

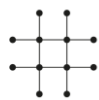
Diaconia as Gamechanger? Leadership of Service in Times of Crisis, Complexity and Transformation

**The 8th Conference for Research
in Diaconia and Christian Social Practice (ReDi)**

**An International Digital Conference for Researchers,
Diaconia Students and Practitioners**

**Diaconia as Gamechanger? Leadership of Service in
Times of Crisis, Complexity and Transformation**

17th September 2020



VID



**World Council
of Churches**

Parallel Thematic Paper Sessions Round 1
9 -10 AM Norwegian Time

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Reinventing the Role of Leadership in Innovating Diaconia 1

Churches as actors at local welfare politics

Heini Sajalin, Diaconia University of Applied Science, Oulu, Finland

According to law Finnish municipalities are obligated to prepare a local welfare report every fourth year. Municipalities primarily carry the promotion of welfare. Since they are struggling with resource problems, they would need more actors to this work. Welfare reports are basic documents for local welfare plans and create a starting point for political decision-making. For the moment Finland does not have a national structure for this process. Every local government is autonomous within the framework of law to make their own welfare plans with or without any specific partners.

Municipalities and parishes make vibrant cooperation in many places. At the same time the definition for aims is sometimes unclear and common ground might be weakly discussed on a linguistic and theoretical level. Local governments are facing new welfare challenges with e.g. ageing, migration and pluralism. Communities with religious background might have something to offer for this field.

After sending my paper I was invited to work as team member for six months in a project financed by European Social Fund. The project is run by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oulu and the Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (Diak). Oulu City council has been also co-operating since planning the application for the project together. The project is called OuluHope2020. The main aim is to figure out how Covid-19 changed possibilities to find help or support for adults who are outside the working-life. Parishes closed their groups, lunch-meetings as well as the city closed its community centres between March-May 2020. Even public libraries were closed. One aspect of the project is to find out how those people managed to find needed support when almost all services was run from distance. In the presentation, I will concentrate on local politics giving examples from a survey among people working social services, health care, diaconia and third sector in Oulu. The survey is meant as a starting point for planning services together to improve the social services.

A diaconal counter narrative of leadership?

Stephen Sirris, VID Specialized University, Norway

In times of rapid changes and various crises in contemporary society, diaconal organizations are challenged. This development triggers innovations in technology and provides renewed services. However, changes simultaneously challenge diaconal organizations to reflect on their identity and values.

In the Norwegian context, the conservative government and the larger municipalities encourage civil society actors to provide welfare. This sets the scene for faith-based organizations to reflect further on their identity. They are financed by the authorities, perform same work and are inhabited by the same professions as secular health institutions. They share basic similarities, yet the differences also need to be explored (Nordstokke, 2011, 2014).

This study presents a single case study of a diaconal hospital. Data from ethnographic fieldwork is rich on narratives about careers and motivations for entering and staying in demanding jobs. The data indicate a management discourse in the hospital, i.e. a general and dominating cultural narrative or discourse about what leadership underpinned by religious and diaconal values. I ask: *Is there a cultural (counter) narrative on leadership in the diaconal organization?*

This paper chisels out a diaconal discourse on management by juxtaposing it with another discourse portrayed by Sveningsson and Alvesson (2016). They claim there is a major management discourse in the contemporary western world. Compiling a range of studies from the business and public sector organizations in Sweden, they identify this discourse or cultural narrative. Their study shows how managerial work is a means of self-realization where managers seek to realize their potential, express their ideals, and essentially expressing themselves. This points to the meaning dimension of work.

In contrast, Sirris and Byrkjeflot (2019) found that diaconal leaders wanted to realise their calling. This meant that they integrated self-realization and realization of higher purposes transcending the self. The theory section of this article presents these concepts closer (Laceulle & Baars, 2014) and distinguish between self-realization as individualisation and individuation (Reedy, King, & Coupland, 2016:1554); the latter defined as the collective organizing practises undertaken in pursuit of autonomous selves. This relies on maintenance of personal bonds of trust. It is prompted by “conviviality, mutual aid, activism, self-provisioning, cultural production and shared sub-cultural practises” (Reedy et al., 2016:1567). Individuation allows both for the autonomous self, as well as a collective identity. In organizations, this may be practiced through shared values. Shared values and collective purpose essentially divide individuation from individualization.

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Biblical and Theological Paradigms for a Game-Changing Diaconia 1

The Right to Justification and the Use of Noumenal Power in the Diaconal Project Use Your Talents

Mirjam Syltebø Endalew, VID Specalized University, Norway

My PhD project is about international diakonia as struggle for justice in the midst of global injustice. The material in this empirical study is from the diaconal project Use Your Talents. Use Your Talents is a network of people who gather to share experiences about how they are doing use your talents and encourage each other to use their talents. I analyse the material with the help of Rainer Forst's theory of justice as the right to justification and the corresponding understanding of power as a noumenal concept. The biblical text about the talents from Matthew 25. 14-30 plays a central role in Use Your Talents. In this presentation, I introduce the theory of the right to justification as a possible contribution to the understanding of what it means to struggle for justice, and I give some glimpses of how the participants in the diaconal project Use Your Talents use the Bible as a source of noumenal power that they use to justify the normative order of Use Your Talents.

Religious Pluralisation as a Challenge to Diaconal Identity

Johannes Eurich, Diakoniewissenschaftliches Institut, University of Heidelberg, Germany

First of all, the change in religious social forms is outlined from a sociological perspective and its significance for diaconia is shown. What consequences does this change have for the formation of a diaconal identity and how can it be presented in diaconal organizations under the condition of religious pluralization? These questions are the focus of the lecture and will be discussed on the basis of four approaches to diaconal identity determination. Subsequently, points of contact to the practice of diaconia will be established and contours of learning spaces for an interreligious opening will be outlined. On this basis, an outlook on the question of the interreligious opening of diaconia is given with reference to recent developments.

Youth and Diaconia and the Global Crisis 1

National Crises faced by Kyrgyz Youth and How Diaconal Organisations Help Enabling to Act for Change?

Irina Trofimova, Interdiac, Czech Republic & Kyrgyz Republic

This paper will explore how young people in the Kyrgyz Republic are affected by factors of the global crisis. The focus will be on youngsters from poor and marginalised families who have become service-users of diaconal organisations.

National statistics reveal that such factors as the growing tendency to exclude young people from low-income families from the education system decreases their chances of accessing the labour market. This, along with growing unemployment due to the influence of the COVID -19 pandemic brings them on the edge of poverty and threatens their decent wellbeing.

Concurrently the work of diaconal organisations with service-users is threatened by the rise of the influence of Islamic religion which has been supported by the political regime of the country. Therefore, the diaconal organisations are acting under the threat of legal persecution, but also experience a passive-aggressive attitude from the majority of the Kyrgyz population, which puts young people who become their service-users into jeopardy of physical or emotional persecution from their families or communities.

Despite these challenging factors, through the work of diaconal organisations, vulnerable youth strengthen their voice, and this allows them to be heard in bringing changes and reducing their vulnerability to poverty.

The paper aims to bring a comprehensive analysis of how young people can have a game-changing role and as players in Diaconia contribute to addressing these national and global crises. The material for the paper is drawn from the practice of diaconal organisations from different regions of the Kyrgyz Republic and findings of the recent interdiac research project “Youth on the Margins” which involves with young people and diaconal practitioners.

Is there a Transformative Expectation for Diaconia Research? Reflection on Interdiac International Research on Youth Diaconia

Oksana Prosvirina, Interdiac, Czech Republic

The International Academy for Christian Social Action and Diaconia in Central and Eastern Europe (interdiac) launched a research programme in 2018 together with partners in 12 countries. The basis of the research was the lack of analysis of diaconal practice in the region as well as the rapidly changing context. The research process was organized with a participatory and dialogical approach and focused on three themes: Youth on the Margins, People on the Move, & Ecclesiology & Theology of Diaconia. The first two themes are the most important for this reflection on the process, which has already had an impact on the organisations and their practice. I would like to share how the qualitative methodology and participative research perspective contribute to empowerment of the young people in the margins. This outcome is, I suggest due to several key factors. First, the research process did not start with definitions which are normally used in the respective fields, but it gave 'voice' to those young people who are the users of diaconal services. Second, the method of focus-group interviews allowed young people to share and discuss their views, give evaluative reflections on their present well-being and future hopes and dreams. Third, this story-based analysis was then complemented by reflection of the workers experience within a dialogical framework. Fourth, mutual international sharing and enhanced self-reflection helped to assess the practices of the agency independently from donor politics, in the light of the aims and uniqueness of youth diaconia. It is now on the agenda to conceptualize and bring to the wider public 'voices of the young people' in the research publication and then pursue the development of innovative diaconal practices aimed at preserving the youth perspective, identifying their issues and supporting their involvement in social action and advocacy as approaches towards overcoming social exclusion and the marginalization of vulnerable youth.

Parallel Thematic Paper Sessions Round 2
10.15 -11.15 AM Norwegian Time

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Drifting Apart? Diaconal responses to Demographic Developments, Forced migration, and crisis of solidarity and democracy 1

Legitimizing, Adapting, Protesting - Diaconal Organizations' Responses to Welfare Exclusion among Immigrants in Norway

Mateus Schweyher, VID Specialized University, Norway

In Norway the relationship between the state and the third sector, including diaconal organizations is characterized by close cooperation, with the state funding much of welfare services provided by diaconal organizations, who are playing a significant role in public services delivery. However, in recent years increasingly restrictive migration and welfare policies have resulted in a situation where some migrants find themselves barred from accessing public welfare provision and unprotected against homelessness and destitution. This situation represents a challenge to the relationship between diaconal organisations and the state, as such exclusionary policies and the acceptance of human suffering contradict the organizations values of equality and deservingness of support of every person in need, irrespective of legal status. Based on ethnographic fieldwork, this paper explores three different strategies diaconal organizations have employed in response to the situation: (1) setting up parallel welfare services outside the public system, (2) helping individual migrants to become included in the public welfare system and (3) advocating the government to change their policies and practices. The paper discusses ethical and strategical dilemmas associated to each strategy. It is argued that these responses can be understood as legitimizing, adapting to and protesting exclusive welfare policies.

Hans Morten Haugen, VID Specialized University, Norway

A number of cases from Norway in recent years have shown the relevance of freedom of conscience:

1 The judgment of 19 December 2019 against Gunnar Stålsett for continued employment after Lula Tekle, who did not have legal residence in Norway, had her permission to work revoked in 2012. A similar judgment, but with greater financial implications, was handed down on 17 October 2019 against Arne Viste and his staffing company Plog. In both cases, it was Section 108 (3) of the Immigration Act, a) which was violated: "With fine or with imprisonment for up to two years, it is punished who... intentionally or grossly negligent makes use of a foreign national's labor force when the foreign national does not have the necessary permission under the Act. ." Vist's sentence was one year's suspended prison and a fine of 1.5 million NOK.

These are the most recent cases, and the cases that most directly affect diakonia. The Healthcare centres for undocumented migrants, started in Oslo in 2010 and in Bergen in 2013 has been criticized, as it provides assistance to persons who are formally illegally residing in Bergen.

Other societal areas are also relevant in identifying freedom of conscience situations:

2 Reservations about referring to abortion, assisting in birth control or in boy circumcision for health workers. For persons working in shops, the handling of pork might be strongly unwanted for some. These situations are discussed in NOU 2016: 13 Freedom of conscience in working life.

3 The balancing of educational institutions' freedom to have their value basis, to be applied when employing persons and the academic freedom of the individual, both enshrined in Section 1-5 of the Norwegian Act on higher education institutions. The NLA value document – that is to be revised – states that it should be used "to clarify candidates' relationship to scripture and confession," and emphasizes that "Scripture" (the Bible) "communicates God's revealed word to people at all times, and has authority where it clearly binds our conscience ...» (<https://www.nla.no/globalassets/pdf-documents/om-nla/vedtekter-and-planer/verdidokumentet.pdf>). NOKUT (the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education) will conduct an audit of NLA to investigate whether the requirements for accreditation are fulfilled.

4 A new area within freedom of conscience is the requirements on those residing in Norway, with the former Minister of integration Sylvi Listhaug saying that "those who come to Norway must adapt to our society. Here we eat pigs, drink alcohol and show our face.» While eating habits will not be Norwegian politics, a ban on face cover in children garden and education institutions was enacted from 1 August 2018.

In short, the distinction between freedom of conscience and religious freedom is about the difference between one's inner thoughts and judgments (*forum internum*) and the way these are expressed (*forum externum*). There are certain ways that the exercise of religious freedom – or other freedoms – can happen that is detrimental to others or to the community. Therefore, there are exceptions to the freedom of religion, expression, association and assembly. Similar exceptions do not exist for freedom of conscience.

The paper will discuss freedom of conscience issued relevant for diakonal actors, embedded in an understanding of freedom of conscience as a crucial valve in a secular and pluralistic society that no longer can refer to God when justifying laws, but that nevertheless should be able to accommodate diversity.

Reinventing the Role of Leadership in Innovating Diaconia 2

Audit of Malagasy Households Behaviours within a Diaconal Project Framework Involving Trained Matrons (Traditional Birth Attendants or TBAs) and Addressing Sustainable Development Goal 3

Rivosoa Nasoloniaina, VID Specialized University, Norway & Madagascar

A case study on the significance of Remafi (Lutheran diaconal project) services related to SDG3 (Sustainable Development Goal 3) or “good health and wellbeing” for women, provided by trained TBAs, in rural Madagascar. Recently (2019), the District Health Unit in the study area (Anjamanga commune) acknowledged that institutional births rate is increasing because of Remafi work, while in other rural communes, many mothers remain faithful to home deliveries—practiced by unskilled caregivers like matrons, causing maternal death. Thanks to an innovative game-changer called diakonia, which is an integral part of Jesus’ mission as well as the Church, entrusted to Remafi, several households have experienced a healthy behavioural change. There are some factors of academic interest within this example of transformative diakonia. The study objective consists then, to investigate comparable factors shaping the reproductive health behaviours among the project beneficiaries. The central question that one tries to answer here is, what qualitative, quantitative and diaconal significance does the way the MLC (Malagasy Lutheran Church) –through Remafi, use to address SDG3 focussing on women wellbeing? For this purpose, an audit applying an exploratory sequential design in mixed methods research will be held. Thus, an exploratory qualitative method will be followed by a quantitative assessment and finalized by triangulation of the resulting data. After data collection and compilation, firstly, the thematic content analysis and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) will work with some relevant theories and concepts in diaconal studies such as the theory of diakonia, IRHAP’s (International Religious Health Assets Program) and Aadland’s concepts, to evaluate all qualitative data. Secondly, the epidemiologic method along the KAP survey (Knowledge, Attitude and Practice) will address quantitative data. Thirdly, a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) will fit into a triangulation process of both data. The findings of the thesis may bring a practice-based knowledge useful, in the health sector, for improving the ways and professional practices addressing SDG3.

Organizing for Social Innovation in Diaconal Organizations and Churches

Dag-Håkon Eriksen, VID Specialized University, Norway

In the momentous 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN stresses that we live in a time of “immense challenges to sustainable development”, but “also, however in a time of immense opportunity”. Diaconal organizations and churches responding to the 2030 Agenda (Ham, 2019) face these challenges, opportunities, and changes as they strive to develop just and inclusive communities. However, as Ledwith (2020, p. 1) says “*This is not the time to feel defeated: It is an exciting opportunity for change, and we need to be bold.*” Diaconal organizations and churches have a longstanding tradition of social service and community development, but must always stay critical and develop new approaches and methods in diaconal action (Dietrich, Jørgensen, Korslien, & Nordstokke, 2019, p. 2).

An important question then is how diaconal organizations and churches organize for innovation and change.

I will present plans for a study on leadership and innovation in diaconal organizations and churches involved in international diaconia. I use theories from organizational studies (Aadland, 2010; Askeland, Espedal, Løvaas, & Sirris, 2020; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Lawrence et al., 2009; Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2015) to inform the study of emerging practices of leading and organizing mission and diaconal ministry in changing contexts.

By applying perspectives from organizational studies, my goal is to advance the understanding of leadership, organization and innovation in Research in Diaconia and Christian Social Practice and stimulate reflexive practice. By studying diaconal organizations and churches as cases, I seek to advance organizational theorizing drawing on findings from these understudied cases.

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Towards a Transforming Diaconia Spirituality 1

Church as narrative community and effective mission to migrants

John Klaasen, The University of the Western Cape, South Africa

How does the church as narrative community respond to migrants? Migration involves the loss of identity, loss of meaning and loss of the familiar. This three-pronged loss is a threat to world peace and the future of the generations to come. There have been many attempts by world bodies and organisations, influential political governments, social movements and religions to address the threat to world peace. The question that I will address is what is common amongst the peoples of the world that can weaken the threat to world peace and the future of the generations to come?

I will investigate the church as a narrative community and how the mission of the church tells the narrative to the public. What kind of narrative of the church creates the space and time for migrants to feel part of the human race? A sub question to answer is whether the diaconal mission of the church includes the other as identity forming and identity formation. Narrative is the movement of capacity building and agency making to critically engage distorted meanings of identity and meaning making. The church community is a narrative community where migrants challenges the construction of the future of the human race and the rest of creation

Peacemaking as Diaconia: Role of the Church

Victor Aguilan, Silliman University, Philippines

Conflict is found in almost every realm of human interaction. And people have managed to resolve their disagreement without violence. But some turn deadly and violent. Across the Philippines and Asia, religious institutions have been encouraging men and women to work for peace amid armed conflicts. Christians are called to be peacemakers. This is part of the diaconal ministry of the Church in Asia. They have mobilized activists, bishops, congregations, and ordinary members to overcome violent conflicts, to establish and to build communities where peace is a reality.

The role of the Church leader as peacemakers can be in the expanding conceptual terrain of citizen peace-making. There are individuals who continue the ministry of peacebuilding against all odds. In the midst of violence, religious people serve as agents of peace and reconciliation. They tender the spiritual resources for the de-escalation of deadly conflict and sectarian violence; they offer moral and material resources for easing or resolving situations of contention and for promoting reconciliation, social cohesion and mutually beneficial communal life.

Several practitioners and scholars have developed overarching perspectives on the roles that citizens, which include religious people, can play to help ensure prospects for peace. John Paul Lederach, for one, offers a model which he calls “conflict transformation.”

Biblical and Theological Paradigms for a Game-Changing Diaconia 2

Faith Foundations: Mission and Service of Uniting Care Australia

Ji Zhang, Assembly Theologian, Uniting Church in Australia, National Assembly

“Love your God and love your neighbour”, this paper reclaims the core values underlying the work of Uniting Church’s community services over many decades. While it gives expression to our changing context in Australia, in which the Spirit of God is moving our attention into social margins, it also articulates where community services and church identity are called to mutual affirmation, and how to go forward into the world with hope, as partners within the life of the Uniting Church to embody the vocation of service, indeed participate in God’s mission in the world.

Gratitude as a biblico-theological paradigm for a game-changing diaconia

Dennis Solon, Institute for Diaconic Science and Diaconic Management (IDM), Protestant University Wuppertal/Bethel, Germany

This work attempts to examine the place of gratitude in Christian social practice/service. In pursuing this inquiry, the author cursorily looks into gratitude/thanksgiving terminologies in the Bible. Considered are select passages from the thanksgiving Psalms, synoptic Gospels and Acts, and the letters of Paul and his life. The paper will argue that diaconia is in motivation and action a witness of gratitude. This thesis is unpacked by the following sub theses: (1) Gratitude is a relational terminology; (2) Gratitude is a public act, and as such is „public theology“; (3) Gratitude is expression of a „spiritual rationality“ - this becomes clear in the Lukan Gospel; (4) Gratitude is practical discipleship, as reflected in the Gospel of Mark; (5) Gratitude means the passing on of grace. Paul shows this in his collection project and work for others; and (6) Gratitude accomplishes itself through

Parallel Thematic Paper Sessions Round 3

11.30 AM - 12.30 PM Norwegian Time

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Reinventing the Role of Leadership in Innovating Diaconia 3

Diakonia in Greenland

Gimmi Olsen, University of Greenland, Nuuk

World's largest island, Greenland, is inhabited with around 56,000 people who form a complex community, with a complex history and culture, where colonization and post-colonization has affected the society and the church and still plays a crucial role in the development and future of both Society and Church. 94% of the population are members of the Church of Greenland.

When studying *Diakonia in Context* in Greenland, these complex things are of great importance and relevance. The context and starting point for the Society and Church of Greenland is quite different, with a fundamental different history, than we know from especially Germany and the larger Scandinavian countries. E.g. Greenland did not have the diaconal revival movement, which we know from Germany and Scandinavia from 1830s and 1850s, which led to institutional and organizational diakonia which also is important for the possibilities for further discussions and development of the understanding and practice of diakonia, which the Scandinavian Lutheran Churches have had in the last decades. And though Greenland on the paper is a member of both Lutheran World Federation and World Council of Churches, the Church of Greenland has not been affected of discussions in the international and ecumenical diaconal movement, which also has affected the development of the understanding of diakonia in the Scandinavian countries.

There is though a very interesting Greenlandic national - Christian revival movement, which also had a remarkable and natural social engagement in the society in a short period in history from 1908 until around twenty years later. This movement combined very naturally the Christian faith with social work and development for the poorest in the society – in a Greenlandic and Inuit way of practice diakonia.

There are unfortunately remarkable social problems in the Greenlandic society and the Church of Greenland has been criticized for “turning its back” to the problems and not engaging in social issues in the Society. My PhD Project will try to give the Church a voice, studying the Church's understanding of diakonia and its role in the society. I also want to hear out both the Margins and social actors to listen which expectations they may have to the Church.

In the study, I will pay close attention of special Greenlandic and Inuit values and traditions as core assets for diakonia.

Leadership and Participation – How to Create Social Cohesion in a Sustainable Way

Anika Christina Albert, Institute for the Study of Christian Social Service, Heidelberg University, Germany

The paper discusses the project „WABL – Wohnen, Arbeiten, Beschäftigen, Leben“ initiated by the diaconal organization St. Elisabeth-Verein in Marburg (Hessia, Germany). It is based on the idea of finding new ways how people in mixed generations, with different social backgrounds and from various countries can live and find work in one part of a village, which must be reactivated. Therefore the St. Elisabeth-Verein bought an industrial site which wasn't used for many years and initiated a process of communication in which anybody to whom it may concern of private, commercial or charitable interest could take part. As a result, there grew up a new part of a village where people can live, find work, get education and meet for leisure time activities. Several rooms can be used by sport clubs or music bands and can be rented for conferences, cultural events or private meetings.

The role of leadership is here to do networking with partners from the municipality, commercial investors and charitable organizations and to enable all interested people to participate in the process of communication and realization of the project. The aim is to find creative and sustainable solutions for questions as demographic change, inclusion and equality in the chance to find work with or without (documented) qualifications and last but not least ecological challenges. So you can draw the conclusion that a traditional diaconal service provider becomes a gamechanger and discovers its new role as an innovator of social politics in rural communities.

Youth and Diaconia and the Global Crisis 2

Diaconial Response Challenged! The Youth as Game-Changing Roleplayers On Climate Change And Environmental Consciousness

Jacques Beukes, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Ecological justice and climate change is one of the largest challenges to humanity and sustainable development globally. The youth run the risk of them also contributing to climate change and failing to mitigate it, just as past generations have been doing. In order for the youth to actively and meaningfully participate and influence development into the direction of climate-resilient development, it is important that they understand the issues and challenges. Various youth movements have started to acknowledge this problem and ensured that this crucial challenge remains on the global agenda of various political leaders, countries, churches, etc. Moreover, the youth themselves became active game changing role-players as they acknowledge that there is a need for themselves to become active participants in addressing the climate change problems, not as victims but more importantly as solution providers. Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the modern-day generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their very own needs. Therefore, the youth is right in the centre of the ecological justice, environmental consciousness and climate change discourse. It is therefore understandable that the 17-year-old teenage activist from Sweden, Greta Thunberg, made headlines for her ongoing engagement and campaigning for action on environmental injustice and climate change problems and in the process provoked a number of contradictory viewpoints. Thus, this paper wants to address the Practical Theologian, Richard Osmer's descriptive-empirical task, namely, what [on earth] is going on? But also, what on earth is going on with regards to the churches' response on climate issues? The aims of the project is therefore firstly to explore how the youth are involve in environmental issues "glocally". Secondly, I want to investigate whether the voice and involvement of the youth (and the youth movement) made any significant impact or involvement on the "glocal" consciousness of political leaders, religious leaders, citizens, other young people but more importantly the church's diaconal response on this specific challenge.

Female leadership in church and faith-based institutions – past, present and future

The challenges of female leadership in the church: A case of Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), Synod of Livingstonia

Mwawi Chilongozi, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa

CCAP, Synod of Livingstonia started ordaining women as ministers of Word and Sacrament in 2000. Twenty years down the line no female minister has been elected to a leadership position at Synod level. Although women are ordained as ministers, however, they are usually given supportive roles while men continue to occupy positions of strategic importance. How church leaders are elected is embedded and influenced by culture and patriarchy. Consequently, the church misses the different gifts women can offer to the church leadership. This paper, therefore, seeks to challenge the church how it misses out by not electing women in leadership positions at Synod level and to find practical ways to engage the church in conversation to include women in leadership and strategic positions. Women are the most active members of the church and they comprise 60 per cent of the church membership. Inclusion of women in leadership roles at the Synod level is a social justice and human rights issue. In the same vein, it sets an example to the other sectors of the society and the government.

Re-thinking church leadership in a gender perspective

Gry Espedal, VID Specialized University, Norway

The literature on leadership in the church and diaconal institutions has been relatively silent on women's contributions to leadership. Representing a time span of more than a hundred years, this study is looking across contributions of three female pioneers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway. In inductively and empirically analysing the characteristics of their leadership, we are re-thinking church leadership from a gender perspective. Church leadership has been characterized as symbolic, strategic, and interactive; however, leaning on the women's institutional perspectives, this study expands church leadership with two new characteristics, ideological and community-building, to change and maintain the church as an institution through a strong value-orientation and enhancing the common good of the community.

In the last two decades, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway has, as the church of Sweden, gone through several reforms, among them a new church law (1996) and regulations separating the church from the state (2017) (Askeland, 2016). The challenges these new laws and regulations place on the church as an organization have enhanced discussions on responsibility and leadership, especially investigating church leaders' roles and characteristics (Askeland, 2016; Saxegaard, 2009; Sirris, 2018; Sløk, 2009).

Despite an increased interest in describing roles and church leaders' responsibility, few studies have discussed the contributions of church leaders from a gender perspective. In a situation where half of the clergy is female, there is a reason for asking how women lead and how their perspectives are contributing to the understanding of roles, and responsibility, especially in complex situations. To fully describe leadership roles and characteristics, it must include intersubjective dynamics, complexity, ambiguity, and tensions (Yukl, 2013). Thus, as a point of departure, Saxegaard's (2009) perspectives on church leadership as symbolic, strategic, and interactive can be used to analyzing women's contribution. A theoretical framework is to be found in the institutional leadership tradition (Besharov & Khurana, 2015; Selznick, 1957/1983), giving perspectives to understand the organizations in a changing institutional context.

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Christian Social Practice: Methodologies 1

Refugees in German Nursing Education Schools. A Challenge for Research in Diaconia

Christine Auer, Carl Remigius Medical School, Frankfurt am Main & Diakoniewissenschaftliches Institut Heidelberg University, Germany

During the great wave of refugees in 2015, young men in particular came to Germany looking for a perspective for their lives. At the same time, Germany has an increased need for nursing staff and cannot currently fill all vacancies in the nursing sector. Although not all young people could be acknowledged as refugees, the legislature has created opportunities for a nursing profession to be learned in Germany while at the same time obtaining the German secondary school certificate. In this way, a right of residence can be acquired.

The training of young men, especially from Africa, Syria and Afghanistan, poses major challenges for vocational schools and nursing homes. At the same time, however, there are also new opportunities for nursing in Germany.

1. A lot of respect is given to old people in Africa. Refugees in nursing training also show this respect towards the residents. This changes the climate in the care teams and the elderly are valued.
2. In Africa, old people pray for the young who help them. This offers new opportunities for shaping community life.
3. Young men are physically more resilient than women are. This is conducive to the skills mix in nursing homes.
4. The "law on gender equality" can be satisfied in the nursing profession.

Nordic Diaconal Research 2015-2019. A systematic Literature Review

Lena Sjöberg, University of Uppsala & Church of Sweden

Nordic Diaconal Research 2015 – 2019: A Systematic Literature Review

Systematic literature review is a group of methodologies not previously used on diaconal research. In this presentation I am sharing experiences from my master thesis, presented at Uppsala University in June 2020, in which I conducted a *Mixed Methods Research Synthesis* (MMRS). The target of my review was diaconal research produced at Nordic research sites during the past five years.

A key methodological element in Systematic Literature Review is the search protocol. Academic works on Diaconia covers a wide variety of subjects and can belong to any one of several research fields or be cross disciplinary. Different search parameters can result in very different outcomes. My choice was to use diakon*, diacon* and deacon* as search parameters, which excluded works not using Diaconia words. This can and should be debated.

My report, based on 134 individual titles, shows that diaconal works in the Nordic countries engage in theological development, social innovation, social mobilisation and interreligious cooperation. In my paper I discuss differences and similarities in the understanding of the Deacon's ministry in the Nordic countries, as well as recent theological developments.

Parallel Thematic Paper Sessions Round 4
4.30 -6.00 PM Norwegian Time

Please check your local time:

<https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>

Drifting Apart? Diaconal responses to Demographic Developments, Forced migration, and crisis of solidarity and democracy 2

Ageing in local context – A Diaconal Response

Godwin G. D. Ampony, Kirchliche Hochschule Wuppertal/Bethel, Germany

The world is increasingly experiencing population ageing, a phenomena which is being observed both in the global north as well as in the global south (United Nations 2019). While some governments particularly those in the global north are taking action to meet the changing demographic pattern in ageing, same cannot be said by the global south governments. Absence of strong welfare system targeted at the elderly remains a major challenge (Gaminiratne 2004). Many Governments in the global south likewise Churches and diaconal institutions are not in a better position of meeting the needs of population ageing (National Research Council, USA 2001)The research is aimed at developing a diaconal response to ageing which is a growing global phenomenon but have more with local and contextual implications. Expected findings and results is to equip diaconia institutions and churches in designing and implementing Ageing Programmes and Projects in local context. The research as an ongoing work has employed combination of different research approaches including; Action Research, Case Study, Qualitative, Quantitative, Survey, and Narrative inquiry and stories. Findings and results of the research would be presented in an International conference in October 2021 in Sri Lanka and later published.

The empirical data on which the research is based on is from the World Population Perspectives: 2019 Version. The population outlook forecast that globally by 2050, one (1) in six (6) people in the world will be over age 65 (16%), up from one (1) in eleven (11) in 2019 (9%). Its further projects that by 2050, one (1) in four (4) persons living in Europe and Northern America could be aged 65 or over. From 2010 population ageing was estimated at 43 million, the population of elderly people in sub-Saharan Africa is projected to reach 67 million by 2025 and 163 million by 2050. In the case for Asia content, it is expected that by 2050, one in four people in Asia and the Pacific will be over 60 years old. The population of older persons (aged over 60) in the region will triple between 2010 and 2050, reaching close to 1.3 billion people.

How Can Freedom of Conscience Challenge Diaconia?

Changing diaconal practices within religious literacy, leadership and food aid – Diaconia barometer 2020

Tiina Ikonen, Diak Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Finland

Since 1999 diaconal practices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland have been regularly monitored by a survey called Diaconia barometer. The 11th Diaconia barometer will be prepared this year.

With answers of almost five hundred diaconal workers the barometer tells a lot about the changing environment and current challenges of diaconal work run by the church. It aims to observe what kinds of needs diaconal workers face and, at the same time, how they see developing diaconal action within society. As such, the barometer is a follow-up study with permanent questions and changing themes within diaconia. This year the special focus is on religious literacy skills, leadership in diaconia and community-based food aid.

The Diaconia barometer 2020 is done by four master's degree students of Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (Diak) with guidance and support of two lecturers and a work life advisory board. The results of barometer will be published nationally on September 18th 2020. We would like to discuss the main results internationally, too.

Christian Social Practice: Methodologies 2

Inclusive Diaconia research: Power balances, dilemmas and potentials

Inger Marie Lid, VID Specialized University, Norway

A participatory research approach aims to promote citizenship in practice by involving community partners and persons in vulnerable life situations in the development of novel research methodologies. Persons who are involved in research with being educated as researchers, are often referred to as «co-researchers». Over the recent years, research in health and social studies often engage co-researchers in research projects.

Citizenship agendas prescribe relations between people and larger structures of rule and belonging, which are often but not exclusively the nation state.

The idea of everyday and universal citizenship is novel. Citizenship is typically associated with politics or civic life. However, citizenship is important in many arenas, and can be described as cultural, religious/existential/ spiritual and social. Citizenship is thus highly relevant for diaconia research.

In order to gain knowledge related to everyday citizenship, a participatory, inclusive research approach opens for including diverse perspectives as subjects of knowledge. However, the power balance between trained researchers and co-researchers is asymmetric and leads to dilemmas and research ethical challenges. The potentials in inclusive research is, however, also important to acknowledge, not least in terms of human rights and social justice.

Developing an effective practice- a diaconal response to a forced labour issue.

Petra Brooke, VID Specialized University, Norway

This project explores how congregational diaconal workers can extend their knowledge and support, as they meet potential victims of forced labour trafficking or work place criminal exploitation, by studying congregational social work in the Salvation Army through the theory of “community of practice”, using an action research approach.

Consequences of migration can be forced labour trafficking or workplace criminal exploitation. An increasing number of potential victims of these crimes has come to the Salvation Army corps (congregation) for help and support in the last ten years. Complex issues such as legal definitions and negative transnationalism place these individuals in a highly precarious situation. Potential victims have special rights, both in the legal system and in the social economical support system. Limited knowledge and experience of labour trafficking in diaconal work often result in a failure to identify these individuals as potential victims and because of that, they do not access entitled support.

By using observational field studies, individual interviews and reflection groups with staff and volunteers, this study hopes to contribute to practice development in congregational diaconia.

Key words: labour trafficking, community of practice, diaconia.

Reflections about Christian Social Practice Research Methodologies

Kaia Schulz Rønsdal & Trygve Wyller, Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo, Norway

Christian social practice research is often considered an interdisciplinary academic venture. There are ongoing discussions on intersections between theology, social sciences, humanities, nursing studies and ethics within in the diaconia research. Connected to these discussions there are also parallel discussions on specific methodological ambitions in this field. There is a mix of hermeneutical, interpretative methods as well as ethnography, qualitative and quantitative methods and combination of at least two of these approaches. Many contributions expand the question of methodology into the broader issue of the identity of Christian social practice research.

These contributions also often combine methodology developed within the social sciences, hermeneutics and interpretations of what the “data” of this research is. This has opened the discussion in a fruitful way, but there is time to increase the number and variety of reflections.

In the paper, we discuss issues like

- The relation between empirical and normative/theological approaches
- Interpretations of the kind of data relevant for diaconia research
- The role of the researcher in the data collection and in the written texts
- Is there a transformative expectation for diaconia research?

Towards a Transforming Diaconia Spirituality 2

Towards a Transforming Diaconia Spirituality: A Latin American Approach

Carlos Ham, Matanzas Evangelical Seminary of Theology, Cuba

This session will focus on what is a vital Spirituality which empowers the whole process towards a transformed and transforming Diaconia, from a Latin American perspective. In a world living in challenging times and where technocracy seems to dominate, in many cases Spirituality inspires the game-changing role of Diaconia today in the Continent. The session defines a concept of Diaconia Spirituality in the region and explores its preconditions and effects. The presentation will be both empirical and theoretical, focusing on descriptive and normative approaches as well.

Critical Realism Theory for a Transformed Diaconia Spirituality

Van Cliburn M. Tibus Philippines & Stellenbosch University, South Africa

For a transforming Diaconia Spirituality, it has to have a good grasp of interpreting reality. Using critical realism theory as a philosophical methodology can contribute to this goal. This paper proposes using this theory with the missiological concept of Integral Mission in transforming Diaconia Spirituality to minister to vulnerable groups. A discussion of critical realism theory is made as the attempt to find an alternative of positivism and hermeneutics. It is then followed by theology's attempt to incorporate critical realism theory in its epistemology. As the value of Diaconia has its roots from Christian theology a missiological concept must be introduced to mobilize the church. This concept is Integral Mission a merging of evangelism or proclamation of the Gospel and social activism. It serves as a model of mission for a transforming Diaconia Spirituality. This can be applied to a church who is facing serious issues such as the "War on Drugs" occurring in the Philippines.

Knowledge development in diaconal work in parishes

Birgitta Lounela, Church of Sweden & VID Specialized University, Norway

Stig Linde, Church of Sweden & Lund University

During 2018-2020 the diocese of Strängnäs runs a project called “Fokus Diakoni” to promote the local work of diaconia. The character of the project is similar to work in Research and Development (R&D) in social services. The project has tried out a collegial form of learning, inspired of the research of Marianne Rodriguez Nygaard “Caring to know or knowing to care”, 2015. Thirty deacons have met, for one year, in seven - what in this project is called - “focus groups”. They have been articulating, testing and integrating relevant notions, in grasping everyday diaconal work, identifying issues of method and issues of strategy. One such issue is the leadership of the deacon in the Church of Sweden. The documentation from the groups show notable frustration of unclear local mandates and directives. Another critical area for developing congregational diaconal work is management. Interviewing vicars, we have identified the significant role of strategical thinking and implementing strategy for the diaconal work in the parish. In this task, the vicar needs to lead processes, “hold on” and make priorities.

Looking forward, we can see strategical possibilities in an alliance between vicar and deacon, for knowledge development and managing diakonia.

Facing the Challenge of Covid 19

“Give us this day our daily Bread?” Innovative responses by faith communities to suffering within a context of Inequality in South Africa

Nadine Bowers Du Toit, Stellenbosch University, South Africa & Craig Stewart, Tearfund, South Africa

South Africa has recently been recognized as the most unequal nation in the world by the World Bank. Currently “the top percentile of households maintaining 70.9% of the wealth, while the bottom 60% hold only 7.0% ...Nearly half of the population is considered chronically poor” with 76% of the population experiencing poverty “as a constant threat in their lives” (World Bank 2018:xvi). In addition, this poverty and inequality is aligned to race, a painful legacy from the Apartheid era, which continues to haunt us. Food insecurity is a significant indicator of these realities in South Africa. In this article, we begin by articulating the intersections of race, class and hunger with reference to the lack of “daily bread” in an inequal South Africa. This is followed by an exploration of an innovative practical response from faith communities to hunger during the pandemic.

The Romanian Orthodox Church Response in Covid-19 Pandemic. Theology and Charity

Alexandru OJICĂ, Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of Western and Southern Europe

Romania is one of the European countries with a high level of religiosity of the population, with a rate of religious participation in the European average, but above other countries of Orthodox tradition. According to Law no. 489/2006 on religious freedom and the general regime of cults, in Romania we find “a regime of positive neutrality, of cooperation between cults and the state, characterized by an elaborated combination of forms of direct and indirect financing of cult”.

In the direction, the Orthodox Church, recognizes and affirms the responsibility of legitimate government to protect the vulnerable, to prevent and limit violence, and to promote peace among persons and between peoples. Since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, the Romanian Orthodox Church was involved in society through the social assistance offered as: medical equipment was bought for hospitals. In the purpose of continuing the educational act via internet tablets were bought. The valued of the assistance offered by ROC is around 5 million Euro. The spiritual message of the ROC needs always to be in its genuine setting, which is conditioned by the polemic presented in society.

Parallel Thematic Paper Sessions Round 5
6.15 -7.45 PM Norwegian Time

Please check your local time:

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Towards a Transforming Diaconia Spirituality 3

***Following to make a way* – the empowering spirituality of the Christian development organisation in Cape Town, South Africa.**

Deborah Hancox, Department of Practical Theology, Faculty of Theology, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa.

A spirituality of *following to make a way* emerged from grounded theory research of 18 Christian development organisations (CDOs) in Cape Town, South Africa. These organisations work to see greater human flourishing amongst groups and within communities that suffer from socio-economic marginalisation and continuous traumatic stress. What emerged as central to their work was a spirituality very different to that often thought of as spirituality, for example as “a quest for values and practices that can be embraced in the pursuit of a meaningful life” (Sheldrake, 2014: 167–184).

Rather, the CDO’s spirituality reflected four key characteristics:

1. A purposive spirituality – with a transformational intent
2. A communal spirituality – involving collective divine-human encounters
3. A prevenient spirituality – which supports agency
4. A trinitarian spirituality – providing the means of CDO spirituality

In this paper, each of these characteristics will be described and illustrated with examples from research. In addition, the way in which this spirituality connects the CDO as a community, and their work with their beneficiaries, will be expanded upon. What will be shown is that their spirituality helps to bring change in both the CDO and its team, and in those with whom and for whom they work.

Dilemma resolutions in Diaconal Leadership and Practice; a case for Spirituality.

Ondrej Fischer, Charles University & Jabok Academy of Social Pedagogy and Theology, Praha, Czech Republic

Current global socio-political situation brings Diaconia and other Christian welfare organisation to the need to respond to variety of new challenges. Though they are not the only organisations which stand up to tackle these problems, which are often embedded in conflicting cultural settings, there are reasons for seeing Diaconia activities as unique. This is in virtue of its ultimate concern with the highest respect for the individual, taken from the concept of man as created in the image and likeness of God. This, among others, brings along the ultimate purpose of every diaconal action as linked to the dignity of every single person and recognition of its unique specific human condition. Such a concept of diaconal work generates an increasing number of real ethical dilemmas in both the “hands on” activities and in strategic leadership of organisations. These can be often based on mutually exclusive principles such as autonomy and beneficence. Using methodology of professional ethics (e.g. Barsky, 2010, Bondi, 2011), my paper will explore some fundamental issues which connect the role of spirituality in Diaconia with the way these dilemmas, typical for Christian social practice, can be dealt with.

Reflections on pastoral care and *mizuko kuyo* in Japan

Terese Bue Kessel, VID Specialized University Stavanger, Norway

The Japanese *mizuko kuyo* is a memorial service for children that were not born, due to miscarriage, stillbirth, or selected abortion. *Mizuko* means 'water-child', and *kuyo* refers to ritual/memorial service. The clergy, mostly in Buddhist temples, offer the ritual to respond to women's feelings of regret, and maybe also to the fear of some supernatural vengeance from a hostile *mizuko* spirit of the child that was prevented life. Key words in advertisements to promote *mizuko kuyo* are relief of anxiety, comfort, and peace of mind, salvation, and happiness. Many women attend the ritual several times a year, and year after year. It is most often a repetitive matter.

There are about 1 % Christians in Japan. The Christian churches of various denominations do not have one unified voice in the public sphere. Its significance lies rather in the meaning of the faith and fellowship it can offer to its members and those who choose to join. It is therefore of interest to ask if the Christian church have a space and something to offer in the encounter with *mizuko kuyo*. My pursuit is to reflect on the relationship between diaconia and pastoral care/counselling and *mizuko kuyo*.

Presentations of Recent and Up-Coming Publications

Biblical and Theological Paradigms for a Game-Changing Diaconia 3

Reality, Faith and Action as Diaconal: An African-Christian Theology of Migration

Sthembiso Zwane, University of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa

The relationship between religion and development is fundamental as reflected in the discussion on forced migration. The social, economic and political elements of forced migration affects the working class poor. The diaconal work is a Christian and Theological that serves as the basis for the construction of an African-Christian Theology of Migration. This theology leads to a pragmatic response through Contextual Bible Study in the South-North contexts.

First, the paper seek to provide a modest but candid analysis of the social, economic and political '*Reality*' of migration. The social, economic, and political reality of forced migration affects mostly the working class poor communities.

Second, the paper seek to argue for an 'African-Christian Theology of Migration' that finds expression in the Christian '*Faith*'. This African Christian Theology is imbedded in the diaconal work of the church. The diaconal work is primary based on the biblical message of love for the 'stranger'. Third, the paper argues that Contextual Bible Study (CBS) provides an appropriate contemporary '*Action*' to the challenges of forced migration. The CBS is pragmatic response to the challenges of forced migration especially in the South and North contexts.

Testimony and ambiguity. Biblical and theological impulses toward transformational Diakonia

Thomas Renkert, Diakoniewissenschaftliches Institut der Universität Heidelberg; Germany

Within the framework of accelerated globalization and the foreseeable permanence of global and interdependent crises, Diakonia is becoming more and more decontextualized from its historical European roots and utilized under different premises within new contexts. Thus, Diakonia has to navigate issues that were historically always present in new ways. Especially the tensions between explicit confession and practical ambiguity, between mission and aid, between autonomy and cooperation are in need of a more general framework enabling the reflection of contextual renegotiations of these tensions and their ethical implications. In order to do so, I am proposing a theological and philosophical reconstruction of the notion of testimony and witnessing.

International Handbook of Ecumenical Diakonia

Dietrich Werner, Martin Büscher & Beate Hofmann, Kirchliche Hochschule Wuppertal Bethel, Germany

Training and education for Diakonia, for social care, support for the vulnerable, advocacy for those marginalized and suffering from injustices today needs high quality resources and intercultural, contextual as well as interdisciplinary approaches. This was the core conviction of major institutions of diaconal work and research in Germany and some of their international partners to come together in 2018 to plan for an International Handbook on Ecumenical Diakonia. Conceptualized together by the Institute for Diakonic Science and Management (IDM) in Bielefeld/Bethel, the United Evangelical Mission, an international communion of 38 churches in Africa, Asia and Europe, the v.Bodelschwingh Foundation, Bread for the World, Desk for Theology and Ecumenism, Diakonia Germany, the All African Conference of Churches (AACC), and also supported by the Desk for Ecumenical Diakonia in the World Council of Churches a project was developed to bring together key resources on biblical-theological foundations, regional and confessional expressions, new themes and trends and educational approaches and curriculum models for diakonia and Christian social services which can enrich current training courses for diakonia and widen the horizon by inter-contextual and inter-cultural perspectives. An international editorial group consisting of , consisting of Rev. Godwin Ampony, Prof. Martin Büscher, Bishop Prof. Beate Hofmann, Rev. Félicité Ngnintedem, Prof. Dennis Solon and Rev. Prof. Dietrich Werner (Convener) worked tirelessly to implement this project being accompanied by a wider international advisory group and members from the network Research in Diakonia. The emphasize was on *ecumenical diakonia*, i.e. approaches to Christian social services and social development work in many different denominational and cultural settings, the interconfessional and trans-national cooperation and joint action for diakonia between different churches and faith-based actors and the orientation towards the “whole inhabited earth” (*oikumene*) as the indispensable horizon and frame of reference for spelling out current mandates and profiles of church-based diakonia in the contexts of globalization.

The result of this three years process is a publication with around 100 concise introductory essays and regional survey articles from all major Christian traditions and regions in the world structured in four different sections:

- I. Theologies of Diakonia in Different Ecclesial and Social Contexts
- II. Concepts and Profiles of Diakonical Ministries in Different World Regions
- III. Trends and Crucial Concerns in Diakonia
- IV. Models and Methods for Competency Building in Diakonia

The Corona Pandemic which has unfolded its global devastating impact during the second part of the editorial process for this project and has deeply influenced many of the contributions of this volume had underlined the significance and “systemic strategic value” of the professions of care-giving, medical and social support as well as advocacy work for those left behind economically and also has evoked a new sense of urgency for learning and education: relearning what is really essential and lifegiving in our models of development, learning from one another in terms of inter-contextual exchange about the art of providing care with dignity, love with justice, compassion with advocacy for the vulnerable has strongly come again on the agenda. Thus the volume will be facilitating

learning, research and education in many churches and their seminaries, theological faculties and places of theological research around the globe in the future so as to equip churches for being a *diakonos*, a go-between person between a community and the marginalized, between the suffering or vulnerable and the powerful, building bridges of care and support, of resistance and hope in order that all may enjoy the fullness of life (John 10:10).

Drifting Apart? Diaconal responses to Demographic Developments, Forced migration, and crisis of solidarity and democracy 3

Encountering EU-citizens who experience homelessness: A study on diaconal responses to new (but also old) forms of precariousness.

Leni Mjåland, MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society, Norway

After the “eastern” EU-enlargement in 2007, the mobility of EU-citizens who seek informal sources of income has introduced new forms of precariousness in otherwise affluent northern countries. Responding to new social realities of urban marginalization, diaconal and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been pioneering social work for people who are excluded from nation-based welfare systems. Many of these EU-citizens are Roma. In the public debate, there is a strong association between informal street work, such as begging, and the Romani minority; a debate that builds on stereotypical images and negative portrayals. Critical scholars and activists have, in recent years, urged the need to recognize antigypsyism (anti-Roma racism) and to incorporate antiracist perspectives in policies and grassroots initiatives in order to address the unjust social situation of Roma. Amongst Scandinavian NGOs, there has also been an increased focus on EU-citizens as victims of discrimination, harassment, and hate-crimes. In this paper, I explore how diaconal organisations encounter EU-citizens who live in precarious conditions. Based on reports produced by Scandinavian NGOs, as well as existing research literature, I will discuss questions such as: What experiences in the work with marginalized EU-citizens have shaped current practices? By including antiracist perspectives, I seek to incorporate a more comprehensive understanding of the social harms that EU-citizens are exposed to, as well as of the historical trajectory of their social condition.

FBOs and churches as a provider of convivial services for and with people on the move in the Eastern European countries

Ulla Siirto, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland & Interdiac, Czech Republic

People are on the move globally. There are different reasons for moving: for work, relationship, seeking better living conditions, escaping persecution or war etc. Interdiac has an ongoing research program: People on the move, which is occurred in the Eastern Europe. Six countries are involved in the process: Armenia, Czech rep., Hungary, Poland, Serbia, and Ukraine. Faith-based partner organisations and churches of Interdiac are participating into the research program. The aim is getting a picture of the work among migrants.

In the research countries, there are migrants, internally displaced people, refugees, and Roma people, who are moving out and in. These groups are represented in this research. The research program has several phases. Firstly, country reports about migration have been collected. Secondly, contact persons in every country interviewed service users. Finally, contact persons interviewed professionals who are working among people on the move.

The results of the research are examined from the window of conviviality. In this research conviviality is understood as living together in solidarity. How FBOs and churches are encountering people on the move and how conviviality is appeared in their action?

FBOs and churches have reacted to people's immediate need and helped and are still helping in many difficult cases. However, it seems that there is a tendency to develop more sustainable work with people on the move. It means to ask what they want and develop work together as well as co-operation with other actors. A big challenge is instability of societies which do not offer clear structures but leave a lot of on the shoulders of NGOs. Capacity building is still needed both among newcomers and those who are working with them. Furthermore, important is to work with fears and prejudices of local people and authorities.

Covid-19 and The Islamic Council of Norway: The Social Role of Religious Organisations

Bjørn Hallstein Holte, VID Specialized University, Norway

The new coronavirus came to Norway with holidaymakers returning from Italy and Austria in February 2020. In less than a month, the demographic profile of the individuals infected by the virus changed from the privileged to the less privileged and from people born in Norway to immigrants from certain mostly Muslim-majority countries. This presentation reflects on how The Islamic Council of Norway (ICN) produced and distributed information material about the coronavirus in the early phase of the pandemic in Norway. It examines how ICN's information material reflects particular ideas about the social role of religious organisations. The information material shows differentiation of religion occurring as ICN linked religion to politics and health as well as how the ICN links a geographically bounded national public with a transnational religious public. The presentation relates this to theories about the social role of religion and religious organisations, focusing particularly on the concept of religious organisations as public spaces from PhD thesis of the presenter. The results are relevant for practitioners and analysts of religious social practice in modern, secular, and diverse social contexts.