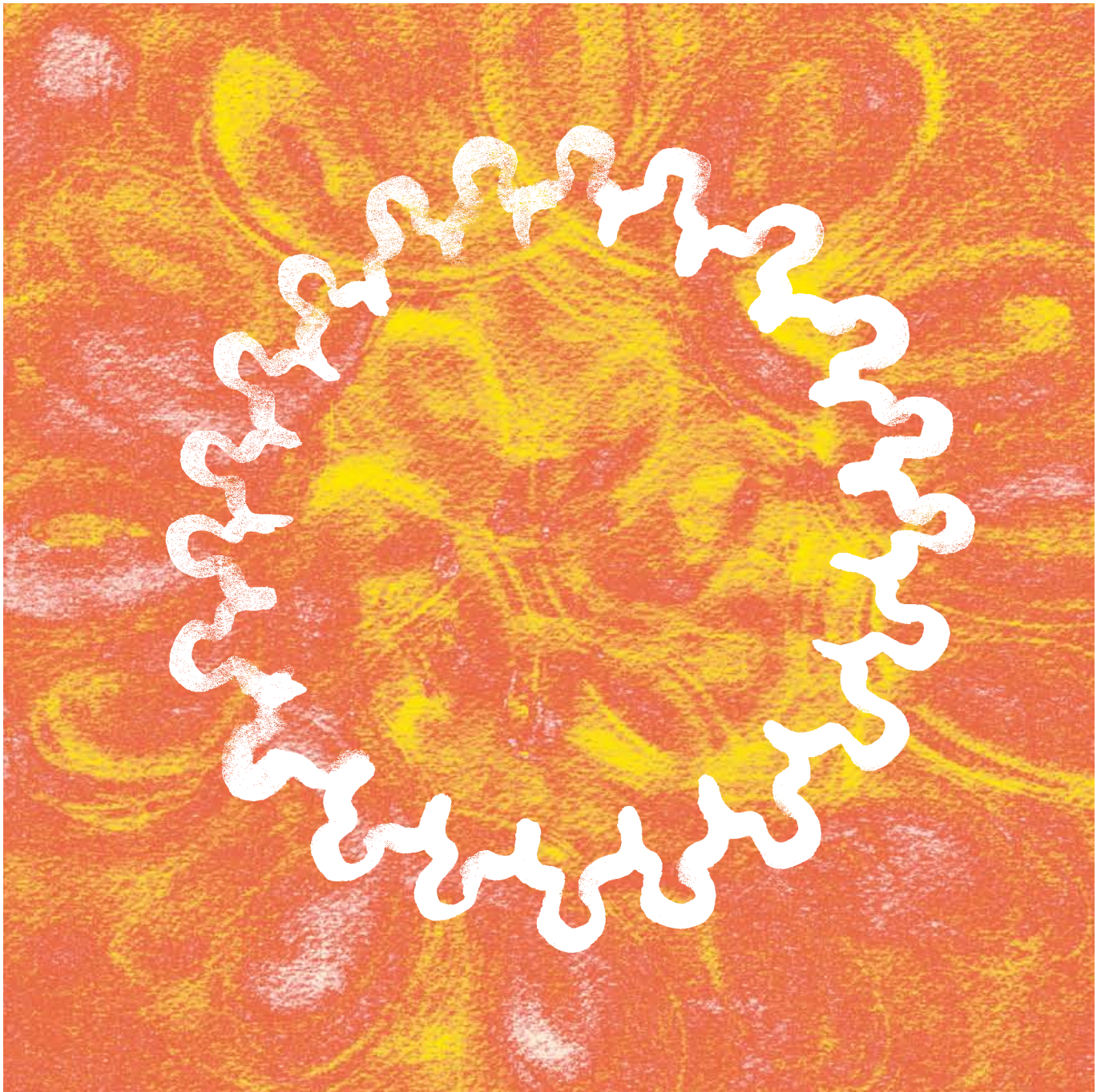


Windhoek (/Ai //Gams) Agreement 2019



Agreements with the Namibia Partnership Consultation



Evangelical Church
of Westphalia



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The participants of the ELCRN Partnership Consultation (Photo: Uli Baege/UEM)

Preamble

In continuity with the prior partnership consultations of partnership groups from the Evangelische Kirche im Rheinland (EKiR), the Evangelische Kirche von Westfalen (EKvW), the Evangelische Kirche von Kurhessen-Waldeck (EKKW), and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), in the framework of the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) in Gut Holmecke 1985, Swakopmund 1990, Haus Friede 1998, Swakopmund 2006 and Bad Driburg 2013, we, the delegates to the Windhoek 2019 consultation, appreciate the work that has been done here and commit ourselves to the following renewed agreement:



1. Partnership in Solidarity

1.1 When we use the term “partnership”, we want to express the following:

God has created all of us equal in His great love; therefore, partnership is about people;

through Christ we recognize our guilt and misunderstandings, and Christ helps us to forgive and reconcile;

the Spirit of God places us anew into the worldwide communion of saints, and sets us free to serve God’s people in our respective societies and nations.

From there we discover each other, and our eyes are opened to others, to the riches of the church of Christ in the whole world, and to her sufferings and needs.

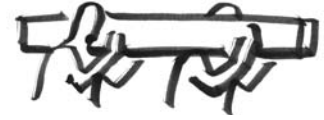
1.2 The word partnership is not a traditional term in our Christian doctrine and might have arisen from coincidental historical developments and relations, or from certain trends and fashions in discussions on ecumenical and development affairs. Yet our partnership relations and project work have a unique position. They are rooted in a shared history that was fruitful and painful. It cannot be altered at random and cannot be denied or forgotten. Our relationship is a concrete expression of the worldwide sister- and brotherhood in Christ.

It is God who governs history beyond our understanding. God has brought us together in the spirit of committed ecclesiastical communion.

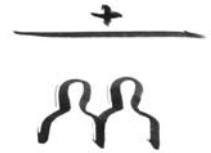
1.3 The word “solidarity”, in our partnership relations, means to stand with each other in unity in good and in challenging times.

1.4 Partners will have the liberty to raise critical questions where they are due. We are confident that the difficulties and burdens of the partnership can be discussed in a spirit of mutual respect, trust, honesty, and transparency and that we can engage with each other in a constructive way.

2. Working Together



- 2.1 Within the framework of the existing circuit partnerships, congregations are encouraged to take up partnerships on their own level. Church councils and decision-making bodies on all levels are involved in the process.
- 2.2 Partnership contacts are to be developed among the kindergartens, hostels, schools, institutions, youth groups and choirs of ELCRN and its partners. Executive committees, circuit councils, and the heads of the institutions concerned are to be involved in the development of partnership relations.
- 2.3 Circuit programme committees in the ELCRN will be working with the heads of institutions, earmarked project administrators, and parish councils where no partnership relationships exist. Partnership committees will have to report to parish, circuit, and church councils on a regular basis. Laypersons are encouraged to lead partnership committees.
- 2.4 The ELCRN will reorganize the Partnership Office, put the Programme Management Office (PMO) in place, and employ staff who will work together with the regional and international UEM partnership and project officers to ensure the facilitation and coordination of the partnerships and projects of the ELCRN. The German partnership groups will continue working together with the responsible person/s in the ecumenical structure of their churches.
- 2.5 Specific proprietary partnership agreements will be set up according to the UEM Partnership Guidelines in order to strengthen the work and communication that forms the basis for better partnership and spiritual life. Evaluations of our partnership work will be conducted on a regular basis in both Namibia and Germany.
- 2.6 Information will be shared on a regular basis about life and work in the congregations, institutions, and circuits, as well as about the burning issues in our societies.
- 2.7 High emphasis will be placed on youth participation in order to strengthen young people's ownership in the partnership work.
- 2.8 There will be an exchange of prayer concerns, especially for mission in Namibia and Germany.
- 2.9 We will include congregations and churches from all parts of the world who have official relationships with the ELCRN, the EKIR, the EKvW, the EKKW, or the UEM.
- 2.10 We will jointly provide assistance with the unification process of the three Lutheran churches in Namibia, particularly with regard to the revision of existing contracts, and in consideration of the continued effort made by churches towards this goal.
- 2.11 The official language of communication will be English.



3. United in God's Mission

3.1 In our partnership together we proclaim Jesus Christ to be the Lord and Saviour of all people and declare our willingness to meet the present-day challenges of mission. In a world torn apart, we commit ourselves to remain members of the one Body of Christ, and therefore to:

- grow together into a worshipping, learning, and serving community;
- share gifts, insights, and responsibilities;
- call all people to repentance and new life;
- bear witness to the Kingdom of God in striving for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

We are together in the community of the United Evangelical Mission (UEM), a Communion of Churches on Three Continents. We take notice of the possibilities of this community for our partnership relations (multilateral partnerships, advocacy, exchange programmes, financial assistance, and much more).

3.2 Our churches are places of trust, refuge, and help. As living letters of Christ, we raise our prophetic voices in our societies.

Through the prophetic voice in word and deed, we identify ourselves with the rights of the poor, the oppressed, the refugees, and those whose human rights are violated, and we speak out for their rights. We encourage and educate people in order to foster self-confidence, awareness-building, self-reliance, and self-sustainability.

The churches commit themselves in particular to preventing and working against the spread of HIV and AIDS and gender-based violence, as well as to promoting land reform and poverty reduction, and meeting other social challenges.

The churches are determined to face the challenges of climate change. We want to share ideas for solutions and encourage each other to change our behaviour, preserve our environment, and work for climate justice.

3.3 We are learning to have high sensitivity and respect for the questions arising from the encounter between the gospel and different cultures. The aim of intercultural learning is to find a deeper understanding and respect for the other.

3.4 We see our sharing of the missionary task as a challenge to the churches involved in partnership. To enable this sharing, urging issues should be identified and exchanged. We share the visions and experiences of our mission. Opportunities should be provided for everyone, especially young people, to take part in the mission work of partner churches..

4. Sharing



Sharing, in all its patterns, is the essence of partnership. What we are, and what we have, does not come from our own strength but is a gift from God. This results in mutual participation and communication, and sharing is an expression of life in Christ. Such sharing includes the whole person, in whatever situation we find ourselves.

The communion founded by Christ is what makes us share each other's spiritual life and material possessions, how we meet the needs of individuals and of respective churches and societies.

Sharing has its roots in the unity which Christ gave to the church. Partnership and practical sharing have to start with this clear confession, which gives us a spiritual fellowship inseparable from material, administrative, political, financial, personal, staffing, or other aspects.

It is our task and challenge to create awareness of self-sustainable attitudes and conditions. In order to support this process, we must encourage and strengthen each other in empowerment, responsibility, and ownership. The partners have to realize their own abundance and needs and share these with one another. The partners will give one another a profound understanding of the inner workings of their churches in order to each identify their own challenges and determine how to respond to them and seek the necessary assistance.

4.1 Communication

Information should be shared through letters, newsletters, minutes, social media, personal encounters, and other forms of communication. Websites should be regularly updated.

4.2 Personal Contacts, Visits, Visitations, and Delegations

Personal contacts, visits, visitations, and delegations are derived from Jesus, through whom God Himself has visited us. Mutual acceptance, as Christ has accepted us, can be experienced in personal encounters.

These visits should involve women, men, and youth, pastors and lay personnel. All parties should receive thorough preparation. A delegation should be composed according to the topic of a visit in order to ensure beneficial opportunities for learning.

Visitors should see all sides of the life of the church, and should not communicate only with the pastors.

Because visits help participants to get a different perspective on their own situation, time is needed for evaluation and for discussion of common issues. Visits shall be jointly prepared in good time.

Mutual visitations are an expression of mutual assistance in church leadership.

The respective partners should each contribute towards the costs of visits and visitations according to their abilities.

4.3 Exchange of Personnel

In the spirit of sharing, we maintain exchanges of personnel that are not limited to pastors. Such cases shall include an agreement on the job description and coverage of the costs for housing, medical care, and wages. Personnel shall be recruited in mutual consultation, as stipulated in the UEM Guidelines. Such programmes can be facilitated by the Programme Management Office with the help of the UEM.

Our common instrument for exchanges for young people is the UEM volunteers programme.

We will encourage the exchange of young theologians and students of theology.

4.4 Participation in Spiritual Life

Mutual participation in spiritual life should be stressed. Common celebration of services and sharing in the sacraments, as well as sharing in hymns, common prayers with lists of intercessions (several times a year, and vice versa) can help to express the unity of the church.

Such participation can be experienced in personal encounters, but also through various kinds of media correspondence, in reports and newsletters of the partners, and during commonly planned worship services.

All partners are encouraged to celebrate common Partnership Sundays.

Joint biblical and theological reflection is essential within the partnerships.

We help each other to bring out our prophetic voice in our different contexts.

5. Sharing in Financial Terms



5.1 We live under unjust economic conditions. The division between rich and poor is a distressing reality between North and South and is also visible within our respective societies.

Our financial cooperation is therefore an expression of solidarity.

Out of our confession that we are one in Christ follows our common participation in material goods and shortcomings.

Needs and possibilities always affect all members of a body equally. Those who have greater financial potential at present do not have a greater right in decision-making or intervention. The act of giving something is easier than genuine sharing. In this respect we may have to go through some conflicts, but that must not divide us.

5.2 Our financial cooperation is manifested in part through project assistance, by the Solidarity Fund (SF) established in 2013.

The Solidarity Fund is our main tool for financial support of projects in the ELCRN.

This has been confirmed by this consultation following the ASSESSMENT OF THE ELCRN SOLIDARITY FUND (Namibia, 23-30 September 2018) and the development of the SF PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES – BETTER SERVICES, PEOPLE’S IMPROVED LIVES. These items have been discussed and adopted by this consultation.

All German partnership groups, as well as the German churches, the UEM, and the ELCRN, commit themselves to fund this mechanism within their means. Funds shall be channelled via the UEM through the Solidarity Fund account.

Procedures are explained in the SF PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES.

5.3 Apart from the Solidarity Fund, bilateral project support for earmarked projects is also possible. These funds shall be channelled via the UEM through the Project Account of the ELCRN.

The circuits and institutions shall acknowledge receipt of the money immediately and report to the partners via the PMO on the use of the funds within six months of receiving said funds. All bodies concerned within the ELCRN, German churches, and UEM should receive copies of the correspondence.

The delegates of the Bad Driburg consultation envisaged to completely end bilateral fund transfers in light of the concept of the ELCRN. This has not been possible so far because field realities have proved to be different, but perhaps it can be achieved in the future.

5.4 We also emphasize the idea of working as partners on and in similar projects in Namibia and Germany (Soup kitchens – youth centres ...).

5.5 One of the aims of our partnership support is to help the ELCRN to reach financial self-reliance. The delegates therefore welcome the efforts that the ELCRN has already undertaken.

5.6 All decisions within the framework of the partner relationship should consider and guarantee the inner structure and unity of the churches concerned.

5.7 Our bilateral partnership shall not affect the contributions of all partners to the UEM.

For the participants

(Bishop Ernst // Gamxamûb, ELCRN)

(Barbara Rudolph, EKIR)

(Dr Ulrich Möller, EKvW)

(Anne-Rieke Palmie, EKKW)

(Frauke Bürgers, UEM)

November 2, 2019 Tabitha Conference Centre Windhoek, Namibia

Appendices

A: References

1. SF Programme Management Guidelines
Better Services, People's Improved Lives
2. SF Strategic Plan
Paving the Way for the Future
3. Transition Phase Action Plan (2020)

Order:
partnerships@vemission.org

4. UEM Code of Conduct for Transparency
against Corruption
5. UEM Code of Conduct against Sexual
Harassment

Order:
www.vemission.org/downloads/kodizes.html

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Abbreviations

EKIR	Evangelical Church in the Rhineland
EKKW	Evangelical Church of Hesse-Waldeck
EKvW	Evangelical Church of Westphalia
ELCRN	Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia



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