



**Mennonite
World Conference**

A Community of Anabaptist
related Churches

**Congreso
Mundial Menonita**

Una Comunidad de
Iglesias Anabautistas

**Conférence
Mennonite Mondiale**

Une Communauté
d'Eglises Anabaptistes

www.mwc-cmm.org
info@mwc-cmm.org

General Secretariat:
50 Kent Avenue, Suite 206
Kitchener, Ontario N2G 3R1
Canada
T: (1) 519 571 0060
F: (1) 226 647 4224

TERMS OF REFERENCE Global Anabaptist Peace Network – GAPN

**Facilitated by the Peace Commission
Mennonite World Conference**

Vision and Purpose of GAPN

As Christians and members from the Anabaptist Family, we recognize that peace is at the very center of the Gospel, and that by witnessing to justice and peace (Just-Peace) we anticipate and participate in the already-inaugurated but yet-to-be-fulfilled Kingdom of God. As we seek to walk in the ways of peace, we need companions, fellow sojourners, to support us on the road, and we them. In doing so we can walk and journey together in witnessing to God's Just-Peace.

Mennonite World Conference (MWC) is a global communion comprised of 107-member churches from 57 countries around the world. These church bodies, which comprise approximately 10 000 local congregations, have produced much fruit – many peace-related organizations, programs, schools, training programs, research projects, activist-focused initiatives, activists, and scholars.

As an envisioned Global Anabaptist Peace Network (GAPN), we want to support and connect organizations and agencies that have emerged from and serve our church communion. Our hope is to foster an alternative consciousness – a consciousness of peace – as a witness to the realities and mechanisms of death and violence in the world. As such, we want to nurture an imagination built on the kingdom of God and it's all encompassing and all-embracing vision of *shalom*.

In light of this, GAPN seeks to become a space in which it is possible to:

- Walk in solidarity with and support one another as we pursue, promote, and build peace in the world;
- Have the fruit of our churches –i.e. the organizations, programs, schools, training programs, research projects, think-tanks, activist-focused initiatives, activists, and scholars – connected and to explore ways in which to walk with one another in mutually supportive, transformational, and interdependent ways;
- Strengthen the church and communities of peace and justice in our world and for the world;
- Create opportunities to explore the meaning (theological and philosophical) and impact (ethical and practical) of peace (i.e. *shalom*) as we seek to be a Peace Church in the world, which includes exploring and addressing the root causes of conflict, violence, injustice, and oppression;
- Strengthen our Anabaptist Christian identity and our peace consciousness.

Relation with Mennonite World Conference and the Peace Commission

The GAPN has grown in close relation with MWC, more specifically with the Peace Commission (PC). One key decision over time has been to translate this relationship into the structure: the GAPN is hosted and will be organized within the MWC's coverture. In this framework, we see the PC as the entity/space representing and connecting the MWC members churches while the GAPN as a network oriented towards the different organizations that have emerged as result of the ministry of the churches, which in some cases are not members themselves of MWC or one of its existing networks. While the primary addresses of the PC and the GAPN are different, by rooting the GAPN in the PC (and more widely in MWC) we envision a way to sustain and/or re-connect the fruits of the Mennonite/Anabaptist "tree" to the "tree" itself (i.e., the church).

Structurally, this means that the PC will host the GAPN and seek to make the connections between the network, the other parts of MWC and, ultimately, the fellowship of churches. The fact that the GAPN is hosted by the Peace Commission and MWC does not mean limiting the action of the GAPN – especially if, as described, the goals of the network involve working with agencies and organization in multiple directions and levels – but rather grounding it.

Another way in which the MWC/Peace Commission and GAPN relation is translated into practice is by being able to use the opportunities offered by the MWC meetings (such as the Assembly, Commissions Meetings, and the MWC's Networks meetings) to facilitate and promote face-to-face meetings of the GAPN.

Membership and Structure of the GAPN

1. Membership

- Membership will be based on organizations/agencies¹, in particular:
 - Those who are interested in peace from a Mennonite/Anabaptist perspective or root their existence and emergence in this perspective.
 - Those who are already engaged in peace-related activities
 - Those who contribute with different resources to the network
- Membership means:
 - Commitment to sustain and actively participate in the GAPN.
 - Having access to and offering resources.
 - Will be “developers” *and* “beneficiaries” of products and services of the network.
 - An invitation to the network gatherings. Based on the budget of the GAPN, this will involve either subsidizing the traveling costs of some organizations -for instance, from the Global South- or covering the cost of one representative of each member organization/agency.

2. Organizational Structure:

The GAPN will have a Steering Committee (SC). The SC will be tasked to be in contact (via email) and to meet on a regular basis (via skype and/or face-to-face) and follow up closely the life of the GAPN. Some of its tasks will involve planning next possible joint actions and meetings; to nurture and promote the exchange among member organizations; facilitating the relations between the GAPN and the PC (and MWC in general); following up on the decisions made by the members of the GAPN; making decisions and plans in line with the vision of the GAPN; monitoring the budget and the spending plan. The SC of the GAPN will count on the following roles:

- A at least 5 different Steering Committee (SC) representatives, who are chosen from the membership of the GAPN. There will be at least one representative from each continent.
- One Network Coordinator is hired by the MWC General Secretary and is accountable to the Peace Commission Secretary.
- The Peace Commission’s (PC) chair will also serve on the GAPN SC.
- One of the GAPN SC members will serve on the PC as a “specialist”.
- The PC Secretary will sit as an “observer” to the Network SC meetings.
- The Network Coordinator will sit as an “observer” to the PC meetings.

¹ This disposition that the GAPN will initially search for agency/organization as potential members does not mean that in the future some changes of could be possible, considering specifically the potential interest and involvement of persons/individuals. However, it was thought that initially working on the base of agencies and organizations as members would help the start and consolidation of the network. In the meantime, what could be considered is different forms of relationship, endorsement or support from individual or agencies, organization or churches (non-members) and the GAPN.

What the GAPN does

1. ***Facilitate the sharing of information and resources:***

Share with one another urgent prayer and advocacy requests, news, stories, resources, perspectives, studies, expertise, and experiences of network members. This exchange may also include member related or driven opportunities for learning exchanges, internships, bursaries, funding, learning tours, and so forth, that may exist or arise.²

Sharing in such a way would enable:

- Opportunities to empower one another
- Opportunities to learn from one another
- Opportunities to create and share resources with one another

2. ***Membership Directory:***

To promote the exchange between the different agencies and organizations, one key step is to develop a membership directory which responds to the needs of GAPN. This means going beyond simply submitting or sharing “contact details” about different Anabaptist organizations. It would seek to explore the context and the kind of work in which organizations are involved. This will enable the members of GAPN to explore and consider more concrete forms of exchange with other members.

3. ***Creating spaces:***

In order to create interdependent relationships, we want to enable the creation of spaces whereby such connections, synergies, and friendships can emerge.

Guidelines for GAPN

Given its vision, we have identified certain ways in which the GAPN should operate:

1. GAPN will focus on providing the infrastructure that supports and nourishes its members. This does not exclude encouraging urgent actions, campaigns and prayer requests, among others, that can be motivated from the network. Yet, at the centre of GAPN is the idea that the member organizations (and not the network) are at the center of the process. This can be done in different forms:

- Website: developing a website that allows members to share information, news, resources, etc.
- Facilitating connections/exchanging of experiences: we would encourage and try to connect members with one another so that they can build relationships and share experiences.
- Encourage participation: even though we acknowledge that being part of the network is a significant investment of resources and energy and that maintaining it beyond meeting sporadically is difficult, we want to encourage and promote the participation of the different Anabaptist inspired agencies.

² Note that GAPN is not a funding organization. Our desire is to create opportunities for members themselves to share information about such funding opportunities as they exist, which is not granted by GAPN itself.

2. The GAPN will seek to establish multidirectional engagement:
 - Toward each other (other GAPN members).
 - Toward MWC and MWC related churches.
 - Toward other agencies outside of the Anabaptist family of faith.
3. The GAPN will seek to foster spaces for interdependent relationship, building from the local to the global level. In this sense, the GAPN will seek to promote different levels of engagement:
 - at a micro level (e.g., encouraging local/regional involvement and/or action, such as local gatherings, conferences, advocacy involvement, etc.).
 - at a macro level (e.g., international relations; responding to political, economic, systemic realities; global gatherings, etc.).
4. Every voice matters in the life of the GAPN: we want to make sure that the different voices are heard, acknowledged, and respected in the actions and processes of the GAPN. This implies that:
 - GAPN members can participate in the GAPN meetings, contributing their valuable opinions and insights regarding decisions that affect the network.
 - GAPN members will be able to nominate Steering Committee members as well as approve Steering Committee nominees.