

MISSION ECHO

UNITED EVANGELICAL MISSION AFRICA REGION

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UNITED
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MISSION



EQUIPPING SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS FOR THEIR CALL

Dear esteemed readers,
Greetings!

Welcome to the latest edition of the **UEM Africa** Region magazine, **Mission Echo**, which covers the period from *January to June 2026*. We are grateful to God for the opportunity to share inspiring reflections, practical insights and information that strengthen us.



In this issue, readers will find important articles analyzing Christianity and church growth in Africa, as well as the role of the church in re-defining mission and global justice issues. We also present reflections on the challenges facing the African youth today and how we can overcome them. We explore women's engagement in holistic mission, development, justice and peace. Special attention is given to children and youth's ministries, emphasizing the importance of a good environment during children's education and of continually equipping Sunday school teachers and families to help children know, love and obey God.

Another contribution depicts the capacity building of development officers regarding church-based development through Results-Based Management. The reader will be informed of the UEM Africa Regional Assembly that was hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Botswana (ELCB), providing meaningful direction to the UEM Africa region. The event of the UEM Moderator's official visit to the coast region of Tanzania and other special events that align with the United Evangelical Mission's vision are featured in this issue.

We would like to thank all the writers, church leaders, partners, stakeholders, and readers for their valuable support and contributions. We hope that this publication will continue to serve as a platform for encouragement, learning, growth and edification.

Thank you for networking with us. Please keep reading and exchanging the information presented in the pages of Mission Echo magazine, as we continue our shared journey of faith and service. It is our joy to learn and grow together.

For any idea, feedback, requests and contributions, please contact us at:

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The Challenges Facing African Youth Today – And How We Can Rise Above Them

By Devroda – Kagusa

Across Africa, young people take up a large proportion of the population, and they show great potential in transforming and shaping different fields like leadership, technology, sports, business, and social change in remarkable ways in our churches and the community at large. With energy, creativity, and ambition, the continent's youth hold the power to transform societies and drive development. Yet despite their potential, many young Africans continue to face serious social and economic challenges that threaten their future. Unemployment, poverty, drug abuse, and mental health struggles make their journey to success a challenging endeavor. Let us deep dive into the underlying challenges that constitute a hindrance to the blossoming of the young African generation.

Unemployment: A Growing Concern

One of the greatest challenges facing African youth today is unemployment. Thousands of graduates leave schools and universities every year hoping to find jobs, only to discover that opportunities are limited. In many countries, the number of job seekers is far greater than the number of available jobs.

This situation has left a large proportion of young people frustrated and discouraged. Some are forced into low-paying work, while others become vulnerable to crime, exploitation, or dangerous migration journeys in search for better opportunities.

However, other young Africans are beginning to create opportunities for themselves through entrepreneurship, technology, agriculture, and creative industries. By learning practical skills and embracing innovation, young people can become job creators instead of job seekers.

The Struggle for Quality Education

Education is often described as the key to success, yet many young Africans still lack access to quality learning. Some schools face shortages of teachers, books, laboratories, and modern technology. In rural areas, students may walk long distances to school or study in poor conditions.

This makes it difficult for some young people to successfully finish their education due to these struggles while some others end up as young mothers, drug addicts and more.

To address this challenge, the church,

governments and communities must invest more in education systems that prepare young people for real-life careers and promote vocational skills education to help the youth create capacity for self-employment. On their side, the youth should take advantage of online learning opportunities and continue developing their talents beyond the classroom.

Drug Abuse and Peer Pressure

Drug and substance abuse is becoming an alarming issue in many African societies. Some young people turn to drugs or alcohol due to stress, unemployment, depression, or peer influence. Unfortunately, addiction often destroys dreams, damages health, and weakens communities.

Peer pressure also pushes some youth into risky behaviors simply to fit in or gain social acceptance. Social media has intensified this pressure by promoting unrealistic lifestyles and unhealthy comparisons.

Young people can overcome these struggles by choosing positive friendships, engaging in sports and creative activities, and seeking guidance from mentors, parents, and community leaders. Strong self-confidence and clear goals can help the youth resist negative influences.

Mental Health: The Silent Struggle

Mental health remains a sensitive and often ignored issue in many African communities. Yet many young people silently struggle with anxiety, stress, loneliness, and depression caused by financial hardship, academic pressure, or family expectations.

The fear of being judged prevents many from speaking openly about their emotional struggles. Creating awareness about mental health is essential. Churches, schools, families, and communities should encourage open conversations and provide counseling services where possible. Young people should also

understand that seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Political instability and Civil conflicts

In some African countries, there are continuous political struggles and civil war and in between all this chaos, the youth suffer greatly for it. They are the biggest victims of the aftermath of the chaos. Besides, many lives are lost, and the nation loses the manpower. Another fact is that some of the youths are taken away by terrorists as war accessories. In fact, the absence of peace poses a huge challenge for the youth and development in general and as a result, the church loses people in different countries.

A Future Filled with Possibilities

Although African youth face many obstacles, they also possess extraordinary potential. Across the continent, the church, community and government should work together to help overcome the challenges that the youth face, but in all these efforts, the youth should be the forefront to take charge of their future and wellbeing.

United, the youth can form small support groups amongst themselves, create entrepreneurship plans and seek financial aid, have wellness groups to help one another get out of difficulties, inspire one another and push one another towards righteousness in love.

With determination, education, discipline, and support from society, African youth can overcome today's challenges and create a brighter tomorrow. The future of Africa depends not only on its natural resources, but also on the strength, vision, and resilience of its young people.

When empowered with opportunities and hope, Africa's youth will survive and lead the continent toward progress and prosperity.

Equipping Sunday School Teachers for their Calling: In Step with the Master Teacher

“An untrained Sunday School teacher is dangerous for children.” This powerful statement set the tone for a meaningful and transformative training session designed to strengthen and equip those entrusted with teaching God’s children.

By Sibia



As a way forward, after attending the workshop organized by the United Evangelical Mission in October 2025 in Kinshasa DRC on "The Art of Nurturing Children," Ms. Sibia and Rev. Julien did not keep for themselves the knowledge they had acquired. They decided to hold a follow-up seminar for all Sunday school teachers in their church district, as a sign of their commitment and dedication to children's ministry.

In this regard, from April 30th to May 2nd, 2026, they called together 25 Sunday School teachers from the Communauté Baptiste au Centre de l'Afrique (CBCA) in the vibrant city of Kinshasa, DRC, for a training program developed by Bible Centered Ministries (BCM). The main subject developed was "In Step with the Master Teacher (ISMT)".

The sessions were facilitated by Mado Fumunguya, who serves as the National Director of Sunday School within the Église du Christ au Congo (ECC).

The purpose of the training was to remind Sunday School teachers of their identity in Christ, their calling, and their mission. Teachers were encouraged to understand that their purpose is to help children know God, love God, and obey God.

The training focused on the following four modules:

1. Developing Biblical Attitude

This module teaches God's Attitude towards children: Children are valued by God; they can understand many things about God; and they can respond to God's calling.

2. Modeling

The module shows trainees how to be good role models for children the same way Jesus was for his disciples.

3. Building Relationships

Teaches how to build relationships with children



through 2 ways: knowing children through general characteristics and individual characteristics.

4. Teaching for response

As most children get into contact with the Word of God only on Sunday, this module shows the importance of using time effectively by preparing a Sunday School lesson centered only on Bible truth.

To make the training more holistic and respond to the needs of children in Kinshasa, additional training was provided on understanding stress and trauma in children and adolescents. Sunday School teachers were equipped to understand the causes and symptoms of trauma in children and adolescents and to know how to respond to their needs.

The training also highlighted the urgency of children's ministry. With an estimated 2.4 billion children in the world, every child deserves the opportunity to hear the Gospel. Teachers were reminded that the Church has a responsibility to reach children while their hearts are still open to God's truth.

It was a rich moment of reflection, learning, and spiritual renewal as participants rediscovered how to nurture God's children and faithfully teach them biblical truth.

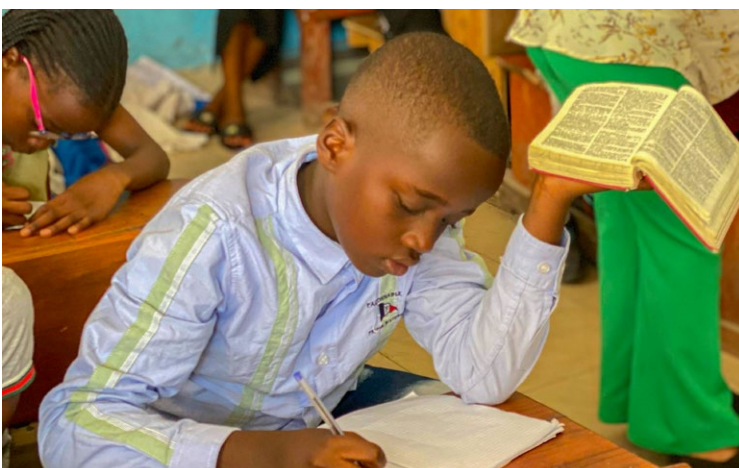
Key Bible passages guided the sessions, including:

Proverbs 22:6 — “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

The example of Samuel — reminding participants that children can understand the Gospel and respond to God at an early age.

At the end of the session, all participants were given their certificates of completion for the training and a Bible (powerful tool for teaching biblical truth to the children).

This training was a powerful reminder that: *“when Sunday School teachers are equipped, the next generation is strengthened in faith and prepared to walk with God.”*



The Eglise Evangélique du Cameroun (EEC) and the United Evangelical Mission promote children's education in Lobéthal

By Flore Ekoullé



In a spirit of faith, solidarity and social commitment, the Evangelical Church of Cameroon (EEC) officially handed over new educational facilities for the community's children on Thursday 23 April 2026 in Lobéthal, Cameroon. The project was carried out with the decisive support of the United Evangelical Mission, a loyal partner of the EEC in its mission to provide human and spiritual support.

The project comprises a block of two classrooms, offices for the principals, and play equipment for children. Much more than just a building, this project embodies the shared commitment of the EEC and the United Evangelical Mission to provide young children with a dignified, safe and appropriate learning environment that fosters their development.

The ceremony, marked by fervour and emotion, began with the arrival of the official delegation, followed by a warm welcome from the local Christian community. The opening prayer led by the parish priest served as a reminder that education remains a sacred mission, at the heart of the Church's witness.

In their various speeches, church leaders, traditional authorities and project stakeholders unanimously praised the involvement of the United Evangelical Mission whose support made this social initiative possible. In turn, the

representative of the President of the Synodical Region, the traditional chief, the Director of DESUFOP/EEC, the project manager and the beneficiaries expressed their gratitude for this action of hope.

The highlight of the ceremony was the official handover of the keys by Mr Elie LEUWE, symbolizing the effective transfer of the facilities to the beneficiaries. In his address, the President of the Church and Chair of the project's steering committee reiterated that the EEC, supported by its missionary partners, intends to continue its work in support of education, which is regarded as a powerful lever for social and spiritual transformation.

In entering classrooms and having a look at facilities, guests had an opportunity to appreciate the quality of the work carried out, whilst children enjoyed themselves taking part in the fun activities organized for them. The day ended in a spirit of fellowship over a meal, reflecting the values of communion and sharing upheld by the Church.

Through this initiative, the Evangelical Church of Cameroon, with the support of the United Evangelical Mission, reaffirms its calling: to proclaim the Gospel not only through words, but also through concrete actions that are useful for communities and the future of children.

Empowering Women Pastors to Strengthen the Evangelical Church of Cameroon (EEC)

By Flore Ekoullé



Women have chosen to play their part in building and strengthening the Evangelical Church of Cameroon (Eglise Evangélique du Cameroun in French, EEC for short).

A three-day capacity-building seminar calling together women pastors of the Evangelical Church of Cameroon (EEC) started on June 1, 2026. Focusing on female pastoral leadership, the initiative aims to equip and support them in fulfilling their ministry with faith, dignity, and responsibility.

The seminar was jointly organized by the EEC and the United Evangelical Mission (UEM), represented by Rev. Dr. Félicité Ngnitedem, Director of the Global Programmes Department. The sessions were chaired by Rev. Abestine Memiafo, General Secretary of the Evangelical Church of Cameroon. Presidents of the Centre-South Synod Regions 1 and 2 were also participating in these sessions.

Hosted at Nlongkak Parish, the seminar opened with a worship service based on Romans 16:3-5. The meditation highlighted the essence of authentic female pastoral leadership—one that is measured not only by the impact of ministry, but also by the ability to reflect Christ in personal, family, and community life.

The opening presentation, entitled “Female Pastoral Leadership: Balancing Ministry, Personal Life, and Family,” was delivered by Rev. Dr. Hervé Kuate Djilo. In his address, he emphasized that women pastors are called to be dedicated servants of God in ministry while remaining fulfilled individuals and a source of blessings within their families.

According to the speaker, achieving balance between these different spheres is not a hindrance to ministry. It is rather a vital component of Christian witness and pastoral effectiveness.

Over the course of the three-day seminar, participants explored key topics including the challenges and opportunities of women’s ministry, Christ-centered leadership, and women’s health.

Practical workshops, notably on vinegar production, also enriched the program, fostering interaction, knowledge-sharing, and hands-on learning.

At the end of the seminar, certificates of completion were awarded to the participants in recognition of their commitment, dedication, and active participation throughout the training.



Beyond Expansion: A Critical Examination of the Nature and Impact of Church Growth in Africa

By Evarist Nsabimana

It is obvious that Christianity in Africa is thriving. However, beneath the surface of this growth lie questions that demand answers: Is this growth reflecting and based on the Word of God? Does it reflect discipleship? Is this growth sustainable? Do Christians have a faith that seeks divine truth? In an attempt to answer these questions, the United Evangelical Mission Africa Division and Africa Region implemented a workshop on “A Critical Analysis of Church and Christianity Growth in Africa”. Hosted by the EPR (ÉGLISE PRESBYTERIENNE au RWANDA) from 28th April to 1st May 2026 at Isano Centre in Kigali-Rwanda, the workshop brought together 21 distinguished scholars, church leaders, and theologians from the 15 UEM member churches in Africa Region.

This article provides a summary of the proceedings of the workshop convened to critically analyse the growth of Christianity and the Church in Africa and to equip member

churches of the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) and the wider African church with insights for sustainable and transformative growth.

The workshop was officially opened by Rev Dr Pascal. Bataringaya, EPR Church President, who set the tone by emphasising the need to evaluate both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of church growth critically. Indeed, while numerical expansion remains significant, it is insufficient without corresponding spiritual formation, ethical transformation, and active participation in God’s mission. The African context, marked by persistent poverty and social instability despite rapid Christian growth, raises urgent questions about the Gospel's transformative impact. Holistic growth, therefore, must integrate spiritual maturity with social engagement.

Rev Dr E. Muhozi, UEM Executive Secretary/ Germany Africa Division, introduced the conceptual framework of Christianity and church



growth within the UEM context. He showed that the Church is understood as a missional community rooted in Christ and called to participate in God's redemptive work. Growth was defined holistically, encompassing numerical, organic, conceptual, and incarnational dimensions. Such growth must occur within complex socio-political realities and must contribute to peacebuilding, justice, gender equality, and environmental stewardship, reflecting a credible and transformative Christian witness.

The warm words of welcome from the Moderator of UEM, Honourable Bishop Rev Dr Abednego Keshomshahara, graced the workshop. In his welcoming note, he emphasised the importance of the workshop and expressed his appreciation to the organisers. He further stressed that Christian numerical growth on the African continent should be accompanied by authentic and theologically sound teaching within the church. He also noted that, for this growth to be sustainable, it should encompass the socio-

economic transformation of people's lives across the continent.

Everyday morning and evening devotions were packed with excellent expositions and were relevant to the workshop topic. Preachers of those days, Rev. D. Saas, K. Bikimane, H. Mwinuka and M. M Dausas emphasised unity, discipleship and authentic growth, including service and care for the church and society.

The following topics were presented in this workshop by excellent scholars from the UEM member churches:

- The State of the Church and Christianity in Africa by Rev Prof Leepo Modise: The presentation highlighted that authentic church growth must be grounded in the Kingdom of God and expressed through discipleship rather than mere numerical increase. The need for Africanisation, ethical renewal, and contextual theological engagement was strongly emphasised.



- Case study on the Authenticity of Christianity in Cameroon by Rev Prof Herve: The study calls for a shift from a “crowd church” to a “witnessing church” through intentional discipleship, spiritual health assessments, and organisational reforms that prioritise mission.
- Critical factors driving the growth of Christianity in Africa by Rev Prof Ndikumana Viateur: The rapid expansion of Christianity in Africa is attributed to inculturation, responsiveness to socio-economic realities, and the rise of African Initiated Churches and Pentecostal movements. This growth is reshaping global Christianity, positioning Africa as a central contributor to theological discourse and missional practice.
- The critique of the church and Christianity's growth in Africa by Rev Prof Marthe Kandemo: The presentation called for a shift toward authentic discipleship, ethical leadership, and Reconstruction Theology grounded in the African philosophy of Ubuntu.
- The impacts of embracing false teachings and teachers within our churches and the status of Christianity in society, considering the Bereans as an Example for Christians today (Acts 17:10-12) by Rev Prof Olivier Munyansanga: This session highlighted the dangers of false teachings and their impact on the credibility of Christianity. Drawing lessons from the Bereans, the presentation emphasised the need for biblical discernment. It also reflected on the Rwandan context, noting how weak theological grounding and lack of accountability have led to harmful practices, prompting government intervention in some cases.
- The alignment between theological academic training and practical ministry - Evaluating how theological seminary education models impact missional effectiveness by Rev Prof Josephat Rweyemamu: The presentation emphasised the need to align theological education with practical ministry through Reconstruction Theology. Although Africa is becoming the global centre of Christianity, numerical growth has not translated into sufficient social transformation. Theological institutions must therefore train leaders who

are spiritually grounded, contextually aware, and socially engaged.

- Case study on the Authenticity of Christianity in CBCA - Rev Dr Kambale Musamba Jonas, represented by Rev Roger Kauta. The study of Baptist churches in the Democratic Republic of Congo revealed both strengths and challenges. While doctrinal foundations and social ministries affirm authenticity, issues such as inadequate theological training, leadership integrity, and syncretism raise concerns. Sustaining authentic Christianity requires balancing doctrinal faithfulness with meaningful societal engagement.

• Contextual Expectations of Religion:

An additional presentation by Rev Prof Joel Kuvuna explored how religion in African contexts addresses holistic human needs. While this contributes to church growth, it also exposes weaknesses such as shallow spirituality, untrained leadership, and insufficient engagement with contemporary societal challenges.

From the above themes, key findings and strategic recommendations were provided by participants.

Key findings:

1. Christianity in Africa is experiencing rapid numerical growth, often accompanied by weak spiritual depth and limited societal transformation.
2. There is a significant disconnection between numerical expansion and authentic discipleship.
3. Organisational growth frequently overshadows spiritual vitality, undermining credibility.
4. Misalignment between theological education and practical ministry reduces missional effectiveness.
5. Holistic growth requires integrating qualitative and quantitative dimensions grounded in the Missio Dei and African values such as Ubuntu.
6. Despite challenges, Africa remains a fertile ground for vibrant and contextual expressions of Christianity.

Strategic recommendations:

1. To prioritise intentional discipleship over numerical expansion.
2. To strengthen theological identity and doctrinal integrity.
3. To reform theological education so as to align with practical ministry.
4. To train pastors in other fields in order to strengthen their ministry.
5. To train pastors and volunteers in children, youth, women, and men's ministry.
6. To train pastors in technology (social media, Artificial Intelligence).
7. To integrate qualitative and quantitative growth assessment systems.
8. To enhance ethical leadership, accountability, and governance.
9. To promote biblical discernment to counteract false teachings.
10. To streamline church structures to support mission.
11. To engage in a holistic mission addressing social challenges.
12. To encourage contextualised African expressions of Christianity.
13. To foster self-sustainability and local ownership.
14. To develop leadership succession and capacity-building strategies.
15. To reaffirm the centrality of spiritual vitality in church life.
16. To carry out evaluation and monitoring of the implementation of the workshops and conference recommendations.
17. To ensure church storage of statistics and archives for future research and for the mapping of future growth.
18. To keep unity by communion through the usage of the church calendar.

At the end, the workshop affirmed that “sustainable growth must be rooted in spiritual depth, ethical integrity, and meaningful engagement with the realities of African societies.”

Highlights of the UEM Africa Regional Assembly: From 23.02 to 28.02.2026 hosted by the ELCB, Botswana



From 23 February to 1 March 2026, the Africa Regional Assembly (AfRA) of the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) met in Gaborone/Botswana and tackled the theme “The beam in our eye: Discrimination in the Church and Diaconia”, taken from Matthew 7:3. The host church was the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Botswana (ELCB),

The UEM being a communion of churches, the delegates had an opportunity to meet and worship during an official opening service. Bishop Jairos Letlhage of the hosting church, together with his team, led the welcome devotion through songs, prayers and biblical readings. Reflecting on the Assembly theme, “The Beam in Our Eye”, (Luke 6:41–42), Bishop Mothusi emphasized the importance of self-examination within the church. He noted that the church sometimes becomes a place where people judge others rather than examining themselves. Jesus warns believers against hypocrisy and calls for sincere self-reflection before correcting others.

With regard to the devotion message, the assembly had already set a visible sign of solidarity during the opening service. In fact, delegates and guests spontaneously collected donations for people and congregations that were affected by the severe flooding which raged in Sumatra/Indonesia at the end of 2025. This flooding left many families homeless and destroyed the infrastructure of entire communities.

After the opening devotion, Rev. Dr Ernest Kadiva, Deputy Executive Secretary for the UEM Africa Region, welcomed the Executive Secretary for Africa, Rev. Dr Emmanuel Muhozi, and introduced the international leadership of UEM present at the Assembly. These included the UEM Moderator, Bishop Dr Abednego Keshomshahara, and the Vice-Moderator and Chairperson of the Africa Regional Board, Bishop Jairos Mothusi Letlhage.

The Executive Secretary for Africa, Rev. Dr Emmanuel Muhozi, was then invited to

Theme: “The Beam in our Eye: Discrimination in Church and Diakonia”

By Christine Musongya



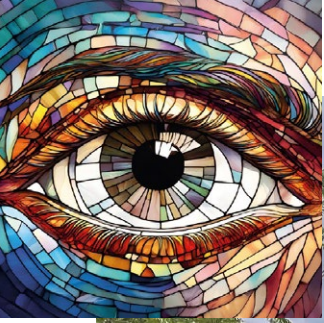
introduce all delegates representing the various UEM member churches in the Africa Region. He expressed his gratitude to the ELCB congregants and church choir, who warmly welcomed the AfRA delegates and contributed to the spirit of fellowship and hospitality.

Prior to the AfRA assembly, the women, youth and men delegates met in their respective pre-assemblies, to brainstorm on the theme and share information of their work in their churches. Addressing the Assembly, Bishop Jairos Mothusi Lethage, highlighted that “the Men’s Pre-Assembly, held prior to the AfRA, was the first of its kind, following the decision of the UEM General Assembly held in Dar es Salaam in 2025 to provide a platform for men to meet and reflect on issues affecting their role in the life and mission of the church”. He noted that similar platforms had long existed for Women and Youth Pre-Assemblies, and that the inclusion of the Men’s Pre-Assembly strengthens participation and dialogue within the church community. During the 5 days of the assembly, the delegates

shared reports and information from their churches focusing on the five pillars of work and joint projects between UEM and the church. They also received the UEM multifaceted staff report deriving from the UEM General Secretary, the Africa Department, the Africa regional office, and Finances sector.

Apart from sharing different reports, delegates reflected on, learned, and discussed different topics such as Resource Mobilization, Self-Reliance, Transparency, Accountability and Trust, Discrimination in church and diakonia, Being a reforming church Today, Disaster Preparedness and Crisis response, and Responsible Integration of artificial intelligence.

Delegates also received respectively a testimonial of Albinism and testimony of San Community. San community of Botswana is one of the oldest human cultures that have been disadvantaged in many ways, particularly through the loss of their ancestral lands due to mining activities. The Assembly acknowledged the need to support and advocate for the rights, dignity, and inclusion of



the San community.

“Albinism is not a sickness, but a natural condition of different skin pigmentation” said Rev. William Sechele, the General Secretary of ELCB, who shared a personal testimony about his life as a person living with albinism. He encouraged the church and society to promote acceptance, dignity, and protection of all people. His testimony served as a powerful reminder of resilience, inclusion, and the importance of embracing diversity within the church and society.

The 55 delegates coming from fifteen churches in seven African countries actively participated and adopted five concrete recommendations to the Africa UEM member churches.

Recommendation no 1: Resources mobilization and self-reliance

UEM Africa member churches must make sure to have a clear database of the expertise and

assets (buildings, lands, movable assets, etc.) in their respective churches.

Churches must improve resource mobilization for their self-reliance by cultivating a shared vision of stewardship, strengthening transparent financial systems, diversifying local income-generating initiatives, and empowering members’ financial literacy for effective contribution.

Recommendation no 2: How to improve United Action Campaign

UEM member churches are invited to re-own the United Action Campaign and to ensure the achievement of the agreed target amount through diverse and context-appropriate approaches, such as the 1-Euro Campaign, dedicated UEM Sunday(s), and the revitalized engagement of UEM Ambassadors.

Recommendation no 3: combating discrimination in Africa UEM member



churches

UEM member churches in Africa should intentionally promote inclusive theologies and practices by mainstreaming gender justice, disability inclusion, intergenerational participation, and respect for ethnic and socio-economic diversity in all church structures, leadership processes, worship life, and diaconal ministries.

Recommendation no 4: the use of Artificial Intelligence in the church

UEM member churches are encouraged to make use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a supportive tool for efficiency in ministry and operations under clear ethical policies, ensuring human accountability, transparency, data protection, and respect for human dignity, while preventing any use of AI that replaces pastoral presence or moral responsibility.

Recommendation no 5: Preparedness of churches

to disaster prevention and management.

UEM Africa member churches are invited to initiate disaster preparedness, prevention, and response by developing local contingency plans, building community awareness, training church leaders and congregants and partnering with public authorities and other ecumenical agencies to protect life, dignity, and livelihoods before, during, and after disasters.

A Step Toward a Prophetic Communion

In the view of the participants, the 2026 African Regional Assembly was more than an administrative meeting. “It was a moment of spiritual renewal and a clear commitment to a justice-oriented, inclusive, and self-reliant mission” says Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Muhozi, head of the Division Africa and member of the UEM board. Pre-assemblies of youth, women, and men ensured that diverse voices were meaningfully integrated into the final resolutions.



40 Years of Engagement for Development, Justice, and Peace

By Rev Marthe Kondemo

Introduction

In April 2026, the Department of Women, Family, and Children (DFF) of the Church of Christ in Congo (ECC) celebrated its Ruby Jubilee. This major milestone marked 40 years of pastoral, social, and transformative service across the nation from 1985 to 2026. Held under the theme "Woman, actress of transformation of a just, equitable, supportive and peaceful society," this event transcended simple historical celebration. In fact, it established a concrete, future-oriented strategic roadmap designed to address the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) deepest structural crises, including land tensions, resource inequality, and the historic marginalization of women in institutional decision-making.

This milestone aligns directly with the joint ecumenical commitment to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. By training grassroots leaders to become active agents of development, the ECC is translating holistic mission theology into measurable structural changes.

Since 1985, the DFF has been working at the heart of the Democratic Republic of Congo to respond to the country's structural crises. The rallying cry of this jubilee, drawn from 1 Samuel 7:12, "Thus far the Lord has helped us," resonated as a testimony of divine faithfulness over four decades. It was an opportunity to honor known and unknown pioneers, foremost among whom was Reverend Berthe Nzeba Kalombo, the first female theologian in the DRC, whose leadership paved the way for the institutional recognition of women within the ECC. The DFF also expressed its gratitude to its historical partners, such as the United Evangelical Mission (UEM), the United Church of Canada, and the Presbyterian Church of USA (PCUSA) represented by Mr. and Mrs. Boyd, and the Institute for Economics Peace (IEP), represented by Mrs. Patricia Garcia.

By drawing on a theology of holistic mission, the DFF transforms women into leaders and development agents. The operational highlight of the jubilee began with a three-day intensive workshop followed by two days of



conferences and a day of celebration.

Positive Peace Training

The Positive Peace Training was co-facilitated by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) by its international expert Patricia Garcia. The training focused on the framework of Positive Peace—the specific attitudes, institutions, and structures that actively build and sustain peaceful societies, moving far beyond the mere temporary absence of war. This model is based on eight interdependent pillars: a well-functioning government, the acceptance of the rights of others, low levels of corruption, the equitable distribution of resources, the free flow of information, a sound business environment, high levels of human capital, and good relations with neighbors.

To fully internalize these structural dynamics, leaders engaged in participatory exercises. The "Privileged Walk" visually demonstrated how

systemic resource inequalities drive social imbalances. Meanwhile, the "Spider Web" game utilized a continuous cord to illustrate a stark reality: if a single pillar is weakened, the entire structure of national peace is compromised.

The two days of conferences led by eminent professors addressed the following themes:

1. Education and Mentoring

The DFF considers the education of young girls to be the "definitive foundation of national peace." Drawing from the example of Ruth and Esther in the Hebrew bible, participants were informed on the importance of mentorship. This mission should not be limited to formal schooling but anchored in a theology of biblical equality, aiming to create intergenerational complementarity between women leaders and young girls.

2. Health and Well-being

A major part of the department's action concerns the integral health of women and families. A specific focus was placed on current challenges in women's mental health, providing support through simple methods to proper stress management. Participants also gained knowledge about menopause, which until now has been considered a taboo subject by some and about which many women remain underinformed. By breaking the stigmas surrounding menopause, it can be properly viewed as a natural biological stage requiring medical follow-up when necessary.

3. Environmental Safeguarding

Women were equipped to engage in responsible environmental management ("Environmental Stewardship"). Women leaders are called upon to mobilize communities to fight against the devastating impact of municipal waste mismanagement and to lead community sanitation initiatives to protect local ecosystems and public health.

4. Conflict Transformation

Beyond raising awareness, the DFF is actively lobbying for the strict domestic implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security. The strategic goal is to shift Congolese women out of the passive status of conflict victims, integrating them as formal negotiators and executives within both the State apparatus and ECC church governance. Within the next 12 months, these trained leaders are projected to establish at least five formal community-led conflict management mechanisms in high-tension areas.

By valuing and reaffirming the legitimacy of women's spiritual and institutional leadership, the ECC ensures that women are not merely beneficiaries, but active decision-makers within Church governance.

2026-2027 Roadmap: Autonomy through Entrepreneurship

To translate this vision into concrete actions on the ground, the DFF launched its new project for peacebuilding through entrepreneurship, targeting 600 beneficiaries (women and young

girls who are heads of households) across 12 ecclesiastical provinces. To guarantee long-term sustainability without total dependence on foreign aid, the DFF is deploying the VSLA (Village Savings and Loan Associations) financial model. This system allows members to build their own local credit pool with an accessible interest rate of 5%, aiming for total financial autonomy for 90% of the groups. Concurrently, community-level projects in agriculture, beekeeping, and local crafts have been drafted by women leaders, and the DFF has committed to securing the financial resources required to strengthen the economic resilience of these communities.

Conclusion

By equipping women with skills in conflict management and entrepreneurship, the ECC is not just preaching peace; it is building it brick by brick. As the final report of the Jubilee highlights, these women are now the "indispensable architects" of social cohesion and structural development in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

For the DFF, this Ruby Jubilee represents a dynamic missionary catalyst for long-term national stability. As these trained leaders return home, they are equipped to replicate this exact training locally. Through this decentralized model, the Church of Christ in Congo is transforming grassroots women into the ultimate, indispensable architects of structural development, economic resilience, and social cohesion across the entire Democratic Republic of Congo.

Vision 2030: Towards an Organization of Excellence

The DFF is now projecting itself toward 2030, based on four non-negotiable pillars: Integrity, Equity, Accountability, and Excellence. The ambition is to make every home a "peace ecosystem" and every woman an actor capable of designing budgeted and verifiable projects. Relying on the piety of Mary and the boldness of Deborah, the women of the ECC are rising today as the indispensable architects of structural development and social cohesion in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

On the Shores of Lake Kivu, a Global Church Gathering Searches for Radical Hope

By EPR team



KARONGI, RWANDA, as the morning mist slowly lifted from Lake Kivu on 26 November 2025, the quiet pathways of Bethany Hotel began to fill with voices, greetings, and the movement of delegates from across the world. By sunset, representatives from 36 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, the Pacific, and the Americas had transformed the lakeside ground into a vibrant crossroads of cultures, traditions, and shared convictions. They had converged for the Global Mission Consultation, a week-long gathering jointly organized by the Council for World Mission (CWM), United Evangelical Mission (UEM), and Community of Churches in Mission (Cevaa), and hosted by the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda (EPR). Held from 26 November to 1 December 2025, the consultation urged churches to seek clarity, courage, and renewed commitment in what organizers described as “catastrophic times.”

Anchored in the theme “Let Your Light Shine (Mt 5:16): Witnessing to radical hope in catastrophic times,” the meeting invited participants to reflect not only on the darkness shaping global realities including climate change, war, extreme inequalities, democratic erosion, and disruptive technologies, but also on how Christian mission could become a beacon of resistance, healing, and new possibilities. The consultation opened with an inaugural worship service led by Rev. Dr Hana Kim, whose prayers set a tone of sobriety and expectation. Delegates knew they were stepping into a space designed not for ceremonial niceties, but for honest confrontation with the crises reshaping human life and the planet.

During the formal welcome, Rev. Dr Pascal Batarigaya, President of EPR, reminded participants of Rwanda’s journey from the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi to national rebuilding, an embodiment of radical hope forged through unity, truth, and relentless commitment to



human dignity. Hosting the consultation in Rwanda, he said, symbolized the resilience and prophetic responsibility the global church must reclaim.

Representing the Government of Rwanda, Dr Félicien Usengumukiza, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB), reinforced this connection. Rwanda's transformation, he argued, was the result of moral courage, accountability, and community-rooted leadership. He emphasized that faith-based organizations remain central to nurturing peace, justice, and ethical development.

The week's analytical depth unfolded immediately with an opening keynote from Rev. Dr Roderick Hewitt, who challenged churches to face the structural forces driving today's global turmoil, neoliberal economics, extractive industries, political dehumanization, and persisting colonial dynamics within mission partnerships. The church, he insisted, cannot speak of hope without confronting systems that manufacture despair. This theme intensified during Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum's session on Reading the Signs of the Times. The CWM

General Secretary described the current era as a "catastrophic convergence," where climate injustice, militarization, widening inequality, and disruptive technologies intertwine, accelerating harm for the most vulnerable. Mission in this era, he said, must position itself at the frontlines rather than retreat into silence or neutrality.

A panel of leading theologians, Rev. Dr Kenneth Ross, Prof. Fundiswa Kobo, Rev. Dr Steve Taylor, and Prof. Vidal Gilles Louis, echoed these concerns. They warned that neutrality has become a form of complicity. Churches must rediscover prophetic responsibility, speaking truth to power and defending life wherever it is threatened.

One of the most impactful sessions came from the UEM-led reflections on Mission from the Margins. Presenters Prof. Simone Sinn, Rev. Dr Lesmore Gibson Ezekiel, and Ms Sarah Vecera argued that marginalized communities, women, migrant workers, racial minorities, indigenous peoples, and others pushed to the edges, must move from being recipients of mission to becoming its shapers and teachers. Their message was clear: true mission arises from solidarity with today's "crucified," those whose



Rev. Dr Pascal Bataringaya
President of EPR



Dr Félicien Usengumukiza
Deputy Chief Executive Officer of RGB

lives bear the weight of systemic injustice. Delegates, meeting in small group circles, wrestled with the implications of racism, gender inequality, and the hidden hierarchies within church structures themselves.

Therefore, the conversation widened further during the session on Transformative Ecumenism, led by Rev. Dr Fidon Mwombeki, Rev. Dr Andar Parlindungan, and Rev. Dr Samuel Pang. Ecumenism, they argued, must move beyond institutional agreements and evolve into a movement of justice, peace, and creation care. A united church, they said, carries greater power to confront global threats.

The consultation devoted significant attention to the accelerating ecological crisis. Speakers Rev. Dr James Bhagwan, Rev. Dr Jessica Hetherington, and Rev. Dr Seungbum Kim painted sobering pictures: Pacific islands disappearing under rising seas; African communities battling droughts and resource depletion; and vulnerable populations facing irreversible losses. In this perspective, Hetherington linked climate injustice to colonial histories and extractive global economies. Kim insisted that environmental collapse is not merely a technical or political issue but a profound theological disruption that challenges humanity's relationship with creation. Suitably, discussions on the future of the mission emphasized reparative, liberative, and post-colonial approaches. Rev. Michael Blair, Rev. Dr Lizette Tapia-Raquel, Rev. Dr Allan Pallanna, and Rev. Dr Oinike Harefa called for healing-centered partnerships, redistribution of power, acknowledgment of historical harms, and

prioritization of leadership from the Global South.

Sunday offered a shift in rhythm. Delegates worshipped with the local congregation at EPR Rubengera Parish, where they witnessed Rwanda's lived experience of faith, resilience, and community-rooted healing. The Preacher was Rev Dr Andar Parlindungan, the General Secretary of VEM. Returning in the afternoon, participants began shaping a shared vision for mission amid global catastrophe. Common threads emerged: commitment to climate justice, dismantling oppressive systems, equitable economic structures, empowering marginalized communities, and a collective determination to make Christian hope actionable. The day concluded with worship led by Rev. Claudia Schulz, whose message wove together the week's reflections, urging participants to persist in solidarity and to shine light even in the face of overwhelming darkness.

On 1 December, as the final morning sun stretched over Lake Kivu, delegates gathered for quiet farewells. The calm of departure contrasted with the intensity of the week's debates, yet a shared sense of urgency remained. They left Karongi carrying commitments to reshape global mission, away from old hierarchies and toward justice, courage, ecological responsibility, and radical hope.

In a world confronting extraordinary challenges, the consultation reaffirmed the church's enduring call: to be a light that does not retreat, but shines with purpose, compassion, and prophetic clarity.

UEM Council Appoints Robert Meyer as New Executive Secretary for Finance and Administration

By Martina Pauly



Experienced manager with an international profile to take over on October 1 (Wuppertal, March 26, 2026) At its most recent meeting in West Papua, the Council of the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) appointed Robert Simon Meyer as its new Executive Secretary for Finance and Administration. The 38-year-old German will assume his new role on October 1, 2026, and, according to the constitution, will also serve as one of two deputy general secretaries of UEM. He currently works as a project manager at the University of Leipzig. Robert Meyer holds a Master of Business Administration with a focus on the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. He thus brings entrepreneurial thinking as well as experience in project management to the international community of UEM. Meyer sees the 30th anniversary, which UEM is celebrating this year, as a special beginning: "I am very pleased to be able to contribute to the

work of UEM's international Management Team. Here I can help shape the future of a credible international community that looks back on 30 years of development and partnership on equal terms."

As someone who has gotten to know churches of various traditions in different places, Meyer is convinced of the power of diversity and the possibilities of UEM: "I am deeply impressed by the enormous potential of this vibrant communion of churches spanning three continents. The diversity of UEM and the mutual appreciation for different perspectives offer the best possible environment for shaping the church together."

The UEM looks forward to working with Robert Meyer and is confident that he will lead the community into its next 30 years with a fresh perspective, entrepreneurial thinking, and Christian conviction.

About „UEM“

The United Evangelical Mission (UEM) with offices in Germany, Indonesia and Tanzania is an international, equal communion of 39 members, including 32 Protestant churches in Africa and Asia as well as six Protestant churches and the v. Bodelschwingh Foundations Bethel in Germany. 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.

United Evangelical Mission 1/2
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Strengthening Church-Based Development through Results-Based Management Training session in Kinshasa DR Congo

By Reuben Inganji



Through the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) communion, churches continue to respond to the needs of their communities, thanks to diverse development initiatives. From education and health to economic empowerment and climate justice, these efforts reflect a shared commitment to holistic mission. Yet, as contexts grow more complex, there is an increasing need to ensure that such interventions are not only well-intentioned, but also well-planned, accountable, and impactful.

It is within this context that recent capacity-building efforts for Project Officers have emphasized the importance of Results-Based Management (RBM) and structured project planning approaches. These tools are not merely technical frameworks—they are pathways that enable churches to translate vision into measurable transformation.

Starting with Purpose: Why Projects Matter

Every project begins with a question: **What problem are we seeking to address?** A project is more than a set of activities; it is a time-bound intervention designed to respond to a clearly identified need or challenge within a community. For churches, this means grounding

development work in real-life contexts—listening to communities, understanding their challenges, and envisioning a future where those challenges are addressed. Without such clarity, even the most committed efforts risk losing direction. As reflected in the training, clarity of purpose is essential: knowing where we are going determines how we plan, act, and measure success.

Linking Action to Change: The Results Chain

A key insight from the training is the importance of the results chain, which connects resources, activities, and outcomes into a coherent pathway of change. This chain begins with **inputs such as financial, human, and material resources, which enable activities to take place.** These activities produce outputs—tangible results—which then lead to outcomes and, ultimately, long-term impact in people's lives.

For UEM member churches, this approach strengthens the ability to move beyond activity-based programming towards impact-oriented mission. It ensures that every intervention—whether a training, a livelihood project, or a social outreach—contributes to meaningful and lasting change.



A Shared Vision for Change: The Theory of Change

The results chain is complemented by the Theory of Change, which provides a clear roadmap of how transformation is expected to occur. It invites churches and partners to reflect on their long-term goals, identify the steps required to achieve them, and examine the assumptions underlying their work.

In practice, this fosters deeper collaboration and shared ownership among stakeholders. It also strengthens accountability, as progress can be measured against clearly defined expectations. For UEM, where partnerships span continents and cultures, such clarity is essential in building trust and ensuring collective impact.

Faith in Action: Biblical Foundations of Project Management

What makes this approach particularly meaningful within the *UEM context is its connection to faith*. The training draws inspiration from the biblical account of *Nehemiah, whose leadership reflects key principles of project management: problem analysis, planning, stakeholder engagement, risk management, and accountability*.

This reminds us that effective project management is not separate from Christian mission—it is an expression of faithful stewardship. It is about using the gifts, resources, and opportunities

entrusted to us in ways that bring transformation to communities and glory to God.

Strengthening Sustainable and Accountable Ministry

As churches continue to engage in development work, the adoption of structured approaches such as RBM contributes to:

- Improved planning and clarity of objectives,
- Enhanced monitoring and evaluation of results,
- Greater accountability to partners and supporters, and
- Stronger evidence of impact in communities.

These elements are critical in ensuring that church-led initiatives remain relevant, credible, and sustainable in a rapidly changing world.

Towards Transformative Mission

The journey from planning to impact is one that requires intentionality, reflection, and commitment. For UEM member churches, *embracing results-based approaches offers an opportunity to deepen their engagement in holistic mission—where spiritual care is accompanied by tangible improvements in people’s lives*.

As we continue to learn, adapt, and grow together, we are reminded that our *shared calling is not only to serve, but to do so in ways that are effective, accountable, and transformative*.

The UEM Moderator carries out an official visit to the Coast Region of Tanzania: Strengthening UEM Unity

By Ms Mushi



As part of his work, the Moderator of the United Evangelical Mission (UEM), Bishop Dr Abednego Keshomshahara, carried out a visit from 18th to 21st January 2026 to the Coastal Region of Tanzania. The visit that ended on 20 January 2026 aimed at reinforcing unity and collaboration, commending the UEM for the significant work they are doing, and ensuring that evangelism is carried out with the utmost care. He practically visited the parishes of Kana, Mikanjuni and Makorora which have shaped the history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

Bishop Dr Abednego showed the necessity for East and Coast, North-East, North-West and Karagwe dioceses to contribute to the UEM development activities every six months and to the UEM membership. They are the only four UEM members in ELCT. He reminded the fact that the Gospel was brought to those dioceses by missionaries from Bethel, Germany.

Besides, he expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the ELCT Eastern and Coastal Diocese for having donated a plot of land worth 5 billion Tanzanian

Shillings for the construction of the UEM Africa head office, to the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda for having donated to UEM a plot of land in Kigali, and to the Communauté Association des Eglises Evangéliques de la Lulonga (CADELU) in the DR Congo for its donation of 20 hectares of land to the UEM.

He added that for the UEM, such donations demonstrate how the African continent has grown and recognizes the value of God's work, which is carried out through joint evangelism and a commitment to bringing about the development of its people.

On his side, the Head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Bishop Dr Alex Gehaz Malasusa, who is a member of the Africa Regional Board of UEM, has called on the Church, particularly pastors and evangelists, to carry out God's work with heart and passion, and not to treat it merely as a job. He has also emphasized the need to foster interfaith harmony so that peace and love may reign amongst us.

Bishop Dr Malasusa has urged the leaders of Diakonia centers to implement projects that



will boost the economy, so that the Church can continue its good works by serving those in need within the community. For his part, the Bishop of the North-Eastern Diocese, Rev. Dr. Msafiri Joseph Mbilu, who is the host, expressed his gratitude to the Chairperson of the UEM for the way this communion of

churches has supported him and the clergy in the payment of debts. He added that the UEM has become an integral part of the Diocese and that the Diocese and the UEM will therefore continue to work hand in hand, particularly in matters of evangelism and development.

My Experience in **Advocacy** since 2017 to 2026

By Kambale Kahongya

Background

I began my work as the Officer of Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation in April 2017. Prior to this work for the UEM, I was living in the city of Butembo in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where I was the Academic Secretary General of the Free University of the Great Lakes Region of Butembo, which I had joined in 2015. I regularly visited my family in Goma, 330 km away from Butembo, and consecutively taught at the Free University of the Great Lakes Region in Goma and Bukavu. Originally, these three institutions were a single entity under the same administration, before their expansion and subsequent autonomy. Since this expansion and autonomy, the three universities are only united within the governing board.

My interest in children's ministry did not arise by chance; it stems primarily from my family responsibilities as an elder brother. I was the third of fourteen children, born by the same father and mother. I often felt that my parents' efforts weren't enough to provide each of us with everything we needed for school and clothing. I had to make myself available so that the little ones could have enough to live on.

Later in my youth, I thought I should be a role model, an initiator, and a protector. This desire to protect the vulnerable led me to present myself to the young children as a village group leader and the Sunday school teacher at the church.

When I left my village to join the university in 1989, I found that children in the chapel had no one who was truly interested in them. As I was playing guitar for the University choir, I hesitated to join these children, but my passion was always with them. In 1991, I published my first theological reflection booklet for children, young

people, and adults to read. It was my first step in producing Christian literature for young people and children. Following this, I was assigned to work with children in the Baptist Community in Central Africa (CBCA). I established a program to teach children, train children's leaders, and lead teenage groups.

In the years that followed, from 2000 to 2002, I continued my theological studies while remaining deeply involved in children's ministry. Then, from 2002 to 2008, I worked as a chaplain at the University. There, my greatest joy was to lead worship services every Thursday morning for over 300 kindergarten children, over 650 primary school children, and over 800 secondary school pupils. On the last Friday of each month, I organized a service for all students from all the university on two campuses. Initially, the younger students weren't interested in spiritual matters. But over time, this trend reversed; the younger students attracted others to the services, even in my absence.

At the end of 2008, I joined the Faculty of Theology as an assistant and enrolled directly in the Master's program. In 2010, I joined the Kirschliche Hochschule Wuppertal in Germany for my doctoral program. In my early work, my thesis supervisor, Professor Dr. Henning Wrogemann, encouraged me to pursue research in the field of child protection, an area that I was very passionate about. In 2015, I graduated and returned to my family, my university, and my church.

I felt a kind of moral debt towards Tanzania, as I received my scholarship after an interview at Tumaini University in Arusha in 2009. I prayed to God that He would grant me the grace to serve Him on Tanzanian soil. This is what happened. Now I thank God for His faithfulness to His

promises.

Achievements

When you enter a new department, you don't come with an empty head, and this shapes the emotions your heart will receive. You might be surprised, positively or negatively, satisfied, or you might still have many questions. Hopes are numerous, and obstacles are also present. How did I learn to function in this department, and what are the different areas to cover?

Youth Climate Action Day. For one day, children and young people engage in an environmental protection activity. The group chooses an issue that is urgent in their community. It could be collecting garbage, planting trees, weeding a field, feeding animals, etc.

Climate Justice. We encourage and promote agriculture that does not exploit children at the expense of their schooling. Climate change severely impacts impoverished regions and leads to low income in families. Unfortunately, poor families often rely on children's labor to contribute to their well-being.

Economic Justice. Here, we aim for workers to be fairly compensated. This takes into account the selling price of their produce and the cost of production inputs. Farmers, not buyers, should participate in setting the price of their products.

Music and Ecotheology. In African tradition, major life events are celebrated with music and poetry. Birth, marriage, death, harvest, hunting, travel, festivals, and so on are all accompanied by songs or poetry. Similarly, music remains the best way to express God's great deeds. Thus, the crisis facing the Earth and various acts of injustice are denounced and condemned in music. To restore the Earth, songs, both religious and secular, remind us that what is destroyed in the environment can be rebuilt through human commitment and determination.

Interreligious peace. Religions have often been consulted to promote peace and harmonious living. Yet, we also know that other open conflicts are fueled by religions. Interreligious dialogue is a very useful element for building peace and promoting living together in a multi-religious society. In Zanzibar for example, common activities are successful.

Prophetic Role of the Church. The prophetic voice of the Church is very much threatened in the world. Those in power want people to be behind them. They also want everyone to agree with their point of view. However, the Church always stands with the weak and reminds people that God always stands on the side of the oppressed. Thus, this ministry is very delicate; it requires wisdom to carry this voice effectively in a world of contradictions.

Trauma Healing. We have observed that all situations can lead to trauma. Pregnancy, childbirth, growth, play, deprivation, displacement, illness, death, broken relationships, failure, excessive success, hunger, poverty, etc are all sources of trauma. However, to survive and maintain good mental health, it is necessary to engage in exercises that can help process and heal from trauma. While these issues can be addressed by focusing on diaconal work, this neglects the fundamental question of the rights of vulnerable individuals. Trauma leads people to become dependent on the support and advocacy of others.

Raising awareness on various violations. In our societies, there are practices and customs that, according to our analysis in light of the rights of the vulnerable, sometimes constitute violations against children. Examples include female genital mutilation among the Masai people, the elimination of babies with birth defects or orphans at birth, and laws prohibiting women from eating certain kinds of food such as chicken. This kind of traditional legislation does not disappear easily. It takes on new forms

that must be effectively combated through strong awareness raising campaigns, education, and training.

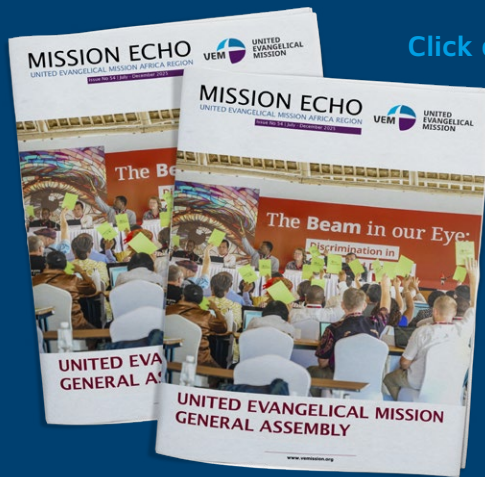
Misleading theology. In many churches, false teachings arise and are unfortunately embraced by many members. They come from various sources. Some stem from misinterpretations, others from the deliberate intent of those who alter biblical truth, and still others from a confluence of circumstances. The advocacy department ensures that the church's teaching remains orthodox and respects the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. To achieve this, a meticulous study of the writings and multiple analyses of consultations of ancient sources are essential.

Conclusion

The advocacy sector may seem small, depending on how one translates its meaning. But in reality, it is the largest department, as it covers many aspects. Therefore, one cannot succeed in the church's mission without considering the

contribution of advocacy.

Jesus did not only preach the gospel, heal the sick, and serve the poor. He also justified why he had to heal on the Sabbath, why he had to heal the child of a foreigner, non-Jewish, Canaanite woman, why he involved his hands by kissing little children in an assembly of adults, why he went to dine at the home of a sinner, Zacchaeus, why he allowed the public kissing of a prostitute, why, even in the throes of agony, he offered unexpected salvation to a condemned man... The work of advocacy carries the gospel from the Jewish temple in Jerusalem to distant continents. From well-established churches to informal gatherings, from structures to individuals living without an address, from the known to the unknown, etc.

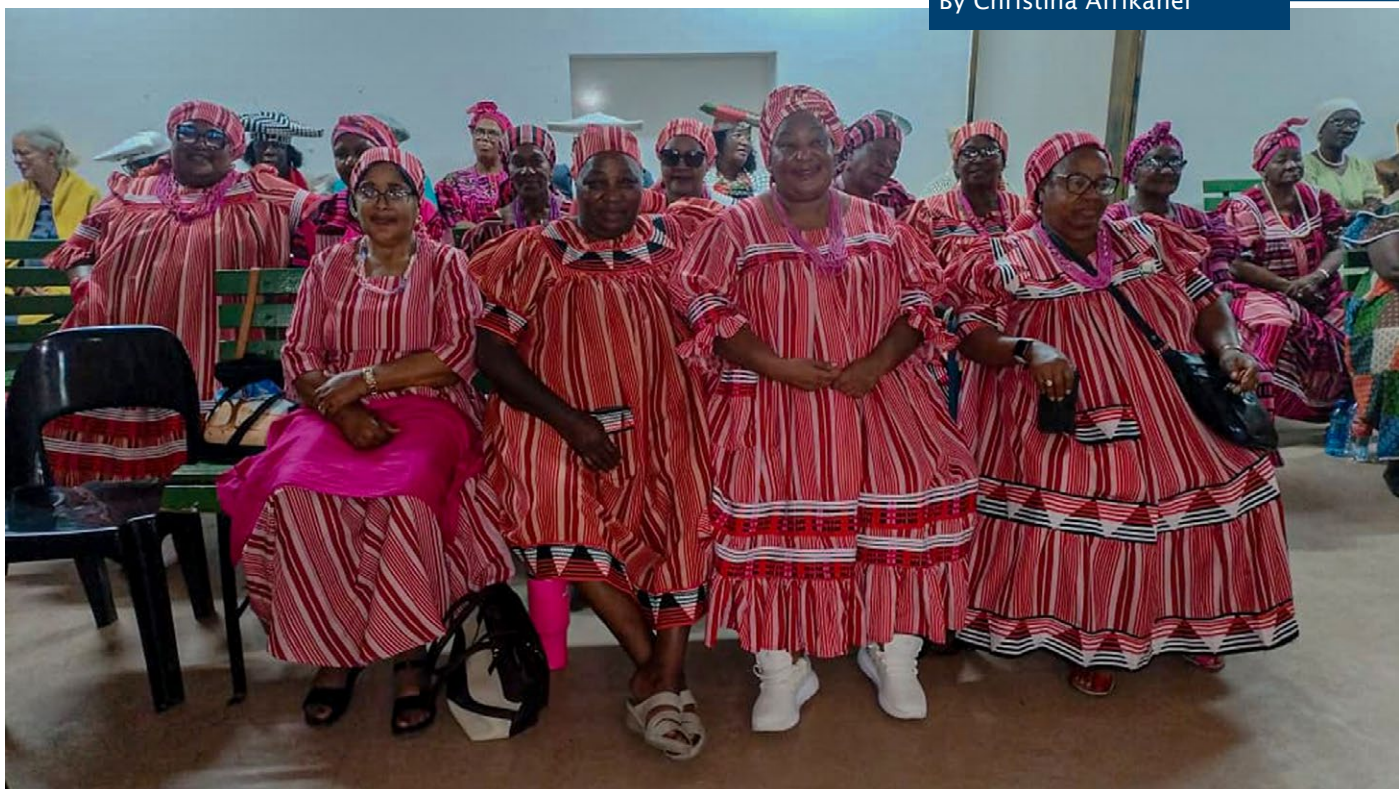


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Women's League Conference in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia

By Christina Afrikaner



The Women's League Conference serves as an annual platform for spiritual growth, fellowship, and empowerment among women within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN).

The annual Women's League Conference of the ELCRN, convened in Okahandja from 13 to 15 March 2026, brought together 330 women from all six circuits, under the leadership of Pastor Lionel Kamburute, assisted by Pastor Hans Rooi. The main theme comes from John 12:24- "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

The gathering aims to strengthen faith, promote unity, and inspire women to play active roles in their communities and church. The Women's League is recognized as the backbone of the ELCRN, fostering prayer, leadership, and service, and contributing significantly to the church mission and outreach.

The conference commenced on Friday 13 March evening with an engaging Bible quiz that fostered fellowship and friendly competition. Saturday's program featured educational and motivational presentations, with highlights including "Prophetic Living" by Mrs. M. Nendongo, "Women and the Gospel" by Mrs. M. Murorua, and an inspiring message, "Reflecting Christ Daily," delivered by Pastor Kamburute. The day was further enriched by music from Mr. Japan Jacobs.

Saturday evening offered a lively fundraising event, featuring a beauty contest and a spirited boxing performance reenacting the legendary bout between 'Mohammed Ali' and 'Joe Frazier,' with Ali claiming a knockout victory in the fifth round. Throughout the weekend, the Women's League prayer warriors faithfully gathered each morning for prayer, embodying the ELCRN spiritual foundation.



Sunday worship service liturgy was led by Elder A. Goagoses, with a sermon by Pastor Rooi. The service was uplifted by music from both the musicians and the Women's League.

During another highlight event, Pastor Kamburute officiated the clothing of 52 women. How does this work? We need to know that the entire Women's League of ELCRN has a specific attire they wear. When women join the League, they are prepared for a year, brought into a programmer and learn how things are done, what is expected and other skills. After a year of being part, they have to start wearing an attire (grey and white for Saturdays and Navy blue and white on Sundays), especially when it comes to conversion on circuit level or national level. So, the closing ceremony is done by the pastor responsible for AKC (Andreas Kukuri Center), and also a brooch is put on women on the side of the heart as a reminder of the crucifix.

A poignant candle lighting ceremony honored members and pastors who had passed away during the year, including the late Pastors Gerda Kayambu and Sara Keramin as well as other sisters. May their souls rest in eternal peace.

Pastor Lionel Karumbute concluded the ceremony service with prayer and benediction.

Volunteers in Mission

By UEM Team

Our UEM communion of churches invites young adults to do a voluntary service in another country:

- Young people from Africa, Asia, or South America come to Germany for their voluntary service (“South-North”).
- Young people from Africa or Asia do their service in another country within Africa or Asia (“South-South”).
- Young people from Germany do their voluntary service in countries in Africa, Asia, or South America (“North-South”).



My name is **Justa Charles** i am a current South-South volunteer from **Tanzania ELCT North Western diocese Bukoba**. Am committed and open minded individual with passion for learning and serving others. I has a privilege of serving as UEM volunteer 2025/2026. Through this experience i gain valuable exposure to new culture, improve different skills, and develop ability to adapt and work effectively in diverse environment.



During volunteering I serve as english teacher in kindergarten and primary school owned by **HKI church pamatasiantar**. I gained valuable professional and personal lesson that shaping my growth. This experience also deepened my understanding of child development and importance of creating a positive inclusive learning atmosphere where every child has confidence to share ideas and feel encouraged and supported.

Finally volunteering is not only about providing and teaching others but also learning from other improve our professional and personal ability and skills.



My name is **Jerry Oliver Simunapendi**, a UEM South-South Volunteer 2025-2026 from **GKI Church** in Papua Land, Indonesia which is placed at Anglican Church, **Diocese Shyogwe** in Rwanda.

I am serving in an office called RDIS (Rural Development Inter-Diocesan Service). As a volunteer, I support office staff with administrative tasks and collaborate with the team in proposal writing. Most of my work takes place in the field, including documenting tree-planting activities, visiting farmers, preparing tree nursery sites, and assisting with restoration land mapping.



Apart from serving in the office, I join Enihakole Choir, where we sing, share, and learn together. Surrounded by extraordinary young people, I've gained insights and lessons that will stay with me for a lifetime and I am grateful to God and UEM for this opportunity.

“I know a place is truly special when arrive with a smile and leave with tears.”

Meet some of our writers



MUSHI
NED communication officer
Tanzania



Christina Afrikaner
Chairperson on educational board of the ELCRN. Women league member.
Namibia



SIBIA
Director Sunday School CBCA Limete parish in Kinshasa DRC.



Devroda - Kagusa
Youth Leader in ELCT ECD and serve as delegate at UEM General Assembly and AFRA. Tanzania



Rev. Kambale Kahongya
UEM Advocacy officer (Former) - Professor at ULPGL Goma.



Flore Ekoule
Serve as Director of communication and l'information of EEC. Cameroon



Rev Marthe Kondemo
Serve as General Secretary of the Department of Women, Family, and Children. Professor of old testament at UPC-Kinshasa. DRC



Evarist Nsabimana
serve as communication officer at EPR. Rwanda



Reuben Inganji
UEM Project officer
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