

Report on the Use of Funds from the Church of Norway

*Project: Life and Work Digital Collection – Commemorating 100 Years of the
1925 Stockholm Conference*

Submitted by: World Council of Churches (WCC)

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Reporting Period: [2024 –2025]

1. Background and Purpose

The *Life and Work Digital Collection – Commemorating 100 Years of the 1925 Stockholm Conference* stood as a monumental tribute to a century of ecumenical vision, scholarship, and moral witness. Made possible through the generous support of the **Church of Norway** and in collaboration with the **Lund Mission Society**, this historic initiative by the **World Council of Churches (WCC)** captured and preserved more than one hundred years of Christian engagement with the world's most urgent social, ethical, and theological challenges.

Launched under the title "**Life and Work Digital Collection: A Century of Ecumenical Social Ethics and Action**," the digital collection brought together over 300 publications and 35,000 pages of material; reports, proceedings, studies, and reflections, that chronicled the journey which began in Stockholm in 1925, when churches gathered under the visionary leadership of Archbishop Nathan Söderblom to respond to the moral and social crises that followed the First World War.

The project became more than an archival milestone; it was a living legacy, a bridge between history and hope. By digitizing and freely sharing this vast body of work, the WCC renewed its call for unity, peace, and justice in today's world.

The collection opened a "giant window," as noted by Dr Samuel Rubenson, to the decisive moments that had shaped the political, ethical, and theological role of the global church. It invited scholars, students, and faith communities everywhere to rediscover the ecumenical spirit that continued to inspire Christian witness for life, justice, and peace.

Through this digital preservation, the WCC not only commemorated the centenary of the Stockholm Conference but also reaffirmed the ongoing mandate entrusted to the global church: to be instruments of reconciliation, agents of justice, and stewards of creation. The Lund Mission Society's visionary support ensured that the story of *Life and Work*, rooted in history yet alive in our common calling, would continue to educate, inspire, and unite generations to come.

The digitized resources are now part of the WCC digital collections on Internet archive, supporting research and study by scholars, theologians and students worldwide.

Life and Work Digital Collection: A Century of Ecumenical Social Ethics

Link: <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications/life-and-work-digital-collection>

LIFE AND WORK
A Century of Ecumenical Social Ethics and Action

About **Browse and Search** **Introduction to the Life and Work collection** **How to use the Life and Work Digital Collection** **Contacts**

Welcome to the World Council of Churches (WCC) "Life and Work Digital Collection: A Century of Ecumenical Social Ethics and Action." This digital collection is made up of more than 300 publications and up to 35,000 pages that embody more than 100 years of serious and sustained ecumenical reflection on ecumenical social ethics and action, since the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work in Stockholm in 1925.

The Stockholm conference in 1925 was called into being by Archbishop Nathan Söderblom of Uppsala as a response to the carnage of the First World War and the need for the churches to play a central role in the rebuilding of society, and economic and political life as a sign in history of the coming kingdom of God.

The conference gave birth to the Life and Work movement, which became an integral part of the WCC at its foundation in 1948, leading to the commitment of the WCC to issues such as human rights, decolonization, racial, gender, and economic and political justice, the challenges of science and technology, environmental ethics and climate justice.

Screenshot of part of the digital collection online on the WCC Internet Archive - <https://archive.org/details/worldcouncilofchurches?tab=collection>

2. Activities and Achievements

Digitization Process

- **Selection and preparation:** Identification of relevant papers and physical materials in the WCC Library and Archives.
Activities included assigning reference numbers, defining metadata, and physical preparation of documents.
- **Shipping and digitization:** Materials were packed and shipped to the Internet Archive's premises in London for digitization. These will need to be shipped back from London- which is part of the next steps.
- **Post-digitization control:** Verification and quality control of digitized items.
- **Integration into the WCC Library Catalogue:** Each digitized document was linked to its digital version within the WCC Library Catalogue, part of the national Swiss library platform Swisscovery
Example: [Catalogue record](#)

Online and Public Engagement

- A **dedicated webpage** was developed on the WCC website to host the collection: [Life and Work Digital Collection](#)
- Two **news releases** were published highlighting the project and its significance:
 - [WCC releases Life and Work digital collection](#)
 - [Reclaiming the spirit of Life and Work for ecumenical renewal](#)

Publications

- A special **issue of the *Ecumenical Review*** commemorated the centenary of the 1925 Life and Work Conference:
[Ecumenical Review, Vol. 76, No. 4 \(2024\)](#)

Promotional Materials

- **Marketing postcard** designed and printed for distribution during centennial events.
- A **flyer** distributed at the European Academy of Religion in Vienna, July 2025

3. Integration with Commemorative and Educational Events

Centennial Celebrations

The digital collection featured prominently in the 2025 centennial commemorations of the **Stockholm Life and Work Conference**, including:

- **Ecumenical Summer Academy** – The collection served as a key resource for an online summer course at the University College Stockholm linked to the Ecumenical Week in Stockholm: “Ecumenical Peacebuilding in Times of War: The Legacy of Stockholm 1925”
[Read more](#)
(*Testimonial from Dr Sara Gehlin, Senior Lecturer, University College Stockholm,- available upon request*)
- **Stockholm Centennial Commemoration** – The collection was presented by the **Moderator of the WCC Central Committee** to international participants at the Ecumenical Week.
[Read more](#)
- **Resisting War Conference at the John Knox Centre** – The project was presented to an international audience exploring theological responses to conflict.
[Conference report](#)
- **Other academic integration:** The collection is being used as a resource by **Prof. Simone Sinn** for a seminar in the Winter Semester at the **University of Münster (2025–2026)**, “From Stockholm 1925 until today – The development of ecumenical social ethics in an intercultural perspective.”

WCC commemorations of the 1925 Stockholm conference

During 2025 the WCC was involved in several commemorations of the 1925 Stockholm conference.

Life and Work Centenary Consultation

In May 2025, a Life and Work Centenary Consultation was organized in Athens, Greece, by the WCC's Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA). The links below are a part of a video interview series recorded in Athens, exploring moral leadership, justice, and ecumenical unity. Conversations with church leaders and thinkers address global crises from an ecumenical perspective.

Below is the content which was produced from this occasion. *These interviews connect historical milestones (Stockholm 1925, Nicaea) to present challenges and spiritual life. A WCC cooperation with [Andreas Loudaros/Orthodoxia.Info](#)*

WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs reflects on today's geopolitical landscape

Vice moderator of WCC Faith and Order Commission reflects on Nicaea's importance in theological dialogue

H.E. Metropolitan Gabriel of Nea Ionia reflects on democracy, participation, and Christianity

Prof. Dr Michalis Marioras reflects on how interreligious dialogue becomes transformative

Ecumenical Week "Time for God's Peace" Stockholm

The WCC was closely associated with the Christian Council of Sweden (SKR) during the Ecumenical Week organized by the SKR in August 2025 to mark the 100th anniversary of the Stockholm conference, including the participation of the WCC moderator, Bishop Dr Heinrich Bedford-Strohm and the WCC general secretary Prof. Rev. Dr Jerry Pillay. As already noted this included the presentation of the Life and Work Digital Collection to participants at the Ecumenical Week, and involvement in the in-person phases on the Summer Academy, for which the Life and Work digital Collection was a major resource.

At an Ecumenical Celebration at the Filadelfiakyrka in Stockholm on 22 August, Dr Pillay commemorated those who gathered in Stockholm 100 years ago and spoke out for justice, peace, reconciliation, and a new ordering of society.

He noted that the conference gave birth to the Life and Work movement in which churches sought to respond to social, political, and international challenges, and was one of the main ecumenical streams that led to the creation of the WCC in 1948, and that the youngest delegate was Willem Visser 't Hooft, who in 1948 became the WCC's first general secretary.

Full information about the Ecumenical Week and the WCC's involvement with links to news releases about specific events:

WCC Feature story- Stockholm gathering recalls centenary of 1925 conference that called for peace: <https://www.oikoumene.org/news/stockholm-gathering-recalls-centenary-of-1925-conference-that-called-for-peace>

4. Challenges and Limitations

- **Resource constraints** limited the scope of post-digitization work and long-term integration.
- **Planning overlaps** with major WCC events (e.g., the Ecumenical Year meetings, Central Committee sessions) delayed some follow-up tasks.
- Continued work is needed to promote and expand the educational reach of the digital archive.

5. Outlook and Next Steps

- Ensure ongoing visibility of the digital collection through WCC communication platforms and academic networks.
- Integrate the collection into future WCC educational offerings and ecumenical history courses.
- Explore opportunities for continued collaboration with academic partners and mission societies to expand access and translation.
- More resources pertaining to Life and work that need to be digitized
- Further development of the website's access features

(C1061B) Digitization of Life and Work material- Expenditure report

Activity/Item	Actual implementation costs (CHF)
Work on metadata (enrichment)-Staff time	975
Selection and description of material (staff time)	1950
Editorial Staff time	669.5
Outsourcing of digitization and metadata creation through Internet Archive	5460.19
Promotion and marketing	
Travel costs- Stockholm conference	261
Stockholm brochure- shipping costs	21.71
Stockholm brochure-printing costs	170.43
Graphics designing-promotional material	106.25
Printing costs	1100.41
Translations of official news release of the project	550.82
Subtotal Promotion and marketing	2210.62
Project coordination & launch in Stockholm	1882.07
Logistics/Courier costs	206.18
Development of online access hub- Collaboration with Web developers for the functionality of the integration of the internet archive	5440
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	18793.56

INCOME REPORT

Organization	Amount (CHF)
Church of Norway	9797.98
Lund Mission Society	12800.24
TOTAL INCOME	22598.22

BALANCE AS OF 11 DECEMBER

3804.66

The WCC received **9797.98 CHF** from Church of Norway and **CHF 12800.24** from the Lund Mission Society, for the *Digitization of Life and Work Material* project.

The project incurred a total expenditure of **CHF 18793.56**, covering key activities such as the development of the online access hub, digitization through the Internet Archive, metadata work, marketing, coordination, and logistics.

Notably, the selection and description of material required more time than originally anticipated, resulting in a higher allocation of staff effort in this area.

While significant progress has been made, some work remains pending, specifically in the areas of:

- Post-digitization tasks
- Remaining logistics
- Further development of the website's access features

The Church of Norway's contribution was essential in enabling the digitisation, online integration, promotion, and launch of the Life and Work Digital Collection. Some activities, particularly post-digitisation tasks, remaining logistics, and further website development, will be completed in the next phase of the project.

6. Acknowledgement



Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

The World Council of Churches (WCC) expresses its deep gratitude to the **Church of Norway** for its generous support, encouragement, and ecumenical partnership in making the *Life and Work Digital Collection – Commemorating 100 Years of the 1925 Stockholm Conference* a reality. The Church of Norway's commitment has been instrumental in enabling the preservation, digitisation, and global accessibility of a century of ecumenical reflection and action, offering an invaluable resource for scholars, theologians, and faith communities worldwide.

This collaboration honours the enduring legacy of Archbishop Nathan Söderblom and the pioneering vision of the 1925 Stockholm Conference, while reaffirming a shared dedication to unity, justice, and peace within the global church. Through the support of the Church of Norway, the Life and Work Digital Collection stands as a living archive, connecting past and present and equipping future generations to engage thoughtfully with the ethical, social, and theological challenges of their time.

The WCC also acknowledges with appreciation the **Lund Mission Society**, whose financial contribution and longstanding commitment to ecumenical scholarship have significantly strengthened this initiative. Together, these partnerships reflect a shared vision and faith that bring history to life and ensure that the Life and Work tradition continues to inspire dialogue, research, and transformative action across the worldwide fellowship of churches.

Rev. Dr Benjamin Simon, former Academic Dean of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey and Director of the WCC Commission for Ecumenical Education and Formation, noted that the digital archive will open new opportunities for students and academics around the

world to access and engage with critical perspectives on social ethics from within their respective academic institutions.

The WCC further resonates with the words of Dr Samuel Rubenson, President of the Lund Mission Society, who observed that the publication of the Life and Work archive “opens a giant window not only to some of the most decisive events that have shaped the political role of the churches worldwide, but also to how theology and interpretations of the world have developed over the past one hundred years-a true treasure for students, scholars, and church leaders today.”

The establishment of the Life and Work Digital Collection as an online archive was recognised as a significant milestone in contemporary ecumenism. It was also noted with gratitude that the Sixth World Conference on Faith and Order and GETI 2025 recorded the highest levels of online participation among recent WCC events, demonstrating the growing global engagement fostered through digital platforms.

As affirmed by WCC General Secretary Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay at the official launch of the collection, “We are profoundly grateful for the support received from the Church of Norway and the Lund Mission Society in making this collection possible, and we look forward to continuing to develop and expand it.”

*Geneva, January 2026
Marianne Ejdersten
Director of Communication*