

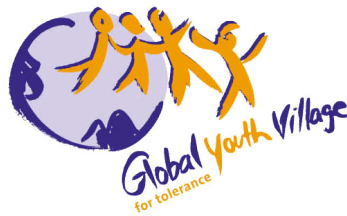
Zentrum Ökumene

der Evangelischen Kirche
in Hessen und Nassau

Global Youth Village

Youth from four continents
meet in the Protestant Church
in Hesse and Nassau (EKHN)

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Zentrum Ökumene
der Evangelischen Kirche
in Hessen und Nassau

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Global Youth Village 2012

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Preface



Rev. Dr. Johnny Thonipara

“We have jointly felt God’s love. This, we will not forget for long”, said a participant in the Global Youth Village coming from one of our Partner Churches. “The days brought along experiences that I would never want to miss”, said a participant from Germany. These are just two examples from the many feedbacks on the Global Youth Village 2012 at Erbach/Michelstadt. In that Global Youth Village a community has been created that was stronger than any linguistic or cultural barrier.

It is an important issue in EKHN to integrate young persons in the ecumenical activities and to enable them an access to the partnerships. In this sense, the Global Youth Village 2012 picked up the thread of the Global Youth Villages 2001 and 2006, put its own emphasis, and left clear traces on the Jugendkirchentag (church convention for youth). The Global Youth Village, once again, was a learning field of living out ecumenicity and tolerance, and a place of experiencing ecumenical spirituality. Unfortunately, an extensive documentation of this project cannot be provided here. But we might mention some highlights that will become visible in the present reports.

Our heartfelt thanks go to Ms. Barbara Manderscheid for the edition of the texts and pictures, to Ms. Ulrike Bohländer and Mr. Reinhard Heinzel for cooperation at the layout.

We, my colleague Dr. Helga Rau and my colleague Rev. Friedhelm Pieper and I, are grateful that our partners in the Partner Churches have supported the project and sent suitable candidates. Without their support, the Global Youth Village would not have become what it actually was for the young people. In the name of the preparatory team I thank all Partnership Committees for their collaboration and assistance. Many honorary workers and church workers have invested much time and energy and thus contributed to the success of this project.

Special thanks go to Ms. Annette Wiech in the Centre of Ecumenical Work for her excellent commitment in organizing this project. The Global Youth Village took place within the framework of the Jugendkirchentag (JUKT) at Michelstadt. I thankfully remember the good cooperation with the project team of JUKT. The collaboration consisted in mutual assistance and enrichment.

The town of Michelstadt has with its hospitality considerably contributed to a good atmosphere. We give many thanks to the Mayor Mr. Stephan Kelbert and his co-workers. The small town of Michelstadt has been experienced as an international city with a great heart.

The project was enabled financially by the generous support from the EKHN by means scheduled for partnership meetings, and with a subsidy from the Office for Mission and Ecumenical Affairs. On top of that, the participating Deaneries have considerably contributed to financing despite their own financial shortage. And also the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Evangelischen Jugend (AEJ) has supported the project with means from the federal Children and Youth Plan. Further support came from Jugendkirchentag of EKHN. Many thanks to all.

I wish all interested persons a lot of courage and strength to organize such meetings in the future. The predominantly positive experiences will certainly give us motivation for that.

Rev. Dr. Johny Thonipara, Project Director
Centre for Ecumenical Work of EKHN
Unit Development and Partnership Asia



2. The Way towards the GYV



“The targeted integration of young people into Church Partnerships is in many groups a central topic”.

This insight was one result in the evaluation of the ecumenical direct partnerships of our Church with churches in Africa and Asia from the years 2003 and 2004. At the occasion of an international partnership consultation in September 2004 this statement was confirmed and the necessity of a program for the exchange of youth was formulated.

The issue of offering young people an access to the partnerships has been integrated in the agreements on objectives between the Church Administration and the Centre for Ecumenical Work, and it was realized by international youth meetings within the framework of direct partnerships of EKHN, and by the "Global Youth Village 2006" during the Jugendkirchentag at Friedberg/Bad Nauheim.

At the occasion of the Jugendkirchentag 2012 at Erbach and Michelstadt, the project was meant to be continued and the Global Youth Village 2012 was planned on the basis of the experiences gained during the Global Youth Villages 2001 and 2006.

Clear objectives were set regarding the central issue of arranging an international ecumenical youth meeting within the scope of the church partnerships of EKHN: the Global Youth Village should be a place where young persons are being actively integrated into the existing partner relationships, where the partnerships are being linked by the South-South and the South-North encounters, and where the ecumenical competence of the young persons should be strengthened by the experiences made together.

This time again, the Global Youth Village should be integrated into

the overall framework of a Jugendkirchentag where the participants would come together under the motto "Change of Life – Between Globalization and Tradition" and can present their living worlds to a broad young public. During the Global Youth Village they may share their experiences and learn from one

"Change of Life – Between Globalization and Tradition". Which kinds of hope, wishes, desires and experiences of faith are carried by youngsters?

another by interchanging among each other and with the other visitors of the Jugendkirchentag on their own living worlds and life designs, and on the different roles of young Christians in church and society in their home countries. In the preparation and presentation of the "Global Village" with exhibitions and creative workshops they should experience community, on the basis of common issues and by creating and experiencing an ecumenical spirituality.

The planning, preparation and organization of the Global Youth Village was based at the Department for Development and Partnership in the Centre for Ecumenical Work of EKHN, at the Department for Children and Youth Work in the Centre for Education of EKHN, at the youth

workers in the Deaneries, at the representatives of the youth work and the partnership groups in the interested Deaneries, and at the project group for Jugendkirchentag 2012. They all have made it possible for the forty youngsters and young adults from the partner churches of EKHN, together with the German youth from the partner deaneries, to spend days rich of experience and adventure, and an intensive meeting in the sharing of one's faith and life.

3. Meeting in the tandem groups



In June 2012 we were ready again: 40 youngsters and young adults from the Partner Churches of EKHN in Ghana, Tanzania, South Africa, USA, Indonesia, South Korea, Italy, Poland and India should be guests in the Deaneries and Parishes of EKHN.

The guests would spend three weeks in our region, first staying one week in the deanery, then one week at Michelstadt together with youth from all Partner Churches to form the Global Youth Village on the Jugendkirchentag at Michelstadt. The third week would then be spent again by the young guests in the deaneries and congregations.

What awaited the participants in the deaneries, what they saw and which experiences they could carry home is shown in the description of the meetings of “Giessen – India” and “Anterior Odenwald/Darmstadt – South Africa”.

Giessen – India

The delegates from two out of the three partnerships with India were expected with much excitement. Two young persons each from the Diocese Krishna-Godavari of the Church of South India (CSI) and two from the Diocese Amritsar of the Church of North India (CNI) have travelled to Giessen.

The preparation group of the Deanery has had many ideas in order to offer unforgettable impressions to take home for the

delegates. Of course, at the beginning the mutual getting to know each other and the exchange about German and Indian reality and life worlds stood in the foreground. This was practically enforced by activities such as a guided city tour at Giessen, a boat trip in canoes on the river Lahn – where some people made direct contact with the water – or at a visit of the monastery Arnsburg. A small foretaste of the Global Youth Village was felt by the guests already during the excursions and the framework program, because the delegates from Ghana had already joined them for that.

It was not only for their age that the guests were interested in our educational system, and so they could see various aspects of education and schooling during visits in the Comprehensive School East and at a high school Liebigschule, as well as at the University and in the “Mathematicum”, an exhibition of mathematical experiments at Giessen. The youth and education work outside the school had also to be presented, and so the guests visited a workshop together with the group from Ghana in the Youth Workshop Giessen, and they played soccer with the Syrian Orthodox youth of the sports club “Tur Abdin” at Pohlheim.

A contact with the parish music

band at Münzenberg under the direction of Mr. Gerhard Radgen was established easily, and rather by chance but not totally unplanned, a worship band consisting of youth from Münzenberg and some Indian guests was formed, which later on at Michelstadt joined with Korean youth and cooperated there in the church president's bible study, the bible study of the Indian group, and the “Night of Cultures”.

The Whitsun weekend and the days after the Global Youth Village were spent in the congregations, where the young people were hosted by families. In his feedback Akshim still was enthusiastic about the fact that he could witness a baptism, or Pranavi told that she was accepted in a folklore dancing group. On Monday after Pentecost, all took part in the open air ecumenical worship service at Giessen Schiffenberg that had been prepared by the Working Group of Christian Churches (ACK). Bishop Pradeep Kumar Samantaroy, who had made the journey together with his wife Lily and the former Bishop Anand Chandu Lal because of the anniversary of the Amritsar Partnership, took actively part and held the sermon.

The second weekend was also something special for the two guests from Amritsar, as they





cooperated on Saturday in the worship service for the Special Synod of the Deanery Wetterau on the topic: "The poor are amongst you at all times...", and in the service for the 25th Anniversary of the Amritsar Partnership in the city church at Friedberg, and there they pleased, together with the grown-up delegates, the attendants with Indian hymns.

During the program, hosts and guests sometimes very clearly felt the different expectations and cultures, not only between India and Germany, but also between adults and youth. Not all hosts could positively accept the great importance of Facebook and the (expensive!) contacts via mobile phone to the home places. "But all in all it was a very dense, well-filled and successful time of meetings, exchange and living together", say Rev. Konrad Schulz and Rev. Bernd Apel with satisfaction.

Anterior Odenwald/ Darmstadt – South Africa

Long before the meeting and the Global Youth Village, the preparations for this special encounter had begun. For three weeks the guests from the partner congregations would be here and spend the first and the third week of meetings in the region. Whereas the partners in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth had soon found their delegates, the search for German youth that would have enough free time to spend these three weeks together with the guests was much more difficult.

The original idea of sending the guests to German families with youngsters who would participate in the Global Youth Village was not feasible. Instead, young persons, who had prepared and shaped the three-week program, and host families being mainly a host have complemented each other well.

After a warm welcome and a first getting to know of "country and people", the first week of the meeting stood totally under the sign of preparing the Global Youth Village. On the motto of the Global Youth Village "Change of Life" some sub-topics were discussed such as environment, multi-cultural society, or fair trade, and this was interesting and experience-orientated: visits at an ecological farmer and a carpenter's workshop working sustainably showed local approaches of engaged people, and initiated lively discussions. On Sundays, contacts with the partners and the visit of a worship service in the respective partner congregation were on the program.

After the week of meetings in the Global Youth Village, we attended a cultural youth event at Dieburg where the South African guests also contributed, and then during the next and last week there were



also excursions – to the roots of the Moravian Church at Herrnhag, to Frankfurt am Main, and to Heidelberg.

Varied additional information and impressions on the topic of the Global Youth Village were collected by the guests during a visit of the prison at Dieburg, in Werkhof Darmstadt, or at the Women's Representative at Darmstadt. The talks and the exchange were mostly a profit for both guests and hosts. Even if the circumstances of life in South Africa and in Germany are not comparable in many ways (life in prison or the life of many women certainly is much harder there), the problems to overcome (e.g. the prejudices you have to tackle with as a former prisoner) are the same here and there, and the societies here and there are challenged to help the prisoners, the youth without a perspective in the job market, or the women.

For the delegates at Darmstadt a visit to the Synagogue, and especially the participation in a Juleica-course (training for youth leaders) was also very interesting. Since that course was

on the question by which means and practical exercises one could communicate faith, the guests could draw a profit for themselves even without German language knowledge, and at the same time get into church youth work outside of the Jugendkirchentag.

The delegates at Odenwald contemporaneously visited the Synod of the Deanery Anterior Odenwald, where the 25th anniversary of the partnership between the Deanery Anterior Odenwald and District 3 at Cape Town was celebrated with a prayer meeting, words of greeting, music and a common dinner.

In the subsequent evaluation with all delegates from Germany and South Africa, the special quality became clear that had been sensible during the whole meeting: "This youth meeting was for the delegates (and for us organizers) a very precious and important experience. And they will take home these experiences and will return to their daily life with a new, wider outlook", concludes Nina Nicklas-Bergmann.

The farewell

After the weeks full of events, the guests were seen off home in a ceremonial frame by their hosts. Even if the personal farewell often was very hard and some were weeping, the young participants separated in the assurance that they will remain united in their hearts after these eventful, deeply emotional and spiritual weeks spent together, and that they – thanks to modern technology with Facebook and e-mail – can maintain their unity and deepen it.

4. The preparation of GYV



For preparing the Global Youth Village, the young adults from our partner churches met with their German partners and the team of the GYV at the youth hostel at Erbach im Odenwald on Monday, 4 June. Since there was no suitable accommodation found at Michelstadt, the site of the Global Youth Village, we had chosen the youth hostel at Erbach. Erbach and Michelstadt are situated in the Odenwald, an area shrouded in legend with its wonderful landscape. A special attraction in Erbach is the worldwide unique German Ivory Museum. In Michelstadt there are beautiful parks and framework houses, the town hall even counts among the most beautiful and significant framework buildings in Germany. The guests arrived in the morning at Erbach. Already in the prayer meeting for the opening of our meeting they looked at our central theme of the Global Youth Village: “Change of Life – Between Globalization and Tradition”. Everybody brought an object symbolizing for him or her the topic and thus contributed to a multifarious and colourful mood for the meeting.



„Change of life – between globalisation and tradition“

In small groups where the participants first could present themselves and get to know each other they worked in an initial dealing with the subject on some common features and differences.

Together they stated,

- that the change brings along similar chances and problems everywhere in the world,
- that the change is not uniform everywhere,
- that the change in a global world has effects on all levels of life in the various parts of the world
- that there is a tension between tradition and modernity, particularly in the life of young people,
- that the answers and reactions of the churches on the transformations are not always appropriate and suitable,
- that many people become individualists by the change,
- that many people are intolerant against members of other religions and people living in different forms of life (e.g. homosexuals).

Some lamented the loss of precious traditions and cultural goods. The destruction of environment and nature by industrialization, the growing gap between rich and poor, unemployment and commercialization of the religious holidays were also seen as great problems of our epoch.

The participants were convinced that there are things to which Christians should cling: democracy, human rights, gender justice, family, religious faith, hospitality and integrity of culture.





„You can call me Ika“

“My name is Datu Madinka Bongasilomba! You can call me Ika”. That is how one participant from Indonesia presented herself, and her presentation sounded rather like a poem. The strangeness and diversity, that occasionally showed in a poetical and mysterious way during the presentation round, changed sometimes into astonishment and non-understanding in the later discussions on content.

After some general statements had been prepared in international groups on Monday, the topics were concretized and thoroughly discussed on Tuesday in the respective groups of the country.

The discussion was led under the topics:

What are important traditions in my country?

What is changing in my country?

Which positive effects has this change?

This made clear how different the situations are in the respective countries.

For instance, whereas Ghana and Tanzania still have something in common, the situation in Germany is often a totally different one. A common statement was quickly found in the

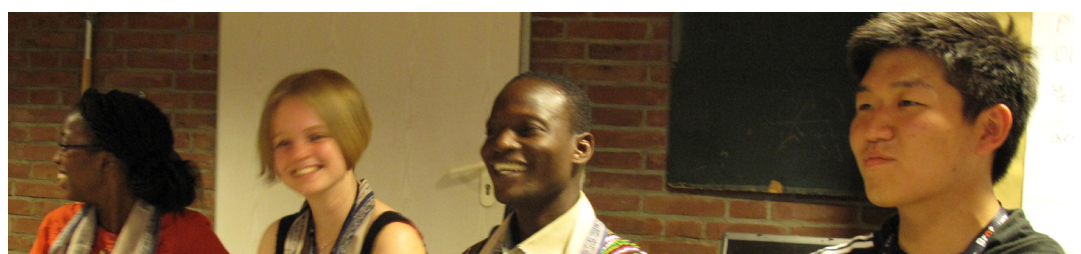
claim that, whether in Ghana, Tanzania or Germany, all humans shall have the right to go to school and that the state must create the circumstances for that. In a totally different manner and with much controversy, the topic “Youth Involvement in Church” was discussed. Both the original situations and the demands are very diverse here. Whilst in Ghana, but also in Tanzania, children get very early into contact with church and bible study, and work very committed in the congregation, the Ghanaian and Tanzanian guests missed just this in the German parishes. “Where are your young people?”, was a question repeated that morning several times. “If adults don’t go to church, why then should children and youth go there?”, was one attempt to understand and explain the situation in our local congregations.

Especially the African participants could not conceal how helpless and shocked they were to see this circumstance in the German congregations. “How could solutions look like”, “What can or must the Church do to alter this”, was discussed lively and dedicated.

The exchange and the discussions were not simply closed by the end of the working units. Often one could see groups walking around the area or sitting in the seminar rooms, that were deeply and passionately involved in discussions and debates. Sometimes they shared ideas about their churches at home, and sometimes there were excited disputes when very controversial ideas clashed. The young persons showed how seriously they take their faith and their church, and that they are fully aware of the up-to-date topics and problems.

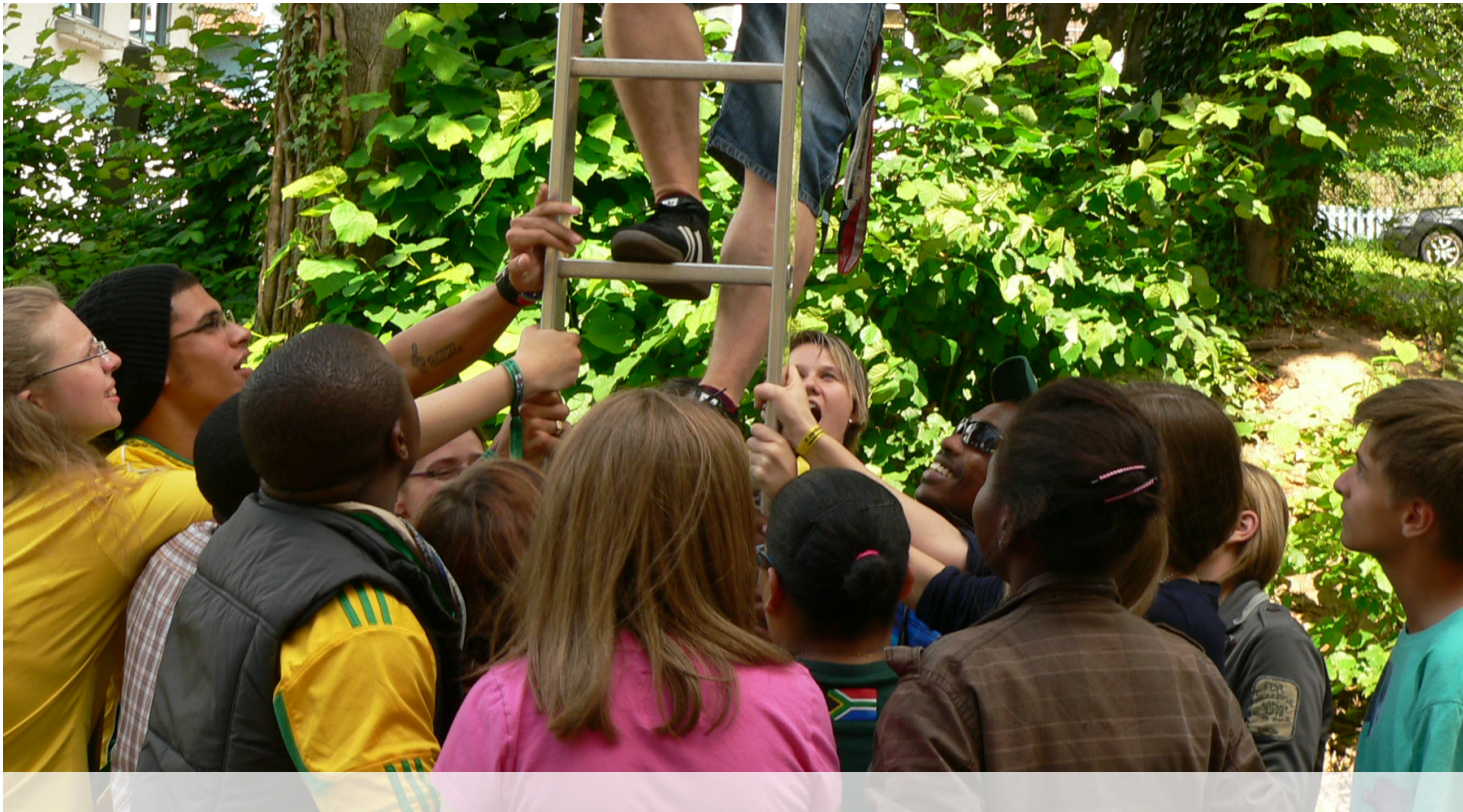
During the next days the manifold activities centred on preparations for the numerous presentations, workshops, performances and concerts which the participants in the “Global Youth Village” and during the “Night of Cultures” wanted to present to the visitors of Jugendkirchentag.

In working together, in prayer, in singing and playing, one experienced again and again how exciting and enriching community can be, despite all the differences and across the borders of cultures and languages.



5. Workshops

at Jugendkirchentag in Michelstadt



Already some days before the beginning of the Jugendkirchentag, the youngsters from the partner churches and their German hosts from various regions of EKHN met in order to jointly prepare the days at Michelstadt. And then the time had come, the Global Youth Village was opened, the guests could arrive.

And it was a really friendly village the visitor would enter here. In the Town Hall of Michelstadt, the 65 young delegates from four continents had formed a unique common global village.

In the middle of the room there was a big inflatable world ball, on the left one could hear African drums, on the other side there was Indian dancing. On about nine square meters, Africa had its place in one angle represented by the countries South Africa, Ghana and Tanzania. Zingisile from Cape Town (S.A.) welcomed the visitors and presented his home country with pictures and reports, showed clothing, typical food, talked about politics and of course about the faith that unites everybody, but he also did not spare out the country's problems: poverty and violence, child prostitution and

Aids, to only mention some examples.

Nearby, reachable without any border or visa, were Tanzania and Ghana, a few meters further on were localized the USA and Europe. All "inhabitants" of the village tried to transfer a piece of their home to the Global Youth Village by means of information, pictures, flags, traditional clothes, food or music instruments, and make accessible to the visitors the



cultural specificities but also the important issues of their countries.

And many visitors had come. At the opening of Jugendkirchentag, the Global Youth Village had been presented and vouchers for participation in many actions and workshops had been distributed to the youth. This had aroused curiosity in many visitors of Jugendkirchentag so that later on they came to the rooms in the Town Hall.



"Singing, dancing, music, but above all our common faith are the bearing columns",

says Rev. Dr. Johny Thonipara



Bible study

God has created us and gave us an order – what have we made of it? In the theme park “Nature and Environment” the bible study of the delegates from Germany, Ghana and India together with the Church President Dr. Volker Jung marked the official beginning of the program in the Global Youth Village. Surrounded by the music of the extra formed multicultural worship band (consisting of Münzenberg Gemeindeband, Indian and Korean youth), 150 visitors of the Jugendkirchentag in the crowded tent heard the statements and prayers of young people from three continents and the text exegesis by the Church President.

And also surrounded by the music of the worship band, the bible study of the Indian delegates and their partners dealt with the subject “What do we think of faith and spirituality?”

Bishop Pradeep Kumar Samantroy, who assisted the Indian delegates herein, encouraged us in his sermon to engage ourselves in church and congregation, and to play an active part there. With a story about different receptacles he showed whom

God is searching. He does not count on the perfect china, the fine cups with a golden border or the embossed silver cups. He instead chooses the broken fixed mug of clay. Because this one knows well how it feels to be broken and be rebuilt again. Lively and very illustratively the bishop spoke to the audience: the church should be vulnerable and prepared to take risks, and it needs young persons who give themselves into the hands of God.





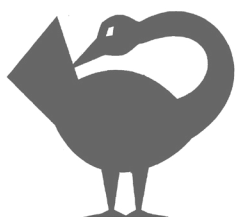
*Adinkrahene (Adinkra KIng)
symbolizes leadership*



*Gye Nyame (God alone)
stands for the almightiness of God*



*Nkyinkyim (swirling)
is a symbol for initiative, dynamics
and versatility*



*Sankofa (turn back and accept)
is a sign of the significance of
learning from the past*

Adinkra printing

The Ghanaian culture is a culture of symbolism. An essential aspect of this symbolism are Adinkras which, as a model of proverbs, sayings and maxims, refer to the whole range of life and give orientation, support and courage to the people.

Adinkras are used in all forms of handicraft, and the tandem Runkel-Ghana put them with traditional and handmade printing plates onto t-shirts.

Getting to know the Adinkras was not only for the visitors of Kirchentag an interesting insight to the Ghanaian culture, but also a special event for the Ghanaian delegates themselves, as Michael reports: "The textile printing with the symbols of Adinkra was an exciting thing for me. Even though I come from Ghana, I never have done this before. In the Global Youth Village I now had the chance and it was a great experience."





“Energy riding” in the park

The production of energy by riding a bicycle – that was the adventure awaiting the visitors in the theme park Nature and Environment.

One could produce energy on six bicycles for a mixer, a stirring machine and a lamp. The guests of Jugendkirchentag were asked to produce themselves the necessary electrical energy by using the bicycles. Many youngsters and also Church President Dr. Volker Jung enthusiastically paddled hard and worked all together 340 Watts of electrical power on the first day. The point was to get a feeling for the effort needed for producing energy.

Here in Germany power comes from the wall socket – the whole year long and 24 hours per day. This is not always the case in our guests' countries, and thus one could get into dialogue, with the youth from the project group and the young people from Ghana and India, about the situation of energy provision in the various parts of the world, about the distribution and the consumption of energy, about climate change, and about alternative forms of energy that become ever more important.

Experience Encounter – Overcome Borders

The tandem Darmstadt/Odenwald-South Africa had invited to the workshop “Experience Encounter – Overcome Borders”. In various interactive plays the participants could experience in a very special way how community can carry you; how the support given by a community enables the individual for unexpected performance, and how problems can be solved jointly in mutual respect.

An equally spectacular and touching action was it to climb up and down a ladder that was exclusively held by the group. The experience of accepting responsibility together for another one, and on the other hand to master the exercise trusting in the group, was incredibly strengthening and enriching for all parties.

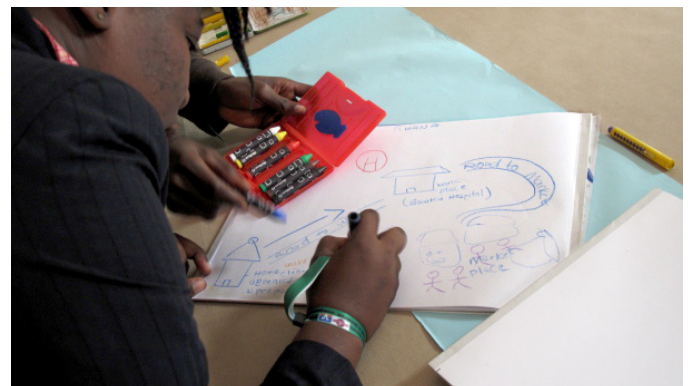




Where I am at home

It should have been an exciting discussion round – but it became much more. The participants in

the workshop did not only report about themselves and their daily routine at home, they designed a “social landscape” of their life. Ordinary places and realities of life became visible and were experienced in their manifold facets, and in the exchange on



this the young persons went deeply into the world of the others.

The personal life design was presented in very fine details, one could learn much about the daily routine, and the meaning of Sunday, the shaping of faith and the commitment to church, and how this manifests itself in the cooperation in Sunday school or in mission work.

At the same time, social and political circumstances such as the job market, education and schooling, poverty and the struggle for survival of the rural population, distances so difficult to be overcome, and transportation problems in the rural areas, environmental problems like water scarcity and erosion, prostitution, conflicts between tribes, and security in everyday life were reported very differentiated, compared and evaluated.

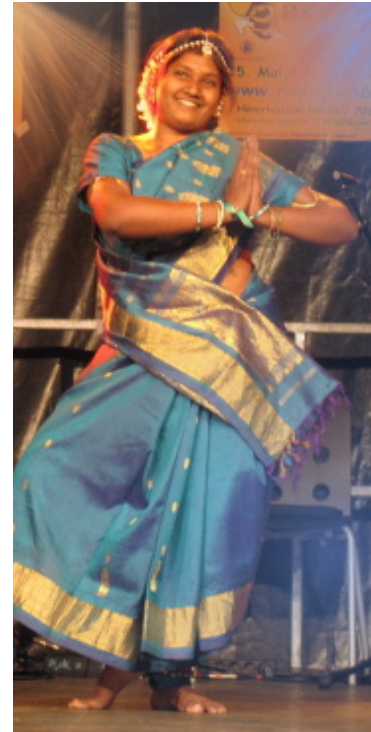


Night of Cultures

The highlight of the meeting definitely was the “Night of Cultures”.

“It was a wonderful experience to share your own pleasure in the case, to infect others with your joy, and to move them to take part and to sing together ...”, says Nina Nicklas-Bergmann.

On the great stage, I-Themba, a group from South Africa, and the regional groups from the Global Youth Village alternated with their performances. It did not detract from the whole that some do their thing professionally, whereas the others were laymen just gathered into “choirs” and theatre groups. At both I-Themba and the groups from Global Youth Village it has clicked with the visitors.



Painting with henna: “Mehindi”



Mehindi, the artistic ornamental body painting with henna is an old Indian tradition. It is being prepared for special celebrations and rituals, and thus, for example, a bride receives an impressive painting for her marriage on hands, forearms and feet. But meanwhile Mehindi has also become “suitable for every day”, and so the Indian delegates not only presented the old tradition to the visitors of Jugendkirchentag, but they painted interested persons courageous and patient enough with “henna tattoos”.



Bollywood dance

The advertisement of India in the globalized world of the media has also its origin in old traditions.

Guests of Jugendkirchentag could enter into this strange world and test themselves what makes the appeal of this dancing art.

At the great feast of the “Night of Cultures” all visitors were taken on a journey to India, when in the colourful spot lights both the traditional dance and the Bollywood dance was presented.

6. Personal impressions



“Sometimes I have difficulty to get together what I am hearing here with what I knew before.”

"The Global Youth Village has opened my eyes: it is like I have lived in a bubble before; it really changed me."

One delegate

"The most touching thing for me was to see with how much courage one of the participants, who actually suffers from the fear of heights, climbed up a ladder only held by the group, and back down on the other side. This and similar experiences were incredibly strengthening and enriching, not only for the individual who mastered the exercise, but also for all parties present."

Nina Nicklas-Bergmann

Inke Rondonowut Lasut



Despite considerable expenditure of work, it has been worth the effort to once again have brought together youth from the partnerships in India, and youth from our own deaneries, and beyond that from other partnerships. Exactly the triangular meetings were particularly felt as very important by the participants. In some aspects, the South of India seemed to be more distant from its North than from Europe. Of course some participants might have desired more practical working together, or even more insight into Germany as a whole. But all in all it was a very dense, well-filled and successful time of meeting, of sharing and living together."

Konrad Schulz and Bernd Apel

The Global Youth Village was a fresh breeze of experiences for me. You think you know about multicultural richness, but to spend a whole week together with youth and young adults from four continents in one house, this brings new knowledge and experience.

Inke Rondonowut Lasut



Marta Bigda

Interviews

Marta Bigda from Poland has asked the same questions to delegates from four continents. The answers reflect the common interest and the difference of cultures and traditions.

She asked the young adults what was important for them personally in their life.

„One thing in life that I find to be important is happiness. Adults often live their lives in a practical manner, often making decisions for the future but never really for the present. I believe that one's happiness is one of many factors that truly determine the type of life that a person lives.”

For all, coexistence, community and their fellow humans are in the foreground. Then, there are different traditions and developments: whereas for the European and the American delegates personal responsibility and development are an important aspect in their life, it is God and the Belief what is prevalent for the African and the Asian delegates.

„Faith. I'm a Christian so I believe everything is made by God. What could be more important?”

On the question reflecting the theme of the Global Youth Village: "What kind of changes do you see in your country and in the world?", all focused on the positive changes they have been observing: more human beings have access to education, information and knowledge. Communities become more liberal and tolerant. Even minorities can exercise their religion, and in those countries where people are being oppressed, they stand up against it and claim their rights.

In all this, the world comes closer, they think.

In their evaluation of the Global Youth Village they underlined the extraordinary experience of this meeting. They were overwhelmed by the fellowship, by jointly believing and praying. They felt the different ways of how faith is being lived and celebrated, and

„GYV was great to me. It was an eye opener. My mind was full of views I learned at home and during GYV it changed a lot.“

most of them felt enriched by that. But some were also put off by it: "If we are going through the one Bible, why do we still have different statements?" asked one participant from Africa.

"Sometimes I have problems to get together what I am hearing here with what I knew before."

That is the opinion of Michael Wandusim from Ghana. In the workshop "Where I am at home", the 22-year-old student has just described his daily routine: in the morning at four thirty a.m. he gets up, prepares prayers, reads in the Bible, eats breakfast. After that he runs to the university where he attends four seminars every day. Twice daily he also meets with other Presbyterians in the prayer centre on the campus. By half past seven p.m. he returns to his room. On Sundays: going to church, prayer, bible-study... the thin young man says confidently: "That is my life since three years – there's not much room for leisure time and parties. But this is normal for me."

He asks the Germans: "Do you really only go to church on Sundays?" It's true that he had already heard that there were many things different, but he had

come with the expectation to experience a "prayer community with the Germans". "Do you read the Bible?", is his standard question, the answer is regularly: no. "But what do you then believe?", he wanted to know from Rebekka. "I explained him that I am not yet so assured in my faith – and then he urged me to read the bible." She laughs amused. But then the 17-year-old thinks about it: "Somehow he has convinced me, I'll try it." An impulse for both sides, when the deep personal piety of an African Christian clashes with the rather reserved faith attitude of many in the people's church of Germany.

What does Michael take home to Ghana? "At home it is not part of daily life that the opinion of a younger person should count. The free speech here was good for me. It opens the mind to see things differently and to think about it."



Michael Wandusim

7. Goodbye...

...till next time



On Sunday, 10th of June, the time to say goodbye had come. After the celebrations in the night before, it was not easy for some to clean up their rooms and to say goodbye to one another. First, we attended the closing worship service in Odenwald Hall where international guests from the Global Youth Village actively took part.

In the closing round, the participants reported mostly positively about their experiences. Nearly seven days they had discussed with each other, shared their experience, lived friendship, celebrated fellowship in faith, and had much pleasure with one another. Life in the Global Village was like a dream ending too early, said one participant. Many have made the experience that they could live together like a family without

discrimination. One participant said: "I was never lonely in the Global Youth Village". For another one the week spent in the GYV was the best week in his life.

The intercultural living together with people from 10 nations and the sharing among each other were unique experiences that changed their life. Together, they formed a tie of unity. As one participant commented: "We jointly had part in God's love. This

we cannot easily forget". For the first time one of the participants felt that he can go everywhere and will find friends there. The common faith and the Bible have brought us together. We should draw strength from these sources for our continued work, said one participant from Africa. For many, the time had been too short, they wished to have more time to get to know each other, for talks and discussions.

Looking back...

The Global Youth Village 2012 was a success and an enrichment for the Jugendkirchentag and for our Church. It was perceived as a firm element of Jugendkirchentag, and it has as well somehow left its imprint. Highlights were the workshops such as painting with henna, printing t-shirts, producing energy with the bicycle, "Experience Encounter – Overcome Borders", the bible study, Bollywood dance, the Night of Cultures, and last but not least the thematic discussions. The creative workshops were more exciting and interesting for the participants and were better accepted than pure discussion rounds. During creative collaboration they heard much

about the respective partner country and its particularities. For the interested young people from the inland and abroad, and for the Deaneries, the Global Youth Village was a great learning experience in the ecumenical environment. It offered a learning field for tolerance and mutuality. Some young people have made experiences that they will never forget in their life. So we have managed to motivate young people for the ecumenical work. There was a very good cooperation both between the team of the JUKT and the team of Global Youth Village, and between the Centre for Ecumenical Work and the Partnership Committees.

... and perspectives for the future work

Besides all enthusiasm and the positive experiences there were also parts we should rethink, and which should be an incentive for us to consider some improvements for any next Global Youth Village.

This time again the Global Youth Village was an event organized by the Centre of Ecumenical Work of EKHN and has meant something to the visitors of Jugendkirchentag.

The visitors of JUKT were referred to the Global Youth Village by information and vouchers, and many of them found their way to the activities and workshops. In the future one should, however, think about an

easily accessible location having a good visibility potential, so that even more visitors might find their way to the Global Youth Village.

It is becoming more and more difficult to form suitable tandem groups. For German youth and young adults it's not easy to accompany the guests during the entire program, as they are bound in school, academic studies or the job. In the future, the Ecumenical Voluntary Program could be a help here.

The congregations with other languages and origin, above all the migrant congregations within EKHN, should be more integrated into the exchange program in the future. The participation so far of

our guests' compatriots living here has shown how fruitful and helpful this participation is for both sides.

The close linking to JUKT has many advantages. First of all one could count with some public. It was advantageous that we could use the infrastructure of JUKT and could contribute some of our own performances to its content: Night of Cultures, participation in services, bible study with the Church President, etc. But this also meant a special preparation work which was very time-consuming. It would be fine to shape the future preparation in such a way as to take into account the great need for sharing and talks.

For several reasons it would be good to invite more participants from one respective country. On the one hand, it would be an enrichment for the contributions as to the content: If more than two persons from one country were present, this would bring a larger range of information and opinions. On the other hand, the risk that no delegate could come from a partner church because of a late visa would then be smaller.

Last but not least it would be helpful if the regulation of a partial financing by AEJ would be changed, because the majority of the tandem groups could not apply, for reasons of the very specific conditions, even if the meeting confronts the Deaneries

with high financial challenges.

The described experiences and “shortcomings” do by no means reduce the positive resonance of the meeting. The positive aspects are by far predominant, both for the participating youth and for our partnership work, and the – still young – tradition of the Global Youth Village shall also be continued in the future.

But first of all there shall be bilateral and trilateral possibilities of youth exchange in the regions within the individual Partnerships. Such meetings may prepare the soil for the next great multilateral encounter.



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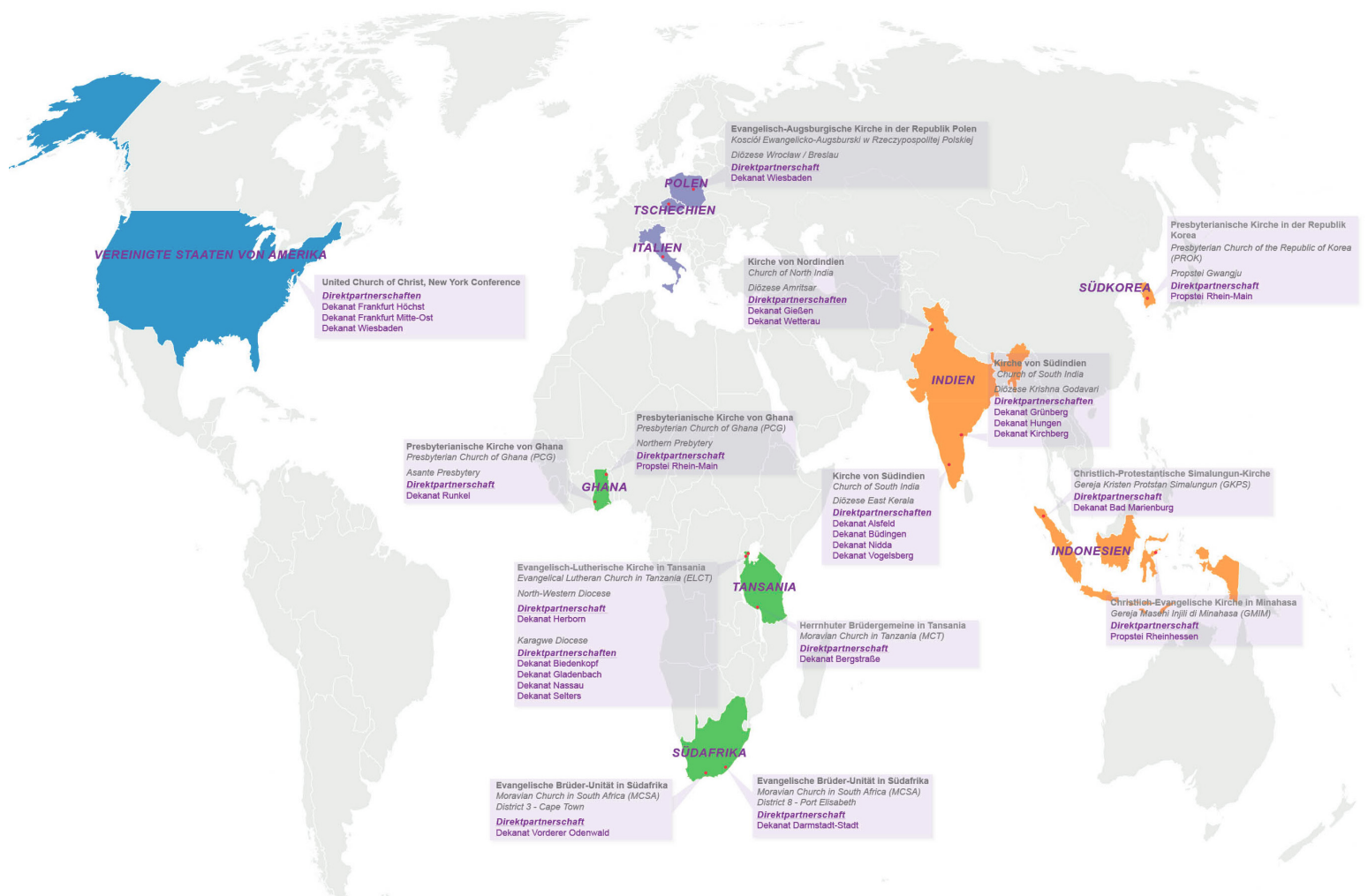


We say thanks to all of you!

The following institutions and deaneries with their partners have participated in the GYV:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| • Good days & nights | – | Jugendkirchentag der EKHN |
| • Dekanat Gießen | – | Presbyterian Church of Ghana - Northern Presbytery |
| • Dekanat Frankfurt Mitte-Ost | – | Presbyterian Church of Ghana- Northern Presbytery |
| • Dekanat Runkel | – | Presbyterian Church of Ghana - Asante Presbytery |
| • Dekanat Wetterau | – | Church of North India (CNI) - Diocese Amritsar |
| • Dekanat Grünberg, Kirchberg, Hungen | – | Church of South India (CSI) - Diocese Krishna Godavari |
| • Propstei Rheinhessen | – | Evangelical Christian Church in Minahasa (GMIM) |
| • Dekanat Bad Marienberg | – | Protestant Christian Church Simalungun (GKPS) |
| • Propstei Rhein-Main | – | Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) |
| • Partnerschaftsausschuss UCC | – | United Church of Christ - USA |
| • Dekanat Vorderer Odenwald | – | Moravian Church in South Africa - MCSA |
| • Dekanat Darmstadt-Stadt | – | Moravian Church in South Africa - MCSA |
| • Dekanat Gladenbach | – | Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania - ELCT -
(Ngara Distrikt) |
| • Waldensian Church in Italy | | |
| • Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland (EKABiP) | | |
| • Zentrum Bildung der EKHN, Ev. Kinder- und Jugendarbeit | | |
| • Zentrum Ökumene der EKHN, Fachbereich Entwicklung und Partnerschaft | | |

EKHN Church Partnerships



World map, Peters-Projection



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