

Intercultural Youth Exchange Program ELCPNG & FREIBERG–SAXONY/LEIPZIG–GERMANY

The Intercultural Youth Exchange Program was organized by the Youth Department of the church at Saxony through Freiburg District with the support from the Youth Ministry of the Government of Germany and the Lutheran Development Service in Germany. There were 8 participants from ELCPNG and 8 participants from the German team.

This is the group report from the ELCPNG Team including the financial acquittal for the K600.00 group money given to the team on the day of the travel. In this report you will read about the highlights of the activities done during the exchange in a chronological order; and in the concluding section of this report you will find some practical recommendations for immediate considerations and actions, the appropriate authorities are asked to seriously consider. This report does not intend to degrade nor debase anyone at all levels, in the church and others concerned. Somewhere in the report you will realize that the report uncovers certain failures which has somewhat affected the ELCPNG Team performance during the exchange. It could have been better if such impediments were avoided.

Activities during the Exchange

As I assumed, when I talked to some of the leaders during the team preparation, the youth exchange was not focusing only on the spiritual aspects. It was all about social, cultural, educational, emotional, daily encounters between young people from both countries. Most important of all, was the sociological aspects of the program which concerned me most. As leaders in our own rights we have the responsibilities to safeguard the dignity and morality of our churches. With due respect, I consider myself marginal in this matter. However, for the good of the church that I serve and the God whom I serve I am compelled to say that any matters relating to God's business should be considered imperative above all else and as such we cannot dare to fail any of it. Since I was called to lead the team of these young men and women to represent ELCPNG, I intended not to fail. It was my responsibility to see to it that all was well organized and not ineptly prepared. Unfortunately, I was over looked and let down in the process, but this careless ignorant attitude did not affect the team's performance during the exchange. The team excelled and performed extremely well and superb during the exchange. It was one of the well-behaved team I have ever led in my life, with very fascinating and highly talented young men and women in music and dances. I am so delighted to say that my church is really blessed with spirit filled young men and women.

All of the ELCPNG participants were very vocal during discussions and debates on topics regarding spirituality and faith in God, but were somewhat silent when the topic was on something else. And also, due to language complications most of the team members were not able to express enough the teachings of our church and the richness of our cultural values. But they managed to reveal it all well practically in their daily endeavors and performances during the exchange.

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One or two of the participants were a little problematic at first due to illness relating homesick but were soon rectified. We were unprepared for illnesses because we took no medicines with us and so it really caught us bad but our hosts were always on their toes to find a way out before the day ended. This really caused burden for some host families because they were too open to allow the participants to use their phone to call to PNG for hours. It's really expensive to call from Germany to PNG but the host families wholeheartedly allow the homesick ones to call their families. I was informed of the situation and I talked to the group about it. I bought a phone afterward and loaded it with some top-ups for the participants to call home just for 2-minutes each because the group money was far too less when converted to Euros. I was not able to buy enough units for everyone to call home for 5 to 10 minutes long. For fifteen Euros you can only call for less than 3 minutes. Most team members called home except one because he was not able to get through, but on our return he was given two chances to call home from Singapore.