



APPROVED

WCC Communication Strategy revised

Update

The direction of the WCC outlined at the WCC 11th Assembly, 2022, calls for an updated communication strategy fully aligned with overall WCC strategies. The basis for communications remains the same as decided by the WCC central committee and the WCC executive committee in 2018, along with additions made at central committee meeting held in June 2021. The revised WCC Communication Strategy was presented to the WCC executive committee in November 2022.

The attached proposal thus builds on earlier strategic decisions by WCC governing bodies and does not contain any major changes in terms of communication strategies. It relies on the same solid communication philosophy as before, in which credibility, accountability, relevance, and consistency are key pillars, all in a spiritual context. The main communication task is to continue raising awareness of the WCC and be a driver of change through systematic and professional communications.

Adjustments included in this strategy document, *A Loving Fellowship to Act and Pray Together for Justice, Reconciliation, and Unity*, closely relate to the messages conveyed at the WCC 11th Assembly:

*“Hearing the word of God together, we recognize our common calling;
Listening and talking together, we become closer neighbours;
Lamenting together, we open ourselves to each other’s pain and suffering;
Working together, we consent to common action;
Celebrating together, we delight in each other’s joys and hopes;
Praying together, we discover the richness of our traditions and the pain of our divisions.”*

The strategy is articulated around the WCC Strategic Objective 4: Innovative and inspiring communication:

The WCC is an effective communication actor and a platform for sharing stories and voices from member churches and ecumenical partners working together in the pilgrimage of justice, reconciliation and unity, and raising the fellowship’s visibility and public role.

Timeline

First discussion at the executive committee in November 2022.

Second discussion with regional communicators, partners and assembly communicators.

Third discussion and for approval at the central committee in June 2023.

WCC Communication Strategy 2023-2030

A Loving Fellowship to Act and Pray Together for Justice, Reconciliation, and Unity

Background

The goal and purpose of WCC communications are to raise the profile and impact of the work of the WCC. This is done through a variety of means which reflect the core Christian and ecumenical values of the WCC. Communication is an important strategic tool for the WCC and its member churches and ecumenical partners to sustain influence, gain visibility, and promote good causes. Ensuring relevant, credible, transparent, and well-coordinated communication in a timely manner is a pivotal task for WCC Communication. The WCC audience is international, including the WCC membership, its committees, commissions, and the churches and the public at large.

WCC Strategic Objective 4: Innovative and inspiring communication

The WCC is an effective communication actor and a platform for sharing stories and voices from member churches and ecumenical partners working together in the pilgrimage of justice, reconciliation and unity, and raising the fellowship's visibility and public role.

Introduction

The WCC must be a catalyst for change – for a world with unity, justice, and peace at its heart. Its communication must consequently reflect this mission and continue to play a key role as a powerful driver of change.

The WCC aims to inspire and invite its member churches to work together, actively lending weight to the churches' common voice. The member churches are the heart of the council.

Communications from the WCC must thus be inclusive and have participation and hope at their core, both in content and in methodology. Our task is to ignite and sustain hope for a better world where human dignity prevails. Human dignity and equality must permeate all communications.

To quote the WCC 11th Assembly message:

“Hearing the word of God together, we recognize our common calling;
Listening and talking together, we become closer neighbours;
Lamenting together, we open ourselves to each other's pain and suffering;
Working together, we consent to common action;
Celebrating together, we delight in each other's joys and hopes;
Praying together, we discover the richness of our traditions and the pain of our divisions.”

Recognizing the new media landscape, marked by the global growth and control of digital communication technologies, the WCC communication strategy also draws inspiration from the “New Communications Paper for the 21st Century,” received by the central committee in February 2022¹, and hopes to be a tool to the global ecumenical fellowship to address the challenges posed by digital justice in our work and advocacy.

WCC communication will seek innovative ways in which the council's digital communication platforms and methodologies can be used in ways that promote inclusion, accessibility, equality, and respect.

¹ <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/a-new-communications-paper-for-the-21st-century-a-vision-of-digital-justice>

Communication Strategy

- The strategy is articulated around the WCC Strategic Objective 4: Innovative and inspiring communication:
- The communication strategy is the overarching framework for internal and external communications, with fellowship as a key component.
- Communication must be integrated, timely, coordinated, and spiritual, as well as clear, innovative, and inspirational.
- WCC communication plays a leading role in shaping a trustworthy and consistent picture of the WCC and lays solid foundations for professional communication within the fellowship.
- The WCC should not only focus on strategies to communicate the pilgrimage of justice, reconciliation, and unity but also reflect and promote reflection on the role of communication in building just and peaceful communities.
- All communications produced by WCC communication emanate from the WCC and the overall strategies and priorities laid out by its governing bodies. The WCC's visual identity, including the WCC logo, shall thus be applied consistently and without exception.
- The WCC uses a personal form of address and comprehensible and inclusive language.
- The communication strategy will be supplemented by communication plans with detailed strategies that support decisions, leadership, concrete programmes, and other activities, events, etc. in the day-to-day work.
- Particular focus on the youth and their perspectives will be offered. The young generation embodies the future of the ecumenical movement. WCC communication material – generated by young people for young people – shall help to inspire young Christians all over the world to engage in the ecumenical movement.

Fellowship Communication

- Communication is crucial to the fellowship and its credibility. Communication comes from the Latin word *communicare*, meaning to share. Communication from and within the WCC promotes participation and transparency in order to build fellowship – to walk, pray, and act together. Professional communication plays a vital role in strengthening the fellowship.
- The WCC shall maintain high accessibility and welcome people warmly and respectfully. The WCC must always be perceived as relevant and credible.
- Communications must effectively support the fellowship, the organization and the WCC management. This includes:
 - further developing regional collaborations;
 - gathering and sharing the stories of the “living fellowship” through the web, news media, social media, publications such as books and journals, and other channels;
 - offering resources for nurturing the spiritual life of the fellowship with prayers and Bible studies;
 - developing joint communication activities with member churches and ecumenical partners.

Prophetic Communication

- WCC Communications is committed to prophetic communication, that is, to telling the truth (*John 16:13*), even when it is inconvenient or unwelcome or from voices previously silenced, ignored, powerless, or marginalized.
- The WCC seeks to lift up and convey the authentic experiences, stories, insights, and values of people and communities within the churches that might otherwise not be heard, even if they are critical of our habitual or accepted practices or challenge principalities and powers.
- The WCC is committed to empowering people and groups to speak for themselves and to enabling communication by those who might otherwise not have access to the public sphere.

Advocacy Communication

- The WCC is to inspire and invite its member churches to work together, actively lending weight to the churches' common voice.
- For the WCC to be a catalyst for change – fostering a world with justice, reconciliation and unity at its heart—its communication must reflect the most pressing concerns and deepest aspirations of people in the churches and beyond.
- Communications from the WCC must be inclusive and have participation and hope at their core. Our task is to ignite – and sustain – hope for a better world where human dignity prevails. Human dignity and equality must permeate all communications. That includes:
 - engaging in advocacy and communication campaigns;
 - actively reaching out to journalists and public media;
 - fostering capacity-building with member churches and ecumenical partners.

Capacity-Building

- As a fellowship working with and for the churches, the WCC believes in the ability of all member churches and ecumenical partners to participate, exert influence, and communicate.
- Through capacity-building, such as training, inspirational workshops and networking, members' ability to communicate can be strengthened.
- The WCC will seek ways to ensure that its communication resources and experiences are shared within the fellowship, allowing the greatest possible access to information. This includes:
 - training leadership, staff, and member churches to become better communicators;
 - utilizing publications such as books and journals to further spiritual reflection and ecumenical formation;
 - translating WCC content.

Accountable Communication

- The WCC is committed to accountability in its communications, intent on being a credible instrument of Christian communication and a trustworthy witness to the truth.
- WCC communications must not only convey truth but also counter falsehood, lies, and misconceptions that threaten understanding and dialogue among Christians and churches, as well as with people of other faiths or no faith.
- WCC Communications aspires to transparency in its work methods and accountability to the organization, its member churches and partners, as well as its readerships and the public.

WCC Communication media and channels

WCC Communication employs a variety of media and channels to communicate with the fellowship and the wider world:

- WCC communication must employ the appropriate and effective channels to meet its specific objectives and remain open to new, innovative means of communication in its work.
- These include external media; various social media platforms; material on the WCC website and distributed to media and the public; posted documentation from the WCC, its fellowship of churches and ecumenical partners; book and journal publications that offer in-depth analysis and stimulate theological reflection; a variety of digital and printed introductory materials about the WCC and the ecumenical movement; and online productions such as webinars, webcasts, and podcasts.

Of special significance are the WCC website and social media channels. The website is a digital communication hub for the WCC's multilingual fellowship. It aims to inspire and encourage the

member churches to work together and showcase what they do on national, regional, and global levels. The WCC website serve as a hotline for journalists, enabling them to access up-to-date information and comments on current events, further increasing the fellowship's media exposure worldwide. In parallel, WCC social media has become an essential space for the fellowship to access and engage with the content produced, while serving as the main online entry point for many audiences. Social media is also a vital tool to reach and listen to the prophetic voices of young generations.

The overall strategic goal of the WCC website is to provide insight, as well as the latest news and developments in the ecumenical movement. The WCC website also offers resources for ecumenical engagement and facilitates access to the vast documentation about the ecumenical movement and its involvement in a variety of topics.

Raising awareness of the WCC and the ecumenical movement by harbouring an open, viable dialogue through all channels mentioned above remains a key priority for WCC communications.