

# Confirmation Work in the View of the Workers Workshop Erfurt 4th of May 2017

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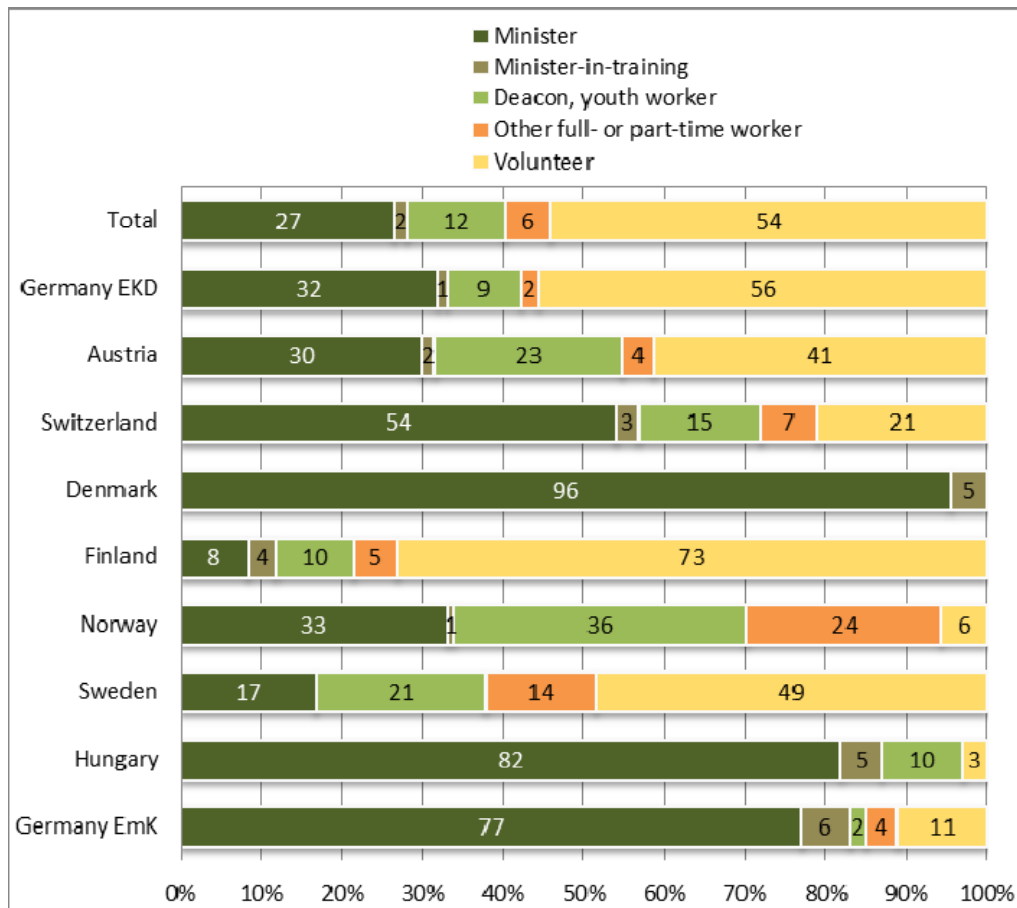


# 1. Introduction

- ▶ The **quality and meaning of confirmation work** depends highly on those who are planning and organizing this program.
- ▶ The **ministers are key persons** in this respect but, increasingly, **voluntary workers** also play an important role.
- ▶ The 2nd European Study on Confirmation work asked not only confirmands but also the workers themselves, **employed workers (full-time or part-time)** and **voluntary workers**.

## 2. Some General Information on the Workers

Figure 1: Different workers in confirmation work in the participating countries (%)



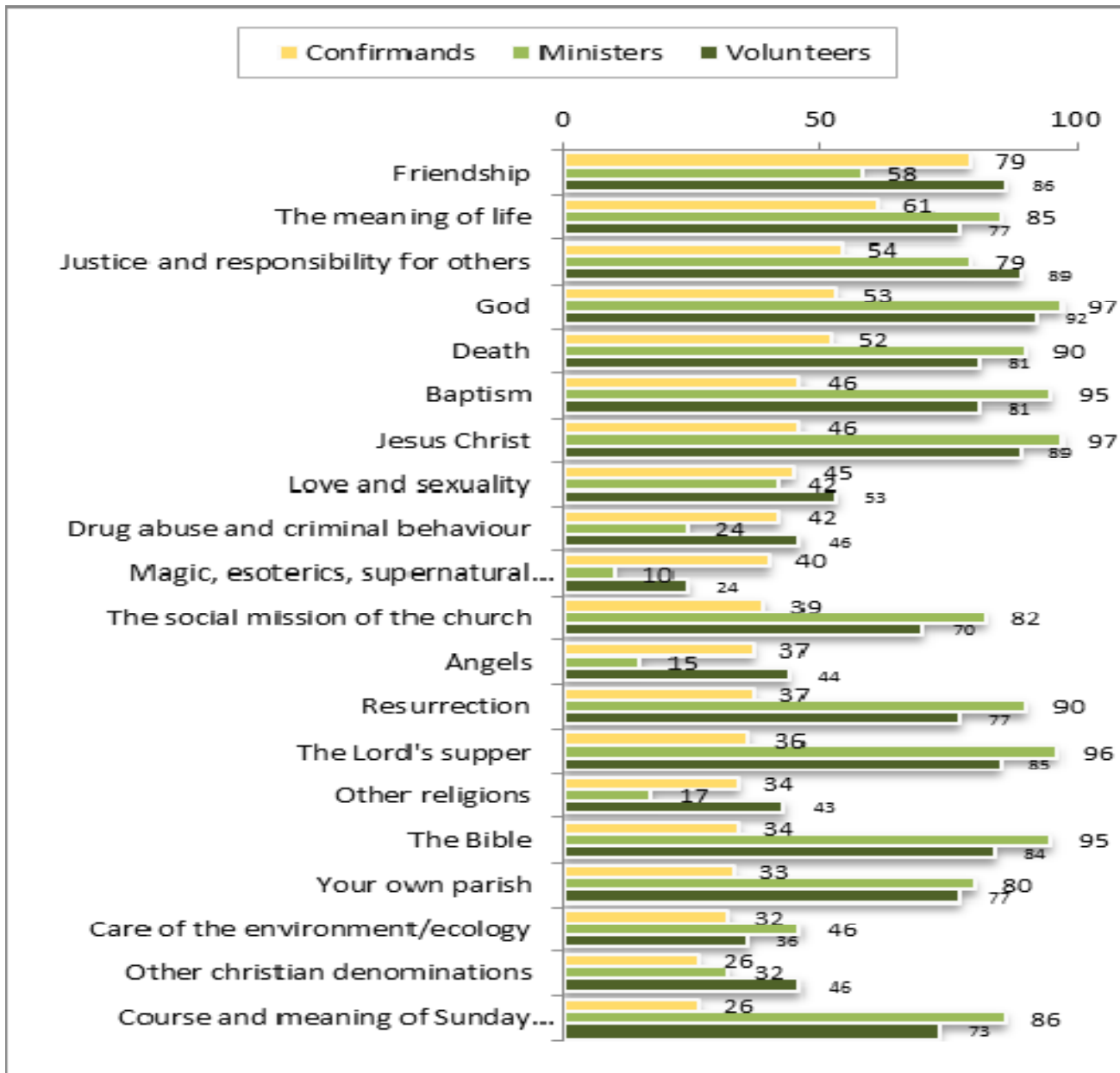
## 2. Some General Information on the Workers

- ▶ The age distribution among volunteers very wide.
- ▶ Youngest volunteer was 14 and the oldest 80 years old.
- ▶ The average age of the volunteers is 20 years. The volunteers are youngest in Finland (mean age 16-17) and Sweden (18 years), while in Hungary and among the Methodists in Germany volunteers are typically about as old as the employed workers. Average age of all workers is 42.
- ▶ The gender perspective: 64% of the ministers are male and 36% female
- ▶ Within the group of the volunteers: 37% are male and 63% are female.

# 3. Important Topics - in the View of the Workers

- ▶ **The workers' choices:** a certain preference for topics that are clearly related to the Christian tradition
- ▶ But the list of most preferred topics also includes **some ethical topics (justice and responsibility)** and **existential questions (meaning of life)**.
- ▶ Yet beyond the international averages, there is a **considerable amount of variation**. In this respect, national and regional traditions seem to play a role.
- ▶ Lord's Supper: lower interest (69%) in Switzerland,
- ▶ Course and meaning of Sunday services: lower interest (51%) in Norway,
- ▶ One's own parish: lower interest (51%) in Denmark
- ▶ Other religions: lower interest (9%) in Denmark and (12%) in Norway
- ▶ Differences between the preferences of the ministers and the volunteers.

Figure 2:  
Interest in  
topics at the  
beginning of  
confirmation  
time (t1)  
among  
ministers,  
volunteers  
and  
confirmands



## 4. Aims of the Workers

Table 1: Aims of the employed workers' and volunteers' (t1)

	Employed workers		VOLUNTEERS		TOTAL	
	Important (5-7)%	Mean	Important (5-7)%	Mean	Important (5-7)%	Mean
Aims related to personal growth and belonging	94	6,08	91	5,97	92	6,02
Aims related to community and fun	78	5,54	86	5,79	82	5,67
Aims related to an active role in services	82	5,66	80	5,65	80	5,64
Faith-related aims	82	5,69	61	5,17	71	5,41
Aims related to encouraging voluntary work	71	5,29	67	5,27	68	5,25
Aims related to liturgical life	55	4,95	44	4,71	49	4,82

## 4. Aims of the Workers

Table 2 and 3: Share of employed workers and volunteers in different countries (t1) who regard different aims as important (%)

Employed workers	Total	DE EKD	AT	CH	DE	FI	NO	SE	HU	DE EmK
Aims related to growth and belonging	94	95	95	94	87	97	95	91	98	96
Faith related aims	82	85	74	67	65	82	89	81	95	91
Aims related to an active role in services	82	83	85	80	69	83	88	78	76	88
Aims related to community and fun	78	70	75	71	77	94	77	90	79	82
Aims related to liturgical life	55	56	35	28	63	69	48	51	81	47
Aims related to encouraging voluntary work	71	77	80	*	16	81	81	65	68	84

Volunteers	Total	DE EKD	AT	CH	FI	SE	HU	DE EmK
<b>Aims related to growth and belonging</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Aims related to community and fun</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Aims related to an active role in services</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Aims related to encouraging voluntary work</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Faith related aims</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Aims related to liturgical life</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>36</b>




## 5. Satisfaction of the Workers

Table 4: Share of the workers who are satisfied with the confirmation work in their parish (VM01) and who like doing confirmation work (VM02) in 2007/2008 and 2012/2013 (t2) in different countries (%)

	VM01: satisfied with the confirmation work in their parish		VM02: like doing confirmation work	
	2012/2013	2007/2008	2012/2013	2007/2008
<b>Total</b>	83	83	89	89
<b>DE EKD</b>	84	81	92	91
<b>AT</b>	91	85	95	96
<b>CH</b>	82 (85 CH-ZH)	78 (CH-ZH)	90 (90 CH-ZH)	94 (CH-ZH)
<b>DK</b>	73	88	87	85
<b>FI</b>	88	92	81	90
<b>NO</b>	78	81	90	87
<b>SE</b>	84	93	84	97
<b>HU</b>	71	-	92	-
<b>DE EmK</b>	69	-	85	-

## 6. Conclusions

1. **Number of volunteers** participating in confirmation work throughout the European countries involved in the study, is **higher than the number of “professionals”**. In this respect, confirmation work builds a **link between the different generations in the church**.
2. The number of volunteers involved in confirmation has its **own value especially for older adolescents**. Becoming a volunteer in confirmation work can be viewed as part of **education for civil society**.
3. The voluntary workers are **often closer to the confirmands** which indicates the special potential they have for **meeting the confirmands’ interests**, probably because they are close in terms of age.
4. The main aim of the workers throughout the participating countries is obviously not to shape a certain missionary form of confirmation work but rather to try to **develop a liveable and workable balance of faith-, life- and youth-related questions**.
5. The workers, be it the professionals or the volunteers, show a **deep commitment of heart and soul and a high potential of positive motivation**.



# Challenges: Pedagogically and Theologically

## Before Anything Else - Workers' concerns!

- ▶ The rate of baptism is dropping all over protestant Europe with few exceptions
- ▶ There seems to be a certain fear of religion in many European societies
- ▶ A certain distance between the church and its members - not to speak of the population as such
- ▶ Even less focus on religious nurture at home

# Theological and Pedagogical Challenges - An Overall View

- ▶ The difficulty in dealing with so many different countries and churches - however:
  - ▶ It seems to be increasingly difficult for the confirmands to see or establish the bridge between religious interests of the workers such as Holy Supper, baptism etc. and confirmands' daily life - religious issues v. life world issues. Poland and Sweden as examples of the two extremes.
  - ▶ A dominant feature in many countries is still that many confirmands do not feel any personal interest in services, including the Sunday service.

# Challenges for Finland

- ▶ Lack of religious nurture - almost half has experienced no evening prayer whatsoever (30% five years ago)
- ▶ Only 22% has confidence in the church
- ▶ Decrease in Christian belief items
- ▶ Decline in church membership and attendance to various church rites
  - ▶ Church membership among young (25-32) has dropped to 60% - women higher rate.

## Finland continued

- ▶ Fast decline in wedding rates and baptism rates which will in turn influence confirmation rates in future
- ▶ Finland suggest to meet the challenges by supporting parents in Christian nurture of their children and pedagogical help to parents
- ▶ More "marketing"
- ▶ Pedagogically Finland is already doing well but perhaps more emphasis on church rituals and church life?  
Interesting development - compare with DK or Sweden

## Germany

- ▶ A development from "instruction" to youth work style confirmation work (seen as an improvement)
- ▶ More young volunteers involved in spite of dropping confirmand numbers
- ▶ Still room for improvement when it comes to church services
- ▶ No major changes in religious attitudes



## Germany continues

- ▶ The movement from instruction to creative methods must be strengthened (more camps, more creative work, more non-school-type-work) and more focus on the individual confirmand's questions (lack of nurture in home)
- ▶ Answers to demographic development and fewer confirmands must be found and developed
- ▶ More church services directed at young people must be developed

# Austria

- ▶ Keep the "diaspora" setting in mind
- ▶ During ten years the participation rate has dropped by 10% from 80% to 70% even though the confirmands are very happy about their confirmation time
- ▶ A challenge is to put more emphasis on spiritual counselling for confirmands

## Austria continued

- ▶ More emphasis on relevant church services where young people play a role
- ▶ Beware that confirmation work is not only for the in-crowd
- ▶ More volunteers and workers and more courses and help for them to obtain
- ▶ More emphasis on becoming a volunteer

## Switzerland

- ▶ Interesting mixture! The workers seem to have reached far when it comes to up-to-date pedagogy, camps, life-related teaching et al. BUT figures indicate that "theological substantial learning and communication about the Gospel in its meaning for daily life...potential for improvement and innovation".

## Switzerland continued

- ▶ Difficulties in reaching the confirmands emotionally (33%)
- ▶ Big gap between satisfied and dissatisfied confirmands - connected to religious nurture in the families concerned (nurtured - more satisfied)
- ▶ How to gap the distance between the confirmands and the church?
- ▶ First world problem: The confirmands are not distressed economically or existentially. For 86% life is to be enjoyed.

## Denmark

- ▶ Nothing much happened between the first and the second study with regard to confirmands' attitudes, motives and nurture
- ▶ A lot happened to the workers
- ▶ The new school reform from 2014
- ▶ Pedagogically the school reform has 'forced' a lot of workers/pastors to rethink their classes

## Denmark continued

- ▶ Less schooltype teaching - more youth type setting
- ▶ The big challenge is the dropping numbers of baptisms and young people (22-35 years) leaving the church
- ▶ Church has to develop strategies for maintaining its relevance in an individualized society - how to bring ancient tradition into the future without selling out but still be relevant
- ▶ Financial issues!

# Norway

- ▶ Dropping numbers concerning membership and baptism
- ▶ Pedagogically things are improving- Faith Education Reform
- ▶ Future focus must be on the recruitment of young volunteers who do not have a background in Church - new blood
- ▶ How to approach immigrant churches that they might be affiliated with the Norwegian church's confirmation programme



## Norway continued

- ▶ How to keep in touch with confirmands after their confirmation time
- ▶ Consequences of the separation between state and church - the 15-18 years old are difficult to connect with
- ▶ Only 1/3 of the confirmands were encouraged to become workers or volunteers

## Sweden

- ▶ Happy workers and confirmands
- ▶ Little interest in theology and traditional church doctrine
- ▶ Workers feel they meet the requirements set for their work with confirmands
- ▶ Confirmands are dropping in numbers

## Sweden continued

- ▶ Interesting gap between workers and confirmands: The latter expect to learn about Christian faith while the workers set focus on the confirmands' own life issues as the starting point - what do we think of this??
- ▶ A challenge to raise the bar for goals set for confirmation work?
- ▶ What does the rest of the society and its structure mean for confirmation work? Could answers be found there as to why numbers are dropping when everyone is so happy about the confirmation work conducted?

# Poland

- ▶ NB - No workers asked
- ▶ Minority challenges and historical challenges
- ▶ A challenge to be a Lutheran in society
- ▶ Focus from the workers in the future should be on trying on newer teaching methods, materials, camps and on a whole put emphasis on up-to-date-pedagogy

## Poland continued

- ▶ No volunteer workers now but a challenge would be to engage more young people in confirmation work
- ▶ More courses for the pastors involved in confirmation work
- ▶ More influence to the confirmands on the subjects taught

## Hungary

- ▶ Mixed religious environment - 37% Roman Catholics, 12% reformed protestants and 2% Lutherans
- ▶ Few volunteers
- ▶ Need for youth work after confirmation to be established in order for the young to stay within their denomination

## Hungary continued

- ▶ Workers need to attend courses in order to use a more diverse pedagogy
- ▶ Difficult for the workers to keep track of the young members in urban surroundings and to 'compete' with other offers in society and in rural settings the young people leave the village early on in life - before the average age of confirmation
- ▶ Workers must see confirmation work not as the end of religious education but as the beginning!

# Methodist Church in Germany

- ▶ Workers must strive to involve young people in the KU, listen to their ideas and wishes for the KU
- ▶ A wish for more volunteering workers and more than just one person in charge of the KU
- ▶ Leaders must rethink their criterias for full membership of the church



## Methodists continued

- ▶ Due to the minority setting the confirmation groups are small and workers must consider cooperation with other groups in the future so that the confirmands might experience a greater degree of fellowship

