



Wespath

BENEFITS | INVESTMENTS



Central Conference Pensions 2024 Report

CONNECTED IN MISSION ACROSS A GLOBAL CHURCH



Wespath staff Ross Lundstrum and Thomas Kemper meet with a group of pensioners at the 2023 Liberia annual conference session.



Wespath's General Secretary Andy Hendren and CCP consultant Thomas Kemper visit several UMC programs in Combine, Mozambique including an agricultural project led by the General Board of Global Ministries missionary John Nday (left), and the Carolyn Belshe orphanage (right).

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Greetings from Wespath's General Secretary

Greetings,

I'm pleased to share Wespath's *2024 Central Conference Pensions Report*. Within these pages are stories and images that showcase the lives and ministries of clergy and their families who are served by the Central Conference Pensions (CCP) program.

The CCP program's success stands as a reflection of the worldwide connection across The United Methodist Church (UMC). This program is made possible through strong relationships between Wespath, the UMC's Central Conferences and thousands of dedicated donors. Together they support more than 11,000 participants who are either currently receiving pension benefits or looking forward to receiving benefits upon retirement from active ministry. In my view, the CCP program fully embodies John Wesley's concept of social holiness, as we are most effective at doing good to transform the world for better when we work in connection.

A Personal Perspective

My own experience with the CCP program reaches back 20 years. I joined Wespath in 2004—the same year the UMC General Conference authorized Wespath to lead fundraising efforts for the emerging “Central Conference Pension Initiative.” Since that time, I've watched the program blossom—distributing over \$16 million in pension benefits to more than 3,600 retirees throughout Africa, the Philippines, and parts of Europe and Asia.

Over the years, I have heard countless stories about the CCP program's impact. But it wasn't until my first trip to Africa in 2023 that I truly understood, deep within my heart, the vital role this program plays in transforming the lives of UMC pensioners and their surviving spouses or other beneficiaries. During my time in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, I met with retired pastors and their family members in their homes and local churches. We spent time together in worship, song and conversation despite speaking different languages. As a privileged American, I was moved by the world economy's inequities as pensioners described the personal sacrifices made so they can live into their calling to serve God. At the same time, I was reminded of the power of the UMC mission, witnessing how even modest Church pensions can improve the lives of these servants of God in their later years by providing financial security that helps them afford essentials like medicine, eyeglasses and sometimes even food. I met dozens of individuals with unwavering faith that God will provide. Their fortitude in the face of minimal resources renewed my own faith in God's goodness.

Building for a Stable Future

The past two years have been pivotal for continuing to grow Wespath's already-strong relationships with our partners in the Central Conferences. In 2023 and 2024, several Central Conference bishops visited Wespath's U.S. office. In addition to my travels to Mozambique and Zimbabwe, Wespath staff traveled to Liberia, Kenya, Sierre Leone and the Philippines. And, most recently, we connected with so many of our Central Conference colleagues at the UMC's General Conference in Spring 2024.

As the UMC continues to grow across Africa and the Philippines, the need increases for sustainable local benefit plans that support retirees after a lifetime of faithful service. Thank you for walking with Wespath on this CCP program journey.

Grace and Peace,

Andy Hendren

*General Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Wespath
President, Overseas Pension Corporation*



Andy Hendren, General Secretary and CEO

Central Conference Pensions (CCP) At-A-Glance

Twenty years after the *Book of Discipline* was amended to authorize the effort of the Central Conference Pension Initiative (renamed “Central Conference Pensions” in 2013 upon reaching an initial fundraising goal of \$25 million), Wespeth continues to manage the program, supporting efforts to provide long-term retirement security for United Methodist clergy and their families in many central conferences across Africa, the Philippines and Europe.

What started as a taskforce of eight leaders charged with launching a pension support plan for the central conferences—including many conferences that historically offered little-to-no pension assistance for retired pastors and their family members—has turned into a program with a global UMC network that supports 69 annual conferences from the central conferences.

The CCP’s story showcases the remarkable potential to create powerful, borderless change when the UMC community connection comes together in mission across the world. Today, with overall stable support for the central conference pension plans in place—although sustainability may vary by plan—the program focuses on long-term plan sustainability to ensure future success.



Scan the QR code for more resources about the mission and history of the CCP program.



\$28 million+ in total donations received inception to date through June 30, 2024



\$16 million+ in pension funds distributed from January 1, 2007 to June 30, 2024



Over **7,900** active clergy



69 conferences that CCP assists in management of retirement funds for clergy in 69 of the 79 annual conferences in the central conferences



Over **3,600** retirees and surviving spouses receiving support

A Letter From the Chief Operating Officer

Last fall, during my visit to Nairobi for the Central Conference Pension Forum, I was reminded of the deeply moving stories shared by pension recipients and their families during the visit I made to Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire in 2018. The invaluable impact of the CCP program remains vivid in my mind, a constant reminder of the importance of sustaining this vital program.

In this report you will read the unique stories of retired central conference clergy and their beneficiaries, similar to those I heard firsthand. These stories consistently highlight a critical fact: for many pension recipients, life without these benefits would be unsustainable.

You will also find in this report the current financial state of the benefit plans with a thorough review of each plan. We have taken efforts to highlight plan sustainability, sharing the level of financial risk associated with each plan, as well as areas requiring continual diligence and improvement. The livelihood of the many pensioners supported by the CCP program depends on it.

With opportunities for in-person collaboration resumed following the global pandemic, it is essential that CCP plan sponsors work closely with Wespath to ensure the ongoing health and vitality of these plans. Wespath oversees periodic audits to ensure funds are used as intended and to identify ways to strengthen the plans' stability. Transparency and continual change are required to make long-term progress, and with caring for those who serve at the heart of Wespath's mission, we are here to provide counsel in guiding corrective action.

Since its formation, the CCP program has transformed the lives of thousands of United Methodist clergy and their families. We hope the accounts of the beneficiaries and the information in this report inspire you as they have inspired us to take the necessary steps to keep the pension programs thriving throughout the central conferences. By doing so, we can ensure that we care for those who serve, no matter their location.

Bill Kavanaugh

Chief Operating Officer, Wespath

Vice President, Overseas Pension Corporation



*Bill Kavanaugh,
Chief Operating Officer, Wespath*



(Left to right) Thomas Kemper, Reverend Paul Matheri (Dean of Superintendents of The United Methodist Church, Kenya) and Bill Kavanaugh at the 2023 CCP Forum in Nairobi, Kenya.

In-Person Forums Foster Connections and Collaboration



Wespath's team discussed pension plan administration and the importance of data at the CCP Officers Africa Forums.

Opening worship at the Nairobi CCP Forum with leadership from the West Africa Central Conference.



For Wespath, CCP Forums have always been a way to maintain open lines of communication between our staff and central conference representatives. These gatherings of pension officers and other leaders involved in the pension plans, provide opportunities for networking, training and exchanging important information.

Johannesburg, South Africa CCP Forum

When in-person meetings resumed in the fall of 2022 after the global pandemic, Wespath's CCP team traveled to the bustling city of Johannesburg, South Africa to reconnect with representatives at the CCP Officers Africa Forum, after having met with pension personnel from Europe and the Philippines earlier in the year.

The purpose of the event was to discuss a range of important topics, from sustainable investing and audits to the monetary struggles of UMC clergy in certain parts of Africa, to help Wespath shape a constructive action plan for the CCP program.

"We always welcome opportunities to learn first-hand about the work we do to support the worldwide Church, as well as how we can improve," said Dale Jones, member of Wespath's CCP team.

Nairobi, Kenya CCP Forum

A year after the Johannesburg forum, Wespath hosted the most highly attended CCP Forum in recent years in Nairobi, Kenya. Demonstrating a strong commitment to fostering in-person relationships with the central conferences, the four-day meeting welcomed nearly as many new attendees as returnees, including benefits officers, treasurers and Board of Pensions chairs and members.

From the opening worship—performed in multiple languages and celebrating many cultures—to the group discussions, the theme of collaboration was central throughout the Forum. During Opening Worship, attendees participated in a spiritual coming together, singing and dancing in worship. This experience fostered an openness, encouraging attendees to later engage in dialogues with differing perspectives.

Wespath's CCP team presented alongside other financial experts on topics including global trends in retirement plans, actuarial valuations, auditing programs, and best practices for conference staff and boards. Many central conference representatives also had an opportunity to meet one-on-one with Wespath staff to ask questions, share feedback and explore the needs of their pension plan.

Face-to-Face Forums Foster Connections and Collaboration

The gathering also addressed challenges, such as the ongoing need for retirement plan education, collecting contributions, and the importance of maintaining complete and accurate data. Attendees affirmed efforts to raise awareness of, and promote education about, the CCP program. They were also reassured of Wespath's unwavering support for the CCP program amidst a changing UMC.

Between sessions, attendees had time to dine together and enjoy local recreational activities, fostering camaraderie. Wespath staff joined attendees for a safari outing and visited a conservation center, where they had the unique experience of feeding giraffes undergoing rehabilitation.

"Most of us had never done something like this before," noted Wespath's CCP team member Ross Lundstrom. "It was incredible, and to share that experience as a group for the first time made it even more so."

Following the Forum, attendees were asked to provide feedback on the event. Many participants returned positive evaluations and offered valuable suggestions for the future, oftentimes echoing similar sentiments:



CCP Forum attendees participate in worship.



Nairobi CCP Forum attendees enjoy a visit to a conservation center and safari.

"A great conference! I'd like to see more of these in the future."

"May God bless the work of your hands. I am truly grateful."

"I'm very glad the Forum was held in Nairobi so that I could attend. It was good to be there."

"The visit to the National Park and safari were truly special. We should do it again."

"A wonderful event! It would be great to hear more from the individual conferences."

"The event was very helpful. I'd like to see more training on QuickBooks, sustainability and investments."

New Perspectives: Understanding Pensioners' Points of View

With international visit opportunities reopened following the global pandemic, Wespath staff made two trips to Zimbabwe to reconnect with Central Conference benefits officers and pension recipients.

First, in the fall of 2022, Ross Lundstrom and Thomas Kemper met with the Zimbabwe Board of Pensions in the capital city of Harare to discuss pension plan sustainability. They also visited retired clergy and surviving spouses in Mutare, forming connections with these pension recipients.

Just a few months later, in June 2023, Kemper returned to Zimbabwe and visited Mozambique for the first time with General Secretary Andy Hendren. They spent two weeks meeting pension recipients and their families to learn more about how Wespath cares for those globally through the CCP program.

These face-to-face visits provided valuable perspectives for better understanding the needs of pensioners and the opportunities for the CCP program to better address those needs.



Wespath's General Secretary Andy Hendren meets the late Rev. Enosse Litiho, who was the oldest member of the UMC in Mozambique prior to his passing in 2023.



Wespath's Ross Lundstrom visits with pensioners in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Andy Hendren and Thomas Kemper are welcomed into the home of retired Bishop João Somane Machado (pictured left). Bishop Machado led the Mozambique UMC from 1988-2008.



Liberia Conference Makes Moves Towards Plan Sustainability

In July 2024, members from Wespath's team traveled to the UMC Liberia Annual Conference to discuss the conference's pension plan in Monrovia. The plan has faced many financial challenges over the years, and after a recent audit that was conducted by the CCP program audit firm, Holbrook Global, Wespath had a productive follow-up meeting with the auditor and the Liberia pension team where they created a plan to work towards added benefit transparency and accountability.

One of the new developments for the conference's pension board is electronic pension payments via mobile phone, which will be safer, faster and more convenient for recipients. In district meetings in Monrovia, Buchanan and Cotton Tree, the team was able to see these efforts in real time. At the time of the visit in July, 55 people registered for the mobile service, and Wespath witnessed their joy of receiving a pension via their mobile device, for the first time! While much more work remains, the Liberia Annual Conference demonstrated its commitment to supporting clergy and their families in the days and years ahead.



Rev. Alex Harmon (center), Liberia Conference Benefit Officer, and Wespath staff address clergy questions in Monrovia about pension plan basics, sustainability challenges, and setting up mobile money accounts for electronic pension payments.



Rev. Frisco Reese (right), 78 years young, receives his first mobile pension payment with the help of Lucky Vanceyah (left) from the conference office.



Pensioners are excited to receive their first mobile payments.

Historic Milestones and Renewed Commitments

Philippines Central Conference Strengthens Its Pension Program with Wespeth Support

Over the past several years, the Philippines Central Conference has worked diligently alongside Wespeth to ensure the stability of its pension program amid significant changes in the Conference's leadership.

During a 2022 visit to the Philippines, Wespeth's Dale Jones and Bill Kavanaugh witnessed history when Rev. Ruby-Nell M. Estrella was elected the first female bishop in the Philippines Central Conference. Estrella was one of three bishops elected at the Philippines Central Conference Special Session.

Then in 2023, the three newly elected bishops from the Philippines visited Wespeth's headquarters in Glenview, Illinois. Their visit included discussions about the Central Conference Pensions program and provided an opportunity for the Wespeth team to meet with Bishop Estrella and discuss her historic appointment.

"I have always been very grateful for Wespeth and the CCP program," Bishop Estrella shared, "but it wasn't until I was elected treasurer [of the Philippines Central Conferences] that I realized the extent of their impact and came to truly appreciate what you do for us. I value all the support Wespeth provides—not just the financial support, but the moral and spiritual support as well."

After another trip to the Philippines in 2023, Dale Jones praised the Conference's commitment to its pension.

"Liz [Mariano, Philippines Central Conference Board of Pensions chairperson] and Board of Pensions members care deeply about the well-being of the pastors they seek to support and serve," he observed. "Board leaders and members and central conference staff have worked diligently and conscientiously over the last decade to strengthen their pension plan and move it closer to becoming self-sustaining. While the pandemic disrupted their excellent progress, they are emerging from that setback and funding for the pension plan is again improving."



Dale Jones and Bill Kavanaugh were at the Philippines Central Conference Special Session when Rev. Ruby-Nell Estrella was elected the first female bishop for the area.



Bishops from the Philippines visit the Wespeth office. Bishops pictured starting third from left (L to R): Bishop Israel Painit, Bishop Ruby-Nell Estrella, Bishop Rodolfo Juan (retired), Rosario Acdal and Bishop Rodel Acdal.



Board of Pension presents plaque of recognition to Wespeth's CCP team.

General Conference



Wespath's General Secretary Andy Hendren (left) and Dale Jones (right) present at the General Conference orientation session in April 2024.

After a four-year delay, the General Conference convened in 2024 in Charlotte, North Carolina from April 23 to May 3, 2024. Wespath's General Secretary Andy Hendren, Dale Jones and consultant Thomas Kemper, alongside North Katanga benefits officer Didier Banza and conference treasurer Rev. Daniel Mumba, presented an overview on Wespath's legislation to the central conference delegates during the orientation session. The team discussed the need for the since-approved Compass retirement plan for the U.S. Church, Wespath's sustainable investing legislation and the rationale behind introducing regionalization for addressing U.S.-only matters. Guest speakers Didier Banza and Rev. Daniel Mumba also explained the importance of their pension plan in providing a livelihood for retired clergy and spouses.

Wespath materials were translated from English into French, Portuguese, Kiswahili and Tagalog to clearly communicate with all delegates. The event was an incredible opportunity to strengthen Wespath's relationships across the worldwide UMC Connection.

General Conference Implications for Central Conference Pensions

Outcomes from the General Conference that are widely heralded and affirmed by much of the U.S. UMC have caused some unrest and dissension among United Methodists elsewhere, particularly in Africa. As disaffiliations and clergy withdrawals from the UMC have ebbed in the U.S., UMC separations and discussions of separation have increased in parts of Africa. These activities have implications for the CCP program and the pension plans it supports.

The CCP team and the Overseas Pension Corporation Board developed guiding principles for UMC division and separation scenarios, and continue to amend and refine these principles as situations in the central conferences evolve. The principles are aimed at ensuring CCP funds are used in support of pensions for past and future service in the United Methodist Church and pension obligations for UMC service are fulfilled.

Most pension plans operating in the central conferences contain provisions for clergy who end their relationship with the UMC but have enough UMC service to be entitled to a benefit in accordance with each pension plan's vesting rules. In situations where active clergy choose to leave the UMC and their annual conference or episcopal area, CCP urges adherence to plan language to return contributions to those clergy, allowing the pension plan to settle its obligations to these former clergy participants.

In other situations, an entire conference or episcopal area may leave the UMC to become an autonomous body. CCP will seek to develop a new arrangement with that entity so it can meet its pension obligations to existing pensioners and active participants with vested UMC service. The new autonomous entity may choose to continue to invest pension funds with Wespath.

At the writing of this report, there is considerable uncertainty about divisions and separations from the UMC in some areas with CCP-supported pension plans. The administrative and financial effects of divisions and separations on both the CCP program and the pension plans involved are therefore not yet fully known.

CCP Program Administration

The administration of the CCP program requires a strong partnership between Wespath and the central conference bishops, benefit officers, treasurers and other key pension leaders across the globe.

The Wespath team is made up of four individuals and supported by Bill Kavanaugh, Chief Operating Officer, General Secretary Andy Hendren, and Wespath's Board of Directors and the Board of the Overseas Pension Corporation, a subsidiary of Wespath. Each individual and function plays an important role in the oversight of the CCP program.

Wespath invests and serves as trustee for the CCP endowment, which has been funded by donors' gifts over the past 20 years and is essential to the mission of the CCP program. The mission of the CCP program is *providing support to assist in developing sustainable benefit plans for the benefit of those who serve The United Methodist Church globally.*

Each of the pension plans supported by the CCP program was developed and adopted by the respective conference, episcopal area, or central conference in which the plan operates. These entities bear legal, administrative and financial responsibilities for their plans. While Wespath offers support services to the individual plans and plan sponsors, it

is ultimately the responsibility of the plan sponsor to adhere to their plan document and local regulatory requirements and ensure that pension benefits are made available to those clergy who faithfully serve the UMC.

Members of the Wespath CCP Team



Dale Jones, Managing Director, Church Relations; Ross Lundstrom, Church Relations Manager; Michelle Smart, Senior Church Relations Specialist; Thomas Kemper, CCP Consultant (left to right, top to bottom).

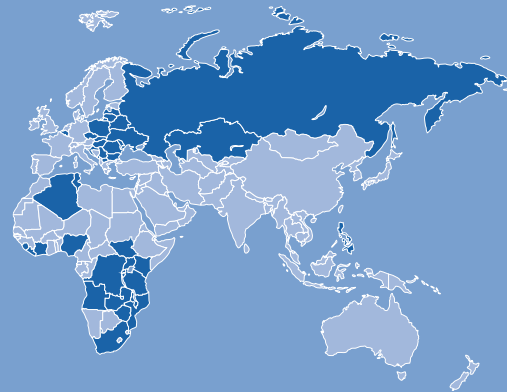
The following image more clearly illustrates the roles related to the plans and participants.



**Note: Plans adopted by central conference, episcopal area or annual conference*

CCP Program Administration

The CCP program serves pension plans in countries throughout the Central Conferences as reflected below.



Wespath Support

The CCP team provides consulting support to the plans related to administration and plan design. This is primarily done through site visits, video meetings, communications and biennial CCP program forum in-person meetings held in a central location. Since the last report generated in 2022, Wespath has held a forum in South Africa and then late last year in Kenya. With the ease of obtaining visas and traveling to Kenya, it provided the opportunity for expanding the number of attendees from the various countries to include a Board of Pension chair or member, resulting in our largest gathering to date and provided an increase of perspectives and richness to the conversations. Challenges and best practices related to the administration of the plans were covered as well as general discussions on direction of the Church and impact on the pension plans. Wespath also took the opportunity to include investment, actuarial and audit experts that support the CCP program in video sessions to share their perspectives and services provided to the program.

Investment support is also made available to the CCP program members for pension reserves or other pools of assets they may have and choose to invest in the Wespath Funds. Wespath is available to review the funds and investment performance as well. We also attempt to meet with Boards of Pensions during our visits and are able to provide guidance on plan design, administration and our investment program.

CCP Program Support

The CCP program provides pension payment support that was designed to cover a portion of the benefit payments from the initial establishment of the plans by transferring funds to the local countries on a quarterly basis, which matches the timeframes of the payments for most of the

plans. As these are contributory plans, the expectation is that church and participant contributions will be made to support ongoing and future payment needs and not rely solely on funds from the CCP program. Additionally, the program provides financial administrative support on a semi-annual basis in order to cover a portion of the administrative expenses with running a pension program.

The CCP program has also contracted with Willis Towers Watson LLC to complete biennial actuarial valuations for each of the plans that provide a long-term perspective of the financial health of the plan and the ability to meet the benefit payment needs of the participant base currently and well into the future. In addition to providing the information to each of the plans, review and training sessions on the actuarial reports were held by video meetings as well as at the Forums where the actuarial representative from Wespath reviewed the report in detail.

Pension audits are made available to the plans at no cost at least once every three years through field work and on-site visits by Holbrook Global Limited. A complete report of adherence to the plan document, administrative procedures and confirmation of receipt of benefits by the participant is provided to key leadership of the plan including the bishop. Ensuring progress towards addressing any issues identified by an audit is also a critical element of the process. Holbrook's familiarity with the UMC, Central Conference structure and operations, and the opportunity to hold audits with other parts of the area has proven to be a positive in terms of efficiency and maintaining costs.

Pension Plan Sustainability

Sustainability Considerations

To receive CCP funding a pension plan must initially achieve the following criteria before becoming operational:

Six Foundational Criteria

1. Elect and train a Board of Pensions,
2. Prepare and adopt a pension plan description, or plan document,
3. Select and train a benefits officer and orient the bishop to the pension program,
4. Establish a discrete bank account to be used only for pension funds,
5. Provide documentation of the conference's or episcopal area's official government registration and engagement in legally recognized charitable work, and
6. Establish accurate records for all pension plan participants.

Pension plan reviews and assessments that occur over time typically include evaluations of several aspects of the plan that have been identified as important factors in achieving long-term sustainability as follows:

- Foundational strengths, that is, maintaining the criteria and qualities required for CCP support initially,
- A continued, sustainable funding stream,
- Regular actuarial valuations and utilization of the valuation results,
- A comprehensive investment policy and regular investment reviews
- Legal review to ensure plan complies with pension laws and regulations,
- Plan document compliance,
- Focused benefits education for pastors and congregational leaders,
- Regular audits, with reporting of and action on audit findings,
- United Methodist connection or origins, and
- Working with Wespath to address pension plan sustainability.

Future Pension Plan Stability

Achieving and preserving a self-sustaining status is at the core of the CCP-supported pension plans. These are contributory plans by design, requiring contributions from both church and clergy to ensure their viability. Although CCP funding is anticipated to continue indefinitely, it alone cannot fulfill all the long-term obligations of the pension plan, underscoring the critical need for sustainability.

As mentioned earlier, the individual pension plans within the CCP program are the ongoing responsibility of the plan sponsor, which in this case are the episcopal areas and annual conferences located in the Philippines, Europe and Africa areas. The fundraising for the CCP program was intended to provide initial financial support and supplement conference funding ongoing, but never to be considered the sole source of funding. Therefore, the collection of contributions and appropriate investment management is critical to the ongoing support and success of the plans. Without that, plans will not have sufficient funds to meet their pension obligations as their pension liabilities continue to grow.

The amounts needed for pension benefits over time are subject to increase for several reasons, including, but not limited to:

- Growth in numbers of clergy,
- Increases in the costs of essentials for living, and/or
- Improved medical/health systems that increase life expectancy.

Already, the pension distributions of several plans exceed the amount of CCP support. Sooner or later, this will be true with most pension plans and will require the areas to provide the ongoing shortfall.

Pension Plan Sustainability

What happens if a pension plan becomes unable to meet its pension obligations?

The necessity of developing sustainable pension plans is highlighted by the history of previous non-CCP programs that failed to meet their obligations, leaving clergy without the support they expected in retirement. Such failures not only diminish trust in the Church's systems and institutions but also significantly impact the lives of retired clergy and their surviving spouses by reducing the income they depend on for a dignified retirement. Additionally, active clergy nearing retirement face the prospect of having no pension income at all.

Wespath is dedicated to helping CCP-supported pension plans avoid this outcome through continuous analysis and advisory support. However, the responsibility for maintaining contribution levels and implementing essential sustainability reforms ultimately lies with the pension plans themselves and their governing bodies, such as the local board of pensions and the annual conference, episcopal area, or central conference. This report's "Global View of Benefits and Reviewing Individual Plans" section includes a risk assessment that underscores the urgency for some plans, which without action are at risk of depleting their funds soon. As you will see, others are on a more stable footing.

Achieving sustainable pensions requires a long-term view that demands consistent commitment, vigilant monitoring, and timely adaptations to changing circumstances. CCP is committed to this long-term effort, working collaboratively with pension plans to ensure they can meet the future needs of clergy and their families.



Wespath representatives meet with the Sierra Leone Board of Pensions to discuss the financial status of the plan and the formation of a new Pension Sustainability Committee.



Ross Lundstrom with members of the Zimbabwe conference benefits office, Moss Kapumha (left) and Solomon Chiripasi (right).



Thomas Kemper (right) meets with Bishop Samuel Quire (left) of the Liberia Annual Conference.

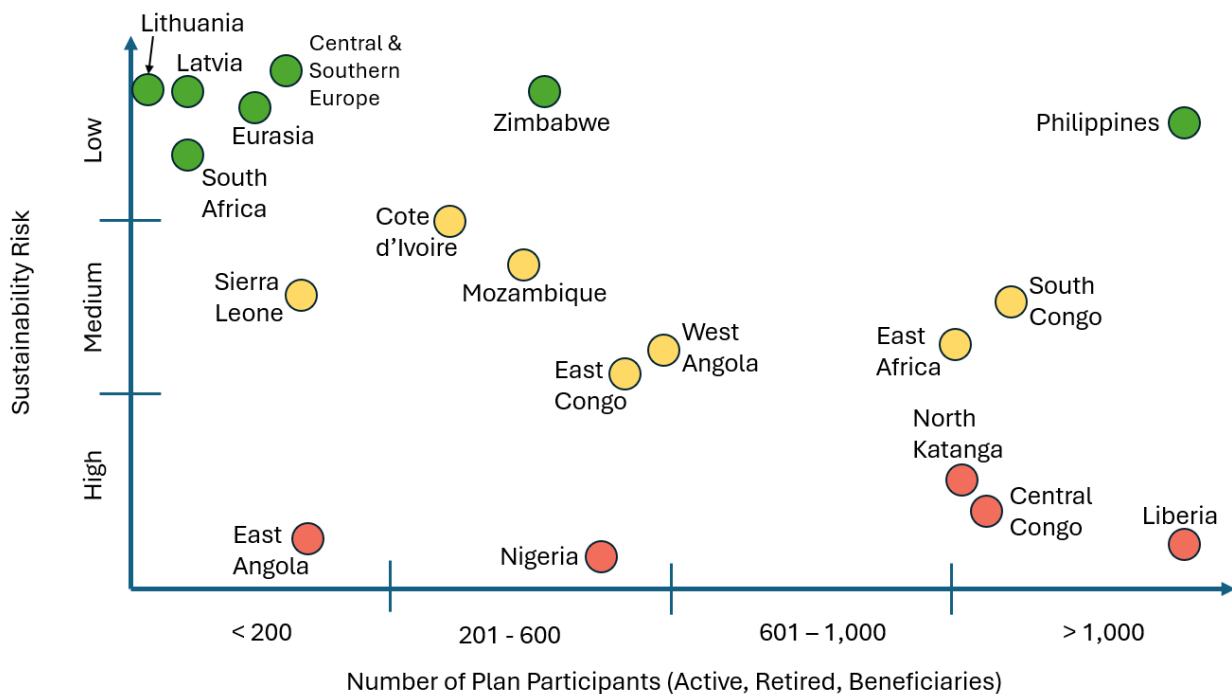
Global View of Benefits and Reviewing Individual Plans

As mentioned, each of the plans are the responsibility of the individual conference or episcopal area, while Wespath provides consulting services for administering successful and sustainable plans. To that end, Wespath has provided information for each of the plans that reflects the overall risk of the plan towards long-term sustainability and specific information regarding the assessments, challenges and recent developments of the plans in the following plan details. The following reviews are based on the CCP team’s assessments at the time this report was compiled (third quarter 2024). Future reports will reflect the outcomes of any actions or changes made to improve sustainability.

Additionally, for comparison purposes, included is a chart that reflects the relative sustainability risk and approximate size of each plan in total number of participants and beneficiaries. It charts the risk factor of the plan by color and the size of the colored circle represents the size of the plan. Please note that all dollar values are in U.S. Dollars, unless otherwise noted.



PENSION PLANS RELATIVE COMPARISON SUSTAINABLE FUNDING STREAM AND PLAN COMPLIANCE





OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY



East Angola Overall Plan Risk Summary

RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar to the West Angola plan, the fund level reflected in the most recent actuarial valuation is at an extreme low of 1.76%. The lack of clergy and church contribution collection continues to be a significant reason for insufficient funds required to meet pension obligations. This has resulted in the plan being solely dependent on CCP support and contributions deducted from Mountain Sky Annual Conference salary supplements.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A CCP program consultant conducted an onsite visit in October 2023 to review the administrative processes and adherence of the plan to plan documents. The consultation confirmed a lack of pension fund sources beyond those from outside the conference as well as deviations from plan requirements. Improvement of operational management and controls is also needed. Benefit payments are not in compliance with the plan document as amounts are being reduced in order to utilize the funds provided as outlined above. The CCP team feels strongly that the variability and reduction of retiree and surviving spouse benefits based on available funds must be addressed by Conference leadership.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing continues to be an issue, with the current voluntary benefit officer seeking a voluntary successor for several years. A dedicated individual of the conference should be identified, hired and trained to address plan needs. Holbrook Global is scheduled to conduct an onsite audit of the pension program in August 2024 for a more detailed review of plan compliance and internal controls. While we await further details regarding the plan's operations, dedicating conference resources to address current shortcomings is extremely important.



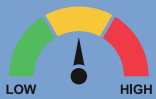
Gertrude Ntamajo (Province of Gisuru, Burundi)

Gertrude Ntamajo served as a pastor for nearly 30 years with a special focus on women and young girls at a church center established by missionaries. Now, with the support of her pension from Wespeth and the Burundi Annual Conference, she is able to employ local workers for her farm and provide them with livelihood opportunities. Her pension has also enabled her to build a three-bedroom house, which she shares with her daughter, grandchild and great-grandchild.

Global View of Benefits and Reviewing Individual Plans



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY



West Angola Overall Plan Risk Summary

RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the 2022 actuarial valuation, the plan’s funding level is 0.27% with over \$4 million unfunded liabilities. While contribution collection has significantly progressed at a 92% rate, funds continue to fall short in meeting required benefit payments compared to those provided by the CCP program.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A CCP program consultant conducted an onsite visit in October 2023 to review the administrative processes and compliance with the plan document. The administration of the plan has improved significantly regarding contribution collections, financial controls and record management. However, despite these improvements, the plan’s overall sustainability remains at significant risk due to its financial condition. The consultation revealed that benefit payments for the approximately 95 pensioners are not being made in accordance with the plan document—the payment amount is determined solely on the funds provided by the CCP program. Increasing reserves through contributions and other means is critical to ensuring benefit levels are raised to the existing plan requirements.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While improved plan administration has proven valuable, more accurate record management has identified additional active members covered by the plan—from 89 to 435—since the last valuation. However, accurately accounting for this increased number of clergy has negatively impacted the plan’s long-term financial sustainability. Holbrook Global is scheduled to conduct an onsite audit of the pension program in the third quarter of 2024 for a more detailed review of plan compliance and internal controls, followed up by a thorough assessment of plan provisions and opportunities to improve sustainability. Inclusion of the Board of Pension and Conference leadership in the review process is critical.

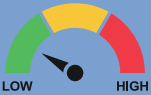


Salida Natingue (Mozambique)

According to her grandchildren, Salida Natingue is a living library. At 86, she continues to teach her four children, 15 grandchildren and one great-grandchild good manners. Her late husband Gideon Jamella was a translator of the Methodist hymnbook into the Tswa (Xitswa) language. As a widow living with her daughter’s family, Natingue expressed her gratitude for the CCP program’s financial support.



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY



Central and Southern Europe Overall Plan Risk Summary

RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan's overall funding level has significantly improved from 28% to 63% since the last actuarial valuations. This improvement can be attributed to an increase in pension reserve assets and a return to more normal discount rates, which ultimately reduce the overall liabilities of the plan. The most recent valuation reflects sufficient assets to meet benefit payments over the next 40 years.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The separation of the Methodist Episcopal Church from the UMC in Bulgaria was completed prior to this report's publication. A mutually agreed upon process for handling the administration and ongoing pension support of the clergy's service with the UMC was coordinated between Bulgaria, Central and Southern Europe, and Wespath. Overall, the plan's services are well coordinated and the cooperation with the Central and Southern Europe pension staff and leadership is greatly appreciated. Ongoing monitoring of the plan will be important given the recent benefit increase of 25 euros a month to help offset the impact of increasing inflation across many of the countries within the region.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Central and Southern Europe plan is audited regularly by the area's selected firm given it is part of their entire audit package. Results continue to show the financial controls and management oversight are well managed. Meeting with Bishop Zurcher and other key leaders on pension issues and having a member of the Wespath team regularly attend Board of Pension meetings have been beneficial for Wespath and the episcopal area.



Marta Mucambe (Mozambique)

Before Marta Macambe's husband passed away, he and Marta were church planters in northern Mozambique. One of the churches they had previously established with four other families is now an entire district of The United Methodist Church. Marta gave birth to 10 children but suffered the early loss of four. As Hendren and Kemper were leaving Mucambe's home after a welcoming stay, she began to sing and dance in joy and peace the words of Simeon, "My eyes have seen your salvation."



Rev. Kaiboni Nkomo (Mozambique)

Together with his wife Anni, Rev. Kaiboni Nkomo raised six children and 21 grandchildren. Now 81, Nkomo has accomplished a great deal during his years of service. As a pioneer of prison ministry, he was appointed the first chaplain general of the Zimbabwe prison service. He also started many new churches in the mining region of Zimbabwe, which have developed into ten circuits today. Thanks to the CCP program, Nkomo and his wife can help their daughter-in-law run a school of over 200 students on their compound in Harare.



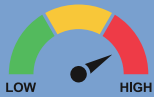
Congo Overview

Although the Congo Central Conference has a single pension plan document, the pension plan essentially operates as four different plans, one for each existing episcopal area in the central conference. Below is an overview of considerations or concerns that apply to all four plans. On the following pages, we've outlined detailed reporting for each of the four areas.

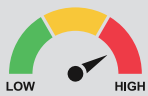


RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to the individual area reports on the following pages for detailed information.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to the individual area reports on the following pages for detailed information.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on actions of the General Conference, the Congo Central Conference is approved to add a fifth bishop in 2025. We expect this will lead to reconfiguration of one or more episcopal areas, and the possibility of participants transferring to new areas. The impact of adding the new episcopal area on the Central Congo Episcopal Area's pension liability, participant numbers, and plan administration remains to be seen. An annual maximum for CCP support was set initially for the Congo plan as a whole. However, that total was never divided into separate amounts for each episcopal area. Instead, to date CPP support for each area has been equal to the amount of that area's pension payments. Accordingly, in earlier years when CCP payments to all four areas totaled less than the maximum for the Congo pension plan, CCP retained the difference; when pension payments exceeded the maximum designated for the plan overall, as they have in recent years, the episcopal areas have continued to receive the full amounts of their pension payments, resulting in CCP expenditures that now well exceed the original maximum amount. The significant growth in United Methodism across the Democratic Republic of the Congo has led to a substantial increase in payments to pensioners. Eventually, CCP will need to set a maximum pension support amount for each episcopal area, similar to the arrangements in place for most other CCP-supported pension plans. The best time would be after the fifth episcopal area is operational, allowing us to assess the impact of reconfiguring the central conference.



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY



Central Congo Overall Plan Risk Summary

RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan requires clergy to contribute 3%, and churches 5%, of compensation. As of the most recent actuarial valuation, average clergy salaries in the Central Congo Episcopal Area were the lowest among the four Congo Episcopal Areas, with salaries just over half of those in the next lowest area. However, because the formula used to calculate benefits across all episcopal areas is the same, in accordance with provisions of the Congo pension plan, even with full collection contributions, the annual contribution income falls far short of the annual amount needed to meet the cost of benefits earned. On an annual or semi-annual basis, the plan deposits contributions received into its Wespath investment account, resulting in an account balance of over \$71,000 at year-end 2023. Accumulated assets have come almost entirely from church and clergy contributions. Up to this point, contributions have not been used to pay benefits to pensioners. To date, CCP funds have covered those payments, which have not grown substantially over time. (See related comments in Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns, below.) Achieving financial sustainability for the plan in the near-term will require additional income from contributions or other sources, or reduction in benefit obligations, or some combination of both. The plan's long-term financial challenges were compounded by a sudden and unexplained increase in the number of active clergy, from 392 in September 2022 to 713 by March 2023. The funded ratio of current assets to accrued liability as of the most recent actuarial valuation was 2.7%, only slightly improved from the 2.6% of the prior valuation. The funded ratio for present value of future assets to future liabilities is 57%, which equates to an underfunding of over \$1 million.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Central Congo Episcopal Area benefits officer is the veteran among the benefits officers serving each of four episcopal areas of the Congo Central Conference and is competent, conscientious, and responsive. He is assisted by two conference benefits officers. Pension payments are distributed in cash as many pensioners live in remote areas without access to banking institutions. Although this is not ideal for security, effort or efficiency, the pensions staff has established sound processes to ensure payments are appropriately received and documented. The primary management of the plan seems to be handled by the episcopal area's benefits officer and his assistants for the conferences within the area. There is little evidence of active involvement by the Board of Pensions.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to page 19 for Congo overview.



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY

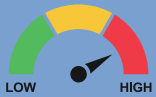


East Congo Overall Plan Risk Summary

RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributions to the pension fund are set at 3% of compensation for pastors' contributions and 5% for church contributions. Numbers from the most recent actuarial valuation indicate these contribution rates, even if collected at 100%, will fall short of the annual amount needed to cover the benefits earned. The plan has annually or semi-annually deposited contribution receipts into its Wespath investment account. Accumulated assets have come almost entirely from church and clergy contributions. Up to this point, CCP support has been providing all the funds needed to pay benefits to pensioners, which have grown substantially over time. Achieving financial sustainability for the plan will require increasing contributions or other additional income to the plan, reducing benefit obligations, or some combination of both. Financial challenges are compounded by portions of the area in which violence and civil war displaces pastors and even communities, so that clergy may go for periods with no compensation, and accordingly, no source for pension plan contributions. In the past, this resulted in markedly lower average and aggregate clergy compensation than reported for the last two valuations. The funded ratio of current assets to accrued liability as of the most recent actuarial valuation was only 4.14%. However, that was up from 2.02% with the previous valuation. The funded ratio for present value of future assets to future liabilities is more a more hopeful 67%, although that still leaves the plan underfunded by more \$345,000.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The benefits officer for the East Congo Episcopal Area is a diligent, competent and dedicated servant of the Church and its clergy. The pensions office has thorough records of payments to pensioners and contributions received, although they generally use paper rather than digital files. The benefits officer is working on setting up QuickBooks, which offers application-based accounting and digital recordkeeping. Pension payments are distributed in cash as many pensioners live in remote areas without access to banking institutions. Although this is not ideal for security, effort or efficiency, the pensions staff has established sound processes to ensure payments are appropriately received and documented. Primary management of the plan appears to be cared for by the benefits officer for the episcopal area and his assistants for conferences within the area. There is minimal indication of Board of Pensions activity.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to page 19 for Congo overview.



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY



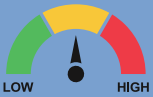
North Katanga Overall Plan Risk Summary

RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan requires clergy to contribute 3%, and churches 5%, of compensation, however, only 15% to 20% of total eligible clergy are contributing to the pension plan. Most of these participants are clergy in and around Kamina. While only a small percentage of clergy currently contribute, prior to the appointment of the current benefits officer the plan had essentially no contributors. The North Katanga plan has the highest total pension payments and largest number of pensioners among all episcopal areas in the Congo Central Conference. The latest actuarial valuation shows that without an increase in income or a reduction in benefit obligations (or a combination of both), the plan could deplete its funds within approximately five years. Despite low participation rates, the plan has shown progress in collecting and investing contributions, increasing assets from nearly zero at the beginning of 2018 to approximately \$47,400 as of the most recent actuarial valuation. However, this only resulted in a funded ratio of 2.51% of accrued liabilities. The funded ratio for the present value of future assets to future liabilities is 87%, with an underfunding amount of over \$275,000 if all eligible clergy are contributing, or 84% and about \$346,00 in underfunding without participant contributions.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The benefits officer for the North Katanga Episcopal Area pension plan lives in Lubumbashi. He is assisted in administering the plan by the treasurer of the North Katanga Conference. Pension payments are distributed in cash since many pensioners live in remote locations without access to banking institutions. Pensions are typically paid every six months. Pensioners have asked for quarterly or even monthly distributions, but this would cost a substantial amount due to the lack of electronic payments, the number of pensioners and the expanse of the area. The benefits officer reports North Katanga pension plan provisions have been amended to remove licensed local pastors from eligibility. Few, if any, local pastors had been participating in the plan, and the benefits officer was often unable to obtain the data of licensed local pastors required for actuarial valuations. Thorough recordkeeping of contributions from the few eligible clergy—who contributed and for which periods—is essential. The plan cannot become self-sustaining if it pays pensions for periods when clergy did not contribute and should not receive pension credit. The North Katanga pension office has explored the use of QuickBooks, which should be a viable good solution for tracking contributions if other reliable systems are not already in place. The primary management of the plan seems to be handled by the episcopal area’s benefits officer and the North Katanga conference treasurer. There is minimal indication of Board of Pensions involvement.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to page 19 for Congo overview.

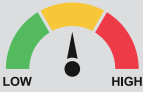
Global View of Benefits and Reviewing Individual Plans



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY



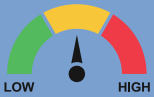
South Congo Overall Plan Risk Summary

RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan requires clergy to contribute 3%, and churches 5%, of compensation. The benefits officer for the South Congo Episcopal Area seeks to collect additional funding to improve the plan's financial condition. Higher average clergy salaries in South Congo result in higher contributions, which will extend the financial solvency of the South Congo pension plan, as compared to those in the other three episcopal areas of the Congo Central Conference. However, as the number of pensioners increases over time, the plan will require additional income or reduced benefits within the next 20 years to remain sustainable. The plan has shown good progress in collecting and investing contributions. At the beginning of 2018, the plan had minimal assets. By the beginning of 2024, the combination of invested contributions and investment earnings increased the plan's assets to over \$190,000. Despite the asset growth, the funded ratio of current assets to accrued liability as of the most recent actuarial valuation was only 7.6%. The funded ratio for present value of future assets to future liabilities is more hopeful at 69%, but still leaves the expected obligations underfunded by almost \$655,000. Almost no contributions were collected, or funds raised, in the first five years of the plan, leaving a substantial funding deficit.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The South Congo pension plan encompasses five annual conferences and two countries, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia. The geography is vast, and some pensioners are in remote and difficult-to-access areas. The benefits officer has been effective in improving clergy participation in, and contributions to, the plan. A financial assistant provides day-to-day plan accounting, financial management, and data management. A Zambia Conference district superintendent serves benefits officer duties for Zambia clergy. Their participation in the plan reportedly has also improved substantially since he assumed these duties. Pension payments are distributed in cash since many pensioners live in remote locations without access to banking institutions. Pensions are typically paid every six months. Pensioners have asked for quarterly or even monthly distributions, but this would cost a substantial amount due to the lack of electronic payments, the number of pensioners, and the expanse of the area. In accordance with plan provisions for South Congo, unlike for the Congo plan overall, clergy appointed as local pastors are not eligible for the plan. There appears to be compliance with this provision. The primary management of the plan seems to be handled by the benefits officer for the episcopal area and the financial assistant for the episcopal area, with support from the Zambia Conference's benefits officer. There is minimal indication of Board of Pensions involvement.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to page 19 for Congo overview.




Global View of Benefits and Reviewing Individual Plans

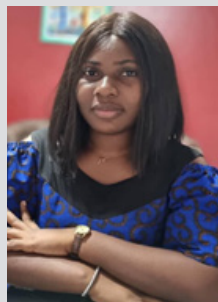


OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY



Cote d'Ivoire Overall Plan Risk Summary

RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan's unfunded liability significantly improved between the end of 2020 and 2022, increasing the funded ratio from 31% to 43%. This improvement was due to an increased discount rate—an important factor when calculating plan pension liabilities—as well as the increase in pension reserves, resulting from a higher contribution rate of 4% starting in 2023. Reserve assets are maintained both locally and at Wespath. The \$25,000 annual CCP support, covers nearly all benefit payments, with any modest shortfalls covered by more-than-adequate reserves. The most recent actuarial valuation was completed prior to the decision of the Cote d'Ivoire Annual Conference to leave the UMC. Some financial implications of that decision are yet to be determined.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the plan is well managed from an administrative and data perspective. Wespath appreciates the work of the plan's benefit officer and other pension leaders to position the plan to be sustainable over the short- and long-term. This plan is unique in that there are currently only three retirees and 34 surviving spouses receiving benefits. As mentioned, the collection of contributions through the centralized system allows for efficient and effective processes resulting in high levels of relative contributions and effective administration of the plan. Holbrook Global's audit of the plan in Q2 2024 indicated a well-managed plan with a few areas for improvement in administration but no major issues.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retirement benefits are distributed via check or cash payment. Given strong administration capabilities within Cote d'Ivoire, this is an area of administration that could see some improvement going forward. In late May 2024 it was reported that the Cote d'Ivoire Annual Conference voted to leave the UMC. Exiting the UMC will end the current arrangement between CCP and the Cote d'Ivoire Annual Conference. If a continuing expression of the Cote d'Ivoire Conference as a non-UMC entity wishes to continue their current pension plan, it is possible Wespath and the Cote d'Ivoire church may develop a new agreement outlining what continued supports and services for the pension plan can be provided through the CCP program and the terms for those supports and services. As with other cases of separation from the UMC, CCP's first priority is assurance pension obligations to former UMC clergy for their pre-autonomy or pre-separation UMC clergy service are met in accordance with the terms of the pension plan applicable to that UMC service.



Emmanuella Bodjo (Côte d'Ivoire)

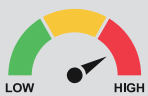
In the shadow of losing her father, the Reverend Noël Bodjo, Emmanuella was able to turn to the UMC pension plan for the light and support she needed to pursue her dream of becoming a chartered accountant. Initially, Esaie, Emmanuella's older brother, used the pension to fund his academic pursuits. Once he graduated, the baton was passed to Emmanuella. She used the pension funds wisely, focusing on covering tuition fees and essential academic materials.



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY

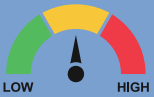


East Africa Overall Plan Risk Summary

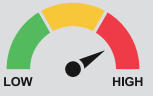
RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The East Africa pension plan overall is currently significantly underfunded, with reported assets equal to only 2.08% of accrued liabilities, as of the 2023 actuarial valuation report. Funding levels differ across the four conferences covered by the plan. For example, the Burundi Conference accounts for about 51% of the plan’s aggregate liabilities, but over 75% of the plan’s aggregate assets. The Uganda-South Sudan Conference, in contrast, has almost a third of the plan’s aggregate liabilities, but only about 2.5% of the plan’s aggregate assets. Contributions to the pension fund are set by the plan at 5% of compensation for both the church and the participant, except for Kenya-Ethiopia Conference, where the rate is 6% for each party. Given the low salaries relative to the plan’s pension benefits, even fully collected contributions, fall short of covering the cost of benefits earned. To address this imbalance, it may be necessary to increase contribution rates, reduce pension benefits, or implement a combination. Salary levels also vary among the four conferences, with annual average compensation as follows, according to the most recent valuation report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – \$313 for Burundi – \$228 for Rwanda and – \$283 for Kenya-Ethiopia – \$118 for Uganda-South Sudan. However, the pension benefit—\$30/month plus an additional \$1/month for each year of credited service over 15 years—is the same across these conferences. This formula produces an annual pension benefit of \$360 for 15 years of service and \$660 for 40 years of service, a very high and likely unsustainable income replacement ratio.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan is effectively administered by benefits officers in each conference, with the Kenya-Ethiopia benefits officer overseeing coordination among all four conferences. The primary compliance issue for the plan is receiving contributions from churches and clergy. While this issue varies in severity among the conferences, overall, they have each shown improvement over time. All pensioners are paid electronically through bank accounts or other financial institutions, such as savings and credit cooperatives. CCP pension support funds are wired to pension-plan bank accounts in each conference, except for Uganda-South Sudan. Due to an earlier lapse in the conference’s registration with the Uganda government, the conference Board of Pensions had been unable to open a bank account. CCP pensions for Uganda-South Sudan are wired to the plan’s bank in Kenya and then transferred to the pensioners’ accounts. This costs more but has otherwise been successful. Development of the East Africa pension plan started with a single East Africa Annual Conference, which has since expanded into the multiple conferences and countries that now comprise the East Africa Episcopal Area. By the time the plan became operational in 2018, it already included the current structure of four annual conferences.



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY

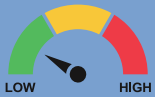


East Africa Overall Plan Risk Summary (continued)

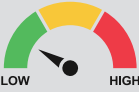

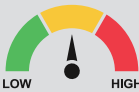
RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to differences in average salaries, plan funding levels, and other factors across the four conferences, it may be prudent to divide the East Africa plan into multiple plans in the future. This consideration becomes particularly relevant for the Burundi portion of the plan, should the Burundi Conference become its own episcopal area. • Since the plan began disbursing pensions in 2018, the number of pensioners in the plan has grown dramatically for some of the conferences as more retirees or surviving spouses were identified and set up bank accounts. Eventually, CCP will need to establish a maximum pension support amount for each East Africa conference, aligning with the maximums that exist for most other CCP-supported pension plans. • Reportedly the Kenya-Ethiopia and Rwanda Provisional Conferences have experienced a significant level of clergy and congregations leaving the UMC. These former participants, if they made contributions to the pension fund, will be entitled to a refund of their personal contributions. These withdrawals will create some short-term administrative load but should ultimately help the financial status of the plan, as the present value of benefits earned to-date by these former UMC clergy had they remained in the UMC until retirement, will typically exceed the refunded contributions. • At the time of finalizing this report, we don't know the effect that clergy withdrawals and local church departures in the Kenya-Ethiopia and Rwanda Provisional Conferences will have on the continued viability of these conferences or how they will impact pension plan operations.



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY

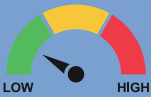


Eurasia Overall Plan Risk Summary

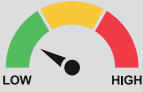
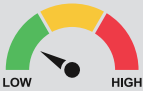
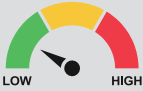
RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan requires participants to contribute 4.5% of their “pensionable salary,” up from 3% since the plan was establishment. Local churches and other church organizations such as annual conferences contribute at the same 4.5% rate. The Eurasia pension plan is among the better funded CCP-supported plans. Contribution receipts tend to meet or exceed the plan’s outlay in pension benefit payments, allowing the plan to invest the quarterly CCP pension support to build plan assets. As of the most recent actuarial valuation, total accrued liability was \$784,102 and plan assets were \$654,357, with an 83.45% funded ratio. When considering future income and liability accruals for the current population, the present value of future assets is about 118% assuming full receipt of employee contributions, or 108% if future income includes only CCP pension support. Projected cash flows over the next 40 years show continually increasing net assets for the plan.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan has a well-functioning and involved Board of Pensions, with representatives from the annual conferences comprising the episcopal area. Day-to-day oversight and administration of the plan is the primary responsibility of the area treasurer and benefits officer. Overall, the plan is well-managed and administered in accordance with the provisions of the plan. In a few instances, the benefit calculation for an individual differed from the formula prescribed in the plan, resulting in a request for clarification. The transfer of the Ukraine-Moldova Conference from Eurasia to the Nordic and Baltic Episcopal Area resulted in contribution refunds and payments being made to those participants for their Eurasia service, as well as a reduction in the number of Eurasia active clergy by about 10 participants. There were no Ukraine-Moldova pensioners. The Eurasia plan is unique among CCP-supported plans in not having a surviving spouse benefit. Benefits end with the death of the participant. At a certain point the Board of Pension considered adding a surviving spouse benefit, with the CCP team providing an actuarial analysis of the amendment’s financial impact, but a decision was never reached.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Eurasia Area has been approved to become an autonomous Church, effective with the next meeting of the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference in the spring of 2025. The move of Eurasia out of the UMC will end the current arrangement between CCP and the Eurasia Area. However, if the new autonomous Eurasia Church wishes to continue its current pension plan, we expect that Wespath will work with the Eurasia Church to develop a new agreement outlining what continued supports and services can be offered by the CCP program and the corresponding terms. As with other cases of separation from the UMC, the CCP program’s first priority is assuring former UMC clergy that their pre-autonomy or pre-separation UMC clergy service pension obligations are met in accordance with the terms of the pension plan.



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY



Latvia Overall Plan Risk Summary

RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Latvia plan is one of the CCP program’s smallest plans with six active participants and five retirees based on the recent quarterly information. Additionally, with the assumption that CCP support, and church and participant contributions will continue, the plan is projected to have a surplus of assets to meet pension obligations over the next 40-year period. Based on the most recent actuarial valuation, the funding ratio has improved from 19.30% to nearly 38%. This increase is partially due to the normalization of discount rates, but also because the majority of CCP funding is now held in pension reserves for future needs. We anticipate the next valuation to reflect further improvement in the funding level, though as mentioned, we expect the plan will continue to have sufficient assets to meet future accrued benefits.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan remains well-managed administratively, which is notable considering the recent replacement of the benefit officer. From both a management and compliance standpoint, the plan is in a positive position. Additionally, the centralized payment process helps ensure consistent collection of contributions across the plan.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two pension representatives attended the CCP Forum held in late 2023 in Kenya. The pension plan training and review of the entire CCP program provided a valuable learning and relationship building opportunity for the Latvia pension leaders. The pension reserves maintained at Wespeth for the benefit of the Latvia plan have grown nearly 50% over the last four years, which is significant to ensure future financial sustainability.



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY



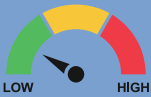
Liberia Overall Plan Risk Summary

RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Liberia plan is a major concern for the CCP program from both a financial and administrative perspective. The most recent actuarial valuation reflects a 4.31% funding level with a significant increase in benefit payments due in the near future. With minimal reserve assets available to meet future obligations, significant plan revisions along with increased asset reserves are imperative. The Board of Pension and Annual Conference approved a very modest plan revision to reduce benefits and incorporate years of service in the benefit calculations. This adjustment allows individuals previously unable to retire due to funding shortages to gracefully exit ministry and receive their earned benefits.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An audit conducted by Holbrook Global in 2023 identified several issues, including financial and staffing concerns, a lack of internal controls, and inaccurate and incomplete participant records. Most concerning was the discovery that participant payments were being reduced to offset the cost of distributing quarterly cash benefits to retirees and surviving spouses. This process has since ended, and starting with the first payment in 2024, pensioners are receiving their full benefits. One significant plan provision issue is that the plan calls for clergy and church contributions, with investment earnings, to be repaid to clergy at retirement. Therefore, in addition to receiving their due benefit, pensioners also receive the contributions made by them or on their behalf. This results in contributions not being made available to the plan to fund the lifetime pension payments for clergy and surviving spouses. Additionally, while the plan calls for service credit earned in years during which contributions were made, this provision has not been adhered to.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The growth of the plan continues to be another concern, which will only serve to exacerbate the stability of the plan. The active population has increased by 22% over the last 10 years and now has 1,150 individuals on the register, along with 215 retirees and 545 surviving spouses. After some challenging conversations with the Liberia leadership, the CCP team is pleased to report some progress in addressing some of these concerns. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new Director of Pensions was appointed, who is working with other pension staff to address administrative control issues and arrive at a solution for the electronic delivery of pension benefits. The CCP team has observed a drastic positive change in the approach and progress of managing the Liberia plan locally. Establishing a Sustainability Committee to focus on increasing pension reserves is a positive direction toward supplementing future financial obligations. Plan change proposals developed by the Director of Pensions and presented to the Cabinet, which if approved by the next annual conference session, will improve funding and reduce liabilities. Given that most administrative grant funds provided by the CCP program are used for pension staff, resources are not readily available to improve program's operation. While the CCP team is grateful for the improved direction within the Liberia area, much work is needed before the plan can be considered sustainable.

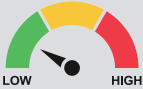

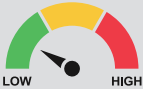
Global View of Benefits and Reviewing Individual Plans



OVERALL
PLAN RISK
SUMMARY



Lithuania Overall Plan Risk Summary

RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Lithuania plan is a small plan, with only one active member and no retirees or beneficiaries currently receiving benefits. The last report and actuarial valuation reflected four active members but in accordance with the plan provisions, three of these individuals were removed from the plan and received a payout of benefits due. Additionally, the pension reserve account at Wespeth holds over \$50,000, which is more than sufficient to fund future plan liabilities of the and a small amount of CCP pension support provided to the Lithuanian District.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the CCP team’s perspective, the plan’s administration and data management are sufficient for the small number of participants in the plan and have been since the plan’s inception.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the small size of the plan, there will be minimal administrative support from the CCP program as services like onsite audits and actuarial valuations are not cost-effective or warranted. However, ongoing monitoring and discussions about the future of the program are necessary to determine a potential solution that may prove to be more beneficial to the participant as well as the program.



Rev. Jano Sjanta (Serbia)

Born in 1954 into a Methodist family in Padina, Serbia, Jano felt a call to ministry at age 17 after a life-changing conversion inspired by the writings of Christian fiction novelist Kristina Roy when he heard through prayer, “Now you can fulfill your dream.” After completing his theological training in Osijek in 1978, Jano served five parishes throughout his ministry with the support of his wife, Liljana, who found her own calling in women and children’s ministry. During the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the couple remained steadfast in their ministry. When Jano was called to war, Liljana held church services in his absence and provided refuge to a Serbian family displaced by the Yugoslav Wars.

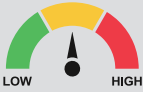
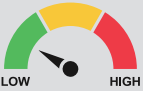
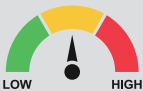
The couple raised a daughter, Anna, and a son, Daniel, who is now the Superintendent of The United Methodist Church in Serbia. After losing his wife to illness in 2020, Jano retired after 42 years of service and turned his focus to pastoral care. With the pension support he receives from Wespeth, in retirement Jano enjoys providing repairs for his community, woodworking and gardening.



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY



Mozambique Overall Plan Risk Summary

RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pension plan’s unfunded liability decreased by approximately \$1.3 million from the previous to the most recent actuarial valuation. This improvement was primarily driven by a return to more normal discount rates but was also supported by an asset reserve increase due to increased contribution collections. However, an increase in the number of reported active participants—from 219 participants to 263—also increased pension liabilities, offsetting the improved funding level, which is currently at 10.69%. Significant efforts have been undertaken over the past few years by the Mozambique pension staff and leaders to increase participant collection rates and annual conference contributions. This has resulted in a nearly 70% collection rate for contributions.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefit payments are electronically processed through financial institutions, ensuring a strong and reliable administrative process for recipients. Mozambique leadership has been actively reviewing plan provisions to move toward a more sustainable plan, including limiting participation for part-time clergy and lay after January 1, 2022, since their retirement will be provided solely by the Mozambique social security system, INNS System. Ensuring annual conferences and churches meet the plan contribution requirements will lead to a more consistent contributory plan across the Mozambique area.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The focus on making contributions in order to receive pension credit is important to continue with increased contribution levels. As the active clergy base grows, the projected CCP-provided funds and accumulated assets will not meet the funding needs in 20 years. Additional funding will be required by Mozambique to meet annual pension costs. The strong administrative controls and management will allow the area to focus on improving the financial condition. Wespah appreciates the professionalism within which the plan is run.



Late Rev. Enosse Litiho (Mozambique)

At 106, Rev. Enosse Litiho was the oldest member of the UMC in Mozambique, before he passed away in late June 2023. In the 1950s, he was sent to serve in migrant Mozambican mining communities in South Africa. When Hendren and Kemper visited him in his home near Cambine, Rev. Litiho said he was incredibly grateful for the CCP program because he loved to read, and the pension allowed him to pay for his prescription reading glasses and many books.

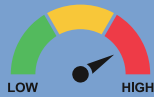


Leonor Noa (Mozambique)

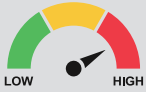

Surviving spouse Leonor Noa lost her husband while he was still in active service. After leaving theological school in Cambine in 1976, Noa’s husband served in apartheid South Africa for migrant mine workers from Mozambique. Together they had seven children, four of which died young. After her husband’s death, Noa returned home to Inhambane to live with her daughter’s family. She is thankful for the ability to continue supporting her family through the CCP program.



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY



Nigeria Overall Plan Risk Summary

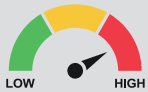
RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recent audit report and information from the conference’s benefits officer and others indicate that the Nigeria plan is financially unsustainable for several reasons. This assessment comes despite the lack of actuarial valuations, which have not been performed due to difficulties in obtaining participant data. The pension plan calls for active clergy to contribute 3.5% of compensation, 4% for married participants, and church/employer contributions of 4.5%. Consistent with what was reported by the benefits officer, the auditor confirmed that no clergy or church/employer contributions have been collected or made to the pension plan. For several years, the amount owed to pensioners has consistently surpassed the funding provided by the CCP. Both the auditor and benefits officer report CCP-provided funds are divided among pension recipients proportionally, based on years of service, because the pension amounts due under the plan’s terms significantly exceed the CCP support designated for Nigeria.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The issues noted in the “Plan Funding and Financial Information” section also impact plan management and compliance. Specifically, contributions are not being collected according to the terms of the pension plan, and benefits are not being paid at the levels defined in the plan. To further illustrate, the quarterly CCP support for the Nigeria plan is \$7,750. For the second quarter of 2024, total payments due to retirees and surviving spouses was \$9,147. This gap in quarterly funding left pensioners short nearly \$1,400. The data available to the benefits officer and CCP program, particularly clergy data, is inadequate for managing a pension plan effectively. As noted in “Plan Funding and Financial Information,” the lack of clergy data has prevented actuarial valuations as there is not a reliable source of data. For example, the participant file from the benefits office for the second quarter of 2024 listed 127 clergy from only two of the four Nigeria area conferences, while another active clergy list from a former official of the area contained 346 active clergy names from all four annual conferences (although one conference only noted three participants). A third file listed over 450 active clergy names. The recent audit identified numerous other concerns and areas for improvement, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payments are currently distributed to pensioners in cash rather than electronically. Accounting processes and records are weak or lacking. Board of Pensions leaders and staff were not familiar with the Nigeria’s plan’s terms.



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY



Nigeria Overall Plan Risk Summary (continued)

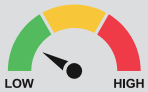

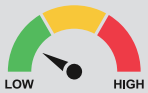
RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to conditions in certain areas of Nigeria and the U.S. State Department’s guidance to limit travel, there has not been a review of the Nigeria pension plan or site visit in several years. Visa denials prevented the benefits officer from attending the CCP Forums in 2019 and 2022, and attempts to arrange videoconferences have been unsuccessful. Accordingly, the CCP team has had limited interaction with the benefits officer, other than by e-mail and an occasional phone call, between the CCP Forum in September 2017, when the benefits officer was new in the role, and the November 2023 CCP Forum, which the benefits officer was able to attend. These connection and communication challenges have hindered opportunities for the CCP team to provide training and resources, as well as the benefits officer’s ability to update the CCP team on the plan’s challenges, status and developments. • Conversations with the Nigeria bishop and the benefits officer revealed the UMC in Nigeria in recent years started a defined contribution (DC) retirement plan for clergy, operated by a Nigeria government-approved third-party firm. The CCP team has very limited information about this plan and the benefits officer is also unfamiliar with this DC plan. The external company administering the DC plan apparently has no engagement with the episcopal area office or staff. Existence of this plan raises questions important for the CCP-supported defined benefit (DB) plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Are clergy with access to the DC plan also still considered participants in the CCP-supported DB plan? – To what extent do clergy participate in the DC plan, given that there have been no employee contributions to the DB plan? – Considering the lack of funding for the DB plan, is it feasible to close that plan for future service and let the DC plan provide retirement benefits for future service? • At the time of this writing, United Methodist news sources recently reported the former bishop of the Nigeria Episcopal Area has withdrawn from the UMC and become a bishop in the Global Methodist Church. The extent of UMC separation in Nigeria and the implications and potential additional risks for the pension plan are unknown at this time and are being assessed as information becomes available.



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY

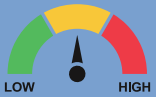


Philippines Overall Plan Risk Summary

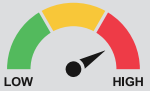

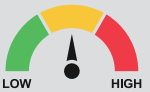
RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Philippines pension plan has consistently improved its funded status over time, although it experienced a setback from the COVID pandemic. The most recent actuarial valuation showed current assets at 50.51% of accrued liability, almost double the 25.45% funded ratio from just two years earlier. When considering future income and liability accruals, the funded ratio rises to 93.33%. Projected cash flows over the next 40 years are positive, even with an increase in the pension benefit level. The plan requires clergy to contribute 3%, and churches 7%, of compensation. Additionally, the Board of Pensions developed additional revenue streams, including an annual request for 150 Philippine pesos per church member and 1,000 pesos from each participant. Continued success and improvement in collecting church and clergy contributions is important for the ongoing financial viability of the plan.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Philippines pension plan is well-managed. The capable and conscientious staff of the Philippines Central Conference (PCC) are the primary plan administrators. The PCC Board of Pensions has also been involved and effective in managing the plan, approving plan document updates, encouraging contributions and plan funding, and interpreting plan provisions when questions or special situations arise. A key compliance concern is the full receipt of church contributions, a common challenge across many plans CCP supports—more clergy are contributing than churches. Despite this concern, the staff and Board of Pensions leadership operate the plan with a high level of compliance. Pension payments are made electronically, and PCC staff maintains accurate and complete records on participants and plan beneficiaries. However, one issue encountered is that some clergy deposit contributions into local banks without proper identification, making it difficult for the PCC office to determine the source of the contribution.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In recent years, the PCC Coordinating Council has repeatedly asked the Board of Pensions to increase the benefit level from 800 Philippine pesos per year of credited service to 1,000 pesos. Based on the improved funded status and cash flow projections that show a surplus accumulating over time, the Board will likely consider increasing the current benefit level to 850 or 900 pesos. This increase will require continued strong levels of church and clergy contributions. The current Board of Pensions chair has worked tirelessly and shown exemplary leadership, as seen in the plan's excellent progress in many areas. Succession planning for the present chair will be important for the plan's continued sustainability.



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY



Sierra Leone Overall Plan Risk Summary

RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partly due to a change in the plan nearly 10 years ago, all participant and church contributions for individuals under the age of 60 were eliminated from the plan and essentially redirected to the National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT). Other contributions due to the plan were also not collected. This resulted in a lack of reserves and long-term funding of the plan. <p>The Wespath team had the opportunity to meet with the bishop, pension plan leadership and the newly formed Sustainability Committee in early 2023. Wespath helped the committee adopt a new approach that began in early 2024, which reversed a previous decision to reduce contributions to the plan. Successfully collecting these required contributions will be crucial for developing a financially sustainable plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Sierra Leone Episcopal Area has insufficient pension reserves to meet the annual shortfall of approximately \$6,000 from the benefit payments compared to the funds provided by CCP for pension support. Based on the most recent actuarial valuation, the plan has a funded ratio of 1.45%. This is represented by \$12,548 of assets with plan liabilities of \$868,000.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to the Wespath team onsite visit, Holbrook Global conducted an onsite plan audit in 2023. While there are a number of administrative areas and issues to be addressed, Wespath is confident that the Sierra Leone Episcopal Area has the ability and resources to improve areas of internal controls and plan oversight. The utilization of electronic delivery for benefit payments is a positive in efficiency and risk reduction for the plan.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The newly formed Sustainability Committee should continue to support the Board of Pension in implementing the revised contribution plan provisions and other plan administration improvements.

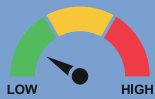


Dagri Koliahon Virginia Epse Sonan (Côte d'Ivoire)


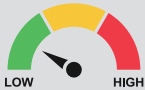

After the loss of her husband, a dedicated UMC pastor, Dagri transformed her grief into hope. Her son discovered a niche in sourcing girls' t-shirts at an affordable price. The duo uses their modest pension not just as a means for sustenance, but also as seed money for this business venture. With her son and business partner, they created a clothing business that is doing fairly well. Sonan acknowledges the vital role of the UMC pension system in her entrepreneurial journey.



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY



South Africa Overall Plan Risk Summary

RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The South Africa plan has decreased in size to become a very small plan with eight active clergy, two retirees and one surviving spouse. As a result, the CCP support considerably exceeds the benefit payments to pensioners, allowing the plan to more quickly accumulate assets. The most recent actuarial valuation showed accrued liabilities of \$73,154 and current assets of \$11,721 for a funded ratio of 16%. However, when considering the present values of future assets to future benefit obligations, even with only the CCP pension support and no contributions, the funded ratio rises to 106%. The plan calls for contributions of 4% of compensation from both the church and participant. Cash flow projections in the most recent valuation indicated that, with the current number of participants, the plan would stay solvent even without church and participant contributions.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day-to-day administration of the South Africa plan is carried out primarily by the benefits officer, who also fulfills several other functions and duties for the South Africa Provisional Conference. The Board of Pensions chairperson is knowledgeable and engaged. The benefits officer has previously indicated some challenges with receiving the prescribed 4% church and clergy contributions. Presently the number of pension recipients is small enough that each quarter's distribution of CCP pension support improves the plan's funded status, regardless of whether church and clergy contributions are received. Occasionally, funds wired to the South African bank account from CCP are returned to Wespeth, which delays and complicates the funding for pension payments.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The small size of the UMC in South Africa may be a sustainability consideration. A significant portion of the South Africa UMC broke away several years ago. Some earlier conversations about reuniting led nowhere. If the breakaway group did come back into the UMC in the future, the pension plan's situation could change, depending on the reunification terms.



OVERALL PLAN RISK SUMMARY



Zimbabwe Overall Plan Risk Summary

RISK LEVEL	
	<p>Plan Funding and Financial Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant work on the plan design over the last two years has ultimately improved plan funding. Given that Zimbabwe had adopted a defined contribution (DC) plan as its primary benefit plan and directly receives all contributions, the CCP supported pension plan was considered a supplementary plan. With Wespeth's revised schedule for pension support and Zimbabwe's modifications, the plan should be able to meet benefit payment needs without additional contributions from participants or local churches.
	<p>Plan Management and Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New entrants were not permitted to the defined benefit (DB) plan after 2017, therefore plan modifications were made to reduce benefits for new retirees beginning in 2024 along with a revised vesting schedule of five years. Benefit payments have been outsourced to Fidelity Life Assurance of Zimbabwe and are provided electronically to individuals' accounts on a quarterly basis and are monitored for receipt. Benefit payment tracking has improved and should continue to be monitored to ensure all participants receive their benefits.
	<p>Other Sustainability Considerations or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and administration are positive overall due to an established and well-trained Board of Pension overseeing the plan. The direct support received by Fidelity Life Assurance and the conference benefit officers ensures strong administration of the frozen defined benefit plan. With the CCP program's ongoing financial support and the defined benefit (DB) plan revisions, the pension plan is in a sustainable position.



Diana Phiri (Zimbabwe)—*pictured left*

Diana Phiri's husband was a United Methodist Church pastor who died of cancer before the creation of the CCP program. Following his death, Phiri and her four young children had to leave the parsonage and find a new home. To provide for her family, Phiri left her children with her sisters and other family members and moved to England for work. She worked three jobs and went five years without seeing her children. Thankfully, much has changed since then. Phiri has returned to Zimbabwe, her children now have families of their own and she receives a pension through the CCP program in Zimbabwe.

Wespeth's Ross Lundstrom, the Church Relations manager, and Thomas Kemper, a consultant for the CCP program, traveled to Zimbabwe in late September and early October and met with retired clergy and surviving spouses, including Phiri, to learn about their experiences as plan participants. Kemper wrote on Facebook that Phiri is "full of joy and love of life." Phiri has 10 grandchildren. She lives with two of her children and their families.

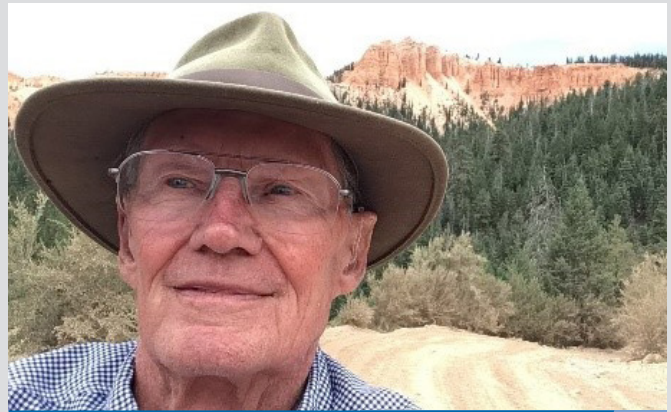
Continued Generosity

The CCP program is deeply rooted in the UMC spirit of generosity and commitment to global ministry as demonstrated through the thousands of donors, both individuals and organizations. We had the opportunity to connect with several CCP donors, Rev. Donald Dial and his wife Christine, and Rev. David Deshler, who exemplify the heartfelt support that fuels this program.

Rev. Dial, a retired United Methodist pastor from the Florida Annual Conference, and Christine Dial have been passionate in their ministry, serving first the conference, and later leading mission trips to Central America and the Caribbean. Their decision to donate to the CCP program was inspired by their experiences and the stories of pensioners shared in Wespath's biannual CCP Newsletter, highlighting the challenges faced by retired clergy worldwide. "We saw how difficult it can be to serve in different parts of the world, and we just want to say, 'thank you,'" Reverend Dial expressed. "Wespath has been a tremendous blessing and asset in allowing us to accumulate a stable retirement income, so we want to pay it forward by helping the CCP program support others in global ministry."



Christine and Reverend Donald Dial.



Retired Reverend David Deshler.

Another CCP donor and third-generation pastor, Rev. Deshler, also shared his story with Wespath—his connection to the CCP program is deeply personal. "I'm really concerned about the issues of poverty and social justice all around the world," Rev. Deshler said. "This (the CCP program) is one way the Church can be involved in those causes I care most about." Reflecting on his own family's history, where his grandfather retired without adequate financial support, Rev. Deshler emphasized the significance of the CCP program in providing a safety net for pastors. "I just want to say to all those people that receive any money that I send, I want them to know that there are people who appreciate their service," he stated during an interview.

Donor generosity extends the Church's mission to a global scale and ensures the well-being of the retired clergy who have served faithfully. The support from CCP donors like the Dials and Rev. Deshler inspires a cycle of gratitude and support that enriches the global ministry community.

Consider Donating to CCP



Looking to the Future

The CCP program supports the financial needs of those who serve around the world, while embodying the spirit of global ministry and connection within the Church. The Wespeth team's engagements through forums and personal visits have further strengthened our understanding of the diverse challenges faced across different regions, allowing us to adjust our approach as needed. The program's success relies on our ability to adapt and respond to the evolving landscapes of pension management and compliance, supported by regular audits and strategic planning.

Looking forward, thorough and proactive benefit plan governance is essential to sustain and expand the impacts of the CCP. Our focus will continue to be on enhancing the financial stability of each plan and ensuring that every retiree and their beneficiaries receive the benefits they deserve. The introduction of new technologies and improvement of administrative processes will further enhance efficiency and transparency.

As we continue to navigate the complexities of global pension support, the commitment of Wespeth to the well-being of its members remains unwavering. Together, with the sustained support of the United Methodist community and the dedication of central conference leaders, we are poised to meet future challenges and ensure that the CCP program remains a cornerstone of support for those who have dedicated their lives to serving others.



The Sierra Leone Annual Conference celebrates ministries with children during its 2023 gathering.



Andy Hendren visits with Mozambique's Bishop Joaquina Nhanala.



Wespeth's Dale Jones and Thomas Kemper discussed the changing UMC landscape with Africa General Conference delegates, pension officers and other key leaders in Tanzania prior to the 2024 General Conference.



Wespath

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