A Survey of the Eco Justice Program of the SCMs

The Global Eco Justice Program of WSCF conducted a study with the purpose of assessing and gaining greater knowledge on its creation of projects in Eco Justice. The study aimed to probe the degree of knowledge, participation and implementation of actions of the Student Christian Movements (SCMs) and its impact on the activities that are developed internally.

The sample respondents of the survey consisted of students and members of SCMs from 42 countries who actively participated in a total of 74 movements in the 35th global general assembly. (See Eco-Survey Graph 01). The sample, although not exhaustive gave us a basis on the global picture of the state of the SCMs in the development of the theme throughout the six regions. Seventy-four percent (74%) of the respondents is in the range of 18 to 34 years which corresponds to the representative ages of the young people who participate in the movements. The rest of the respondents are 35 years old or older.

Considering that WSCF is an organization with a strong ecumenical identity, diversity is its strength. The members of the movements belong to different Christian denominations and denominational families such as Protestants, Anglicans, Catholics and Orthodox. As such, this survey gathered several youth of diverse Christian identities.

One concern of the study is how important the theme of Eco Justice within the SCMs. Majority of the respondents, 89% of the sample considered the theme as important to very important in the local context of the different movements which reflected how fundamental the work on ecological and economic justice for the movements is.

Likewise, it was possible to observe that the main challenges involved in this issue are related in the first instance to 1. Climate Change (79.31% of respondents), 2. Water and People’s Rights (34.48% each) and 3. Sustainable Development (31.03%). (See Eco-Survey Graph 02 and 03). Regarding the main environmental challenges and their direct relation with social...
consequences, the SCMs understand that the direct effects are: poverty (62.07%), food security (27.59%) and displacement, migration and refugees (24.14%). (See Eco-Survey Graph 04).

Once the main challenges and problems that address the theme of Eco Justice were defined, an attempt has been made to analyze whether the different participating movements have developed measures or strategies regarding the subject in the last two years. Of the total respondents, 62.07% indicated that they have not carried out initiatives in this area. Considering the importance they attached to the subject (89%), the little development that they have made of it within the movements is significantly visible, which leads us to think about the importance of being able to strengthen the work in Eco Justice. (See Eco-Survey Graph 05).

**Climate Change**
Fifty-five percent (55%) of the respondents indicated that the main causes of climate change are agro-industry and industry. With these two causes, mining and the exploitation of fossil fuels are added as relevant. To measure the challenges and key issues, respondents were asked to select the three most relevant options from list as shown in Eco-Survey Graph 06.

As for the initiatives from the WSCF:

In general terms, the need for training and awareness-raising processes on the theme of Eco Justice was corroborated. Specifically, the following measures were considered:
1. Workshops & Training (74.07%)
2. Youth Mobilization (70.37%)
3. Global Campaign Development (62.09%)
4. Webinars (55.56%)
5. Publications and Articles (44.44%) and 6. Seminars and Conferences (44.44%). (See Eco-Survey Graph 07).

As a result of the study, the following considerations are presented.
Youth in the Construction of Eco-Justice and Peace

By Marcelo Leites

Young people in Latin America and the Caribbean is a significant part of the demographic profile of the region. However, when we talk about young people, it is almost impossible to place them in an isolated and exhaustive category. In dealing with youth issues, it is necessary to start from the recognition of diversity. They are marked not by the age group they belong, but also their particular and cultural conditions. They are a diverse population: students, workers, peasants, women, indigenous people, and members of minority groups.

In 2010, 153 million people in Latin America were young people (15-29 years), and the projection by 2030 tells us that the population will be about 158 million. This represents an average of 25-27% of the population in the present decade. 70 million of them live below the poverty line.

Perhaps as never before in the history of our region, young people represent an important part of the productive force and socio-political participation. However, public policies towards youth have not been, are not sufficient or compensatory, to counter inequalities and exclusion. We must add that although there is great potential in participation (due to demographic representation), organizational platforms are not enough.

The vision of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) is the empowerment of youth and students. WSCF has developed different initiatives related to the development of capacities and leadership of young people and students. The theme of Eco-Justice has been at the center of regional and global programs. And it is our goal to form (us) and promote (us) as subjects of transformation, active in the search for more just societies. And in this case, we are interested in a topic of great importance for all people.

Eco-Justice, as the relationship between economy and ecology; between how the result of human action - unequal and unfair - on nature is critical for life and therefore, contrary to our Faith. This action starts from greed for unlimited development, accumulation and not sustainable, and as a consequence, has generated a socio-environmental, climate and humanitarian crisis.

Educating, making awareness and empowering young people to become part of the change process is the key to our mission. Promote leadership that can incorporate new knowledge, form, organize to form platforms in the work with multiple-actor networks and intergenerational dialogue. As well as occupy spaces for decision making. Be aware of their context and become more critical of socio-political, economic and cultural events.

They are the young people, especially those in situations of greater vulnerability, victims of the consequences of this unjust relationship; From access to fair employment or quality education, to extreme cases: Victims of conflict and violence, or the consequences of climate change resulting in greater poverty, forced displacement. As well as loss and cultural identities and diversity. We understand that everyone is linked to the unfair relationship between Ecological and Economic.

Our Faith, identity and ethos the principles that as Student Christian Movements (SCMs) impel us to committed work. This work has had different initiatives and projects in Latin America: fund regional workshops, artistic interventions, community action, participation in international governance spaces, such as COP20 or Rio + 20, articles, website, etc.

These initiatives are part of a global eco-justice program that is ongoing, based on the moment and context in particular, but they are part of a larger body where we intend to intervene in favor of more just societies. One of these projects for 2017 will be “Young People for Eco-Justice: The challenge we accept.” which will develop reflection, training and promote actions focused on specific thematic axes of interest and priority for the young people that make up the WSCF.

Young people have a fundamental role in the processes of transformation. Areas in which to form us, causes to embrace and a space of decision making to occupy. Organization, reflection and action are the keys to the search for a more inclusive and equitable, conscious and proactive present and a future with greater justice guaranteed for all.

Marcelo Leites, 31 years old is Uruguayan. He is the regional executive of WSCF LAC and recently director of the Global Eco Justice Program of WSCF Fumec@fumec-alc.org

Footnotes:
2. “Youth and Demographic Bono in Iberoamerica” OIJ / United Nations, ECLAC.2012

Praying with our feet at Standing Rock

By Abby Mohaupt

“Water is life,” this is the prayer of the water protectors at Standing Rock. It is imprinted on their signs, clothing and bumper stickers. I went to Standing Rock as a white person, a descendant of colonizers on their soil. I wanted to witness what was happening from my perspective of social privilege on the sacred lands of the Standing Rock Sioux. I traveled to the camp with members of a delegation from Presbyterian Peace Fellowship during the week of Thanksgiving.

On our first day, we were taught the seven Lakota principles for living in the camp: prayer, respect, compassion, honesty, generosity, humility, and wisdom. These principles reminded me finally that we human beings know only the beginnings of what it means to be in charge. Etched onto my soul was the reminder that water is life and that we are connected to the earth.

At Standing Rock, we stood by the river in the mornings to pray. We spoke to her and called her by name (MniSose), knowing that if she disappeared, the watershed around her would break and change. Life would change. It was impossible to live and work in a camp without feeling connected to the earth. Embedded in our time at the camp was a sense of prayer and ceremony. The challenge was given to us that we should do all things in the camp prayerfully, that we should walk with prayer. It reminded me of the Christian teaching to “pray without ceasing.”

The day before our arrival at the Oceti Sakowin camp, the military accosted peaceful protesters with water cannons in twenty-seven degree Fahrenheit weather, an ironic use of water, even as the protestors chanted “water is life.” Those moments were stark reminders that full-body prayer—the reality of showing up to put the human body in solidarity with the earth-body—can mean that the human body can be injured, as the young woman whose arm was severely damaged and another woman loses her sight permanently brought by the brutal dispersal of militarized police to the water protectors. The women can sympathize with the de-limbing and blinding of creation.

We went to the river on Thanksgiving Day, and stood boldly in front of the militarized police as they trespassed on the burial mounds of the ancestors of the Lakota, Dakota peoples. We asked them to move out, and our request was denied. How can we find hope when the opposition is unwilling to respond to a simple request of vacating the burial ground?

On December 4, the Army Corps of Engineers announced that they would not grant the easement for the pipeline through federal land and would explore alternate routes for the pipeline. This decision was overturned by President Trump’s Executive Order to resume building the pipeline.

So we continue to pray with our feet, connected by the water which is life.
Keep The Hope Alive
The Olive Campaign: Non-Violent and Solidarity Resistance Of Palestinian Peasants

One million trees and thousands of hectares of agricultural land have been destroyed in the Palestinian territories by the Israeli occupation army since September 2000. About half a million olive trees have been uprooted as a result of a systematic practice done daily in the occupied territories. The Olive Tree Campaign is a program developed by the Joint Advocacy Initiative of the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) and Student Christian Movement (SCM) in Palestine.

Under the pretext of security, Palestinian land is confiscated in order to expand Israeli settlements. The wall of separation results to the destruction of millions of olive trees. The olive tree is a symbol of peace, wisdom and prosperity. For centuries, the olive tree is not just a vital part of the economic development of the Palestinians, but a vital part of their daily life, culture and tradition. “Keep the Hope Alive” aims to protect lands from confiscation, to support peasants at risk of losing their lands and to generate an education campaign for nonviolent resistance which includes the support of international solidarity through sponsorship, and sending of volunteers and to plant 11,000 olive trees every season.

ML: What is the campaign all about?
MQ: The campaign began in 2002 when the Israelis started building the separation wall which was not created to protect Israel but was created to take more and more land that belongs to the Palestinian side. At that time, the farmers were not able to defend their lands. The Israelis created a handful of laws saying that if the lands are empty for more than three to five years, they can take it.

As you know the YMCA and the YWCA do not support violent activities so we think of a campaign to protect and support the farmers.

ML: What are the main achievements at the level of local economic development and land protection of the campaign?
MQ: As you know, when peasants own the trees and are supported by us, they manage to keep those lands out of confiscation by Israeli. After a couple of years farmers start to get some money from the olive plantations. Economically this is a good project for the farmers.

So far we have planted more than 100,000 olive trees. Farmers have been planting trees since 2002, and they were able to get money from planting olive trees. Now they have land and work from which they are able to get sustenance from the harvest of their trees.

ML: What is the campaign doing outside of Palestine?
MQ: Hundreds of foreigners who come to Palestine every year learned about the realities here through our program. This is one of our greatest achievements; that hundreds of people, who never knew anything about the situation of Palestine, come here through the campaign and witness the reality in the territory; then return to their countries and communities and work there to spread the realities happening here.

Our partners around the world promote the campaign in their countries and they invite us to their country to talk about the problem of land confiscations and how our people suffer to keep those lands. They sponsor trees and seeds with a small contribution and it is in this way that they become connected with the Palestinian people.

We exchange e-mails. They know they are connected through the olive trees, we inform them of what happened to the olive tree that they have sponsored and to the farmer. They can read the stories of the farmers, hear about their daily lives and the sufferings that is involved in maintaining those lands.

ML: Is there a non-violent form of resistance. How would you evaluate the campaign?
MQ: We try to find ways to stand and resist peacefully. Planting the olive trees on our land is the most sustainable way to resist and protect the territory.

Another important achievement that we have discovered is that thousands of Palestinian farmers still have hope of staying on their land and keeping it out of reach of the Israelis. When they see the international volunteers arriving each year to their lands to accompany them in planting and harvesting, it gave them much hope.

In our country, without hope it is difficult to survive, but when you see people coming from all over the world to support us, it gives us hope, we are no longer alone. Indeed there are peaceful ways of resistance.

ML: You talk about peace building, economic and ecological justice and active non-violent resistance against the onslaught of Israeli occupation. In Latin America and in the global south, many times - in different forms - there are the same problems in terms of peace, land, economy and violence; the suffering of the most vulnerable and poor. I think of Colombia, with millions of displaced people by internal violence, inequality and land dispossession. I understand that it is important to work more towards South-South cooperation among those who are in similar struggles against an economic military system that destroys lives.

MQ: Now with the social networks, people in the South can hear our stories, share our sufferings and accompany us. I invite the people from the South to be in solidarity with us. Look at what is happening here because the whole world is treating us in an unfair way. We do not need weapons or army. We have been suffering for 68 years of Israeli occupation. People lose their lands, children and dignity. Come and be with us. Let’s stand and save our world.

ML: From WSLC we look forward to further promote international solidarity among young people and students and cooperation between countries and movements that make up the Federation.

MQ: People will always be welcome to visit us to see what is happening on the ground. We appreciate your accompaniment a lot, this gives us hope to continue the fight.
IRLTP Participants Stand in Solidarity with Rohingya, Mexican Migrants and Adivasi People

The recent Inter-regional Leadership Training and Advocacy Program (IRLTP) of World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) increased the awareness and capacity of the participants to advocate for justice and human rights and stand in solidarity with the migrants and refugees. The program also highlighted the importance of intersectional and solidarity work as distinct WSCF advocacy work.

After hearing the Rohingya situation at the WSCF Program on Refugees and Migrants Rights held in Dhaka Bangladesh in December 1 to 6, 2016, Chaitra Lakshminarayan, member of Student Christian Movement (SCM) from the Bishop Cotton Women’s Christian Law College in Bengaluru, India said “Rohingya refugees are humans without human rights. Apart from being stateless, Rohingyas have been subjected to various forms of discrimination, persecution and exploitation which included forced labor, extortion and nfofreedom of movement, absence of residence rights, unequal marriage regulations and land confiscation. Their limited access to education and other social services is a clear violation of the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”

WSCF Chairperson Georgina Kengne Djutane said at the end of an intense meeting and discussions, “we are all fearful, hesitant in asking questions – but we agreed to work on difficult issues and we will continue to receive a renewed passion from God to pursue the vision that God has entrusted to us.”

The meeting was attended by WSCF Officers, Georges Kengne Djutane Chairperson, Immanuel Kitian Co-vice Chairperson, Bronwyn Claire, Treasurer, WSCF Regional Executives and Program Directors, Luciano Kovacs for North America, Sunita Suna for Asia Pacific, Ely Waikl for Middle East, Natia Tsintzadze for Europe, and Marcelo Leites for Latin America and the Caribbean. WSCF General Secretary Necta Montes, Finance Officer Jean Luc De la Soujeoule, and meeting facilitator, Faith Bacon, senior friend from the Philippines. The meeting was hosted by SCM Bangladesh at the CCDB Hope Center in Dhaka, Bangladesh

WSCF Chairperson Georgina Kengne Djutane said at the end of an intense meeting and discussions, “we are all fearful, hesitant in asking questions – but we agreed to work on difficult issues and we will continue to receive a renewed passion from God to pursue the vision that God has entrusted to us.”

Staff and Officers review WSCF Staff Model and plan for 2017

The annual In-face Staff and Officers Meeting of World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) last December 6 to 10, 2016 assessed, clarified and unified the group’s understanding on several management and operational outstanding issues that surfaced in the first year of the transition period such as the WSCF Staff Model review process proposed by the WSCF Executive Committee (ExCo) in July.

Necta Montes, the current General Secretary of the Federation clarified during the meeting amidst the group’s apprehension on the proposed model that “the purpose of the review is to find the most viable and sustainable Staff Model for the long-term or strategic need of the Federation beyond this transition period, the current model continues as long as the Federation is able to support.”

A Working Group composed of the WSCF Officers, General Secretary, Youssef Zaki Wahib from Egypt, John Boonstra from USA and Horacio Mesones, consultant from Centro Regional Ecumenico de Aesearia y Servicio was formed in August 2016 to lead the WSCF Staff Model review and they are expected to present its proposal in mid-2017 during the WSCF ExCo meeting.

The meeting also served as a space to share and assess the annual work of the Federation, which includes the regional and global activities, follow-up on the recommendation and actions taken on the mandates of the Palermo WSCF ExCo Meeting held in December 2015, analyze the Federation’s current situation and develop the action plan for the 2017.

Program plans for 2017 were also finalized with a more consolidated approach towards the achievement of Programmatic Goals of WSCF. Youth for Eco justice and Peace Project in Latin American and Caribbean, Solidarity Trip to Indigenous People in Canada, Youth Conference on Overcoming Violence in the Middle East, Interfaith and Migration Conference in Europe, and the IRLTP in Sexuality in Asia Pacific. The ExCo Meeting is being planned in mid of 2017 to be hosted by the Middle East region.

The meeting was attended by WSCF Officers, Georges Kengne Djutane Chairperson, Immanuel Kitian Co-vice Chairperson, Bronwyn Claire, Treasurer, WSCF Regional Executives and Program Directors, Luciano Kovacs for North America, Sunita Suna for Asia Pacific, Ely Waikl for Middle East, Natia Tsintzadze for Europe, and Marcelo Leites for Latin America and the Caribbean. WSCF General Secretary Necta Montes, Finance Officer Jean Luc De la Soujeoule, and meeting facilitator, Faith Bacon, senior friend from the Philippines. The meeting was hosted by SCM Bangladesh at the CCDB Hope Center in Dhaka, Bangladesh
School for Ecumenical Leadership Formation (SELF) 2016 on Identity, Diversity & Dialogue

By Sunita Sun

The WSCF Asia Pacific organized the SELF program from October 20 to November 5, 2016 at Siem Reap, Cambodia on one of the WSCF’s global themes: Identity, Diversity & Dialogue (IDD). The 2016 SELF in Cambodia, brought together Students and Youth leaders from SCMs (Student Christian Movements) and Churches from Aotearoa/New Zealand, Cambodia, East Timor, Hong-Kong, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Finland.

As bi-annual ecumenical leadership formation the SELF targets frontline leaders of the SCMs (Student Christian Movements) and Churches with a designed module to process and provide an effective platform to train young ecumenical leaders working closely with young people in different parts of Asia and the Pacific. The WSCF has an ecumenical and prophetic identity - as a global community of students enjoys the richness of the diversity that comes from the many cultures, contexts, and religious traditions it represents. At the same time there are points of strong disagreement between members of the community. Our understanding of human sexuality, particularly on homosexuality is another area of difference and disagreement that has been growing in visibility and importance for the last decade. SELF 2016 was an opportunity and an important space for the young people in Asia to discourse, to question each other’s commitment to Christian discipleship and to transcending boundaries through dialogue on the subject of human sexuality. The main objectives of SELF 2016 were:

• To create a space for dialogues to articulate their differences and to learn from each other to embrace and celebrate diversity
• To provide skills and tools of analysis on identity politics, Diversity and the need for Dialogue from the social, political and economic settings of the world particularly in the context of the Asia-Pacific region.
• To trace the history of the ecumenical movement in the national, regional and global levels, identifying convergence, challenges, and possibilities to contribute to the renewal of the ecumenical movement and to promote justice and peace in the world.

The group was also able to witness their sharing of experiences/stories, exposure of their own youth and congregation members and back it up with relevant studies and reflections
• To search alternative approach to communicating and advocate ecumenical witness among students and youth in the life of the peoples, and strengthen each other in their ecumenical journey and aspiration.
• To create space for dialogues to transcend boundaries in building inclusive communities

This SELF on the topic of Identity, Diversity, and Dialogue was one of the vehicles which led to building dialogue between the various diverse identities discussed during the SELF-program, including that of sexual identity. The delegates of SELF were equipped, inspired and challenged during the process of SELF to respond the challenges of the mission context to critically examine their communities and find ways to respond to the challenge of justice and peace.

WSCF-AP is grateful to her partners UK Methodist and United Church of Canada for their support and solidarity in enabling us to organize this significant SELF for the youth in Asia and the Pacific.

During the program, a delegation of ten young adults and students from across the United States were able to roam in the border and witness the cruelty of human-made efforts to keep off migrants coming from the Southern part of the Americas on the basis of “illegally” crossing the border.

The participants visited the site where a border patrol officer killed Jose’ Antonio Elena Rodriguez, a 16 year old Mexican boy. The agent has always claimed to have acted to defend himself from rocks being hurled at him, a very warped hypothesis given the 12-15 meters wall sitting on an already tall stone embankment rising off the street where Jose’ Antonio was standing. Likewise they joined a vigil and Interfaith service in support of the Eloy Detention center on the eve of the School of the Americas Convergence in Nogales.

The group was also able to witness the cruelty of a border enforcement program called Operation Streamline, a strategy set up in 2005 to fast track deportation practice consisting in a pre-agreed plea where migrants who are caught crossing the desert are arraigned and sentenced to “illegal entry into the United States”. In the Federal Court of Tucson 60-70 migrants appear in front of a judge in shackles and chains on any given day in a show reminiscent of slaves just off the boat where they plead guilty to entering the US. Many of these people are imprisoned in so-called detention centers where inmates are subjected to all kind of abuse, which often ends up in unexplained deaths or suicides.

At the end of the program, participants recommended that the Solidarity Border trip should become a WSCF signature program, as it challenge participants and changes young people’s lives. In the words of a participant: “Thank you for disturbing me”. “We all need to be disturbed to fully understand what is ethical in doing solidarity in deep and meaningful ways”. This program enabled participants to see that “there’s hope amidst suffering and that marginalized people continue to take charge of their narratives”.

The program was in partnership with the American Waldensian Society and Borderlinks, a Tucson-based non-profit organization that receives delegations throughout the year for full-immersion visits in the borderlands.

Ecumenical Transformative Diakonia:
Border Solidarity Trip

By Luciano Kovacs

From October 1st to October 11th, 2016, World Student Christian Federation (WSCF)-North America held a solidarity trip to the Arizona border between the US and Mexico as a regional follow-up project on the Inter-Regional Leadership Training Program on Migrants, Refugees and Asylum seekers. The solidarity trip was organized in the framework of WSCF’s strategy of Transformative Ecumenical Diakonia and Overcoming Violence Program.

The participants visited the site where a border patrol officer killed Jose’ Antonio Elena Rodriguez, a 16 year old Mexican boy. The agent has always claimed to have acted to defend himself from rocks being hurled at him, a very warped hypothesis given the 12-15 meters wall sitting on an already tall stone embankment rising off the street where Jose’ Antonio was standing. Likewise they joined a vigil and Interfaith service in support of the Eloy Detention center on the eve of the School of the Americas Convergence in Nogales.

The group was also able to witness the cruelty of a border enforcement program called Operation Streamline, a strategy set up in 2005 to fast track deportation practice consisting in a pre-agreed plea where migrants who are caught crossing the desert are arraigned and sentenced to “illegal entry into the United States”. In the Federal Court of Tucson 60-70 migrants appear in front of a judge in shackles and chains on any given day in a show reminiscent of slaves just off the boat where they plead guilty to entering the US. Many of these people are imprisoned in so-called detention centers where inmates are subjected to all kind of abuse, which often ends up in unexplained deaths or suicides.

At the end of the program, participants recommended that the Solidarity Border trip should become a WSCF signature program, as it challenge participants and changes young people’s lives. In the words of a participant: “Thank you for disturbing me”. “We all need to be disturbed to fully understand what is ethical in doing solidarity in deep and meaningful ways”. This program enabled participants to see that “there’s hope amidst suffering and that marginalized people continue to take charge of their narratives”.

The program was in partnership with the American Waldensian Society and Borderlinks, a Tucson-based non-profit organization that receives delegations throughout the year for full-immersion visits in the borderlands.

Ecumenical Transformative Diakonia:
Border Solidarity Trip

By Luciano Kovacs

From October 1st to October 11th, 2016, World Student Christian Federation (WSCF)-North America held a solidarity trip to the Arizona border between the US and Mexico as a regional follow-up project on the Inter-Regional Leadership Training Program on Migrants, Refugees and Asylum seekers. The solidarity trip was organized in the framework of WSCF’s strategy of Transformative Ecumenical Diakonia and Overcoming Violence Program.

The participants visited the site where a border patrol officer killed Jose’ Antonio Elena Rodriguez, a 16 year old Mexican boy. The agent has always claimed to have acted to defend himself from rocks being hurled at him, a very warped hypothesis given the 12-15 meters wall sitting on an already tall stone embankment rising off the street where Jose’ Antonio was standing. Likewise they joined a vigil and Interfaith service in support of the Eloy Detention center on the eve of the School of the Americas Convergence in Nogales.

The group was also able to witness the cruelty of a border enforcement program called Operation Streamline, a strategy set up in 2005 to fast track deportation practice consisting in a pre-agreed plea where migrants who are caught crossing the desert are arraigned and sentenced to “illegal entry into the United States”. In the Federal Court of Tucson 60-70 migrants appear in front of a judge in shackles and chains on any given day in a show reminiscent of slaves just off the boat where they plead guilty to entering the US. Many of these people are imprisoned in so-called detention centers where inmates are subjected to all kind of abuse, which often ends up in unexplained deaths or suicides.

At the end of the program, participants recommended that the Solidarity Border trip should become a WSCF signature program, as it challenge participants and changes young people’s lives. In the words of a participant: “Thank you for disturbing me”. “We all need to be disturbed to fully understand what is ethical in doing solidarity in deep and meaningful ways”. This program enabled participants to see that “there’s hope amidst suffering and that marginalized people continue to take charge of their narratives”.

The program was in partnership with the American Waldensian Society and Borderlinks, a Tucson-based non-profit organization that receives delegations throughout the year for full-immersion visits in the borderlands.
WSCF upholds youth and LGBTQI voices at the International Forum on the Mission of Church in Taiwan

“The call to Gender Justice is the call to repentance to our complicity as faith communities to the perpetuation of injustice, and the invisibility and non-recognition of members of our community that does not conform to a binary interpretation of Gender,” said Necta Montes, General Secretary of WSCF at her presentation at the International Conference of the Mission of the Church in Taiwan last February 13 to 17 2017 at Hsinchu Bible College organized by the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan (PCT). The Conference aimed to update PCT’s partners and ecumenical organizations on the new context of PCT’s mission in Taiwan and to learn from the sharing and inputs from the partners. WSCF Asia Pacific region has been a long-time partner of PCT.

Montes was co-panelist with Prof. Wang Chin-Chai on the topic of Gender Justice. Prof. Wang presented the situation of women in Taiwan and the varied ways the church is reacting to the issue of gender and sexuality with the church. Montes shared that the “bi-polar interpretation further contributes to the fragmentation of our communities and anti-theory of our theological claim and understanding of Okkumene, the wholeness of creation,” she asked, “How do we recover the fullness of life when we continue to set aside the realities of the LGBTIQ in our narratives for Gender Justice?”

SunitaSuna, WSCF regional executive

Rev. Amos Mushendwa WSCF Africa Staff bids farewell, WSCF Appoints Maxwell Omondi as Interim Staff

In December 2016, Rev. Amos Mushendwa, WSCF Africa Regional Staff resigned from his post after 3 years of service to the Federation. In his letter, Rev. Amos said, “I am passionate of student and youth ministry, my love and commitment to work Student Christian Movements (SCMs) and WSCF in different ways remains.” WSCF is grateful for the service and commitment of Rev. Mushendwa.

In January 2017, Maxwell Ray Omondi started his post as Acting Regional Secretary of World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) - Africa Region. “This is an exciting new position where I get to share my administrative skills and engage with the community as we identify and tackle challenges together. My working mantra when working with the community has always, and will always be ‘Intervene with the community, not for the community.’ That way, the community owns the innovations delivered by WSCF. I am ready for both challenges and learnings that this new position will bring” he said.

Maxwell worked for over eight years as an administrative assistant and accountant in WSCF where he managed all aspects of administration and account functions which included, preparation of annual financial plans, reports budgets, handling fixed assets policies, maintaining staff payroll, managing the field work, training of new employees, networking with student movements and developing proposals for fundraising to facilitate various planned activities.

He worked for over 20 years at various organizations and handling different positions and responsibilities which accorded him the opportunity to further nurture his Ubuntu upbringing.

Maxwell is a Kenyan citizen who was born and raised in a Christian family. His Christian values and commitment to serve the community are well embedded in his character.

Remembering Pat Patterson
By Connie Kimo

After a three-month valiant struggle of complications from a spinal fracture and lymphoma, Patricia Jeannette Patterson, peacefully breathed her last on January 10, 2017, at 4:05pm at the Health Services Center of Pilgrim Place.

Born on May 3, 1935 Pat is the eldest child of Lester and Hilda Null Patterson. She grew up working on their farm near Gamber in Carroll County, Maryland. Pat earned her Bachelor of Arts in English and Education from Western Maryland College (Now McDaniel) and a Master of Arts in Religion and Literature from Drew University. She taught English at her alma mater in Westminster, Maryland. She was a missionary and an associate professor at Aoyama Women’s Junior College and University in Tokyo, Japan from 1957-1972. She was married to Ruth Harris, with whom she collaborated for many years in their professional work in the United Methodist Church, died in 2013.

She worked for almost 40 years with the United Methodist Church in various capacities, with successive positions in Missionary Affairs and as a liaison officer in programmatic relations with Indochina, Japan, and Korea, working to end the war in Vietnam and consulting with Protestant Church leaders, Vietnamese and US negotiators; she also participated in ecumenical support for Korean peace and unification from 1972-1990. She was the Coordinator for the Japan-North American Commission on Cooperative Missions from 1990-2000.

Pat used to describe the primary influences on her life as “My work as a mission-related person shaped my career and my Christian commitment. The suffering of the Vietnamese in the US war, the struggle of the Korean people for democracy and human rights, and the constancy of women to be fully human despite sexist circumstances, all inspired and shaped me.”

She was an active leader of Pilgrim Place programs such as World Affairs and Doing Theology; she also convened the Pomona Valley Peace Network, and supported local justice and environmental groups.

Along with all these endeavors and accomplishments, Pat was a warm, generous and loyal friend, a great team player and a source of inspiration for others.

She loved good food, especially Italian spaghetti at Eddie’s. And though she lived most of her life in big cities around the world, her rural origins nourished her love of nature. For the past 30 years she would retreat to her little house in beloved Berkshires around Alford, MA. She wrote hymns and many poems to honor people and events; she published five books of her poetry illustrating her perceptions of the natural world and the world of human relations.

Pilgrim Place named her Poet Laureate during its 2015 centenary celebration. She was a resident of Pilgrim Place since December 2000.

Pat or Trish to her family was survived by her sister and in laws. Her memorial service was held last February 19, at 3:30pm in Decker Hall of Pilgrim Place. Memorial gifts may be made to the Pilgrim Place Residents Health & Support Program; the Center for Process Studies at Claremont School of Theology(CST); the Institute for Post-Modern Development of China at CST; the World Student Christian Federation’s Ruth M. Harris Fund for Women’s Leadership (WSCF Trustees, New York, NY).
World Student Christian Federation

Office Addresses

**World Student Christian Federation**
Inter-Regional Office Ecumenical Centre 5 route des Morillons
P.O. Box 2100 CH 1211, Geneva 2 Switzerland.
Phone: + 41 22 791 6358 | Fax: + 41 22 791 6152
Email: wscf@wscf.ch | Website: http://wscfglobal.org

**General Secretary Office**
World Student Christian Federations (WSCF)
3rd floor, UCCP Building 877 EDSA, Quezon City, Philippines
Telephone: +639-154786463 | Email: necta@wscfglobal.org
Skype:nectamontes | Website: www.wscfglobal.org

**WSCF Asia-Pacific Office**
18/F, Room 1 & 2, 280 Portland Street Commercial Building,
Mongkok, Kowloon, Hong Kong
Phone: +852 238 52550 | Fax: +852 278 23980
E-mail: wscfap@netvigator.com | Website: www.wscfap.org

**WSCF Africa**
All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) —
Sir Francis Ibiabm House, 4th Floor
Waiyaki Way — Westlands
PO. Box 14782 — 00800 Nairobi, Kenya.
Email: wscf@wscf-africa.org | Website: www.wscf-africa.org

**WSCF Europe Office**
Piazza di Centa 9, 38122 Trento, Italy
Phone: +491763468972
E-mail: wscf@wscf-europe.org | Website: www.wscf-europe.org

**WSCF Latin America and Caribbean Office**
FUMEC America Latina
Camacuá 282 1406 DOF Buenos Aires, Argentina
Phone: +54 11 4631 2194 | Fax: +54 11 4631 8516
E-mail: fumec@fumec-alc.org | Website: www.fumec-alc.org

**WSCF Middle East Office**
Sourati Street, Shartouni Bldg., 5th Floor Hamra — Beirut — Lebanon
P.O. Box 11-1375, Beirut, Lebanon
Phone: + 96 11 34 19 03 | Fax: + 96 11 34 19 02
E-mail: wscf-me@inco.com.lb | Website: www.wscf-me.org

**WSCF North America Office**
Inter-Church Centre 475 Riverside Drive Suite 810
New York, NY 10115, USA
Phone: +1 212 870 24 70 | Fax: +1 212 870 31 12
Mobile: +1 646 246 8936
E-mail: wscfna@gmail.com | Website: www.wscfna.org

---

**Federation News Team**

**Editor**
Necta Montes

**Contributors**
Marcelo Leites
Luciano Kovacs
Sunita Suna

**News Editor**
Glenda Rocas

**Layout Artist**
Mike Garcia