

Blueprint for Young Anabaptist Network in MWC

Note: Whenever the term “youth” is used, it refers to both youth and young adult, loosely referring to teenagers plus young adults up to the age of 35

PURPOSE

On the foundation of our Anabaptist identity, through global and local networking, we as young people want to walk together, empower and support each other in fellowship, decision-making, and peace-making initiatives.

FOCUS

1. Create some infrastructure for **networking** within young people, both through face-to-face and online interaction
2. Encourage **fellowship** and closer relationship within young people, and with other groups in the church, locally and globally
3. **Capacity building** for young people
4. Provide space for young people to influence **decision-making** in the church
5. Promoting **peace-making** and the **Anabaptist identity** among the young people

PROGRAM PLAN

In reference to *MWC Program Plan page 2, Purpose 1 (P1), Goal 7 (G7), Action A1 and A2*

Focus 1 – Networking

Goals:

- Create platforms, face-to-face and online, for young people to interact with each other, locally and globally
- Create a network of committed young Anabaptists who will help networking to happen, either by translation, sharing of information, or preparation of events

Activities:

1. Develop and expand a reliable **database** of GYS delegates and young leaders in Anabaptist churches and keep in touch with them regularly
2. **Online platform.** Create a *Facebook* fan/group page and a *Twitter* page for youth-young adult interaction, with links to the MWC website. This page(s) needs an administrator that spends time on it daily, and should have:
 - Discussion forums for each continent,
 - Intercontinental discussion groups for topics that are globally relevant,
 - Who we are as an Anabaptist, and
 - Testimonies from young people around the world
 - Information about what is going on within MWC and opportunities for them

- to take part
 - A space to archive teaching/training materials for youth / young adult
 - Provide regular update to the MWC website and MWC publication network on what's happening with the youth
 - Consolidate the different young Anabaptist Facebook and Twitter pages under one umbrella
3. **Face-to-face platform.** Meeting with Anabaptist youth / young adult groups to share about youth/young adult in MWC and listen to their voices for the church. We can do this by:
- Organizing a joint youth meeting or event whenever the youth committee meets
 - Use business / personal travel opportunities to visit youth groups
 - Assign a few GYS delegates to visit a neighboring country for speaking-listening engagement
 - Be involved in, or encourage, continental and national youth summits
 - Global Youth Summit in conjunction with the World Assembly, or independently as seen required. The next Global Youth Summit will be in 2015, alongside the World Assembly
 - Allocate travel budget for country, continental and intercontinental visitations as mentioned above

Focus 2 – Fellowship

Goals:

- For young people to have strong real relationships with each other, both locally and globally.
- For them to have a sense and understanding that they are a part of one real global family that supports each other, prays for each other, and is responsible for each other.
- For young people to participate and share their gifts more with the global and local church, as they realize their important role in the global family

Activities:

1. Use the above online platform (*Focus 1 Activity 1*) as a **media for developing relationships**
2. Be in charge for the creation of **World Fellowship Sunday material for 2011 (DONE)**
3. Appoint some young people to create an annual **Youth Fellowship Sunday** material specifically for youth groups to use. This is something separate from World Fellowship Sunday material, catered specifically to encourage a sense of unity among young Anabaptists globally, highlighting different youth-relevant theme each year
4. **Brother/sister youth groups** in the same continent and with another continent, where young church members can exchange stories online, learn from each other church life experiences, or eventually visit each other or conduct a joint service project. By partnering with a youth group in the same

continent and a different continent, young people can learn two different perspectives at the same time.

5. **Ongoing correspondence / conversations with other MWC commissions** and teams on their agenda and activities, to see where young people can contribute. At the same time, the youth committee will provide them with updates of our plans and activities to see where we can collaborate with other groups in MWC
6. **Invite local church leaders and other groups in MWC** to attend and be part of MWC youth events (see explanation under Focus 1 - Networking, Activity 3)
7. **Create printed and visual materials for young people with no access to internet** to hear about youth in MWC. We can do this by:
 - Utilizing *Courier* and *MWC News Service* to spread the news
 - Encouraging our contacts globally to subscribe to *Courier* and *News Service*, and translate articles into their language and have them published or posted locally
 - Encouraging our contacts globally to submit stories on what young people are doing around the world
 - Creating short videos that can be copied onto DVD / CD and be brought on MWC trips, or posted on *YouTube* to be downloaded and copied in different countries

Focus 3 – Capacity Building

Goals:

- Equip young people to serve and make a difference
- Emphasize the importance of mentoring and training for young members of the church
- Improve awareness of exchange, training, service and scholarship opportunities for young people

Activities:

1. **Encourage, or even sponsor, local seminars or training programs for youth** (e.g. vocational training, conflict resolution, what it means to be an Anabaptist) that can positively impact their church and local communities. We need to set general criteria for future proposals, and need to analyze each proposal prior to sponsoring any local initiatives.
2. **Promote youth exchange, training, service and scholarship opportunities that are done by MWC and MWC-related organizations** (e.g. YAMEN!) volunteering opportunities during the GMF Gathering in Kenya in 2010) so more young people can apply and participate. We will use the infrastructure explained under *Focus 1 – Networking* to achieve this
3. **Encourage pastors and conference leaders to provide ways for youth exchange/service project participants to share what they have learned** (e.g. writing articles, speaking engagement), thus encouraging future applications and blessing more church members with new knowledge

4. **Compile stories of “youth empowered”** to be published through *MWC News Service* and *Courier* (then translated and published in local languages), to encourage young people globally that they can make a difference in different areas of life at young age. This is in relation to
5. **Ongoing dialog with church leaders** on providing mentoring and training for the youth
6. **Encourage the use of teaching materials** as explained under *Focus 1 Activities 2.f.* in local churches and conferences.

Focus 4 – Decision-Making

Goals:

- Open the ways for young Anabaptists to get more involved in church activities and decision-making locally and globally
- Bring up the voices and ideas of the young Anabaptists to MWC structures and ensure that these messages are heard.
- Provide opportunity for young Anabaptists to gather to study, discuss relevant issues, and make decisions

Activities:

1. **Regular teleconference for committee members**
2. **Maintain contact with GYS delegates and participants** in respective continents as our main partners in distributing information and obtaining feedback prior to decision-making
3. **Ongoing communication with MWC commissions and teams** to introduce the YTF, its goals and programs, along with our intention to collaborate with them more closely in the near future
4. **Invitation to other MWC commissions and teams to send us questions** so we can provide them with the perspectives of the youth in their agenda
5. Regular communication with other MWC Commission’s committee members to **discuss issues and particular opportunities for collaboration**
6. **Introducing the work of various MWC commissions and teams to the young Anabaptists** to increase awareness, induce interest, and encourage their participation in listening and providing feedback. This can be done either in writing or by inviting young Anabaptists to attend an MWC event (e.g. GYS, joint youth meeting)

Focus 5 – Anabaptist Identity and Peace-Making

Goals:

- Strong foundation on the Anabaptist identity throughout the youth network within the MWC
- Youth identified with the Anabaptist tradition and peace-making processes

Activities:

1. Share basic Anabaptist materials in the Youth Fellowship Sunday materials

2. Incorporate a testimony relating to peace and intergenerational work in the 2011 World Fellowship Sunday material
3. Develop a documentary (video, written) of vivid experiences of young people within the Anabaptist network, in relation to *Focus 2 Activity 7* and *Focus 3 Activity 4*
4. In relation to *Focus 2 Activity 7* and *Focus 3 Activity 1*, Global Youth Summit and any future Continental Youth Summits to have discussion groups / workshops on
 - Anabaptist realities and challenges
 - Violence, conflict resolution and peace challenges
5. Gather peace-makers' experiences and share best practices among the youth, also in relation to *Focus 2 Activity 7*
6. Gather and publish information on the consequences of the use of violence in different context with specific shared stories

Through the above activities, and the support of the different groups in the local and global church, we hope that youth in MWC will look like the following in the long term:

- An empowered young body / arm that is involved in decision making in their local church, conference and MWC
- A group with a defined Anabaptist identity. They know who they are, what they believe and what makes them unique
- A group who has strong fellowship and real relationship with each other, not just locally but globally, and one who has a sense that they are one global yet real family that supports each other
- They are active members of the body of Christ, devoted to discipleship, peace-making and transforming the realities in their communities

STRUCTURE

Format and name

The youth committee does not wish to be a Commission – which obligates half of its committee member to come from General Council (a vast majority of whom are not youth), rather a permanent network within the MWC structure that is connected to the voice and realities that young people are facing continentally and globally.

We propose a new name Young Anabaptist Network, to describe the network of youth and young adults under MWC, and future committee members be named the Young Anabaptist committee. We decided to discontinue using the name AMIGOS because this name is very strongly tied to the five committee members, and re-explaining that AMIGOS is the network rather than the team of five will take considerable time and effort from current committee members.

Committee members, leadership, terms of service

We propose the youth committee to consist of five members, one representing each continent, chosen primarily (but not necessarily) from among the GYS delegates. Each member has equal say in decision-making, and should attempt their best to make every strategic decision by consensus.

The team will choose a chairperson from among the five, whose main responsibilities are (a) being a facilitator to discussions, (b) be the main face or contact person on youth-related correspondence, and (c) be an overseer to the youth funds.

We propose that the committee members' term starts after one GYS and ends in the next GYS, normally a six year term, with the possibility of midway replacement (e.g. because of relocation, study, family or work commitment). We strongly recommend that two people from the existing team continue on to next team to ensure smooth transition. More details on how this structure works is provided below under *#4: Timeline*.

We also strongly encourage that during the new committee members' first meeting, a time be set aside to learn each other's culture, leadership and decision-making style, to ensure effective communication throughout their term.

Personnel needs

We propose that the YABs committee reports to MWC General Secretary and is accountable to the Executive Committee on annual basis. The formal reporting and accountability structure will be decided at a later time, bearing in mind that the structure should be flexible enough to adapt to possible changes of MWC offices in the future.

To assist with the administrative tasks, we propose that the Young Anabaptist committee is equipped with a dedicated staff member / member on part-time basis. The committee should also be able to assign certain tasks to various young volunteers, mainly chosen from the pool of talents that have participated in GYS, to provide opportunity for more young people to exercise and share their gifts within the MWC structure.

To ensure smooth transitioning between one youth committee to another, we propose that any MWC youth officer be one that has sat in the previous team.

Timeline

Under the structure described in *Structure point #2*, the transition timeline between now until the next World Assembly would look like the following,

knowing that the next World Assembly will be in 2015, in maintaining the six-year cycle:

- **2010:** Youth Task Force (YTF) at work, presentation to the Executive Committee, receive feedback from Executive Committee. The blueprint is affirmed as of July 29, 2010, the five Youth Task Force members become the first YABs committee members
- **2011:** Mid-way replacement of YABs Committee (2 of its five members could be from YTF), and handover meeting from YTF to YABs committee
- **2012:** YABs Committee members meet in conjunction with General Council meeting in Switzerland
- **2013:** Start preparation for the Global Youth Summit, formation of national planning committee, kick off fundraising for GYS (does it mean YABs committee need to meet here?)
- **2015:** Global Youth Summit and Assembly Gathered 2015, appointment of new YABs committee and new MWC youth officer

(Above blueprint adopted May 2011 by MWC Executive Committee)