

REPORT OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT FOR MISSION AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Introduction

The Department for Mission and Development engaged in a review process in early 2014. This process is part of the on-going reflection on how DMD can best fulfil its mandate within the LWF Communion. While it builds on previous work, including programmatic adjustments of recent years, it should be seen as a key step in deepening the theological understanding regarding the LWF moving from a federation to a life in communion. Participation in the communion of churches is rooted in the divine initiative of God who comes, incarnates, and starts that relationship. In response, churches commit to enhance these relationships as neighbours serving each other, and nourished in God's invitation to the table. Member churches renew their commitment to grow in relationships through sharing experiences, developing contextual theologies and liturgies, ministering through diverse diaconal actions, and expressing solidarity with non-Lutheran neighbours. These actions vividly proclaim life in communion

This vision of communion has challenged DMD to further develop its role from the model of a centre which transfers knowledge and resources to different regions, to rethinking its program and project work in a pluri-centric world. In this renewed role, the emphases on accompaniment and coordination are key features, which support existing creative actions, development of capacities and mutual learning. Intentional relationship-building globally and in the regions, defines new challenges for programs and projects that DMD wants to develop with the member churches.

Member churches are changing rapidly. Some struggle to keep their members while others deal with rapid growth. Member churches face demographic changes, challenges in repositioning themselves in the societies in which they live and witness, and at the same time, try to live and develop their holistic mission within an overall ecumenical commitment as faith communities encountering other faiths and /or secularism.

The current LWF/DMD program structure reflects this changing landscape. The programmatic emphasis has tried to respond to these challenges within the present strategy 2012-2017 that gives the overall frame for the work.

However, it has become evident that the program structure is overly complex and there is a need to sharpen the focus and the coherence of the work, linking it more closely to the realities of the member churches. Equally important is the development of new ways of addressing emerging issues and making use of the resources that are available within the communion, emphasizing the importance of rethinking and adjusting methodologies. In addition, the program structure has presented incongruences between the organizational structure and the new programmatic approach, including the need to integrate better projects and programs as requested by governance. The department is also challenged by the changing funding environment and the evolving stakeholder relations which require renewed attention and innovative approaches.

After a careful diagnosis of the overall situation of the department by the LWF/DMD staff, and with the support of the General Secretary and the Communion Office Leadership Team (COLT), the DMD Director decided to engage in a review process within the frame of the present 2012-2017 LWF Strategy and the mandate and priorities outlined in it. The aim has been to find ways to have a new program configuration that allows DMD to support member churches better in growing in capacity for holistic mission, deepening relationships with each other and focusing on encouraging LWF member churches to support one another, share resources and practice mission in a holistic way in their respective contexts.

2. Process

Two other elements were decisive for the timing of this review. In June 2013 the LWF Council mandated DMD to look at the sustainability of their present work in light of declining funds and the trend for increased bi-lateral cooperation among member churches that specifically affected project work. A Task Force was appointed to research and analyze the situation (see separate report). At the same time, the development of the Communion Office Operational Plan 2015-2016 provided an opportunity to assess and redirect present program work. Keeping a close link between the two processes, the LWF DMD Director initiated a review of the program work within the communion office in January 2014. It was anticipated that key outcomes would include developing a new program frame, linking/integrating program and project work, and subsequently revising the DMD internal management and organizational structure. The review was carried out by LWF CO staff reflecting on the feedback and experience of working with the present structure with the member churches and the partners who fund the work of DMD.

Three workshops were held in February and March 2014, with 4 staff from DMD, resource persons from DWS and DPO. Additional DMD program staff, became involved after the first programmatic frame was developed and continued the work in developing the program content further. This resulted in a draft program structure and program plan for the COOP 2015-2016. One group worked on a frame for future project work and developed content and criteria. Another group reflected specifically on issues of relationship management. All staff were kept informed by the DMD Director. Funding partners were informed of the process during the Working Together meeting in January and during the Task Force process. The process was supported by an outside consultant.

The present documents outline the outcome of the process in mid-April 2014.

3. Outcome

Key points

- DMD has 6 programmatic areas and 30 sub-programs and supports about 100 member church projects. It is proposed that DMD will focus work in three main program areas which could be divided into 4 sub-programs. It would be possible within the next few years to focus on 50 projects.
- Following the review process, DMD is presenting a working frame based on the three programmatic areas with all work seen as one package, including different programmatic activities, intentional network/learning space creation, strong relationship building and project work linked to the programs. These three main areas are DMD's focus and priorities within the present strategy, and are understood as part of the holistic mission concept.
- **Programmatic Area 1:** Member churches growth and sustainability in areas responding to spiritual, relational and organizational challenges of being church, with an emphasis on development of theological and leadership resources. DMD wants to assist member churches in building human capacity deeply grounded in the theology of holistic mission, and to train and support church leaders to equip them in managing and leading sustainable, relevant and credible churches in their own context.
- **Programmatic Area 2:** Diakonia both within churches and with member church linked organizations. DMD wants to strengthen the diaconal aspect as a dimension of holistic mission and as an integrated task of member churches. Building capacity for diakonia, offering training in management skills, and mutual learning between churches will be key components to improve sustainability and performance of the diaconal work in member churches.
- **Programmatic Area 3:** Communion building, which is nurturing and furthering Lutheran contextual identities, and possibly mutually learning from each other, building relationships among members with trust, respect and accountability to each other. LWF regional expressions and networks are already established and will continue to be supported and affirmed, but as DMD is repositioned, more focus will be given to cross-regional and global learning among member churches. Area secretaries will facilitate processes of learning with the aim of growing together as a communion and support the LWF vision to live and work together for a just, peaceful and reconciled world. The main roles of the area secretaries will be to manage relationships, offer accompaniment, and be coordinators between the national, regional and global level.
- **DMD project support** will undergird the three programmatic areas and is a tool to promote the outcome of the programmatic foci. Future projects should strengthen member churches in their own context and offer a cross-regional and global learning dimension. DMD will have a more focused accompaniment for project content which implies a smaller number of projects.
- In addition to the thematic emphasis of the programme areas, DMD will develop the way it works with **crosscutting priorities**, basing all its work in continuous contextual theological reflection, developing the understanding of the public witness dimension and

consistently emphasizing gender justice. DMD also has the main responsibility in furthering youth participation in the life of the communion and will need to develop tools and ways to engage the whole communion.

PROGRAMMATIC AREA 1: Church growth and sustainability *Member churches are better equipped to respond to spiritual, relational and organizational challenges of being church.*

Member churches have the desire to grow in holistic mission and develop theologies connected to diverse, rich contextual realities. They want to be relevant in their context and renew their proclamation to reach people in their present day needs. This will nurture their praxis and proclamation, and strengthen congregations as spaces for communion, transformation, empowerment and reconciliation. Churches are already committed to increase capacity to reflect and respond to challenges in the society. Contextual theological and ecclesiological approaches have implications on how churches want to redefine their identities within the concept of the holistic mission. With qualified and engaged human resources participating in God's mission at all levels, member churches become strong with leadership that manages key areas with openness, transparency, and accountability that enhances their public witness. Being good representatives in church and public space is an important aspect for the church and a key part of its public witness.

It is foreseen that the programmatic work will include member church projects that promote lay leader training, pastor's theological education and formation, and improved church structures in terms of human resources at different levels. Through projects, DMD aims to contribute towards institutional strengthening and sustainability in new and struggling churches. The program caters to projects that enhance member churches inclusivity especially at decision making and leadership levels by supporting women and youth in developing their leadership skills.

PROGRAMMATIC AREA 2: Capacity for diakonia - *Member churches diakonia is better equipped to serve in society.*

LWF member churches strongly affirm diakonia as an integral part of holistic mission and a central part of what it means to be church. Lutheran diakonia aims to transform communities and societies, advocating for justice, promoting reconciliation and peace, and empowering people to work toward achieving dignified and sustainable livelihood as well as transforming the church. Diakonia is practiced at different levels in the LWF with some churches having strong diakonia departments/units and engaging in highly specialized social ministries; while other churches are engaged through their members in serving their neighbors in need.

Theological and practical insights developed around the diaconal themes haven't reached the wider constituencies of the Communion. More intentional and mutual learning among the member churches, local and global diaconal actors and stakeholders is critical for on-going reflection. This includes the theological and practical implications of understanding diakonia in the context of holistic mission - transformation, reconciliation and empowerment, and in

taking up and sharing other contextually developed key themes. There is a need to develop a common frame of reflection based on previous processes, including our understanding of the criteria for good diakonia.

In an increasingly competitive environment, it is critical for the member churches to become reliable and competent partners in diakonia, by improving management and performance. Church diakonia, or independent organizations linked to churches, need to relate to each other to grow in their work and strengthen their sustainability, enhancing quality and accountability to people they serve and having a role in the churches' transformative agenda. Effective links to the ecumenical family, such as ACT Alliance will need to be developed. Advocacy capacities need to be more intentionally developed as integral dimension of relevant diaconal themes.

Projects related to diakonia will contribute to the improvement of churches' capacities to respond to the needs of their communities, strengthening mutual learning, exchanging experiences, and development of good diakonia models among member churches and related organizations. Projects that contribute to improvement of member churches' project management skills will be reviewed and endorsed as part of capacity for diakonia program.

PROGRAMMATIC AREA 3 Communion building - *Member churches are actively strengthening and nurturing relationships with each other and engaged in processes of common discernment that further communion.*

The Lutheran communion integrates member churches with a diversity in size, history, gifts and resources. They share a common spiritual journey with encounters fostering relationships and communion building, especially within the work that has been sustained within regional expressions of the LWF. In the present LWF/DMD Relationships and Identity Program, regional church communion building has grown through addressing joint concerns, concepts and meaningful service in their respective contexts. Regional work has served as a platform for interchange between the local and regional. The themes of the Lutheran communion have been shared in the regions for ownership and feedback.

Aware of the risk of regionalization and the loss of opportunity to enrich the global by the local, this program area sees relevance for increased cross-regional fertilization. It promotes actions to enhance learnings from the grass roots. It will further the practice of accompaniment at a global level with the intention of supporting each member in the communion. It will harvest good practices from experiences of peace building, while encouraging flexibility and inspiration for networking. The program aims at building on the multiple existing relationships, in different generations, among churches regionally and globally. The program pays attention to accompanying and strengthening equal relationships among sisters and brothers of different ages.

LWF member churches will actively address global themes and processes together in the communion. They will address expectations towards, and responsibilities of, members of the communion. Member churches' public witness as part of their holistic mission will be strengthened and will contribute to the relevance of the local, regional and global voice of the

Lutheran communion.

This shift on mutual learning is possible because of strong regional experiences and processes which made it evident that the communion is thriving and developing in multiple centres. The challenge is to capture and capitalize on these beyond the regions to benefit the global communion. Many of the key issues - holistic mission, proclamation, governance and sustainability, diakonia as part of a holistic mission and communion building are being increasingly informed and led by living experiences of churches. DMD must adjust its program and project work accordingly. Definitions of agendas and content will be based on learnings from the member churches.

The project dimension of the "Communion Building" program builds on joint local and regional initiatives on LWF themes and issues. Member churches' initiatives in conflict resolution and peace building activities, introduction of good practices and new regional creativity contribute to a stronger communion and sense of belonging.

4. PROJECTS

In the future, DMD project support will undergird the three programmatic areas of the department and is offered as a key element to contribute to the outcomes of the programmatic work. Projects will respond to needs from member churches within the given programmatic parameters, based on direction from the governing bodies and within the framework of the LWF strategy. Projects will strengthen the content of the programs and inform the direction of program work. At the same time, programs will provide a wider and more communion-oriented frame for individual projects, clustering them around sub themes and present opportunities for mutual learning by the project holders. Although future projects will continue to strengthen member churches in their own context, the LWF project work will undergo some changes.

Beginning in 2015, the overall emphasis of LWF/DMD project work will be with churches in situations of vulnerability. These can be new and/or numerically small churches as well as churches without strong bilateral partnerships. LWF/DMD project work will be strategically oriented towards institutional strengthening of the member churches and fostering sustainability processes. It will prioritize projects that are innovative and provide possibilities of learning for the communion.

The life cycle of projects will be limited to 3 phases with a maximum of 9 years, except for institutional support projects which will have a different set of milestones. There will be increased emphasis on quality requirements for long standing project holders, but simplified procedures for the projects from new and numerically small member churches. High standards as to the relevance of the projects will be retained. Ongoing projects that are not in line with the new programmatic strategy will be accompanied on a case by case basis to find a sustainable new entry point to continue their work without the direct financial support from LWF. If it is not possible to find a new entry point to continue the project, the project will

phase out. It is hoped that the relationship between DMD and the churches should continue as an expression of communion relationship.

The proposal to develop project work from 2015 onward includes two separate funding mechanisms. The *Communion Solidarity Fund* will directly target new and numerically smaller churches that do not have strong bilateral partnerships.

By 2016 the number of regular and institutional support projects will be reduced to 54 with implementation to ensure closer accompaniment, clearer focus and enhanced learning. DMD will define different categories of projects with swifter and more flexible processes of selection. Projects will become flexible, concrete tools for churches to address issues around spiritual and theological development, governance and sustainability, diakonia, and communion building, always with a priority given to churches that most need the solidarity of others.

DMD supported projects will be an opportunity for churches to link their project work with DMD program work and put it in practice in their local context. At the same time, DMD programs will be enriched and developed based on the diverse experiences of member church projects. DMD's role in this context will be to further strengthen the capacity of member churches in the area of planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER), to promote project holders' participation in learning networks and thereby to contribute to the institutional strengthening of churches and the communion as a whole.

5. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION TO DEVELOP THE WORK OF DMD

The key role of DMD is the intentional **relationship management** with member churches. These relationships need to be nurtured and deepened. An organized way for making this happen, consolidate, and grow, needs to be further developed. Mutual **accompaniment** is a very proactive engagement with member churches looking at long term and sometimes open ended relationships to address issues of concern. It involves careful listening, planning, monitoring and working together.

Coordination is understood as helping to strengthen relationships within the communion; among churches, across regions, the communion office with member churches and with other ecumenical partners. Intentional coordination fosters mutuality and accountability, and enhances commitment among members as they endeavor to participate in God's mission, ensuring unity of purpose/action as the communion moves/grows together. **Communication management** is one of the main aspects in the management of relationships, accompaniment and coordination.

6. NEXT STEPS

The outcome of the review process was presented to the Sub-Committee for Mission and Development (SMD) for feedback in April 2014. The renewed programmatic directions are

to be presented to the Committee for Mission and Development (CMD) in June 2014 for discussion and recommendation to the Council for approval. The outcome will determine the new frame for program and project work, and feed into the planning cycle of LWF and DMD's work in the frame of COOP 2015-2016. In practice, the process has already informed the COOP 2015-2016 planning, and has informed project screening for 2015.

Further work will be done in the area of management, adjusting organizational structure and procedures, developing further methodologies of work, and use of new technologies while always conscious of the digital divide. Further steps have been planned for intentional communication and stakeholder engagement including improvement in the quality of relationships with the funding partners by providing spaces for systematic strategic conversations that could take place starting in autumn 2014.

7. REPOSITIONING DMD

DMD will be repositioned in response to profound and rapid changes at the global level, which challenge the member churches in different ways in their distinctive regions, and to respond in a more effective and relevant way to the needs and opportunities that arise as the member churches deepen their understanding of what it means to be part of the LWF Communion of Churches and to live and work together for a just, peaceful and reconciled world.