

CODE Forum News Update November 2025



CODE Forum Introduction

CODE Forum is an open network which keeps its focus on community development (local practice) and diaconia (Christian social practice). It is an open space for sharing and discussing research as well as ideas and proposals and for sharing practice to secure feedback. Therefore, it is a research and development network for researchers, teachers, practitioners and students

This means it is international, ecumenical and open to researchers and teachers in this field as well as to students and different practitioners such as deacons, city chaplains and church community workers.

The Forum is a recognised thematic network of the International Society for the Research and Study of Diaconia and Christian Social Practice. It gathers every two years, alternating with the ReDi conference. The CODE Forum organised a workshop and members contributed to paper sessions at the 2025 ReDi conference in South Africa.

CODE Forum Programmes

The CODE Forum is not only a gathering, but it also has several programmes which are run by the members, and which are related to it. These include:

Webinar Series

The webinar series, once per semester, is internationally open and organised by Diak (Finland), VID (Norway), Jabok (Czechia), Diakoniewissenschaftliche Institut, (Germany) University of Stellenbosch (South Africa) and the Finnish Church Council. The webinars invite practitioners, students, teachers, researchers and others interested in the themes.

In the academic year 2025-2026 we will have two webinars on the theme of food and diaconia. Each time there will be inputs from researchers and practitioners and a space for discussions and small break out groups. The webinars have a continuously updated Web Page which is accessible here:

<https://www.diak.fi/en/calendar/code-forum-international-webinars-academic-year-2025-2026/>

'Innovative Practice for Sharing Food - Research, Practice and Reflection'

November 21st, 2025, 9.00 – 12.00 CET

In a time of food poverty, the question of the diaconal role in food sharing with affected people is increasingly questioned. On the one hand diaconal food sharing is an area for innovative practice, including political practice. From a diaconal perspective, sharing food takes on a deeper meaning against the horizon of sharing a meal together, as the embodiment of community or solidarity. This intrinsic connection is visible in the Eucharist. The webinar will therefore pay attention to theological reflection on food sharing. The webinar will also explore local practices of food sharing as community building and as support for action for change.

The speakers are Rosa Huotari, a postdoctoral researcher in Urban Theology at Helsinki University, Finland, Erica Meijers, a teacher and researcher at the Protestant Theological University in the Netherlands, Christine Wenona Hoffmann, professor of Practical Theology at the Goethe-University, Frankfurt, Germany and James Henderson, the 'Your Local Pantry' Network Coordinator, Church Action on Poverty, UK

Joining Instructions for this webinar - Zoom Link

There is no need to register, you may join by using the link:

<https://diak-fi.zoom.us/j/68978790188>

'Innovative Practice for Food Security and Sustainability - Analysis, Practice and Theology'

April 24th, 2026, 9.00 – 12.00 CET

Food poverty and hunger are not usually 'accidental'! This webinar will probe the reasons for food insecurity, including the impact of climate change and the impact of civil conflict and war. However food poverty may be seen as an aspect of globalisation where the best land is given over to food production for export (global food chains). The topics for the webinar will include the analysis of food (in)security as well as practice and research on engagement for food security and sustainability. Ways to ensure food security in areas where there is food poverty and related political engagement for food justice and security will be discussed. There will also be space for theological reflection, for example on land or soil as factors influencing food production.

Platform

Most of the materials from previous webinars are available for educational use on a [HowSpace](#) platform hosted by Diak. If you would like to access them, please write to: Ville Paivansalo at Diak. (ville.paivansalo@diak.fi)

More details are available from the co-convenors of the webinar group:

Tony Addy (praxis@pro-vocation.org) and

Oksana Prosvirnina (oksana.prosvirnina@outlook.com)

Diaconal Identity in Work with Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Andrew Orton (Durham University, UK) and an international CODE Forum team have organised a European learning, development and research process on diaconal work with asylum seekers and refugees. The project involved 25 grass root workers from several European countries and an expert team from the CODE Forum. The project will end in 2025 and will probably continue in another form. The first product is a handbook with new materials for learning which can be downloaded from:

<https://durham-repository.worktribe.com/OutputFile/4695964>

An academic article based on this experience is in the process of production and the CODE Forum in collaboration with ReDi will organise a webinar to share the work done so far and to further work on this theme.

Diaconia Journal for the Study of Christian Social Practice

Members of the CODE Forum have worked on the publication of a special edition of the Diaconia Journal which is called '**Community Development and Diaconia in Times of Crisis**' and it is now available, free to download online at:

<https://www.vr-elibrary.de/toc/diac/15/2>

Book Projects

Series on Diaconia

The Forum in collaboration with VID University has produced a series of four edited books on diakonia which share experience from different global contexts and which have been published by Regnum Books. The latest project in this series is an edited book on **Diakonia and Modern Slavery** which is being coordinated with a team led by Erica Meijers of the Protestant Theological University in the Netherlands.

Reimagining ecumenical diakonia? - Theology, hope, and witness from the margins

This edited book proposal is from CODE Forum members, Stephanie Dietrich and John Klaasen and readers are invited to submit proposals for chapters by the end of November 2025.

'The book is organized into four thematically and theologically coherent sections, progressing from foundational reflection to contextual practice, institutional formation, and global solidarity. Each section combines theological insight with lived experience, drawing on diverse traditions, regions, and forms of expertise. Rather than offering an exhaustive map, the volume will curate key voices and perspectives that help reimagine diakonia as an expression of God's justice, healing, and mission of hope.' The book will have four sections:

Section I: Theological grounding and reorientation

What is diakonia, and why does it matter theologically today?

Section II: Contextual expressions and challenges

How is diakonia embodied, contested, and transformed across diverse contexts?

Section III: Ecumenical and educational praxis

What sustains, forms, and renews diaconal leadership and cooperation?

Section IV: Witness in crisis and global solidarity

How does diakonia respond to crisis, suffering, and the call for mutual learning?

Please write to Tony Addy if you would like to see the full proposal, including the invitation to submit abstracts and a more detailed description of the proposed book.

Diversity, Inclusion and Social Cohesion (DISCO)

DISCO is an international Erasmus Blended Intensive Programme which involves students and teachers from universities in Europe and Africa (EvH Bochum (Germany), University of Tartu (Estonia), Charles University (Czech Republic), the University of the Western Cape (South Africa) and the University of Malawi). It is coordinated by Diak, Finland. The latest face to face workshop was in Bochum in November 2025.

Recent Publication – Diaconia and Christian Social Practice in a Global Perspective

The previous chairperson of the International Society for the Research and Study of Diaconia and Christian Social Practice, Johannes Eurich and the present chairperson, Ignatius Swart have co-edited this collection of papers. The publication draws on many international research projects and perspectives, including by participants in the CODE Forum network.

It is published by MDPI and is available in a print version which can also be downloaded here:

<https://bit.ly/4id37l2>

CODE Forum Next Steps

The next face to face meeting of the Forum will probably be in September 2026. Suggestions for the main themes are invited!

In between now and the next Forum the joint activities will continue. The Forum welcomes participation in these different projects and processes. Universities or other institutes are also invited to suggest new programme initiatives for the Forum, or to join the team of webinar organisers

In the next period, CODE Forum may develop a project with the following very provisional title:

Creating 'wise' neighbourhoods

The contribution of receptive and transformative diakonia

WISE = Working for Inclusion, Sustainability and Equity

Receptive Diaconia = concept, practice and theology

Transformative = change towards a good future

If this theme interests you, please contact Tony Addy.

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