

Terms of Reference for Convenor of Thematic Support Group

' Spirituality in Christian social practice '

Purpose:

This document sets out the Terms of Reference for the Convenor of the Thematic Support Group 'Spirituality in Christian social practice'.

Short description of interdiac:

The International Academy for Diaconia and Social Action, Central and Eastern Europe, o.p.s (interdiac) is an international educational institution rooted in the learning and development needs of those engaged in Diaconia and Christian social practice in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The interdiac vision is to promote interlinked Learning, Networking, and Research & Development.

interdiac:

- wants to be an ecumenical learning community that supports Christian social practice for the fullness of life;
- affirming a lived conviviality in which recognition, diversity and difference are the basis for mutual learning and common action;
- supports work for change towards a convivial society and economy through Christian social action by
 - co-creating spaces and opportunities for the development of knowledge and skills for practice;
 - supporting research and innovation;
 - empowering and accompanying people in their commitment to social transformation;
 - supporting partners in action for change in church and society.

The interdiac learning community provides a space and structure for people who share a common interest in a particular issue. It connects people and organisations who want to learn and work across boundaries.

In the interdiac learning community people share their learning and practice, their questions and the problems they face. The learning community shares a common vision and interest in improving practice. The learning community is based on the understanding that everyone can share and learn as we codevelop practice, reflection, research and learning by connecting people & new practices for change can be developed.

The challenges and new development trends require new responses to support the work of practitioners in churches and diaconal institutions.

Therefore, we will establish TSGs to support staff and volunteers in this new situation, which is largely unknown and undocumented.

We see this process as a learning journey based on shared learning and mutual support.

As an integral part of Thematic Support group work, we invite diaconal practitioners to explore their everyday work with people as active learning together with them towards mutuality and empowerment. This journey of reflection by diaconal practitioners will provide new impetus for the further development of an integrated approach to diaconal practice.

The purpose of the TSG is

- to include the exploration of a specific topic and the development of tailored learning and support for practitioners.
- to provide a shared space where participants can exchange experiences, support each other, identify resources and share ideas and inspiration for their practice. It will support participants through peer group learning, specific inputs and mutual support.
- to promote "learning from each other" to improve diaconia and Christian social practice by
 - developing practical knowledge in different working contexts,
 - gaining new approaches for mutual support and new insights.
- to work with Extended Groups (regional, national) in order to provide more local support and share and deepen the knowledge gained.
- to document the results of the TSG's work in an appropriate way. This idea builds on the findings from the reflective learning journeys of diaconal practitioners.
- to share the newly acquired knowledge with a wider circle within and outside the region.

As we encourage co-learning and mutual support, the themes are rooted in practice and relevant to the needs of social action practitioners.

Theme of Thematic Support Group: 'Spirituality in Christian social practice'.

This TSG will bring together diaconal workers who wish to develop their spirituality in direct relation to their practice. It will include personal spirituality as a resource and work with people in different life situations who may have their own spirituality or need to develop their spirituality.

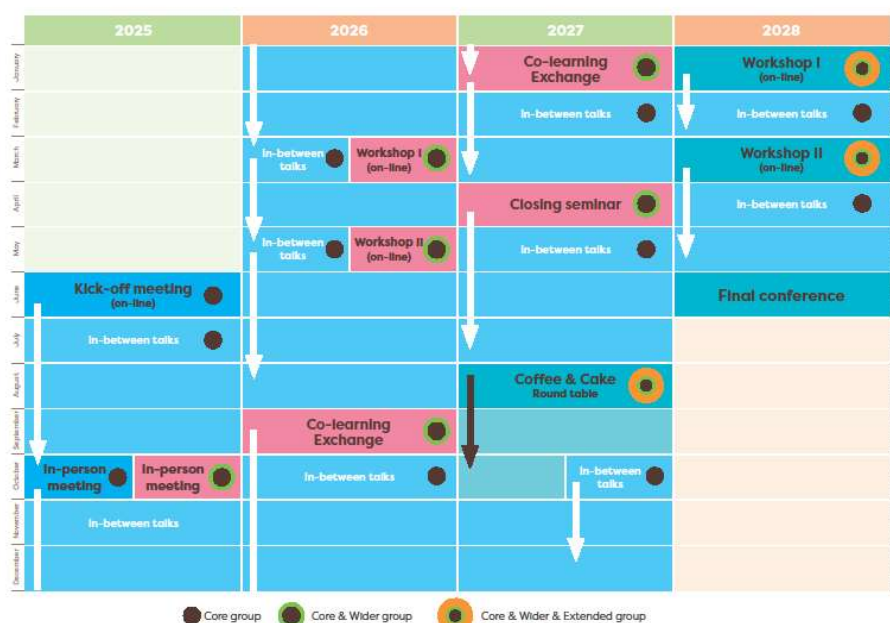
The immediate impetus for the creation of this TSG came from the previous interdiac learning programmes and a series of online workshops "Walking and Dancing with God". This was based on a recent interdiac publication of the same title. The second impulse is the reflection in the recent interdiac partners meeting, where there was a discussion on hope, where different ideas were shared.

The key issue raised was the diaconia as a bearer of hope and the need to develop support for people and to cultivate hope in very difficult situations. The question was also raised as to what spiritual resources people themselves draw on in their daily lives. As members of interdiac expressed it, we trust in God who gives us energy and motivation for our work, but we need to deepen our understanding in relation to the ongoing stressful situation we are facing. We can see that the crises affecting the people with whom diaconal workers are involved also affect diaconal workers, and this is important to recognise as we support the search for a relevant spirituality.

As a result of this reflective learning journey of the TSG, proposals will be made for new learning initiatives and programmes for diaconal workers.

The themes of 'conviviality' and 'practitioner-researcher' are considered horizontal and will be integrated in each TSG.

Learning process of TSG



Appointment

1. The Convenor of the Thematic Support Group will be appointed for 3 years term based on the Honoraria Contract and appointment may be prolonged.
2. Rate of pay will follow interdiac rules and will be recorded in the on-line system.

Location

3. Home Office – the person will normally work from home.
4. Regular meetings will be organised via Zoom or face to face. The venue of the face to face meetings will depend on the programme or event and will be confirmed well in advance.
5. Programmes and Events will normally take place in one of the member countries of a partner organisation of interdiac.

6. The Convenor's role is one of facilitation and representation of the groups which they contribute to form and support the development of their group process.
7. The Convenor co-designs the working and learning programme of the groups with the members of the groups.
8. The Convenor acts as moderator of the theme presented in the online space.

Functions

9. The Convener has the following functions:

a. TSG representative in Honorary Council

- i. Serve as representative in the Partner's meeting. If the Convenor cannot attend a Council meeting, they work amongst their TSG members to select a delegate.
- ii. Engage with the representatives of the interdiac partner organisations, particularly with regard to their contributions from local, regional and national perspective to wider international community.

b. Invited participant of Executive Board

- i. Attend Board meetings under a standing invitation,
- ii. Engage with the Director on the Thematic Support Group matters in advance of the Board meetings and/or by suggesting agenda items.

c. Form/ build up the groups

- i. In consultation with the Director and Honorary Council representatives form and contribute to co-forming the groups.

d. Lead the learning process and facilitate meetings

- i. Call for the group meetings & events and invite the respective groups for the meetings & events.
- ii. Maintain communication among group members.
- iii. Co-develop the learning & working programme¹ Group meetings ensuring appropriate topics are addressed in a participatory and process related approach.
- iv. Develop or co-develop resources for learning of TSG and for wider use in the field.
- v. Ensure appropriate handouts are co-developed and made available before each meeting.
- vi. Facilitate the processes in a transparent and effective manner and addressing conflicts and ethics questions as they arise.
- vii. Keep the Director informed of the results of the working groups and proposals for the further development of the group and related activities.

¹ The Convenor takes a leading role in the development of the content and process of the Core Group and the Wider Group.

- viii. Ensure that the topics of support groups are discussed and decisions are taken and jointly implemented.
- ix. Elaborate a record of the conclusions and decisions reached at each meeting in a timely manner.
- x. Liaise with the Programme & Event Manager in their role to provide support for the meetings and events.

e. Moderator of the on-line space

- i. Direct the communication and dynamise the discussion on the theme between and among the members of the specific thematic section of the online space.
- ii. Publish the resources on the online space.

f. Contributing to other groups and processes

- i. Participate, as necessary, in other groups or processes as a representative of the interdiac.

g. Reporting-back

- i. Bring new programme items to the attention of the Director and prepare any substantive items for further decision by the Honorary Council.
- ii. Organise and carry out the evaluation of the learning programme and processes.
- iii. Provide a 'report-back' to groups members and sharing relevant materials on meetings, decisions and plans from the Convener's functional areas on an ongoing basis.
- iv. Contribute a brief annual report-back to the Honorary Council and Executive Board on activities during the Convenor's term.

Working relationships

- 10. Collaborate with the Director of interdiac, Programme and Event Manager, other Convenors or Thematic Support groups, Honorary Council members and facilitate the co-creative work with the group's members.
- 11. The Convenor is responsible to the Director.

Facilitating access to information

- 12. In collaboration with the Director, and the Convenor ensure necessary information is provided to Executive and Advisory Board.

Personal conduct, ethics and conflicts of interest

- 13. Recognizing the potential for conflict of interest situations to arise, the Convenor shall act in good faith in the interests of the interdiac.

14. The nature of the role makes requires excellent time management skills and certain level of flexibility. The Convenor may expect to be 60 calendar days' equivalent service as counted in accordance to the work and learning process (see the infographic diagram).
15. The costs incurred in carrying out the role, in particular reasonable travel and hotel costs related to attendance of in person meetings will be covered.

Required Experience, Skills and Qualifications

16. Experience and knowledge of working in the field of Thematic Support Group, preferably in a Christian organisational context, diaconia or other related areas;
17. University Degree: Master's level preferred, in a subject relevant to the field;
18. Leadership and Facilitation skills:
 - a. Ability to lead and motivate groups.
 - b. Excellent communication and interpersonal skills in English. It will be an advantage to have other language skills.
19. Organisational and Administrative skills:
 - a. Ability to manage time effectively and prioritise tasks.
 - b. Ability to work with digital platforms for meeting and document sharing.
20. Applicants should be:
 - a. Self-motivated and able to work independently and collaboratively in international teams;
 - b. In sympathy with and support of the aims of interdiac;
 - c. Prepared to travel;
 - d. Willing to work flexibly according to the needs of the programmes, which have intensive workshops and seminars and of other events;
 - e. Open to learn.

How to apply:

Interested applicants are asked to send a motivation letter and CV (both in English) to office@interdiac.eu by latest the 15th May 2025.

Contract details:

The appointed Convenor of Thematic Support Group should be available to commence work not later than the 15th June 2025.

Further information:

Enquiries to Ms. Janka Adameová:

Email: office@interdiac.eu

Phone: +420 731 401 449