

Press Release



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No More “Us Here and Them There”

New UEM Publication Presents a Model for Decolonizing Global Learning

(Wuppertal, July 31, 2026) The United Evangelical Mission (UEM) has published a new English-language publication titled “Decolonising Global Learning – The GLEP Approach of the United Evangelical Mission.” On 171 pages, the book introduces the concept of “Global Learning in an Ecumenical Perspective” (GLEP): an internationalised, diverse learning model that aims to overcome colonial and paternalistic patterns of thought — patterns that continue to influence the church and Christian institutions to this day.

Sixteen authors from the international ecumenical movement have contributed articles, lectures, and research papers on the topic, including UEM Moderator Willem Simarmata, who passed away in 2022.

The editors — Rev. Marie-Anne Halim (Head of the UEM’s Germany Region), Rev. Andar Parlindungan (UEM General Secretary), and Angelika Veddelar (retired UEM Board member and co-developer of the GLEP model) — hope the book will spur further academic development: “We expect that this publication can be studied collectively to further develop this concept academically. It is inherent to the nature of GLEP that this learning model is open to being challenged and further developed by many who are interested in the field of global learning.”

UEM Expertise Against Colonial Patterns of Thought

The decolonization of learning has long been one of UEM’s central concerns. The division into “recipients” and “donors” continues to shape relations between churches in the Global South and the North — as does the notion that churches in the North have something to teach churches in the South. The editors wish to move beyond such paternalistic attitudes and instead grow together.

Furthermore, they see the current social polarizations — in Germany as well as worldwide — as a sign that new forms of coexistence are needed, both globally and

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locally. To this end, the international Protestant communion of churches intends to contribute its own experiences drawn from a long history of living and learning together across borders.

Eleven Steps for Joint Learning

To overcome colonial patterns of thought, all UEM educational programs are designed based on the fundamental principle that they are organized and carried out jointly and internationally. Diversity and participation shape every step of the planning process. To this end, eleven concrete steps for joint learning are applied:

1. Create a diverse environment with a variety of groups
2. Identify topics together
3. Form diverse leadership teams
4. Set goals together with the supporting groups
5. Communicate across the boundaries of accepted values
6. Plan content and structures together
7. Learn together in diverse, international groups
8. Teaching together – with trainers from different regions and professional fields
9. Leading together and transforming traditional educational roles
10. Finding methods and spaces that foster diverse perspectives
11. Recognizing and transforming conflicts

The goal is shared learning — not learning from one another, with one another, or about one another — in order to overcome outdated dichotomies of “us here” and “them there.”

The book is available for free download [here on the UEM website](#).

About „UEM“

The United Evangelical Mission (UEM) with offices in Germany, Indonesia and Tanzania is an international, equal communion of 39 members. The UEM consistently pursues a holistic understanding of mission. This includes improving the living conditions of suffering and disadvantaged people while respecting their personal dignity and taking their cultural context into account.