ReDi Newsletter December 2020

Digital Conference on 17 September

New ReDi Board Elected

Dear member of ReDi,

This year has been dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Rising numbers of cases in many countries at the end of this year remind us again of the vulnerability of life. Many families have suffered losses of loved ones. Many people, such as medical professionals, have delivered tremendous services under enormous stress. Yet, there are also people who are not at the centre of attention or are neglected in this situation, such as people with special needs or migrants and especially refugees. This shows how important the work of diaconia is. It addresses human needs and suffering regardless of circumstances or life conditions. It is the single human being - created in God's image – that counts. How to better serve our fellow humans in times of new challenges, how to adopt existing structures of helping, how to combine church outreach and diaconal specialized services in order to address new situations – all this affects and challenges research in diaconia as well.

We welcome a deepening worldwide connection between researchers and practitioners of diaconia that was visible at the digital ReDi-conference in September, as it is much needed in times like these. This is also one of the objectives for the coming years that the new board will be discussing.

Digital Conference on 17 September

Due to the pandemic, the biannual conference was held digitally. Altogether, about 200 researchers, diaconia students and practitioners from all continents and in different time zones had registered for the conference. A maximum of 90 participants joined the lectures, paper sessions and panels at the same during this academic meeting. They were enriched

by discussions on the overall theme *Diaconia as Gamechanger? Leadership of Service in Times of Crisis, Complexity and Transformation.* The conference aimed at exploring the ways in which churches and diaconal organisations can address present-day challenges such as marginalisation and radicalisation.

The key notes, Professor Dr. Bosela Eale, at the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) in Nairobi, Kenya gave a lecture about the topic "The Challenges of Diaconia as Game changer: An African Perspective". Dr. Theresa Chong Carino, representing the Amity Foundation Hong Kong, gave an Asian perspective on the same issue. The participants divided into 8 sub-themes that included at total of 42 papers. The conference was facilitated by an international advisory board and a local organization committee, coordinated by PhD scholar Zo Ramiandra Rakotoarison, VID and directed by Professor Dr. Annette Leis-Peters, VID. The members of the international advisory board were senior lecturer Dr. Jaques Beukes, University of Pretoria, South Africa; Associate Professor Dr. Nadine Bowers Du Toit, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, Rector Professor Carlos Emilio Ham, Matanzas Evangelical Seminary of Theology, Cuba, WCC Programme Executive Matthew Ross, Geneva and Professor Dr. Dennis T. Solon, Protestant University Wuppertal/Bethel, Germany. The local organisation committee was constituted by the VID scholars Associate Professor Dr. Terese Bue Kessel, Professor Tormod Kleiven, Associate Professor Kari Jordheim and Associate Professor Dr. Stephen Sirris.

New ReDi Board Elected
The new board of ReDi was unanimously elected during the General Assembly that took place as part of the digital conference on September 17th. To find out more about the new board members, visit the following underline webpage.

ReDi Introduction Video

Have a look at the new ReDi introduction video on the following link

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

On behalf of the ReDi Executive Board,

Johannes Eurich, chairperson