

# WUCWO School for Synodality

*Voices and faces at the threshold of the Synod*



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World Union of  
Catholic Women's  
Organisations



## WUCWO School for Synodality

*Final Report of April and May's "Conversations in the Spirit" on  
women's participation in a synodal Church*

26 October 2024



### *Women's mission in the synodal Church*



### OBJECTIVE

- **Train** the people of God, **particularly women in synodality**, so that they can promote this new way of being Church in their own communities, parishes, organisations
- **Deepen** on some of the main issues of **chapter 9**, “Women in the Life and Mission of the Church” of the Synthesis Report of the Synodal Assembly
- Strengthen and **enhance the formation of women to fully participate** in today’s synodal Church in mission, becoming leaders in their communities, parishes, organisations...

## 4 WEBINARS

In February 2024, we developed **4 webinars** where more than **500 people** from **5 continents** participated

Starting  
WUCWO's  
School for  
Synodality

*Women's mission in the Synodal Church*



**Anne-Béatrice Faye**  
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Presidenta Delegada  
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**Momoko Nishimura**  
(Japan)  
President-Delegate Synod  
Assembly



**Eva Fernández Mateo**  
(España)  
Invitada Especial Asamblea  
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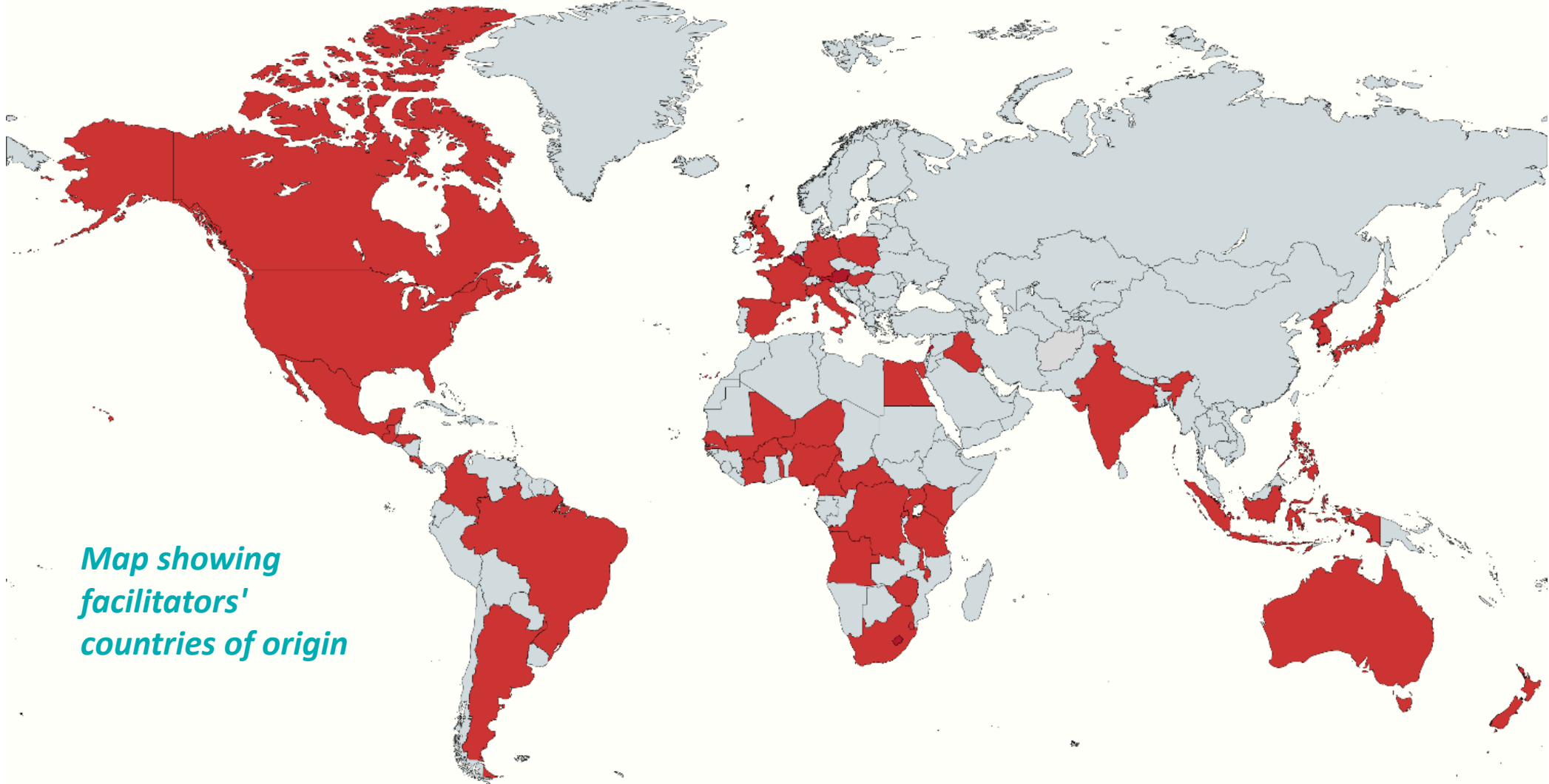


**Susan Pascoe**  
(Australia)  
Expert Synod Assembly

# **April 17, 2024 - Facilitator training**

49 countries

253 women



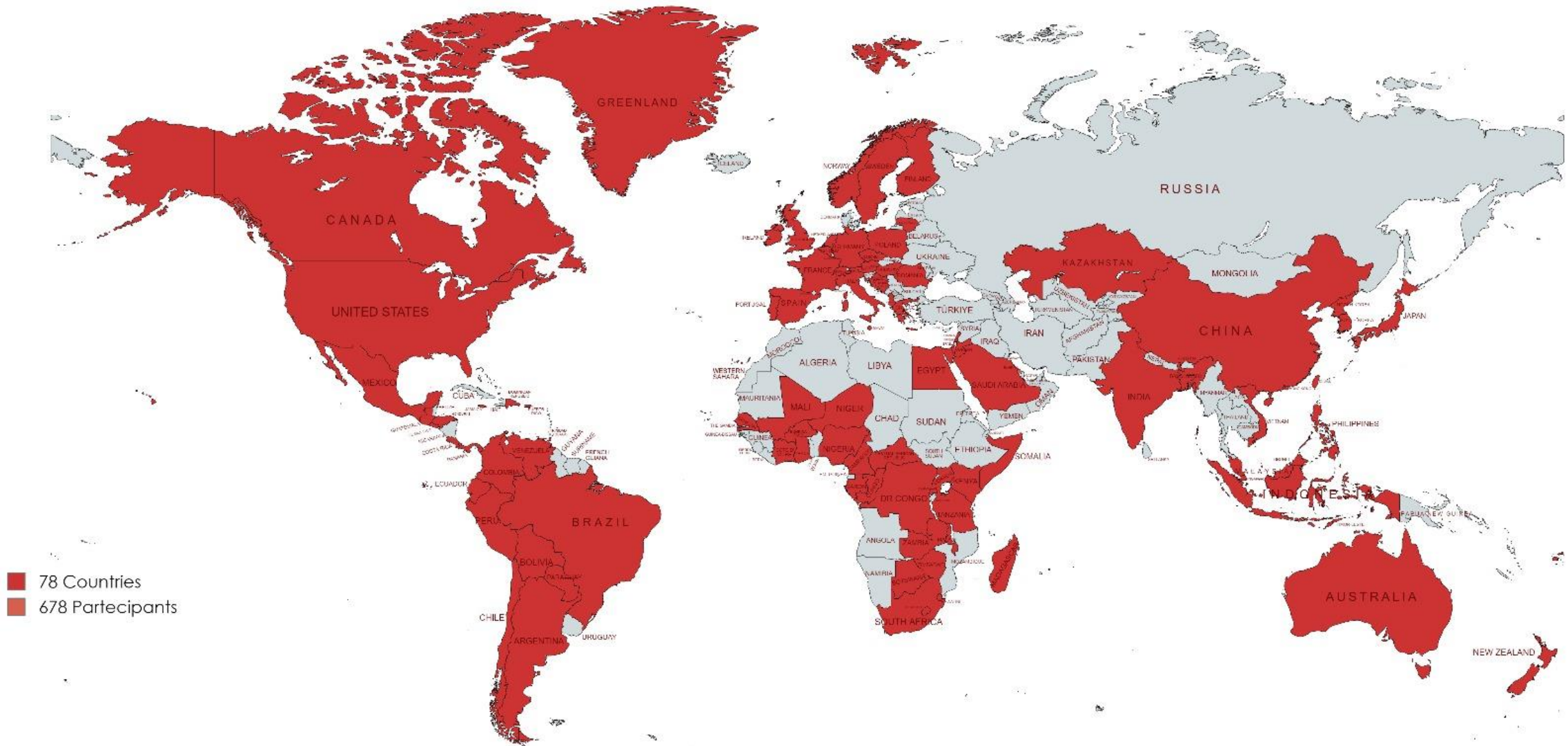
*Map showing facilitators' countries of origin*



## April 23 and May 9 “Conversations in the Spirit” on women's participation in a Synodal Church

78 countries

678 women



## Questions raised in the “Conversations in the Spirit”:

1

How has the Church encouraged and embraced your gifts and charisms as a woman (or man) in the ecclesial community?

2

Did you ever feel excluded by members or structures of the Church?

Give examples and explain how you were affected, positively or negatively

3

**How can the Church include more women in existing roles and ministries?**

**What changes in the structures of the Church or what new roles and ministries might be needed and why?**



## 2024 WUCWO SCHOOL FOR SYNODALITY

# First results of the “Conversations in the Spirit”:

Document:

## “SYNODAL GOOD PRACTICES: FIRST STEPS AND CONCLUSIONS OF WUCWO’S SCHOOL FOR SYNODALITY”

- Sent to the Secretariat of the Synod on **May 15**
- Presented to the public and the press on **May 29**



# Final report of the “Conversations in the Spirit”



**Prepared by the UCA**  
***(Universidad Católica Argentina)***

- Today we will present the main conclusions
- The final report will be sent to the Secretariat of the Synod and to Synodal Mothers and Fathers
- Some conclusions will be deepened with Synodal Mothers and Fathers in parallel events to the Synodal Assembly

## Main results of the “Conversations in the Spirit” – Recommendations

### 1 - Participation, leadership, and empowerment of women in the Church:

- Promote women's participation, co-responsibility and meaningful involvement at all levels of the Church, including the synodal process and decision-making in liturgy, lay organizations, religious education, pastoral activities, digital Evangelisation, selection of Bishops...
- Leadership and empowerment: Women need more opportunities to take on leadership roles within the Church with measures as inclusion in Church governance and new ministries.



## Main results of the “Conversations in the Spirit” – Recommendations

- Autonomy for women in the Church: Acting and making decisions, always in communion with the Church, but without the constant need for clerical validation is fundamental for reducing clericalism. Women need to stop depending on the approval of priests or Bishops to carry out, within the Church, their pastoral and leadership activities.
- Create or strengthen Social Justice Ministries to address domestic violence, trafficking and other forms of exploitation, where women can fully develop their special charisms and gifts at the service of those most in need.



## Main results of the “Conversations in the Spirit” – Recommendations

### 2 - Formation:

- Advanced theological and pastoral formation for women is crucial so that they can participate fully in the Church.
- Joint education to both, men and women, in mixed groups to foster equitable participation and leadership.
- Specific leadership training for women.
- Updating the formation for priests to be better prepared to connect and collaborate with the laity and in particular with women, and answer to today's challenges.

## Main results of the “Conversations in the Spirit” – Recommendations

### 3 - Injustice towards women:

#### INVISIBILITY OF WOMEN.

Women, especially in African and Asian contexts, feel that they are visible only when their work is required, but ignored in decision-making processes. This is frustrating.

#### LACK OF APPRECIATION OF WOMEN'S WORK.

Despite some progress, many women feel their contributions are still undervalued, especially in leadership and decision-making roles.

#### INSUFFICIENT RECOGNITION OF WOMEN'S GIFTS.

Although progress has been made, women perceive that their capacities are still not fully harnessed and respected.

## Main results of the “Conversations in the Spirit” – Recommendations

UNITY IN DIVERSITY as an aspiration. Overcome exclusion and build a more inclusive community, where cultural and gender differences are valued.

RECOGNITION OF WOMEN'S WORK in terms of salaries. Ensure that women's work in the Church is valued and remunerated equally compared to that of men.

METANOIA: a conversion of heart by priests and Bishops regarding women in the Church.



## Main results of the “Conversations in the Spirit” – Recommendations

### 4 - Fruitful collaboration between men and women in the Church:

- Transforming abuses of power into fruitful collaboration between men and women in the Church.
- Strengthening the role of religious women, acknowledging and expanding their influence in key areas such as education, pastoral care, and community leadership.



## Main results of the “Conversations in the Spirit” – Recommendations

### 5 - Structural Reform:

- Need for structural reform: widespread feeling that the structure of the Church needs a profound change to embrace individuals, families and communities.
- Young people are under-represented in the Church and there is a need of spaces for greater youth participation.
- Creation or flexibility of new ecclesiastical institutions and ministries to better reflect current realities and respond more effectively to the needs of the community.



2024 WUCWO SCHOOL FOR SYNODALITY

Main results of the “Conversations in the Spirit” – Recommendations

## 6 - Synodality and Peer Support:

- Synodality: Key methodology for promoting full female participation in the Church, including decision-making. Synodal mechanisms must be incorporated in the power structures of the Church.
- Promote open and inclusive dialogue in the Church, fostering a deeper and more genuine communication where women's voices are actively heard and valued.
- Peer support: encourage women's support networks that they can rely on when experiencing discrimination within the Church



## Main results of the “Conversations in the Spirit” – Divergencies

1

CLEAR DIVISION OF OPINION REGARDING WOMEN'S DIACONATE AND EVEN PRIESTHOOD. Some strongly support the inclusion of women in the diaconate, as a valid aspiration or as a necessary response to the lack of clergy and a sign of justice, while others are sceptic or against it. A few even support women's priesthood.

2

AMBIVALENCE ABOUT PROGRESS. Many women see inclusion as a necessary step in the evolution of the Church; others fear that a rapid change could destabilise Church tradition.

3

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION. Contrasting experiences of leadership in the Church; while some women have felt welcome by Bishops or clergy, others have faced rejection and exclusion.

4

MIXED EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPATION. While some women have received support in their parish communities, others face significant barriers due to a lack of openness of priests.

## Main results of the “Conversations in the Spirit” – Challenges

Resistance to Change and Clericalism: Despite clear demands for change, clericalism remains a major obstacle to women's participation. Among both, clergy and laity, resistance to change has been identified as one of the main challenges to overcome in order to achieve a more inclusive and equitable Church; an authentic synodal Church.



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Newsletter

Magazine *Women's Voice*



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