



BEYOND BOUNDARIES

The newsletter of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey

www.bossey.ch



November 2022

Greetings by the Director

This academic year 2022-23 is very special for our Bossey students. They already came to the Ecumenical Institute in mid-August this year in order to be able to take part in the assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Karlsruhe, Germany, as part of the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI). This was a unique opportunity for them to see the vibrant global ecumenical movement in action. This year 35 students from around the world are enrolled in Ecumenical Studies at Bossey.

Bossey continues to nurture and model the future generations of ecumenists and church leaders. It continues its mission and vocation as a unique laboratory of the ecumenical movement, a free and safe space for profound theological debate, and for intercultural, inter-church and interpersonal encounter. We continue to be very thankful for the prayers and support of many people who feel close to the Ecumenical Institute: students, alumni, friends, donors, guests. This is much appreciated.

Rev. Dr Kuzipa Nalwamba has been appointed as WCC programme director for unity, mission and ecumenical formation beginning 1 November 2022. Since 2019 she served as professor of social ethics at the Ecumenical Institute and programme executive for ecumenical theological education. Her successor in this position will be Rev. Dr Benjamin Simon who recently served as programme executive for church relations in the WCC. As Rev. Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus and myself have reached retirement age we bid farewell to our teaching position at the Ecumenical Institute. It was a privilege and joy to serve the Institute for many years.



Photo: Paul Jeffrey/WCC

After my 24 years of uninterrupted service as Professor and Director at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, it has become part of my very identity. During those years, I saw many life changing experiences of the students; but, at the same time, life and work in Bossey has equally changed and modelled my own life, my way of relating to and understanding and valuing the others. I continue to pray with gratitude for this unique space of ecumenical formation, encounter and dialogue.

*Fr. Dr Ioan Sauca
Director of the Ecumenical Institute
Acting General Secretary of WCC*

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A Moment of Gratitude



In January 2022, twenty graduates successfully completed the Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) programme and six graduates the Certificate of Complementary Certificate (CC) programme. Prof. em. Hans-Christoph Askani, Autonomous Faculty of Protestant Theology, University of Geneva addressed the students on the occasion of the closing ceremony on 27 January 2022 and encouraged them to continue the ecumenical journey with curiosity.

In August 2021, Bossey resumed its residential face-to-face courses carefully amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, while strongly encouraging students and faculty to follow the local and national guidelines. These efforts have led to a remarkable result in that it was hard to find someone testing positive for COVID-19, despite frequent testing after several excursions, and Bossey could end its autumn semester successfully.

Ms Carolina Zamorano Martinez of the Methodist Church in Mexico, the United Mexican States delivered her graduation speech. She said, "We have experimented with worship in different ways



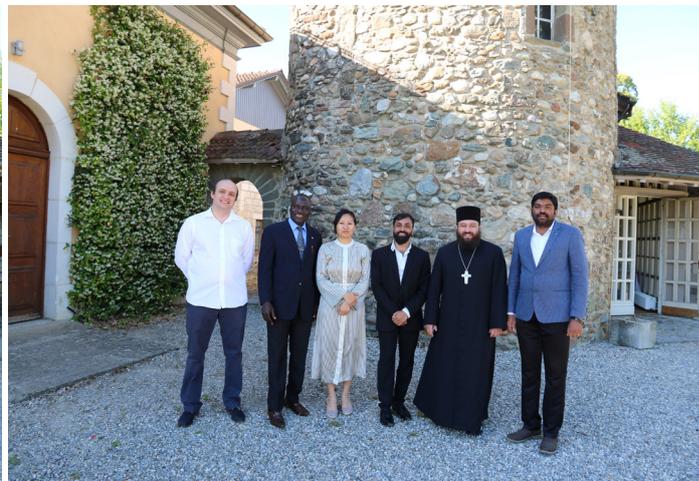
Photos: Peter Williams/WCC

that we have never thought before and we found God in each one of us. God is in the silent reflection, in the singing prayers, in the traditional hymns and in the energizing chants with drums. The Holy Spirit is among us, every time we light a candle, every time we share the needs in our contexts." She also said that we have continued in communion with each other in our communal life, in spite of all the challenges we have faced, and we could experience changes deep down in our hearts. At the conclusion, she expressed

her sincere appreciation to all the students, faculty and staff.

Fr. Dr Ioan Sauca also gave Ms Lucette Bourguignon the award as a token of our thanks. For many decades, she welcomed our students to her home for meals and bible studies and our students enjoyed her warm hospitality.

Six Masters' Students Graduate



Photos: Gloria Koymans/WCC

Six masters' students, Sijo George (India), Giorgi Gvelesiani (Georgia), Rev. Abel Lamido (Nigeria), Shashimongla Longchar (India), Rev. Jebin Thankaraj (India) and Fr. Andrea Saria (Georgia) graduated on 13 June 2022. During an outdoor graduation ceremony, the dean, Rev. Dr Simone Sinn, commended the six graduates for their successful defence of their

theses and contribution to the academic research depository at Bossey. She encouraged them to go back to their churches and countries as envoys of the Institute. During closing prayers in the chapel, earlier, the students reflected on Psalm 84 as a metaphor for their shared journey. They concluded that living and studying together was an act of

growing in integrity and belief in God's hospitality, guidance and blessing. "Bossey is a nest of true unity and love, built for all kinds of 'swallows'. It gives them all, an opportunity to attach to it and share of its goodness," Fr. Saria remarked.

Application Process in WCC Trakstar Hire Platform

The application process moved online for all courses in Ecumenical Studies. The platform requires careful preparation; filling in data and uploading required digitized documents following a protocol. The platform is accessible once per application dossier.

<https://www.oikoumene.org/study-in-bossey>

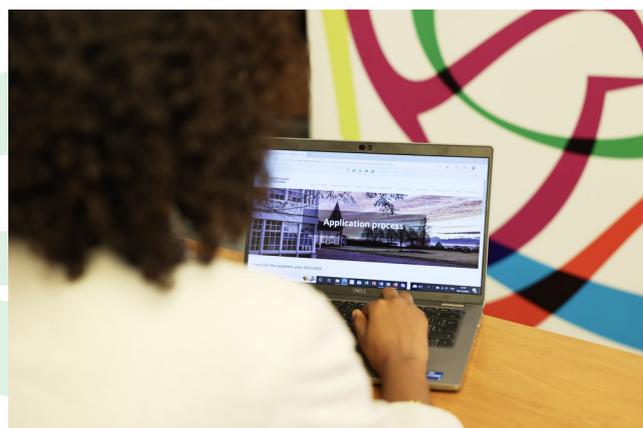


Photo:Gregoire de Fombelle/WCC

Bossey at the WCC Assembly in Karlsruhe



Photo: Paul Jeffrey/WCC

The Bossey students of the academic year 2022-23 had the unique opportunity to join the WCC 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe (Germany) this year. They were part of the residential Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI), and joined many sessions of the assembly: morning prayers under the magic sky, which is a huge tent that symbolized an oasis of peace during the assembly; the thematic plenaries that provided insights into the theme of each day; home groups and ecumenical conversations. Moreover, the students used the opportunity to meet people in the Networking Zone or the Brunnen space. Bossey students immersed themselves intensely into global ecumenism.

Beyond the current Bossey students, Bossey alumni from all around the world participated in the assembly in different roles: as delegates, as staff or co-opted

staff, as stewards, and as guests. It was very touching to see recent Bossey alumni contributing to different thematic plenaries, like Mr Roman Sigov from Ukraine, Mr Simone de Guiseppe from Italy and Ms Lani Anaya from Mexico.

On 5 September, more than 120 Bossey alumni joined for a meeting hosted by the Protestant Church in Switzerland, coordinated by Rev. Serge Fornerod, and a greeting offered by Rev. Claudia Haslebacher. When the director of the Ecumenical Institute, Fr. Dr Ioan Sauca, opened this gathering, he radiated the unique spirit of Bossey, where long-lasting friendships are formed and the commitment to the ecumenical movement is nurtured. Rev. Merlyn Hyde-Riley, a Bossey alumni from Jamaica, echoed this in passionate words in her speech at the alumni meeting. This lunchtime gathering offered a wonderful space for

reunion for Bossey alumni, enjoying delicious food and engaging conversations.

On two other occasions, Bossey alumni shared their experiences at panel conversations in the WCC Networking Zone. It is very moving to see how a theme discovered at Bossey had continued to be a red thread in the lives of a Bossey alumni. Two of the interreligious guests at the assembly, Benjamin Kamine from the USA and Dalia Al Mokdad from Lebanon also were Bossey alumni, they participated in the CAS Interreligious Studies.

It was important to see that Assembly programme guidelines committee affirmed the commitment to ecumenical formation, and Bossey continues to be one of its expressions that prepares young people for leadership roles in church and society.

Bossey Alumna Rev Merlyn Hyde-Riley Elected Vice Moderator of the WCC Central Committee

Rev. Merlyn Hyde-Riley, graduate of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, 2012-2013 cohort, and the acting general secretary of the Jamaica Baptist Union was elected vice moderator of the World Council of Churches (WCC) at the 11th assembly in September 2022 in Karlsruhe.

Rev. Hyde-Riley is engaged in various leadership roles in the ecumenical movement. She was the first woman to serve as the president of the Jamaica Council of Churches (JCC) and in her capacity as president, hosted the WCC's celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Decade to Overcome Violence, in 2018 in Jamaica.

She participated in the WCC's Twin Consultation on Reformation, Education and Transformation held in Brazil and Germany as a part of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and took part in the WCC consultation on the role of women in the Churches, Monastero di Bose, Italy. Rev. Hyde-Riley also gave one of the Bible studies at World Mission Conference in Arusha, Tanzania in 2018.

As vice moderator, Rev. Merlyn Hyde-Riley is a member of the leadership of the WCC. She will join the moderator in the task of chairing sessions of the WCC central committee and of the executive committee. The Ecumenical Institute and the entire Bossey community congratulate our worthy alumna and celebrate a historic first.



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

CAS Interreligious Studies



Photo: Gloria Koymans/WCC

On 21 July 2022, twelve students from Africa, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and North America earned a Certificate in Advanced Studies (CAS) in Interreligious Studies from the Bossey Ecumenical Institute, celebrating six weeks of thriving and learning together.

Taking place under the theme “Reconciliation and Healing Judaism, Christianity and Islam”, the international course offered capacity building for constructive engagement in interreligious relations and dialogue. Dr Vasile-Octavian Mihoc, faculty member at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, coordinated the course.

The summer course, equally divided into three weeks of distance learning followed by three weeks of intensive residential study, offered research opportunities in a community life setting. The residential period included four study modules: core course on Judaism, Christianity and Islam, thematic workshops, practical interreligious workshops, and interreligious study visits.

Mahmoud Nazari, a Muslim from the Middle East, said he enrolled in the course to strengthen his knowledge. “I will take back with me the teaching methods,” he said. “I could see some of them being really creative in their teaching.” He also valued the approach of comparative studies in interreligious dialogue.

Marcelle Al-Zoughbi, a Christian from the Middle East, said she had been trying to find space and time to attend the course since as far back as 2014. “I really believe in interreligious dialogue when we come to meet the person at the level where they’re at,” she said. “We can walk with them and talk with them. We can start the healing and reconciliation process.” Like Nazari, she marvelled at the graciousness and kindness of the staff and students at Bossey. She also acknowledged comparative theology as a powerful tool. “If we read someone else’s sacred text, we can have a further understanding of our own sacred text,” she said. “I saw many similarities, and how we build off of each other.”

Elizabeth Breit, a Jewish rabbi from New York City, was recently ordained and attended the course before beginning her first job as a congregational rabbi in August in Atlanta, Georgia (USA). “I think one of the most powerful aspects of the course was the relationships we built with people we wouldn’t have a chance to come across on equal footing,” she said. “Meeting here in Switzerland really allowed us to have a neutral place to build friendships and to communicate.”

The summer course strengthened knowledge on the three Abrahamic religions: Christianity, Islam and Judaism, and especially on the theme “Reconciliation and Healing Judaism, Christianity and Islam”. Participants enjoyed the interdisciplinary approach in interfaith studies, while finding constructive solutions linking theory of interreligious studies to practice of interreligious dialogue and engagement and discovering how the three religions respond to modern challenges.

“Théologie interculturelle” – A Theological Course in French Language

In June 2022 twelve students graduated from the first “cours en théologie interculturelle” at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey.

The course is a cooperative effort of French and Swiss WCC member churches and different organisations (Office Protestant de la formation, Neuchâtel - DM, Lausanne – Défap, Paris, CEVAA, Montpellier and Témoigner ensemble à Genève), all concerned and involved in questions around formation in intercultural and contextual theologies. The participants, who were partly from autochthonous French or Swiss churches and others from churches of migrational background, followed for six weekends the teachers’ courses usually an intercultural tandem, shared their experiences on different theological themes from an intercultural perspective, and learned from each other. As societies are becoming more and more intercultural and diverse an intercultural theological training for church leaders and active members of churches is much needed. The Ecumenical Institute at Bossey has recognised these challenges and wants to make a necessary change and puts with this course more the focus on World Christianity.

This Academic year, the course will be offered again and enlarged from six to eight weekends. Next to the former partners, we are grateful to the Protestant Universities of Montpellier and Paris to have joined. You are most welcome to watch the film about the course in “Théologie Interculturelle”.



Photo: Gloria Koymans/WCC





Thank You and Adieu Fr. Dr Sauca

Rev. Dr Ioan Sauca has had a long and productive relationship with the Institute. It began when he came as a student from 1984 to 1985. In 1994, he joined the World Council of Churches as executive secretary for Orthodox studies and relationship in mission. A senior priest from the Orthodox Church in Romania, Fr. Dr Sauca has been professor of ecumenical theology at the Institute since 1998. He has poured his life into the growth of the Institute and has served as its vision bearer since he became director in 2001. In that

capacity, he nurtured numerous younger and emerging ecumenical theologians, presided over infrastructure renewal and consolidated the academic programme, leading to its accreditation by the University of Geneva's Faculty of Theology.

During his tenure, Fr. Dr Sauca forged stable partnerships that support the appointment of faculty and a scholarship fund for students from member and non-member



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

churches of the WCC. The cultural, theological and confessional diversity at Bossey lends depth and breadth to the mode of ecumenical formation at Bossey. Its continuation will benefit from the foundation Fr. Dr Sauca has laid.

Rev. Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus: Engaging Teacher and Empowering Educator

The Ecumenical Institute at Bossey has been blessed with a very fine professor since 2007: Rev. Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus. He has been an engaging teacher, an empowering educator and a skillful mentor to many students during the past fifteen years. Two years ago, students designed a "Times" cover with his image to symbolically express how special his teaching was for them.



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

Whenever Rev. Dr Odair begins a classroom session, students' minds and hearts would be drawn into fascinating theological reflection that connects today's challenges with events and insights from the past. He encourages students to walk in one another's shoes, for example through panel discussions in which students represent church traditions different from their own. He has shared many meals with students in the Orangerie in Bossey, and accompanied their holistic ecumenical formation.

In the faculty, Rev. Dr Odair sparked important processes to reconstruct the syllabus of Ecumenical Studies in order to respond to students' perspectives and make the curriculum more coherent and relevant. For many years, he co-taught the intercultural seminar with a colleague from the theological faculty at the University of Geneva.

A pastor of the Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil, Rev. Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus first came to the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey

as student in 1981-82. When he came back to Geneva he first served the World Alliance of Reformed Churches from 2000 to 2007, and then started to work with the WCC as professor of ecumenical theology and programme executive in the Faith and Order Secretariat. The Ecumenical Institute was proud to see him promoted to Faith and Order director in 2015, and to WCC deputy general secretary in 2020. We are full of gratitude for Rev. Dr Odair's profound and inspiring contribution to ecumenical formation at Bossey.

Rev. Dr Kuzipa Nalwamba appointed Programme Director for Unity, Mission and Ecumenical Formation

The Bossey family celebrates the appointment of Rev. Dr Kuzipa Nalwamba as the World Council of Churches (WCC) programme director for Unity, Mission and Ecumenical Formation. Until her appointment, Rev. Dr Nalwamba was part of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, serving as the professor of Ecumenical Social Ethics. She was also the programme executive for Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE).

In that capacity, she coordinated the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute in conjunction with the WCC Assembly in Karlsruhe in 2022. She will develop strategic directions for the programmatic work in the area of Unity, Mission and Ecumenical Formation. She will also strengthen relationships with member churches, ecumenical partners and specialized ministries; and lead programmatic collaboration



Photo: Mike DuBose/WCC

with churches and partners.

As Director for Unity, Mission and Ecumenical Formation, Rev. Dr Kuzipa Nalwamba will also take the overall responsibility of oversight for the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey following the retirement of Fr Ioan Sauca.

The Ecumenical Institute is grateful to Rev. Dr Nalwamba for her contribution to the life and work of formation at Bossey and looks to her continued involvement as a teaching staff member of the faculty.

Bossey Salutes the Return of Rev. Dr Benjamin Simon as Core Faculty



Photo: Albin Hillert

The Ecumenical Institute at Bossey rejoices at the return of Rev. Dr Benjamin Simon after nearly three years hiatus serving as the programme executive for church relations in the World Council of Churches. He is not new to the life and formation offered at Bossey being a part of the faculty as Professor for Ecumenical Missiology in the past.

Rev. Dr Benjamin is re-joining the core faculty of the Bossey as the Professor of Ecumenical Social Ethics and Programme Executive, Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) of the World

Council of Churches. The chair of Ecumenical Social Ethics offers an intensive introduction and study in relating to the challenges arising from the complexity and plurality of globalised societies, and explores responses from an ecumenical ethical perspective. The Institute rejoices for the wealth of experience and expertise he brings, knowing that Rev. Dr Benjamin was not only trained in intercultural theology but also in social sciences.



Library News



Photo: World Council of Churches

Several changes affected the library in Bossey since March 2019: first, the collection of books of the library at the Ecumenical Centre merged with the collection of the library at the Ecumenical Institute. We have now in one location more than 100,000 documents making the library one of the most relevant ones worldwide about the ecumenical movement.

Then the new library catalogue (www.cutt.ly/WCCLibrarycatalogue) was launched together with the other 450 Swiss academic libraries.

In addition, and together with the WCC Archives, the digitization project of former WCC publications (<https://archive.org/details/worldcouncilofchurches>) continues. In 2022, we have been awarded by a grant of the ATLA American Theological Libraries Association, allowing the digitization of an additional batch of about 300 documents.

The life of (and at) the library is enriched by the students of the Library Committee from one year to another, ensuring its openness throughout the week. All this makes the library a unique place for current and former students of the Ecumenical Institute: the library is yours!

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Editorial Team

Joo Mee Hur
Susan Kim



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Ecumenical Institute

Château de Bossey

Chemin Chenevière 2,
1279 Bogis-Bossey,
Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 960 7300

Fax: +41 22 960 7367

bossey@wcc-coe.org



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