



Thousands of Lutherans and guests gathered for a festival of worship, witness and song in the Sam Nujoma Stadium, Windhoek, Namibia, on May 14, 2017, to commemorate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. Photo: LWF/Johanan Celine Valeriano

## The LWF in 2017

For a just, peaceful and reconciled world

The LWF is a communion of 145 churches in 98 countries, bringing together more than 74 million members. In 2017, the LWF communion of churches commemorated the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation around the globe, and the LWF continued its work for a just, peaceful and reconciled world.



THE  
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WORLD  
FEDERATION

## Reformation Anniversary

The Lutheran World Federation continued to mark the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. LWF produced worship resources for churches, broadcast a live stream of worship services on Reformation Day, presented sustainability projects by the Global Young Reformers' Network and took part in the World Reformation Exhibition, in Wittenberg, Germany. The LWF member churches marked the Reformation anniversary with a range of activities, many with their ecumenical partners. The LWF published "Global Perspectives on the Reformation: Interactions between Theology, Politics and Economics."

## Assembly

The Twelfth Assembly of the LWF was held in Windhoek, Namibia, in May. Member churches of the LWF gathered to worship and discern their joint journey. The Assembly spoke out on many issues through its message, resolutions and public statements, giving direction for the communion of churches. Women and youth pre-assemblies contributed to the Assembly with their messages.

## Ecumenical Relations

The World Communion of Reformed Churches and the Anglican Communion declared their adherence to the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, which has become a multilateral consensus document. The Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity celebrated 50 years of sustained dialogue that has resulted in significant ecumenical milestones.

## Inter-faith Relations

The LWF Interfaith Network was set up in response to the mandate of the Assembly to strengthen interreligious relations. In Indonesia, an inter-faith youth project brought together young men and women from various religious communities to find ways to counter discrimination and enhance equal rights. The LWF published "Transformative Readings of Sacred Scriptures: Christians and Muslims in Dialogue."

## Theological Education

The Assembly gave a strong mandate for theological education. An online course on Lutheran theology was set up and brought together tutors and learners from across the communion. A roundtable consultation on financing ministerial formation was held with the aim of beginning to define a strategy for theological education across the communion. The International Theological Seminars in Wittenberg similarly contributed to the objective of church growth.

## Advocacy

The LWF advocated for the rights of the poor and the most vulnerable communities at global, national and local levels. The LWF supported 28 local human rights activists to speak at UN platforms in Geneva and followed up with governments to implement their international commitments. As part of their UPR commitments, the governments of Myanmar, Mozambique and Angola, provided over 40 land registration certificates to communities supported by the LWF.

The LWF conducted advocacy training for its country programs and member churches. The annual Advocacy for women's human rights training that LWF organizes with ecumenical partners in close collaboration with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has equipped 91 participants from 60 countries.

## Member Churches

The LWF supported 66 projects in member churches as part of a coordination program of nearly 4 million EUR to build the capacity of churches to serve people in need. It awarded 54 new scholarships and 73 on-going scholarships through the scholarship program. They are a significant contribution to the member churches' capacity for holistic mission.

Training sessions on the Human and Institutional Capacity Development program were held in Malawi, Bangladesh, India and Peru. One of the goals was to enhance the effectiveness in equipping member churches for holistic mission throughout the regions.

The 2017 Retreat of Newly-Elected Leaders welcomed 13 bishops and presi-

dents for leadership formation training; The International lay leaders seminar welcomed lay people in key positions. Both offered leaders in the churches a chance to examine the meaning of living in a global communion of churches.

## Development and Climate Justice

The LWF ran workshops on the Sustainable Development Goals at pre-Assemblies and the Assembly. Twelve young Lutherans took part in the UN climate change COP 23 meeting, calling for immediate climate justice. The LWF ran a climate workshop in South Africa. A Peace Messenger training workshop in Jerusalem helped equip 17 youth to serve as advocates for peace, as mediators, and as leaders in their communities.

## Humanitarian Work

In 2017 the LWF supported over 3 million people through its World Service programs. The LWF opened a country program in Somalia, bringing the number of World Service country programs to 25. The LWF supported 7,000 people through teacher training and student programs, school meals and sanitation services in Kismayu, south Somalia.

The LWF scaled up support to refugees in northern Uganda who were fleeing war in South Sudan, and to internally displaced people in the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The number of refugees entering Uganda passed a million. The LWF supported refugees fleeing Boko Haram in Northern Cameroon.

The LWF continued its support to Rohingya minorities on the ground in Myanmar during the Rohingya crisis, one of the few international agencies to do so.

The LWF took part in an inter-church consortium promoting the peace process in Colombia and continued supporting indigenous communities living in a guerilla supply corridor.

Support to Iraqi and to Syrian refugees in Jordan continued. In northern Iraq, the LWF provided food parcels, clothing, household goods, shelter kits and psychosocial counseling, among others.

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