



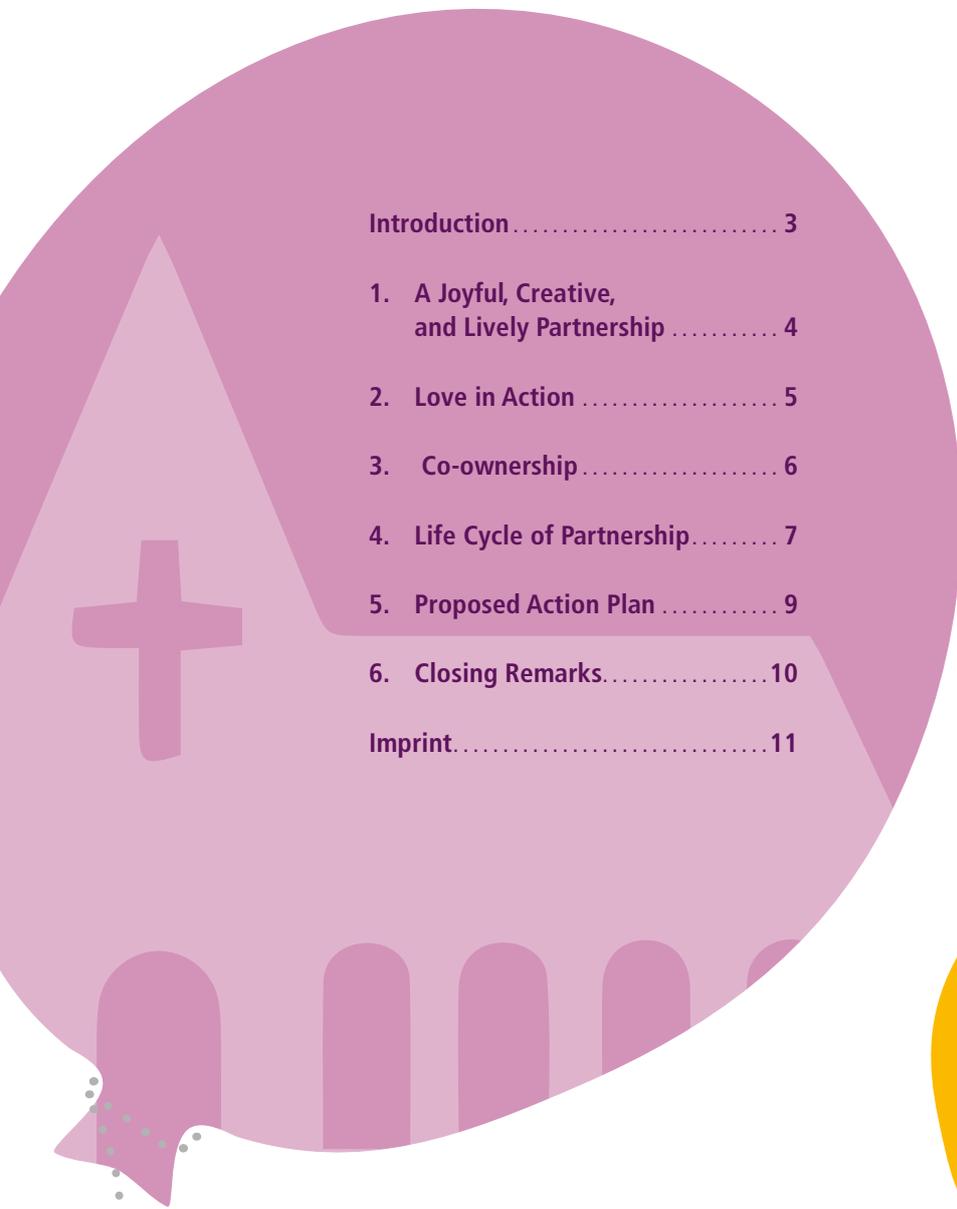
# ENJOY PARTNERSHIP

3<sup>RD</sup> INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE OF  
THE UNITED EVANGELICAL MISSION (VEM)

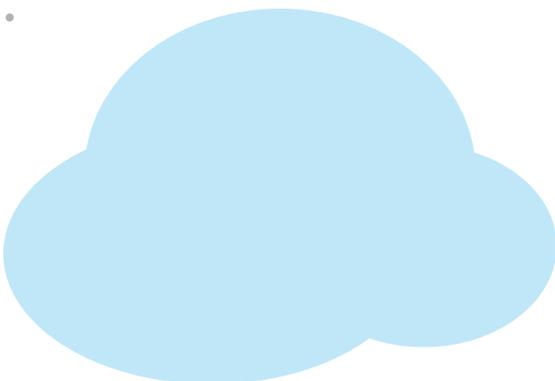
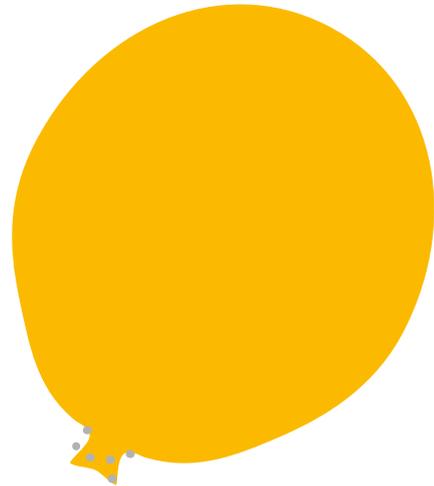
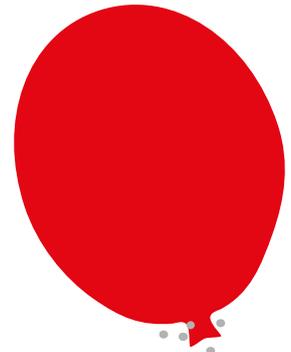
WUPPERTAL, JULY 2<sup>ND</sup> – 8<sup>TH</sup> 2017



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# INTRODUCTION

The 3<sup>rd</sup> International Partnership Conference of the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) took place in July 2017 in Wuppertal, on the theme of “Share the Good News: Grace and Faith in Action”. Twenty-four delegates from Africa, Asia, and Germany held discussions about partnership work. The conference evaluated the implementation of the Parapat Statement and the future of partnership work.

The first International Partnership Conference was held in 2007 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and evaluated the international partnership work in its totality, strengthening the theological background of partnership.

The second Partnership Conference was held in Parapat, Indonesia in 2012, on the theme of “On the Way to Strengthening Our Faith”.

## Evaluation of Parapat Statement

The Parapat Statement on partnership was reviewed and reported by UEM officers and by delegates from the three regions, Africa, Asia, and Germany.

While some UEM members have successfully implemented the action plans on communication, structure, involvement of youth and women, ecumenical learning, partnership guidelines, and projects, more remains to be done in order to reach the goals that have been set. The implementation of the Parapat Statement should therefore be ongoing, e.g.: South-South-partnerships, trilateral partnerships, appointing a partnership-officer in the African region, etc.

## Future approaches for partnership

After evaluating the Parapat Statement, discussing it, and getting more input, we identified the need to empower partnerships and to develop joyful, creative, and lively partnerships.

These are the results of the International Partnership Conference. Chapters 1 to 4 are the results, ideas, and incentives from four international working groups. Chapters 5 and 6 include the consequences from these working groups.

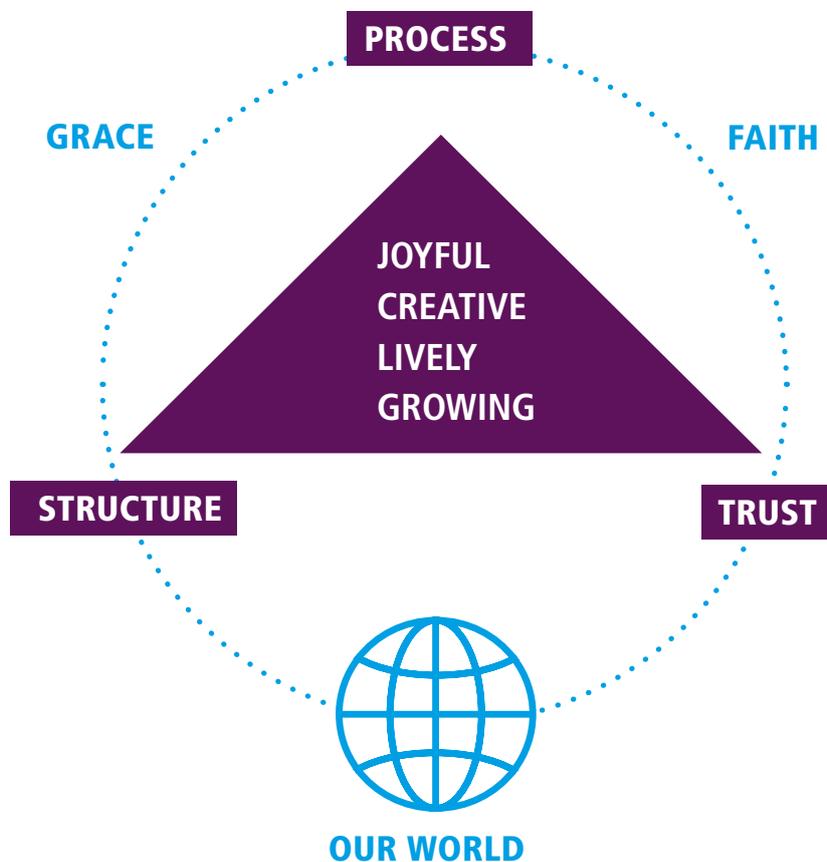
AND I WANT  
ALL OF YOU TO  
SHARE THAT JOY.  
YES, YOU SHOULD  
REJOICE, AND I WILL  
SHARE YOUR JOY.

(PHIL. 2:17-18).

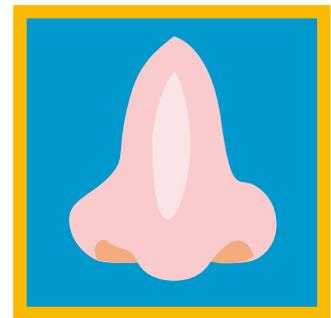
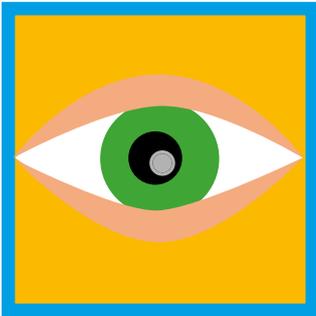
# 1. A JOYFUL, CREATIVE AND LIVELY PARTNERSHIP IS POSSIBLE! – “LORD, GIVE US THE COURAGE TO BUILD BRIDGES”

This triangle is used as a model to improve the cooperation of partnership groups in their respective contexts. It demonstrates the necessity of a balance between structure, process, and trust. Through this model, each partnership group is able to reflect on its own situation.

Partnerships are the backbone of the UEM (see UEM Guidelines on Partnership: Growing Together as God’s People). We are bound together as one body of Jesus Christ by God’s grace, our common faith, and the service for our one world. In order to achieve success in our partnerships, we need a balance of process, structure, and trust. With such a balance, our partnerships will be ongoing and capable of facing various challenges like our different languages and distances; our different understandings of mission, tradition, and history; our different expectations and finances; etc.



## 2. LOVE IN ACTION



**W**e invite the partnership groups to look at partnership in a holistic way. All five senses should be involved strengthening the existing long-lasting partnerships and establishing/creating new encounters.

### Feel (the heart)

Partnership stakeholders shall enjoy their partnerships from the bottom of their hearts – joyful and lovely encounters are key. Love is the base of every single partnership. With love and trust, the guidelines and agreements of the partnerships are easier to put into practice.

### See (the eye)

Agreements and contracts are important for every partnership. Nevertheless, partnership stakeholders shall regard the rules, regulations, and guidelines not only as obligations but as chances for creativity. Partnership stakeholders shall also see the history of partnership from a new perspective, not only as tradition but as a source of inspiration for the future.

### Listen (the ear)

Partnership stakeholders shall listen to the needs of their partners and listen to the experiences of the partners. They shall keep an open mind in order to learn from their partners and shall look for experts and advisers within the partnerships.

### Talk (the mouth)

Partnership stakeholders shall identify different issues of common interest to talk about, e.g., urbanisation, disasters, new forms of the family, education systems, etc.

### Smell (the nose)

Partnership stakeholders require a common sense of understanding. They shall develop their sensitivity to one another and to the needs, dreams, and visions of the partners.

## 3. CO-OWNERSHIP

**C**o-ownership means that we have a common vision and work towards it together by contributing our resources. In order to achieve co-ownership, the responsibility for partnership is shared and the partnership changes from dependence to self-sustainability and self-empowerment.

### Development of a common vision

- A common vision shall be developed by the partners as a basis for the particular partnership.
- Agreements/contracts/actions for the partnership are helpful.
- By translating “partnership” into the context and language of each partner, the joint vision can be further strengthened, e.g., “paralealeon”, meaning “soulmateship” in the language of the Batak people of North Sumatra, Indonesia, or “ubuntu”, meaning “friendship” in the Bantu languages of the Zulu and Xhosa people in Africa.

### Raising awareness about the partnership

- Tell people about your partnership. The Partnership Committee could prepare a presentation to be used for distributing information, for example.
- Present your partnership actively at church and other occasions: markets, church celebrations, etc.
- Public relations are important and can be done with different kinds of media (websites, magazines, flyers, social media, e-mail, and letters).

### Projects

- Target: everyone shall benefit from the project, possibly in different ways.
- Communicate openly about given needs and find ways of fulfilling them together.
- Please refer to the UEM Project Handbook, “Planning Projects in Partnership”, and make use of it

when planning, monitoring, and evaluating a partnership project.

### Involving the whole congregation

- Partnership worship
  - Prepare a special service together and include partnership-related topics in regular services (Bible text, prayers, intercessions, songs, offerings for the same cause, celebrating at the same time)
  - Exchange songs to be sung in services, worship, or choir performance
- Include the whole congregation in fundraising for the partnership work

### Youth involvement for future partnerships

- The needs and struggles of young people need to become a topic of the partnerships.
- Young people are a creative community and an agent of transformation in our societies. Young adults are open to living in intercultural relationships and their involvement in partnership has a transformative nature. Young people shall therefore be creatively involved in the partnership. For example, they can be given the possibility of “live-in” experiences, or creative youth camps can be developed and young people can be involved in ecumenical learning. A particular focus shall be put on school-to-school partnerships.

Additionally, partnership groups shall do the following:

- Reach out to young people in confirmation classes by inviting partnership members to conduct sessions on partnership relations.
- Reach out to the young people at Sunday schools: partnership members shall prepare a Sunday school lesson on partnership, with the Sunday school teachers.

## 4. LIFE CYCLE OF PARTNERSHIP



**P**artnership members must consider the life cycle of the partnership in order for it to be successful, joyful, and equal. The following steps shall be taken:

### Analysis

- Listen to the needs of your partner in order to have good mutual understanding.
- Communicate honestly about your different needs and requirements.
- Talk about your expectations.
- Be aware of different understandings of partnership and make sure that a common understanding is achieved.
- Determine the topic of your partnership and the contributions to it.
- Identify the challenges of your partnership, e.g., language barriers, financial difficulties (including in the German churches).

### Formulate a vision for your partnership

- Develop a strategy for your partnership
- Formulate creative but simple and clear goals for your partnership.
- Involve different stakeholders in your partnership, e.g., youth, and make your partnership interesting through creative activities, e.g., music, art, theatre.
- Take your partnership beyond committee structures.
- Emphasize ecumenical learning in your partnership as we are all Christians facing joint challenges in our global world.
- Partnership should become a cross-cutting activity of the church.
- Develop different types of partnership visits, e.g., for official representatives of the partnership, for youth, for schools.
- Partnership is more than sending reports; it consists of long-term planning, regular communication, and joint responsibilities.
- Be a good example in your partnership by following Christian values in your society.

### Additional approaches

- Develop new project paradigms, e.g., you and your partner fund a third party project.
- Develop creative new forms of partnership, e.g., between institutions or occupational groups.
- Pray for your partner in every Sunday service and on other occasions.
- Create multicultural partnership visits.
- Intensify South-South partnerships.
- Intensify trilateral partnerships and different forms of creative partnership.

### Implementation of strategy and additional approaches

- Implement your strategy and openly communicate challenges encountered on the way.
- If problems arise, communicate these in a transparent way and look for joint solutions.
- Monitor and evaluate your strategy and additional approaches. Be open to the possibility of closing a partnership project or renewing a partnership.



# 5. PROPOSED ACTION PLAN



## 6. CLOSING REMARKS

**W**e, the delegates of the conference, acknowledge that partnership work is facing challenges in today's reality. In order to take part in and develop the process further, we invite the UEM, its

members, and the partnership groups to use the results of the conference. We want to encourage all partnership groups to take up these new approaches to partnership in their discussions and bring them to life.

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## Imprint

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