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PRIORITY AREA 3

Witness

BEAR WITNESS IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY TO GOD'S HEALING, RECONCILIATION AND JUSTICE

Bringing together the faith, diaconal and advocacy dimensions of the Lutheran communion is what makes LWF a distinctive player on the global scene. The grounding in Christian faith convictions and practices enables collaboration with other organizations, in reaching out and serving especially vulnerable people. One result of such cooperation is advocacy for policies that seek to further reconciliation, justice and the common good.

The international diaconal work of the LWF has been a central, concrete expression of what it means to be the church globally. However, the extensive experiences and insights from this multi-faceted work are what make other aspects of the Federation's public witness more visible and distinctive. The active participation of local partner communities in LWF's work adds greater credibility to subsequent advocacy work, which in turn makes the theological

work more connected with real life, and its fruits of faith more visible.

Much of the LWF's theological work in recent years, especially in relation to the Theology in the Life of the Church program, has been developed in the context of the actual global challenges. This is because theology is an ongoing process of reflection occurring in community as people of faith honestly face and name the everyday realities they are experiencing. Secondly, the factors behind what is being heard and felt need to be analyzed, especially the wider social, economic, political and /or cultural factors—structures, ideologies and policies—that cause or contribute to a given situation. Thirdly, reflection from a Lutheran faith perspective is necessary, in order to expose emerging issues and continue the work to empower and bring transformative hope to those most affected by suffering, conflicts and injustices.

The realities of suffering and injustice typically are so entrenched or pervasive that most people feel powerless to do anything to change them: the way things are feels inevitable. Struggles to further the dignity of all and to address situations of injustice confront churches everywhere, especially in those areas of the world where Lutheran churches are growing the most. People struggle with pervasive poverty, killer diseases, inadequate infrastructures and public policies, lack of resources, capacities and basic services. How then does the LWF bear witness in church and society to God’s healing, reconciliation and justice?



Members of a community-based organization participating in a training program on vegetable growing organized by DWS Nepal partner CEAPRED. © LWF/DWS Nepal

DIAKONIA IN PRACTICE

In 2007 in Lund, Sweden, the LWF celebrated its 60th anniversary, recalling the aftermath of World War II and the solidarity of Lutheran churches around the world as they jointly committed themselves to assist the over 20 million refugees in Europe. This service-oriented foundation of the LWF has flourished into an ongoing commitment to cooperate globally as a network of Lutheran churches and related agencies mainly through DWS, becoming an important cornerstone of what the LWF is today.

While the international diaconal work of the LWF, as coordinated through the Geneva secretariat remains somewhat unique among global church bodies, its local rootedness, multilateral and international connections reflect its distinct identity and advantages. As the Federation’s humanitarian arm operational in 36 countries throughout the world, DWS reaches out to “uphold the rights of the poor and oppressed” (Psalm 82) whenever the need exceeds the response capacity of local churches and governments.

In countries where there are LWF member churches, DWS programs have encouraged and supported their engagement in diakonia, especially through joint implementation of humanitarian response and development projects. Through these cooperative and collaborative actions, DWS has encouraged an outward-looking attitude—in the true Christian spirit of diakonia—going beyond church partnerships

Continued from p. 35

September [OCS] •

OCS publishes an **LWI special issue** on water titled “Waters of Life.”

04–08.09.06 [DMD]

▪ The “Arusha Plan” is embraced as a mission obligation at a DMD Consultation on Poverty and the Mission of the Church in Arusha, Tanzania.



Tanzanian coffee farmers explaining to poverty consultation participants why they prioritize quick cash-earning crops. © LWF/K. Bloomquist

09–11.09.06 [DTS:

TLC study] ▪ A DTS Theology in the Life of the Church study seeks to bridge different types of theology in the life of the communion.

06–10.09.06 [DMD:

WICAS] ▪ Gender issues need to be integrated into every aspect of church work, says a consultation organized by WICAS in São Leopoldo, Brazil.

12–13.09.06 •

Dr Noko attends the Second Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions held in Astana, Kazakhstan.



Dr Noko with Thai member of the Buddhist delegation Dr Pra Darmkosadzhani in Kazakhstan. © LWF/R. Karasch

20-24.09.06

[OIAHR] • A consultation in Karasjok, Norway, of indigenous communities asks the LWF to help protect indigenous peoples' human rights.



Aili Keskitalo, president of Norway's Sámi parliament, addressing the LWF consultation in Karasjok. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

22-24.09.06 [DMD]

▪ Bilateral partners of the Christian Lutheran Church in Honduras participate in a special worship service during which more than 50 new church members are confirmed.

25-28.09.06 [DMD]

▪ Baltic and Russian church leaders meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania, affirm the LWF as an important instrument for building communion.

26-28.09.06 [DMD]

▪ A meeting with the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod in San Salvador brings the church's bilateral partners together to coordinate multi-lateral support.

26.10-02.11.06 •

President Hanson meets with church and government leaders in Hungary and Romania.

November [DMD] •

Participants in a North

alone. Today, support for this work comes not only from churches and church-related agencies but also from UN agencies, governments and private foundations.

Participatory community-based approaches have long been the key to addressing LWF's sustainable development work. Since 2004, effort has been concentrated on promoting a rights-based approach (RBA) to development in all DWS programs. The RBA incorporates a comprehensive perspective that underscores application of human rights principles while at the same time challenging the power structures that foment exclusion, underdevelopment and poverty in society. This approach provides tools that help the local population to understand their role as duty bearers, including their obligation to hold service providers accountable. Over the reporting period, DWS has developed guidelines on advocacy and extensive training to enhance the practical application of the RBA in many countries where the LWF humanitarian arm is operational.

Many DWS programs have developed local action plans to apply the RBA in all their work, others are still in transition. Still, there are significant gaps between this approach and actual realities, especially as staff attitudes and behavior often are difficult to change. Strengthening participatory methodologies is critical to the RBA advancement.

BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY

The understanding of humanitarian crises has changed significantly in recent years. The collapse of states in several countries as well as frequent, repeated weather-related catastrophes have altered the perception of disasters as not only sudden, exceptional events but recurring, chronic crises. Responding to human need in such contexts has likewise evolved to include integrated responses that combine aid, advocacy, diplomatic, military and development approaches, as well as disaster preparedness.

The long-term goal of DWS is not to provide continuous relief support, but rather to build local capacity that can sustain communities' post-emergency needs. Working collaboratively with LWF member churches and ecumenically, DWS is committed to transfer its programs to local ownership and management. Examples include the former country programs in Tanzania and India, both of which are now under local governance and leadership of the respective LWF member churches and national council of churches. The localized programs continue to cooperate very closely with the LWF as "associate programs." However, it is a constant challenge for DWS and these local organizations to sustain and enhance the necessary programmatic and administrative standards to meet donor requirements and enable the expression of diaconal ministry in the best ways possible.

In every country where DWS is present, the various partners have sought to further the formation, growth and capacity-building of ACT International, the Geneva-based global alliance of churches and their related agencies working to save lives and support communities in emergencies worldwide. The LWF has remained the largest and most significant implementing member of ACT International, which it co-founded in 1995. Over the past few years, DWS has been active



A classroom constructed on a community self-help basis at Tomibi, DRG. © LWF/DWS Rwanda/DRG/H. Nikolaisen



An LWF/ACT food distribution center in the DRC.
© LWF/DWS Rwanda/DRC/H. Nikolaisen

in the establishment of the ACT Development network, and more recently in the unified ACT Alliance launched in early 2010.

The diaconal expression through local rootedness, multilateral and international partnerships is also expressed through the work of the DMD, which continues to be a project facilitating office for member church activities. Not only has the form and focus of multilateral support for a diverse range of work in the member churches changed, the capacity of church-related organizations to provide bilateral support has also increased. Against this background, the LWF has identified areas where a multilateral approach provides added value. Compliance with standards for professional planning and reporting for international project support is one such area, where the goal is to ensure that ‘resource sharing’ does not become a competition for resources whereby only the most able manage to survive. DMD therefore continues to accompany member churches as they mutually develop their capacities in this regard by supporting projects that stimulate transformation processes in churches and their respective social contexts. The member churches are assisted in learning processes that encourage reflection, build capacity and where necessary, change the understanding of their roles and responsibilities in diakonia. This has become an important part of DMD’s work and is the focus of the Comprehensive Capacity Development Program.

ADVOCACY

Prophetic diakonia—seeking to change what is causing or contributing to injustices—thus becomes an obvious follow-up and increasingly indispensable aspect of LWF diaconal work. During the past decade, advocacy and lobbying at national, regional and international levels have become increasingly important in redressing gross violations of human rights, unjust policies and practices, and other negative effects of neoliberal economic globalization. Although LWF advocacy work is coordinated through the Office for International Affairs and Human Rights, this is done collaboratively with the ongoing diaconal,

American Lutheran meeting in Winnipeg, Canada, learn how to advocate against global sexual exploitation.

02-09.11.06 [OEA]

- Twenty-five years of Lutheran-Orthodox dialogue are celebrated in Bratislava, Slovak Republic as the Lutheran-Orthodox Commission adopts a Common Statement on “The Holy Eucharist in the Life of the Church”.



Altar of the Orthodox Church in Bratislava. © LWF/S. Dietrich

December [OIAHR] - LWF Documentation

No. 51 on “Faith and Human Rights” is published.

01-03.12.06 [DTS: TLC study]

- An international consultation in Breklum, Germany, on “Beyond Toleration? Assessing and Responding Theologically to the New Challenges in Christian-Muslim Relations” is organized by DTS.



Breklum consultation participants discussing Christian/Muslim relations in their contexts. © LWF/K. Bloomquist

04-12.12.06 [DWS/ OCS] • A joint OCS/ DWS Latin America and Caribbean regional communication workshop is held in San Salvador, El Salvador.

2007

During the year •

The establishment of Lutheran councils in Asia and Africa embody a movement towards a stronger communion.

07-19.01.07 • Over 20 students participate in the third annual intensive course on “The Ecumenical Church in a Globalized World.”



North American students at the third annual course on “The Ecumenical Church in a Globalized World.” © LWF/K. Bloomquist

09-13.01.07

[OIAHR] • Led by its convenor Dr Noko, an IFAPA delegation visits Sudan for discussions with state leaders on peace processes with various insurgent groups.



Gathering at an ecumenical ceremony to mark the 7th WSF opening in Nairobi, Kenya. © WCC/J. Michel

20-25.01.07

[OIAHR] • An LWF delegation to the 7th WSF in Nairobi, Kenya establishes networks

theological and communication work that takes place through other LWF units, and with member churches and related agencies.

For this diaconal-grounded advocacy with global and multinational bodies, the LWF is well placed in Geneva and held in high esteem in various UN organizations, such as the UN Human Rights Council. When the LWF advocates through the UN human rights treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, it draws on inputs from its member churches, programs and partners. Further possibilities are considered under the new Human Rights Accountability Program that the LWF has launched. The LWF also holds human rights training workshops for the sake of capacity-building, and develops theological and practical perspectives on how churches, in collaboration with others, can hold governments more accountable for the common good. As called for at the Winnipeg Assembly, particular attention has been given to raising the perspectives and concerns of indigenous and Dalit communities through various consultations, and in UN-related forums.

Continued on page 43

DEPARTMENT FOR WORLD SERVICE

DWS is the internationally recognized humanitarian and development arm of the LWF. It challenges and responds to human suffering and poverty, serving all people in need irrespective of race, gender, social status or religious affiliation.

Through programs in 36 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, DWS’ work is focused on building and strengthening the capacity of marginalized and vulnerable people to respond effectively to the impact of natural and human-made disasters and manage their own lives.

“Uphold the rights of the poor and oppressed” (Psalm 82:3)—the motto of the DWS Global Strategic Plan 2007-2012—affirms that the poor and needy have the right to a life with dignity and justice. DWS uses a rights-based approach inspired by Scripture and by international human rights.

Working with Partners

DWS closely cooperates with a number of church-based agencies and churches in providing not only much-needed financial and technical support but also seconded staff, material aid, and advocacy. These include Australian Lutheran World Service, Germany’s Brot für die Welt, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and



Two women farmers who participate in a Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service (TCRS) development project. The TCRS is a DWS associate program. © LWF/TCRS

Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, Church of Sweden, DanChurchAid, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, FinnChurchAid, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, Icelandic Churchaid, Lutheran World Relief (USA) and Norwegian Church Aid, among others.

The LWF is a founding member of ACT International—the global alliance of churches and related agencies responding to emergencies and cooperating for development worldwide. DWS is a major ACT implementing partner. It is an important operational partner of UNHCR, and collaborates closely with other UN agencies including the World Food Program – WFP, UN Development Fund – UNDP, UN Children’s

Priority Area 3: Witness

Fund – UNICEF and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Partner relationships and agreements are maintained with many governments around the world and intergovernmental bodies.



Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic.
© LWF/DWS Haiti/M. Kuehn

Refugees and Displaced Persons

DWS reaches out to over 2 million under-privileged people each year, including more than 250,000 refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) worldwide. Since the Winnipeg Assembly, DWS has engaged over 5,000 staff persons who provide services in refugee camps and rural communities. Whether working with IDPs in Chad, Colombia or DRC, Sudanese or Somali refugees in Kenya or Bhutanese refugees in Nepal, DWS emphasizes rights-based, integrated and empowerment approaches in its work. As camp manager in a number of UNHCR refugee camps, the DWS intervention strategy varies depending on local needs—from providing basic resources and skills training, meeting psychosocial and educational needs, working with victims of gender-based violence, to preparing for repatriation or reaching out to local host communities.

The LWF is committed to bridging the gap between emergency, rehabilitation and long-term development. DWS continues to facilitate refugees' return home, and supports their individual resettlement including the establishment or rehabilitation of physical infrastructure in towns and villages ravaged by civil conflict.

Sustainable Livelihoods and Community Development

After the 2003 Tenth Assembly, DWS development efforts shifted significantly

from direct service delivery to community-based and rights-based approaches.

In Cambodia, a household-level partnership promoted the inclusion of the poorest sectors of society in development initiatives. Community-based organizations such as village rice banks, advocacy groups and village management committees helped to implement projects on poverty reduction, social development, environmental protection and afforestation.

In Bangladesh, the Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service (RDRS) promoted landless and marginal farmers' federations that exercise strong leadership in community-based development, and microfinance groups to manage loan applications and repayments.

HIV and AIDS

DWS country programs also applied a community-based approach to HIV and AIDS response initiatives. In Rwanda and the DRC, church communities and women's groups were engaged in raising awareness, encouraging HIV testing and providing trauma counseling to victims of sexual violence and their families. In Cambodia, district committees helped to strengthen the capacity of volunteer groups that included Buddhist monks, while a community-based project in Uganda integrated volunteers, teachers, peer educators and traditional healers.

In one of the poorest areas in Mozambique's capital, Maputo, a DWS "Human Rights and the Health of Women Project" allowed open discussion about violence, abuse and HIV and AIDS. An association of people living with HIV carried out various activities that helped to change attitudes and reduce domestic violence, stigma and discrimination at family and community level. The group also facilitated home-based care delivery, as volunteers and traditional healers supported those in need.

Rights-Based Approach

The commitment to a rights-based approach (RBA) can be seen as the very *raison d'être* of particular DWS programs and projects over the past six years.

The DWS Nepal program encouraged efforts to free *kamaiyas* (bonded laborers) and to repay loans by negotiating with landlords and through court action. As the overall aim is to enable oppressed groups to speak out on critical issues and assert their rights, the LWF helped members of this marginalized community to advocate on their own

with civil society partners engaged in struggles for human dignity and economic justice.

29.01–03.02.07

[DMD] • Central American churches analyze their diaconal methodologies at a workshop organized by the DWS/DMD regional program in Central America.

22–03.02.07 •

Leaders of the LWF and the International Lutheran Council, meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, discuss plans for celebrations of the Reformation anniversary in 2017.

16–19.03.2007

[DMD: Youth/YICAS] • At a meeting in Höör, Sweden, young LWF Council members and stewards urge the LWF not to allow differing opinions on marriage, family and sexuality to divide them.

20–21.03.07 [DMD:

WICAS] • A conference of LWF churches' women bishops and presidents and WICAS regional coordinators held in Lund, Sweden, condemns violence against women.

20.03.07 •

The LWF Executive Committee meets in Lund, Sweden, ahead of the Council meeting.

21–27.03.07 •

The Council meeting in Lund, Sweden, adopts

a historic statement on the “Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church” and approves “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread” as the theme of the Eleventh Assembly. LWF 60th anniversary celebrations are broadcast via live web-streaming and covered by an **LWI special issue**.



60th anniversary celebrations in Lund.
© LWF/J.H. Rakotoniaina

21–27.03.07 [OCS/ DMD: Youth/ YICAS] • Young communicators claim that “We are ready for the next step” and ask the LWF Council meeting: “Are you?”

18–20.03.07 [DTS: TLC study] • A third seminar in Höör, Sweden, organized by DTS, affirms that fundamentalist interpretations of Scripture and ethics are inconsistent with Lutheran understandings.

March [DMD] • To encourage church members to become more active and effective in accompanying persons living with HIV and AIDS, DMD publishes “Grace, Care and Justice.”

April [OEA] • A study document on “The Apostolicity of the Church”, the statement of the fourth phase of

behalf in public forums and at meetings with government representatives.

The Central American regional program supported popular protests against environmental destruction. It also provided training and coordination, and mobilized citizen groups to urge legal action on government impunity for past human rights’ violations. Workshops on laws governing citizens’ rights and responsibilities have promoted a culture of citizenship. In El Salvador, communities were encouraged to use these laws to negotiate with government, while youth organizations in Honduras pushed the government to enact a national youth law. The LWF provided support to indigenous organizations combating racism and struggling for greater political participation in Guatemala.

Since its establishment in 2006, DWS Colombia has concentrated on building awareness and empowering communities and organizations to claim and achieve the collective rights of socially excluded populations.

Gender Justice

The RBA approach has been especially crucial in the struggle for gender justice. Work in this area included girls’ education in Eritrea, programs to combat domestic violence in Mozambique, advocacy on gender-based violence in Liberia, and women’s right to paid employment in Southern Sudan.

In southern India, for example, DWS promoted gender justice in tsunami-affected fishing and Dalit communities. Through orientation, training and micro-credit programs and self-help groups, women were emboldened to meet government officials and speak out on their own behalf, and to state their individual opinion at the family level.

Environment

As part of DWS’ efforts to empower women and promote sustainable grassroots

community participation and development, women from remote villages in Mauritania learned new skills at a Barefoot College in India in 2008. The six-month hands-on training in installing, repairing and maintaining solar lighting systems enabled them to set up simple but effective solar lighting systems in their villages upon return.

Localization

During the last six years, DWS handed over its programs to local churches whenever possible. Former country programs in India, Malawi, South Africa and Tanzania are now church-governed but maintain close links with DWS. As associate programs, they adhere to the same programmatic principles and standards as the other field offices.

New Challenges

The last decade has seen a steep increase of weather-related disasters, most probably as a result of climate change. DWS continued to respond to affected communities’ immediate needs after cyclones, storms, flooding, drought, as well as to people affected by civil conflicts in Africa, Asia, Central and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Climate change and violent conflicts will continue to pose major challenges for DWS in the coming years as they demand resources far beyond any national response capacity. Recently established DWS programs in Chad, Colombia, Myanmar and Sudan care for refugees and IDPs, restore livelihoods after civil conflict, establish community-based disaster-preparedness initiatives, and provide relief and rehabilitation.

As the Lutheran communion’s global diaconal arm, DWS continues its strong expression of faith in action, restoring hope and upholding the rights of the poor and oppressed.

Continued from page 41

INTEGRATING THEOLOGY, DIAKONIA AND ADVOCACY

The ways in which theology, diakonia and advocacy flow together and mutually reinforce each other can be illustrated in terms of the Federation’s work on key challenges for healing, reconciliation and justice in the world today. These are related to HIV and AIDS, economic injustice (especially illegitimate debt), and climate change. In each case, what is being experienced on the ground, especially by

Priority Area 3: Witness

those in member churches and international diaconal programs, is the point of departure for LWF's advocacy and action.

HIV and AIDS

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS – UNAIDS 2008 report cites indicators of success in the global response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic. These include fewer people becoming newly infected with HIV—estimates declining to 2.7 million in 2007 from 3 million in 2001—pointing to a global stabilization of the percentage of people living with HIV. The number of people dying from HIV-related illnesses has also gone down—from an estimated 2.2 million in 2005 to 2 million in 2007. Around 3 million people in developing countries received HIV treatment in hospitals and clinics at the end of 2007—a more than ten-fold increase from five years before. However, the number of people living with HIV globally remains high at 33.2 million by the end of 2007. This underscores the need to increase efforts to fight the epidemic.

Launched in 2002 to seek churches' active response to the epidemic, the LWF campaign on HIV and AIDS has been based on what communities in the most affected areas are experiencing. Using biblical and theological grounds, it has intentionally challenged the stigma and discrimination that hinder people from receiving the care they require for healing and wholeness. The campaign began as the prevalence rates were escalating in the first part of this decade, and with disturbing indications that in many places where it had reached pandemic proportions, churches were part of the problem rather than taking leadership in the necessary response efforts. Thus, work proceeded with four strategic goals to:

1. Encourage member churches to engage in or increase their work in this area, assisted by an LWF project support fund. In the past six years, around USD 1.7 million has been allocated to 75 small projects.

Listening to people's life stories and engaging in dialogue are part of the Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras' (ICLH) HIV & AIDS information-sharing and awareness-raising work. © ICLH Diaconia



the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, is sent to member churches for study and response.

16-17.04.07 [DWS]

- The DWS Annual Forum is held in Montreux, Switzerland.

16-20.04.07 [DMD]

- The 14 Latin American member churches, meeting in Santiago de Chile, agree to external evaluation of their regional cooperation over the past decade.

16-24.04.07

- [OIAHR]** ▪ IFAPA women representatives highlight development issues for women and children in Africa during a study visit to Sweden, Norway and Finland.

May [DTS: TLC

- study]** ▪ Insights from DMD and DTS seminars held in Arusha, Tanzania, in 2006 feed into "So the poor have hope, and injustice shuts its mouth."

May [OEA] ▪ Meeting

- in White Point, Canada, the Anglican-Lutheran Commission encourages the reconstitution of the All Africa Anglican-Lutheran Commission.

07-10.05.07 [DWS]

- A DWS consultation in Arusha, Tanzania, seeks a common understanding, criteria and mechanisms for becoming an LWF associate program.

07-14.05.07 [OIAHR]

▪ Representatives of member churches in Indonesia and elsewhere in South East Asia participate in a human rights training workshop in Bali, Indonesia.

June [DMD: Youth/YICAS]

▪ Young people are invited to a regular exchange of views on youth ministry, their lives, faith and justice on the newly launched LWF youth blog.

June [OCS] ▪ A new donation portal on the LWF website invites Internet users to contribute to projects and programs online.

04-08.06.07 [DWS]

▪ A DWS Southern Africa regional consultation is held in Maputo, Mozambique, on "Diakonia and HIV and AIDS."

06-07.06.07 [DMD]

▪ A meeting with the newly elected leadership of the Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church discusses a church plan to overcome administrative challenges.



A "bataye" where Haitian migrants to the Dominican Republic live.
© LWF/DWS Haiti/M Kuehn

18-22.06.07

[DWS] ▪ A DWS Central America and Caribbean regional consultation in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on



HIV and AIDS counseling in Georgia, 2008.
© LWF/Lutheran Diaconie Amsterdam

2. Get church leaders on board, especially through peer education to change attitudes toward people living with HIV and AIDS. A survey confirmed there had been important positive changes among church leaders who, through personal experiences and mutual support, learned how to deal with difficult challenges.
3. Encourage member churches to work alongside other actors in their societies and globally in responding to the epidemic. Almost all churches established multiple relationships, for example, with governmental, non-governmental and faith-based organizations. Global collaboration with the Geneva-based EAA has been important.
4. Build capacity and access financial resources from sources beyond churches. Various workshops have been organized in the regions. The sub-regions in Africa have also taken initiatives for capacity-building, with LUCSA being especially active and successful through the LUCSA AIDS Action Program. There are challenges as well as opportunities for churches to get funding through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) and other large scale donors, from which some churches have received support.

It also became evident that there was a need for a comprehensive LWF handbook that would be helpful for those providing care in local communities to explain Lutheran theological motivation for church involvement. Such a publication would also serve as a resource on how to counter stigma and discrimination, offer health information, gender-based perspectives, as well as pastoral care, home-based care and advocacy recommendations. Subsequent attention has also shown how this focus is taken up in theological education and pastoral formation. Experienced persons actively working in these areas were convened to provide important input as the *Grace, Care and Justice* handbook was being developed collaborative by DMD and DTS. Published in 2007, the handbook is available in all four LWF languages, with additional local language translations by some of the member churches.

Whereas almost all DWS field programs address the issue of HIV and AIDS, programs in Southern Africa have a particular focus, which includes scaling up their work with local partners, especially LWF

OFFICE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Through OIAHR, the LWF supports member churches' engagement with key issues of social and economic justice, and promotes human dignity as fundamental to holistic Christian ministry and witness.

OIAHR works closely with other LWF units and ecumenically to raise awareness of human rights through solidarity and exposure visits; international advocacy and

An LWF-sponsored delegation reported on discrimination against women in Mauritania at the 2007 UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. © ELCA/D. W. Frado



networking at inter- and non-governmental meetings; interventions at United Nations' sessions; and participation in civil society movements such as the World Social Forum.

The Winnipeg Assembly urged an LWF process to address indigenous peoples' human rights. A 2006 follow-up consultation in Norway affirmed the need for a specific LWF program to support the churches' engagement.

OIAHR continued to provide training on human rights instruments and mechanisms at regional workshops, including contributing to a workshop on illegitimate debt in 2005, primarily for the Latin American churches, and holding a workshop in South East Asia in 2007. A 2008 *LWI* special edition was issued for the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Many churches and DWS field programs work in insecure settings. OIAHR helps to promote peace and reconciliation by directly engaging in dialogue with the parties concerned, and supporting grassroots peace building efforts. The office has accompanied the IFAPA initiative, encouraging the continent's faith leaders to be active peace advocates.

OIAHR works ecumenically to advocate for just global trade, and was involved in a UN review of travel restrictions that discriminate against people living with HIV and AIDS.

Continued from page 45

member churches. The aim is to increase the scope and impact of their activities, and their access to GFATM resources and other donors.

However, focus on HIV and AIDS should not overshadow the need to address other killer diseases. In close cooperation with the GFATM, DWS, ACT Development and some member churches have joined a new effort to fight malaria. Very promising developments over the last years give reason to hope that the spread of this disease can be largely reduced if strong joint action is taken.

Economic Globalization and Illegitimate Debt

LWF attention to neoliberal economic globalization was developed within the theological-ethical framework of "communion, responsibility, accountability." This resulted in the 2003 Assembly affirming "A Call to Participating in Transforming Economic Globalization" and a public statement on illegitimate external debt. Subsequently, the LWF publication, *Communion, Responsibility, Accountability: Responding as the Lutheran Communion to Neoliberal Globalization*, (LWF Documentation

"Violence, Migration and Their Impact on Citizenship and Democracy" argues that advocacy is the key to tackling violence and migration in Central America and the Caribbean.

18-22.06.07 [OEA] •

A meeting in Strasbourg of the Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission addresses historical condemnations of Anabaptists in Lutheran confessional writings.

27-30.06.07 [DTS:

TLC study] • The challenges of "empire" are addressed at the fourth seminar in the DTS Theology in the Life of the Church study.

July •

The President of Ecuador invites the DMD-supported program on illegitimate debt run by the LWF regional communion in Latin America to join the Commission for the Audit of the Public Credit.

04-07.07.07 [DMD:

HIV & AIDS] •

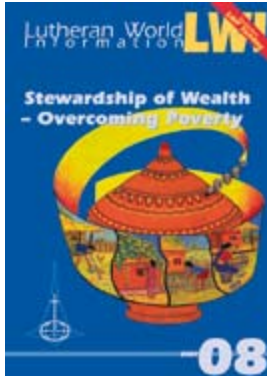
Churches from the Lutheran constituency are strongly represented at a World YWCA summit in Nairobi, Kenya, on Women's Leadership on HIV and AIDS.

August [DTS:

Christian-Muslim

study] DTS publishes "Bridges Instead of Walls. Christian-Muslim Interaction in Denmark, Indonesia and Nigeria."

August [OCS] ▪ OCS publishes an **LWI special issue** on the “Stewardship of Wealth – Overcoming Poverty.”



© LWF

11–17.08.07 [OEA] ▪

The common life in each church family was deepened by the struggles of the apartheid era, the Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission states at Windhoek, Namibia.

04–08.09.07 [DMD: WICAS] ▪ A Latin

America regional consultation held in San Salvador, El Salvador, titled “Stirring the Waters” focuses on women and water.

22–28.09.07 [DWS]

▪ A DWS Program Management forum in Rangpur, Bangladesh, reflects on how to fulfil the highest programmatic and administrative standards.

03–08.10.07 [OEA]

▪ In Joensuu, Finland, the Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission begins a cycle of meetings focused on the practice of the Eucharist.

15–17.10.07 [DMD] ▪

The secular affirmation of church social contributions is an opportuni-

ty (LWF Studies 50/2004) drew together a number of theological-ethical perspectives and diaconal and advocacy initiatives, including from member churches. Among other initiatives, this influenced the development of an LWF strategy on poverty and the mission of the church in Africa and the resource, *So the poor may have hope and injustice shuts its mouth* (LWF Studies 1/2007).

Foreign debts are deemed to be illegitimate if they were incurred through fraud or corruption, under invalid terms, by illegitimate governments, and/or without benefit to the people in that country. In the Latin American region, this spurred the development of a high-profile advocacy campaign on the illegitimacy of some countries’ external debt, which compounds their impoverishment. The initiative, which included the churches’ active participation, arose out of strong pastoral, ethical and citizenship motivations. *Not Just Numbers – Examining the Legitimacy of Foreign Debts* (LWF Documentation 53/2008), an LWF resource on this process, provides insights on the impact of illegitimate debt on the lives of people, their livelihoods, and future.

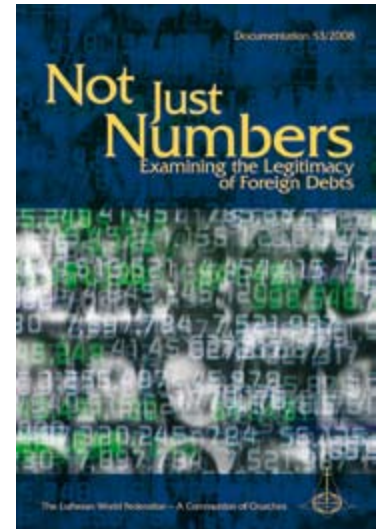
The illegitimate debt campaign influenced the government of Ecuador, for example, to cease certain foreign debt service payments because of the adverse effects this would have on its citizens. It also led to a major symposium in 2008, hosted jointly by the LWF, Norwegian Church Aid and Church of Sweden. Participants included political and legal experts on this subject from governments, UN agencies, academic and international financial institutions, civil society organizations and church representatives. The symposium concluded that “sovereign lending and borrowing is not just a matter of finance and economics, but of politics, law, justice and ethics,” and that human rights guidelines for such must be developed.

Climate change

The LWF focus on climate change was initiated in response to action by the LWF Council in 2007. This is not only an urgent environmental issue but a matter of justice toward other communities, the rest of creation and for the sake of the future.

From the beginning, this effort has depended on close synergy between LWF’s theological, diaconal and advocacy work, and has intentionally given priority to communities that are most vulnerable. It has been pursued with an awareness that much has already been occurring in this regard through DWS programs, the member churches and ecumenically, at local and global levels. Ongoing work includes practical measures for adaptation, mitigation, life style and policy changes. LWF advocacy positions have been developed, for example, calling for reducing 1990 carbon dioxide levels by 40 percent by 2010 and for a “carbon tax,” and for LWF involvement in international climate change conferences.

This current work began with an *LWF Youth Toolkit on Climate Change* developed by and for youth, and a grass-roots survey of how people in local communities are experiencing the effects of climate change, and especially the spiritual or faith questions this evokes for them. This became the basis for developing spiritual and ethical responses—ways of thinking of God and creation and acting in light of this—that can



LWF publication on illegitimate debt. © LWF

motivate, guide and empower the long-term, multifaceted strategies needed to redress climate change. Articles developed as a result of a consultation have been published in *God, Creation and Climate Change: Spiritual and Ethical Perspectives* (LWF Studies 02/2009) along with a resource for reflection and discussion in local communities.

In 2008, a strategic LWF climate change “encounter” was held in Orissa, India, an area of the world that has already been very dramatically and adversely affected by climate change. This also brought together theological, diaconal and advocacy dimensions of this urgent challenge in poor farming and fishing communities where LWF diaconal programs and member churches are deeply and proactively involved. As the communiqué “Witnessing to Hope Amid Rising Waters” from that encounter declares:

In many parts of the world, climate change remains something “out there” in the future, but for these villagers it is no longer “out there.” With every surge of the insatiable sea, climate change becomes all the more local, to the extent that one day their village will be “in there,” swallowed by the waters. Here the disturbing effects of climate change are not just predicted to occur in the future, but are undeniably present today. It is hoped that the numerous witnesses, words and actions related to this timely, urgent challenge can be brought together at the upcoming Assembly.

LEARNING FROM THE CHALLENGES

Power inequities, whether perceived or actual, often hinder the critical theological, diaconal and advocacy work that is necessary. The dynamic of the gospel is such that it helps to transform situations that hold people in bondage, including some inherited theologies and practices.

What became apparent in the Theology in the Life of the Church program was how difficult it is to develop contextual theological work that is critically constructive. Participants attributed shortcomings to various factors, including inadequate theological education and the lack of skills that would encourage creative re-thinking or re-configuration in the face of contextual challenges. For many in the global South, theological understandings that have been passed on through mission movements continue to be repeated instead of being subjected to the scrutiny of critique and reconstruction that is necessary for bearing witness to the faith amid today’s realities.

In the broader perspective of diakonia, the role of religion and the church in development is increasingly acknowledged. However, some governments are hostile toward churches, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and humanitarian aid from outside. Accountability, humanitarian access, workers’ security and independence of humanitarian actions are increasingly matters of concern.

Supporting churches in their diaconal work and providing a platform for engaging in prophetic diakonia and joint humanitarian and development action remain core tasks of the LWF Secretariat. While it is clear that international interventions in any crisis or in development processes may only be second-best solutions, there are many complex situations today which cannot be addressed adequately with local resources or perspectives alone.

Climate change and its consequences are one such challenge. How can the LWF best secure mechanisms, attitudes, and funding for joint advocacy for mitigation and adaptation to be able to cope with the humanitarian and environmental challenges emerging from climate change? In this context there is an urgent need to create awareness

ty for diaconal ministries says a DMD workshop on “Church-state relations in transitional contexts” in Central and Eastern Europe.

06–08.11.07 [DMD] •

The church’s prophetic task is to promote indigenous peoples’ rights and dignity, says an Asia consultation on “Diversity within Communion: Indigenous People’s Rights.”

06–09.11.07 [DMD] •

DMD organizes the first of a series of study and training meetings for LWF member churches in the Latin America & Caribbean region.

06–09.11.07 • LWF

commits to engagement with many Christian communities, attending the first meeting in Limuru, Kenya, of the Global Christian Forum.



Dr Ishmael Noko with Prof. Joachim Track at the Global Christian Forum. © LWF

30.11–02.12.07 •

The LWF Executive Committee meets in Geneva.

December [DMD]

▪ Published by DMD with the AIPRAL, “Life in All Fullness” promotes dialogue on the ethical and moral aspects of neoliberal globalization.

28.11–02.12.07

[DMD: WICAS] • A regional consultation

on gender and power held in Johannesburg, South Africa, deliberates on practices that prevent women and churches from experiencing their full potential.

12–14.12.07 [OEA] •

Rekindling the work of the All Africa Anglican-Lutheran Theological Commission, a group meets in Johannesburg, South Africa, to foster closer relations between member churches in the two traditions.

18–20.12.07 [OEA]

▪ A preparatory group meets in Bossey, Switzerland, proposing two tasks for the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue: “A Text on the Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017” and “Baptism and Growth in Communion.”

2008

January [DMD:

Youth] ▪ Meeting online in a consultation on climate change, young people ask for better resources to educate themselves.

08–24.01.08 ▪ Students from seminaries in the USA, Canada, Japan, Tanzania, Pakistan, Costa Rica, Ghana, Colombia, and Namibia participate in the annual “The Ecumenical Church in a Globalized World” course.

and build local capacities for disaster preparedness and response as an integral part of the organization’s work.

In order to confront these challenges adequately churches need to be equipped with the necessary capacity. Indeed it would be desirable to renew and re-emphasize the joint commitment of all LWF member churches to the theological, diaconal and advocacy work from a congregational level to the global multilateral platform and operation.

The global context calls for a reassessment of the role of local churches, faith and church-based humanitarian organizations, as well as the dynamic of competition and cooperation between local and global actors. In addition, the relationship of local churches with LWF-related programs, and their respective roles in humanitarian response, disaster preparedness, rehabilitation and development are matters that continually need to be discussed from all sides to ensure common understandings.

The church-related agencies that are the major financial contributors to LWF’s work apply requirements and expectations that change and influence the way joint global diakonia is carried out. The creation of ACT Development and the ACT Alliance, and the increased direct presence of agencies in developing countries, pose new challenges for cooperation between churches and church-related agencies. This new context of ecumenical cooperation calls for the reassessing and redefining of the role and responsibility of the LWF Secretariat, member churches and their related mission and diaconal arms or agencies.

There is still a long way to go in overcoming the divide in the Lutheran communion between “giving” and “receiving” churches. As humanitarian response is becoming increasingly professionalized, there is a pressing need for churches and their agencies to develop closer mutual understanding and cooperation with each other in order to witness to the faith the Lutheran communion confesses and lives out through its diaconal and advocacy work.

Finally, in a renewed LWF, it will be important for these three dimensions— theology, diakonia and advocacy—to continue to be more intentionally woven together, with the necessary resources and staffing, for the sake of a more focused, effective and distinctive public witness of the Lutheran communion in the world.

*Climate change and its consequences: a farmer surveying his cornfield devastated in 2005 by Hurricane Stan.
© LWF/DWS Central America/Nuria Badilla*



It Is About the Whole Community

Access to solar lighting in three remote locations in Mauritania is changing peoples' lives. Children can read at night, women can hold meetings after dark, and traditional midwives can deliver babies at night under more hygienic conditions. Mobile phones can be charged, and economic activities have begun—thanks to the “Women Barefoot Solar Engineers” project that trains rural women in building and maintaining community-based solar systems.

There are several other examples of community empowerment made possible through collaboration between the LWF, its World Service programs, member churches and their related organization. From turning Cambodia's former mine fields into vegetable gardens, to resettling returnees in Southern Sudan, helping small-scale farmers' cooperatives market their coffee in Haiti, rebuilding homes and restoring agricultural and dairy activities in the Balkans, or conducting workshops on financial reporting and auditing for churches in India, the LWF continues to emphasize local capacity-building to ensure sustainability.

In the Strategic Plan for the LWF Secretariat 2007-2011 capacity-building is described as an

instrument “that empowers the whole people of God for participation in God's mission.”

The process includes responsible stewardship among churches to create and develop sustainable structures that make their ministries less vulnerable to various risks including financial crises.

In many places around the world, LWF-supported initiatives promote approaches that offer alternatives to the dominant market-oriented methods often advocated by governments and the global economic forces. The Latin American churches have launched a program on church sustainability, while at the same time taking a leading role in international advocacy on illegitimate foreign debts.

Raising awareness about individual rights and freedom is another level of capacity-building. In Nepal, a former bonded laborer (Haliya) who joined a community group advocating against such slavery, discovered that it was not just his own freedom that was at stake. Eventually, the government freed the Haliyas in 2008, and the man continues to teach others about the right to freedom.

In the end people are empowered to take responsibility for their own livelihoods, structures and community well-being.

Examples of community empowerment: LWF/DWS helps small-scale farmers' cooperatives market their coffee in Haiti. © LWF/DWS Haiti/L. Gustavsson

