

WCC Eco-School 2023
(Europe and North America Regions)
on
Water, Food and Climate Justice
November 11-18, 2023
Orthodox Academy of Crete, Greece

Convening organizations:



Various WCC programmes involved:

WCC Ecumenical Water Network	WCC Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance	WCC Ecumenical Youth Engagement
WCC Economic and Ecological Justice	WCC Indigenous People	WCC Health and Healing

This program is made possible through a grant support from Thrivent Charitable Impact & Investing, through ELCA

**The WCC-EWN and the WCC-EAA are ecumenical initiatives of the World Council of Churches*

WCC Eco-School on Water, Food and Climate Justice 2023

Introduction

Today more than 2 billion people do not have access to safely-managed drinking water and over 4.4 billion people do not have safely-managed sanitation. 795 million people – or one in nine people – go to bed on an empty stomach and nearly 1,000 children die due to preventable water and sanitation -related diarrheal diseases every day. Climate change aggravates water and food insecurity. In the current scenario, two-thirds of the world's population could be living in areas of high water stress by 2030 and global agricultural production could decline by as much as 25% by 2050.

The nexus between water, food and climate change is deep, and directly impacts the sustenance and survival of communities, especially the socio-economically vulnerable. It is well known that climate change affects the availability of water and food security. Industrial farming and factory animal farms; commercial fishing; deforestation; destructive land and sea mining, all contribute to climate change, degradation of the environment and brings about water shortages, threatens food sovereignty and endangers biodiversity. Food security and nutrition are directly linked to the availability of fresh water, as 70% of it is used for agriculture. Industrial agriculture of water intensive products in water stressed countries for exporting to richer countries is a major cause of high water footprints of those countries and making them all the more vulnerable. Therefore, issues of water, food and climate change have to be addressed in a holistic manner and within a framework of justice.

Europe and North America region

Global average temperature have risen 1.1 degrees compared to the pre-industrial baseline. Increased frequency of extreme weather events, massive storms, continue sea level rise resulting in submergence of several islands and costal villages around the world. The north America region especially is effected by frequent forest fires, hurricanes, water scarcity, etc . These incidences have clear linkages with climate change. The 2021 IPCC (Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change) report says, "it's "unequivocal" that human activity is driving climate change, and it's affecting Earth's oceans, atmosphere, ice and biosphere in ways that are "widespread and rapid," . The 2022 IPCC report predicts that climate change will push more than 100 million people into extreme poverty in the next decade alone, endangering access to water, food security, livelihoods and health. Europe and the North America region has the ability and resilience to tackle climate change. However its political will to do so fluctuates under various administrations, particularly in the North America region. Its high time the rich nations of Europe and the north America region leads the world in its endeavour to address climate change and its impacts on water, food, health and indigenous people.

The Eco-School

In response to the above challenges the World Council of Churches (WCC) Ecumenical Water Network (EWN) in collaboration with various WCC programmes including the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA), Economic and Ecological Justice programme, Youth Engagement in the ecumenical movement, Health and Healing and Mission from the margin programme is organising the fifth edition of the Eco-School for about 25 young people from the **Europe and North America region** to train them on the nexus between Water, Food and Climate Justice.

The WCC Eco-School will be hosted by the churches in Europe and North America. The programme was made possible through the financial contributions from the above organisations, particularly through a grant support from Thrivent Charitable Impact Investing through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Currently, young people, under 30 years old, make up 50.5% of the world's population. They along with the children, will be facing the brunt of the impacts of climate change in the days to come.

Today's young people are at risk of being worse off than the previous generations, in terms of quality of life and access to basic human rights. We have witnessed young people taking leadership in drawing the attention of world leaders to respond to the urgency of climate change.

Therefore, it is important to invest in young people in building their capacities on ecological issues. WCC Eco School on water, food, and climate justice go on to show its commitment towards young people.

In an ecumenical setting, participants will have the opportunity to study the local, regional, and international manifestations and causes of the water crisis and food insecurity that gets accentuated by climate change. They will examine the situation and challenges from a perspective of faith and ethics, and search together for possible ecumenical responses to these challenges. By the end of the Eco School, participants are expected to be equipped with the tools to enable them to become eco ambassadors and eco-advocates for a more sustainable and just earth. To this end, they are expected to draw action plans that may be implemented in their communities.

The details of the Eco-School on Water, Food and Climate Change are given below:

Dates	:November 11-18, 2023 (including arrival and departure dates)
Venue	:Orthodox Academy of Crete, Greece. https://www.oac.gr/en/
Eligibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Residents of Europe and North America, 18-30 years old * Affiliated with WCC member churches /ecumenical organizations * Holds a Bachelor's degree in any discipline (<i>preferred, not required</i>) * working language of WCC Eco-School - English
Registration fees	: US\$ 100.-
Expenses	: Candidates have to cover travel expenses (flight/train, visa, etc) Tuition fee, Accommodation and food covered by WCC
Scholarships	: Limited scholarships available for needy students

Aims & Objectives/ outcomes

The Eco-School aims to motivate and prepare young people to contribute to the work of the churches at the regional and local level on issues related to water, food, nutrition, health and climate change towards a sustainable future.

Objectives:

- Convey a basic understanding of the water crisis, food security, health and climate change and their root causes
- To explore the nexus between water, food, climate change and health with a justice and rights perspective and review them with the lens of gender and marginalised communities.
- To strengthen understanding of ecumenical youth movement and engagement.
- To understand indigenous perspectives of care for creation.
- To sustain regional capacity building of our churches on ecological issues, particularly on the nexus of the above issues through this annual regional Eco-school.
- Strengthen commitment to work in church and ecumenical context on these issues.
- Capacitate participants to initiate follow-up activities in their home communities.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants have a basic understanding of the water crisis, food security and climate change and its causes.
- Participants are aware and equipped with theological and ethical considerations relevant to the issues of environmental protection, poverty eradication, The participants have become eco-ambassadors and eco-advocates to work with their church /institutions towards making this earth more sustainable and just.
- Participants have shown appreciation and understanding of indigenous and cultural wisdom for earth and care for creation
- Participants have expressed their commitment and developed concrete ideas to further pursue the issue upon returning home.
- Churches represented by these participants are made aware of water and sanitation, food security and climate change related issues and that these issues may be prioritized in the churches' discourses.

Course Methodology

The course of the Eco-School 2023 would be an in-person training and would include the following:

- Lectures and workshops
- Theological and contextual bible studies
- Creative liturgy and worship
- Exposure visits for a live-in /emersion experience
- Sharing of local and regional experiences
- Cultural and artistic activities
- Learning Journal and Eco-School Newsletter
- Assessment and plan of action
- Follow up low cost local projects by participants, funded by WCC (**subject to availability of resources**)

Facilitators

The WCC Eco-School will be facilitated by the following facilitators:

- Mr Dinesh Suna, Coordinator of Eco School (Coordinator of WCC's Ecumenical Water Network)
- Dr Manoj Kurian, Coordinator WCC's Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance
- Ms. Athena Peralta, Programme Executive, WCC-Economic and Ecological Justice
- Programme Executive, WCC Youth and Ecumenical Engagements
- Dr Mwai Makoka, Programme Executive, WCC Health and Healing
- Rev. Nicole Ashwood, Programme Executive, Just Community of Women and Men, W
- Rev. Dr Peter Pavlovic, Coordinator, ECEN
- Mr Antonis Kalogerakis, Orthodox Academy of Crete
- Other resource persons

Application Process:

If you are from the Europe and North America region and interested in participating/nominating someone eligible, please download the **brochure, application form and the guidelines of WCC Eco-School on Water, Food and Climate Justice 2023** from the WCC website: <https://www.oikoumene.org> or request for an application to eco.school@wcc-coe.org. Read the application form carefully, complete it clearly and fully, type if possible and send it to the address mentioned in the form on or **before September 16, 2023**

Cost of Participation

Registration fees :US\$ 100.-

The organisers will cover the accommodation and boarding related expenses.

Travel cost has to be borne by the participants through their member churches.

Scholarships: Few travel subsidies are available for deserving candidates. An application has to be made for this. The organisers will review the applications and provide travel subsidy/sponsorship, subject to availability of resources or help connect with potential funding partners.

Please also forward this call for applications to others, you think might be interested.

For further information please contact: eco.school@wcc-coe.org



The first
Eco School
of WCC
was
organised
for the
Africa
region in
2017 in
Malawi.



The second
Eco School
of WCC was
organised for
the Latin
America and
Caribbean
region in
2018 in El
Salvador.



The third
Eco School
of WCC was
organised for
the Asia
region in
2019 in
CCA,
Chiang Mai,
Thailand.



The fourth Eco School of WCC was organised in a hybrid manner (due to COVID-19), for the Pacific region in 2021 with PCC in 5 Pacific countries.