



WSCF European Staff and Officers Meeting

Lund, Sweden
21-25 March 2009



Nine staff members and volunteer coordinators from throughout the European region of WSCF gathered together to follow-up the activities and thematic work that has taken place over the past year. Through various methods of reporting, discussing and workshops the participants were able to reflect on the work they have done on the national level in inter-cultural dialogue, gender issues and various other topics. The hosts, SCM Sweden (KRISS), invited the group to the Lund SCM office, welcomed them to the weekly prayer meeting and to share a meal at the SCM collective. With the local students, they celebrated the Universal Day of Prayer for Students, focusing on the theme Climate Justice.

SCM Reports



Each participant reported on past and future events and the life of the local SCMs in Norway, Finland, Georgia, Slovakia, Sweden, Germany, and Britain. Their work on gender, inter-cultural and interfaith dialogue, minority integration, and environmental issues were reviewed among colleagues. Some exciting new initiatives continuing the work of 2009 were two projects in Georgia teaching journalism students about religious hate speech and an inter-religious dialogue program and publication. Also, a student collective in Zvolen, Slovakia has created an art gallery in their home, for the local community, carrying forward the theme of art and spirituality in the coming years.

Building Strong Foundations and Enthusiastic Leaders:

One of the benefits of meeting in person with other staff members and volunteer coordinators was the ability to talk candidly about SCM financial issues that each SCM was facing at a local level and their coping mechanisms. The group talked about various new fundraising strategies; how to make the most of grant reporting and applications; and how different movements can support each other financially through closer relationships. WSCF's Senior Friends network is also an important part of the federation, not only does it link students to the work of past generations but they are an inspiration to current students and a wealth of knowledge.

Strategic Planning:

Hilary Topp (UK), led a valuable workshop on strategic planning and taught the participants how to create a strategic plan, mission statement and vision. Some of the benefits of having an organised work plan are that it can show to donors and potential donors that they are a viable and reliable organisation as well as making staff and volunteer time more efficient and effective. Also, by working together with staff and volunteers to create a plan and vision for the organisation each individual feels like an integral part of the organisation's work. Introducing movement building into a structured strategic plan will make it easier to create new university-based SCMs. Overarching themes of gender equality, intercultural dialogue, environmental rights, and minority rights can also be worked into an SCMs strategic plan helping to create concrete programs based on these issues.

Liberation and Gender Equality:

One of the highlights of the week was participating in the International Oscar Romero conference hosted by the local churches and SCM in Lund. Participants heard lectures from theologians from around the world about the history of Liberation Theology and how it relates to the current global climate, gender issues and minority integration. Participants also studied and worshipped together by following the World Council of Churches Lenten campaign "40 Days to End Violence against Women". This campaign focused on the experiences women have because of sexual violence and human trafficking within Europe and around the world.



One way of staying connected after this meeting will be through an internal newsletter about upcoming activities and opportunities and working on building intercultural dialogue through SCM partnerships and exchanges. This week rejuvenated the staff and volunteer officers who attended, inspiring them to continue working on their grassroots activities with students and helped to build bridges between the work of the region and local groups.

A special thanks to our donor who made this meeting possible: Council of Europe.

