

GPENreformation
Journal 2018

Join



First International Schools Camp in Wittenberg

Review of the Reformation
Summer 2017



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Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD)

Herrenhäuser Straße 12
30419 Hannover
Germany
+49 (0) 511 2796-0
www.ekd.de

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GPENreformation

+49 (0) 511 2796 7997
www.gpenreformation.net

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Preface

In front of the castle church in Wittenberg 500 balloons are flying up to the sky. They carry personal thoughts of students from all over the world about earth's future.

The students have been working and celebrating together the whole day right in the middle of the World Reformation Exhibition. Shortly after, they will celebrate an English-French-German worship in occasion of the Reformation Jubilee in the castle church; because: It is the "Global schools500reformation Day". Many hundreds of young people and teachers are organizing – across all Protestant denominations – a Reformation day for schools led by institutions with a Reformation tradition.

In 2017, more than 600 schools took part in the global network "schools500-reformation". They are connected digitally as well as by personal encounters and benefit from common developments regarding educational quality, the Protestant profile and a solidary commitment – for each other as well as for the future of creation.

"schools500reformation" is one of the most sustainable projects of the Reformation Jubilee. Thus, there is no doubt on June 23, 2017 in Wittenberg: The raised and still growing network has a huge relevance for schools and universities with a Reformation tradition – locally and globally. Young people should learn how to act as global citizens and how to take world responsibility as Protestants. And as globalization could be shaped best by being globally connected, the network shall be continued even after the Jubilee in a modified way!

Loud applause rings out as GPENreformation, the "Global Pedagogical Network – Joining

in Reformation" is opened. Meanwhile, the follow-up network of "schools500reformation" has already risen to more than 700 schools.

In the present publication you can gain impressions about the Reformation Jubilee in 2017: About the "Global schools500-reformation Day", about the first International Schools Camp of Protestant schools and the International Teachers Academy – right in the heart of Wittenberg and about the talents tent on the World Reformation Exhibition where hundreds of students and their committed teachers publicly presented what they worked out for and about the Reformation nowadays.

It is obvious: With God's spirit and blessings, a strong Protestant school system has been grown up since and because of the Reformation all over the world. It fills young people with enthusiasm for God and his creation. It reveals global horizons because God acts globally.

As the envoy of the Reformation Jubilee, I hope you enjoy browsing and reading this booklet.

May God richly bless the millions of children and young people who learn and live at schools with a Reformation tradition worldwide. May he encourage them to shape the global future actively. GPEN-reformation supports their way.

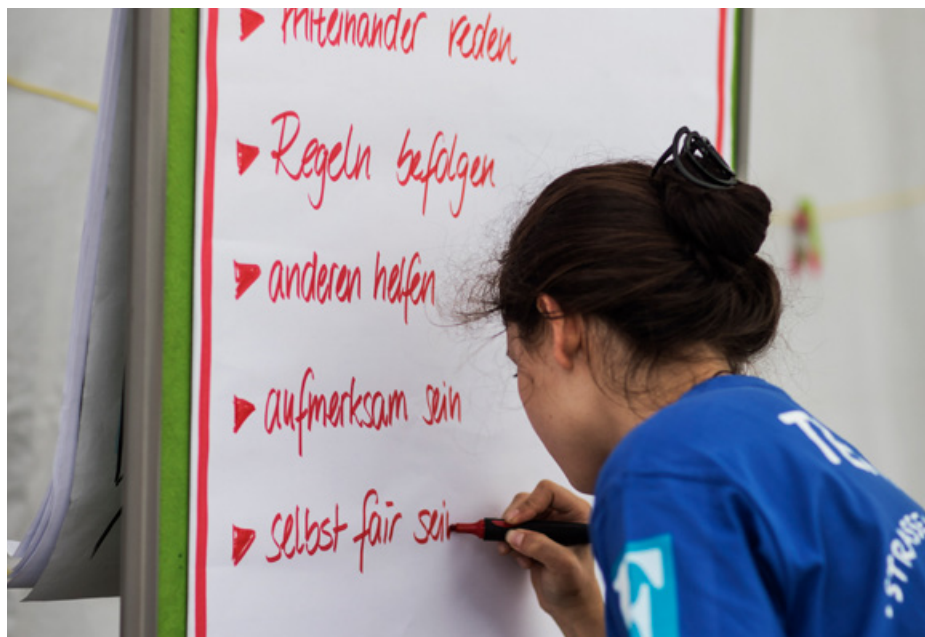
Yours

Prof. Dr. Margot Käßmann

Special Envoy of the EKD Council for the Reformation anniversary 2017

“Right from the beginning there was a ‘Christian wind’ perceptible in our group and the city which we enjoyed facing up to”

Bleibergquelle Christian Secondary School, Germany





World Reformation Exhibition

May 20 to September 10, 2017





Growing a sustainable Tent



Context

The World Reformation Exhibition took place in Wittenberg, Germany, from May 20 to September 10, 2017. As one of more than 80 exhibitors, GPENreformation participated in this major event during Reformation Summer 2017 at the birth-place of the Reformation itself. Under the name 'talents tent – education worldwide' the GPENreformation pavilion presented to the visitors one of the most important aspects of the Reformation movement: education.

Philosophy of Growing

The talents tent was a real pavilion at the World Reformation Exhibition. It was not an ordinary tent but an open space constructed out of steel, wood and living plants. Multiple cubes in unusual geometric forms, overhung with plants, formed an ensemble housing a kiosk and a café area with an exhibition cube and a stage. The plants grew higher and higher during the whole summer, symbolizing how children and youth grow every day at the various Protestant schools participating in the worldwide network of GPENreformation.

Workcamp

The major part of the pavilion was constructed with the help of an international youth group, which gathered together in Wittenberg in spring 2017. Among the participants of the workcamp were young people from Ukraine, Russia, South Korea, Japan, Serbia, Mexico, Switzerland and Germany. Little by little the group built the benches and a ramp for the tent area. Even though the physical work was sometimes hard, the group displayed a positive team spirit and motivation. Time soon flew by and the participants said goodbye to each other with tears and hugs. For all of them, this creative intercultural workcamp was a special experience.

Reuse

From the very beginning it was clear: the GPENreformation pavilion should be constructed in a way that allows a post-exhibition use at a different place. Finally, the talents tent was given to the Protestant Secondary School in Wittenberg, Germany.

“We are very grateful for the pavilion. We will reuse it as a student café, stage and tool shed in our schoolyard.”

Gunter Woitschig, Protestant Secondary school, Wittenberg

“As volunteers from different countries and backgrounds, we were brought together by this project. Meeting people for the first time is not always easy, but it was amazing how quickly and easily we became friends, even before we got to cut and join pieces of wood together.”

Erna Njoya, volunteer from Cameroon

Showing international Variety



Showing Protestant Schools' Variety and Contributions

In the Exhibition Cube visitors discovered the member schools on a screen showing the world map of the network's website. Several schools had handed in videos for this occasion presenting themselves in an entertaining way. Posters showed extracts of the competition "Protest for the future": students from 65 schools all over the world had written more than 1000 theses about which future they wished for their school, church and society.

The visitors were able to examine all this information more closely in an interactive way. A quiz guided them through the whole area of the pavilion from the exhibition cube passing by the café to the stage. When not used, the stage was transformed into a classroom including a board, tables and chairs. There, the visitors could find posters with interesting and sometimes surprising stories, information, facts and figures about Protestant schools around the world. Did you know, for example, that 75% of the schools in Ghana are Protestant schools?

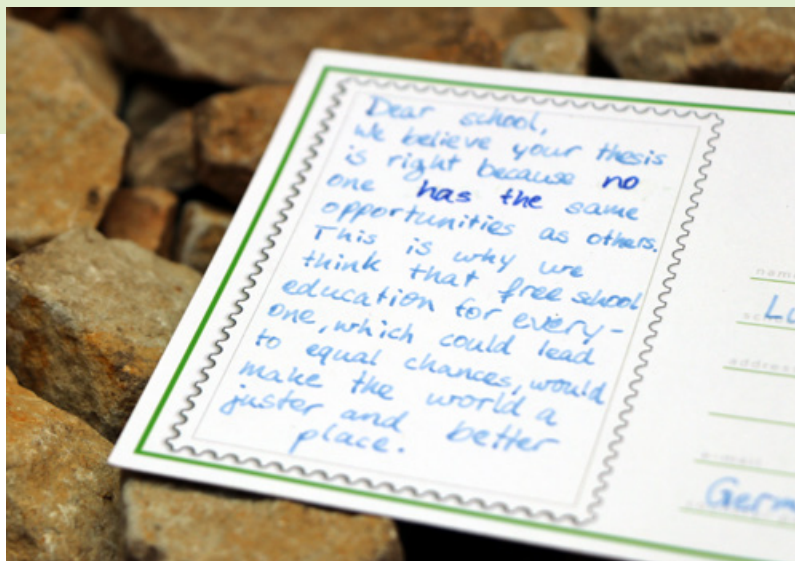
The Team

The diversity of GPENreformation's world-wide community was not only made visible by the information and stories on Protestant Education around the globe. The on-site staff also stood for intercultural cooperation. The four volunteers who joined the office team – Meike and Astrid from Germany, Erna from Cameroon and Carrie from the United States – made the difference: they talked to visitors about the network, offered children's programs and tirelessly made coffee and waffle dough at our kiosk. Soon, the talents tent had a very good reputation for the friendliness of its hosts and for the best coffee and waffles in town!

“Being part of such a unique project and such an amazing team was really an incredible experience. It will probably influence my life even long after I have moved away from Wittenberg.”

Meike Rethmeier, volunteer

Exchanging about global Challenges



“We protest against the fact that in today's world the fundamental rights of children formulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are not implemented in many countries. The right to life, education and protection against violence, but also the right to be heard, should apply to every child in the world, regardless of gender or origin. Children are the future of our world: their rights must already apply today.”

Theodor-Fliedner-Gymnasium Kaiserwerth, Deutschland

Debating Theses for the Future

The board of the global classroom was also used for the “thesis of the week”, chosen among the theses of the “Protest for the Future” activity. Everyone passing by had the chance to comment on the topic displayed.

Furthermore, the theses of the week served as starting point for workshops with school classes. Young boys and girls from Protestant schools had the chance to discuss the thesis written by their counterparts e.g. from Ghana, Brazil or Slovakia. At the end, a lot of groups seized the chance to write back to the young authors via postcards prepared by the talents tent team.

Education Experts opening Discussions

GPENreformation invited experts on education to come to Wittenberg during the Reformation Summer and contribute to a varied program on the talents'tent stage. Each week's topic was interpreted

in relation to Education: Peace as Peace Education, Integrity of Creation as Learning for Sustainability, Media as new media tools in the classroom, etc. ... The visitors had the chance to learn more about these topics in discussions, workshops and more.

Church for Children

Twice a week the talents'tent had a special offering for the youngest guests. The association “Church for Children” prepared some nice little prayers and handicraft activities for kindergarten kids. Sometimes members of the association visited Wittenberg, sometimes it was the talents tent team itself which was in charge of the program. Anyway, it was always a lot of fun!

Making Students' Talents visible

“We really made an effort for this and everyone accomplished their own task, e.g. reciting a poem, performing in a sketch or playing an instrument. We brought a great, interesting one-hour program with us to Wittenberg. [...] The audience really enjoyed our program and we got waffles to thank us for our presentations. It was a great relief that we performed so well.”

Protestant Primary School Göltzschtal, Germany

“The time in Wittenberg was an especially nice time for us – the students from the Bleibergquelle Christian Secondary School in Velbert. And that was not only because of our really nice and well hosted performance at the talents tent, despite a thunderstorm coming up, or because of our street theatre at the city centre, no: Right from the beginning there was a ‘Christian wind’ perceptible in our group and the city which we enjoyed facing up to.”

Bleibergquelle Christian Secondary School, Germany





“We want a playful church which (also) brings the Bible on stage.”

10th thesis of the music theatre group, presented in the context of their performance at the talents tent, Theodor-FlieBner-Gymnasium

Students on Stage

The team talents tent was very happy to give the opportunity to a lot of students from Protestant schools to present a cultural program on the stage of the pavilion. Within the program “Students on Stage” the students became part of the talents tent program and the program of the World Reformation exhibition as a whole. This became possible thanks to cooperation with the Protestant school foundation of the

Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), which offered special support to classes travelling to Wittenberg during Reformation Summer 2017. Over 16 weeks each Wednesday and Thursday afternoon the students attracted a flow of visitors to the pavilion. Each and everyone dealt with the topic of the Reformation in their own way. There were impressive musical productions, choir presentations, theatre plays and Big Band performances to enjoy.

International Schools Camp

June 21 to 27, 2017





Presentation of the Participants and Arrival



Participating Schools

From June 21 to June 27, 2017 the International Schools Camp in Wittenberg opened its doors to more than 120 students and their teachers and principals.

Germany was represented by the Bodelschwingh Gymnasium Herchen, Evangelisches Gymnasium Gelsenkirchen, Martin-Luther-Gymnasium Eisenach, Matthias-Claudius-Schule Bochum, Paul-Schneider-Gymnasium Meisenheim, Städtische Maria-Montessori-Gesamtschule Meerbusch and Viktoriaschule Aachen.

From Rwanda, the TCC Rubengera and the Groupe Scolaire de Shyogwe participated in the International Schools Camp. Furthermore, there were African groups of the Institut Majengo (DR Congo), PSST Bafut (Cameroon), Njase Girls' Secondary School and Kafue Boys' Secondary School (Zambia). Students and teachers from the Escola Família Agrícola de São João do Garrafão from Brazil took part in this international exchange, as did a group from the Vox Dei Academy (Philippines).

Arrival

After the participants arrived at the former Karl Marx School, they all met for the first time at dinner. The program went on directly with a welcome at the gym that has been converted to a prayer room for the time of the International Schools Camp. Every school was welcomed and the most important rules for the following days were explained. The musical inputs by the Bodelschwingh-Gymnasium Herchen and the PSST Bafut made sure that the atmosphere stayed good.

Working Together

Team-building Workshops

The participants formed groups for workshops to get to know each other. Under the headline of topics like 'El Origen. Where are your roots?', 'La religion. What do you believe in?', 'Family. Whom do you love?' and 'La musique. What's your sound?', students and many of their teachers got acquainted and discussed the differences and similarities caused by origin, culture and the circumstances we live in.

Home-building Workshops

A second round of workshops faced the 'redesign' of the accommodation. While some of the students transformed the gym '...from sports to prayers', e.g. by building an altar, some others '...colored (y)our world', or rather the 'Kirchentag-Shocker', others '...carried the cross together', decorated the dining room ('...a feast for the eyes!'), created an information wall for the entrance area ('...what's up?') and furnished '... a room for me', a relaxation room.

And the work was worthwhile: after no more than 1 ½ hours, the former school looked a lot more inviting and homy.

Testing Spontaneity

A group visit of the centre of Wittenberg had been planned for the afternoon, but a heavy storm thwarted this plan. Instead, the groups used the newly gained free time to discover the area around the accommodation, to do some shopping or to relax a bit. Some students defied the bad weather and went down town anyway.

In the evening, everybody met again at the gym to watch a musical the Bodelschwingh-Gymnasium (Germany) and the PSST Bafut (Cameroon) had rehearsed during their week together in Windeck-Herchen. Besides the musical, the participants enjoyed a sketch performed by the group from Institut Majengo (DR Congo), a song and dance performed by the girls from Njase Secondary School (Zambia) as well as a traditional dance performed by the group from Vox Dei Academy (Philippines).

“I can say that the workshops for our students and for us, their teachers, have been a very good lesson in thinking about the meaning of Global Solidarity.”

Manuela Wagner-Heim, Paul Schneider
Gymnasium, Meisenheim in Germany

“On that day we were split into different groups and I got to know people’s views about music in my group. That was interesting because I love art.”

Natasha Kasempa, Njase Girls’ Secondary School, Choma in Zambia

“One of my favorite parts were the workshops and the sports that we had. We learned a lot of things in our workshop like how families are in other parts of the world.”

Hazel Hagwelele,
Njase Girls’ Secondary School,
Choma in Zambia



Fair Play



Fair Play Tournament

The fourth day of the International Schools Camp was in the hands of “Bread for the World”. According to the motto “Fair Play”, the ISC participants were asked to form groups of 6 people and to give names to these teams. As well, the rules of a fair soccer game were explained.

While two teams were playing against each other during the tournament, the remaining students had a large range of activities to choose from: climbing a wall, a goal-shooting contest focusing on the speed of the shoot, a dribbling parcours, workshops about fair play and many more such programs.

Ceremony and Party

The winning teams were honored at an award ceremony. But not only the most successful teams were invited onto the stage: the fairest team got a special mention and won the “Fair Play Award”.

The following party was a great success: the DJ ensured a great mood and everybody danced until sunset.

**“One favorite moment
was the fair play event and
the disco outside”**

Natasha Kasempa, Njase Girls’ Secondary School,
Choma in Zambia

Free Time

Worshipping

The Sunday morning begun with an open-air service at the talents'tent:

Birgit Sendler-Koschel and Lucie Kahambu Kighuta from DR Congo invited everybody to celebrate the Lord's Supper together. Because of a rain shower everybody gathered in the pavilion for the blessings and gave good wishes to each other.



Free Time

The rest of the day was free time. While some groups used it to discover the centre of Wittenberg and the World Reformation Exhibition, others went to Berlin to explore the German capital. Some few defied the bad weather and enjoyed a public concert given by a well-known German band – and were rewarded with a blue sky and rays of sunshine.





Theses for the Future and Farewell

Theses for the Future

Visitors from the University of Bamberg arrived at the Karl-Marx-Schule in the morning and guided the students through a workshop phase about “Our Contribution to a better Future”. First, small groups of students prepared their ideas about the future concerning justice and peace, ecology and caring for creation, equality and children’s rights, our church, or “the school of our dreams”. After discussing the main aspects and collecting their ideas of how to contribute to a better future, they presented their different posters to each other. In the end, a considerable gallery of posters could be visited at the backside of the prayer room.

Craftwork with the Konfi Camp

In the afternoon, the team of the Konfi Camp visited us at our accommodation and offered different activities like painting gym bags, making dreamcatchers and key rings and getting henna tattoos. The bright sunshine made it even more relaxing to join some handicraft activities outside.

Farewell Dinner

In the afternoon, everybody met in previously formed groups to prepare for the last evening. While some were preparing welcome drinks, an ‘amuse-gueule’ (French for appetizer or snack), the starter and the dessert, others made menu cards and decorations for the dining room.

Everything was ready in time and Bianca Kappelhoff and Birgit Sandler-Koschel welcomed everybody in the festive decorated hall. They gave an overview of the evening and announced the welcome drink – non-alcoholic champagne with grape juice, which was served by its creators. Evi and Michel from the Evangelische Schule Neuruppin supported the special atmosphere with their acoustic music. Then, it was the teachers’ turn to address the audience: Paul Nyabyenda (Rwanda) and Tom Laengner (Germany) underlined the importance of a global perspective. Their speech was followed by vegetable dishes with various dips as an amuse-gueule (appetizer). Right away, the representative of the students, Kim from the Philippines and Elvis from Rwanda, conquered the stage.

With an emotional and powerful talk, they made clear that the time for young people to get active is right now and that they have the power and the obligation to work together to change the world – today and not tomorrow. Based on the founding and the implementation of the youth parliament, Mio and Anaick, the German youth delegates of the UN General Assembly, took up and illustrated the argument that the world – and especially politics – needs courageous and lateral thinking people, who do not abandon their mission,

despite numerous difficulties and challenges. The delicious meat loaf made by 'Kommando Verpflegung' and the Dutch specialty "Vla" rounded off the culinary offerings of this evening.

A spontaneous dance interlude by the Brazilian group, which ended up as a flash mob, symbolized the good atmosphere of the farewell dinner – as well as of the whole week. The day closed with a common blessing under the open sky.



Departure



Departure

The last day consisted mainly of cleaning up the accommodation, packing bags and saying goodbyes. One last song together marked the end of the International Schools Camp 2017 in Wittenberg.

“I really enjoyed the Wittenberg camp because I had fun and I learned a lot of things like how people live there and in other parts of the world or rather other countries. And it was a great experience that people from different countries came and enjoyed the 500 years of Reformation together.”

Hazel Hagwelele, Njase Girls' Secondary School, Choma in Zambia

“The two weeks we spent together describe a process of how to reach every person in our group, and how to learn from the others coming from another culture about the other mentalities and ways to express emotions.”

Manuela Wagner-Heim, Paul-Schneider-Gymnasium, Meisenheim in Germany

Global schools- 500 reformation Day

June 23, 2017





Context and Transformation



Context

On June 23, 2017, hundreds of students, teachers and friends came to the festival tent of the World Reformation Exhibition to celebrate the transformation of 'schools-500reformation' into the 'Global Pedagogical Network – Joining in Reformation' and to highlight Protestant schools worldwide and their importance for the church, the politics and the society.

Opening and Transformation

After coming together, Birgit Sendler-Koschel, Head of the Education Department of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and Head of schools500reformation, opened the happening with a warm welcome to all guests. Exciting and motivating speeches by Thomas Rachel, Parliamentary Secretary to the Federal Minister of Education and Research and Margot Käßmann, Special



Envoy of the EKD Council for the Reformation anniversary in 2017, focused the importance and the power of 'young peoples' communities. They were framed by music performed by students and teachers of the Bodelschwingh-Gymnasium (secondary school) and the PSST Bafut. Finally, all the participants themselves unfurled the new logo of GPENreformation over their heads, joyfully celebrating the official start of that long-term network.

Workshops

In a workshop phase organized by the team from the University of Bamberg, the students and teachers created "signposts towards global solidarity in Protestant education". In groups they discussed different questions about main issues that call for more solidarity, and reflected together on how to promote solidarity in global society and everyday life.

Balloon March and Service

“One of my favorite moments was when we went to the Martin Luther church and let go of the balloons with cards stating our opinions.”

Mourica Matimba Muloongo, Njase Girls' Secondary School, Choma in Zambia





Balloon March

A highlight was the balloon march: all participants walked together from the festival tent through the centre of Wittenberg to the Castle Church, carrying with them balloons with good wishes for the future and the finder. At the Castle Church, Margot Käßmann started the countdown: 5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1 ... and almost 500 balloons started their way from Wittenberg into the world.

Service

The next big happening was the service: Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, Chair of the Council of the EKD, Margot Käßmann, Henrik Simojoki, Professor of Protestant Theology at the University of Bamberg, Samuel Mutabazi, Director of the National Office of Protestant Education in Rwanda and Birgit Sandler-Koschel opened the 'Theses Door' of Castle Church and everyone entered through this historical and meaningful entrance to worship together.

Heinrich Bedford-Strohm and Margot Käßmann welcomed everybody and introduced the church and its history to the guests. The special, festive atmosphere created by the building and the introduction was underlined by music of students of the Wilhelm-Löhe-Schule (Germany), led and accompanied by Moritz Metzner and Rev. Mark Meinhard.

The sermon by Samuel Mutabazi and Heinrich Bedford-Strohm was inspiring and made it clear that there is injustice and inequality in the world and many young people have to bear heavy burdens. But the younger generation, connected by the network, has the strength to carry these burdens to the cross and – empowered by faith and God's unconditional love – to get rid of them. They can change the existing conditions, aiming to create a better place for everybody.

Party



Party

The bands 'Jetlagged' and 'Retarded' of the Evangelische Schule Neuruppin (Germany) provided a festive end to the day, encouraging students and their teachers to sing and dance together.

“Perhaps it was a glimpse of a possible future, with Christians networking worldwide (here specifically in their work at schools).”

Mark Meinhard, Wilhelm-Löhe-Schule, Nürnberg in Germany

Photo Credit

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Bredehorst/Brot für die Welt (top)
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Bredehorst/Brot für die Welt

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