

Lutheran World Information

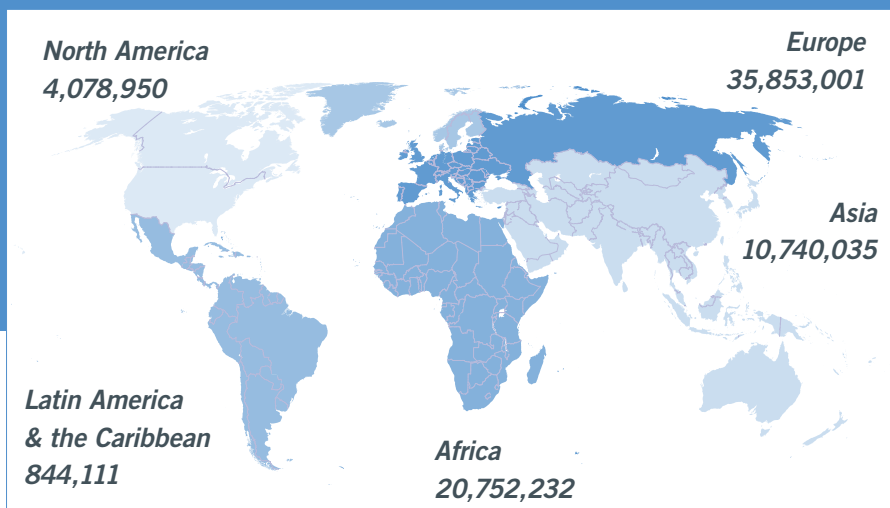
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LWF Communion Is Growing Survey Shows 72 Million Members

GENEVA (LWI) – Member churches of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) are growing, statistics gathered by the LWF Communion Office show.

According to the data, the 142 LWF member churches, 10 recognized congregations and 2 recognized councils in 79 countries had a combined total of 72,268,329 members as of February 2014, showing a slight increase of 2.1 percent since statistics were last gathered in 2011. The total number of member churches changes to 142 (140 members and 2 associate member churches) due to mergers in Germany and Estonia.

The growing numbers of members in LWF churches can mostly be attributed to the African and Asian regions. In Africa the survey shows an increase of 3 percent or 600,000 people. In Asia statistics show an increase of 1.7 million Lutherans in LWF member churches since 2011.

Member churches in the Latin American/Caribbean, European and North

American regions continued a slow decrease in membership, most notably in North America (7.8 percent) and Europe (1.6 percent), while in Latin America and the Caribbean membership dropped by 0.3 percent, amounting to about 2,300 people in total.

Some of the more obvious changes in membership figures can be attributed to church mergers and different ways of compiling membership figures. The Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church (AELC) in India, which reported an increase of 212 percent over 2011, did a more thorough update of its membership figures than it had in previous years, thereby effectively including the growth in its membership over more than just the last two years.

Due to new data protection laws in Switzerland the statistics show a decrease of almost one half. It is assumed that not all LWF members have been



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A Communion
of Churches

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Concern over immigration vote

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance and the World Council of Churches (WCC) have expressed deep concern over the direct implications of the 9 February 2014 vote on an initiative to restrict massive immigration to Switzerland.

In a joint letter to the President of the State Council of the Canton of Geneva Mr François Longchamp, the general secretaries of the three international ecumenical organizations express concern about the constraints the vote would have for their overall work including staff recruitment and other related operations. They also state their apprehension that the initiative against massive immigration was discriminatory and incompatible both with Switzerland's humanitarian tradition and the Christian idea of humanity: "Fundamental humanitarian principles, European norms and Christian values are being seriously challenged by the results of the vote", the letter says.

"Over the past years, our organizations have experienced an increasingly difficult environment to hire international staff, with increasingly cumbersome and slow authorization processes to obtain work permits", the general secretaries relate in the letter. "Almost all permits are eventually granted, but the delays can go on for a long time. Some of the required showings do not reflect the reality of our international organizations. For example, when we are recruiting a member of one of our African churches to relate to our work in that region, we have to demonstrate that there is no qualified Swiss for that job." In the letter they also

give examples of discrimination against guests of conferences and meeting who are coming from the South: "It is not unusual for some of our church representatives to be denied a Schengen visa, especially if they are young, single, and of modest economic means". Even granted visa are usually combined with a lot of inconvenience: "When the visa is eventually granted, an LWF governing board member from Liberia must travel to the nearest Swiss consulate in Abidjan and stay there several days while the visa is being processed."

The vote to restrict "mass immigration" and to introduce quotas for foreigners working and living in Switzerland was approved by a mere 50,3 percent nationwide. While the Italian and many German Swiss cantons voted predominantly in favor of restrictions, people of the French speaking Romandie mostly defeated the proposition. In Geneva more than 60 percent of the voters rejected the idea of limiting immigration.

Since its founding in 1947, the LWF has had its headquarters in Geneva and currently employs 67 persons in the ecumenical centre. The LWF, ACT and WCC have more than 200 staff persons from all parts of the world working at their Geneva offices. Deep concern has also been voiced by the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Switzerland, whose congregations in major parts consist of young educated people and families coming to work in Switzerland. "This could have an immediate impact on the membership figures of our congregations", former church president Dagmar Magold says.

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reported and that the actual number of Swiss Lutherans might be almost twice the reported figure.

Membership figures reported from Rwanda also show a decrease by almost 90 percent. This is related to the 1994 genocide when the Lutheran Church of Rwanda (LCR) set up church tents for people displaced by the conflict. The worshippers who registered included Christians of all denominations. "Many churches were unclean because people had been killed in churches," Rev. Evariste Mugabo, LCR president, explains. "But now that they started to clean the buildings, people went back to their original churches." LCR in 2013 conducted a new survey, which brought about a lower count of members, but the new figures also are a testimony to the healing in the country.

Africa

The 30 member churches in 23 countries have been growing by about 600,000 members, and now have a total of 20,752,232. The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), which has 6.3 million members, is the second largest LWF member church. Other large membership churches in Africa include the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (5.8 million), the Malagasy Lutheran Church (3 million) and the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (2.2 million).

It is noteworthy that in Sierra Leone and Zambia member churches almost doubled their numbers, reporting a total of 4,000 and 4,500 members respectively.

Asia

Asia's 53 member churches in 18 countries reported 10.7 million members, 1.7 million more than in 2011 (an increase of 19 percent). Most Asian countries have many Lutheran churches, reflecting the different languages and cultures in the region. In India, the 11 member churches reported an increase of 1.7 million members. Indonesia's 12 Lutheran have a combined total of 5.8 million members. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea reports a stable 1.05 million members.

Europe

Almost half of the LWF members worldwide live in Europe, where some structural changes have taken place. In Germany, the Evangelical Church of Pomerania merged with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mecklenburg and the North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church in 2012, forming the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany. Germany's member churches now have a total of 12,202,382 members.

In neighboring France the Evangelical Lutheran Church of France merged with the Reformed Church of France in 2013

to become the United Protestant Church of France. This merger, which did not affect the count of member churches, did however alter the number of LWF members in the country to 400,000.

Churches in the Nordic countries continue to be a strong presence. The Church of Sweden is the largest LWF member church with 6.5 million members; Denmark has 4.43 million members; Finland 4.15 million and Norway 3.8 million. The combined LWF membership in the Nordic churches makes up more than half of Europe's 35,853,001 Lutherans, 1.2 percent less than in 2011.

Latin America & Caribbean

The 26 member churches in 18 countries of the Latin America and the Caribbean region saw a slight decrease in membership. Churches belonging to the LWF reported 2,321 fewer members. The Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil continues to be the biggest LWF church in the region with 717,000 members. The region is also home to the smallest recognized congregation in the LWF communion, the German-Speaking Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Bolivia, which has 150 members.

North America

Both LWF member churches in the United States and Canada reported a decrease in membership numbers. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America reported 3,950,924 members. In Canada, membership figures changed partly due to the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad re-uniting with its mother church in Estonia. Canada now reported 128,026 LWF members. Currently churches in the two countries have a combined total of 4.1 million members.

The numbers indicated on the following pages are based on information received by late February 2014. Figures recorded from the statistics in 2011 were used for churches that did not indicate any changes. The LWF membership statistics are published every two years.



Photo: LWF/J. Latva-Hakuni

The Lutheran World Federation – 2013 Membership Figures

Summary

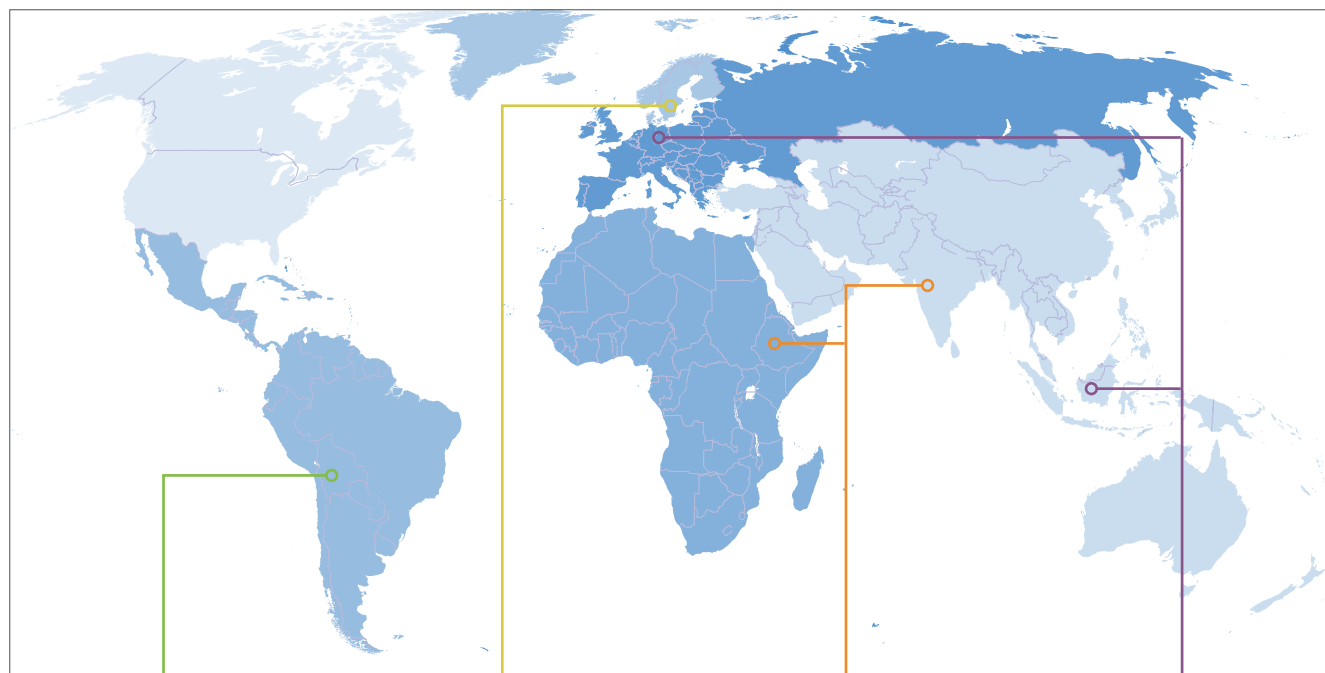
The following figures give the membership of the 140 member churches (M), two associate members (AM), 10 recognized churches and two recognized councils (R).

General summary 2013

142 LWF member churches, 10 recognized churches and congregations and two recognized councils 72,268,329

Continent	LWF Membership
Africa	20,752,232
Asia	10,740,035
Europe	35,853,001
Latin America & the Caribbean	844,111
North America	4,078,950
Total	72,268,329

Statistics at a glance



Bolivia

The German-Speaking Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Bolivia with 150 members is the smallest recognized congregation in the LWF communion.

Sweden

The Church of Sweden (Svenska Kyrkan) with 6.5 million members is the biggest LWF member church.

**India
Ethiopia**

These countries are home to the fastest growing Lutheran churches. In India, LWF membership increased by 1.7 million. Statistics from Ethiopia show an increase of half a million LWF members.

**Indonesia
Germany**

The two countries have 12 different LWF member churches.

2013 World Lutheran Membership Details

- (M) Member Church
 (AM) Associate Member Church
 (R) Recognized Church, Congregation or Recognized Council

Church	Individual Churches	National Total
Africa		
Angola		49,500
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Angola (M)	49,500	
Botswana		18,800
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Botswana (M)	18,800	
Cameroon		507,276
Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon (M)	157,276	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon (M)	350,000	
Central African Republic		107,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic (M)	107,000	
Congo, Democratic Republic		136,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo (M)	136,000	
Congo, Republic		2,128
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Congo (M)	2,128	
Eritrea		11,000
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Eritrea (M)	11,000	
Ethiopia		6,355,838
The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (M)	6,355,838	
Ghana		27,521
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana (M)	27,521	
Kenya		144,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (M)	100,000	
Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	44,000	
Liberia		70,000
Lutheran Church in Liberia (M)	70,000	
Madagascar		3,000,000
Malagasy Lutheran Church (M)	3,000,000	
Malawi		102,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi (M)	102,000	

Church	Individual Churches	National Total
Mozambique		12,606
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mozambique (M)	12,606	
Namibia		1,131,664
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN-GELC) (M)	5,000	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) (M)	420,000	
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) (M)	706,664	
Nigeria		2,348,000
The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (M)	2,200,000	
The Lutheran Church of Nigeria (M)	148,000	
Rwanda		5,118
Lutheran Church of Rwanda (M)	5,118	
Senegal		4,053
The Lutheran Church of Senegal (M)	4,053	
Sierra Leone		4,500
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone (M)	4,500	
South Africa		643,916
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (M)	580,000	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Cape Church) (M)	4,266	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (N-T) (M)	9,650	
Moravian Church in South Africa (M)	50,000	
Tanzania		5,825,312
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (M)	5,825,312	
Zambia		4,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zambia (M)	4,000	
Zimbabwe		242,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (M)	242,000	
Asia		
Australia		70,000
Lutheran Church of Australia (AM)	70,000	
Bangladesh		15,000
Bangladesh Lutheran Church (M)	5,000	
Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	10,000	
Georgia		
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (M) (<i>see Russian Federation</i>)		
Hong Kong, China		43,512
Hong Kong and Macau Lutheran Church (M)	2,115	

Church	Individual Churches	National Total
The Chinese Rhenish Church Hong Kong Synod (M)	13,000	
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong (M)	17,700	
Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong (M)	10,697	
India		3,538,912
Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	2,500,000	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madhya Pradesh (M)	20,000	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Himalayan States (M)	27,208	
Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	17,770	
Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chotanagpur and Assam (M)	374,806	
India Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	125,000	
Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	175,000	
Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	87,541	
South Andhra Lutheran Church (M)	60,000	
The Arcot Lutheran Church (M)	40,000	
The Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	111,587	
Indonesia		5,812,489
Batak Christian Community Church (M)	25,000	
Christian Communion of Indonesia Church in Nias (Gereja AMIN) (M)	18,500	
Christian Protestant Angkola Church (M)	29,311	
Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia (M)	587,985	
Indonesian Christian Lutheran Church (M)	18,560	
Pakpak Dairi Christian Protestant Church (M)	38,120	
Protestant Christian Batak Church (M)	4,100,000	
Protestant Christian Church in Mentawai (M)	50,000	
Simalungun Protestant Christian Church (M)	217,000	
The Indonesian Christian Church (M)	355,000	
The Protestant Christian Church (M)	360,956	
The United Protestant Church (M)	12,057	
Israel		
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (M) <i>(see Jordan and Palestinian Territories)</i>		
Japan		27,147
Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	21,900	
Japan Lutheran Church (AM)	2,490	
Kinki Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	2,757	
Jordan		3,000
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (M)	3,000	
<i>(see Israel and Palestinian Territories)</i>		
Kazakhstan		
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (M) <i>(see Russian Federation)</i>		
Korea, Republic		4,824
Lutheran Church in Korea (M)	4,824	
Kyrgyzstan		
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (M) <i>(see Russian Federation)</i>		

Church	Individual Churches	National Total
Malaysia		104,524
Basel Christian Church of Malaysia (M)	59,500	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia (M)	4,145	
Lutheran Church in Malaysia (M)	8,879	
The Protestant Church in Sabah (M)	32,000	
Myanmar		28,126
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Myanmar (Lutheran Bethlehem Church) (M)	1,900	
Lutheran Church of Myanmar (M)	2,000	
Myanmar Lutheran Church (M)	2,726	
The Mara Evangelical Church (M)	21,500	
Nepal		941
Nepal Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	941	
New Zealand		1,130
Lutheran Church of New Zealand (C)	1,130	
<i>(District of the Lutheran Church of Australia)</i>		
Palestinian Territories		
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (M) <i>(see Israel and Jordan)</i>		
Papua New Guinea		1,049,455
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea (M)	900,000	
Gutnius Lutheran Church - Papua New Guinea (M)	149,455	
Philippines		18,000
Lutheran Church in the Philippines (M)	18,000	
Singapore		2,949
Lutheran Church in Singapore (M)	2,949	
Sri Lanka		5,324
Lanka Lutheran Church (M)	5,324	
Taiwan		12,308
Taiwan Lutheran Church (M)	10,481	
The Lutheran Church of Taiwan (Republic of China) (M)	1,827	
Thailand		3,524
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand (M)	3,524	
Uzbekistan		
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (M) <i>(see Russian Federation)</i>		
Europe		
Austria		302,875
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Austria (M)	302,875	

Church	Individual Churches	National Total
Belarus		
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (M) <i>(see Russian Federation)</i>		
Belgium		703
Lutheran Church of Belgium: Arlon and Christian Mission (R)	703	
Croatia		3,329
Evangelical Church in the Republic of Croatia (M)	3,329	
Czech Republic		103,022
Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (M)	84,022	
Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (M)	19,000	
Denmark (including Greenland)		4,430,643
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark (M)	4,430,643	
Estonia		180,000
Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	180,000	
Finland		4,146,056
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (M)	4,146,056	
<i>(including ELCF members abroad)</i>		
France		660,000
Malagasy Protestant Church in France (M)	10,000	
Union of Protestant Churches of Alsace and Lorraine (M)	250,000	
United Protestant Church of France (M)	400,000	
Germany		12,202,382
Church of Lippe (Lutheran Section) (M)	30,000	
Evangelical Church in Central Germany* (M)	807,171	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Baden (M).....	2,905	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria* (M).....	2,511,151	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick* (M)	370,010	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany* (M).....	2,231,298	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oldenburg (M).....	439,386	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg (M).....	2,170,345	
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover* (M)	2,803,377	
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony* (M)	754,451	
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Schaumburg-Lippe* (M)	55,868	
Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad (M).....	26,420	
<i>* Members of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (R)</i>		
Greenland		
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark (M) <i>(see Denmark)</i>		
Hungary		192,816
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary (M)	192,816	
Iceland		245,184
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland (M)	245,184	

Church	Individual Churches	National Total
Ireland		461
The Lutheran Church in Ireland (R)	461	
Italy		7,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy (M)	7,000	
Latvia		250,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (M)	250,000	
Liechtenstein		
Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein (M) (see Switzerland)		
Lithuania		20,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania (M)	20,000	
Netherlands		2,085,843
Protestant Church in the Netherlands (M)	2,085,843	
Norway		3,847,098
Church of Norway (M)	3,825,525	
The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Norway (M)	21,573	
Poland		70,000
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland (M)	70,000	
Romania		40,181
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania (M)	12,641	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Romania (M)	27,540	
Russian Federation		85,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (M)	70,000	
(see Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan)		
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia (M)	15,000	
Serbia		49,000
Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia (M)	49,000	
Slovak Republic		226,402
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Slovak Republic (M)	226,402	
Slovenia		20,000
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovenia (M)	20,000	
Sweden		6,500,000
Church of Sweden (M)	6,500,000	
Switzerland		4,206
Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein (M).....	4,206	
(see Liechtenstein)		

Church	Individual Churches	National Total
Ukraine		
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (M) <i>(see Russian Federation)</i>		
United Kingdom		180,800
The Lutheran Church in Great Britain (M)	1,500	
The Lutheran Council of Great Britain (R)	179,300	
Latin America & the Caribbean		
Argentina		38,500
Evangelical Church of the River Plate (M) <i>(see Paraguay, Uruguay)</i>	27,500	
United Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	11,000	
Bolivia		22,150
Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church (M)	22,000	
German-Speaking Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Bolivia (R)	150	
Brazil		717,127
Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (M)	717,127	
Chile		13,100
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (M)	3,000	
Lutheran Church in Chile (M)	10,100	
Colombia		2,470
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (M)	1,998	
St Martin's Congregation (R)	160	
St Matthew's Lutheran Church (R)	312	
Costa Rica		1,607
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Costa Rica (R)	220	
Lutheran Costa Rican Church (M)	1,387	
Ecuador		237
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ecuador (R) <i>(including the El Adviento Evangelical Lutheran Church in Quito, and The Savior Church in Guayaquil)</i>	237	
El Salvador		20,000
Salvadoran Lutheran Church (M)	20,000	
Guatemala		190
Evangelical Lutheran Congregation "La Epifania" (R)	190	
Guyana		11,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana (M)	11,000	
Honduras		1,500
Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras (M)	1,500	

Church	Individual Churches	National Total
Mexico		1,730
German-Speaking Evangelical Congregation in Mexico (R)	230	
Mexican Lutheran Church (M)	1,500	
Nicaragua		7,050
The Nicaraguan Lutheran Church of Faith and Hope (M)	7,050	
Paraguay		
Evangelical Church of the River Plate (M) (<i>see Argentina</i>)		
Peru		1,500
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Peru (R)	200	
Peruvian Lutheran Evangelical Church (M)	1,300	
Suriname		4,000
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suriname (M)	4,000	
Uruguay		
Evangelical Church of the River Plate (M) (<i>see Argentina</i>)		
Venezuela		1,950
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Venezuela (M)	1,950	
North America		
Canada		128,026
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (M)	128,026	
USA		3,950,924
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (M)	3,950,924	

These statistics are based on data received by end February 2014.

Compiled by Colette Muanda (LWF/OCS)

Critical Financial Situation at Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) remains steadfast in its commitment to the ongoing management of the Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH) in East Jerusalem and the life-saving services AVH provides, but is deeply concerned about the current financial situation facing the hospital.

By the end of January 2014, AVH had receivables in the amount of EUR 18 million. These receivables result from non-payment of fees for patients that are referred to the hospital by the Palestinian Authority (PA). The PA pledged to pay for the treatment of these patients but it has not been able to uphold its commitment to patients referred to hospitals such as AVH throughout 2013. AVH is managed efficiently and effectively. It operates in the black and, had all fees been paid by the PA, the hospital would have a cash surplus.

AVH provides life-saving healthcare to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, including specialized treatment offered at

its cancer, diabetes and pediatric centers. The hospital is widely acknowledged in governmental and church circles for its excellent treatment and care and was accredited by the Joint Commission International (JCI) in May 2013.

The LWF continues to be committed to the future of AVH and the patients it serves. AVH is a cornerstone of the Palestinian health system and an important institution in the overall social infrastructure of Palestine.

The LWF is, therefore, negotiating with the PA as well as advocating that individual governments and the European Union (EU) find a solution that will enable the PA to honor its financial commitments. The EU has committed to assisting the PA and the East Jerusalem hospitals financially. However, the final decisions regarding the EU payment will not be made until later in 2014. While the promised aid is highly welcomed and appreciated, it does not address the immediate cash flow crisis.

Safety and Hope in Adjumani's Refugee Settlements

LWF Increases Support to Influx of South Sudanese in Uganda

ADJUMANI, Uganda/GENEVA (LWI) – “I am grateful for the support. Before I was sleeping under a tree in the shade with my children, now I have a plot of land, and I have just received cups, plates, blankets and things that will help my family. But I am not sure how I shall manage to build a new home without my husband,” says Achol Thon, as she waits to receive non-food items distributed to South Sudanese fleeing violence at home and seeking refuge in neighboring countries.

Together with thousands of other refugees, the 25-year-old mother of 10 month-old twins and two other young children was forced to flee to Adjumani district, northern Uganda, after fighting erupted last December in South Sudan's capital Juba and spread to other areas of the world's youngest nation.

Thon currently resides at a center in Nyumanzi, Adjumani district. It is one of several refugee settlements in Uganda, a country hosting more than 79,200 South Sudan refugees, of which 87 percent are women and children, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

At the centers in Nyumanzi and Dzaipi, home to over 50,700 South Sudanese, The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is scaling up its support to the refugees by providing more water boreholes, hand-washing and bathing facilities, latrines, non-food items including household and community shelter kits, and securing the centers' perimeters.

In Uganda, LWF's response to the current South Sudan crisis is carried out by the Department for World Service (DWS) program there, with support from partners in the global ACT Alliance network, and in close collaboration with UNHCR.

At the settlement in Nyumanzi, Thon was waiting at a relief items' distribution area that was still under



*South Sudanese children at a refugee settlement in Adjumani, Uganda.
Photo: DCA/ACT/LWF/Mai Gad*

construction, and the crowded queues included special lines and shady areas for pregnant women, mothers with babies and people with special needs.

“I came from Bor in Jonglei State. I was in my home when I could hear the gunshots and I ran with my children. My husband was not at home. He has remained in Bor,” she says.

“I depend on organizations to help me right now. I hope my future will be bright; here I have found help,” she adds.

Beyond the 60,000 Projected

However, more funds are required to help the young mother and other vulnerable groups in Uganda, which accounts for more than 80 percent of South Sudanese fleeing into neighboring countries, says Mr Jesse Kamstra, LWF country representative for Uganda and Burundi.

Kamstra points out that the number of South Sudanese recorded to date in Adjumani, Arua, Koboko and Kiryandongo districts in Uganda “surpasses by far” the 60,000 projected by UNHCR for end of March 2014.

With support from its partners, LWF is increasing its refugee response capacity to cater for the recent influx in all the centers in Adjumani. “We need to scale up our personnel and operations in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector; distribution of non-food items; livelihood support and environmental care; community services and protection; provision of education materials; and infrastructure development,” he adds.

By mid-February, LWF Uganda had distributed thousands of cooking and serving utensils, sleeping mats, beddings and mosquito nets, plastic sheets for shelter, seven tons of laundry soap and over 1,000 plastic water jerry cans to over 32,000 refugees. In Nyumanzi, 10 community shelters (capacity for 120 per tent) have been constructed, three new boreholes have been drilled and four more have been rehabilitated.

Still, there are many urgent gaps including renovation of the health center at Dzaipi, and the construction of up to 6,000 latrines and 600 additional hand-washing facilities in the Nyumanzi settlement, Kamstra notes.

Responding to a Regional Crisis

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that around 150,000 South Sudanese could arrive in Uganda by the end of March 2014. In addition, renewed fighting in the Democratic Republic of Congo has recently pushed 4,500 people into central and southwest Uganda, Kamstra adds.

Mr Michael Hyden, humanitarian coordinator at DWS, explains that the LWF has opted for a coordinated regional response to the current crisis, and is working through its country programs in Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda, as well as inside South Sudan in order

to provide protection and assistance to affected populations.

Yet, there are many challenges. Citing the example of Adjumani, Hyden says the transit centers where refugees are first received were not built to accommodate "anywhere near the number of people currently arriving." In addition, the former refugee settlements where LWF Uganda worked with Sudanese refugees in the 1990s, and which are accommodating some of the new arrivals today, lack roads and water points.

"It is not only the refugees who are starting from scratch. Humanitarian agencies including the LWF are also

racing to respond to the growing influx," he notes.

But progress is being made, as "we see new organizations supporting the humanitarian efforts, more boreholes being drilled, and additional groups of people being transferred to the settlements," Hyden adds.

UN sources estimate that 729,000 South Sudanese have been internally displaced in the current crisis, while more than 125,000 have sought refuge mainly in neighboring countries.

(Mai Gad, communications officer for DanChurchAid and LWF Uganda staff contributed to this article.)

Indonesia: Prayers and Aid for Victims of Volcano Eruption

Lutheran Churches Assist Mt Sinabung Evacuees

MEDAN, Indonesia/GENEVA (LWI)—Financial donations, material goods and above all prayers for the people affected by Mount Sinabung volcano eruptions—that's what the National Committee of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) asks of Christians in Indonesia.

The LWF National Committee Chairperson Bishop Langsung Sitorus called for prayers for the villagers who lost their lives and homes to the

ongoing eruptions of the volcano in North Sumatra. The committee, which comprises the LWF member churches in the country, has been sending financial aid as well as material goods to churches in the affected region.

"The Lutheran communion in Indonesia and all over the world is called to pay serious attention to help the families who have been tremendously affected by the eruption," stated Sitorus,

who is bishop of the Indonesian Christian Church (HKI).

Death and destruction have been raining down on the farmers in the Karo lands in North Sumatra, Indonesia since Mt Sinabung, a volcano which had been dormant for centuries, awoke in September 2013. A particularly violent eruption on 1 February 2014 killed 16 people in pyroclastic flows and covered villages and farmland within a radius of eight kilometers in volcanic ash. Among the victims were seven volunteers of the Indonesian Student Christian Movement who died when they tried to evacuate local villagers who went to look after their houses and farms.

Donations by the Lutheran Communion

The Lutheran communion immediately found ways of helping the affected. Lutheran churches in Indonesia have been donating money and material goods to the evacuees who had to leave everything behind.

"Through the LWF National Committee, Lutheran churches can contribute



Displaced Karo land inhabitants at the Kabanjahe evacuation center in North Sumatra.
Photo: HKBP/Fernando Sihotang

towards the needs of those who are affected”, said the committee’s Executive Secretary Rev. Basa Hutabarat after receiving the churches’ donation and contribution. She said all the churches’ donation and contribution would be sent to the Karo Church (GBKP) which is very active in the region.

“We have heard that the displaced villagers are in urgent need of clothes for women and children, blankets, medicines and milk. Women and children are found to be the most affected by the situation”, continued Basa.

Famous for Farmland, Now Reduced to Ashes

Karo lands and the villages sitting on the slopes of Mt Sinabung have a nationwide reputation for their farming.

The volcanic soils provide fertile land, making the area the top organic fruits and vegetables producer across Indonesia. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture, products from Karo land made up a considerable percentage of the export to neighboring Singapore and Malaysia.

The villagers’ high dependence on the farm products led them to ignore the risk from the mountain even after the volcano started to show signs of activity in 2010. Farming gives them the means to pay for their children’s education.

“We sent our children to schools and universities only because we had good orange farms, but now we have nothing to earn the money for our children’s education,” cried a mother whose farming land has been devastated by the eruption. What has not

been burned is now covered in rocks and ashes.

Mt Sinabung has erupted about 150 times since its first volcanic activities on 15 September 2013. At the beginning of February 2014, the number of evacuees had risen to 26,174 people. Those from the more distant villages have been able to return home. According to the National Board for Disaster Management, 5,783 people had been sent back to their villages by 16 February 2014.

Around 18,000 displaced villagers are still staying at evacuation centers, as their homes lie within the eight kilometer-radius deemed unsafe by the government. Unpredictable volcanic activities make it unlikely they’ll be able to return to their farmland in the foreseeable future.

(A contribution by LWI correspondent Fernando Sihotang)

Ukrainian Bishop calls for an end to the violence

Lutheran congregation attends to the injured in Kiev

ODESSA, Ukraine/GENEVA (LWI) – A place of peace and prayer – and an improvised hospital. For days now, the church of the German Evangelical Lutheran congregation in Kiev has been caring for victims of the violent clashes at Independence Square (Maidan). Serge Maschewski, who was consecrated bishop of the German Evangelical Church in Ukraine (GELCU) on Sunday, talked on 19 February 2014 to LWI about the events of Tuesday night and the situation in Ukraine.

How is the situation at your end?

It is very difficult. Many demonstrators from the Maidan got into fierce fighting with the Berkut [special police forces] and there are victims on both sides. We issued a statement: We pray for the people involved and call for dialogue and reconciliation. We ask the government not to fight its own people but to sit down at the table with them and take joint decisions. We are extremely concerned that the government is using violence against its own people.

Has the congregation in Kiev been caring for the wounded?

Our congregations in Charkov, Dnipropetrovsk and Kiev are supporting the Maidan demonstrators. The Kiev church is only 150 meters from the government building. It is actually an island of peace where many people come to rest and reflect on what is going on here. But for days the congregations have been giving first aid as well. Wednesday morning the Kiev congregation attended to over 20 people with serious injuries – cuts, burns from Molotov cocktails, bruises and injuries from batons. I only reached the congregation by telephone because the roads to Kiev are blocked. The situation is very difficult there, and we are in constant contact by cell phone and Skype.

So the Lutheran parishes have been a drop-in center for demonstrators for a long time already?

Our churches are open to all. In the last few weeks we have been offering coffee and tea to anyone who came in, plus access to doctors and medical assis-

tance. People can come in to take a rest, or just go to the toilet. We talk and pray with them; that is very important in this situation and we see it as our responsibility to help. Sometimes soldiers come in and we offer them coffee and tea as well. They are in an unfortunate situation; they have been given orders they really don’t want to carry out, but they are afraid. We assist everyone, regardless of the political party they belong to.

What is your position as a church?

Since we are a German church people here associate us with Western Europe. We are not on any side but we have to speak up about injustice. We cannot remain silent. We do not want any violence; it is our biblical responsibility to call for peace. Today we sat down and issued a statement that the church supports the people. The casualties and bloodshed are terrible and we called for dialogue and reconciliation.

What can be done to assist the people at the local level?

The Kiev congregation needs donations of medicines, bandages and iodine.

We are also looking for trained doctors to volunteer and lend a hand.

And we need your prayers. Pray for our church, for peace and a good future for the Ukraine, for our people. We are on the verge of a civil war and your prayers are very important to us.

If your congregation is interested in helping, please contact Rev. Dr Eva-Sybille Vogel-Mfato, LWF Area Secretary for Europe in the Department for Mission and Development.

Laos Government Award to LWF for “Timely and Relevant Response” in Emergency

Possibilities for Further Collaboration to Empower Rural Communities

VIENTIANE, Laos/GENEVA, 18 February 2014 (LWI) – A government award to The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) for its “timely and relevant response” to populations affected by severe flooding in northwestern Laos affirms the need to strengthen collaboration with local authorities when supporting communities in need, says Mr David Mueller, LWF regional representative for Southeast Asia.

Mueller made these remarks after the LWF received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Government of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic on 5 February. Presenting the award in the capital Vientiane, the Deputy Head of the National Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (NCRDPE) Mr Somsanith Souvannalath thanked the LWF for “the generous, coordinated, timely and relevant response” with food and non-food items to families affected by flash floods and landslides in August 2013.

The government also commended the LWF for engaging residents in the

affected villages in a transparent and participatory way during the emergency which had resulted in loss of lives, huge population displacements and destruction of infrastructure and livelihoods. In addition, the NCRDPE official thanked LWF for the ongoing close cooperation at national, provincial and district levels.

LWF’s intervention following the flooding in the worst affected districts of Beng and Xay benefitted nearly 300 families with food and non-food items including materials to construct shelters, over a period of three months. The rapid response assistance worth USD 51,017 was coordinated through the global ACT Alliance network.

LWF’s presence in Laos is through the Department for World Service (DWS) regional program for Southeast Asia, which started working there in 2012. In close partnership with the local authorities, it supports rural communities to develop sustainable livelihoods through various activities including agriculture, improving health,

sanitation and education infrastructure, and the formation of community-based organizations.

“In many ways, the LWF has won the trust of the government and built up working relationships that benefit the communities we seek to serve,” Mueller noted. This, he added, “has facilitated a rights-base empowerment approach that helps local populations to devise ways to manage disaster risks and find options for alternative livelihoods.”

Most of the villagers assisted by the LWF following the flooding have resumed their agricultural activities including livestock keeping; and schools and infrastructure have been renovated.

The LWF representative explained that future partnerships in the relatively new DWS program will include capacity development in disaster risk management.

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