

EMS

A photograph of three women standing in front of a light blue wall. The woman in the foreground is wearing a red and white patterned sari and has a bindi on her forehead. The woman behind her is wearing a pink sari, and the woman in the background is wearing a green sari. They are all looking towards the camera with serious expressions.

PRACTISING SOLIDARITY IN DIFFICULT TIMES

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Evangelical Mission
in Solidarity

DEAR READER,

“We are all battered by the same storm but we’re not all in the same boat.” These words spoken at the Mission Council in June 2020 described the different impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the member churches of the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS). This image accompanied us throughout the whole year. Indeed, the “storm” of the pandemic affected all the members of the EMS last year.

But unlike the storm on the Sea of Galilee, all the disciples today are no longer in the same boat, but the boats are very different. Last year, there were comparatively comfortable boats with enough space to keep one’s distance, good health care and effective leadership on the bridge. And then there were small nutshells in which people were at the mercy of the ravages caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Within the EMS, this particularly affected the churches in India, Indonesia and South Africa. In the Middle East, the pandemic came on top of many crises that still continue to burden the people in the region.



*The strong spirit of unity within the EMS
has proven its worth many times during the
crisis of the past year.*

THE EMS – AN INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MEMBERS WITH EQUAL RIGHTS

The EMS forms a unique international association of 25 Protestant churches (including two guest members) and five mission associations in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Europe. It advocates the concerns of roughly 25 million believers all over the world. Through its member churches and mission associations it has many more ecumenical relationships all over the world. All members of the EMS enjoy equal rights, no matter whether the issues have to do with theology, organisation or finance. Such a cooperation based on equal rights and the active participation by all members have noticeably changed the character of the EMS association in recent years. It has become a working example of global cooperation.

THE EMS IS A UNIQUE FIELD OF LEARNING FOR THE FUTURE

Experiences from the year 2020 have shown the following: When it comes to many issues concerning the future, the churches in Africa and Asia are much more dynamic than the majority of European churches. The international EMS association offers its members a unique international field of learning for issues such as recruiting new members, anchoring the churches in society or the ability to dialogue in a multi-faith and multi-cultural society. The EMS stands for the future of ecumenism: Instead of bilateral relations which are often marked by inequality between partners, the activities of individual churches in the EMS are integrated in a network. This reduces direct dependency and offers many more opportunities for cooperation.

MISSION IN SOLIDARITY CORONA RELIEF IN 2020

When the pandemic broke out in March 2020, the EMS immediately launched its Corona Relief “Living. Solidarity. Worldwide”. This raised a total of 338,180 Euro for the protection of people in 2020. The first donation came from the small Japanese member church. In the EMS, Mission and Solidarity belong inseparably together. Thus, the EMS Corona Relief had three facets from the very beginning: sharing faith, sharing information among members and sharing financial resources. One thing we have experienced time and again in the international EMS community during this special year of 2020 has been a tremendous trust in God and a close spirit of unity in the face of special challenges.

Rev. Dr Dieter Heidtmann
General Secretary



FINANCIAL STABILITY DESPITE ALL THE CHALLENGES

The year 2020 started with a challenge that was not expected in such an extent. The spread of the coronavirus pandemic required a realignment of our cooperation. All of a sudden, the structures and daily work routines completely collapsed for a large number of our members. The lockdowns brought many to the edge of their resilience – and even well beyond that! The light at the end of the tunnel still seems far away as the world is unable to perceive and fight the pandemic as a global catastrophe.

MORE AND MORE DONORS PLACE THEIR TRUST IN THE EMS

Even though the EMS is only a small light in the darkness, it still has an effect. Earnings from offerings and donations increased significantly in 2020 for the fourth year in a row. We are in fact reaping the first fruits of the fundraising efforts that we initiated in the past. We have put great effort into setting up the international EMS Corona Relief which will continue well beyond 2020 and needs further support from the EMS association. Savings in administrative costs as well as proceeds from the sale and reinvestment of financial assets have allowed us to close the 2020 financial year on a healthy footing.

FUTURE TASKS IN TIMES OF TIGHT FINANCES

An urgent task for the future is to secure our financial stability in the long term. For the member churches of the EMS, it is considerably more effective and cheaper to maintain common structures than to finance bilateral relations in parallel. With respect to consultations about cutbacks in some member churches, a critical question that must be asked is whether the richer churches really want to save money with those who are confronted with much more serious hardships. Crisis situations instinctively further self-interest as a yardstick for action. However, in view of the international challenges we are facing, this is not a sustainable survival strategy. Within the EMS fellowship, all members are givers and takers, and no one will ever be as strong and stable on their own as they can be within the EMS community. The year 2020 has provided ample proof of this.

Rudolf Bausch
Executive Secretary



FUNDING AREAS 2020



3.247.847,57	Donations, offerings
4.110.430,27	Contributions from members
222.033,06	Project refunds and subsidies
102.587,23	Interest, dividends
272.034,00	Revenues on assets
95.396,60	Rental revenues
34.103,36	Refunds and other revenues
55.000,00	Reversal of accruals
--	Withdrawal from free reserves
1.541,12	Annual surplus
8.140.973,21	Total revenues

8.140.973,21 EUR

3.762.775,34	Project allowances
642.877,54	Allocations to reserves
879.231,45	Staff costs, administration
1.736.036,30	Staff costs, programmes
275.323,06	Staff costs, ecumenical co-workers
56.495,83	Write-offs
379.955,16	Material costs, administration
408.278,53	Material costs, programmes
8.140.973,21	Total expenditures

EMS CORONA RELIEF 2020

338.180,00 EUR

**THANKS TO THE SUPPORT OF THE CHURCHES,
THE EMS IS ABLE TO PASS ON
100% OF DONATIONS TO THE PROJECTS.**

**COOPERATION AS EQUALS:
ALL EMS MEMBERS DECIDE AS EQUALS
ON THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS AMOUNTING TO**

3.762.775,34 EUR

FOR JOINT PROJECTS



WE ACT JOINTLY AS PARTNERS

The themes that move us are mission and theological training, combating poverty and justice, education and education for peace, women's empowerment as well as health and the environment. The projects, programmes and networking activities that all of us are actively engaged in are dedicated to long-term, sustainable and successful solutions to the concerns of our member churches that need funding and support. In the long term, this creates structures that improve the lives of all people in the supported regions.

2020 – A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

From one moment to the next, the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 put all long-term plans on hold. All EMS member churches were and continue to be affected by the pandemic. The worldwide lockdown measures have caused serious economic disruption. For many church members, their entire livelihood collapsed as they were no longer able to continue their work. The congregations which lost almost all of their collection revenue were severely restricted in their activities.

Here are only a few examples of the work of the EMS Corona Relief which is planned to continue in 2021. Money from the Fund allowed the Christian Protestant Church in Bali (GKPB) to distribute food packets to 900 families in need and personal protective equipment to doctors and nurses. The Christian Church in South Sulawesi (GKSS) regularly supplied emergency food to destitute congregation members. The Church of South India purchased sewing machines and material. Women from disadvantaged families used them to make protective clothing, masks and disinfectants for sale and were again able to earn a living.

“I can't cut the salaries of our staff because I know that if I do, our people will starve.”

Godfrey Cunningham, Church President of the Moravian Church in South Africa, on the plight of the church in the coronavirus crisis.



AID FOR DISASTERS AND CRISES

Many EMS member churches are situated in regions that are regularly hit by natural disasters. Indonesia is a high-risk zone for earthquakes while India experiences regular flooding or periods of drought. Climate change is causing an increasing occurrence of weather extremes that can be life-threatening, especially in countries in the Global South. Humanitarian crises such as wars, environmental disasters or catastrophes are on the increase all over the world and threaten the lives of many people. EMS emergency aid is then provided quickly and without bureaucratic delays. Immediately after the devastating explosion in the port of Beirut on 4 August 2020, the EMS sent urgently needed funds to support reconstruction work. The explosion severely damaged the church and community hall of the National Evangelical Church in Beirut (NECB), the building of the renowned Near East School of Theology (NEST), and the parish centre of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East.



The project had a lasting impact on the entire village community. The programme has become an exemplary model for similar development programmes. In 2020, the project, which has paved the way out of poverty for many families since it began in 2010, was finally handed over to the community.



SUSTAINABLE HELP FOR SELF-HELP – LIVESTOCK FARMING IN SULAWESI

Long-term, sustainable development over many years and mutual support are what constitutes the project work of the EMS. Important goals are the improvement of living conditions and the promotion of justice. This has been achieved, for example, by the livestock project in Sulawesi (Indonesia).

Many Christians in Sulawesi live in small villages scattered all over the island. Despite large natural deposits of raw materials and fertile soil, they often suffer from poverty. Families often lack the knowledge of how they to generate a profit from their agricultural production beyond their own needs. However, their products are in high demand. More and more people in Indonesian cities belong to the middle class. With growing prosperity, eating habits are also changing. In 2012, the Toraja Mamasa Church initiated a cattle breeding project in which the participants were initially given four heads of cattle to raise and were intensively supported and accompanied by the church.

SHARING THE GOSPEL – CHILD-FRIENDLY CHURCH IN INDIA

Children are not only the future of the church, they are already an important part of it. This is especially true for the Church of South India (CSI) where over 25% of church members are aged under 18. In order to make children's worship more attractive, the CSI developed the Child Friendly Church concept: Children are made welcome in the church, encouraged, listened to and invited to participate in decision-making processes. Such an approach places high educational demands on staff and church leaders. The EMS supports the further training of volunteers as part of this project.



**PRESERVING THE PEACE –
PROMOTING ENCOUNTER IN GHANA**

The majority of Ghanaians (about 70%) are Christian but Islam and traditional African religions also play a major role. The Presbyterian Church in Ghana (PCG) intends to preserve and promote this peace since there are occasional violent outbreaks between religious groups, even in this country. The church therefore runs the Centre for Interfaith Studies and Engagement in Africa (CISEA). Staff at the centre often see the cause for religious conflicts as a lack of knowledge and dialogue between religions. The CISEA promotes encounters between religious communities and organises conferences, seminars and workshops. The target groups include young people and women in particular.

**EDUCATION FOR ALL
IN JORDAN AND LEBANON**

The Schneller Schools in Jordan and Lebanon are places of security and peace that welcome children of different denominations and religions, Christians, Druze and Muslims, from poor or broken families. The schools which are unique in the region have a concept that teaches tolerance between cultures. Since they were established, the Schneller Schools have been doing real peace work and all the more so now as radicalisation and mutual segregation are on the rise. The Johann Ludwig Schneller School (JLSS) in Lebanon accepts numerous Syrian refugee children in addition to Lebanese girls and boys. The Theodor Schneller School (TSS) in Jordan is also trying to provide the best possible care for the children and young people during this time of crisis. Here, too, there are alternate shifts in the classrooms, and a lot of energy is invested in keeping the new training courses (catering, hairdressing, motor vehicle electrics) alive under coronavirus conditions. In 2020, the Schneller Schools in Jordan and Lebanon received funds to support the implementation of online learning offerings and to pay the salaries of the teachers and staff at the schools.



“The tasks of the EMS are varied. Trust and loyalty between our members play an enormous role here. This is the only way in which we can bear common witness to the Gospel whether in good or bad times and give one another strength.”

*Klaus Rieth
Chair of the EMS Mission Council*

EVENTS IN THE EMS YEAR 2020

JANUARY +++ EMS at the 36th Synod of the Church of South India (CSI) +++

FEBRUARY +++ Regional meeting of the EMS Youth Network in Germany +++

MARCH +++ International Sunday School Conference in Indonesia +++ All EMS volunteers are repatriated within a week after the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic +++ EMS launches worldwide Corona Relief +++

APRIL +++ Rev. Dr Dieter Heidtmann takes over as EMS General Secretary +++

MAY +++ The International Women's Conference is convened as a video-conference +++

JUNE +++ EMS supports appeal for peace on the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War +++ Mission Council adopts new organisation structure at the EMS Secretariat +++

JULY +++ Second phase of the EMS Corona Relief: aid for South Africa, India, Indonesia and the Middle East +++

AUGUST +++ Emergency aid after the explosion in Beirut +++ International Youth Network Conference +++

SEPTEMBER +++ EMS supports distance schooling at the Schneller Schools +++ Carola Hoffmann-Richter elected new chair of the German East Asia Mission (DOAM) +++

OCTOBER +++ EMS Regional Forum in Indonesia +++ International Conference "India after Covid-19" +++

NOVEMBER +++ "Free for the Future": General Meeting adopts EMS Strategy 2021–2026 +++ The Mission Council approves funding for 70 new projects for 2021–2022 +++ The Church of North India (CNI) and the Christian Church in West Sulawesi (GKSB) become EMS guest members +++

DECEMBER +++ International editorial team set up for new EMS magazine "Insights" +++ EMS project cycle 2019–2020 completed: 52 programmes and projects and 71 minor projects were funded +++

BODIES OF THE EMS

The **General Meeting** is the most important body of the EMS and convenes once every two years. Delegates from the 28 EMS members decide jointly on content and strategy for the future.

The **Mission Council** is the international executive committee of the EMS and meets twice a year. It consists of 17 people, eight from churches in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, six from churches in Germany and three from the mission associations.

The **Presidium** chairs the General Meeting and the Mission Council and represents the EMS externally. The three members of the Presidium ensure that resolutions are implemented.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS STRENGTHEN THE EMS

- Youth network
- Women's network
- Network of press relations officers
- Network of project managers

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CHURCHES AND MISSION ASSOCIATIONS IN THE EMS FELLOWSHIP



1 Ghana, 2 South Africa, 3 Jerusalem and Middle East, 4 Lebanon,
5 India, 6 Indonesia, 7 Japan, 8 Korea, 9 Germany, 10 Switzerland
Friendly relationship to: 11 China

Linked through Basel Mission German Branch with:
12 China, Hong Kong, 13 Cameroon, 14 Malaysia, 15 Nigeria, 16 South Sudan

Since its establishment in 1972, the international EMS association has enjoyed continuous growth. In 2020, the Church of North India (CNI) and the Christian Church in West Sulawesi (GKSB) became guest members and are expected to join the EMS as full members in two years' time. The member churches of the EMS represent the concerns of about 25 million believers in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

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OUTLOOK

50 YEARS OF BEARING THE GOOD NEWS FOR A BETTER WORLD: EMS JUBILEE YEAR 2021–2022

In autumn 2022, the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS) is 50 years old. This event will be celebrated with a Jubilee Year lasting from September 2021 through to September 2022. The Jubilee Year will begin with a theological conference from 13 to 17 September 2021 in Akropong, Ghana, and a festive worship service on Sunday, 19 September 2021. The EMS follows Jesus' first sermon with the theological perspective of the biblical Jubilee Year: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." (Luke 4:18-19)

"FREE FOR THE FUTURE" THE NEW EMS STRATEGY 2021–2026

The EMS set an important agenda for the future in 2020. At the Mission Council in June, a new organisational structure for the office was adopted. The General Meeting in November approved an ambitious strategy for the coming six years. The members of the EMS regard globalisation, ecological crises and increasing social and economic injustice as central challenges affecting humanity. The churches will have to face these challenges, so they are setting up common responses against these threats, e.g. by expanding project work or through the common focal theme of "Preservation of Creation".

We are looking to the future with confidence. Our faith is what sustains us. The EMS future strategy also places its firm trust in this: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then." (Galatians 5:1)



"Since its transformation into an international organisation seven years ago, the EMS has taken significant steps to promote internationalisation and the active participation of its members. During this time, we have grown closer together and have found that an association where its members meet as equals opens up totally new possibilities. We are committed to continuing along this path."

"Free for the future" EMS strategy 2021–2026