



Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert

The LWF in 2019

For a just, peaceful and reconciled world

'With a passion for the church and for the world' is the title of the LWF strategy 2019-2024, outlining the journey we are taking together over the coming years as a global communion present in 99 countries.

During 2019 we have worked to put that strategy into practice through regional gatherings of church leaders, women, and youth, celebrations of an ecumenical milestone, global consultations on Lutheran identities and of women theologians, local and global advocacy for the inalienable rights of individuals and communities, and humanitarian and development work to directly support some 2.25 million of the world's most vulnerable people.



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Strategy

The two priorities of the LWF Strategy 2019-2024 shaped the work of the Communion in 2019:

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

The strategy reflects the member churches' commitment to express their communion relations by joining hands to work together on diaconal initiatives including action for climate justice, promoting gender justice and youth inclusion, and support for ecumenical dialogue, theological education and formation.

Leadership conferences

Regional church leadership conferences allows the LWF's member churches to strengthen their relations and get to know one another. In 2019 such conferences were held in Africa, Asia, the Americas and in Europe, bringing together church leaders, lay and ordained, women and youth from the seven regions of the LWF. Each conference offered an opportunity for exchange and mutual learning, getting to know the host church in depth, sharing of gifts, and sharing the joys and sufferings as churches with one another.

Celebrating an ecumenical milestone

The year 2019 marked the 20th anniversary of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ). In March, a consultation in the United States brought together representatives of the LWF, the Roman Catholic Church, the World Methodist Council, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and the Anglican Communion. They expressed the desire to strengthen their bonds and further the core commitments of the JDDJ that remain relevant for their work and for the world today. In June, the five global communions celebrated the JDDJ anniversary at a joint worship service in the Cathedral of St Pierre in Geneva.

Churches contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals

The Waking the Giant initiative launched a self-assessment tool which churches can

use to map their own contribution towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The tool helps churches to "learn, reflect and act" on how they can work more closely together with other religious bodies, as well as national, regional and international organizations. Churches are encouraged to celebrate the work they are already doing and to share the results in order to develop best practices.

Understanding Lutheran identity

In October, the LWF launched a process to explore how spirituality shapes Lutheran identity worldwide. This will be an exploration of the diversity of Lutheran churches, while celebrating the common faith that equips churches for creative and transformational witness in the world. A global consultation in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, brought together participants from around the world under the theme "We Believe in the Holy Spirit." The multi-phase study will run until 2022.

Empowering youth to work for peace

The second global training for Peace Messengers was held in Tallinn, Estonia. The program brings together young people of different faiths. It is built on strengthening young people's contribution to peace building and preventing violence. Participants discussed the connection between a vision for peace and understanding conflict in multi-faith and multicultural contexts. They were offered space to learn from each other's experiences and foster mutual respect and understanding about peace in the different cultures and contexts. The goal is to enable participants to see themselves as active contributors and powerful multipliers towards peace in their different parts of the world.

Humanitarian and emergency response

In 2019, the LWF directly supported 2.25 million refugees and internally displaced people in 25 countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean. More than half of the beneficiaries are refugees and internally displaced people, the other half are members of host communities and communi-

ties at risk. By linking emergency relief with recovery and development work, LWF World Service is able to adapt to changing circumstances in protracted crises, while delivering holistic and sustainable support.

Cyclone Idai, which struck Mozambique in March, was one of the worst tropical storms recorded in Africa and the Southern Hemisphere. LWF's water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) emergency response reached 1,500 families in three isolated locations in the Manica Province.

Gender justice and women's empowerment

LWF's gender justice work promotes equal dignity of every person created in God's image through the empowerment of women and leadership development. LWF works towards just relationships between women and men and promotes women's leadership in church and society. Global, regional and local initiatives in 2019 focused on strengthening leadership skills, building networks, and deepening understanding of women's human rights in partnership with the UN.

Global partnership

The LWF engages with the United Nations (UN) through its partnership with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, contribution to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Human Rights Council, its cooperation with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The UN has applauded LWF's innovative use of the UPR for "effectively mainstreaming refugee policy into human rights policies at the national level."

Theology, Mission, and Justice

From 2020 the new Department for Theology, Mission and Justice in the Communion Office brings together theological studies and member church-related program work with a new team called Action for Justice. The new team will connect the work of the new department and the Department for World Service in a shared thematic focus on human rights, interfaith and peace, gender justice and climate justice.

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