

Families today worldwide



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"Families today worldwide" ... an ecumenical issue

jamaa, family, keluarga, rodzina ... these are the Swahili, English, Indonesian, Polish terms for "family". But what does "families today" mean for our partners in Tanzania, the UK, Indonesia, Poland...? Are they faced with similar questions, e.g. how to strengthen families, how to secure a work-life balance? Is "family" an issue in their churches and congregations?

We want to invite you to turn "families today" into an issue to be discussed in your encounters with your partners in Cameroon, encounters with young people in Argentina or visits to a Russian-Orthodox community in your town. Discover "families today worldwide".

In its discussion paper "Families today", the Evangelical Church of Westphalia has addressed the topic of "families" in order to discuss the diversity of living in families. The discussion paper also provides numerous stimuli for the ecumenical context. We can discuss in ecumenical partnership groups what "families today" means for us and our partners from all over the world and what challenges families are faced with today. We can discover common ground, identify differences, learn from one another and engage in dialogue. Every individual can make contributions as everybody is an expert on "families". "Family" is an issue that offers many different opportunities for encounters and dialogue:

- How do we celebrate family celebrations, e.g. baptism and weddings?
- How are roles and tasks shared out within families? What has changed compared with the past? What challenges have arisen as a consequence – for the church, among other players?
- We can focus on the situation of children, women, men and elderly family members: What is the role of women within families? How can women and mothers be strengthened – through families and policies? How can the rights of children be protected? How has the role of men changed? What are the new opportunities and challenges facing elderly people? What are the tasks facing churches and congregations?
- Exchanging views with our partners, we can find out which ideas and forms of life we can share and which ones we do not share or even fail to comprehend. How do we learn to deal with such differences in our ecumenical partnerships?
- We can discuss cohesion within families: How do we handle significant events in our families, e.g. unemployment, illness, need for care, dying and death? How do congregations and society assist families in these contexts?
- How do we understand the Bible and its family-related statements, e.g. in the Ten Commandments?
- How are Christian traditions passed on within families? How can we strengthen Christian faith in our life together?

Every individual can contribute their own personal experiences. We warmly invite you to do so! That is why we have compiled some ideas and suggestions in this brochure for you.

Father-mother-child, grandma with five grandchildren ... Being family – worldwide

"Family is where people stand by and bear responsibility for one another over the long term and across the generations," as pointed out in the keynote presentation "Families today".¹

Do you and your ecumenical partners agree to the statement made in the keynote? What does family mean to each individual? Who do you consider to be part of a family?



Discuss with your ecumenical partners what and who is family for you: Show your partners photos of your family and ask them to show you some photos. Explain to them who belongs to your family. Show each other the photos. Complete the sentence "Family for me is ..." within your group.

Discuss the following questions:

- What are the common features, what are the differences that we can see – in the photos, pictures? Who and what is family for us? Who and what isn't?
- What characterises your family? What is special about it?
- What does "supporting one another" and "assuming responsibility" mean in concrete terms for your family, e.g. when parents need care, when the woman or man falls ill, when children need support, e.g. for a training programme? Is support taken for granted within your family, does every member get the same level of support? Are there any limits?
- What has changed over recent years? What are the problems and opportunities facing families today?

Elsie Joy dela Cruz, pastor in the United Church of Christ in the Philippines:

"A family that prays together stays together." This is one of the most popular mottos of many families in the Philippines. For us, families are the cornerstone of society, and faith plays a major role for its cohesion. A family usually comprises father, mother and children, but it is also entirely normal for large families to live together with grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. Family members have an obligation to assist one another and share with one another. This traditional family image has changed over recent years. Many family members leave their families to find work, either in large cities or abroad. Children often stay behind with their mother or father or are taken care of by their grandparents or aunts. This phenomenon has started to gradually loosen the family ties and weaken the basis for a holistic upbringing of the children. It poses a major challenge for church and society.

¹ Evangelical Church of Westphalia, keynote presentation "Families today", 2012, p. 7



"My family!" the mother proudly says. Years ago, the older woman on the left took in her husband when he arrived in Germany all on his own as a young apprentice, treating him like a son. She has chosen her two young neighbours as godmothers for her third child. Why did she not ask some member of her large family back in Mozambique? "They are simply the right ones! And my conmadres (i.e. co-mothers) are to be close to us!"

In Tanzania many grandmothers raise several children today. According to Tanzanian tradition, grandmothers should actually be supported by their families. However, here a grandmother takes care of the children aged 2 to 17 as her daughters and daughters-in-law have died of AIDS.



Elfriede Dörr (in charge of the ecumenical desk of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, Romania) brought drawings made by her daughter Paula (7) on "Families" to the Synod 2012. Elfriede Dörr commented on the drawings as follows: In trying to depict "family", Paula was not just focusing on father, mother and child. Her drawing also includes the apple tree and the bird as well as the hedgehog spending the winter in the basement. With her drawings, Paula tells us that children always perceive families in a multi-dimensional context. Harmony within the family plays a role, but also the family's joint responsibility for the hedgehog in its winter home. Another important element of the picture of the family is the apple tree and a good harvest. Family does not exist on its own, but as part of creation, which needs shared responsibility.

Happiness for every child (Romeo del Rosario, Philippines)²

*I want every child in this world to be happy
I want fathers to nurture their children
and mothers to bring them up to be strong and gentle.
I want my eyes opened to the reality of other people,
to hear what they are not able to articulate.
I want to add to an atmosphere of trust
where people who were deeply hurt when they were young
can heal, recuperate and recover.
I want to see justice run like a river,
bringing healing and peace to the nations.
I want to sing the songs of my sisters and brothers.
I want to tell their stories, dance their dances and recite their poetry.
I want to add my voice to the resonance
that conveys what each person on the face of the earth wants the rest of the world to know.
Her vision. His dreams. Her strength. His gifts. Her hope. His yearning.
Her anxiety. His fears. Her grief. His sadness. Her indignation. His
anger. Her determination. His striving. Her joys. His excitement. Her
discoveries. His dawnings.
I want the eye of my heart to see the grace of God
That is present to me in every child, woman and man I meet.
I want to be able to see differently, to think differently, to live kindly, to
walk humbly, to serve graciously and gratefully.
Come, Lord Jesus. Come always and save me –
that I may want what you want,
that I may live in you, that I may be completely holy.*

² Source: *In God's Hands, Common Prayer for the World*, Frankfurt/M. 2008, p. 142

Candle, gift, the entire village ... How do we celebrate family events?

The family gets together at various occasions in order to have a joint celebration, celebrate an event, e.g. a birthday, baptism, confirmation, wedding, funeral.

"Family celebrations" represent an issue that offers numerous opportunities for encounters and exchanges with ecumenical partners.

Questions for a discussion with your ecumenical partners:

- When and how do you celebrate in your families?
- What role do these family events play?
- What do we have in common, what differences are there?
- Who takes part? Grandparents, parents, children, brothers and sisters... the entire village?
- Just how important are these family celebrations for your family, for your faith?

Tell your partners how you celebrate, for instance, a baptism, confirmation or wedding in your family. Show them pictures, videos... Ask your partners how they celebrate a baptism or wedding.

Taking "baptism" as an example:

Show your partners photos of your own baptism or the christening of your children, grandchildren, godchild! Tell them how the baptism took place and how your family was involved and took part. Ask your partners to show you photos or tell you how baptisms are celebrated in your partner community.

Questions for a discussion of baptism:

- How do you celebrate baptism? What traditions are there in your family?
- How is your family involved in the baptism service in your church?
- How is the christening celebrated after the service?
- Are the godparents part of your family?
- What is the role of the godparents, parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters in the baptism? What role do they assume after the baptism – in raising the child and passing on Christian faith?
- Does the baptised child receive any gifts? What is the role of these gifts?
- How was baptism celebrated in the past – by your family, by your partners? Are there any differences compared with today?
- Are infants, young people and/or adults baptised?



Baptism in England

My godson Jamie was recently baptised in Yorkshire, England. He wore a christening robe that had been made for his great-grandfather in the US in 1910 and had since been worn by every family member.

At the baptism ceremony, the godparents and parents were asked to come up forward with the baby to be baptised in order to confirm that they wanted the infant to be baptised. Jamie

was then blessed by the pastor, his parents, us godparents and all relatives present – including his almost two-year-old sister – by making the sign of a cross on his forehead. After this promise and before another song, we carried Jamie to the baptismal font. Apart from the relatives and godparents, all children were also invited to watch.

Finally, the parents were asked what name they wanted to give their child before the child was then baptised with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Since Jamie's parents play a very active role in their congregation and his father is a member of the parish council and choir, they had invited all members of their parish to the parish hall so that most of those that had attended the service celebrated with the new member of the parish afterwards.

Report by Susanne Hansum

Baptism in the Philippines

A baptism ceremony in the Philippines does not only involve the parents with their child and the pastor carrying out the baptism; rather, a large group of people assemble around the baptismal font. Joy dela Cruz, pastor of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, explains: in the Philippines, it is common for 15, 20 or even more people to be godparents for a child.

After all, many hands and feet are required if a child is to be guided safely through life in a country characterised by so many challenges. During the baptism ceremony, the community members also raise their hands to bless the child – the family is not left to its own devices with its child to be baptised. On the contrary, it can rest assured that many godparents will support it and the entire community will remain interested.



Joseph, Sara, David ...

Together discovering families in the Bible

Strangely, the word "family" is not to be found in the Old Testament. The Bible speaks about the "house of the father", i.e. the extended family: several generations, relatives and married persons, even slaves and other dependents. The extended family secured the economic survival of everyone and offered protection against external invasion. Life without a family was virtually impossible. Personal freedom in choosing one's partner and shaping one's life were subordinate to family interests.

Patchwork families, loss of one's partner, competition among siblings, infertility and the associated strain are all addressed in the oldest books in the Bible:

- "The Joseph narrative reports on the unequal treatment of the sons by the father and the competition among the brothers that explodes violently.
- Theologically significant are the narratives about unfulfilled wishes for a child and the ensuing burden on the relationship between wife and husband. That is clear from the narratives of Sarah and Abraham, and Rachel and Jacob.
- It is also part of the everyday realism of the Bible that it tells of violence in families, e.g. the quarrel between the brothers Cain and Abel that ends with the murder of Abel. David commits husband murder in order to get a coveted woman for himself. Cases of rape in the family are also reported. Children and slaves are dependents that can also be sold."³

Idea:

Read these biblical family narratives together! Stage a role-play of the stories! Which persons, which family member do you identify with? Which role would you like to play?

Subsequently discuss the following questions:

- What do these stories mean for you? What pictures do they paint of the father, mother, children...?
- What does it mean for you to be a father or mother? What does it mean for you to be childless?
- What features of being a father or mother are particularly important to you? To what extent is your family characterised by that?
- What roles do fathers or mothers play in the families? What do they have in common, what differences exist?
- Are there any questions the Bible does not refer to?

³ Evangelical Church of Westphalia, keynote presentation "Families today", 2012, p. 19ff.



Picture of the birth of Jesus from Tanzania.
Artist: Festo Kijo, Dar es Salaam

Is the "holy" family a "real" family?

Nativity scenes are found in every region, every country, even every family. However, they look different in different places. They often also reveal a longing for the "holy family".

Idea:

Show one another pictures of nativity scenes and discuss the presentation and role of Joseph as the father and Mary as the mother.

Many wives – one husband

In the Old Testament, polygamous family forms are normal: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob have several wives – and, as a matter of course, concubines. The New Testament advises bishops to have one wife (1 Timothy 3:2). African Christians occasionally confront us Europeans by saying: "You, too, have several wives – but one after the other!"

Discuss the following questions:

What do the biblical texts say about faithfulness and responsibility within the family?
What do they say about the role of social structures and values

Cecilie Mutanga, Namibia

Our Herero tradition offers the possibility of polygamy. Let us assume I am married, I am getting older and have trouble doing the washing and the overall household chores. I notice that my husband has fallen for a younger woman. As the first woman, I can then go to talk to that other woman and ask her whether she would not like to come to our home and marry my husband. My husband must not ask her – it is the woman's right to do so. My uncle has five wives and they get on well with one another. This polygamy has been legal since Namibia became independent. But I do not want to live that way.

"Honouring one's parents" ... what does that mean for us?

"The Ten Commandments start with God pointing to the liberation ... They help to shape and preserve the gift of freedom... The family is a necessary space for human life. A life without family is de facto not possible... It is about giving weight to those who cannot preserve and assert their dignity alone."⁴

"Honour your father and your mother..." Discuss with your ecumenical partners what it means for them to "honour their parents" and how old and young people in their family, in society, deal with each other.

Discuss, for instance, the following questions:

- What does it mean for you to honour your parents? What does it not mean?
- What would you wish your children, other family members, to do when you have grown old? How would you like to live?
- How do families, society at large, show "respect" vis-à-vis older people? How are older people protected?
- What is the role of old people within society? Is the knowledge, the experience of older people used?
- How do you perceive the way young and old people live together? Are there any conflicts? If so, which conflicts? What are the causes? How can they be resolved?

Tip:

The film "Wazee. Alterbilder in Tansania" (old age in Tanzania) by the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) may trigger debates. You may obtain or borrow the film from UEM or the MÖWe office.

Jean Mutombo, pastor from the DR of Congo, currently works for the Evangelical Church of Westphalia:

In Africa, the Commandment "Honour your father and your mother" is interpreted as referring to rights and obligations of the child. The child is guided into life by its parents. They provide the child with its roots, take care of the child and offer the child the opportunity to grow and prepare for the future. The obligation arising from honouring one's parents is a token of the gratefulness, the respect and appreciation of those that have given this child the gift of life. It is an appreciation of those that embody the tradition, values and experiences the child needs in order to be able to live a happy and successful life. This results in responsibility and care for one's parents. You want to protect and assist them; and this does not only relate to the core family but the entire extended family. The family community caters for the individual, but the individual also has the obligation to assist and contribute.



Old woman from Tanzania.

⁴ Evangelical Church of Westphalia, keynote presentation "Families today", 2012, p. 20



In a Catholic retirement home, Cameroon.

Fidon Mwombeki, Secretary General of the United Evangelical Mission, grew up in Tanzania, and now lives and works in Wuppertal:⁵

Every time I forget something – as happens not infrequently – my 15-year-old daughter teases me by saying: "You are old, Dad!" That is a thought I never associated with my own father until the moment he was ill in bed! I grew up in a Tanzanian village where reaching old age was considered an honour and a blessing. In Tanzania, old or elderly persons are called "mzee", even when they are only 30 but nevertheless an authority, or if you want to show them they enjoy a higher social status. My daughter, however, grew up in a Tanzanian city and has become immersed in the German and European culture for six years now. She does not associate this sentence with a positive meaning, unlike a typical child from a Tanzanian village. What she really means is: "Poor thing!"

Ein Interview mit Herrn Baldé aus Guinea (Westafrika), der in Deutschland lebt:

What role does your family, in particular your parents, play for you?

My family is very important to me. In our culture, parents play a very important role and are treated with a great deal of respect. Their voice is always heard, even when they children have already reached adulthood.

How is that expressed in actual practice?

To this very day, I address my father and my mother in a formal way, and I would never contradict them because they brought me into the world and have a much longer experience of life than I have.

Have you noticed any differences compared with families/parents in Europe?

Recently, a German family invited me for a meal. Suddenly an argument arose during the meal, and the oldest daughter snubbed her mother by saying: "Now stop it – end of discussion! Will you please shut up!" I was surprised and a little ashamed, as that would never happen in Guinea.

⁵ United Evangelical Mission: Bilder des Alters – Altersbilder – Lebenssituationen alter Menschen in Deutschland und in Tansania, 2013, p. 4

Have you noticed any other differences?

When the parents grow older, they no longer have to work in Guinea. My mother and my father, for instance, have their meals prepared and are cared for by their children and relatives, who perform all household chores for them. That is taken for granted. As far as I know, there aren't any old people's homes in Guinea yet, either. The extended family takes care of the parents until they die, with nieces and nephews regarded as their own children as well. Overall, family ties are very strong.

Samson Mushemba, former bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania:⁶

Some congregations have launched a special Sunday at which the communities thank the elderly for the special gifts they contribute to the communities by means of dancing, singing, special prayer and communal meals. A fascinating aspect observed on these days is the presence of guests from other parishes and religions. Some congregations also invite the children and relatives who do not live in the region to attend this "Old People's Day".

And, of course, the church tradition also includes regular visits to the sick, those in need but also the old, by the pastors and elders. We regard these visits as necessary in order to motivate, encourage and strengthen the inactive community members. No doubt: regardless of the fact that our financial resources are limited, our churches will have to step up their efforts to care for the older community members. After all, it is an indispensable task of the churches to meet the spiritual and physical needs of the elderly, both inside and outside the churches.



⁶ United Evangelical Mission: Bilder des Alters – Altersbilder – Lebenssituationen alter Menschen in Deutschland und in Tansania, 2013, pp. 18, 19.

Breakfast, TV, working in the field...

How do families live and work together?

"Every family constellation must find its way to establish a sense of community. Thereby the time factor plays a role."⁷

How about your family? Do you have breakfast together, or is that not possible due to different working hours? How much time does your family spend together in a day, a week? What do you do together? How important is this shared "family time" to you and your family? What do you do to ensure that you have this time together as a family? How about your ecumenical partners, your neighbouring community? How do they shape their day-to-day family life?

Idea:

Ask your ecumenical partners to tell you how family life takes place during the day, the week or the year. Record the daily or weekly routine of your opposite number, in particular the time spent together by the family. Your partner will subsequently ask you and record your daily and weekly routine. You can then present your results and impressions to the other group members.

You may wish to discuss the following questions:

- What are the differences, what is the common ground you have identified with regard to family life?
- How important is the shared family time? What do you do together as a family, what do family members do on their own?
- What are your common family rituals?
- Are there any activities you only do together?
- Have there been any changes in the way the families live together? Are there any current changes? What are the reasons?

An example – family life in Namibia

A day in rural Namibia

This farm hosts many people, not just the nuclear family. The family also includes all unmarried adults. The children attend school. The boys sometimes go to school a little later because they have to herd the cows or goats. All staple foods are grown in the field.

- *When it gets light enough, between 5 and 6 in the morning, the family gets up and starts working in the field. It has to be bright enough for them to be able to distinguish the small mahango plants from other plants. Sometimes all family members work in the field; in any case, the women do so.*
- *The boys take care of and herd the cattle. If there are any cows, the men milk them.*

- *At around 10 a.m., oshikundu is brought to the field – a refreshing drink made from mahango millet. It stills everybody's hunger and quenches their thirst at the same time. There isn't much time for the meal because it will soon be too hot to work in the field. Some families also have tea and eat some bread.*
- *One of the women will soon go home to prepare lunch. All the others will work until noon. From the fall of the shadow, everyone knows when it is between noon and 1 p.m. so that it is time for lunch, even without having a watch.*
- *There is no break after lunch: the men and the boys take care of the cattle (and may sit under a tree in doing so) or gather sticks to build homes or fences. The young girls start pounding mahango so that the traditional mahango gruel and oshikundu can be prepared in the evening. The women and girls also gather nuts to produce oil, creams or drinks. In the rainy season, when the little rivers are full of water, the women go fishing.*
- *After the evening meal, which consists of beans, spinach and mahango gruel (people do not eat meat every day), there is some time to sit around the fireplace. People go to bed early because they have to get up early next day to start their work.*



Farmer in Namibia.

Pastor Justina Shilongo's life in a small town in Namibia

Justina's husband is away from home most of the year. He works in different construction sites and sometimes only gets home briefly in between, as if only stopping over. Nevertheless, Justina manages to organise her family life in close contact with other working women and family members, even if one of the children falls ill and although her son is still very young.

- *Justina Shilongo gets up at 5:00 in the morning and prepares the breakfast and school sandwiches. Her three children get up a little later; the older girls get dressed on their own. They wear a school uniform. At 6:30 or 7:00, they have all left home.*
- *Justina then usually has some time left to cook the meal for the day. She then has to work in the office, go on visits, perform lots of organisational and administrative tasks. Justina says that she then sometimes simply walks around in her parish, without having any fixed appointments, in order to meet people in the street and be available, listen to them and hear about their problems. Many of them do not have work and are at home.*
- *The children get back between noon and 1 p.m. and prepare their own meal if Justina has not managed to do so. They then have to do their homework and have some time to recover, which they often spend watching TV.*
- *The family would love to have the evening meal together, but very often Justina has to go on visits, attend funerals, attend meetings etc. so that the children and all those living in the house have dinner on their own, with Justina only getting back late in the evening.*

⁷ Evangelical Church of Westphalia, keynote presentation "Families today", 2012, p. 11

Interview with the von Françoise family from Namibia, who currently live in Germany⁸

Elizabeth von Françoise has lived in Germany as an ecumenical staff member since July 2012. She lived in Bochum with her husband Arnold, their son Rewaldo and granddaughter Aleesha, to learn German. In the spring of 2013, the family moved to Lengerich.

Who belongs to your family?

Aleesha: There are four of us right now: my grandma, her husband, their son and myself.

Rewaldo is my uncle. Teachers at school sometimes do not understand that.

Elizabeth: And, of course, our family also comprises Aleesha's mother in Namibia, and her second daughter. I have also got two brothers and five sisters. My husband Arnold had nine brothers and sisters, eight of whom are still alive. They all have children and grandchildren.

Aleesha: My great-grandfather has remarried, so that another family has joined us.

Our family is very large!

What is important for your family life?

Aleesha: The most important elements are the family celebrations. I really miss them!

Elizabeth: When my dad had a special birthday, everyone would get together. Many people also get together to celebrate Mother's Day or Father's Day. We also consider the 21st birthday to be a very important day.

Arnold: However, the most important family reunions are those held for funerals. That is when everybody will get together. We have a meal and sing together. There are slips of paper indicating who will follow the coffin in which group.

Elizabeth: Everyone brings some food. As Arnold can slaughter animals, people also bring animals and prepare them for a meal.

What is your day-to-day family life like in Namibia?

Aleesha: My mother works a long way from home. She only gets home sometimes at the weekend and during school holidays. We then go swimming together. When we spend an evening at home during the week, we watch TV a lot. Arnold cooks a meal, but it is really rare for us all to have dinner together. We do not have a dining table. Elizabeth is at church. In the evening she helps us do our homework. We sometimes spend our Saturdays together, but Elizabeth often has to conduct funerals at weekends.

Elizabeth: In 2010 we were given a plot of land and a farm. Since then, Arnold has spent most of his time in the farm and I have been on my own with the children.

So a lot of things have changed for you in Germany?

Arnold: Yes, now I usually cook the meals and Elizabeth does not do that any longer.

Elizabeth attends her German class, and the children go to school.

Do you sometimes read the Bible together?

Aleesha: Yes, every evening.

Elizabeth: We read a chapter in the Bible in the evening – in Afrikaans. In the morning we pray together, and I bless the family before we leave the house. I also teach the children how to bless one another. Children can bless one another so beautifully.

⁸Interview on 2 Feb. 2013



Arnold, Aleesha, Elizabeth von Françoise.

Aleesha: I sometimes bless us but forget an important sentence. Elizabeth will then add the sentence.

Elizabeth: In Namibia, we live in Katutura, where it can be dangerous to be outside in the streets. I have taught my children that we have to tell God if we leave the house. In the morning we always travelled to school with several children. We would then also pray on our way to school.

Has the role of families changed in Namibia over recent decades?

Arnold: Prior to independence, very few people had the opportunity to travel and leave the family environment. This changed after 1990. Many families now live far apart. Every family member is in a different place, where there is work. Many old people stay behind on their own.

Elizabeth: Many children do not grow up with their parents but with their grandparents or aunts. Many are AIDS orphans or their mothers are too young to take care of them. Sometimes, very young mothers have children from different fathers, with none of them paying any money to support them. That is why there are more and more street kids.

Are these also special challenges for the church?

Elizabeth: The church tries to ensure that children growing up without their parents, i.e. living with their grandparents on in the street, are registered. They need support. The community provides food for them.

Aleesha: On Sunday evenings children sometimes come in who have not had anything to eat during the entire weekend but have to go back to school on Monday.

Elizabeth: However, the church is also quite busy dealing with its own issues. It should actually do more to combat poverty. In my congregation I would leave with the presbyters after the service to hand out soup and bread. People can only listen when their hunger has been stilled! That is why many parishes also have a soup kitchen. Families are not really the focus of attention in the church. If we want to help them, we have to provide them with foodstuffs or sometimes simply warm blankets.

You will be moving to Lengerich soon. What are you looking forward to?

Arnold: We are very pleased we will no longer have to live in a high-rise building. We will thus be able to cook and bake more food.

What are you going to do as a family on your first Saturday off?

Arnold: A braai (barbecue)!

Elizabeth: We will perhaps go swimming beforehand. And we will bake some Namibian bread.

Arnold: But perhaps I will not be at home. I would love to go cycling with Rewaldo. But what will we do if it rains? Have a barbecue in the garage?

Elizabeth: No, we will have some pancakes and play cards!

Daughter studying at university, dad cooking the meals?!

... Family roles

Due to social change, family roles have changed for many years. The classical family with a main breadwinner and the woman exclusively taking care of the children is becoming less and less frequent. The reasons for this change include better education and vocational opportunities for women, a loosening of bonds with tradition and specific values.

How about our ecumenical partners? Who has got what tasks, assumes what responsibilities within the family? Who sees their role as the main breadwinner – the man or the woman? Who is in charge of raising and taking care of the children? What is the role of the children? How are they raised in order to play that role? Have roles changed in recent years? How is that change perceived?

Carry out mutual interviews with your ecumenical partners. You can subsequently introduce the partner to your group.

You could mutually ask yourselves some questions, e.g.:

- Who belongs to your family?
- What are you responsible for in your family? What is the responsibility of your husband, wife, parents?
- Are you satisfied in this regard, or would you wish certain tasks or responsibilities to be distributed differently?

You may then discuss the following questions in groups of two or three or in the big group:

- Who has what responsibilities in your family – e.g. meals, household chores, the family income, allocation of funds, care for the sick, the children?
- Who takes decisions e.g. concerning the purchase of a house or land, the career choice or education/vocational training of the children, purchases for the household, the place to live?
- What is the role and importance of children within the family? How are they raised, and how does that affect their roles? What tasks do girls or boys take on? Do children play an important role in terms of old-age security?
- What is changing or has changed with regard to the sharing of roles within the family, e.g. between the sexes, compared with the past?
- What roles does television assign, promoted by politics? Can you identify with that?
- What problems arise if someone is not prepared to assume or carry out certain roles?

Benny Sinaga, 36, Indonesia

I have been married since 2007. I am a pastor, lecturer in New Testament, a wife, mother and sister in my home and at the same time the eldest among my brothers and sisters. My role day in, day out is to prepare the meals for the entire day – I often do so early in the morning, then leave to teach at the seminary. In the afternoon I run activities for women's groups in my church, and I preach on Sundays.

I would like to remain a loyal pastor until the end of my life. Concerning academic activities, I hope I will write a book relating to my work as a lecturer one day. I have made an effort to start several times, but every time some other job crops up that needs doing. And thirdly, I hope my son will not suffer as a result of my work. Every day I hope that one day I will be a grandmother and will still be able to hug him.

There is a saying in our Batak culture: "More children, more blessing." However, for me, he is a blessing all on his own, and if God should give us another child, it would really be more than enough. As a wife, I would like to be a good wife – my husband always considers me to be the one who can do things and is strong, and I wish to carry on that witness on his side. Two months ago he quit his job because I am so busy doing my church work, and he said: "I will quit my job, rather than you..." He takes care of our son, prepares the breakfast, takes him to school and will soon also look out for a new job.

My name is Berti Purba

I am 19 years old and come from northern Sumatra in Indonesia. I currently live in Hagen, where I am doing social work for the Protestant youth organisation during a voluntary gap year. I also support the partnership of the Hagen church district with my Simalungun church. In Indonesia I live with my parents. My two brothers and my sister are married and no longer live at home. My father works in a rubber plantation; he gets back from work in the afternoon. My mother works from six to eleven in the morning. We spend the weekends together, attending church, having our meals together and having lots of opportunities to talk to one another. Our shared meals – including breakfast and dinner during the week – are good for the family; they provide us with opportunities to talk to one another.

We are tied together by communication and joint prayer. For us, possessions are less relevant than the family, which is number one. Children are a gift of God and assist us when we reach old age. Our household chores are divided up between my mother and myself. I do the cleaning, the laundry and the dishes, while my mother is responsible for the garden and our fish breeding. We often cook meals together. My mother manages the money. She gives the pocket money to my father and myself.

My father is the undisputed "head" of the family. He is asked and has the final say in every decision to be taken. These are the traditional roles in our Simalungun society. However, I was able to take my own decisions regarding my school education and my studies. We are often also confronted



with different types of roles on television, e.g. when the mother takes decisions or works and the father takes care of the children.

Of course, conflicts also arise between us. They are discussed – and resolved in no time at all. However, there were two situations where it was a bit more difficult. My sister married a Muslim and converted to the Muslim faith. That was difficult for my parents, and they even fell ill as a consequence. After some time, they then accepted their son-in-law as their child. When we worship at home, we also pray together, as Muslims and Christians. The other situation was when my brother married a woman who already had a child. That is a problem in our culture. He then lived with my grandmother for some time. My grandmother and my parents held discussions that led to a good solution. Communication is the key.

The role of children within families

It may be interesting to analyse in particular the role of children within families and the way they are raised. Do you see any common ground? Any differences?

Children in the Philippines

"Children are regarded as *biyayang galing sa Dios* (a blessing of God). They are not only appreciated because of the joy and inspiration they bring, but also because all the hopes for the future of the family rest on them. Even when they are still very young, children are expected to help with household chores, take care of their younger brothers and sisters or help in the field and with the harvest. When they earn their own income, they are expected to pay the school fees for their younger brothers and sisters or support the family income, even when they no longer live at home.



Children are also expected to secure their parents' future: If the parents fall ill or lose their jobs, the children are supposed to leap into the breach as breadwinners. When the parents grow old, they expect their children to take care of them and pay for the doctor and the medical drugs. That is why an education is not just considered an important investment in the future of the children but also a way to ensure that children will be able to manage these tasks when they grow up. It constitutes a mutual contract, deeply rooted within the children as a sense of duty. The obligation to "repay" (*makabayad sa nagulang*) is what makes for a *mabuting anak*, a good son or daughter."⁹

⁹ Pilgrim Bliss Gayo, *Geschenke Gottes, Kinder, Kindheit und Erwachsenwerden*, in: Niklas Reese/Rainer Werning (eds), *Handbuch Philippinen – Gesellschaft-Politik-Wirtschaft-Kultur*, 4th updated and expanded edition, Hornemann Verlag/Berlin 2012, pp. 169-170

Raising children – in the Philippines and in Germany¹⁰

A child in the Philippines:

1. The child is born in a personal environment (family). The baby is breast-fed and often touched and carried around by all family members (no pram or children's room).
2. The emphasis is on the group/community; the child has to adjust to the others. Individuality is suppressed. Mothers prevent early attempts at walking. Dependency is promoted as a virtue. Children aged five to ten years already help with household chores and in the fields.
3. Privacy is not emphasised. Children are never left on their own and rarely take any independent decisions.
4. Children learn to respect older children and adults – in particular those with a higher social status. The parents are loving but authoritarian.
5. The parents stress harmony and place less emphasis on competition or performance. A child learns to respect the feelings of others.
6. The parents promise a lot. If promises are not kept, the child learns not to be annoyed.

Applied mechanism: Teasing until the child integrates harmoniously into the group.

Result: Attitude to shame. Success and failure are not taken personally but borne by the group.

A child in the Philippines:

1. Most children are born in an impersonal environment (usually a hospital). Fewer children are breast-fed; many babies are left on their own according to some "fixed schedule".
2. The focus is on individuality and uniqueness. Children are asked to say what they would like. Parents encourage early attempts at walking. They promote independent thinking and action. German children rarely have to do household chores, in particular in the cities.
3. Privacy plays an important role. A child learns to be autonomous, and to think and act independently.
4. Children learn to be egalitarian. Most parents are democratic, some are even anti-authoritarian.
5. The parents encourage their children to compete. In so doing, they learn to ignore the feelings of others.
6. The parents avoid making promises they cannot keep. The children are annoyed if a promise is not kept.

Applied mechanism: Personal ambition. Competition often leads to aggressiveness ("You are stupid") Result: attitude to guilt. Focus on personal success or failure.

¹⁰ Hanns F. Groeschke, in *Baum des Lebens*, ed. Bernd Schütze, Peter Hammer Verlag, Wuppertal 1990

If a family is not a home...

Domestic conflicts and violence

"The family is, on the one hand, a place of refuge but, on the other, it is also a place of violence. Frequently exhaustion and overburdening are the cause of conflicts. When conflicts in the family escalate, the most vulnerable suffer most. This leads to violence in the partnership, violence against children and also violence against helpless old people."¹¹

Talk to your ecumenical partners

... about conflicts in families:

- How do you handle conflicts that arise in your family?
- What are the issues that most frequently lead to arguments in your family?
- What are the solutions found, e.g. if children oppose certain requirements raised by their parents?
- Do you obtain external assistance if conflicts are not resolved?
- Do you assist other families in finding solutions if an argument has arisen?
- Does your parish, your church offer assistance to families if conflicts arise, or in order to prevent conflicts?

... about violence in families:

- How is domestic violence handled? When does violence occur within families?
- Who is particularly strongly affected by violence?
- How do the other family members behave in a situation of domestic violence?
- Does domestic violence tend to increase or decrease? What are the reasons for this trend?
- What is the cultural definition of masculinity? What are the cultural and traditional values passed on to women and girls? To what extent does that promote domestic violence?
- Is domestic violence an issue in your parish, in your church? Is there any assistance for people affected? What do the churches do in order to prevent domestic violence?
- What rights and opportunities do the victims of violence have in order to defend themselves?

Domestic violence in South Africa¹²

One out of four women lives in a relationship in which she does not experience respect. Every six hours, a woman in South Africa is murdered by a close partner. Every 25 seconds a woman or girl in South Africa is raped. One out of two South African women is raped prior to her 18th birthday. Of all recorded cases 45% of cases are offences against minors. Most crimes are perpetrated by people known to the victim. Approx. 88% of all cases of rapes are not reported.

Extract from the circular by Clara Imort, working as a voluntary staff member in a day care centre for children run by the Reformed Congregation in Mar del Plata (Argentina), November 2012

¹¹ Evangelical Church of Westphalia, keynote presentation "Families today", 2012, p. 16

¹² http://www.capetownmagazine.com/events/1000-Women-United-Against-Domestic-Violence-fundraiser-in-South-Africa-/2012-05-17/11_37_54395

My heart belongs to the Club de Ninos, a day care centre for children where I work every afternoon. It is attended by about 10 to 20 children aged 6 to 13; the number varies depending on whether it is raining, or school has been cancelled once again because teachers are on strike or simply have not turned up.

... Over time I also hear about the children's family stories and their everyday lives outside of the children's club. You get told how the child, with whom you have just painted a picture, lives with a drug-addicted father and his amigós and is often unable to attend school because he or she is forced to search the garbage for any objects that may be sold, how the police have now taken him/her to the mother who disappeared years ago but now lives with a child abuser (so that the attempt to improve her life has obviously failed). Or if you know that a tiny girl frequently comes to the day-care centre with half her face all bruised, or that the two brothers who are the kings of curse words in the day care centre have been sexually abused for years, I look at the group of kids all yelling and romping around and really have to make an effort not to cry for anger and sadness about the helplessness. Because I really feel helpless in this hopeless situation. The only thing you can give the children is a few hours in a safe place where they are fostered – as far as possible – where they are loved and shown a way to do things better than their parents one day



Child in a care centre in Argentina.

Not in our hands but with our hands (Juan Gattinoni, Argentina)¹³

God of love, we pray for the victims of violence, the hungry, the homeless, the unemployed, the ill, those who are on the edge of losing hope that things might change, so there might come a reconciliation between society and these persons towards respecting their human dignity. We do not have in our hands the solutions to the problems of the world, but you, O God, have the power to use our hands.

Help us to love.

God of life, we pray for families who live in conflict, where there is no forgiveness or reconciliation between partners, sisters and brothers, young and old, that they might find forgiveness, reconciliation and the joy of peace.

We do not have in our hands the solutions to the problems of the world, but you, O God, have the power to use our hands.

Teach us to love.

God of solidarity, we pray for those who suffer, the elderly, those who mourn, those who live in the street, that they may find in others attitudes of compassion, caring and support.

We do not have in our hands the solutions to the problems of the world, but you, O God, have the power to use our hands.

Push us to love.

¹³ In God's Hands, Common Prayer for the World, Frankfurt/M. 2008, p. 256

Juan Gattinoni, Argentina (source: Red de liturgia del CLAI). English translation: Terry MacArthur@World Council of Churches, Geneva/Switzerland

Marriage, birth, care ... How do families respond to significant events?

Many events change families, e.g. marriage, birth but also stressful events such as a separation, a person in need of care, unemployment, the death of a family member. They pose major challenges for families; the family gets bigger or smaller, an additional workload or emotional strain arises.

How do people in our partner churches handle such experiences? How do families in the partner churches respond to events that fundamentally change life in the family? What values help the families to cope? What family traditions make it more difficult to deal with significant changes appropriately?

The discussion will never aim at providing general responses as to how to understand and interpret decisive events in people's lives. Rather, it may help to exchange experiences in a framework of confidentiality as ecumenical partners. Some of the comments will be familiar to us, while others will be unfamiliar or surprising.

Think of a dramatic change within your family. What was that event? How did you respond as a family? Which member of your family was particularly strongly affected? How did your friends, neighbours, parish support you?

Try to discuss this type of experience with your ecumenical partners. Ask them how they have perceived crucial family events.

Marriage:

- Who can make a marriage proposal? What does the bridal couple have to take into account with regard to the two families?
- What traditional wedding customs and traditions are there? How does the church wedding take place? What do the bride and groom pledge to do in the wedding service?
- How does the family change due to the marriage? What obligations are associated with the wedding? What are the values that determine the marriage, and what is the guiding image of men and women in this regard?
- Can people of different denominations or religions marry? How does that change the families?
- Are same-sex partnerships respected? Do they constitute a taboo that nobody talks about?



Wedding in Tanzania.

Birth:

- What does the birth of a child mean for the parents and family? How does childbirth change the family?
- What is the role of baptism? How is the baptism conducted and celebrated?
- What is the role of children within a family? Are the boys and girls raised differently? Do the children grow up in a nuclear family or in an extended family constellation?
- Who takes care of the children if the parents die?
- How is the experience of childlessness handled?

Marriage breakdown:

- How do you and your partners experience the failure of a marriage? How is the question of a spatial separation of the spouses or a divorce handled as a potential consequence?
- What is the position of your church or your partners regarding divorce? Are couples living apart, divorced couples or single mothers and fathers assisted or supported by their parishes? Or are they stigmatised and excluded? What are the reasons?

Illness and need for care:

- What happens if family members fall ill and need assistance? Which family member, relative, friend, community member takes care of them?
- What are the prerequisites that need to be met for people to be treated in a hospital? What is the material strain this imposes on the families?
- How do families handle a situation in which the parents or grandparents need care? What external assistance is available, e.g. nursing staff or social services institutions? Where do families run up against their limits in caring for family members?
- What programmes would need to be made or expanded in order to take care of elderly people in need of care?

Dying and death:

- How are dying family members supported? Do they pass away in the family, in hospital, nursing homes or hospices?
- How does the family handle death? What roles and tasks does each individual family member have?
- Are there any mourning rituals and rites? Where is the body of the deceased laid out?
- How is a funeral conducted?
- Are there any forms of support for the grieving? What is the role played by community members, the pastor? How do people find comfort when they have to bid farewell to their relatives? Which biblical texts offer them guidance?
- How do families shape the time of mourning after the funeral? Which rites and forms are there?

Events in families of the Herero culture, Namibia

Marriage:

A man proposes marriage. A woman cannot do so. If the couple is agreed, the negotiations start. Initially the future husband informs his family of his plans. If his plans are accepted, an uncle or the father proposes to the family of the future wife. A decision is not taken at that point in time. The uncle or father returns, and several months pass in which all family members are consulted. At some point, a second meeting is held, and the date for the wedding may be fixed, along with the bride price.

At the wedding weekend, the two families get together with the bride price (frequently two cows and money) as well as all drinks and meals for the wedding. The two families settle in two camps on the farm. The cows and the money are handed over in silence. Each family slaughters one of the cows, and they exchange some meat. On the Saturday following these rituals, a highly respected man carries out a small ceremony at which the couple jointly eats some meat as a token of their close relationship. The man may then stay over in the woman's home. This traditional marriage is more important than the church or civil wedding. With this ceremony, which constitutes the handing of the woman over to the man, the man decides about the church wedding, which may at the same time be the civil wedding.

If the woman is from a different cultural background, the man has to follow that culture until he has got married. After the wedding, the man traditionally is the head of the household and takes decisions.

Younger people attach importance to these values and traditions; however, equal rights are playing a more and more prominent role. The married couple increasingly take joint decisions. The role of the man as head of the household seems to change. However, some women also say: "I am happy my husband is the head of my household. I will respect that. Sometimes violence also results from men being frustrated if women call for greater decision-making powers!"

If two people get married, they are accepted into the large family circle. This extended family supports them in cases of crisis, assists them in situations of illness or unemployment. It offers protection and guidance to the nuclear family and creates cohesion. Engelhard Unaeb, Namibia: "That is why we are so poor here in Africa, even when we have jobs and earn money. We always know about family members in need, needing e.g. a school uniform, medical drugs, etc. We use our own money in order to help others, just as they would help us."

Splitting up – divorce

It is possible to get a divorce; however, that tends to be an expensive affair. The children usually stay with the women. "In many cases, people do not get divorced but continue to live together or in different places – sometimes with a new partner," says a man, talking from his own experience.

Increasing need for long-term care in Namibia

A group from a Lutheran congregation visited older people in villages and cities in northern Namibia. They found people nobody took care of, on the brink of starvation. They urgently needed assistance in the form of social services. As a result of these visits, the first Namibian centre for old people will be built in northern Namibia. According to a rapporteur: "It may not be in line with our culture to ask or recruit people to take care of our elderly family members. However, many families are not always able to provide this care in these times."

Funerals and mourning

If a family member dies, as many family members as possible get together. The women meet in a house, the men sit around the fireplace. Services are held, songs are sung on the eve of the funeral. Most family members stay awake. After the Christian funeral ceremony, they jointly slaughter a cow. After the funeral, they all meet in the home of the family of the deceased family member. One of the elders will make the sign of the cross on everyone's forehead with water – as a sign indicating that the time of mourning should end. Rituals help people so that life will go on after the death of a relative.



In a retirement home run by the social services centre of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia.

Lippstadt, Cameroon ...

Being church for families and within the worldwide family

Living faith within families

Being church for families and within the worldwide family

Engage in a discussion with your ecumenical partners about the way faith is lived in the family and passed on to the children:

- What rituals exist in your family, in your partners' family?
- What role do these rituals play for you?
- Which ones do you like in particular?
- What prayers, songs do the children bring back home from e.g. kindergarten or school?

Collect prayers, e.g. the grace said before a meal, evening prayers, from the different families in your group.

*Words of grace said before a meal in the Philippines:*¹⁴

Bless us, o Lord, and bless these gifts which we are about to receive from your bounty through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thank you, Lord, for the food on our table, for the people who have prepared it and for those that receive these gifts. Amen.

Being church for families

Discuss with your partners what churches can do to support families

- What does your congregation, regional church do to assist and support families?
- Are there any counselling and support programmes for families?
- Does your congregation support family-friendly policies in your municipality?

Families in the Philippines – a task for the churches¹⁵

Bishop Norman Reuel Marigza, Secretary General of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines:

... According to current figures from June 2012, 3,700 people leave the Philippines every day in order to work abroad. There is hardly any family in the Philippines that does not have some close family members working abroad. In 2011 alone, the overseas Filipino workers transferred US\$20 billion, contributing to the Philippine economy. This phenomenon, which makes our population one of our top dollar-yielding exports, causes substantial problems and difficulties within Philippine families.

¹⁴ Source: Arbeitsmappe für Kindertagesstätten, Mmmmh ... Lecker! Brot schmeckt uns – rund um die Welt, Brot für die Welt, 2012

¹⁵ From his contribution at the Synod of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, November 2012

The phenomenon of solo-parenting (when one parent stays behind to take care of the children) or even "substitute" parenting (when both parents leave and the children stay with relatives) has been increasing with almost four thousand workers leaving daily for overseas employment. The once closely-knit family ties that the Philippine families are noted for are beginning to unravel, bringing with it many other social problems like broken homes, juvenile delinquency, drug addition, marital infidelity, etc. The Church must help provide both a pastoral and prophetic response to these pressing issues. A pastoral response would be to care for the family members left behind and partnering with the churches in the receptor countries to do migrant ministry to their foreign workers. A prophetic critique must be sounded as well, raising the question why there are no opportunities in our land, why poverty persists, why inequality of resources make the rich richer and the poor much poorer. Until justice is established in our lands, families will bear the brunt. So indeed, we need to work hand in hand, you in your land and we in ours, to see to it that the vision of shalom implanted by God in our hearts will be realized...



Children enhance a service in a university church in the Philippines.

Thanksgiving and prayer for the family (Ghana)¹⁶

Almighty God, we laud and praise you, we let your name shine for what you are. You are the Lord of Lords and King of Kings, there is no one beside you. We worship your holiness and sublimity. We thank you for the existence of nuclear families and of extended families. We ask you in all humility, O Lord, to forgive the sins of families. Precious Lord, as you have made the family the foundation stone of society, we pray that you will make our houses into homes, so that the families remain strong foundations for our communities, societies and nations. So we pray, O God, for peace, love, wisdom and mutual understanding for families. We pray for good health, healthy relations between brothers and sisters, spouses, parents and children and other members of the family. We pray for the fruit of the womb for many who long for it; for material and human resources for managing families, for stability, righteousness for our children and a long life. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, Amen.

¹⁶ Become a wise and understanding people – Gebete aus der Ökumene no. 6, Hamburg 2008, p. 50

Experiencing the worldwide Christian family ... within church

"I have been baptised into a worldwide family" is the title of a (German) brochure on baptism published by the United Evangelical Mission (UEM). It thus makes reference to one of the key terms, looking at families from an ecumenical angle.

In God's family there are no limits based on kinship, countries or cultures. All members are included and in some way or other interdependent and interrelated – even in shared mourning, thanking and praising God, our creator. "Family worship" is thus a place where people of all generations celebrate together and where "strangers" also feel at ease. Should you notice any persons attending the service as guests, you should briefly address them before the service, ask them where they are from and mention them in your words of welcome.

Potential occasions to include the worldwide family:

Celebrating the baptism anniversary; talking to the godfathers and godmothers and the child, depending on his or her age, about the fact that he or she has brothers and sisters all over the world and is linked up with them through baptism. It is, for instance, exciting to use a globe to look for places where people live who are connected to the child through the baptism, or to read one of the many nice children's books portraying "How people live in other parts of the world".

In the evening you may end your day with an evening prayer that also includes people from other countries.

Hold a children's service, children's Bible Day, family service on "Families – here and worldwide" in your congregation. This would be a good opportunity to talk about the life of families in a country with which there is a partnership, e.g. Cameroon, Tanzania, Argentina. You may also have a service on "Families" with parishes with a different language or origin in your city or region.

The pictures below were taken at a children's Bible Day in Lippstadt. It enables children to experience how children live in the country concerned by playing their games, preparing their food etc. It also provides an opportunity to discuss different family situations, e.g. extended family vs. nuclear family.



Children's Bible Day in Lippstadt.



Selection of songs for a service on "Being family ... here and worldwide"

Thuma Mina – International Ecumenical Hymnbook; Basel, Munich, Berlin 1995

2	Bani nyeti Ba Yawe	Let us praise the Lord our God
5	Hineh ma tov	How good it is
17	Munerero, munezero	Come let us sing joyfully
21	May our living be a feast	
24	God gave us breath	
99	Fylt av glede	Filled with joy and wonder
112	Let us break bread together	
138	Dalam Yesus kita bersaudara	In Jesus, we are one family
157	Siph Amandla Nkosi	O God, give us power
195	Bless and keep us, Lord	
219	Guds kärlek är som stranden	Wide is, o Lord, your love like beach and meadow

Das Liederbuch – Lieder zwischen Himmel und Erde; Düsseldorf 2007

2	Wo Menschen sich vergessen	
10	Komm, bau ein Haus	
15	Wo zwei oder drei	
45	Segne dieses Kind	
47	Kind, du bist uns anvertraut	
48	Das wünsch ich sehr	
59	Unser Leben sei ein Fest	
70	Bist zu uns wie ein Vater	
157	Sanftmut den Männern	Siph Amandla Nkosi
258	Gut, dass wir einander haben	
353	Vergiss es nie	

Films and books

Films

*Unless stated otherwise, you can borrow the films from
Filmzentrale of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia
Evangelisches Medienhaus
Cansteinstr. 1, 33647 Bielefeld
Phone: +49 521 9440 122
www.filmzentrale.ekvw.net*

Anna, Amal & Anousheh – Mädchen zwischen Rollenmustern und Selbstbestimmung
(Benin, Pakistan, Somalia, Venezuela, Peru 1998 – 2005, 8 short films, FSK
(Voluntary Self-Regulation of the German Film Industry) 10 years)

The DVD provides insights into the lives of girls from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Despite the efforts undertaken to secure equal rights, their stories differ from those of boys. However, they do not reflect a depressing picture of deprivation and exploitation but convey positive, hopeful messages. Self-confident, emancipated, charismatic girls tell about their lives.

Hab und Gut in aller Welt
(Cambodia, India, Uganda, Mali, Madagascar 2006, 7 short films, FSK 12 years)

What do people own, what do they need for their lives, what is important to them? What tasks are carried out by women, by men, by children? What have they all learned? What are their everyday lives like? These and other questions are answered by families from Brazil, Haiti, India, Mali, Madagascar and Uganda.

Each film portrays a family with its possessions, housing situation, family structures and living conditions – their normal, everyday life in different parts of the world. However, each film also presents the family members' joys, wishes, hopes and dreams; it appreciates and respects whatever is important to each individual protagonist.

No time to die
(Ghana, Germany 2007, 90 min., FSK 14 years)

"No time to die" is a turbulent African comedy about love and death. Asante is a handsome man. He is searching for a wife. Asante loves his job and executes it with great joy and the required seriousness. However, his profession is also his biggest problem. After all, which woman would want to live together with a hearse driver? Asante works for an under-

taker and transports dead bodies from the Ghanaian capital of Accra back to their villages for the funeral ceremonies with his assistant Issifu. In Ghana there is a marked culture of death. And the coloured coffins reflecting the preferences of the deceased are well-known far beyond Ghana.

Memory Books – Damit Du mich nie vergisst (So that when I die you will never forget me)
(Germany 2007, 90 min. FSK 14 years)

Dennis and Chrissi brush their teeth every evening in the dim glow of the oil lamp. The 10-year-old watches his little sister conscientiously. They are both orphans, two of more than two million of their kind in Uganda. A very special project has emerged in Uganda as a result: memory books. Openly, honestly and compassionately, the books give the children a chance to prepare themselves for life on their own.

Steps for the Future – Life in Southern Africa in the presence of HIV/AIDS
(South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Zambia 2004, 8 short films, 197 min., FSK 12 years)

Eight short films offer various insights into the lives of people affected and provide them with an opportunity to talk about the way they cope with their lives and their hopes for the future. The focus is on people, whose courage to face life is contagious, in spite of their disease. Young filmmakers shot these films in different countries of Southern Africa. They are well suited to initiate discussions.

*This film can be borrowed from: Amt für MÖWe, Ope 35, D-44135 Dortmund,
phone +49 231 5409 70, email info@moewe-westfalen.de*

Wazee. Altersbilder in Tansania.

A short film by the United Evangelical Mission about growing old and dealing with old people in Tanzania.

*This film can be borrowed from: Amt für MÖWe, Ope 35, D-44135 Dortmund,
phone +49 231 5409 70, email info@moewe-westfalen.de*

Books

Jahrbuch Mission 2013: Jung und Alt in Nord und Süd

missionshilfe Verlag, 2013

"Jahrbuch Mission" analyses how the "generational question" is experienced in the North and South, what we can learn from one another and how young and old people within church and society deal with this life-long task.



Menzel, P.: So isst der Mensch.

Familien in aller Welt zeigen, was sie ernährt.

Gruner & Jahr, 2005

The authors have travelled to 24 countries in the world and visited 30 families. They have taken a picture of each of these families, showing their food supply for one week and a list showing the average amount consumed for each foodstuff, the amount spent to buy the food and the amount produced in the families' own garden.

Menzel, P.: So lebt der Mensch

Gruner & Jahr, 2004

16 photographers have travelled to 30 countries to portray the lives of typical families. The result is an album of the global family. A global stocktaking of possession or non-possession, of the lives, wishes, hopes and dreams of people who are neighbours on planet Earth.

Ommer, U.: Familien der Welt

Gruner & Jahr, 2003

Children from 52 countries with their parents, brothers and sisters tell about their lives. A book enabling boys and girls to discover and understand the world on the basis of personal stories.

The website for the keynote presentation "Families today":

www.familien-heute.ekvw.net/fileadmin/familienheute/Downloads/13-03-05_Hauptvorlage_Familie_engl_neu.pdf

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Families today worldwide

Jamaa, family, keluarga, rodzina ... these are the Swahili, English, Indonesian, Polish terms for "family". But what does "families today" mean for our partners in Tanzania, the UK, Indonesia, Poland...? Are they faced with similar questions, e.g. how to strengthen families, how to secure a work-life balance? Is "family" an issue in their churches and congregations?

We want to invite you to turn "families today" into an issue to discuss in your encounters with your partners in Cameroon, meetings with young people in Argentina or visits to a Russian-Orthodox community in your town. Discover "families today" - worldwide.

