



**Dansk
Missionsråd**
Danish Mission Council

Church-Based Development Leadership Information about the 2025-26 course

The online course Church-Based Development Leadership (CDL) is focused on training leaders and pastors engaged in church-based development/ diaconal work. CDL is offered on Zoom by the Danish Mission Council (DMC) in collaboration with CKU - Denmark, Kerk in Actie - the Netherlands, and Digni - Norway.

Fall semester - Church-Based Leadership

Diakonia, Culture and Communication, Organisational Development, Value-based Leadership.

Spring semester - Church-Based Development

Gender Perspective on Leadership, Trauma Healing and Counselling, Project Design, Church and Society, Dialogue with Authorities and Media, and Children and Youth

Course plan

The course consists of 8 lessons a week in a 15 week's Fall semester, 26 August - 4 December 2025, and a 23 weeks Spring semester: 6 January - 30 June 2026, with an Easter break in week 14 and 15.

Course values and goals

We believe that church-based development leadership should be founded on *diakonia*, a Greek word meaning *service*. Since all human beings are created in the image of God, they are unique and valuable, entitled to be treated with kindness and respect. The church and church-based organisations should therefore serve and defend people in need.

We want to encourage our students to trust their own ideas and abilities, and we also wish to equip and motivate them to assume responsibility for making a positive and sustainable change in their churches, organisations and society. The CDL course provides an opportunity for exchanging thoughts and experiences through interaction between people from various cultures, churches and countries without the limitations of visa applications and travel costs. We want to do more than simply conveying knowledge, we also want to facilitate a team-fellowship with life changing impact.

CDL 23-24 student Wilda Sihombing, Indonesia: *"This course has given me more confidence in applying development models to team-staff under my supervision. I have started providing regular training and coaching to my team. - I am now more confident in sharing my knowledge and becoming firm in doing my work. This course has restructured my skills and knowledge about organisational development and communication skills."*

Who is this course for?

Students must be selected by member organisations of CKU, Kerk in Actie, Digni or similar organisations and their South/East partners. To profit from the teaching and to participate in the exchange of experiences, the students must have leadership responsibility in diaconal or development work - professionally or voluntarily. You may want to send two students from the same place, either at the same time or 2 succeeding years. This might increase the outcome for them and their organisation, as they can support each other, in applying the new knowledge in practice.

Still part of local church/organisation

Since the students remain in their usual context, they can relate the subjects of the course to their daily work experience. When they practice their obtained knowledge in dialogue and cooperation with their own local church/organisation as the course progresses, it will increase the effectiveness of their learning process and the benefits of the endorsing church/organisation. Together they can transform the training into solutions that are useful in their own context.

Requirements of students and their church/organisation concerning time investment

Both the students and their endorsing local church/organisations must be willing to invest time and effort to achieve the long-term benefits, such as increased leadership qualifications, higher quality of project applications and improved cooperation between partners. Once or twice a semester the students and their closest superior should discuss if, how and when the attained learning can be shared or otherwise used in their church/organisation.

Since the estimated workload of the course is 14-16 hours a week, it is not wise to try to do it for 10 months on top of full-time work. The closest superior must therefore ensure that the student's workload in the organisation is reduced 8 hours a week. If the lessons are in the late afternoon or evening, students should be allowed to start work later/leave earlier, to ensure they are not too tired to participate fully in the course.

The students need to be actively participating in all lessons and further to the lessons use 6-8 hours of their free time every week to study and do their assignments. The teachers expect to be informed, if students are not able to attend lessons.

CDL 21-22 student Roba Wako, Kenya: *"Gaining knowledge, experience, inspiration related to my work right at my workstation is an important thing that has happened in my career. It is exciting that technology has made it possible to access educational materials and tutorial services in a remote rural part of Africa. At the same time I was fully aware of our project activity progress. Lessons required some extra time, however, a good spacing between lessons during the week enables adjustment as required."*

Practical, technical and personal requirements of students and their church/organisation

Applicants must:

- be able to attend the course in an undisturbed room. A busy office does not work well.
- have access to a computer with the Zoom app, a smartphone and a well-functioning internet solution financed by themselves or their church/organisation.
- install the Signal app on their phone if available in their country.
- take responsibility for always having enough data for using Zoom 8 hours a week.
- have a back-up plan if electricity cuts happen. (Like power bank, generator, solar power box or a fully charged computer and data on their phone to use it as hotspot.)
- speak and write English well enough to take active part in our dialogue-based teaching and to do the written assignments at Bachelor level. The verbal abilities must be checked and confirmed by their European partner.

Strengthening partnership, cooperation and mutual understanding

To enhance the benefit of the course for both North and South partners, we invite the European partners and local leaders to join their students for a 1 ½ hour online CDL event four times during the course. These are the

Course Introduction 26 August; the Semester Celebration 4 December, where your students share what they have learned so far; the Course & Partnership (P)review 4 June with focus on how you can use the learning of your students in your partnership; and Course Graduation 30 June with awarding of certificates.

CDL 22-23 student Sara Hanna, Egypt: *"CDL was very useful for me to understand the European culture, and it helped me have a good relation personally and professionally with them. It became friendship, not only partnership."*

Reference group

A reference group representing CKU, Kerk in Actie, Digni meet online once or twice a year with the course staff and the general secretary of DMC to evaluate the course and give suggestions to the content, administration and economy of the course.

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 project plan addressing needs in their own church or community, as well as 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 schedule consists of 4 lessons both Tuesday and Thursday 13.00 - 17.00 CAT (Central African time/ European summer time). We begin each course day with a short devotion. The content of the teaching is presented more detailed in the separate *Curriculum* and may be subject to minor changes before course start.

CDL 22-23 student Christophe, Cameroon: *"I learned a lot from "Project Design". I am now able to help colleagues from other departments and communities in drafting better development projects. - "Gender Perspective on Leadership" has improved my understanding of Scripture, and I can now bring more into the discussions concerning the situation of women in my church and my community."*

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: | 2 lessons |

Lessons in total:

300 lessons

Course staff

All teachers of the course are 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.

Price of the course

- The fee of the 2025-26 course is 30.000 DKK (app. 4.000 Euro). Member organisations of CKU, Kerk in Actie and Digni can apply them for economic support to cover the course fee. The payment can be split in Fall semester (12.000 DKK) and Spring semester (18.000 DKK).
- Additional expenses concerning data, electricity, computer, mobile or travel to a place with sufficient internet connection are basically the responsibility of the students and/or their church/organisation, but might if needed be included in the application to the funding organisation.
- Many organisations benefit from letting the students pass on learning to their colleagues, and it might be relevant to include costs in relation to that in the budget.

Application procedure

1. Since there are few available seats, the applicants and their leader must return the completed *Application* and *Endorsement forms* to their European partner as soon as possible.
2. The European partner forwards these forms, along with their approval and confirmation of sufficient English skills, to the relevant contact person. For member organisations of Digni: Lisa Winther, Kerk in Actie: Petri Hofland, and CKU: CDL course director Lisbeth Pedersen. Please send it all in one email.
3. When CDL has received and accepted the application, we will send an acceptance mail.
4. To keep the reservation, the European partner needs to notify CDL that the funding is in place, either when sending the application, or within 1 month from receiving our acceptance mail.
5. The invoice is sent to the European partner in May and should be deposited to our account by 1. June.
6. The European partner organisation needs to send e-mail and phone no. of the contact person, who will be the link between them, their South/East partner, the student and the course director.
7. Two weeks before the course starts, we will send you updated course information.

CDL 21-22 student Sun Cheng, China: *"In September, we officially started our Church-Based Development Leadership voyage. We boarded on the CDL cruise with a mixture of anticipation, joy, uncertainty, nervousness and curiosity. We did encounter some storms: technical problems, unstable internet connections, covid, malaria... We also enjoyed some unique scenery together: seeing different opinions in different cultural contexts, lively discussions on some topics, celebrating birthdays, completing big assignments, like Project Design, encouraging and supporting each other.*

Now almost 10 months of voyage are coming to an end, and the CDL cruise ship is about to dock. We, who before the journey thought we were passengers, under training and guidance grew into capable crew members and played a part in the voyage. We are finally about to disembark with our newly acquired supplies, tools and equipment and are set off for a different destination with the ambition of breaking new ground. Please pray for us and wait for our good news."

More information on Church-Based Development Leadership Course: <https://dmr.org/cdl/>