

Exchange programme - Church exists elsewhere, too

Aim of the programme

The exchange program strengthens the international-ecumenical and intercultural competence of employees¹ of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover (LKH) and the partner churches. This happens in the encounter, in the cooperation with the exchange partner and in the reflection of the experiences. Furthermore, existing church district partnerships are to be promoted and new partnerships are to be made possible.

Subgoals

- 1. Encounter:** The exchange of the participants is made possible by a one-month mutual stay in the context of the two participants. The participants will intensively encounter a continent, a country, a church landscape, a congregation or church institution and an exchange partner.
- 2. Cooperation:** The cooperation between the participants takes place in the respective fields of work of the host and serves to deepen the mutual acquaintance and the examination of the respective other context and its significance for the respective field of work.
- 3. Reflection on the experiences:** Questions from the international-ecumenical, intercultural, developmental as well as ecclesiastical field are dealt with exemplarily on the basis of questions worked out in the preparation and subsequently reflected upon. These questions will be worked on during the preparation and evaluation.

Programme

Employees of the LKH and its partner churches visit a congregation or institution of a partner church of the LKH or the ELM (Ev.-luth. Mission in Lower Saxony) for about four weeks.

During the return visit, the LKH employees host their exchange partner in their congregation, the corresponding institution or in the church district. The order of the visit and return visit, as well as the time interval between the two trips can be arranged individually.

The exchange partners enable each other to get to know the different areas of their work, to participate in them and, if possible, to play an active role. In addition, the German participants enable their exchange partners to get to know the work of the LKH and its facilities.

¹ In the following, the term "employees of the LKH" is used as an example for pastors, deacons, speakers in church institutions, directors of pedagogical institutions.

As the programme is aimed at getting to know the conditions in the respective partner country intensively, the accompaniment of spouses/life partners, children or other relatives is not envisaged during the exchange.

The ELM introduces the German participants to the specific conditions of the host country and place of assignment. Different levels of international ecumenical and intercultural encounter are taken into account, as well as the specific church context. The preparation and follow-up of the international participants is organised in consultation with the respective partner church.

Prerequisites:

- Interest in international-ecumenical contexts and readiness for intercultural learning;
- Willingness to bring the international-ecumenical and intercultural competence gained into one's own fields of work, e.g. by contributing to groups within LKH or ELM;
- Written report based on a given report format about the participation in the exchange program for evaluation;
- Preparation for and follow-up on the exchange through a day-long ELM seminar in each case;
- Approval of the supervisor and, if applicable, the church council as well as the department for further education and arrangements for substitution for the time of the stay in the partner church;
- Medical certificate confirming health suitability for the stay abroad;
- Planning of an appropriate accommodation in Germany, as well as the accompaniment of the exchange partner from the partner church, if necessary in coordination with the persons responsible for partnership work in the congregation and church district;
- Ability to communicate in one of the languages of the host country;
- Persons without international service experience will be given preference. Exceptions may be made in the case of prior experience.

Costs

Basic information

The costs for preparatory meetings as well as the outward and return journey (flight and arrival/departure from/to the airport) including the costs for visa, prescribed vaccinations, medical certificate, if necessary foreign health insurance and if necessary accommodation costs will be covered by the LKH for the participants, after a proof has been furnished. For participants from the LKH, a personal contribution of 500 EUR will be deducted.

The ELM will settle the accounts on behalf of the LKH.

As a rule, the flights of both German and international participants are booked through ELM in accordance with the participants.

Full particulars

Daily allowance: The exchange partner from the partner church may receive financial support for daily expenses. This serves to compensate for salary differences on an international level and is intended both to promote the independence of the exchange partner and to facilitate an encounter at eye level.

Accommodation: Accommodation is provided by the host local congregation or the host institution. The quality and furnishings of the accommodation depend on the local conditions, so a certain standard is not a prerequisite.

Primarily, the possibility of private accommodation in the respective partner congregation/area of the partner institution or in a guest house should be used. Where this is not possible, it must be clarified on an individual basis how the accommodation can be provided and up to what level the costs can be reimbursed by the LKH on presentation of proof.

Catering: If the food for the international guest is not or cannot be provided free of charge by the receiving local congregation or the hosting institution, the participants from the area of the LKH will bear the food costs themselves. For participants from the partner churches, the cost of food will be charged to the German participants. This is to take into account the different circumstances under which exchange partners participate in the programme.

Travel costs for journeys during the programme: Travel costs will be reimbursed according to the usual local flat mileage rates or distance allowances or on the basis of receipts from public transport/taxi upon proof.

Cancellation: If a planned participation in the programme cannot take place for reasons for which a participant is not responsible (e.g. illness, business necessity), or if the assignment is terminated prematurely, costs will be reimbursed via travel cancellation insurance and the LKH.

If participants withdraw from the assignment for personal reasons (e.g. family celebrations, holiday planning) or end the assignment prematurely, they have to bear the costs incurred up to that point and which can no longer be cancelled or insured.

Private holidays: If participants from the LKH combine their assignment with a private holiday in the partner country, they bear all additional costs incurred. They have to take care of the taxation of a possible pecuniary advantage.

Arrangements: The contractual arrangements will be made by ELM in consultation with LKH and the participants.

Procedure

- The application includes a tabular CV, a letter of motivation and a medical certificate. Wishes regarding the host church can be indicated.
- A maximum of four candidates per year can participate in this programme. Attention will be paid to gender balance.