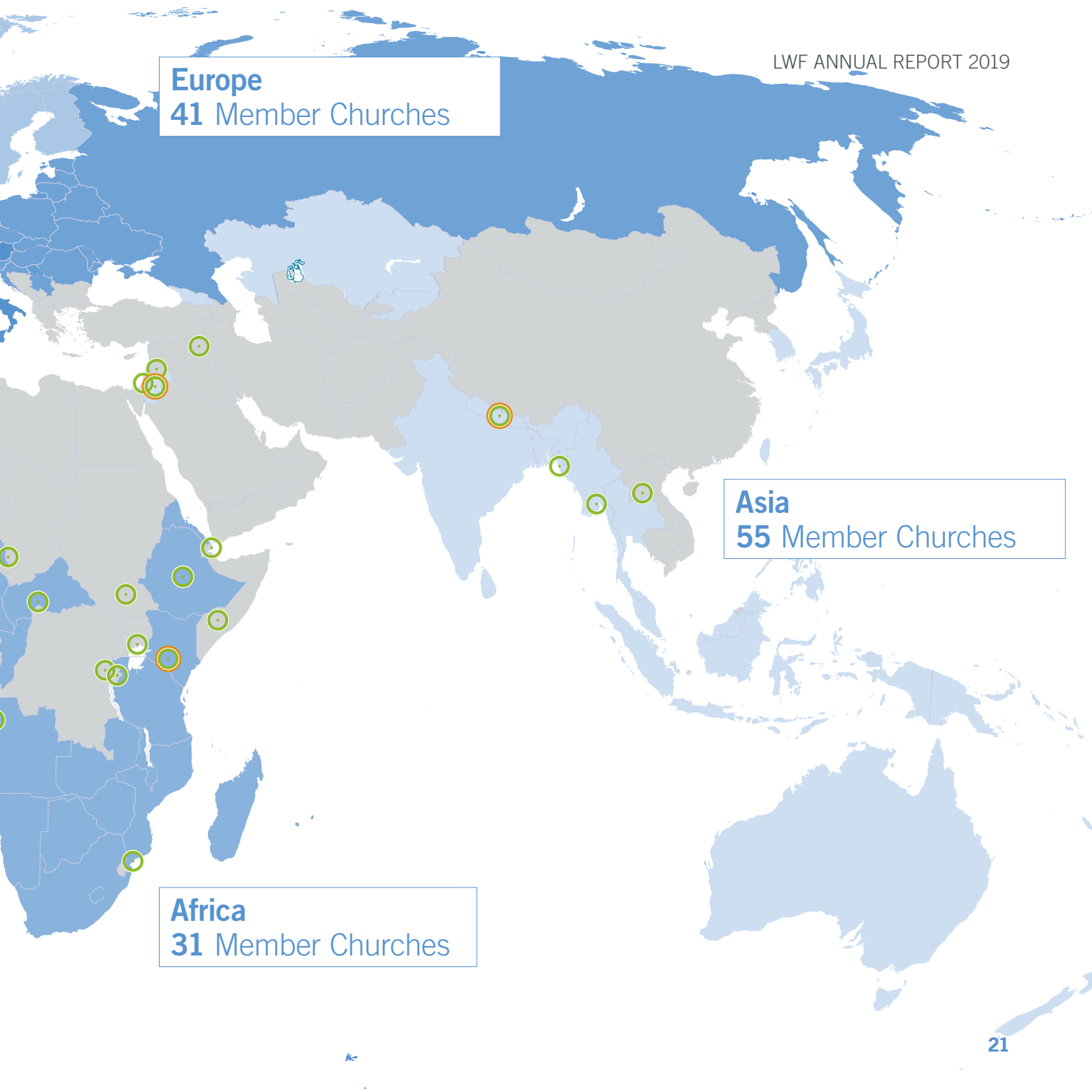
**Latin America**  
and the **Caribbean**  
19 Member Churches



**Europe**  
41 Member Churches

**Asia**  
55 Member Churches

**Africa**  
31 Member Churches





## Mapping faith-based contribution to SDGs

In the second year since its launching, the LWF Waking the Giant initiative increased its collaboration with churches and other faith-based organizations.


The LWF offered tools to assess the churches' important contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and share good practices.

During an event in Geneva attended by representatives of the UN among other organizations, the LWF launched an online tool to help churches link their work to the global 2030 Agenda.

A mapping conducted in Liberia assessed the work of 35 faith-based organizations in Good Health and Well-Being (SDG 3), Quality Education (SDG 4) and Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 16). LWF's local partner, the Liberia Council of Churches, collaborated with the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) in the research involving 102 representatives from Christian, Muslim and other interreligious bodies in the

country. LISGIS described this as one of the first ever attempts to systematically gather nation-wide data on SDGs' implementation. Government support was evident, with the country's Minister for Education officially launching the study report.

The exercise provided an entry point for Liberia's faith-based actors to get involved in the country's voluntary reporting to the UN on the SDGs' implementation progress, which is due in 2020. It also offered locally-based UN agencies practical information that can be used as a basis to further strengthen partnerships with faith communities. An example is the UN AIDS body, UNAIDS, which sees faith-based actors as natural partners in combatting HIV and AIDS in the country.



LWF President  
Archbishop Dr Panti  
Filibus Musa (left) in  
conversation with UN  
Director General Michael  
Møller, during the June  
event in Geneva.  
Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert



In the other Waking the Giant target countries—Colombia, Tanzania and the United States—data collection started on the contribution of faith-based actors to specific SDGs.

“It is not enough to mobilize minds around the SDGs, we must also mobilize hearts and souls. This is where men and women of faith can make all the difference.”

*Michael Møller, Director General, UN Office at Geneva*

## Connecting churches through mutual solidarity

LWF's support enables churches to carry out work that relates to the issues that are most relevant in their specific contexts.

Besides its global programs, the LWF supports member churches through project grants and accompaniment to implement their own initiatives locally. In order to make this possible, the LWF facilitates a system of multilateral resource sharing among the member churches, which provides space for churches to support each other. The member church projects



Jenet Mogimbong, diaconal worker from Malaysia, talks about her church's kindergarten project during the workshop in Manila, Philippines.  
Photo: LWF/Marina Dölker

therefore become a meaningful expression of mutuality and solidarity among churches in the communion.

In 2019, the LWF worked with 57 member church projects in 31





countries. This included LWF's coordination and monitoring of the different projects, and supporting project holders with capacity building to increase the impact of their work.

## Mutual learning in Southeast Asia

In March, the Lutheran Church in the Philippines hosted an LWF capacity-building workshop for member churches in South East Asia, bringing together 25 participants from 11 churches in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

The aim was to equip church staff, including project coordinators, with the knowledge and skills to implement their projects more effectively and sustainably. Participants shared internal challenges, such as lack of staff or financial resources, and external factors that include the destructive effects of climate change in the sub-region.

Rev. Batara Sihombing, General Secretary of the Indonesian Christian Church (HKI), spoke about the church's eco-theology project which the LWF has been supporting since 2018. The project includes both theological studies and awareness raising activities, as well as women's empowerment through vocational training. Women use recycled materials to produce clothing and bags to sell at the market and increase their family income. At the same time, they become 'environmental activists', raising awareness about climate change and environmental degradation among their families and neighbors.

## Serving the most vulnerable

As a faith-based organization, LWF's humanitarian and international diakonia arm—World Service—is recognized for its professional humanitarian work, long-term development experience, and presence in hard-to-reach areas.

In 2019, LWF World Service worked in 25 countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean, and responded to four new emergencies in Bangladesh, Mozambique, Syria and Venezuela.

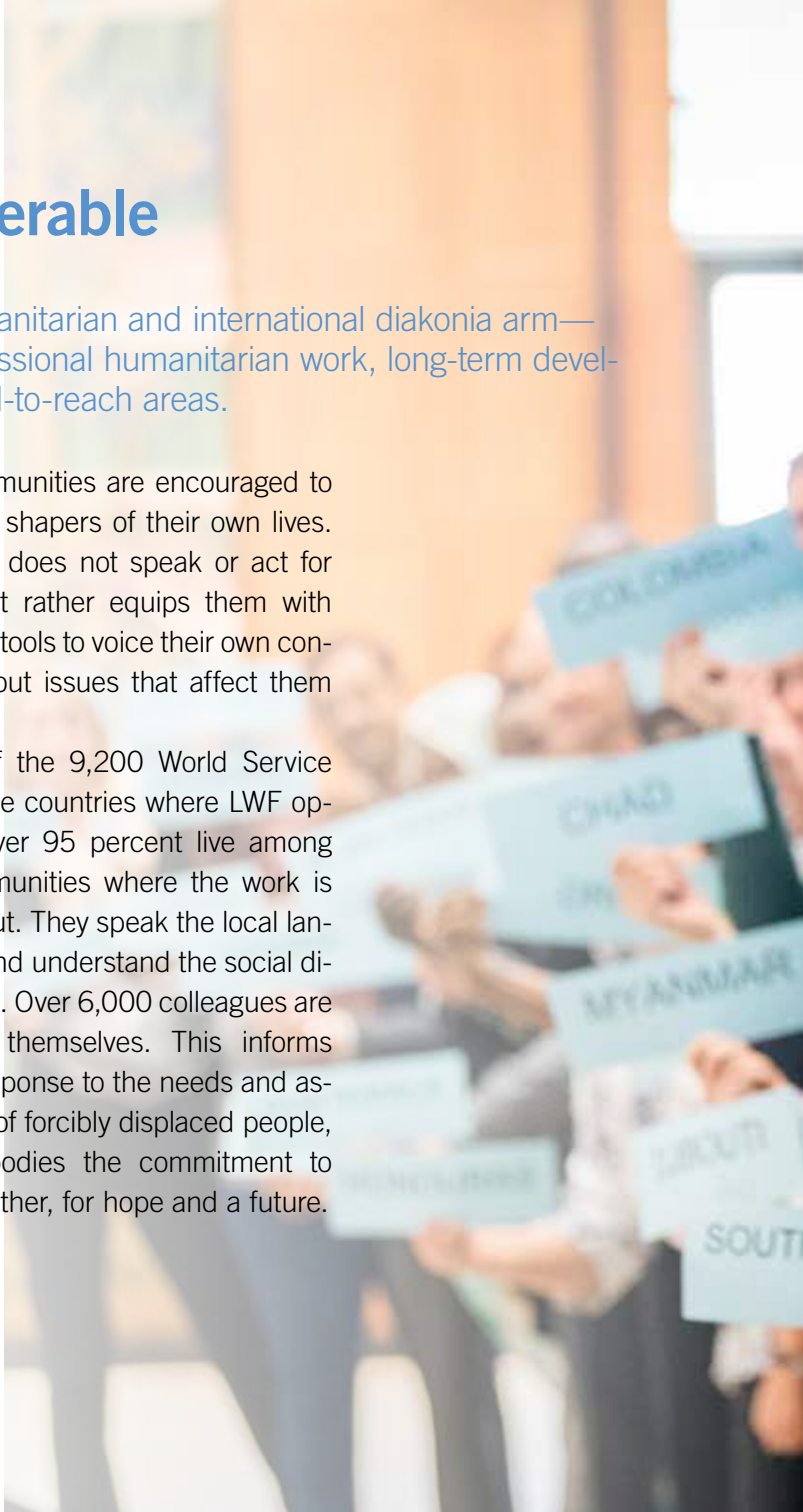
During the year the LWF assisted 2.25 million people in need, more than half of who were refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs). The rest are host communities and populations at risk, who are subjected to extreme poverty, discrimination or the effects of climate change.

LWF's work links emergency relief with recovery and development. This makes it possible to adapt to changing circumstances in protracted crises while delivering holistic and sustainable support.

People are at the center and starting point of every activity in countries in which the LWF works. Individuals

and communities are encouraged to be active shapers of their own lives. The LWF does not speak or act for them, but rather equips them with skills and tools to voice their own concerns about issues that affect them directly.

Out of the 9,200 World Service staff in the countries where LWF operates, over 95 percent live among the communities where the work is carried out. They speak the local languages and understand the social dimensions. Over 6,000 colleagues are refugees themselves. This informs LWF's response to the needs and aspirations of forcibly displaced people, and embodies the commitment to work together, for hope and a future.





World Service staff attending the 2019 Global Leadership Team Meeting hold the names of the countries where they work. Photo: LWF/A. Hillert





After trekking for up to 60 km a day, young Honduran families endured long waits for rides on lorries at the border post with Guatemala, in their attempts to migrate to the United States via neighboring Mexico.

Photo: LWF/Sean Hawkey

## When crisis strikes, LWF acts quickly

The UN refugee agency put the number of forcibly displaced people in 2019 at an unprecedented 70.8 million.

Conflict remained the main driver of humanitarian needs, with more people seeking safety in other parts of the country or across the borders because of protracted or resurging violence. The number of people forced to move during the year included more than 25.9 million refugees and 41.3 million IDPs.

Climate change related events such as flooding, recurring drought, tropical storms and epidemics continue to cause death and desperation.

Out of the 14 most severe crises in 2019, LWF responded to eight: in Bangladesh, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Iraq, Mozambique, Syria and Venezuela. Many LWF country programs are engaged in responding to large refugee crises: people displaced by protracted conflicts in South Sudan and Somalia, the Democratic Republic

of Congo and Nigeria, in Venezuela, Myanmar and the Middle East.

In Colombia, the country hosting most of the people fleeing neighboring Venezuela, the LWF with support from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia, offered protection to both the new arrivals and host communities. The number of Venezuelans seeking refuge in other Latin American and Caribbean countries had increased from 123,000 in 2015 to 3.8 million in November 2019.

Many people arrive at the border in a fragile state. Most of them have been subjected to hardship, theft, exploitation and abuse, and they are unaware of their rights. Women in particular are vulnerable to sexual violence. LWF offers advice and a safe space, where they can be protected.

## Building resilient and self-reliant communities

Through World Service, LWF's international humanitarian and development work focuses on three strategic areas: quality services, livelihoods and protection, and social cohesion.

Access to education, water, energy, and health care is a right. When service provision breaks down in times of crisis, LWF provides life-saving humanitarian assistance. In 2019, more than 50 percent of all LWF World Service expenditure went to the provision of such quality services for refugees, IDPs and host communities.

LWF provided food, relief goods and shelter to 2,000 Venezuelan migrants at the Colombian border. About 200,000 refugee and IDP students in Djibouti, Jordan, Kenya, Myanmar and South Sudan have been learning in LWF-managed structures. Following the devastation of cyclone Idai in Mozambique, more than 1,500 families received clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) kits, and shelter construction materials. Thousands more in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Iraq and countries in the East

African region had access to WASH items. Our specialized health care through the Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem catered to more than 22,500 Palestinians.

The skills, tools, and networks provided through LWF's livelihood activities make people and communities more resilient and self-reliant. Through projects in agriculture and vocational training, families have resources to meet basic needs, send children to school, access health care, and save for the future. This is the case in the Central America region, Ethiopia, and countries in East and Central Africa, where refugees and host communities affected by climate change are less dependent on aid, thanks to LWF's agricultural projects and vocational training. In the West Bank, out of the 2,816 Palestinians who graduated from LWF's



The LWF-run Augusta Victoria Hospital provides specialized health care to the 5 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Nurse Najwa Hawamdeh examines a patient during a mobile clinic screening for diabetes. Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert



vocational training centers, 93 percent had found employment within six months.

LWF serves people, who have been uprooted from their ordinary life. Routines and structures have disappeared and roles have changed. This affects especially the most vulnerable--children, women and girls, the elderly, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities--who risk being exploited and abused.

LWF's work therefore includes elements to protect and foster social cohesion. In Nepal, former bonded laborers are protected against discrimination. Through child rights' clubs in refugee camps in East Africa, young girls gain the courage and tools to seek help against early marriage.



ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

## For a just, peaceful, and reconciled world

The LWF Strategy 2019-2024 is an expression of the joint commitment of the Lutheran communion member churches in the world. It conveys their shared passion to work together for justice, peace and reconciliation as they witness in their local and global contexts.

LWF's work is structured around three strategic priorities:

- Supporting churches' presence and vibrant witness in the world.
- Promoting human dignity, justice, and peace.
- Organizational sustainability and effectiveness

The LWF Communion Office in Geneva helps to realize these commitments.

Two programmatic departments—Theology, Mission and Justice\*; and World Service—facilitate and coordinate the work.

The Department for Planning and Coordination\* helps in ensuring coherence to the overarching goal of

making the LWF a more sustainable and efficient organization.

The aim is to strengthen the connection between the programmatic work and the member churches, and through that the churches' participation in the overall journey of the communion.

### Partnerships

The LWF has strong relationships with many partners including its member church organizations, UN agencies and other global bodies, non-governmental organizations, civil society and national governments. These ties are expressed through long-standing support and commitment to program



Members of the LWF Council vote to hold the Thirteenth Assembly in Krakow, Poland. Photo: LWF/S. Gallay



funding and implementation. The mutual sharing of knowledge, experience and resources, enriches the work towards a shared mission. The LWF would not be able to achieve its goals without these partners.

The LWF also works closely with its “sister” ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners. Engagement with those of other church and faith traditions enables the Lutheran communion to be outward looking and increase a shared understanding of the churches’ place in the global context.

*\*Department names reflect the structure of the LWF Communion Office from 1 January 2020.*

## Executive Committee

The Executive Committee oversees the proper functioning of the LWF between Council meetings. It convenes twice a year. Elected at the 2017 LWF Assembly in Windhoek, Namibia, members of the committee

serve a six-year term. It is made up of the President, seven Vice-Presidents, chairpersons of the Finance Committee, Committee for World Service and the specified Committees respectively.



### President

Archbishop Dr Panti Filibus Musa. Head, Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria since 2017, former diocesan bishop, past LWF department director.



### Vice-Presidents

**Africa** - Rev. Dr Jeannette Ada Epse Maina. Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon, and women's executive secretary, Council of Protestant Churches in Cameroon.



**Asia** - Ms Desri Maria Sumbayak. Advisor for women's fellowship, Indonesian Christian Church (HKI), and English lecturer, Pekanbaru State University.



### Central Eastern Europe

- Archbishop Urmas Viilma. Head of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church since 2015, former school chaplain and teacher.



### Central Western Europe

- Pröpstin Astrid Kleist. Provost, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany Hamburg district since 2013, chair of city forum on social issues.



### Nordic Countries

- Archbishop Dr Antje Jackelén. Head of Church of Sweden since 2014, former Bishop of Lund, past professor, Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, USA.





**Latin America and the Caribbean** - Rev. Dr Nestor Paulo Friedrich. Former president, Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, theology professor at EST/Sao Leopoldo.



**North America** - Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton. Head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (USA) since 2013, former bishop, Northeastern Ohio Synod.



**Committee Chairpersons**  
**Finance** - Oberkirchenrat Olaf Johannes Mirgeler. Member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany, treasurer, LWF German National Committee.



**Communications** - Ms Vera Tkach. Regional church youth coordinator, Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Russia and Other States, and English teacher.



**Communion Relations** - Rev. Karla M. Steilmann Franco. Assistant pastor, Evangelical Church of the River Plate, Misiones, Argentina, and school chaplain.



**Communications** - Mr Johanan Celine Valeriano. Communications coordinator, Lutheran Church in the Philippines.



**Ecumenical Relations** - Rev. Dr Robin Steinke. Member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, President, Luther Seminary, St Paul Minnesota.



**Theology, Mission and Justice** - Rev. Yonas Yigezu Dibisa. President, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus since 2017, former mission and theology director.



**World Service** - Bishop Henrik Stubkjaer. Head of Viborg Diocese, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark since 2014, and chairperson, National Council of Churches in Denmark.



**Standing Committee for Constitution and Membership** - Ms Ranjita Christi Borggary, women's secretary, United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India.

**Advocacy and Public Voice** - Rev. Dr Jeannette Ada Epse Maina (see Vice-Presidents)

## Leadership Team

The Communion Office Leadership Team supports the General Secretary in leading and managing the LWF Communion Office. The General Secretary and Department Directors are voting members. The Head of Communication is a co-opted member, without vote.



Rev. Dr Martin Junge  
- General Secretary of  
The Lutheran World  
Federation



Ms Eva Christina Nilsson - Director, Department for Theology, Mission and Justice



Ms Maria Immonen -  
Director, Department  
for World Service



Ms Maryssa Camaddo  
- Director, Department for Planning and Coordination



Rev. Árni Svanur Danielsson - Head of Communication



LWF Staff during the Days of Meetings 2019.  
Photo: LWF/S. Gallay

## Staff

The work highlighted throughout this report would not have been possible without the competent and dedicated support of staff in the Communion Office, World Service country programs and regional offices.

We are committed to a working culture that supports innovation, continuous learning, and improvement in our shared endeavor to bring about justice, peace and reconciliation in the world.



Geneva staff



International staff



National staff



Refugee staff and volunteers



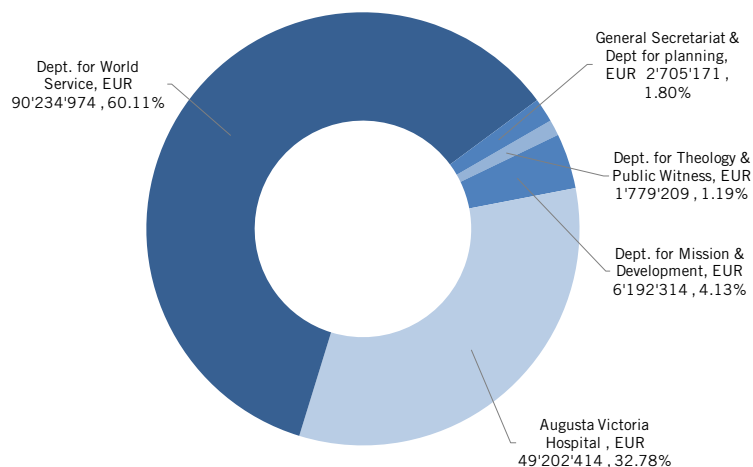
## Financial transparency and credibility

Strict compliance to transparent financial accountability is one of the principles that makes the LWF a credible and reliable organization to its different stakeholders.

The constantly changing global financial landscape, in which the LWF operates, presents both new opportunities and funding challenges. Income is mainly contributions from the member churches, church-related organizations, the UN, European Union and United States governments, individual donors and other ecumenical partners, all of which face external factors in their respective settings.

People, especially the most vulnerable, are at the center of the Communion Office work, and of the local programs and projects by the churches, country and regional offices. In 2019, the LWF spent 91 percent of its total operating expenses in initiatives that directly benefited people confronted with varying humanitarian need, and in strengthening the churches' capacity for holistic mission.

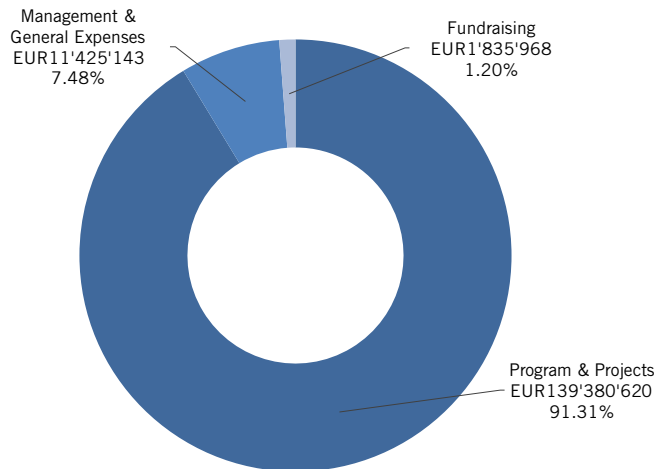
The summary of income and expenditure below provides the consolidated financial highlights for the year ending on 31 December 2019. Unrestricted Income refers to the income



**Income 2019**

received for the Communion Office activities including governance, planning, coordination, program implementation, monitoring, evaluation, non-project income and capacity building.

The consolidated financial statements have been prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), and comply to Swiss laws and regulations and International Accounting Standards (IAS).



## Expenditure 2019

## Income

In 2019 LWF total income was EUR 168 million, which was EUR 18 million or 12 percent higher than the previous year. While the budgeted 2019 income was EUR 180 million, the shortfall of EUR 12 million or seven percent compared to the budget meant that some of the planned work could not be fully funded. Fund-raising efforts are continuing, with the goal to reach the anticipated coverage.

## Expenditures

In 2019, the LWF spent EUR 152 million to implement its programs and projects around the world. The overall annual expenditure grew from EUR 145 million in 2018, representing a seven percent increase.

This growth was mainly driven by more designated funding to LWF's humanitarian response, revenue from expanded patient services provided by the Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH) in East Jerusalem, and additional funding for mission related work.



LWF Endowment Fund board members at the 2019 meeting, left to right: Mr. Clement Zablon Kwayu (Tanzania); Mr. Marco Antonio Zuniga Gomez (Costa Rica); chairperson Rev. Dr. Robin Steinke (USA); Rev. Rudolf Renfer (Switzerland); Oberkirchenrat Olaf J. Miggeler (Germany); and Ms. Hannah Olive (Malaysia). Photo: LWF/S. Gallay

## The LWF Endowment Fund

The Endowment Fund was established in 1999 to secure a financially sustainable future for the LWF, with a target to raise CHF 20 million by the end of 2019. As income generated through the fund's investment is allocated annually to program and project activities, the amount distributed during the year was CHF 453,597.

An independent Board of Trustees manages the Endowment fund. Gifts and legacies from individual, churches and organizations are welcomed with gratitude.

LWF Endowment Fund

Department for Planning and Coordination

P.O. Box 2100, CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland

Email: [info@lutheranworld.org](mailto:info@lutheranworld.org), Tel: +41-22 7916455

In a changing financial landscape, we will be responsive to new opportunities and funding challenges. This will require strengthened capacities and expertise among the staff. Strong internal collaboration in resource mobilization is essential to the financial sustainability of the LWF.



Established in 1947, The Lutheran World Federation is a global communion of 148 member churches with over 75 million members in 99 countries. We share a common Lutheran heritage, shaped by the diverse contexts in which we experience and witness to God's liberating grace.

Follow the LWF on the web and on social media

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a communion in Christ  
living and working together  
for a just, peaceful,  
and reconciled world.

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