



## NEWSLETTER

### Dear Colleagues & Friends,

I am glad to introduce to you the last edition of the interdiac newsletter in the year 2011. The last 3 months were fully packed of the smaller and bigger groups meetings with 'old faces' and new ones! Being together as a learning community and sharing perspectives on social & diaconal work from different contexts has been a continually enriching experience that has opened door to enable a better understanding of 'ourselves' in the work in relation to those with work with. Alongside this, new encouragement and inspirations have been important for all participants. Generally speaking it has been very 'rich year' and we are thankful to everybody who is making the journey with us, those who are committed to make changes in this world, and who are full of expectations! You are warmly welcome to join us in the future work .....

Janka & Tony

### What has been happening ?

Workshops & study event of Georgian experts, 29 September – 10 October 2011

Study visit, October 10-14, 2011

Honorary Council meeting, October 17 – 19, 2011

Joint Board meeting, November 9-11, 2011

Joint consultation process LWF & interdiac, December 7-10, 2011

### Workshop & study visit: Georgian experts, 29 September – 10 October 2011

interdiac organised a 12 day study visit for a group of 12 representatives of 3 newly established day centres for socially vulnerable children and their communities in Lanchkhuti, Tsjaktubo and Marneuli, Georgia. Alongside the representatives of the day centres, the representatives of national and local government were a part of the learning process. The focus was put on the isolation of children and ways to combat it by adopting a holistic approach. During the meetings, the issues of child welfare were kept in mind and reflected through the eyes of professionals and volunteers from different sectors. This event contributed to the development of specific services for and with children living in poverty in particular regions of Georgia. The delegates in the study visit aimed to share their experience and findings in their respective organisations 'back home'. The necessity of building up partnerships between the governmental and non-governmental sectors, in order to respond systematically to the challenges of social exclusion was emphasised. The study visit was arranged in conjunction with the NGO Children & Environment, a partner organisation of NDOBA, which is a member of interdiac and Slezská Diakonie, one of our founder members.

### Study visit 'Input to wider society from local engagement by young people in the neighbourhoods', October 10-14, 2011, Český Těšín & neighbourhoods

The Study Visit was a follow up action to the study visit 'Community Engagement – real Participation – Empowerment' held in Helsinki, June 2011. This joint interdiac and Eurodiaconia study visit was organised in conjunction with interdiac founder Slezská Diakonie and the Community centre DEN.

Seventeen participants from 8 different European countries took part in it. The purpose was to offer a space to share experience and deepen the understanding of community engagement in Diaconia and Christian social action, especially of church related organisations which were founded after the political changes which began at the end of the 1980's. The following ideas for planning the next steps were developed, as the participants clearly expressed their interest and commitment to continue with such events:

- Learning from others: a space for sharing the best practice and experience from particular working environments of the participants should be opened
- Deepening the issues: (e.g. Dignity, Exposure Method, Community Development): the idea is to organise workshops which will handle these issues



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International Academy for Diaconia and Social Action,  
Central and Eastern Europe, o.p.s.

At this Christmas time...  
we wish you season blessed with peace and joy  
On Christmas day...  
may we rejoice with Christians worldwide  
in the blessings of the love of God  
In the coming year...  
let us share God's love for us  
with our neighbours near and far

pf 2012

Your interdiac team wish you  
a blessed 2012

- Mediation of contacts & ideas on the development of programme of international voluntary service: as some of the participants intend to develop new programmes, they asked for advice before starting out, from interdiac and the other participants. The Narrative Report from the study visit can be found on the interdiac website.

### Joint Board meeting, November 9-11, 2011

The members of Executive & Advisory Board evaluated the activities of the year 2011 so far and approved the priority work areas for the year 2012. The Advisory Board approved the Annual report and Accounts 2010. The upcoming on - line meeting of the Executive Board will deal with the Work Plan and Budgeting for the year 2012.

### Articles published in the research journal Diaconia

Case studies of diaconia in the region, edited by Tony Addy have been produced by Nicole Borisuk, Oxana Banaruc and Tsovinar Ghazaryan and they have been published in the research journal Diaconia, Journal for Research in Diaconia and Christian Social Practice. They will be used in interdiac learning programmes and can be downloaded in January from the interdiac web site. Those interested in the journal, which is published twice a year in English should check the link: <http://tinyurl.com/boupkzg>

### Joint LWF & interdiac consultation process on 'Seeking Conviviality: Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe', December 7-10, Järvenpää

This 3- year process has been started with meeting which brought together 27 participants from 15 countries. The pan – European gathering of pastors, deacons and social or diaconia workers, students and teachers explored their work in diverse local contexts across Europe, as well in support work and training for diaconal work. The learning and sharing process focused on participant's work in their diverse contexts and the identification of the motives for diaconia & social work. This led to thematic discussions on:

- How Diaconia combats inequality and injustice
- How Diaconia opposes the consuming society and market driven economy
- Diaconia as a faithful response to God's call through the 'other'
- Diaconia as an approach to life in community

Following these discussions, the reflective process ended with the identification of the most relevant key issues in participant's regional contexts which should be worked on in the future. It is also foreseen that the regional priorities from 3 different contexts will be introduced and further discussed at

The project 'Input to wider society from local engagement by young people' is financially supported within the framework of the EU programme Youth in Action.



Education and Culture DG

'Youth in Action' Programme

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### PRIORITY WORK AREAS 2012

*Joint Degree Programme*

*Mobile Events*

*Networking & Partnership building*

*Research & Publication*

*Advocacy & Lobbying*

*Fundraising*

*Group picture—Honorary Council meeting, October 2011*

at the Lutheran World Federation European regional church leaders meeting which will take place in May 2012 in Os-trava. The process will then continue with reconvened work-shop in December, 2012. The press release will be soon pub-lished on LWF and interdiac websites and more comprehen-sive report will be available by the end of January 2012.

### **Research conference 'Faith-based Social Action in Combat-ing Marginalisation', November 17- 18, 2011**

The interdiac representatives, Ms. J. Adameova and Mr. T. Addy were invited to this conference to contribute to the issues of 'faith – based social action'. Tony made an input with the title Exploring the Ambiguity and Relevance of the Concept of Dignity to Addressing the Challenge of Poverty. The input noted that the European Union and many other bodies refer to poverty as a threat to human dignity. Yet dig-nity is normally left undefined. An exploration of the concept shows that it covers a number of contradictory ideas from Christian and secular traditions. A positive understanding of dignity leads to social policies which enable all to have the resources and services for the maintenance and develop-ment of life and that the participation in civil society is im-portant for enhancing human dignity. The paper will be pub-lished in a collection of the inputs to the conference. The conference, which was organised by interdiac educational partner Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Finland, (Diak) focused on faith-based social action across different religious traditions and serving people of all faiths and none.

### **Honorary Council Meeting, October 17-19, 2011**

The meeting created a space for the sharing the new challenges in the participant's home organisations, developing the council's contribution to the development of the degree programme cur-riculum and drawing up ideas for the further use and develop-ment of the document 'Bratislava Declaration'. New models of community work with participatory approaches and more in-volvement of the users are seen to be among the most effective tools to respond to social needs, especially in the time of very limited resources. The impacts of the world financial crisis have had clear effects on the national policies as budget cuts in the public sector have been already introduced for year 2012. Those partner organisations which do not get any support from the state budget and depend on the funding of the development agencies, also struggle from these developments because as a consequence, many donors has reshaped their funding strategy. The partners raised up the issue of the voluntary action. There are several examples which show that the development of vol-unteerism is under the way in post-communist countries. There is a need to implement models that will support a good coopera-tion between professionals and volunteers and to develop vol-unteer roles and possibilities. To support this development, training for the new coordination and management skills needed were requested. Since the year 2008, when the Bratislava Decla-ration was published, the global economic and political environ-ment for social development has changed rapidly and new chal-lenges have emerged. Thus the document needs to be updated and further integrated into interdiac actions.