

## **Across the Border – LCC plus projects, 30 July 2014**

Goodevening everybody.

I am very honoured to be invited on this evening to give a small report on my experiences at the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the development afterwards. This conference was scheduled in Busan, november 2013).

I was part of the WCC-team of the European Forum, LGBT Christian groups, so I was able to join this 10th Assembly of the WCC (theme: God of live, lead us to justice and peace). Our goals were:

1. Be visible at the conference, so people get to know about LGBT and being Christian too
2. Work together (global) with coalition partners
3. Try to get the reference group on Human Sexuality re-installed

We reached them all! And, even more than that! On some points I would like to zoom in on these goals.

Ad 1. + 2. Be visible and coalition partners

We tried to find other LGBT christian groups who were also planning to attend the Assembly . We managed this and we were able to be visible on the Madang (in a booth), realised to make booklets in several languages ('Stand in solidarity'), and we helped and joined a workshop of IAM and ICCO.

The booklets are in the languages: Russia, Spanish, German, Englisch, French, Korean. And they are still (digital) available.

**Our coalition partners were: IAM (South Africa), United Church of Christ (USA), MCC, Jakarta Theological seminary (Indonesia), Reconciling Works.**

Ad 3. Reference group within the WCC

In the general meeting (Friday 8th of November 2013) all delegates agreed on the following subject:

**“Being aware of divisive issues among churches, the WCC can function as a safe space to enter into dialogue and moral discernment on matters which the churches find challenging. Examples which have been heard strongly in this assembly include questions of gender and human sexuality. Controversial issues have their place withint hat safe space on the common agenda, remembering that tolerance is not enough, but the baseline is love and mutual respect.”**

And so, since then what happened:

In Geneva they worked hard on the preparation of decision making on this subject by the central committee (first meeting: July 2014). We recently heard that this paper was agreed on, so that is great news. So the refence group will be re-installed and 3 experts on human sexuality will be included.

*(By the way, I just heard, that money will be a problem on this item.But, when isn't that an issue. The money for this project needs to be found in the running budgets). So this will be challenging of cause, but that doesn't change the decision, or the goals on this subject by the WCC).*

To be continued in the years to come .....!!!

At the end of my contribution on this evening I would like to share with you a special moment. During the closing ceremony on Friday afternoon, 8th November 2013 Father Michael Lapsley from South Africa told everybody the following words:

“Today I want to say as a Christian, as a priest, to all the LGBTI community, I am deeply sorry for our part as a religious people, in the pain you have experienced across the ages. I have a dream that in my lifetime, I will hear all the leaders of all our great faith traditions making the same apology.”

Thank you all for listening!

Many regards,

Heleen de Boer

President LKP (Landelijke Koepelorganisatie van de Christelijke LHBT gemeenschap)

Heleen de Boer (chairperson LKP)