



Quintennial report from Uniting Church Women of Sweden

We are still a young organisation, born in the fall of 2011 when women of three churches decided to join forces when our churches united.

We are all called to serve in Sweden and out of Sweden, some of us are originally Methodists, some Baptists and some belonged to the Covenant Church. It has been a joyful journey bringing us all together and find ways to give birth to this new organisation with a rich heritage.

Some of our commitments run through the years and the work is carried out in committees consisting of a varying number of people. At least one of the members of each committee is from within the board.

Each year we arrange two or three summer camps for single mothers and their children. Each year that has given more than 30 families a week of fun, recreation and a chance for the mothers to get in touch with her inner self and our Lord. The camps have been located in six different places around Sweden and more than a hundred different volunteers have done their very best to make these weeks memorable for the participants. Every day starts with morning devotion and ends with evening prayers and the last evening with communion. For three hours each day the children have activities for themselves with keen leaders, if the weather is good most activities are outdoors, playing sports, The financing comes from our church, gifts from generous members and a very modest fee for the families as we know that many of them struggle with their economy. There is a great need for this type of camp.

Our media group puts together our newsletter which is distributed to all of our members around Sweden four times a year. We also have a website and a Facebook group where we publish news and encourage our members to participate in our operations, in person, by gifts and by praying for us and all that we do.

The Thailand group work hard to finance and support four hostels and a scholarship program for young Karen children and youths in northern Thailand. The children come from small villages where there are no schools and the families are too poor to be able to send their young to the cities where they can find education. Through this work hundreds of young have been given the chance of education and an opportunity of a brighter future for themselves and for their villages and families. In 2018 we support 182 young attending different schools, from primary school to university and theology education. Every year a small group of us from Sweden visit the hostels to encourage the local staff and the students.

Lithuania: Work in Lithuania is intense. Walla Carlsson, primus motor in the work our organization promotes, with work at four aid centers, three in the Birzai region and one in Panevezys.

Annually three summer camps are held for children and young people from our centers in Birzai, Papily and Paceriaukste, one four-day camp and two day camps.

For the participants, it is good to be part of and participate in the program of the campus; bible stories, conversation, craft, song and music, bathing, playing and having good fellowship.

For Panevezys we also have a family camp. Five days by the sea in Sventoji. Also in this camp the Bible has a central place, good food, friendship and lots of fun activities fill the days for all participants.

Every Christmas we distribute Christmas presents to families, orphans, day centers, schools, retirement homes, prisons and hospitals. The presents are prepared by groups and individuals all over Sweden and each present contains a number of carefully chosen items. All presents get a handwritten label with the name of the receiver. Every year there are more presents than the year before. For 2017 Walla and her helpers distributed 8860 presents.

Congo: Many cartons with baby packets and dressings, prepared by several local groups of committed women all over Sweden are sent every year to hospitals in the Congos. For Congo we also have participated in our Church's work in teaching adults to read and to collect and distribute glasses for those who need them to be able to read.

In 2012-2013 we set up a project to let young women from Sweden and Thailand meet and exchange experiences. They met in Thailand and in Sweden and both groups learned a lot about each other and the two cultures.

In 2016 we arranged a conference for women of our churches in Scandinavia in a beautiful location where the women shared in worship, singing and learning. The conference was very successful and we are now preparing for a similar conference in 2019 for women in our sister churches around the Baltic Sea.

Each year members of our board visit a number of congregations and womens groups around Sweden, to encourage them in their work for women in Sweden and around the world. We also visit congregations where we hope to inspire women to start new groups.

Summary:

Uniting Church women have carried out a number of valuable activities through the working groups and in the daily activities. We strive to respond to the needs of active women who can be recruited to the organization. At the same time, we try to manage the legacy of former women's organizations.

We have many challenges left to work for in the future.

Growing in faith and helping each other is part of our goal, as well as working in the spirit that we all belong together in the creation of God to create peace and justice. With the help of God, we shall proceed in patience and with great joy, grateful for the work of Christ.

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