

LEARNING PROGRAM GUIDE

# Conviviality

## Diaconal Life in Diversity

*Inspiration for a diaconal church*



**CONVIVALITY**  
diaconal life in diversity

© The Lutheran World Federation, 2025

Editors: Rebecca Daniel and Tony Addy

LWF Coordination: Katariina Kiilunen

Contributors: Diaconal Practitioners from the LWF Member Churches in Europe

Proofreading: Pauline Mumia

Design and layout: Allie Hill

Illustrations (including cover): Komeil Zarin

Acknowledgement:

Over the past 15 years, the LWF has been partnering with the International Academy for Diaconia and Social Action in Central and Eastern Europe (*interdiac*) on the Seeking Conviviality: European Diaconal Process. We acknowledge the valuable contribution of *interdiac* in engaging and supporting diaconal practitioners in the creation of the Learning Guide.

LWF and *interdiac* coordination and content consultation:

Katariina Kiilunen, LWF

Janka Adameová, *interdiac*

Published by:

The Department for Theology, Mission and Justice

The Lutheran World Federation

A Communion of Churches

Chemin du Pavillon 2,

1218 Le Grand Saconnex, Geneva

Switzerland

ISBN: 978-2-940798-02-5

Websites:

LWF: [www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org)

*Interdiac* on-line space: [www.online-space.eu](http://www.online-space.eu)

E-mail:

LWF: [info@lutheranworld.org](mailto:info@lutheranworld.org)

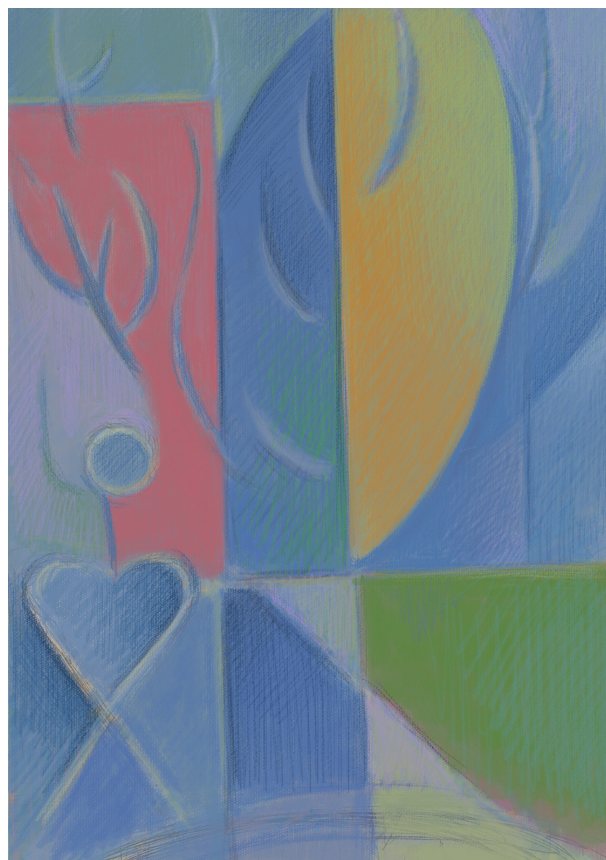
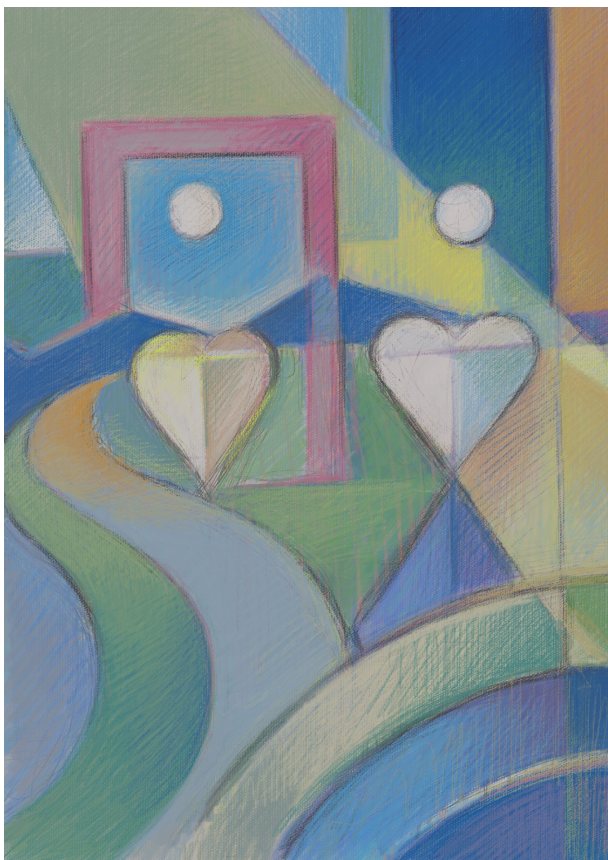
*Interdiac*: [office@interdiac.eu](mailto:office@interdiac.eu)



# Contents

<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>04</b>
.....	
<b>INTRODUCTION TO THE LEARNING PROGRAM</b>	<b>06</b>
.....	
<b>OUTLINE OF THE FOUR MODULES</b>	<b>08</b>
.....	
<b>MODULE 1: EXPERIENCING</b>	<b>12</b>
.....	
<b>MODULE 2: SEEKING CONVIVIALITY</b>	<b>30</b>
.....	
<b>MODULE 3: REFLECTION ON PRACTICE</b>	<b>74</b>
.....	
<b>MODULE 4: WORKING FOR CHANGE</b>	<b>103</b>
.....	
<b>RESOURCES</b>	<b>128</b>
.....	
<b>CONTACTS</b>	<b>129</b>
.....	
<b>CONVIVIALITY GROUP</b>	<b>130</b>
.....	

# Foreword

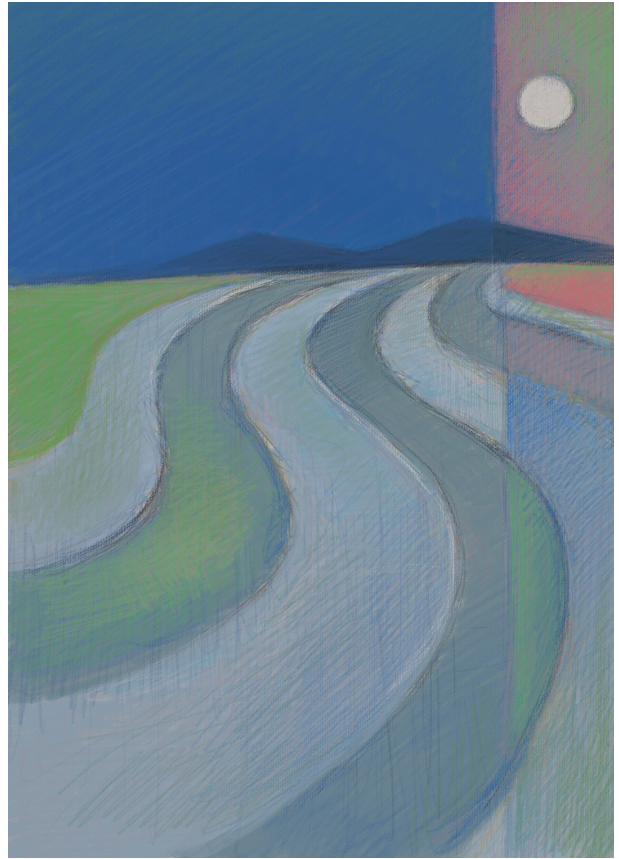
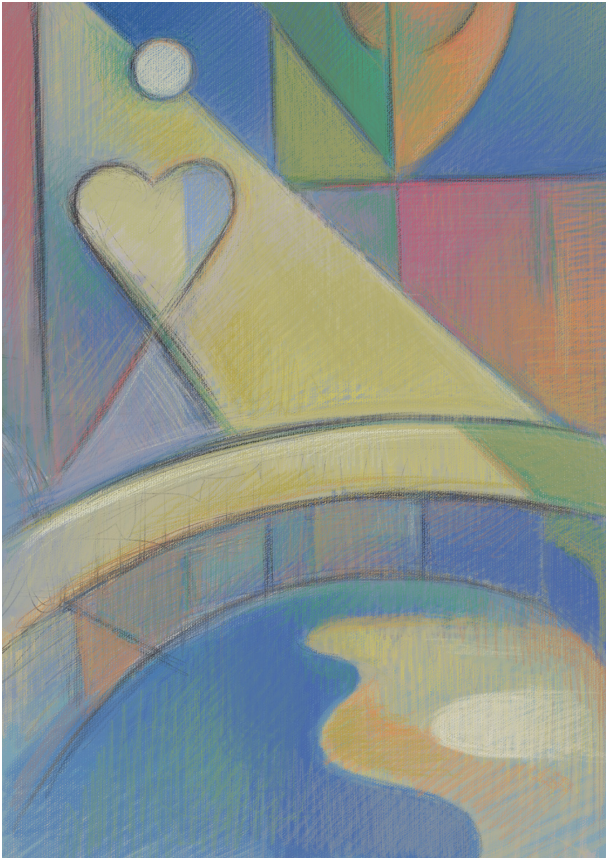


Have you ever paused to consider how our increasingly fragmented world cries out for authentic ways of living peacefully together? When we meet people across diverse communities and contexts, we witness both the challenges of division and the transformative power of genuine human connection. It is against this backdrop that I find this learning program guide on “Conviviality – Diaconal Life in Diversity” not just timely, but profoundly necessary.

This guide emerges from the lived experiences of practitioners across Europe who have wrestled with a fundamental question: what does it mean to be a diaconal church in times of growing diversity and division? Their collective wisdom offers us not merely theoretical concepts but practical pathways toward nurturing convivial life together.

The significance of conviviality, as explored within these pages, serves as an inspiration for how we might reimagine our life together, our diaconal practices, and our work for meaningful change. Rather than remaining at the theoretical level, this guide challenges us to embody a culture where welcome and mutual respect flourish naturally. I’m particularly drawn to how it disrupts the traditional divisions between those who give and those who receive. Therefore, this guide invites us into a mutual dance where each person’s dignity, as created in God’s image, is honored and celebrated.

Central to this process is the need to create spaces where everyone feels safe to contribute their gifts. This is the heart of convivial diaconal work—building bridges that connect rather than separate, engaging with people in all their complexity and nurturing environments where learning and growth become communal experiences.



This resource provides practical wisdom for deepening both our understanding and practice of diakonia. It invites a shift from hierarchical models of service to reciprocal mutual relationships where everyone participates as both giver and receiver. This daily commitment to serving neighbors, advocating justice and upholding dignity embodies what many of us have come to recognize as a powerful current of hope running through our communities. This hope reflects God’s gift of conviviality, a gift that carries both joy and responsibility.

You are invited to join a collective learning journey that aligns with the LWF’s strategy, which is titled “Sharing Hope: Empower Churches, Impacting the World”. By inspiring reflection and transformation in everyday life, church communities and diaconal practices, this mutual learning guide equips us all to be agents of positive change in culture, politics and economic structures.

May the outcome of our learning together stand as a testament to our shared conviction that change is possible. Through diaconal life rooted in conviviality, the church can indeed serve as a beacon of hope— empowering communities and impacting society for the common good. I invite you to journey through these pages, not as a passive reader, but as an active participant in this transformative vision of living together in diversity.

Rev. Dr. Sivin Kit  
Director for Theology, Mission and Justice  
The Lutheran World Federation

# Introduction to the Learning Program

---

Welcome to this learning program focusing on “convivial life in diversity” as an inspiration for a diaconal church. This introduction will provide a short overview of conviviality as explored in the learning program. The program guide will be introduced, followed by a description of the structure of the learning program.

The structure of the four interlinked Modules divided into Sessions will then be introduced. Following this, the role of the program leader or leaders is discussed. This section includes practical guidance for those interested in running the program, as well as a range of resources designed to support the delivery of the sessions.

---

## INTRODUCING CONVIVIALITY

Conviviality is an inspiration for:

- ***everyday life***

Conviviality as a concept for diakonia started with the question, “How can we live together in a society with so many divisions and growing diversity?” This implies it is built on a renewal of everyday life with a perspective of receptivity, open sharing, and the understanding that all are made in the image of God.

- ***a diaconal church***

A convivial and diaconal church not only proclaims its openness to diverse people, based on mutual respect; in practice, it fosters a culture of welcome. It does not divide people but embodies a mutual approach with a space for relationships where all feel safe.

- ***diaconal practice***

Diaconal practice avoids generalizing people’s experience in a way that tries to “sort” people into categories. It also recognizes that convivial life together requires breaking down the division between givers and receivers so that all may share a common table.

- ***work for change***

Convivial life together can be expressed in the change in everyday life, in the church, and in diakonia. However, it also requires discernment of the policies and practices of governments and economic factors that may obstruct convivial life together, including life together with creation.

- ***this Learning Program...***

will encourage reflection and lead to changes in practice—in everyday life, in the church, and in diakonia. It will also explore and inspire work for change in the culture, politics and economics of societies and a change in the relationship of people with the environment.

Key terms used throughout this guide include conviviality, diakonia, dignity, justice, and mutuality. A full glossary is provided at the end of the document.

## INTRODUCING THIS GUIDE

A writing group, primarily consisting of practitioners from across Europe, has developed this program. It is organized into four modules, each further divided into focused sessions. Drawing from their extensive experience, the group has designed a pedagogical process to guide the participants in the learning program through a structured sequence of steps.

Each session offers a wealth of adaptable material, enabling the program leader to tailor the content to suit different groups of participants. The program leader may emphasize different elements depending on group needs.

An individual time framework should be developed, taking into account both the size and composition of the participant group. Additionally, the leader should ensure sufficient breaks, incorporating movement and bodywork, to maintain engagement and well-being throughout the program.

## PURPOSE OF THE LEARNING PROGRAM

The purpose of this learning program is to create processes which support convivial life together, creating a convivial church and diakonia. It is well intended for congregational groups, diaconal workers, and leaders of church and diakonia. This learning program is based on experience, seeking conviviality as a core idea, reflection on everyday life and practice and working on personal change and change in church, diakonia and society. The main purpose of 'Conviviality – diaconal life in diversity' is also to inspire a new practice of everyday life and diakonia; to support a new understanding of what it means to be a diaconal church and work out the implications for professional diaconal workers and their organizations. The purpose is also to ensure that the learning program is open to surprise and innovation.

## STRUCTURE OF THE LEARNING PROGRAM

The four **Modules**, designed to follow one another, are briefly described below. Each module begins with a short overview and outlines the preparatory work required by the program leader or participants for each session. The number of sessions within each module varies, with most lasting approximately 90 minutes. However, some sessions are longer to accommodate diverse activities.

The sessions flow in a sequence, usually starting with everyday life, then focusing on church and diakonia and diaconal organizations and finally the need to analyze the situation to discover which social and economic policies and practices undermine or support convivial life together.

The structure of the sessions, which form the core of this learning guide, serves as guidance for the program leader. Each session description follows a common format:

**Goal.** One sentence which highlights the aim of the session.

**Objectives.** The specific objectives that will be addressed.

**Overview.** A paragraph describes the whole session.

**Process.** Describes the activities of the session, step by step.

Sometimes, there is a need for reflection between the sessions and in each case, there are bridging activities which lead from one Module to the next.

Every session description ends with a specific **Resources Box** which contains links to:

- Lutheran World Federation Publications linked to the specific session.
- Supporting Materials which can be downloaded from the Program Webpage, and which may be translated using a free online translation service (for example: Deepl or Google Translate).
- Handouts for the Participants
- A link to a selection of icebreakers and warm-up exercises which may also be translated.

# Outline of the Four Modules

## Module 1: Experiencing

Module 1 starts by reflecting on the factors that shape a person's approach to the people and environment that they encounter in everyday life. It delves into the experiences of the participants and the use of the environment as a "mirror" for reflection. Therefore, there is a focus on experience sharing and on seeing this as a bridge to Module 2 of the program.

### OUTLINE OF MODULE 1: EXPERIENCING

- Session 1: Welcome to the Program (90 minutes)
  - Session 2: Focus on "Experiencing" (90 minutes)
  - Session 3: "This is Me!" (up to 150 minutes – depends on group size)
  - Session 4: "Experiencing the Street" (around 4 hours – going out)
  - Session 5: Reflection and Analysis (120 minutes)
  - Session 6: Evaluation, Future Plans, Conviviality! (90 minutes, plus optional shared meals)
- Total time: Approximately 13 hours plus options and logistics

## Module 2: Seeking Conviviality

Module 2 is called "Seeking Conviviality" because it represents a long-term process. People may recognize some convivial moments, but conviviality has a long tradition and deeper meaning that requires time. During the process of digging deeply, participants will reflect on convivial life together and create a convivial diaconal church and convivial diakonia. They will also look at the creation of a convivial society and economy.

### OUTLINE OF MODULE 2: SEEKING CONVIVIALITY

- Session 1: The Meaning of Conviviality (90 minutes)
  - Session 2: Understanding Conviviality – Vocation, Dignity, and Justice (90 minutes)
  - Session 3: Understanding Conviviality – The Practice of Everyday Life (90 minutes, plus optional shared meals)
  - Session 4: Signs of Conviviality in a Diverse Society (90 minutes)
  - Session 5: Conviviality and Diversity in Everyday Life (90 minutes)
  - Session 6: Conviviality Goes Beyond Hospitality (90 minutes)
  - Session 7: Toward a Convivial Church (90 minutes)
  - Session 8: Toward Convivial Community Diakonia (90 minutes)
  - Session 9: Toward Convivial Diaconal Practice (90 minutes)
  - Session 10: Church Working for a Convivial Society (90 minutes)
  - Session 11: Convivial Perspectives on the Economy and Society (90 minutes)
  - Session 12: Key Issues for a Convivial Economy (90 minutes)
  - Session 13: Evaluation and Planning for the Next Period (90 minutes, plus optional shared meals)
- Total time: Approximately 15 hours plus optional shared meals

## Module 3: Reflection on Practice

Between Modules 2 and 3, participants will observe their practice of everyday life and the practice of church congregation and diakonia through a convivial lens. This module, through participative approaches, will enable reflection on practice and also on the structures of economy and society that impede convivial life together.

### OUTLINE OF MODULE 3: REFLECTION ON PRACTICE

- Session 1: Exploring Barriers, Borders, and Boundaries (90 minutes)
- Session 2: Exploring Barriers, Borders, and Boundaries through Artwork (90 minutes optional)
- Session 3: Change of Perspective (120–180 minutes)
- Session 4: Experiencing the Change (visit, flexible timing)
- Session 5: Empowerment to Change (120 minutes)
- Session 6: Intentional Conviviality in Diaconal Work 1 (60 minutes, optional)
- Session 7: Intentional Conviviality in Diaconal Work 2 (90 minutes)
- Session 8: Intentional Conviviality in Church and Diakonia (90 minutes)
- Session 9: Conviviality in Diakonia (visit[s], flexible timing)
- Session 10: Conviviality in the Social and Economic Context (90 minutes)
- Session 11: Reviewing, Planning, and Closing Worship (90 minutes plus worship and a shared meal)

Total time: Approximately 14 hours including options, plus two possible visits, worship, and a shared meal

## Module 4: Working for Change

Having begun with personal experience and deepened through shared convivial perspectives, participants have reflected on the policies and practices that shape their daily lives. A clear contrast has emerged between the vision of convivial living together and the realities encountered in everyday life.

Module 4 will take this reflection further, guiding participants to develop concrete action plans — for personal daily life, for the church and its diaconal work, and for fostering change within society and the economy. These plans will then be brought together, affirmed collectively, and celebrated as the achievements of the learning program.

### OUTLINE OF MODULE 4: WORKING FOR CHANGE

- Session 1: Introduction to the Section and Review (90 minutes)
- Session 2: Making Change in Everyday Life and Action Planning (120 minutes)
- Session 3: Making Change in Church and Diakonia 1 (90 minutes)
- Session 4: Making Change in Church and Diakonia 2 (90 minutes)
- Session 5: Action Planning – from Our Reality to the Future Vision (90 minutes)
- Session 6: Making Change in Society and Economy 1 (90 minutes)
- Session 7: Making Change in Society and Economy 2 (90 minutes)
- Session 8: Action Planning – from Our Reality to the Future Vision (120 minutes)
- Session 9: Evaluation and Follow-Up (90 minutes)

Celebration perhaps including a shared meal (flexible)

Total time: Approximately 14 hours plus celebration and worship

## PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

Each program has a leader, a pair of leaders, or be led by a small team. The leader or leaders prepare the sessions well in advance using the details in this guide, the related publications, and support materials. Planning is easier when done with another person or a small team, as different strengths complement one another. It is a good idea to go through the upcoming sessions together and share responsibilities for moderating each smaller part of the sessions.

Working with a pair gives two extra “eyes” to see what is happening in the group. It also guarantees that one person can continue if the other person has “lost their words.”

It is also possible and, in some cases, necessary to involve members of the participant group in preparing part of an upcoming session.

## BEFORE STARTING THE PROGRAM

It is important to know something about the people who may join the learning program. It may be for a specific group, and this would shape the way the resources in this guide are adapted and used, on the one hand. For instance, the program may be used by a group from one congregation (parish) or church district, by diaconal workers or by volunteers. It could be adapted for church and/or diaconal leaders or for students in programs for ministerial or diaconal formation. Another option is to organize the program for a cross-sectional group from different parts of the same church and diaconal district. A leaflet could also be produced to shape the invitation according to the specific group interests.

On the other hand, the program could serve as the basis of an open access opportunity for many people, and this would require its own leaflet and advertisement on relevant media.

It is a good idea to invite participants to register and to provide them with detailed information about the schedule and venue.

It is important to think about the timing of the program and the process of the sessions because some sessions involve exercises during which people “go out” or “visit” places or organizations. The program can be suitable for several-day or weekend workshops, or it may be broken down into smaller time blocks. Also, it is good to bear in mind that sometimes there is a need for a break between sessions so that participants can prepare for the next session. The timings given in the guide are not exact since they depend on the specifics in each case as well as the number of participants.

As part of the preparation, it is important to consider the place and space where the program will be held, as these “speak” to the participants through their ambience, identity, and accessibility. The room should allow chairs to be arranged in a circle, provide space for small group work, and include harmonious and attractive elements to create a welcoming and safer atmosphere. It is also important to ensure that fruits, snacks, tea,

or coffee are available, and, where possible, that there is an opportunity to share a meal. Certain points in the program suggest different models for meal sharing. Whenever possible, organic and fair-trade products should be used. It is important to recognize that economic relations should be just and promote convivial life and work. Similarly, the use of natural resources and energy should reflect a respectful and harmonious relationship with creation.

## RESOURCES

For the whole program, there are three important resources:

- The program web page that gives access to all the relevant materials and documents. [Link](#)
- Lutheran World Federation publications that are linked through almost every session. [Link](#)
- Supporting Materials for each Session that are stored on the relevant section of the web page.

It is important to ensure the availability of basic educational materials, such as pens, colored markers, colored cards in various shapes, flip chart paper, sticky notes, a pin board, and, if possible, a whiteboard. A projector (beamer) for PowerPoint or other presentations and a source of music is also useful. For each session, access to a Wi-Fi connection and a device with a larger screen is recommended.



MODULE 1

# Experiencing

People often make assumptions and jump to conclusions when meeting someone new – even before that person has spoken. Especially when the other person is different from ourselves, we tend to fill up the “space” between “us” and “them” with assumptions. Our assumptions may be shaped by our culture or our previous experience – that is, from our biography and socialization.

Though our assumptions shape our reception of others and influence future relationships, we seldom reflect on how our assumptions are formed. Therefore, reflecting upon the contexts and processes that shape our approach to others is important when exploring the theme “convivial life together.”

For this reason, our learning journey in this program starts with experience sharing. Participants are invited to analyze how their “experiencing of others” has been shaped. The implications of what they have discovered will act as a bridge to what follows in Module 2, “Seeking Conviviality.”

---

## OVERVIEW

The focus of this Module is to develop a self-awareness of how we experience otherness and difference. The Module comprises 6 sessions as follows:

***Session 1. Welcome to the Program***

***Session 2. Focus on “Experiencing”***

***Session 3. “This is Me!”***

***Session 4. “Experiencing the Street”***

***Session 5. Reflection and Analysis***

***Session 6. Evaluation, Future Plans, Conviviality!***

Total time: Approximately 13 hours plus options and logistics.

## SESSION 1

# Welcome to the Program

**GOAL**

To introduce group members to each other and to create a safe space with the participant group.

**OBJECTIVES**

- To introduce oneself to each other
- To develop groups
- To create a trustful and safe space

**OVERVIEW**

This introductory session focuses on building trust within the group and understanding how people engage with diversity. Through the sharing of personal stories and experiences, participants will delve into themes of similarity and difference, cultivate intercultural awareness through understanding the significance of names, and share their expectations from the learning program.

**PROCESS****Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader welcomes the participants to the learning program and introduces the group activity. The group activity begins with all the participants sitting in a circle, creating an open and inclusive atmosphere where everyone can easily engage. This setup encourages equal participation and helps foster a sense of community.

This session starts with a brief round of introductions, where each participant shares their name. This step is essential for setting a welcoming tone and helping people get to know each other.

The program leader observes and assesses the group dynamics to plan effective introductory activities. It is important to assess the comfort levels within the group to ensure a smooth transition from introductions to more in-depth discussions.

Before moving into deeper discussions, the program leader can introduce a simple icebreaker or warm-up activity. This helps participants relax, fosters trust, and encourages active participation. The choice of activity should suit the group's needs and encourage everyone to contribute.

Supporting materials and additional ideas for icebreakers can be found on the program web page and accessed via links, which can be found in the Resources Box.

## THINGS TO OBSERVE AS PROGRAM LEADER: UNDERSTANDING INTERPERSONAL INTERACTIONS

It is important for the program leader to observe and understand interpersonal interactions as they facilitate the learning program. As the participants progress through this program, they will deepen their understanding of interpersonal interactions – an essential element in fostering a welcoming and inclusive church environment.

Building strong relationships within the church involves recognizing both commonalities and differences among group members. While it is often easier to connect with those perceived as similar, forming relationships with individuals who may seem “different” can be more challenging and enriching.

It is also important to remember that many individuals may at times feel like the ‘other’ within a group. Acknowledging this adds depth to our understanding of group dynamics and helps participants appreciate the diverse perspectives that exist within the church community.

### Power Dynamics in Interpersonal Interactions

An essential aspect of interpersonal relationships is the concept of power. Power dynamics are often present in interactions, whether subtle or overt. For example, when two individuals meet, there may be an imbalance of power, which can shape the tone and nature of the relationship. Reflecting on this can help participants understand how these dynamics influence interactions and relationships within their church communities.

### The Role of Church Identity in Interactions

Church identity also affects interpersonal interactions. In some contexts, Christians – such as Lutherans – may be the majority and view their status as “normal.” In other contexts, however, Lutherans might be a minority, experiencing a different perception of what is considered “normal.” These varying identities influence how members relate to each other and to the broader society.

### Reflection on Life Together

Exploring these interpersonal dynamics is essential for meaningful reflection on how church members live together both within society and in their congregation. By examining how individuals relate to each other – considering identity, power, and difference – the participants can gain valuable insights into their own identities and relationships. This reflective process ultimately supports the creation of a more inclusive, and convivial church community.

## INTERPERSONAL INTERACTIONS

In this session, the program leader guides the participants through two essential steps to deepen the participants’ understanding of interpersonal dynamics within their group.

### Exploring Similarities and Differences

Participants begin by reflecting on both the similarities and differences among themselves. The approach may be tailored to fit the group’s specific composition. For example, in groups where members come from the same congregation and are familiar with each other in a particular context, the exploration might focus on discovering new aspects of one another. In more diverse groups, such as students from different backgrounds, the focus may shift toward uncovering broader differences in culture, experience, or perspective.

Participatory methods are employed to facilitate this exploration, encouraging open communication and shared insights.

### Name Significance and Personal Histories

To continue the process of getting to know one another, the program leader encourages the participants to share the stories behind their names – both surnames and given names. This exercise opens discussions on the cultural and familial significance of names, offering insights into participants' backgrounds. These personal histories can reveal diverse cultural roots, even among participants from the same region, and deepen mutual understanding. Following the name activity, participants can take part in additional exercises to explore other aspects of their identities.

These exercises are available in the document *Deepening the Discussion – Methods That Facilitate Participatory Engagements*, which can be found in the Resources Box.

### Sharing of Expectations

The participants then reflect on their expectations for the program. In pairs, they discuss their answers to the following questions:

- What do they hope to learn from the learning program?
- What parts of the program connect with their experiences or interests?
- Are there changes they wish to see in the church, diakonia, or broader society?

After sharing in pairs, participants bring their main points to the larger group, fostering a shared sense of purpose and direction for the program.

## UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF CONVIVIALITY

Following this sharing process, the group will transition to the second theme, “Conviviality.” This concept guided a church in a rapidly changing neighborhood in Amsterdam, encouraging them to envision a future that extends beyond merely maintaining the status quo. The program leader shall show a short video about this church, followed by a discussion. The participants can refer to one of the four storybooks available in the program resources for additional context (e.g., *Diaconal Life in Diversity Book 1: Conviviality and the Diaconal Church*).

## CONCLUDING SESSION

The program leader shall conclude this session with a brief round of feedback, inviting participants to share any surprises or insights they would like to carry forward. If this is a stand-alone session, it may end with a short prayer, expressing gratitude for the group's diversity and the experiences shared together.

In preparation for Session 2 – Focus on “Experiencing,” the program leader shall inform participants about the Agape meal planned for the end of that session. This will allow the participants to discuss and to decide together on how they would like to organize it.

### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 1

#### Lutheran World Federation Publications

Seeking Conviviality – re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe  
Diaconal Life in Diversity 1. Conviviality and the Diaconal Church, p.28–34

[LINK](#)

#### Short Video

‘Diaconal Life in Diversity’ The Augustanahof Community in Amsterdam

[LINK](#)

#### Supporting Material for the program leader

Deepening the discussion

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 2

## Focus on “Experiencing”

## GOAL

To introduce the concept of “experiencing” as a lens for understanding conviviality and to guide participants through the learning process.

## OBJECTIVES

- To provide an overview of the learning program
- To understand the process of “Experiencing” as an integral part of the program
- To create a trustful and safe space
- To understand “experiencing” using a biblical devotion

## OVERVIEW

In this session, the program leader builds on the sharing from the previous session and introduces the learning program using the concept of “experiencing”. The group then identifies shared principles of interaction, emphasizing safeguarding, building trust, and maintaining confidentiality. . Finally, participants are introduced to the work they have to do at home to prepare for Session 3 – “This is Me!”

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader welcomes the group. If the session does not follow directly from the previous one, a brief recap may be helpful. Alternatively, an icebreaker or warm-up exercise can be used to set the tone.

The program leader guides the participants in understanding how the various components of Module

1 on “Experiencing” comes together and forms the foundation of the learning program. Participants deepen their reflections on the theme of “experiencing,” beginning with an exploration of their own life stories. This helps them continue reflecting on how their lives are shaped by the influence of others, key life events, and social and political changes.

**Creating a Life Story**

The program leader prepares participants for the upcoming session, in which they are invited to share their life stories. The purpose of this activity is to recognize that our life stories or biographies form the foundation of how we relate to others.

Participants reflect on and write down important aspects of their life that have shaped their self-understanding in preparation for sharing.

**Preparation for Life-Story Sharing**

The program leader needs to provide ample time for the participants to ask questions about the exercise and provide clear instructions on how to complete it effectively.

The program leader encourages the participants to consider how they share their stories with the group. Additionally, the program leader suggests preparing a visual presentation, such as a timeline or a diagram, to help convey their story.

Detailed preparation instructions for writing "My Story" can be found in the Resources Box.

### Identifying Shared Principles for Interaction

The program leader invites the group to collaboratively create shared principles for their work together. These principles help build trust, maintain confidentiality, and create a safe and supportive environment for all participants.

Participants work in small groups to discuss and propose the guidelines they would like to follow throughout the program. Key principles to consider include:

- **Confidentiality.** What is said in the room stays in the room.
- **Group behavior.** Respecting diverse opinions and ensuring an inclusive process.
- **Safeguarding.** Recognize safeguarding as an essential aspect of the group's work together.

### Presenting and Deciding on Shared Principles

The program leader invites each group to present their five most important principles. Once all the groups have presented their proposed principles, the entire group identifies similarities and differences and decides which principles to adopt. Participants are also encouraged to suggest any principles not mentioned by others.

Once agreed upon, the shared principles are written on flip chart paper and displayed at every meeting.

**CONCLUDING SESSION****Devotion**

The program leader concludes the session by introducing a biblical story that illustrates how surprising changes occur in the life of Jesus, a Rabbi, or a respected teacher. One example is the story of the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21–28), in which she challenges Jesus and prompts him to change his mind. This moment symbolizes the shift that reveals that the incarnation is meant for everyone – not only the Jews, but also the Gentiles.

A Bible study on the story of the Canaanite woman, along with a link to additional Bible studies created by participants in the Seeking Conviviality Process, can be found in the Resources Box. These resources can be useful for future group work.

**Agape Meal**

To close this session, the program leader leads the group in a brief reflection and prayer. If an Agape meal is planned, the group collectively participates in organizing and preparing the meal, further fostering a sense of community and shared experience.

**Leadership Readiness**

Leadership readiness is essential in a conviviality program focused on fostering mutual respect, an inclusive community, and shared life. Effective leadership sets the tone for the environment, the process, and the outcomes. Therefore, it is important for program leaders to reflect on their readiness before deciding to fully engage in the process.

**RESOURCES FOR SESSION 2****Lutheran World Federation Publications**

Convivial Life Together – Vocation, Dignity and Justice p.3–6  
(Bible Studies written by participants in the Seeking Conviviality process)

[LINK](#)**Supporting Materials for the program leader**

Instructions for Writing "My Story"

[LINK](#)

A Bible study on the Canaanite Woman (Matthew 15:21–28)

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 3

## “This is Me!”

## GOAL

To share each person’s socio-biographical story as the first step in working on diversity.

## OBJECTIVES

- To share the participants’ stories
- To explore similarities and differences

## OVERVIEW

This session focuses on sharing the biographical work that participants have already completed. The primary task is to listen attentively to each other’s stories, paying attention to the key shaping factors and turning points in their lives.

This is an important step in the process, and the program leader ensures that the group is prepared for an intensive sharing and learning experience. The goal is to build understanding and connection through personal experiences, forming the foundation for Session 4 – “Experiencing the Street.”

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader welcomes the group. If the group has not met for a while or if there are new participants, it is helpful to begin the session with an icebreaker or warming-up exercise. A simple approach is a name-recall activity, which helps participants get to know each other and foster a sense of connection.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE SESSION**

This session lays the foundation for reflecting on participants’ experiences of convivial life together and sets the tone for the entire program. The program leader guides participants as they explore group dynamics, share personal stories, and engage in a collective journey of reflection and discovery. Through these activities, participants build deeper connections with one another.

Establishing trust and creating a safe space in this session is essential for meaningful participation and engagement throughout the program. The program leader fosters an environment of openness and mutual respect, ensuring that participants feel supported as they begin their journey of learning and reflection.

### Small Group Sharing

The primary activity in this session is story sharing, where participants share their personal stories with the group. The focus is on listening and asking questions that can deepen understanding.

However, it is essential to remember that no participant is forced to answer any question that they are uncomfortable with. The participants are free to say, "I do not wish to answer your question," or something similar, to maintain personal boundaries.

The program leader plays a key role in creating and maintaining a safe space, continually reiterating the shared principles – with special emphasis on confidentiality.

- The larger group can be divided into small groups of 4 to 5 participants.
- Each person gets 15–20 minutes to share his/her story, without interruption, followed by 5–10 minutes where other members can ask questions to deepen their understanding.
- The total time per participant is about 30 minutes.
- Timekeeping is critical to ensure equal participation and balanced session.

The program leader emphasizes that, in this context, storytelling is not a therapeutic exercise but a means for participants to be seen and understood by others. Each person's socio-biography reveals how their upbringing, culture, and life experiences shape his/her worldview, context, and interactions with others. Recognizing the unique perspectives each group member brings is a key learning outcome of this exercise.

Even in groups with shared experiences – such as church membership or involvement in diaconal work – individual histories can highlight diverse perspectives, encouraging participants to reflect on both similarities and differences. This activity takes approximately two hours; it is recommended to schedule a break after two stories have been shared to allow time for the participants to recharge.

### Group Reflection

After the small group story-sharing segment, the program leader brings the group back together for a brief reflection. Participants share "how they felt" about telling their own biography and listening to the life stories of others. This reflection helps consolidate the group's experience and provide a smooth transition into the next stage of the program.

In preparation for Session 4 – "Experiencing the Street," the program leader reminds participants that they engage in an outdoor activity. Participants are advised to wear suitable clothing for the weather and comfortable shoes. They also bring a notebook to record their observations and reflections during the session.

## CONCLUDING SESSION

### Devotion

To close this session, the program leader introduces a biblical story that illustrates the power of transformation through storytelling and personal encounters. For example, the story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19: 1 – 10) – a wealthy man who climbs a tree to see Jesus and is then called down to have his life transformed, serves a meaningful parallel. It highlights how sharing one's story in a safe and welcoming atmosphere can open the way for significant change.

A Bible study on Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus, highlighting the transformative power of life changes, can be found in the Resources Box.

The program leader ends this session with a brief reflection, inviting participants to share final thoughts on the day's activities, followed by a closing prayer.

### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 3

#### Lutheran World Federation Publications

Seeking Conviviality: re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe  
Diaconal Life in Diversity 4. Conviviality and Radical Welcome P.29–33

[LINK](#)

#### Supporting Material for the program leader

A Bible study on Zacchaeus encounters Jesus (Luke 19: 1 – 10)

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 4

## “Experiencing the Street”

## GOAL

To explore a new way of being in the street without a task.

## OBJECTIVES

- To be involved in close observation of sensory and bodily reactions while being in a neighborhood
- To reflect on the experience

## OVERVIEW

This session is divided into three parts: an introductory and orientation session, “Experiencing the Street,” and coming together.

In this session, participants go out into a neighborhood (urban or rural, familiar or new) to observe

- the environment (buildings, streets, atmosphere)
- people (who is present, how they interact)
- the place itself (what it reveals about the community)

The goal is to explore an unfamiliar neighborhood to observe and reflect on the environment.

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader welcomes the participants and introduces a warm-up exercise called “Moon and Sun.”

After the exercise, the program leader facilitates a brief reflection on the experience. Participants are then asked to quickly respond to the question, “What did you see, smell, or hear on the way to the meeting?” They discuss their observations, focusing on how often people concentrate on their own goals and become “blind” to those around them. This exercise highlights the importance of observation and reflection.

**“Experiencing the Street”**

The program leader introduces the “Experiencing the Street” exercise to the participants.

The instructional handout Guide to “Experiencing the Street”, for both the program leader and participants can be found in the Resources Box.

In this activity, participants are invited to explore the same area, or “streets,” where they previously shared their biographies – this time individually rather than as a group. It is important to clarify this in advance and to ensure that the neighborhood is spacious enough for participants to explore on their own.

The participants, including the program leaders who have shared their own biographies, are encouraged to visit the designated area with an open mind and a willingness to observe their surroundings thoughtfully.

This exercise is sometimes referred to as “Exposure.” The term draws a parallel to an old-fashioned camera containing an undeveloped film. When light enters the camera, it creates an image. In the same way, when participants “go out,” the impressions they receive vary—not only because of the environment itself, but also because of what is personally “received,” how it is interpreted, and, in comparison with others, what may not be received or may be perceived differently.

The “**Exposure**” process suggests a shift in how we approach both the environment and the people within it. It involves three key aspects:

### **Walking**

When a participant “walks,” there is no other task than to receive and experience. They are not professionals, tourists, or researchers searching for “something,” nor are they on a journey to a specific destination. Instead, they are free from responsibilities, obligations, expectations, and busyness. Participants may walk down the same street several times, noticing and experiencing different things each time. In this way, the neighborhood becomes their mirror. An important guiding question to hold during this exercise is, “What do I see?”

### **Meeting**

It is not necessary for participants to come into direct contact with others, though it may naturally happen. For example, stopping for coffee or lunch creates at least some interaction with the server. Even without direct engagement, participants will observe people at close range.

If conversational partners become available in an unfamiliar environment, participants are free to engage in dialogue—while also respecting the value of the “empty moment,” should it arise.

Participants may enter any places open to the public, such as service points, libraries, shops, cafés, open events, or pubs. They are welcome to remain there quietly, simply to take in the atmosphere and experience it—pleasant or otherwise—without any particular role or goal beyond “exposure.”

### **Making Notes**

Participants are encouraged to pay attention to their feelings and reactions to what they observe, recording them in their notebooks along with their reflections. They may write while experiencing the activity or afterward and can also choose to draw—either realistically or symbolically.

It is important that the program leader reminds participants that being in the street may sometimes feel awkward or even boring. However, it is essential to remain present and continue through that sense of “emptiness,” as staying engaged is a key part of the exercise.

Participants bring all notes and materials to the next session to support further reflection and discussion.

### **Coming Together**

At the end of the “Experiencing the Street” activity, all participants gather at the meeting place and share a drink. It can be helpful to go round the group and briefly share their “first feelings” about the experience of “going out” in the streets.

The program leader proceeds to give instructions for the preparation of Sessions 5 and 6. Where feasible, the Reflection and Analysis session may be scheduled directly after the “Experiencing the Street” session. Careful time management is essential to ensure sufficient breaks for refreshments and meals.

**Key Follow-Up Task**

The program leader invites each participant to reflect on their experiences and the notes they have taken during the session. Participants are asked to distill their thoughts and insights into a single symbol or drawing that encapsulates their experience. These symbols or drawings serve as personal reflections on the session’s impact. In the next session (Session 5 – “Reflection and Analysis”), participants begin by sharing these symbols or drawings, creating an opportunity for deeper group reflection and discussion.

**CONCLUDING SESSION**

The program leader concludes the session with a prayer, inviting the group to share a moment of spiritual reflection. The prayer may focus on:

- Gratitude for the opportunity to slow down and observe the world in a different way.
- Reflection on how time without a task might bring deeper connections to oneself, others, and the world.
- A blessing for continuing this mindset of receptivity and mindfulness in daily life.

**RESOURCES FOR SESSION 4****Handout for the participants**

Guide to ‘Experiencing the Street’

[LINK](#)**Supporting Material for the program leader**

Guide to ‘Experiencing the Street’

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 5

## Reflection and Analysis

## GOAL

To share the experience of the street (exposure) and relate what each participant “saw” to their biography.

## OBJECTIVES

- To reflect on the Experiencing/Exposure process
- To share deeper personal reflections on the way biography influences experience

## OVERVIEW

This session is especially important because it helps participants understand how the things they notice are closely related to their own biographies. This insight is valuable for exploring the factors that shape a person’s relationships with different people, places, and contexts.

Reflecting on the diversity of perception within a safe group environment can raise important questions about what it means to work diaconally in a diverse society. Such reflection can also highlight how changes in structures, politics, or the economy influence personal lives, shape expectations of others and of the church, and impact the motivation to bring about change.

These reflections may also touch on matters of faith and theology, as well as participants’ understanding of the church. All these aspects are linked to the broader process of “socialisation.”

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

After the previous session, which focused on active engagement and observation, this session shifts to a more analytical and reflective approach. To create a contemplative atmosphere, the program leader begins with a meditative round by inviting all participants to form a large circle. Each participant is then asked to briefly share their “sparkling or disturbing moment” from the last session in just one or two sentences, without elaboration. This collective reflection concludes with a short prayer.

Following the prayer, the program leader invites each participant to present the symbol they prepared to capture a key takeaway from Session 4 – “Experiencing the Street.” Sharing takes place group by group (based on the previous “exposure” groups), allowing participants to recognize both the similarities and differences in their reflections.

**Small Groups Sharing**

The goal of the small group session is to explore and share individual experiences of the place, while noting both similarities and differences in observations.

It is important for both individuals and the group to recognize how each experience is shaped by personal socialisation. Each participant is given equal time to share what stood out to them through their senses (sight, sound, smell, etc.). Listeners focus on understanding the speaker’s experience without interrupting, seeking to

explore why certain aspects were noticed—or overlooked—based on their background. This process of “learning by difference” highlights how assumptions are shaped by personal socialization and expectations.

Following the discussion, the group collaborates on a creative presentation—such as a collage, painting, drama, or “living statue”—to express their collective insights. The aim is to weave together diverse perspectives to form a deeper, shared understanding of the experience.

### Coming Together

Each group presents their artwork or drama without explanations, giving the other participants the opportunity to share what they notice and the conclusions they draw from the presentation.

Following this, the program leader poses two key questions to the group:

- What do we learn about the diversity of perception of the same reality?
- What can we learn from this for our ongoing life and work together – both within this group and in other group settings?

This reflection serves as a foundation for growth and change, encouraging personal transformation, shifts in congregational or diaconal culture, and broader societal changes.

## CONCLUDING SESSION

Toward the end of the session, the group shares a communal snack or meal together.

The program leader then leads a devotion, drawing on the theme of the church as one body with many diverse parts, as described in 1 Corinthians 12:12–26. This passage underscores the unity that emerges through diversity, providing a meaningful link to the concept of conviviality and highlighting the importance of unity through diversity

A document on One Body, Many Members can be found in the Resources Box.

### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 5

#### Supporting Materials for the Program Guide

Time Out Dialogue Approach

[LINK](#)

One Body, Many Members – Biblical Text: 1 Corinthians:12: 12 – 26

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 6

## Evaluation, Conviviality and Future Plans

## GOAL

Evaluation of the first Module of the Learning Program and introducing Module 2 – “Seeking Conviviality.”

## OBJECTIVES

- To evaluate the first module of the learning program
- To introduce the participants to the next part of the program
- To celebrate the completion of the module with a joint meal

## OVERVIEW

In this session, participants evaluate their personal and group learning outcomes from the previous sessions. Module 2 – “Seeking Conviviality” of the learning program is also introduced, setting the stage for the next phase of the program.

## PROCESS

In this session, the program leader guides the participants to reflect on their collective journey, beginning with the session titled “This is Me!,” continuing with “Experiencing the Street,” and concluding with “Analysis and Evaluation.” This approach helps to create a cohesive understanding of the experiences and insights gained throughout the module.

To facilitate reflection, a brief devotion can be held. During this time, the program leader or another designated person – connects key words and phrases from the previous sessions, offering a meditation that encapsulates the process and leads into the evaluation.

## EVALUATION OF LEARNING

**Individual Reflection: “This is Me!”**

Seated in a circle, the program leader asks participants to reflect on Session 4 – “This is Me!” for about 10 minutes, based on the statement:

- What I learned about myself from the “This is Me!” session is...

Each participant makes short notes about their insights to share later.

**Small Group Sharing**

After reflection time, participants return to the small groups where they previously shared personal stories. Within these groups, they continue to share their insights and discuss the implications of their reflections for approximately 20–30 minutes.

**Plenary Feedback**

The program leader facilitates this feedback session. After the small group discussions, participants are invited to share their reflections with the larger group in a plenary session.

**Reflection on “Experiencing the Street”**

Each participant spends another 10 minutes contemplating on the following statements:

- The “Exposure” approach to “Experiencing the Street” was significant because...
- The analysis of “Experiencing the Street” was important for my everyday life, for my diaconal church or diakonia or for the society and economy because...

**FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION**

The program leader provides participants with sticky notes or cards in three different colors or shapes, inviting them to write their responses to each question on the note that corresponds to the designated color or shape for that theme. Participants then share their insights by placing their notes on a board and discussing themes verbally. They may use multiple cards if needed.

This round of feedback, facilitated by the program leader, can then develop into a broader discussion of the specific or general themes that emerge from the reflections.

**PREPARATION FOR MODULE 2 – “SEEKING CONVIVIALITY”**

The program leader invites participants to reflect on what the word “conviviality” (or its equivalents—convivencia, Konvivialität, convivialité) means within their specific contexts. Together, they explore the different meanings and interpretations of the term.

If “conviviality” is uncommon in a particular context, participants may identify synonyms or short phrases that best capture its essence.

**SHARED MEAL**

Module 1 concludes with a celebratory meal, during which participants share sweets to symbolize positive experiences, jellybeans to represent surprises, and nuts (or a suitable alternative for those with nut allergies) to reflect on the challenges they faced during the program.

**RESOURCES FOR SESSION 6****Lutheran World Federation Publications**

Seeking Conviviality re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe  
Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church

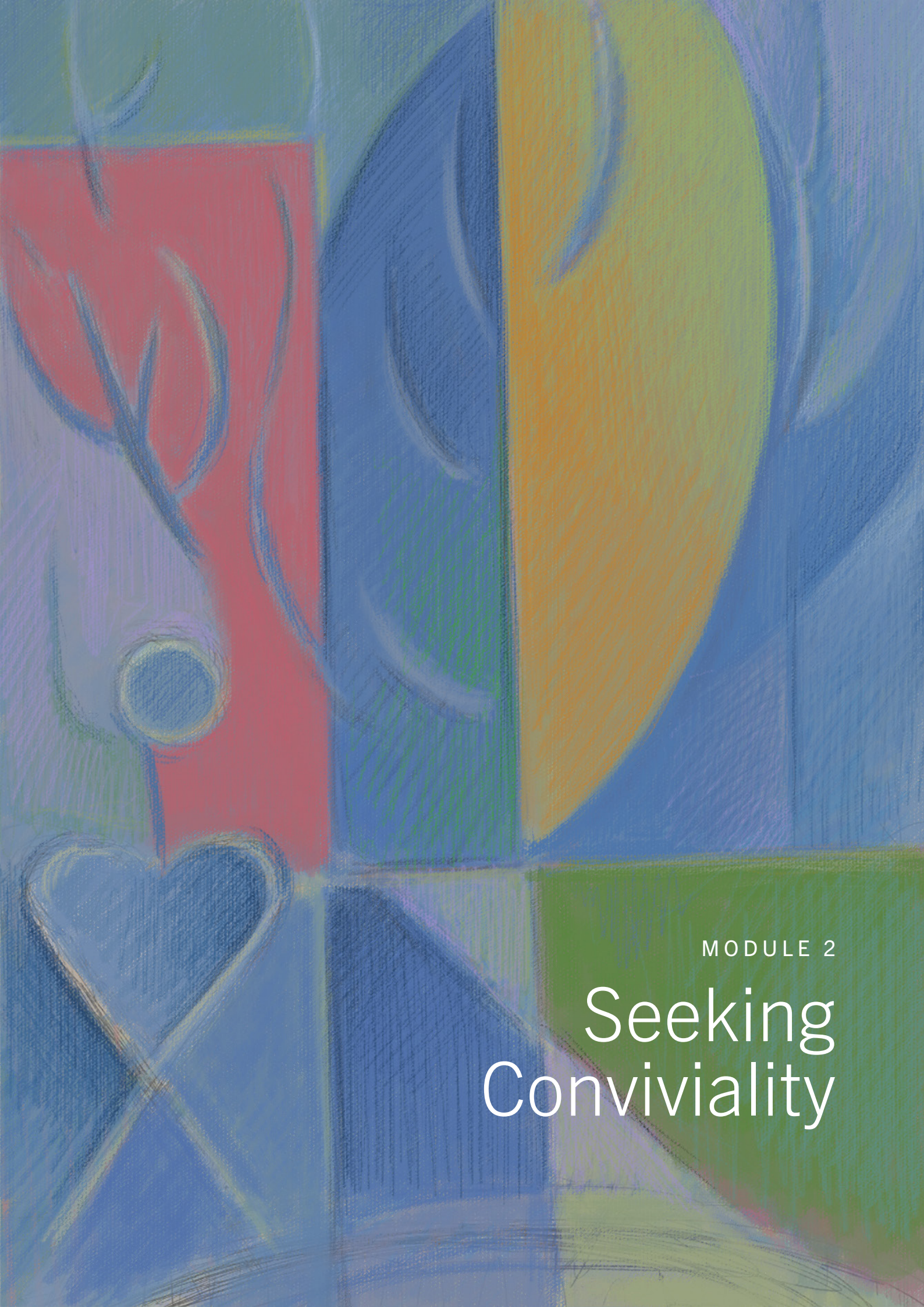
[LINK](#)**Supporting Materials for the program leader**

PowerPoint: for the Overall Program

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)



MODULE 2

# Seeking Conviviality

This module forms the core of the learning program. Building on the exploration in Module 1 of how personal socio-biography shapes responses to ‘others’ who may be different, it introduces the concept of conviviality, encouraging participants to reflect on creating a convivial economy, society, church, and diakonia.

## OVERVIEW

The Module comprises of 11 sessions as follows:

*Session 1. The Meaning of Conviviality*

*Session 2. Vocation, Dignity and Justice*

*Session 3. Understanding Conviviality – the practice of everyday life*

*Session 4. Signs of Conviviality in a Diverse Society*

*Session 5. Conviviality and Diversity in Everyday Life*

*Session 6. Conviviality Goes Beyond Hospitality*

*Session 7. Towards a Convivial Church*

*Session 8. Steps Towards a Convivial Community Diakonia*

*Session 9. Towards Convivial Diaconal Practice*

*Session 10. Church Working for a Convivial Society*

*Session 11. Convivial Perspectives on the Economy and Society*

*Session 12. Key Issues for a Convivial Economy*

*Session 13. Evaluation and Planning for the Next Period*

Total time: Approximately 15 hours plus shared meal

## SESSION 1

# The Meaning of Conviviality

**GOAL**

To explore the meaning and experience of conviviality as it relates to everyday life, diakonia and society.

**OBJECTIVES**

- To understand the meaning of conviviality in its various facets
- To find words to express 'convivial life together'

**OVERVIEW**

This session builds on the group's work from Module 1, Session 4 – "Experiencing the Street," linking socio-biography to the concept of conviviality as both a vision and a practice. It explores the overlapping meanings of conviviality, examining its historical roots and its influence on social practices and the church's mission today.

This session begins with a theological exploration of 'conviviality,' which will be further developed in future sessions to enrich and deepen the diaconal understanding of conviviality.

A PowerPoint presentation and a detailed handout on, Conviviality – A Deep Dive, are available in the Resources Box for this session, providing additional background and insights.

**PROCESS****Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader welcomes the participants and, considering group dynamics, begins the session with an icebreaker exercise. Participants are then invited to share an inspiring takeaway from Module 1 – 'Experiencing.'

Following this, the program leader encourages a brief discussion on their understanding of conviviality. This conversation may also be nurtured in informal, festive settings, for example, by organizing a convivial evening.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

For effective facilitation of this session, the program leader is encouraged to consult the supporting materials that outline the historical background and development of conviviality. These resources will assist in linking the concept's multiple interpretations to particular contexts and in demonstrating its significance for diakonia and the diaconal church today.

The supporting material on the Historical Background of Conviviality can be found in the Resources Box.

## THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Conviviality is a divine gift entrusted to humanity, embodying both the beauty of human diversity and the vocation to steward creation. Rooted in faith, hope, and love, it fosters dignity, justice, and peace, aligning with diakonia and social work, with its ultimate fulfillment in God’s Kingdom.

The supporting material on the Theological Perspective can be found in the Resources Box.

### Conviviality is the art and practice of living together with all our differences:

In seeking to create a convivial environment, it is essential to remain aware of both our similarities and differences with “others.” This awareness helps to build meaningful relationships, creating pathways for harmonious living, “living together.”

To deepen your understanding of “others” and to cultivate a convivial spirit, consider reflecting on the following questions:

#### Questions for personal reflection

- How am I similar to my neighbor from another continent? How are we different?
- How am I similar to my neighbor with Down syndrome? How are we different?
- For whom am I the “different other”? How do they perceive our similarities and differences?
- What different conditions do we each face, both personally and due to the society we live in?

#### Questions for group discussion

- What human conditions do we all share?  
(e.g., We are all born, we will all die, we need food, water, shelter, relationships, and love. We are all vulnerable.)
- What human conditions are unevenly distributed?  
(e.g., Health, living conditions, access to resources, capabilities, knowledge, skills.)

## CREATING A CONVIVIAL SPACE

In a convivial life together, it is important to create space where everyone can both give and receive, even though contributions may differ depending on each person’s circumstances, gifts, and possibilities.

Referencing 2 Corinthians 8:7–15, we are reminded of the importance of the reciprocal sharing of resources as a basis for equality that acknowledges diversity. This scriptural passage emphasizes that generosity should flow both ways, fostering an environment of mutual support and understanding. By recognizing and valuing each person’s unique contributions, we cultivate a truly convivial community.

## VULNERABILITY AND INTERDEPENDENCE

Everyone experiences vulnerability as a fundamental aspect of our interdependence and the shared reality of mortality. When individuals recognize their own vulnerability, they become more open to receiving from others and embracing change. In contrast, those in positions of power often neglect to acknowledge their vulnerability.

Firstly, by accepting our shared human vulnerability, we can meet each other as equals, recognizing our kinship and forming a collective sense of belonging. However, there are disparities at the heart of our vulnerabilities that are caused by factors such as health issues, displacement, or marginalization. To foster conviviality, it is essential to acknowledge these disparities and work toward creating conditions that address these disparities.

Secondly, recognizing the uneven nature of vulnerability prompts groups to consider how to facilitate inclusive spaces where everyone can participate, and both give and receive. Additionally, it is vital to advocate for societal conditions that support convivial living and address marginalization.

### Questions for Personal Reflection

- How can a person without spoken language contribute if communication is solely verbal?
- How can someone who uses a wheelchair participate if no ramps are available?
- How can an unemployed person feel included in discussions focused on work, status, and roles?

### Questions for Group Discussion

- How does our acceptance of shared vulnerabilities affect our relationships and communities?
- How can awareness of uneven vulnerability distribution shape our communities as we search to pursue convivial life?

## THE TRINITY – A MODEL FOR CONVIVIAL LIFE?

Trinity serves as a model for convivial living, offering a framework that extends beyond the church to society and the economy. It provides essential principles for practicing conviviality, including mutual recognition, inclusiveness, love, and service. As beings created in the image of God, we are called to reflect these core values in our lives – living in love, justice, and inclusivity. To explore this idea further, program leader can refer to the article, *Divine Images: Building Up Our Spirituality, Walking and Dancing Together* by Eva-Sibylle Vogel and Martin Urdze, published by *Interdiac*.

The supporting material on The Trinity – A Model for Convivial Life can be found in the Resources Box.

## FINDING NEW EXPRESSIONS OF CONVIVIALITY

Following this discussion, the program leader invites each participant to take five minutes to formulate a sentence that captures their understanding of conviviality. Sharing these reflections with the group will help deepen the collective understanding. (If time allows, participants may also create a drawing or visual representation to express their insights).

### Optional Activity

Under the Resources for Session 1, there is a story titled “The Heart of Conviviality.” This can be used during this session or at another point in the program, as deemed appropriate.

A handout of a story about The Heart of Conviviality can be found in the Resources Box.

**CONCLUDING SESSION**

The program leader summarizes the key points from the session and invites each participant to share their main takeaway or insight. The leader then closes by inviting everyone to the next session on “Vocation, Dignity, and Justice.”

The session concludes with a common prayer.

**RESOURCES FOR SESSION 1****Lutheran World Federation Publications**

Seeking Conviviality: re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe  
Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church

[LINK](#)**interdiac Publication**

*Walking and Dancing Together, Divine images : building up our spirituality* by Eva-Sibylle Vogel and Martin Urdze, p.119–124

[LINK](#)**Supporting Materials for the program leader – Theory**

Historical Background for Convivial life

[LINK](#)

Theological Perspective of Conviviality

[LINK](#)

The Trinity – a Model for Convivial Life?

[LINK](#)

PowerPoint: the Background to Conviviality

[LINK](#)**Handouts for the participants**

Conviviality – a deep dive

[LINK](#)

The Heart of Conviviality – a story

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 2

## Vocation, Dignity and Justice

## GOAL

To reflect together on vocation, dignity, and justice as key concepts for a convivial life together.

## OBJECTIVES

- To initiate reflection on vocation as the faithful response to God's call, informed by convivial thinking
- To initiate reflection on diakonia as the promotion of justice and equality toward conviviality
- To identify a perspective on human dignity which supports convivial life together
- To reflect on the biblical texts that relate to vocation, justice, and dignity

## OVERVIEW

Session 1 introduced the roots of conviviality and its connections to historical, biblical, and theological perspectives. Session 2 builds on this foundation by deepening reflection on conviviality through the themes of vocation, justice and dignity.

- **Vocation:** The Christian response to God's call, central to discipleship, often involves addressing the needs of marginalized people, reflecting Christ's presence in them.
- **Justice:** Seeking a convivial life together requires recognizing equality before God and working toward justice as a way to support convivial life together.
- **Dignity:** Since all people are made in the image of God, they possess intrinsic dignity. This dignity must be reflected in political and economic policies, regardless of individual capability.

These ideas can be visually represented to enhance understanding.



A PowerPoint presentation on Vocation, Dignity and Justice can be found in the Resources Box.

## PROCESS

### Welcome and Introduction

The program leader welcomes the group and starts the session with an icebreaker or warm-up, before briefly introducing the theme “Vocation, Dignity, and Justice.” This session will cover each of these themes, allocating around 30 minutes to each.

## VOCATION

In the diaconal church, vocation involves a double call – both from God and from the people, those who are suffering or marginalized. Christians are called to serve both God and their neighbors, reflecting the message in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke:10:25–37). This story highlights the “call” to service, which comes from the wounded man by the wayside.

### Group Activity on the Parable

The parable of the Good Samaritan offers a critical perspective on diakonia. The program leader divides participants into small groups to reflect and discuss the following questions:

- What do you see happening in this parable? What are the roles of the different actors and what is their background and motivation (as far as we know it)?
- What links can you find to “our” present situation?
- What implications does this parable hold for the “diakonia of everyday life” and for the diaconal church?

### Discussion and Feedback

After the group discussions, participants are invited to share their insights. The following points can be emphasized:

- Those who passed by the wounded man were unable to respond to the call to help because they were preoccupied with religious, economic, or political positions and tasks.
- The one who did hear, and act was considered an outsider, marginalized by society.

Christians are called to reflect on their personal role in diakonia, liberated by God’s grace to serve others, especially those who are poor or marginalized. This calling is closely connected to daily life and requires awareness of how personal backgrounds shape our interactions. Cultural, theological, and professional biases influence how we perceive “the other,” so recognizing these is essential. The parable of the Good Samaritan reminds us that anyone — even those considered “other” — may have a vocation to care. Christians are therefore called to inclusive service, rejecting divisions and working for justice and peace for and alongside all people. Diakonia begins in daily life, aiming to promote justice and uphold the dignity of all people.

## JUSTICE

The reign of God is often depicted as “shalom,” a concept that goes beyond mere peace as the absence of conflict. It relates to the welfare, mutual sharing, and security of the entire community. Biblically, justice is tied to righteousness, peace, compassion, and salvation, with God as the source and sustainer of these gifts. This view is more expansive than contemporary legal systems, including the Roman justice system of Jesus’ time historically administered by the powerful. As a result, our understanding of justice, in theological terms, must transcend conventional legal interpretations, focusing instead on the reign of God in everyday life and prioritizing shalom. This Christian perspective also critiques modern ideas such as “everyone is responsible for themselves” or “everyone gets what they deserve,” offering a more holistic understanding of Justice. This aligns with The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) work on the “Church in the Public Space.”

Three main diaconal principles for pursuing justice can be identified:

- **Focus on the Marginalized.** Diakonia must engage directly with the marginalized or the disadvantaged individuals to address their needs. This work must promote dignity and ensure that those affected participate in resolving their challenges. For example, it is not just about providing food but ensuring that the way food is shared promotes equality and conviviality.
- **Participation.** Justice also means ensuring that all people can actively participate in political, economic, and cultural life. Often, those lacking financial resources are excluded from civic participation due to a lack of time and resources. A healthy democracy requires widespread participation in institutions that shape everyday life.
- **Advocating for Fair Policies.** Political and economic systems must prioritize the common good. Those in positions of power must take responsibility for the well-being of all people and the care of creation, ensuring that resources serve the collective needs of society.

### GROUP ACTIVITY

During this group exercise, participants explore three main diaconal approaches to working for justice. The program leader divides them into three groups, with each group reflecting on a specific theme. Participants then consider how their assigned theme relates to their understanding of justice and shalom, both in biblical and in practical terms.

1. Diaconal work directly with those who are marginalized.
2. Diaconal work to enable all people to participate in political, economic, and cultural life.
3. Diaconal work to ensure that the resources of society serve the common good of all and the care of creation.

### GROUP ACTIVITY

Each group shall fill out sticky notes:

**Color 1.** Groups or initiatives of the church or diakonia engage directly with those who are marginalized.

**Color 2.** How this work enables participation in political, economic, or cultural life.

**Color 3.** How this work supports work to change policies or practices.

The program leader will then invite participants to share their feedback and reflections on the group work. For each theme, the sticky notes will be posted on a pin board for collective discussion.

### DIGNITY

The program leader introduces the concept of dignity, emphasizing its foundational role in conviviality, and engages the group in a discussion of its implications. The discussion highlights that conviviality flourishes when the dignity of every person is recognized and upheld.

**Dignity in Modern Terms:**

Dignity, in contemporary society, is often viewed in an individualistic manner, linked to personal autonomy and economic success. It suggests that individuals are solely responsible for their welfare, leading to a perception that dignity is unevenly distributed – where those who are sick or marginalized are considered to have less dignity compared to successful individuals.

**Dignity in Christian Terms:**

In Christian thought, dignity is inherent and non-negotiable, as every person is created in the image of God. This dignity is universal and independent of status, class, or ability. The Christian understanding of dignity challenges systems that devalue human life and affirms a model of relational care grounded in creation and the interconnectedness of all beings. A person's worth is not defined by ability or independence but by their value in God's eyes. Therefore, systems that prioritize markets over human needs—such as access to basic necessities—are understood to undermine human dignity.

**DIAKONIA AND DIGNITY:**

Diakonia, rooted in the Christian view of dignity, focuses on three key aspects:

- **Expression of Dignity:** Reflect on how churches and diaconal organizations promote the dignity of all people.
- **Focus on the Marginalized:** Prioritize those whose dignity is denied by societal systems, advocating for their rights.
- **Critical Reflection:** Examine societal structures to defend dignity, ensuring everyone is heard and valued.

After explaining the link between dignity and diakonia, the program leader encourages participants to reflect on how their actions and advocacy can uphold the inherent worth of every individual.

**GROUP ACTIVITY**

After the introduction, the program leader divides participants into small groups of 2–3 people. In these groups, participants discuss how churches and diaconal organizations express dignity and support those whose dignity has been denied. They reflect on the ways these institutions defend and uphold the dignity of all individuals.

Following the group discussions, each group shares their insights with the larger assembly, allowing for a collective reflection on the topic.

**CONCLUDING SESSION**

The program leader encourages participants to share the main learning points, eye-openers, or questions for further reflection that emerged during the session.

The leader may then guide a devotion based on Luke 4:18–19, highlighting the Christian vocation to work for justice and to uphold the dignity of every person.

In preparation for Session 3, the program leader identifies two or three participants who can introduce the story of a church that has been welcoming to People on the Move.

**RESOURCES FOR SESSION 2****Lutheran World Federation Publications**[LINK](#)

Church in the Public Space

Seeking Conviviality: re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe

Vocation p. 15 – 18 and p. 27 – 29

Justice p. 20 – 22 and p. 31 – 34

Dignity p. 22 – 25 and p. 34 – 37

(Page numbers are for the English language edition but there are translations into German and Russian which have different page numbers for the relevant texts!)

**Supporting Materials for the program leader**

PowerPoint: Vocation, Justice and Dignity

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 3

# Understanding Conviviality — the practice of everyday life

## GOAL

To examine the approaches that the participants take to the diversity they meet in everyday life.

## OBJECTIVES

- To reflect on experiences of diversity
- To identify mechanism to overcome walls and barriers in everyday life
- To identify the challenges, responses, and issues in creating a convivial local church

## OVERVIEW

This session begins with a reflection on personal experiences, connecting them to biblical teachings, and exploring practical steps toward fostering conviviality. A concrete example from the Lutheran Parish in Lindesberg, Sweden—“Meeting Point: Café of the World” (details in the Resources box)—will be discussed. This exercise aims to create a ripple effect, promoting a sense of belonging through shared experiences and meaningful connections.

To conclude, the program leader or a group member leads a brief devotion centered on the concept of an “open table,” where everyone is welcome. The session may end with a communal meal, which could either be a pre-announced potluck or a pre-prepared meal.

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The session begins with the program leader welcoming the group and providing time for any necessary updates. Participants are then invited to share a recent experience related to diversity and conviviality, whether positive or negative. Each person is encouraged to speak briefly, allowing everyone a chance to contribute. An icebreaker or warm-up activity may be used if needed.

Once all participants have shared, the program leader summarizes the key points and transitions into a short bible study.

**Bible Study**

Someone should read Ephesians 2:14–18 aloud.

*For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father.*

The program leader highlights that throughout Jesus' life there were many conflicts because Jesus often crossed boundaries in ways that some found unacceptable or provocative. This boundary-crossing continued into the early church, as seen in the tensions between Gentiles and Jews, reflected in the references to Jewish law in the text. The core message is that Jesus worked to break down walls of hostility.

Participants are then invited to take a few minutes for personal, prayerful reflection on the text, considering the question:

- What kind of walls that create hostility can you see in your context and in your church?

Afterward, the program leader encourages participants to share their reflections and draws the contributions together, highlighting common themes and insights.

### Sharing a Story

Introduce the story about the "Meeting Point: Café of the World," which shall be prepared in advance by a group of participants. When retelling the story, it shall be shortened, highlighting key points. This story can be found in the book *Marks of Conviviality* and these "Marks" can also be shared with the group.

### The Practice of Everyday Life

After sharing the story and the "Marks," participants shall be asked to discuss the following question with a neighbor:

- What personal challenges do you face in promoting conviviality in everyday life in your/our context?
- And how do you/we overcome them?

The program leader shall then gather the personal challenges, solutions, and issues related to fostering convivial life in the community.

The three key aspects of a convivial approach – being mindful of our biases, recognizing that empathy is different from sympathy, and recognizing the complexity of strengths and needs – significantly influence everyday life. These points build on insights from Module 1.

To deepen the conversation on conviviality, the program leader can draw insights from the notes on The Practice of Everyday Life to enrich reflections on the participants' responses to the related questions.

The supporting material on The Practice of Everyday Life can be found in the Resources Box.

### Being a Convivial Church or Diakonia

Reflecting on the story and the biblical text, participants are invited to explore the connection between everyday life and conviviality, as well as the practical reality of being a convivial diaconal church. Building on the previous discussions, the program leader then invites participants to discuss the following question in small groups:

- Can you identify the challenges in promoting convivial life together in y/our church or community?
- What would be important factors in developing potential responses to such challenges?

The program leader gathers the identified challenges, responses, and issues related to fostering conviviality in the church and community. Reflections on these responses can be guided by the notes on Being a Convivial Church or Diakonia.

The supporting material on Being a Convivial Church or Diakonia can be found in the Resources Box.

## CONCLUDING SESSION

The program leader invites participants to reflect on the session and the issues discussed. Each person is encouraged to identify one action they can take in their daily life to promote conviviality, and one action their church or diakonia could implement. Participants first share their personal actions in one round, followed by church/diakonia actions in a second round.

To conclude, the program leader or a group member leads a brief devotion focused on the concept of an “open table,” where everyone is welcome. The session may end with a communal meal, either as a pre-announced potluck or with pre-prepared food.

### Preview of Upcoming Sessions

In preparation for the upcoming sessions, the program leader shall communicate the overarching theme of “Conviviality and Diversity,” which will be explored in the following sessions:

- Session 4: Signs of Conviviality in a Diverse Society
- Session 5: Conviviality and Diversity in Everyday Life
- Session 6: Conviviality Goes Beyond Hospitality

These sessions invite participants to reflect on their lived experiences of conviviality, or its absence, both in daily life and within their engagement in the church and diakonia. Through this process, they examine diverse perspectives on diversity itself, relating their insights to theological reflection and the broader framework of conviviality. For Session 4, participants are requested to bring a laptop or tablet for use in group activities.

## RESOURCES FOR SESSION 3

### Lutheran World Federation Publications

Diaconal Life In Diversity 2. Conviviality with People on the Move  
Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church  
Seeking Conviviality: re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe

[LINK](#)

### Supporting Materials for the program leader

The Practice of Everyday Life

[LINK](#)

Being a Convivial Church or Diakonia

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 4

# Signs of Conviviality in a Diverse Society

**GOAL**

To understand the different kinds of diversity in our lives and in our societies, to find signs of conviviality in a diverse society and to explore the response of our churches.

**OBJECTIVES**

- To examine experiences of living in a diverse environment
- To understand diversity and discrimination
- To investigate the experiences and roles of our churches and diakonia in a diversifying context

**OVERVIEW**

This session focuses on examining participants' experiences of living in a diverse society and their responses to this reality. It connects increasing diversity with a growing awareness of differences and the rise of migration for various reasons.

The second part of the session addresses discrimination and efforts to combat it, particularly through anti-discrimination legislation.

The session also explores the experiences and roles of churches and religious organizations, concluding with a discussion of innovative and responsive practices.

**PROCESS****Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader gathers the group and, depending on the time since the last meeting, may begin with a round of personal updates. Following this welcome, participants are invited to share one thing they learned, found inspiring, or found surprising in the previous session. This can be followed by a brief warm-up or icebreaker activity to create a comfortable and engaging environment.

**Exploring Life in a Diverse Environment**

The program leader introduces the group to the theme of exploring life within a diverse environment.

The supporting material on Exploring Life in a Diverse Environment can be found in the Resources Box.

Following the introduction, the program leader introduces a group activity designed for participants to reflect on their individual or collective responses to living in a diverse and multireligious society, particularly in relation to the decisions they make while navigating this diversity.

If needed, the program leader can divide the larger group into smaller groups or encourage participants to engage in personal reflection. Participants begin by sharing their insights on a few guiding questions related to this theme, with a focus on identifying signs of everyday conviviality.

Each participant or group should focus on the following topics:

- **Recognizing Diversity.** What types of diversity do group members observe in their environment or context?
- **Everyday Conviviality.** Are there practices of everyday conviviality that the participants notice in themselves or in others?
- **Experiences of Diversity.** With greater opportunities to learn, listen, and experience diversity, what examples do the participants have from their everyday lives?
- **Global Connections.** Many local communities host individuals with “global” connections. How do events in other regions influence their lives, and how does this diversity affect their neighborhood? The participants should reflect on informal encounters with the “different other.”
- **Generational Change in Gender and Sexuality.** How is generational thinking about gender and sexuality evolving? It is essential to reflect on its impact on personal lives and experiences as it pertains to diversity.

The questions mentioned above guide participants to reflect on the different kinds of diversity they encounter in their daily lives and to identify signs of conviviality. They also consider instances of discrimination they observe.

Following group discussions or personal reflections, the program leader invites participants to share their insights regarding encounters with diversity, everyday conviviality, and discrimination. Recognizing everyday conviviality is a crucial step toward fostering a convivial life together.

#### Exploring the Legal Framework for Anti-discrimination

Following the discussion on Exploring Life in a Diverse Environment and the importance of recognizing everyday conviviality as a crucial step toward fostering life together, the program leader introduces the group to anti-discrimination laws, emphasizing their role in creating a supportive framework for convivial living.

The supporting material on Exploring the Legal Framework for Anti-discrimination can be found in the Resources Box.

Next, the program leader introduces the Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) as a tool for assessing the legal landscape surrounding migration and integration. Participants are encouraged to explore MIPEX online, examining both their own and other countries to discuss how these policies influence the fostering of convivial life.

The program leader also reminds participants to be mindful of the data collection timeline, as policies may have changed since the last update.

The handout (link) for MIPEX can be found in the Resources Box.

Following this, the program leader facilitates discussions in either plenary or smaller groups, with insights shared afterward in the larger group.

## EXPLORING THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN BUILDING CONVIVIAL LIFE TOGETHER

In this session, the program leader guides participants to explore their personal experiences within faith communities or diakonia. While religion has not always promoted convivial living—in some cases, faith communities have even contributed to civil conflict or war when instrumentalized by powerful societal or political forces—there are also clear signs of conviviality across diverse religions, highlighting the potential for mutual respect and peaceful coexistence.

At the heart of the session is Jesus' exhortation: "In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12), commonly known as the "Golden Rule." This principle resonates across many religious teachings, providing a shared foundation for convivial and reciprocal relationships. Multilingual posters of the "Golden Rule" from different faith traditions can be found online and used as visual support for this concept.

Furthermore, Jesus and the early church expand on this message through an emphasis on forgiveness—even toward enemies—which helps break cycles of vindictiveness and fosters a foundation for trust, mutuality, and convivial life.

The program leader invites participants to engage in the following reflections:

### Personal Reflection

Reflect on your experiences within your church, faith community, or diakonia. Consider statements such as "All are welcome here" or "affirmations that diakonia does not discriminate". While these statements are well-intentioned, they may not always be reflected in everyday experiences.

### Interfaith Relations

Examine the relationships between different churches, local congregations, and other faith communities. In some contexts, active connections and declarations of solidarity exist – for example, covenant in which faith communities commit to supporting one another when one is the victim of hatred or an attack. Such practices provide concrete expressions of non-discrimination. Additionally, interfaith initiatives—such as shared worship services or collaborative prayers for peace and environmental concerns—contribute to fostering a convivial life together.

### Group Work

After this reflection, the program leader facilitates a group discussion. To do so, the leader divides the larger group according to relevant criteria. If all participants are from the same church or diakonia, they may be split into pairs or small groups of three.

The groups can discuss the following questions:

- In the light of personal experience, in which ways would the "different other" feel included in the worship and activities of the church or diakonia? (Imagine being a "visitor" or reflecting on the diaconal approach and in which ways it is effectively inclusive.)
- In the light of personal experience, what is the relationship between churches in a specific place? Which churches are included? Which not? And what are the reasons for inclusion or exclusion? Furthermore, what is the relationship between the faith communities in a specific place?
- What steps could be taken to develop more convivial relationships?

After the discussions, the program leader gathers the findings from the groups and invites suggestions for follow-up actions.

**CONCLUDING SESSION**

The program leader gives participants a few minutes for personal reflection on the session before inviting a round of sharing about their discoveries, key learning points, and potential next steps. If time permits, participants may choose cards or pictures representing diversity in everyday life to inspire their reflections. Alternatively, group members can create drawings to express their insights and present a picture or symbol that represents everyday conviviality.

In preparation for Session 5, the program leader nominates 1–3 participants to prepare in advance a story from The Church as a Convivial and Safe Space: A Story about Congregational Diaconal Practice in Drammen, Norway. These participants need to be ready to read, summarize, and retell the story to the rest of the group.

The session concludes with a closing prayer, which can be focused on reflections around the understanding that all people are created in the image of God. Participants are invited to consider the implications of recognizing and encountering the “other” as the image of God in their day today lives.

**RESOURCES FOR SESSION 4****Lutheran World Federation Publications**

Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church p. 13,14,18,19  
 Seeking Conviviality – Evaluation and Commentary  
 Diaconal Life in Diversity Book 1–4

[LINK](#)**Supporting Materials for the program leader**

Exploring Life in a Diverse Environment

[LINK](#)

Exploring the Legal Framework for Anti-discrimination

[LINK](#)**Handout for the participant**

Migration Policy Index (MIPEX) <https://www.mipex.eu/anti-discrimination>

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 5

## Conviviality and Diversity in Everyday Life

## GOAL

To deepen reflection on and learn about life in diversity in the community, congregation, and society.

## OBJECTIVES

- To reflect upon experiences of diversity
- To identify and analyze racism, xenophobia, and discrimination everyday life
- To understand conviviality as an approach to a diverse society
- To identify biblical background to diversity and conviviality

## OVERVIEW

In this session, the program leader guides participants in exploring the themes of diversity, super-diversity, and intersectionality within faith communities. The discussion highlights both historical and contemporary complexities of diversity in society, emphasizing the growing need for conviviality—particularly in light of migration and the multifaceted nature of modern communities.

Through group activities and shared reflections, participants engage with personal experiences of diversity and explore biblical perspectives related to these themes. The session underscores the importance of creating safe spaces for dialogue and building trust, recognizing how individual stories, identities, and backgrounds shape perceptions and interactions.

The session concludes with a period of personal reflection and a call to action, encouraging participants to consider how they can actively engage with diversity and foster inclusive, life-affirming relationships within their own communities.

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

After introductions and an icebreaker activity, participants are invited to reflect on key points from the learning program. Drawing from their experiences in Session 4, they share insights that surprised them, raised questions, inspired action, or sparked curiosity. Using colored cards or sticky notes allows for a dynamic and visual exchange of ideas. The activity concludes with a brief collective discussion to consolidate the group's reflections.

As planned, the program leader invites 1–3 nominated participants to share a prepared story with the larger group, focusing on congregational diaconal practice—specifically *The Church as a Convivial and Safe Space: A Story about Congregational Diaconal Practice in Drammen, Norway*.

The program leader then encourages participants to discuss the story's themes and implications for fostering conviviality and inclusivity in faith communities.

## DIVERSITY, SUPERDIVERSITY, INTERSECTIONALITY, AND CONVIVIALITY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

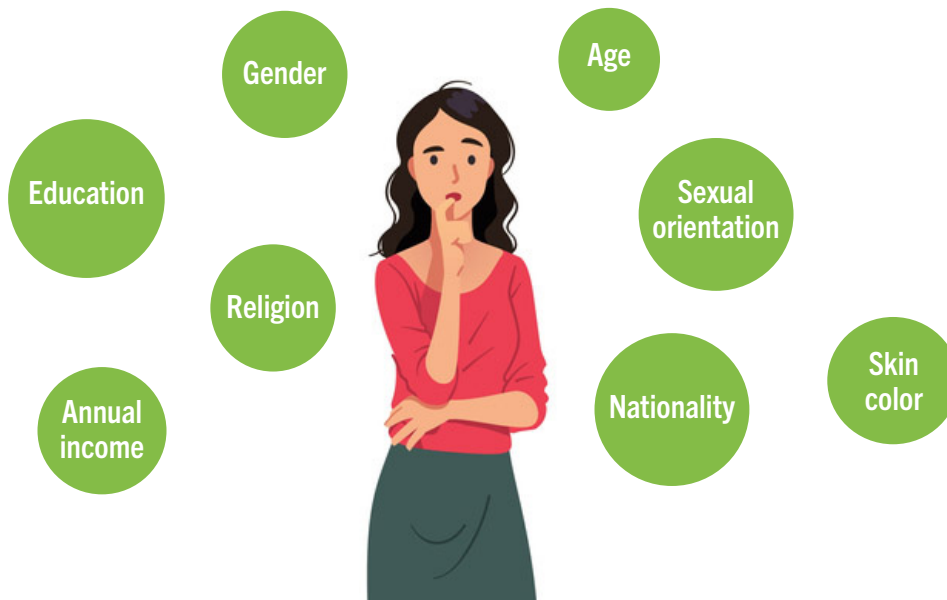
Following the discussion on fostering conviviality and inclusivity in faith communities, the program leader introduces the theme of Diversity, Super-diversity, and Intersectionality to set the stage for group work.

The supporting material on Diversity, Super-diversity, Intersectionality and Conviviality in everyday life can be found in the Resources Box.

### CONVIVIAL LIFE TOGETHER

Convivial life together invites individuals to cultivate safe spaces for sharing stories, fostering common understanding, and taking collective action. This topic shall be explored through group works.

#### Group Activity 1:



To facilitate the group activity, the program leader divides participants into small groups. Discussions focus on the participants' own contexts, encouraging them to reflect on how they experience diversity in their everyday lives and in their relationships with those they consider a "different other." Participants are also invited to consider situations where they feel they belong to a minority group.

After the discussions, the findings are shared with the larger group, allowing the program leader to summarize and reflect on the feedback provided.

#### Group Activity 2:

In this session, participants explore various biblical perspectives on diversity. The Bible study description in the Resources Box provides guidance, encouraging them to draw on relevant Bible stories that connect with their discussions. As with the first group activity, findings are shared with the larger group, and the program leader offers a summary and reflection on the insights gained.

The handout on Bible Study on Group works can be found in the Resources Box.

**CONCLUDING SESSION**

After the group activities, each participant is given 5 minutes to reflect on what they have heard and discussed. They begin by focusing on their understanding of diversity within their own contexts and their “position” within it. Following this, they consider practical actions they could take individually, as well as steps the congregation might take to more fully engage with and embrace the diversity of its members.

After this reflection period, the program leader invites a round of uninterrupted sharing, giving each person an opportunity to present their conclusions.

The session concludes with a brief prayer and any necessary details regarding the next meeting. To encourage contemplation, the following text is read aloud:

*As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. (Luke 24:28–30)*

**RESOURCES FOR SESSION 5****Lutheran World Federation Publications**

Seeking Conviviality: re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe  
– Diaconal Life in Diversity 1. Conviviality and the Diaconal Church p. 19 – 23

[LINK](#)**Supporting material for the program leader**

Diversity, Superdiversity, Intersectionality and Conviviality in everyday life

[LINK](#)**Handout for the participants**

Bible Study on Diversity for Group Work

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 6

# Conviviality Goes Beyond Hospitality

**GOAL**

To deepen the understanding of hospitality and develop a convivial approach to welcoming people and building up a common life.

**OBJECTIVES**

- To understand hospitality and its limitations
- To explore convivial approaches to welcome
- To build up life together
- To explore the themes of hospitality and conviviality through biblical reflection

**OVERVIEW**

This session invites participants to explore the themes of hospitality and conviviality, examining their differences and relevance within faith communities and migration. They will reflect on how these concepts relate to welcoming others, building inclusive communities, and fostering long-term coexistence. A brief presentation on the limitations of hospitality will provide deeper insight into the complexities of welcoming others, particularly in the context of migration.

The program leader then facilitates a group discussion on participants' understandings of these concepts, capturing key ideas on a whiteboard or flip chart.

**PROCESS****Welcome and Introduction**

This session focuses on the theme of *hospitality*. It may be beneficial for the group to meet in a space where they themselves experience being “guests.” This could be a welcoming space belonging to another group or faith community where they have been invited. If the group is small, hosting the session in a member’s home can also create a comfortable atmosphere. This “new” setting provides an opportunity to reflect on the power dynamics between hosts and guests.

The program leader begins with a welcome activity, such as a warm-up or icebreaker. Participants are then invited to share their experiences of migration or moving to another country, recognizing that many people undergo this for various reasons. Care should be taken to remain sensitive to anyone who may have had traumatic experiences related to migration, ensuring no one feels pressured to share.

Next, the program leader invites participants to share their ideas about hospitality—how they understand it—and to recall their understanding of conviviality. The group then works together to explore and define the differences between these two concepts.

Using a whiteboard or flip chart, the program leader records key ideas and guides the discussion, highlighting the main themes that emerge.

### The Limitations of Hospitality

While hospitality is generally seen as a positive approach, especially when contrasted with hostility or unwelcoming attitudes, it is important to explore the nuanced differences between hospitality and conviviality. Hospitality often brings to mind warm welcomes and gracious hosting, but conviviality goes beyond these familiar boundaries. To further understand this, we can turn to the ideas developed by Jacques Derrida, who was himself an immigrant.

The supporting material on Conviviality and Hospitality in the Context of Migration can be found in the Resources Box.

### Group Discussion

In light of this reflection on Conviviality and Hospitality in the Context of Migration, the program leader invites participants to consider reflecting on the following key question:

- How do you view conviviality as an important concept for working with diverse groups?

Conviviality relates not only to those with migrant backgrounds but also to a wider range of individuals from different contexts, each facing unique challenges.

Participants are encouraged to first discuss these ideas in pairs, followed by group feedback. This discussion then serves as a transition into a Bible study that explores the “treatment” of people, with particular focus on migrants.

### BIBLE STUDY

#### The Exodus and Treatment of Migrants

The Bible study, based on the story of the Exodus, explores biblical teachings on how migrants should be treated, linking the Israelites’ history in Egypt to contemporary challenges faced by migrants today. It encourages the participants to reflect on these themes and consider how conviviality and inclusivity can be fostered in modern society.

#### Setting the Context

The program leader begins the bible study by summarizing the story of the Exodus and its relevance to how “foreigners” or migrants should be treated. It is significant to observe how the experience of exile and deliverance shaped the biblical understanding of hospitality and justice for the “foreigner.” Two key texts from the Hebrew Bible can guide the discussion.

- Exodus 22:21: “You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.”
- Leviticus 19:33–34: “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”

### Group Discussion

For the group discussion, the program leader divides the participants into small groups to discuss the following questions:

- What do these texts imply about empathy, compassion, and justice for those who are “foreign” in our context?
- What does it mean to “love the alien as yourself”? What are its implications for our understanding of living together?
- What does it mean for us and our society when the commandment insists that aliens should not be oppressed and should be treated as citizens?

Given the focus on convivial life together, the groups are encouraged to reflect on and discuss the following questions:

- Where do you see parallels between the biblical experiences and the realities faced by immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees in your context today?
- How is your church or diakonia responding to these challenges, and what more can be done?

At the end of the group discussion, each group prepares brief feedback comments, focusing on the implications of the biblical texts for present-day practice—in everyday life, within the church, in diakonia, and in wider society.

### CONCLUDING SESSION

The program leader invites the participants to spend 2–3 minutes in silent contemplation, reflecting on the following questions:

- What was most important for me in this meeting?
- What will I continue reflecting on when I get home, and what action will I take?

After the reflection, participants can briefly share their responses. The program leader then summarizes the key points of the session and closes with a prayer for convivial life together.

This would be a meaningful moment to organize a communal meal or an Agape to conclude the session, fostering deeper connections and shared experiences.

### Preview of Upcoming Sessions

In preparation for the upcoming sessions, the program Leader can communicate the overarching theme of “Conviviality, Church and Diakonia,” which will be explored in the following sessions:

- Session 7: Toward a Convivial Church
- Session 8: Toward Convivial Community Diakonia
- Session 9: Toward Convivial Diaconal Practice

These sessions examine the impact of convivial thinking on the practices of the church, as well as on church and diaconal organizations collaborating with it. They also explore how the church can remain rooted in its local context and emphasize the importance of building connections with local organizations. In this way, the pursuit of conviviality aligns with the church’s role in the public square.

### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 6

#### Lutheran World Federation Publications

Diakonal Life In Diversity 2. Conviviality with People on the Move  
Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church  
Seeking Conviviality – Evaluation and Commentary p 17 – 29

[LINK](#)

#### Supporting materials for the program leader

Conviviality and Hospitality in the Context of Migration

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 7

## Towards a Convivial Church

## GOAL

To investigate the signs of a convivial church/congregation.

## OBJECTIVES

- To explore the Biblical background for an open and convivial church
- To identify steps towards an open and diverse church
- To understand Diakonia as a mark of the church

## OVERVIEW

In this session, participants reflect on the meaning of conviviality in church and congregational life through Bible study, structured discussions, and exploration of five steps toward building a convivial church. This session concludes with reflections, sharing key takeaways, and a prayer inspired by the artwork and intercessions for the growth of a convivial church.

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader begins the session by welcoming the group, providing time for updates, and creating space for participants to share learnings or observations from the previous session. An icebreaker activity may also be used to set a comfortable tone.

In this session, participants begin reflecting on the meaning of conviviality in church and congregational life. Key concepts of conviviality are introduced through Bible study and structured group discussions. Participants explore five steps toward building a convivial church and reflect on how these can be applied in their own congregational and diaconal settings.

In the first part of the session, participants are invited to reflect on New Testament texts that offer insights into the values of a convivial church and to consider what it means to be a church that is truly open to the other. The second part of the session explores practical steps toward embodying conviviality within faith communities in greater detail.

The final part of the session explores published stories of diaconal work, highlighting the meaning of convivial diakonia by diaconal organizations, sometimes in collaboration with congregations. After the group activities, participants reconvene to share their findings, fostering collaborative learning and a deeper understanding of what it takes to build a convivial church.

## BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON A CONVIVIAL CHURCH

In previous sessions, participants have explored various biblical narratives, including the stories of creation, which emphasize that all human beings are made in the image of God. If each person reflects God's image, then the diversity of humanity also reflects the divine. This diversity mirrors the Trinity—a perfect communion of Three in One—and should be seen as a divine gift and a promise of healing in a broken world.

The New Testament further illustrates this through Jesus' encounters with different "others," including women and children, who were not commonly engaged by Rabbis of his time. Jesus often transcended social and cultural barriers, and even in moments of struggle, his respect for the dignity of others shines through. This respect reminds us that in meeting our neighbour, we are encountering the face of Jesus.

One powerful sign of conviviality in the New Testament is the act of sharing meals. Jesus' invitation to share a meal symbolizes recognition and acceptance, a practice that remains relevant today as a way of affirming each person's value. Living a convivial life together emphasizes that everyone has something to offer, and that we all need the gifts of others to thrive in community.

### Group Activity

To further explore biblical perspectives on a convivial church, the program leader guides participants to organize into pairs. Each pair selects a theme from the biblical texts below and creates a colored drawing that reflects their understanding of the theme. The drawing may be a literal representation or a symbolic interpretation. Alongside the drawing, pairs document their discussions and insights to present to the larger group.

Themes for Reflection and Drawing:

- The recognition of the diversity of people, as created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26).
- The recognition of the other person – when we see Jesus in the face of the "other" (Matthew 25:35–36).
- The inclusive table of the Kingdom (Luke 14:14–23).
- What happens when one (or more than one) group is neglected (Acts 6:1–7).
- People of diverse cultures are united (Galatians 3:28).

Once the drawings are complete, each pair presents their artwork along with the findings from their discussions on conviviality to the whole group. The program leader then summarizes the key insights from the presentations.

## FIVE STEPS TOWARD A CONVIVIAL CHURCH

The program leader introduces the five foundational steps required to create a Convivial Church. These steps serve as essential building blocks for fostering an inclusive, diverse community where trust, safety, and openness are prioritized.

The program leader guides participants through a process in which sub-groups discuss one or two steps (depending on group size), reflecting on their meaning and practical implications for their church community. The goal is to collaboratively develop an action plan that can be referenced in Session 13: "Evaluation and Planning for the Next Period".

Resource materials are drawn from the four books titled *Diaconal Life in Diversity*, and it is also beneficial to refer to the booklet, *Marks of Conviviality*.

The supportive material on Five Steps toward a Convivial Church can be found in the Resource Box.

### Concluding Session

The program leader invites participants to reflect on the group work and the Five Steps toward a Convivial Church, sharing moments that were particularly striking or key takeaways.

The session concludes with a prayer inspired by the artwork and intercessions for the growth of a convivial church.

### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 7

#### Lutheran World Federation Publications

[LINK](#)

Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church

Diaconal Life in Diversity 1. Conviviality and the Diaconal Church

Diaconal Life In Diversity 2. Conviviality with People on the Move

Diaconal Life in Diversity 3. Conviviality, Diakonia and the Church

Diaconal Life in Diversity 4. Conviviality and Radical Welcome

#### Supporting materials for the program leader

Five Steps towards a Convivial Church

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 8

## Steps toward a Convivial Community Diakonia

## GOAL

To explore Convivial Diakonia and the steps toward becoming a Diaconal Congregation, Seeking Conviviality.

## OBJECTIVES

- To understand community based diakonia
- To understand the relationship between Conviviality and diakonia
- To understand how diakonia responds to injustice
- To develop a framework for a diaconal local church
- To conduct Bible study focused on diakonia

## OVERVIEW

In this session, participants explore the concept of Convivial Diakonia, focusing on community-based diakonia, addressing issues of injustice, and identifying steps toward creating a diaconal and convivial congregation. They also engage in a Bible study reflecting these themes, providing an opportunity for deeper reflection and discussion.

## THE PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader begins the session by welcoming the group and allowing time for any necessary updates or a brief warm-up activity. Building on Session 7, this session shall further deepen the understanding of creating a diaconal, convivial congregation, while also exploring the impact of convivial thinking on community diakonia.

The “Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe” process has involved over 70 practitioners from across Europe. Together, they have examined diakonia as a mark and responsibility of the entire church, not merely the work of specialists or a specific group of volunteers. Central to this process is the view of the neighbor as created in the image of God, emphasizing equality.

Theologically, Christians engaged in diaconal work are understood as imperfect people accompanying other imperfect people on a shared journey toward a convivial life, society, and economy. This perspective discourages patronizing or exclusionary attitudes and instead fosters a spirit of mutual respect, humility, and inclusion.

## COMMUNITY BASED DIAKONIA

Community-based diakonia can be understood through two main approaches:

- **Congregational Diakonia.** This approach focuses on developing the concept and practice of a diaconal church or congregation. It builds on the idea of the church as a convivial space that builds links with the local neighborhood and creates a stronger diaconal identity. We began exploring this in the previous session and will deepen that understanding in this session.

- **Outreach Diakonia.** This approach is centered on diaconal work beyond the church walls, starting with “forgotten people in forgotten places” – often located in the streets or neighborhoods. These initiatives may have a small meeting place, such as a former shop or housing unit, and are common in urban mission work.

These two approaches can be thought of as “inside-out” (church to community) and “outside-in” (community to church). At times, both approaches can be successfully combined, as demonstrated in the Amsterdam story from *Diaconal Life in Diversity – Conviviality, Diakonia and the Church* (referenced in the Resources Box).

### ASPECTS OF CONVIVIAL DIAKONIA

#### Convivial diaconal work:

- Builds bridges to the local community in all its diversity.
- Engages with people in all aspects of life, connecting with their diverse life-worlds.
- Creates spaces and opportunities for learning and growth.
- Empowers laypeople and community members to have the skills to be community builders.
- Facilitates collective reflection on voluntary, community-based diaconal work.

These principles of convivial diakonia encourage inclusive and holistic community engagement.

#### Group work

After the introduction, the program leader invites participants to reflect on the presence of the church in their neighborhoods. This reflection can focus on one specific neighborhood, especially if all the participants belong to the same congregation, or it can involve multiple churches and neighborhoods.

Consider questions like:

- What are the experiences of convivial diakonia or a convivial diaconal church that you have witnessed or experienced in your city or your neighborhood?
- Can you give some other examples of congregational-based convivial diaconal work?

The program leader is also encouraged to develop additional questions relevant to the participants’ specific contexts.

### DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR DIAKONIA – FIVE GUIDELINES FOR A CONVIVIAL CONGREGATION

As discussed, diaconal vocation is not just a personal calling but is rooted in the vocation of the entire congregation. Conviviality, understood as “the art and practice of living together,” offers a practical approach to diakonia grounded in everyday life. The emphasis on “living together” implies a shift from a hierarchical model of service to one that is reciprocal, where everyone is both a giver and receiver at different times. This approach fosters a “horizontal” rather than top-down model of communication where all can contribute ideas and actions based on their skills, strengths, and possibilities.

For example, a congregation in Sweden developed a strategy to cultivate a more convivial diakonia. Staff, volunteers, participants, youth, and elderly members worked together to identify the changes needed to create a more inclusive and interactive convivial congregation.

Their results can be summed up in the following table:

FROM	TO
The church as an “association for mutual interest”	→ A church where the members work together to develop action that corresponds to actual social needs
A church that supports some individuals	→ A church that supports many groups of people, particularly those who are disadvantaged, on the margins of society, or excluded.
A church that exists for a minority	→ A church that recognizes and acts with many minority groups and realizes it is a minority among minorities
A church trying to fill the (growing) gaps in public provision	→ A church involved in shaping public provision through advocacy and collaborating with civil society and public bodies where appropriate
Silent diakonia	→ Prophetic diakonia, advocating for justice and peace

(Adapted from the model created by Grytnäs Parish, Sweden. Source: Seeking Conviviality, p. 28)

The program leader introduces the model created by Grytnäs Parish in Sweden, providing an overview of its key principles and demonstrating how it can foster transformation in various local contexts. Participants are guided through a discussion on the potential applications of the model, exploring how it can address challenges, enhance community engagement, and promote inclusive and collaborative practices.

Following this discussion, participants are encouraged to develop their own ideas for applying the model to transform their current situations.

The handout on the Five Guidelines for a Convivial Congregation can be found in the Resources Box.

**BIBLE STUDY:** Conviviality as Sharing Resources – Seven Chosen to Serve – Acts 6:1–7

This Bible study highlights how the early church addressed practical needs, such as caring for widows, by distributing responsibilities among capable members.

During the Bible study, participants are divided into groups to focus on the biblical text and discuss the key points derived from it.

The supporting material for the Bible Study – Seven Chosen to Serve can be found in the Resources Box.

The questions on the handout are related to the specific context of the participants, and the following key points are the starting point for these reflections:

### **Conviviality extends Diakonia Beyond Food**

Working out the idea of conviviality extends diakonia beyond the making and sharing of food to include the sharing of culture and the development of local economic activities using people's skills and interests. This approach does not require the creation of a soup kitchen or food handouts. Rather, it calls for an extension of the table of sharing—which encompasses conversation, food, and being together—ensuring that all, including Hellenist widows, are included. In other words, it is both a call to and an expression of convivial life together.

It is important to note that in the culture of New Testament times, widows often had little or no means of financial support.

### **The Eucharistic Sharing**

All practices of diakonia can be examined in the light of eucharistic sharing, highlighting the importance of concrete food sharing in the practice of faith. At the symbolic heart of the church, the meaning of the Eucharist for wider society should be clear to all participants. When used as a template for action, this understanding influences how food is shared with those who go without or live on the margins. It also challenges us to find ways to ensure that all people can share food with dignity, without being made to feel less than fully human.

### **Convivial Diaconal Congregation**

The whole congregation can act as a convivial diaconal agent in its shared life. Diaconal thinking can shape the organization of church buildings, ensuring that open and welcoming attitudes are reflected in their physical arrangements. The layout of furniture and spaces communicates messages of inclusion or exclusion and conveys the values and priorities of the congregation.

### **Diakonia as a Practice of Grace**

Diakonia is one of the most significant ways the church demonstrates its commitment to the values of conviviality in practice. An understanding of grace and inclusive community should permeate the everyday work of a convivial congregation and its local diakonia.

## **CONCLUDING SESSION**

### **Discussion**

After the group Bible study, the program leader facilitates a discussion to gather key insights, noting similarities, differences, and the reasons behind participants' interpretations. These points will be explored further in later sessions.

Participants then share what resonated with them—whether a new realization or a question for deeper reflection—consolidating the key takeaways.

The session concludes with a prayer for the participants' concerns, gratitude for the group's work, and recognition of the new insights gained.

In preparation for Session 9, the program leader invites four participants from the wider group to review and present stories of diverse diaconal practices, such as St. Mary project from Lindesberg, Sweden; the Shared Table initiative from Vantaa, Finland; the Housing and Homelessness project from Hannover, Germany; and

the collaborative projects De Nieuwe Stad (The New City) and Stap Verder (A Step Further) from Amsterdam, Netherlands.

The program leader is encouraged to assign these stories well ahead of time so that the participants can be ready to share them in small groups during Session 9 – “Toward Convivial Diaconal Practice.”

The supporting materials for these stories are drawn from Diaconal Life in Diversity 3 – Conviviality, Diakonia, and the Church, specifically from the “Marks of Conviviality” section.

A handout featuring the stories on Diverse Diaconal Practices is available in the resources for Session 9.

### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 8

#### Lutheran World Federation Publications

Diaconal Life in Diversity 3. Conviviality, Diakonia and the Church  
Seeking Conviviality: re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe

[LINK](#)

#### Supporting materials for the program leader

Bible study on Seven Chosen to Serve

[LINK](#)

#### Handout for the participants

Five Guidelines for a Convivial Congregation Table  
(from the model created by Grytnäs Parish, Sweden source: Seeking Conviviality p.28)

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 9

## Toward Convivial Diaconal Practice

## GOAL

To learn more about conviviality in the practice of diakonia through new models of convivial diaconal work.

## OBJECTIVES

- To gain a understanding of relationship between
- Diaconal Practice and Employment
- Diaconal Practice and Food Sharing
- Diaconal Practice and Homelessness
- Diaconal Practice and Diversity

## OVERVIEW

In this session, participants explore four models of diaconal practice from diverse European contexts. Each model emphasizes cooperative action between diakonia, churches, and local organizations, focusing on addressing people's needs and tackling social issues while encouraging a shared, outward-looking perspective.

Through this collaborative approach, the boundaries between church, diakonia, and the local community become more fluid, fostering the development of new forms of service and social action.

## THE PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader begins the session by warmly welcoming participants and allowing time for any necessary updates or announcements. The session may start with a brief icebreaker or warm-up activity to encourage engagement and create a comfortable environment for sharing. The program leader then introduces the topic of diverse diaconal practices by presenting four stories from the booklet *Diaconal Life in Diversity 3: Conviviality, Diakonia, and the Church*. The stories include:

- The St. Mary Project from Lindesberg, Sweden
- The Shared Table initiative from Vantaa, Finland
- The Housing and Homelessness project from Hannover, Germany
- The collaborative projects De Nieuwe Stad (The New City) and Stap Verder (A Step Further) from Amsterdam, Netherlands

These stories provide insights into diverse diaconal practices and set the stage for deeper reflection on key principles of diaconal work.

**Group Work – Round 1**

- Divide the participants into four groups and assign each group to explore stories one and two (St. Mary project from Lindesberg, Sweden; Shared Table initiative from Vantaa, Finland).
- Encourage the participants to focus on the diaconal practices demonstrated in these stories, noting their observations and insights.
- Group members shall reflect on how these examples could inform and enrich their own practice, using the “Marks of Conviviality” section as a reference.
- Allocate 30 minutes for small group discussion and 15 minutes for feedback and discussion in a bigger group.

**Group Work – Round 2**

- Repeat the process for stories three and four (Housing and Homelessness project from Hannover, Germany and De Nieuwe Stad (The New City) and Stap Verder (A Step Further) collaborative project from Amsterdam, Netherlands), giving the participants time to review these stories and consider how these additional models can shape their approach to diaconal work.
- Allocate 30 minutes for small group discussion and 15 minutes for feedback and discussion in a bigger group.

The handout on the Stories on Diverse Diaconal Practices for both the first and second rounds of group work can be found in the Resources Box.

The program leader facilitates the reporting and discussion of findings from the first and second rounds of group work, ensuring that the implications for participants’ practices are shared and recorded.

In the final step of the session, the program leader guides participants in synthesizing their reflections on the four stories. The group identifies the most significant implications for convivial diaconal practice and outlines potential follow-up actions.

**Concluding Session**

To conclude the session, the program leader allocates time for personal reflection on the key themes and lessons from Sessions 7, 8, and 9, which focused on Conviviality, Church, and Diakonia. Participants are encouraged to share important topics and key insights in a round of feedback, reflecting on the implications for a convivial diaconal church and diaconal practice in the context of “Seeking Conviviality.”

The session ends on a positive note with a shared meal at a local social enterprise. Ideally, this enterprise supports ecological, social inclusion, or employment-related initiatives—or a combination of these—reinforcing the values of conviviality and shared community emphasized in Module 2.

### Preview of Upcoming Sessions

In preparation for the upcoming sessions, the program leader will communicate the overarching theme of “Conviviality: Church, Society, and Economy,” which will be explored in the following sessions:

- Session 10: Church Working for a Convivial Society
- Session 11: Convivial Perspectives on the Economy and Society
- Session 12: Key Issues for a Convivial Economy
- Session 13: Evaluation and Planning for the Next Period

The sessions aim to explore the relationship between the church and society, connect theological themes to a convivial economy, and encourage practical reflections on justice, dignity, and vocation.

### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 9

#### Lutheran World Federation Publications

Diaconal Life in Diversity 3. Conviviality, Diakonia and the Church  
Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church

[LINK](#)

#### Handout for the participants

Stories on Diverse Diaconal Practices  
(St. Mary: An innovative model for change in work and employment, Västerås Diocese, Sweden, Shared Table: Space for a convivial economy, Vantaa, Finland, Church and Diakonia tackle housing and homelessness: The experience of the church in Hannover, Germany, Being a diaconal ecumenical church in a diverse neighbourhood, De Nieuwe Stad (The New City) and Step Verder, Amsterdam, Netherlands)

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 10

## Church Working for a Convivial Society

## GOAL

To explore the role of the churches and diaconal organisations working towards a convivial society.

## OBJECTIVES

To deepen reflection on

- The context in which the church is set
- The practice of the church as convivial and diaconal
- Working for change for a convivial church
- Three expressions which together create a diaconal church working for a convivial society

## OVERVIEW

This session has three main parts:

- **First part.** Aims to deepen reflection on the church's context, exploring how it fosters a diaconal and convivial culture in everyday practice and how it can engage in change with people in its community. The session is based on group work that opens key questions for discussions.
- **Second part.** Focuses on the prophetic literature from the Old Testament, particularly the teachings of Jeremiah and Micah, and examines how Jesus follows and develops this prophetic tradition.
- **Third part.** Building on the biblical reflection, participants are invited to consider how their practice—and that of the church—reflects three key aspects: humility and faithfulness, the practice of love and mercy, and keeping the word while doing justice.

## PROCESS

**Welcome and introductions**

The program leader begins the session by warmly welcoming participants and allowing time for any necessary updates or announcements. The session may start with a brief icebreaker or warm-up activity to encourage engagement and create a comfortable environment for sharing.

The program leader then introduces the topics of Conviviality, Church, and Society.

**Group work**

For the group work, the program leader divides participants into smaller groups based on shared contexts or specific themes. Each group is invited to reflect on key questions related to conviviality, diaconal vocation, and the church's relationship with the community. Alternatively, participants may be organized into three groups to explore themes in depth, such as: Thinking about the Church Congregation, Thinking about the Context, and Thinking about Conviviality in Practice.

The program leader guides participants in reflecting on these themes, using questions designed to stimulate thought and exploration rather than to seek definitive answers. Each group then prepares to share their insights in a collective discussion.

The supporting materials for Questions About Church and Diakonia – Group Work can be found in the Resources Box.

### THREE BIBLICAL APPROACHES TOWARD BEING A CONVIVIAL DIACONAL CHURCH

After the group discussions, the program leader continues to guide participants in reflecting on three biblical approaches to being and becoming a convivial diaconal church. This reflection draws from key texts in both the Old and New Testaments, offering insights that deepen the understanding of conviviality. The session builds on prior work exploring the diaconal church in context, encouraging participants to connect biblical teachings with practical applications in their own communities.

This reflection leads to the formulation of three key aspects of working toward a convivial church and society. Groups discuss these texts in relation to their own context and prepare to share feedback with the whole group.

#### FIRST IMPULSE. Jeremiah's Call for Shalom

In Jeremiah's time, the people of Israel were in exile and had lost hope. They were also subjected to propaganda that offered false hopes. This is perhaps a picture of how some people feel right now and of how churches feel because they are in a minority position in a post-religious or even a multireligious society. Jeremiah's letter encourages them to seek peace and welfare (shalom) in the city where they live, reminding them of the importance of reciprocity – giving and receiving – even in difficult circumstances.

*Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. (Jeremiah 29:5–7)*

For our reflection on conviviality, the text reminds us of the idea of reciprocity, of giving and receiving. But it also suggests that this minority population should not think they are powerless and should make their contribution to the “welfare of the city.”

#### SECOND IMPULSE. Micah's Call for Justice, Mercy, and Humility

Micah's words clarify what is truly required of us: to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. In doing so, the prophet rejects ritual sacrifices in favor of ethical and spiritual integrity. His message makes clear that genuine worship of God is expressed not through offerings, but through lives marked by justice, compassion, and humility.

As the prophet declares:

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)*

#### THIRD IMPULSE. Jesus' Denunciation of Religious Authorities

Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees criticizes their focus on minor laws while neglecting the weightier matters of justice, mercy, and faithfulness. His message emphasizes practicing these principles without forsaking others.

*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel! (Matthew 23:23–24)*

From these three biblical impulses, we derive three key principles which can serve as guidelines or critical waymarks to test our practice: (1) being humble and faithful, (2) practicing love and mercy, and (3) keeping the word and doing justice.

### THREE EXPRESSIONS OF BEING A LOCAL CHURCH

After exploring the biblical approaches, the program leader facilitates a deeper reflection on the key principles and ways to implement them within church practice.

Participants are divided into pairs and provided with a table outlining four key aspects of church life: everyday practice, strategy, perception, and decision-making (the “three ways” approach is influenced by Robert C. Linthicum, *The Urban Church*, 2003). Pairs are given 15 minutes to study the table and reflect on how these aspects impact church policy, training, and diaconal organizations.

This session aims to foster not only immediate insights but also ongoing learning and practice, contributing to the development of a more convivial church and society. Participants are also encouraged to take the table home for further reflection and discussion.

The handout on the Three Expressions of Being a Local Church can be found in the Resources Box.

### CONCLUDING SESSION

To conclude, the program leader gives participants a few minutes for personal reflection and then invites each person to share one word that sums up the session for them, along with one area they would like to explore further—either in practice or for deeper reflection.

A participant or small group of participants may also be invited to lead a prayer related to the theme of the session.

#### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 10

##### Lutheran World Federation Publications

Seeking Conviviality: re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe  
Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church

[LINK](#)

##### Supporting Materials for the program leader

Questions About Church and Diakonia for the Group Work

[LINK](#)

##### Handout for the participants

Three Expressions of Being a Local Church

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 11

# Convivial Perspectives on the Economy and Society

## GOAL

To analyze and to reflect on the meaning of a convivial economy and working life.

## OBJECTIVES

- To deepen understanding of vocation as the basis of a convivial economy
- To reflect on justice as a key to a convivial economy
- To reflect on how human dignity can be promoted and supported by a convivial economy

## OVERVIEW

This session builds on the three key themes – Vocation, Justice, and Dignity – that are the roots of Christian thought and practice and that were discussed in Session 2. These themes provide a foundation for reflecting on a convivial economy and society. The following diagram, which is used in Session 2, illustrates these interconnections:



It is important to recognize the coherence of these concepts as they relate to diaconal practice, as well as to our understanding of work, economy, and society.

## THE PROCESS

### Welcomes and Introduction

The program leader welcomes the participants and provides any necessary updates. This session will explore the economy and society through the lens of three key themes introduced in Session 2 – “Vocation, Justice, and Dignity.” These themes are central to developing a convivial economy and society.

### World Café Process

In this session, the program leader introduces the World Café format, an engaging method designed to facilitate group discussions in a relaxed setting. The space will be arranged in a café style, which can be done either in one room or across separate areas, depending on the size of the group.

The program leader presents three key themes—Vocation, Justice, and Dignity—using prepared materials or a PowerPoint presentation to introduce each theme. These themes serve as a foundation for participants to reflect on fostering a convivial economy and society.

Each theme is overseen by a designated chairperson who is knowledgeable about the topic and has reviewed the resources in advance. Participants are divided into three groups, with each group spending 20 minutes discussing one theme before rotating to the next. By the end of the session, each participant will have engaged with all three themes over 60 minutes.

Questions related to each theme are included in handouts for all participants, removing the need to repeat them during the session. Group leaders facilitate discussions and capture key points on a flip chart to ensure that important insights are documented.

After the group discussions, the program leader will facilitate a plenary session where group leaders will summarize their group's findings and highlight key points, similarities, and differences.

The handout on the background and questions on Dignity, Justice, and Vocation can be found in the Resources Box.

## CONCLUDING SESSION

The findings from this session serve as a foundation for deeper insights into a convivial economy in Session 12.

In preparation for the upcoming session, the program leader can distribute a handout to the participants containing background information on the key issues for a convivial economy and the related discussion questions. This handout can be found in the Resources Box for Session 12.

The closing prayer can reflect on both broader changes in the economy and work, as well as personal

transformation. Using the biblical story of the loaves and fishes (Matthew 14:13–21), participants are invited to reflect on shifting from scarcity and exclusion to generosity and inclusion—moving from a mindset of sending people away to one of welcoming and sharing.

### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 11

#### Lutheran World Federation Publications

Towards a convivial economy – the contribution of a re-formed community diakonia in Europe

Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church

[LINK](#)

#### Handout for the participants

Background and Questions – Dignity, Justice and Vocation

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 12

## Key Issues for a Convivial Economy

## GOAL

To contextualize important issues which prevent the emergence of a convivial economy and to reflect on the role of church and diakonia in supporting a convivial economy.

## OBJECTIVES

To develop and to deepen an understanding of the following key issues which affect the search for a convivial economy at both local and national levels

- Work and welfare
- Migration and work
- Creation and the environment
- Food poverty and food sustainability
- Debt
- Corruption and the need for transparency

## OVERVIEW

This session explores how the key issues outlined in the objectives—related to the pursuit of a convivial economy—are experienced both locally and in a broader context. Participants discuss how the church and diakonia currently address these issues and consider future developments, with a focus on promoting conviviality.

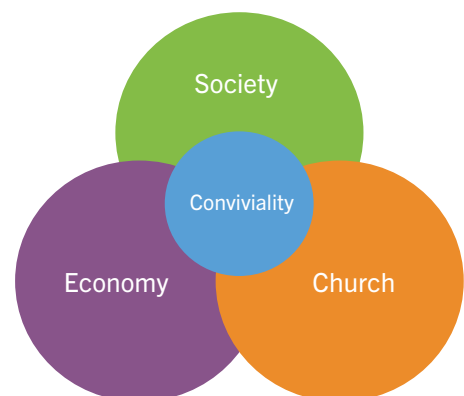
## THE PROCESS

## Welcome and Introduction

The program leader begins the session by welcoming the participants, providing brief updates, and introducing the session. Following this, the program leader facilitates a discussion on the role of the church and diakonia in fostering a convivial economy. This conversation will focus on the interconnected roles of society, the economy, and the church as essential contributors to promoting conviviality, as illustrated in the accompanying diagram.

There are six themes that are integral to the search for a convivial economy in our contemporary contexts, both local and national:

1. Supporting convivial work and welfare
2. Migration and work from the perspective of a convivial economy
3. A convivial approach to creation and the environment
4. Convivial approaches to food poverty and food sustainability



5. Debt as it affects people and undermines convivial life together
6. Corruption as a threat to conviviality and the need for transparency

These themes were identified by the European group working on conviviality as a new core concept for diakonia and as arising from the practice of local diaconal workers.

### GROUP WORK

For the group work, the program leader divides the participants into three groups, with each group focusing on two of the six themes mentioned above.

The handouts for participants containing the background information and discussion questions for Groups 1, 2, and 3 can be found in the Resources Box.

After the group discussions, a representative from each group will share a brief summary of their findings, which the program leader will note. The program leader then invites each group to provide additional feedback on their findings.

### CONCLUDING SESSION

To conclude, the program leader facilitates a discussion with the whole group to identify common themes and priorities for follow-up and action. This process prepares participants for the final Session 13, which will focus on the evaluation of Module 2 and preparations for Module 3.

#### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 12

##### Lutheran World Federation Publications

Towards a convivial economy – the contribution of a re-formed community diakonia in Europe:

Work and Welfare p.11 – 14

Debt p.15 – 17

Migration p.18 – 20

Corruption and Transparency p.21 – 23

Creation and the Environment p.24 – 26

Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church

[LINK](#)

##### Handouts for the participants

Background and Discussion Questions Group One

[LINK](#)

Background and Discussion Questions Group Two

[LINK](#)

Background and Discussion Questions Group Three

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 13

## Evaluation and Planning for the Next Period

## GOAL

To evaluate the learning from Module 2, and to celebrate the successful completion of the Module and prepare for Module 3.

## OBJECTIVES

- To evaluate personal learning
- To evaluate learning for church and diakonia
- To prepare for Module 3
- To organise a celebration meal together

## OVERVIEW

The main aim of this session is to evaluate the learning gained throughout this Module, both at a personal level and in relation to the church and/or diakonia. During the session, participants will engage in a reflective exercise to connect the insights and experiences from this Module and prepare for the upcoming Module 3.

The session concludes with a shared celebration, including a meal and a communal devotion. The meal may take the form of an Agape meal, symbolizing fellowship and gratitude.

## THE PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader welcomes the participants to the last session of this Module and gives time for people to share updates if need be.

**Personal Evaluation**

The first part of the session focuses on personal learning and takeaway from this Module.

The program leader invites the participants to complete an evaluation sheet which is accessible from the Resources Box, and which asks:

- What new insights did this Module give me?
- What was surprising for me from this Module?
- What follow-up actions would I like to take?
- What questions do I now have that I would like to work on?
- What would I like to share with another person, other people?

Approximately 15–20 minutes are allocated for this evaluation. The program leader then invites participants to share reflections that are meaningful to them, while making it clear that no one is required to share if they wish to keep their thoughts private. Both similarities and differences in perspectives are valued equally and contribute to the richness of the discussion.

**Evaluation for Church and/or Diakonia**

The second part of the session focuses on learning and takeaway for church and diakonia from this Module. The program leader invites the participants to complete an evaluation sheet which is accessible from the Resources Box, and which asks:

- What new insights did this module give for my church and/or diakonia?
- What was surprising for church and/or diakonia from this module?
- What follow-up actions would I like the church and/or diakonia to take?
- What questions do I now have, concerning church and/or diakonia that I would like to work on?
- What would I like to share with another person, other people?

Approximately 15–20 minutes are allocated for this evaluation. The program leader then invites participants to share reflections that are meaningful to them, while making it clear that no one is required to share if they wish to keep their thoughts private. Both similarities and differences in perspectives are valued equally and contribute to the richness of the discussion.

At the end of this evaluative round, each person is invited to express in one word how they feel at the end of this Module.

### From Module 2 to Module 3

The program leader introduces a task for participants to undertake between the end of this module and the start of the Module 3. This framework encourages participants to apply insights from Module 2, “Seeking Conviviality,” to re-examine and reflect on activities in their daily lives or within their communities.

Questions revolve around:

- Conviviality in Everyday Life
- Conviviality in Local Church or Congregational Life
- Conviviality in Diaconal Work (professional, volunteer, activist)
- Conviviality in Political and Economic Events, Structures and Speech

This should be organized in the time frame which the local Program has proposed.

## CONCLUDING SESSION

### Celebration

To conclude Module 2, a shared celebratory meal or a devotion from the Iona Community Agape can be organised.

A liturgy from Iona Community Agape can be found in the Resources Box.

### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 13

#### Supporting Materials for the program leader

Iona Community Agape

[LINK](#)

#### Handouts for the participants

Evaluation – Personal

[LINK](#)

Evaluation – Church and Diakonia

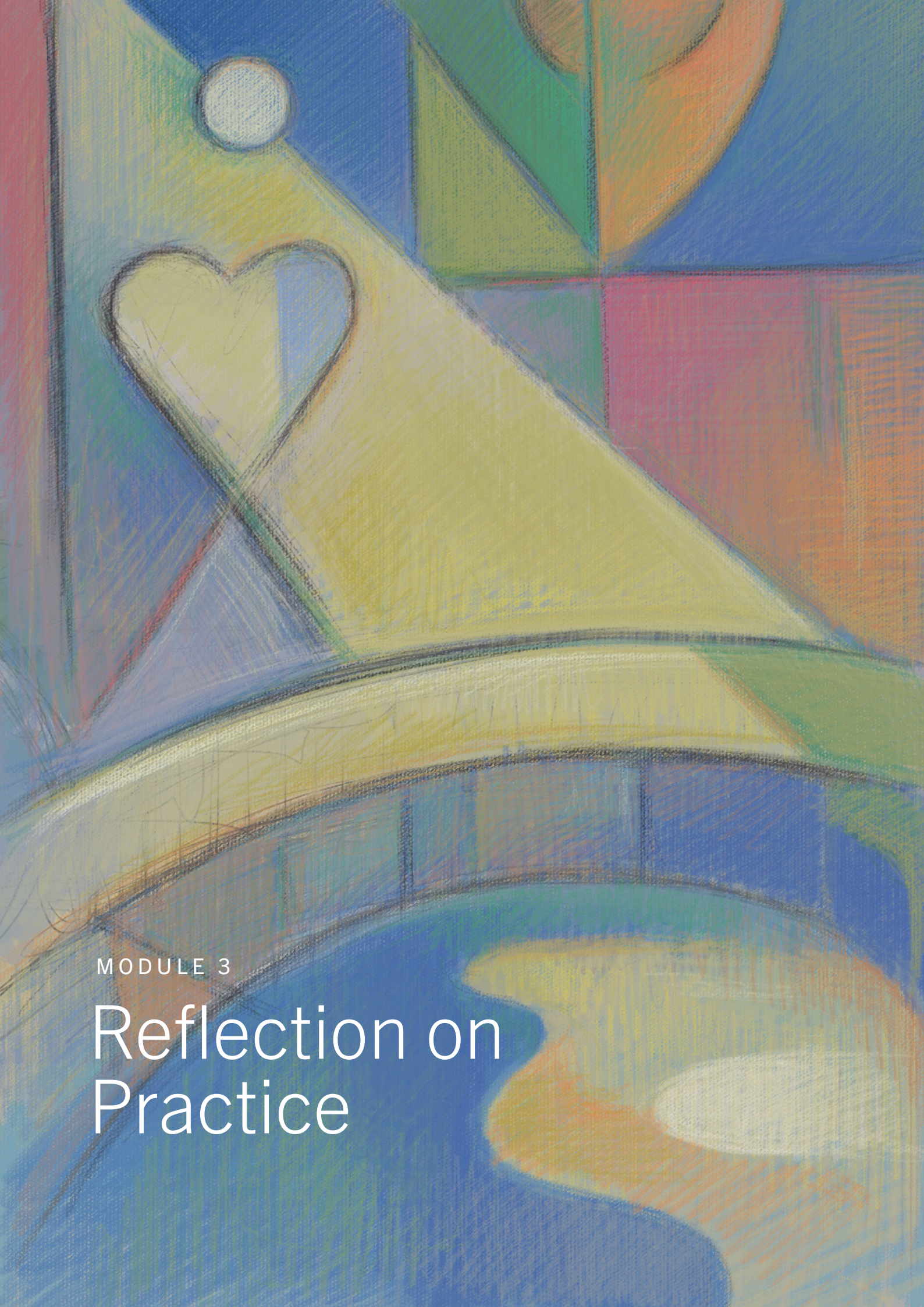
[LINK](#)

Reflecting on Experience – Preparation for Module 3

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)



MODULE 3

# Reflection on Practice

In this module, participants are encouraged to engage deeply with their reflections on experiences, specifically drawing from observations and insights gained from the previous modules. The program builds upon the foundational work from Module 1, where the participants explored how their personal socio-biography – their unique backgrounds and life experiences – shapes their responses to situations, especially when interacting with people who are different from themselves.

In Module 2, participants took a deeper dive into the concept of conviviality – the idea of living together harmoniously despite differences. They explored the long-term nature of seeking conviviality as an ongoing process of building understanding and inclusion.

Now, in Module 3, participants will focus on reflection on practice. This involves examining how their actions, attitudes, and perspectives need to evolve in order to foster intentional conviviality – a deliberate effort to create spaces of inclusion, respect, and mutual care. The goal is for the participants to not only reflect on their experiences but also to identify how their perspectives and actions transform so they actively promote a harmonious, inclusive community.

---

## OVERVIEW

The Module comprises the following 11 sessions:

***Session 1. Exploring Barriers, Borders, and boundaries***

***Session 2 (optional). Exploring Barriers, Borders, and Boundaries through Artwork***

***Session 3. Change of Perspective***

***Session 4. Experiencing the Change***

***Session 5. Empowerment to Change***

***Session 6. Intentional Conviviality in Diaconal Work 1***

***Session 7. Intentional Conviviality in Diaconal Work 2***

***Session 8. Intentional Conviviality in Church and Diakonia***

***Session 9. Conviviality in Diakonia***

***Session 10. Conviviality in the Social and Economic Context***

***Session 11. Reviewing, Planning, and Closing Worship***

Total time: Approximately 14 hours including options, plus two possible visits, worship, and a shared meal

## SESSION 1

# Evaluation and Planning for the Next Period

**GOAL**

To explore barriers, borders, and boundaries in everyday life.

**OBJECTIVES**

- To share the participants' lived experience at this stage of the learning program between Module 2 and Module 3
- To explore the participants' personal, everyday experience and understanding of barriers, borders, and boundaries
- To reflect on convivial everyday life in a diverse society

**OVERVIEW**

The program leader begins by introducing the various sessions of Module 3 and providing an outline of Session 1. The core resource for this session is the participants' lived experiences and reflections at this stage of the learning program, which forms the foundation for discussion.

Session 1 starts by drawing on the work the participants have completed during this interim period, encouraging a deeper examination of personal barriers and boundaries. The participants are also prompted to reflect on what contributes to a convivial everyday life. This sharing and reflection aim to foster a deeper understanding of each participant's experience of conviviality, as well as the barriers and boundaries that exist within and between groups.

The second part of the session focuses on reflecting on these shared experiences. Finally, the participants engage in an exercise that explores the meaning of "conviviality" in everyday work and life from their own perspectives. The program leader guides the participants in developing a synthesis of their reflections while acknowledging and valuing differences between group members.

Note: It is important that the program leader emphasizes that both Session 1 – "Exploring Barriers, Borders, and Boundaries" and the optional Session 2 – "Exploring Barriers, Borders, and Boundaries through Artwork" share the overarching theme of "Everyday Lived Conviviality."

**PROCESS****Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader begins by welcoming the group and providing space for the participants to share updates. A warm-up activity, such as the "Bingo Exercise" from the Resources Box under Ice Breakers and Warm-up Exercises, may be used to initiate engagement. Following this, the program leader presents an overview of the module, covering the key themes.

**Sharing Experience**

The program leader divides participants into groups of three and introduces the exercise, "Sharing Experience." This activity encourages participants to explore personal barriers and boundaries while reflecting on the factors that contribute to convivial everyday life. If the program leader is participating in the related "in-between" exercise, they may join one of the groups with the participants' consent. At the conclusion of the exercise, each group shares any key insights that emerged during their discussions.

The supporting material, including the Description and Questions for the Exercise on Sharing Experience, can be found in the Resources Box.

### Reflection on Convivial Life Together

The program leader invites the participants to sit in a circle and places picture cards in the center of the circle. Each participant selects two cards:

- One card represents what “convivial life together” means to them.
- The other card symbolizes where they encounter barriers to convivial life.

After a brief period of reflection, the program leader invites the participants to share their chosen cards, explaining how these cards represent conviviality and barriers in their lives.

This exercise serves as a foundation for understanding the factors that contribute to convivial interpersonal relationships, as well as the obstacles or boundaries that may arise. Additionally, it may reveal instances where boundaries play a positive and constructive role.

The Picture Cards can be found in the Resource Box.

## CONCLUDING SESSION

The program leader concludes the session by inviting one of the participants to close with a word of prayer. Alternatively, the group may say grace together to end the session.

### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 1

#### Supporting Materials for the program leader

Description and Questions: Sharing Experience

[LINK](#)

Picture Cards

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 2

# Exploring Barriers, Borders, and Boundaries through Artwork

**GOAL**

To explore our borders and boundaries and discover what creates convivial life together through collective artwork.

**OBJECTIVES**

- To explore personal borders through visual art
- To engage in a shared creative activity
- To foster connection and understanding

**OVERVIEW**

In this session, the program leader introduces an art-based project aimed at deepening the participants' compassion and understanding of others. The leader emphasizes that each person carries a unique biography, shaped by both similarities and differences, and reminds the group that we are individuals who also depend on one another.

To guide the activity, participants are invited to explore their personal borders and boundaries through the metaphor of a tree. Each person envisions themselves as a tree, and together, they form a forest.

For example:

- Roots may symbolize traditions, parents, and grandparents – everything we stand on. They can also represent our curiosity and drive to explore the topics and challenges we encounter in life.

The program leader encourages participants to design their tree in a way that reflects their own story, fostering creativity and personal expression. As the trees come together, the group collectively explores their symbolic meanings, uncovering connections and reflecting on the boundaries that shape each person's journey.

**PROCESS****Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader warmly welcomes the participants and leads a brief warm-up exercise to create a relaxed and open environment. Following this, the leader introduces the concept of using visual art to explore personal borders and boundaries, emphasizing that creativity often expresses emotions and feelings that words cannot. Art serves as a powerful tool for reflecting on and sharing personal experiences.

The activity involves participants creating collaborative artwork in groups of 7 to 12. If there are more participants, they are divided into smaller groups to ensure an engaging and manageable experience for everyone.

The supporting material, including the Description and Guiding Questions for the Artwork Process, can be found in the Resources Box.

### CONCLUDING SESSION

At the end of the artwork process, the program leader facilitates a group discussion to reflect on the participants' experiences during the activity.

Following the discussion, the group, guided by the program leader, decides what to do with their artwork—whether to display it, keep it, or explore another creative use. This reflection phase encourages participants to connect their individual experiences to the group's shared understanding and to the broader lessons on conviviality.

#### Preview of Upcoming Sessions

In preparation for the upcoming sessions, the program leader communicates the overarching theme of “Changing the Perspective,” which the group will explore in the following sessions:

- **Session 3.** Change of Perspective
- **Session 4.** Experiencing the Change
- **Session 5.** Empowerment to Change

These sessions aim to foster a shift in perspective, laying the groundwork for building a convivial life together.

### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 2

#### Supporting Materials for the program leader

Description and Guiding Questions: The process for the artwork

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 3

## Change of Perspective

## GOAL

To deal with the dimension of “we” versus the “other,” with the meaning of belonging versus exclusion, and to change the perspective to develop a new attitude toward others.

## OBJECTIVES

- To develop sensitivity and recognition of different perspectives and needs
- To understand self-empowerment as an aspect of broadening perspectives
- To understand reciprocity as a key aspect of developing convivial life together
- To reflect upon the implications for a church with regard to a change of perspective with others

## OVERVIEW

*If you came to help me, you are wasting your time. If you came because your liberation is connected to mine, then let us work together.* (source: Aboriginal activists)

This session invites participants to engage in a transformative experience of perspective-taking at emotional and relational levels. It emphasizes equality among participants and the continual challenge of dissolving the boundaries between “we” and “other.” The process involves questioning implicit hierarchies of “better or worse” and “right or wrong,” fostering openness to diverse life-worlds, and cultivating empathy alongside tolerance for ambiguity.

## Key Components:

- **Listening Without Judgement.** Participants practice listening without implicit or explicit judgment, creating space to perceive different levels of understanding, lived experiences, and emotions.
- **Personal, Social-Systemic, and Spiritual Reflection.** Participants engage in reflection on what a change of perspective means across personal, social-systemic, and spiritual dimensions.
- **Mutual Self-Empowerment.** Participants explore how empowering themselves and each other enhances perspective-taking, encourages meaningful encounters, and fosters dialogue that transcends traditional boundaries of environment and group identity.
- **Impact on Various Aspects of Life.** Participants explore how a change of perspective influences personal life, social interactions, work environments, congregational life, and other contexts.
- **Learning Moments.** Throughout this session, participants reflect on their notions of conviviality, becoming more sensitive to diverse life realities. This awareness contributes to the development of a convivial diaconal church that embraces diversity.
- **Creating a Convivial Community.** This period of reflection allows the group to cultivate ideas, aspirations, and hopes for a church grounded in reciprocity—collaborating with people rather than acting on their behalf—and fostering a sense of ‘we’ instead of ‘us and them.’

## PROCESS

### Welcome and Introduction

The program leader begins by warmly welcoming participants and leading a brief warm-up exercise to create a relaxed and open atmosphere. Following this, the leader reviews the ground rules to ensure they are understood and observed during the discussions.

### Ground Rules:

- **No Hierarchy:** Everyone in the group has an equal voice. Each participant is free to share their thoughts and reflections.
- **Speak for Yourself:** Participants speak for themselves, using sentences that begin with “I..”
- **Create a Safe Space:** The group fosters a safe environment where diverse opinions can be expressed, adhering to the principle that “what is said in the room stays in the room.”
- **Use Simple Language:** Participants use clear and simple language so that everyone can easily understand and take part.

After establishing a positive tone for discussion, the program leader introduces four key points that will serve as a framework for exploring participants’ thoughts and experiences of difference and diversity.

## KEY TERMS TO UNDERSTAND CHANGING PERSPECTIVE

In this session, the program leader introduces two key terms: “life-world” and “system-world.”

**Life-world:** This concept highlights the unique personal world that each individual inhabits, shaped by attitudes, experiences, and background. It serves as the foundation for how people perceive and interpret their lives.

**System-world:** This concept refers to the larger systems and structures – such as societal, institutional, and cultural systems – that influence and shape individual lives. People’s reactions to these systems are influenced by their socialization and personal experiences.

The program leader facilitates a short discussion to help participants recognize and reflect on these concepts. Together, they may explore how a deeper understanding of these perspectives can encourage participants to re-evaluate their own views. Through new experiences and reflections, participants may be inspired to see their biographical journeys in a new light and consider how they might question or transform the systems that have shaped them.

A detailed explanation of the key terms—“*life-world*” and “*system-world*”—which are essential to Understanding Changing Perspectives, can be found in the Resources Box.

## IMPULSE TO CHANGE PERSPECTIVE

The program leader introduces the concept of a ‘change of perspective’ using a PowerPoint presentation or adapted content. This introduction can be enriched with personal examples from the program leader’s own experience, making the concept more relatable and engaging for participants.

An Introduction to the PowerPoint presentation that outlines encouraging steps toward change can be found in the Resources Box.

### GROUP WORK: BELONGING TO GROUPS

After the PowerPoint presentation, the program leader introduces the next phase of group work. The aim is to recognize the complexity and diversity within these groups and to appreciate the different perspectives of their members. A plenary discussion will then bring these perspectives together, capturing the richness of diversity and providing reflections that guide the next steps of the session.

The Instructions for Group Work can be found in the Resources Box.

### Coffee Break

#### CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE

The program leader introduces the World Café format as a method for exploring group dynamics and the value of shifting perspectives. Participants are invited to reflect on the contexts they belong to, as well as those they do not, examining the human needs fulfilled by these groups and how these needs influence interactions. An expanded version of Maslow's hierarchy of needs may be used as a reference point to guide this reflection.

This exercise unfolds across three World Café 'stations.' After participants have engaged with all three, the program leader facilitates a feedback session, gathering key insights on a flip chart and provides a summary to conclude the discussion.

A detailed description on World Café process and reflection on Belonging to Groups can be found in the Resources Box.

#### BIBLICAL REFLECTION

The program leader facilitates a biblical reflection on the theme of "Change of Perspective." This reflection draws on two key biblical passages:

- Genesis 16:13: "You are the God who sees me" (NIV) – a declaration by Hagar when God met her in her distress, affirming His presence and care.
- Philippians 2:3–4: "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others."

These scripture passages serve as a foundation for exploring how a change in perspective can shape and transform our interactions, our empathy, and our diaconal practices rooted in humility, reciprocity, and care.

The program leader may choose one of the biblical passages for the reflections.

The biblical reflection – Change of Perspective can be found in the Resource Box.

## CONCLUDING SESSION

The program leader begins an open exchange by leading an icebreaker activity—for example, passing a ball of wool around the circle—and inviting participants to respond to simple, engaging questions such as:

- What has touched my heart?
- What do I take with me?
- Where did I feel resistance?
- What encouraged me?

In addition, the leader may pose questions about the group's identity as a church and its relationship with the 'other,' reflecting on what it means to work with people rather than for them as a diaconal church.

### Preparation toward the Upcoming Session

In preparation for Session 4, it is important to explain that this session builds on the network map created during the World Café at Station 1. Participants are encouraged to identify unfamiliar people, groups, or organizations they might reach out to, approaching these encounters with curiosity and intentionality.

The importance of identifying “bridge people”—trusted individuals who can facilitate introductions and connections needs to be emphasized. Participants may choose to engage individually, in pairs, or as a group, with meeting locations thoughtfully selected to promote equality and mutual respect. For example, meeting in neutral spaces or within the other group's environment can help balance perceptions and power dynamics. Even without a detailed plan, participants can develop meaningful follow-up steps that foster authentic encounters and broaden perspectives.

### Important:

1. The program leader and the group may decide whether to invite the visited group or individuals to join a future session of the program, potentially in Module 4.
2. The program leader needs to be prepared to facilitate contacts and support practical arrangements as needed and may also share their contact details in case participants require assistance.
3. Guidelines for conversations, including key aspects of a learning conversation, are provided in the resources for Session 4.

## BLESSING<sup>1</sup>

The program leader or a group member may say:

*I invite you to touch your eyes, your ears, your mouth, and your heart at the respective points of the prayer of blessing and thus feel this blessing physically.*

<sup>1</sup> Text: Annette Winkler-Mann, Pastor, Lauffen am Neckar, Baden-Württemberg, with permission.

**Let us pray:**

Touch your eyes, for they should be blessed to see and perceive your neighbour.

Touch your ears, for they should be blessed to hear and understand the words of your neighbour.

Touch your mouth, for it should be blessed to speak good and encouraging things.

Touch your heart, for it should be blessed to open itself to the love of God and the love of your neighbour.

May God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit bless you. Amen.

**RESOURCES FOR SESSION 3****Supporting Materials for the program leader**

Introduction to PowerPoint on Impulse to change perspective

[LINK](#)

PowerPoint: Impulse to change perspective

[LINK](#)

Key Terms to Understand Changing Perspective

[LINK](#)

Biblical reflection – Change of Perspective

[LINK](#)

Reflection: belonging to groups (World Café process)

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 4

## Experiencing the Change

## GOAL

To reflect on the experience of meeting a different group and to reflect on the change of perspective.

## OBJECTIVES

- To meet people from a different group
- To experience being a 'guest' in a different place
- To share the impressions and personal experiences from these encounters.

## OVERVIEW

In this session, the group have reached the following agreements:

- Meeting as a whole group with a different group.
- Meeting individually or in pairs with people from a different group in a different place.

It is important to decide in advance whether the group(s) visited will be invited to join Session 5, or whether that session will focus solely on participants sharing their own experiences from the encounters. Making this decision beforehand allows for proper planning of the next steps in the learning process.

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader begins by explaining both the practical arrangements and the overall objective of the session: to learn about and engage with a different group. Participants are reminded to approach the meeting with openness, empathy, and a non-judgmental attitude, with an emphasis on entering the conversation as learners. This approach is supported by two key handouts:

- A handout outlining basic approaches for engaging with the 'other.'
- A handout with suggestions for questions to help guide and focus the conversation, fostering deeper insights and meaningful engagement.

The handouts on the Guidelines for an Approach to Others and Inventory for the Discussion can be found in the Resource Box.

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

After meeting with different groups, each participant is invited to reflect on their experience. This personal reflection is essential for consolidating the learning gained from interacting with the 'other.' To support this process, participants are encouraged to make notes in response to the following key reflection questions:

- Did my perception of the 'other' change? If so, how and why?
- How was I affected by the conversation? What emotions or thoughts emerged?
- Will I change my personal approach when encountering different 'others' in the future?
- What could I learn from this experience regarding how to work with this group in the context of church or diakonia?

A handout on Reflection on experience can be found in the Resources box.

## CONCLUDING SESSION

The program leader shall record the insights and learnings from this reflection, as they are essential for the next session, where the participants will come together to discuss their experiences.

### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 4

#### Handouts for the participant

Guidelines for an Approach to Others

[LINK](#)

Inventory for the Discussion

[LINK](#)

Reflection on experience

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 5

## Empowerment to Change

## GOAL

To share understanding about perceiving the “other” and to experience a process of mutual self-empowerment as important for convivial life together.

## OBJECTIVES

- To debrief the visits from Session 4
- To practice and experience seeing and being seen
- To perceive how mutual self-empowerment happens
- To experience limitation, dependence, trust, and liberation
- To identify and check community/organization

## OVERVIEW

This session begins with a debriefing of the visit(s) conducted in Session 4. The goal is to capture and reflect on the diverse learning points from these experiences, which will inform the content of future sessions, including Module 4.

Following the debrief, the session shifts to exploring aspects of empowerment, with particular emphasis on mutual empowerment as a foundation for fostering convivial life together. Because this session involves sharing personal experiences, it is essential to reinforce the ground rules and introduce the Awareness Guidelines for maintaining respectful and inclusive dialogue, as outlined in Session 1 (available in the Resources Box).

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader begins the session by convening the group for a brief round of introductions, intentionally avoiding any mention of the visits. If needed, a warm-up or icebreaker activity may follow.

Next, the program leader introduces the Awareness Guidelines (as explained in Sessions 3 and 4), emphasizing their connection to the previously agreed ground rules. It is important to seek consensus around these guidelines. It is important to highlight that participants’ experience between Sessions 4 and 5 may impact their reflections and conversations during this session.

**Debriefing the Visit or Visits**

The program leader divides participants into small, informal groups. Each group is invited to discuss the questions below for five minutes before sharing their feedback with the larger group. It is important for the program leader to note and record both similarities and differences in the participants’ responses.

The debriefing process centers around the following reflection questions provided to participants after the visits:

- Did my perception of the “other” change? How? Why?
- How was I affected by the conversation?
- Will I change my personal approach to different others in the future?
- What could I learn from this experience concerning working with this group in the context of church or diakonia?

### INTRODUCTION TO EMPOWERMENT

The program leader shall facilitate this session and invite the participants to explore their personal views on empowerment through paired conversations. This pair work is foundational for the next steps and does not require group feedback.

#### **Impulse for Empowerment: “My World and Yours”**

The program leader facilitates this session, inviting participants to explore their personal views on empowerment through paired conversations. This pair work serves as a foundation for the next steps and does not require feedback from the larger group.

A text and PowerPoint presentation on “My World and Yours” exploring personal empowerment through engaging in conversation with others can be found in the Resources Box.

#### **Coffee Break**

#### **Power and Powerlessness – Limitation and Empowerment**

In the final part of the session, the program leader introduces the Participatory Exercise on Empowerment and invites participants to explore the dynamics of power and powerlessness in human relationships. This section includes a series of participatory activities followed by reflective discussions. The program leader carefully selects the methods in advance to best suit the participants’ needs.

A handout on the Participatory Exercise on Empowerment can be found in the Resources Box.

#### **Discussion on a Biblical Text**

The theme of power and powerlessness can be further explored through the story of Jesus and Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46–52). While this story is suggested, the program leader may choose other Biblical texts that resonate with the theme.

The Biblical reflection on power and powerlessness, through the story of Jesus and Bartimaeus, can be found in the Resources Box.

### CONCLUDING THE SESSION

The program leader shall conclude this session with a fishbowl process, where a small group sits in a circle discussing key questions while the larger group observes. The process is repeated until all the participants have had a chance to both discuss and observe. Sample questions include:

- What surprised me during this session?
- What do I take away from this session and the visit debrief for my personal life?
- What is important for my congregation or organization?
- What insights did I gain about working with different “others”?

Afterward, the larger group may share reflections on the discussion they observed or participated in, emphasizing key points of engagement.

### Blessing on the Way

To conclude the session, the program leader leads a prayer, for example, the one by Edith Stein

“Just take everything exactly as it is, put it in God’s hands and leave it with Him.”  
— St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein)

or a prayer with a comparable focus:

Without reservation and worry I place this day in Your hand,  
be You my today and my tomorrow,  
be You my yesterday that I overcame,  
do not ask about my paths of longing, I am a stone from Your mosaic.  
You will put me in the right place, in Your hands I will be firmly embedded.  
May God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit bless you today and forever. Amen.

**Note:** It would be meaningful to end this session with a common meal together.

### Preview of Upcoming Sessions

In preparation for the upcoming sessions, the program leader will communicate the overarching theme of “Intentional Conviviality in Church and Diakonia,” which will be explored in the following sessions:

- Session 6: Intentional Conviviality in Diaconal Work 1
- Session 7: Intentional Conviviality in Diaconal Work 2
- Session 8: Intentional Conviviality in Church and Diakonia
- Session 9: Conviviality in Diakonia

These four sessions are designed to foster purposeful change toward conviviality, culminating in a structured visit to a diaconal organization or project. The visit will provide an opportunity to assess how the organization exemplifies conviviality in practice.

## RESOURCES FOR SESSION 5

### Handout for the participants

Awareness Guidelines

[LINK](#)

### Supporting Materials for the program leader

My World and Yours Text

[LINK](#)

PowerPoint: My World and Yours

[LINK](#)

Biblical Reflection on power and powerlessness – Jesus meets Bartimaeus

[LINK](#)

Participatory Exercise on Empowerment

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 6

## Intentional Conviviality in Diaconal Work 1

## GOAL

To analyze conviviality in personal engagement in diakonia.

## OBJECTIVES

- To review personal diaconal engagement

## OVERVIEW

This session introduces a creative method to enhance inner motivation, self-reflection, and empathy within the group, while also laying the foundation for deeper exploration in Session 7.

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader begins by warmly welcoming the participants and allowing time for a brief round of updates to ensure everyone feels engaged and present. The leader then provides a clear overview of the session's purpose and planned activities.

For the first activity, participants are invited to create a personal 'mini-exhibition,' which can be arranged on a table or on the floor. Using items they have with them—such as those from a pocket, rucksack, or handbag—participants build a small display. For example, a participant might showcase a business card they always carry or another item of personal significance. The items should reflect aspects of their life or work.

Participants are not required to explain their reasons for selecting the items immediately, allowing space for natural reflection and curiosity. The exhibition can be collectively titled as "Conviviality in My Life and Work."

## VISITING THE EXHIBITIONS

Once the 'mini-exhibitions' are ready, participants are invited to visit each other's displays. They use sticky notes and pens to leave messages for the 'exhibition presenter,' which could include expressions of gratitude, thoughts, or reflections on specific items or the exhibition.

After visiting, participants return to their own displays to read and reflect on the messages left for them.

## CONCLUDING SESSION

### Group Reflection

To conclude the session, the program leader invites participants to a group reflection, providing an opportunity to share their experiences and impressions of the activity. This discussion encourages deeper insights into the connections between the items displayed and the theme of conviviality.

Finally, the program leader thanks participants for their thoughtful contributions to the mini-exhibition and the discussion, and warmly invites them to the next session, offering a brief overview of its content.

### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 6

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 7

## Intentional Conviviality in Diaconal Work 2

## GOAL

To analyze conviviality in personal diaconal engagement in a complex and diverse society.

## OBJECTIVES

- To profile personal engagement
- To reflect on engagement from a convivial perspective
- To identify future changes which would support conviviality in church and/or diakonia

## OVERVIEW

This session provides participants with an opportunity to take a closer look at their field of work and engage in discussions about it. The process is designed to accommodate full-time workers in church or diakonia, as well as volunteers and church members, with the program leader adapting the steps to suit the specific group. Additionally, the session encourages critical reflection on how personal work, as well as organizational or church settings, can be developed to foster conviviality.

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader begins the session by welcoming the group. A round of updates allows participants to reflect on the previous session and share any personal changes or developments. A warm-up exercise may also be included to energize the group.

**Create your Engagement or Job Profile**

The program leader invites participants to reflect, write, and share a brief overview of their current involvement in church, diakonia, or other work with people. This may take the form of a personal 'job description' or 'profile,' regardless of whether they are employed. The exercise is expected to take around 30 minutes.

Once the personal profiles are complete, participants pair up with someone in a similar role for a 15-minute 'walk and talk,' during which they share their profiles with one another.

A handout with guidance for exercise on Create your Engagement or Job Profile can be found in the Resources Box.

**Group work on your Engagement or Job Profile**

The program leader then guides participants into small groups to further discuss and reflect on their profiles.

A handout with guidance for exercise on Group work on your Engagement or Job Profile can be found in the Resources Box.

### Group reflection

After approximately 45 minutes, the program leader reconvenes the whole group and facilitates a discussion in which the conclusions from the small-group work are shared.

### CONCLUDING SESSION

To conclude the session, the program leader collaborates with the group to nominate four participants to prepare for the group work in Session 8. It is helpful if the groups are formed based on shared experiences (e.g., local church, and diakonia).

Note: All relevant materials and the process description for the Session 8 group work are accessible on the Interdiac online space.”

Finally, the program leader may invite participants to engage in an open round of prayers, addressing any concerns or reflections that have arisen during the session.

### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 7

#### Handouts for the participants

Personal Engagement/Job Profile

[LINK](#)

Group Work on the Profile

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 8

## Intentional Conviviality in Church and Diakonia

## GOAL

To use stories of convivial church and diakonia from different contexts as a basis for reflection.

## OBJECTIVES

- To analyze and to reflect on stories of convivial church and diakonia
- To engage in Marks of Conviviality as a checklist
- To relate convivial practice to the participants' context

## OVERVIEW

This session shifts the group's focus from personal reflections to broader perspectives on conviviality in church and diakonia. Participants work in small groups, each analyzing an example of convivial practice from the book *Diaconal Life in Diversity*. A leader is nominated for each group in advance to guide the preparation of a presentation on the story and its related Marks of Conviviality. Participants are encouraged to review the relevant materials available in the Resources Box, beforehand.

The session begins with sharing the story and its associated Marks, followed by an analysis of the experience and the lessons it offers. This approach is designed to foster critical learning by connecting these examples to the participants' own church or diaconal work.

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader opens the session with a round of updates and sharing. A short warm-up exercise may also be used.

**Analyzing Convivial Practice in Other Contexts****Group Work 1**

In preparation for the group work, the program leader divides participants into four small groups to explore distinct examples of convivial practices within church and diakonia. Each group also examines the related Marks of Conviviality, fostering a deeper understanding of how these principles are applied in various contexts.

The four groups are pre-arranged by the program leader, with participants grouped according to similar experiences—such as those from local churches or involved in diaconal work—to enhance discussion and analysis.

A leader is nominated for each group in advance to facilitate the discussion and presentation, ensuring that all participants contribute and that the conversation remains focused.

Participants can access relevant materials beforehand via the interdiac online space. These resources provide foundational knowledge and context, enabling more meaningful engagement during the group work.

The four groups focus each on one situation / case study:

Group 1 – Augustanahof: A community living in a repurposed church.

Group 2 – Stovner Volunteer Center: An initiative supporting migrants and refugees.

Group 3 – Cross Congregation: A diaconal congregation with a strong community focus.

Group 4 – Bethel Church: A church that started working with street children and created an inclusive church, accommodation, and a community center.

Each group analyzes their case study in relation to the Marks of Conviviality, evaluates the key elements of the story, and discusses the lessons that can be applied to church and diaconal work in general. Groups record their key findings and learning points for later sharing.

Case studies for the Group Work 1 to Analyse conviviality in church and diakonia can be found in the Resources Box.

### Learning from the Examples for Each Participant's Own Church and Diakonia

The program leader guides participants through a personal reflection exercise, using insights from the group discussion as a foundation to examine their own church or diaconal context. Participants then reconvene with their original group to share and discuss the outcomes of their reflections, focusing on conviviality as a core concept for a diaconal church and/or diakonia.

### Developing a Convivial Church and Diakonia

#### Group Work 2

The reflections from the personal work are then brought together in a group discussion with participants who focused on the same story. The group collaboratively prepares a brief presentation of their findings, highlighting conviviality as a core concept for a diaconal church and/or diakonia.

The Description, Process, and Guiding questions for the Personal and Group Work 2 can be found in the Resources Box

### Concluding Session

The session concludes with a round in which participants share the most important learning point for their personal life, work, and church or diakonia. The program leader encourages participants to reflect on how these insights might influence their future approach. Any final decisions regarding the upcoming visit are also finalized during this time.

**RESOURCES FOR SESSION 8**

**LWF Publications:** <https://www.online-space.eu/lwf-seeking-conviviality-publications>

[LINK](#)

**LWF Podcasts and Videos:**

<https://www.online-space.eu/seeking-conviviality-podcasts-and-videos>

[LINK](#)

**Supporting Material for the program leader**

**Case studies for Group Work 1**

**For Group 1 Augustanahof**

Diaconal Life in Diversity – Conviviality and The Diaconal Church p.28 – 34 and 35 – 43

Marks of Conviviality p.10 – 13

Lutheran World Federation Video: The Augustanahof Community

[LINK](#)

**For Group 2 Stovner Volunteer Center**

Diaconal Life in Diversity – Conviviality with People on the Move p.10 – 17 and 24 – 35

Marks of Conviviality p.14 – 15

[LINK](#)

**For Group 3 Cross Congregation**

Diaconal Life in Diversity – Conviviality and The Diaconal Church p.12 – 18 and 35 – 43

Marks of Conviviality p.13 – 15

[LINK](#)

**For Group 4 Bethel Church**

Diaconal Life in Diversity – Convivial Church and Radical Welcome p.10 – 17 and 34 – 37

Marks of Conviviality p.18 – 20

[LINK](#)

**Group Work 2**

The description, process, and guiding questions for the Personal and Group Work

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 9

## Conviviality in Diakonia

## GOAL

To visit a diaconal organization in participants' area(s) in the light of "seeking conviviality."

## OBJECTIVES

- To meet people from different backgrounds
- To learn about the life worlds of people with diverse stories
- To meet staff and volunteers in the diaconal organization
- To engage in reflection on experiences made in relation to "seeking conviviality"

## OVERVIEW

This session focuses on visiting a diaconal organization or initiative relevant to the participants' regions. Depending on the group size, the visit may involve a single initiative for the entire group or multiple organizations explored in smaller groups. Excursions to organizations outside the region can also provide additional prospects.

During the visit, participants engage with individuals from diverse backgrounds involved in diaconal work, gaining insights into their stories and living conditions. This experience encourages reflection on both the differences and similarities between the participants' own experiences and those of the people they meet.

At the conclusion of the visit, participants evaluate whether—and in what ways—the visited organization exemplifies the principles of conviviality discussed throughout the program.

## PROCESS

**Preparation and Briefing: Guidelines for the Visits**

In preparation for the visit, the program leader briefs the group on the purpose of the visit, emphasizing the importance of reflecting on conviviality and diaconal practice. The leader provides reflective questions to guide participants' observations and interactions during the visit. Throughout the visit, the program leader continues to remind participants to keep the themes from *Diaconal Life in Diversity* and the Marks of Conviviality in mind, allowing time for observation, listening, and reflection.

After the visit, the program leader facilitates a group discussion to process what participants saw, felt, and heard, connecting these experiences to the concept of convivial living. Participants are invited to identify the Marks of Conviviality observed during the visit and highlight key learning points for future practices in church and diakonia.

**Ground Rules**

The program leader reminds participants to follow the ground rules discussed in Session 3, which play an important role in creating a trusting atmosphere that encourages storytelling from those being visited.

A guide to the visit, and framework questions to aid reflection can be found in the Resource Box.

### Concluding Session

After the group reflection, the program leader concludes the session with an open round of prayer, giving thanks for the insights gained and offering intercessions for those involved in the diaconal initiatives. The session may conclude with an informal shared meal to celebrate.

### Preview of Upcoming Sessions

In preparation for the upcoming sessions, the program leader introduces the overarching theme of “Convivial Economy and Society,” which will be explored in the following sessions:

**Session 10.** Conviviality in the Social and Economic Context

**Session 11.** Reviewing, Planning, and Closing Worship

Session 10 is designed to examine how social and economic conditions influence convivial life. Session 11 marks the conclusion of Module 3, providing an opportunity to evaluate its key elements before transitioning to Module 4.

The final session includes group reflection, worship, and a shared meal to strengthen communal bonds and prepare participants for the next phase: Module 4 – ‘Working for Change.’

#### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 9

##### Lutheran World Federation Publications

Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church

[LINK](#)

##### Supporting material for the program leader

Guidelines for the Visits

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 10

## Conviviality in the social and economic context

## GOAL

To recognize and analyze the social and economic conditions which affect the possibility for convivial life together.

## OBJECTIVES

- To analyze how one's social and economic context affects living and working
- To explore the possibilities of convivial life together
- To reflect on the impact of different aspects of inequality on convivial life together

## OVERVIEW

This session introduces two perspectives on how social and economic conditions influence convivial life. In the first part, participants engage in an experiential activity, adopting different roles to explore how their work and life experiences differ.

The aim of seeking conviviality is to create an environment where divisions are overcome and people can practice the 'art and practice of living together.'

In the second part of the session, participants watch a short video presenting one or more concrete themes, followed by a discussion on how the highlighted issues can be addressed and overcome.

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader welcomes participants to the session, and a warm-up or icebreaker exercise may be used to create a welcoming atmosphere.

The program leader may also introduce key Marks of Conviviality relevant to the theme, such as work and economy, poverty and food insecurity, employment, and other social issues.

**Group Activity – One Step Forward**

The program leader introduces a participatory activity designed to help participants understand how social and economic contexts affect different groups. The activity encourages participants to perceive multiple perspectives, enhancing empathy skills. Participants reflect on injustices, privileges, or disadvantages, and discuss assumptions, interpretations, and potential prejudices.

Nine participants receive role cards and take time to read and familiarize themselves with their assigned roles. The remaining participants act as observers. If the group is larger, additional roles can be created, or some participants can assume the role of 'themselves'—without others knowing which role they have.

The instructions for the Role Play, Role Cards and the debriefing can be found in the Resource Box.

**Exploring Topics Related to Conviviality**

To deepen understanding of topics related to conviviality, the program leader may share one or more videos from the 'TED Talks' series that relate to living together and the issues raised in the first participatory part of the session. The program leader can select a single video or multiple videos as appropriate.

A handout on the list of links Exploring Topics Related to Conviviality can be found in the Resource Box.

The purpose of viewing the video is not to determine whether participants agree or disagree with the viewpoints expressed, but to prompt discussion about what changes would be necessary to foster a convivial life together.

The program leader encourages participants to recall concrete observations from the period between Module 1 and Module 2. The leader guides the discussion, helping the group draw conclusions about the changes in policy and practice necessary to support convivial life together.

**CONCLUDING SESSION**

The program leader guides the group in drawing conclusions from the session by using the following questions.

Questions such as:

- What were the key points that you found important during today's Session?
- What will you take away from today's Session?
- Where did the theme of conviviality become particularly clear to you?
- Was there an "aha" moment for you?
- What was helpful in the Session and what was unhelpful?

Reflecting on these questions helps the participants to draw conclusions to guide their work before the next module, which focuses on "Working for Change".

The session concludes with planning for the preparation of the worship and shared meal at the end of Session 11.

**RESOURCES FOR SESSION 10****Lutheran World Federation Publications**

Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church

[LINK](#)
**Supporting Material for the program leader**

Instructions for the Role Play

[LINK](#)
**Handouts for the participants**

Role Cards

[LINK](#)

Exploring Topics Related to Conviviality

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 11

# Reviewing, Planning and Closing Worship

**GOAL**

To review Module 3, look forward to Module 4, and celebrate with an act of worship.

**OBJECTIVES**

- To evaluate of Module 3
- To introduce Module 4
- To celebrate, including worship and a shared meal

**OVERVIEW**

This session marks the completion of Module 3 and serves as a bridge to Module 4, which focuses on future actions following the learning program. To celebrate the conclusion of the module, the group prepares an act of worship and organizes a shared meal, providing an opportunity to reflect on the journey so far.

**PROCESS****Welcome and Introduction**

The session begins with the program leader welcoming participants and introducing the key focus on evaluation, optionally including a warm-up activity to set a reflective tone.

**Review and Evaluation**

The program leader provides an overview of the sessions covered in Module 3 and guides participants in completing the self-evaluation sheet. Participants are given at least 15 minutes for personal reflection using the sheet. Afterwards, they are invited to share their key takeaways with the group.

To facilitate the discussion, the program leader may work through the questions one by one, recording the main points on a flip chart for collective review.

The Evaluation Handout can be found in the Resources Box

**Planning for Module 4**

The program leader introduces Module 4 – ‘Working for Change,’ highlighting its focus on translating insights from previous modules into meaningful action. By this stage, participants are expected to have developed strong connections through shared learning and personal engagement, which can inspire ongoing collaboration beyond the program and exemplify the principles of living conviviality.

To prepare for the upcoming module, participants are encouraged to reflect on the practical applications of their experiences and consider the broader implications of their learning throughout the program.

**WORSHIP, CELEBRATION, AND SHARED MEAL**

The program leader shall conclude this session with a time of worship and celebration, followed by a shared meal. The shared meal will serve as a symbolic and practical celebration of the convivial life cultivated within the group throughout the program

The Worship Resources can be found in the Resources Box.

**RESOURCES FOR SESSION 11****Handout for the participants**

Evaluation Handout

[LINK](#)**Supporting Material for the program leader**

Worship Resources

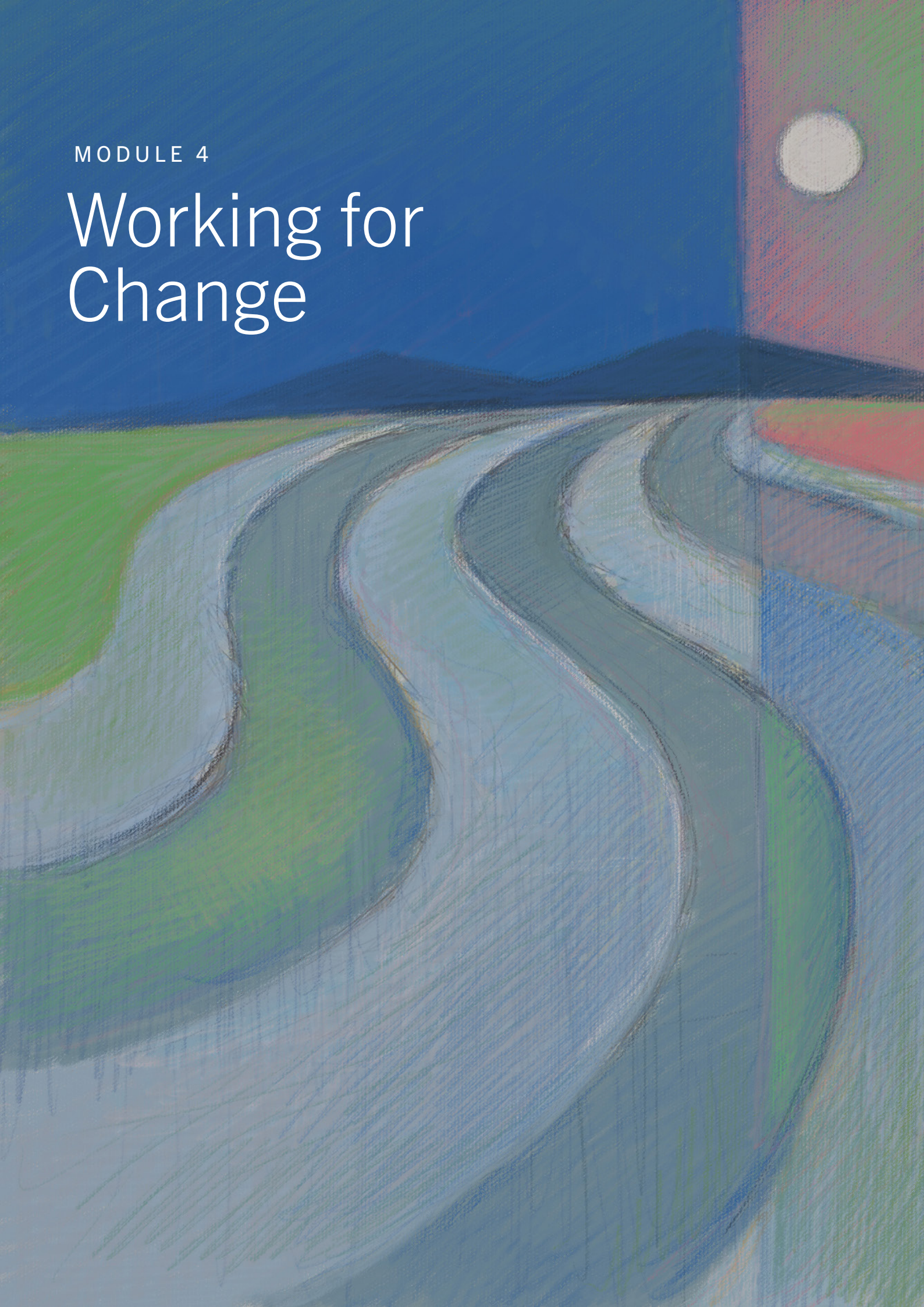
[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

MODULE 4

# Working for Change



In this module, participants come together to reflect on Working for Change in light of all the work done so far, as well as to evaluate the entire learning program. Through the collective learning process and the deepening of personal connections, participants are expected to have formed strong bonds with one another. Ideally, this group will continue meeting beyond the program, embodying the concept of “living conviviality.”

## OVERVIEW

This Module builds upon the previous three Modules and comprises of 9 sessions as follows:

*Session 1. Introduction to the Section and Review*

*Session 2. Making Change in Everyday Life and Action Planning*

*Session 3. Making Change in Church and Diakonia 1*

*Session 4. Making Change in Church and Diakonia 2*

*Session 5. Action Planning – From Our Reality to the Future Vision*

*Session 6. Making Change in Society and Economy 1*

*Session 7. Making Change in Society and Economy 2*

*Session 8. Action Plan*

*Session 9. Evaluation and Follow-Up*

Total time: Approximately 14 hours plus celebration and worship

## SESSION 1

## Introduction to the Section and Review

## GOAL

To link the work of Experiencing, Conceptual Reflection, and Reflection on Practice to Working for Change, and to review the Program.

## OBJECTIVES

- To create a safe space for the introduction and personal updates
- To introduce Module 4
- To reflect on learning from the program

## OVERVIEW

This session enables participants to review the learning process and begin reflecting on their experiences while planning for future actions.

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader fosters a welcoming and open atmosphere for group reflection. To begin with, participants are seated in a circle to encourage a relaxed and inclusive environment. The program leader then introduces the theme, 'Working for Change,' explaining that this module will follow four key steps:

- **Step 1.** To foster change toward a convivial everyday life.
- **Step 2.** To look at the future and imagine what difference convivial life together would make to the church and diakonia.
- **Step 3.** To look at the future and think what social or economic change would support convivial life together.
- **Step 4.** To provide time for evaluation and celebration.

The main components of the program, along with the various learning goals integrated throughout and explained in the PowerPoint presentation titled "Outline of the Program," can be found in the Resources Box.

## TIME FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

The program leader facilitates a conversation focused on sharing positive 'convivial moments' from participants' experiences and practices—moments they may view as 'gifts' gained through the learning program so far. To begin, participants are given time for personal reflection, followed by sharing in the circle. To enrich the discussion, the following questions may be used:

- What stood out to you in the program?
- What did you hear from others that resonated with you?
- What were the most frequently mentioned words or ideas?
- How may what you heard or learned relate to Working for Change?

### Short Break

After a short break, it may be a good idea for the program leader to use an icebreaker exercise.

### “A RIVER OF CHANGE”

The next step involves reflecting on key learnings about conviviality from the three previous modules. This is done through an exercise called ‘A River of Change,’ which helps participants explore the connection between their engagement with the program and its impact on their thinking.

The exercise prompts participants to consider the following questions as part of the program’s overall evaluation:

After the “River of Change” exercise, the program leader will facilitate the final round of “take aways” and “surprises” and close the session.

- What is your most important learning about conviviality and everyday life from this program?  
How does this reflect in your experience?
- What is your most important learning about a convivial, diaconal church?  
What changes would you like to see in a church you know?
- What is your most important learning about convivial diakonia?  
What insights might this bring to a diaconal organization you know?
- What is your most important learning about convivial society, economy, and relationships with creation?  
What do you see as the most important challenge?

Description and the Question in relation to a River of Change exercise can be found in the Resources Box. It leads the participants to consider these questions as part of the program’s overall evaluation.

This exercise encourages participants to deepen their understanding and reflect on the broader impact of conviviality before moving forward into strategies for change. It also leads the participants to consider these questions as part of the program’s overall evaluation.

### CONCLUDING SESSION

After the ‘River of Change’ exercise, the program leader facilitates a final round of ‘takeaways’ and ‘surprises’ before closing the session.

#### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 1

##### Lutheran World Federation Publications

Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church

[LINK](#)

##### Supporting Materials for the program leader

A River of Change – Description and Questions

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 2

# Making Change in Everyday Life and Action Planning

## GOAL

To explore living “conviviality” and to promote everyday convivial life together.

## OBJECTIVES

- To understand the roots of each participant’s approach to a convivial life together
- To engage in biblical reflection on the theme of crossing boundaries
- To develop action plans to foster conviviality in everyday life

## OVERVIEW

This session engages participants in exploring the roots of convivial thinking within their personal experiences and examines potential barriers to conviviality. Participants also reflect on a Gospel story to draw lessons about crossing cultural boundaries, concluding with an action-planning exercise to foster conviviality in daily life.

The supporting material on Openness and Receptivity – Background to this Session can be found in the Resources Box.

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader welcomes participants and explains that this session explores conviviality in everyday life through three stages of reflection:

- **Stage 1.** Revisiting personal biographies (from Module 1) and exploring conviviality in everyday life (from Module 2).
- **Stage 2.** Reflecting on a Gospel narrative to draw relevant conclusions.
- **Stage 3.** Creating a follow-up action plan to support conviviality moving forward.

**Biographical Roots and Barriers**

Building on the learnings and experiences from the program so far, as well as reflections from the first session, the program leader may introduce material from Openness and Receptivity to Other People as a Way to Practice Convivial Life, available in the Resources Box.

Participants are encouraged to revisit their biographical work with a focus on identifying the roots of conviviality and potential barriers to convivial everyday life. These roots influence how we relate to others, either fostering connections or creating obstacles.

Steps in this Reflection Process:

1. **Personal Reflection:** Participants review their biographical work and reflect on the following questions, taking approximately 15 minutes to make personal notes:
  - Where do I find the roots of convivial thinking and its expression in everyday life?
  - Where do I identify barriers to convivial thinking and practice?
2. **Small Group Sharing:** After personal reflection, participants form small groups or pairs to share insights, exploring similarities and differences. This discussion lasts approximately 20–30 minutes. Each group identifies common issues or patterns in their reflections to prepare for the whole-group sharing.
3. **Whole Group Discussion:** The program leader reconvenes the entire group to share and discuss findings. This collective discussion forms the foundation for the remainder of the session and informs participants' ongoing reflections on conviviality in everyday life.

### Coffee Break

**BIBLICAL REFLECTION:** Jesus' Ministry on the Borderline Matthew 15:21–28

#### Introduction

In this story, we see a powerful movement where historical and cultural stereotypes are challenged as Jesus crosses boundaries to engage with someone from a marginalized nation. Jesus, in his humanity, encounters the need to transcend established cultural divides. Both he and the disciples initially respond by trying to “fill the gap” between themselves and the woman without fully recognizing the significance of the interaction itself. This moment marks the beginning of a broader understanding that the gospel and God's love extend beyond traditional boundaries, reaching all people, not only the children of Israel.

Detailed material for the Biblical reflection is available in the Resources Box. The program leader may use this material as is or adapt portions into a handout or PowerPoint presentation for participants.

#### Group Work

In the same pairs or small groups from earlier in the session, participants reflect on what they have learned and explore how the themes of the biblical story apply to everyday life. They can consider connections with their biographical reflections and discuss how the story resonates with their experiences.

Each group records their reflections and conclusions. To facilitate plenary sharing, participants may also summarize their key insights on a sticky note.

#### Sharing the Reflection

The program leader guides participants in sharing their group reflections during a plenary session. Sticky notes with participants' insights are placed on a pinboard, visually organizing common themes and unique experiences. This display serves as a reference for the next part of the session.

#### Snack Break

#### Action Planning

This action-planning session invites participants to draw concrete conclusions from their reflections and the biblical study, applying these insights to promote a more inclusive and convivial life. Recognizing that marginalized groups often bear a greater burden in fostering inclusivity, the session emphasizes the importance of intentional changes in approach, particularly for participants from more privileged backgrounds.

The Steps for Reflection and Action Planning and guiding questions can be found in the Resources Box.

## CONCLUDING SESSION

In the final plenary, each participant presents their action points, placing their sticky notes on a central pinboard. A brief explanation of each point allows the group to understand and support one another's commitments.

The program leader facilitates a concluding discussion, inviting feedback, encouraging additional ideas, and summarizing the shared commitments and reflections. Participants are reminded to keep their action points for future evaluation and personal reflection.

### Preview of Upcoming Sessions

In preparation for the upcoming sessions, the program leader communicates the overarching theme of 'Conviviality in Church and Diakonia,' which will guide the following sessions:"

- **Session 3.** Making Change in Church and Diakonia 1
- **Session 4.** Making Change in Church and Diakonia 2
- **Session 5.** Action Planning: From Our Reality to the Future Vision

These sessions focus on reflecting on the changes participants envision for their churches and/or diaconal organizations as a result of learning about seeking conviviality. The term 'seeking' is significant, as conviviality is an ongoing process rather than a fixed destination.

The ultimate goal is to cultivate a safe and convivial environment within churches and diaconal settings, grounded in inclusive and reciprocal relationships. Insights gained from Modules 2 and 3 continue to offer valuable input for these discussions.

## RESOURCES FOR SESSION 2

### Lutheran World Federation Publications

Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church:

A Convivial Approach to Diaconal Practice p.7 – 12

Convivial Church and Radical Welcome p.18 – 19

Diaconal Life in Diversity, Conviviality and the Diaconal Local Church

Diaconal Life in Diversity, Convivial Church and Radical Welcome p.28 – 42

[LINK](#)

### Supporting Materials for the program leader

Openness and Receptivity – Background to the Session

[LINK](#)

The Canaanite Woman – A Deeper Reading: Matthew: 15: 21 – 28

[LINK](#)

Action Planning – Description and Questions

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 3

## Making Change in Church and Diakonia 1

## GOAL

To analyze a church and/or diakonia in the light of a commitment to “seeking conviviality.”

## OBJECTIVES

- To analyze a church and/or diakonia in practice
- To create an overview of present practice in church and/or diakonia

## OVERVIEW

In this session, participants examine the specific congregation or diaconal organization they are engaged with through the lens of ‘conviviality.’ Building on previous work, these efforts are grounded in the vision of ‘seeking conviviality,’ while taking into account the unique identity and context of the congregation or organization.

This exploration is important because churches and organizations often reflect specific cultures shaped by historical contexts or unexamined norms, which may not align with current societal realities. Such influences can create visible or invisible barriers related to cultural origins and perceptions of the ‘other,’ potentially hindering contributions needed for a shared convivial life. These presuppositions also shape congregational dynamics and influence the priorities of diaconal practices..

The central questions guiding our discussion are:

- How does seeking conviviality support the concept of a diaconal congregation?
- What implications does seeking conviviality have for the policies and practices of diaconal organizations?

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader welcomes participants and engages them in a conversational mode through a warm-up exercise. Following this, the leader introduces the session on ‘Making Change in Church and Diakonia 1,’ which focuses on analyzing the church or organization to develop a vision for the future, informed by insights gained from the program thus far.

**Step 1 – Analysis**

After introducing the theme, the program leader facilitates the formation of three relevant groups, depending on the composition of participants. The group may consist of individuals from a single church or organization; however, if participants come from different contexts, the session will be adjusted accordingly.

Each group receives several cards containing questions derived from the Marks of Conviviality sections of *Conviviality and the Diaconal Church*, *A Convivial Approach to Diaconal Practice*, and *Convivial Church and Radical Welcome*. Groups address the questions assigned to them as appropriate.

The handouts on Questions for Analysis (cards) can be found in the Resource Box.

The groups are invited to discuss their experiences of the congregation or organization through the lens of one thematic question, using insights from the program to analyze the current situation. Feedback to the larger group includes a summary of each group's conclusions, highlighting differences among participants and the reasons behind them. The program leader then facilitates a plenary discussion to create an overview of the congregation or organization, identifying both similarities and differences across the groups' conclusions. These differences are essential for reflecting on vision and strategy.

### Step 2 – Creating a Vision

The groups reconvene to discuss their findings related to the theme and develop a vision (not a blueprint) for the church or organization. Each group prepares their feedback for presentation.

The program leader then gathers all groups to share their findings. Depending on the participants, this may relate to one or several contexts. The aim is to create a comprehensive vision for how the church or organization can cultivate a convivial life together in the future.

## CONCLUDING SESSION

To conclude the session, the program leader guides participants in summarizing their conclusions and introduces the upcoming session, Making Change in Church and Diakonia 2, which focuses on diaconal practice.

### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 3

#### Lutheran World Federation Publications

Seeking Conviviality: re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe, p.27 – 43

Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church:

A Convivial Approach to Diaconal Practice (first three marks), p.10 – 11

Conviviality and the Diaconal Local Church p.13

Convivial Church and Radical Welcome p.18 – 20

[LINK](#)

#### Handout for the participants

Cards with Questions for Analysis

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 4

## Making Change in Church and Diakonia 2

## GOAL

To reflect on the practice of a local church congregation or on a diaconal organization (or both) and to identify the practice needed to create a convivial diaconal church or organization.

## OBJECTIVES

- To create an open and safe space
- To foster receptivity and reciprocity
- To develop participatory, transformative approaches to work with people

## OVERVIEW

This session focuses on diaconal practice, exploring what it means to be a church or organization that actively seeks conviviality. Building on previous material, it examines key questions drawn from the “Marks of Conviviality” and considers how conviviality shapes concrete practices, rather than remaining limited to statements such as mission statements. The aim is to foster openness to diversity by enabling and supporting it in daily practice.

In many churches, members may share a common culture or language while still living in diverse contexts. Some communities identify as minorities within minorities, while others may treat a minority group as the normative reference point. Progress toward genuine diversity requires creating safe, open spaces, encouraging authentic communication, and avoiding stereotypes or unrealistic expectations. Convivial practice also emphasizes recognizing conflict as a potentially creative force, while promoting transformative and participatory processes that share power.

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

Following the group work and conclusions of Session 3, the program leader introduces Making Change in Church and Diakonia 2, which focuses on diaconal practice for fostering conviviality and change. As in Session 1, participants are divided into groups in the same way. In this session, however, all groups engage with the same set of questions. These key questions, drawn from the Marks of Conviviality, are designed to guide reflection on practice.

The handout on Questions for Practice (cards) can be found in the Resources Box.

**Step 1 – Practice**

Building on the analysis and vision from Session 3, participants continue working in small groups to identify concrete practices that can help shape a convivial diaconal church or organization. Each group prepares feedback to present to the wider assembly.

The program leader then facilitates a plenary discussion, where findings are shared and explored collectively. Together, the group reflects on how these practices can bring about transformation within the church or diakonia. Key issues are highlighted, while also taking into account the diversity of perspectives emerging from the different groups.

### Step 2 – Reflection

The small groups reconvene to reflect on insights from the plenary discussion and further refine their understanding of transformative practices for their church or diakonia. Their conclusions are then shared with the wider group and will serve as the foundation for developing a concrete action plan.

## CONCLUDING SESSION

The program leader guides the discussion to explore any gaps between mission statements that affirm openness to diversity and the actual practices that put this into action. By the end of the session, the group arrives at a shared vision and identifies the practices needed to bring it to life.

### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 4

#### Lutheran World Federation Publications

Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church

[LINK](#)

#### Handout for the participants

Cards with Questions for Practice

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 5

# Action Planning – From Our Reality to the Future Vision

## GOAL

To create an action plan for the practice needed to create a convivial diaconal church and/or convivial diakonia.

## OBJECTIVES

- To develop an action plan, based on a convivial approach to practice

## OVERVIEW

This session synthesizes the work completed in the learning program so far, drawing particularly on the results from Sessions 3 and 4. It connects the vision of a convivial diaconal church and/or diakonia with the analysis and practical approach required to make that vision a reality.

The primary goal is to develop an actionable plan. To support this process, the program leader introduces the Action Plan Template and prepares participants to use it as a guide during the session.

## PROCESS

### Welcome and Introduction

The program leader welcomes the participants to this session, which focuses on building a process of change within their organization or church.

The session can either focus on a single specific situation or address multiple contexts within a mixed group, with the goal of developing practical steps to support the change process.

To encourage a range of practical ideas, action planning should align with the previously established vision and remain grounded in the principles of *seeking conviviality*. The program leader provides participants with a handout of the Action Plan template at the start of the session, and small groups are given sufficient time for in-depth work.

The handout on the Action Plan template for the participants can be found in the Resources Box.

### Step 1 – Developing the Plan

In the same small groups that previously developed ideas for vision and practice, participants now identify the processes and concrete steps needed to move toward the vision of a convivial diaconal church or diakonia.

Using the provided Action Plan template, each group outlines the required steps, the necessary learning resources, and the support needed. Groups also identify potential allies, relevant organizations to involve, and areas where resistance to change may arise, along with strategies to address these challenges.

**Step 2 – Synthesizing the Plan**

The program leader reconvenes the groups to present and discuss their Action Plans. During this process, the leader facilitates a discussion to synthesize overlapping ideas and ensure coherence, especially when multiple plans pertain to the same church or organization.

**CONCLUDING SESSION**

The program leader ensures that the final results are clearly formatted and well-organized, making them easy to communicate and share. These results are prepared to facilitate effective discussion during the Evaluation session.

**Preview of Upcoming Sessions**

In preparation for the upcoming sessions, the program leader communicates the overarching theme of “Toward a Convivial Economy and Society.” This theme will guide the focus of the following sessions:

- **Session 6.** Making Change in Society and Economy 1
- **Session 7.** Making Change in Society and Economy 2
- **Session 8.** Action Planning: From Our Reality to the Future Vision

While providing a preview of the upcoming sessions, the program leader emphasizes the importance of advancing a just and participatory society and economy, fostering a culture of mutual respect, and honoring creation. These sessions are designed to explore actionable pathways toward a convivial society and economy, encouraging participants to reflect on practical strategies for meaningful and sustainable change in their contexts.

**Introduce the Celebration**

The program leader informs participants about the Celebration planned for Session 9, which marks the conclusion of the program. This event provides an opportunity to reflect on the journey, celebrate progress, and share collective aspirations for the future. By outlining these preparations, the program leader ensures that participants are well-informed, engaged, and excited for both the upcoming sessions and the culminating celebration.

**RESOURCES FOR SESSION 5****Lutheran World Federation Publications**

Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church  
Seeking Conviviality: re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe  
Towards a convivial economy – the contribution of a re-formed community diakonia in Europe

[LINK](#)

Diaconal Life in Diversity 1–4

**Handout for the participants**

Template for Action Planning Church and Diakonia

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 6

## Making Change in Society and Economy 1

## GOAL

To identify what policies or practices threaten a convivial life the most and to identify which issue(s) should be addressed.

## OBJECTIVES

- Introduction of the process and strategy for change in a convivial perspective
- Identifying the key issue(s) which the strategy should address

## OVERVIEW

The main goal of this session is to identify and discuss key issues affecting convivial life and to explore foundational ideas for a strategy for change. The program leader introduces the essential concepts of change from a convivial perspective.

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader welcomes the group and allows time for personal updates and brief reflections on Session 5. This session focuses on developing strategies for change from a convivial perspective, examining key issues within the current context. Participants are encouraged to discuss the most pressing challenges to achieving a convivial society and economy and to identify priority areas for future work.

**Key Ideas for a Strategy for Change – A Convivial Perspective**

The program leader introduces key ideas for a Strategy for Change – A Convivial Perspective, highlighting points rooted in convivial thought and practice. These concepts will be explored in greater depth in Session 7.

- **Empowering Affected Communities.** To emphasize the importance of working with people affected by inequality or environmental issues, helping them to build their capacity for innovation and advocate for policy and structural changes.
- **Inclusion of Marginalized Groups.** To support people who are excluded due to their identity or background by acknowledging their rights and involving them as key participants in any action taken.
- **Understanding Interconnected Frameworks.** To recognize the relationship between local conditions and broader national or international frameworks, and how these impact the potential for convivial life together.
- **Advocating for Policy Change.** To work toward change at the political and policy levels, particularly in economic and work-related areas, to support convivial life together.

After the introduction, the program leader invites participants to work individually, in pairs, or in small groups to identify specific societal and economic policies and practices that threaten convivial life. This initial brainstorming session is grounded in concrete experiences, particularly those of people most negatively affected, and ensures these perspectives are considered in any future actions. At this stage, the focus is on identifying issues, practices, and the groups affected, rather than developing strategies for action.

Each pair or small group will prepare feedback to share with the wider group.

It is important to remember that actions may take the form of “projects,” but they are fundamentally rooted in relationship-building aimed at cultural or political change. Crucially, these initiatives must involve those directly affected by the issue from the outset.

A summary on Key Ideas for a Strategy for Change – A Convivial Perspective can be found in the Resources Box.

### Coffee Break

### SELECTING KEY ISSUE(S)

The program leader facilitates a plenary session to share the results of the initial brainstorming. During this discussion, the group identifies and prioritizes the most pressing issues, emphasizing active involvement of affected communities. The focus should not be on duplicating services traditionally provided by the church or diakonia, but rather on collaborative issues where working alongside those affected is feasible. For example, systems related to food sharing could serve as a platform for creating alternatives, promoting food sustainability, or campaigning against food poverty. These efforts could also address employment or rights-related issues.

Points to consider during the discussion and prioritization:

- If the group intends to work collectively, they may agree on the most critical policies and practices that hinder convivial life together.
- If individual participants or sub-groups wish to pursue their own initiatives, they may determine their priorities independently.

These decisions form the foundation for the next stage of the process.

### CONCLUDING SESSION

The program leader invites a round of sharing in which participants highlight the most important points from the session. The concluding prayer may focus on the chosen themes for future work, including creating a vision for a convivial society and economy (Session 7), developing the next steps in the process, and formulating an action plan (Session 8).

#### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 6

##### Lutheran World Federation Publications

Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church

Diaconal Life in Diversity 3. Conviviality, Diakonia and the Church

Towards a convivial economy – the contribution of a re-formed community diakonia in Europe

[LINK](#)

##### Supporting Material for the program leader

Key Ideas for a Strategy for Change – A Convivial Perspective

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 7

# Making Change in Society and Economy 2

**GOAL**

To root the vision of the future in a way that is related to the issue(s) identified in convivial approach, and develop a vision to motivate work for the future.

**OBJECTIVES**

- To link identified issues to the concept of conviviality
- To develop a vision for future work that aligns with convivial principles

**OVERVIEW**

In this session, participants focus on the issues identified in the previous session and develop a practical vision for addressing them, since a concrete vision is essential to inspire the work. In the second part of the session, participants identify concrete next steps to take on the issues and move toward the vision.

**PROCESS****Welcome**

The program leader welcomes the group and reminds participants of the work from the previous session. This session creates a vision for future work and then moves into identifying possible initiatives that can be taken. Depending on whether there is one specific issue or several, group work is designed to enable reflection and analysis that is rooted in the situation.

**CREATING A VISION**

Participants divide into groups, with each group focusing on a different issue (or, if preferred, multiple groups may work on the same issue). Each group reflects on what they have learned about pursuing conviviality, using the Marks of Conviviality and other resources to create a concrete and actionable vision for the future. This vision is not utopian but serves as an inspiring guide for future work.

A clear and motivating vision is essential for sustaining commitment to the journey of change. The vision should be easy to communicate to others who may join in “working for change,” and it may evolve over time based on input, especially from those most affected by the issue.

Each group presents their work using a flip chart or another chosen format. The program leader then facilitates a plenary session where groups share and discuss their results. If multiple groups address the same issue, their findings are compared and, after discussion, may be combined.

**Coffee Break**

## TOWARD THE VISION

The program leader introduces the next step, building on the visionary ideas shared by participants. Groups re-form to discuss and propose an initiative they could undertake to move toward the vision. Each initiative is described in general terms but also includes specific details about the individuals or groups involved. Each group then prepares a presentation to share the results of their work.

## CONCLUDING SESSION

The program leader facilitates the sharing of results in a plenary session. Where more than one group has worked on the same issue, their results are compared and combined. This work is then carried forward into Session 8.

### RESOURCES FOR SESSION 7

#### Lutheran World Federation Publications

Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church

Diaconal Life in Diversity 3. Conviviality, Diakonia and the Church

Towards a convivial economy – the contribution of a re-formed community diakonia in Europe

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 8

## Action Plan

## GOAL

To work out a proposed action plan for the implementation of the initiative, relating this to the criteria and fields for strategic action.

## OBJECTIVES

- To develop effective Strategies for Change
- To foster relationship building and analytical skills
- To define clear next steps in the action plan

## OVERVIEW

In this session, participants further learn and gain deeper understanding of the four dimensions of a conviviality-influenced strategy for change.

## PROCESS

**Welcome and Introduction**

The program leader welcomes the participants and introduces the session, which consists of three key elements:

- A strategy for change from a convivial perspective.
- Developing a strategy for working toward change.
- Agreeing on a strategy for one or more issues.

**FOUR DIMENSIONS OF A STRATEGY FOR CHANGE**

The program leader introduces the concept of the Four Dimensions of a Strategy for Change (using a PowerPoint presentation if appropriate) and facilitates a discussion to ensure participants understand it. Afterwards, small groups are formed to develop an action plan based on the decisions already made.

**The Process of Working for Change**

In their groups, participants identify the steps involved in the process of working for change. It is important that they begin considering the different dimensions of the strategy for change, namely:

- Communicating
- Innovating
- Reforming and/or
- Opposing

The supporting materials on the “Four Dimensions of a Strategy for Change” are available in both text and PowerPoint formats and can be found in the Resources Box.

A strategy rooted in conviviality relies on effective communication and relationship-building. As the program leader guides participants, it is important to remind them to draw upon elements introduced earlier in the program, particularly the Marks of Conviviality and the key concepts from Module 2, “Seeking Conviviality.”

When forming a strategy, the program leader should emphasize that insights from Module 2 help participants develop a broader vision and uncover new opportunities. The initial strategy does not need to be overly detailed; participants are encouraged to remain open to growth as relationships expand. They should also periodically revisit and reflect on the concrete vision they have set out to achieve.

### Framing the Action Plan

Building on the provisional vision developed in Session 7, participants begin identifying practical steps. Start by asking:

- With whom should we build relationships, and what resources are available to support this?

### Key Considerations

The program leader reminds participants to keep these points in mind as they develop their plans:

1. **Resource Discovery.** As the network of communication grows, new resources may emerge.
2. **Inclusive Participation.** Recognize and involve those directly affected by the issue, valuing their knowledge, skills, and resources.
3. **Effective Communication.** Emphasize that clear communication is essential to securing long-term commitment and engagement.

As relationships grow, the vision becomes more concrete and communicable, evolving from a broad aspiration to a tangible goal that motivates change.

### Determining Areas of Focus

The program leader helps participants identify the primary area of action that aligns with their issue and vision, such as:

- Changing an organizational culture,
- Building community,
- Creating social or economic innovation, or
- Advocating for policy or practice changes.

**Key Questions to Explore**

The program leader guides participants to explore and reflect on their action plan by addressing the following foundational questions:

- How can this vision and work toward it be expressed in everyday life? What everyday conversations, behaviors and habits support the implementation of the strategy?
- How can the (local, wider) church and/or diakonia relate to this vision and action plan, recognizing that they will be one actor among several?
- How does this become integral to the diaconal life of the church and not simply an external “project”?
- How does the process affect the self-understanding of church and/or diakonia?

**Facilitating Group Feedback**

The program leader concludes the session by facilitating a group discussion. Each group identifies its initial practical steps for action and prepares a brief presentation summarizing its insights. During the feedback round, participants share their findings and explore potential synergies and next steps with the larger group.

The handout on the template on Strategy for Change – Four Dimensions can be found in the Resources Box

**CONCLUDING SESSION****Sharing and Synthesizing**

The program leader guides the sharing of findings from each group, giving everyone a chance to present their insights and proposed actions. When multiple groups from the same church or organization work on the same issue, the program leader helps combine their contributions into a clear, unified understanding.

The program leader also encourages the group to set clear follow-up actions, including specific dates for next steps, to maintain accountability and ensure continued progress.

**RESOURCES FOR SESSION 8****Lutheran World Federation Publications**

Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church  
Diaconal Life in Diversity 1–4

[LINK](#)**Supporting Materials for the program leader**

Four Dimensions of a Strategy for Change

[LINK](#)

PowerPoint: Four Dimensions of a Strategy for Change

[LINK](#)**Handout for the participants**

Template: Strategy for Change – Four Dimensions

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

## SESSION 9

## Evaluation and Follow-up

## GOAL

Evaluation of the planning workshop and the overall Learning Program.

## OBJECTIVES

- To evaluate the action plans and the learning from Module 4
- To evaluate the whole Learning Program
- To celebrate the progress made by the participants throughout the Learning Program.

## OVERVIEW

This session focuses on an evaluation of personal learning during the program. Therefore, it is advisable for the program leader to become familiar with the materials and, where necessary, to organize the modification of the text to suit the participant group and the context and to translate the texts as necessary.

During this session, three exercises require additional preparation:

1. The exercise on “Evaluative Questions” requires large cards of three different colors for each participant.
2. There is another version of “A River of Change.”
3. There is an exercise which requires three large “houses” to be drawn and placed on the floor for a “fantasy journey.”

It is suggested that the program leader organizes the purchase of bulbs or packets of seeds for each participant to be shared as a memory of the learning program.

Reflection and celebration are integral to this session. The room is arranged to foster convivial learning and to celebrate life and the fruits of the journey together. The space “speaks” through its setting and decoration, for example with flowers and candles.

Participants are encouraged to take part in designing both the celebration and the layout of the room. In fact, the entire celebration is organized by participants, with the program leader serving as facilitator. If agreed, Certificates of Participation or similar recognitions can be presented during the celebration.

If there is interest in connecting with other groups following the program, the program leader may contact *Interdiac* to see if others are interested in building links.

## PROCESS

### Welcome and Introduction

The program leader welcomes the group and introduces the main themes for the session:

- Evaluation of the Action Planning “Toward a Convivial Economy and Society”
- Evaluation of the Learning Program
- Review of the Action Plans
- Celebration

### Evaluation of the Action Planning “Toward a Convivial Economy and Society”

The first step in the evaluation process is to reflect on the theme “Toward a Convivial Economy and Society” as explored in Sessions 6 and 7. The focus is on its key elements: identifying and prioritizing issues, introducing a convivial strategy for change, rooting those issues in convivial principles, creating a motivating vision, and suggesting initiatives to pursue it.

The program leader explains that the purpose of this exercise is to encourage participants to reflect on their personal takeaways, actionable ideas, and future learning aspirations that emerged from these sessions.

A description of these three evaluative questions and the method for this process can be found in the Resources Box.

### Coffee Break

## EVALUATION OF THE LEARNING PROGRAM

### Reflection

The program leader invites participants to reflect on their learning journey, emphasizing both personal insights and practical lessons applicable to everyday life. After this reflection, participants review their action plans, identify needs for peer support and mutual encouragement, and plan for ongoing follow-up.

This process includes two activities: “A River of Change” and “The Story of a Fantasy Journey.” Descriptions of each activity are provided in local languages to support participants during the session.

### Personal Learning

The “River of Change” exercise supports participants in reflecting on their personal stories, the growth they have experienced, and the tangible changes that have taken place in their living or working environments through engaging with the concept of convivial living. It also encourages them to consider their next steps in the learning program.

During the exercise, the program leader invites each participant to embark on a journey of personal reflection, symbolized as swimming in a river. The river serves as a metaphor for the flow of their experiences, challenges, and progress throughout the program. Supporting materials and visuals are used to guide this reflection, focusing on personal learning and development across the entire learning journey.

The “River of Change” exercise 2, including its process description and guiding questions, can be found in the Resources Box.

### Learning for New Diaconal Practice Based on the Conviviality Approach

The program leader introduces *The Story of a Fantasy Journey*, an imaginative and reflective activity that helps participants explore their learning journey, personal growth, and future paths.

The exercise involves setting up three imaginary houses on the floor, each symbolizing a different aspect of participants’ practices:

- Practice before the program – representing their experiences prior to the program.
- Learning about practice during the program – reflecting on changes and insights gained throughout the program.
- Practice after the program – envisioning how they will apply their learning moving forward.

This exercise provides a creative space for participants to reflect, share insights, and connect their experiences to the broader themes of the program, fostering deeper engagement with their personal and vocational growth.

“The Story of a Fantasy Journey” exercise and its method can be found in the Resources Box.

### Peer Learning and Support Activity

The program leader introduces the concept of peer learning and support in a creative and engaging way. At the start of the session, each participant receives a small flowerpot filled with soil, and a box of flower seeds is placed on each table.

Participants are encouraged to write ideas for supporting one another beyond the learning program on sticky notes, as well as a personal note for their own follow-up actions. For each idea shared, they take a seed and plant it in their flowerpot, symbolizing the nurturing and growth of both collective and individual efforts.

This activity highlights a vision of mutual support and provides practical strategies for participants to sustain their learning, share experiences, and address challenges collaboratively in their personal and professional lives after the learning program. The activity takes place at the end of the feedback session, emphasizing its role in program follow-up and ensuring that connections, encouragement, and support among participants continue to thrive.

The detailed activity guide for Peer Learning and Support can be found in the Resource Box.

### Coffee Break

### Action Plan Reflection

Participants review their Action Plans from the previous three sessions (Sessions 6, 7, and 8) of this module. This review helps them transfer what they have learned from the program into ongoing diaconal practice, fostering reflective learning that extends beyond the program itself.

Each participant begins with a personal reflection on the three Action Plans, focusing on the next steps they envision for themselves. This reflection takes around 20 minutes and may use the provided template for creating a combined action plan. Participants also consider their own role within each specific plan and assess the need for follow-up meetings with others involved in the projects.

Additionally, participants reflect on the value of mutual support and the concept of peer learning. They then share their reflections with a partner in a one-on-one exchange, allowing them to prepare their thoughts before sharing with the wider group.

The program leader facilitates a plenary session where participants share reflections and discuss follow-up actions. This includes involvement in the different action plans, opportunities for peer learning and mutual support, and setting a timetable for meetings related to the plans.

At this stage, participants may also consider forming connections with other groups who have participated in the program, joining a broader network in the “Seeking Conviviality” movement.

### Coffee Break

## CONCLUDING SESSION

To conclude the session, the program leader invites the participants to share words of gratitude, appreciation, blessings, and wishes for each other. This sharing can be done in a “node circle,” a symbolic arrangement where each participant connects with others through spoken affirmations and support.

Instructions for creating a node circle can be found in the Resources Box.

The program leader closes the session by giving each participant a small packet of seeds or a bulb to take home. This symbolic gift serves as a reminder of their shared journey, their action plans, and their ongoing commitment to peer learning and mutual support. Planting and caring for these seeds represent nurturing the ideas and relationships developed during the program.

The program leader and participants continue to collaborate in preparing the final celebration, integrating these elements of gratitude and mutual support.

### Celebration

Participants are encouraged to design a “convivial party” that reflects their interests and desires. This could take the form of a shared meal inspired by the concept of an Agape. If the worship elements from Module 3 have not yet been incorporated, they can be included here using local resources.

If a certificate of participation is to be issued, it may be presented during the celebration.

**RESOURCES FOR SESSION 9****Lutheran World Federation Publications**

Marks of Conviviality – Inspiration for a Diaconal Church  
Diaconal Life in Diversity 1–4

[LINK](#)**Supporting Materials for the program leader**

Three Evaluative Questions

[LINK](#)

Exercise 2 – A River of Change – Description and Questions

[LINK](#)

The Story of a Fantasy Journey

[LINK](#)

Peer Learning and Support

[LINK](#)

How to Create a Node Circle

[LINK](#)

Iona Community Agape

[LINK](#)

Icebreakers and Warm-up Exercises

[LINK](#)

# Resources

LWF Web Site: <https://lutheranworld.org/news-and-resources>

LWF Learning Platform: <https://lutheranworld.org/learning/diakonia>

interdiac online space: <https://www.online-space.eu/>

---

## Glossary of Key Concepts and Terms

### **Life-world**

This concept highlights the unique personal world that each individual inhabits, shaped by attitudes, experiences, and background. It serves as the foundation for how people perceive and interpret their lives.

### **System-world**

This concept refers to the larger systems and structures – such as societal, institutional, and cultural systems – that influence and shape individual lives. People’s reactions to these systems are influenced by their socialization and personal experiences

### **Conviviality**

Conviviality is God’s gift that enables people to live together in dignity, justice, and peace amid diversity. It is both a vision and a practice of shared life, where all people are recognized as created in the image of God. Conviviality emphasizes mutuality rather than hierarchy, breaking down the division between givers and receivers so that all may both give and receive at a common table.

### **Diakonia**

Diakonia is the church’s calling to serve, grounded in faith and expressed through compassionate action, justice advocacy, and solidarity with those who are marginalized. It is not charity alone, but a relational and transformative practice that seeks justice, upholds dignity, and works for societal change.

### **Diaconal Church**

A diaconal church is a church shaped by service, hospitality, and justice. It embodies openness and welcome in practice, not only in proclamation, and nurtures relationships where all people feel safe, valued, and able to contribute their gifts.

### **Diaconal Practice**

Diaconal practice refers to concrete actions and ways of working that reflect the values of conviviality, justice, and mutuality. It avoids categorizing people as “helpers” and “helped” and instead fosters reciprocal relationships and shared responsibility.

### **Dignity**

Dignity is the inherent worth of every person, rooted in God’s creation. Upholding dignity means recognizing each person’s value, voice, and agency, regardless of social status, ability, origin, or circumstance.

### **Justice**

Justice is the pursuit of right relationships in society, addressing inequality, exclusion, and structural injustice. In the LWF understanding, justice is inseparable from diakonia and is essential for creating conditions that allow convivial life together to flourish.

**Hospitality**

Hospitality is the practice of welcoming the other with openness and respect. In a convivial perspective, hospitality goes beyond invitation and generosity to include mutual transformation, shared power, and belonging.

**Mutuality**

Mutuality emphasizes reciprocal relationships where all participants are both contributors and recipients. It challenges hierarchical models of service and affirms shared vulnerability, interdependence, and responsibility.

**Vulnerability**

Vulnerability is a shared human condition, though unevenly experienced due to social, economic, and political realities. Recognizing vulnerability is central to convivial life, as it opens space for empathy, equality, and mutual care.

**Life Together**

Life together refers to the everyday practice of living in community across differences. It includes relationships within church, society, and creation, shaped by faith, shared responsibility, and hope.

---

## Contacts

For LWF: [katariina.kiilunen@lutheranworld.org](mailto:katariina.kiilunen@lutheranworld.org)

For *interdiac*: [office@interdiac.eu](mailto:office@interdiac.eu)

# Conviviality Group

## Members Nominated by the LWF Member Churches in Europe

**Nils Åberg.** Diocesan Chaplain, Västerås Diocese Church of Sweden. “I have been engaged in Church and Society questions for Västerås diocese and the Church of Sweden since 2000. We are working with different projects trying to engage our deacons and other church workers to see the needs of people on the margins. Our vision is that the congregations could be an empowering structure, open for new possibilities in social enterprises, social housing, food chains, etc.”

**Zoya Bryskovskaya.** Design lead and head of the parish council at Annenkirche Lutheran Church in Saint Petersburg, Russia. Annenkirche specializes in immersive Bible-inspired exhibitions and artistic concerts that help bridge the gap between the church and the city. “I am committed to fostering a sense of community and inclusivity. I believe in the power of art to transcend boundaries and bring people together. My work at Annenkirche exemplifies a modern approach to church engagement, where creativity and faith go hand in hand to enrich peoples’ lives as well as the broader society.”

**Anna Brtka Valent.** Director of the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization (EHO) from Novi Sad, Serbia. EHO is a development organization that, by implementing projects through practical action guided by Christian ethical values, contributes to building a just society in which differences are respected.

**Michael Jäger.** Pastor, responsible for tourism (Bavaria) and the parish of Reutte (Tyrol), was formerly pastor of Bozen, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy. “I have been engaged in diaconal work with children, migrants, older people, and those facing social restrictions. The church of Jesus Christ is always ‘a church for others.’”

**Randi Margrethe Tønnessen Leiknes.** Deacon in the Church of Norway. Background as a music therapist, engaged in diaconal work for people in all kinds of life situations, from newborn babies (through baby song) to people in elderly homes. “I love to facilitate fellowship where people and generations can enrich each other, like baby songs or groups of confirmands visiting elderly homes or multinational parties with cultural exchange.

**Kadri Kesküla.** MA (Recreation Management), Diaconal worker for the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church.

**Fenja Lüders.** Studied social economics (MSc) and is responsible for international partnerships and disaster relief at Diakonie Bayern. “Since starting my career at Diakonie Bayern eight years ago, I have been passionately committed to the topics of sustainability, international partnerships and development cooperation as well as the topic of charity in a global context.”

**Anna Nagy.** One of the founders of the Drop in the Sea Foundation, which was founded to help children living in state care. Anna is the professional manager of the Bizsu community space created for the Roma community in Pilis, Hungary. “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” Gal. 3:28.

**Kjell Nordstokke.** Retired professor of diakonia at VID University, Oslo, Norway. He has been engaged in the education of deacons and in developing academic study material on the understanding of diakonia, in particular its biblical and theological foundation. He has been involved in ecumenical work, both in the World Council of Churches (WCC) and Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and has participated in processes of deepening and actualising the concept of ecumenical diakonia.

**Matthias Rose.** Deacon and social worker, head of department at the Diakonisches Werk Württemberg and regional church commissioner for the migration service at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg, Germany. “For me, the Christian faith comes alive in an open church with others. I am involved for the long term in a diaconal church in Württemberg that works for dialogue, solidarity, and self-empowerment with refugees and immigrants, people who live at subsistence level, people who are in crisis or who are excluded on their way through life.”

**Ulla Siirto.** Deacon, D.Soc.Sc., advisor on intercultural issues, migration, human trafficking and Roma people at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. She has worked in the conviviality group of the LWF since 2011.

**Peter Szynka.** Dr.phil., consultant at Diakonisches Werk Oldenburg e.V and Diakonie in Niedersachsen e.V., organizing services for homeless people in Lower Saxony (1984–2019). Interim Professor at Hochschule Hannover, teaching Science of Social Work, Community Work and Community Organizing (2021–2024), member of FOCO e.V, developing Community Organising in Germany.

**Avo Üprus.** Pastor of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Head of Diakonia and founder of the Baltic Criminal Prevention Institute. “Conviviality and restorative justice are close to my heart. They have the same roots and similar fruits as do joy and justice and peace. It is shalom.”

**Ewa Wunsz.** Educator (a teacher), has been involved in the work of Diakonia Polska – a charity organization of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland – for over 20 years. “As a coordinator of international volunteering projects, I perceive diversity as wealth, and for me the testimony to Christian faith is the very practical task of actively being there for other people.”

---

## Organizational Members

### The Lutheran World Federation

**Katariina Kiilunen.** Ordained pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland serves The Lutheran World Federation as Program Executive for Capacity Building and Leadership Development in the Department for Theology, Mission and Justice.

**Rebecca Daniel.** Nominated member of the Conviviality Group. An ordained pastor of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain, she serves the Council of Lutheran Churches in Great Britain (CLC) as Head of Chaplaincy and Mission. She works as a chaplain among the international community and advocates convivial life together among the CLC member churches through various mission initiatives.

### International Academy for Diakonia and Christian Social Action, Central and Eastern Europe (interdiac)

**Janka Adameová.** MA, Director of interdiac where she leads the working and learning process. She also leads the international voluntary service program of Silesian Diakonia. “The openness of my heart to curiosity, gifted with love and courage, leads me to enjoy the encounters that bring moments of everyday surprise and give sparkling impulses for souls, hearts, and hands. This is about creating the kingdom of God on this earth.” Adameová was also involved in the writing group for the Program Guide.

**Tony Addy.** Pastor, Advisor, interdiac and Research Associate, VID Specialized University (Norway). “As a person involved in action, research and learning I am an enthusiastic advocate for convivial life together as a new concept for diaconal work in these times of crisis and uncertainty.”

***The Conviviality – Diaconal Life in Diversity: Inspiration for a Diaconal Church Learning Program Guide*** is designed to support congregational groups, diaconal workers, church leaders, and students of diaconia or pastoral ministry in exploring what it means to be a diaconal church in today’s diverse and challenging context. Rooted in everyday experience, it encourages reflection, personal and collective transformation, and the development of new practices in both church and society that embrace diversity, confront injustice, and seek peace. Emphasizing conviviality as a core value, the program fosters creativity, openness to surprise, and innovation—helping participants respond to complexity with a spirit of empowerment and shared purpose.

*This is the heart of convivial diaconal work—building bridges that connect rather than separate, engaging with people in all their complexity, and nurturing environments where learning and growth become communal experiences.*

Rev. Dr. Sivin Kit, Director for Theology, Mission and Justice, The Lutheran World Federation



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION



interdiac

ISBN: 978-2-940798-02-5