

Church-Based Development Leadership (CDL) Curriculum for the 2025-26 course

The course is focused on training leaders and pastors engaged in church-based development/diaconal work in subjects such as Diakonia, Culture and Communication, Organisational Development, Value-Based Leadership, Gender Perspective on Leadership, Trauma Healing and Counselling, Project Design, Church and Society, Dialogue with Authorities and Media, and Children and Youth.

Teaching methods, coaching and mentoring

The lessons contain lectures, dialogue, sharing of experience, group discussions and feedback, role play, exercises and students' presentations. Personal preparation will include studying written material, watching videos, working on a personal project plan and application, addressing needs in their own church or community, as well as doing other written assignments.

During the course each student gets app. 10 hours of coaching by the teacher of Organisational Development and Project Design and has 4 reflection and mentoring talks with the Course Director.

Course plan, weekly schedule and subjects of the course

The course has a Fall semester of 15 weeks and a Spring semester of 23 weeks. The weekly schedule consists of 4 lessons both Tuesday and Thursday 13.00 – 17.00 CAT. (Central African time/European summer time). We use Central African Time (CAT), as European time is confusing due to summer/wintertime shift. We begin each course day with a short devotion. The plan may be subject to minor changes before course start.

Fall semester: Church-Based Leadership

120 lessons

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| • Course Introduction: | 4 lessons |
| • Diakonia – to serve and defend the needy: | 16 lessons |
| • Study Techniques: | 4 lessons |
| • Culture and Communication: | 20 lessons |
| • Organisational Development: | 30 lessons |
| • Value-Based Leadership: | 30 lessons |
| • Team Time and Semester Evaluation: | 14 lessons |
| • Semester Celebration: | 2 lessons |

Spring semester: Church-Based Development

180 lessons

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| • Gender Perspective on Leadership: | 14 lessons |
| • Trauma Healing and Counselling: | 18 lessons |
| • Project Design: | 78 lessons |
| • Church and Society: | 28 lessons |
| • Dialogue with Authorities and Media: | 14 lessons |
| • Children and Youth: | 10 lessons |
| • Team Time and Semester Evaluation: | 16 lessons |
| • Course Graduation Celebration: | 2 lessons |

Lessons in total:

300 lessons

Fall semester: Church-Based Leadership

Diakonia - to serve and defend the needy

Description

The students will be introduced to the Biblical background, purpose, concepts and practical application of Diakonia. The teaching will include the context of Diakonia and the role of Diakonia in the mission of God and the life of the church. Students' former experiences and their impressions from being introduced to people involved in the diaconal work of Danish church-based institutions/organisations will be integrated in the lectures.

Topics included

- What is diakonia - definition?
- The identity of diakonia
- The history of diakonia
- The context and spirituality of diakonia
- The purpose and expression of diakonia
- Meeting people involved in diaconal work

Learning objectives

The theoretical and theological reflection of the students will be strengthened, as well as their considerations on how diaconal values are to be reflected in the diaconal praxis of their church/organisation. The students will be motivated by the diaconal values and practices they have seen and heard to apply the inspiration and concrete ideas for diaconal work in their church/organisation at home.

Culture and Communication

Description

The students will learn important aspects and principles of effective communication as part of good leadership - both one-to-one and with a broader audience. The course will address the issue of dialogue between cultures and faiths, as well as the ability to listen and express own opinions in a non-judgemental way.

Topics included

- Intercultural and non-violent communication/"Giraffe language"
- Interfaith communication and reconciliation (Islam & Christianity)
- Communication with an audience and presentation of your work

Learning objectives

The students will improve their skills in communication on a personal level, which should lead to better understanding and less conflicts. They will also increase their confidence and abilities to present the importance of their work to an audience with potential sponsors or volunteers and to give a short speak or devotion to different age groups.

Organisational Development

Description

The students will learn concepts regarding organisations and partnership and obtain an understanding of phases and objectives in organisational change management. The students will learn to facilitate corporate analysis, reflection and goal-orientation in their local setting and to formulate or reassess the vision and strategy of their organisations.

Topics included

- Partnership, working with volunteers – recruitment & motivation
- Organisational development - organisation, vision, mission, strategy, SWOT, stakeholder analysis and other relevant tools.

- Decision making, accountability, credibility, appreciative inquiry
- Time management and effective meetings, evaluation

Learning objectives

The students will attain strategic skills in facilitating organisational development in their local diaconal/development organisations. This includes abilities to facilitate organisational reflection processes in order to identify concrete measures and actions relevant to their specific organisation. This will empower the students to take on responsibilities of management in order to support their organisation in fulfilling its objectives and reaching its goals.

Value-based Leadership

Description

While organisational development emphasizes the *what* and *how* – management and organisation, Value-based Leadership concerns the *who* and *why* – the leader and leadership. This subject focuses on values, identity, culture, relationships, personal qualities and skills, along with different perspectives and ways of leadership.

Topics included

- Introduction, leading with a serving attitude
- Mentoring and coaching
- Teamwork
- Handling conflicts
- *Pay it forward* (film) - generosity and forgiveness
- Strength-based leadership
- Leadership skills, styles & roles
- Leadership development
- Leadership based on values
- The personal life of a leader
- Preventing sexual harassment, exploitation & abuse

Learning objectives

The students will be more acquainted with the values and ways of leadership in Danish/(European) culture, which can improve the mutual understanding and co-operation between them and their European partners. The students will be inspired to further develop leadership qualities and abilities and to consider how their leadership can be based on diaconal values like servanthood, confidence, openness, integrity and compassion.

Spring semester: Church-Based Development

Gender Perspective on Leadership

Description

The course will inspire the students to consider the meaning of gender equality and the significance of translation and interpretation of the Biblical texts on leadership. The teaching will address negative impacts in families, churches and society caused by bias and misinterpretation of Scripture, as well as positive results from a balanced gender perspective on leadership in church and society. The focus will be on how the church can work constructively in the interest of both men and women, encouraging both genders to see each other as allies for positive change.

Topics included

- The importance and benefits of gender equality in family, church and society
- A biblical basis for women preaching and taking senior leadership positions in church
- Dynamics of leadership and culture seen from a gender perspective

Learning objectives

The students will gain an increased understanding of the influence of culture and context on the interpretations of the Biblical texts, especially regarding gender perspective on leadership. Based on a solid theological foundation, both male and female students will know their responsibilities in enhancing more gender balanced roles, resulting in an improvement of the quality of the teaching, as well as the credibility and service of the church.

Project Design

Description

The focus of this subject is project planning, and it will present ways to mobilise resources and talents of churches/church-based organisations and local communities in development and constructive civic engagement. We use different objective-oriented planning tools, including an adapted version of the Logical Framework Approach (LFA), which is applied by Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DANIDA) and many Danish development organisations. The students learn to facilitate the process of defining, qualifying and formulating a written project application using the different tools. The course introduces development theory and discussions about project strategy in order to identify how to enhance the extend of influence of a project.

Topics included

- Defining development, a project and a good development project
- Role & resources of faith-based Organisations
- Mobilizing church and local communities in development
- Problem analysis, problem tree, participation analysis, context analysis, objective tree, target group/stakeholder analysis
- Climate changes and sustainable development work
- LFA matrix – objectives, inputs, activities, outputs, indicators, assumptions, sustainability
- Project economy, finance, budget, accounts, receipts, guidelines, checklists, corruption etc.
- Income generating activities and sustainability in projects
- Change triangle (the connexion between strategic service delivery, capacity building/organisational development and advocacy) and dialogue with authorities - planning, documentation and networks
- Writing application, preparing and performing presentation
- Partnership and cooperation

Learning objectives

The course will expand and nuance the students' understanding of the concept of development. The students will attain the ability to plan, monitor and evaluate development activities on the basis of a comprehensive introduction to all aspects of a typical project cycle. This will provide the students with qualifications to maintain overview of the complex process of clarifying and formulating better and more influential projects.

Trauma Healing and Counselling

Description

The course will introduce basic counselling, focusing on the importance of listening and understanding, as well as on asking questions rather than giving answers. The teaching will also be using the material *Bible-based Trauma Healing*, which is a faith-based method with Biblical and psychological tools to help traumatised people through teaching, case stories, role-play and group dialogue.

Topics included

- The foundation of Christian counselling
- Active, empathetic listening
- Key points about counselling
- Counselling as a helping relationship

- Suffering, trauma and grief
- Violence, suicide and dependence
- Care for the care giver
- Forgiveness and dependence on God

Learning objectives

This subject will increase the abilities of the students to counsel and facilitate healing to people with psychological and spiritual needs.

Church and Society

Description

The students are introduced to the fundamental concepts of civil society, citizen participation, rights-based development, economic justice, good governance and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The teaching will encourage considerations about the responsibility of churches/church-based organisations concerning how to reflect the inclusive love of God for vulnerable groups and minorities.

Topics included

- *Poverty Inc.* (film) - Is aid a part of the solution or the problem?
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Roleplay
- Inner Development Goals (IDGs), social capital & development
- Citizen participation, rights & governance
- A faith-based perspective on rights of children
- Development, tax, trade and corruption
- Inclusive education for children with disabilities
- SDGs, Poverty and violence
- The poor, inclusion and the Kingdom of God
- Reflecting God's inclusive love for vulnerable groups and minorities

Learning objectives

The students will get an understanding of the potential impact of churches/church-based organisations in civil society. They will be equipped and motivated to think of new ways to be engaged in a positive and including development of their society.

Dialogue with Authorities and Media

Description

The students will get practical insight into challenges and possibilities when communicating with authorities and media, and they will have a dialogue with a member of the Danish Parliament

Topics included

- Dialogue and engagement with authorities
- Meet a former member of the Danish Parliament
- Dialogue with authorities through lobbying
- Communication - a good story, media, ethics and strategy

Learning objectives

The students will gain an increased understanding of the responsibility and challenges of the church in relation to society, and they will be motivated and strengthened to work for positive changes by engaging in dialogue with authorities and media.

Children and Youth

Description

In this subject we look at important factors in child development and the support of families in raising self-confident children. We also focus on how the church can improve its understanding, communication and cooperation with children and youth.

Topics included

- Understanding and encouraging children
- Teaching children and youth with learning disabilities
- Communication & cooperation with children
- Communication with youth & children

Learning objectives

The students will be motivated to make children and youth a top priority in their work and be better equipped to respond to the physical, social, and spiritual needs of children and youth.

Minor subjects taught in Fall and Spring semester:

Course Introduction

The students are introduced to Danish Mission Council, teachers, students, representatives from partnering organisations, as well as course content and Danish culture and society.

Study Techniques

The methods and values of teaching in Denmark will be presented along with our expectations, when it comes to personal assignments, group work and active participation in all lessons. The students will also get to know more about the importance of internet security and wise use of the web.

Team Time

Is an informal time where the students can share life and faith, reflect and evaluate on what is learned, as well as discuss common issues.

Semester Evaluation

Each subject will be evaluated in plenum and through individually written reflections or reports. Upon completion of each semester the students must fill in an online evaluation survey to assess their benefit from participating in the course. These will be sent to the European partners, the closest superiors/local leaders and funding organisations, and they and will also be used for adjusting the curriculum.

Semester Celebration/Course Graduation Celebration

Each semester ends with a celebration or graduation, where your colleagues, European partners, closest superiors/local leaders, funding organisations and your teachers are invited.

Course staff

All teachers at the course are very competent and specialized in their subjects and have been teaching leaders from Asia, Africa, South America, Middle East and Eastern Europe for a number of years.

- Lisbeth Pedersen, MA of theological communication, FBL Church-based Leader Education, Course Director – teaching *Culture and Communication, Value-Based Leadership, Gender-Based Leadership, Church and Society, Dialogue with Authorities, Children and Youth, and Team Time.*
- Benjamin K. Kobborg, MA of theology, post grad. psychotherapist - teaching *Diakonia*
- Johannes Nordentoft, MA, Development expert with more than 25 years' experience in project design and international development - teaching *Study Technique, Organisational Development, Trauma Healing and Counselling, and Project Design.*

Other experienced and qualified teachers will be teaching on specific issues in subjects like *Diaconal Work, Church and Society, Dialogue with Authorities and Media, and Children and Youth.*