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OUR VOICES

ems women's network



ENGLISH

JOINT ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S PRE-CONFERENCE



Evangelical Mission in Solidarity

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Dear women, dear sisters in the International Women's Network,

the new edition of OUR VOICES is here with the title:

JOINT ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT.

Harsh title? Tough and painful reality in all of our churches and mission societies!

The EMS Mission Council has decided to develop a Code of Conduct to prevent sexual harassment within EMS programmes. The Women's Pre-Conference dealt with the topic intensely. Presentations, methodologies and devotions related to "joint action against sexual harassment" are to be found in this edition of Our VOICES.

In June 2019 the upcoming Mission Council will receive a draft of a possible Code of Conduct. Even after an endorsement, concrete implementation must be ensured through collaborative efforts for further sensitization and training programmes.

This edition of OUR VOICES introduces you to three groups of delegates who participated in the Women's Pre-Conference. Working together they focused on sexual harassment in their various churches and home countries:

EMS Liaison Women from Ghana, South Africa, South Korea, Japan, and Indonesia.

The new women joining in are Dr Rima Nasrallah van Saane/Lebanon (her ordination on page 7), Dr Lidya Tandirerung/Indonesia (interview on page 8) and Buyiswa Sambane/South Africa (devotion on page 9).

EMS Women's Advisory Board meets twice a year and supports the Women & Gender Desk.

Female Delegates of the EMS General Assembly convene regularly before the opening of the General Assembly.

Despite Gender Policy and recommendations to respect gender balance in nominating delegates we observe currently a strong imbalance of gender representation among delegates, in Mission Council and Presidium.

Raising our voices remains a tedious challenge we only can do in joint projects and activities.

Thank you to all the women who are responding to that call at home and in governing bodies.

With cordial greetings from Stuttgart

Gabriele Mayer, PhD
EMS Gender Desk
International EMS Women's Network
June 2019

Participating women

Introducing the three groups of delegates participating in EMS Women's Pre-Conference in Neustadt, Germany, December 3rd and 4th, 2018

EMS Women's Advisory Board meeting twice a year, supporting Women and Gender Desk:



from left to right: Gabriele Mayer/EMS, Katharina Goodwin/Moravian Church in Germany, Eva Ursula Krüger/German East Asia Mission, Angelika Maschke/ Protestant Women's Association in Hesse and Nassau, Lore Raudonat/Ev. Women in Württemberg, Annekatrin Schwarz/ Protestant Church Palatinate, Bissy Raj/Protestant Church in Baden/India, Josefina Hurtado/Mission 21, Andrea Wöllenstein/Women's Association/Ev.Church of Kurhessen/Waldeck, Bärbel Wuthe/EMS

EMS Liaison Women:



from left to right: Asao Mochizuki/Japan, Buyiswa Sambane/South Africa, Rebecca Abladey/Ghana, Rima Nasrallah van Saane/Lebanon, Lidya Tandirerung/Indonesia, Hyun Sun OH/South Korea, (Wadia Badr from Lebanon and India N.N missing)



All participants in Women's Pre-Conference including the female delegates of EMS General Assembly

Women's Pre-Conference in Neustadt, December 2018

Gabriele Mayer

Before each EMS General Assembly - which takes place every two years - a Women's Pre-Conference is held with the female delegates of General Assembly (GA) and representatives of the EMS Women's Advisory Board.

This time, in the run up to this year's GA, the Women and Gender Desk combined it with a reunion of EMS Liaison Women, thus joining three bodies:

The Women's Advisory Board, the Liaison Women and the Female Delegates of the General Assembly; in total 27 women from South Korea, Ghana, India, Japan, Indonesia, South Africa, Lebanon, Chile, Germany, and Switzerland.

Some history on EMS Liaison Women

In 2002, the women's association of National Evangelical Church Beirut and women of the Lebanese World Day of Prayer team hosted 40 women from almost all 28 EMS partner churches and mission associations. At the end of this conference so-called "Liaison Women" from each church and mission association were nominated to continue communication and collaboration between their region and the EMS Gender Desk in Stuttgart (see network map on the last page).

They formed "knots" of a growing network among women within the EMS churches.

Unfortunately, face to face encounter were very limited after the meeting in Lebanon in 2002. Regional gatherings such as the Asian women's conference in Bangalore 2013 and the African women's consultation in 2012 in Accra/Ghana took place and brought women from the regions together.

In November 2018, five from a total of seven Liaison Women gathered for a weekend seminar in Stuttgart/Germany two days before joining the EMS Women's Pre-Conference: Rebecca Dowuona/Ghana, Buyiswa Sabane /South Africa, OH Hyun Sun/South Korea, Lidya Tandirerung / Indonesia, Asaoh Mochizuki /Japan.

Currently, the position of the general secretary of CSI Women's Fellowship is vacant. Susan Oommen, the President of Church of South India (CSI) Women's Fellowship substituted and participated in the General Assembly. Wadia Badr from Lebanon could not join for health reasons, but Rima Nasrallah substituted for her.



Rebecca Abladey

Memories of Rebecca:

"I bring you warm felicitations from Ghana thanking the Almighty God and your good office for the opportunity given me to participate in the Women's Pre-Conference to deliberate on the thorny issues affecting women in the area of Sexual Harassment and its Code of Conduct..."

In my opinion, the networking is to keep us in love with unity of purpose and mission...

Inspiration for me

The connectedness and the solidarity I experienced gave me the spirit of belongingness. Sharing of joys and pains of what other women encounter helps to never quit but remain so steadfast to the truth and faith in God.

The painful experience of Rev. Hyun Sun motivated me to be focused on whatever aim and objective I have. Furthermore, how Sisters shared their commitment to the task of gathering women for improved and purposeful living in order to achieve their God given potentials.

I have observed that advocacy for women's work and fraternization boosts self-esteem and enlightens for greater impact in society and nation building.

There is always a ring connecting each one of us and our individual "shawl" representing our diverse cultural values helps us to grow and promote better ecumenism. EMS has been the connecting ring bringing all the affiliated countries for empowerment and leadership skills enhancement."



Buyiswa describes her Understanding about Networking:

"Networking as the action or process of interaction with other women to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts. We are 5 women from different countries. We are actually serving as the link between EMS and our countries. So we are the ones who are at the middle of the circle. At the center we are to hold one another tightly. As we are holding one another we are sharing the feeling with the whole EMS liaison desk.

As hands are joined together that is the sharing of the feeling, the sharing of the load and the sharing of the pain. The sharing then leads to the brainstorming of solutions and suggestions based on what has shared. After brainstorming the discussions are coming out of the circle. Spread to the different levels step by step. But finally the whole world will benefit on how to work out and act on the problems affecting women."

How can we stay connected?

- Installing a WhatsApp Group EMS Liaison Women and skype calls twice a year
Buyiswa writes: "Social media make you really see and feel other women's actions taking place around the world."
- Sending reports for OUR VOICES once per year
- Sharing prayer requests: Buyiswa's request refers to the upcoming national elections in South Africa. 32 parties are registered. "May I ask for your prayers dear sisters that those who win will concentrate on people and deliverance of the people to God – and not about themselves".
- Opportunities for face-to-face meetings should be regularly implemented in the run-up of the Women's Pre-Conference before General Assemblies (every two years).



Buyiswa with Heidrun Perron



Bissy Raj, Bärbel Wuthe, Lidya Tandirerung

Three new women joining the Women's Networking are Rev. Dr Rima Nasrallah van Saane, Rev. Lidya Tandirerung and Buyiswa Sambane.

Introduction of Rev. Dr Rima Nasrallah



Rev. Dr Rima Nasrallah

Marathon that has only just begun

Rima Nasrallah is the third woman to be ordained in the Middle East. The ordination of Rima Nasrallah took place on 11 November 2018 at the same time as the Beirut marathon. The whole inner city was blocked off for the 50,000 participants. The streets were full of families; enthusiastic students manned the stations and afterwards cleared up the rubbish; young women also ran in

veils or in close-fitting sportswear. It was a plethora of different generations, nations and genders – for a brief moment there was a glimpse of the rainbow flag of an LGBT group. All along the route the mood was one of festivity: a surprising warm-up to the ordination ceremony in the afternoon.

In the service of her church for the past 20 years

The kick-off for these festivities went very quickly. The Supervisory Board of the NECB chaired by Reverend Habib Badr unanimously approved the ordination of Rima Nasrallah and fixed the date shortly afterwards. But for the doctor of theology, the "marathon" had started much earlier. At the age of 20, she had offered her services to her church and since then has been active in various functions.

Most of the people attending the service were surprised when they heard that Rima Nasrallah had completed an engineering degree before she started her studies in theology. In 2003, she received her Master of Divinity at the NEST. She then headed the Department for Religious Education and Spiritual Life at the NECB for five years. This was followed by several years preparing for her doctorate in liturgical ritual studies in the Netherlands. Rima Nasrallah is married to the Dutch theologian Wilbert van Saane. They have two children. In 2014, the family returned to Beirut where Rima Nasrallah works as lecturer at the NEST.

Now, many years after she offered her services to her church, she has been ordained – an unusual step in a church context, not to mention in a religious context which is the exclusive domain of male decision-makers.

Change of scene: At the beginning of December 2018, hardly four weeks after her ordination in Beirut, Rima Nasrallah delivers the report of the EMS Women's Pre-conference as new delegate of the international women's network to the plenary session of the EMS General Meeting in Neustadt an der Weinstraße. She is wearing her white collar showing that she is an ordained pastor. I am surprised. Rima explains: If congregations in Lebanon see the photo of her appearance, it is important that they see her in her official function as an ordained pastor. The 11th of November 2018 was more than a magnificent church ceremony. The fact that women can also hold ecclesiastical offices must first sink into the minds and feelings of Arab Christians.

I ask myself whether it is the religious education lecturer speaking, knowing full well the enormous power of role models. Or is it Rima Nasrallah speaking as a far-sighted woman of the church who understands her calling not as a personal milestone but as a marathon which has just started; a marathon which many can join in to bear witness to a diversity of genders that is appropriately inspired by the Gospel.

Gabriele Mayer, PhD
 Source: see imprint

P.S.: Rima Nasrallah will also be our new liaison woman for Lebanon. After more than 20 years Wadia Badr resigned from this task.

Her service for EMS Women's Network will be appreciated during mission council meeting in Lebanon in June 2019.



Beirut Marathon

Interview with Rev. Dr Lidya K. Tandirerung

Gender equity, feminist theology and interreligious dialogue are topics close to your heart. What influence did the international network of the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity have on your professional career?



Rev. Dr Lidya K. Tandirerung

I have always been excited about these issues. As a young, newly ordained pastor I worked for the Toraja Church of Rantelemono in 1995. There, at that time, the women's network of the Toraja Church came together and worked on a project financed by EMS on the empowerment of children with disabilities. Shortly thereafter, I was sent by the Toraja Church as a youth delegate to the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI). At these gatherings, the EMS was a regular guest and left a lasting impression. Later, the Indonesian member churches of the EMS community approached me and asked me to become a Liaison Woman on the EMS International Women's Network.

It is of particular concern to me to bring women's perspectives into the international debates on religion and culture. At the moment, I am particularly concerned

with the topic of sexual harassment and violence and how this topic is being dealt with in different cultures.

The issue of sexual harassment and violence is also being discussed with high commitment in the EMS International Women's Network, especially with regard to a possible Code of Conduct against Sexual Harassment. Can you give us an insight into the current discussion?

The problem is that the need for a Code of Conduct against Sexual Harassment is not always recognised. A response to the proposed Code of Conduct is often the question: What do we need this for? After all, we have Christian values!

But sexual harassment also occurs within the churches and even in Christian families, be it through words, language or through physical contact. But in different cultural contexts, certain behaviors are evaluated differently. Some things are socially accepted in a certain environment but are not accepted elsewhere.

A Code of Conduct is particularly necessary in an international organisation, where different cultures meet regularly and within the EMS community.

The patterns of behaviour accepted at a local level can be experienced in another cultural context as invasive behaviour. An awareness of this problem must be initiated. Accordingly, it is important to set a framework for these international encounters in which all members find themselves and which are fair to all parties involved.

How is this complex issue being dealt with in Indonesia? What cultural differences are striking?

Basically, I feel that the subject is more topical than ever. The #MeToo debate has brought enormous attention to the issue – also in Indonesia. In the Western part of the world this issue is being dealt with more openly. But even in these countries it is still difficult to talk about sexualized violence or to ask for help. To fight against this kind of power abuse we must speak up. I feel that in Indonesia, too, more and more women are standing up, no longer accepting certain ways of behaviour. I think we are at the beginning of a long journey.

For the EMS, as an international organization, to move forward and adopt a Code of Conduct would be a decisive step towards more gender justice and an important sign to all members of the EMS community.

Her areas of expertise are religious studies, ecumenism, feminist theology and gender equity. She is involved in the Network of Women Theologians in Indonesia (PERUATI) and the Interfaith Women's Network for the Study of Religion and Culture. Lidya Tandirerung is also the EMS Liaison Woman of the nine Indonesian member churches in the EMS International Women's Network. As a lecturer, she participates in interfaith exchange programs and regularly teaches at Alauddin Islamic State University in Makassar.

The interview was conducted by Thorsten Krüger, EMS Online-Editor.

Devotion by Buyiswa Sambane

"Let us be Sheperd"

„Sisters in Christ, kindly join me and let us sing together hymn 107 on our hymn books.

I am going to read the watchword for today on the Moravian Church daily texts.“

When the shepherd has found the lost sheep, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. Luke 15:5

„Luke 15:5 is basically affecting us as women. There are so many lost sheep outside there. They may be lost in different ways e.g. it may be through violence encountered along the journey of life, lack of trust, abuse, anger. But they belong to us. As we are all gathered here tonight. We are like the shepherd looking for the lost sheep but the sheep we are looking for is:

HUMANITY (UBUNTU)
 CONFIDENTIALITY
 TRUST
 LACK OF LOVE

The world has lost humanity in such a way that mothers think twice when they are about to leave their children with male member relatives.

It is difficult to share the abuse to elders as they sometimes react heartless by accusing the victim of lying when reporting a form of abuse.

If you walk in the streets may be at night, if you see a stranger coming your way you lose trust and think on how am I going to defend myself incase of attack or abuse.

In our days, people who love purely are very few. People pretend to love and yet they are looking for benefits and pay by hurting.

We can go around and try to look for the above mentioned lost sheep and see if we can not rescue our beautiful world from the Hungry Lions outside longing to destroy our lives. If we stand divided we might fall. If we stand up together and say with one voice "Count on me on fighting women and children abuse" the lost sheep can be found and we can rejoice. Let us be shepherd and ask God to assist us. Let us sing Lords prayer.“

Benediction

Amen



Buyiswa Sambane is EMS liaison woman for Moravian Church in South Africa and a teacher in Johannesburg.

Developing an EMS Code of Conduct against Sexual Harassment

The Mission Council mandated the Gender Desk to contribute towards the development of an EMS Code of Conduct. CoC is an agreement by the organization/ leadership to implement and follow specific guidelines that help preventing sexual harassment or deal with it in a safe and fair way for both the survivor and the perpetrator.

Within the EMS Head Office a working group was formed, updates to governing bodies were given, and in

December 2018 the women's preconference was dealing with that topic intensively: listening to voices from all the participants and experts and unearthing, in a joint effort, what might be crucial aspects for the EMS Code of Conduct.

Beforehand, participants had been invited to identify examples from their churches and countries. Several methodological steps were taken during the conference.

EXERCISE:

"Finding your place" in the conference room thinking about the following questions:

- Is the term Code of Conduct new in your church setting?
- Do you know one?
- Do your friends talk about sexual harassment?
- Do you know a Space to address it?

PLENARY:

Listening to brief reports: What is happening in your country?

- Ghana • Lebanon • Germany
- Young volunteers abroad

FIVE GROUPS:

Sharing one anonymized example you know of from your:

- neighbourhood • church • school

PLENARY:

Listening to reports: How do churches respond?
PCK (Dr OH Hyun Sun), LWF mission 21 (Dr Elaine Neuenfeldt)

FIVE GROUPS:

Sharing on initiatives that address and prevent "sexual harassment"

PLENARY:

Body exercise – breathing exercise

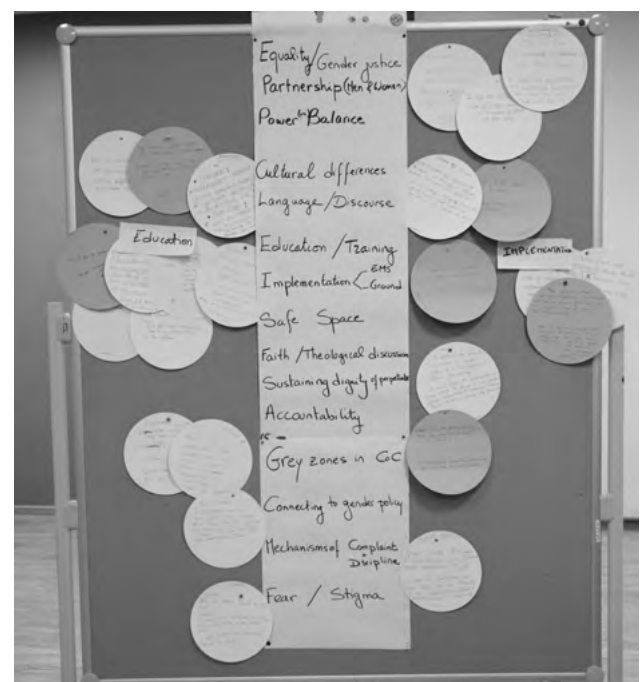
Taking individual notes:

- What is my concern/question for developing an EMS Code of Conduct?

All written responses were clustered and taken up for the plenary discussion the other morning. Which aspects are important to be shared with the General Meeting and the respective report Dr Rima Nasrallah will have to present.

Gabriele Mayer

(See page 16 Women's Report to General Assembly)



Clustered Answers

Sexual harassment: Every second female volunteer affected

Kathrin Lehrbach, Coordinator of EMS Ecumenical Youth Volunteers Programme (EYVP)

In our North-South Exchange programme, we regularly send between 25 and 30 young people to volunteer in projects and institutions of our EMS member churches outside Germany. Most of these volunteers are young women in the age group of 18-22 years. All volunteers stay for 6 to 10 months in countries where they have never been before. They try to fit into the new cultural environment and build relationships with people who have grown up in a society with different social rules and values. Although most experiences made are very positive, there are also negative experiences, that have a lasting effect on the volunteers. Some experiences are even traumatizing.

During our evaluation process, after the volunteers' return to Germany, we work with the volunteers on those negative experiences with a theatre therapist. Many situations that come up involve the general topic of sexual harassment. About 50 percent of all female volunteers had to experience sexual harassment in different situations. Incidents range from men following them around persistently, ignoring personal boundaries, pressing against them on crowded busses, taking pictures without permission, groping them and in a few cases even threatening them with violence. Most of these incidents occur in daily life situations, on public transport, in supermarkets, on the streets and sometimes even at work.

In some cases, the volunteers ask for help and situations can be resolved with the assistance of other locals who intervene on their behalf. But in other cases volunteers feel ashamed and insecure and do not know how to talk about it. In some cases, volunteers contacted us several years later because it took them so long to find the courage to talk about what happened to them.

We are very concerned about the large number of incidents that affect almost every second female volunteer. We do not believe that this is a problem only in certain countries or dangerous neighbourhoods, though. This also happens in Germany, in families, on trains and at work. However, we are convinced that young women living in a new cultural environment may be more vulnerable: They do not know all the written and unwritten social rules. Non-verbal and verbal signals from others often cannot be interpreted correctly, in return their own signals are misunderstood. They are actively seeking new relationships and contacts – something that requires an open-minded attitude. In this process the young women often lower measures of precaution and are thus more vulnerable.

But what can we do? One way to respond would be to keep them at home and limit their movement to supervised outings. Basically, this is often the first reaction from host families or supervisors when they learn about incidents. They want to protect the volunteers and restrict their movements. This is sometimes one of the reasons why young women won't talk about it. They are afraid of limitations or even being blamed. Why did you go there? Why did you wear this dress? These or similar questions often leave the blame with the young women and not the person who harassed them. The consequence of such reactions might be counterproductive: If more and more women stay at home and are not frequenting public spaces in big numbers, the overall safety for the few women who do go out, will decrease.

We try to make our volunteers strong and confident. We teach them to know their personal boundaries and defend these with a very clear: No! Do not come closer! And we teach them to ask for help in case something happens. But we also try to create awareness and speak openly with the institutions and responsible persons in the hosting churches about the topic of sexual violence and harassment. It is a big challenge sometimes because this topic is not yet freely discussed. In many cases the attitude is that women should be more careful. But the discussion rarely turns to men's responsibility to make sure that the surroundings are safe for everyone.

It is important to communicate these challenges in our international community rather than keeping them secret. We have to find a way to talk freely about such issues in order to build a strong and secure network for all genders and ages. We are just beginning the discussion: First, we have to fight against shame, guilt and bad habits. We hope that an officially adopted Code of Conduct is a first step in openly talking about difficult issues and bringing about positive change.



Kathrin Lehrbach

Response from Presbyterian Church of South Korea



Manual of Prevention and Response to Sexual Violence in the Church
published in 2018 by PCK.

Incidents of sexual violence in the Church is one of the ongoing hot issues in the Korean Church. These shadows have been put aside and hidden in the name of stabilization of the Church.

However, Korean society has tremendously developed in regard of human rights including feminism since Korean people's candle rights revolution in 2016/17.



Rev. Dr. Hyun Sun OH

In 2018, the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) established a responsible committee against sexual violence in the Church. They also published "A Manual of Prevention and Response to Sexual Violence in the Church."

This short guide book draws the ethical principles of Christians, confession of faith, concepts of sexual violence, tasks to be done by local churches, presbyteries, General Assembly, guidelines for victims of sexual violence in the church, to-do-lists of congregation members and pastors, and call numbers of hotlines and contact groups/networks.

I hope that this small step done by PCK can be a stepping stone for Korean Christians who were sexually victimized and searching for a path to more women's liberation.

Dr OH Hyun Sun

Reponse from Protestant Church in Baden Sexual Harassment – In Germany? Paradise Germany?

Dr Urte Bejick, responsible for World Day of Prayer and Ecumenism at Evangelical Women at Protestant Church in Baden

Colleagues working in pastoral care in nursing homes tell of elderly women shouting and crying without visible reason, and try to avoid being touched. Some of these women were raped during and after World War II, but never spoke about it. Now, at the end of their lives, the traumatic experiences rise up again. These women are the mothers and grandmothers of my generation, the generation now in their sixties. And they transposed their silence on to us. Harassment, to be molested by men - it was normal, it was some sort of education, a way to learn what it means to be female. You don't want to be harassed? Then don't dress like a slut!

These times are past. Many young women consider their current experiences to be normal: women can learn, study, travel, become chancellor. So - what's the problem?

While young girls are taught to offer resistance, women in my generation had learnt a different approach: It's your fault! It's your body, your dress, your attitude! Young girls today learn: It's not your body or dress. But maybe it's your anxiety, your behaviour, your lack of self-confidence. Maybe it is your fault, too?

#MeToo

The “#MeToo” campaign has reached Germany. In the public sphere it was mostly actresses who revealed harassment by film producers or directors. So for a time this subject was very present in the press.

The discussion revolved around the question: What is harassment? Touching, words, clumsy flirting, awkward compliments? What is flirting, and what is harassment? And how should one react? How to report it, how to provide evidence of it?

„#Ausnahmslos“ (=without exception)

In Cologne, on New Year's Eve 2015, some hundred women were harassed in a way previously unreported in Germany. They were surrounded by men, robbed, harassed, touched, some of them raped. The police did not react, and the first police reports of the next morning spoke of a „quiet, normal night “. This form of violence, occurring in other large cities such as Hamburg as well, was new to Germany. And: the offenders/perpetrators were mostly men from Northern Africa, young men with insecure residence-permits. This came as a shock. And an opportunity for the Rightist, populist movement in Germany.

To avert a takeover of the discourse by Rightists, the hashtag „Ausnahmslos“ (“without exception”) was started. In Germany, such violence is also found in families and in relationships. Shelters for battered women are closed because of a supposed lack of money. „Ausnahmslos“ wants to show that violence not only comes from the outside, from strangers, it also comes from the midst of German society.



Making visible who addresses the topic of Sexual Harassment currently

Harassment and Politics

Reinforced in their opinion by Cologne as well as other incidents such as rapes and murders committed by refugees, the Rightist movement attempted to occupy the subject. They act as supporters of women's rights, as fighters for the female freedom to go out at night. The populist party AfD („Alternative for Germany“) used the theme „violence of refugees against women“ (not: male violence!) for their election campaign. They stylized women as victims who require protection by the strong, European men they hope to approach. Yet by stirring up fear of strangers, they convince many women of their victimhood as well.

Report by the German Federal Police Office 2018

Violence and harassment are no new experiences, introduced from the outside. The latest Police Report (20.11.2018) reports: Every five minutes a woman is battered, stalked, threatened with violence. This happens in relationships and families. For a lot of women, home is a dangerous place. As the political magazine „Der Spiegel“ titled: „The greatest danger for women? Their husband.“ In 2018, 113.965 women were identified as victims of domestic violence.

Abuse in the Churches

A further subject has been prominent for years: Sexual abuse of children in the RC Church. Then, in 2018, the synod of the Protestant Church „Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland“ (EKD) decided to provide 1.3 million Euro for the recompense of victims of sexual violence and harassment in their church. There will also be independent commissions located in our regional churches and advice centres.

„Attention“- A Training course in Baden

In our Protestant Church in Baden, we started a project in 2015 called „Alle Achtung“. „Achtung“ means „attention“ but also „respect“. It is a training and a codex for anyone in the church who works with children or adult proteges. The goal: to respect boundaries, and to protect children and persons with handicaps from abuse. It does not pertain particularly to the harassment of women but some aspects may be useful to us, since harassment is the first step to abuse and violence.

The concept consists of five elements:

- *Analysis of risks*

This means: Which places, structures, situations may be risky or invite a violation of boundaries? Which places have hazardous contents? What about the imbalance of power? Which structures are prone to an abuse of power or authority?

- *Intervention*

Where to report or to get help and advice?

How to apologize for involuntary harassments?

- *Prevention*

- *Trainings, Codes of Conduct*

- *Help and advice by offering contact addresses*

In all church districts there exist teams for such training. There is a basic training on cultivating a culture of respect:

- the rights of children or protégés,
- one's own boundaries and the boundaries of others,
- the definition of transgression or harassment
- a codex of behavior
- possible actions

www.alleachtung.net

How to build a Code of Conduct – Experiences & Learning

Rev. Dr Elaine Neuenfeldt gathered ten years of experience as Secretary for Women in Church and Society, Department for Theology and Public Witness, at the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), since 2018 temporary contract with Mission21, Basel.

The points collected here are learning results from the LWF and Mission 21 process to build, adopt and implement their Code of Conduct against Sexual Harassment (CoC).

It is of utmost importance to talk about sexual harassment, to *address it institutionally*, to introduce the topic in discussions and organizational workshops and trainings.

Discussions must be understandable and relevant to churches, it is very much needed to *ground it in theology* and to make faith connection visible and meaningful.

In the process of building a CoC it is crucial to have the institutional *leadership commitment*. It must have an intentional institutional process, with Human resources unit taking the lead, with advise on methodology and content lead by women and gender desks/programs – to ensure a critical gender perspective to the process.

Ownership must be ensured, it is crucial to *make a participatory process*, with spaces and steps of discussion involving partners, taking into account local cultural differences and obstacles or opportunities to address sexual harassment and abuse of power.

It is important to have a broad understanding of *the different concepts and nuances* of the topic: a comprehensive glossary and the political use of the concepts is crucial: PSEAH – Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Harassment; sexual harassment, abuse of power, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), etc.

There is a need to have complementary documents like, *complaints mechanisms*, check lists, or guidelines making clear steps on how to deal with concrete cases and some hints or suggestions on how to implement it in local organizations. LWF; WCRC and ACT Alliance developed a CoC to be used in meetings.

Implementation of a CoC is indispensable with designed *trainings and workshops*, to promote a broad understanding of the topic especially to address the “grey zones/areas” where abuse of power is more clearly perceived, and maybe not yet a clear sexual harassment situation. The power relations which sometimes take place in meetings (older men, in leadership positions and young women (or men) as youth delegates, or participants fulfilling quota – can be a place for non-balanced relations and may lead

to abuse of power. A Code of Conduct for meetings is very useful to deal with situations that might happen.



Rev. Dr Elaine Neuenfeldt

Some useful links:

https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/lwf_code_of_conduct_january_2015_english_0.pdf

https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/lwf_code_of_conduct_events_june_2015_english.pdf

https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/lwf_complaints_mechanism_june_2015.pdf

<http://wcrc.ch/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Guidelines-for-Dealing-with-Sexual-Harassment-EN.pdf>

Women's Report to the General Assembly

This Official Report of the EMS Women's Pre-Conference in Neustadt/Germany was submitted to the Plenary of the EMS General Assembly by Rev. Dr Rima Nasrallah van Saane

Dr Rima Nasrallah is the new delegate of EMS International Women's Network to EMS General Assembly (GA), gathering once in two years. After introducing the three groups of participants, namely liaison women, female delegates of GA and women's advisory board, Rima shared... Two main topics were discussed:

I. Code of Conduct against Sexual Harassment.

Within the context of the mandate of the Mission Council in Stellenbosch, the women's pre-conference took up the challenge to reflect from their own experiences on sexual harassment. The participants reported on the realities of their countries, laws and initiatives to prevent harassment. One participant shared: 'The experience of many is that the impact of harassment can last a lifetime'. They shared about efforts in some churches, particularly those who have already something in place, to regulate and prevent inappropriate conduct in church context. Another hoped 'perpetrators will understand how much their acts also hurt their own dignity' 'There is a need for clear rules/systems to deal with misconduct in all represented countries even in places where gender balance seems to be a bit more fair (for example we heard that in Germany every five minutes a woman is battered, stalked, menaced with violence; in Lebanon 31% of women experience intimate partner violence).

It is not easy to talk about such a topic especially in an intercultural - international setting. The women pre-conference offered safe spaces of small groups where the participants could share their observations, experiences and hopes regarding this issue. It also had an agreement that information shared should not leave the small groups and that confidentiality is guaranteed; participants were supposed to use anonymous examples.

We collected concerns and questions that the discussion engendered. Here are some areas highlighted for further development:

1. There is a need for a theological, Biblical and **faith grounding** of the discussion of the Code of Conduct where concepts such as the Imago Dei can play a role. The reflection must be embedded in our ecclesiological understanding: Who are we as Church and body of Christ? And how can we sustain the dignity of both victims and perpetrators?

2. In an international setting, **cultural differences** might create misunderstandings, obstacles and confusion. Therefore, in developing a Code of Conduct we should address our differences as diverse genders and contexts.

3. We live in a world of power imbalance and this affects how different genders interact. EMS already has a **Gender Policy in place** which strives for equality and gender justice inspired by Galatians 3:26. We wish to see the Code of Conduct as another concrete implementation of this policy and in continuation with it for the upholding of the dignity of both men and women.

4. The **power imbalance** between different generations, ecclesial positions, educational and economic background needs to be addressed in order to understand the dynamics of harassment.

5. This is why it is important that the leadership of our churches take responsibility and acknowledge that this is not simply a woman's issue but **a thorn in the entire body of the Church** that can hinder its ministry and harm the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

6. The Code of Conduct will **call for training** and education on all levels so that we optimize its impact.

7. **Procedures** should be put in place for victims to be able to submit complaints and for perpetrators to be held accountable.

The pre-conference strongly urges the Mission Council to receive the draft in its next meeting and see to its implementation as this is perceived as a pressing matter. We would like to see the **governing bodies of EMS take responsibility** for this matter and make sure this will be implemented as a step in our pilgrimage towards justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

II. Basic Training on Impact Oriented Planning of Projects with particular focus on women.

As a response to the proposal by the international Pro Pro Committee of the Mission Council, the pre-conference offered an introduction and a training on how to plan impact oriented projects. The Pro Pro Committee had observed that very few applications were coming from women and for women who in many cases are working relentlessly within their churches to raise funds.

The participants were introduced to the EMS funding policy, its aims, criteria and standards. Christine Groetzinger explained the basic principles and proceedings of Impact Oriented Project Management, encouraging the women to develop their project skills. Space was also given for the women to practice in teams supporting each other in understanding the process of drafting project proposals.

Conclusion:

The pre-conference was framed and embedded in a spiritual and worshipful context where the participants shared in leading worship, introducing songs from their cultures and voicing their prayer concerns, sharing their sorrows and joys.

The participants agreed that bringing together the three parties: liaison women, women's advisory board and the women delegates together with the female youth delegates was fruitful and needed and they recommend that such a comprehensive meeting be regularly held.



Rev. Dr Rima Nasrallah

Joseph being harrassed

Opening Worship of the Women's Pre-Conference



Genesis 39: 6-20
© see imprint

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, we come to you at the beginning of this week from many different places
We come to you at the beginning of Advent with many different expectations.

Open our heart that we may receive each other and bless each other's culture.
Open our mind that we may be enriched and enrich each other.

Incarnate God, you have taken up flesh and experienced a human body
You have known thirst and hunger, you have known shame and pain.

Receive us as we come to you, each in our particular and different body.
Help us as we share its joys and its pains, help us to cherish it and protect it.

Spirit God, you act and work within our countries and churches
You know our secrets and are acquainted with our ways

Break into our experience and change our minds and lives
Blow in our midst, renew, heal and transform us. Amen

Response: Magnificat



Meditation

Joseph and the wife of Potiphar

"This is a very unique and disturbing story. It is often interpreted in the line of Joseph's purity and his bravery in resisting the temptation, and in line of Potiphar's wife, a woman without a name.

When I was looking for a good artwork to accompany my meditation, I came across dozens and dozens of paintings and etchings where Potiphar's wife is portrayed naked and lounging while Joseph is running away completely dressed. Not only is she portrayed naked but we can see very suggestive parts of her body while she poses in a seductive erotic way. More in the pose of a prostitute. But is this a story of seduction versus purity? I think not.

If I were to paint this narrative, I would paint a fully dressed woman standing powerfully and purposefully intimidating a young man who is afraid and overpowered. This is a story of harassment. Potiphar's wife was a powerful woman, living in a large house with servants and assistants who would do whatever she asks them to; otherwise they end up in jail.

She fancied this new young man, just hired by her husband and wanted him to herself despite the fact that he did not seem to be willing. She kept trying to 'beg' until she decided to set up a trap. The great house was empty! She wanted no witnesses, no one who would hear him object, no one who would save him from what she was about to do.

The powerful woman did not only use her position and wit to get what she wanted from this young man but she even used physical force ...catching him as he tried to escape and only capturing his cloak. A woman who is used to getting what she wants cannot handle rejection easily but rather seeks revenge. Although she was the offender she later presented herself a victim and Joseph as the offender. And to gain sympathy and support from those around her she played on certain sentiments.

To the other servants who might feel solidarity with Joseph, Potiphar's wife used the race language. That Hebrew, He is not one of you, you cannot side with him, she claimed. To others, mostly to her husband, she used the class language: That slave you brought. She takes away his name: he is that other who is to shame us; we who are the non-Hebrew and the non-slaves.

The victim was thus punished and humiliated. This story embodies to us a typical process of GBV (Gender Based Violence) that we see, mostly in the work place, but also elsewhere. It is a shocking story to our ears because our experience tells us that Joseph – though a young man here – represents countless women in our world who stand before a powerful employer or superior, experience a series of advances, and even after clearly saying no, would still be approached and touched (if not more). Moreover, in most cases the aggressor plays the role of the victim and the victim loses her job, her reputation and even her future prospect.

Scripture mentions this unusual story of a female aggressor, but scripture is silent about male aggressors. Could it be because GBV against women was seen as normal and therefore not worth mentioning? Could it be that it is mostly kept silent as a societal shared secret and that scripture writers did not see the point in exposing it?

Whatever the reason, We should not be silent as Joseph kept silent. Joseph, a Hebrew, a slave, a new comer, could not speak because no one would listen to him; no one would believe him. Many of us feel the same. Our ethnic background, social status or other attribute could keep us from speaking up or speaking against the aggressors, since we know the aggressors will use our background to discredit us. Standing in a network of sisterhood and brotherhood, it is here that we are called to solidarity just like the fellow slaves should have stood in solidarity with Joseph. The epistle to the Romans leaves us with this command:

Be sincere with your love for each other. Hate everything that is evil. And hold tight to everything that is good. Love each other as brothers and sisters and honour one another more than you do yourself. So may God help us in striving towards this. Amen."

By Rev. Dr Rima Nasrallah

Intercessory prayer:

Let us turn to God in prayer: We pray for men and women who hold positions of leadership and power within the Church, that they may use their power to empower all those around them and bring them to full dignity into the image of God.

Lord, hear our prayers.

We pray for women and men who experience violence and exploitation in our countries and around the world that they may find healing, safety and the courage to speak up.

Lord, hear our prayers.

We pray for all women and men in our churches, that we may find new ways to work together in a partnership of equals having mutual respect as brothers and sisters.

Lord, hear our prayers.

We pray for our meetings this week that we may grow in communion and find ways to support and encourage each other.

Lord, hear our prayers.

We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ who is alive and reigns with You and in unity with the Holy Spirit one God, now and forever. Amen.

Encouragement by an Angry Mary

Rev. Angelika Maschke, Protestant Women in Hesse and Nassau, Germany

The Gothic Cathedral of Ely in Cambridgeshire in England is a beautiful place, with colourful ceiling plastering, art treasures and luminous glass windows. A busy place on this day, more than 600 schoolchildren had come on buses and had a guided tour through the cathedral.

Quite the opposite was the great Lady Chapel, an annex built at the back end. It was quiet here. There were many empty niches in light grey sandstone, up to the high ceiling. Once there had been figures in the niches, sculptures of holy women and men, pictures of Mary. But they had been smashed, beheaded, broken out during the English Reformation. Remains were still visible in some places. The Lady Chapel, dedicated to Mary – quiet, bald, bleak.

I already wanted to turn and leave with sadness and then, suddenly, I saw the statue of Mary directly above the altar. That's where she stood. Her size much more than life-size, her hair and belt in gold plating. And then the bright blue of her dress. What a contrast to the plain grey of the walls. Her arms stretched up, her face concentrated, eyes closed.

My God, she looks angry, I thought. She seemed to be stirred up by the suffering and destruction that took place in the name of God. Here in the chapel the suffering of many Marys and Annas, Catherines and Marthas and Magdalenas, but much more so about what had been done in the name of God to the nameless women throughout history. Persecution, coercion, violence. I took a deep breath and was glad about the anger of this Mary.

And I saw even more than anger. The arms stretched up to heaven. "O Saviour, tear open the heavens!" She is calling to God for help... so that healing can begin. Her position shows that she is full of hope and is making herself ready to receive God's blessing. With closed eyes, very focused. In this moment God is giving her the strength to act. And in this moment, she is very present and wide awake.

This young and passionate Mary is a survivor. God's presence gives her dignity. In her anger and in her hope. In a moment, she will begin to sing her song, the Magnificat. I can almost hear it.....



*Blessed Virgin Mary (2000), sculptor: David Wynne
Photo by Leo Reynolds (with courtesy)*

Praying with our whole body

Moving

I invite you to stand up and move. Just walk around.

We have listened to reports
about women suffering
about what they are fighting for, all over the world.

It was not only listening to many words,
but also holding the burden of our sisters
touching our hearts, and
now feeling it on our shoulders.

So let's just start walking through the room...

Feel the ground under your feet,
solid ground, connected to the ground
Mother earth, as many cultures tenderly call it.

Find a place and
Stop for a moment.

Breathing

Get in contact with your breath
take a few long deep breaths
filling the lungs up with air and slowly
releasing your breath.
deep breaths entering and leaving the body.

With each exhalation you let go of some tension.
Give weight to the ground and allow
the ground to support you.

And with each inhalation you invite
new strength and vitality
Cold air flows in, warm air flows out
Follow the breath. Allow the breath to anchor you

Shaking

I invite you to shake a bit. Start with your right arm...
Maybe you know the Christian community of the
shakers,
founded in the US in the late 18th century.
They had a special ritual at the beginning of their
services:
They would shake the body, a kind of dance.
And with this shaking they wanted to shake off the evil.

Turn to the left arm. So we shake off tension and some
of the burden which is paralyzing us.
It is a physical sensation, but we know
that it has an impact on our whole being, body and
soul.

Legs. jiggering the whole body,
bend and straighten your knees just a little bit.
Do this over and over again, until you find a rhythm.

*Rev. Andrea Wöllenstein, Women's Association in
Evangelical Church of Kurhessen-Waldeck*

Prayer of release and protection

I release and let go
I breathe deeply, I open to divine light, to the blessing
of God.
I invite the heavenly light into my mind, into my heart,
and into my body.
I hold the light.
I pray for protection, for myself and for all my sisters.

by Nadia Keran



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

From Lebanon

The World Day of Prayer English worship service was held on Friday, March 1, 2019, at the Near East School of Theology (NEST) in Beirut. The theme was "Come-Everything Is Ready." Women and men from different churches attended the service.

At the entrance of the church red envelopes in the form of a heart were distributed to each person coming to the service. They were prepared by Mrs. Samia Boulad of the National Evangelical Church of Beirut (NECB). Inside the envelope was written

"God's Love is Calling You
... Come to my banquet. R.S.V.P!"

All the prayers focused on thanking God for the fruitful vineyards, green forests, singing birds and the beautiful nature of Slovenia. Dr. Nadine Mouadieh (of NECB) prayed for the people of Slovenia and Lebanon. She asked God to provide food, health care and education to everyone in need. Nadine also played the flute accompanied by Mrs. Esther Kilaghabian from the Armenian Evangelical Church of Beirut, while the children of the Armenian Evangelical Sunday School were singing "Come to my Banquet."

The keynote address was delivered by the Rev. Najla Kassab of the Presbyterian Church of Syria and Lebanon and current president of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). She focused on God's commandment for us to take care of the needy, especially foreigners, refugees and all those who have no one to help them. She talked about the importance of empathy, and drew our attention to the distinction between service and hospitality. At the end of the service the audience read together the following prayer:

"Good God, help us to respect human life and to accept it in its uniqueness. Help us to respect the wonders of our nature and to protect them with all our power, to mutually support one another on the path of freedom, justice and peace, as equal members of your family. May we be blessed in this endeavor by God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." Amen.

When the service ended, red carnations were distributed to the audience.



WDP worship at NEST



Children of the Armenian Evangelical Sunday School

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

From South Korea

Hyun Sun Oh reports:

It is great to experience women's fellowship through EMS. OUR VOICES is a bridge to connect with the women in the world.

The women in the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) and Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) have their own women's associations and they are also working with "Korea Church Women United" (KCWU).

KCWU have seven membership churches in Korea. They all celebrate World Day of Prayer (WDP) every year. On March 19th, they gathered to worship with this year's liturgy from Slovenia under the title "Come – Everything Is Ready".

One of the PCK local Christian women's gathering held the worship with some pastors from PROK as well.

In Gwangju, through the "Space Elisabeth" (representative is Hyun Sun Oh) a worship service was celebrated with WDP liturgy for March 24th, 2019. This liturgy was translated by KCWU. They sent 100 liturgy booklets to Space Elisabeth for this worship.



Rev. Hyun Sun Oh



World Day of Prayer at Space Elisabeth

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

From Japan

Asao Mochizuki sends greetings:

WDP takes place all over the world. Despite different time zones the same liturgy is celebrated. There is not friend or foe. We are all united in this worship service through God.

In 1974 the liturgy came from Japan and Christians all over the world prayed for Japan. God listens to the prayers. Japanese Christians feel this.

The situation in Japan is very difficult at the moment – please pray for us!



Rev. Asao Mochizuki

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

From Nigeria

Riley Edwards Raudonat, former EMS Liaison Secretary Africa, presently in Nigeria, writes:

I had an unexpected encounter this past Thursday with the World Day of Prayer in Pegi, Nigeria (near Abuja). As I was leaving after a prayer meeting with the local church Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa (EYN / COB), the pastor's wife Elisabeth Daniel showed me a document in the Hausa language. I speak no Hausa, but when I looked at the paper, I immediately recognized the word "Slovenia". The paper was the liturgy for the WDP worship service the following day.

Pegi is way off the beaten path. Accessible only by dirt roads, it is an entity all to itself. If the World Day of Prayer has reached Pegi, it truly is a world wide movement.



Women's Fellowship of EYN Church in Pegi celebrating WDP

Letter of farewell

Rev. Dn Synthia Sobha Rani Chopra from India



Rev. Dn. CHOPRA SYNTHIA SOBHA RANI
2008 - 2018

I, Praise and Thank God for the blessings that God has given to me to get to know and be a part of EMS Family. My journey with EMS started way back in 2009 April when I first attended the International Workshop on HIV/AIDS in Matatiele in South Africa. The workshop was an eye opener to me when I encountered HIV/AIDS affected people.

Bärbel Wuthe, and Jerda Djawa, the then delegate of EMS International Women's Network.

We could listen and learn on cultures and customs of each country and discover the commonalities the countries were facing especially in regard to gender injustices. The CSI Women's Fellowship work was highly appreciated by the EMS during the visits to CSI WF Bangalore as well as their visits to the Project and Programs of CSI WF in the dioceses, and also in submission of accounts for the programs supported by EMS.

EMS was a home for me whenever I attended the General Assembly Meeting, Mission Council, Pro-Pro Committee or the workshop in Germany and other Countries. I thank the EMS especially, the Pro-Pro Committee for approving applications for the Women's Fellowship projects during these ten years that many lives were transformed and enabled the women to learn to live in dignity in the family, church and the society.

The friendship with EMS enabled me to go into grass root level of women to study the needs of them and help them to overcome their difficult situations, wherever and whatever I could. The impact of love and friendship of every one in EMS transformed me to show the love, care and concern to people seeing through the eyes of another.

From then onwards, the relationship continued with EMS as I was working for the CSI Women's Fellowship as a General Secretary. At the General Assembly Meeting in 2012, I was elected as a Pro-Pro Committee Member for the South – East Asia. Members are screening all applications for programs and projects, writing a proposal for Mission Council which applications should be revised or which can be accepted.

As a General Secretary CSI WF, I also had the task of the Liaison Woman for India CSI WF to work with the Women and Gender Desk at EMS Secretariat. Programs were conducted on Gender Equality and "Reading the Bible through the Eyes of Another".

With deepest heartfelt gratitude I thank the EMS for the appreciation certificate given to me during the Platinum Jubilee celebrations of CSI WF September 27, 2018 by recognizing my services to CSI WF with EMS.

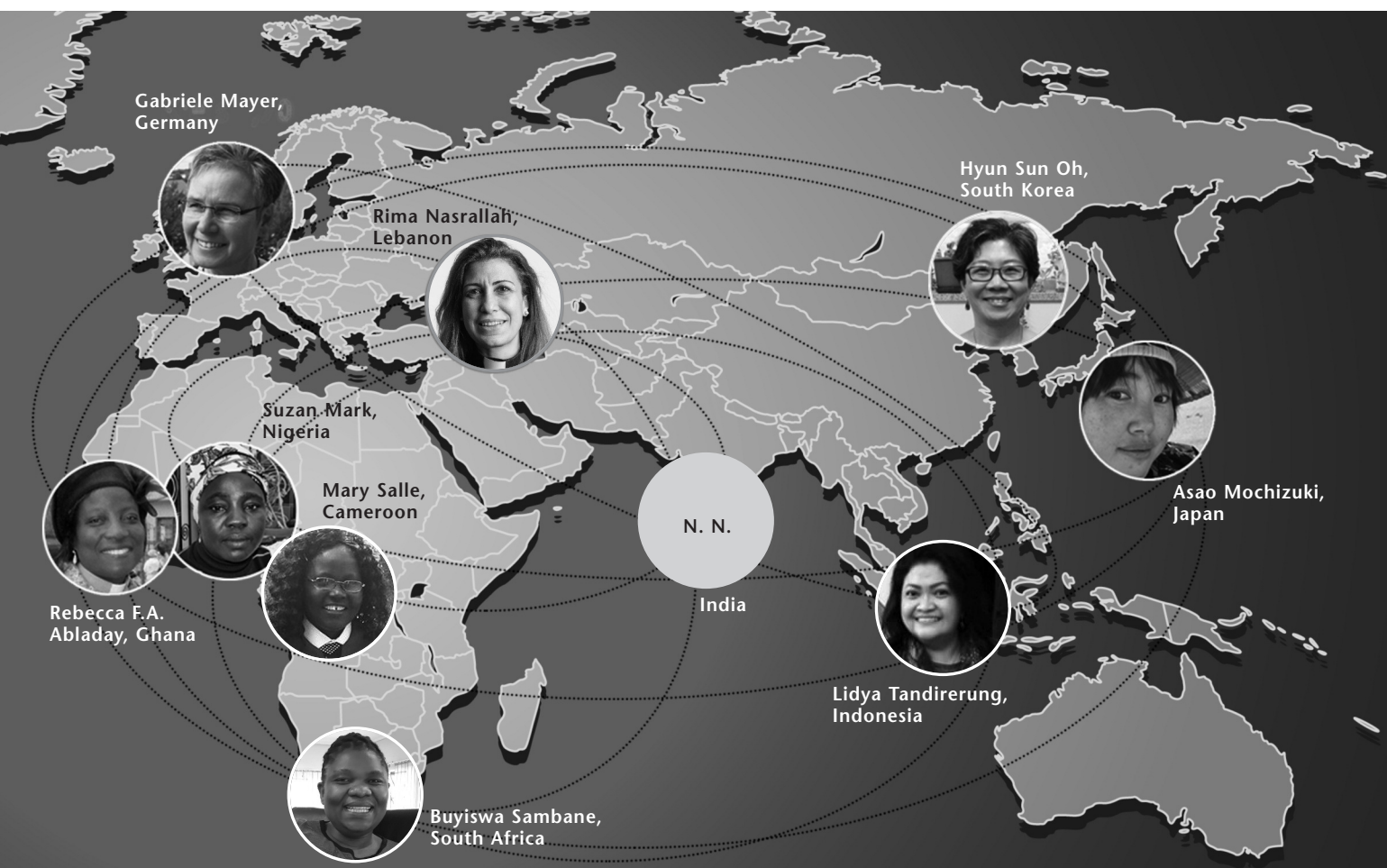
CSI WF had the privilege of hosting the International Women's Consultation at Vishranthi Nilayam, Bangalore in August 2013 for the South Asia and East Asia Member Churches under dynamic leadership of Gabriele Mayer,

Yours in His Service,
Rev. Dn. Synthia Sobha Rani Chopra



Synthia Sobha Rani with Regine Nagel and Gabriele Mayer

The Liaison Women of the International Women's Network



IMPRINT

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*We sow the seeds of hope,
We expect a harvest of love
We sow the seeds of justice,
We expect a harvest of peace
We sow the seeds of compassion,
We expect a harvest of solidarity*

*God, rain upon our efforts
The rain that transforms is from you.
We know there is something in the heavens
God, let it reach our hands...*

Prayer with the words of Mercy Amba Oduyoye/Ghana



Evangelical Mission in Solidarity