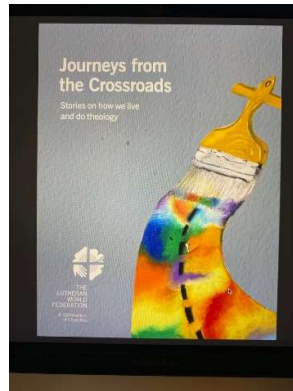


Report on the LWF Youth



<https://youngreformers.lutheranworld.org/>

<https://www.lutheranworld.org/get-involved/ongoing-campaigns-and-open-calls/scholarships>

Coming Together to Reflect

Around August last year, 10 students from India, Chile, Malaysia Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and South Africa came together to reflect on their journeys of theological education. Via Discord (online platform) we discussed the different challenges in our diverse contexts and the way that the LWF helped us in our situations. As we shared rich stories about our theological education and thought of how we could write about these stories, Katariina Kilunen and Hans-Christoph Lange presented us with the opportunity to publish our writing. She invited us to travel to Geneva to complete our writing that would be published later in 2023.

It was decided that each student would tell their story of how they came to study theology and what the effects of power hierarchies were in their theological formation. I, for example, mentioned the importance of my mentor in Stellenbosch and the way that lecturers at Stellenbosch were competent and did not abuse their authority. Rutendo shared how she went from a small to a big world in her life as her social environment changed. So, we put together diverse stories that show how valuable our theological formation is and, basically, that the bursaries that the LWF hands out to students does not go to waste. The contribution of the LWF scholarships to theology students and churches around the world has been invaluable, and this autoethnography of affirms that.

Trip to Geneva

On the 30th of November 2022, Hans, Rutendo and I set off to Geneva, Switzerland to meet the other seven students and Katariina. When we arrived, Katariina gave us a tour around the

beautiful city, explaining to us why, how and when the LWF office was built in Geneva. The following day, she explained to us how the publication process would work so that we could consequently get to work.

We read one another's essays and reflected on them. We then decided on a way to synthesise all the ten essays to make one coherent and yet richly diverse statement about the value of theological education. Hans' anarchical framework for reflection helped us identify the way that power and authority have played a role in our studies. In the end, we took note of how our different stories painted a colourful picture in which we all seem to be called by God to make a difference in the world. Rutendo therefore created an image of a paint brush making various colours and our volume was titled "Journeys from the Crossroads".

I can perhaps mention that my view of the people who helped me on my theological journey was very positive and is reflected in my essay. I recognised the privilege of studying in Stellenbosch while also acknowledging that there were also challenges. I never faced them alone, however, as the leaders of my church, the NELCSA, often stood by me and supported me.

Implications for Scholarship holders

In Geneva, it was discussed how scholarship holders of the LWF could keep in touch. The bursaries are important but the networking, mentoring and sharing of stories is also. To witness to God's presence in various locations around the world is special, so it was also decided that scholarship holders would meet regularly to discuss what's happening in their theological journey. Every Tuesday we have a discord meeting and every three months we have a larger zoom meeting where a group of scholarship holders from a region, for example Latin America, present something about their Lutheran identity in their region.

The scholarships that Rutendo and I have received are very helpful to the NELCSA and to us. We have had valuable exchanges with other international Lutheran students that have broadened our view of the Lutheran Church. Through the publication process, we also learned that God's mercy reaches as far as from sunrise to sunset, as He calls people from Chile to India to serve in His Church.

Tristan D. Krüger and Rutendo Gora