



Lutheran Youth Mission, ELCSA (N-T)
KZN Youth Council

Lutherische Jugendmission, ELKSA (N-T)
KZN Jugendrat

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ELCSA (N-T) Youth Report 2017

1. Introduction

The youth ministry in the ELCSA (N-T) is structured in different ways in our various circuits.

In the southern and eastern circuits of KZN the Congregations maintain and finance a regional youth ministry led by a youth pastor (in a 25% post) and an elected youth council. This leadership is responsible for regional youth activities including camps, events, training, planning and administration. The greater region is divided into three hubs (or sub-regions), which offer activities and events in a smaller region. Currently these hubs are served by two posts for youth workers/pastors – one in Pietermaritzburg and one in the eastern circuit. In addition to this, Congregations work with volunteers that help with the youth ministry in local structures.

In the central and northern circuits there is a greater focus on local structures in Congregations and there are therefore 7 posts for youth workers/pastors in local Congregations, two of which are currently vacant. Some Congregations also work with volunteers in their local structures. The central circuit mainly follows an approach in which the Congregations are responsible for their own youth ministries. In the two year period since the last Synod, very little activity took place on a circuit level – circuit camps and co-worker training, which had taken place in the past, was not undertaken during this time. In the northern circuit a similar approach is followed, however, there is far more activity on a circuit level.

2. Southern and Eastern Circuit

The structure of the youth ministry in this region, as described above, has been functioning quite well. As in previous years, one main focus of the regional ministries is the camps, through which the KZN Youth Ministry aims to equip and inspire young people for life and to be witnesses to Christ and his love:

- **Kailager Children's Camp (Ages 8-12)** – this camp takes place at the Kailager site in the winter holidays. It is led by a parent couple and other volunteers, together with one pastor (for the whole week) and the youth pastor (for part of the week). This camp has grown significantly over the last two years (more than doubled in the period since the last Synod).
- **KT Camp (Ages 12-16)** – this camp takes place at the Kailager site in the winter holidays. It is led by the youth pastor together with a team of volunteers. This camp has also shown significant growth in the last two years. Concern about attendance led to several changes, which have borne fruit.
- **Rüstwoche (High School and Young Adult)** – this camp takes place in December and has developed over the years and now includes theme-focused sessions and discussion, workshops (to equip young people in the areas of music, art, drama and much more) and outreach.
- **GO Camp (Ages 18+)** – this camp is specifically aimed at our students and young adults and takes place on long weekends. It has been an important addition to the regional ministry.
- **Church Festival Youth Camps** – these camps at our Church Festivals (Choir and Brass Band Festivals) have gained in popularity in recent years. At the brass band festival last year approximately 80 youth participated!

These camps have been well attended over the last two years. Some of the concerns that were reported at the last Synod have been addressed and this has resulted in some very positive developments. Improvements in the area of regional communication using modern technology and social media are

pleasing. There are still, however, some areas that need to be addressed. A more detailed camp policy that meets today's legal and other requirements is necessary. The youth council is currently working on this. Leadership planning and training conferences take place at least 1-2 times a year. The youth pastor and council are also a resource to help Congregations at a local level. Other regional events serve to promote fellowship amongst youth beyond the local Congregation.

Currently the KZN Youth Ministry is very healthy financially. The funds available are used to subsidise camps and to promote regional and local ministries. The very healthy reserves will also stand us in good stead going forward. At this year's combined regional conference the Congregations of KZN decided to extend the youth pastors' post (and, with it, the current structure) by another three years until 31 December 2020.

3. Central and Northern Circuit

It is a bit more challenging to report on the activities of these two circuits as there is no single structure that is responsible for it. Feedback from the various Congregations is that they face many of the same challenges as the youth ministry in KZN and experience similar successes and many joys too. Some Congregations have struggled in their youth ministry in the last two years, while others have had a very positive two years.

It is a concern that circuit activities in the central circuit have all but fallen away in the last two years. These activities were dependent on specific people in previous years and as they have moved on the activities have stopped too. In the last two years no regional co-worker training or circuit camps have taken place. The youth deacon of the Johannesgemeinde reports that it is noticeable that their student ministry is mainly supported by youth from the rural areas – consideration should be given to the reasons that we are not able to draw our urban youth to this ministry. Work in the younger age groups of the youth is far more successful.

In the northern circuit there are several circuit activities in addition to the ministries in local Congregations. Particularly in December, there are various Congregation and Circuit camps to which the other Congregations of the Circuit are invited. These take place in venues such as the Kailager and Gerdau. Where co-worker training is offered in one Congregation, co-workers from other Congregations are invited.

4. Kailager

The Kailager remains a wonderful asset for our church. All the circuits make use of the site. Our thanks go to the committee that manages the Kailager, as well as its supervisor, Richman Lubanyana.

5. Conclusion

Our thanks go to everyone who has been involved with the activities of our various youth ministries over the last two years, whether they be volunteers or full-time employees. There are many challenges to this ministry – youth workers/pastors reported of struggles with commitment issues, finding ways to remain relevant, achieving sustainable participation, being a home for young people, and more. We encourage our Church at every level – Church, Circuits, Congregations, parents and individuals – to take an active interest in our young people and to invest time the time and effort that is needed to develop our ministry towards them. I encourage us all to continue our efforts under God's guidance and in his Spirit.



Pastor Udo Lütge
KZN Youth Pastor