



Towards a Convivial Economy



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

The Contribution of a Re-formed Community Diakonia
in Europe

Contents

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on behalf of
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This report is the result of the second stage of the working process of the Solidarity Group. Five sub groups worked on each of the five key themes and produced preliminary papers for the workshop that was held in Manchester in 2015. We would like to warmly thank our local host, Niall Cooper, Director of the national organization Church Action on Poverty, which is based in Manchester. We appreciated the commitment of Church Action on Poverty and the five local organizations, which guided our contextual work in the city. We also acknowledge the generous welcome we received from the ecumenical theological college and resource center, Luther King House and especially Graham Sparkes their President. We would like to thank Bishop Martin Lind of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain, for finding the time to journey from London to be with us in Manchester.



Photo: Ulla Siirto

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Preface

The Report *Towards a Convivial Economy* is a result of the second phase of elaborating and sharing concepts and practices of conviviality – the art and practice of living together in solidarity and making sustainable communities possible. This process of critical reflection about community diaconia in Europe started in 2011. It has been coordinated by the Lutheran World Federation Department for Mission and Development – Europe Desk in cooperation with International Academy for Diaconia and Social Action (Interdiac) in Český Těšín, Czech Republic. Diaconal practitioners from all three LWF regions in Europe created Solidarity Group, conducted a series of workshops, shared their experiences and developed new models of diaconal ministry in the context of current social, political and economic challenges.

The fruits of the earlier work of the European Solidarity Group have been presented in two publications: *Seeking Conviviality. Re-forming Community Diaconia in Europe* (2013) and *Convivial Life Together. Bible studies on Vocation, Dignity and Justice* (2015).

The reflections on convivial economy presented in this report are not only the result of the five years long process but they refer directly to the current situation in Europe and in the world. Multiple and interacting crises, violent conflicts and terrorist attacks, economic developments and a wave of eroding solidarity in Europe reaffirms the actuality and urgent need of convivial initiatives. In the situation where public authorities in many European countries feel overwhelmed in offering a welcoming environment, social and health services for refugees seeking asylum, Christian commitment to working towards a just and compassionate society is indispensable. Already in the first report, the so-called financial

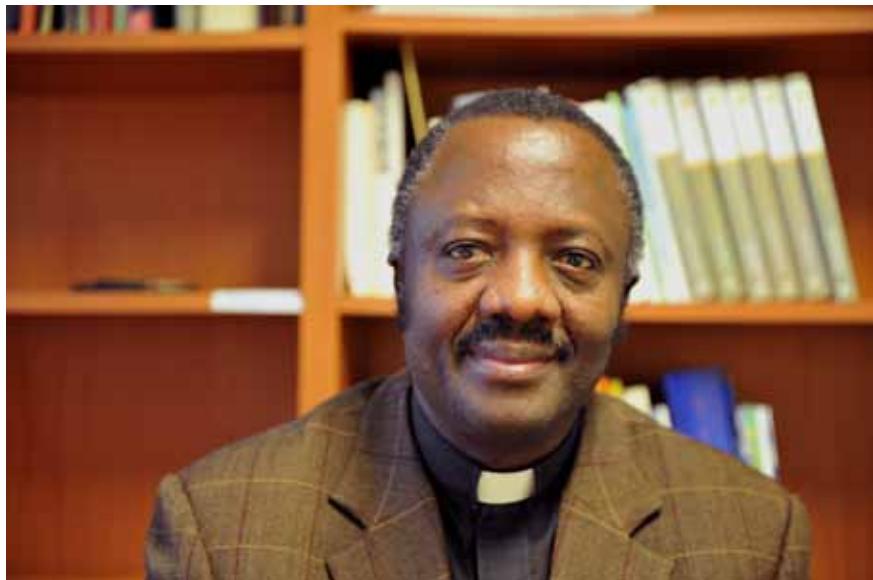


Photo: LWF/S. Gallay

crisis has been identified as a major driver of change in Europe, affecting the welfare of people and communities. The Solidarity Group decided to deepen their reflection on convivial economy as they discovered that in every context the concrete developments of work and economy are creating growing inequality and injustice. In contrary to popular understanding where work is seen as a step to social integration, in many cases the structure of the formal labor market and unjust working conditions do not recognize the dignity of the person and even become a source of mental ill health.

The value of this report lies not only in the fact that it precisely describes mechanisms of social injustice related to the economy, but suggests concrete ways of overcoming them. Seeking a convivial economy presents the key concepts of vocation, justice and dignity as “foundation stones for a positive economic paradigm to guide diaconal and social practice”. Analysis of the current economic situation, its

impact on individuals and society are presented in the report around five themes: work and welfare, debt, migration, corruption and transparency, creation and the environment. In each of these topics the understanding of convivial approach as a signpost to overcome problems is presented.

With the publication *Towards a Convivial Economy* the Re-formed Community Diaconia in Europe process links directly with the themes of the LWF Twelfth Assembly in Windhoek/Namibia in May 2017: “Salvation – Not for Sale”, “Human Beings – Not for Sale” and “Creation – Not for Sale”. This report is commended as a valuable contribution of European Churches to the global reflection on liberation by God’s grace during the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation with the hope that it will inspire and strengthen our engagement in holistic mission.

Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki
Director, LWF Department
for Mission and Development

Introduction

Conviviality is:

...the art and practice of living together.
Diakonia seeks to promote conviviality

The realities of life in Europe are changing rapidly with many negative impacts on people and communities. The European Solidarity Group, which brings together people active in local diakonia from across the region is exploring and analyzing the changes. On the basis of their own experience they have begun to reformulate an understanding of diakonia, which creates new perspectives on the context and on experience.

The first phase of the work of the Solidarity Group pinpointed the concept of conviviality as a creative new focus for understanding diakonia. This was elaborated in the first report of the group, which was launched in Nuremberg in 2014.¹ The group understands the term “conviviality” to mean “the art and practice of living together”, in solidarity. The meaning is derived from the Spanish word *convivencia* and has been taken up by the Group because it relates to the time of peaceful living together of people with Christian, Jewish and Moslem faiths. But it also resonates with the fact that in rapidly changing times, the way we live together is a challenge to us in every context. The challenge comes from the growing diversity and plurality of different communities due to migration, the growing numbers of refugees and to cultural diversification. A big challenge

is also faced in countries where there are disputes over national borders or where national minorities are discriminated against.

In the European context, the concept of conviviality points towards the fact that we should not withdraw into—or remain within our own cultural and even faith based circles. This may be comfortable but there is a need to go beyond the “passive toleration” of difference to active engagement. Diakonia implies sharing everyday life with people, taking an approach of respect and mutual learning. It is an active and relational concept, which challenges all kinds of exclusivism and segregation.

To put it theologically, if in all our diversity, we are created in God’s image, then the process of seeking conviviality is a process of entering into the fullness of what God creatively offers in all humankind. By having an open, curious and receptive attitude we are all enriched. By working with people, by sharing and learning together in common actions, borders are gradually broken down. This may start small scale and face-to-face, but these ideas also influence the way we organize our life together and create or renew organizations and structures.

Conviviality is:

... a relational concept with three main components:

- Vocation
- Justice
- Dignity

The European Group used the word “Solidarity” to identify the fact that through sharing our own motivation

and engagement in all its richness and diversity we were able to learn from each other. Some stereotypical views were broken down. Some ideas had to be given up and new ideas shared. This is true also of local diakonia. Seeking conviviality is an interactive process by which we—and those we work with—are enabled to go beyond our borders and differences. With empathy, we begin to transcend the “helper-helped” dichotomy and find the basis for common action.

The Solidarity Group then began to search for the components of a positive frame for our work and for the future development of European societies. Three overarching concepts were identified, to guide our thinking about our work in context. They are all linked to and are vital for conviviality. From sharing our diverse life stories, we came to the concepts of vocation, justice and dignity. These concepts inform both the churches and their diaconal work and our understanding of the needs of the wider context.

When the Solidarity Group reviewed its work in 2014 we came to the conclusion that the concept of conviviality, linked to vocation, justice and dignity also formed a key to thinking and acting in the area of economy and work. These had emerged as central issues in the production of the first report and it was agreed to develop a workshop to explore the meaning and practice of “Convivial Economy.”

In every context, we could see that the concrete developments of work and economy are creating growing inequality and injustice. These changes, in conjunction with other changes, negate the dignity of the person, especially those on the margins or who are unable

¹ *Seeking Conviviality—Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe*, Addy, Tony, (ed.) 2013, Lutheran World Federation, Geneva Available in several languages from: www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-seeking-conviviality



to integrate into the formal labor market. Indeed the structure of the formal labor market was seen to be becoming more unjust and work conditions often do not recognize the dignity of the person. Actually, we also began to see how workplace conditions are now becoming a main source of mental ill health. The former idea that work is a step to social integration becomes less and less of a reality as working life becomes fragmented. On top of that, more and more people earn their poverty and cannot survive unless they work excessive hours or have two or more jobs!

A “Convivial Economy” would be based on the key concepts of Vocation, Justice and Dignity. These concepts could provide the foundation stones for a positive economic paradigm to guide diaconal and social practice. According to the first report of the Solidarity Group, the present economic paradigm (neo-liberalism) as it affects work, welfare, health and education, actually undermines conviviality

Seeking a Convivial Economy

From the perspective of diaconal practice, a number of issues were identified where blocks to the development of a Convivial Economy were experienced. These were:

- Work and Welfare
- Debt
- Migration
- Corruption and Transparency
- Creation and the Environment

The present economic and policy framework is shaped by neoliberal ideas about ‘economy’ and related understandings of the person. This was

explored in the first phase of the work of the Solidarity Group. The aim of the Manchester workshop was to go more deeply into the pressing issues, which must be addressed if we want to aim for a more convivial economy and to outline possible actions towards such an economy. Basically it was seen that the neoliberal paradigm has negative consequences for many people and communities. As well as dealing with these consequences, diaconia must struggle for a political and economic paradigm that does not have these negative effects. The Solidarity Group divided into five working groups, each of which explored one theme and prepared the Manchester workshop. This report covers the main lines of the overview shared in Manchester and the outcomes of the working groups as they point toward the actions needed to support a convivial economy. We expressed the diagram below.

The first part of the report that follows deepens the discussion about the link between the ideas of conviviality and of work and economy. The second and central part deals with each of the five key themes using the experience and insights of participants and the local partners in Manchester. We look first at the context and then reflect on it in the light of our experience with a view to making a response that moves in the direction of a convivial economy. The third part of the report looks for the resources that we have to work on these issues in terms of our motivation, relationships and spirituality. Finally we share some concrete ideas for following up this work in local contexts and more widely.



Part One: Conviviality & Economy

Vocation

A convivial economy would be based on vocation

In the first phase of the work of the Solidarity Group we focused on the diaconal vocation of the church and of Christians in everyday life. In our thinking and reflecting on convivial economy we broaden the concept of vocation. It stands for the calling of all Christians to work for the common good and the wellbeing of all people. In Christian thinking the concept has tended to be narrowed in two ways. First, traditionally vocation was often seen as a calling to be a pastor or priest or to be a deacon. The second use of the word has been to indicate the particular (secular) calling of a person, especially to a profession or career. But in fact, the idea of vocation relates to the understanding that each person has gifts and talents with which to express love for the other and for creation.

If we are seeking a convivial economy, we need many different contributions and we can analyze these under three different headings. When we think about vocation, as already mentioned, we usually focus on paid work which means employment or self-employment. As we discovered, in the European context, more and more people are also doing paid work without a formal employment contract and many people are in insecure and badly remunerated self-employment. Furthermore, there is a growth of precarious work, for example, so-called “zero hours contracts,” where a person has a job but does not know from one day to the next how many hours they will work, or if they will work at



Photo: Ulla Siirto

all. This is an extreme form of flexible work contract. Furthermore, in reality a great deal of work is done other than in an employment relationship. Think about the enormous amount of household work on which our common life—and our economy—depends. There is also a huge amount of work done by volunteers and in associations. Much of this is essential to well-being and security. It ranges from caring to fire fighting. This work, much of which is done by women, is not counted in the formal economy. (Pietilä, H., 2007)

There still remains a lot of socially useful activity, which may lead to personal development or fulfillment and to a better quality of life together. It may be making music or organizing a meal together or following a hobby or sport. Normally such activities, whilst being useful and creative, are not remunerated.

From this analysis we can see the field which we call “work” can be divided into three sub categories:

- ✓ **Employment** (with or without an employment contract, or as self-employed)

- ✓ **Work** (needed for our common life but not paid for)

- ✓ **Activity** (contributing to personal and social life but not essential for survival needs, such as leisure pursuits)

In the present context, the aim of public policy is that as much work as possible should become employment, yet we are faced with a big challenge of unemployment and under-employment with a variety of causes. This is devastating for many people and communities and it is especially affecting young people, many of whom for the first time in generations also face worse employment prospects and often worse working conditions than their parents.

The process of industrialization meant that more and more of the

In a convivial economy:

- ✓ Work would be recognized as important for the health of society and the pressure to turn work into employment would be diminished
- ✓ Employment would be organized within a framework which ensured a living wage (or would supplement an already ad-

equate basic income, see p. 36 below)

- ✓ No one have to work excessive hours or under bad conditions simply to survive.
- ✓ Activity would be enhanced because time would be released for reciprocal activities, culture and work, on which a convivial society could be based

has continued to increase and the gap has arguably become much wider as a result of competitive globalization, the financialization of the economy which puts pressure on companies to produce a higher rate of return on investment. This effectively squeezes wages and reduces the expenditure on research and development. The austerity policies, which were introduced in most European countries were a follow on from the bail out of banks and financial institutions after the 2008/9 financial crash. Austerity policies reduce expenditure on health, education and welfare and restructure income support systems by reducing their scope and levels of payment. This has been coupled with a reorganization of welfare from insurance and entitlement to a system where people have to follow prescribed actions in order to continue receiving payments. On top of this, the privatization of services of general interest from water to education and health care to transport is making access to services more unequal and reducing the value of the social wage as private company profits increase.

products and services we needed were provided through paid employment. This process has been dramatically extended through the development of a consumer driven service economy. More people, in total, than ever are employed worldwide in the primary sectors such as mining and farming and the secondary sector of manufacturing, but as is well known, the location of production has changed dramatically with more and more goods and services being produced outside Europe. Nevertheless within this overall pattern there are also big differences in Europe, with some countries still having a relatively large manufacturing sector. At the same time the introduction of new digital systems has changed the structure of employment and is set to reduce it even further than in previous rounds of "automation." As a result of these structural changes and the consequences of the financial crash of 2008, the level of unemployment is stubbornly high, yet the pressure is on unemployed people to find employment at all costs.

On top of this, the financialization of the economy and the pressure for an increasing return on capital by investors is having an impact of the quality of work and the management of work life. The increasing stress is not restricted to the private sector because public employers and expert organizations such as universities and colleges increasingly use segregated employment structures and heavy control systems, which bear on their workers.

All these changes create stress and increase social and health costs. Other related impacts include a reshaping of educational priorities by linking education narrowly to instrumental goals. For example, by forcing students to pay for education and cutting maintenance grants, a debt burden is created and this forces students to think about the earning potential of a degree. The effect in the longer term is for many courses to be closed, if they do not have a link to a higher earning job. This system also makes higher education less attractive to students from lower income families who are likely to end up with higher debts than those from higher earning families.

A convivial economy would focus work and employment on activities that contribute to the well-being and welfare of people and communities as well as the protection of the environment.

These effects are well documented for Europe and the major industrial economies in a wide range of studies that have recently been brought together by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in a major study, *In It Together: Why Less Inequality Benefits All* (OECD, 2015). The report points out that the negative economic impact of the high and ever increasing concentration of income and wealth in the higher economic level in society and the reduction of incomes of the poorest. According to the OECD, the whole economy suffers in this process. In terms of labor markets, the growth of precarious non-standard work contracts, such as the previously mentioned "zero hours contracts" and growing labor market polarization as well as persisting gaps between women and men have the effect of reducing

Justice

A convivial economy would be based on justice

One of the incontrovertible facts of economic development is that income and wealth has become ever more concentrated in fewer hands. The inequality within and between countries

living standards. People, families and whole communities are forced into poverty and this also has a negative impact on the economy as a whole. Equally disturbing is the effect on social cohesion and on overall welfare. Whilst in the Solidarity Group we have a primary concern for people in poverty or on the margins, the report shows how average and slightly below average income households have also suffered because of this growing inequality. The OECD recommends a range of different policy changes and sees an important role for stronger measures to redistribute income and wealth.

If we look at the wider context, whilst many reports have signaled the growing percentage of the world population not living in extreme poverty, the measure for this is based on a rather hypothetical criteria of an income of \$1.25 dollars a day which hardly puts a person into the “money economy” (UN, 2015). The newly launched sustainable development goals continue to have the eradication of poverty (this time by 2030) as a key goal (UN, 2016). This, however has to be seen in the context of a worldwide growth in inequality, to the obscene level where in 2015, just 62 individuals had the same wealth as 3.6 billion people—the bottom half of humanity and the wealth of these 62 people has risen by 45% in the five years since 2010, which is an increase of more than half a trillion dollars (\$542bn), to \$1.76 trillion. Over the same period, the wealth of the bottom half fell by just over a trillion dollars—a drop of 38% (Oxfam, 2016).

Whilst we are focusing on individuals and the unprecedented growth of personal fortunes and on extremely high incomes, we should not forget that this disturbing trend is related to the power of institutions and permitted by the lack of action by governments singly or together. Persons as well as economic organizations are embedded in politically determined structures that

can regulate their activities and moreover, these regulatory and governing bodies have encouraged the growth of inequality. Whilst much public discourse after the various “economic crises” and around financial mismanagement has focused on personal “greed” or personal “morality” we need also to recognize that the frameworks for business, including taxation and regulation have been systematically liberalized and this has had a powerful effect on the context. The possibility for re-locating income (personal and corporate) so it is not taxed or only minimally taxed is also a contribution to growing inequality and poverty as well as to reductions in income for health, education and welfare budgets.

In a convivial economy...

... a just and equitable distribution of income and wealth would provide a basis for building trust and security in relationships at every level. This would create a platform for action to combat all kinds of exclusion and marginalization by removing the threat of poverty and immiseration. A convivial economy would create the foundation for sustainable food production and would be less damaging to the environment. It would also have the effect of stopping forced economic migration and allow free movement based on choice. At the moment people and households in poverty are “forced to move or forced to stay!” In terms of everyday life, such economic security would also support people’s participation and give the “space” for associational life.

Dignity

A convivial economy would support human dignity

The relationship between the economic order and human dignity is complex and not immediately apparent. However the operation of the finance markets affects every day work and living conditions directly in ways that can undermine human dignity and in some cases the basic sustainability of people, households and communities.

The first point to emphasize is that decisions about economic investment or disinvestment are made on the basis of financial rate of return often in the short run, unless large scale fixed investment is needed. The rate of return governs the conventional viability of an economic asset and over the past twenty years investors have demanded an ever-higher rate of return on the capital invested and consequently a higher percentage of the profit from any given asset. This puts a squeeze on the proportion of profit that is taken by wage earners, allocated to research and development or to taxation. This pressure has resulted in a financially driven economy and it led to the financial crisis from which we are still suffering. The well-known concept of “creative destruction” through which older systems of production and indeed older product lines are destroyed and new ones created, usually in new places has inexorably speeded up (Schumpeter 1987). This leads to whole communities becoming part of the “waste” of a globalizing economy. (Bauman 2004)

A convivial economy would...

- ✓ Combat exclusion and marginalization
- ✓ Support sustainable food production

- ✓ Reduce the destruction of the environment
- ✓ Prevent forced economic migration
- ✓ Support democratic participation and associational life



Photo: Solidarity Group

On top of this, as wages are being reduced in real terms for many people in Europe and other industrial economies and as prices for goods and services rise, household debt is increased, exacerbated by the rising cost for formerly state financed or provided services such as university education and social care. The link between debt and dignity has been explored in the first report, *Seeking Conviviality* and in the Bible studies included in the publication, “Convivial Life Together.” (LWF, 2015)

The second effect of the economic and political transformations of recent years has been the privatization of many public services and the breakdown of the social security systems, which guaranteed the basic economic security of people, families and communities. There are at least two consequences of this which impact on human dignity. The terminology which surrounds our use of public services in Europe is now more related to “markets” than to “citizenship.” Users of services of general interest are now referred to as “customers” and the privatized suppliers are seeking to segment the market and make profits, whilst gaining state subsidies. This creates a situation where the quality of the services for poorer people tends to deteriorate, a

situation that particularly affects housing, care services, health and education.

The third effect is the restructuring (often called “reform”) of income maintenance systems such as support for unemployed, sick or disabled people. The concept of social insurance, which protects a person against risks for which they cannot be personally held responsible, provided amongst other things a guaranteed income as of right for people who had an employment record and who became unemployed because of the closure or downsizing of a workplace. Gradually such benefits are being restructured and the recipients are subject to specific disciplines and targets for their behavior. The criteria for receiving benefits are tightened and private agencies are tasked with assessing people’s eligibility—for example in the case of longer-term sickness or disability. Life experience is very different for people in receipt of such support under this regime of authoritarian liberalism than it was under the previous social insurance concept of financial support. In addition to the financial pressure such policies impose on people and households, there is the indignity of the process of testing by people who are incentivized to get people off benefits and who may

have no qualification or experience to carry out assessments. This stigmatizing of benefit recipients translates into everyday life experience where, for example, people with disabilities increasingly face verbal and even physical abuse on the street. These changes have a direct impact on the dignity and self-worth of people subjected to such disciplinary measures.

The fourth impact on everyday life stems from the impact of a combination of large-scale structural economic change (privatization, relocation, results of the banking crisis) on levels of income, conditions of work and job security. The economization of work has extended from shop floor manual and routine service workers to professional workers including teachers, lecturers and social workers as well as workers in the health services. Workers who were previously regarded as having a measure of professional autonomy now have to quantify their engagement in systems that specify how much time may be spent on each activity.

Because of our interest in diaconal social service and social care we investigated this issue in Manchester. We found out that, for example in one typical case, a care worker is allocated 15 minutes to support a frail or sick elderly person living alone in getting washed, dressed and fed in the morning. In many social work structures, a worker is only allowed a limited set time per client regardless of how complex or needy the situation is. Even more prevalent is the reduction of wages and conditions for routine workers who, because of low pay, are forced to work excessive hours—having as many as three jobs, to enable their families to survive.

These developments place non-profit service providers in direct (financial) competition with private profit seeking companies in the fields of health, education and welfare, which forces them to reduce costs and this very often means reducing working conditions or quality.

Alternatively, service users, who may have their own personal resources or who may rely on (diminishing) state support have their own care budget. This gives the service user the freedom to choose the provider according to their wishes or their means. Usually the service providers have to meet specified standards, and especially so, when state financing is involved. These changes also have an effect on working conditions in diaconal service organizations and therefore on the workers.

We witness a hierarchical splitting of the experience of employment. Underneath the formal labor market there is a growth of casual and informal work, often carried out by migrant and immigrant labor under conditions of near slavery and with very poor pay and oppressive management. This is prevalent in the food industry and agriculture but also in construction, textiles and other branches.

These are just snapshots of a world of work where stress leads to illness (mental and physical) and where management exerts ever tighter control. It is a far cry from conditions experienced at higher levels of the economy. These changes have had especially negative consequences on women for three reasons. Firstly, one of the consequences of deindustrialization and technological change has been the reduction of well-paid skilled jobs usually taken by men and a growth of in-person service sector jobs, which are mostly taken by women. Most of these jobs are badly paid and many are part time. Secondly, because of the squeeze on household incomes, there has been a major growth in the number of women participating in the labor market, which has boosted the numbers of women working in low paid jobs, often part time and with little security or opportunity for career advancement. Thirdly, in general women are over represented in lower levels of the employment "hierarchy" and continue to suffer discrimination when seek promotion regardless of legislation

in favor of equality. On top of this the standard of equal pay for work of equal value is still widely ignored.

In all these cases human dignity, which is an essential attribute of each person is denied and undermined and the attitudes in society become harsher to those on the margins. With the growth in working hours and flexible working times and conditions, there are also many hidden effects. Family life is harder to maintain as each person has a different time schedule and guarantees of a work free weekend or Sunday are eroded. It also means that many voluntary activities including such things as voluntary community engagement and working for volunteer fire brigades in rural areas become more difficult.

A convivial economy would...

... change the structures of income and employment to ensure that no one in a society would have a lack of resources for basic needs or be so over-worked in order to support a family that they had no time or possibility for family activity, let alone community based activity. One possibility for achieving this would be for all to have the right to a basic "citizen income" or maybe better a citizen / denizen income which people could then build upon through employment, cooperative working or engagement in a social enterprise. Over the past 25 years this concept has been developed and it has the support of several church groups. One advantage is that it gives everybody a floor that prevents pauperization and supports human

dignity. An originally European network has been developing these ideas with a global perspective (Basic Income Earth Network). The research done by people, including many from church related organizations, has shown the feasibility of such a system and that it would even save the money spent on administering several welfare systems at the moment. What is more, it would release people and families from stress and create an incentive for new economic activity. Of course the critical question is at what level the basic allowance is set and what the mechanisms are for uprating it.

Such a development, if it was allied to a quality education system that was geared to 'learning for the whole of life' would have the potential to lead to innovation and more balanced development, less geared to consumption. The focus in education is increasingly narrowed to skills for employment, especially as education is privatized. Higher education is becoming a product to be consumed, which leads to a focus on a narrowing range of subjects and programs. The fact that students usually have to go into debt to fund their education further narrows the scope education and learning which is not geared to economic priorities.

Following the same line of reasoning, the re-orientating of health and welfare services on the whole person and the return to services being provided as a right and not on a market based system would lead to more equitable access to services and eradicate one of the major challenges to the dignity of people who are ill or who are living with a disability.

In a convivial economy.

- ✓ The structures of paid work would ensure that employment supports human dignity, in terms of what is produced, how it is produced and the resource implications of production

- ✓ Everyone would have a wages or income that is sustainable and allows a life in dignity
- ✓ All denizens would have the right to good quality health, education and welfare and to adequate housing



Photo: Fritz Blanz/Leb-mit-Laden

All these changes would lead to the possibility for people to become more involved in the whole life of the place where they live and to build up new forms of social action. It would also release more time for involvement in the decisions that affect life together and so would strengthen democratic participation and civil society.

Two underlying questions

In a capitalist system the process of development is based on the **increasing monetization of time** as more and more areas of life are transformed by the production and consumption of marketable goods and services. When time is “monetized” it diminishes the possibility for building human relationships, especially for people who have to work long hours for survival. Convivial life together is supported if people

have time for creativity and participation. The deepening of the connection between time and money on the other hand is a cause of stress and ill health and even of social conflict. It would be important for Christians to reflect on the way in which giving time and space for non-economic activities is one contribution the churches make to well-being. Empirical research and studies of subjective well-being show that active Christians score higher than similar groups who are non-religious. (Myers, 2008)

It may be conventional wisdom to link money and hence consumption to happiness, but empirical studies show that beyond a certain point, you need very large increases in income and/or wealth to get a significant increase in happiness. **The correlation between money and happiness is not direct.** This is not to argue the virtues of poverty but rather to investigate why this is so! Our economy is based on pro-

ducing instant pleasure, through the consumption of goods and services. If pleasure is based in the pursuit of the “repetitive consumption of pleasurable experiences” we find ourselves caught up in an insatiable spiral! The items consumed have to become ever more grandiose and the experience ever more “exotic” yet the happiness hardly increases. (Bauman, 2007) This should cause us to reflect, along with the reflection on the link between time and money, on the link between pleasurable experiences consumed and happiness. Do we have in our tradition other understandings of happiness? May this not be linked to the question of well-being? Is there a way in which we can bring these underlying issues into the public sphere?

Part Two: Five Key Themes

Introduction

The Solidarity Group members identified five key issues that were seen to be arenas through which we could share experience and develop analysis of the present economy. The members of the workshop prepared papers on the five themes and these were shared in working groups. Local visits to Manchester neighborhoods; congregations and projects provided a common mirror for deeper reflection in the groups. For two days members of the group were “on the way.” Walking through the streets, looking with people and sharing their life. We saw sorrows and needs, injustice and inequality, which interrupted the usual way of life. We saw the wounded earth and met people burdened by injustice and exclusion. But we also discovered life, which was deeply impressive. Some of these experiences were brought into our morning worship and each section of this chapter starts with a prayer rooted in experience. Then we would like to share

some of the insights and experiences related to the specific themes.

Work and welfare

We saw:

- the impact on everyday life of growing poverty and inequality and the lack of resources for social action with marginalized people
- loss of dignity because of the commodifying of welfare
- the gap between donors and beneficiaries, which creates degrading hierarchies

Kyrie Eleison

Introduction

Work and welfare are at the core of any thinking about a convivial economy and especially since the introduction of neo-liberal thinking to the field and the collapse of the formerly centrally planned economies, the situation has become increasingly difficult for families and communities that are in economically weak areas. The 2008 financial crisis gave a further negative impetus towards increasing poverty and marginalization. Whilst diakonia has a concern for the most marginalized, we can see that the present tendency affects many people who are in work and those who are in low paid employment. The term “precarity” typifies this development. People are living on the margins and are vulnerable to quite small changes in circumstances. This situation is set to worsen with the labor market consequences of rapid digitalization of employment. We already see this in the growth of service organizations which through the internet link service users and providers without providing any stable employment, health and social insurance or pension rights. The growth of self-employment has meant a rapid growth in self-exploitation in the labor market, which is set to get worse as firms implement more digital tools and systems.

The group visited Church Action on Poverty, a UK ecumenical organization based in Manchester (CAP). CAP has taken a critical stand on the rise of unemployment and precarious work and is part of a campaign to pressure all employers (including the churches) to pay a living wage. They are also campaigning against precarious working conditions, such as the zero hours



Photo: Fritz Blanz/Action 1+1



Photo: Nicole Borisuk

contracts mentioned earlier, which do not create a financial basis for supporting a family. CAP has also campaigned on issues of fuel poverty and for a sustainable food supply for everyone. (Church Action on Poverty, 2016)

The methods that CAP uses include community organizing and training community leaders, building campaigns on key issues and supporting so-called “Poverty Truth Commissions” which organize hearings about the life situation of people on the margins and use the results in lobbying and campaigning. CAP also produces educational material and suggestions for worship and spirituality related to the issue of poverty and inequality. The visit with CAP enabled group members to reflect on their own context in the light of the specific experience of the group.

Context

In the working group the main focus was on the impact of the changes in the overall situation of social welfare on the very different contexts of the group members. There are some common trends but it makes a large difference which country you come from. In Germany, for example the welfare system

is undergoing processes of “reform and innovation,” which means decreasing state expenditure and the increase of private provision as well as of private responsibility for welfare. This can be contrasted with Ukraine where there is still a process of building up a welfare system but this is interrupted by the conflict on the border regions and the annexation of Crimea. This situation has created new and unprecedented challenges for welfare services and for diakonia. Nevertheless a number of key common issues were raised amongst which we mention three challenges:

The demographic challenge

In most contexts, people are living longer and the numbers of people surviving into their 90’s is expected to rise to five times the present level in the next twenty years. This will put big pressure on health and welfare services, which are already under strain. The classic approach to funding income maintenance and services for the elderly are reaching a limit, especially in the time of austerity, which is an ideologically driven response to the banking crisis. (Blyth, M., 2015) This situation is one in which the church and other non-profit

organizations are called on to make up the care deficit. But the scale of need is such that this response is not enough! There is a need to redesign income support and to ensure adequate and effective social and health care.

The generational challenge

Looking at the European context we see that the impact of economic pressure on people is felt most keenly by the under 30-year-old generation. In many countries more than a quarter of all young people are unemployed and many of them that have jobs are in insecure and low paid work, with little prospect for a career. On top of this, the restructuring of health, education and welfare on neo-liberal lines has drastically reduced the support for students and those who wish to carry on in education post 16 or 18 years old. This means that a growing number of students enter a precarious labor market with a “debt hangover,” even if student loans are offered in a special financial structure. Coupled with changes in the housing market, it also means that young people are less able to establish their own home or family for financial reasons.

The regional challenge

In the Solidarity Group we were able to explore the ways in which different countries and regions have been affected by the banking crisis and responses to it and to other kinds of regional crisis.

Firstly, the countries which are part of or are closely linked to the Euro zone have suffered particular problems because they are linked to the German economy which at least in terms of the production of manufactured goods, very successful. Of course, there has been a price to pay for this success. It has been gained on the back of a depression in wages and life-quality

for many average workers and their families. But because of the common currency (Euro) and the lack of any balancing mechanism, the largest cost has been faced by the weakest economies. This is a very well-known feature of currency unions and one problematic factor is that a country that gets into difficulty cannot devalue its currency. In the case of the Euro-zone, countries are obliged to follow strict rules that are very often inappropriate to the situation—especially in some peripheral countries. (Blyth, 2013; Varoufakis, 2016) There are other factors that also affect work life and welfare in different regions. Notable are the different disputed borders that in some cases have led to the destruction of infrastructure and productive capacity, on top of the human suffering and the displacement of people and communities and this paralyzes the economy. Other regions have been affected by growing numbers of refugees fleeing from war and civil conflict.

Reflection and Response

Then the group explored the ways in which the different diaconal organizations have been responding to these crises. Here we can identify three main types of response, which are related to the transformation of the social state:

Social Enterprise

Several members of the group have been involved in creating social enterprises as a novel form of diaconal response to the worsening funding situation. Social enterprises are a form of business that combines social and economic objectives. They may take the traditional form of “sheltered workshops” where people with (for example) learning difficulties do some basic work as a sub-contracted part of a normal business. The “social” part is to offer a job to people who cannot

access the first labor market and to support them in their work. The second form is to create an enterprise that provides goods and services directly on the open market and the most typical kind of business is catering. Jobs are created and a service provided for which people pay. The third stream is to establish social or educational services that are open to people in a locality, low threshold or for those who are in need of a specific service. In this case different elements can be combined—services, employment of people who could not find a job in the first labor market and also space for social and developmental activities.

In some countries, notably Germany, there is significant state support for social enterprise and this has generated new activity, sometimes co-designed and co-produced by and with the service users who are or would be the intended beneficiaries. This development raises a number of questions. The first question is about the concept of social enterprise itself, because it mixes two categories of organization—those that are profit making and those that are ‘not for profit’ and which may enjoy tax exemptions. The second question is whether this

support could ever be adequate, to secure sufficient quality and coverage, because members of the group had doubts on the basis of other national experiences. Welfare provision should be a redistributive activity, which enables those with lower incomes also to enjoy high quality services. Most analysis of the ways out of social exclusion emphasize this redistributive aspect. Thirdly, social enterprise and open procurement processes can be simply a means for private interests to generate profits from welfare spending or to offer paid for services to welfare providers in order that they can compete in the market

Community Based Initiatives

Whilst social enterprises represent one contextual innovation, the church in other contexts has built up its engagement on the basis of local congregations and communities. These may include an element of “social enterprise” or initiatives that have the structure of a non-profit/non-governmental organization. In the solidarity group we have very significant examples of local diaconal action. For example, to create a specific diaconal



Photo: Peter Szynka

"Now, when the churches and schools are provided with God's Word, it must also be borne in mind that the right fruits are also driven by God's word; For the kingdom of God is not in words, but in the fact that we accept the poor as warmly as Christ has received us." Stralsund Chest Arrangement (1525)

congregation which does not see itself as an "agency" offering social services but as a congregation sharing in the local community life and creating actions together. This means that the congregation itself is to a greater or lesser extent made up of people who are normally the recipients of diaconal services or who may receive some financial support from diaonia. This approach was described in the first report of the Solidarity Group. (LWF, 2013)

The advantage of this approach is that it starts near to everyday life and does not divide people into different categories of need as the way to access diaconal work. People may be 'givers and receivers' and there is built in reciprocity. Such local diaconal initiatives can often combine working with people but also entering into common projects with social movements, non-profit organizations and local government. Political action with and on behalf of different groups can also be integrated into a community-based initiative especially if it is part of a wider network (such as a campaign against cuts in benefits or services).

Large Scale Service Providers

Whilst these are not present in every context, in many places the churches run large welfare organizations and they also face some special challenges at the moment. The funding situations in each country and region may be different. In some cases church health and welfare services are part of a national or regional pattern of provision and it may be that the service is no longer simply financed directly but that, following for instance, the European Union rules on procurement, the church finds itself in competition with private providers. This transforms the economic base and puts a premium on unit costs. In other cases the church has large non-profit organizations and they have been funded continually also, even if not a part of the state services and they are now worryingly also being put into a "competitive market place." In some countries, church diaconal organizations are in receipt of grants where the tightening conditions of funding restrict the level and quality of service over a period of time.

The transformation of welfare states also has an impact in countries where the church has not normally run large welfare institutions and now it is "invited" to bid to take over sometimes quite large welfare organizations. The question is, whether to operate services as a sub-contractor to the local or regional government is an appropriate role for local churches or whether they end up being compromised as the annual resources are reduced and needs are increasing. For church related or faith

based organizations there may also be funding or other difficulties because of the attitudes taken over from previous governments, which may have been hostile to the church and religious groups in general. These attitudes may still affect decisions whether or not to support diaconal efforts, although in some contexts trust has been rebuilt and although financial support is not adequate or guaranteed, the church is recognized as a valuable partner in social and in some cases health care.

The impact of welfare reform in some countries and the lack of welfare in others as well as the growing inequality across Europe and between countries is a major challenge. Whereas, as churches, we feel that we should collaborate with civic authorities when they are fulfilling their function, nevertheless we should also advocate for change when policies lead directly to poverty and social exclusion, working with and on behalf of those affected. This is a real task for the churches, which was already recognized in the reformation time.

"The soul quickens and animates not only this or that part, but the entire body; thus the magistrate may never disregard a portion of his governance. Those who only fancy the wealthy and despise the poor are like those doctors who are not concerned about healing the hands or the feet because they are at some distance from the heart." Jean Luis Vives (1525)

Debt

We saw:

- how debt changes the life of families, when they may lose everything
- people oppressed by the demand to repay the money they cannot pay back
- the result coming out of the debt crisis: the hunger and suffering of people, the restriction of social work by financial reductions and whole countries led deeper into crisis



Photo: Ulla Siirto

Kyrie Eleison

Introduction

Indebtedness has become a central issue in national, European and even global policy. It is one of the main consequences of the financial crisis that started in the United States in 2008 with the collapse of a number of financial institutions. Developments since then have shown how the international financial economy reaches deep into the everyday life of people and communities. So, in this way the financial crisis has become a social crisis and even a political crisis—a crisis of democracy. Our starting point is at the level of people, families and communities and sharing experience in the Solidarity Group. The visit of our group in Manchester explored the actual impact of debt in everyday life.

Context

Families on the margins who have a very insecure and low income may need to borrow money to deal with a life crisis or, for example to replace an oven, which is worn out. It might just be some new clothes for children. They may need to borrow money simply

because the social security system did not work effectively or in time to give them the resources for everyday life such as food and energy. Food banks have mushroomed in the UK, which is the world's sixth largest economy and churches are at the forefront of this movement. In one national network alone there are 500 food banks in England, whereas a few years ago they were almost non-existent. The Trussell Trust reports that the main reasons people have to use a food bank is problems with the benefit payments, low pay and debt, which actually are often inter-related. (see: www.trusselltrust.org)

For households facing this situation it is very difficult to get an unsecured loan at a reasonable rate of interest. Banks do not find it interesting to lend to people on the margins and therefore the poorest people are forced to buy on credit at very high rates of interest or to borrow from lenders who specialize in small, unsecured loans. Usually the interest rates in these cases are extremely high, some short-term lenders have been known to charge 4,000%.

We visited a neighborhood of Manchester where many people who are in living in debt and could get a small

glimpse of everyday life. We visited the local shopping center and could see what was on offer there and how shops were geared to providing items on high cost credit for poor families. The combination of this situation with the fact that poor families have to pay more for their energy (being forced to use pre-payment meters which have a higher tariff) drives people into debt. This extra charge for people already living in poverty is called "the poverty premium." It is a paradox that the poorer the household, the more they have to pay for the same service than do more affluent households.

Meeting the Challenge

Local Financial Initiatives

The group met with one of the pioneers of the Manchester Credit Union, which aims to tackle this situation in a

"Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven those who are in debt to us..." Mt. 6 v.11-12

Luther's Response to Poverty and Indebtedness

Under the rubrics of justice and love to the neighbor, Luther moved... in alliance with local governments to establish new social welfare policies and legislation. The first major effort was the Wittenberg Church Order of 1522, which established a "common chest" for welfare work. Initially funded by medieval ecclesiastical endowments and later supplemented by taxes, the Wittenberg Order prohibited begging; provided interest-free loans to artisans, who were to repay them whenever possible; provided for poor orphans, the children of poor people, and poor maidens who needed an appropriate dowry for marriage; provided refinancing of high-interest loans at 4% annual interest for burdened citizens; and supported the education or vocational training of poor children. To the objection that this was open to abuse, Luther replied, "He who has nothing to live on should be aided. If he deceives us, what then? He must be aided again." Lindberg, C., (1987) see also Szynka, P., (2016)

practical way through a well-structured local savings and loan organization. Members save small amounts, which earn interest and can then borrow at a reasonable rate of interest. The idea is also to use this as a way to build up trustworthy relationships between people. The credit union has grown from small neighborhood beginnings into an organization active across the region. (See: www.manchestercreditunion.co.uk) Local groups, churches and faith communities started the credit union, as they wanted to tackle this problem in a practical way that would also strengthen their local community.

Campaigning

This is not enough and the second action was to tackle the problem of organized firms who exploited the situation by charging exorbitant interest rates on small loans. This includes so called 'pay-day lenders' who lend small amounts at very high interest rates to help people to survive until the next pay day or benefit check arrives. On top of this poor households face the high interest rates charged by those who provide domestic appliances (such as ovens or washing machines) on rental purchase using slot meters.

A double strategy of directly meeting and challenging the owners and managers of the companies and also pressing for new legislation was adopted and this has achieved some successes. For

the informal lenders, however, there is no real regulation and quite often violence is involved in debt collecting by these operators. Indebted people often find themselves in a personal debt crisis—they are paying money back but the amount owed goes up every week and this also needs emergency financial support to break the spiral. (Church Action on Poverty, 2013) The campaign achieved some success in persuading companies to change their policies and also for a change in the rules governing unsecured loans, which was achieved in 2014. (www.church-poverty.org.uk) On top of this there was a commitment by some of the national churches to support the work of credit unions and encourage congregations and parishes to get involved.

Reflection

On the basis of this visit and the experience of the group members, we could summarize the interlinked nature of debt:

- on the level of people and families in poverty, personal debt traps and a vicious circle of indebtedness, which may result in homelessness
- on the level of the village, community or city where indebtedness of the local government may lead to failing services or collapsing infrastructure

- on the level of the nation, where indebtedness may lead to austerity policies which make the first two issues even more intractable

The context of the visit was a local economy which had collapsed and which was set in a relatively thriving city. It showed how the economic activity in the city had not resulted in the regeneration of the community and many people remained trapped in unemployment or low paid, precarious or casual employment. Meanwhile they are living in a consumer society, which is generating ever more 'desires', which also lead people into debt. In fact because of falling incomes, people who previously could live without indebtedness have now developed debt problems that are exacerbated by the pressure of consumerism and the availability of credit. This growing debt burden amongst people in work—even those in relatively middle class jobs—is a function of the pressure on labor markets driven by the financialization of the economy.

On the national level—and even the international level—the banking crisis has led to restrictions on social spending and also on social security and income maintenance. More conditions are introduced and there is an increasingly punitive attitude to people in poverty. The reductions in state expenditure aim to reduce state indebtedness and these policies are often accompanied by the privatization of state assets. This produces a short-term gain and on the other hand cuts off a future revenue stream. In the UK, assets that in some cases took over 150 years to build up, such as municipal water supply systems, were sold off at a low price leading to huge gains for the investors.

It is important to recognize that a market economy actually depends on the ability to obtain credit, the opposite of which is debt of course! Debt can be a tool in development for the

business sector but it may also have a role in developing the ways out of a vicious circle for a national economy. The present policy of attempting to reduce debt by cutting public investment, social security and taxation for the relatively rich all at the same time has the perverse effect of creating greater poverty, rising inequality and in most cases does not reduce the debt. (Blyth, M., 2015)

In this discussion it is not only important to see the link between indebtedness on different levels but also to notice that debt is not 'one thing'! If a person or household is in debt it may be for the purpose of buying goods or services that eventually lose their value (for example a car)—in the case of a house it may result in asset appreciation and in the case of education perhaps a higher income

later on. But when the state goes into debt it buys goods and services which increases economic activity and may lead to more income in the future (in case we think economic growth is a positive achievement!). Simply put, our economic system will not function on the present model, without indebtedness.



Photo: Solidarity Group

Migration

We saw:

- radicalism acting against the presence of asylum seekers
- the exclusion of black and minority ethnic minority groups
- prejudice in ourselves, as we looked to the 'foreigner'

Kyrie Eleison



Photo: Solidarity Group

Introduction

The issue of migration is not new to Europe, neither is the experience of groups with different backgrounds living together in the same cities and regions. What has changed the situation is the different context of migration in the light of globalization. Furthermore, the different conflicts in Europe and other world regions and the environmental challenges have put great pressure on people to move as migrants or forcing them to move as refugees.

Another aspect is the fact that within Europe the possibility for visa free travel and the mobility of people seeking work has meant that more people are on the move. This is especially so concerning the citizens of countries that were formally centrally planned economies. People are on the move for many different reasons, positive and negative and this theme is very important for all European countries and institutions. The mobility of people who are EU citizens within the EU is a right established in law, just as is the right for the free market in goods, services and the mobility of finance is guaranteed. As well as that, anyone with the right to enter one of the countries that is part of the so-called Schengen agreement can also freely move to another member country.

These various dimensions of migration, mobility and being an asylum seeker or refugee have meant that local communities, towns and cities are becoming more diverse. Members of the solidarity group with experience of working in communities with very diverse populations brought together their direct experience and different church positions on this.

Whilst in Manchester we visited the Boaz Trust, which is a Christian organization dedicated to working with asylum seekers in Greater Manchester. The Trust provides accommodation, as well as food and other essentials, to those who are unable to access support from anywhere else. It also provides advocacy and pastoral support, and campaigns on a local and national level for justice in asylum legislation. Their most challenging work is with people whose claim for refugee status has been refused. In a year they can deal with up to 100 new people who maybe need basic supplies for everyday life, accommodation, some social activity and most often support with continuing the claim for asylum in the country. Boaz is a small organization but it is embedded in a network of active volunteers, churches and other

supportive organizations. Boaz was founded by one person, who realized the Christian imperative is to support marginalized people, who arrive in the country as refugees and have little support. It is especially important for those who have few immediate possibilities, especially if their claim for refugee status has been rejected.

"You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." Ex 43 v.9

Context

From the experience of local work and indeed from their own life experience, members of the group shared the burning issues, which need to be addressed.

First, of course is the need to understand **the complexity of migration** background and the different legislative frameworks that govern the process. For countries that are members of the European Union, their citizens have right to free movement and this has gradually given people from the so-called new member states the right to move and to live and work in any other member state. This may seem to

be uncontroversial but has led to very diverse outcomes. The most obvious one is that younger people or highly skilled people move to the northern and western countries in search of work or work and education. Another group is recruited or freely moves to take up jobs in mid-life, which are open to them. For example a bus company in the UK recruits drivers from Poland and has even established a drivers' school there. On the other hand there are many who come to the western countries organized by so-called gang masters to do very low paid or seasonal jobs and often the living and working conditions are extremely exploitative.

We should, however, also take into account the fact that when large numbers of adults move and their families are left behind there may be serious problems for the communities of the "left behind." This can lead, for example to the grandparent generation being responsible for day to day care for the children, to a lack of qualified people on the spot to do work which is available and also to a disruption of normal family roles. For example Serbia, which is not yet a member of the European Union, already experiences a loss of 35,000 people per year to migration and 20% of this number are highly educated workers. There is a consequent "brain drain" effect as well as the previously mentioned splitting of families. This situation is compounded by two further problems: migrants are often returned to Serbia when their right to work permit ends and the total number of returnees could reach 100,000 in the next ten years. On top of that, Serbia is a transit country for refugees fleeing from the Middle East and as they transit the country they are placed in emergency camps, which are in place.

A further dimension of migration and mobility is the possibility for Roma, who are EU citizens, to migrate

and this has led to a growing Roma diaspora in Europe and the need to work with people on the move who are outside the regular labor market.

Looking at the issue from another viewpoint, Northern European countries are demographically aging and immigration is important to replace the older labor force, which is retiring. Finland, for example needs about 35,000 new workers to fill this gap! The demographic background is also important, that with an ageing population some countries would experience a fall in population without in-migration. It is also clear that many seasonal and low paid jobs are taken by workers moving from poorer regions of the European Union and beyond. This has an impact on the western economies by lowering food prices for example. It has also been claimed that much of the economic growth in the UK in recent years is because of population growth due to migration. This has an impact because migrant or mobile workers consume much of what they earn and contribute to taxation income directly and indirectly.

Reception and Integration

The experiences of migrant labor and of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe are therefore very diverse and diakonia has to be aware of the various nuances. For example diakonia in one Swedish parish, represented in the solidarity group, has been focused on the issue of work with refugees and immigrants for over 20 years. Over these years the groups arriving have been from different backgrounds and for diverse reasons. For example, refugees from Somalia, later from Afghanistan, later still Iraq and Syria. Very often social and diaconal workers get into difficulties because they do not differentiate between the needs and priorities of these different groups. Furthermore, in the solidarity group

there was a growing experience that immigrant/migrant and refugee groups are forming their own self-organized or informal groups, or groups related to a specific religious community. This may provide some security and a feeling of being at home in an environment that may be hostile.

The so-called host community is also challenged because if we speak about integration it means change for them too! In the solidarity group we have distinguished between integration and assimilation—the latter assuming the immigrants and refugees should assimilate themselves to local culture, which is a more or less impossible goal. Integration is therefore a challenge and the working concept of conviviality provides a positive vision for creating contexts where people can live together without becoming separated or even segregated. In some situations where there is apparent segregation, the host community can form hate pictures, which motivate anger and even violence against immigrants and refugees. On the other hand some younger generation immigrants are becoming radicalized especially but not only as a result of the severe conflicts and wars in the Middle East.

Putting together the experience of the group and of the Boaz Trust in Manchester, we notice that for refugees and asylum seekers there are particular problems related to the various legislative frameworks that govern their lives. This is even more

"Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured."
Heb 13 v.1-3

acute for people who have been refused refugee status and are awaiting appeal outcomes or whose route for appeal is closed. The kinds of services and support needed have to be appropriate to their situation. As well as marginalization and unemployment (they may be prevented from working by law), they often have to deal with the results of traumatic experiences of war or during their flight. There are inadequate services for this escalating situation and it presents new challenges for the churches to collaborate in providing health and social services as well as support groups for people who basically are sometimes living 'outside the law'. Nevertheless, it has to be remembered, concerning the

present refugee situation in northern Europe, that European conditions are generally good compared to the situation facing displaced people in the Middle East or Africa, where the numbers are also much larger and the resources much less.

Reflection

Honest reflection in the group revealed how difficult it is to deal with prejudices and racism. There is good will to work to build relationships and a sense of belonging and to cross the boundaries. Some members had their own experience of migration, being forced to move or of being in exile but in every case, even among

those whose everyday work is in this field, there is a recognition that the "borders run through everybody." This understanding demands a constant fight with the feelings inherited from the majority community—the feeling of call to engagement and the desire to show respect require a daily struggle with prejudice and weakness. In the Solidarity Group members give witness to the complexity of the situation where the worker and sometimes the church or congregation is living 'between different worlds'. The conviviality approach aims to work on this issue through supporting new relationships and solidarities. (LWF, 2013)



Photo: Nicole Borisuk

Corruption and Transparency

We saw:

- victims whose lives are so involved in the “corruption system” that they cannot step out.
- that corruption leads to threatening life itself, for example by blocking medical care to needy people
- corruption of decision makers is eating up financial resources that are needed to build good lives and convivial communities

Kyrie Eleison

Introduction

When the Solidarity Group was deciding on the key themes for the work we wanted to do on the economy, it was very clear that an important priority to focus on could be corruption. In some contexts it is a part of everyday life and affects both public and private organizations. This is linked in practice to the question of the ‘transparency’ of political decision-making and accountability. The reason for the connection is clear—in a corrupt situation, political decision makers may be manipulated and financed by part of what we could call the “corruption system.” The questions of small-scale local corruption and wider systemic corruption are interlinked. If low-level officials engage individually or in small groups in small-scale corruption, it very often operates in contexts where there is major or systemic corruption, which forms a tacit normative environment (everybody does it). In the work of the group, adequate testimony was given to the concrete impacts of corruption in local communities. It was pointed out that even local churches might become part of a chain of cor-



Photo: Peter Szynka

ruption, where resources meant for the public good or the good of the church community are diverted to individual gain. These are the fields that the group working on corruption and transparency explored. The evidence points to the fact that corruption also is a major factor in creating a lack of trust in society and in the economy. This not only imposes extra (hidden) costs on transactions it not only produces a society that is less equal and less healthy, it is a block on conviviality.

Normally discussions about corruption divide into two main streams: the one that focuses on the individual agent and the other that focuses on the fact the whole structure or system is corrupt and tacitly supports corrupt behavior. In fact corruption is also both structural (it may be embedded) and relational—depending on differential power. It is very important to focus on this issue, which by destroying trust, also prevents the emergence of conviviality and a convivial economy! By linking it to the reformation anniversary, we remember that it was an issue that was very much in Martin Luther's mind, concerning the operation of church and business, especially finance—and even in organizing support for poor people in his day! (Szynka, 2016)

Context

The first context to consider is that of the members of the Solidarity Group who were exploring this issue. The majority are from Russia and the formerly centrally planned economies. In many of these countries corruption is endemic and it affects many aspects of everyday life. If you want to get health care, maybe you have to pay a premium directly to the doctor or if you need documentation to buy a house maybe the local government officer needs an extra payment. These kinds of situations occur in many contexts and it means vital services are only available for those who can, or those who are willing, to pay. But it is important to notice that corruption can be an issue in any context and not to relate it just to one specific group of countries. What is more accurate to focus on is the fact that corruption tends to be more of an issue in countries with a large and growing gap between rich and poor (in terms of both income and wealth). It is also an issue where one party has more or less monopoly power and especially if civil society is not well developed to perform a “watchdog” role. Furthermore, one of the most important correlations is between the level of trust in a society and the prevalence of corruption. This can be determined from



Photo: Peter Szynka

the annual corruption perception index produced by Transparency International (See: www.transparency.org)

This should not blind us to the fact that in almost every context, corruption is an issue. The connections between the worlds of business and finance and government at local, regional and national levels can facilitate deals that are organized so that specific business interests or individual enterprises benefit. It can be via a change in policy or the law to benefit an interest where considerations discussed in private, or through lobbying, privilege those interests over the common good. There are also instances of corruption in contracts even in countries with relatively high standing in the Transparency International index. On the local level, individuals and groups can benefit from such corrupt decisions, for instance by finding work, even though the larger benefits from a contract accrue to decision makers and related entrepreneurs. Furthermore, corruption causes extra costs for the whole system that affects everyone, so whilst single enterprises or persons may gain the common good suffers and especially poor and marginalized people and communities are the ‘losers’.

The group in the Manchester workshop visited Salford, the adjoining city,

which has areas of deep and long standing poverty and social exclusion. Historically the city council has had an overwhelming majority of representatives from one party and this led to local level instances of corruption and a lack of transparency. After a long process of campaigning, the city council culture was changed and a new understanding of the need for participation has developed. The key to this is an active civil society and the visited project is specifically geared to enabling local residents to continue to have the tools to participate in the decisions that affect their lives and to organize their own activities in their own interests. One of the main initiatives has been to develop “schools of participation” for particular groups who are normally excluded from decision-making, including those with long-term mental health problems, people with disabilities and ex-offenders. The group of ex-offenders, for example, is now established as the project “Positive Changes.” The Salford project also works with local residents’ groups, enabling people to make a difference and to press for change. Another related project is “The Salford Apprentice” which supports local community members who are leaders, or want to be leaders of community organizations.

The latest initiative is a so-called “poverty truth commission” which is supported by the churches and the city council and it aims to give voice to people living in poverty in an affluent city and society.

Reflection

Corruption is a factor in personal life and in the life of organizations—even of the churches. When we reflected on it we realized that in the Biblical witness there is evidence of corruption which seen as a sign of rebellion against God. The Hebrew Bible contains many warnings against corruption in all the main traditions—the most frequent attacks and commentaries being in the prophetic tradition and in the wisdom literature. (Tamez, 2014) One of the central issues that is confronted in the prophetic literature is the corruption amongst the rulers and the rich people of the day. The corruption even spread into the prophetic movement, in so far as some prophets were paid by the rich. The main argument of the prophets was that the leaders, those with power or influence pursued their own interests and broke the laws in order to obtain benefits for themselves. The desire for money often is seen to lead to corruption and the people who suffer are those living in poverty. The rebuke is very sharp and includes lying, deception, bribery and a lack of integrity. In everyday life the scales are fixed and in legal processes the judges accept bribes. In fact there is a corrupt network, which supports this behavior. The prophets claim this not only to be

“The leaders give verdicts for presents, the priests take a fee for their rulings, the prophets divine for money and yet they rely on the Lord! ‘Isn’t the Lord among us?’ they say, ‘No disaster will overtake us.’” Micah 3 v.11

"If in a province the poor are oppressed, fair judgement and justice are violated, do not be surprised, because over every official there watches a higher official, and over these, higher officials still... The lover of money will not be satisfied with money; nor the lover of wealth, with gain. This also is vanity."

Eccl. 5 v.8 & 10

unjust and illegal but also to be against the cause of people in poverty and to call forth the judgment of God.

The prophets, in their context expected a change in the situation—repentance and renewal—and they presented the challenge in very graphic terms, anticipating the fall of the nation if there was no change among the leaders. In another context, that of the wisdom literature, there was no expectation of an immediate change but the writer of Ecclesiastes recognized the absurdity of a world where values had been turned upside down. In this situation of ‘work and wait’ there was still a sharp understanding of the network of corruption that causes oppression. The writer of Ecclesiastes is pleads for caution and recognizes that the powerful have spies everywhere. He advises that people should not work in isolation and conversely that even in the present tough situation life should also have moments of enjoyment! The situation depicted is that of people facing an unknown future and when it is impossible to imagine a return to some past golden age. It sounds rather prudent, conservative even, but it is not quiescent and the writers look to a better future. They have a sharp eye to the web of corruption, which has been constructed around them and its consequences, and look for a time when, thanks to the grace of God there will be change.

On the basis of these reflections we can return to the analysis of cor-

ruption in the present situation and recognize that very often we are invited to think of it simply as the unjust or non-transparent behavior of one person. What both the prophetic literature and the wisdom literature point out is that although there may be corrupt individuals, usually they are embedded in a system or web of corruption, which supports and legitimizes corrupt behavior as in everyone’s interest. Nevertheless the prophets were seeking for changes in personal behavior among the leaders of their day.

In the New Testament, Paul points out that the problem is even deeper, calling this systemic power ‘sin’ which encourages human greed. (Tamez, 2014) Paul gives a whole catalogue of the greed and rotten behavior, which he characterizes as sin. It is clear that sin is pervasive; it is not just a question of an individual wrongdoing and the ‘law’ makes the reality of sin visible and is a bulwark against sin. But it is not enough! The reason is linked to motivation—simply following the law does not depend on our own decision, except to try to follow the law and also it does not necessarily change consciousness. In addition to the reality that people will try to evade the law, there is the fact that people so often don’t do what they want to do, but do what they theoretically hate. Hence Paul insists on the primacy of grace—the grace of God and living by common grace. This points to the need to change from the following of law to the letter but living according to a different logic, which actually transforms the law in the service of life. It points to the fact that without this change the propensity to greed and injustice is ever present in the logic of the human condition.

If we look at this situation through the lens of the Reformation Anniversary, we can see that Martin Luther and the reformers were living at a time when the logic of the developing market was leading to corruption on

a grand scale. Luther identified the corruption of merchants in price fixing, in trading in futures and the growth of debt. He also challenged the way in which the church had become part of the market system, selling of the forgiveness of sins (indulgences) and other economic practices. In this context he advises sharing and lending and for buying and selling in a market in cash or kind. He is very suspicious of the financial system and indebtedness, critical of financial speculation and trade and also of international trade. Luther can be criticized from the perspective of living in a pre-capitalist economy and working within a mercantilist framework. Nevertheless he points us to the dangers inherent in such a system, which are magnified in the present globalized and financially driven global economy, where the scope for corruption is even greater. Indeed the logic of the present system produces limitless greed and a situation where corruption permeates our institutional life and even personal relationships are affected.

"First—The merchants have among themselves one common rule, which is their chief maxim and the basis of all their sharp practices. They say: I may sell my goods as dear as I can. This they think their right. Lo, that is giving place to avarice and opening every door and window to hell. What does it mean? Only this: "I care nothing about my neighbor; so long as I have my profit and satisfy my greed, what affair is it of mine if it does my neighbor ten injuries at once?" There you see how shamelessly this maxim flies squarely in the face not only of Christian love, but of natural law." Martin Luther, On Trading and Usury 1524

Creation and the Environment

We saw:

- the increasing pollution, which destroys the quality of life and the fruitfulness of the earth
- the slow development of the awareness of the integrity of creation
- how easily we forget that we are included in Gods creation

Kyrie Eleison

Introduction

The link between ecology and economy is clear and it is also clear that the environment is a key factor affecting the quality of life in cities and villages. On top of this, many people are affected by the changes in their working environment, due to changes in technology and the use of more hazardous substances. Members of the solidarity group brought diverse experiences to the topic ranging from personal engagement in ecological gardening and the production of food in local communities to a commitment to political action for climate justice. The group was enriched by having one young person from India, involved in the LWF young reformers' network commitment to climate justice. Another participant was a pastor working in a regional context where there are many ecological problems stemming from the former centrally planned economy and the transformation processes. These personal commitments formed the background to the work of the group.

Context

The Solidarity Group met in Manchester, which was one of the first

cities in the world to be industrialized. In fact it was the heart of the global textile industry in the nineteenth century and therefore has experienced all the environmentally damaging effects of the industrial system. The Manchester region was rich in coal and the power for the factory system and the domestic heating and power were largely derived from coal burning. On top of this there was a large metal producing and chemical industry all of which produced toxic effects in the atmosphere and on the ground. Since the rapid deindustrialization of the city, millions of pounds have been spent on cleaning up the environment, but the impact on life and health over generations cannot easily be undone.

Walking through one of the former industrial areas that were constructed in the nineteenth century, the housing being adjacent to the factories, was an experience that left many impressions. The poor quality of the housing, even including some of the newer housing was tangible. The general neglect of the common open spaces led to people having no respect for the area in which they live. Visiting the People's History Museum revealed the rich history of associational life, by which

people aimed to improve the quality of life and create a better environment. The pride that formed the culture of these movements has somehow been lost. On the other hand the state has invested a large amount of money in infrastructure and also in new up-market housing. The infrastructure spending supports sport (a new stadium and a velodrome), leisure and shopping and the costs of using these facilities are beyond people on low income. Much of the housing is also priced at levels out of reach of the lower income community members. To some it looked like a kind of "re-colonization of the city." On the other hand the investment in public transport was seen as a positive aspect. Manchester was a city that generated great wealth but the population of the "left behind" are not benefitting from this.

One point that is clear is that the industrial economy in Europe, under different government regimes, created huge environmental problems, which at different speeds are still being worked on. We can see that the immediate local impacts of industrial society have disappeared in many ways, but similar production still goes on in other parts of the world, where local



Photo: Peter Szynka/Soziale Wohnraumhilfe, Hannover



Photo: Peter Szynka

workers and populations pay the price once more. It is even more dangerous now because as a consumer you are shielded from the day-to-day working conditions and the environmental costs because you are far away from the hazards of production.

The ubiquitous electronics and communication systems rely on minerals, which are hazardous to mine and on production systems, which are dangerous for health. On the other hand new damaging environmental problems are becoming more serious such as exhaust emissions from cars and the emissions from power stations depending on carbon fuels. The air may look cleaner—there is no longer industrial smog—but it contains dangerous particles and carries a growing threat from the changing balance of gases, such as the growing concentration of carbon emissions. This is linked to long-term effects such as climate change, which have an impact on many communities, on food production and on survival.

Reflection

In reflecting on the experiences of Manchester and the background experiences of members of the soli-

darity group, we should look at the issues through a consideration of the difference a “convivial economy” would make to the environment. But one starting point is the assertion of the process towards the Reformation anniversary, “Creation is not for sale” which focuses on creation care. This is based on the understanding that human beings should not plunder the earth and that its rich resources should not be exploited for profit, especially when they are the basis of well-being (for example water). (Burghardt, ed., 2015). The other angle from which to reflect on this theme is to evaluate how far the present economy supports conviviality and how far it undermines our ability to live together in peace and with justice, without destroying nature.

In our visit to Manchester and in discussions among participants, the question of environmental degradation, the over exploitation of nature and the impact of industrial society, with growing inequality and food poverty has on life together and on human dignity were apparent. The trends are not auspicious and when we factor in the larger scale changes—for example climate change and the use of invasive techniques to extract ever more oil

and gas—as a group, we can see the need for a profound change. Peaceful and equitable co-existence is being threatened already by climate change, which leads to drought or flooding and is behind regional wars and the displacement of whole communities.

The driver of this accelerating process is the dominant finance driven, globalized economy, which feeds and feeds off the increasing consumer desires of people especially in the global north. In our group we examined the consequences in different contexts and we could see that there is still scope for the European nations to set different frameworks which constrain the economy and which support the change away from a carbon economy, to take one key issue. Therefore we should not be totally pessimistic, but the overall context demands a fundamental change. The dominant paradigm is built on belief in the beneficial effects of economic growth (usually measured by GDP growth) and therefore on growing consumer markets and private provision of services. Yet growth is leading us further into the spiral of irreversible environmental change due to pollution and the exhaustion of natural resources.

From the point of view of the Solidarity Group, we have to think out a new approach to economy and create a positive vision of the ‘good life for all’ to supplant the present vision of good life through consumption. Or to put it another way, to restore the primacy of being over having. (Illich, 1973) We should foster the re-examination of our relationship to each other and to nature and this is exactly what the concept of conviviality invites us to do and moreover it gives a direction to the way we should do it. This working group extended the concept of conviviality from “the art and practice of living together” to include the way we live with creation. This means we can start locally with dialogical processes

but also that we cannot neglect the political framework and the need for political action. We are in the process of developing new forms of practical, peaceful and political interaction with people across diverse boundaries. One of the central contributions the Christian faith and the churches can make is to be peacemakers on the micro level and beyond, but also we could envisage making “peace with nature.” In the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament it is surprising how often the well-being of people is linked to the fruitfulness of the land. If the exploitation of people and the over exploitation of the land is prevented, people and nature flourish. The vision of the future realm of God is moreover, imagined as a city—a New Jerusalem, a city of peace with justice. So we are not just thinking of rural contexts but also of the city.

If we start with the understanding of conviviality, it is clear that we have to think about how to work on our self-understanding as well as the concrete issues and challenges from the bottom up, from our own context. There is no ready-made blueprint and in any case, the history of ready-made blueprints in Europe causes us some skepticism. But we do need a vision or

what we could call a “utopia,” which acts as a provisional guide to a process of change. On the local level church communities have the possibility of becoming directly involved with many other religious communities and secular associations in building up a web of concrete local initiatives and at the same time joining and promoting a societal debate about the basic economic paradigm. There are many signs of such possibilities and initiatives in which churches are often involved so this does not mean starting from a “blank sheet.” The process we are envisaging will also deal with the change of self-understanding which the gospel implies, of implementing an economy based on grace rather than merit and on convivial relationships rather than pure competition.

The economy based on growth and accumulation, therefore of growing inequality seems to be reaching its environmental limits but people have put their hopes in continued growth—hoping for a ‘better’ future in material terms. This has become a proxy for a fulfilled life. We now can see the beginnings of what happens when limits are reached and when high growth rates also seem to elude the so-called advanced economies.

As wages stagnate or reduce, so that basic needs are not covered and unemployment especially among young people is at record high levels, there is a space to ask, “What constitutes the good life?” and to see the value of conviviality as an end in itself.

So much of the construction of our societies especially in Europe and the global north depends on the existing culture of accumulation and growth that we need to change our understanding of the place of work and employment as well as social security and income. This will need a reflection of our basic ideas of a fulfilled life based on consumer desires. Furthermore, a limit on the ability to amass limitless income and wealth coupled with a minimum income would also create a society which would foster coexistence through resource sharing rather than producing marginalization and poverty amidst affluence. For example the much discussed idea of reducing working time and introducing a citizen’s income would free more time for associational life (civil society) and for social innovation whilst being less resource intensive. This would be a contribution to conviviality and to the renewal of democracy. (Bregman, 2016)

Part Three: Resources for Change

Introduction

We often are concerned about the resources we need to address the situations of marginalization and injustice, both in terms of direct working with people affected and also in lobbying, advocacy and campaigning for change. Facing this we noticed in our sharing that the most important resource we have is ourselves and the colleagues and congregations and churches we work with. On the other hand we also want to affirm our understanding that the people themselves (who are often termed “beneficiaries”—a word which tends to keep them in their place!) also possess resources and are a resource for change. In this section we want to summarize and present some resources that we found in our group. We have no doubt they can be found more widely and can be encouraged and built up.

Motivation:

From our perspective, we see people and communities suffering and we are motivated by their presence and by our faith to act with them. Very often we find that others also share this motivation. Sometimes we can identify that, as diaconal workers, we have more resources of time or more training which is an important contribution. But we should not allow this to mask the fact that people who may have few material resources and whose time is consumed with survival also have their own motivation and their own faith as well as other assets. One key aim of diaconia should be to build up the strengths of people who are marginalized and to see them



Photo: Ulla Siirto

as key actors for care and in the work for sustainable change. This means starting with face-to-face relationships and group work and building up the confidence to tackle the issues both in everyday life and practice and in terms of political change. In this respect the motivation of people engaged in diaconia can be a critical factor in supporting people in their local context, knowing that this builds the motivation to go further. A convivial society and economy continually strengthens people's motivation because they also see the results of their activity.

Experience:

From our faith perspective, we understand that persons are “relational” and not formed as isolated self-sufficient individuals. Whilst each person has their own identity and dignity as created in the image of God, they develop this personhood in relation to other

people and their environment. Similarly we see the people with whom we work diaconally as also shaped by their relationships and their environment. They also have their own inherent dignity, experience and capacity to act as subjects in their own life. The implication of this insight is that the view of the person as an individualized consumer and isolated decision maker does not correspond to reality and should be replaced with a view of the person as relational. In our work with people and in the development of diaconal action, reflection on experience gives us, and those with whom we work, a valuable resource for future praxis. The experience we have of being people in relation and acting for care and change provides the basis for one key assumption in our work for seeking conviviality.

Relationships:

The core of our work in the Solidarity Group has focused on developing the concept of conviviality as the art and practice of living together. A convivial society is built on inclusive relationships and strengthens the capacity to act. One of the negative effects of competitive globalization, which is exacerbated by new communication technologies, is to leave people isolated. We can see the consequences of this in the rising incidence of mental illness in many European countries. A focus on convivial relationships is a counter-cultural move, which already provides an alternative to the individualistic view of the person as a consumer. When have a sense of belonging, it leads us to be critical of the divided and divisive economic and politics of neo-liberalism. This leads to practical and political action. This aspect is very important politically because many people in “majority communities” in European countries feel disconnected from a sustaining narrative and that political and economic decision makers have “forgotten them.” The result is a fragmentation of identity because it is no longer provided by (relatively) stable structures and roles and which is threatened by the arrival of people who are different. In this situation the danger is of scapegoating those who are different and seeing them (in person) as the cause of the negative developments. Building relationships and achieving change are ways of addressing this situation.

ideas of conviviality. The starting point is the view of the person in relationship to other people and this is already a break with the dominant view taken in economic thought. Far from being an isolated individual, seeking rational economic maximization as the route to fulfillment and happiness, the exciting challenge of creating conviviality can be implemented in contexts with very few resources as well as in more resource rich contexts. The development of life together creates new resources and new possibilities.

The three themes that underpin conviviality—vocation, justice and dignity cast light on the negative economic developments of the last decades. The evidence from the work of the group is that the pressures of employment or the mal-distribution of work have denied many people and even whole communities the possibility of a fulfilling vocation where good work is a valued contribution to the well-being of all. On the other hand, a new perspective on the diaconal vocation of the church is being developed which has also brought new energy and resources into local contexts. The rooting of the Solidarity Group’s life in the biographies and contextual realities of its members has created a grounded spirituality and a recognition of the need for people and communities to develop moments of reflection and worship which are grounded in the struggle for conviviality.

The concept of human dignity with its basis in Christian thought, reinforced by the insights of Lutheran understandings of grace and the fact that ‘people are not for sale’ has led us to a sharp critique of the injustices in the present context. This includes many dimensions of life and care and in particular, the fact that people suffering from ill health, disability or trauma are not able to access care or the care given is not supportive of the dignity of either the care giver or the

recipient. Human dignity concerns the recognition of the equal worth of each person and a convivial economy would ensure respect and the resources to participate in the society at large. On the other hand the conviviality perspective on dignity gives a new impetus to Christians and the churches to reach beyond themselves and to create relationships with forgotten people in forgotten places—with people who are normally not visible in the church community. This challenge is especially acute in relation to the refugee movements in Europe as well as in relation to areas of civil conflict and war.

Justice is the third dimension of conviviality, which is rooted in the witness of the Old Testament prophets as well as in the ministry of Jesus. This gives a solid basis for the recognition that conviviality is denied by economic and political structures and processes that marginalize and exclude people. In our work on conviviality, we have sought to give relevance to this in relation to both the growing inequality and immiseration following on from the financial crisis as well as from political system change and the environmental challenge which is a result of the same financially driven economy.

In this way, we have seen how faith and spirituality are an important resource for seeking conviviality, but on the other hand we notice that the opposite is true! Seeking conviviality in practice is a tremendous resource, strengthening yet challenging faith and enriching spirituality and the understandings of diaconal service.

Faith and Spirituality:

The journey of the Solidarity Group is also a journey to discover new ways of reflecting on diaconal work and new ways of seeing resources and possibilities. The particular focus on convivial economy brings to the front the core

Part Four:

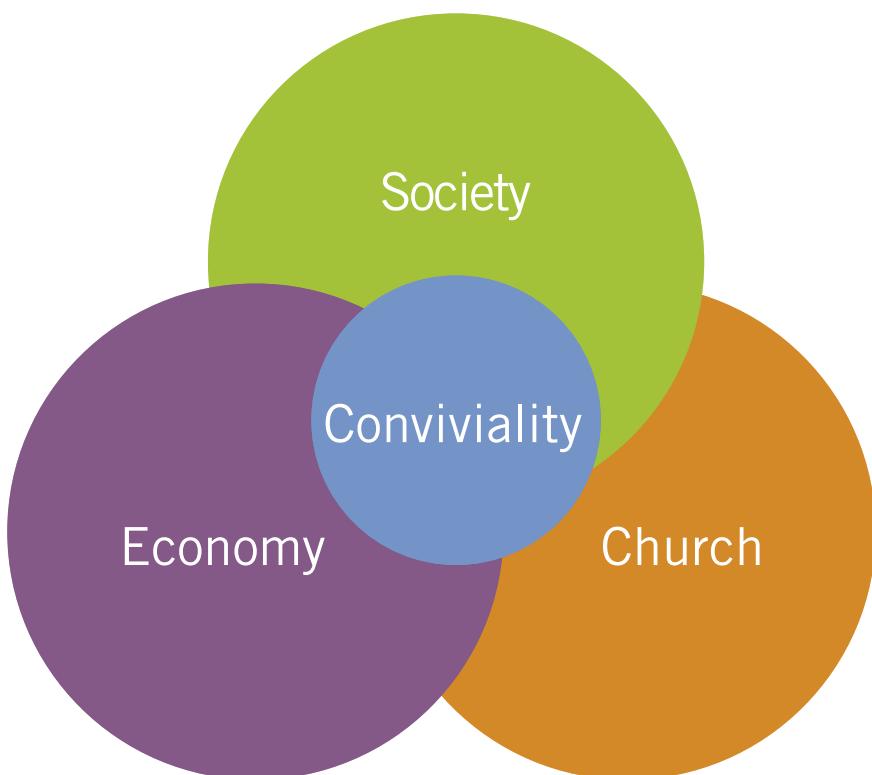
Steps towards a Convivial Economy

Introduction

In the first part of this report we have focused on the implications of taking the concept of conviviality seriously as the basis for examining what is happening to work and economic life. We have seen that there are many negative developments, which combine together to produce societies marked by poverty and people and communities that feel forgotten. When

towards a convivial economy. For sure we cannot work on this alone and it will need networking and collaboration at every level across the boundaries of faith and spirituality and with social movements and civic associations. The people who are suffering most from the negative effects of the present context will be our most important partners in working for transformation. When we think about steps and strategies we are starting with the local

such a shaping force on most countries, whether or not they are members. We are also aware that the pressures to consume increasingly mold people's lives and expectations and that this not only affects political decisions, it drives economic growth. We can see that the development of the consumer and finance driven economy has very negative effects on community and society. We have documented some of these effects in this report, especially as they affect marginalized people and communities. However the impact of the changes in the economy are being experienced even in more affluent contexts, where we are witnessing rising rates of anxiety and clinical depression, increases of substance abuse and heavy drinking and a decline in morale in working life. This is also linked to a loss of trust in society, social isolation and loneliness as well as a lack of participation in politics. The growing inequality and the privatization of public services as well as the reduction in earned incomes especially at the lower end of the labor market all have an impact on this. (Jackson, 2009) Even rich societies do not seem to optimize human flourishing. It seems therefore that change must be sought both from the point of view of human dignity and flourishing but also to deal with the very important issues of the environment that we have discussed in Chapter 3. The implications of these issues, which affect whole societies, forms a link this to the



we examined the situation through our own working experience and through the experience of the groups visited in Manchester we could also see that the conviviality approach underlay the positive action we witnessed. Therefore in this last chapter we would like to share some positive reflections about the possible steps we could take

places because our concern is to work through community diaconia in the direction of conviviality.

Of course, we are also very aware of the need for structural change, including changes in policies of governments and of international political structures. In Europe, this has to include the policies of the European Union, which have

"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God." (Eph. 2 v.19)

concept of conviviality and underpin its importance. A convivial economy would not only be of benefit to marginalized people and communities but to the whole society and the environment.

In this chapter we would like to move from the critique of our present reality and look more constructively to the future convivial economy. The members of our group are all engaged in local contexts, which roots them in the present reality, particularly as it affects “forgotten people in forgotten places.” The tone has been predominantly critical and it is appropriate to our task. But we also found positive examples of local initiatives that point us in a different direction. Christianity is an incarnational religion and Christians are called to be with marginalized people and communities in a struggle to overcome injustice, support participation and work for peace. From a faith point of view it is clear that whilst we most of us are “citizens of a country” we are also conscious that our citizenship is elsewhere, in the kingdom of God. Our kingdom values function as a utopia, which is in sharp contradiction to the core values expressed through the present economy. We are also aware that neo-liberalism functions as a kind of utopia for some, even if in our experience it has dystopian consequences.

The most dangerous aspect of this is that we live in a time when horizons of hope in Europe—at least as we often experience it—have been diminished. Institutions, including institutions of government and leading economic actors shape our options, but we seem to be caught between rampant consumerism, the politics of austerity and the rise of a dangerous strand of nationalism. Resurgent nationalism is accompanied by increasing aggression against minorities and in some cases war and civil conflict. The present society and economy seems to lead in the direction where

people are encouraged to be suspicious of each other and especially of the different “other.” The increasingly ruthless treatment, in some countries, of people who are excluded or living with disabilities and long term illness is justified at the same time as a minority becomes ever more affluent and wealthy. Our positive steps forward have to deal with these fundamental issues in a way that is appropriate for local diaconia and work on a wider regional and international level.

This implies that in order to develop our work we need to create our guiding vision rooted in kingdom values and in seeking conviviality. The key points of this guiding vision should act as a lodestar for our action.

Starting points

We have three different starting points for developing perspectives for action:

- The first and most obvious is that for many of the members of our group, the urgent priority for the people with whom they work is **the sheer fact of economic survival** in hard-pressed urban and rural com-

munities. The fact that is that many people are unable to meet their basic daily needs for food, warmth, energy or housing and also to access the essential services such as health care and this is a strong imperative for action.

- The second starting point is also related to the context and this has two dimensions. First, we face the **global environmental challenges** resulting from highly developed consumer markets that demand more and more production and yet reduced cost of the basics for everyday life. There is no need for further elaboration of this point, which results in rapid resource depletion and also intolerable working conditions in many producer countries. In terms of **food security and sustainability**, the global production systems are a challenge because they create food insecurity in many areas where agriculture is orientated on supplying food—even luxury food—to high income countries. One of the prime causes is the fact that land used for local food production is turned over to intensive production for export.



Photo: Peter Szynka

- The third starting point is related to the fact that the consumer market and the competitive labor market conspire to create shaping conditions for **values and goals that are damaging for personal, family and social life.**

In the next section we explore the ways forward from the perspective of these starting points. We understand that conviviality, as a core concept is a challenge to everyday practice personally as well as in our diaconal engagement and it is important that it is grounded local church life. Therefore we will begin with the ways in which we can develop this approach to create a fruitful context for working on economic and social issues ([Seeking Conviviality](#)), building on the first report from our process. Then we will explore the local possibilities for concrete action towards a convivial local economy ([Seeking a Convivial Local Economy](#)). Finally we will look at the necessary changes in terms of national and international contexts ([Seeking a Convivial Economy](#)).

Seeking Conviviality

If we go to the roots of our thinking about conviviality as the ‘art and practice of living together’ we can find pointers to some very practical approaches to engaging with the issue of work life and the economy. We are concerned with local diaconal practice and before we even begin to engage in developing practical action and working for change, we have to reflect on two aspects:

- First of all, in our local congregations and diaconal organizations, how can we model different ways of relating to each other as well as to those in our local context? How can we create processes and structures that are more inclusive than in the main-

stream economy? We dealt with this issue in the first phase of our work but there is a need to deepen the reflection in terms of economy and local economy. (LWF, 2013)

- Secondly how can we use our Biblical and theological resources to reflect on the way in which our life perspective and even our deepest motivating desires are formed and re-formed by expensive and intrusive advertising? The media saturated context in which we live is constantly shaping and reshaping our desires so that they reflect the offerings to consume in different market places. Through this process, many of our desires are formed by consumer priorities, yet we know from faith and experience that increasing consumption does not itself bring happiness and fulfillment. In fact consumption transforms the idea of happiness into the transient pleasure of consuming, whether it be the things we need for everyday life, survival, housing or, for example holidays. The implicit offer is that if we have more financial resources we can consume more and have more pleasurable moments that will add up to happiness. (Bauman, 2007) This, we believe to be a false prospectus because according to the Christian tradition, happiness and fulfillment are to be found elsewhere. Consumer led desire is restless and endless, as well as being costly to the environment. This is one of the root issues in our culture and it means that as well as working on projects and for change in the direction of justice and inclusion, we need to work on our core beliefs and values as well as visions for the future. In our actions we should seek to embody this perspective.

This process of reflection on everyday life is therefore not an “add-on” to

practical engagement, it is an important foundation for it! In our learning processes from work with children and young people through to adults we can prioritize what we might call the “education of desire.” (Levitas, 2013) We could imagine a curriculum that is built on a Biblical and theological background, which begins to address this issue from childhood through to adulthood and continuing. For example, on a very basic level we often ask children to imagine themselves when they are “grown up.” This can be in terms of relationships and work as well as social, family and community life. In adult education and worship, the concrete and shaping realities of work and economy are not usual topics for reflection. We very often mirror the standard expectations of the wider society, which actually cause exclusion. Furthermore, in very marginalized situations, or for people facing special challenges these standard expectations are meaningless in concrete terms. Economic inclusion in European societies depends on meritocracy and performance and this leads to inevitable exclusion for those who for whatever reason cannot “perform” or who face barriers of different kinds. The more we engage in real communication with the diversity of society, we come to see how limited and limiting consuming desires may be.

We are constantly engaging in telling and retelling the story of our life, who we were, who we are and who we might become. Empathy is built on this ability to see ourselves and others in a different way! Our story is constantly under revision and this is true for everyone else. But the reflection on this is missing especially in terms of work and economy. Furthermore it is a very difficult process for marginalized groups, who are under daily pressure to survive. Not only that, they very often are forced to conform to rules of behavior, which in many cases are felt

to be oppressive, in order to receive a meager income from work or social benefits. Rooting our work in conviviality gives us an approach to deal with this issue. It would be possible to work with people to envision an alternative set of desires and satisfactions and this may lead to practical action and will certainly support it.

This can be described as pastoral or diaconal work, or as educational work. The process of imagining our future selves and communities as otherwise than they are is an essential foundation for transforming local communities and economies. However, in the context of continuous and disruptive imposed change and uncertainty, it is very difficult for people and communities to build up a positive developmental story. Continuous disruption and seemingly arbitrary and imposed change as well as the lack of political engagement with marginalized communities are some of the mainsprings of the switch to the support of authoritarian leadership in politics. People expect that a “strong father figure” as a political leader will create a stable “national family” and a coherent framework for life. We are dealing here with the intersection between local stories and relationships and the wider forces of economic and political change. The tools that we have are rooted in our Christian tradition but can also be enriched by diverse contributions from other traditions. The support and enhancement of a different discourse along with experience of positive change is a most urgent task if we are to avoid resurgent nationalism and xenophobia in Europe. Moralizing is not an effective strategy for change in this context!

To shed some concrete light on these thoughts we could look at the Spanish experience of the Mondragón co-operative complex. Analysts of this organization nowadays see how an elaborated structure of educational,

manufacturing and financial organizations has been developed cooperatively, to become one of Spain’s biggest enterprises. However, it is very important to recognize is that the deep roots of this co-operative are to be found in the 15 years of pastoral work and education, led by the local priest. This preceded the creation of the first initiative (Mondragón, 2016). We draw attention to this example because, although the Mondragón corporation has its limitations, it shows the importance of a long-term perspective with a strategy for personal and community formation as well as for actions in the present moment, which also can be informed by that strategy.

Convivial communities create a space where these kinds of reflections and the consequent practices can take root and people can flourish. In a convivial community people do not treat others as objects or as means to an end. The ability to develop conviviality requires openness and vulnerability rather than certitude and fixed viewpoint. In a context where individuals are valued mainly—or even only—in terms of their contribution to economic life, conviviality seeks the contribution of all to social organization. Grace is a key concept—all have something to give and the gift is unearned and often unexpected. The relations between people are based not on the idea that we are all “the same” but that there are differences, which are not always easily bridged, and contributions that may not immediately be recognized. Conviviality as a basic concept for diakonia engages with this diversity with a vision for the future founded on dignity and human equality. It implies continually reaching out from who and what we are to what we might become and it requires the development of a capacity for critical analysis and creative action.

We can summarize this section with the recognition that in order to create change, even to create local alterna-

tive economic initiatives, we have to work carefully on change ourselves and with those with whom we work, so that we become ‘subjects’ who in turn can create and support change. We often encounter ‘apathy’ and try to deal with it by moralizing, but this is counter-productive especially if people have no experience that they can make a difference (or even do not reflect that they in fact *do* make a difference). Without experience and reflection, it is very difficult to create and sustain motivation. Such changes rarely happen quickly and involve thinking about how to remake our situation and how to transform the everyday ‘realism’ of those around us. In some of the examples we saw in Manchester it became clear that this kind of process, although not elaborated, was implied and that smaller actions built up into larger processes. Good examples we saw in Manchester include the ex-offenders’ group in Salford and the Manchester credit unions. We could see that action, if carried out with creativity and vision creates possibilities! These small-scale interventions are vital in many contexts because of people have lost confidence in their possibility of changing anything for the better.

Seeking a Convivial Local Economy

As people involved in local practice, we have to start with local action, even if we are well aware that there is a need for wider structural change in the economy. This is important not only for marginalized and financially very poor communities but also for the wider society. If we take conviviality as the art and practice of living together, as a way of implementing love of neighbor, then our approach to the local economy will be first of all relational. A relational approach does not start with goals and action plans but with the complexity



Photo: Nicole Borisuk

of the local situations and the different perspectives and interests of diverse groups. This is quite a challenge to the model of local diakonia which is based on a church or agency defining needs and establishing a service to meet those needs (even if it is “voluntary service”). With an orientation on the different “life worlds” present in a locality, where the congregation may also be made up of different groups, it is important to have a starting point which respects this diversity and works with it rather than round it!

Linked to this is the tendency for diakonia to start with a so-called “deficit model” which focuses on the needs and deficiencies in the locality (and often by implication of “other” people and communities). This is not a very motivating basis for action. Therefore apart from the general approach outlined in our first report, we would like to focus local economic action on methods that start with the knowledge,

skills and competences which people already have. These may be formally recognized or be the result of practice and experience. Furthermore it is important to recognize the different routes to expertise in a group. Some people are “experts by experience”—for example a long-term homeless person or a refugee may have valuable expertise about their situation and how to handle it, which will incorporate differences compared to the expertise of a professional worker. To find a relational approach which recognizes and affirms this is very important for empowerment. The approach may be called “starting from strengths” or “use your talents” and links to further steps in analyzing and defining the needs and issues which need to be addressed. Integrated with this approach are processes of local analysis and vision building. (O’Leary, 2011) Then small concrete steps can be designed with people to create new economic

initiatives, starting close to people’s felt needs and without coercion. This approach embodies an understanding of human dignity and is inherently trust building and transparent. In this kind of process the gospel can emerge as a surprise, as a gift from the work with people, rather than as a message that is delivered. With this diaconal approach the church organization can, with others build up a platform for sustainable local economic projects.

Coupled with this approach rooted in everyday life, it is also important to discover the strengths and resources of local informal organizations, voluntary organizations and also municipal and other organizations that hold resources. Actions may involve these resources or working for changes in policy, practice and resource allocation to support local development, as we have seen in the Solidarity Group and in the visited projects in Manchester. From a conviviality perspective, the



Photo: Solidarity Group

most important resources in a locality are the people and then come environmental resources and organizational resources. This is not the place to start a thorough discussion of the kinds of local processes and concrete actions that could be the result of these developments but building on the experience of the Solidarity Group we can identify at least the following:

- Money and currency:** It is important to understand the nature of money and its importance to community well-being. All localities have an income and there is a possibility to foster economic development by ensuring that as much money as possible that comes into a locality circulates in the locality and adds value, so creating jobs. This has implications for the organization of consumption. For example, if people use pay for local services rather than buying in services from large companies based externally it will in most cases have more local impact than if money leaks out! In terms of finance, in our visit in Manchester we saw how a local savings and loan organization can help households survive. A further

development of these ideas is the creation of local currencies, which circulate within one area. As people trade with the local currency, the value remains local and fosters relationships and well-being. Another variant is to create local time banks through which people can trade their different skill (Kennedy et. al., 2012). In these systems, either the local currency or the time can be combined with transferrable currency, for example the Euro or a national currency.

- Energy and Water:** Locally controlled development also has implications for the environment, for example a locally owned decentralized heating system or other energy production can be both more sustainable and contribute to the local economy. The retro-fitting of buildings to be more ecological and the production of new passive buildings can also make a contribution. As part of this the churches can also be certified as eco-friendly, for example the Church of Finland has been implementing an environmental diploma for churches since 2001.

- Food:** In some areas it is possible to increase the production and sale of food and to bring disused land back into use. Another important development is to link up groups in urban areas with local small farmers to create new local distribution systems or to create farm shops/markets in the town.
- Education and Welfare:** In localities where there is a lack of facilities church related organizations and churches can pioneer new services, for example in working with children, young people and families.
- Services:** Local economic development can provide new services and prevent the loss of existing services, for example providing a post office, general store or transport.
- New enterprises:** Building on the talents of people in the locality, new enterprises can be developed.
- Property and land:** In many places there is unused property and vacant land, including church owned property and land, which could be used for new initiatives and the production of food. In some countries it is possible for land and property to be acquired by local economic development groups and this also creates new locally controlled tangible assets.
- New forms of ownership:** Community enterprises can develop under new democratic structures as community enterprises, community development trusts or co-operatives.

(For resources see: Centre for Intercultural Communication; Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland; Felber, 2012, 2015; Hopkins, 2011; New Economics Foundation)

As well as these kinds of concrete economic, social and cultural initiatives working towards a convivial economy can include opening up local municipal decision making, for example on the model of participatory budgeting, so local people can make a direct input to decision making and the decisions made by municipalities are open to scrutiny. This was pioneered in Britain by Church Action on Poverty and is in operation in Salford and many other places. (Participatory Budgeting Network). The possibilities for developing democratic decision making extend beyond normal representative political structures and the development of more participatory forms will revitalize local democracy.

From the perspective of our visits in Manchester we could also experience the possibilities for local church related groups and projects to influence national level political decisions. For example, the work of local Church Action on Poverty groups, working with people in debt and in a national network, brought pressure to bear on companies engaged in lending to poor people at excessive rates of interest and produced not only changes in their practice but a change in legislation on the national level. Work on the local level has also pressured churches, municipalities and private companies to pay a living wage (which is higher than the state minimum wage) to all their employees.

Local actions can pioneer new solutions to economic issues and develop new ways of relating income, work and time as well as developing more environmentally sustainable communities. Linked together these initiatives support change processes on the national and international level. (Felber, 2012, 2015; Hopkins, 2011;)

Seeking a Convivial Economy

Our focus as a Solidarity Group was on local actions, which can create conviviality, but we also recognized that localities are embedded in national and international structures. Thus, whilst there is scope for many local economic initiatives, the shaping conditions can enable or undermine convivial local economies. In the previous section we set forth some suggestions for local convivial economies and we recognized that there are many links between such local initiatives, which can be mobilized to change the external conditions and lead to a convivial economy on a wider scale. We cannot touch on all aspects of policy but here we want to give some main lines for further reflection and action. The churches represent an important space for the development of new thinking, which is based on lived experience of the impact of the present economic and political policies and priorities. We witness this in our group and also in the Manchester visits. If we want to support moves towards a convivial economy the present practices and policies in five key areas will need to change.

Employment Time and Income

First of all, we would like to see a new relationship between employment, time and income. There is a rapid change in the labor markets in Europe and with the technological change more jobs will disappear in their present form. On the other hand in many countries people are working excessively long hours with very precarious working conditions, including time flexibility. This all has a large negative impact on family and community life as well as on health, happiness and well-being. Unemployment on the other hand is becoming increasingly precarious because in some cases there is no financial support and in others the conditions surrounding receipt of the low level of support is very coercive. If we also factor in environmental questions we can see that the present drive for growth and consumption coupled with labor market stress do not create a sustainable economy or support human flourishing.

In our work on the local economy we can see at least some seeds of a more meaningful economy that contributes to a greater sense of well-being and fulfillment for both the producers and consumers. In such community



Photo: Peter Szynka



Photo: Peter Szynka

based or social enterprises, local energy projects, food co-operatives and so on as well as in a wealth of mutual aid organizations people learn new skills and inter-relatedness is supported. They are already standing in contradiction to the time poor, materialistic economy in which most of us spend most of our lives. (McKibbin, 2007)

On top of this there is a growing need in European societies for in-person services in the personal and social services, social care and health fields. This sector represents work which is both needed and which with the right conditions provides fulfilling work for people. On top of that it does not make heavy demands on the environment. Yet such work if it is not in the profit making market is regarded as "worthless" because it does not add value and the productivity level is not growing. In fact as we saw in Manchester, the search for cost reduction and productivity produces work, which is low paid, stressful and does not achieve the social care objectives in a dignified way. These services depend on human interaction and

the diminution of this undermines the quality of the output. (Jackson, 2009) The expansion and quality improvement of these services would support the human flourishing by creating satisfying work and quality services. Such services are not normally internationally traded and therefore for the conventional pressure for increased productivity to maintain competitiveness does not apply (assuming we accept a conventional economic argument which emphasizes global competition as a driver).

Looking at employment in other sectors, we have seen that productivity gains lead to structural unemployment and with the increasing use of new technologies more jobs will be destroyed. The total hours required in the national economy will gradually (maybe suddenly) fall and the result is usually unemployment. Paradoxically, at the moment working hours in many contexts have been increasing and labor productivity in Europe has not been rising as fast as previously. But the introduction of more self-operating systems will increase the pressure.

This presents an opportunity to reduce once again the working hours, improve working conditions and maintain a stable income, especially if we are not focused on economic growth as a main goal. This has been pioneered in Sweden and in France, although there is pressure to reverse the development in France. Research shows that with a shorter working week, workers are more productive in fact and more satisfied with their work, take less time off due to illness and maintain better health.

These changes work best in economies where the inequality is not so great and where the education and training system can ensure a ready supply of suitably qualified workers. This implies the need for a more strongly redistributive tax and social security system, or the establishment of such a system where it does not exist. A logical extension of this approach would be to implement a basic or citizen's income, which would accrue to each citizen or denizen of a particular country and would be set at a level which would enable normal

participation in society. This would require a change in the taxation structure but has been costed and there are ongoing pilot projects to test the feasibility of such a system. (Basic Income Earth Network, Levitas 2013) Such a basic income approach would need to be matched with improved or well-functioning public services, particularly in the fields of health, education and welfare and would be a less punitive and coercive way of handling the rapid labor market changes we are experiencing in Europe. Basic income at an adequate level would represent a gain for human dignity, give the possibility for everyone to participate and develop and give opportunities for gift and grace. Without such a possibility we face either the indignity of enforced idleness or the compulsion to work in undignified conditions.

Changing the relationship between employment-based work, income and time would lead to less stress, less resource consumption and would enable social relations and associational life to flourish. More inclusive and convivial relationships can be enabled by providing income security, a more egalitarian framework and re-evaluation of the place of care in the widest sense and education in its inclusive (less instrumental) sense. Time and economic security would provide the basis for the re-creation of a vibrant civil society—the creation of a context that is beyond the intimate family and not part of a market relationship. We catch a glimpse of this in the choices some young professionals already make to forego income and spend time working in the local community and with their family. Another glimpse is in the lives of people who already have an income more or less guaranteed through their pension and who work in local food systems, provide support for refugees and asylum seekers and do other valuable social tasks. Some of these tasks such as working in food

banks would not be needed if the system of basic income was introduced and time would be released for other forms of associational life. All manner of such initiatives already exist and are well documented, if not exactly headline news! (Hopkins, R., 2011, Transition Network)

During the last four hundred years we have witnessed a growing commodification, first of food and clothing and later of many other goods and services. This abundance has been possible because of the work of people, which converts time into money and thence purchasing power. This development now encompasses culture (in its broadest sense), learning and leisure.

Our societies also mark by the fact that for many people to survive they have to work more and more hours, as we have seen this leads to a reduction in health and personal and social well-being. In the Judeo- Christian tradition there is an emphasis on the need for human and creational rest. This gives us a basis to reflect on the contemporary meaning of Sabbath. Time is a social construct and maybe Sabbath can be seen an act of defiance against the dominant culture and its relentless productivity. (Brueggeman, 2016)

Financial Institutions

Secondly, as we have seen, debt is a major problem at the personal and community level as well as in many cases at the state level. This is an issue with profound Biblical and theological roots (LWF, 2015). A very important structural change would be to regulate the banking system so that debt would be controlled and created in the interests of the common good rather than creating debt as means of making money from money. (Block et. al., 2016) This would entail a splitting of domestic private banking from investment banking and controls on the

creation of debt by both domestic and investment banks. A mixture of legislation and taxation, using for example, the idea if a transaction tax on international currency movements to dampen speculative short-term investments, could be applied to implement controls on the financial sector. This would be a ‘top-down’ change, which would bring a more ethical perspective into banking and finance. A financial system with a convertible currency is needed to deal with international transactions and we also need a national financial system but this should be balanced with local financial institutions and even local currencies, which balance the dependency on national currency denominated transactions. Such a policy shift could be complemented by creating a more supportive frame for local financial institutions such as ethical banks and credit unions, enabling them also to support local social and economic initiatives as well as providing a savings and loan facility which would be of great benefit for the people with lower incomes.

Recreating the Commons

Coupled with these changes in the financial system, there is also a need to reflect further on what has been called “the commons.” The allusion here is to the per-industrial society where there was a measure of common land and common equipment, which all people could use. The most typical example is common land, which still exists in some places. This land was available for all people to enable food for everyday life to be supplied. The industrial system was built on the fact that the enclosure and privatization of the common land forced people to work in the emerging factory system or to emigrate. The “new commons” are the services on which we depend for everyday life including transport, energy and water for example. The assets these services

are built on were very often publicly provided through local government or by subscription. In recent years the privatization of these assets has in many cases allowed quasi monopolies to be built up which, by using accepted market models, remove services from non-profitable areas (such as rural

transport) and deny services to many on marginal incomes. On top of that they claim state subsidies to maintain services of general interest such as transport and postal services. In this way the former public service systems now operate as private profitable businesses with public support from the

state. The gaps are filled, if at all, by associational and co-operative ventures such as community transport. Rather than continuing with this discriminatory model, services of general interest ("the modern commons") should operate in the interest of the common good and should be returned to some form of public ownership, which recognizes their basic nature. In this way they could also dovetail with locally provided services in the same field. There are examples of this in the field of energy supply where the major provider is a municipal company (with the goal of reducing dependence on fossil fuels) complemented by small local providers of heat and power, for example in rural areas and urban neighborhoods. In this way the strengths of decentralized systems and an overall network could be maintained for the common good of all.

In other areas we can see the emergence of common goods—for example in publishing the Creative Commons initiative enables the publishing and use of material which has a copyright assigned to it and which enables the use of the content according to specified rules. This is a different approach to that of conventional publishing, which uses copyright rules to prevent access and sharing. In other fields such as computing a similar development is taking place through the promotion of open source software of which Linux is the best-known example.

Renewing and Extending Democracy

Earlier in this report we dealt extensively with the problem of corruption. In this chapter we would like to explore the forms of governance and political participation, which would be implied by a more sustainable and transparent economy. As workers involved in local diakonia we see the results of the way in which political decision makers shape the dominant

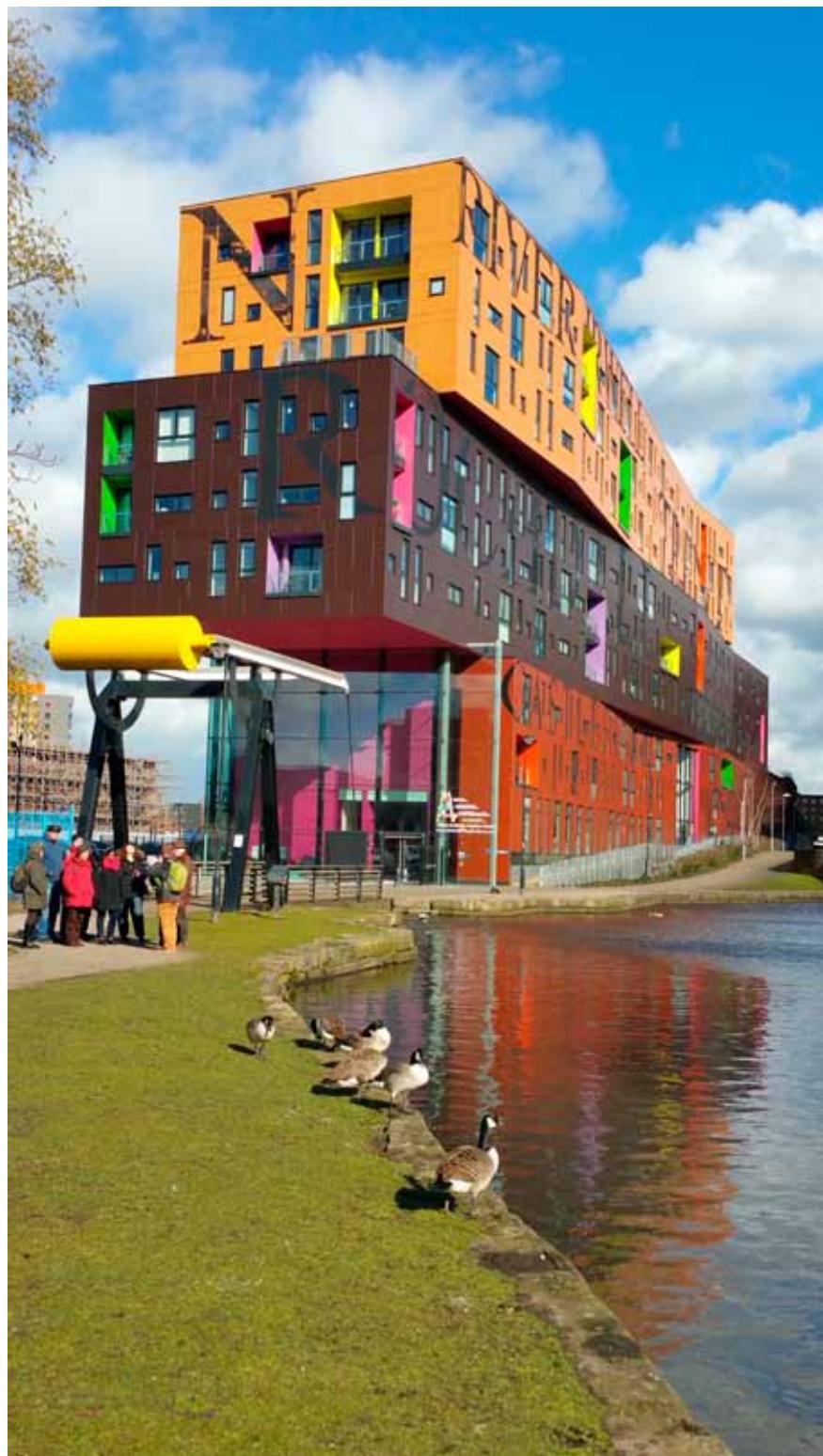


Photo: Peter Szynka

economic ideas. The deregulation of the finance system which privileges financial transactions that enable financial institutions to make money from money rather than investing for the common good is one case in point. Governments, acting in the interests of private investors, have promoted the privatization of the commons (water, energy etc.) Taxation systems have been increasingly skewed away from redistribution towards a reduction of taxes on corporate income, higher earners and those with large amounts of unearned income and wealth. This has been enabled by the decisions of formally elected democratic governments, which are closely tied to the interests of large enterprises and major investors. There is a kind of revolving door between political and economic elites and the power of economic lobbies combined with the exchange of elites facilitates a consensus that has increasingly ignored the common good of all. (Felber, 2012, 2015)

We also witness the power of media linked to this system, which promotes the same ideas. This is one side of the problem. The other side is the corruption of political decision making on a high level but also in local communities in various contexts. This points us in the direction of the need for a change in democratic structures and processes. This is needed both for transparency and for the redirecting of economic decisions so that they support equity rather than exacerbating divisions and that they underpin sustainable local economic development rather than benefitting disruptive placeless capital.

As already mentioned, in our visit to Manchester we saw one example of a small initiative aiming to create a shift, albeit small, in the decision making process through participatory budgeting. Such instruments are a school for economic management. Other small initiatives include the emerging practice

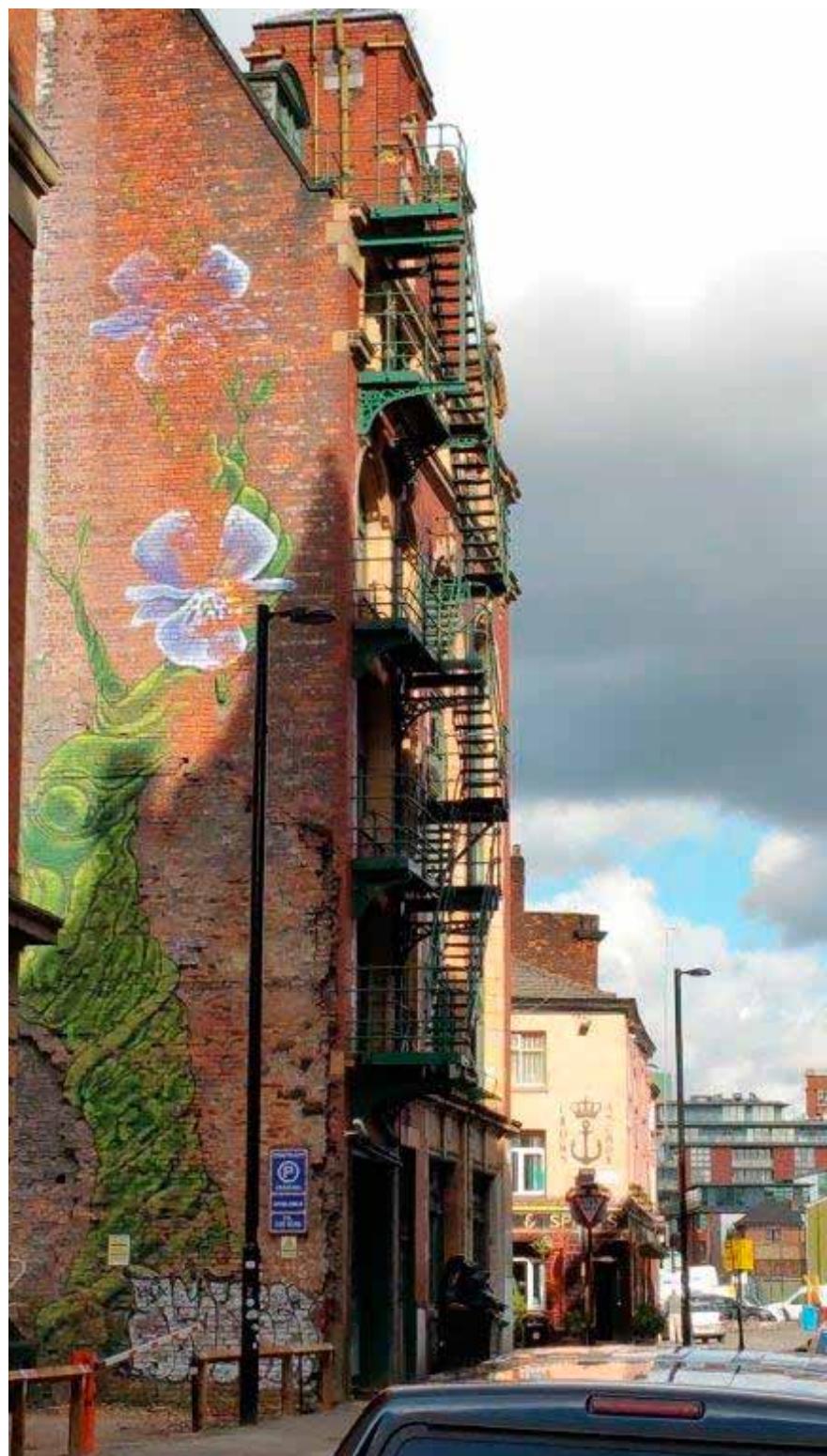


Photo: Peter Szynka

of local governments making public the concrete decisions about local economies (including the terms of contracts for goods and services) so that they can be scrutinized. However, the present democratic system is, through the electoral process, designed rather to

limit democratic participation and in general terms the participation in political parties in Europe has declined dramatically, with few exceptions.

The paradox is that as a result of disillusion and insecurity, the tendency has rather been in the direction of pro-

test led by apparently strong populist and authoritarian leaders. On the other hand there is, as we have seen, a huge number of local initiatives seeking to create new forms of social, cultural and economic action which also have a political goal, but which only episodically achieve public attention.

These findings lead us to question the limitations of the present democratic structures and processes and to think through the meaning of basing democracy on conviviality. This would not totally supplant classical democracy but would envisage a more open participatory form of decision-making that could be allied with an elaborated form of direct democracy such as exists in some European countries, regions and localities. Such a process could be complemented by a more democratic structure for the management of enterprises so that all stakeholders could be represented.

Economy for Sustainability

The final topic that we need to address is that of sustainability, which is embedded in the discussions about work, income and time as well as the financial system and democratic participation. Nevertheless, we would like to highlight some key points. We participate in the life of society through employment, work and activity, which

contribute to human flourishing and community development. Through our engagement we create and recreate the social world and find our place in it but we recognize that there are ecological limits, which should be placed on human activity. These have to be informed by what we have learnt about the ecology of the planet and various threats caused by human activity and sheer population growth. Limits should be embedded in all the working principles of the economy and included in legislative frameworks at appropriate levels of governance. The production of goods and services should make a contribution to human flourishing and conviviality and should have a low material and energy consumption and throughput. It goes without saying that people and households should have a decent livelihood and access to quality services of general interest. As we have seen it is not only the question of what is produced and the sustainable use of resources it also concerns the form of work organization and the relationship between work, income and time. Human interaction or conviviality is at the heart of enterprises whether they are socially and cooperatively owned or privately owned and operated. Local community economies will become more important but industrial activities such as construction, manufacturing and food production

will also continue but under criteria linked to environmental and social sustainability. For example, construction must prioritize refurbishment and upgrading of existing buildings where possible as well as the construction of new buildings that are sustainable and repairable.

Financial intermediation is necessary but it will be organized in a more stable, long-term framework less dependent on monetary expansion. (Jackson, 2009) Investment will be geared to increasing energy efficiency and the reduction of the use of natural resources, increasing use of low carbon technology and the creation and support of public assets and local organized services (a renewed commons). This would be a significant shift in financial strategy away from ever increasing short-term returns on capital deployed towards longer-term commitments to a sustainable economy. Crucial transformations would be in investment in activities that are ecologically sustainable and more locally rooted service-based activity, which is more labor intensive.

Part Five: Conclusions

In this conclusion we would like to summarize some of the main points, which are important for local action towards a convivial economy. We have not produced a blueprint but would like to give some directions. The report has examined a number of concrete issues that are relevant to the field according to the experience in different contexts and working fields. We described and elaborated these concerns in Chapter Three. The main direction of our work has been to identify approaches to local diaconia which address the key challenges and which can be used in many contexts. The starting point for our reflection is the local church and local diaconal actors and building on the report *Seeking Conviviality* (The Lutheran World Federation, 2013) we have produced a check list out of our work on diaconia and the local economy:

Key Points for Local Church Life

- ✓ Develop congregational life as a model for a new pattern of inclusive relationships as a counterpoint to existing economically driven institutions
- ✓ Using traditional symbols and actions, for example in the Eucharist, to demonstrate a sharing, grace filled economy
- ✓ Creating learning programmes which are focused on “educating the deepest desires” of people as a counter to the education of desire by the consumer market
- ✓ Changing the culture of the congregation so that it becomes an open and accepting space for others



Photo: Edgars Pohevics

Retelling the story of the congregation in the place so that it becomes a resource for change in a time when people sense disruption and discontinuity

- ✓ Using the rhythm of congregational life to build a convivial community through sharing life, food, reflection and celebration
- ✓ Optimizing the use of church land and property to support convivial living and a convivial economy.

The second check list concerns working specifically on local initiatives to create a sustainable economy. It necessarily focuses on basic needs but incorporates ideas about methodology and about the kinds of concrete local initiatives already underway or which could be envisaged. The Bibliography lists some sources for this work, which can be used to inspire local ideas, but the main direction is to work with a process grounded in the talents and

strengths of people in the locality. In other words to start with capabilities rather than deficits! Furthermore, we should not lose sight of the fact that in many contexts the churches are still the owners of appreciable assets, not only finance, but buildings in the midst of communities and also investments in land a property. The church itself can make a large contribution to conviviality by creatively using its resources to support local ventures and meet local needs. For example land can be made available for food production or buildings for offering housing to homeless people or refugees.

Key Points for local Diaconal Work on Issues of Work and Economy

- ✓ Instead of starting with goals, plans, projects and resources start with relationship building and work inductively

✓ Change the “service model” away from the church or congregation as a provider of services to working collaboratively as a partner, using the resources of the people and the groups in the locality (starting from strengths)

✓ Place the emphasis in diaconal work on participation, trust building and transparency

✓ Create small scale actions which gradually build confidence on the basis of people's knowledge, skills and interests

✓ Step by step create a new vision for the local economy through local initiatives and collaboration in a variety of sectors: food, energy, water, finance, transport, care, etc.

✓ Challenge local decision makers to join in the process and to open up economic decision making to participation and challenge unjust practices in the local economy

✓ Out of the working process create a convivial community with new visions for the future so overcoming apathy and resignation

The third check list is related to the need to press for a change in the

framework that governs the economy, work and the environment. This is a huge field and we have just extricated some key issues from our work in the Solidarity Group. The important point is not to separate working on these issues from local action. As we know from our work and as we discovered in Manchester, local action can influence national and even international policies. The factors of networking and using different organizational resources and strategies are also important. However, if our focus is on local economic empowerment and conviviality, the connecting of local groups is a vital dimension.

of long term support for local and wider sustainable initiatives and away from disruptive speculation

✓ Reclaim “the commons” so that services such as energy and transport on which a convivial life depends are provided on the basis of need and access and that quality is maintained and controlled

✓ Renew and extend democratic processes and structures on local regional and national levels and ensure the democratic development of international structures which shape economic conditions

✓ Test all policies in the fields of economy, land use and work for their environmental and social impact and press for the orientation of financial, planning and taxation policy to support sustainability and protect the environment.

✓ Ensure that the church is a living wage employer and has good working conditions and that it uses its resources, including land and property to support a convivial economy.

Key Points for a Framework for a Convivial Economy

✓ Support a new division of work (employment), time and income so that work conditions support conviviality and all have a livable income

✓ Create a supportive legislative framework for new forms of local economic, social and financial initiatives

✓ Work to change the framework of financial institutions in the direction

Appendix 1

Summary of the Report

Introduction

In this Chapter, the link between economy and the idea of conviviality is explored and the structure of the report is explained. The report is based on the three sub themes of the conviviality concept: Vocation, Justice and Dignity and the five working group themes: Work and Welfare, Debt, Migration, Corruption and Transparency and Environment and Creation

Part One: Conviviality and Economy

In this Chapter we explore the three dimensions of conviviality in relation to work and the economy:

Vocation

This refers to the calling of people to work for the common good and the welfare of people.

Work can be divided into employment or other work, which is done for payment, the work we need to survive everyday which is without payment and activities that contribute to enjoyment and social life.

The division has changed over time and more and more work has become employment.

A convivial economy would ensure that the quality of employment and relationships in the workplace as well as what is produced would contribute to welfare and conviviality as well as the protection of the environment



Photo: Ulla Siirto

Justice

The gap between rich and poor in terms of both income and wealth is increasing. Inequality as we experience it today has a negative economic impact.

A high level of inequality affects social welfare and undermines conviviality.

A convivial economy would prevent marginalization, reduce environmental degradation and support sustainable food production. It would also help prevent forced migration and support associational life

Working long and irregular hours for poverty pay is an increasing phenomenon that prevents conviviality and often leads to mental or physical illness.

A convivial economy would ensure basic needs are met and that people would not have to overwork to support a family. A so-called basic income would provide a floor for every one resident in each country.

Each person would also have access to good quality health education and welfare.

Dignity

The present economic system is leading to more stressful working conditions for many and wages are being depressed to increase profitability especially among middle and low income groups.

Part Two: Five Key Themes

In this Chapter we examine the themes the group identified as critical for work, welfare and economy in Europe:

Work and welfare

The welfare system faces three major challenges—a demographic challenge due to aging populations in Europe; A generational challenge, because the under 30 year old population experiences high levels of unemployment and worse working conditions than the previous generation; A regional challenge because the different regions of Europe have suffered because of the banking crisis, increasing debt and the problems faced by formerly centrally planned economies.

The responses to these challenges include the creation of social enterprises and community based initiatives that build on people's participation. Large scale service providers have also responded to the challenge and face particular problems of financing services in the changing economic framework, which is more market oriented.

Debt

Indebtedness destroys conviviality but we have to distinguish between different kinds of debt, ranging from short-term survival debt, which is often a trap for poor people, debt for purchasing a house or consumer goods and the debts of public bodies, which may underpin future economic development. These different kinds of debt have serious outcomes for households, communities and whole nations. Indebtedness on the state level (perhaps as a result of the financial crisis) has led to austerity policies, which tend to make matters worse!

The response to this problem includes organizing local savings and loan systems, campaigning for fair conditions for borrowers and politically advocating a different approach to austerity which does not involve cut backs in welfare and other services. Pursuing these solutions involves working together and seeking conviviality locally,

which links up into national and even international action.

Migration

Migration is not a new phenomenon but it is increasing and has complex and diverse causes. The framework of migration is different for citizens of the European Union, within the European Union and for those from outside. People from outside the European Union may migrate for economic reasons or to join other family members as well as because environmental change or pollution affects their life and work. Asylum seekers and refugees arrive in Europe as the result of uprootedness because of war, civil conflict or similar phenomena, where people fear for their survival. Europe has faced new movements of uprooted and displaced people in the last 10 years as well as increasing migration flows. But actually Europe has an aging population and requires migration in the coming years.

Conviviality as the art and practice of living together offers an approach to working with people who have migrated, who maybe have arrived in countries as asylum seekers, eventually to become refugees. Processes of integration, where both traditional residents and new immigrants are ready to share, perhaps even to change are a very important.

Corruption & Transparency

Corruption is part of everyday life for many communities represented in the solidarity group. It affects people and communities in smaller or larger ways and it also is a feature of some large economic and political structures which may also be corrupted and take money from or allocate money to illegitimate projects.

Corruption is most successful where there is a lack of transparency

in decision-making and therefore to create a more participatory approach to governance is an important key in the fight against corruption. What we see from experience and can find also in the Bible is that small-scale local corruption only really thrives when it is legitimized by large-scale systemic corruption.

Corruption destroys trust, which is both a basis and outcome of conviviality. The problem was identified in the Biblical narrative and was a dominant issue in Martin Luther's time. To work for a convivial economy means creating transparent structures in church, society and the economy so that it corruption cannot flourish.

Creation and the Environment

The link between ecology and economy is clear and the quality of life and even longevity are adversely affected by unsustainable economic activities, not least of which is the use of carbon fuels. The impact of industrialization on the environment was very clear in the visit in Manchester and the group focused on what could be done to work towards a convivial economy with less negative environmental impact.

One key entry point is the creation and enforcement of new frameworks for environmental protection but the underlying need is also to create a positive vision of the 'good life for all' to supplant the present vision of a good life through consuming more and more.

Part Three: Resources for Change

In this Chapter we identify the resources for change, recognizing that the most important resource for change is people and local communities, congregations and churches as well as associations.

Four aspects can be identified:

- **Motivation** to respond to the suffering of people and communities as well as to the degradation of the environment
- **Experience** of working with people on the basis of affirming human dignity and by creating new initiatives which transcend the idea of a person as a consumer
- **Relationships** between people, based on trust and transparency are an import resource for conviviality and for working for change
- **Faith and Spirituality** is expressed in the work of groups engaged in action towards a convivial economy represent an important resource for change and on the other hand seeking conviviality enriches spirituality and the understanding of diaconal service



Photo: Ulla Siirto

Addressing Personal and Societal Values

However, the most important underlying issue is the question of the way in which the consumer market shapes personal and societal values and goals, which are actually damaging for personal, family and social life.

systems, energy and water supply, food, property and land.

- **Seeking a Convivial Economy** implies the linking of local actions into a wider network which address some of the key issues such as employment, time and income, finance and debt and recreating the idea of the commons as a public sphere of important resources which all should be able to access. This also implies renewing and extending democracy and working on the disconnection between people and the processes and structures of government.

Part Four: Steps Towards a Convivial Economy

In this Chapter we outline the starting points for working towards a convivial economy are different for the diverse European context:

Entry Points

For some people and communities, the sheer fact of daily economic survival is uppermost but for others the global environmental challenges, which maybe expressed through local issues, are the most critical entry points. This also includes issues of food security and sustainability as well as of the production of goods and services.

Action towards a Convivial Economy

We identify steps that have to be taken on three levels:

- **Seeking Conviviality**—reflecting on everyday life and using Biblical and theological resources to develop alternatives to the narrative of successful consumerism. This is an agenda for diaconal, educational and pastoral work
- **Seeking a Convivial Local Economy**—using an approach that starts from the local people having resources of skills, knowledge and competence that are rooted in the reality of everyday life. Then concrete actions can be developed, focusing on key issues local initiatives in such areas as local financial

Part Five: Conclusions

In this Chapter the main points towards a convivial economy are summarised in action points for:

- Local church and congregational life,
- Local diaconal work and
- The creation of a new framework for a convivial economy



Photo: Solidarity Group

Appendix 2

LWF accompaniment of the Follow-up Process: Seeking Conviviality— Re-forming Community Diakonia

1. The European Diaconal Process is part of the Department for Mission and Development Capacity for Diakonia Program

The LWF makes use of its unique position both reaching deep to the grassroots and having representation in global policy making forums.

The Capacity for Diakonia program seeks to accompany and strengthen member churches in developing capacities and mechanisms to advocate against structural and systemic violence. Processes of mutual accompaniment enable member churches to develop capacities for prophetic diakonia and contribute towards affirming and defending dignity. The promotion of human rights increases awareness and empowers actions for responsible citizenship in societies.

The Capacity for Diakonia program aims at accompanying and empowering the LWF member churches by facilitating different kinds of training, promoting mutual learning as well as collaborative exchanges between churches, networks, and related diaconal organizations. This allows member churches to enhance the quality and effectiveness of their diaconal interventions on issues related to human rights, gender and child rights, access to income, awareness and ad-

vocacy on HIV and AIDS, climate and ecological justice, sustainable livelihood, advocacy and peace building.

The experience and knowledge available in the existing networks in the member churches and diaconal institutions are an important resource for the program. From that knowledge, training materials will be developed on aspects like climate justice, overcoming poverty and HIV and AIDS. As part of this program the LWF will support the follow-up process of the work developed by the Solidarity Group of the European Diaconal Process. The focal themes of the process: vocation for transforming service, community, dignity and justice enrich the values and strategic directions of the LWF. Furthermore, the process will also gain from connection to the learning and good practice of the global communion.

2. The European Diaconal Process contributes to capacity building for diakonia in the global Lutheran communion

The LWF enhances sharing of learning and good practice in diakonia among the LWF regions. One instrument for global exchange is the concept of global virtual conferences on diakonia. In

2013, participants from the European Diaconal Process contributed to the Global Virtual Conference on Diakonia held under the theme “Stand up and Walk (Mk 2)”, with two activities: a workshop on Life Together—Diakonia for communities, using the material from the Diaconal Process; and a thematic forum on Training Volunteers for Diakonia. The resources from virtual conferences are available on line on the LWF website: <http://lwfconference.lutheranworld.org>

3. The Process contributes to the development of a theological and pedagogical basis for capacity development in the LWF

The statement, “Growing together in capacity for holistic mission—a theological framework for LWF communion learning” was approved by the LWF Council in June 2013. It underlines participatory and empowering methods of learning, drawing from concepts and good practice in Africa, Latin America, and in Europe, including from the “bottom up” working method used in the European Diaconal Process. At the LWF Council in 2013, the General Secretary expressed his appreciation of what he sees developing

into the “pedagogy of the communion:” “If the LWF is really to move to become a polycentric communion, we need to do something about the ‘pedagogy of the communion.’ How is it that we intend to teach and learn, to accompany and admonish, to mutually support us towards increased maturity as we continue journeying together?” and he continues, underlining that the participatory concept reflected in the Seeking Conviviality document “provides an important foundation for the task of developing pedagogical models for the LWF communion of churches.”

4. Program plans ahead

According to the LWF Department for Mission and Development program plans for 2017-2018, approved by the LWF Council in June 2016 the following goals and results are anticipated:

- LWF member churches diaconal networks are strengthened and platforms are provided on various thematic areas of engagement to facilitate mutual learning, sharing of knowledge and experiences across the communion.

- Identified member churches and/or related diakonia organizations are supported and equipped to engage in new initiatives around migration and increase their capacity for implementing the SDG agenda.
- The LWF member churches are equipped with contemporary advocacy skills on the protection and promotion of human rights focused on gender justice, child rights, climate and ecological justice as active agents of change through local and global mechanisms.

Expected results in the next phase 2017 and 2018:

- Member churches’ leaders in different capacities as well as diakonia practitioners are applying/multiplying insights gained through mutual learning on themes such as migration, HIV and AIDS, climate justice and poverty.
- At least 50 member churches and related diakonia organizations participate in capacity development initiatives; with special focus on promoting human rights advocacy,

gender justice, child rights, climate and ecological justice, HIV and AIDS and engaged on activities around the SDGs.

- Diakonal workers are able to link their on-going work to the SDGs and access relevant related resources, including funding, networks and material.

5. Methodology

The results and achievements of the European Diaconal Process (2013-2016) will be presented to church leadership and assembly delegates at the LWF European Pre-Assembly and Reformation Anniversary in Höör, Sweden in February 2017. Printed materials will be disseminated and a workshop session on conviviality will be offered to all Pre-Assembly participants. An evaluative report on the European Diaconal process will be published in early spring 2017. A workshop on conviviality as diaconal practice will be organized as a side event (at the Omatala space) during the LWF Twelfth Assembly in Namibia.

In the second half of 2017 an international group of multipliers will be identified. A workshop on convivial theology and migration will be organized.

6. Connection to the Reformation Anniversary

The period from 2015-2017 is the core time for commemorating the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation and the year 2017 has a special importance throughout the global Lutheran communion. The focal points of the commemoration in 2017 are regional Pre-Assemblies, the LWF Assembly in Namibia in May and the Reforma-



Photo: Ulla Siirto

tion Day, which most of the Lutheran churches are celebrating on 31 October. However the main idea is not just to have a one-day celebration but to build up to the celebration with activities on every level across the communion. The European Diaconal Solidarity Group is seeking to ensure that the activities started in previous years are sustainable into the future.

The main LWF Assembly theme proposed is “Liberated by God’s Grace” and this is intended to lead to an exploration of themes including the idea that Christians are free to serve their neighbor, that they are responsible citizens in the world and stewards of creation. The central idea of grace contrasts sharply with the idea that nowadays “everything is for sale!” Three key sub themes are proposed, which link into the themes developed by the Solidarity Group:

- Salvation—not for sale, which handles the doctrine of justification and freedom to serve the neighbor

- Human beings—not for sale, which emphasizes the uniqueness of each person created in God’s image and therefore all must be fully respected in dignity and integrity. This relates to some of the key themes about economic and social policy and diaconal practice covered in this report, including policies that increase poverty and homelessness as well as such issues as trafficking and bad working conditions.
- Creation—not for sale, which focuses on creation care and the understanding that human beings should not plunder the earth and that its rich resources should not be exploited for profit especially when they are the basis of well-being (for example water).

Czech Republic, many church leaders consider this outcome paper to be a stimulus for actions around the Reformation Anniversary and beyond.

The first report on Re-forming Community Diakonia, *Seeking Conviviality*, been translated and published in different languages (most recently in 2016 into Polish) and is being actively used in various contexts. A handbook with six Bible studies has been published on line as part of the work of the group. The Solidarity Group hopes that the work reported in that first report and this paper on Conviviality and Economy will be further developed and that the convivial re-formation of community diakonia will become one of the central elements in the celebration in 2017 and its follow up!

Having introduced the draft first report on Re-forming Community Diakonia to the 2012 LWF European Church Leader’s Consultation, held in Ostrava,



Photo: Peter Szynka

Appendix 3

The Manchester Consultation

| European Diaconal Process: Workshop on Convivial Economy Manchester, Great Britain, March 2 – 6, 2015 | | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Mon., March 2 PREPARATIONS | Tues., March 3 ENCOUNTERING MANCHESTER | Wed., March 4 ANALYSIS | Thurs., March 5 REFLECTION | Fri., March 6 PRACTICE |
| Meeting of the team (arrived on Sunday, March 1) | Breakfast | 7:30 – 8:15 | Breakfast | Breakfast |
| | | 8:30 | Morning devotion Finnish team – Ulla Siirto, Maria Kulju, | Morning devotion combining Bibl. reflection & introduction to the theme – Fritz Banz |
| 9.00 | Introduction to Visits Niall Cooper | 09:00 – 10:30 | Session 1 Introductions: Participants, venue, the theme & 5 sub themes Short introduction: Convivial Economy | Session 5 Thematic groups: theological, ethical theme components |
| Visit to Manchester neighbourhoods and projects | | 10:30 – 11:00 | Coffee break | Session 9 Agreements on • Collaborative actions • Networking & sharing of good practice • Resolution/Statement |
| Lunch at projects | | 11:00 – 12:15 | Session 2 Five thematic working groups: 1. Debt: 2. Corruption Transparency: 3. Welfare & Work: 4. Migration: 5. Creation/environment: | Session 6 Short introduction: The overall economic model background Groups Work: Mixed groups from all 5 themes – critique of the overall model, alternatives? Blessing for travel |
| 15.00 Pump House Museum | | 12:30 – 14:00 | Lunch | Session 10 What we bring home Feedback Outlook / Programme plans ahead |
| 16.00 Reflections on the visits; Implications for ‘Seeking Conviviality’ | | 14:00 – 15:30 | Session 3 Working groups continued, analysis formulated and proposals developed | Lunch |
| 17.15 Taxi to LKH | | 15:30 – 16:00 | Session 4 , plenary: Bringing together the groups' analysis and proposals | Departures Regional groups: How to move ahead – aims, goals, collaborators, etc. |
| Arrival of participants | | 16:00 – 17:45 | Coffee break | Session 8 Groups continued, Plenary: Common issues |
| Dinner | Dinner 18.45 | 18:00 – 18:15 | Evening devotion Bishop Martin Lind | Evening devotion Maria Halldén |
| 19.30 Welcomes and Introduction | 20.00 Lounge Social evening with intercultural snacks | 18.45 | Dinner Free time | Dinner Exhibition of good practice, invited local guests from visits, host organisations, party |

Appendix 4

Manchester Consultation, Participant list

| Title | Name | Organization | Country |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Ms | ADAMEOVÁ Janka | International Academy for Diaconia and Social Action | Czech Republic |
| Rev | ADDY Tony | International Academy for Diaconia and Social Action | Czech Republic/Austria |
| Ms | BISWASI Pranita (LWF Youth) | Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church | India |
| Mr | BLANZ Fritz | Diakonisches Werk Bayern/Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria | Germany |
| Ms | BORISUK Nicole | Living Hope NGO | Ukraine |
| Mrs | CLAESSON Gunnell | Church of Sweden | Sweden |
| Rev | ERAKER Steinar | The Church City Mission in Norway / Church of Norway | Norway |
| Mrs | GALIMOVA Luba | German Evangelical-Lutheran Church in the Ukraine | Ukraine |
| Ms | HALLDÉN Maria | Church of Norway | Norway |
| Ms | KULJU Maria | Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland | Finland |
| Mr | LIN David | The Lutheran Church in Great Britain | Great Britain |
| Bishop | LIND Martin | The Lutheran Church in Great Britain | Great Britain |
| Ms | LUKKARINEN Marjut | Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland | Sweden |
| Ms | MATTSSON Matilda | Church of Sweden | Sweden |
| Mr | MATUMBA Francis | Diakonhjemmet University College, Norway | Malawi/Norway |
| Mr | NEUMANN Petr | Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren | Czech Republic |
| Ms | PARNICKY Marija | Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization, Novi Sad/Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia | Serbia |
| Mr | SAKETA Abebe Yohannes | The Lutheran World Federation | Switzerland |
| Ms | SELIVERSTOVA Aleksandra | The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia | Russia |
| Ms | SIIRTO Ulla | Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland/ Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Finland | Finland |
| Rev | SZABO Szilard | The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary | |
| Dr | SZYNAKA Peter | Evangelisch Lutherische Kirche in Oldenburg Diakonisches Werk | Germany |
| Rev | ÜPRUS Avo | Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church | Estonia |
| Rev | URDZE Martin | Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia | Latvia |
| Rev | VOGEL-MFATO Eva | The Lutheran World Federation | Switzerland |
| Rev | VOJNIC Svetlana | Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization, Novi Sad/Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia | Serbia |
| Rev | WEINFURTER Jiri | Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren | Czech Republic |
| Ms | ZACHRAJ Marta | Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland | Poland |

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The European Solidarity Group came to the conclusion that the concept of conviviality, linked to vocation, justice and dignity, forms a key to thinking and acting in the area of economy and work. These issues had emerged as central issues affecting every context as we worked on the production of the text *Seeking Conviviality*. The Group agreed that in the present situation, our priority is to explore the meaning and practice of “Convivial Economy.” This report is the first result of this process “Towards a Convivial Economy”.

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International Academy
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